



LITTLE BIRD DRAWING BY CAITLIN, 2014

Caitlin Elizabeth O'Sara



CAITLIN ELIZABETH O'HARA



Born Sunday, July 31, 1983 in Framingham, MA, 1:17am

Leo Sun, Aries Moon, Gemini Rising

Soul departed on Tuesday, December 20, 2016, 6:30pm, in Pittsburgh, PA

Early Christian art, Northern Renaissance Art, all art, Henry, Joni Mitchell, all music, classical piano, good movies, the work of Martin Scorsese, good television, the brilliance that was Mad Men, good books, philosophy, birds—all birds, even pigeons, especially pigeons, Audubon's work, Paris, the city of light. Nights at Sorrelina with Mummy. St. John. Home. The smell of JP Licks. The smells of the beach and barbecue and bourbon. Menemsha, steamers at Larsen's, the Ag Fair, buddy the elf what's your favorite color?, Henry, pup jokes, pups, movie line jokes, which wigs?, Groundhog Day, "I'm NOT goin' back to Pittsburgh," Shopbop, astrology, being Leo, 3 little pigs, pig room, pig chairs, soft sweaters, LL Bean slippers, headscarves, cats, all animals – the more sad and forlorn, the better – donkeys on St. John, boat days on St. John, drives out to the East End, Ivan's, Soggy Dollar, the Gilligan's Island Cay, Seabreeze. Ireland. Barn owls, all owls. Daddy days. Sleeping in. Staying up late. Going to the cinema, Roger Ebert, onion rings, comfort, warm socks, foot massages, leg massages. Being in charge/the boss. Making lists. Reiki, "We're connected." 7a sausage breakfast sandwiches, llamas, Miami, the Standard, day trips, Kennebunkport, Girls, the green couch, Simba, Talking Heads, Judy. Buying gifts for friends. Writing beautiful, handwritten notes. The ocean. Salt. Peace. Equality. Fairness. Feminism. Underdogs! Chugging water. Raggedy lounge-wear. Rags. Dancing. Singing—singing out loud. Popcorn. Butter. Berries. Baby chicks. Kindness. Crying. Chatting. Take-out. High-end stuff. Gypsies. Babies. The unknown. Religion. Spirituality. Boston. The Vineyard. Cats. Bob Dylan. Bobby McGee. Brownies. Books. Small creatures. Love. Travel to old Europe, the churches – the older and more ornate, the better. Genealogy, pearl earrings, corndogs at the fair, Henry, the Newton cemetery, Mary Oliver, Easter candy, pig pups, rabbit rabbit, the Virgin Mary, Watermelon sherbert, snails, spirit animals, the small white flowers that smelled so wonderful at the UPMC hospital garden and which were the smell of childhood, parrot tulips, the good articles in the New Yorker, pies, driving around listening to music, Prouty Garden, DonandKay all one word, Lake Champlain chocolate caramel bars from Whole Foods, Chinese food delivery, Henry, dozens of wrist bracelets, being alone to sit and think, driving to Castle Island to look at the harbor, road trips, Maine, the first year with Andrew in the Ogunquit apartment. Andrew.

The Service

Friday, December 30, 2016
The Chapel at Edgell Grove Cemetery
Framingham, Massachusetts



RICHARD WALKER
Officiant

GARY RICHARDSON
Classical guitarist
with Mr. B. Bear

Speakers

KATIE WHITTEMORE
From-before-birth friend, almost-sister

KYLE WHITTEMORE
Closest-to-a-brother friend

JACQUI HAMILTON
Early and beloved friend

RICHARD WALKER LEADS ALL TO READ ALOUD:

VISITING PARIS

by Vijay Seshadri

They were in the scullery talking.

The meadow had to be sold to pay their riotous expenses;
then the woods by the river,
with its tangled banks and snags elbowing out of the water,
had to go; and then the summer house where they talked—
all that was left of an estate once so big
a man riding fast on a fast horse

couldn't cross it in a day. Genevieve. Hortense. Mémé.

The family's last born, whose pale name is inscribed on the rolls
of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. As in the fresco of the Virgin,
where the copper in the pigment oxidizes to trace a thin green cicatrix
along a seam of Her red tunic,
a suspicion of one another furrowed their
consanguine, averted faces.

Why go anywhere at all when it rains like this,
when the trees are sloppy and hooded
and the foot sinks to the ankle in the muddy lane?

