

57 letters to Ethan Hawke,
or I wanted to stop saying god

August 2024
Barton Smock

Letter 061424 words toward my daughter
getting married

Dear Ethan Hawke

A song played that made me forget a song
was playing. I made my daughter laugh a
couple times in a place that knew itself into
beauty. There is always a church. A church
near a church. I don't really pray bc I pray all
the time. My healthy sons sat with my sick
son. I don't mean to say it that way. Say, I
say, to saying. It all felt very young. Very
elsewhere. Elsewhere, the worlds of more.
Beside me, my wife looked perfectly alone. I
mean to say it that way. Alone in her own
perfection. My sick son is not sick unless you
account for healing. It was such a great day.
It gave way, and gained. I hate the world,
and days end. We only get one simulation.
Run out of sadness.

Letter 061524 words toward god and sleep
and Aase Berg

Dear Ethan Hawke

I said this yesterday but I'm a fan omfg of
remaining. Think *A Midnight Clear*. I don't
know what happened to Keith Gordon. Don't
tell me, and I promise I won't AI that shit. I
like to think he is okay. I did not see *Mother
Night* and still regret it. Regret doesn't go
away, so again I've said something I didn't
mean. Don't. Fuck I can't write. Does
everyone know? I said this yesterday but it
keeps us awake that god can't sleep. I think
god saw the face of an insect and then made
insects. Then made *The Woman In The Fifth*.
I don't know if you remember what I said
about us only getting one simulation. And
that was only yesterday.

Letter 061624 climate sameness

Dear Ethan Hawke

Palestine has entered my dreams. I see car accidents before they happen but can't tell my children. I kill a grasshopper with another grasshopper then keep the second alive. I kill a rabbit. I'd never kill a rabbit. But it was in my house. If there are babies, amen, I sleep a little in my sleep. In my death. It's hot here. It's cold. Palestine is not a dream. We keep touching it. Our hands go online twice and the holy spirit tortures a photograph. It is cruel to dream after never once imagining. After being, for a whole life, human.

Letter 061724 when insomnia leaves
listening to us

Dear Ethan Hawke

Last year, I was quiet for seven months.
Movies came to me as bruises from the
moon. My children hid and their hiding was a
kindness. All sight was plain. I wore slippers
and my heels set small fires. Pain sang to
the stone that god gave a stomach a song so
short that a butterfly became an angel's
erection. I wanted to laugh, but everything
was funny. Many of the guns didn't go off. I
don't think I will tell you about the guns. Our
disappearance is occupied. And code for
something else.

Letter 061824 machines made from
abduction

Dear Ethan Hawke

The television is a monthless calendar. In the
mirror, I am the only mirror to taste the blood
of a ghost. I want you to know that time is
safe with me. An angel's eye fills with fog.
These bodies aren't doing anything.

Letter 061924 horrors

Dear Ethan Hawke

I don't know why it would, but the eye keeps
itself alive. The soul is god's last radical
permission. Symbolism a grave for an empty
coffin. I'm tired. Not as tired as my clothes.
Sound has arms. It can't miss both.

Letter 062124

Dear Ethan Hawke

Donald Sutherland to me is the last time I was afraid of long division. Eventually I took over my father's handwriting. My footprint chooses a footprint then dies. I am stuck on a rabbit and then stuck on a deer. It's all so lazy. I am a blood clot in god's undetected loneliness. I watched an entire movie about a bomb and then heard a moviemaker hate me for watching it from home. They keep moving hell. Yeah you're right, no letter yesterday. Something wasn't there. I know that now.

Letter 062224

Dear Ethan Hawke

I deleted this letter. Here is the new one:

We do not live in unreal times. We never have. The animal kingdom kindly gave us, gives us, god. The absurd is a manifesto that the dream erases while protesting the afterlife of sleep. You've seen the bodies, gone, mid-ghost. My receipt is a rib, but which one. Surrealism steals the past from nostalgia. It's not an escape. It's a sustainable staying. A personal ruin that ruins nothing. My love for transformation is unchanged. Angels hate art.

