

## **My Suicide Notes**

**By Brian Garcia**

### PREFACE

Dear Reader,

What you are about to read is queer.

Queer like the literature that gave breath to this voice. Queer in the vein of blood-filled deserts, victims of separation and dreams. Queer like the void of depression, desire and self-imposed healing. It is a strange thing to be born with the ability to take one's own life. As humans, we yearn for belonging yet are some of the most devastating creatures Mother Earth gave the universe witness to. We wield this power with the danger of inflicting it on ourselves. Would it be fair to explain to fellow wanderers the pain of being sentient? Do we want to inflict as has been done unto us, the further we lean into singularity?

The page offers a safe place for exploration and I encourage you to not shy from these questions.

It's true, as a society we shy too often from talking about suicide. Take hope in that you breath to ask. Take hope in that you are not the thoughts that are on these pages. Take hope in that your thoughts do not have to be your actions - your actions your word - and I hope that you take as much from these words, as I have, to continue living one day more in this queer reality.

If you, or someone you know, needs help, please call **1-800-273-8255** or text **741-741**.

Brian

There was no note the night my uncle died.

He was simply found flameless.<sup>1</sup>

#### A NOTE

These are my suicide notes. Not the literal interpretation of words that suggest my death but words near death. That which rub against the fragility of life. That which crack the boundaries of a tormented mind. That which break the illusion of a depicted happiness or health. That which I attribute to be a lie in the eyes of most. That which I attribute to be imbalance. That which I attribute to be queer – beautiful.

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<sup>1</sup> Performer proclaims the following words enacting a deep ritual space of mourning. The words should not be easy to say, as if jostled from a deep point of pressure.

ON DEPRESSION

I'm embarking on a journey  
to connect the death of my uncle  
To the depressions of being queer  
And the queerness of being depressed  
It's an experience uniquely mine  
culturally shared  
Exploited by the media  
Shall I say more?

ON CURRENT AFFAIRS<sup>2</sup>

A la rorro niño  
A la rorro ya  
Duérmete mi niño  
Duérmete me ya

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<sup>2</sup> Performer sings the following excerpt from a Mexican lullaby. The tone is charged, melodious, forcible yet still trying to put the subject to sleep. As if to muffle the outside.

ON SOLIDARITY

People keep coming up to me through the course of the project. She wore see through platform heels, a black dress, and bleached hair.

**“I overheard you talking about your project.  
I couldn’t help but notice it was about suicide.  
I think that’s really important.  
My friend committed suicide last week,  
I think he really needed it.  
He was in so much pain.”**

I could see the universe in her eyes.  
We agreed to mourn in silence.

ON ISOLATIONS<sup>3</sup>

**“I like to play part time in the feminine/masculine binary  
otherwise known as my gay agenda.”**

**“I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am God.”**

**“I think he really needed it. He was in so much pain.”**

After my uncle’s death, my mother underwent a deep depression.

It’s an illness we both undergo.

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<sup>3</sup> Performer lip-syncs sound bites: Each piece distinct. Treat them with care as they all come from a specific kind of pain.

ON LOCATION

It's about 9pm on a Sunday in 2001  
Warm September Skies  
Outside the miles and miles of Central California farms  
Happy farms  
Where happy cows go to live  
Amidst the ruins of colonialism  
Where missionaries  
With giant bell signal:  
"Indios- your time has come!"  
But that's another story for another time  
So, I digress.  
It's September  
Picture big suburban houses  
In a big suburban neighborhood  
New development  
Ready to crash  
Amidst American values  
"Our Grief is Not a Cry for War!"  
But I digress  
This is the truth:  
2001, small town, central California  
Big suburbia – happy cows -  
And a phone call  
A phone call from down South  
Keep thinking South  
Further South  
Not fried chicken and slavery but  
Borders and borderlands South  
A phone call asking to be present  
To be here,  
To be now,  
In the moment,  
To take time  
A phone call announcing a loved one has died  
And no explanation why

ON MEMORY

I was eight years old the last time I went to Mexico  
City smells deeply rooted in my mind:  
Tacos behind wired windows  
In forced European floral patterns  
Smell  
Laundry detergent  
Down tight paved corridors  
Smell  
Lime green buggies  
Spewing gas pollution  
I'm puking most of my stay there  
Gringo stomach not able to embrace the  
Smell

I was eight years old the last time I went to Mexico.  
I was eight years old the first time I told Derrick:

