

the last time i saw...



(figure 1)

**A collection of memories,
and maps of their locations.**

Summer 2007, ProvFlux Festival edition.

the last time i saw...



(figure 2)

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Edited by Tim Devin

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All maps are altered versions of the
US Census Bureau's TIGER/Line map, available
at <http://tiger.census.gov/cgi-bin/mapbrowse-tbl> .

This project is also available online,
at <http://timdevin.com/providence.html> .

If you have a story you'd like to share,
I hope you'll get in touch!

Introduction

Public spaces often have secret meanings for people. Some are positive or neutral; others are decidedly negative. Negative associations often involve memories of the last time a person saw someone who they no longer speak to—such as a former friend, an ex, or an estranged family member. These types of memories are often kept secret even from friends, and can bring up bad feelings unexpectedly.

“The Last Time I Saw...” is a Providence RI-specific book/art project that serves as a forum and memorial for these types of memories. It documents both the stories themselves, and the exact places in Providence where they occurred.

I’d like to thank the storytellers for sharing their very personal (and sometimes very, very personal) memories. Without their participation, this book would not exist. I’d also like to thank Frank Stieber (of the Arizona State University Library) and Thomas Stieve (of the Brown University Library) for helping me find suitable maps; and Amy Hamel for helping me prepare those maps for this book.

Please note: This is the first edition of this work, and is presented as a part of the ProvFlux Art Festival. The final version of this book will be produced in early 2008.

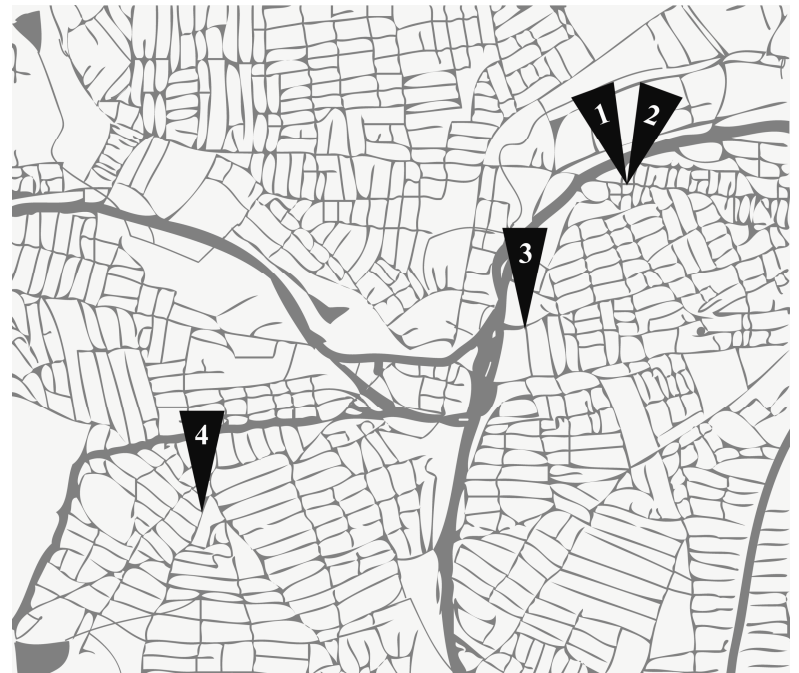
If you’ve had a “last time I saw” experience, I hope you will consider sharing your story!

For more information on submitting stories, and to view the online version of this project, please see <http://timdevin.com/providence.html>, or email me at lasttimeisaw@yahoo.com.

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Section 1: Federal Hill, Olneyville, and Silver Lake



1. 422 Atwells Ave. (Lili Marlene's Bar)

The last time I saw Bailey Leonard Fritzmeier happened three times. In no particular order...

one: I'm crossing Atwells Avenue in the early hours of December 26th, 2005, quickly and with the people and cars and lights around me frozen. I recognize a version of my friend lying beside a car, face down. A friend of mine is kneeling over her, engaged in a one-way conversation with her figure, and then stepped aside, asked me to take over. I lean down toward an ear, speak quietly, I love you. I love you and keep breathing and just keep breathing. From the surrounding throng, someone says move away from her. Someone else says we should turn her over. I reject both requests, and stay right where I am until the rescue comes, places a body that is shaped and dressed like Bailey on a stretcher, and walks her body onto the ambulance. The last thing I see is her feet.

