

SAYF Worship Journal
Yearly Meeting Warren Wilson College
June 9-12, 2011

The worship journal is the written reflection that closes the retreat with love and relative worshipfulness.

At closing circles SAYFers should look inward and reflect on their experiences, thoughts, and questions from the weekend.

The worship journal is the time we come together to express the feelings that you take from being part of a loving spiritual community.

There is no wrong way to write a worship journal, however it's shared with the wider community therefore you should not say anything private or offensive to others in it.

What did this retreat mean to you?

How can I put this onto words, especially ones that will make sense later? Or perhaps that's not the point. But I wish I could describe the beauty of Willamae's sideways glance/glare, the sound of Emily's laugh. The grace in speech of Laney. The whole room laughing when Jordan says something typically hilarious.

How do we make sense of something so glorious that you can spend four years with it and still not know what to say?

I love this place. I love the swear-piñata filled with the kindest things that anyone could say and I love you all for being the people who said them. I love watching SAYF grow and I hate watching my loves leave it. I love the loud people that walk by graduation who don't realize that the whole world is changing right there before them. I love my sister.

Thanks for everything. Good luck with your struggles, congratulations on your triumphs and joys.

You all fit me like Zan's pants. I can't wait to be with you again, some where.

~ Lekey

PS Seniors should know how I feel.

PPS Little piece of advice: Try to meet the world from a place of love and giving, not desire and need. I think it makes you happier and people love it.

This has been so much more comfortable than it ever has. My third and favorite SAYMA has been a great success. Baby pigs are one of the most adorable creatures EVER. Ice cream shouldn't be never ending. Chad should major in story telling...Despite how stuck up it sounds, I've never cried for the graduates until this year. Well, I cried after graduation last year because I realized that Ian was leaving this year. But this year, they're just all so great, and ...diverse. I think it's great how individual you all are and that you're all so close and mean to each other (with best intentions of course!).

Anyways, thanks for a good retreat. The workshops were great! I learned a lot from them.

I hope you all get some sleep tonight. I love you. ♥ Tessa

PS Can we PLEASE hold Ian back?

Once upon a time Tim was bald. The end.

Knock Knock

Who's there?

Interrupting Banana

Interrupting Bannana wh-

BANANA!

Well. Now I wrote down the funny parts, I can do the serious parts.

Dear Seniors, I am going to miss every single one of you. Pretty sure I say that every year but like it's SO true this year. You guys are only a year older than me and it's really weird to have the people I've shared most of my SAYF experience with graduating. I was just telling Ellen how I feel like although you all are some of the pillars of the community it won't come crashing down without you because you have built new pillars not to replace you but to continue what you're all so good at. Wow, that was a long sentence. Now to each of you:

- Ansley: I already told you what I wanted to say at graduation. You haven't been here as long as the others but in that time you've become a fabulous part of SAYF.
- Autumn: I'm really glad I know you. I hope you have a fabulous time at Uof L & ignore the haters. Stay sweet.
- Emily: I cannot imagine SAYF without you leading things. It's really a shame we don't know each other.
- Willamae: I really like listening to you talk sometimes.
- Ian: I don't even know. I wrote a lot in your book. There's just too much. Let's finish the 3rd season.
- Ellen: You are so sweet and kind and nurturing. You are who I think of when I think of nurturers. I hope you nurture everyone in your life forever.
- Joseph: I wish we had been friends before this year. Maybe I was intimidated by your coolness. I like you!
- Jordan: I really liked it when you recited Robert Burns in a Scottish accent. Stay awkward.

Well my arm hurts and this is the 3rd page so I'll wrap this up. Newbies you're awesome, that's for letting me tell you bad (and good) jokes all the time.

I love all of you.

~Taylor

PS I'm sorry I missed your birthday party Lekey. I was tired and grumpy and I wouldn't have been any fun. I ♥ you.

PPS DELANEY. I am so so so sorry that I forgot you. I knew I would do that! So you get an extra long one. You are so beautiful and cute and amazing. I remember the first retreat we both went to; we laid upside down on a chair & you had on a plaid dress. That's all I remember. You have brought this delicate little light to SAYF that shines so bright on everyone. I guess maybe I forgot you because I can't think of you leaving! I know that whatever you do it will be done earnestly and gracefully.

Once upon a time there was a _____ named _____ who had a pet _____ and lived in _____.

Answers: princess, Delaney, Narwhal, Newport! Not necessarily in that order.

I LOVE DELANEY ♥♥♥

Seniors, Please disregard the things I wrote in your books. I'm not a very good writer and I feel like they don't even come close to expressing the love I have for you guys. Anyways..... last night hit me like a herd of antelopes. I never thought I'd actually have to see you guys go. But I am truly excited for you. You all are oh so special. I know each one of you is destined for greatness. If I wasn't choking back a nervous laugh and tears like a river I would have said something like this....

"So Joseph, remember when I clotheslined you? Yeah? Well I love you."

"Delaney, remember when we first talked and we fell in love?"

"Emily, remember how long I've known you? Yeah it's been incredible and I'll always love you and thank you for all the comfort and guidance. You're radiant."

