

NEWSLETTER

Self-Love

Welcome to Lihiyot.Be's newsletter

The mission of Lihiyot.Be newsletters is to foster and inspire a community of people, artists, free-spirits, creators, lovers, wanderers, and adventurers through touching upon specific themes and expressing them creatively through a variety of mediums.



“Look Down at your body, whisper, there is no home like you - thank you.”

Self Love?

Leila Baron, Tel Aviv

I love you.

I, love you.

I love you.

I love you, because.

I love you, when.

When, when.

When a rush of joy overwhelms you
and you can't stop smiling, exclaiming
touching.



I love those moments
when you make him giggle with you.
You are infectious, you are powerful.
You are an infection.

I love you...
I love you.
I love you!
I love you...
because, because
it makes you happy to help others.
I love you because it's important to you
to leave the world better than you found it.
I love you.
I love you...
I love your pasta.
I love your love for pasta, even though I know
your passion would serve you better directed at buckwheat. Or kale.

I love your children.
I love you for making them
and for teaching them to sing
your favorite songs
and yell your favorite songs.
To sing their favorite songs
and yell their favorite songs.
To have favorite songs.

I love you for your honesty
even when it's awkward and not particularly helpful.
I love you.
I love you because,
I love you because,
I love you although.
I love you despite.
I love you despite
your complacency.
I hate your inability to choose, to act upon
those things you want.
And your hair.
I hate your thin, scraggly hair,
lacking its former density, its fullness
disappeared like the deer from the forest across the street back home
no longer able to hide among the thinning tree line.
I hate when you boast that you've never been to a hairdresser
just go get your damn hair fixed
what is it exactly that you're trying to prove?

I love.



I love your thirst,
the moments when you allow yourself to drink
the noise and smells
to be touched, overwhelmed. That's good.

I love you, then.
I love your thirst for touch,
your birthmarks
finger-painted in accidental dots and drips
you are your own galaxy,
perfectly stained.

I love how you hug.
I love how you wrap them up
and make them feel loved and safe.
All of them.
Any of them.
In this, I love your height, your breadth, your depth.
I mean, I love.
I love your body, and what it can do.

I love you.
I do, I love you.
I do!
But, I wish you would be better at telling jokes
and staying awake at night
I pretend it's endearing, when you fall asleep at parties,
but it's not. It's anti-social and lame.
I wish you'd be better at making mom-friends.
I don't always like who you are at the park.
I love you, but you're boring.
I love you, and don't take this the wrong way, but you seem a little bit stuck.
I love you, but.
I love you?
I love you.

I love you because I need to,
because I'm selfish.
I love you,
though it's surprisingly challenging to say why
to be honest, it's rather jarring to try.
I love you, because I know how important it is
(and it's not that you make it so hard)
I love you because I must
because you deserve it
because you're a person
because you're a good person
because you try
because you're reflective
because you appreciate



because you know how to feel awe
without envy
because how can I truly love anything
if I don't know how
to hold you in love.

"Hot Chocolate"

Sara Wong, Anchorage, Alaska

I pour one cup of milk into a small saucepan.

It is cold, white as the moon, and sloshes around as I set the saucepan on the burner. It is purportedly lactose free. My stomach is a great lie detector when it comes to the lactose free-ness of things.

The burner putt-putt-putts to life and spits a small blue flame. I go about gathering the rest of the ingredients I need: cocoa powder, brown sugar, white sugar, vanilla extract, and salt. I have memorized my hot chocolate recipe by heart. It is one of the things that has not been lost to dissociation, absentmindedness, or time.

It's strange to look at the things my mind has decided to hold onto. Sentences of books I finished reading years ago. No shortage of song lyrics. Snippets of melody that play in my head over and over. The amount of lime juice to put into the dressing of my quinoa salad. But the hour-long calculus lesson I sat through? Or that really creative story idea? Not even a bit committed to memory. They gradually erode until they are just a vague shape in my mind-- do I even remember what an integral is?

Little domes of cocoa powder, scooped and shaped by my trusty tablespoon, float on the surface like islands. The sugar sinks straight through it. It's heavy. I stir my potion and watch the islands crumble and collapse into the white sea until the cocoa has lent its color to the milk. Little cays survive and swirl around my whisk, refusing to sink. They are stubborn. I toss in a pinch of salt and a splash of vanilla extract and lean against the counter, waiting for it to heat up.