Letter 062324

Dear Ethan Hawke

Most surgeons are addicted to standing in church. I am wrong with my entire body. I am at the point in my dying where I remember only those things that my children wanted to tell me. Angels stop appearing bc people aren't where they should be. A groundhog's heart turns into a star. I call this chapter groundhog pain. There are no doctors who specialize in tunnel hurt. Don't kill the light. Make it sick.

Letter 062424

Dear Ethan Hawke

There is a tooth you can put in your mouth
that will let you see every ghost. Angels use
more data than god.

Letter 062524 the rabbit's dream of knowing
magic

Dear Ethan Hawke

I am reading Vanessa Angélica Villarreal's
Magical/Realism and its propulsively
engaged agonizing has such weight that one
can hear lights pop distantly above its
interrogated verse. Have you ever
reappeared in front of a child who then puts
bread in your hand? I eat like a ghost in fast
food parking lots. I think of my father's
partner who was deported too many years
ago. I drive like my mother. I can't be
elsewhere. My two older sons carry my
younger son everywhere. They place him
across his mother's legs which have both
been tricked into falling asleep. A straight line
weighs nothing. Nothing, also, when it
weeps.

Letter 062624 a knife loses consciousness

Dear Ethan Hawke

I was going to write a letter to Elliott Smith and apologize to him for thinking he sang this one *Sparklehorse* song. I started the letter but it put me to sleep and I went on to have a nightmare where I was Peter and kids were asking me about Jason Molina and I just kept saying Ohio Ohio Ohio and I was half awake when god told me there were actually three roosters and I needn't have died. Touch turns off its hands.

Letter 062724 the painted door of hell and
the non

Dear Ethan Hawke

I've seen a person lose a scar in a game of
telephone. I talk bliss into a cup and the first
time a child touches the earth their hands are
underground. I wrote a poem called
wheelchair machine all about my son's
footprint. Where it could be.

Letter 062824 voiceovers

Dear Ethan Hawke

Nothing creation makes is as ghostless as a baby. If a being needs rest, then a being can get sick, get better, be killed. Pain keeps the body in the past. I drink in the present.

Letter 070124 misreckonings

Dear Ethan Hawke

Your mother was pulling out her hair on the moon. It all came back, but god doesn't know what a baby is. I talk with my violent son. He's not violent. Looking will live longer than seeing.

Letter 070324 the office of the lower body

Dear Ethan Hawke

We are this close to eating online a boneless god. It's not hell, but there's a neighbor boy who won't stop putting wasps in his ear. Mothers can't sleep if a shoe store is touching the earth and fathers strangle themselves long enough to win a fog machine. I buy a spider each morning from a child who tells me a spider is a button that a ghost can push. Death has a room nearby where blood doesn't go everywhere. I put deer in front of most things now. Deer-hunger powers the angel's flashlight. Deer-sorrow the boxcutter's sex doll. Deer-deer the movies that remove nude scenes from other movies for not knowing the difference between the anorexic and the bulimic. Deer-mouth, deer-dream, etc. Remember our life.

Letter 070524 silence denies perfecting god

Dear Ethan Hawke

What's the longest name you've given to a cigarette? The shortest? I don't name things anymore. Blue kids. The housefly that burns my shadow.

Letter 070724

Dear Ethan Hawke

The healer's secret diet confuses starvation.
We live in houses, here, and share dancing
videos that will touch three people at once in
a cornfield. We bomb our unloaded guns and
say things in singsong that are attuned to a
cute, collateral resurrection. I drink and my
ribs tell god.

Letter 070824 bring your own body

Dear Ethan Hawke

Snowfall named the ache in this road after
nothing. My son's knees click on and off.
God is a numbers game.