"So Ellen, remember when you danced all pretty in the talent show? Well it gave me goose bumps. You're a loving conscious person. I love you."

"Ansley, remember that time we should have been making memories but never got to? Well it sucks. You're really awesome. You're eccentricity is refreshing." (I think that's a word.)

"Autumn, you're good will shines through with every smile. You're a beautiful person inside and out."

"Jordan, damn you're funny. Sure, I remember you being kind of awkward but I could tell you had an amazing persona. I was so right."

"Willamae, I decided you're new name is Willajune because you are moving on in life. Super lame I know, but I think it's clever. I've known you for practically my whole life so I feel like I should have tons of memories to reminisce on but the first one that comes to mind is you in preschool with a bowl cut and in nothing but overalls. I thought you were a cute country boy for the longest time. But now you're a gorgeous young woman. I'm so glad to know you. Also, I'm glad someone has a filthy mouth like me."

"Ian, Ian, Ian. Where do I begin? Well let me go ahead by saying I love you. Being in your presence and squeezing you tight makes me all warm and fuzzy inside. You're one of the greatest people I've ever met. Everyone says you have violent tendencies but thank you for always being loving and tender towards me. And those massages! Amazing! This isn't the end."

"Joseph Bishop, you've always been very special to me. Hopefully I will see you soon."

"Michael, Where so I even begin? You've been one of the most important people in my life for years. I can always rely on you to help me see the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you for being in my life. I love you."

To all you lovely SAYFers: I can't wait to spend another year with you getting to know you. You all are beautiful.

Shout out to Chad... Great Balls of Fire that was good!

To the FAPs. Thanks for making this possible. And thanks to the light.

Love and hugs to all.

Lauren Amber Hudson

Coming to SAYMA for the 2nd time was a great experience. I do not remember much of my 1st visit because I was about 7 I think. This is something I will always remember. BYM and SAYF have differences but beautiful similarities. I felt so welcome, awkward, but welcomed. Over the past few days I have come to realize that SAYF is to these young friends as BYM is to me.

Coming to that conclusion was amazing. It is strange to think about. Thank you to everyone who made this so memorable. Please pardon my spelling.

PS I think I want to come back next year.

Oh Man. I don't even know where to begin. I feel like I may have missed out on some of the fun that was had this weekend, but that's okay with me. Because I actually got some sleep, which made everything better. It's hard to imagine coming back in September without our seniors. But there are so many people who will be able to grow and take their places, so I'm fairly certain we'll be able to function. But I really love you guys, and you will be deeply missed. Well, my head is still fuzzy, even though I got reasonable amounts of sleep. So I'm gonna have to stop writing or else I'm worried I may start to babble a little. Love you all, and see you in September!

♥ Madelyn

Shoutouts:

Hannah ~ Thanks for being here. In my life. I honestly don't know what I'd do without you. ♥

Taylor ~ Oh hey, it's nice to have you back! Where were you? You missed a fun party!

sarcasm Oh, and thanks for helping me drink. Yeah.

Amber ~ You're awesome. I'm so glad you came! Please come back!

Ian ~ Well, thanks for making me be happy. I haven't gotten in trouble yet, so I guess it worked.

Emma ~ Madelyn and I took your shoes off, so we could play SAYF!

Lekey ~ I miss you. We should talk soon. ♥

Ellen ~ You're beautiful. I just thought you should know that.

Flannery ~ I'm glad we finally got to hang out. Your hair cutting skills amaze me!

Cuddling with Emma, Chad's AKA lady Gaga's Amazing Stories, Beating everyone at ping pong, missing Ceal, Colin, Sam Fisher, & Bonnie, talking to Lekey, & heart to heart with Rachael. This was a great retreat. If I really think about it I live a double life and I become a whole different person at SAYF and I love this one so much better and the people that surround me. And I love all of you so very much.

Kofi

Shoutouts!!

Micala & Paola: Cute Botty.

Emma: I knew you loved me☺

Joseph Bishop: I Hate You.

Chad: Please bring the toads back.

Guthrie: I love you so much.

Tessa: Where & why are the _____ in your arm.

Levi: You're just so cool.

Noah: You're just adorable.

Lekey: I need your addresses.

Sam: I'll teach you my serve next time.

Dylan: Please don't jump through any windows.

Anna: Lekey & I have decided you're the perfect little girl.

I can't go on forever and I am really tired so I love you so very much.

This is my second to last SAYMA and SAYF has changed so much. Most of my friends are now gone, and next year, I will be too. This is really depressing, but when I think about all the great times I had, it was totally worth it. I had a great time this retreat. It was full of laziness, eating and adventures. For the first time EVER I did not once sleep in the late night coed. I still didn't get much sleep, but I'm better off than last year when I didn't sleep at all – literally. Scootering down the hill really fast with Zan was an awesome tradition that we will have to continue next year! The food in the cafeteria was even better than before even though they served lasagna like three times. However, I am really disappointed that there was never any coffee ice cream. Lekey, I am still really glad that we saved that ice cream even though it was as hard as a rock. That was exactly what I needed after graduation. Bethany and Angelina and Lincoln too, next year for sure! ☺ Everyone who went to the mud house building project, I had a lot of fun and swimming in the creek was a ton of fun, too. Too bad my phone had to go swimming as well. Okay, Delaney, Emily and Willamae, I think we took the best not-really-naps ever. Where we would talk about how good sleep sounded and then not actually sleep. Great fun! And I think your stories are hilarious. All the seniors, I will miss you terribly. I'm really sorry if I somehow didn't manage to write in one of your books. You are what makes SAYF so special. I'm sure all your lives will be awesome and I hope we cross paths again. Anyone I didn't mention, I am pretty tired this morning so I forget. Love you all though.

