

# Letters to the World

*from Utah's Youth in Care*

**SPRING 2018**



Dear World / Dear Parents of the World / Dear World / Dear World /  
Dear World / Dear World / Dear Mother Earth / Dear Parents / **Dear  
World / Dear World** / Dear World / Dear My Part of This World / Hello  
Earthlings / Dear World / **To Whom It May Concern** / Dear Myself  
/ Dear World / To The World / Dear Hood / **Dear Whoever Listens** /  
**Dear Women of the World** / Dear Youth in Lockup / Dear Parents  
of the World / **Dear World / Dear World / Dear Homeless People  
of the World / To the Racists of the World** / Fellow Suffering People  
/ **Dear World** / Dear World / Dear World / This Is My Letter to the  
World / Dear Addiction / Dear Earth / Dear Future Dime-Piece World /

This is my letter to the world,  
That never wrote to me.  
*Emily Dickinson*

### *About Letters to the World*

We don't write many letters anymore. Now we write emails or text or tweet or just call each other on our smartphones, anytime and anywhere, to say whatever, of great to no consequence. For a change of rhythm and habit, students in a few Youth in Care classrooms were invited to write a letter addressed "to the world," to quote Emily Dickinson, or to a group or a person in the world and to tell the world, or whomever, what these students are thinking about things right now. Students responded in surprising ways, especially the large number of thank-you letters they composed. Who knew these students would be so grateful for so much?

I have organized their letters into categories: (1) Thank-You's & Gratitude; (2) Rants & Musings; (3) Reflections & Ruminations; and (4) Grievances & Complaints. Each of these letters was a bit of a surprise and worthy of the moment's consideration it takes to be read. If I do this project again, I will be looking for adults to respond to each of these students. In a perfect and responsive world, a letter deserves a letter deserves a letter and so on. Maybe next time.

And, as you read, think of the letter you would write to the world. What would you like the world to know about your thoughts, opinions, heart, sorrows and hopes for yourself and, well - the entire world, even if the world will never write back?

Bonnie Shaw, PhD, Utah YIC Creative Arts Coordinator

The artwork in this anthology was created at Salt Lake Valley Detention Center under the direction of the wonderful Cathleen Taggart, Queen of Creativity. Thank you to all for these fun designs.

Dear World,  
Hello.

My name isn't relevant, but my topic is.  
I'm 18 years old, just barely an adult.  
I've been a drug addict for 4 years now.  
I've been raped. I've been sold.  
I've been alone -- It's getting old,  
But I need to say something . . .  
When you look at me . . . what do you see?  
Do you see what I am or what I'm trying to be?  
I'm in a rehab. Days are dark.  
I hate myself. I don't know where to start.  
But I'm here, not alone.  
I've finally found a home,  
And I'm here to get better.  
I'm trying.

Dear World,  
One thing I wish from you,  
Just try to comprehend,  
Stop trying to demand.  
No one will listen if you don't understand.  
Be patient. No worries.  
There is no need to hurry.  
Be kind. Be loyal.  
Don't try to foil  
Our lives because life is hard,  
And we don't need your judgment.  
We are trying.

Sincerely, Troubled Teen ALR

# SURPRISING THANK-YOU'S



The struggle ends when  
gratitude begins.

*N. D. Walsh*

Dear Parents of the World,

Even though us kids are a handful and drive you parents absolutely crazy at times, I want you to know that we really do appreciate all the things that you do for us. We make you laugh, and we can make you cry. We can make you so irritated that you just want us in our rooms for the rest of the day.

Sometimes we forget how much you guys really care about us because we get so caught up in our own minds. You are truly awesome for all that you do. We, as kids, forget to realize that while we are growing up, our parents are growing old. While we are hanging out late, our parents are staying up wondering and worrying where we are and whether or not we are safe. I hope you know that even though we have a funny way of showing it, we truly do care and appreciate you guys. We are sorry we give you guys a hard time, and we're sorry that we make you worry.

There is a barrier between parents and their kids; the kids always seem to feel that the parents don't understand them. This results in conflict and anger towards one another. The kids feel smothered as the parents care beyond measure. Kids don't realize that parents go through a lot and do a lot just to provide for their kids and make sure that they have what they need. It's hard for parents to do all these things, and I feel that kids take a lot of advantage, advantage of our parents without even noticing.

Therefore, Parents of the World, thank you for all that you do for us, thank you for helping us through the pain. We are sorry for getting mad and throwing fits. We truly appreciate and love you parents beyond anything in the world. Thank you for teaching us lessons and letting us know wrong from right, even though we may not always choose the right. Thank you, Parents, for all that you do.

Gratefully, J. B.

Dear World,

I am a 17-year-old boy who would like to send you a thank you letter despite all my troubles and hardships. I like to look at the world in a more optimistic way so this is my thank you.

I would like to start by saying thank you for my family, even though they were not perfect. I still love my family and friends, not just blood family. I'm talking about the people I can count on to be there for me in times of need.

Second, thank you for the simple things like the old man walking his dog that says hello in the morning despite the fact that I'm a total stranger to him. Thank you for the trees, the plants, our beautiful blue sky, the robins that sang their song this morning, thank you. Thank you for the air we breathe. Thank you for my wonderful teachers, and not just the ones at school, but, the other teachers like our fathers and older brothers we have to guide us through the world and teach us life. Thank you, Mother Earth, for my own caring mother for being there for me.

A BIG thank you for our beautiful Rocky Mountains here in Salt Lake City, Utah, the tall, broad, gigantic, Rocky Mountains that shadow and protect us. Thank you for the beautiful lakes and rivers you give us that provide that delicious, refreshing water we drink. Thank you for the dirt that grows the grain, the grain that the cow eats, that cow that gives us milk. Thank you, Earth. Thank you for our beautiful women, children, and our strong men. Thank you for the beach we lie on in the warm sun, the trees that are so beautiful in the fall that change their colors. But, I will keep this letter short. I can't take all your time because after all you are the world.

Thank you, World.

Sincerely, Me

Dear World,

I'm angry that I neglected you, angry that I let people trash and hurt you. I'm angry that I was too caught up in my own little world that I forgot to grab a grip onto reality. I'm angry at myself for being mad at you for no reason at all. I guess I felt all my problems were because of you. I'm angry that I once thought I was never welcomed by you; I felt as if you never wanted me. But I was wrong, wrong for thinking that. I'm angry that I couldn't and sometimes still can't appreciate what's given to me.

My mother once told me you could hear what we say, so I screamed. My mother once told me you could feel, so I helped my father destroy trees. I'm sorry; yet still, I'm thankful for the fresh air you give us, give me. I'm thankful I went through all my struggles, my programs, my elders; they all helped me realize that you're a wonderful thing. I'm thankful that you give us beautiful blue oceans and gorgeous green fields. Sorry that we destroy them. Sorry that people are too inconsiderate to realize what we've done, sorry that I am.

I want to thank you for the days, the hours, and even the minutes. I grew within that short amount of time that feels like forever. I grew into someone who now knows the only way to appreciate is to appreciate herself. So, dear World, thank you for helping me realize that no matter who turns on me, you will still be there giving me hope for the next day. Thank you for never letting me down. Dear World, thank you for helping me realize that if we want an amazing future, we must make today amazing. We are tomorrow.

Your friend, A.M.



Dear World,

All I want to say is thanks for all these beautiful places we have around the world, including all these nice views of nature. Also, all these animals we have in the world and all the water. We have also food, and all the mountains we have around us. Thanks for the weather, especially summer and fall. Also, thanks for all these holidays, like Christmas. They give us time to be with our families and spend our holidays with them.

