

**TELL ME  
YOU'VE  
GOT**



**GOOD  
NEWS**

**TYLER  
GOBBLE**

**TELL ME**

**YOU'VE GOT GOOD NEWS**

# **TELL ME YOU'VE GOT GOOD NEWS**

**TYLER  
GOBBLE**

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*for Todd McKinney*

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## **WAY BACK INTO LOVE**

This just in: there are 2,918,177 ways to love someone. I counted.

The TV said to grab it by the face, shake it and tame it like the first man that hugged a dog and said you're gonna be my best friend, just settle down,

But yikes, I'm overwhelmed by its funny shapes, like when a carwash turns out to be a giant hole in the ground.

Or how I haven't been good at balloons and birthday cake since I grew out of Spiderman underwear. And the way Peter Parker loves Mary Jane, I guess,

is another. I can't believe in movies, like the ones you waste the name brand tissues over, because

life ain't no damn Hugh Grant/Drew Barrymore flick: the one thing I say with confidence. Still, a temporary plant waterer falling in love with an olddude pop star reminds me

of falling out a second story window, caught in the arms of my favorite poet. Even then it's hard to believe in taking

anyone the distance, friend or mentor, lover or pal, because I'm no good at math, and I wanna know the odds that ours isn't one of the seven involving vans

and some kind of abortion, or a constant hum of wewouldallbebetteroffifwejustfakedourbeliefinjesus.

My weird noggin trembles for a love that generates new organs, makes history in the shape of poems. Beside me, the radio shouts, WHAT IS LOVE? and I'm like, NOT WHAT BUT WHERE.

## **I'M So STOKED**

you are alive that last night  
I printed 72 pictures of you  
from Facebook, cut out  
Natalie, Spencer, Layne, me.  
The curtains closed, I took off  
my shirt, glued every last one  
to my bare skin. With glue  
there is a coldness you get  
used to. I called you but  
you couldn't talk. Something  
about the lifespan of a fish.  
Something about breathing.  
Something about focus.  
You hung up before I could say  
goodbye, before I could say  
HEY I HAVE 72 PICTURES  
OF YOU GLUED TO MY BODY.

## **GAME ON**

I'm so stoked you are alive,  
like waking up and the baby is squished  
in the cushions, but yes it is breathing.

The guy on TV is trying to pick up two  
chicks at once, one with a smile  
like yours last night shimmering off

the cans on the counter, the other  
has hair with that golden sheen  
of your dog, prancing around the house

until you said WOW when our arms rubbed,  
and he trotted up the stairs, put his head  
in my crotch, a thank you for the nice evening.

## **ANTHROPIC BLOWJOB**

The place between your thighs  
is a luminal space, like a tide  
leaving trash and sand dollars behind.

For sex's sake, I should extend  
this image, but I have other things  
to extend, like our dinner bill,

because when we get together,  
babe we are all appetite, beneath  
our mountains of mashed potatoes.

Our relationship is Sunday morning,  
potluck after potluck, church to church,  
happy with our eyes closed, bellies full.

Out of the bathroom, you ask if I washed  
my hands, tell me about a tribe somewhere  
that doesn't clean their skin, *ever*,

and they all die before age four.  
*Do you want that, for me, for yourself?*  
I'm 22 years old, I thought you knew.

I'd also like to extend our evening,  
an after-dinner stroll around Hump City,  
at your house, where I'd like to sleep in

your bed, but I'll settle for the couch again,  
kicking the National Geographics off the side  
table, dreaming about ending starvation.

## **WRITING HOME**

In 2004, Dean Koontz novels were the only words  
I read, that and messages

black men sent me on Myspace thinking I was my older brother,  
thinking I had finger-fucked them

at Club Odyssey, Winstom-Salem's hottest gay bar.

Sometimes, I think it's best not explaining to my grandfather  
being a poet doesn't make me gay,

like how being homosexual doesn't make my brother insightful,  
jumbling his emotions

in peace sign profile pictures and sideways hats.

Maybe my poems are pick-up lines, I tell him,  
use this bit on your next date

I promise it's okay to pretend the world is a big talkin' book,  
you are a catchy title

spewing funny words half of us can't understand.

