

## NEVER

War is never fought under rainbow skies. Men with guns and bayonets never crumble upon spring flowers, splattering them with blood. Souls never escape to a nest of newborn bluebirds, squawking for their mother to feed them freshly acquired bugs. Humans never harm those they love in the city of “Brotherly” love. No mother has ever died on Mother’s day alone, her last thoughts being of her children she will leave behind. No child has ever suffered abuse at the hands of someone they had great respect and admiration for on their birthday. No girl has ever had her heart broken on valentines day. No man has ever been left alone at the alter, feeling shame and embarrassment in front of those whose opinions matter the most to him. No religious institution has ever shunned or humiliated those they vow to protect. Never has a married woman had to lie to her friends about how they got those bruises. And surely in history, there has not ever been a case of a person in power using that authority to harm the most vulnerable in order to further that power and control. And no persons have ever worried about where they are going to get the next meal.

How I wish this to be the truth. The reality of the world. This place is so confusing at times, so completely unintelligible. I want sometimes to give up. To wash my hands. To walk away. I want sometimes to be free of this earth, of all the pain and fear and all of the emotions that they create. But what then? Where will I go? To some kind of paradise where there is no pain, no fear? What will I do there? Just lie around on some perfect beach somewhere perfecting my tan? BORING. Or how about the other direction? Some place that is always too hot, and I have to shovel brimstone, sweat, and listen to disco music for all of eternity? Sounds a bit lame, right? Could I have another fate? Where my spirit will be recycled into a whole new person, and I will experience everything again, trying to subconsciously recall past life mistakes and not make them again, so as not to end up the same? Yuck. I didn’t even like that in “Groundhog Day.” I certainly don’t want to do that. Or maybe there is just NOTHING. No difference. I just continue to walk the earth, watching all the pain, and anguish, but now not being able to do anything about it. (Because nobody can see or hear me, and so I have no influence.) Um, NO.

I can help. I can make change a reality. First within myself, and then within others. I can try not to harm the ones I love, in ANY city, in any PLACE. I can help those who have been harmed during war, just by listening and having compassion for them and their struggles. I can always let my children know I love and support them and their life choices NO MATTER WHAT. I can hold my daughter close and let her cry into my chest when she is feeling rejected. I can do this for my son’s too. I can choose to lose my ego driven opinions and judgements about people whom I don’t know, recognizing that they are only brought on by my suffering. I can value

myself enough to never allow someone to physically, verbally, or sexually harm me. I can choose not to support those who abuse their wealth and power, so as to not take away from my own or others. And I can help in little ways to ensure that more people are fed. Even if it is only buying a meal for a man laying on the grass at the corner, asking for spare change. If I can do this, so can anyone. And maybe, just maybe they WILL.

And then- NEVER will *BE*.

## **THE NOISE**

The noise is amazing. The noise is fantastic. Rumbling like thunder approaching a dry desert hill. Screeching like a vintage car crash. The noise hurts. The noise cuts. Distracting me, annoying me, and causing some pain within my skull. The noise is a phantom friend, there to remind me that I am never alone. I am never detached from its source. I can wish the noise away, to no avail. I can attempt to ignore the noise, but am not balanced enough. Or I can scream, which is the path I usually take, trying to become one with the noise. But I am an outsider, and the noise will never accept me into its folds. As I cry out, the noise mocks and taunts my voice. I am left invisible, angry and lonely. What to do? WHAT TO DO?

Accept. Accept the noise, not only hearing it, but listening to its cries of desperation, of sorrow mixed with delirium and joy. To even touch, see, and smell the noise, and appreciate its uniqueness and assertiveness. I do accept the noise, and all that it is, however, I do not love the noise. No, I don't even LIKE this noise. It is too overwhelming, forcing itself on me like a door to door cosmetic salesperson might on weekday afternoon in a suburban neighborhood. It makes my heart beat too fast, and my tongue spew venomous words. This noise has no lyrical merit, no sweetness of a bird looking for a companion in early spring, no peace like bamboo wind chimes blowing in the breeze of the salty sea.

Sometimes the noise makes my vision blurry with tears of frustration. Sometimes it makes me expect to go deaf with a shocking POP! like an overly inflated balloon. Sometimes it turns my stomach and makes me want to retch. Sometimes I WANT to go deaf, to never have to be surrounded by the noise ever again. But this is a fleeting desire, as I look to the rearview mirror, and gaze angrily, sadly, and exhaustingly at the creation of the noise, at the pure innocence at the noises root-my children, and know one thing with ultimate certainty: the noise is MINE completely.

## **LOSS FOR WORDS**

What is the word of the day? Is it *stable*? Is it *freedom*? Or is it *Banana*? Do we ever know what the word of the day is? Who is there to inform us of the word? When we

