

Chapter 25

Change is hard.

I wish I could just dream myself into a new life. One filled with yellow rays of light streaming from the sky all around me holding me up away from harm, and in the light of happiness The days would never end. The lonely nights would only be memories. Yesterdays dreams would be today's realities. I would be filled with the love of God and the peace of love. The darkness would fade away. I would lie in flowers and violet colored sheets made of silk. The fragrance of flowers fills the air. Life would be so light that I would just float into the clouds. I would be gliding with the birds as they circle me singing their praise to God.

I knew I needed to do something with my life here I was with no direction. I asked the other members of AA what I should do and where I could go from here. fear surrounded my every thought. I am going to end up a prostitute, or destitute.

Member: There are agencies out there that help people with disabilities and

you are disabled, you're an alcoholic.

Me: Where are these agencies, where can I find help I will call them today.

And I did from that meeting I went straight to their office. From whatever directions the guy told me. I sat there scared and desperate.

Amanda: Hi my name is Amanda I am a counselor here for Rehabilitation

Services. May I help you?

Me: Yes, my name is Christine Michelle. I was at an AA meeting and one of the other members told me that you could help me. I don't know what to do with my life. When I wasn't being taken care of by lovers I would strip and tend bar here and there. My entire life has been sporadic. I have a certificate as a medical assistant, but I never used it for anything. I went back to the bar scene as soon as I got certified, but I couldn't handle the adjustment. I can barely handle my life now. I am an alcoholic and I dance in a full liquor bar. I was given commissions to drink and so I drank and drank and drank, they didn't hold a gun to my head but now I find myself in a bind because I know eventually I will drink if I don't leave this environment, they say in these AA meetings that we as alcoholics have to change persons places and things. I really don't know what to do.

I started crying out of despair, I was so embarrassed that I was breaking down in this woman's office and I didn't even know her. She showed me such compassion. And she listened and truly helped me.

Amanda: Christine it's never too late. It's only too late if you give up.

As long

as your alive there is hope for the future. We will help you get started in a new career. You have to decide which one you want. And then we will take it from there.

From that day forward they meant every word they said. I was given my second chance. They put me through a number of tests and I even spoke to a psychiatrist for a psychological evaluation. I grasped onto this opportunity and didn't let go. Just like a kite taking me up and out of harms way, this was a dream come true, I couldn't believe this was happening to me. Here was a chance to change my life forever, a hope that I had forgotten existed

I chose to become A Massage Therapist I went to Sheridan Technical Center. As I was sitting there in class this time learning Anatomy and Physiology I heard loud and clear all of the things I had done to my body it was hard to hear of liver damage and remember all of the bottles of wine I drank, the suicide attempt with my over does on both Tylenol and diet pills. What have I done to my liver? At the time I didn't think about what I was doing to my body, I didn't think about the years to come. Then there was the lungs and all of the millions of air sacks called alveoli, that I had destroyed I thought back on the two packs of cigarettes I smoked a day for 14 years, plus all of the marijuana. I knew that even though I wasn't in pain that didn't mean that there wasn't damage. Breathing is the very first vital sign of life why did I smoke. The pancreas is responsible for insulin which breaks down sugar. I was always told that sugar harms the teeth, now that I am missing a few I thought if sugar can eat right through enamel which is a hard substance, then what has all of the candy bars and gum done to my pancreas, and other organs, all of that had to be broken down into my body, I thought if candy is bad for you then it must be poison even though it tastes so good. I took my health for granted, sure I did the occasional exercise yet that night I would drink all night thinking that the little bit of exercise would compensate for all of the packs of cigarettes I smoked and all of the bottles of wine I had drank. A couple apples do not make up for the countless hamburgers and candy bars I ate. I can't make up for what I have done all I can do from this day forward is change. Exercise instead of hanging out in bars. Eat healthy instead of eating fast food. I heard Goldie Hawn in a interview say "I eat for fuel" I thought about that. I believe that is what food is intended for.

