

# Rift

Journals: May - September  
2001

Box

Cut

Over

Traces

May 27, 2001

So that was it. I got sick. Everything just froze. Not out of choice, but it stopped. It was similar to the last time. There were of course differences.

But of course I couldn't eat. Dropped 20lbs in 11 days. Felt weak as hell. Could hardly do more than just lay in bed and sleep, I remember the first shower I took after the weight-loss left me exhausted.

But that's all done now. My hair's grown. That's a sign of health - that the stress is gone. I suppose that this was necessary - to teach me that I need to set boundaries. I need to learn to say "no."

I think I went through the #1 most negative period of my life. I got as close to being depressed as I've ever seen myself. I felt absolutely powerless and useless, and as a person who thrives on action and achievement, it was hard. I don't know why I stopped writing. I think that in a way, I knew that if I did keep it up, I would remember this time of my life in greater detail and I just don't want to. I've already shut out a lot of

it. Hopefully those experiences won't have to resurface for a very long time.

And of course I've grown. Done lots of thinking. Realised new things about myself, about other people. No matter how hard it is to admit, I know that I've grown out of Ward. I still love him but I can't see myself with him as much anymore. His dependence upon me scares me a little, and I've got to the point where I don't know if I'm still in this relationship for the right reasons. It's so hard to think clearly when you're clearly confused.

It's weird how a few months of your life can turn you into a very different person from the one you were developing into. Yet I'm still the person I think I was originally meant to be. Getting sick has made me realise how valuable friends like Kate and Caitlin are, and how important it is to know who you can rely on to cheer you up when there's nothing that could possibly lift your dismal mood.

A true friend is the most valuable thing in the whole world, more so than a boyfriend because it is friendship that usually lasts,

unfaltering, while relationships and love can often fade and break.

Box

I sit as though in a tiny white box of material harder than life and I wait I wait and I wait until it becomes clear that you cannot see me at all you cannot feel my breath against the cool hard wall that separates us you cannot see the smudges of salt water running down the side until they reach the ground forming a pool of my fears a pool of my thoughts a pool of my sorrows and sadness and you you are the pool you are the pool and I dive into it for fear of losing you the pain is deep and the pain is hard but the pain is irrelevant compared the pain without you the loss of you would be equivalent to the loss of my soul and without a soul what is a person what is a person what am I

May 29, 2001

What do you do when you fall out of love? When the person you felt so unbelievably strongly about no longer makes you feel that there is no one in the world you would rather be with.

Is there a worse feeling than the one which crushes your heart when you lose something so valuable to you that it hurts?

May 30, 2001

What do I do?

I went to Ward's this evening. I hadn't seen him in so long. We sat around not knowing what to think of one another, and finally when we started talking, the floodgates just opened up and I cried and talked and spewed out so many things that I hadn't even considered before.

I realised how much happier I am when I'm with him and that although the thought of being dependant on someone scares the shit out of me, that I really am and that it's healthy and necessary for me to be who I really am. Ward actually makes me stronger and I never even realised it until tonight when I was crying my eyes out because I really

have no idea what I want. I thought that I wanted to end it with him, but I realised that I really can't do it because I need him. And I'm not being selfish about this, because that's what I was scared of. I'm staying with him because he makes me stronger. He makes me more decisive. He makes me realise how intelligent and damn worthwhile I am and that the little indecisive girl who tried to disguise herself as someone who knows that she's doing really doesn't have to do that.

I just need to spend more time with him. I need to talk to him more often and we have to get back to where we were because that was an amazing place. I've gone back to being as lost as I was before Ward helped me to figure out who I am, but I didn't realise it until tonight. It's the time I spend with him that makes me realise why I fell in love with him so quickly and what it is that has kept us together. I know I love the person he is deep down and not the other guy he sometimes pretends he is. And although he drives me absolutely crazy, I do the same to him. We have fun when we're together. Isn't that really all that matters?

May 31, 2001

But now think.

Could there possibly be anything worse than telling the person who meant the world to you that you no longer wanted him in your life? And once he was gone and you could never have him back, you realised that you still love him and that you are lost without him, but he was gone, and there was absolutely nothing that you could do about it.

Cut

Tiny shards of glass  
Pierce into me with your stare  
Penetrating deep

August 1, 2001

Have you ever been doing something that you know was wrong, but just not cared and carried on doing it anyhow?

I didn't really sleep last night. I spent most of the night lying with and talking to Noel. It's really strange because neither of us really expected something like this to happen, but it has. And we both like it.

I'm still fighting a major battle within myself. I do think that I still love Ward. I've learned once before how I can grow apart from him in a matter of weeks, but when we're together again, everything is always wonderful. I've loved Ward for almost a year; I've known Noel for almost a month. Is it really worth it for me to risk a long-term relationship with someone I hardly know?