two: *I'm in a supermarket with friends speaking of nothing in particular when I see a collective change in their expression, the jaw-agape face of shock dancing from one to the next. All I can ask is what and then my sister tells me, it's Bailey, she's here. It's easy for me to know that the surprise is not that she's alive, but that she's here, even though she is not alive. I walk through this wave of shock, to her, and begin to form a sentence, when she says, hey, it's okay. I'm okay.*

three: I'm gonna get going, Bailey says to me, standing over this semi-circle booth at Lili Marlene's. I'm thinking, I need to stay, to keep flirting with the girl next to me. Another friend says, I can give you a ride home, and I decide to stay. I rise up from my seat, Bailey and I give each other a hug, and we say, one after the other, Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas. Good night. Good night. I give her a kiss on the

cheek, let go, and she rounds the center table, moves out of view, surely heading toward the door.

By: Rob Albanese

2. 422 Atwells Ave. (Lili Marlene's Bar)

The last time I saw my high school friend "Mike" was in a bar on Federal Hill. We'd recently gotten back in touch via email through another friend. He'd moved away after school, and he was back home visiting his family for a weekend, so we decided to meet up for a drink.

I had lost touch with pretty much everyone from high school, so I was hoping to renew our friendship. We had a good time, catching up. We emailed a bit for a while afterwards, but then the emails got thinner and thinner, and less and less frequent. And now I can't remember the last time I heard from him.

By: Anonymous

3. Corner of Broadway & Barton

The last time I saw him, he was standing on the kickball field, holding a Narragansett tallboy and smoking a cigarette, like always. I think the only time I ever saw him without a tallboy was on the rare occasion he'd show up to an AA meeting—and I don't think I ever saw him without a cigarette. My team wasn't playing that day, not that it mattered, much, 'cause I was on crutches (unfortunate bike-vs-car incident) and couldn't quite make it around the bases. I spent a lot of time watching on those summer Saturdays.

The last time I saw him, I was standing next to "Bill," and I don't remember what I said but I remember it wasn't much and he just sighed, "Bill" did, and said "I can't save him, y'know?" and we both shrugged, and we both nodded, and we both looked at him. He was laughing. It was so hot and so sunny and he looked happy, and I remember thinking that the tallboy looked pretty good, and I bet "Bill" thought so, too, but it didn't matter.

The last time I saw him, he was a few weeks away from overdosing on heroin in a room by himself, after drinking his last Narragansett and smoking his last cigarette. The last time I saw him, he only had a few more weeks to live. But that day at the kickball field, standing on the curve of the hill between St. Mary's and Olneyville Square, he was just drinking a beer, smoking a cigarette, laughing and happy. That day at the kickball field, he didn't need to be saved.

By: Anonymous

4. 212 Pocasset Ave. (Knights of Columbus)

So I had this friend "Brian" see... He used to go missing every couple years... We'd loose touch for no reason, just stopped calling each other... then start talking again... We had been friends since high school... met at the bus stop but had mutual friends, he made me laugh... Anyway, we hung almost everyday back then... Then I went to school in New York, still would see him on breaks, we'd go to Thayer Street and occasional shows...

Then while in college we started to loose touch, I hung out with different people and went to raves which he had a problem with... but we'd still hang out occasionally... Anyway, the summer after I graduated we hung out almost everyday... It was a group of us, my other best friend "Rob" and my sister... Then "Rob" faded out for a

bit... He met a girl and quickly got engaged... Meanwhile, I think my friend “Brian” developed a bit of a crush on my sister... Anyway, the day of “Rob” and “Mary’s” wedding was the last day I saw him... Don’t know why but never got in contact again and felt like we would never hang out after that... I got caught up in working a lot and that was it...

By: Anonymous

Section 2: The East Side, Fox Point, and Downtown



5. 75 Waterman St.

The last time I saw “Mike” wasn’t supposed to be the last time. Just over a year ago, when the weather was cold enough to wear mittens, but still warm enough that I walked everywhere. I was on Waterman St. next to Faunce House at Brown. I’d taken him there once the year before, and he’d found a way onto the roof. I often wondered if he thought about that day. I wondered if he thought about me.

“Mike” had always called me by my last name, so it wasn’t a shock to hear him call it out from across the street. He was wandering with middle finger held high, a gesture of our complicated friendship. Even from across the street, I could see that he looked unhealthy. Still so thin and fragile, but with that punk rock air of confidence that he only found in needles. I missed him immediately.