It's true life is scary painful and tragic at times, but I want to live it to the fullest, and stay around as healthy and as long as possible. I took big risks concerning my health as a dancer not only with alcohol and drugs but also with men doing things I wouldn't do if I were in my

right mind, I would drink and my defenses were down they would give me things and because I have fear of the future I would except there help for security selling myself only for material gain, not considering the risks of disease that could not only harm me but kill me. I stopped. Material gain does not cure aids it does not cure herpes, even more serious rape or murder. yes these are extreme cases but they do happen. And they could happen to me. I was not going to allow myself to be a statistic, I was going to pass I was going to make a better life for myself. I had no choice I was the only one who was going to help me. so I did it I made it. I passed! I passed my state boards!

~O~

Cricket

I danced with Cricket here and there. I would see her one year and then I would quit working for a few years, but when I would come back I would run into Cricket again it would be as if no time had passed. I loved her she was a nice woman. I saw her grow up, I remember the first time I met her she was lying there sprawled out over a row of lockers.

She was small and cute, with short hair and a few piercing.

Me: Did that hurt.

Cricket: Shucks no.

Me: Not even the one above your eye?

Cricket: I wanted it, I got it.

She was getting pierced all over the place before it was even popular. It seemed at her tender age of 17 she had a style all of her own. She was fantastic with an energy I hadn't seen before. It's like she glowed in the dark yet the lights were on. She also had this contagious laugh, even if I caught the tale end of what she was saying I would still get the flavor of the conversation just by the way she expressed herself. I know she was going places fast, she had to she was Cricket. I was four year older then her yet she seemed to always be ten steps ahead of me in everything, She made more money, she was more beautiful, she was a better dancer, she was more popular, she had more courage, she was funnier, she was Cricket. I loved her yet I envied her in a way wishing I was as good, and why shouldn't I have been we were doing the same type of work, we were around the same age, but she was still a bit better and I couldn't catch up. I had to accept that she was

Cricket and I was Shannon.

I came into work late like I always did.

Manager: You need to go on stage, Ozzy can't keep it together, and we have customers.

Me: What happened?

Manager: Cricket got into a Bike accident, she's dead.

I took a step back and gasped for air.

Me: Oh my God, oh my God What happened?

Manager: She had an accident on her bike on I-95 she hit debris and went down. She was alone. She wasn't wearing a helmet.

I got ready jumped on stage, but then cried throughout my set. All I kept thinking about was how gorgeous she was, how clever, how charming, how funny, what a

magnificent dancer she was. She had the world by the balls, she was going places doing things, achieving her goals. Where did she go?

Days after the accident the owner of the club told me he heard of Crickets passing, and that he remembered that I knew her for many years. The manager over heard the conversation knowing I was a writer and asked me to write her Eulogy. I told him I would start on it right away, and so I did tearfully. I sat there and just wrote all of the things I thought of her in a letter, and it came out in a beautiful array of love.

**In Loving Memory
Susan Arnesen (Cricket)
July 18th 1971 - Nov 30, 2003**

It's shocking to me how you of all people can be taken from us so soon, there is so much more of you to give. You surpassed all tangible limits forever changing and reinventing your self. Over the years we have seen you blossom from a lovely young lady into an electric vive rant woman. With a style all of your own, you have taken the ordinary and turned it into the extraordinary.

You are one of the most spectacular women of all time: such strength yet graceful, gorgeous yet with no conceit, professional yet personable. Your wit and intelligence are obvious to all who meet you. Just by the way you tell a story, you could turn a simple conversation into a life changing event. You have an amazing smile and incredible laugh. One which will linger with us always.

You have an energy about you that only God could have put there, and a limit only God could have known. Eagles soar high into the Sky my friend, but as sparrows must eventually fall to the ground. Now you're free to ride through the gates of heaven, as you have on earth. Cutting through the clouds, the wind blowing through your hair, you screaming.....

**“Watch out Heaven
I’ve got hell to raise.
watch out Angels, because
here comes *BLAZE!!*”
AKA CRICKET**

Angel

She was a carbon copy of my cousin Becky. As soon as she got off the stage she was like “Get out of my way!” And that was her disposition most of the time. She was a Hell Raiser and proud of it.

Angel: You going my way after work?

Me: I live in Hollywood.

Angel: I live in South Beach. Can you give me a ride? I’ll chip in for gas.

Me: That’ll be all right, sure I can give you a lift.

As soon as we got into the car she lit up.

Angel: You smoke pot.

Me: Of course how else could I get through a shift.

So we passed the joint back and forth, until it was no more.

