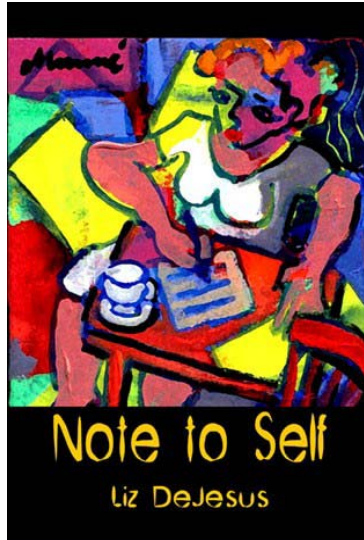


*Note to Self*  
by  
*Liz DeJesus*



*July 28*

*Dear Journal:*

*Today, absolutely nothing happened, just as nothing continually happens each and every day of my life. So much nothingness was happening that I was overwhelmed by that nothingness. Oh God! That doesn't even make sense to me and I just wrote it. I didn't know whether to start trying breaking everything in my kitchen just to see what would happen next or, just sit around and watch how long nothing could continue happening in this adventure I call my life. This was at three o'clock in the morning and I've never woken up that early in my life. After two hours and fifty minutes of nothing I went to work at the wonderfully successful coffee shop where I earn my meager livings (and please be aware that I'm being completely sarcastic when I used the word wonderful). My workplace just so happens to sit across the street from where I live. This little bit of trivia adds to the nothingness of my life.*

*My biggest concern in getting to work isn't gridlock, a broken fan-belt or a flat tire. No, I usually worry about stepping in someone's used chewing gum, but, I was writing about Dancing Beans, where every day I get to ask the patrons these three critical and life-altering questions:*

- 1) What would you like to drink today?*
- 2) Decaf or latte or black?*
- 3) Small, Medium or Grande?*

*That is what I do all damn day. If we get ten customers every day, we will actually make a profit for the store this week.*

*I say WE meaning myself and three other people that work with me. There is the manager Arthur; who by the way I have come to think of a ghost because I hardly ever see him. That is a shame because he is a real hottie. He keeps his jet black hair neatly trimmed, and I watch him closely when I don't think he is watching me so I can observe his constantly shifting green eyes that always seem to be taking in everything going on around him. He is something I could sink my teeth and nails into. But it's kind of hard to do that when he's in his apartment all day.*

*The other person being in the WE I mentioned is an extremely shy college student Margie, who I'm beginning to believe is allergic to conversation. I am absolutely-fucking serious! I tried talking to her once and she started hyper-ventilating. She also broke out in rashes that covered her arms within minutes. She couldn't show up for work for a week. How she manages to take peoples' orders without getting a rash, stuttering or breaking out in tears amazes me.*

*This is a shame, cuz' if she had a bit more confidence in herself, she might be able to get a date with the guy that works in the video store right across the street right next to where I live. He's always checking to see if she's working on the days that he's at the video-store. Margie is a cutie, but she really doesn't take care of herself, her blond hair is constantly hanging limply in her face, so you only get a glimpse of her when she sneezes and her hair puffs away from her face during the sneeze concussion. I would like to help her with her stuttering. I used to stutter when I was seven, but something tells me that she would probably get a rash again if I talked to her.*

*The other unfortunate soul that happens to work in this little subdivision and unsuccessful corner of my personal Hell happens to be my best friend Lucien. Truthfully, he isn't the brightest crayon in the box, but if I could assign him a color, I would have to say that I would make him puke-green. The only reason why I acknowledge him as my best friend is because he makes me laugh and he allows me to tease him mercilessly all of the time. He reminds me a lot of Jack Black, you know...that guy from Tenacious D who's always showing his crack in movies. Anyway, Lucien is a bit on the chubby side. He's not exactly what I would call fat; rather he just is not in the best shape, unless of course you consider round being a shape. If he were smarter, and if he took regular showers, and if he didn't drink so much, I'd go out with him. But, unfortunately, that is a lot of 'ands' and 'ifs' and Lucien has all these things working against him. Anyway again, all four of us work here in this little coffee shop...good God, it really is pathetic.*