I didn't stay for the end of the conversation.

I was wanted in Paris. Paris, astounded by my splendor
and charmed by my excitable manner,
waited to open its arms to me.

ALYSSA BAKER
SCHOOLMATE, SOUL FRIEND

ALLISON GODOFF
SCHOOLMATE, SOUL FRIEND

KENLEY BRADSTREET
HEART OF CAITLIN'S HEART

KENLEY RECITES ONE OF CAITLIN'S MOST-LOVED POEMS:

AS I WALKED OUT ONE EVENING

By W. H. Auden

As I walked out one evening,
Walking down Bristol Street,
The crowds upon the pavement
Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river
I heard a lover sing
Under an arch of the railway:
"Love has no ending.

"I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street.

"I'll love you till the ocean
Is folded and hung up to dry
And the seven stars go squawking
Like geese about the sky.

"The years shall run like rabbits
For in my arms I hold
The Flower of the Ages
And the first love of the world."

But all the clocks in the city
Began to whirr and chime:
"O let not Time deceive you,
You cannot conquer Time.

"In the burrows of the Nightmare
Where Justice naked is,
Time watches from the shadow
And coughs when you would kiss.

"In headaches and in worry
Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
To-morrow or to-day.

"Into many a green valley
Drifts the appalling snow;
Time breaks the threaded dances
And the diver's brilliant bow.

**"O plunge your hands in water,
Plunge them in up to the wrist;
Stare, stare in the basin
And wonder what you've missed.**

"The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

"Where the beggars raffle the banknotes
And the Giant is enchanting to Jack,
And the Lily-white Boy is a Roarer
And Jill goes down on her back.

"O look, look in the mirror,
O look in your distress;
Life remains a blessing
Although you cannot bless.

"O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbour
With your crooked heart."

It was late, late in the evening,
The lovers they were gone;
The clocks had ceased their chiming
And the deep river ran on.

BILLY DUFFEY
OLD FRIEND, CHAMPION, LOVER OF LIFE

JESSICA DANFORTH
BELOVED SOUL FRIEND

JILLIAN KELSEY
GENETIC COUSIN, SPIRITUAL KIN

“HAIL MARY” PRAYER, FOR ALL TO RECITE, LED BY JILLIAN.



Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
Our Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death.
May it be so.

*Hospital artwork:
Virgin Mary by Caitlin in 2016*



ANDREW SUTRYN
LOVE OF LIFE, SOUL FRIEND

MARYANNE O'HARA
MOTHER, MOSTLY COMPANION

MARYANNE LEADS ALL TO READ ALOUD A POEM BELOVED BY CAITLIN:

DOGFISH

By Mary Oliver

Some kind of relaxed and beautiful thing
kept flickering in with the tide
and looking around.
Black as a fisherman's boot,
with a white belly.
If you asked for a picture I would have to
draw a smile
under the perfectly round eyes and above
the chin,
which was rough
as a thousand sharpened nails.
And you know
what a smile means,
don't you?

I wanted the past to go away, I wanted
to leave it, like another country; I wanted
my life to close, and open
like a hinge, like a wing, like the part of
the song
where it falls
down over the rocks: an explosion, a
discovery;
I wanted
to hurry into the work of my life;
I wanted to know,
whoever I was, I was
alive
for a little while.

It was evening, and no longer summer.
Three small fish, I don't know what they
were,
huddled in the highest ripples
as it came swimming in again, effortless,
the whole body
one gesture, one black sleeve

that could fit easily around
the bodies of three small fish.

Also I wanted
to be able to love. And we all know
how that one goes,
don't we?
Slowly

the dogfish tore open the soft basins of water.

You don't want to hear the story
of my life, and anyway
I don't want to tell it, I want to listen
to the enormous waterfalls of the sun.
And anyway it's the same old story –
a few people just trying,
one way or another,
to survive.
Mostly, I want to be kind.
And nobody, of course, is kind,
or mean,
for a simple reason.
And nobody gets out of it, having to
swim through the fires to stay in
this world.

And look! look! look! I think those little fish
better wake up and dash themselves away
from the hopeless future that is
bulging toward them.

And probably,
if they don't waste time
looking for an easier world,
they can do it.

UNCLE MIKE'S FILM TRIBUTE TO CAITLIN

"SILENT NIGHT FOR CAITLIN"

GARY RICHARDSON'S RENDITION PLAYED IN FULL

SILENCE.