So I went to him. Against my better judgment, knowing it would hurt, I crossed the street to walk with him. We didn’t talk much, but I watched everything. The way his fingers clutched his cigarette, shirtsleeves ragged and stained. I avoided all the important questions, figuring I’d have another chance to casually mention rehab, to push him towards a safer place. We parted ways at the corner of Waterman and Prospect, we parted ways. I watched him leaving and didn’t even think to ask for a hug. He was too far gone for it to mean anything.

A month later, they told me he’d been court mandated into rehab. He was already somewhere in Vermont, but no one would let me contact him. For months I waited for some kind of news. I held my breath reading the obituaries, wandered the streets praying to catch a glimpse of him. I went through school records to find his fathers phone number, but never had the guts to call. In June, just before my junior year ended, “Ed” told me “Mike” had overdosed at rehab. It was the kind of information that Rhode Island is so known for, passed around from a

friend to a friend until it reached me, rigid and frightened on a public bus.

I still don't know where he is, or how he's doing. I'm pretty sure he's not dead, and every time I leave Providence I have dreams about him needing me. I'm petrified to leave this city and move on with my life, because it means leaving behind all the places that bring him back. The East Side, especially Faunce House, will always mean "Mike" to me, even if we never meet again.

By: Laura

6. 260 Thayer St. (The Avon Cinema)

I grew up in Cranston and therefore know a lot of people who live in RI. I now live in New York City and rarely run into people when I come back to visit my family.

A few years ago, I was walking down Thayer Street. As I passed the Avon I looked in, and recognized the woman standing behind the counter. We grew up in the same neighborhood and had been friends since we met in third grade, though I've barely been in touch with her since high school. We chatted briefly and I found out she had become manager of the theater. It was really great to see her again, though that was the last time.

By: Karen

7. 203 Wickenden St.

The last time I saw "Susan" she was standing on the tiny, tarred "porch" (really just the protruding roof of the floor below) of our apartment on the second story above the Indian restaurant on Wickenden Street. She was waving as I pulled out of the parking lot behind our building. I was moving to Boston and I wasn't coming back. I remember it as an overcast, windy, but warm day towards the end of the summer. She was barefoot and wearing some kind of summery dress that blew around her legs as she waved. Her messy black hair was being pushed over her face by the breeze. It's been about 10 years and I haven't seen her since.

Reading what I just wrote sounds almost romantic. I liked "Susan," but I was never attracted to her. She was crazy and dirty in a way I didn't particularly relate to, though most of my friends at the time were crazy and dirty in one way or another. I myself was very clean, but probably thoroughly insane. Besides, I was spending most of my time pining for one of our other roommates... but I can't even remember that woman's name now.

"Susan" was more of a hippie than a punk, which is what my social circle seemed to be divided between, and while I got along with her just fine she seemed to drive everyone else in the apartment nuts. I gathered this was mostly because she was supposed to be dealing with things like the bills and so forth while the others who normally had those responsibilities were away, and she was screwing up somehow.

I was subletting my friend "Ed's" girlfriend's room for a couple of months. I didn't know what the hell I was doing, I just wanted to not live in Connecticut at my parent's anymore. I was out of college, working a craptastic temp job, and didn't have the faintest beginning of an idea of what I was going to do for the rest of my life. Most of the residents of the apartment were away, and I wouldn't meet some of them for a month or two, but "Susan" was there the whole time. Her

room was across the hall from mine; we were both up in rooms in the attic, where the ceilings slanted sharply. I think I was only inside of her room once; it was like a dark nest made of clothes piled up all over the floor and tapestries on the wall. The cloying smell of incense or patchouli wafted throughout the attic when her door would open.

I remember “Susan” and I spending some random evening sitting up late in the living room with the lights out telling each other about weird dreams we’d had and things we’d seen. That was when I learned a little more about “Susan.” She told me about having seen evil spirits as a child... and that sometimes she still did. I gathered that her parents were separated and both possibly clinically insane. I wish I could remember that conversation better.