Me: You remind me so much of my cousin Becky it just staggers the mind.

Angle: And where does she live?

Me: Indianapolis Indiana.

Angle: Well no wonder I am from Indiana too.

I drove Angel home night after night until she saved up enough money to buy herself a car. On those drives she and I got pretty familiar with one another. I told her about Cricket and how much I missed and loved her. Angel was able to meet Cricket but only for awhile until her passing. Cricket had a profound affect on anyone she met even if it was just for a moment. I cried as I would talk about Cricket.

Angel: So how long did you know each other?

Me: About 16 years. She was a wonderful person. She was like a cousin to me. I will never get over her death..... What about you do you have family?

She got quite for a moment. Looking out the window.

Angel: I have a son and a daughter. I gave up the girl and my X husbands folks are watching my boy.

Me: Why aren't you watching your boy?

She gave me no answer.

Me: Are you close with your family?

Angel: Why sure I am.

She got a bit frustrated with my probing so I left it at that.

As the weeks passed we became friends, I told her about my drinking, and how I had quit.

Me: It was killing me, take it from me Angel the drinking isn't worth it in the long run, all of that alcohol has to filter through your liver, and the liver just wasn't made for all that booze.

Angel: All I do is drink and smoke it's not like I do the hard stuff.

Me: Well I quit smoking cigarettes about 12 years ago. Now my only bad habit is Pot and ungrateful women. Learn from my mistakes. I am ten years older then you, and I feel every bit my age because of the crap I fed my body. You have time to make wiser decisions then I did, You have time on your side. And while were on the subject. You need to come up with a plan B because this job doesn't last forever. Your body will give out on you. I was strong and vive rant too. Now look at me. I am 37 and don't know what to do, I am tired you hear me girl? I am tired and you will be too if you don't watch your steps and march your self right out of here. Don't be like me and wait till the last second to try and figure out what to do.

She took my advise and quit drinking, and started counting down the days.

Angel: It's been one month Shannon.

And that one month over time became a year. Then it was the cigarettes she used the patch and she got off. I was impressed and happy she heard me because this girl didn't seem to listen to anyone. I would ask her if she was ever going back to her son. And she did, she went back to Indiana to raise her son. She changed her whole life around. I was and still am so proud of her. We both stopped smoking pot after she had been gone for awhile. I know she'll be okay.

She told me once, "It's not what you do that matters it's why you do it, and it's not what people call you that matters either, it's what you answer to"

~O~

It was really hard changing who I had been for all of those years. How do you change who you have been? I didn't know the first thing about having a normal life. I relapsed two or three times since I passed my boards. It's scary to face life and change. It was hard to keep my clothes on and walk away from the fast easy money. I enjoyed the race, the hustle it became apart of me, at this point it was what made me feel good, the more I made the better I felt about myself and my situation.

~O~

I was with a group full of women when I met Elizabeth it was some lesbian wrap group. I was hanging out with a friend that I was sort of dating at the time. I guess you could say we were friends with benefits. But there she was a beautiful blond with a gorgeous face and lovely hands sitting across the table from me. She smiled at me I about fell out of my chair. She covered her mouth when she smiled I thought maybe she just had her tongue pierced.

Me: Why are you covering up your smile?

Elizabeth: My bridge is falling out.

She was coy, I thought it was cute.

Me: What is your name?

Elizabeth: Elizabeth, and yours?

Me: Christine Michelle

A moment passed while the other girls remained talking. I couldn't keep my eyes off of her.

Me: Would it be to forward to ask for your e mail.

Elizabeth: How about my phone number?

She wrote her number down on a napkin and passed it to me across the table.

Elizabeth: If you'd like you can call me tomorrow.

Me: Okay.

But I didn't I waited a few days, I wasn't quite sure what to say.

Me: Hi Elizabeth, it's me Christine how are you doing?

Elizabeth: Fine, What have you been up to?

Me: Just working as usual not much of anything else. Hey would you like to go out to lunch sometime?

Elizabeth: Well what are you doing right now?

Me: Not much.

Elizabeth: Why don't you come over.

Me: Sure where do you live?

