

We are writing this letter regarding the tragic explosion that happened in Groningen earlier this month, for two main reasons. First of all, we want to share her story, as Anna was very passionate about expressing herself and her truth. Second of all, we hope in proper investigation of the circumstances surrounding her life and death, so that similar things won't happen to others in the future.

We only knew Anna for a relatively short time, so this is in no way a complete account. Throughout her life Anna has touched many people, who all have their stories of her, which could be shared in order to get a more accurate picture. We encourage everyone who knew/loved her to speak up for her, as we all know she would've done the same for us.

Tuesday 12th of May 2020 at around 4PM Anna's gas filled house explodes and she dies. She was 27 years old, leaving the world a little poorer, a little worse off, a little deader, a little whatever, and let us all to pat ourselves on our backs and happily reminiscence and prance about joyfully.

The truth is, the world has completely failed Anna, first in slightly more abstract ways (this is how we failed her, by non-caring coldness and sheer cowardice through which we refused to even peer in the places she inhabited and was unable to leave; we left her there all by herself like some spiritual orphan), then in very concrete ways (there is some conduct of the police and health care workers that we find highly questionable).

My friend says we should frame this letter as just sharing Anna's truth without blaming anyone specific. Personally, I do blame someone specific. I blame the particular police officers, Anna's social workers and doctors that were (or were not in the case of the latter two) there on that day, and the day before, thus catalyzing a tragedy that did not necessarily have to happen. Though we both also blame ourselves (& society), this does not absolve the relevant institutions of their complete incompetence which is staggering to the point it is almost inexplicable.

When we first met Anna, she was 23 and almost annoyingly beautiful. She had long blonde hair up until her mid-back, blue eyes, a great body, every man fell in love with her on the spot which was slightly annoying for her less glamorous friends... but we forgave her because she was just so much fun, she would dance, and her eyes were so big even when she wasn't high on anything. Anyways it was sort of impossible not to love her with how her voice was and just with how she was.

Anna lived in Beijum with her two dogs Kyra and Lisa and her cat Bear. We would sometimes visit her, make food, talk about life and cry together. We would go out to dance and have good times, we did speed off a key and stuff like that. But as much as she was a party girl she was also very wholesome and pure, walking and loving her dogs, redecorating her house, always beautiful and girly. Anna always had a dramatic flair to her and that's why we loved her. She made us believe in magic. But she also made us see the unfairness of the world.

Anna was born on 14th of July 1992, in Russia. She didn't know her father and at a young age Anna's mother decided to take Anna with her and hitchhike to a better life. Their journey stopped in The Netherlands, and while Anna would tell us about how her mother was abused by numerous men on their journey, she always saw her mom as her hero. When Anna was 7, her mom had to unexpectedly leave Holland for some time to care for her sick mother, if we remember this story correctly. During this time Anna was placed in a refugee camp, which she described as hell, and later in foster care in a family which she described as an even bigger hell. Anna said she was abused in this foster family, which is something she brought to the attention of the police a few years ago. The police was "unable to take criminal action as the accusations were over a decade old". This made Anna angry and she was not one to hold her tongue. She screamed, she cried, she cursed the police. Must've looked like a crazy person, right? Well Anna's mom killed herself. Nobody really knows why but Anna's foster mother allegedly told Anna that her mom killed herself because she didn't love her. Anna said her step mother told her no one ever will love her. Anna often talked

about healing, whether it be from her childhood trauma, an abusive boyfriend or the general pain of the world.

A story Anna told once can summarize this perfectly. During a trip to a relatively poor Eastern European country, her and a group of people were walking around some sketchy area and she noticed a boy sitting on a porch of an abandoned house with no shoes on. She said he looked sad and lonely. Anna immediately took her own shoes off and put them on the boy's feet and started asking everyone around "how can we help him", she was emotional. The other people around allegedly reacted in various ways - some laughed and took pictures of her, some asked her why she's making a big fuss out of this, some told her to stop making a scene because she doesn't know what the full picture is. But we believe she was the only one who saw the full picture. What would you have done? Nothing. Same as we all did nothing for Anna.

You might think, well it wasn't up to Anna to give that poor boy shoes, it was up to.. Who? The police? Social workers? The "system"? Well in Anna's case the "system" was very much aware of her situation early on – the same "system" that treated her as an "outsider", cast her away, failed her so completely and stupidly and callously, eventually as good as killed her.