I think I have Pavlov-ed myself into wanting to write every time I make hot chocolate. It's only natural; hot chocolate is the anchor that moors me to my desk, makes me feel like a movie character tapping away at a keyboard and sipping on a hot beverage. I even have a favorite mug I like to use. It's small, black, and covered in the titles of banned books. BANNED is raised in relief on the center of the mug. It makes me feel like I'm a maverick, look at her, she's drinking from a mug with banned books all over it, isn't she a well-read rebel, she's into classic literature, ooh, ahh. Nevermind the fact that I have not read a single book listed on this mug. No, not even *Les Mis*. I'm a poser, I know.

The foam begins to shiver on top of the milk, which is how I know it's time to take it off the heat. I pour the hot chocolate into my mug through a sieve-- gotta catch those little stragglers of cocoa, or it'll be lumpy-- and toss things into the sink to wash. I know exactly how full the cup will be when I pour my hot chocolate into it, every time. It is a tiny, satisfying piece of my life that is both predictable and exciting.

The sponge smells weird. I scrub things in the stream of tepid water as fast as I can (or my drink will get cold, and there's nothing more disappointing than that), set my hot chocolate-making instruments all on the rack to dry, and then make a tactical retreat to my bedroom. I don't bother with the marshmallows this time. We don't have mini marshmallows and I don't feel like butchering a jumbo marshmallow into little drinkable pieces. I don't think it even adds anything to the flavor and it means I'll have to bring up a spoon to stir with. No thank you.

I kick my door shut and it rewards me with a half-inch long splinter driven straight through the skin of my foot. Ouch. The powers that be really don't want me to have a nice, peaceful, quiet night of writing, huh?

The fairy lights are on, casting a comforting warm glow over every inch of my crowded, messy room, and I feel myself deflate as I sit down in my chair and set my drink on the desk. There are many things I would change about my room. My desk is one of them. It's not so much a desk as it is a huge, decommissioned drawing table that has lost bits and pieces of itself over time. It's a sickly shade of lime green and spattered on every inch of its surface with ink and paint. It's endearing and familiar and I love it, in a way, but would it make me a better writer if I had a sleek, dark, handsome desk with a million drawers and an extending surface? It sure would make me *feel* cooler.

There is an idea of who I want to be buried under layers and layers of introspection, self-doubt, and embarrassment. She's a writer, a successful one, and a painter too. She plays cello every night and she's amazing at it. She wears trendy hipster togs like vintage mom jeans and black turtlenecks. She has those Doc Martens Leona boots that I've been eyeing for months now. She has a minimalist workspace with a cool gooseneck lamp and a little black bookshelf full of her favorite novels. She knows how to use Paint Tool SAI. *And* she speaks like a lawyer, sure and confident, with an excellent vocabulary. Need I go on?

But then there is me. Just me, normal me, who often doesn't have the energy to put on anything more than sweatpants and a fleece in the morning. Just me, who lives in a perpetual mess, who says cringey things all the time, who can't summon the motivation to sit down and write or draw or play music. Me, fallible and human, severely lacking in hot leather boots.

The hot chocolate feels warm in my belly. I sit beside the idea of myself and think, "She would love me, too."



We Are Safer With Two Feet On The Ground

Keshet, Jerusalem

After a long day, I tell myself

I don't know if I will ever be clean.

I've tried

I'm optimistic

Maybe somewhere in the deep



There is a version of me
Hanging like the moon on a wet night
Young and glistening
Waiting to be slipped into.
When I sleep in the late afternoon
I always dream about water
And wake up on the cold floor.

I'd like to remember what it feels like
To be untouched by everything
I wish I'd noticed it then.
There was a time before rip tides.
Before everything I should have never seen
And before it saw me
That way.
Before it reached out and I ran right in
If the flags were up I did not see them.

Once,
The curve of my spine was the most notable feature of my body
The last thing I ever thanked for holding me.
The voyeurs are tired
Of having nothing left unseen.

Somewhere alternate,
This clean thing
Finds her shame in
Back pockets
Of old jeans
And knows how to polish it down,
Set it out to sail.
Somewhere there is an island
Of glass bottled ships



Waiting to be forgotten.

I'd like to step into the ocean
Without thinking of the cleansing of it
But the days
They roll back
Cover everything in salt
I am the sum of every thing
That I have given myself up for
And where do those pieces go.
Are they the feeling at the front door
When there is nobody waiting inside
Are they the wrong body
Better than no body
At least no colder than my own
Maybe they are lonely.
Knowing quite well what it felt like then
But still begging to be wanted
Again.