*Oh, something else. We don't even sell muffins to go along with your coffee. I mean, even I go to Starbucks when I want to get coffee. Do you really think I would drink the swill I make here at Dancing Beans? Just who am I, or more to the point, just who do I think I am? Like everyone else, I have a self-image but unfortunately it's not always the brightest. I tend to think of myself as a poor unfortunate soul that just so happens to grace this world with her presence. I am plain and simple Samantha Adams. Although if you want to get cute and be friendly, you can call me Sam. Yes, I've been told countless times that if I'd have been born male my parents would've named me Samuel Adams, after the famous Samuel Adams. You know the one, Harvard graduate, politician, beer-brewer. Oh, and if you make any jokes about my name, I'll punch your teeth in, pull some of them out of your mouth and jam them up your nose. I really hate jokes*

*about politicians and beer, especially if you put me in them.*

*Anyway here's a poem for those of you that appreciate the effort.*

*The Rose*

*So this is what has become of me  
This is what has become of my beautiful life  
Not the way I thought it would be  
So sad, so many fears  
And so many tears*

*Where does love live?  
So that love I may capture  
Where do I find sweet passion?  
So I can have some type of distraction  
And when do I become enraptured by it all?*

*When will someone answer my call?  
When will I finally fall?  
But is this what I've become?  
Some shriveled up memory  
Of what a rose used to be?  
There is nothing left of that wondrous scent  
All that is left is a memory  
Of a drifting melody  
Of the song I used to sing*

*There is no prince charming  
There is no happy ending  
Just the sky on me falling  
And me trying to lift this ceiling  
That is slowly closing in on me.*

*So this is what has become of me.  
A shriveled up dying rose  
That is petal by petal  
Falling into the ocean  
Going along with the notion  
That I still have something  
to offer to the world.  
Going along with the notion  
that I still have some of my gifts  
as I set of into the world adrift*

*this is what has become of me*

*a memory of what a rose used to be.*

*Sigh... This is now the end of another entry of mine. Say goodbye to the rants and raves  
of a madwoman...*

*Un-sincerely,*

*Sam Adams*

## Chapter 1

The alarm went off, the beginning of yet another beautiful sunny day, at least that would be for the rest of the world. I was lying on my bed with a floor surrounded by dirty laundry, just waiting to see how bad my life could get even though I haven't so much as stuck my foot out from under the covers to test the air temperature. Ah, my bed! My safe haven! Absolutely nothing can hurt me when I'm in bed and the sheets are covering me, keeping me extra warm from head to toe. I peeked at the alarm-clock from underneath the sheets and cursed at it. The red digital numbers read 5:00 AM those numbers burning themselves into the back of my brain. I stared at the display and watched the numbers climbing as minutes ticked off.

Listening to the alarm beeping incessantly, I could've sworn that the clock was laughing at me. I turned it off by grabbing it and throwing it across the room. This is my favorite thing to do in the morning. I, of course, preferred to get an extra six hours of sleep, but that was a wishful thinking. This is a daily thing, me testing the alarm clock. I wanted to see how many throws it would take to break it. (I like to think that I'm an evil villain from a cartoon whose sole purpose in life is to destroy time and then taunts the super-hero by going on a clock-breaking rampage.)

The alarm hit the wall it stopped its annoying beeping. It didn't shatter and break into the hundred-or-so pieces that would signal its demise. To date, it has endured six throws since I bought it last week, the one before that took eleven throws before it finally gave in. If I went to see a shrink and I told him this, he'd probably tell me that I have something against time. He'd try to convince me that I may think that I 'feel' like I'm running out of time or whatever psychological mumbo-jumbo he's come up with so he could fill me up with pills. But the reality of it all is that it's just great fun smashing the instrument of torture that wakes you up in the morning against your will. (Okay, so what if you were the one that set the alarm so it could wake you up?)