## ONE VIOLENCE

I discovered last night the damn  
pretty things have existed inside  
the vibration of your saw glob  
together like a dead bird a winged  
spout of vomit mutilated worms  
somehow beautiful somehow with a glory  
that rivals Jesus I realized stuck  
between these walls like a colon  
the shit and shit-tube walls life bites  
like soggy demons and this cloud coming  
from inside you is a haven I'm safe thanks  
I wish you could talk instead of gargle  
your glowing guts but my hurricane is naked too  
what I call emotions took out a cool lady  
and HEY SHE WAS ONLY OFFERING A TASTE  
my body breathes the paint and I'm splattering  
the tiny things stuffed inside my pockets  
onto these glasses your hands like one  
of those paintings where Pollock flicks and drips  
and drops the colors cigarette butts etcetera  
yep that's life sometimes everyone striving  
for happiness faking smiles chuckling memory  
chunks of roadkill pets and we-are-all-perishing  
-but-together feelings a fleetin' comfort I know  
(phew! been waiting this whole poem to get my lips  
untangled and admit that) in the morning  
you can hug and you try even but hey hey hey  
don't forget at night you can do more than hum  
and wet the world with this inner slush.

## **POEM**

THE GOAL IS TO PLAY  
OH BABY YES IT IS YES IT IS  
Often, affection defines itself as resistance  
kind of like a wage  
but not quite kind of like flipping  
a coin but you've got way way more control baby  
I can find the right  
word the exact word to tell you  
how I feel about your sweet dimples, hankering to see  
which fingertip best  
fits as I tell you the same joke for the 114th time and still you laugh  
Socialization  
some would call this but I'd be apt  
to remind them that I have yet to meet a sound person  
Everyone flashes  
their chest on the Internet yells  
fuck you through tinted windows at 40 miles per hour  
It is okay to be  
goofy with the lights on  
GO FOR IT TRY IT  
have an HELLYEAH outburst windmill  
arms, your voice shrieking  
like you've just won the lottery  
BECAUSE MAYBE YOU HAVE—the self does not exist in  
sealable baggies  
The ruin of imagination  
is a steamroller flattening  
your existence is your ship docked full of boring people  
I'M BEGGING MORE WRECK MORE WRECK

## **Us Two Plus That Baby In Your Belly Makes Three**

This embryo on a string, she says,  
bounces in and out and back again.

Some of us have uncles with shaky pick-ups  
and some of these uncles set fire to chickens,

but all of my uncles have children  
and swear, *A diaper is worth a thousand beers.*

They holler above the hubbub of the motor, the dirt  
road, whistling about their new tattoos.

Some of us have tattoo artists who do their best  
work drunk, and perhaps, parenting is a similar art.

It's like nature is daring me: JUMP  
AND LET'S SEE YOU EVEN TRY A BACKFLIP.

I was never courageous and you know this, baby.

Today, our child is the size of a lima bean  
and tomorrow it is skinning the cat.

This child without a name, has a pronoun,  
already it's got you flubbing your words

when *I'm hurtin'* sounds like *I'm birthin'*  
among the racket of burning chickens.

Uncles smashing Milwaukee's Best cans on the porch  
can't deliver this baby. Are you listenin' to me?

Oh darling, yo-yos are a riot, but they can't solve everything.

## **NEW YEAR'S EVE**

Your hat was a broken piñata.  
My intentions, full of candy.  
And before tonight, I would've shouted

PERFECT

across this neighborhood lined with  
drunk drivers, sitting at the wheel,

contemplating  
the right thing.

I've been scribbling  
my Best of 2010 lists for months  
your name in numerous fonts  
and colors, under headings like

The Wahoos in my Heart  
Dance Partners of the Year

No, my slapped cheeks are not hurt,  
but confused and scared,  
like the tiny dog that wandered  
into our party avoiding the trapezing

feet, mimicking the pup's zig-zagging  
after its tail the natural way.  
Oh do I know things about the terrible urine  
of canines startled by drunk kids.  
Now, I'm motorboating memories  
like I'm running out of self-esteem.

I left without telling anyone, without  
one final song, because  
maybe I am a slug,  
maybe I am hungry,  
maybe I am stupid,  
maybe I am dead.

The pang of your hand on my cheek  
thudded like

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN RIGHT,  
erasing the tug of your squint,  
like good bike tires on black top  
before I wrecked, just like I asked for.

