

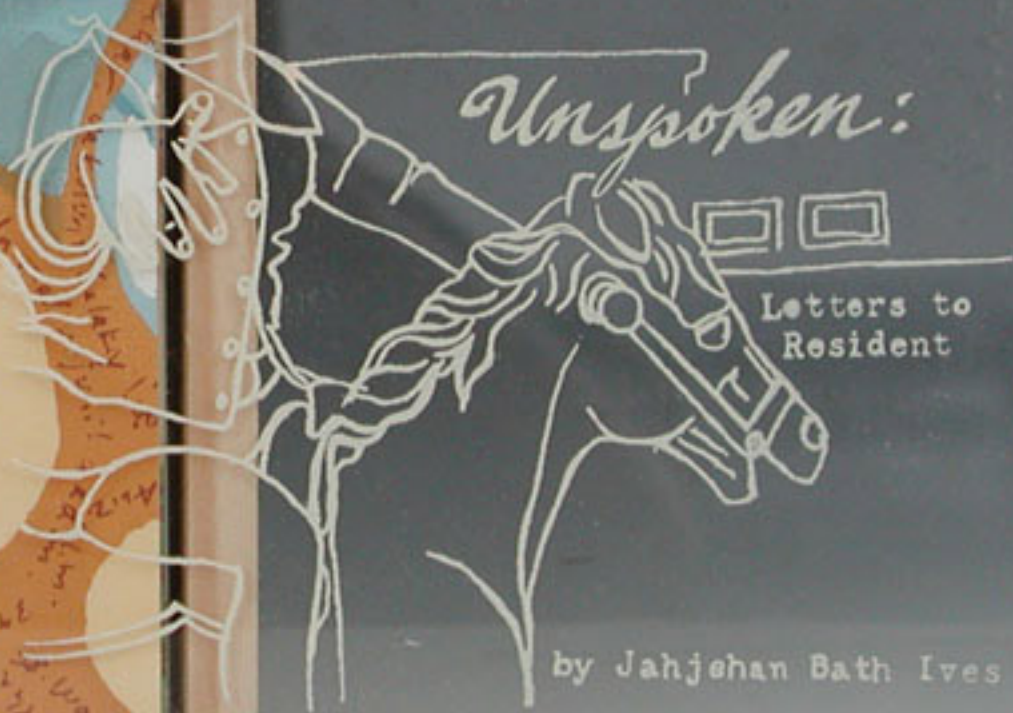
Unspoken:

Letters to  
Resident

lose-lose  
lose-lose  
lost-lost-love  
love-love-love  
love-lost-lost  
lost-love-love

Jahjehan Bath Ives





*Unspoken:*

Letters to  
Resident

by Jahjehan Bath Ives



I am not afraid of death. Now I realize it is simply the next step in waking. I will not miss this body, it has only plagued me with vanity and greed.

I will remain.

I realized this shortly after you died, I stood at your grave and tried to imagine you there, under the earth and stones but I couldn't. You weren't there. I could feel you smile at me from my heart so I turned my eyes away from the earth and embraced you.

We are closer in death than we ever were in life. The body is no longer an obstacle, and the soul contains infinite love. The grave is just a marker, it does not contain you, I do. The grave does not hold you. I do.



Raheem  
C/o Resident



I saw the scrim that covers the world pulled aside the night you died. I realized that this life was not the reality and now I look around me out of eyes blurred with understanding.

My eyes can't quite focus and I think maybe I am seeing true reality for the first time. The shimmer of this world has gone and the stark light of truth hurts my eyes. I can only squint into the truth and realize that the haze was a dream.

This world is just a dream and when I die I will simply wake to see the truth cutting through the fog. but for now I am enjoying the dream i am part of.



Raheem

C/O Resident

in creating a fiction in your mind  
will come home come home  
in his empty bed gather his forgotten  
possessions and simply exist.  
He will just be there filling  
that empty space we never got us

— 9

Every night people gather at our house to sing the Ya-Sin, the prayer that begs for those who have died to enter heaven. We sing for your release, for your place in heaven, for our pain to be swept away.

It's amazing.

We sing and the sound is beautiful. Love flows as voices fill the room. The energy vibrates through the house. Tonight there were so many people we could barely fit into the room.

It was luminous.



Raheem  
c/o Resident



People are visiting our house day and night. They come bearing food, open arms, and wounds. They look out of eyes overflowing with pity and glazed with pain. They greet us with arms intending to heal, but when thier hearts are torn how can they do anything but cry? They marvel at our strength as we welcome them into our embrace to share the secret.

You were their son, you were their brother, you are our strength. Mingled with god in a corner in our heart you support us and I can see you smite at me when I falter.



their son  
c/o resident



הנה יאמר  
למנו יאמר  
למנו יאמר  
למנו יאמר  
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למנו יאמר  
למנו יאמר



the night we buried your body I  
sensed you at the mosque. Your arms  
wrapped around my shoulders  
supporting your friends as they  
shook in my arms.