She gave me the directions and I got there as fast as I could. She was so beautiful I couldn't wait to be in her company. Once inside her apartment I just couldn't take my eyes off of her. I couldn't believe how beautiful she was, and that I was talking alone with her. What a beautiful face and so feminine. She had the prettiest hands and the

way they moved just threw me into a different dimension. I wanted to hold her hands. Every time she smiled I smiled too. I couldn't help it, it was like a magnet. My eyes locked into hers like something out of a movie.

The conversation was light until we got onto the subject of love.

Me: I don't believe in love anymore.

Elizabeth: Oh If the right person comes along you'll fall in love again.

Me: I wrote a book called "A Place For Me" it's my life story, I wrote it to help other women who have gone through tragedy as I have. It would take hours to tell you about me so instead I brought a book over for you, hoping that maybe you would find some time to read it.

Elizabeth: I would love to read it.

So I gave her the copy. We continued talking about our likes and dislikes music, women, and things. It got late I gave her a hug and let myself out. She was so beautiful that the hug for me was beyond sexual.

Me: See you later, tell me what you think of the book.

A few days went by and she asked me to come over her house. And so I did. She greeted me at the door with a hug. And a big smile.

Elizabeth: It's nice to see you again, I read your entire book. Every day after I got off work I would come home and read your book till I fell asleep. I just want to hold you and show you love.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. She actually finished my book she cared enough to get to know me, this beautiful woman actually cares about me. She laid down on her bed and told me to lay next to her, she pulled me next to her and she held me, she was so affectionate, rubbing my arms. Rubbing my chest with those beautiful hands. She took me to a different place, sure I was lying next to her in her bed but she took me far from the pain and anxiety I had felt for so long.

Elizabeth: I just want to give you love Christine.

She whispered in my ear as I let myself drift off to sleep. The next day I thought of her every minute, I couldn't wait till I was able to see her again.

She was in between jobs and so I gave her money in order to help things be easier in her life. I brought her lunch and flowers to work I was falling so in love with her, I couldn't help myself in my mind I kept telling myself that I was moving too fast. But I just fell faster and faster whether we were together or not, My heart just yearned to be near her and have those beautiful hands on me once again. Just her looking at me seemed to make my world drift away and every single care in it. I just wanted to make her smile. And when we kissed I didn't feel like I needed to breath anymore. I just wanted to feel this way every second of every day for the rest of my life.

Elizabeth: I have never felt like I was beautiful, my father remarried and he had a new family, he no longer loved us anymore like he did his new daughters. I always felt second best.

Me: But you are so beautiful Elizabeth I don't know how you could feel any differently.

(She put her arms around me)

Elizabeth: I'm sorry for the life you had.

She then cried for me as she held me. I never had anyone cry for the childhood I lost.

Me: Something happened to me when I was 13 I was shot up with a drug. There were three adults in the room with me it happened when I ran away one day from the group home I was living in.

Elizabeth: Which arm?

I held out my right arm. She sucked the crease in my right arm. As she cried.

Elizabeth: That part of your life is over and it will never happen again.

Me: Life is crazy. I had a friend named Cricket. She was so special to me, I admired her even though she was younger than I was. She was more beautiful, much more talented, she was just so everything. She was a star and everyone knew it. That is one person and one accident I will never get over. She died a few days after Thanks Giving, she was riding her motor cycle and hit debris, She died shortly after. What a loss to us all.

Elizabeth held me that night, she was so loving and patient. I was falling into her and loved every breath she took. I was falling for who she was and how she was treating me, she held me so tight and gave me so much affection. Could this be the love I have been so desperately searching for? I gave Elizabeth anything she wanted. In my mind this was the woman I have been looking for. The romance was over the top we would dance nude to love songs just holding each other. I just can't even put into words what that did to me. We would make love for hours as if we were going to be separated forever.

~O~

After we had been seeing each other for a few months she asked me to stop dancing, she said she wanted to be the only one to see me nude. I didn't at first but when she gave me an ultimatum I quit. But I was still doing body rubs. She would ask me if they were in the nude and I would lie to her and say that I was clothed, it hurt me to lie but I didn't want to lose her over something that meant nothing to me. Just the thought of losing her from my life hurt beyond my imagination. But the fear of being destitute was just as strong. I worked with the homeless and it was a terrible reality how these people lived. That too is an unimaginable fate.