For example, my friend remembers a time a few years ago after one of Anna's breakups when she told the boy she would kill herself if he didn't come back. He contacted someone who contacted the police and my friend in order to check up on her. When my friend arrived, the police had broken down Anna's window (the same one as on 12th of May), and her GP was knocking on her door. Anna had a talk with her GP, therapy was suggested, they smiled, shook hands and the GP left. They took a walk and Anna told her that she wasn't actually going to kill herself, she said it wasn't her path like it was her mom's. She said she just wanted someone to care. Anna did go to therapy after this, which she soon quit because she didn't like the therapist nor the people there very much. Now we don't know if this had happened before (we only knew Anna for the last 4 years of her life) or if it would have happened again if the 12th of May hadn't been fatal for her. But what we do know from the short time period that we knew Anna is that all she needed was care, in all its forms.

When I last saw her in the summer, Anna was already quite into God, spirituality and ayahuasca, which is a drug people take in rainforests during ceremonies, but Anna would order it off the internet and do it by herself. Now we agree that aside from this, Anna legitimately had a knack for seeing things and knowing things, but the combination of her already over-working intuition and imagination and all those things (a cute story – Anna told us how she used to talk to fairies in a forest as a little girl) with drugs led her to things that were as fantastic as they were scary. I would say that talking to Anna in the later days was about 50% incredible insights into myself, other people, world at large, especially if we interpreted it as metaphors, 50% incoherent rambling that was clearly off base, she would throw one incoherent info after another like a broken TV. But even so, some things she said were real gems, Anna was able to really see people.

She used to say she showed people themselves, which is why they didn't like her much – as in, she mirrored them. Now we really don't want to write this but we have to, in the light of her death, what does Anna's mirroring say about our entire society? Being alone in a room full of suffocating gas around numerous people (police officers, firefighters, ambulance, neighbours) all watching from a safe distance and taking videos.

By this time we were barely speaking, and Anna started getting more "psychotic" if we are to believe her Instagram posts (which had a VERY LARGE following), she saw herself as the goddess "Kali Maa" and would sometimes get mean to people, also the people she loved, which is perhaps a reason why some of her friends would now say that they "lost touch with her recently".

But there were also nice things: for example in spring 2019, Anna started singing. "I'm gonna make music, it's the only thing that I can think of right now and I can't stop myself from singing and dancing, this is my life's purpose, I know it", cue the message she wrote me, it was a happy one. Or "you'll be fine, you'll be alright. know that I love you, know that someone cares."

A few weeks ago I had a phone conversation with her during which we really connected. Anna was very exhausted. She told me she was living in hell and had been for a long time, which I understood, and while listening empathically I thought I saw at least a glimpse of what she was living in. After a while she calmed down. There was a beautiful light in her room, a crystal, and Anna told me she loved my hair, then talked about how we are going to live together with other sympathetic people in a castle she is going to buy, she said I will be able to come and go and we will be a real family. I just let her ramble on and told her that sounded really cool, which as far as I am concerned is not a lie.

Now the reason she was distressed on that day had to do with police coming over to her house (all these claims could be investigated, as Anna was posting everything on Instagram and Facebook, as far as I know it is still accessible to the public). Anna's side of the story was, that her neighbours are demons and paedophiles. From what I understood, it is true that a neighbour called the police on her, probably because she was verbally attacking him (I think that was a common occurrence at that point). Anyways, Anna's side of the story was that the police tried to rape her. She was so distressed after the encounter that she allegedly went to her ex-employer (Anna used to babysit) who promised she'd go with her to the police station to file a report. Anna said that the woman insisted that Anna goes on her own scooter while she goes by car, then she apparently drove away and of course never did arrive at the police station.

At this point, Anna was terrified of the police (as she was of her neighbours) and clearly viewed them as hostile figures.

Morning 12th of May, a friend who followed Anna on Instagram shared some disturbing images with me - Anna has killed her cat, apparently while psychotic. The story, as I learned it from her Instagram and directly from Anna when I called her, is that previous evening, 11th of May, police came to her house and took away her dogs.