~ Emanuel 931-691-9877

PS I forgot to mention, but thank you Chuck for your kite workshop. I like that you have had such a cool passion for so many years. Thank you Aaron for your entertaining workshop as well. I never knew there were so many sounds one could make, but I think I'll stick with regular music for now.

PPS Chad! Your fire spinning was AMAZING! What a bad-ass hobby. I would pay good money for one of your performances. I think you should add some fire-breathing to it, too if you want. Thanks for being such an awesome FAP.

Dear SAYF Community,

It has been a joy and pleasure to have the privilege of spending a weekend with you once more. SAYF was a fundamental part of my teenage experience and I feel blessed to spend time with young people going through those same experiences. I have talked to many of you throughout the weekend, but there were a few conversations that I want to add a piece to:

- 1. Kofi: You were wonderful at the talent show. Not only were your tricks amazing, but your stage presence and interactions with the audience were great too. Your insistence that you messed up a lot, despite all the positive comments you've received just shows me that you will continue working and practicing and just get better. But you were fabulous.*
- 2. Ruby: You are one of the sweeter people I have had the opportunity to spend time with. It was a pleasure to sit with you at graduation. I am sorry I accidentally set your cup on fire.*

I have so many things I wish I could say to you all, but there is only so much paper and so much time. You are all wonderful and this community and the wider world are blessed to have you.

Much love,

Rachel Leeman-Munk

For the first time in ever, I feel pretty well rested at SAYF! I don't know what it was, but something made me sleep in the dorms every night this weekend. What's happening?!? From previous experiences, SAYF and sleep just don't mix. But I needed it. This weekend really was just what I needed; Amazingly great people with hugs is what I'd missed for the month since April. SAYF has gotten me through the year, so I just have to thank everyone for that.

Blah. Can't think straight.

- ♥ - Hannah Rain

PS Delaney – MaidenQuest = First place I met you. You read “Oh the places You'll Go!” and I concluded that you were amazing right then and there. I'm gonna miss you, gorgeous.

Madelyn – What would I do without you. ♥

Amber – You're the other me. I don't know if it's good or bad.... One easily amused person is bad enough, but two together? Uh-oh!

Anna – Told you! ☺ They love you!

Ian – All next year. Eleven O'clock every night. Awh yeah, baby!

Angelina – You know what? We should both move away to....Germany? Find us some great Germans and decorate our rooms with lava lamps. It's gonna happen.

All Seniors – No one will ever forget you. Legacy of awesome right there.

Emma – Hehe. Love you.

Flan – Thanks, babe. Love you lots!

Thank you Friends. For the deep silences and the love I feel from this community. This past year I have noticed how differently I have dealt with conflict and I know that it is because of what I have learned in this community. It is so much easier to see the light within everyone, even when we are in conflict. Thank you for helping me cultivate this. I love this community so much. Willamae and Emily, It is awesome that you encouraged me so hard to get up here. I am so excited for the graduates but I am sad that I won't get to see you at SAYF.

I'm going to stop now cause I'm just going to sound sappy.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. In Quaker weddings it is important that the whole community be present. Each of you are part of my community and I can't imagine getting married without you there. Please know that Davin and I want you there. Date to be announced. Don't listen to Willamae if she says it is January. Love to you all.

Peace, Lili

This was an awesome third retreat. It seemed to be slightly better than the other retreats, because I have now gotten to know a lot of people in SAYF. This retreat was really sad though, because a bunch of people are graduating. ☹

Chad's fire show was completely awesome. Being able to sleep peacefully on a bad was another bonus as well as the cafeteria food. Building and flying kites with Chuck Jones was awesome as well as swimming in the pool. Goodbye graduates. I love you Ian.

~ Noah

This is my third SAYMA but the first time I have written an epistle so I'll keep it short and sweet. Even though I'm not graduating I may be going away for a semester so I may be gone for the majority of the upcoming retreats. I just want the community in general to officially know how much you all mean to me because I can be pretty quiet about it. I love you all and thank you for adding so much SPICE (haha punny) to my life. Hope to see you again in January.

~Paola

As I sit here in silence with all of you I am having lots and lots of thoughts. I'll put them into two categories:

First: Thank you. Thank you to Chuck for sharing his love of kites with us. Thank you to Chad for sharing his fire-y poi ways with us last night. Thank you to Wren for all the planning and behind-the-scenes efforts that went into this weekend. Thank you to Willamae for showing me her fashion line. Thank you to Ellen for her dance. Thank you to the juniors for planning graduation and to the nurturers for the care and attention you gave to this community this weekend. There are many more thanks in my head but I'll move on.