I didn't know how to be this person she wanted me to be, I didn't have a road map to this new person I had to become to make her happy. I didn't understand what the big deal was because I was giving her anything she wanted and all of me. Every time she told me that she couldn't handle my job. I didn't want to lose her but, who was going to help me when I am old? I am really alone in this world, I really have no family with the exception of the light relationship I keep with my Aunt, Uncle, and Cousin In Indianapolis. They are the only ones I can count on as far as listening to me, they don't get me out of binds in my life but they do listen. I do have a friends that have been there for me, but when it comes right down to it, I am alone. And what a scary thought that is.

Elizabeth was always asking me for money directly and indirectly and I gave it to her. After awhile she just wanted more and didn't appreciate what I was giving her. She asked me for \$3,000. I said "No" Then she said to take her on a cruise I said "No" I knew there would be problems after that. She got so angry with me. I knew if I didn't make money I would lose her and if I continued my job I would lose her. I cried all the time just knowing the clock was going to run out on me.

I put up with anything she through at me, I let her scream at me for hours. For me it seemed worth it each second left of love. She told me that she was going to get married for money. Of course I didn't like the idea but she was going to do it anyway and so she did. His name was Jose she said her friend Terry turned her onto him, she went on to tell me he was gay and there would be no sex involved. Elizabeth: And if you don't like it, you can walk. He's a nice guy madly in love with his lover and he needs his papers. And I need money.

Me: I want nothing to do with this. And I don't want to know anything more.

But she talked about these guys here and there anyway. In fact, they were doing favors for her all the time, and at one point she was more happy to see Jose then she was to see me. I saw her put her hand inside his pocket and smile at him. She was no longer treating me that well. I don't think she was capable of being nice to me anymore. She lost all respect for me, because I let her yell at me constantly. I would just sit there and let her scream thinking. What am I doing here damn it, what am I doing here?

~O~

I scheduled a time to see my family in Indianapolis. I told her I would be gone for 10 days, that I was going to buy a house up there

for she and I to live in eventually. While I was up there I couldn't get a hold of Elizabeth. I wasn't concerned at first I thought maybe she just got tied up with things. Someone else had her attention and affection. It took me by surprise because we had made love the night before I left, and I made sure she had money in her pocket. Why would she do this to me. Why couldn't she let me know before hand? Everything seemed loving when I left why Elizabeth Why?

After about a week of not being able to get in touch with her. I started feeling sick I was worried about my business about her and I, about my future, I was going crazy and feeling sicker and sicker.

I was sitting in my Aunts living room surfing the internet when all the sudden I felt faint. I tried getting out of the chair but when I did my knees buckled beneath me, I felt dizzy and then all of the sudden I couldn't see, for a moment everything went black. I didn't know what was happening to me I was so scared. Am I having a stroke? Am I going to be paralyzed? What am I going to do? I screamed for my Aunt.

Me: Claudia call 911 something is wrong with me.

Aunt: For goodness sakes Christine sit down and relax. Calm down you'll be fine your flopping around like a fish.

I walked out side and went to the garage. I asked my cousin to help me.

Me: Becky, I need someone to take me to the hospital.

Becky: I'm tired and I have some things to do.

My Aunt once again told me to sit down so I decided to call 911 myself.

Me: Please help me I don't feel well I feel faint.

911: Where are you?

I gave them my Aunts address. They said stay by the phone there on their way. With in minutes they were there, Two female ambulance drivers. They were very nice to me, they carried me to the ambulance one arm over each of them. Once in the ambulance they took my blood pressure. It was 200 over 170.

Paramedic: Have you taken any drugs?

Me: No

Paramedic: Are you on any medication?

Me: Yes Xanax. I have been taking it since 1991

I told them about my relationship and what was happening with Elizabeth. I had such a bad head ache that I could barely answer their questions.

I stayed at the hospital for a few hours till they got my blood pressure under control. They placed a heart monitor on me. They brought in a woman which was a crisis intervention counselor. I talked about my relationship with Elizabeth she told me I had to get out. She

went on to tell me that it was abusive. But I already knew that. I couldn't let her go even though I knew it was killing me. I called Elizabeth from the Emergency room. I finally got though.

Me: Elizabeth I'm in the hospital my blood pressure is sky high I don't feel well.