“Your beauty”

Tamara Weiss, Jerusalem

Dear Avi,

Your beauty is so bright

that only those who don't hide behind shades of shame are blessed to experience your glow.

Your beauty is so bright

that many people fear being blinded by your rays of sunlight
Because it only illuminates their own sense of discomfort.

Your beauty is so bright

that being surrounded by those who hide behind shades of fear makes you question it's validity.

Your beauty is so bright
that you eventually also hide behind frames to dim the light
because of how much it hurts to see others neglect what makes you feel special.

But you are special
Always trying on new looks.
So as you try on newer glasses,
as the shade vanishes,
you finally uncover that the light is a part of you wherever you go.

This light embodies who you are.
This light is seen by those who don't hide behind shades of shame
But who help you ignite the light that is always yours to embrace as your own.

So once you chose to see that your beauty is so bright
I hope you chose to embrace it by walking freely into the light.

Love you forever,
Tami.





Julien Lee, From Hong Kong, living in Jerusalem

Since the beginning of this year, I started to love myself on another level.

I was always proud of my uncompromisable ability to follow the inner voice, as long as I am able to hear what he told me. Very often, it leads me to take decisions that are far from comfort and ordinary logic, and it occasionally pushes myself to experience immense pain and agony. For instance, slamming my boss in the conservatory and got fired; or eight months ago, I chose to come out to my parents even though I could anticipate their rejection; Or, a few years ago I was travelling in Europe with a bike and a tent. My backpack, passport and most of my possessions were stolen in one cold winter night on a beach in Provence. Yet, I insisted on continuing my journey to Italy for two more months with one set of winter clothes until loneliness and winter storm got the best of me.

I mean I am still proud of what I did. Rebel and wrestle against fate is the privilege of youth. Nevertheless, as I love myself more, I put my mental and physical comfort on top priority and decide to treat myself way much more gently.

In fact, this so called 'inner voice' that has guided my life trajectory is reflecting my strongest impulse from time to time. It could be as gentle as the green pasture and blue sky, and also could be as stubborn as a bull.

In Danish director Lars von Trier's "Breaking the waves". He investigated the deceptiveness and even the diabolic quality of this "inner calling".

Learning to love myself in a deeper level, I started to inspect each of these impulses before I transformed it into action. My filter is based on its gentleness and if it does bring me peace eventually. Or so as to say, that does not make me feel bad. From my personal experience, the most magical guidances are always the quietest whisper that is not louder than your heartbeat. One has to be listening with utmost attentiveness or otherwise divine opportunity will just go with the wind.

Other than the abstract discussion above, speaking in a more concrete term, I love myself by sparing an hour for an afternoon nap every day, eat good homemade organic food, put a few beautiful plants in my living space, hang out with people I deeply adore, take a bath twice a week, meditate, make love, sunbath, listening to my favourite podcast, playing piano to people I love, chill out and forget the things that bother me.

But actually nothing really is a big deal. Since writing this article, I am sitting on the bench in the cemetery next to my place. With this quietness, I am welcoming whatever that comes to me.

Did I Tell You?

Leah Levenson, Jaffa

Did I tell you that you are strong today?

I'm sorry,

I was just frustrated that you didn't run fast today

Annoyed that it was hard to get out of bed this morning

Did I tell you that I am proud of you today?

I'm sorry,

I was disappointed that it was hard to focus on work all day

Angry that you were lazy and had no creativity

Did I tell you that you are beautiful today?

I'm sorry,

I was irritated that my pants were a bit tighter than usual

Bothered how hungry you were all day long

Did I tell you thank you today?
I'm sorry,
I've been so busy complaining about you lately
Hating how much sleep you keep asking me for!

Did I tell you that I am grateful for you today?
I'm sorry,
I have just been so frustrated by the aches in my shoulders and neck
Embarrassed that I haven't been able to balance in yoga lately

Did I tell you that you are great today?
I'm sorry,
I just couldn't get past the fact that are so awkward sometimes
Mad that you once again didn't respond to those texts

Did I tell you that I love you today?
Oh I'm sorry, I must have forgotten again.
I was too busy loving her stride, their evening plans, his strength, her bravery, his confidence, her body, loving him. Loving her.
Loving them.

So, would you forgive me if I say that I love you now?

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How do you speak to yourself?

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