One day a blue jacket, of the really simple, “workin’ man” variety appeared in our kitchen hanging on a chair. It stayed there for a day or two and I became increasingly enamored of it. Then I saw “Susan” wearing it and asked her where she’d got it. Apparently she’d “borrowed” it from some guy, and wasn’t really planning on giving it back. Somehow, a few months later, I wound up wearing it to work one day and decided that it was now mine, as it didn’t fit “Susan” anyway and she had apparently already cast it aside. I still wear that jacket every day; it’s got some gold paint on one sleeve and I sewed a chunky metal skull and crossbones onto the lapel, but it’s still my favorite jacket ever. On the other hand, I’m pretty sure “Susan” had vanished quite a few of my cd’s into her nest. Every once in a while I’ll try to find something in my collection and realize it was probably one of the albums she nicked from me.

I think “Susan” smoked a lot of weed, but she was quite spacy one way or the other. Or perhaps she was just deviously crafty beyond my simple understanding. All that aside, I quite liked “Susan” and I found her to be charming in her spacy, dirty way. She was never mean or judgmental.

Most of the other roommates I have only the faintest memories of, but “Susan” is engraved on my memory.

By: Andy T.

8. 73 Washington St. (a diner that has since closed)

I was laid off from “XYZ Company” in Providence in 2000 because this health insurance company pulled out of RI. Everyone in the company was laid off and went their separate ways to find jobs elsewhere in the state—it very devastating all of a sudden not to know where all of these people who you had seen day after day for several years had gone.

About a year after the lay off occurred, I went out lunch with several of my new coworkers, and I ran into a nurse that I had worked with at “XYZ”—this was at Mark’s Deli. This person had gotten a job nearby with the Department of Education. We spent some time talking about former coworkers that we kept in touch with and she said she’d be in touch, but not surprisingly, I never heard from her again. I sometimes wonder when and if I will run into her again.

By: Liz

9. 103 Eddy St. (The Safari Lounge)

I was friends with “Amy” since junior high. She was so awesome, the one who got me into “alternative” music, always wore black, etc. We grew apart though in high school, she was hanging out with people who were ‘cooler’ and they didn’t liked me so much. But senior year she was going through some shit and we reconnected, spent a lot of time together again (maybe it was the summer before senior year actually)

but hung out less as the year went on. I remember she signed my yearbook thanks for being there for me, sorry we grew apart again. Or something along those lines.

So she went to college in NYC, an art school I think. I remember she came over one afternoon before she left. I didn't hear from or of her much over the four years, not that I recall anyway. Until one of the times I was visiting a friend right before I moved to New York I ran into her in the East Village! She was living with her significant other in Williamsburg and working at a store on my new street!! And I thought, of all the people... Sadly she was just about to move back to Rhode Island.

A few months later I went to this real divey bar (the Safari Lounge) in Providence to see the band of some guys I knew from high school and she was there! A lot of people I hadn't seen in awhile actually were there. She was sitting a few people away from me at the bar talking this other guy I hadn't seen in awhile (who I'd dated for a month senior year) about some art project she'd done involving tomatoes. I so wanted to join their conversation but I could only half listen because my sister was with me and having a lousy time, so I felt I had to pay all my attention to her... The little bit "Amy" and I did talk, she didn't seem too interested—at least not nearly as much as I was. Which made me sad. And now I feel kind of bad about it again.

By: Karen

10. 52 Pine St. (a restaurant that has since closed)

It had been over ten years since I'd seen her. Sometimes in the dark hours of the night I'd surf the internet looking for her. Whatever I could

think of—online telephone directories, the state department of motor vehicles records, websites of companies in the industry I knew she worked in, whatever I could think of. At other times I'd try to find old friends or relatives of hers, always without success. Once I believed I'd found a relative, who told me she had passed. A cold feeling took residence in my stomach. After stunned silence, another question discovered it was another with the same name.

While passing through Indianapolis, her last known address, finding her became a mission. I knew I had been within miles of her. At home a few nights later, awaking from a deep sleep, I had an idea and in minutes the computer was on and I found her name. It had changed. Armed with the new name and supposing an Indiana residence, there were but a few options to try. The morning could not come fast enough and on the third phone call I found her. As luck would have it, she'd be returning home soon to visit her family.

Two weeks later I walked into a downtown restaurant. Time had not changed her. Although a few, faint lines now graced her face, she was the woman I remembered, the only woman I've ever loved. It was as if the previous decade had disappeared...but it hadn't. She now had a beautiful daughter of seven and a husband who shared my sense of humor. We talked of the loss of her sister and of how much she needed me then, and of how fear kept me from being there for her. Tearfully, she asked to change the subject. The realization that that had been our last opportunity hit hard. I realized just how much had been given up when she reached out to me across the miles all those years ago, practically begging me to be there for her.

