

A Letter in Confidence

Sofie Camarillo
Butler University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall>

Recommended Citation

Camarillo, Sofie (2018) "A Letter in Confidence," *The Mall*: Vol. 2 , Article 18.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall/vol2/iss1/18>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Mall by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.

A Letter in Confidence

Sofie Camarillo

To my lifelong partner,

You weren't a burden until I was fourteen years old. I forget that there was a time when I didn't resent you. You made me confident. You weren't constantly on my mind. You were compliant with me for such a long period of time, then you let me down. It broke my heart. I couldn't understand why this was happening to me. I looked in the mirror and I didn't like who you were anymore.

You never dismayed me until your existence grew. It felt like you were an elephant in the room; or rather like I was the elephant in the room. You stuck around in the most inconvenient areas. Other people said they didn't notice you but I always did, and I couldn't figure out why. I noticed the lack of muscle definition you had, even though you were just as physically capable as everyone. Everyone's arms were more cut, yours were just big and bulky. Your thighs were also much larger than I wanted. I hated walking onto the pool deck in my swimsuit and feeling your thighs rub together, it felt like everyone was staring at you all the time.

I remember as a freshman at swim practice, I couldn't help but notice the way you looked against everyone else. I compared you in the locker room. It was humiliating to see how skinny everyone else looked next to you. You protruded in my lower stomach areas; the exact place I didn't want you to be. You also gave me some serious love handles. I can never find jeans that fit you the right way. They would be way too tight in some areas and way too big in others.

I wondered a lot about what other people thought of you. It was never obsessive until I met Migs. You consumed my thoughts. Migs was the first boy who I truly loved. He had dark hair that swept across his forehead. He was about four inches taller than me, he was tan and muscular; he had the swimmer body. Everyone knew him for his insane gift of swimming. In some ways, dating

him was like dating a local swimming celebrity. People knew me as “Migs Martin’s girlfriend.” I couldn’t believe that a boy like him, was dating a girl like me. Because of you, I convinced myself that he couldn’t ever love me because of the way that you were. That’s when I decided you needed to change.

I needed your presence to diminish. I stopped eating because of you. As I stopped eating you didn’t bother me in the same way you used to. I used to hate you because you made me feel insecure. You bothered me in different ways, now all you said was, “Feed me.” It felt like you were screaming at me every second of the day for more food, but I had to stay strong and ignore it. I couldn’t feed you after all the pain you caused me. I wanted to control you, so I did. People started giving me compliments, telling me how good you looked. My coaches even pulled me aside to let me know that they saw a change in the both of us. Swimming was terrifying because it made me vulnerable. I couldn’t hide you from anyone. Everyone could see you, and that was scary to me. I was worried people would ask questions. They did. I told them that I wasn’t trying to lose weight. It just happened. It wasn’t intentional.

Once Migs started to notice how much you had slimmed down I was content. I finally felt like he could love both of us now because of all the work I put in for you to transform. I felt like an entirely new person. I had a boyfriend, I was swimming well, and I was skinny. I had never been so happy. Migs was a sweet boy, most of the time. Sometimes he’d make some nasty comments about you. He would tell me that you would be easier to show off if you were smaller. Sometimes he would say that we could swim faster if you were stronger and skinnier. It really hurt me sometimes. I did love Migs, but he made me feel like you weren’t good enough. He made me feel like you were unacceptable looks wise, and swimming wise. All I ever did was try to make you look smaller and make you perform well in the pool. I later realized that nothing I did would ever be enough for him. Migs couldn’t understand us because he was in extremely good shape and an extremely talented swimmer without any efforts. He didn’t understand us because we had to work hard to be mediocre. Migs was ignorant, but so was I.

After about a year and a half of dating I found out Migs had been cheating on me. I received a text from my friend. I looked at the blue bubble on my phone and I couldn’t believe the words on the screen. “Sof, Migs has been cheating on you.” This was my first real

heartbreak. I didn't know that pain like this existed. I felt a huge weight and this sharp tingling in my chest. I cried for hours and after that all I could do was feed you. Even when you weren't asking for it, I fed you. I didn't know how to cope with such an immense feeling of emptiness. I didn't know how to fill the void in my life, so filled it with food. It felt so good to eat whatever I wanted. It was freeing, but it was also burdening. I couldn't control myself.

Soon enough, I began slipping even more. I was feeding you regularly, but at this point I could hardly wake up. It felt like you had me glued to my bed. This wasn't just a tired teenager. This was much more than that. I couldn't understand why nothing would ever go my way. It felt like the world was against me, and I had to fight this battle against you all by myself. Around the winter of my 16th year I felt myself going into a depression. I was quickly losing energy. I remember one day after ten hours of sleep, you made it extremely difficult to leave my bed. I was going to practice everyday, so naturally I thought that was why I was so exhausted. You had felt never this weak before. I confessed these issues to my mom and she said that she thought something was wrong with you. It felt like you were giving up on me and I couldn't grasp why. That was the beginning of my downfall.