**“I’ll show you mine if you show me yours.”**

I had yet to reach the age in which I would realize I was uncircumcised - my foreskin “other” still foreign to me. Derek’s penis had a ridge beneath the head like the other boys that I attributed to be the consequence of maturity. One day my penis will look like his- one day. Perhaps I should stop here to mention that Derek was a circumcised black man but I won’t because as we sat beneath Misses’ Hill’s giant desk all I wanted to do was taste maturity on my lips. At this point, Christian-who had no idea what the fuck was going on looks at us and says:

**“Uh, guys- I’m going to go play over there.  
I’ll see you all later.”**

I was eight years old the last time I went to Mexico. I was eight years old the first time I sucked dick. I was eight years old the night my uncle died. I didn’t know him. He was young and it was weeks after the 9/11 attacks. America was fearful. My family was fearful.



ON FORGETTING

I remember an open-casket funeral  
Up my grandma's spiral staircase  
To her sotea  
Like my mother's sobs  
His cold skin  
Unfamiliar to me  
Our annual trip to Mexico  
Ended

There was no suicide note the night my uncle died.  
He was simply found flameless.

ON MOURNING<sup>4</sup>

When you're so drunk the candle burns so low and you forgot you even lit it  
You're so drunk you forgot there was a candle there for you in the first place  
You're so drunk you can't remember why you're lighting another one again  
And again  
And again  
Until all you can say is - don't tell me to light another fucking candle  
Because I'm still sitting here wondering  
When you'll be lighting one for me  
And it could be  
Very soon  
But  
Light another fucking candle you tell me  
And so I do  
Make your art you tell me  
And so I do  
Carve their names you tell me  
And so I do  
So far in their mind it's engraved in stone  
Cracked, broken  
So why don't you  
Shed a tear  
Because  
You are just as responsible simply for the act of being  
And when you're done shedding tears  
We can barely stand to count  
Why don't you get up here  
And tell me  
To light another fucking candle.

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<sup>4</sup> Performer begins a musical piece that slowly deconstructs into a cacophony of screams and moans of agony and pain. In the final moments, the performer reconstructs themselves, picking up and addressing the audience with determination.

ON BEING<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting upon questions of the ego and histories is what I do. So here is a timeline:

Age 3: my parents construct a conglomerate of Mexican-American holidays in order to assimilate. Halloween mother dresses us up in extravagant costumes. The following night we erect a shrine from cultural memory in a candlelit kitchen.

Age 6: mother buys me a Ken doll after my Barbie fetish is scrutinized by my uncles. Her emphasis is not on heteronormativity but minimizing the effects of sexuality in general. Whether I was gay or not was only important to those who wanted to bring me down.

Age 12: my older brother finds gay porn on my computer. This was my first outing. Mother punishes him for violating my privacy. She doesn't question my "curiosity for men."

Age 13: I begin to come to terms with my sexuality realizing: Holy shit, I'm going to have to come out!

Age 14: I finally come out and like any fresh out of the closet teen I needed a boyfriend! I posted an ad on Facebook like some sort of preteen Craigslist. My aunt found out who told mom who in turn accused me of being selfish. Why couldn't I just think of how this was affecting her? Apparently, it's only okay to be gay in the nuclear family; mother was not ready to go viral.

<sup>6</sup>It's late at night and we're kicking, screaming, fighting for survival and identity. In a fit of rage I did what in hindsight should have been done at a different time. I told my mother I wanted to kill myself. I wanted her to feel my anger, my loneliness, my pain - unaware that she already did.

**“IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT, THEN JUST DO IT  
BUT PLEASE STOP TORTURING ME!  
SI LO VAS A HACER, HAZLO YA,  
PERO NO ME TORTURES!”**

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<sup>5</sup> Performer is playful and displays all manners of delight in each fragment. The speed is quick yet care should be given to emphasize each point. Be careful of over clarifying the moment.

<sup>6</sup> Slow pace of breath. Performer should reflect on the quality of breath. Take time to inhale slowly and exhale long and proud. Connect with your body.

That night I became 2001. That night I was simultaneously her brother and her son and as we sat in the middle of the room crying, I was the one we lit the candle for and eventually I would be the reason she too would want to die.

At this point I find myself floating in blank mental space. Ignited I feel a rapid loss of oxygen, of purpose, of self worth. How do you come terms with your reality when the one you've based it on tells you to end it? In darkness I hear a voice telling me to do it. I calculate all the possibilities. In none of them was society able to save me.