Outside, in the parking lot, an awkward goodbye. We hugged for the last time. It was unnerving to feel awkward when holding the woman I've always considered the love of my life. Somehow I knew it was unlikely I'd ever see her again. Driving away I knew that all those years ago I

had made the right decision for her. I'm not convinced I made the right decision for me.

By: Anonymous

11. 71 Richmond St. (Jerky's Bar)

The last time I saw my cousin "Jay" was at Jerky's. I was very excited to see him. The minute you saw him, it was always like you hadn't seen him in years, even if you saw him 20 minutes before. It was always a big "Hey momma!" and a hug and a kiss—and he just had the best hugs, he always made you feel so awesome, so special.

He was the most popular person in the bar, or anywhere he went. Always the most popular person. Everybody just absolutely adores him. So when he would give you all the attention, and a hug and a kiss, everyone would be looking at you like "Who the hell is that girl?" It made you feel pretty good.

That was a good time. I haven't seen him in 5 or 6 years. Our family—it's complicated. And he moved out to California.

By: Anonymous

12. 71 Richmond St. (Jerky's Bar)

"Janet" was my friend from high school. We were really good friends. We used to crack jokes on everybody in high school, and we just had a ball. We worked at Burger King together. We used to write silly songs together.

The last time I saw her was at a bar in Providence. I felt really bad for her. She had three kids and a husband, and the third baby got sick—and they accused her of child abuse. They took all three of her kids away, and they made her sign away her rights because they were accusing her—criminally charging her—with child abuse, her and her husband. They pitted her and her husband against one another, and they ended up going through a divorce. I think, at this point, they hate each other to death. They had to sign their rights away for their kids, and they had to put their kids up for adoption. All three of them were adopted out separately. The oldest one was adopted by "Janet's" aunt, though, so that was a good thing.

After going through a couple of years of court cases, and trying to plead their innocence, it finally went to court. The hospital brought their proof in front of the judge, and the judge didn't believe it, and they realized that they had made a terrible mistake. But all of her kids were already adopted out.

We had lost touch for a couple of years before the last time I saw her. There was just too much going on with the court case. I had gone to court with her. It was high profile, in the papers—it was awful. So seeing her, she looked awful, sad. It was really sad, I felt really bad for her. She was always really happy and funny. It was always a good time with "Janet." And then not so good after that. The last time I saw her, she wasn't crying or anything, but you could tell that she wasn't the same fun-loving person—so they really put a scar on her heart, which is an awful thing. And I haven't seen her since then.

By: Anonymous

13. 71 Richmond St. (Jerky's Bar)

I had met "Bill" at the mall, when I was 13 or 14 years old. I was just about to go into the 9th grade. Me and my best friend "Susie" were walking around the mall, looking cute as ever, and we happen to see these two cute guys around our age, "Bill" and "Brian." They had really long hair and leather jackets, and we just thought that they were really hot. So we sat down—and this was back in the day when you could smoke cigarettes actually in the mall. And they came up to us, and that was their opening line to us was: "Do you got any fire?" That was what they said: "Do you got any fire?" And we were like "What?"—but then we figured out that they just wanted a match. That's how we met them.

A month went by—because that was in the summer--and we started high school. Lo and behold, we ended up at the same high school together. After a year of being friends with them, we started dating them, and I think that lasted for a year or two. "Bill" was pretty much my first boyfriend. We broke up, because he was naggy—he was a little whiney, and he had a really big and crooked nose, which was embarrassing, with curly nasty hair.

He used my brother to get back with me, and we ended up getting into a fist fight in high school. And then he told everyone that I scratched up his arms really bad with my really long nails—except I used to bite my fingernails down to the nubs. So it was kinda hard to do. He was just a big fat liar. And his sister was a slut.

Anyway, the last time I saw "Bill" and "Brian" was at Jerky's in Providence. We were probably 27 years old. And they pretty much still looked the same, except with shorter hair. I was there with "Susie." We went up to them—and either they pretended that they didn't know us, or they really didn't remember who we were. But I think that they did, and

maybe just felt really awkward. But it was kind of an awkward moment, because I was excited to see them, and gave them a big hug, and they didn't really have the same response. So I just kinda said "Well, it was good to see you," and walked away.