Letter 070924 scene syndrome

Dear Ethan Hawke

In the dream I am scrubbing the floor of hell with donated blood. A phone is behind me somewhere playing footage of god two days ago eating a lightbulb but not faster than others. In the dream I ask you under my breath what it means. My mother and father make me sad. If you were them, where would you recover from a botched attempt to switch mouths? Would you both be in the same room? I have heard that angels throw their voices when they die and that they can die from seeing someone give signs in baseball. Ohio is gone for most of the dream.

Letter 071024

Dear Ethan Hawke

My son has been sick his whole life but he doesn't remember being sick. He has no future because it's all we have. God puts a face to god, but touch invented touch. I should've been more curious about the world. In Ohio, anger subsides. Because it's new.

Letter 071224

Dear Ethan Hawke

In Ohio there is a black frog with a star on its
back that no one has ever seen. Men trip
each other to death.

Letter 071224 also

Dear Ethan Hawke

Also in Ohio inside of a dog with dollhouse
rabies there is a gunshot sleeping to the
sound of a gasoline rain as captured by an
undreamed starvation of spiders. It's not
suicide. A rabbit irons a gravestone. In high
school, I'd write the note I wanted to read.
Now was now.

Letter 071324 today I avoided

Dear Ethan Hawke

I wrote pristine and it was changed to Palestine. I've been eating from the wrong mouth. Language is a border because we use it. Terror is aphoristic terror. I worry that because my body did things without me that I now do things to my body to let it know. I watched *Wildcat*. Gardens are oddly human. Thought makes the mind, maybe. *Before* is a planet we name after a country. Ethan I've been drinking. I hope I am, I hope you are, a ghost wearing the skin of an angel.

Letter 071424 think hard on nothing on a
farm machine

Dear Ethan Hawke

God is a response to distance destroying
itself. Top surgery as a password should
surprise no one. Our radios are not the
same. My love for line breaks has no end.
Ends here. I know the kid's name but suicide
isn't as specific as a speeding ticket. That
poor mom. The rifle of longing, the handgun
of birth. This smalltown lightning, starstruck
by a colorless proximity.

Letter 071724

Dear Ethan Hawke

I feel I've been in the room where I'll die. My
little nod to a flower is god at this hour.

Letter 071924

Dear Ethan Hawke

The writing is only going to get more
beautiful. Stop growing, we say. Sleep
directs its first play. Its only. God in a glacier.
Bombs have everywhere to go.

Letter 072024

Dear Ethan Hawke

Ghosts are angel money. Everyone in hell
lets me love them. The letters will stop. My
kids won't die.

Letter 072124

Dear Ethan Hawke

This hasn't been a success. Time is the sex
life of distance. Snake said nothing, but we'd
all hear our own way into sound near the tree
of loneliness. You name things to forget who
you are. I played with my kids, then didn't.
Shaved my head when there was nothing to
eat. The miracle should have been shrapnel
to snow. Graves ache nowhere into being.
With movies, the bleeding is internal. I hear
an owl because that's what it knows to be.
God dies at the speed of god.

Letter 072324 someone smuggled a bone
into heaven

Dear Ethan Hawke

Someone smuggled a bone into heaven.

Letter 072424

Dear Ethan Hawke

The deal may have been for him to be the son of god for a day. In Ohio, a microwave has two angels. Birth and death hear the same sound. My body and my body aren't close.

Letter 072524

Dear Ethan Hawke

I am sitting on a diving board with a rabbit in my lap. Most of the rabbit is dead. I try with my shadow to moan through the water. A stillness stretches god.

Letter 072624 the end I can see it

Dear Ethan Hawke

There is a church for lost parents that keeps catching fire. Arsonists come from all over. They go so hungry. They look through my phone and argue whether it's the videos or the photos that smell like death. Dear dark rabbit. A frog can survive in the stomach of an angel.

Letter 072924 end machine

Dear Ethan Hawke

Adam, though soundproof, could not fathom
the silence of Eve. I don't brush my teeth
when I'm sad. My son is a bitemark that
thinks I'm a word.