Thanks for all the technology we have, and the sports we got. I don't know what I'd do without all of this stuff. The world would be so bad, but we got all these things to do. Thanks for the music. I'm so grateful for the music we have and all types of music we have. I don't think no one could live without music. Thanks for the TV also.

Thanks for all these people. I couldn't imagine how the world would be without these things. If we didn't have anything, everyone would probably go crazy because there wouldn't be anything to do. I'm grateful we have all these things. I'm also grateful for the people who invented all these kinds of different stuff back.

In the 1990s there wasn't anything at all. Well, there was a little bit of stuff, not anything new. But 2018 is crazy because there are these people who are starting to create all kinds of stuff like phones, cars and better technology. It's a good thing the world has been changing slowly, but in a good way I wonder how it will look when 2020 comes.

But thanks for the education we have in the world. It's important to a lot of people. That's all I wanted to say about the world, to thank the world and that I'm grateful. Also, that I'm grateful that I was born in this world, grateful for this world. I think this world is pretty gangsta.

Thankfully, O. V.

Dear World,

I am an eighteen-year-old young man who lives here in Salt Lake City, Utah. I am so thankful that I can wake up every day and start a new day. I have some days that are bad, good, okay, or just flat out terrible, but in the end I just think, "Hey, I woke up. A new day, and I am going to make the best of it, and do what I can to make it a better day."

Oh, most days I think what a beautiful place to live in. I want to say thank you to the world for all of the wonderful things that you, World, have given to me and the people around me. Yes, I am locked up at the moment here at Wasatch Youth Center, but that is my own fault for making decisions that I made to get myself here. I had the choice to go out and get the alcohol that is around here, and I did make the choice to get it and do things that were not good and got myself sent here. But, every day is a new day, and I am grateful that I can wake up in a bed, and walk out of my room to see breakfast and the people who work with me. I am also thankful that I get to have the clothes on my back, and the roof over my head to keep me safe and in a good place.

No, I don't like that I am locked up, but all I can do is make the best of it and do what I need to so I can get out and go see all of the things that are here in the world. I can go outside every single day and see all of the beautiful trees and mountains that you, World, have put here for me to see. These Utah Mountains are the most beautiful mountains in the world to me. Thank you, World, for giving me such beautiful things that I look forward to seeing every single day.

I just want to say one last thanks to you, World, for giving me the most wonderful family. I have been through so many different ups and downs with my family, but in the end we just sit and thank you, World, for putting us together as one eternal family. Thank you so much, World. I know I couldn't do what I do without you, and I know that I wouldn't be here on earth if it wasn't for you. Thank you so much. 😊

Sincerely, S. B.

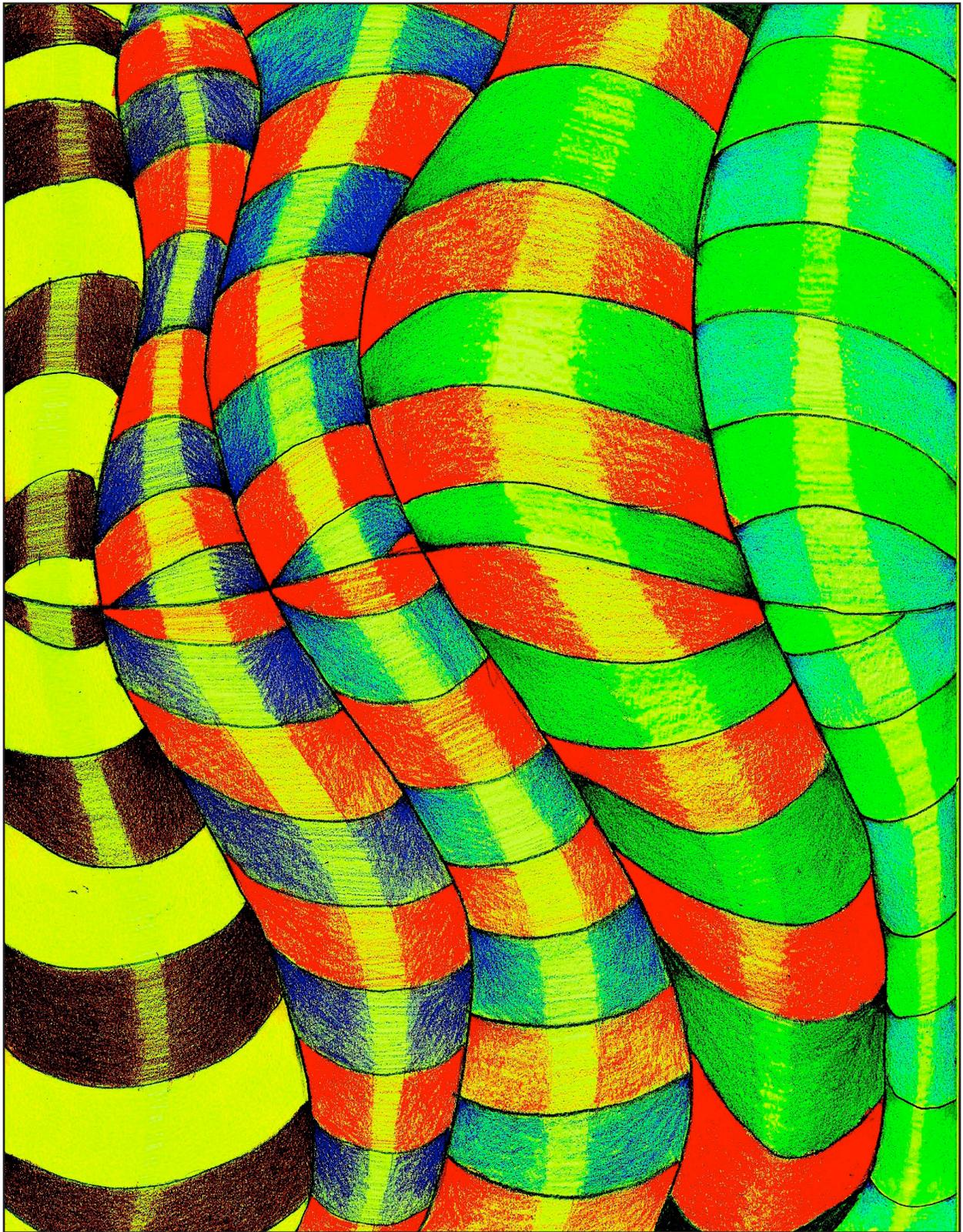
Dear Mother Earth,

You have shown me how to be a strong woman who can tell her destiny. I can tell you anything and know my secrets are safe. You bring me a sense of joy. I know times have been hard; I know I haven't been all that great in showing you appreciation for all you have done for me. But, I want you to know I'm trying, and my love for you, Mother Earth, is stronger than any love you could ever imagine. At times we may grow apart just like we have in the past. We will always come back as one. One thing you've shown me is communication is key. I want to thank you for the many blessings you have given me, the many teachings you have taught me, and all the great qualities you've passed down to me.

Mother, I want you to know you are my Mother Earth, my everything that I look up to, my higher power. Your love is strong, strong enough for me to stand here, still alive today. Through nurture you showed me great wisdom. You've helped me through my hardest trials. When I felt alone as if I had no one to cry out to, I'd walk along your surface with gratitude. When frustration surrounds, I create fire, and then you show me calmness with a nice chilly breeze. When I feel down, I bring rain to fill the sky, but you bring me up with a rainbow after my storm. Sometimes when I feel joy on a sunny summer day, you bring a thunderstorm, but in the end, we would become as one and make a calm, warm day.

