

Achy Breaky Heart

Musings of the recently dumped

By SARAH GIGNAC

I was dumped last night, by a boy named Joe. (Okay, his name isn't really Joe.) And you know what? I kind of liked it.

I admit, not right away. My immediate reaction was a feeling I can only describe as nauseous confusion. That, and a desire for physical exertion. I thought I should move or cry, so I went for a run. It was a great run. I maintained a good pace, felt strong and nimble. It didn't last. Sometime between taking off my shoes and stretching, I burst into tears. The rest of the evening was a total write-off.

Then I got a good night's sleep. After bathing, going for an early morning coffee with a friend and settling into a day's work at my office computer, I felt much better. I even got to have fun conversations with coworkers. "How are you?" they'd ask. And I'd say, "Dumped." The boys looked surprised, and I'd see the brief moment of panic cross their faces as they wondered what they could possibly say. Then the lightness in my voice and smile on my face sank in and they relaxed, and smiled, and said something witty. Like, "Might have something to do with the smell," or, "So just another Thursday night for you?" I even got a few hugs from the women who interpreted my smile as brave instead of flip-pant. And who doesn't like hugs?

Yesterday I was sad for the loss. But now that it's 24 hours later and I feel pretty good, I can only assume that it wasn't the loss of Joe. For the record, I should say that we'd only been dating for two weeks. And not even serious dating. It was casual. There had been some making out—some very fun and sexy making out—and maybe the removal of some tops. But that was it. No talk of exclusivity, no utterances of the "B" word or "G" word. Just fun, comfortable good times.

I was excited about him. About having someone new in my life, someone fun to get to know. So when he told me that he just wasn't feeling it any more (his words), it's not like he broke my heart. He didn't. Honest. It's just . . . how to put it? I felt like he really liked me. That he was excited about me too. And that was amazing. I felt so good about myself, having someone into me, like I was into him.

Yes, hearing the "Meh" sucked. But, that being acknowledged, I also know from years

and years—and then even more years—of experience, that I'll get over it. Fast.

You can't mourn an almost stranger for long. In fact, I'm reminded of a similar experience I had, at the tender age of 19, almost 10 years ago. I met a boy who was super into me and we dated for a few weeks. He kept saying how great I was, then freaked out and stopped talking to me because he couldn't handle how fast things were going. (The casual hanging out was obviously too much for him.)

I remember a few months later stumbling across a journal entry I'd written the evening he'd broken it off. I didn't recognize myself in it. The hurt, the pain, the anger! And I'm reading this thinking, "I felt like that about . . . what was his name? Steve? Really?" I had no recollection of those emotions at all.

So, Joe, I know I will be fine about you too. Soon. And we'll probably become friends because we're both that laid-back. But right now, I'm allowing myself the luxury of feeling glum. Glum, but hopeful. There's nothing like a big boot to your heart to get you going again.

Sure, I'm falling, but at least that means I'm moving. So right now it's downwards, towards the curb. I'll hit it and get back up, and keep going. Already my brain is in over-drive, planning out my life at the oddest level of details. The project, the trips, the evenings that would be best to go swimming.

And, Joe, I'm looking for a rebound. That's right, I'm actively seeking a date. I'm not saying that part is going well—but I'm trying.

And I'm a firm believer in the rule of half, where it takes you half the time you've been with someone to get over them. So in seven days I'll be fine.

Day one is already down. This weekend will be a breeze, being away from home, partying with friends. Sunday night is booked, then I've got Monday and Tuesday, which are work days and should be easy to fill the evenings with something trifling to not think of you. By then it will be Wednesday and I'll be totally normal.

Right? M

Sarah Gignac is a local writer who continues to like boys in the face of overwhelming evidence that they don't like her back.

lastword@mondaymag.com