This year I have changed more than I ever know I could in only a few months. Getting sick entirely changed my perspective on my relationships with my friends, family, and boyfriend. I realised how valuable a true friend is, and how fragile a bond between girl and boyfriend can be. I left Canada this

summer believing that what Ward and I have is something incredible, and I still half believe that. Only now, having been apart for a month, I can see how easily my life can get along without him. How the people I truly miss are the friends who help me through my everyday, and not the guy who makes me happy, but also makes me cry.

I don't really want to think about what's going to happen when I go home. It's on my mind all the time, but I always try to push it away. There are a few different ways my life, beginning in September may end up. I could go home and just forget about what happened here this summer. Forget about Noel and get on with my life. Ward and I could stay together for the next year and everything can be absolutely fantastic between us.

My conscience could get the better of me though, and I may end up feeling a compulsion to come clean with Ward and tell him the truth about my summer. I know him well enough to know that he could never forgive me and would probably never talk to me again. I know how my actions here would break his heart, no matter how much I love him or make sure that he knows I do. The

reality of the situation is that I don't think that I would ever be able to tell Ward about Noel. The third option, and the one that I really think is the most likely is that I'll get home and everything will be different. No matter what I can say or do, I have changed and the way I interact with Ward will be somehow different to how it was before. We won't break up immediately. We could stay together for months before anything happens. But something will happen that will make us realise that we probably can't be together and we will have to go our own separate ways.

I don't know if we will be able to be friends afterwards. I would really like that, but I don't know if Ward is capable of it. Potentially I will be single for the larger part of my final year in high school, and who knows, it may be better that way.

I'll have more time to concentrate on my schoolwork and on getting into university. I can do volunteer work and make sure that I can get scholarships for college.

Relationships just take up an awful lot of time in the long run, and I just may not have it to spare. I have to get my 96% average to go

where I want to go and I know that I can achieve it.

I am intelligent, beautiful and talented and I have everything I need to get me where I want to go. I know that if I devote all of my time to making up for my infidelity this summer, everything will just be that much more difficult.

Noel pointed out to me that I can't plan everything that happens in my life, but I try to anyhow. Then things change. I came to Ireland this summer thinking that I knew what I was all about and after five weeks, everything seems to be so different.

I've realised that while you can love one person, it's possible that you can be incapable of tearing yourself away from another. No matter how hard you try, it really doesn't work to lie to yourself, because all that ends up happening is your confusing yourself.

I never meant to get as close to Noel as I have, for us to actually have a relationship. We've only known each other for a few weeks and he already means so much to me. I never wanted to have two boyfriends at the same time. I never wanted to have feelings for two people. I don't feel like a cheater,

like I've done anything wrong, but I know that I am, that I have. I know that as soon as I get home, I'm going to experience emotions that are totally unfamiliar and possibly heart wrenching, but unavoidable. What's done is done. There is no going back. I'm just going to have to learn to deal with whatever it is that I've got myself into, and to be confident that whatever it is, that it's been an experience. I will have learned something from it. Doing this away from home makes everything a little less complicated. There will be less lying, and little evidence to be covered up. The only thing I'll have to keep out of the way is this journal, which won't be difficult. The rest are just memories. Things that no one can really see.

August 26, 2001

My life sucks. I knew it would, but I didn't expect it to be quite this bad. I broke up with Ward. I broke his heart. I actually watched it happening, which is what hurts the most. And now I don't think I'm ever going to see him again. He came here last night and gave me back everything I had ever given him, and said goodbye.

And now I'm just lost. What can I do? I feel absolutely terrible. I know that we can never be together after this, but I wish that I could know if he will at least talk to me again.

For the first time in months I'm all alone. I don't know what to do.

## Over

### SCENE 1

Paige: (To audience) *Why do we allow ourselves to get into a position where there is no wrong or right answer? What if there are numerous forks in the road, and no matter which path you take; the outcome will still be something that you can't handle: something painful, something that no matter what, you can't change or take back.*

(To Eric) I don't know. I just can't do this anymore. Everything's changed. I just don't want to never see you again. I still want to be a part of your life.

Eric: I don't understand what you're saying. I'm just-

P: I don't know. I love you. I just need to figure some things out. Please ...I just don't know. Maybe if you give me some time... I can talk to you in a few days.

E: What is this all about? All I wanted was my girlfriend back. I've been here waiting for you to come back and for us to just spend some time together, and now you don't think you can? Why not? What can possibly have happened that would make you so unsure of this, of us?

P: I don't know. Things have just changed.

E: What changed?

P: I didn't think about you. For the first few weeks maybe, but after that I just didn't.

E: That doesn't matter. I mean, it does hurt to know that every moment I was thinking about you, you were busy forgetting... but I know that if we just spend some time together everything will go back to being perfect again. If we just spend the next 48 hours together...

P: I know, but I can't. It's just too much.

*I know that everyone has been in this situation at some stage in their life. A decision to make, but no matter how long you sit and think about it, it's never clear what to do.*

E: What's wrong? You know what it is, but you're not telling me.

P: I can't tell you.

*What is more morally correct? To tell the truth and devastate someone, or to hide it and save them from pain?*

E: What?