By: Anonymous

14. 73 Richmond St. (Club Hell)

I have an ex-friend who continues to be on my mind a lot. We grew up together, and when we got older we really got into going dancing at clubs in Providence. It became a lifestyle for us for that time in our lives together. We stopped being friends but I never stopped dancing. So even though I don't see her that often I still see all the places we used to go to and it's like she is still there every time I dance. These places bring back bittersweet memories. The last place I saw her was Club Hell, which I believe is on Richmond St. There's another place, the Century Lounge, that I was recently at and when I was there, it felt like it was ten years ago and I was dancing with my old friend again.

By: Carrie

15. Corner of Richmond & Friendship. (Club Deja Vu)

So we were best friends, psychically connected... So strange how things would just happen if we thought about them together—I think this was my first experiences with manifestation with the power of your thoughts... You know the whole saying "be careful what you wish for"...

Well, anyway, we started going to raves and telling our parents we were sleeping over someone's house in order to stay out all night... It was silly and fun... All we did was giggle when we were together... We used to go to Salem a lot too... She ended up moving there and we lost touch...

She got married too and didn't tell me during this time... She used to come and go... I never knew if I would hear from her again after she started dating her husband... I think he's pretty controlling... Anyway, losing touch with her really bothered me a lot, but I wasn't mad she wouldn't return my phone calls, I just figured she needed her space...

Anyway, I hadn't seen her in three years and was visiting Salem with a friend... While I was there, I kept thinking of her, and when I got home I had a message on my phone from her... She must have picked up on my presence in Salem... Anyway, she invited me to visit... We had sooooo much fun, got drunk in Boston and she puked in the cab, got back really late to her house and her husband was obviously pissed—he stormed out of the house the next morning, and pealed out with his car as he sped off... When we saw him later that day, he questioned me as to what we did the night before, as if to see if our stories were the same... Anyway, he was obviously pissed... They had been having a few problems at this time... He said some mean things to her... She used to visit me and we'd hang out as much as possible...

Anyway, this went on for about 5 months... Then we went out for my birthday and after that I never saw or heard from her again... I've left her messages on her phone, which is also his phone so I don't know if he just deletes them. I got a new job, moved to Boston and got engaged and she missed all of it... It still makes me very sad and that was three years ago...

By: Anonymous

16. 533 Weeden St. (Chef's Diner)

The last time I saw "Bill" was Christmastime 2004. I was back for a visit, four months after I'd moved away. I lived in Providence for about four years; it's funny though, usually when I think of Providence, I think of "Bill" and my last three months in residence there.

We spent the day smoking cigarettes, drinking coffee and eating \$3 all day breakfast with the whole crew from "XYZ Company." That's where he and I had met—they all still worked there but I'd left for Chicago, grad school, all-night drinking binges and all of the revelations that these things offer.

The day I left for Chicago was also his one year anniversary of staying sober. I think about him especially as I come up on mine—two and a half years after I last saw him.

I don't remember the name of the place where we ate, just that it was tiny and frequented almost exclusively by the "XYZ" crowd and other neighborhood activists, stragglers, etc... What I do remember are the smells—fried eggs, grease, and cigarette smoke—and the sounds, a woman behind the counter yelling, nagging, and all of us talking—reminiscing, checking in, keeping up. I also remember thinking it was odd that I'd been around all summer but had only set foot in this little diner that one time.