Secondly: to the graduates: I have a million things I wish for you floating through my brain and heart. I hope you have lots of fun. I hope you find lots of things in life funny. I hope you always remember how to center yourself – especially in times of turmoil – and I hope you always remember to check-in with your own inner voice. I hope you stay healthy. I hope you remember that we-all of us- love you in that SAYF loving way of ours.

It has been such a pleasure to spend time with you...and that is true for everyone here.

Enjoy your summer.

Love, Therese

I've only words for SAYMA: Winning, Sadly. I'm real creative and artsy-like, so I'll skip the suit and do some shoutouts.

Ellen: you...WOW. You know what I'd say better than I do.

Ian: I might come to your house to watch Dr. Who with Levi. Letz do this.

Levi: You're real swell. It'll be interesting to watch you expand.

Willamae: I've come to the conclusion that I can't really survive without someone bitching all the time. DON'T STOP!

Joseph: Whether it's our mutual hatred of something or out of love of bitching, you're a baller. When you have the energy.

Zan: I pack this bowl for two... And I am gonna wanna take it with you & chocolates.

Beth & Angelina: Pig watching is my favorite hobby.

Delaney: Be safe and for the love of Christ, LESS SCRAPBOOKING.

Emily: OH WOW. You're so fun to BS with. Or should I say DS with.

Lauren: All the way from JYM, you were that girl that's too cool for me. You're bitchin.

Joe the storyteller: OH MY GOD BE MY FRIEND.

Lincoln

Chad: You're hot, in the literal sense.

This retreat involved a lot of claiming and tasting people. Mainly Emma and Merrick. It's my first time at SAYMA, and now SAYF looks horribly short. I'd give a shoutout to all the graduates, but like someone said last time, I'd probably have a brain fart, forget someone, and then feel horrible. Whatever.

Shoutouts!

Jane: thank you thank you thank you for recounting the # of retreats I've been to.

Emma: Fire extinguishers & band aids. ☺

Rebecca: I didn't get to steal your nose. ☹

Kofi: Thanks for telling me.

Ruby: You are never allowed to graduate.

Anna and Lekey: You two look and talk exactly the same.

~ Guthrie

I have so much to say to each and every one of you. All of you bring something important to this community and help to shape it. I usually go into detail and tell exactly what I like about everyone, but this time I just want to send out a message to everyone. A haiku actually.

Here in the mountains

Everything is special

Do not forget it.

That was so awful

That last haiku that I wrote

Oh well, much love, Sam

I love to eat grapes

I drive 90 miles per hour, yo

Belly Button, WOW!

Ask me a question

Why I'm wearing a swimsuit?

Friends, I do not know.

Mexican food, Queso

That's Spanish for the word cheese

Good with chips I hear.

Okay, I'm really done now. None of those haikus were clever, nor funny, but haikus don't have to make sense.

Writing a haiku

There's salad in the oven

Refrigerator.

Okay done for real now. Haikus just flow from this here pen.

I'm Da dat swimming swag!

I really don't know what to write. I'm going to miss all the graduates so much.... ~ Zan

Thank you friends! I had a great time and I'll miss all of you. After coming to SAYMA, I have a different part of my life I can think about. I have trust lifts, fish bowls, fire dancing, swimming, building with cob, and graduation for memories, and the best is I have lots more ahead of me. I look forward to the next SAYF.

Well, since everyone else is I guess I'll do SHOUTOUTS:

Delaney, take good care of Newport. We love you!

Joseph, I wish I could SAYF with you.

Ansley, keep doing the question of the day!

Taylor, we need to think of more Knock knock jokes.

Madelyn, I love your rasin face.

Guthrie, You need some new socks.

Rebecca, I loved planning the party with you and Ansley.

Levi, I'll be seeing you.

Jane, ☺

Ian, my dad.

Lekey, hope you had an amazing birthday, you 17-year old.

Love, Anna

Okay, I had an awesome time. Everybody was so kind and loving. I can't wait to come back next year. This is an amazing community.

Something I noticed though is that people kept using the word "retarded". I know they didn't mean anything by it, but it really bothered me. See, my great uncle is mentally and physically retarded, and another person I'm close to suffered a stroke before I was born, and now he has brain and mobility issues. I love these people very much and it made me sad, because SAYFers are such nice people, and would never intentionally hurt someone's feelings.

On a happier note, and like to make a shoutout to Ellen, Elise and Ansley, who were especially nice to me this weekend. You guys just took me under wing, maybe a little because Elise felt bad for me, and I enjoyed talking about Doctor Who, and performing techniques, and other stuff I don't remember. I'm sorry Ellen and Ansley are graduating, but I'm also happy for them, and I can't wait to see Elise next year!

~ Ian and Lekey. Why? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO PICK SUCH A CATCHY SONG! UT'S ALL I'VE BEEN SINGING SINCE THE TALENT SHOW! It was really good though.

"Knock Knock"

"Who's there?"

"Good"

"Good Who?"

"Good Bye".

Dear Delaney Huber-Feely

Poop ♥ I love you.