Really, when your dog wakes you up in the middle of the night you don't grab him and throw him across the room, do you? Okay, so what if you do. The point is that I do it to alarm clocks. I don't have a dog. I prefer cats. I've invested a lot of money in the alarm clock business. I sat up, threw the sheets aside, took a deep breath and said, "Five o'clock in the fucking morning. Don't people die waking up this early in the morning?"

Slowly, on shaky legs, I grabbed my pack of cigarettes from the night stand and went to the bathroom. I looked inside and to my dismay saw that I had one cigarette left. I sighed and said to myself that it must be a good week to quit. I do this from time to time. I smoke when I have money and quit when I can't afford the habit. I didn't know if it would finally fuck up my lungs or not. But that didn't stop me from smoking. *Note to self: Life is a bitch.* I lit my last cigarette took a nice long drag and blew the smoke as I let out a sigh, and put it on the ashtray next to the sink, so I could brush my teeth while I contemplate my misery. It was then that my cat Noir decided to make a special appearance.

Noir showed up this morning as if to grace me with his presence. Because everyone knows that cats are gods and like every god, Noir knows that the world revolves around his little universe. Or, he might have shown up just because he wanted to be fed. He usually hides under

the couch all day and night, coming out from underneath only when he is hungry. To make his point, he rubbed his black fur against my legs telling me that he wanted his attention before I took care of myself.

The only 'person' that pays me any attention these days is the furry one I'm looking at right now. I know that sounds both sad and pathetic, but hey, you take what little affection is given to you. Even if it's not exactly the attention you're craving for. But I'm so desperate for attention that even if a broom fell on my head I'd be happy for the next two weeks and hoping and praying that another broom would fall on my head. My thoughts were interrupted when my bastard of a cat bit my ankle. This Apocalyptic sign insured that I would have to feed him very soon, or I know that I will suffer his wrath in the form of shredded furniture. I don't know how, but Noir manages to keep his claws as sharp as razors.

I rubbed my ankle and checked it for blood and found traces of red beads. I'd have been seriously pissed had the cat actually managed dig his claws into my ankle. He apparently knew my limitations. I sighed and went back to the depressingly simple task of brushing my teeth. The cat can wait for a minute, I'm too busy thinking about how much my life sucks and trying get my daily bathroom ritual done. I spit the toothpaste foam out of my mouth into the sink and scooped a handful of water to rinse. Then I stepped into the bathtub to take a shower. Life on my side of the fence sucks big time at this particular moment. I thought the grass was greener on the other side. I know I am dead wrong. It's never greener on the other side, that's the fairy tale. I think someone gets up earlier than I do and spray paints the lawn a bright green. They're all bloody cheaters - whoever *they* are.

I thought about all of this as I took my shower. The fact that I have experienced a bucket load of failures in past relationships didn't bother me. It didn't bother me when James the guy I was completely in love with turned out to be raging homosexual. It didn't even bother me when my fiancé Tom fell in love with his tennis instructor and canceled the wedding two weeks before we were supposed to tie the knot.

I suppose what really bothered me was that ever since these events, my life has been on a miserable standstill while everyone else - including my so-called-friends, were moving on with their lives. They were the ones getting the better jobs, apartments in the Village and marrying doctors, lawyers and extremely well to do rich whatnots. I mean I used to have all of that. I had the good life, the nice car, the great apartment, the awesome job and the boyfriend to go along with it. And what happened? I got dumped.

One other thing that has been bothering me was that my 'friends' never had any time for me either. I was down in the dumps for six months after Tom cancelled the wedding and my 'friends' were too busy vacationing in the Caribbean or frolicking about in Europe while engaging in hostile takeovers of major companies as a hobby. Then again I see these well-to-do friends as being lazy bitches. They sat in their nice country cottages being waited on hand and foot on any given weekend, yet they were too 'busy' to pick up a phone to give me a call to make sure I hadn't hanged myself. Or maybe call just in time to keep me from slitting my wrists while I sat in a tub full of warm pink tinged water. Either way, I think what I'm trying to say is...“Some friends huh?”