awaken, should we search our mind before ever getting out of bed? Scanning the fog in our brains, looking through the trees with tangled roots, the cobwebs, the grey matter? How do we know when we find it? Is it written on a small yellowing at the edges folded piece of notebook paper that is tucked underneath a rock, with only the corner sticking out for us to discover? Or will it be much easier for us to discover, like a huge pink neon sign hanging on a dilapidated fence and burning brightly even though there is no outlet to provide it power anywhere to be seen? I think that is all we do in life, search for the answer to this question. What is the word of the day? What is MY word of today? Once we grow too old to watch “sesame street”, deep down inside, we grow steadily more insecure, more apprehensive. Who will be there to tell us the word of the day? Who will hold our hands and guide us throughout our daily journey with fun lessons, silly songs sung by hairy (but not scary) monsters? Oh, Jim Henson, you will be forever missed. After the age of 4, all of us subconsciously miss your help in life. But we must all “grow up” and learn to navigate our paths alone. Yes, our parents help us with this process, but ultimately, we are alone. We do the most important things in our evolution in solitary. Besides the obvious ones, like birth, and death, there is breathing, moving, sleeping, waking, thinking and even eating (unless someone chews your food for you, ewww.) peeing, and yes pooping is all ALONE. This is a reality, but does not need to be a frightening one. In fact, it should serve as a motivator, as a chance to revel in our independence. Everyday, it gets easier to figure our choices, and when we figure wrong, to learn from them, and decide better next time. Yes, the world truly is a giant board of chess, and some of us become better players than others. The better you become, the more smoothly the transitions go. But what if your board keeps getting destroyed? What if other players keep breaking your bishops, and tarnishing your queen? There is really no answer to this question. Some players will continue to endure this abuse, while others my stop playing, stop GROWING altogether. Personally, I hope you are someone who is the FORMER player mentioned. Where was I? I tend to take many sidetracks on my route. At times, I do become lost completely, and I don’t really know how to work those GPS devices. At those times, I just take a deep breath, and look inward for the way. Oh YES! That is where I was. The word of today is: *BANANA*.

## **WONDERGIRL**

I am the wonder girl. I am the curious monkey (mind). I use my eyes for intrigue, my nose for interruptions, my fingers for prodding. Mostly, I see nothing special, nothing I wish to note or keep on file. This week my wonder turns to disruptions. To frustration. I seek out answers, I ask questions, I investigate. Except every where I wonder, everywhere I inquire, and everywhere I let my monkey free to

roam turns out to be a burnt place, an area of desertion. A ghost town of nothing but further questions that cannot be found even through infinite time searching. Picking up publications from years past, and turning the pages to see only blankness. Venturing outside lifting my head to view city billboards that are covered with only words missing letters, making them unintelligible, and confusing. Walking to the limits of here, I see a road sign. It reads: Thank you for visiting nothingtown! with a big hand drawn smiley face below. Then at the bottom of the sign, much much smaller, a single question: “who are you for having been here?”

I ponder this question, Who am I? Who am I? Why, I know who I am, I am wonder girl! I am the one who leaves no stone unturned, no questions unanswered! But wait, is this really ALL that I am? Is this my core of existence? Have all the stones I’ve turned, the questions I’ve answered and the inquiring been IMPORTANT? Has it helped anyone, or even myself? Or has it been only there to inflate my own ego, so that before I close my eyes at night, I can try to convince myself that I am worthwhile? Has it all been a mirage, a facade, a LIE? I am starting to see things clearer now, in a more real light. And although it is a bit painful, I am not sorry, not ashamed. Only grateful. I decide I don’t know who I am, and I am ultimately alright with this now.

I call to my monkey, take a deep breath, and hand in hand we walk into our future.

## **TRY AGAIN**

Running. Running. Running. Jogging. Jogging. Okay, now walking (fast?) Pain in my side. Ouch. Walking slower now. Recovering.

Recovering.

Why am I doing this again? Oh yes, because I am angry all the time now it seems, and mostly because I am not HAPPY in my body. I look into the mirror, and I am not THRILLED with what stares back, but I don’t grimace, either. But then I am somewhere, and yahoos start pulling out those..those... THINGS. Those annoying, self serving, intrusive...phones. It wasn’t bad enough when they were glued to drivers’ ears, endangering everyone on the road because they HAD to make that call. And then it was texting which no longer took the persons hearing, but now there eyes, TOO! In the *technology* age, we are sure getting stupider with every “new-time saving” device that comes out!

Where was I? Don’t remind me, I KNOW. I was just being ironic.

When those phone addicts begin to take pictures of me, (or even worse, video) I want to scream and turn into Sean Penn. I want to throw it into the nearest lake or pool but only after I smash it to the ground and do the “Bunny hop” hard on it. If there is no body of water, I would like to place it into my pants and declare that I am having my “mensies” now, and it is a “HEAVY FLOW MONTH!!!”

I would laugh hysterically, and dance and party (like it's 1999). I would enjoy singing the national anthem, and picking up the nearest bat, and hit a home run with your newest Samsung Galaxy.

It would give me no greater joy than to toss your Iphone 6 into a roaring fireplace, and watch as it crackled, and melted. I would revel in mailing your Moto X BACK to China (Postage paid by me, of course) just for fun.

But alas, I know that you would just go out the next day, and get a NEW one. AND I realize I might make the "dumb" news of the week. And that is NOT what I want (I know, hard to believe I don't want to be FAMOUS for 15 minutes.)

It is just that the next time I sit down to check my email after you have taken your "pics" of me and "selfies" of me and you, they will be sitting there, like a large bill to be paid, or a dirty apartment after a huge party that longs to be cleaned. And when I see these photos, I don't see the image that stares at me in the mirror. I see someone else. An unhappy person who smiles and tries to pretend.

A girl lost inside her own image. Someone who time got away from, and wishes that she could party (like it's 1999) because in those days, she at least recognized herself.

So although I speak of loathing your phone, ultimately, what I loath is the TRUTH it shows me, the TRUTH that I don't want to acknowledge.

So, anyways, that is why I was running.