Love, Angelina

Dear Ian Sad-er-helm,

A persons a person no matter how small/tall

♥ Angelina

I continue to be amazed at what wonderful young people you are. I know that you have problems and hopes and fears very similar to many of my students yet I get to see you all in a Special Light. It only confirms my Quaker testimony that there is that of God in everyone. By being with you on weekend retreats, I am better equipped to go out and teach and live. You make me a better Quaker and for this I am grateful to you and for what you bring to these gatherings. You are all very special and the sense of Spirit is evident when we are together.

Chuck

PS Middle-Schoolers, I loved spending time with you & Buffy in the fishbowl. You're a great Bunch of SAYFers, very thoughtful and lots of potential. Remember, the force will be with you, and just like in "Dr. Who" everything will turn out fine & wonderful.

I'm going to start this epistle with a story I was going to tell at graduation, but the YAFs came to soon. It was my first retreat, and I was in Nashville's kitchen that Saturday when two really cool girls walked up to me. One of them asked me "Hi! Do you want to be best friends?" I replied, "Yeah!". She introduced herself as Alise, and the other really cool person was Emily. Ever since that moment, we've all referred to each other as our BEST FRIENDS. It's even how we've greeted each other over the past two years....and beyond! Even though I didn't get to tell this story like I did at last year's graduation with Alise, Emily and I still called out to each other as she was taken away by the YAFs. That was special!

BTW, it took Jordan a little while to be kidnapped as he seemed to have trouble going down the stairs. SAYMA has never disappointed me. I'm glad to have come here because this is the most special out of all of the retreats.

It was also really great to see Lily! I love her so much.

It was great to meet Amber, who just so happens to be from my birth state of West Virginia. It was also great to spend a lot of very special time with the seniors before they go off to do amazing things in life...like kidnap me! ☺...and go to Newport....Delaney!

I guess I'll say something to the seniors.

Joseph: you are hilarious, and a neat guy.

Willamae: You are not mean like everybody says, I mean, you high-fived me at dinner on Thursday....mainly because I gave you a piece of my bread.

Ian: It was great feeling like a secret agent every time we'd enter the code to the dorm and storm in spy-mode...also with Zan as well...in Lekey's skirt.

Autumn: I love you my darling wife.

Ansley: Are those tentacles?

Glitter Ellen: I loved your dance.

Jordan: Meh.

Delaney: Newport and kittens and piglets OH MY!!!

Emily: BEST FRIEND!

Well there you have it. This time next year.... Well we'll just save that for then.

See you all in September (Nurturers in August)

That One Guy

PS Yay for Taylor being a nurturer!

PPS It was funny how I was almost sleeping in the exact same spot on Thursday where a certain inside joke originated....pineapple!

PPPS Shoutouts to Michael, Joseph Bishop and Samantha.

PPPPS Emanuel....I will shut down Bonnaroo for next year only...so haha!

Dear SAYF,

I'm kind of at a loss for words right now. Sleep deprivation has made my brain fuzzy and a little incoherent so I'm not sure this will come out right. SAYF, I love you and all of your inhabitants and I will miss you dearly. I feel I haven't had near enough time to get to know you and I hope my two short years were enough to permanently absorb some of your love and dearness and clarity so that I may pour it out into the world. I only wish that you could have had me at 12 when I was this awkward little ball of raw material that you could shape into (hopefully) a slightly less awkward person. But you didn't and that's okay. I have made good use of my time here and have had some wonderful friends and am a far more mushy sentimental person than when I showed up here, scared out of my wits, in a cut up Charlie the Unicorn shirt. Ellen had somehow convinced me that SAYF was this scary alien planet where bad things happen to people who feel awkward which now makes absolutely no sense. I think half of the point of SAYF is that everyone is kind of awkward and doesn't always know what to say and that in some way translates into love here. SAYF I love you because here you can go up to someone you barely know and give them a hug and then they will be friends with you just because you exist. SAYF I love how you make even the most mundane events into really funny stories. I will miss Grave Robbers and Monopoly with Braden and Miyoshi and Autumn (for Grave Robbers). I will miss not ever talking to Ellen except at SAYMA when we hide out in our dorm and don't talk to anyone else. I will miss being able to quack at the top of my lungs and actually feel cool about it, I will miss the hugs, and I will not miss sleeping on floors, I will miss that warm fuzzy, clean feeling that I get every SAYF, but I think I am ready for it to end. SAYF has been a god send and I wish that I could see all of the lovely younger SAYFers grow and shape this community, but I feel like this part of my life is over and a great, cold, Minnesota part of my life is creeping in and I am ready. I am confident in my ability to brave the frightening new world of college and I think SAYF is partially responsible for that.

~ Ansley Steinhice

PS I would write shout outs but my brain isn't working so I would probably forget something important.

Wow...I can't believe that I've actually graduated, both from high school and the SAYF community. I don't think it has fully hit me yet though because right now I'm still surrounded by all of your loving faces. It seems like just yesterday I was an awkward, antisocial newbie at Nashville desperately trying to avoid the hugs I've come to know and love. Now, I'm a young adult, making the transition into the greater amounts of freedom and responsibilities that hopefully everyone will experience to some capacity. I am immensely thankful to the SAYF community and everyone in it for playing a vital role in shaping me into the young woman I am today.