I need you to know that you are my inspiration above all. You once were in a similar spot in your life like me, a young woman facing addiction, not knowing how to take reality right, wanting to have love so bad you would sacrifice anything to get it. So many trials, one after another. Eventually you pulled yourself up out of the cool surface of the earth, eventually you got to the hottest surface, and eventually you showed me a great power like the start of a fire. You keep that fire burning within you. I love the fact that you're so happy and lead me into the direction I need to be happy myself. I'm happy, my Mother Earth, so happy! I thank you for your help in getting me where I am today.

Love always, Your Daughter



Dear Parents,

Since the day I was born, you were there. Since the day I walked, you were there to help me step by step. You, my dear Parents, were always there. Even though you didn't always have the right words, you always were the right example. You took me in even though I wasn't yours. I don't quite remember the first time you held me, but I sure believe that you guys had the biggest smile on your faces. You took me away from poverty and took me to the riches, not only with money, but with love. Also, you gave me a better a life; you called me the miracle baby.

I'm thankful to call you mom and dad. I started growing up, and you still were there, never leaving my side, always surrounding me with your love. I don't quite know how you put up with my behavior and my attitude, but you still never got tired and never left my side. You were right there. I kept on growing up and lots of things changed. I found out you guys were not my biological parents when I was nine, and from that time on I started changing. I started pushing you away. I hated the fact that the person who should've loved me didn't; I wanted someone to love me.

Even though I knew you guys loved me, I was scared to love back because I didn't want to get close and I thought you guys would end up leaving me. I went out searching for love, and I found my two best friends, Angel, my brother, and Crystal, my drug. They showed me that they loved me, and I loved them back. They taught me many things that you never taught me. They taught me to hate you, to disobey you guys, to basically never trust you, and I believed every single word they told me. I'm sorry for everything I ever did to you guys. I wish I could go back in time to change things and redo everything.

I know I can't magically go back in time and change things, but I can surely keep going forward. I'm going to change. I'm done with the drug life, and I'm done with the streets. I want to spend time with you and never leave you. You are my world, and I'm going to bust my butt off to be with you again and make you happy again. I will be the miracle baby again. Thank you for everything you have done for me. I love you guys.

Sincerely, Your Miracle Baby

**Dear World,**

**I'm sorry that people take you for granted. Dear People of the World, you make me sad, including me. We're so focused on fancy gadgets and brick buildings that we miss out on the natural beauty that's right in front of us. Have you ever taken the time to simply watch the sun rise or set? It's gorgeous. The sky changes all the time, and it's truly something to admire. Fluffy clouds, so many shades of blue, and a black sky filled with jewels. You don't have to go searching for the beauty. It's always there -- if you're mindful enough to notice it.**

**Ever look at the mountains? It's like a painting. They are gorgeous, and we don't have to pay any money to look at them. The world is so beautiful, and we don't bother to look. The seasons all hold beauty within them. Winter provides white flakes of unique crystals. Instead of getting so upset at the freezing cold, why not stop to look at how the sidewalks are dazzling with shiny sparkles? In the spring and summer, the grass turns into many beautiful shades of green. The trees confidently grow beautiful branches and leaves. So many different flowers. They bring so much color into the world. But have you really stopped to look? Or are you too fixed on the things that really don't even matter?**

**The sun sends calming rays of light and warmth. You complain about it being too hot. But if the sun were to disappear one day, you would miss it, wouldn't you? You don't have to travel to see the world's beauty. But you can. And there are sites that are so worth seeing. Beautiful rocks that shape themselves into a rainbow. And mesmerizing blue oceans with tan sand to put the picture together. We should be more grateful to you. It doesn't cost us anything, yet you continue to show us beautiful sights and gorgeous colors for free. Nobody seems to notice though. Most days, I do not take these fascinating features for granted. People should just take a step back and . . . look.**

**Expressing my gratitude, K. F.**

**Dear World,**

**Eight years ago, I was given a new life. I didn't know at the time that my new life would lead me to be the strong, independent woman that I am today. The new life I was given was a life of too much and too many. Too much money, too much stuff, too many people, too many words; it was all overwhelming, tortuous, and satisfying. It was a learning experience that will last a lifetime.**

**Two years ago, I took hold of another new life. I say, "took hold of" because it wasn't given to me; I had to take it. Over the course of the year that I had that life, I fell in love, got my heart broken, started smoking weed, and my life continued to go in a downward spiral. Little did I know the change was still not over. I was still learning, and in the midst of that learning, I was given a possession of marijuana, possession of paraphernalia, and a retail theft charge. I only have to do 15 hours of community service and only one charge will stay on my record.**

**Ten months ago, I was given an escape plan. That escape plan is called "DCFS custody." I call this my escape plan because I finally have choices over almost everything I do. I became a teenager with this escape plan. Once again, I fell in love, continued smoking weed, and continued to spiral down. The only difference, I have the courts to deal with. They said, "If you don't get clean, we'll send you to residential." They said, "We know you can do it; it's all up to you." I gave them a big mental "F\*\*\* you." I got put into residential because of that.**

**Five months ago, I was given a chance. My judge saw the need to place me in residential. My DCFS worker brought me to the GTC. I've accepted the help I've been given, and because of that, I've gotten sober and happier, decided on goals, and trained my mind to make better decisions for myself. I'm leaving in a few weeks. I'm going to be an independent person. I'll have one year of high school left, and I'll be getting ready to live on my own. It's my choice whether or not I choose to stay the person I've become. I hope you understand my need to be independent. Thank you for changing my life in so many ways.**

**Sincerely, T. G.**

Dear World,

Thank you for giving me such a kind, loving and forgiving family. If it weren't for them, I don't know if I would have the strength to move forward. They are the reason that I fight for my freedom every day; they are the reason that I thrive.

Thank you for giving us such beautiful environment. When I'm frustrated, I can take a walk and look at the beautiful scenery. Thank you for having residential programs to help people who are making bad decisions to learn skills to improve their lives.

Thank you for giving second chances, so we can learn from our mistakes and not have them happen again. Thank you for having such loving and caring people who help others when they are struggling, so they can have a chance to get back up on their feet and start again.

Thank you for phones so we can communicate more effectively. All these things I am truly grateful for, and I am glad that we have such a beautiful natural world, phones, kind people, and most of all freedom. But now, I have some really concerning questions.

Why do bad things happen to good people who do not deserve it? Why do good kids get pressured into doing drugs, so their only friends become the drugs, "black" and "white"? Why does my dad love and care for me when he's sober, but when he gets high, he doesn't care and hurts me and his family? Why do people get angry at you, "the world," for their own bad decisions?

Why do natural disasters happen all the time and affect people who are struggling the most? Are you, "the world," really going to end? What happens to us after we die? Are we really in a good place after we die, or do we sit in darkness? Why is everything so overwhelming? Why do bad people get away with stuff, and good people who made a one-time mistake get locked up?

Sometimes why does everyone seem so sad, and other times why does everyone seem so happy? Do all people hide who they really are behind closed doors? Do people really mean it when they say, "I love you"? I am not foolish; I know these questions will never be answered by you. But hopefully when I grow old and wise, with time, these questions will all be answered. Thank you for all the wonderful things that you have given me, so I can walk around every day and know I have had a wonderful life.

Sincerely, J. G.

## RANTS & MUSINGS



Always write angry letters to your enemies.  
Never mail them.