## **I'M SO STOKED YOU ARE ALIVE**

a girl once told me.  
Her name was Shirley  
No, that was her last name.  
She was 17. I was 14.  
We were the same height  
and when we went swimming,  
we wore the same style trunks.  
Her name was Devin.  
No, that was her sister's name.  
I remember French-kissing  
Devin, the sister, next to a big  
cow pasture where a bull  
was scraping its horns  
on the split rail fence.  
This girl, the one who changed  
my life, her name was Alexis,  
but she went by Alex.  
We stood on her porch  
and she looked at me.  
We were the same height.  
I said, "These two weeks  
have been awesome, man."  
She kissed me closing her eyes,  
opening them as if tasting  
her sister, like drinking a glass  
of milk before realizing it came  
from your mother's breast.  
She ran inside. I stopped by the arcade.  
I never heard from her again:  
The email account she gave me  
was invalid: [skater1984@yahoo.com](mailto:skater1984@yahoo.com).

## UNLIMITED TEXTING

Every moment with Jill is LOL  
funny. She is always falling. OMG  
I say and I get a bandaid BRB.  
When I return, she is ROTFL  
and I get mad and bout say TTYL  
but she is my BFF

I'm her BFF  
too. I know that. People say *you are dykes! LOL!*  
and I say to those bitches *TTYL*  
and *OMG*.  
Jill doesn't care, she is too busy making me ROTFL  
and making me pee my panties, so I have to BRB.

Speaking of BRB  
I had a BFF  
in middle school who was ROTFL  
funny not just that ditzy LOL  
like she would say *OMG*  
shit, but one day she said *TTYL*

But she never called or texted, so it wasn't *TTYL*  
or even *BRB*  
it was like *OMG*  
I just lost my freakin' BFF  
and all the fat girls went and LOL-ed  
at me, and Nancy, this evil girl, wrote *ROTFL*

*you are a loser* on my Myspace. *ROTFL!*  
I cried and cried, but my mom said *TTYL*  
and my brother went all LOL  
on my ass so I told the school *BRB*  
and played hooky for a week, grieving my BFF  
It was totally *OMG!*

When I went back, the other kids were all *OMG*  
*we didn't mean to ROTFL*  
*about you and your BFF*  
but I didn't listen. No *TTYL*  
No *BRB*  
on our friendships. I didn't LOL.

But *OMG*, I met Jill so it is all LOL

now because we are always ROTFL and she always says BRB  
and comes back because she is my BFF and means it when she says TTYL.

## **DINNER IS THE NEW BREAKFAST**

My cheeseburger doesn't have to be topped  
with a fried egg, but that'd be nice.

I'd hate to compare our date to hunger, but  
the napkin is often greasier on the other side.

I love the color you've painted the kitchen.  
Yes, I'm sure I can handle rejection with

the right explanation. A thousand words  
is worth an email, a sexy pic attached, a subject

line of SORRY I BROKE YOUR <3 BUT HERE'S  
ME IN MY UNDIES. What I know about flirting

couldn't fill your stomach, but what I know about  
Patrick Swayze fills your heart with questions.

I'm starting to get to the root of the problem,  
like how my best jokes burp up in the shower.

Other people know it's their stutter or their affection  
for dogs. I'm admitting here that I'm lost in tessellation,

begging you to step closer, give me some hints, unable  
to tell apart the bang of the timer and the boom of *goodnight*.

## HEY HEY MY BODY IS MOVING

Today is my day, oh boy goodie,  
gonna get my haircut, pay for it even,  
not just my buzzing hand across  
my scalp, gonna let that foxy lady  
massage and water my head down good,  
gettin' a little tipsy just thinking about it.  
We all need to get stoked sometimes,  
like we strap on beer goggles  
and stagger around with our best buds.  
Only yesterday, I threw my hands up  
ripped off my shirt, told that burning  
wind to get off my back, lighten up.  
Now, I'm ready to get together y'all,  
let people build up my self-esteem  
the way I never could, with that fistful of truth:  
*nice haircut, nice dance moves, nice bod.*  
THANKS THANKS THANKS  
It's called gratitude, when you  
let people store their drugs  
in the pocket of your favorite shirt,  
so please go right ahead because  
I'm so fucking thankful  
not to be dead, that you're not dead.  
It's easy to fall in a bad old groove  
like those old timey folks  
thinking a camera flash  
is enough to set their soul elsewhere.  
I've got news for them:  
things are gonna be just fine.