I got out of the shower, wiped the steam out of the medicine cabinet mirror and looked at myself in the mirror as I dried my short black hair with my faded red towel. I studied the nude reflection of my body, distorted by the steam that covered the mirror. It made me wonder what it was about me that scared men off. I turned to the left eyeballing my profile, sucking in my belly, taking a deep breath to raise my breasts. I turned again and tried to see what my butt looked like and drew the line at getting a stool so I could see the reflection of my ass in the mirror. Instead, I picked up my cigarette and relit the end. Steam condensation had put it out. I took another long drag trying to get every bit of enjoyment from the tobacco that I could. I blew the smoke at my reflection and just glared at the reflection for a moment. I saw that the holes Noir had put in my leg had stopped bleeding.

On the bedroom side of the bathroom door was a full length mirror. With my towel wrapped around me, I stepped back to the bedroom thinking about getting dressed glancing in the full-length reflection. I looked in this mirror intently at an image that wasn't clouded with steam and pondered the person I saw staring back.

"Who are you?" I asked the reflection that glared back at me. I seemed to get better and better at glaring. I've forgotten what I look like when I actually smile. However I usually don't want to smile. Somehow I had learned to enjoy wallowing in my personal ocean of misery that I had created somewhere in my past.

Just think about it! Who are we in reality? We are really little more than pawns for society, politicians and science. We live on a small blue planet that despite seventy-five percent of its surface being covered with water is called Earth.

Think about that! It doesn't make sense. In my humble opinion, I simply think that I should stop thinking logically in a world where thinking logically makes no sense whatsoever. I decided to go back to my regular routine and forget about all the shit I had been thinking since I got out from under the covers. That is what happens when I over do it and this is the price I inevitably pay. I'll never be able to be a ditzy blonde, not for a moment. I'm too much of a brunette to do it with a straight face.

I tried to smile to see what I looked like. When I did, I looked weird and a little goofy. At least these are the adjectives I picked this morning. Then I glared at myself once more and then I felt normal again. I considered the reflection, thinking that I'm not bad looking. I have a 'Spanish' nose - that's what my mother Isabelle calls it. Personally, I think it's just big. My eyes are small and brown with dark black pupils. I think they are sad looking. Lucien calls them demon-spawn eyes and he says that I can look into a person's soul and make them confess all of their crimes and sins just by having me look into their eyes. My lips are full and probably the only thing about myself I actually like. I eyed myself again, now that I didn't have to worry about steam and noticed that I didn't really have a bad body; I confess that I cannot help but notice the small bulge of belly in the middle. I resolved again to start doing sit ups. Uh-huh. Sit ups. Me. Right.

I'm a tiny, feisty Puerto Rican. Towering to a height of five-foot-four-inches and wear a size six. Overall, I feel okay with that and truthfully, that's all I have to say about that.

I'll admit to having curves. I love to eat. I eat like there's no tomorrow. Is that a crime? I'll be damned if I let anyone come between me and a friggin' cheeseburger. I just wish I had food in my fridge that I'd actually want to eat. I sighed, slipping out of the towel to dress. That way I wouldn't add anything else to the list of things I want to change about myself. Instead, I slipped into my jeans, decided I was going braless today and put on my purple tank top and my combat boots, while balancing my cigarette between my lips. It was my last cigarette, I was going to suck every last bit of enjoyment out of it that I could.

It was now 5:35 AM. I went into the kitchen where I served the cat a plate of milk and on a separate plate I gave him his dry cat food. I like to shake the box when I feed him.

I also like to sing the Meow Mix song, "I want chicken, I want liver, Meow Mix, Meow Mix, please deliver."