Elizabeth: Why are you calling me, shouldn't you be talking to your family.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I just sat there and cried, the nurse saw how upset I was getting and took the phone from me, telling me to calm down. Once out of the hospital I slept over night at my Aunts house but first thing in the morning I drove back to Florida, it was a non stop trip. Once I got there I called Elizabeth.

Me: Hi I am back, did you miss me?

Elizabeth: I am not feeling well, I'll talk to you tomorrow.

Me: Okay

I went to her house anyway. I knocked on her door and there she stood nude with a towel wrapped around her. She was expecting someone else.

Elizabeth: I told you I will talk to you tomorrow, I'm going to bed I don't feel well.

Me: You don't have a hug for me? I haven't seen you in days.

Elizabeth: Can we talk tomorrow?

She didn't hug me she just turned and walked into her room.

Me: FINE!

I left but waited only seven minutes before returning. I walked right through the front door it was left unlocked and to my surprise there in the bath room was Elizabeth dancing all dolled up with make up on and beautiful clothes.

Me: Thought you were sick? You liar, who are you going out with, who is she? Got a hot date you damn cheater. How could you do this to me?

Elizabeth: I am going to see my sister.

Me: At 11:30 at night all dressed up? You were sick remember? How could you do this to me?

I stormed out knowing there was someone right behind me to take my place. I meant nothing to her. I was an option and when I wasn't giving her enough I was replaced.

~O~

I was so sick in fact the doctor put me on heart medication because my blood pressure was so high. I had thoughts of suicide a friend of mine named Lois kept calling me, asking me if I was okay, I told her I had bad thoughts going through my head as I sat there looking at pills

I had laid out over my desk. I had emptied the bottles and imagined my own demise. I wanted to kill myself.

Lois: You need God, You need to read the bible and you need to go to church. Thoughts of suicide are of the devil. Do you want to spend time with my father? He's a good man and I know he can help you. He'll be swimming tomorrow grab your swim suit and join him.

I thought what do I have to loose I am having thoughts of suicide anyway what is one more day on this planet going to hurt. So I did go swimming and felt the gentleness of this man. I watched him as he swam back and forth almost treading water because he was on a mission to loose weight, he over the years had gained a considerable amount of weight and at this point it was clearly affecting his health.

Lois's Father: Lois said you needed to talk.

Me: I am having thoughts of suicide. I am in love but she left me. And I have much resentment for my parents I am just so full of horrible feelings that I can't breath.

We talked for quite some time I told him all about myself. I then said:

Me: Why did God save me all of these years?

Lois's Father: Because he loves you Christine God loves you.

Those words sent chills down my spine. The thought never crossed my mind that God loved me and that it was just that simple. I thought it was just because I was supposed to endure this life. That it was just because my time wasn't up and that I had to stay here until the hour glass finished.

I decided to go to church with him that Sunday but once inside the church. I couldn't sit still the thought of suicide kept running through my head. I just didn't want to be here anymore.

Me: I'll be right back.

I whispered to him. I started to cry before I got to the door. I just couldn't contain myself, the service had already started and I knew he was going to want me to join him but I just couldn't get myself together. I walked up and down the side walk and just kept on walking

Me: God please take my life. I can't get it together. I just keep messing things up. My life is a mess. I'm doing sensuous body rubs, Drugs, drinking. I can't stop and I don't know what to do. I'm just an alcoholic plane and simple, can't find the love I long for. What is the sense in living. If living feels like this? There are people so much more deserving to live that are dying, why would you save someone like me?

I continued pacing back and forth. Walking up and down near by streets. I walked up to the church but stopped at a gate right before the entrance. I was crying but got myself together. I knew Lois's

father was waiting for me. But I just couldn't find a way to bring myself back into the church. I just stood there staring out into the street. A woman walked up to me.

Angie: Are you okay? Do you need someone to talk to? My name is Angie are you new here?

Me: My name is Christine I came here with a friend he's inside.

Angie: Are you okay? I was going home but felt like there was something back at the church I needed to do so I came back and saw you standing here I know it was you I had to talk to.

Me: Oh really I laughed. I'm a lesbian still want to talk to me?

Angie: She smiled. I am a former lesbian.

Me: Really?

I didn't quit believe her so I asked her to name a few Lesbian clubs and she knew them all.