Thank you all, for sharing
this sacred time with us.

– Maryanne and Nick

WORDS THAT CAITLIN LOVED AND LIVED BY



MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

by Viktor Frankl

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

“What is to give light must endure burning.”

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

“Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear with almost any ‘how’.”

“The one thing you can’t take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one’s freedoms is to choose one’s attitude in any given circumstance.”

“If there is meaning in life at all, then there must be meaning in suffering.”
“So live as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now!”

“For the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth - that Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love.”

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

“I do not forget any good deed done to me & I do not carry a grudge for a bad one.”

“Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.”

“Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in his spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still alive at all, ceases somehow to be of importance.”

“Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant.”

A CONFESSION

by Leo Tolstoy

“Faith is the strength of life. If a man lives he believes in something. If he did not believe that one must live for something, he would not live. If he does not see and recognize the illusory nature of the finite, he believes in the finite; if he understands the illusory nature of the finite, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith he cannot live.”

“The assertion that you are in falsehood and I am in truth is the most cruel thing one man can say to another”

I, TOO, SING AMERICA

by Langston Hughes

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

“In 1945, roughly 20 years before the Civil Rights movement would come to a head in America, Langston Hughes was a major part of creating the feeling that would define African American nationalism. Hughes doesn't denounce America, he relays a powerful, positive certainty that change awaits. Almost 70 years later, the last words of his poem “I, Too, Sing America” resonate in an America embroiled in the gay marriage debate. I am proud to live in a state that has seen the light for almost 10 years, and have faith that our country will slowly but surely follow, bit by bit. It is because of the hopeful certainty of Americans like Hughes that the fight for rights becomes a peaceful, beautiful reality.” -Caitlin

RANDOM EMAILS AND TEXTS WITH CAITLIN



MORNING AFTER HALLOWEEN, 2008

me: bay scallop ceviche. shrimp and toast
Caitlin: stop im so hungry
me: did you look at our pictures
Caitlin: yeah they are good
me: how about daddy, in the role of angel !!??
haha
Caitlin: daddy looks so funny
hahah it was funny
me: eyes cast heavenward, playing the harp
Caitlin: ha
did you see mine
me: yes, i saw them. you look so beautiful
i can't believe how beautiful you are sometimes
it was like when you were a baby and i used to stare
at your perfect little face

11/29/09

**so how far can you make it in this poem, reading it aloud,
before you choke up on your words?**

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

7/2/2008

i was thinking about the ends of things that i love. the end of anna karenina. the end of ulyssees. the end of the movie crimes and misdemeanors. it is a voice over by the (made-up) philosopher in the movie Louis Levy, who is based on Primo Levi. he says:

We are all faced throughout our lives with agonizing decisions, moral choices. Some are on a grand scale, most of these choices are on lesser points. But, we define ourselves by the choices we have made; we are in fact the sum total of our choices.

Events unfold so unpredictably, so unfairly, human happiness does not seem to have been included in the design of creation.

It is only we, with our capacity to love, that gives meaning to the indifferent universe. And yet most human beings seem to have the ability to keep trying, and even to find joy from simple things, like, their family, their work, and from the hope that future generations.. might understand more.

It is very powerful with the voice of Levy and the images at the end of the movie (which is one of woody allens best i think).

here it is, when you get home or get a chance –
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZ7VJ7pMJGQ>

It reminded me of the thought you pulled out from that box the other day. also, Primo Levi was born on july 31

12/8/10

ok. so remember how ive said before about joni mitchell songs....all her music, all her fans will say, at first you dont get it, and think you dont like it. or think its just not your thing. then you kind of want to listen again. and again, and again. and then suddenly that song becomes your favorite joni mitchell song, then another and another. and you wonder how you could ever ever think it was just ok, or BAD even (!) its like putting in the time and getting a huge payoff.

i read a slate thing last night about “the best joni mitchell song” and it was this song Amelia I had never heard before. And at first I was like, eh. But then (because I know now)...i said....give it another chance. So i listened when i was cooking. (I find listening to new music is best while you’re doing something else....it gives you a chance to half listen and then realize you want to hear it again –or not– and you don’t switch it off soon and get all judgy the way you do if you’re JUST listening and doing nothing else). And i wanted to hear it again, and again, and again. And then today at work i was FURIOUS because I realized I brought my ipod to listen, and realized I’d forgotten to put the song on my ipod.