I feel like I left a lot unsaid at graduation last night so I'm going to attempt to get it written down here.

→ Therese: you are perhaps the most important person in my SAYF experience. Not only have you driven me to and from countless retreats, but you have always been there when I've needed a shoulder to cry on or simply someone to talk to. You've become like a second mother to me and I can't even begin to imagine what life without you and your love would be like. Thank you for always being there and know that I will treasure you and your abilities for as long as I live. I love you! ♥

→ Emanuel: I don't know if you remember, but you were essentially my first real friend in SAYF. I don't remember exactly what we would talk about, but I know we had some pretty interesting conversations. I regret that we've sort of drifted apart over the past couple years and hopefully that'll change in the future. ♥

→ Ellen: Words cannot even begin to describe the love, admiration and respect I have for you. You're a beautiful, sweet, loving person that brings a smile to everyone's face. You've been an amazing friend to me over the years and I am eternally grateful for your presence in my life. I love you so much and hope we will stay friends for as long as we live. ♥

→ Zan: I'm pretty sure the first time I met you I didn't say a single word to you, instead I just started a poke fight with you and then went home. Thank you for being an awesome friend and a great person. Don't ever change. I ♥ you.

→ Patrick: I can't even remember what color your hair was when I first met you, but I'm sure it was something unnatural. Anyways, you are a great friend and a wonderful person and I'm glad I've gotten to know you as a friend. Whether you would ramble on about nothing in particular or drag me along to contra dances, you have almost always made me smile in some way. Thank you for being my friend and putting up with me. ♥

→ Everyone not specifically mentioned: Even though I didn't mention you by name, I want you to know that I love each and every one of you more than I can stand and I'm thankful for the profound ways you have all changed me. All of you combined have taught me what love and happiness is truly like and for that I am forever thankful. Keep being the wonderful, unique glue holding this great community together. I love you all. ♥

I guess at this point I'm just rambling on and on, so I'll stop writing now. Thanks again for always being there and for giving me a place I can turn to for help for the rest of my life.

Love and hugs,

♥ Autumn Traynham ♥

PS Keep in touch!

PPS Chad: Thanks for allowing me to not die when I was blindfolded last night. I appreciate it.

Being a 12-18 year old is tough. Acne and insecurities blooming as we are thrust into the malicious, gnashing teeth of middle and high school. But how lucky are we to have SAYF? A semi-monthly oasis of love, caring and understanding in a deserty world, so dry and sandy it will rub your heartstrings raw. I was so blessed to stumble upon this community, to trip into the arms of all of you. I started at 14, a little late, so I had already spent sometime alone in the desert of puberty where I was stuck with cactus thorns and scratched by tumbleweeds. SAYF healed me and helped me grow. An unlikely flower blooming on the rigid arm of a cactus. And so I leave SAYF filled to the brim with love, light and laughter so that I might share it with other lost travelers who are dehydrated and crawling on scabbed knees. Thank you, SAYF.

And now that I got that out of the way I can do as many shoutouts as I want. Because I'm a graduate and I do what I want.

Therese and Will Harmon: Thank you. Just thank you.

Willamae: I'm hardly even scared of you anymore. I love you so much and you are so beautiful. Maybe you should get a stronger prescription for your glasses so you can see it too. (LOL, jk, I don't think they make a prescription that strong).

Rachel: It is so comforting knowing I will have you next year. You are so sweet and a great YAP. I love you.

Fruit Flies of Warren Wilson: You're welcome.

The people who came up with the slogan "Are you eating Quaker for breakfast?": Quakers are friends, not food!

Lincoln: I know you're reading over my head because I just heard you giggle at that. You are my tiny little brother even though you're now big enough to read over my head. You are such a sweet person and I love you so much. I'll be seeing you this summer. I mean it.

Dylan: God, I love you.

Emily: You make me laugh like no one else can. You are so beautiful & talented & kind, the epitome of SAYF and everything I strive to be. I love you.

Anna & Levi: How can I worry about the future of SAYF when the next generation contains members who are related to Ian and Lekey? You are both such sweetie cuties and I can't wait to see you all growed up.

Jordan: You're ridiculous. Mah. I love you.

Lekey: I tried to say it last night and I'm going to try to say it again. I love you. I'm so lucky to have come into this community with you and have shared so many special times with you. You're incredible.

Lilly: You're 41 years old and yesterday some newbies couldn't figure out if you were a FAP or a SAYFer. I love you so much and I'll see you at your wedding.

Angelina: My little sister. I love you.

Timmy: My little brother. I love you.

FAPs: Thank you so much for devoting so much of your time and energy to us. I am eternally grateful and I love you all so much.

Emanuel: I just got to know you this year and I realized how COOL and sweet you are and how much I love you. That nap we took was so beautiful.

Zan: Wow. One of my favorite people. I keep looking across the room at your face because it is such a sweet face and I want to kiss it off. I want to wade in a river with you forever. I love you.

