

A letter for Hytham

Morgane Billuart



1897. Edmond Rostand writes the play “Cyrano de Bergerac”. It is the story of Cyrano, a nobleman with a sharp pen and a big nose who falls in love with the beautiful Roxane. He does not consider himself attractive enough to declare his love for her and feels unable to compete with the handsome Christian, who is also in love with her. In order to help his friend, Cyrano proposes to write love letters to Roxane in Christian’s name. Thanks to his writing skills and a profound comprehension of love’s nuances, the letters leave an indelible mark on the heart of Roxane, who falls in love with Christian.



2013. I’m a 15-year-old who, like many teenagers my age, enjoys spending time on Omegle and Chatroulette. One of my favorite features is the poetry hashtag, which allows me to sift through various conversations and interactions with strangers. It’s a constant search for that elusive connection, hoping to encounter someone who embodies the spirit of Cyrano de Bergerac. Admittedly, these quests for meaningful discussions were quite arduous and time-consuming. However, when I stumbled upon rare gems, it felt like finding a precious needle in a vast haystack.

On a lucky evening, I met Hytham, a 50 years old man who claimed to be a poet. Suspicious, I call him a liar. After all, the anonymous online existence is only reserved for writers who failed or who seek to hide their physical appearance. Challenged by my affront, Hytham sent over 300 pages of poetry to my email address, unknownwriter1@hotmail.fr.

In the email, Hytham writes:

Hi, or rather, hello...

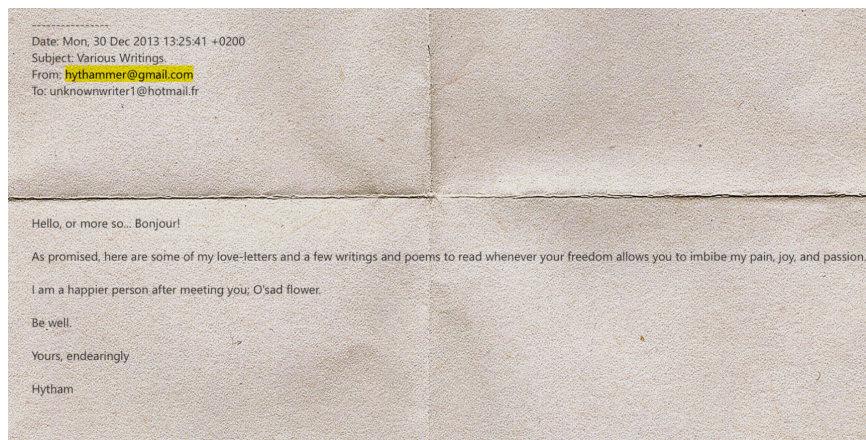
As promised, here are some of my love letters. Feel free to read them when you find the time to soak up my pain, joy, and passion.