i just think it fits, i dont know, i just felt it

i thought it was weird that i became obsessed with the song as i was reading your book right now. and the meaning of the song is about, to me, having your own life path, and in it, love affairs and infatuations that may seem like **the road you will go down, but in the end you’re left with your own trip.**

2011

Caitlin: what am i supposed to say to
ppl who ask me what do i do with a
philosophy degree

me: i don't know what you should say, just
say why you want to study philosophy

Caitlin: yes
avoid the main question

me: ask nearly EVERYONE what they are
doing with the degree they earned? cause
most people the answer is NOT USING IT

Caitlin: i guess
i feel like my friends could argue that
though. what ever
plus a graduate degree is diff
there is supposed to be a point

me: not when it's philosophy, at least the
point isn't job related
but why don't you just answer WHY you
want to

Caitlin: i know
i need to come up with something that
doesn't sound like a kid looking for
answers

me: well, a philosophy candidate should
be able to come up with a good
thing to say. :)

Caitlin: i guess the long answer is i really
enjoyed it in college, and it ties together
all areas im interested in, art, history, and
literature, but in an expanded way and i
feel like ive been in as non-philosophical a
sector as I'm capable of the past few years
and i want to go another direction

me: that sounds like a good answer to me
!

Caitlin: ok thanks!

THE OPENING OF A PIECE SHE WROTE FOR A TRAVELER'S WEBSITE, 2013

On love, on grief, on every human thing,
Time sprinkles Lethe's water with his wing.
—Walter Savage Landor, "On Love, on Grief"

Recently I heard Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky on the radio. He was talking of course about poetry, and said something that changed the way I had always thought about it. The change is something so simple I am almost embarrassed to admit it. What he said was something along the lines of this: when we look at a painting, we don't expect ourselves to understand its literal meaning, or any meaning at all, right away. No, we enjoy art because we like it and we don't know why. We would never berate ourselves for loving a painting simply because. In fact, we would be inclined to buy that painting, hang it in our living rooms, and proclaim to guests, proud and gleefully ignorant, "I don't know why, I just love it!" The visual countenance of a painting makes this assertion easier to accept — our brains are simply trained that under most circumstances, we are allowed to like the look of something without knowing why. We generally accept this as aesthetics, a word that even the 'un-artsy' recognize and warmly embrace.

When words on a page come into play however, our brains switch, and we start trying to organize, to understand word structure. If we can't assign a meaning within the first few lines, then our brains, trained since childhood in the indivisible task of "reading comprehension", (that is, reading should be synonymous with, or lead to, comprehension), may start to panic at our failure. The information becomes difficult, maybe even unknowable (!) and therefore unappealing. This can happen to even a great reader, a lover of literature — for poetry is a different animal. However, and as Pinsky pointed out that day, if we can recognize this, let go, and allow ourselves to read poetry as we would look at a painting, with no expectations of "translation", then we may decide on a gut level if we like it, or maybe if we love it. Once we fall in love, then a true passion is ignited! We want to know more, and we really begin learning. Pinsky remarks that in love and friendship, we don't learn everything there is to know about someone before we befriend them, or fall in love. But after we fall in love, or meet a potential new friend, our wonderfully greedy, human brains just want to know more and more about that person. We have all experienced this. Poetry, perhaps, is the same. We are hardwired that loving will turn to learning, we just have to figure out how to reverse the steps our brains naturally want to make when it comes to words.

2015, AN EMAIL FROM CAITLIN TO NICK:

So what I always loved about Early Christian art was that it was so ...early. Really the beginnings of Christianity , and thinking about what that meant is neat for me. This was years before even the crusades, the first really violent time in the name of “Christ” (well except for Christ himself obviously). So there was violence of course ... In Rome and in the Byzantine empire. But Christianity hadn’t even reached a point yet where people were “fighting in the name of the Catholic Church” etc and things were still more modest.

You can see the change in how Christ is portrayed in the art in these small churches. He’s still a shepherd but he’s wearing roman robes and looks more regal. So it’s the beginnings of it.... But it’s unlikely that these religious people then were implementing awful atrocities on people

I think the area seems beautiful and peaceful. But also something I can’t really place, and don’t necessarily need to figure out. I just would like to go

There is always going to be bad in the world. I think that is what makes being good so important.



