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Love Letters

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Love Letters to the Person Who Called Me “Everybody’s Favorite Pink-Haired Nightmare” on Yik-Yak (and to everyone who up-voted it)

Kathryn Willoughby

1. Ahhh, hello. Probably thought you wouldn’t hear from me. Maybe didn’t even know that I saw it. And, of course, social media always seems anonymous. You probably thought you were in the clear, but that knot now tightening in your stomach says otherwise. You thought being anonymous meant the blame does not rest on your hunched-over shoulders, your smirk illuminated by a phone screen. You didn’t think liking it would contribute to its cruelty. You were wrong.
2. When I saw the thread “who is the most annoying person at CU?” I clicked on it so I could type, “guys, it’s National Kindness Day. let’s not do this.” I went on the thread to defend other people. Do you know what that says about me?
3. When I read it, my limbs went numb. I heard about ten separate heartbeats in my head. Out of rhythm, out of time. Somehow, I sent a screenshot to Kelsey and stumbled over to her room, landed on the floor, and sobbed until my vision went purple. Until my vision went nightmare-pink. Sobbed some more. I told her: I want to die. I wanted to die. I asked, If this is how people see me, why do I even exist? I could not stop crying. It felt near unsurvivable. Liz and Kelsey’s voices were the last thing I remember before the darkness swallowed me whole.
4. Those words haunt me every time I redye my hair an average, quiet blonde. I hate that I surrendered sunset pink hair in order to hide for the rest of that semester. My hair was rosewater and honey. Now it doesn’t taste of anything at all.
5. I nearly did it, you know – killed myself. And if you are a particularly terrible person, you might laugh, reading this. You might say I’m being overdramatic. But I would have died. And no, no one would know who you are. No one would know you had a part to

play – except you. You would always know. It would tick behind your eyes for the rest of your life, a twitch that never settles. Someone would have lost their daughter, sister, friend because you found her annoying. You would always carry that. It would be a secret you could never share. You are lucky I am as brave and strong as I am. You are lucky I know Jesus. You are so lucky it was me. If it were anyone else, you would regret that post until you die. You would never find forgiveness.

6. I'm leaving Concordia after this semester, but it's important to me that you know it isn't because of you. You didn't scare me away – I came back for two more semesters. You do not have that power over me. Last Spring, you decided to play a game with my deepest fears, but I've played Monopoly enough times to know you gotta think long-term. Gotta see the whole board.
7. I am so sorry that the world has made you so cold. That isn't passive-aggressive, I really am. You are a shard of glass in the street, a memory of a mirror now broken. Someone broke you. I'm so sorry. I don't like you, because you were cruel. But I love you, because I have been you. I have said cruel things. I have been a cruel person. But I learned to reach into my past and find what caused the hatred. Only love can heal the brokenness. I know you are broken, because this is all just insecurity. So I hope you find healing. I hope you find peace. I hope I am the last sweater that snags on you. You are capable of so much more than what you have said about me. **I love you.**