It pisses Noir off royally because he knows the food is coming but he also knows it isn't going to come until I finish the song.

I blew the last bit of smoke at the Noir, to which he replied with a hiss. He hissed but didn't move from his position over his plate. He must have picked up his eating habits from me as he too ate as though there would be no tomorrow.

I made myself breakfast consisting of a plain bagel with cream cheese and a cup of green tea. This was all to go since I had to open the shop at six o'clock. I grabbed my bag, my keys and my breakfast, putting the bagel in my mouth while holding the cup of tea in my free hand, and closed and locked the door behind me as I braved yet another commuting challenge of jay-walking across the street.

I was the only one in the store every morning. Arthur usually shows up around noon, if he feels like it, to cover for everyone else's lunch breaks. Margie shows up when she hasn't had a near-lethal attack of whatever the previous day and isn't too afraid of stepping outside her apartment door. Lucien shows up whenever he feels like it and since Arthur is a cheap bastard and would rather have cheap and unreliable help than good and loyal help. Why else would he keep Lucien on the payroll?

Oh, I love Lucien to pieces, but I wish he'd be more responsible when it comes to work. Not that this is the best place to demonstrate responsibility, but most of the time I feel like I am the only one that is ever here. But when it comes down to it, I am the only full-time person, working a whopping eleven hours a day from six in the morning till five in the afternoon, making seven dollars an hour plus tips (that's a funny thought).

I knew it wasn't much, but it paid my rent, which was only five hundred dollars a month that included most utilities like water and electric but all of the other extras like cable and the telephone were on me. I was always able to afford bagels and tea for food, that to me seemed to last a lifetime. If I wanted something good to eat I could always stop by at my parents for a quick bite. What a great life I continually ask myself when my good fortune will come to an end. That

way I can see what else will happen in my *great, great life*. I'm being completely sarcastic of course. Some of you do grasp the concept of sarcasm, don't you? Good.

July 29

Dear Journal:

*It's 6:30 in the morning, and I have yet to write anything of interest in your lovely, pale pink pages, besides the little doodles in the corners of the pages that is.*

*I already completed the always boring morning routine of opening the store. I've already put the coffee to brew, which by the way gives the store a nice aroma. And even though I don't drink much coffee myself, I really do enjoy the smell of it in the mornings. It makes me think of newspapers, briefcases, and suits. Isn't that strange? I think so. Anyway, to add to an already boring morning, I will include a small story. Something funny happened to me the other day that I forgot to include within the pages of my lovely pale pink-paged journal.*

*I went to the bookstore the other day, because I do that from time to time. You know; go buy books, read them, top to bottom, and left to right. Get it? Anyway so I went to the bookstore and since I didn't know where I could find the book I was looking for I went to the information desk to ask. Because I figure information desk... they must know something I don't. I had to wait in line because like me a lot of people didn't know where to find what they were looking for.*

*Well the lady in front of me didn't know what she was looking for, and didn't even know where to find it either. I mean she gave this girl the description of the book, the picture in the cover, even the color of the lettering, but she didn't know what the title was or who the author was. And I was just standing there behind this lady that probably didn't know what she had for breakfast that same morning. I gave the girl a thoughtful and reassuring look, as if letting her know that I too have dealt with customers like the indecisive lady.*

*I got my book which was a copy of Strangers in Paradise by Terry Moore, which Lucien recommended to me. I started reading it as soon as I got home and so far I've enjoyed reading it. Way to go Lucien! You get one point and a high five for being in the gene pool.*

*This is the end of another entry of mine. Say goodbye to the rants and raves of a mad woman.*

*Yours (not really) Sam Adams*

*About the Author*

*Liz DeJesus was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, in 1982 and currently resides in Elsmere, Delaware. Liz started dating at 13 and after that it turned out to be the greatest disaster of her life. Luckily, it inspired the novel you are reading now. She now lives happily ever after with her fiancé Kurt and a fish named Pete.*