Ian: I'm awful to you but sometimes you hurt me (on accident probably) so I don't feel too bad. We really should get married because it would make Willamae cry tears of joy and jealousy which I would really like. I love you.

Willamae, Ian, Emily, Lekey & Jordan: I'm really needy and obnoxious and I'm so lucky you all put up with me. I wouldn't. I love you.

Ellen: You are so wonderful. Like oh my god, HOW?! I want to wring you out like sweaty sock and drink the juice so I can be cool like you. I love you.

Oh my god this is so ridiculously long but signing it would mean that I was finished with my last epistle of SAYF. So here is how I want to end it:

Love is something if you give it away, give it away, love is something if you give it away You end up having more.

Those words are so true. Live by them.

I love you all so much,

Delaney

I love that we reuse these same notebooks over and over and over again every retreat every year to rethink our thoughts, breathe out our fears and wishes, return to centers, play with words and ink and each other and the silence that has been with us for every retreat every year forever. It is powerful to remember the generations who have written and worshipped in these books before us. They ripped out the pages, leaving new spaces for us to fill but leaving their love, their messages. How many of us would not be here a part of this loving community without the laughter and tears and encouragement we witnessed in those older than us. I have distinct memories of my first impressions (of which I have several) but each revolves around what I saw in others. This community has helped me to become, to grow into myself. SAYF has provided both new roles and challenges but also the support to discover solutions to those challenges. Friends, you have such Light. This community is created by and for Young Friends, but it has less to do with age and more to do with learning about love and strength and fear. There are now so many SAYFers who I do not know at all. I think its probably a good thing because it means we are growing. I do not say this without fully meaning it: Every person in this community contributes to it. I am so excited to come back and see each of you stepping into your places and handling the running of this community. New seniors: Thank you and good luck. I look forward to seeing SAYFers like Ruby, Taylor, Lauren, Kofi, Patrick, Elise, Lincoln, Emmanuel, Angelina, Paola, Micala, Braden, Guthrie, Madelyn stepping up and teaching and sharing in this place. I can't wait to see Noah, Anna, Guthrie, Levi, Grace, others folding into the community as they are already beginning. SAYF is influenced by every single person who attends, and every single person who attends can have a part of SAYF. Rachel, Thank you for sharing conversations, trust, and growing up with me this weekend and the last few years and hopefully in the years to coming. FAPs, you are incredible and I don't think anyone knows how to thank you enough for what you give. Lincoln, seriously everything I said about being astonished is still true when I am now more awake and coherent. You have so much. ♥ LOVE! YOU! Elise, I am not mean to you. You're doing great so just keep on trucking. I can't believe that you're a sophomore now! I love you! Willamae, I think we should be friends. We can just babble about nothing maybe until we figure out what to say. Kofi, I am so proud of you. You just have no idea. You have changed so much since you started as a newbie and I'm so impressed with that and your magic and what you are now giving the new newbies. Miyoshi, that time we roomed together at SAYMA was awesome. Delaney, you are just a sweet little nugget of whiny love and smiley pixie cute. That's pretty much it. ☺ kisses! Do you remember fish and fairy kisses last SAYMA? Lekey, you are my love. Everybody should love you, including but limited to judo boy. Ian, I'm glad there was no actual reason to fear the YAFs, except of course for their jagged glittering fangs, live goldfish, and poison dart menacing glares! But I think mostly it wasn't as scary because you were holding my hand. Ansley, You are beyond ridiculous and I beyond love you, dear soul sister, even though are beyond loud. SAYF was not the beginning for me and it will not be the end for any of as SAYFers or graduates. XOXO So much love,
Ellen Askonas
PS I used to sometimes write haiku in class when I was bored. Thanks for those.

Wow. So this is it. I don't know how to express what I'm feeling. In many ways, I'm excited. Graduating from SAYF means I'm moving on to other stages of my life. It's a little terrifying, but SAYF has prepared me in so many ways. I was trying to say it last night, but I fear I ended up not making much sense. This community has taught me how to nurture and be nurtured. Love and be loved. Lead and be led. I will miss it and all of you more than high school, more than my house and more than Atlanta because I've never felt more at home than in your collective loving arms. Not just at home, but at peace. I have grown not just within the past year but during my entire time as a part of this community. I can't thank you/it enough. And I know it will never change. Newbies will come, a little terrified and confused by all the cuddling, find their place, and eventually take mine. Every one here is lovely and a treasure.

It would feel a little weird doing Shout-outs as a post-script in my final SAYF epistle. So....
SHOUTOUTS!

SAYF – You are all so amazing. I know I won't be able to say something to everyone. Know I love you.

Fellow Seniors/Graduates: I've tried to write in your books, but can't find some. (WHERE IS IAN'S?!) Whenever I think of our class as a whole, I think of laughter. Find it always.

Lekey – I tried to say it last night, and probably can't write. I love you. Not the things we have in common, not our inside jokes and not the music we make. Just you. I love your spirit, your face, your total beauty, your laugh, and your wonderfully caring heart. I will miss you probably more than I realize. Visit often.

Dylan – I'm really glad you're not totally creeped out by Delaney and I. You're a cool kid. When we're just hanging out and I'm not trying to convince you to live in my closet. Thank you for saying something last night.