A few weeks later they took some blood from you and found that we had Hashimoto's disease. Turns out that our thyroid wasn't working too well and that was probably causing the depression and the extreme fatigue. Hashimoto's is a form of hypothyroidism, meaning that our thyroid wasn't producing enough hormones. The doctors wanted me to give you some medication everyday and said it would help with our fatigue. Typically when people go on thyroid medication they will lose a lot of weight. I was excited for this to happen. My enthusiasm was soon diffused. You did the exact opposite. You blew the fuck up. You put on what most people lose. I hated you. I could hardly look at you in the mirror. I felt alone, and I was just stuck with your fat ass everyday. The medication was supposed to make me feel better, but I felt worse. I wasn't as tired, but I was just as dejected. You were never on my side anymore and I couldn't figure out why.

I was starting to accept things and the way that you looked until the summer of 2016. I was having my goal meeting with my coach, Derek Howorth, about the things I wanted to achieve in the upcoming season. I expressed my concerns about my performance in the pool

because I wasn't swimming as fast as I used to. You used to be able to do amazing things, but for some reason you couldn't do them anymore. I asked Coach Howorth if he had any ideas about as to why this was. He normally talked to me about how I am too hard on myself, and how I need to have more confidence, so I expected for his answer to have something to do with my negative attitude towards myself and you. That's not at all what he said. He began talking about you. He said that you were getting heavier. He explained himself and at the end of his spiel he nervously muttered, "I'm not saying you're fat." If he had to say those words about you, then it didn't really matter. I felt my face turn red. I had this tingling sensation in my head. I felt my stomach sink. I could hardly look at him. I held back the tears that I so desperately wanted to let out. I had never felt so vulnerable in my life. I looked down at my hands as I sat alone in a chair, in front of Coach Howorth's desk, and he stared at me waiting for an answer. I felt so small, yet so fat at the same time. I felt him peering down at me. I just nodded. If I had attempted to say anything the tears would have basically made a waterfall out of my face. I was ashamed of you. You ruined me. I hated Coach Howorth for being so fucking concerned about you. His words about you agonized me.

After this conversation, I blamed all my failures on you. When I didn't feed you, you somehow swam faster than ever. Why was that? Why was it that now you were at a healthy weight that you couldn't do the things I worked towards everyday of my life. From that point forward, I couldn't help but think that my swimming performance was a direct correlation of your number on the scale. I'm pissed that Derek ruined the way I looked at both myself and my swimming.

Derek always remind me to put "direction" into my emotions. He would inform me that it is constructive to take negative emotions and put them into swimming. He advised me to take my negative emotions and turn them into something positive. I had done it before. It wasn't ever easy, but it was effective. I attempted to take the emotions that I had and put them towards a goal. I worked as hard as I could to prove to both him and myself that you didn't need to be under 140 pounds to swim fast. I tried. I couldn't. I couldn't find a way to take my emotions and make them into something worthwhile. I couldn't do it because I wasn't angry. I wasn't sad. I was numb. Numbness can't be directed.

I couldn't grasp why the males in my life felt the need to make these comments about you. I don't know if they realize that I can be sensitive at times. I don't know if they never realized how insecure I was of you. I always felt like it was so obvious that I was self-conscious of you. No matter, the things that were said about you were unacceptable in that I was already aware of what you look like. I don't need any other ignorant prick to point it out. I see you everyday when I get ready in the morning. I feel like your flaws are amplified when I'm shopping and it feels like nothing will hide all your bulges. I especially notice you when I see you lined up next to my teammates. I didn't need to hear anyone else's opinions about you, when my thoughts about you fill my head everyday.

I don't know why I let the things Derek and Migs said about you hurt me so much. They didn't understand the way you work. I allowed Derek and Migs to influence my opinion and the way I viewed you. That wasn't fair to either of us. We are both deserving of something much better than the insight and the comments they had to offer. I valued their opinion far too much, and the my opinion about you is the only one that matters. You're not as skinny, you have wider shoulders, your thyroid doesn't work as well. I'm not saying that I like the way you look or the way you function. I hate the way that you are. I feel like I had lost years of my life because of the way your thyroid works. I hated that you couldn't lose weight the way everyone else around me did. I hated that you couldn't swim as fast as I knew you could. I always felt like I was trapped inside of you. It is hard for me to think that I am going to have to live with you for the rest of my life. You're the only body I have and I am stuck with you for who knows how long.

Being insecure about you has allowed for me to learn more and more about myself. I've found my weaknesses and I have become a stronger person because of you. It is going to be a long journey being able to come to terms with all the pain and troubles you've caused me, but I know that everyday is going to get better. It is going to get better because I am learning. While it is troubling to think that I am going to have to deal with the way that you look and the way that you function for the rest of my life, I know that overall it is my responsibility to learn how to cope with you. Every single day I learn more and more about you. Learning more about you is what will make it possible to survive with you. I am still angry that you have been the source of so many of my problems in life but, you have still been able to help me gain so many new

experiences. All of the achievements I have made in swimming have been because of you. You have given me the unbelievable opportunity to swim at the collegiate level at Butler University, and it has been one of the most amazing experiences ever. I may hate the way that you look and hate the lack of control I have over you at times yet, I am still able to be grateful for you at times. Learning to live with you, I have to be able to recognize all the wonderful things you have allowed for me to do. Sometimes you're pretty lousy and other times, you're pretty fucking amazing. Even though the lows with you are painful, the highs make it all worth it.

Sincerely,

Your lifelong partner