## **WHEN I SAY WEIRDO, YOU SAY HEY**

*Sometimes, it feels like you got the gold medal at the stalker Olympics, she says and I'm sorry, it's my other half.*

My split personality will send one side to Heaven and the other to Hell but in between, both of me will end up in jail.

*There you go again, throwing yourself under the Judeo Christian bus, but I swear I'm not, religion too tight*

for my style of life, like rolling in paint, smashing into a stretched out canvas, both hoping to stick, hoping the stain comes out.

Sometimes, I'd rather just erasure my birth certificate, leave behind HEALTH at the top, the Go of my last name, the wrinkled border.

Am I declaring that my birth was the problem, another way of blaming my parents? No. I think this is an exercise in social hygiene,

like the girl who wears the hat of buttons, DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR ART, a one-inch circle of comfort pointed my way.

See, some of us are figuring it out, like Mike who told me to oscillate wisely, his crooning floating in bursts through the aisles of the mega

store. To the paint section, a new brand called JUST GO FOR IT, so I did, buying two quarts, one for each arm, to show her I believe in balanced pairs.

## HERE'S ANOTHER POSSIBILITY:

clouds are living things, super intelligent,  
and we are tricycles in comparison.  
I'm imagining a cloud couple on a date  
gazing down on us, watching us  
twist into our various shapes,  
saying, *Oh, that one is homeless,*  
*wait, now an Internet sensation,*  
*singing Cher songs into the public*  
*library computer.* Yes, we evolve  
and persist, I guess you could say.  
My finger is some kind of figure,  
balled inside your palm, my voice  
poofs out like a youngster cloud.  
I lean to you and say, *it's a newborn*  
*chick,* and you nod, impressed with  
these clouds, how they hold themselves  
together, move around, have routines.  
What does it take for life? A system?  
They got it, how sometimes they band  
together, attack us all at once, ferocious.  
I'm sure they can take over if they wanted.  
But you too can take over if you wanted,  
your hair chilled white, eyes and teeth  
with your own bursting. The best things  
in life become a thinking being when  
fermented between us. I see one growing,  
the glow spiraling out of our disgust with  
grownups shriveled up, jitters gone,  
by a nurturing consciousness. I mutter  
the words "floater" and "sinker,"  
the pitiful words I have to describe  
these clouds, like they're something  
to just drift off. Now, I'm staring at one  
radiating around you, thinking,  
*Even if his brain cells aren't remotely*  
*alive, he is gorgeous.*

## **THIS IS SO ROMANTIC**

Ride bikes with me!  
Our helmets protect our heads  
soft from the fossil fuel burgers:  
we go fast through the suburbs  
on the edge of our town,  
dotted with daisies and driveway  
cookouts already in April.  
Our apartment building  
behind us stands like the asylum  
I visited with my girlfriend (before you)  
when her Mom swallowed  
12 pills that started with an E.  
The ride there the last time  
I felt comfortable in a car  
before I knew you  
and your speeding ways,  
before I saw a shirt with  
stick figures holding hands,  
hearts around their heads,  
lop-sided circles empty  
besides two eye dots,  
and the caption *This Is So Romantic*.  
You ride closer as the sun inches below  
the houses with their gold doorknockers  
and gold Hummers parked out front.  
A young boy hits a wiffleball  
ahead of us. We swerve,  
and you say, *Yeah it is*,  
without opening your mouth.

## **TELL ME YOU'VE GOT GOOD NEWS**

The stroke, a few years, a decade ago,  
the doctor said, and my death could never  
come fast enough because the tears inside  
my children's faces are wishing wells,  
hoping for me to sober up, but  
this week's religion lesson claims  
speaking in tongues is how  
some of us pray, noises  
blurred, like the doctor's jittery hands  
in the out-of-control innards of a man  
who rode his bicycle down the hill too fast.  
OH HOW GREAT THAT MUST BE  
Child-me rode a bike before playing doctor,  
but finally with my two cousins and  
my aunt, learning in that dusty trailer:  
some pain only lasts a minute.  
Today, I can't tell you what all these parts  
begin to mean or when it will end, but  
white lab coats like fat-headed ghosts point at  
charts of what is human, and snazzy Jesus-  
loving suits shout at decibels roaring  
like bottle rockets my drunk uncle shot  
at the cousins on trikes, pulling the match  
across his calloused left palm, the only thing  
it's good for. I can feel the flash of  
electricity, a dancing jolt between  
family reunion memories and  
records of the Great Survival when  
my heart stopped beating those 14 minutes  
that one July. On the hospital screen,  
my head is a modern city, tiny people  
running around, not yet figuring out  
you can't straighten your crooked lines  
once the thing's been set into motion.