Ravenna. She longed to visit this church.

IN 2015, WRITING TO ME ABOUT THE 9LIVESNOTES BLOG:

i can sense that you want to write about what is happening - but my honest opinion, and i know that i cant exactly be objective, is that it feels like the same thing is getting written over and over again, and you're not getting the satisfaction that you want

you know what i would really like to read? how YOU feel. this post is kind of all about me - and i think its a great post. they are always great posts. and i want people to care about the prouty and know about the snails. but it just doesnt feel like the right time for it, for me.

it's your blog too, why don't you write something more from your perspective, that i couldn't even really critique because it isn't my story? or something weirdly creative and formless. or a weird poem. i dont know. i feel dragged down by sharing the seriousness of my own personal stories that need to remain, in some ways, my own. or else they become validated by comments and sympathy and it feels strange for me. it really doesn't have anything to do with "not wanting to call attention to myself".

(just try not to hurt my feelings by saying you secretly resent me terribly :) seriously tho. :(

TYPICAL GCHAT, 3/22/11

5:25 PM me: you must watch that jimmy stewart tearjerker ellen posted.
Caitlin: ok
you dont have to tell me twice to watch a tearjerker
5:30 PM oh my god
you dont see that lately on tv
me: no!
no words to describe
5:31 PM Caitlin: ahhhh
me: :(
Caitlin: yeah
i ate all those candies :(
me: ! oink oink
hen jumped on my lap while i was watching it
Caitlin: ahhhh hen
me: i love him
Caitlin: i love him too
me: did you finish susan's book?
Caitlin: no
i havent read since last week
me: i'm trying to finish this review.
i have to send you the email from Simeon... from today
Caitlin: im still crying over that beau poem
me: i know. jimmy stewart was so wonderful. i feel like having a snow day and watching christmas movies. christmas was too fast this year
Caitlin: Heeen!
me: pup
5:54 PM Caitlin: puppin
5:55 PM what about the lights etc
that we have to order
me: well, there's not as big a rush now because of not closing this week, but we still must choose...
if you want to put your thinking cap on— another phrase you probably hate
5:56 PM Caitlin: let me just go rustle around and find that cap
me: hahaha
Caitlin: what do i have to look at those books?
me: or those links greg sent, which i prefer
5:57 PM Caitlin: which links
which wigs
5:59 PM ????
you are the worst gchatter
me: i don't know i sent those links to you from greg last week
Caitlin: i wish i could get a massage every week
that was the most enjoyable thing ever last sat
me: that's great !~
Caitlin: im glad they have a sauna there
me: i want to go. nice showers?
Caitlin: rain shower
Caitlin: and they have heaters to heat your towels
me: lets' go when daddy is in miami
Caitlin: ok ! when is that
me: he leaves april fools day
that weekend he is gone
Caitlin: ha oh yeah
me: you should book massages or whatever now so we can have them at the same time
Caitlin: what day are we going to go?
how long is he gone for?
me: the weekend
Caitlin: ok
what do you want done?
me: do you have that recipe i linked to you yesterday
is there a menu

6:20 PM Caitlin: <http://www.exhalespa.com/Locations/MABostonBatteryWharf/default.aspx?LID=100714>
tomato: <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Seared-Scallops-with-Tomato-Beurre-Blanc-106527>
6:27 PM me: i had some of that honey and this time it worked
6:28 PM Caitlin: ha weird
me: honey bunny
i watched that yesterday. that kid is so cute
Caitlin: ha
so i had my thing with lisa
and it looks like she is the only one who does reflexology
which totally makes sense because she spent a lot of time on my feet and made me wonder if she did reflexology
i just called to find out the name of my woman
me: ok
Caitlin: i love reflexology
me: me too
6:31 PM are there associated prices
Caitlin: download the menu...
me: i have the menu open
6:32 PM Caitlin: ?
its a pdf
me: oh i'm in a window.
what kind of message did you have
Caitlin: fusion
me: that's what i want
Caitlin: yeah its basically just the regular what day
me: saturday ?
Caitlin: ok
me: or friday. i'm goin to alex at 12:45 for color and cut
Caitlin: no sat is better
me: ok

CAITLIN AS THE DOCTOR TO ALL OF US

August 10, 2016 email to me, the night before my annual physical

FOR YOUR DOCTOR

My observations about you -

1. You have always worked out and are in good shape, but you get more breathless than others easier. I think this is probably normal and people just vary - but I notice how people breathe (trust me) and I notice that you tend to get out of breath despite the fact that you are in shape and perform well on a stress test. Maybe worth mentioning. This combined with your aorta, family history, the fat around your middle since you were 26, and your digestion issues makes me wondersee gall bladder stuff below.