ON DEVIANCE<sup>7</sup>

I have a theory  
That my sexuality is due to deviance  
That my gender identity is due to anger  
And my gender expression is a morbid

**“what am I supposed to do with this depressed brown body?”**

Drag!  
But I fail  
Much like I failed Mother Monster when she told me I was born this way  
And when my trans issues took up too much time  
My deported sisters had to wait-  
Take a number and sit down  
Because you were going to tell the world WHY we were born this way  
And capitalism  
But what if I was made this way?  
What if I chose this way?  
What if I was told from a young age that wearing a towel wig meant I was gay  
A limp wrist meant I was gay  
Talking about sadness meant I was gay  
And so, I chose to be gay!  
So gay!  
Like really, really REALLY GAY!  
Because maybe that towel wig did mean I wanted cock in my 6 yr old ass  
Maybe flicking my wrist meant my sassy 7 yr old self was ready to get gay married  
IF YOU WANT IT THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE PUT A RING ON IT  
And perhaps my depressed 8 yr old self just wanted to talk about emotions  
Because emotions were all the rage in 2001  
Because depression was all the rage in 2001  
And who doesn't want to be all the rage?

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<sup>7</sup> This is the performer's diva moment. Take it. Enjoy it!

ON FAMILY<sup>8</sup>

My brother is a person of many voices  
His words were the ones to bring me off the ledge that night  
Together we spoke of changing times  
About growing up  
About why mothers are not perfect  
Reparations are difficult between a mother and a son who are both damaged  
But not impossible  
The night my mother told me to die was  
The night I saw the universe in her eyes  
Her complexities  
Her oppression  
A woman who sacrificed a world to come to this country  
A single mother ostracized at a young age  
A mother who loved me enough to tell me to die  
Because when you grow up in a depressed society  
Who's to tell you what's fucked up and what's normal  
All they can say is: "it gets better"

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<sup>8</sup> Conjure a mother: a complex being. Delicacy is key.

A CROSS-GENERATIONAL NOTE<sup>9</sup>

† = All: “There was no note”

For  
We feel  
Pain  
Stinging within  
We are  
Afraid  
To touch  
Inside  
†  
For  
Final moments  
All things  
We feel  
Demons  
We fight  
They say  
†  
We are  
The slip  
Don't love  
Don't know  
Don't care  
For us  
Cherish us  
Adorn us  
With your compliments  
And grace us  
With humble and excited pleasure  
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<sup>9</sup> Performer introduces the audience to a call and response. Care is given to acknowledge every person in the room. Discomfort is acknowledged and embraced. The goal is to care for discomfort through group mourning - whatever this may look like.

To take  
The shape  
Of a fetus  
To pound  
The demon  
Back  
Into the back  
Of my mind  
Because the thought  
Of losing him  
Is something  
I can't bare

But he drifts  
†  
And perhaps it's inevitable  
†  
Perhaps time does this to everyone  
†  
And like my body that will rot in the ground

I too will end this relationship  
I too will end this  
I too will end.



ON BEING ENOUGH

To be enough  
To find worth  
In words  
To resist  
To fight  
To live  
In a culture  
That mourns the future  
Crushing nostalgia  
Upholding reciprocal pain  
With beauty  
I value a world  
That acknowledges loss  
And reevaluates freedom  
I value a world  
That doesn't conflate pain  
But dances in complexity  
I value a world  
That is queer bodies of color

**[Performer asks the audience what kind of a world they value]**

In the moments when  
We say  
†

ONE FINAL NOTE<sup>10</sup>

I'm here to tell you  
You may not be a special snowflake  
I can see the universe in your eyes  
You are enough  
to find fire  
in difference  
I'm tired of burying my friends  
Of not knowing who will be next  
Of not having a past  
Of being told to grow up when  
the generation before me didn't get to  
Disidentify  
With pain  
And I don't know if it gets better  
But I do know you are an expert of yourself  
A catalyst of critical intervention  
To partake part time in the feminine/masculine binary  
And like many binaries  
It can be fucked up  
It will feel fucked up  
It is fucked up  
Disidentify  
with pain  
Find fire  
in difference  
Aspiration  
in grief.

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<sup>10</sup> This moment is intimate. This moment is magical. This moment is possibility. This moment is a confession. This moment may or may not be needed.