Kofi - How appropriate that this SAYMA's theme was growth. You have grown so much. I'm so excited to see how you end up.

Best Friend Braden- You're so...Braden. Just loving and funny and....tight. I love you. Keep in touch.

I might run out of positive descriptive words. SAYF....you're great.

Aaron, thank you for helping me be here.

Consider this epistle

My group hug, since Willamae hates real ones.

Love,

Emily

Dear SAYF,

Hey. This is Jordan. I want to express my love and gratitude towards this entire community, but I don't have enough time or writing space to do that. I want to thank the many individuals who have made these past few years memorable, but Wren doesn't like it when we do shout-outs and I'm a little afraid of her sometimes.

I want to tell you how great each and every retreat has been, from the awkward introductions to the awkward good-byes, but that's been done a lot and I'm not really one for clichés. Instead, I'm going to leave you all with a heartfelt, sincere "Meh".

Sincerely, Meh.

And so it ends. I really want to thank all of you. Like, really, thank you all so much. You have given yourselves so wholly and completely that, being a part of this community you have given yourself to, I take a bit of each of you with me when I go. I don't want to leave any more than you want me to, but it's time for me to leave. Thanks for the memories, but now it's time for you to get yourself some new ones.

I wish I could write pages about each of you to show how much you mean to me, but I have never been one to ramble in my writings. So I guess I'll write what I couldn't find the words to say last night.

Berea F(f)riends: if I were to write to each of you, it would take pages and I'd end up repeating myself at the end of the summer. I hate repeating myself, so I'll say my goodbyes to you in person.

Angelina: Huber-Feely, that's your name. Ba dum, badum badum badum. Remember that no matter how small and inexplicably cute you are and will remain to be, you will always be a person in my book.

Paola: I couldn't find any words to say last night, but you are one of the most beautiful people I know, both in personality and in physique. I'm proud to count you among my friends. I'm going to miss you a lot.

Lauren: You're pretty. Like, really pretty. Thought you should know.

Zan: Zan my man, it's been fantastic. I'm going to miss drawing you as a big burly Scottish beast.

Ruby: you're really cute. I can't wait to see the things you will do here.

Tessa: I don't even know what to say to you. This year hasn't been the same without your smiling face. I don't know what I'm going to do without you next year.

I'm going to miss all of you more than I can say. You have been such a huge part of my life these last 4 years, and if there's one thing I'll suffer withdrawal symptoms from, it will be cuddles and Lucky charms and you guys, everything that makes SAYF so spectacular.

From the deepest darkest depths of my heart, there is nothing but unconditional love for all of you. Even the middle schoolers, which is saying something.

With the most heartfelt of farewells and good wishes,

Ian

PS If any of you need anything, I'll still be just an email away. Keep in touch.

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Address and phone number change in August.

I am a graduate. It is my time to write about my first retreat, and how much SAYF as a whole has meant to me.

First retreat: awful. I didn't want to come back. I nearly didn't. If you are a newbie going through the special level of hell that comes with being mostly alone and scared to make new friends: it gets better. Really. I wouldn't lie to you.

SAYF has meant a lot less to me than it has to others. I never went through a great time of crisis in High School, and so I don't think I ever truly benefitted from the healing power of SAYF.

I can't say how I've grown this year, but I can tell you yet another story about that first retreat. Older SAYFers were playing wink. They were big and scary. But I was not afraid of being pummeled. I was afraid that someone would kiss me.

Now, I'm sitting next to Delaney, the neediest girl in the world, and leaning over to kiss her on the cheek every time she says something bad about herself. It happens a lot.

That is what SAYF has done for me, and I can't believe it took me so incredibly long to realize it. SAYF taught me how to give myself to a friendship with abandon, and, more importantly, SAYF taught me how to express my love, even a little bit, which is truly remarkable.

That is the gift I have taken from SAYF – not some great deeper knowledge of myself, just enough that I am not a robot, and even if I still have the emotional maturity of a 12 year old, I can show, or try to show, the feelings that I have.

Lincoln – You are definitely the coolest 14 year old I have ever met. How do you do it? If I was as cool as you...I can't even fathom what that would be like.

Lekey – Everyone tells you that you're beautiful. I don't see it. What I do see is a confident, elegant, and wise young woman who takes on extra responsibilities with good humor and grace. I see someone who is kind, and funny and has an inner light that is so intense I am sometimes blinded. Who the hell cares if you are pretty?

Lili – When I first met you, I really didn't like you. I mean, I REALLY didn't. You just wouldn't shut up. And you still won't. You're an overgrown teenager with a lust for life, and an infectious laugh. I couldn't help but be won over. I adore you. Marry in December or January.

Emanuel – You are too sweet for words. Also chill. Just generally someone I will be sad not to have in my anymore.

Buffy – You didn't get me fried chicken. We're over.

Jane – Your mother told me to look out for you, and I don't think I did a very good job. But you seem to be doing all right anyway, so I hope you will forgive me.

Therese – You are too good. It boggles my mind to this day.

I'm done. Thank you.

Willamae