2. You eat more treats than you admit. I don't think the amount you eat is necessarily bad, but I think sometimes we don't see what we are really eating clearly. (Remember that food diary of mine I found??) A week does not go by that you do not have some sort of treat in the house. You may not eat it every day but even for example - you had key lime pie last night. You had cake pop tonight. And I saw an open bag of poppycock in the cupboard. And this is still the same week as the Michael Timothy's night (which was a rarity yes). But all in all I think if you REALLY wrote it all down, it'd be more treats than you realize. Maybe just lately since our lives are so weird ...but ...they are still our lives ...

—I know I am strict with myself - and you've always been a decadent Taurus with your treats - I am not going to nag you I promise and I don't want to make you feel bad. You never make me feel bad. I just want to say it so maybe you're more conscious and not kidding yourself, not to make you stop eating them. now that you've got this slight aorta enlargement... You have always helped me so much see clearly that I haven't actually had as many calories as I think Kind of similar. —

3. Remember to mention the potential gallbladder thing. I wonder if you could get an abdominal ultrasound while you're home. They are so easy and can be done at satellites. It'd be good to know

4. I assume they'll do a bunch of basic labs but make sure they do a CMP (complete metabolic panel) !
I know you're going to have lipids drawn ...and they'll do a CBC. I would ask for a CRP too even though some doctors don't think it means anything anymore. And thyroid but I think they always check that in women

As for your gallbladder.... (this went on and on :))

9/10/2016

Mummy. If I'm ever sedated or in any kind of subconscious unconscious state - but stable or whatever - please make sure you play music. Over and over again I'm reminded how it "brings me back to life"so it seems crazy that if I were to be out of it or really sick and have no control, that there would be no music. It could really help get me better! But I don't want to be at the mercy of what someone else plays. You probably know better than anyone at least. But I have compiled two lists. This lists music is also good to play when I'm getting better from transplant. Or if I'm really sick. I realized it's easier if I tell you now and you can make a playlist and have it. But it's only for dire times. I listen to this music otherwise and I don't want you to just break out the playlist on like, a week like this or something. Maybe you will never have to use it except like right after TX :) But ...if it were a time when I couldn't put music on myself. That is a good benchmark for when to use

The first list is inspirational music. Like if I am in a coma or need to get out of whatever I am in. Or if I'm just despondent and lost hope. If things are really hard. I'm really miserable. The atmosphere for these has to be right though and obviously some songs are more raucous so- u would have to gauge. Like a time of focus and when u can listen to the music. We can talk about this if you want. It feels weird to type it.

List 1:

Roll me away bob segar
We didn't start the fire
Thunder road (both versions- slow one too)
Born to run
Gypsy - fleetwood mac
The boxer
And she was
Dancing in the dark
Do you believe in magic? (Random.. The lovin spoonful)
Let it be
Losing my religion
Southern cross
One U2
If I ever lose my faith
Under pressure

List two are songs I find comforting and relaxing and can be played whenever. Comforting. But don't overdo any of it please! Obviously this is all hypothetical :)

List 2:

Copperline
Danny's song
Eyes of the world
Let it be
Losing my religion
Right down the line
Just like this train
Ramble on rose
Rocky raccoon
Southern cross
Still haven't found what im looking for
Where the streets have no name

The refuge of the roads - Joni

*this is a special song. You can only play very sparingly or it will lose its powers. Like once or twice a year.

It was interesting to go through my music and make this list and identify the songs among MANY favorite songs that get to a certain spot in my soul.

****The night before Caitlin went into the hospital on November 16, I went into her bathroom, where she was sitting in the tub waiting for me to wash her hair. The light had gone out of her eyes. She was listening to Refuge of the Roads. I emailed her doctor immediately.

THE HARDWARE STORE CAT, 2016

Mr. Humphreys wheezed along the hot sidewalk of his new West 81st street neighborhood, then headed into the hardware store where, much to his asthmatic dismay, the resident Persian sat.

