**[Kat Von D «Go Big Or Go Home»](http://vk.com/pages?oid=-408111&p=Kat_Von_D_%C2%ABGo_Big_Or_Go_Home%C2%BB)**

2013

**Ville Hermanni Valo**

I only knew his music, and I loved it on first listen. It was dark and it was beautiful. It was metal and it was poetry. It was love loaded into a gun, and I wondered about the man behind the songs.

Two years later, our paths crossed, and like the majority of the connections I’ve made in life, tattooing brought us together. Through our first tattoo sessions, we began to get to know each other. For the next few years, I just thought of him as my friend from overseas, and that was all. Then, after knowing him for six years, something changed. It could have been the wine, the music, or the moon. Most likely it was just perfect timing. Just one kiss, and he changed my world.

We were both sad back then, and lost. I was depressed, having finally ended a marriage that had been doomed from the beginning. I was also dealing with the pressures of filming a television show, which was totally new to me - and drinking my way blindly through it all. His story mirrored mine, and he had been feeling just as low.

We had been waiting for something to happen, for someone or something to come along and save us from ourselves. And when it suddenly seemed that that someone was each other, it took us both by surprise. We shared darkness, and doing that bought light back into our somber worlds: for once, we didn’t feel alone.

He’s the reason why I wanted to write music to begin with - and learn to sing. I remember the exact moment I made up my mind about making music. It was something I felt I needed to do, not for any reason other than a way to respond to him. It didn’t matter if the songs I’d write never saw the light of day, as long as he was able to listen to my music, my message to him.

He had told me to look for a package at my door step, prefacing the delivery of the contents, his new album, saying, “These are all of the things that are easier sung than said.”

I knew what he meant, but never imagined that each song would be filled with direct messages to me. I put the album on, and the music rushed out of the speakers and filled my house. His voice rang all around, making it’s way to the core of my heart with every word he sang. As cryptic as those lyrics may have been for anyone else, I knew exactly what each word meant and recognized every event and place he referred to.

The songs were so beautiful, I just wished so badly that he could have said everything out loud just once to me. How should I respond to something like this? Where do I even start?

The first time I saw him after I got sober, he was in town working on music. We sat in my office at the shop until the late hours of the night, talking and catching up about everything - music, home, art and work. Did we talk about love? No. We constantly danced around our past instead. What happened to us? I couldn’t find the courage to ask because I was scared of the answer I already knew.

We decided to draw, with pencils and paper in front of us, we sat at opposite ends of the table. He pulled my three-minute timer from one of the nearby shelves, and placed it at the center of the table. He suggested we draw each other, and I was game. With a flip of the hourglass, the grains of sand moved from one vessel to the other, and we began.

Sketching these timed portraits forced us to stare at each other, making it practically impossible to focus on the drawing itself. I had almost forgotten how beautiful his face was. He has a combination of eyes, lips, and a darkness to his looks that makes him look almost otherworldly. With him, I felt like I was at the center of an orderly, tranquil, magnificent universe. For those short three minutes, there were no questions about life or purpose. It was as if we never needed any more from each other than this.

Like all people, I’ve suffered from love sickness and tasted the pain of love. The theatrical director of my mind, the one who staged all these versions of him and my life with him, seemed to be unaffected by reason. I was finding myself constantly day dreaming of the past.

His eyes, his hands, his crooked smile - I’d ruminate over his features. Things he said. Things he did. Things he wrote. Things he drew. Things he sang. Over and over again, I’d sift through these images and memories as if they somehow contained the answer to my prayers. But I was living with a long-age memory of him; living so far away from the present moment.

If we had spoken about what we were or what we thought we were, back when we got sober, I wouldn’t have been so confused, wandering what if, and writing the rest of our story in my mind. What did I expect? For him to magically not hear about me being in a relationship? And to not be bothered by it?

If only he would have asked….. I would have….. If we could have only talked….. then things would be….. if we allowed ourselves to transform our fears of being open, vulnerable, then, I’d convince myself, we would be together.

I realized that none of that mattered now.

If I wanted to be free of this unrequited longing, I would have to make peace with the past and finally let it go. There was no way around it. But did I want to be free of it? - and him?

I listened to one of his songs the other day. Out of all the songs he wrote on that album, this one was the most direct. He sings my name in the chorus. By the time the song is over, I’ve felt a range of emotions - I’m sad but happy, frustrated but calm.

He sings about how I alone bring him to a place of stillness and peace within when we are together. What a victorious feeling - to enter into a place with him where no one else has been. To be able to bring goodness to and draw it out of someone. Those sweet thoughts were interrupted by an e-mail from him. Impeccable timing as always.

It’s just a short note, letting me now he’s somewhere out there, thinking of me. He ends the message by calling me “Star Face” - his pet name for me from long ago that no one else uses. At that moment, I loathe him for it. I loathe him because I love him.

Sometimes it feels like it would be so much easier to walk away from this if he’d just tell me that he hates me, that he wants nothing to do with me. But instead he calls me “Star Face.” There is no way he doesn’t know what he’s doing. He’s not letting go, either.

‘Ultimately, it is the desire, not the desired, that we love.’

The silver plane hurtled over Newfoundland, over the Labrador sea. Someone told me I might see the northern lights as I fly east and north, but I wouldn’t have noticed as I was deep in writing the letter that I had already mentally composed long before I decided to make this trip to see him over New Year’s Day. I didn’t have to edit myself this time, I knew exactly what the letter would say.

I reread the note to myself before sealing the envelope. Then I drew out the first letter of his name in pencil on the front. What a beautiful letter it was, probably my favorite out of the entire alphabet. A letter I was so used to writing myself. With ease the swirls and curves of each arch seemed to flow from my heart, my mind’s eye, drawn in and through my arms to my hands, releasing themselves onto the pale ivory paper envelope. My plane landed soon after.

I had missed this country, I had missed him, too. I wondered how time had treated him ,for it had been a few years since I had last seen him. I wondered if I still had the ability to quiet his heart when he was feeling manic. He always said I had a way of doing that when I was near. And I wondered if he even needed me in that way anymore.

When we met up, he looked just as beautiful as the day we saw each other for the first time, almost ten years before. And as if no time had passed, we started right where we left off - hours flew by in the comfort of each other’s presence. Talking. Catching up.

He asked if I was getting sleepy, and my attempt at concealing the tiredness was transparent. I looked at the clock; maybe it was the jet lag or the clock hands pointing to midnight, but I knew it was time to say good-bye. Reluctantly, we both stood up and tried our best to part ways.

As good as it felt to be near him again, I gave him the letter I had written letting him know that I was letting the nation of us go. He took the sealed envelope, and then I watched him walk away for what I assumed would be the last time.

My heart didn’t belong locked up in a tower across the ocean from my home. It belonged in my chest, beating, living, feeling, sometimes hurting, but always loving. I deserved to be free, and understanding and needing that more than a dream, I was finally able to let him go.