Angie: I have been alone for five years now, I believe it's a sin to be Gay.

Me: I don't, but yes I have been down that road of guilt before. I think having sex without love is a sin.

Angie: Are you having relationship problems?

Me: A lot more then just relationship problems, I'm tired of living I'm having bad thoughts, I do body rubs in my opinion it's borderline prostitution, I didn't think I would go this far. I really don't know what else to do.

She was so attentive. We sat the rest of the time just talking about lighter things. Her job her family my likes and dislikes. Soon Church was out and I had a grip on life though my feelings hadn't changed it did feel good being able to identify with someone and get things off my chest. I went to church the following week and the week after that and the week after that. I cried almost all the way through the first two services. I know that God has pulled me through the impossible. Why didn't I have any faith. How could life have scared the hope out of me.

~O~

I was still feeling sick when I started seeing a woman named Lauren it was about a month after the break up with Elizabeth and I. I was immediately attracted to her Laurens smile reminded me of sunshine. We were introduced by a mutual friend at a pool side. She was wearing shorts and a tea shirt, with a cute base ball cap on her head. She looked so sporty. She had such beautiful legs. She was interesting, bright, talented, and witty. I was very impressed by her. I took note of every single thing she did and every single thing she said. When we three were finished at the pool we went to Laurens apartment, there

she showed us her art work. She had a huge painting of abstract art. She also showed us her web site it was quite impressive it had music and a moving little paint brush which went across the screen.

Lauren: That site cost me \$4,000.

Me: It's quite beautiful. I love the little paint brush. I am also an artist, and a writer. I write poetry and I wrote my life story.

I wanted to get to know her but I don't think she was listening, she was very caught up in showing us her accomplishments and sharing her plans with us.

I saw her at a club and worked up enough courage to talk to her.

Me: Hi Lauren, how are you?

Lauren: Fine and yourself?

Me: Can I take you out to lunch sometime?

I handed her my business card and left. Once I got home I went right back to bed. I could barely stand up. I laid there on my massage table rocking back and forth wishing this terrible feeling would just go away. Hot and cold flashes went through my body. I went to the doctor which seemed to be every other day, he kept assuring me that it was my nerves and that I just had to get on with my life and to try and put aside what ever was upsetting me that relationships and break ups were just a part of life and that life does goes on.

~O~

I waited for Lauren to call me but she didn't. And so a few days later I approached her again and asked her why she didn't call she gave me no real answer. So I asked her one more time please call me lets do lunch. I waited. But still no call. I walk up to her.

Me: Why didn't you call me?

Lauren: I did but your machine wouldn't let me leave a message, your voice mail was full.

I was relieved that she had at least tried. I kissed her and then kissed her again this time with passion.

Me: Do you like what you see?

I fallowed her back into the bar.

Lauren: Yes

She said as she licked her lips. Once inside I let her sit down first but instead of taking the seat next to her I stood in front of her and loosened up my blouse wide enough to introduce her to the black lace bra I had waiting for her underneath. These are yours. Then I loosened up my pants revealing the thong underneath she grabbed my hands not sure what I was going to do next.

Me: Don't worry baby, Everything beyond this point is for your eyes only.

I placed her hands on my hips. Is there anywhere you would like to go besides here?

Lauren: Not sure what do you have in mind?

Me: My apartment

Lauren: Sure lets go.

I was relieved and happy watching her follow me. Once we got to my apartment I showed her pictures of me, my degrees and anything else I could think of to entertain her. I told her I wasn't feeling well which was an understatement, I felt as if I was dying. I wanted her affection. After we talked for hours she stayed the night with me. It was nice having her company. And her affection.

Lauren and I started seeing each other. She helped me get better I had been so sick. We had so much in common and I really had no intentions on falling in love with her but I did. Love was the farthest thing from my mind after the heart break with Elizabeth.

It wasn't smooth sailing with Lauren. I would go to the bars with her because that is what she did. When ever we would go to the bars her friends would hang all over her. And in their own way would pull us apart. They kept telling me that Lauren needed her freedom that she was an artist, she was like a bird that needed to be free. I shook my head at them.

Me: There are many artists that have normal relationships.

Laurens friends would tell her that I was bad for her. It was just so messed up with the head games, and not to mention my life style.