I looked into our father's eyes  
and smiled because we both knew  
that you weren't gone. You were  
standing there supporting us and  
it was just clay we were returning  
to the earth. We held you in our  
hearts and I can feel you more  
now than I ever did when you  
were robed in clay.



Raheem  
c/o resident



"i dont know what my question is  
i dont know"  
... your name is more than enough

tasir tajri (im)

nat illa h



I can't ride behind an ambulance without crying. Each time I hear the siren I am transported back to a moment I never witnessed; your last time outside before you died.

As you rushed to the hospital in an ambulance, alone, how scared were you? Did you ride in that screaming box with knowledge of your death or with peaceful certainty of salvation?

I'll never know because I didn't call. I thought you'd recover, I thought you'd be home for dinner on Wednesday. I thought I'd be able to support you. I never thought I wouldn't get to say goodbye.



Raheem  
c/o resident



to the far

മമ്മാ രാമദാസമുഖിലേ  
wade's kumtum

Somedays it's hard to crawl out of bed,  
to feel hope, to smile.

I still want to talk to you.

We had a great conversation the month  
before you died. We forgave each other.

Put away our  
childhood and  
started to know  
the adults we  
were becoming.

You were coming  
over for dinner,  
but you never

made it, you got stuck in a hospital bed  
where you laid silent as I whispered  
into your ear. I told you I would take  
care of you, quit my job, help you find  
you strength, live with you till you hated me again.  
But I never got to show you I would.



My little brother  
c/o resident



I am still here  
life goes on

I woke this morning and nothing mattered and everything mattered. I remembered everything and I can't shake the feeling that I've been cheated; that an easier life exists somewhere and I'm not allowed to have it.

I dreamed we were being flung through hills, catapulted without anything to hold onto and then I was in a maze of rooms, you were lying in a hospital bed, peacefully unable to move, and you had the bluest eyes.

I couldn't stop crying. A weight is on me. I can feel it crushing me into the couch, suppressing my words, stealing my levity and suddenly everything is meaningless. Suddenly I am mute with tears and I just want to lay down and shake with solitude.



Raheem  
c/o Resident



43. Wa

Ya Taburanna  
Ya Taburanna

Ya Taburanna  
Ya Taburanna

Ya Taburanna  
Ya Taburanna

Dua  
Ya Taburanna

Ya Taburanna  
Ya Taburanna

Ya Taburanna  
Ya Taburanna

you smile at me from photographs  
decorating my walls.

I wonder if I will always surround  
myself with so many mementos. Will  
we always be comforted by snapshots  
of the past? A time where I can see  
myself clearly next to you. Now it's  
hard to see you although I often  
feel as if you are behind me,  
lingering in the room,  
waiting to speak.

But when I turn all that greets  
me is a photograph of a time with  
no future.



Raheem  
c/o resident

*(here they are,  
and within)*



Here I am.

It's been a while since you left, but I still ache. Sometimes I forget for a moment that you're gone. It's a momentary thing that happens rarely in a flurry of laughter. For a second, I think, "Raheem would enjoy this," and then it hits me.

Mom and Dad sold the house, they're moving to a place with fewer  
But they're taking you with them, none of us can leave you behind now. I am moving to a place I never thought I'd go and I'm excited. Life moves, it flows so fast sometimes I feel I am simply struggling to breathe. Struggling to stay on course, <sup>to</sup> meet my goals, to find my secret.  
Stop. It will happen.



Raheem Bath  
c/o Resident



lost love never.

milat hu  
manal

ladhi khalaqul uzwaqa kullaha

arayatal lu hromia  
stakhu minhu na havo

red to.

Four months after you passed away. I had a dream which seemed so real that when I woke I questioned whether I was waking into reality or into another dream.

I was walking along when I saw Dad and Aleema sitting in the seats of a car, your car. As I approached, I noticed that you were sitting in dad's lap. Then I realized that you weren't in his lap; you were in him. He was not aware of this, but accepted the fact that I was speaking to you. I smiled and asked how you were. I don't remember the answer I simply recall your brilliant smile. As we spoke you kept on flitting into Dad and Aleema, appearing within each of them. All the answers were held within your smile. It was so blissful the answers were easy to know, it was simply right.



my heart  
c/o resident



thing ~~is~~ is what doesn't fill over right  
you don't think it will but it does

*These are the words that will never be exchanged.  
Here are the letters that will never be sent.*

My brother Rahsaan died of aspiration pneumonia in November of 1999. He was sick for less than a week and slipped into a coma before I could reach him. When I arrived he greeted me with silence but I was told he could hear me so I spoke to him, wrote to him, and finally let him go.

After his death I continued to write letters to Rahsaan, recording what was happening, delving into the absence, and striving to heal. Separately the letters contained here are the fragments of my experiences, united they are the understanding I was given.

