

Donor Pen Sketch and Goodwill Message

Donor Pen Sketch

Donor 1795

I was lucky to have had a wonderful childhood. I have loving parents, three siblings and grandparents who lived close by, so I was constantly surrounded by family. My dad runs a charity, and my mum is an artist, so I grew up in a creative and socially conscious household, which I'm extremely grateful for. However, I also believe that happy families can come in all shapes and sizes (cliché but it is true). I think the most important thing family can provide is, of course, love, but also that unique feeling of 'homeliness' that entails comfort and belonging.

I particularly enjoyed reading and writing-based subjects at school and went on to study English literature at university. I am currently completing a master's degree in Renaissance/early modern literature. Alongside this, I work as a tutor and love teaching and discussing ideas with my students. After I finish my MA, I hope either to start a PhD or to move into a full-time teaching (or ideally to try out both in the future). Academically and personally, I am interested in evolving ideas surrounding the concept of the 'home' and 'hauntings' (I'm currently writing about 'haunted' households in Renaissance literature). I love the theatre for similar reasons: its reanimation of past stories onstage and the inherent ghostliness of this. While I was at university, I co-founded a theatrical production company and directed several plays. My family are perhaps to blame for this passion - around Christmas every year we put on (extremely) amateur puppet shows, and my role is to act as scriptwriter and director.

I think friends would likely describe me as a principled and political person (left-wing). That said, I think empathy and trying to understand where other people are coming from is important. I would probably consider myself an agnostic/atheist, but I have great respect for people who are religious and am often a little envious of the ability to hold such strong faith. But I also think faith can be found in lots of places, including within the natural world itself. My favourite fact about nature is that all European eels are born in the Sargasso Sea - they travel thousands of miles away and then migrate all the way back just once in their lifetime before they die (strange but incredible!).

I chose to donate because I believe that everyone deserves the right to have children in the way they choose and to raise a family. It would be an honour to be able to contribute to people committed to building a loving home, and I wish you the greatest luck with the whole process.

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Donor Goodwill Message to Offspring

Donor 1795

When I was little, I used to write messages for myself and leave them around the house on pieces of scrap paper, in diaries, scrawled on old pieces of furniture. I'd address them to myself and then I'd return to them weeks, months and sometimes years later and I'd scribble back replies. I think I imagined this as a kind of time-travel, a way of blurring the future and the past together. When I started writing this message, it recalled this habit. But, of course, this message is not for me - it's for you and to give you an impression of who I am.

I like good films, being with friends and good food. I dislike bad films, prejudice, and sweet potato fries (they're not as good as ordinary ones). I'm currently studying an MA in English literature and I'm tutoring on the side. In terms of texts, I am interested in connections between the past and present; how the past haunts the present, and how the present haunts our understanding of the past. My favourite books, at the moment, are Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson, Shakespeare's Macbeth and Artful by Ali Smith.

Most importantly, I formed a tiny fragment of the process by which you were born. I am humbled that I could play a role in the creation of you. I am comforted and reassured by the fact that in working so hard to have you, your parent(s) are clearly devoted to you and love you very much.

I have drafted and redrafted this Goodwill message a hundred or so times, but I've realised that it is not up to me to give you fixed advice for the future. Listen, instead, to the people in your life now: your friends, your family and loved ones, and to your own self be true.

As I edit this message I keep glancing out of my window and at the sky - it is a cold day [REDACTED]. There are raindrops on the glass refracting greyish-blue light. I'm looking at two blackbirds in a tree with no leaves - I imagine they are looking to build a nest, a home. Occasionally, one of the birds calls out. Now, or sometime after you read this message, take a moment to look outside, observe small details, and then look up at the sky. When you read this you will be you, and it is this message that might seem ghostly: words from the past, from a stranger. But when you look up, that'll be the same sky that I am looking at right now - even if the weather, colours, light, are different - the same sky, unchanged. Enjoy the world.

I hope you are having a loving and homely life, and I wish you the very best for the future.