*James Fallows*

Dear My Part of This World,

Midvale's been active. Homie people scared to freaking take a walk. I thank God for my city. I cruise up and down the block. Main Drive, I be driving through Fox Bridge. Busters ain't really coming around here. *Truchas* when you come in old town Midvale. Bunch of freaking memories. I remember when Danger and me would skip school to smoke that green. Getting locked up was something normal for us criminals, smashing on them then hop in the G-ride and get away. Real sick homies, real talk homie, we crazy, from the youngest to the oldest. We stay banging that 13, and when it's time to catch a fade, I get in beast mode.

Don't get me misunderstood, homie, we nothing alike. My cliques full of known killers, your cliques full of lame as *levas*. And then they ask why we crazy. Nah, no, G-wannabes don't faze me. Busters wanna beef it; they been talking all crazy. *Truchas* to the dome and let your barrio be missing. *Quien quiera playto* when *caliente lo arreglamos, riffo por mi barrio, los brown crooks no jugamos*. We stay faded while these fools just keep on hating, walking around while my eyes look intoxicated.

I grew up in that city of the 801. I got arrested over some dumb stuff. I was a good kid; they made me a suspect. Unified pigs always trying to capture me till the day my soul is gone. If I ever freaking make it, Midvale be on freaking top. Sick Foo, that's me, last of a dying breed. Savage in the streets, I was raised to be crazy. Hate my enemies and hate the police, only stack money. You waste my time; ese won't be funny 'cause you waste my time; you wasted my money. Don't play with my paper; I'll play with your blood flow. You'll receive bullet holes.

I ride for my gang; Brownside is the name. Outside my pocket, blue flag always hang. No, I ain't no phony; no, I ain't no lame. Streets know about me, my name. I hang with the sickest, I roll with the illest, me and my team sure bust on you lames. Don't do this for sport, don't do this for show; it's all we know. Crazy life we chose. *La gente no sabe la vida que vivo*.

Listen up 'cause everything I'm saying is true, Last of a Dying Breed



Hello Earthlings,

My name is M. K. My age is 15. My ethnicity is African, and I'm from Earth 2, not Earth 1 where you live. On Earth 2 everything is wa-a-a-y-y-y different except for the food, clothing, houses, etc., but the best part about it is the laws. I can kill anyone I want. I know it might sound crazy, but we finally invented a B.B.T.L. aka Bring-Back-to-Life machine, but I never would see the point to kill someone even though they'll just come back to life.

Also, you can get a driver's license at the age 12. That's the best part and all of the countries signed a peace treaty so we won't be at war anytime soon. I forgot to mention that there are flying cars, but they're too expensive; total cost would be 5.7 trillion dollars. That's just too insane, but somehow the United States is now at its best because we finally got all the drugs out and opioids and made it only for medical research.

Our military is still the best, and Russia still wants to bomb us even though we signed the treaty. I don't know what's up with Russia, always bipolar. Anyway, we made a machine, which can absorb earthquakes and make them into renewable energy. Tsunamis can come no more because we figured out they were manmade. We also made a special task force that can take down the military at any time if necessary because of recent events.

I forgot Africa fixed their hungry problem, and we also figured out Wakanda is real and now helping out Africa to be civilized and now are up-to-date with the 22nd Century and still growing. In my opinion, I think Africa might surpass America in 10 years, and speaking of technology, China made a virtual reality game where you can link up your mind. Now working on teleportation and time travel, they said it can be done in 40 years or so. When it does come out, I will do everything in my power to get one, but overall I would say it's great living here. I also wonder how will other earths be like more advanced or less. But either way, I think it's a good idea. We made hyper crafts. Nice to know y'all.

Peace, M. K.

Dear World,

You guys try to stop every kind of thing that comes through as a drug. I understand that drugs are bad, but have you ever thought that maybe, by making it illegal, they are making more people interested in it? I've just noticed, that, by restricting something, they make people more interested in it. I don't know why, but it really is a proven fact. Not only that, but not all drugs are addictive.

People take drugs for different reasons. Can't they have a say in what they want to do with their lives? I mean, if they want to kill their brain cells, that's their choice. If you ask me, the government shouldn't be able to control what people do. I've done weed, and I know people who do it for different reasons. They can make it a controlled substance and try to push people against drugs, but flat out tell them they can't? That's taking control of their destiny for them. That's like saying we can't go swimming or diving. People die every year from drowning, being attacked by sharks, you name it. But you don't see the government saying: "Oh, you can only swim if you're 21 and older," or "You can't swim because people die every year from it." It's basically the same thing. People know the danger when they go diving with a great white shark. Anyhow, that's all I really want to write about. Write to you later.

Thanks, J. M.

To Whom It May Concern,

I don't usually stand up on a soapbox making speeches. I'm usually concerned with me and how I'm doing. I usually keep my thoughts and feelings to myself. But I have got a few choice words for you, World, and it would be a crime not to make them heard.

Way back when I was young, I knew a few good people I didn't mind looking to for direction. I thought back then that everyone was looking for good examples, that people wanted someone to show them the way. I was wrong, I was stupid, and I was innocent, too.

I've heard a lot of sayings, wise words, and parables. I've read some good stories, some bad, some optimistic, some sad. I've listened to great speeches by illiterate speakers and heard bald-faced bigotry from revered and educated teachers. I know what it's like to hate and love somebody.

Despite all that, I'm still not perfect nor near perfection at all.

I want to point my finger and accuse the vilest parts of the world, but I am not going to because it is not my place. I wish I had the power to make a difference I thought was good. I believe because I want to, not because I've seen any proof I could give you.

And I have something important I have to say.

When I thought I had the answer, when I knew I knew the reason, when I gave up on getting older, I failed. I failed myself, and I failed the world, but luckily for me I failed at failing too. So here I am. I've learned a thing or two.

I've learned I had more inside than I ever thought I had.

It's hard to find silence. The noise outside is constant and grating, and no one else will show you where to hide. Life can be too much sometimes. No one told me that at first. So I found myself a few quiet places where I can be alone.

We all hear words from the moment we are born. But words are like diamonds, stars, people. People can spit in the eyes of a saint or hail the vilest of serpents. Stars may dance or stand still. Diamonds have a hundred facets, and a thousand hidden faces. One thing is another or something else entirely. But some words sound so sure.

It is tempting to fall into the trap of certainty and relinquish responsibility.

I learned this the hard way. Maybe you don't have to. It is arrogant of me to think that I could teach the whole world something. But arrogance has its place, and the world can do some learning. Don't throw away what you might have use for or keep what you can't find purpose for.

An open mind is like a beating heart. It flows with life and pumps miracles through the veins. A closed mind is like death. All you ever were is dust that chokes the maggots that come to feast. If you think you have nothing left to learn, newsflash, World, you're dead, and a moron, too.

Your not-so-ardent admirer, An Aloof Inhabitant of the Planet

Dear Myself,

I feel alone. But then again, I have the closest, loving people with me. And I wouldn't know where or how I would be without them. I also have people I can talk to about anything if I needed them. But I'm still here alone.

Throughout my whole life I've felt alone even though I had people taking care of me. I have a dad who says he loves me and cares for me, but wasn't ever really there. I have a mother who was the love of my life until the day she said goodbye. I never really had a close grandpa, but now he's passed on to another life. And I also have grandmas, but they just don't understand the way I live life. I tried to get a best friend, but she had to live her own life as well. So, I'm here in this classroom by myself with everyone else near.

There can be so many people in the world, to be there and to care, but would they be there to the end of these years? And, at the end, I'm still here alone. Doing things on my own. It's just me, myself and I in this crazy world. Will I always feel this way? Will I always feel alone?

