



A message in a bottle to the woman I'll become

By Emily Ge

Reader columnist • January 12, 2015

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2015/01/12/3580106/a-message-in-a-bottle-to-the-woman.html?sp=/99/447/450/#storylink=cpy>

dear Future Me,
As of January 2015, you have officially survived 18 years on planet Earth. I don't know where you are in the future, but today, you are writing this from the couch in your living room. Your sister is watching TV, and your parents are taking a walk with your dog. The house is quiet but for the groans and squeaks that come from keeping four people and a corgi in the same space.

The Gig Harbor night outside the window is very dark, and the sky is starless. It rained earlier today, and you had lunch with a friend. You drove home to the sound of Billy Joel on the radio. (Do you still act 30 years older than your age?)

There's fresh soy milk in the fridge and a vase of red and yellow tulips on the kitchen island. Your dad bought them for your birthday

to surprise you when you woke up. He's also the one who told you to write this. (Your mom's the one who edited.)

I don't know what kind of a person you are in the future, but I hope you're still a reader, and I hope you still read books that contain paper. Not only do I hope you still write, but I hope you're a writer. I see you snuggled in a nook somewhere, surrounded by crumpled sheafs of paper and with ink stains on your face, delirious with lack of sleep but ecstatic all the same. I want you to remember how scared you were at first to be published in The News Tribune and how your stunningly amazing editors and readers made 2014 a year you will never forget.

I want you to read this column, your last, and I want you to remember how much everything meant to you that year - how every poem, every film and every song seemed to shatter your life. I want you to remember how

*I want you to remember how
everything seemed new and
magical and created for the sole
purpose of changing who you
were. I hope you still feel that
way about something.*

everything seemed new and magical and created for the sole purpose of changing who you were. I hope you still feel that way about something.

I think about you a lot. I wonder if you still like wool socks and colorful clocks and Albert Einstein quotes. I wonder if you wear your dad's old college sweatshirt or if you still follow all of your mom's rules. I wonder if you stick Post-its everywhere and hoard scraps of verse in a shoebox. I wonder if you love Rilke and rap and New York subway maps. Do you listen to ABBA when you can't sleep? Do you watch Star Trek with your sister? Can you still hit a decent drop shot?

I hope you remember how good bubble tea and mala gao taste together, and I hope you've learned to bake something other than strawberry scones. I want you to remember your friend's birthdays and to go home for Chinese New Year.

I want you to remember how to let loose and laugh until your ribs ache. I hope you remember that silliness is a part of you. I hope you've crisscrossed the globe and that you look back on high school and college with joy, not believing that such a tumultuous time could be just a prequel.

If you haven't in a while, go back to your school and walk through the halls. See which of your favorite teachers are still there, and try to remember why everything seemed like a life-or-death situation. Catch up with the friends you've known since forever and the ones who mattered most in the end. Keep in touch with the people you care about, and know that when you need them, they'll be there for you.

If you need a laugh, watch your sister and your dad watching "The Naked Gun" or listen to your mom's monologues. Just remember - no matter what your sister says - you were mind-blowingly cool.

I hope you still stare out car windows counting trees and dreaming. I hope you remember Chopin when you hear him in an elevator. I hope you still make funny faces in the mirror, and I hope you still believe green tea can raise the dead. I hope you surprise yourself every day. I hope you do unexpected things. I hope you're every bit as stubborn and willful as you were. I hope that you're fearless and irrational, and I hope you know when to leap without looking.

I hope you recognize yourself when you read this letter. I want you to remember how full of love and wonder and fun the first 18 years of your life were. I hope the next 18 and the next and the 18 after that were even better.

Happy belated birthday, and remember one last thing: In the jingle jangle morning, I'll come followin' you.

Love,
Emily

###

Emily Ge, a senior at Charles Wright Academy who will be attending Yale University in the fall, lives in Gig Harbor. She is one of five reader columnists whose work appears on this page. Email her at geemily26@gmail.com.