I am a happier person after meeting you,

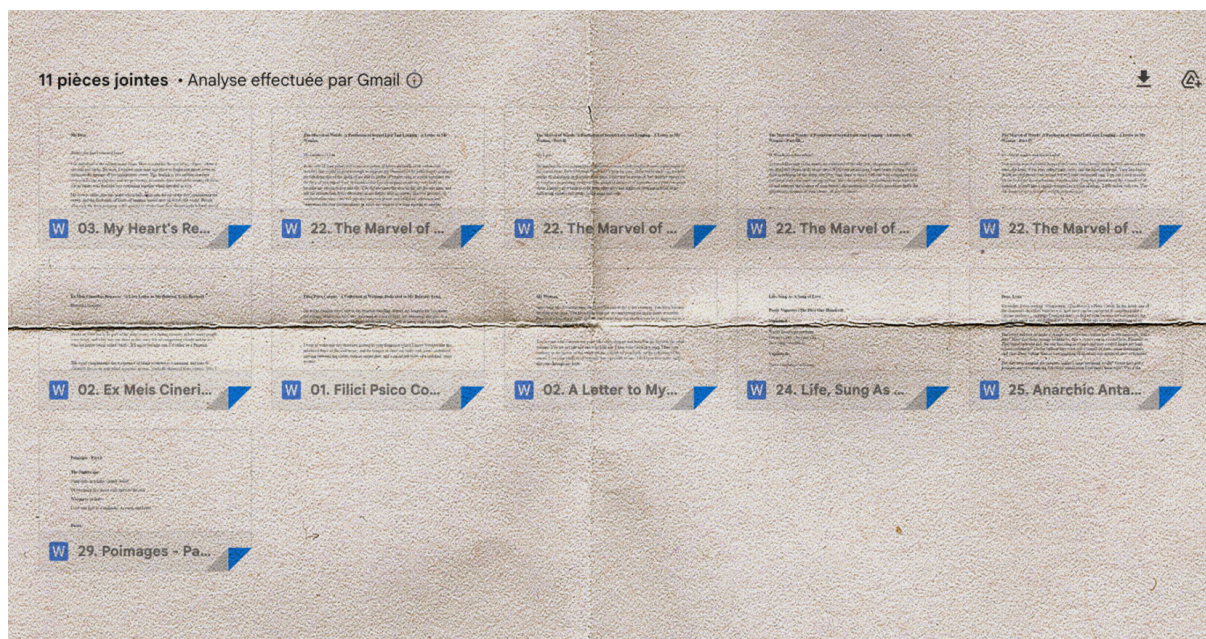
Take care,

Yours truly,

Hytham.



Filled with curiosity, I embarked upon the journey within his letters. They unfolded before me like a captivating explosion of profound love and untamed desire, all dedicated to the woman who had captured Hytham's heart: Lyna.



“On hot summer days, and in the extreme bleeding of the heat, my longing for you under the vault of heaven is like drowning in a sea of light, my beautiful lover, or feeling drowsy outside the darkness, bitten by my desire to never wake up from this dream.

I want to wake up one day drowned in your scent that I know would awaken that soul-dwelling thirst in me, and the hunger to share my body with yours, steadied; moving between the clouds with her feet untied, and a left eyebrow raised in static, satisfied ecstasy.

You paint the sun with the tone of your voice, demanding a defrayal in the postponement of our dream that acts as a messenger for a titanic evening; an evening we will spend listening to our narcotic and percussive poetry in the silence that mandates itself in the sculpted fidelity of your feet.

My voice flees humiliation, full of exclamations. I laugh at the solitude kneaded into our screens and talking images; in this arid and broken urban topography missing like a grave without you, between the face of the door of day and night that will lead me to your sanatorium.

I could not count the elegies of shadows and offerings I extend to your absence, my priceless pearl, nor the masked testimonies and cross-questions of the curse of this space on both sides of the day - a day spent without you; another night spent in sin away from you.

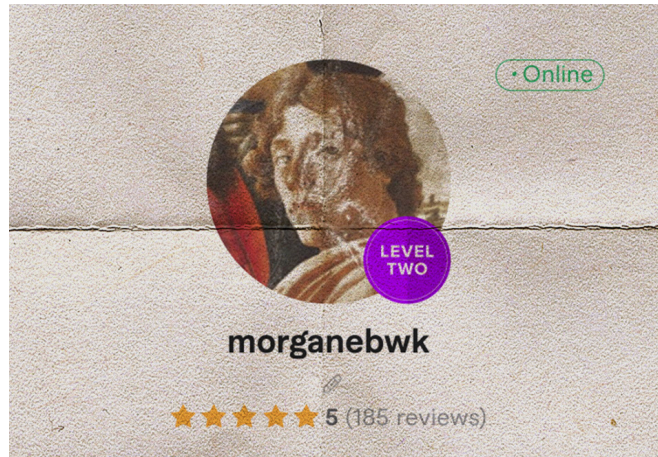
I love in you your neglected past and care about your future, and what I write (and still haven't written), I want you to realize that this man in me is realistic but dreamy and that you rejoice in me instead of grieving. You are the reason I am a good writer. I hope not to make a career of it, though, and I don't know when my writing should end or expire.

I love you so much, my only friend.”

2018. The movie *Her* by Spike Jones is released in theaters. Naturally, I am under the spell. I not only admire the concept and execution of a film about the possibility of loving without seeing or touching but I am also paralyzed with joy in the first scene of the film. Sitting in his chair, the main character, Theodore, begins to write a love poem for a client. Indeed, his profession is not the most common: Theodore writes love letters for those who cannot :

“To my Chris, I thought about how I could tell you how much you mean to me. I remember the moment I started to fall in love with you like it was last night. Lying naked next to you in that small apartment, I suddenly realized that I was part of something bigger, just like our parents, and our parent's parents. Before that, I was living my life as if I knew everything, and suddenly a bright light hit me and woke me up. That light was you. I can't believe it's been 50 years since you married me. And still today, every day, you make me feel like the girl I was when you turned on the light and woke me up for the first time and we started this adventure together. Happy birthday, my love and my friend to the end.”