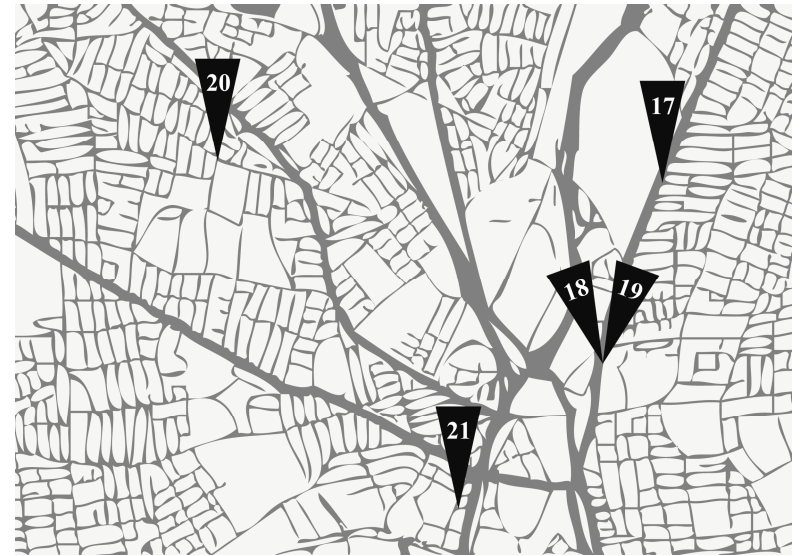
A while later we were saying one of those long awkward goodbyes just outside his apartment near Federal Hill. The paint was peeling off the sides and there was barely enough room for the car I had borrowed—the neighbors were all double parked. I remember that backing out of the driveway was a tenuous and stressful process. I also remember smiling

back at “Bill” and saying to myself: “I wonder if we’ll ever hang out again.”

I feel terrible that I can’t remember the name of that diner...

By: AlliXT

Section 3: Mount Hope, Elmhurst, and Smith Hill



17. Corner of Rochambeau and North Main.

I met my first love at a gourmet cookie shop in 1988. My best friend needed to pee, but was turned down flat by the clerk... until I asked him as coquettishly as a 19-year-old boy can. I can still see those green eyes now.

I didn't think too much about him for a month or more, when that shop advertised for a clerk and I applied on the off-chance I could meet him for real. But it was for his position they were hiring. I took it just so he could train me. I swear I don't remember a single instruction he gave me but I do remember how much I wanted to kiss the back of his neck, just where the hair curled behind his right ear.

It took me weeks to work up the nerve to act on that need... and he turned me down so sweetly. Said that he didn't date, that he was really flattered, and could we be friends? I agreed immediately, and put my plan for conquest into action.

He was a castle, well guarded and deeply fortified against invasion. I crusaded ferociously; the Catholic church would have been impressed (except for the obvious conflicts there—but get my meaning). And the defenses, at long last, fell. We were in love. And it came time for me to know why he planned to never be with anyone—he was positive. Had been for years, the result of a one night stand when his older boyfriend had dumped him harshly.

So I learned to deal with it. And made it go away. For 8 months I did what medical science couldn't—I defeated HIV. It never reared its ugly head even once. Until it did. But not physically, mentally. In my head.

A beautiful day was ending and it occurred to me that one day, the sun would set on us too... and what would I do then? And I made a

mistake—I said it out loud in a scared, 20-year-old’s voice, and made it real. And it was over. I’d hit a nerve and it couldn’t be taken back. It was really over.

Our friends were divided with teutonic precision and I was surgically removed from his world. I was not allowed even to KNOW where/how/what he was anymore. And time passed, and I moved on. And then I moved away as well. And 3 years later, with a new love, I was back in town.

And we pulled up to an intersection where you can only go left or right; there’s no straight ahead. And I was turning left. A familiar car pulled up on my right. I lean forward to see a former close friend. I’m excited to see him—until his passenger leans forward too. And I’m frozen, quite literally struck dumb.

It’s obvious they’re together. And there’s no connection for me in those green, green eyes. No warmth. Just recognition. And dismissal.

And the light turns green. They turn right and I don’t.

And now it’s years, decades later. And though I still don’t know what happened, I do know that I still have the love of the man that was with me that day and I always will. So, I guess things do turn out the only way they can. But I’d like to know.

By: Austin

18. 601 North Main St. (Whole Foods)

The University Heights Whole Foods is like the village greens of times past—it’s easy to get to, centrally located and, if you go alone,

inevitably you will run into someone you know. The last time I saw my ex-fiancé was at the tables outside, where we met for a work-day lunch to discuss the breakup.

We had already been apart for many months, but his brooding emails and sentimental cards sent to my office told me that he needed to be reminded of my new life. It was awkward. I kept wanting to apologize, and did, several times. He was smoooooth, telling me that he understood, that I didn’t need to explain.

At our cars saying good bye, he leaned in and I was sure he was going to kiss me, but it was a hug. One of those lasting-too-long hugs that are meaningful to the hugger, but embarrassing to the huggee. He was trying to convey his emotion through his hug, but I felt it was an attempted manipulation to make me feel guilty and hopefully cause me to change my mind. I didn’t.