## **BE NICE**

*for K*

Every time I see you, Patrick Swayze dies again.  
Rewind the clock, let's listen to the clank of your hips

dancing the dirtiness of the mid-teen years.  
Back then, that whole place was like Skatetown, U.S.A.:

board shorts and backward hats, the scars on my knees  
to prove it. Before school, we'd roll out of bed and

there would be a red dawn, and oh we knew, we were  
safe, decisions made for us in some other room.

At 13, things were sucky, scoffing about our ugly friends  
and the way they butted into pictures at the dances.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, you failed a social studies test, bawling  
outside Math class, and I laughed. That was as bad as life

could get, red pen scribbled F and some dude with six armpit hairs  
mocking you in the hall. You think you are the loser of some game show

consolation prize, your dead baby's ghost holding a straight jacket.  
Now, I'm sure the house on the other side of the road reminds me

of my childhood home, the shitty pool in the backyard and  
shirtless kid in the window with a knife. *Looks like a nice neighborhood,*

I say. This is the point where I break, where I forget where I was going  
with this, like how you forgot the way, taking the wrong turn,

ending up at an abortion clinic on a county road. We never got past  
catching up, fake laughing about the hours you spent staring

at the ceiling in your underwear. *If you gave me three wishes, none  
of them would be to die, so that's good,* you said, looking down the alley.

## **NUCLEAR FAMILY RHYMES**

Fucking people was fun like changing hats  
when I was bent-double with growing pains  
but then I met you, learning your head  
holds images like dying horses and church slumber parties.  
Before I left, your father shook my shoulder  
and the way my innards rattled worried him a bit.  
The way he googled me jumbled my nerves too:  
I know you need proof to lock up your daughter,  
but man, the Internet's got some crazy shit,  
how it sags and grows thin, suddenly it's taut,  
but promise, I am 100% goodnesschangedpromise.  
I'm watching T.V., recovering from the hiccup  
of interrupting your family discussion about  
the value of praying the old-fashioned way  
with my theory that the stars are projectors.  
All the cotton shirts turned yellow with  
confusion, heads tilted like almost-blown-over barns.  
Wonder what they'd say if you told them,  
I quit my job at the cheese puff factory to write poems  
about them and their wonky religion?  
Don't tell them, baby, I've been drinkin' drinkin'  
with the money they sent in the card ending  
a cursive God Bless You. Don't tell them I'm a fool  
for everyone or that my family tree is a bunch of friends  
with meth moms and slutty sisters. Oh darling, don't  
tell them that squiggle between us  
when we sleep is my favorite kind of faith.

## **NUMBERS**

I'm so stoked  
you are alive,  
all 7018938511  
of you in the world.  
The number grows like 4 people  
every few seconds.  
I am a needy person  
in need of other bodies  
to comfort my body.  
I read somewhere  
that 1 in 113 people  
died last year.  
Math problem: If I know 1130  
people, like 10 of my friends died,  
but I don't remember.  
I must be a bad friend.  
I must be too busy with my own needs  
to see my 10 friends die last year.  
I'm sorry, maybe.  
Or maybe, I'm happy  
because now there are 7018939152  
people on Earth  
and most of them don't know me,  
but I NEED THEM TO LOVE ME  
AND NOT DIE THIS YEAR

## **OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS**

I am down with OPP:  
bring me your problems  
people, I am here  
for you, I am here.  
Dead mother? yes  
Cheating lover? yes  
Public intoxication arrest?  
yes yes yes. I am only  
me when I am with you.  
I think I love you.  
You have this power.  
Human beings and their  
complicated dust cloud  
of nagging hope.  
I've never been good with  
empty space.  
Let me help you help me help you.  
There is peace somewhere.  
If we touch each other  
I know we can find it.

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Find more at [www.tylergobble.com](http://www.tylergobble.com).