2021. I just graduated from art school and haven't learned much except to love, cope, and write. After more than 10 years of poetic quests and essays, I decided to challenge fiction to turn it into reality. I log in to the gig economy and start proposing romantic and poetic writing services. Inspired by the anonymous figure of Cyrano, and especially wishing to protect my identity as a young artist in search of fame, I use my real name but do not offer a real image of my face. Instead, I use the portrait of an individual with masculine characteristics, frozen in time like a painting. He gives me the opportunity to gain the trust of men who would not believe that a poet could be a woman. My new career is finally launched. I am fiction turned into reality, waiting for my first commission. A few months later, Yhamouch ordered 10 poems for \$100. I could not believe it, but I poured my heart and soul into this work, delivering poems that she ended up being really satisfied with.



5 stars.

Orders come and go, they are not regular, but they always fill me with excitement. The conversations with my customers are strange, and sometimes too intimate. I live in the illusion of the other, but I love it.

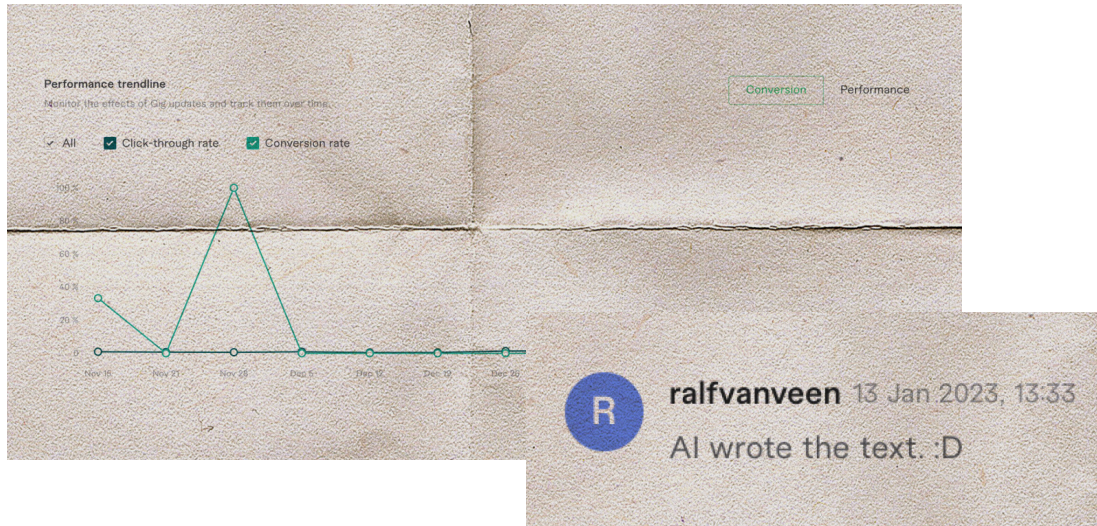
Greetings.

I want to surprise a girl for her birthday with a French poem. I've tried several times before to ask her out, but I've never had the courage. A 30-50 word poem would be perfect. It doesn't have to be long. The girl's first name is NataliA (this is very important). What I like most about her is her smile, because it is unique and is imperfect. I also love her long blonde hair and her laugh. She also has beautiful blue eyes. Her favorite color is black, midnight black if that helps. I think the word "unique" best describes her. I don't know what else to tell you, but let me know if you have any questions."

Review: I am very surprised at how well this poem turned out. It is EXACTLY what I was looking for. Absolutely perfect.



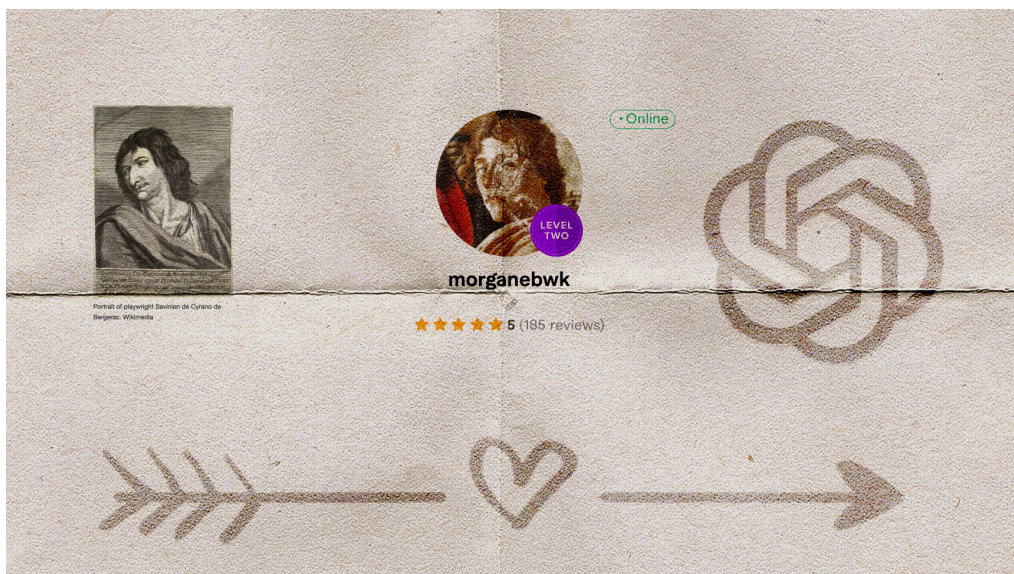
2022. Something is calling to me; perhaps it's the whisper of destiny. I write for various projects and clients, but it's the creation of poems that truly ignites my passion. Motivated by this love for poetry, I made a bold decision to explore the world of domain name purchases and establish myself as the premier poetry-writing company. However, a few weeks into the new year, I noticed a decline in customer inquiries and a general lack of enthusiasm. My statistical data confirmed the troubling trend, indicating that the business was faltering.