Really, we are all alone, secretly by ourselves. I believe someday a person will come into our home and give us love and attention. But it's known it won't last forever unless you meet your soul mate. Then again, there are thousands of other people in the world. That's a life decision you have to make on your own. Then, when you start your life, you'll have a choice of what path you will go on. But you're going to decide on your own.

Truthfully, J. B.

# CONSIDERED REFLECTIONS



Whenever you find yourself on  
the side of the majority, it is time to  
pause and reflect.

*Mark Twain*

Dear World,

Everyone says I have so much potential. And, everyone says I need to go to school. I am in the eleventh grade, and the last regular school I went to was Granite Connect. I liked that school, but it was hard to go last year because I was pregnant and I did not feel well a lot of the time. I was also so emotional; I was not being myself. In spite of all this, I did earn some credits last year. This proves that I am smart enough to finish high school.

Now I am in a program and have to go to school. After school, I also do packets for more credit. Hopefully, I will have enough credits to graduate by the end of my regular senior year. I want to go to college and be an engineer. I have discussed my goals with my caseworker, and she says to get a diploma.

My baby is in foster care, and the plan is for me to reunite with my son, who is eleven months. I get to see him once a week. To be with my son, I have to follow the expectations of the program and get therapy. I have to prove that I will be responsible enough to take care of my son and myself. It is worth learning the skills to do this.

Sometimes I still think about my ex-boyfriend. He still calls me even if I try to ignore it. I miss him, but I do not know if it is right for my health because it is a toxic relationship. I need to focus on myself, not him. All of this needs to be worked out. I do not know how to explain to him that I need space. And, we are both really young.

If I am going to have a good day, I have to follow the rules, go to school, and participate in therapy. I tell myself that I am strong and I can focus on "one step at a time." I have to not worry about the future because it is not in my control. I am strong. One step at a time. Over and over and over. This is my story, and I can't wait to get things right.

Peace out, L. M.

To The World,

Some people are given everything they'll ever need from birth and live great lives. For other people, like me, well, it's not very pretty. Life has dealt me a very bad hand. How am I still alive? I don't even know.

My lifelong struggle started at birth. I was born three months premature, with no body temperature. I could fit in the palm of your hand. I spent four months in intensive care before my mom could even take me home. The older I got, the harder life became. When I was three, my father molested my sister in front of me, almost beat my mom to death, and tried to smash my head in with a hammer. He got away with it too, so my family was forced to move elsewhere to get away from him. So for nine years of my life, from three to twelve years, I was always looking over my shoulder because I never knew if my father would find me and finish the job.

When I was six, my mom married my stepmom. She beat me in every way you could think possible for six and a half years; my older sisters would too. I was forced to do everything just like Cinderella, except I never got my happy ending. Throughout almost my entire life I have been told I'm a failure, and I'll never amount to anything, that they wished I'd just die, and a whole lot of worse things. For my entire life I have been extremely depressed and suicidal. I have attempted on many occasions to end my life, but that never completely worked. Even all my friends, no matter how hard I try, always stab me in the back and use me. Now most of my family is dead. I have watched the only friends that stuck around get shot or die of overdoses. I was supposed to be a father twice. One baby was lost due to miscarriage, and the other because she committed suicide before the baby was born. My brother just murdered his month-old son.

Now I'm an innocent man locked up for something I didn't even do. Everywhere I go, I get dirty looks or get told I'm going to hell because I am a Pagan. On Valentine's Day I got a *Dear John* letter from my most recent girlfriend. She pretty much literally said "F\*\*\* you, don't talk to me anymore, and don't f\*\*\* up the rest of your life please." That was a heartbreaker. This is only a fraction of the things I've been through in my life. People say—*It's all karma*. But, I've never done anything worthy of this much pain. Yeah, sure I did a lot of drugs, but I don't deserve this. Now there are only a few questions I have for you, World. *Have I not been through enough already? Will anything? ever be enough for you? Why do you judge me so harshly when you don't even know me? But, most of all, why do you have to be so cruel?*

World, please get back to me with answers to my questions. I would appreciate if you could give me answers as to why. Despite all the things I've been through, I don't take it out on others. I'm still here waiting to have my happy ending. So let me know when you decide to hear my pleas at night.

Sincerely, The Unknown Person

Dear Hood,

I truly understand how you feel. Living in poverty, growing up with nothing, thinking that there's no way out, and feeling like you're all alone, in a dark world. Trust me I know. When I was 13, my parents started using. During that same time, that's when they stopped caring!

I started using to see what was so good about drugs that made my family choose them over me. I eventually started slanging and banging, trying to find people who would want me since my family didn't. I gave up everything trying to be a well-known drug dealer. Ha-ha, I guess you can say I accomplished it, but for me to get something, I had to sacrifice something, and I sacrificed my freedom. Just because you haven't got caught slipping, that doesn't mean you're doing good. It means your time hasn't come, but when it does you're going to regret!

One thing I've learned is that everyone gets caught; it's just a matter of time. No matter how big of a reputation you got, it will come to an end. Having that feeling that people praise you is just a FEELING; it won't last. When your time is up, you're going to lose twice as much as you had. It took me a long time to realize that . . .

I didn't only lose what I had, I lost myself in the process. I removed myself from you, so I could see beyond the darkness. Trust me, there is more to life than staying with you. Now I am 18 years old, I'm getting my high school diploma, going to get a real job so I don't have to worry that it might get taken. You taught me how to be street smart, so I'm going to use my street smarts to become successful.

It took me a long time to realize that I had to change, but once I did, I saw the light that was covered with darkness when I was in with you. If I go back with you, I have a lot to lose . . . and I'm not willing to give it up just so you can take over my life again!

Sincerely, Street Smarter



**Dear Whoever Listens,**

**I haven't been home in almost two years of my life. And I'm not even sure what home was like at this point. What is home?**

**I guess home can be a place of comfort. But maybe I'm comfortable where I am? Or have I just convinced myself of more lies?**

**As I see other people come and go from my life, I get an empty feeling of jealousy. They get to go home, and I don't; and those people make sure that I am aware of that. I constantly remind myself that I am not ready or "worthy" to go home yet. I remember how lonely home can be, and suddenly home becomes an enemy. I realize over and over home was all my fault. Home was what I made of it, and that was hell.**

**When I think of home, I can't remember what positive memories surround this. As for everyone else, the memories flow like a rich person's money. All that ever surrounds my tunnel vision are blank memories that are half faded. I tend to see black and white while everyone else lives in a grey-colored world. I feel so numb. And this is where my cycle of depression starts.**

**I wish I could go home like everyone else. I wish I was good enough, perfect enough. But enough is never enough. And perfect is never perfected.**

**Please help me go home!**

**Sincerely, The Lonely**

Dear Women of the World,

A lot of people say that women are not strong; I say we can do it all. We can fight for what we believe in, what we dream for. A lot of people say we are too emotional; I say we women have gone through a lot of mental and physical abuse. People don't understand that every day we fight for the right to say what we think. Men control us; that's what a lot of people say. Men say that women can't do things because they are women, but women can do it. But I believe Women can. Women may have to work twice as hard as men, but they can do it. I used to cry when my mom would hit me and I would look at ***manchas de sangre, la sangre sobre el piso o en mis camisas***, but I learned you have to pick yourself up no matter what. ***Recuerdo que la mano que me pegaría a la cara***, that of my father, one of the men of this world who think they have control me. In reality, women do just what we want because we have pain, and we fight for what we need the most of all. I have lost a lot of my friends because they fought back, and the men of our generation didn't like it very much.

