

Awhile back, I sent a post that had various items taped to the page ("Don't Feed the Animals", July? 2019). Nothing very fancy, just a little extra, you know? I never knew how BTB handles the work of getting all these prisoner writings online, and after I sent that one, I got a note from Charlie DeTar (who always promptly, thoroughly, and very courteously answers any BTB questions I have) asking me to try to avoid sending taped pages in the future, since the scanning service is set up to scan single sheets and if something taped on comes off, well, the folks who do that critical work that gets our writing onto your screens aren't really in the business of trying to figure out puzzles of what goes where. All very reasonable — I totally get it.

BUT... worst coincidence ever, lol! I got that note asking me to avoid taped extras, to spare the scanner crew unnecessary headaches, literally just days after I'd sent a post on the anniversary of my mom's death; a post that not only involved taping lots of pictures into very specific spots on the pages, but which I sent in all loose, unassembled, with lots of instructions for how to place the photos. It was exactly what I was just asked not to do, only times ten! Instead of keeping things simple, I doubled down and gave a ton of extra work to people who, so far as I can tell, ~~are~~ aren't part of BTB proper but rather are contracted for scanning only. I can't tell you how bad I felt when I got that note and realized what I'd just done. Also, how worried I was. That post, about my mom, was really important to me: I put a lot into it, and now I was worried it might not get put up at all, or it might be a disordered mess because of how I'd submitted it. I worried I might never get my pictures back, some of which can't be replaced.

I needn't have worried. All the folks with BetweenTheBars — people like Charlie and people like the team that scans all our material — they took my big, complicated, very extra post, all full of special requests and specific instructions, and handled it with the same speed and care they always do, allowing me to have a voice and some presence in the real world, no problems or complaints. Today I got back my SASE, returned w/ all my precious photos, good as new.

THANK YOU guys for the work that you do. This one really meant a lot to me. I promise I'll try to be less trouble in the future. 😊 Love y'all.

--DymitrA