Suddenly, instead of receiving requests for unique, heartfelt texts, my clients were simply asking for rewrites of existing content, with a desire for a more “human” touch in the tone and style.

The moment Spike Jones never saw coming, the instance where my dream ended and my obsolescence began had arrived.

Maybe, after all, it was the natural progression of things. Cyrano, moi, then the AI. Since then, I have been working on my branding. Human-Made Poetry. A rare work to be appreciated. I force myself to believe that those who paid 50 euros for a poem will at least have the nerve not to have it written by a machine, but I doubt it. Maybe one day, I too will be seduced by a combination of words that don't make sense.



17th century. Jean de Sponde wrote *Les Amours*. It is a collection of love poems written for noble and famous ladies and reflects the tradition of medieval troubadours. The *Sonnets d'amour* de Sponde is not specifically addressed. In a way, they are freed from any concrete reference to one or several women. Detached, they become universal. At the end of this work, Jean de Sponde writes:

*Die my verses, die since it is your desire,
What will serve you of death, will serve me of life.*

May 2023. Strangely enough, my business still thrives.

In the midst of a painful breakup, a client approached me to write their wedding vows. It was an ironic twist, as I was grappling with the bitter reality of a love that doesn't last. Tears welled up in my eyes as I crafted heartfelt promises to an imaginary bride, pledging a lifetime of devotion. For a fleeting moment, I imagined the profound beauty of eternal love reflected in the mirror of eternity.

I want to ask the bride:

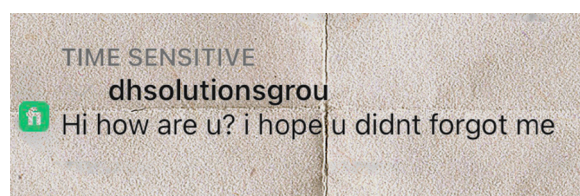
Is it worse to be rejected without showing the best of your love and capabilities, or to be abandoned after showing who you truly are?

I want to whisper to her :

A few weeks ago, I was writing about nostalgia and pre-covid lovers, and now, I suspect that the universe read my texts. Perhaps I should have whispered, instead of shouting. Perhaps I should have hidden how much I missed the chaos. Next time, I'll keep it quiet. I'll only murmur that I'm thankful and that I'm fine. Do you think that the world knows when one's heart lies?

Here's what I know. They lied to us. They said love heals you, that it protects and carries, but they forgot to mention how deeply triggering it is to fail to be complete for another body. Love is a battlefield where one constantly loses and wins simultaneously. Have you read this text on love and bio-enhancement? The writer suggests that feelings are, by definition, inconsistent. He suggests that in order to go through stages in a relationship, one should, as for any other situation, consider enhancing or diminishing their feelings in order to remain on the same wavelength as their characters: SRRI in order to lessen a difference in sexual appetite, viagra to fix it. If one drinks coffee to feel awake, if one consumes MDMA to dance, why the fuck not take a pill to stay in love? At the end of the day, quitting a situationship for a new one, hoping for "novelty" is also a trick on the brain, a pure and logical set of chemical reactions. But in the long run, obstacles always come back. Different one but same, same.

But I don't. I write about the future, about the places they'll go and the memories they'll share, preaching that nothing will take them apart. Apparently, my practice isn't fully obsolete yet. On the contrary, partnerships are, but this is a truth that I will disguise.



You, leaving me?

*It's so sudden, you sound insane
And I don't, and no one understands*

*They say that you should reconsider, capitulate
They think I'm so special, a diamond on the rise
And while I live for their praise
They still ignore who I truly am
They don't know the bedroom in which I die*

*They omit the loneliness that is
To be by my side*