A lot of women don't get treated equally around the world. ***Cuando era una niña, siempre me dijo: no llores. No demuestres debilidad. Dicen, saberan si eres débil. No te daran el respeto.*** My mother said, Men have this image that women and girls are too weak to get out and fight. Now I fight for women's rights. We are stronger than we look. We have to do what we need to do. We are our own super heroes.

When we say we can, we can. Just do it. Fight for what and where you belong. I won't let it happen to me. I will push myself so far you won't believe you can do anything. I say do it if you want. ***TENEMOS EL DERECHO PARA LUCHAR PARA SUS CREENCIAS!*** You can do it. All I see are these girls sitting and hiding their faces, wanting to say something, but they don't because they are scared of the consequences. But I say, Yes.

You may be scared, but you should be able to stand and fight. It hurts me to see all these women struggling, and I can't stop it, but I can. I can be the role model for them, and you can do and say: I will stand up all the way and go down to right path. I may struggle and have pain, but that's what drives me to get this, mostly to have it done, and have it not hurt one anyone. We need to love each and guide one another and just keep on moving. ***Amor, cuidado y dignidad. Mi madre diría que eres sin valor, no serás nadie, que ella me iba a golpear. No. Voy a ser alguien para demostrarle que puedo ser alguien .***

***Yo soy fuerte, eres valiente, te encantaba.***

Lovingly, The Survivor

Dear Youth in Lockup,

I'm in the same boat as you. All of our cases are different. Some are worse than others, but we all started at the same place. Getting caught up doing something little or big, we all still ended up in a Juvenile Detention Center, eating nasty foods, hating life. Being locked up sucks. People say, "If it sucks so bad, then why do you keep coming back?" It's easy for us to say, "I'm going to get out and do good" or "I'm not coming back this time," but we still come back. It's almost like we cursed ourselves when we said that.

The truth for a lot of the kids that keep coming back is they don't want to give up their "homies." I know I don't! That's the hardest thing. These "homies" get us caught up in gang banging, doing drugs, and shooting at people, their so-called "rivals." To some of us, it's the adrenaline rush you get when you steal cars and go on high-speed chases or do those types of things. It's so fun at the time. Then you end up locked up again, with the same or worse charges than the time before. You get so far into the game you think you can't get out because that has become "your world."

Some of you were born into it, with family members doing the same thing, going to prison, getting out, doing the same thing or worse. On the other hand, there are kids like me that may have not grown up in the best neighborhood, but my Mom was always there for me; she played both roles as Mother and Father. My dad has been in and out of prison my whole life, but I have a family that loves me and wants the best for me. Yet I still ended up doing the same thing as all the other kids I thought were so "cool" for doing these things. I knew better than to do those things; my mom raised me better, but I still got caught up in "that world" and for years kept going back and doing the same thing over and over.

It's not easy to get out of the game. But it's possible. It's up to you if you want to keep living the same life or change yours for the better. I'm writing this in a Secure Facility because the choices I've made to hang around gang bangers and do all that "fun stuff" at the time got me here. Now, I'll be eighteen soon. This is my last chance. Just as well as it is for some of you or will be soon. It's your choice to do what you want with your life. Continue to do the same thing or stop and decide to do better things with your life than these things will bring you.

Sincerely, C.S.



Dear Parents of the World,

When your child is born, please don't leave them, don't make them live a life full of terror and hate that this world holds. Please don't let them feel worthless; don't make them feel like you don't want them. Just love your baby as he or she comes. Please don't carry a baby for nine months unless you're willing to drop your unhealthy lifestyle. Please don't leave your child to fend for himself or herself. Don't leave your child for your drug addiction or for some man that's not going to love you as much as your kids do and will. Don't give up the chance of being a parent for your party life. Let your baby know that you love them with all your heart. Be sure to let your child know she or he is loved by you. Be sure to let them know they are on your mind always. Let them know you care. Let them know you are there for them no matter what the situation is.

Be there for your daughter on her wedding day. Watch her walk down the aisle with that beautiful dress and smile. Be there for her when she has her very first baby. Be there to greet him or her. Be there when she needs you the most. Be there when she feels that life is not right for her. Love her like your mom loves you. Be there to brighten her days when she's having a bad day. Be there the day she graduates from high school to let her know that you're proud. Don't leave her for drugs. Don't let her go down that drug-messed-up life. Be there on her bad days.

Be there for your son when he gets his first steps. Be there for him when he gets his first girlfriend. Show him how to treat a female right. Show him the way of true happiness and peace in the world. Don't give up on your son. Be there at every game and cheer him on. "There is no better cheerleader than your parents." Be sure to let him know that you have his back and that you're not going to leave his side. Love your son no matter what.

Don't be selfish. Your child deserves to live and know that her or his parents love them. Don't make that child live a life without either of you. I know being a parent isn't easy all the time, but life will never be easy. Not having your dad in your life is so hard. The feeling of not having a father figure in your life hurts and sucks. Who are you going to look up to now? To know that your dad doesn't want you hurts so bad. Don't be that way. Don't treat her like that. Not having a mom sucks so much, not being able to go out on mother-daughter days, not being able to talk to her about your boy problems or what to wear on her prom day. Love your children as they come and never leave their sides no matter what. Always have their backs, and they will always have yours.

Sincerely, K. P.

**Dear World,**

**I feel good. Life is going good at the moment. I'm back home with my family, and we're getting closer; my boyfriend and I are doing good; and I'm getting packets done for my schooling. I will like to be back home because I like to be around my siblings and my mom. Back then, I didn't really spend time with them because I wasn't never really home, but growing up has made me realize that nothing is better than being with your loved ones. You never know when it's gonna be their or your last day here, so you got to make the best of it every day.**

**Even though my boyfriend is locked up, we're still trying to make things work out. I know it's going to be hard, but in those 18 months, I'm going to get a job and a car. Hopefully, I will already have my high school diploma by then. I know that he's good; I've seen the good and still do. We all do mistakes in life because we are humans, but I forgive him for the things that he has done for him to end up in there.**

**Back then, I didn't care about school; I wouldn't even show to up to school. I ended up dropping out; I thought it was a waste of time, but now that I see how much I am behind in credits and the things that I don't know but should know at my age, this makes me mad. That's why I am doing packets and trying to graduate as soon as possible. I know it won't be easy, but as long as I am motivated, I can do whatever I want to do. Those are the reasons why I feel good, and I think life is good right now.**

**Thank you, World, A. R.**

**Dear World,**

**I am confused and anxious because each country has certain rules, and some are cruel, some are harsh, some are heartbreaking, and some are speechless. For an example, a cruel country is Pakistan because the people there risk their lives to learn and gain some knowledge. There, a woman is forbidden to go to school or even learn to drive. If a woman does something and she's know not do it, then the woman would get punished by getting physically abused or might get shot to death. The government doesn't expect to let any woman have a right to do anything beside being a mother and being home all the time.**

**What is harsh? North Korea is being ruled by Kim Jong Un, who has a reaction to kill certain people if they rebel, which might be a good example to other people. Basically, Kim wants to have all the power and let his people have less power about their futures. What is heartbreaking? In this world, harassment is heartbreaking to innocent people that don't deserve it, and sometimes it happens unexpectedly to random people. For an example, many people want power and want someone else's power to let them know that they know everything, or they are right. Another reason they might be jealous of other people's lives because they get what they want in life.**