Now, we do not know why did they take away the dogs and of course, given the state Anna was in, it was possible she was neglecting them. But from what we know, she loved those dogs, she was a good and responsible dog owner. She would leave places early to go take care of them; she even dropped out of the theatre we had originally met her through in part because dogs weren't allowed where we were rehearsing. Whatever love Anna had to give to the world and tried to give to us, people who didn't want it and couldn't appreciate it, she was giving to those dogs. Anna told me she thought she saw the police killing the dogs. She killed the cat afterwards.

When I learned of Anna killing the cat, I contacted my friend and called VNN who couldn't help, as Anna wasn't their patient, then I called her, then my friend called the police (by this point there were many people calling).

When I got to Anna, she picked up and was kind to me, not at all aggressive like I had feared, but she was clearly distraught. At first she talked angrily about the cat, then broke down and started crying. She was completely devastated about having done it. She loved the cat as much as the dogs and believed they shared a very special connection and likewise believed it would resurrect as a lion, as would she.

Anna then showed me that she has disconnected the gas in her house and barricaded herself on the inside, covering all the doors and windows thus attempting to block the flow of oxygen.

I asked Anna not to kill herself but she seemed adamant about doing it. However she was also semi-lucid. Then, my phone died. When I called again, Anna wasn't responding, and my phone kept

dying. My friend tried to call as well but Anna wasn't picking up anymore. Then from what we know she made more Instagram stories, in which she talked about how she has not died from the gas, which means she is immune and cannot die. To us it seems as though she maybe did not want to die anymore. A few minutes later, as (finally) a couple of firefighters took action, her window was broken and there was an explosion.

Now our questions are, and we are not writing this merely to atone our own guilt, because we fucked up, we know we fucked up, and we fucked up big. But if we fucked up, for there to even be something for us to have fucked up, how big did everyone else fuck up? So our questions are these. Does anyone in the police have any sensitivity towards or experience dealing with people in mental and emotional difficulties? Why were Anna's dogs taken away while she herself was left on her own devices? Where was Anna's social worker, where was Anna's GP? Where were Anna's friends, where were all the boys, where were her thousands of Instagram followers, where was humanity, where was love, where was God, where were the legal authorities? All Anna needed was for one person, it didn't matter who, it didn't matter how, to love her. She never got as much. From any of us.

So how many Annas, how many marginalized people, how much abysmal mental health care in this country, how many mistreated women, how many white picket fences, how many forms to fill, how many calls, how many more children, how many...? We all need to do better; this is happening every day, and unless our society is seriously restructured in a way that people like Anna can find their place in it and meaningfully contribute and share their gifts (of which she had plenty) without being thrown away like an inconvenience or a random casualty of bureaucratic structures (all of which failed Anna) then these people will keep dying like Anna did, and we will have their blood on our hands.

Thank you.

*P.S. "In the Netherlands, you can only be admitted against your will if you have a mental disorder (that has been diagnosed by a psychiatrist) and there is (potential) danger to your safety or the safety of others. The dangerous situation must be caused by the mental disorder. Naturally, attempts will first be made to resolve the dangerous situation and offer help in other ways. If there is no other recourse - and if you are unwilling to allow yourself to be committed voluntarily - then it is possible that you will be committed against your will."*

*What constitutes (potential) danger according to the law?*

- > *The danger that you will try to take your own life or seriously injure yourself.*
- > *The danger that you will lose touch with society completely.*
- > *The danger that you will seriously neglect yourself.*
- > *The danger that others will become aggressive in response to your problem behaviour.*
- > *The danger that you are threatening to take someone's life or cause serious injury.*
- > *If someone else's mental health is in jeopardy.*
- > *The danger that you will neglect someone who has been entrusted to your care.*
- > *You could present a danger to the safety of other people or their property."*

The following is one of the many poems Anna wrote:

“I will love you.

If you want to be free, you can go, you can be whatever you need.

I will still love you.

If you want to be with someone else, if you feel like that's what you need. I will step aside.

But I will still love you, and not even any less.

If you don't want to talk, if you need your space. I'll leave you to it.

But I will still love you.

I will love you, even when you don't have any love to give, I will love you even harder.

You don't have to give me any reason to trust, I will still trust with all my heart in what I feel for  
you

No matter how far we seem to wander, my love can never actually leave

Maybe before we can find true love, we first need to learn to what love is.

How unconditional love is

Maybe to find love, we first have to become love ❤️”