Letter 073024 I don't think my brothers

Dear Ethan Hawke

God moves my brain but not before it turns
the bread in my stomach black. I call it sleep,
but it's not sleep. My wife is tired and my
cousins are sad. The lossless, also, grieve. I
call it the present. I tell my sons that all
slasher movies are about homesickness.
They find a sweetspot in the volume. A ghost
hears an angel. I underwater tell my
daughter there is hope. Men and lonely men
make the same loneliness twice. The science
is silent.

Letter 073124

Dear Ethan Hawke

Pain aches for its desperate star. I crack a tick like an egg on the skull of this dead pup. I'd eat, but light hurts my teeth. My fastball when I had it was described as melancholy on paper. In person, a fat spider losing blood in a cheekbone. No matter. I am going to burn my poems while watching *The Phenom*. A tank will roll toward my birth and god will take forever to put on clothes. Ethan they are using sound to count bullets. Jesus got three days with his twin.

Letter 080124 scenography

Dear Ethan Hawke

My eyes eat themselves in a blood-filled
apple. Doomscrolling is the face of god.
Rain, pain, pine. The cops let him say mom.

Letter 080224 longer than sleep

Dear Ethan Hawke

It has always been the end of the world.
Language says this and only this. Time was
born in the middle of god. I have carried
children from one car to another. Practicing
and alive.

Letter 080424

Dear Ethan Hawke

Suicide is the only way to let people know you want to kill yourself. God is just an alien with a tattoo. I say things so finally that my body stops hating me and my soul starts. The angel of clickbait says fucker fucker vote. I don't want to die. But there has been some criticism.

Letter 080524

Dear Ethan Hawke

It's hard to miss god. Believe me. I accepted something into my body. I drank until I could drink even more. My palms turned blue in a black psalm. My wrist looked for its plural in a mirror known for its blood-colored echoes. Forgiveness has two left hands. Broken by faith.

Letter 080624 telling machines

Dear Ethan Hawke

Sister found the first of the human heads. She had been to practice sleepwalking from one abandoned building to the previous two. She thought it was a bird's nest. A boy's head, blue and quiet. She got her brother's bike and brought the head home. She gave it a pillow then went to keep her brother awake. She took her brother next day to the spot, and the head had returned. Her brother carried it this time home and she pushed the bike beside him. Her brother was a mover of things underwater. Sadder, more serious. It took both of them to process the suddenness of knowing that the head had not in fact returned, but that instead there were two heads. Matching, in their home, on the same pillow. The third day of this insomnia thieved them again to the spot and gave them another matching head. Sister was glad for the bike, for the way it spaced her hands. From here, the story makes the sister old and the brother older. There is a day that

someone beats them to the spot, and it's the
day of the last head. The head of god. But
they don't believe.

Letter 080924

Dear Ethan Hawke

One minute you're asking AI to make a jack-in-the-box and the next it's making little rabbit hells for fake pregnancies and you try not to drink or see single but Ohio does that cup trick with hospitals but anyway have you seen my son's gameshow or just my son or both or neither I put him on a horse once and my finger in my daughter's mouth and nobody was hurting and the world went horse, toothache, horse, horse.

Letter 081124

Dear Ethan Hawke

I don't write to anyone. I am hated. In photos I am the photographer's ghost. In the dream I wear a girl's bathing suit and someone shoots me in the foot. This is how I learn to swim. Thigh is a perfect word. The way it dies in the mouth. Mouth is dead. Who can tell. Only god. In Ohio at every fair the young say eat me until I'm young. We make jokes about crowhio and about the baby's stomach born without an inside voice. The spider in my ear comes out a wasp. I don't want my kids to see me do anything. Spiders get toothaches and angels, erections. Wasp is on its own.

Letter 081124 practice on death

Dear Ethan Hawke

Babies in the lost mind of god sell
sleepwalking videos to childless first-timers.
A deer and a deer okay with dying double
their dreaming to make a hand. I fall from a
tree in a world where something turns blue.
Absence writes its name on the neck of loss.
In case of return, return. Babies love nothing.

