

Explorative Letters: Organize your Thoughts and Emotions

Sample File

Letter 2

Dear R,

On 1st May, a friend called me over to her family's place to spend a few days, and I packed my laptop and the largest paper elephant I had in my room and left. I walked about 6 kilometers between her place and mine and later lied that it was an easy walk.

When I arrived at the place, I was given a mattress in an empty flat above her father's flat and fed twice a day. Most of the time the dishes served were south Indian, and I would find myself asking her if this dish too had coconut in it. The answer mostly was 'yes,' and the dishes were almost always tasty. Her dad, who is as tall as a double door fridge, cooked most of the meals and never complained around it.

Given that her mother passed away last year to Cancer after a short fight, the disordered house wasn't a surprise. And I couldn't help myself but think that something was wrong.

If you looked at her place the unsettling chaos between the members of her family would hit you with the certainty of the truth. Her father slept in the living room, next to the kitchen, under his wife's portrait that still doesn't have a garland on it. Her brother sleeps in one room and she in another, and the bedroom adjacent to the living room, which can comfortably fit her dad, is turned into a storeroom--filled with cartons.

Somebody needs to unpack the cartons in the room. They shifted almost a year back and no one has bothered to unpack. All of them thought it was a temporary shift when they moved out of the house in which her mother spent her last days. There are certain fragments of that place that felt so lonely that I have convinced myself that I am not ever going back to her place.

I myself have lost a parent, and when I think about it, it did fragment my entire family for a year, or two. My family is still fragmented, in a way. But things have only improved. And it gives me hope that soon they will unpack the cartons. And maybe her brother would accept the color of clouds outside his window and buy a garland for her mother.

I stayed there for 8 days and spent most of the time consuming the things I would download the night before. And when I wasn't watching a screen, I was reading a classic. (I finished *Catcher in the Rye*.) I skipped my workouts and only exercised twice during the entire stay, and both of those workouts made me more tired than anything else.

Recently, I read a story in which the writer gave her theory on the amount of time we spend shaping our bodies. She says the time we dedicate to the gym, or swimming, or stretching on our yoga mats is positively correlated with the degree of our sexual frustration. She calls all of us out on our watchfulness around our bodies. She thinks it is a form of narcissism. That we are using our bodies as bait on the hook to convince the passers about the goods in us. To hide whatever we don't want to reveal to others. Now whenever I see the muscles on the lower side quadrant of my stomach, it reminds me of the story.

After I read the story I no more wanted to work out and felt this strange nakedness despite being

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alone in a locked room on the fourth floor. After two days, I still felt tired on my mattress and kept shifting on my shoulders while watching Westworld Season 1. I liked the show, but at the back of my head, I could sense that I was avoiding something.

I had a few more tiring days and thought about how I have dug a pit for myself, and how it will be impossibly hard to go out of this room. I slept for straight 12 hours with that thought and later kept thinking about everything that I have been avoiding, work, calls, writing and replying to your letter.

Every day I would look at these letters I receive from strangers and think what story might be running in their head. Every beep on my phone act as a nudge for me--asking me for a reply, and on every beep I almost get up to type down a meaningful letter. But I stare at my phone for far too long and lose the moment.

But as my friend's forbearing father kept cooking for me, I got more and more tired and convinced myself that maybe my silence is a revenge of my body, or maybe, on this queen-sized mattress, I am seeking a true sense of solitude.

In spite of unlimited reckoning, none of those days made sense.

However, on that checkered mattress, I understood how easy it is to lose ourselves on empty days. I wondered about other people who are locked in their room with a mattress--if they are tired--if they are avoiding what comforts them.

My friend cooked egg curry and rice as my last meal and kept apologizing about its taste. I told her that she shouldn't worry--that it was tasty. And I did mean it. After eating my meal, I asked her to keep my paper elephant above her closet. She liked the idea.

While walking back from her place, I got a lift after a kilometer of scampering, and then suddenly coming back home didn't feel like a task. In the evening, I didn't know what to do with my body so I placed my body on a mat and twisted it for 40 minutes.

While typing all these lines, I felt like I was an unworthy bait on a hook, and you're a Salmon fish with stomach full. So this morning I went for my first run in a year. With Nike running app shoved in my ears, I ran for more than my legs could take it, for 45 minutes. Later I walked back home wobbling, as if I was on a camel ride, thinking about these lines I have written here and felt helplessly naked.

D