**What is speechless? It is speechless that the people still can't communicate or understand each other's painful moments, and people don't really do it on purpose. What I mean, people kill each other accidentally, people use self-harm, and some people use drugs to numb the pain, and some people control people because they are angry that the other people have a good life. The people don't know how to control their emotions; they simply don't know a fact about the world today: "Pain demands to be felt no matter what." The people have enough courage to survive throughout certain difficult obstacles. Then the people learn to thrive from their experience, and there is unforgettable moments in the world that give hope to the people who know there is still hope in this corruptive world.**

**Hopefully, The Hopeless Girl, Still Learning**

**Dear Homeless People of the World,**

**I can validate you in many ways. I understand the struggles and pain that got you where you are today. Some of you have nobody to hold or talk to at night, and no phone to communicate with. The pain inside hurts so much that I understand why you cope with drugs. You're basically living in the streets with nothing but the clothes on your back and barely any food to eat. They say you are welcomed and safe in the shelters, but you're still fighting for sobriety. You honestly look so rough and probably need so much stuff if you're are that desperate to sit on a corner and ask for money of sorts, that your needs are almost impossible to fill.**

**But mostly all you can do is be honest with yourself and tell the truth. Again, I understand where you stand. I've been homeless too. I struggled to be safe and keep a lookout for food. It's very hard to find a job when you don't have anywhere to wash your clothes and to shower like at home. You might have made a mistake, probably the biggest one you've made. But things will get better; just don't dig your self further.**

**Get up and act as old as you are and start over. There are actual places that will truly help you, but you need to want the help they are trying to give you. You should start by calling a love one and apologizing. Don't do it out of spite or pity, mean it and be serious about it. It will take some time to earn back their trust and God will do the rest. Next, you find a job and apply. Don't worry about what will come up from the past. Move forward and be mindful, and it will get you very far. You'll be home soon enough.**

**Sincerely, Your Fellow Traveler**



**To the Racists of the World,**

**Stop judging based on race. Can you not see me deeper than the color of my skin? Our President, full of hate, says, "Mexicans are rapists and drug dealers." But if anything, they, the Mexicans, are leaders. Our country is killing people based on color, and the President just encourages it. While Donald Trump is sipping wine and wearing gold, people on the streets of Mexico are going cold. Donald says he's going to build a wall. Stop trying to bring us down because we're going to stand tall.**

**My father was a good person. He did everything he could to provide and because of who you voted for, he is not by my side. I wish my father was here to tell me, "*Mija*, it's going to be okay." Everyone makes mistakes -- whites, blacks, Asians, Mexicans -- all around the world. So, how do you have the nerve to point out us?**

**I encounter racism when I have to deal with the police. For example, one day when I was walking, I was stopped by two cops. I reached in to get out my drugs, and one of them smashed by head into the cop car repeatedly. I had a busted lip and eye. I am black and Hispanic, and I kick it with a lot of black people. All this happened at the block, and the people I kick it with are "known." The cops just assume they can do whatever they want, and they do.**

**Also, two of my friends have been shot by the police, and they are both black. Were they both targeted because of their race? This really bothers me; it makes me really, really mad. I support "Black Lives Matter" because we, minorities, matter. Sometimes I have hope things will change, but I doubt it with the government we have.**

**Everyone needs to stop judging others by their race. Everyone's life matters.**

**Still Angry, A Mixed-race Teen**

Fellow Suffering People,

I honestly don't know how to get to you. I know that you feel numb and disconnected. I know that you are suffering. I am here to tell you that you are not alone. I used to be the person who thought death was better than living. I regularly cut; I still have the scars. I have attempted suicide twice, but you know what? I have found a reason to live and that reason is love.

I know what it feels like when nobody loves you and you think that nobody should love you. I am here to tell you that I totally respect you. You know why? You haven't quit. You are still here fighting every day against your own mind. I am also here to tell you to spit those pills out. Drop the razor blade. Put down that gun. Put away that rope. You are needed.

I know that it probably seems like a lie, but it is true. I need you to help me and the others. You guys have an understanding for life that nobody else will ever have. You guys have a dark sense of humor that I think is funny. I don't want to have to go through another funeral with your body in the casket. I want you guys to know that it hurts me every time you self-harm. It kills me when someone that I love dies from suicide. When I tell someone that you are struggling, it is not because I want to be a snitch. I do NOT want you to die. I need you guys to make me laugh on my bad days.

My best friend, Stephanie, she wears her Spiderman onesie to school when she doesn't want to get dressed, and it makes me laugh. You guys are needed! We need your laughs; we need your kindness. We need everything that you have to offer. I am not asking you just to be happy. I just wish you would talk to me a little more. I am not going to judge you. Even if people do judge you, do not listen! You are better than labels, and you are so amazing you don't even fit on the scale.

I want you to know the hurt people go through when you kill yourself. I still cry myself to sleep because my girlfriend died from suicide three months ago. I write to help get through the hurt. I am in a treatment program and can't leave because I ran away when I found out that she was gone. I was told her mom can barely even function. We do care. We need you! I love all of you! Thank you for fighting this long. Please stay. It's worth it I promise.

Survive with me, A. G.

# GRIEVANCES & COMPLAINTS



To send a letter is a good way to go  
somewhere without moving anything  
but your heart.

*Phyllis Theroux*

Dear World,

I'm a 15-year-old teenager. Today I'm writing about you, World. We, the people of the planet, have lots of things going on, like war, expensive buildings materials, and the food supply doesn't reach everyone. Then, plastic is being thrown around like candy; people say it's not good for the environment.

On this one island, by Hawaii, plastic from the garbage is everywhere, even floating in the water. They say when people throw away plastic, it travels by itself because the wind carries it on. Then, the birds on the island eat plastic, like the caps from plastic soda bottles, and that's why they're dying because of us throwing things where they don't belong. The same thing happens with the fish we eat, like tuna fish that get little micros of plastic on them, stuck on their skin, that people end up eating. For humans, that can be bad for our stomachs because once it gets stuck inside us, we know what caused the problem – plastic garbage.

There are these other types of things on this world that are happening like fires in California, that people start just for fun of it, that are not safe for us humans. We have mud storms that aren't good for the environment. They make cars stop moving; they destroy our houses.

We need to find a backup plan for all this nonsense that is going on. Some of us try, but some of us don't. If we all tried, imagine how the world would look. We need to help people. One man cannot do this on his own. We need the whole population to do this. In my opinion, don't throw plastic wherever. Find a recycle bin and throw it in. Do the same thing with garbage. Don't throw it anywhere you want. Find a garbage can and throw it all away. Just make it safe for the environment.

Thank you, N. A.

Dear World,

You got me messed up with all these lies and fake people, a corrupted system that will never change, the government putting cocaine on the streets for kids to slang, controlling us like we're just pawns in a game. In a society as corrupt as this, all we have is trust for each other, but we barely have that. See, I don't really trust no one except for my mom and my girl, and they're the only two things that make me wanna stay in this world.

But back to the point about how screwed this world is, we have women and men who can't stay loyal, and that's been around since before Christ. There's a reason they used to stone adulterers. It's because they are sick people, spreading STDs and lies. We live in a world that takes everything too seriously. I mean you can't even joke about a politician without getting in trouble. Now I'm not a perfectionist, because I know that nobody's perfect, not even me, and that brings me to the screwed-up system.

Let's take this program I'm in, for example. I was told I'd be here for three months or until I stopped getting in trouble. The first month was a struggle, but after that I straightened out. Now I've been here for five months, and I've had good grades, passed drug tests, and done as much work crew as possible. I've even stayed out of trouble on the outs, but yet I'm still here even after I learned my lesson. See you teach a lesson a few times and I'll understand, but if you keep teaching it over and over and over, after I've learned it, it gets old real fast. So, like I said before, no one is perfect, but this world needs change from its wicked ways.