P: *Have you ever told someone something that you know would end their life as they know it, but couldn't really see any way around doing it?*

I met -

E: You met some guy...

P: Yes...

E: Who was he? What...what did you do?

P: I fell in love with him...

(extended pause)

P: (quieter) I don't regret it.

*Have you ever looked at someone having his heart broken? Have you ever been there the moment when everything in that person's life, the entire base of solid ground he was standing on, was pulled out from under his feet, and there was nothing for him to do but fall... and it's a long way down.*

E: Where did you meet him?

P: At work.

E: Did he know about me?

P: Yes. (pause) I didn't do this intentionally. It just...happened.

E: How did it just happen? What did you do with him?

P: You know, the first night I was actually drunk. I got really wasted and I kissed him. Then I felt really guilty and wanted to tell you, but I couldn't because I thought there was still a chance for us.

E: Why didn't you tell me? Were you with him when I asked you about going away with me?

PL: No. Not yet.

E: But you were when we were talking about it.

P: Do you really think that I could have just told you over the phone? That I could have called you and said "Look, it's over." I didn't want it to be over. But then I realized that I can't just pretend that it didn't happen.

E: One week. That's all I wanted: to spend one week just with you and for those few days to be perfect. You don't even know. This past year - it's all gone.

P: Just because I did this doesn't mean that everything we've done together means nothing. I still love you.

E: Then why?

P: *Is it fair for someone to depend upon another for all the happiness in their life? Because what happens when that*

*person is no longer there? Is there going to be anything left that matters?*

E: So the whole time I've been here thinking about you, you were off with some other guy. What did you do with him?

P: You don't want to know the details...

E: Actually I do. I have a pretty fucking good imagination...and I don't really want to use it.

P: Well... then imagine the worst.

E: They were right. They were all fucking right. They told me you had something up your sleeve but I denied it. I had faith in you.

P: I know. I did the only thing I could ever do to hurt you. I didn't mean to do this.

E: You know what you've done? You've done the only thing that could have turned me back into that fucking guy I used to be.

P: I'm sorry.

E: You threw away everything we had to sleep with some guy for two months? You took everything that has happened in the past year, and simply threw on a match.

P: Do you think I intended for this to happen? Do you think I said "Yes – I have a boyfriend at home who I love, but now that I'm somewhere else, I'm going to find myself an easy fuck." I only slept with him three days ago - when I realised that when I came home this would all be over.

E: Three days ago? What's the date? That was the 21<sup>st</sup>. Did you even think about the 19<sup>th</sup>? Did you even think about me?

P: You know. I actually did. But I knew that when I came home this was going to happen.

*Do you believe that no matter what we think, everything in our lives is really out of our control, and we're basically just puppets, being manipulated into playing specific parts in each other's lives?*

E: How could you do this? Who was he that he could take everything I've said, everything I've done for you and make it meaningless? Everything I do is to make you happy. Every thought in my head revolves around you. I made you feel safe. I helped you through your insecurities. I helped you figure out who you were. I tried to make you happy...

P: He didn't even have to try.

SCENE 2

P: *I am numb. I feel neither pain nor joy and this sense of emotionlessness...it's just unsettling.*

E: What are you feeling?

P: I don't know.

E: Well, what do you want?

P: For you not to hate me.

E: You know I could never do that.

P: ...for us to be friends.

E: You know me better than my mother; my brother; all of my friends combined. Do you honestly think I could do that?

P: No...

(Eric exits leaving Paige sitting alone)

### SCENE 3

(The doorbell rings. Paige opens it and steps outside, closing it behind her.)

Paige: Hi

Eric: I don't really have a game plan here.

Do you really not regret it?

P: No.

E: (kisses her on the cheek) Goodbye. (exits)

(Paige is left standing at the door with a completely blank expression on her face. She turns and closes the door.)

Traces

The traces of his last word lingered in the air.

His meaning unclear.

The impact irreversible.

September 28, 2001

Ward and I got back together for a while. He called me and basically told me that I owed it to him to give us another chance. We were together for a few weeks, but it was too hard. We tried. I still love him. I think I'll always love him, just a little. It's hard to let go after so long. I think about him a lot. Nine months is a long time to be with someone and to just let go like that. I miss him. But at the same time I know that this is for the best and there's nothing that can be done.

My heart is hurting. It's hurting for Ward, but it's also yearning for something that I just can't have. Of the things I miss, I think I miss that unbelievable feeling I got when I looked into his eyes and saw the love radiating to me. Just looking at him made me feel like I was the only significant being in the whole world, and a feeling like that isn't something that you can find anywhere. Being loved and loving someone is something that is more precious than you often think, and you realise that what you had was so special only when it's gone. It's amazing

how valuable a lesson I've learned from this summer. I suppose it was important for it to happen. I wish it could have happened without our feeling the way we do, but that's impossible.

He called a few days ago looking for his copy of *Dubliners*, which I didn't have. I almost wonder if that was a real reason for calling me, or if he just wanted to hear my voice. I'm glad I had another chance to hear his.