

## Intertext

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Volume 21  
Issue 1 2013

Article 13

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2013

### Section Intro: Open Letters

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#### Recommended Citation

Cody, Roland; Kolodkin, Danielle; Mangovski, Samantha; Swenton, David; and Tull, Katie (2013) "Section Intro: Open Letters," *Intertext*. Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/intertext/vol21/iss1/13>

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# open letters



There are times in our lives when the best means of self-expression is putting pen to paper and letting emotions become words.

The articulation of thoughts and feelings requires courage, and it can act as catharsis. The relief of externalizing deeply personal narratives is an acute, yet temporary state.

However, the story itself is not temporary. It stays on paper, to be read by others and perhaps becomes a part of someone else's narrative. The authors leave themselves open to vulnerability as they share their stories.

Normally letters are private conversations intended for a single recipient and response. While open letters are meant to invoke widespread consideration, they also maintain the intimacy of personal conversation.

The act of writing a letter goes beyond sim-

Layout by David Swenton. Paintings by Sage Cruz Field.

ple communication; you are also constructing your own reality. Letters emerge from private thoughts and can sometimes articulate ideas too difficult to express in face-to-face conversation.

The writers in this section have taken a deliberate leap of faith in publishing their accounts. Not only have they revealed raw emotion, but they have attached their names and identities to these deeply private matters.

Sometimes you open letters, and sometimes letters open you. They can hold words that are too difficult to be said aloud, yet too important to be kept a secret.

Here are our contributors' dedications and declarations—their open letters.

—Roland Cody, Danielle Kolodkin,  
Samantha Mangovski, David Swenton,  
and Katie Tull