These are my thoughts. Consider them.

Thank you, D. T.



Dear World,

I am so confused about life. Every day that I am breathing and walking on our beautiful earth, I fall deeper into confusion. I often wonder why things are the way they are. Why are there so much lies within our government? Why are the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer? Why does our "law enforcement" think they can do whatever they want just because they wear a badge? Questions like these are why I'm so confused. I know things will never change unless we, as the people, fight against our government. Sounds kind of reckless and stupid, but I mean if you really look at it, the people who run the government are not helping us no matter what they say or do!

For instance, the people who work the hardest get paid the least, but then you got some stuck-up person sitting behind a computer getting paid ten times more. We need to fight back and demand more pay. We are the government's puppets. We follow everything they say, and still we are the ones struggling. The reason I'm so confused is: Why do we allow it to continue?

As a seventeen-year-old, what I can I do to change this situation? Well, I really don't have much power, but I do have a voice. I would like to let my people know that we don't have to suffer and keep getting taken advantage of. I want them to know that our voice will be heard. We must step up and fight back. The more people are willing to speak up, the better. All our people should stick with each other and fight back. The day we decide to fight back and let our voice be heard, is the day we as people will be happier.

Thank you, N. G.

## This Is My Letter to the World –

I have learned a lot throughout my life and gained a lot of basic knowledge. I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, and I am 18 currently. Growing up, I went through rough times where I didn't have my biological parents to raise me; therefore, my great aunt had to raise me. Everything went good until I turned 12. Then I started to realize the real world. I got into school and started going downhill, being disruptive and not even caring. I hit eighth grade and eventually got expelled from sluffing and etc. Then I ended up partying and smoking weed before I got expelled. I caught charges and started to go through the court system, which is still going onto this day. This all has taught me a lot of wisdom, and also, let me mention I have a six-month-old son. By telling you this short little introduction and follow up, I just want to give you some advice that can help support you to make better decisions in your lives.

First, I want to start off by saying that school is the key to success. In order to be more successful you have to have a background of knowledge or structure. So take school seriously and put effort into learning because in the end it will help out with your future employment. Then, you can get more money to be financially stable.

Also, I want to say that it might be fun or cool to go hangout with your friends and do things that aren't really positive in the moment, but in the end the results are pretty ugly. Throwing your life away and doing things that only last temporarily isn't worth it. Now days you have to plan ahead and think about the long run. Successful people tend to have a game plan for how they approach things in their lives.

Also, I just want to say that you should have safe sex and use protection so that you can prevent an unplanned birth because if you aren't ready for it, then it can be a real stress. It can cause you to financially struggle and that can lead into other problems. Your children deserve the best. I think of it as you have to give them the life that you never have had. I want to give the world to my son. I realize life is better than most people perceive it. You just have to find your reasons and motivation to do better. Most important of all, shoot for the stars; you are more capable than you understand. It's smart to have a game plan so you set yourself up for success.

Sincerely, I. R.

Dear Addiction,

I've been telling people about you, how you fooled me into loving you with a false sense of security. Don't lie and tell me you're worth it because you weren't. My parents kept telling me that you were turning me into a monster and how terrible you treated me. But I was in love with you, so I ignored their warnings. Soon I became secluded with you; it was me and you against the world, Baby.

Yes, I lost a few friends, maybe even a little family. The world always felt dangerous unless your arms were wrapped around me. People wouldn't listen when I told them how sweet you were to me when we were alone. Without you, I would feel sick, longing for your embrace. But then they locked me away, thinking it was the only way for me to forget you. Some days I miss you; others I'll be happy to be free. Soon I started going to therapy. I didn't want to believe you lied; that the way you treated me was wrong.

Why? Why did you cost me everything I ever worked for in life? Do you understand how much I've given up for you? I gave you my childhood! I turned my back on my family for you! I stole from and hurt people for you! I gave you my innocence. I can't think straight anymore. You've given me the shakes, and my memories of you make me shudder.

And now you're going out to find someone else to do it all over again. Well, guess what!?! I won't have it! I'll tell the world about you. You won't ruin my life any further. It's been so hard cleaning up this mess you've made for me. It's over. Trust me, I'll be warning others about how you can destroy a life so completely. It's been quite the ride, but I hope I we never meet again.

Love, Your Former User



Dear Earth,

This is a bittersweet letter to you. Recently I have noticed that I am encountering more evil people than good, more negative people than positive, and more tragedies than miracles. The smog in the air gets worse and worse every day. You have become a scary place to grow up in. You are full demons and evils, crystal slanging, gang banging, and war. As a child I loved the world so much, but the older I get, the more terrified I become.

I worry for my younger siblings, worry for my future children, and what the future generations will have to go through. I barely made it till I was sixteen. What will they have to go through? Will they make it?

Although this world has become extremely scary, I want to thank you for allowing me to go through my trials and make this life be a learning experience. It has molded me into the person I am today. I pray you, dear Earth, are still intact in the coming years. Because the rate of destruction that you are enduring right now, I worry that the green grass and the parks will disappear, that the sky will become so black, and that we will no longer be able to breathe.

And, I worry the magnificent animals you have placed here, will slowly begin to fade away. Please, let this message open your eyes, to what my life and other lives have become. For you, Earth, are not as beautiful as you once were.

All my love, A Girl who wishes to see the good come back to You

Dear Future Dime-Piece World,

I wanted to let you know that I am a little unsatisfied with you. We claim the world should be equal and responsible. But we are so far, a long ways away from even satisfactory. I have an idea to what could make this world better. The number one thing is accepting the men and women that want to marry the same sex. You may have legalized it in some places, but that doesn't mean you don't throw rocks and tomatoes their way.

We are all capable of love; no matter which you choose, it is your love. If you love another woman or man, you should embrace the fact that someone will be there to catch you when you fall. When I was 10 years old, I found out that I was officially bi-sexual. I remember going home every day to my foster family that pressured me to hang out with boys and hangout with a boyfriend. I had a brother that was also gay, and I remember the shame he carried in our foster home. So I locked my feelings away, and I didn't let anybody know except my girlfriend and her family.

Eventually my family found out a year later, and they kicked me out into the street, and I ran to my friend's house. I was turning 14 years old in three days, and I felt like I was never going to be accepted for who I am. On my birthday my foster parents found me and took me home. They convinced me that I needed to breakup with my girlfriend. So I did, and I went out and "found" a "boyfriend" of their recommendation of course. I have never felt so out of place in my life. But I grew to love him so dearly. But no matter how hard you try to lie to yourself and tell yourself that what you are is not true, the harder it is to be normal and keep other things under control.

A few weeks later I was removed from my placement because of some complaints of my being "unholy" indicating my being bi-sexual. I was moved all around. And I never felt like I could love anyone the same again. I remember I was at my aunt and uncle's house, and I was watching KSL news, and they had their "important story." The story was on how they had officially legalized gay marriages. I remember crying out in joy! My aunt and uncle came in rushing and asking, "WHAT'S WRONG?" And realized that I was starring at the T.V. with tears running down my face. I called my boyfriend and told him that I was so happy and that we needed to celebrate.

But even though we legalized gay marriages, I still have popular kids, adults, teens, etc., shove me away because of my choice of sexuality. You make people suffer! You need to find someone else to pick on that is your own size, or just find some empathy in this world. It is desperately needed. It would benefit the society of LGBTQ. We are all equal, and we all deserve respect from everyone. No matter how disrespectful they are at first.

Sincerely, V. H.



This is my letter to the world,  
That never wrote to me.

*Emily Dickinson*