Humphreys, with a measured inhale, made an attempt to enjoy the blast of air-conditioned cool while at the same time filter out what he only imagined as ‘cat air’ — air that seems pure but in truth is littered with bits of catty flecks that would set off a chain of respiratory events.

The cat, named Frosty according to her bowl, appearing to sense Humphreys’ distress, rose to leave — but was frozen, stuck to the stool. For what Humphreys did not know—nor did the cat until this very moment!—was that Frosty had been sitting on that stool for 15 years.

Why, only now, had Frosty become so corporeally aware? She was anxious as Humphreys came to her, holding his breath but revealing love in his eyes as he wrested her, with large and dusty hands, from her sclerotic position.

Humphreys’ move had been automatic. He shook out of the trance and braced himself as he let go of his breath and mentally braced for the deep inhalation of concentrated cat air that was sure to follow. But he breathed in and nothing happened—nothing at all... For in those 15 years Frosty had become special, free of irritants and organic matter, like a living sphinx — the kind of rare cat that finds only those who can truly love her — the asthmatics and the allergics of the world who have long pined for a cat they cannot love with heart nor lung. For them, there is the hardware store cat.

—Caitlin

ANY COLOR YOU LIKE

NOVEMBER 20, 2016 FROM THE 9LIVESNOTES BLOG

You can't always get what you want. Blah blah blah. Deep thoughts and Pink Floyd. There is no dark side of the moon really matter of fact it's all dark. I'm not the first person to be sick and I won't be the last, but here we are.

Update needed.

Free association is about the only thing I have a mind to do right now and so I'll try to pull it together into something comprehensible.

If you've ever been in a major hospital recently there's this channel called C.A.R.E. that just shows pictures of nature while music plays. Apparently there's scientific evidence that just looking at a picture of a "vista" can relax you. Sometimes I lie there and watch that channel and think about the word "teeming" because that's all that keeps popping into my head. This planet is surrounded by rocky and fiery and gas-laden planets and yet ours is teeming TEEMING — with colors and creatures and millions of upright humans communicating. If you think about that for long enough and stare long enough into the bubbling rapid or the alpine peak on the screen you can get to that state of wonder for a second ...and be like ...pretty ok with everything.

Are you in control?

This is a question my dad often poses to me, and Andrew, during trying hospital times. Perhaps my mother gets it too, though I suspect not. It's his way, I think, of assuring himself and us that we are in control of things when he's not around. He likes to be in control. I like to be in control. I am in control as much as anyone can possibly be in my situation. Sometimes too much. I can't control the big event, the most important thing; no one can. Control is the word of the day, the year – for me – and the country it seems too. Control is elusive. Dangerous. People freak out when they lose it.

Tolstoy had an existential crisis where he couldn't figure out how to have faith...and decided the only logical thing he could do was to kill himself – He spiraled out of control... he couldn't think himself out of the problem of living, the meaninglessness of life, and the uncertainty of faith. He thought that if life had no meaning, which his reasonable mind believed because he could not prove the opposite, then the brave thing to do would be to end it. But he did not want to kill himself at all. He finally found his kernel of faith exactly right in front of him. His desire not to die, to keep on living despite the fact that he KNEW he was going to die, was a kind of miraculous leap of faith that we all do every day when we wake up. He figured the fact that faith even exists at all makes it a truth in and of itself. And he went on. (you can read this in his "A confession").

So the basic details of my situation are things I know people want to know ... I'm so grateful I have so many people that care for me and my family, so here they are. I went into the hospital last Wednesday because I'd reached a new low of shortness of breath, due in part obviously to my lungs but also to my pulmonary hypertension which is more severe now. My increased oxygen needs have now boosted my score way up to 70. It was 47/48 for the past 2.5 years. I cried with relief that there had been a shift. Just days and weeks before had been, as yet, my lowest point. For the sake of transparency and for anyone reading this who might be sick too and think a lot of people make it look easy – trust me – we all fake it. Here's what low looks like– I was sitting in the bathtub while my mom washed my hair. On 10 liters of oxygen with a rescue tank next to me to supplement. The day before I went into the hospital I couldn't even do that. Physical anxiety attacks everyday. Extreme body aches. It's hard to pray for yourself. Or ask for things for yourself. But that day I screamed in my mind to whoever was listening to please help me out because I couldn't find my little ball of fiery strength anymore ...and I can always find it.