Letter 081324

Dear Ethan Hawke

Only time can stop time. I fail my children,
but they don't scream. A ghost can burn god.
With a dream.

Letter 08/13/24 exter

Dear Ethan Hawke

In heaven they tell me that all I did on earth
was cry. The angel of talking says a blue tv
lives in the blue. A baby is killed by breathing
and for going there to breathe.

Letter 081424

Dear Ethan Hawke

In the dream I am reading to myself as a child from a book called *all the places my suicide has taken me*. It does not make me sad but I'm awake somewhere. Televisions are where mirrors go to paint. Mothers lose their sense of smell above too many unmarked infants. In the dream a surgeon emerges from the high corn and coughs up another's blood. Above the dream, we've a surplus of resurrection. Mourning mourns a revocable loss.

Letter 081524 Siberia

Dear Ethan Hawke

God makes more and more god. I know it's not good writing. The hissing ghost goat bliss of it all. Dear Willem Dafoe, the children think they are children. Brevity's last endeavor is death's latest. In Ohio there will always be two siblings racing each other to a bucket of fake blood. I say two because I don't know what language gets out of language. Saying has no heaven.

Letter 081524 history, last

Dear Ethan Hawke

In the movie I am born and pushed into a softspot where silence is a mirror's fossil. A deer and a horse enter Ohio wearing the same angel of oil. Before becoming thunder, the sex of a father's southern ghost flashes god three times. Now swims in its eating of the present.

Letter 081824

Dear Ethan Hawke

Babies cry because it is too beautiful that everyone they know is alive. God is keeping us hidden. War is the creator of time. In Ohio a black spider faints in a box of baking soda and never wakes up. Fake and hospital are two kinds of snow.

Letter 082024

Dear Ethan Hawke

Too often, god goes back in time. Dear Al,
my son always dies. A boring place for this to
end.

Letter 082124 resident, radar, residue

Dear Ethan Hawke

I'll eat until my body gives my soul a ghost.
An only child prays to an only child and
witness murders its sibling observance. The
colonizer's playlist saves an influencer's life. I
don't have a sister. In one of my wrists.

Letter 082324 last future

Dear Ethan Hawke

I remember making from plastic my
children's memories. Ghosts were as new to
me as hands were to angels. Line-breaks
lived in a microscope held by my father to be
the holder of god's skin. I had an animal
nearby and a book about its food. A mother
until there was nothing to die of.

Letter 082424

Dear Ethan Hawke

I don't give faith any space because the brain is god's obstacle. I want to rewatch *Wildcat*. I thought my last letter would be my last letter. I mentioned my mother, but that's the half of it. My aunt was young and I had only recently noticed. I have three dreams and drink the same in each. I read my father's handwriting and it says longing is a paint or it says

long

pain. Weapons-makers don't read poems and death reads too quickly.

Letter 082524

Dear Ethan Hawke

The nervous systems of angels. A funeral for a cigarette. There are two Ohios. I am still in my singsong violence when my sister throws her youngest in front of an unmoving farm machine. Sometimes a year yanks a room from death. A wasp eats the shadow of a practice wasp. *My wrist thinks I'm brushing its teeth and god is the child who survived my dream.* I can't fake sleep long enough to be healed.

Letter 082624

Dear Ethan Hawke

I live in a body that sleep hasn't noticed. A ghost is an angel in love with slow motion. No one touch me. I am dreaming of a poetry book written by Chelsea Peretti. I forget its second name, but its first is *Lamb Hat and Crow Perfume*. It is being reviewed on tiktok by someone whose mother is unable to recently die. I can't say on brand without crying. I don't think it's healthy of course to dream that celebrities want to secretly write poems. But Chelsea's poems are perfect. In a houndless south, my god gets high. Stay pretty. Goodbye.

Letter 082724

Dear Ethan Hawke

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

END

Barton Smock
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