I continue to receive occasional cards reminding me of activities and events we experienced together, but there’s no hope of reconciliation. I keep expecting to run into him at Whole Foods, though. It’s as though he left his ghost there.

By: TL

19. 601 North Main St. (Whole Foods)

The last time I saw my friend “Ryan” was also at Whole Foods. We were friends from our hometown and had known each other since just after high school. “Ryan” was sprite-like, always well dressed with a quirky sense of humor. We were glad to see each other, hugged, and chatted for a few minutes. I asked him about work and he inquired after my kids. I mentioned his shaved head and he said something like, “I’m

almost 40—I need to start looking like it!” I didn’t have much time to chat, so I got his email address and dashed out. He sat down to his lunch. I never got a reply to my email to “Ryan” and five months later he killed himself.

I think of “Ryan” every time I visit the store. I miss him.

By: TL

20. 686 Admiral St. (The Abbey Bar)

The last time I saw you was three years ago, in the place where we first met. Actually, that’s not technically true. The last place I really saw you was the next morning, at your house, after the shortest break-up conversation in history. But for me, the Abbey will always be the first and last place I saw you.

We started dating at the beginning of my last semester in college. It was a Thursday night, and second semester classes had just started. Two of my friends and I went to the Abbey (our favorite bar) to sit, have a few beers and catch up. After settling in at one of the high tables, we noticed that the bar was sponsoring a Quarters tournament and decided to play. After a rather pathetic (and quick) show of our lack of talent, we sat back down. I lit a cigarette (at that time you were still permitted to smoke in bars) and I heard someone at a nearby table exclaim: “Look—she even smokes! She’s perfect for you—go talk to her!” I looked over at the table where the voice had come from, but you didn’t turn around. I was intrigued and kept trying to sneak glances at the table to see who exactly I was ‘perfect’ for, but to no avail. After about an hour, I was engrossed in conversation with my friends when I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned...

“Excuse me, I just won the Quarters tournament and this is the prize.” (At this point in time you held up a green Bud Light hat). “I don’t want it and you look like the kind of girl that might like something like this...”

While I certainly had never thought of myself as the type of girl who would wear a Bud Light hat, I blushed, smiled and said thank you. And you walked away. Perplexed, I turned to face my friends when I heard you clear your throat and ask me if you could buy me a shot. As we walked to the bar, I told you I wasn’t a ‘shot-kind-of-girl,’ but I would certainly take a beer. You ordered two shots of Jagermeister and a beer for each of us. A few beers later I kissed you in the back hallway of the bar. After the Abbey closed, we ended up talking until morning, and officially became a couple within days.

After college, I moved back to New York. You stayed in Providence. We broke up twice during that time—once days after my graduation, and again in September. That next February, I came to Providence for a reunion with my college roommates. You didn’t know that I also was coming to Providence for the purpose of breaking up with you. Our relationship had always brought me joy, but there was something missing. Maybe it was the distance. Maybe it was the differences in our personality. All I know now, and all I knew then was that I wasn’t happy anymore. You and I and one of your friends went to the Abbey that night. I was glad for his presence, because I wasn’t quite sure what exactly to say to you. You had become friendly with one of the bartenders, who agreed to play the short film you had just completed on the TV in the bar. When I saw that you had dedicated the film to me in the credits, I felt incredibly callous for what I knew I was about to do. But I did it anyway.

“I’m not happy anymore.”

“Are we over?”

“Yes.”

(Silence.)

And that was it. You walked out of my life forever.

There are a lot of pictures of us at the Abbey in my photo albums. I look at them more frequently than I’d like to admit. I have pieces of the sweaters I was wearing both nights tucked into a box with the cards and drawings you gave me while we were dating. An even now, every time I walk into the Abbey, I can almost see you.

By: KD

21. On Brownell, two houses in from Holden

“Ann” was my best friend in graduate school. We were both sculpture students at RISD and bonded within the first few weeks. I think the last time I saw her was a few days after graduation at her place. We both lived on Smith Hill. I lived on the South West corner of Holden St. and Jewitt Street. “Ann” lived on Brownell St. in the second apartment east from Holden. We are both getting married within a few weeks of each other this summer, me in CA and she in VA, so neither of us can attend the other’s wedding. I miss her.

By: Michele Jaquis