Yet just last Sunday– I took this picture. Three of my most dearest buddies -Jacqui, Kenley, and Allison – arranged for my awesome Boston hair stylist, Alex, to fly down and completely change my hair. It had become a huge tangled yellow mess that I didn't have the energy to even comb, never mind color or cut.

She came to the apartment and I cut 10 inches off and went closer to my natural color. It was so perfect and such perfect timing – because now I can have dirty hospital hair and it looks like a chic conscious fashion choice with my ripped tees. My point is – I don't look like someone sobbing in the bathtub gasping for air in this picture – but I am. Everyone struggles beyond their photos. But the world is meant to be hard and difficult and beautiful. Maybe it's easy to say this from where I sit – I am one lucky duck – I have a great family and great care a stylist who fucking flies in. I still suffer and it still sucks. But there is so much suffering in the world ... so much.



My belief though at least is – the world was not meant to always be fair or fun or easy. The world is teeming with life, and death, and pain, and Donald Trump even haha. We just have to keep living. Step back. We are just tiny beings. There are lobsters living at the bottom of the ocean for over a hundred years. They have just been sitting down there through all of our lives and wars and lives before us. We aren't that much different from lobsters really if you pull back a little. All part of this teeming painful wonderful world where so much is just luck. But we can choose to be kind, and to keep trying — we have the power.

“There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.” Leonard Cohen

–Caitlin

DECEMBER 3, 2016 FROM THE 9LIVESNOTES BLOG

I love my mummy for everything she does – there are no words. Nor for andrew and my dad. They are all so caring. focused their lives directly on me. it is hard to reconcile how that can possibly be ok. But I guess it's what we do as humans.

Heart and humor, and humility he said will lighten up your heavy load. Joni Mitchell refuge of the roads. So much outpouring of love and attention makes humility a challenge, but I am so grateful for it. Heart and humor are easier. They feel like the only directions to go right now. Joni Mitchell's words feel like permission to let go.

I do realize that not everyone who reads this blog is experiencing a big emotional moment in their lives ...that sometimes life skates around on top where things are delightful and easy. And I've been there and hope to be back, even though I love to cry (with happiness!).

I couldn't be further from the road right now in Joni's song with its literal talk about the refuge of anonymity, cold water restrooms and a photograph of the earth in a highway service station. I am consumed with myself and it's boring and uncomfortable and embarrassing to have so much attention. And I LIKE attention. At the same time I can't stop – in order to keep going I have to focus on myself. Self self self. It feels so anti human. It is. I rely on others completely and ultimately, finally will rely on another person to keep me alive.

My thoughts these days aren't the skate on top kind of normal life thoughts. They're up and down and trippy and depressive – and we have a lot of laughs. And lots of crying. And weird creative urges. I just want to say thank you for listening to what sometimes must be very emotionally over the top sounding writing. And to reassure you I don't take myself too seriously. I do take life seriously though, I'll be honest because it's a seriously wild business.

Thank you for the support – I know I wouldn't survive at all without it. It's such an easy thing to say. But truly, i'd be dead by now! I am so very grateful even if I am a bit off the grid lately and I've faltered shamefully in my thank you notes – I don't think I'll ever get to some of them. But – I'm here, and thank you. And I love everyone very much and love hearing from people even if I am not able to write back.

–Caitlin

AUGUST 2016

Caitlin writing to a woman she had befriended, a woman who had lost her daughter to cancer:

I know it is not the same but after almost 3 years on the transplant list the drama of it has gone out for most people - and I understand that. No one really knows what to say anymore. I saw your recent post about people saying "still?" in regards to your grief. It is funny how people naturally have a desire to see you "get better" otherwise they aren't sure how to handle it. I admire your ability (or at least what it looks like to me) to keep living while grieving...openly. Somehow it seems less daunting then the idea that you have to "get over" someone or something. How much more tragic that seems. I hope if something happens to me that those who love me can keep living while still remembering me.

"I hope if something happens to me that those who love me can keep living while still remembering me."



“LIFE IS ETERNAL, AND LOVE IS IMMORTAL, AND DEATH IS ONLY A HORIZON; AND A HORIZON IS NOTHING SAVE THE LIMIT OF OUR SIGHT.”

-Rossiter Worthington Raymond, b. 1840

“THE UNIVERSE IS FULL OF MAGICAL THINGS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR OUR WITS TO GROW SHARPER.”

-Eden Phillpotts, b. 1862