

## **To those who listen,**

"Unedited: Dead Ended Letters" is a collection of incomplete and unshared songs, poems and letters that I have written and composed over the span of my four years at NYU. When curating this collection, I was fascinated by the idea of absence and (in)voluntary omission, which manifest in different ways in each piece and each represent or describe experiences I have lived through, either first or second- handedly. With the uncertainty of the times we currently face and the already chaotic turbulence that is usually coupled with coming into your own as an adult, this project has acted as a coping mechanism tied to my past and a stepping stone for the projects to follow. It offers a space to interact with the questions that go unanswered, lines that are blurred, thoughts that exist incompleted, and the things that sometimes are and aren't as they appear to be. This collection is meant to be listened to with an open heart and loving mind.

### **[Unedited: Dead Ended Letters](#)**

#### HOW TO LISTEN:

1. Click the link
2. Listen to the song with your eyes closed
3. Listen while reading the lyrics that are listed underneath the title of the song
4. Read the corresponding explanation of the song
5. Relisten (optional)
6. Repeat until the end

Thank you again,

Kennedi

**Illusion:**

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/illusions/s-enj2V>

Playing with fire  
Picking your brain  
Leaving a lover  
It all hurts the same  
Conflict and crushes  
Are also to blame  
It's all an illusion  
It's all just a game

Life  
Isn't for the weak minded  
And time  
Would rather leave you behind

But I just wanna give love  
Wanna give you something to  
succeed/you can feel?  
I know  
Sometimes life is rough  
Wanna give you something that you  
need/is real?

So just say bye bye bye (bye bye)  
To people who can't keep up  
With your fly tonight  
Let's get high on life  
The illusion is in your mind

**Burn:**

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/5-to-burn/s-6r373>

I held the spark  
That caused the blaze  
Started so small  
Barely a flame

Deep in my heart  
I made the mark  
Answered your call  
I am to blame

Awakened by love  
How dangerous  
Gave you my all  
Wasn't enough

Ended in pain  
I cried in vain  
You didn't care  
You walked away

So

Burn  
Burn  
Burn  
Burn hope you

Learn  
Burn  
Burn  
Burn

Next time  
Think of  
Who you're hurting  
Now you burn  
Because I'm broken

Left so  
Many  
Words unspoken  
You will burn  
Because I'm broken

## Background:Here

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/backgroundhere/s-tlQTE>

You're a beautiful man  
With no substance  
And I fell in love  
With your loving

But you don't care  
You're not aware  
Of how I feel

I'm just a small taste of southern  
The sunshine in the summer  
There'll never be another  
Like me

This life is a give and take  
Not just your half of the plate  
But that's okay  
I'll be okay  
I'll Undo all of our happiness  
Disappear without a sound  
You just left me here  
Guess I'll fade into the background  
Forget how you made me feel  
There's nothing left for me here

When the sun and stars  
Cease to shine  
I'll dim my light  
To look behind  
At the carnage  
You left me in  
You left me in

You said we could be friends  
But you can't  
And you don't want to  
used it as an excuse  
To get me out your hair  
Think I'm unaware  
Think I don't know but really  
It's that just don't care  
Cuz if I did  
I'd implode  
Have my momma say  
She told me so  
And she did

How was stupid was I  
To believe in fairy tales

Our stories entwined  
Then elapsed  
Then collapsed  
And you laugh  
As you left me  
And faded into the background

Undid all of our happiness  
Disappear without a sound  
And you  
You just left me here  
Guess I'll fade into the background  
Forget how you made me feel  
There's nothing left for me here

## Caught Up

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/caught-up-acapella/s-HjKg9BTi2Lj>

This is my last message  
Boy I promise  
Disregard 2,4 And 6  
Yeah 6, that was the longest  
But you can't have addictives  
With no tonics  
That's toxic  
Concoctions  
I know that I should stop  
But I don't wanna

I'm Hooked on you  
Baby line and sinker  
Oo what was I thinking  
You're everything I dreamed of  
Had me screaming  
So baby boy  
Blame it on yourself  
No one told you to get me started  
Yes I was wrong to blow your line away

I was caught up  
In your love  
Caught up in ya touch  
Baby baby I can't get enough  
I might just be in love

Bridge:  
I bet ya I bet ya  
You think that I'm crazy  
Cuz boy I've been raving  
My friends all  
Asking about when you'll claim me  
You oughta make me ya baby  
I doubt that  
I'll see ya again  
I wanna see you again

But boy can you blame me  
Boy you threw it down  
No one can stop me  
Just go head/on and block me right now

You blew me I blew it  
Blew me I blew it right back  
You blew me I blew it  
Blew me I blew it. I'd do it again  
You did it I do it  
I Did it I do it  
I'd do it again  
I did it I blew it  
Done it blew did it do it again  
For you

## **Money:**

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/money/s-VHM9drmSsL9?in=kennichanel/sets/dead-ended-letters/s-K2kapPkGOA6>

Give me my  
Give me my money  
Shouldn't have to ask  
Gimmie dat cash

Oh my look at dat ass!  
Twirlin' all around baby  
For that cash

Oh honey honey  
Gimmie my money  
Oh ain't it funny?  
I know you wanna grab.

Money makes the world sing  
Gon' and do it for ya  
For that green.  
Wind my hips  
Baby grind on me.  
Country girl,  
Not Jamaican ting!

BUT...  
I can fool you if you want me to be  
Baby so much power  
In a little thang.

Shake it baby  
Shake it shake it baby  
Pay me pay me baby  
Say it say it!

Gimmie dat green!  
You know what I mean  
Gimmie dat green!

## Callin':

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/callin/s-INh6qo4OFGb>

I am drifting  
Things are shifting  
We're running away from reality  
Here by myself  
I'm quarantined

And you've never felt  
so far away  
And i know  
That someday  
We'll be together again

But, it's killing me  
Cuz I miss you for the now  
We'll get through it somehow  
And you'll be able to stay

So in this moment  
Am I anxious or awake?  
Will I see another day?  
And I wanna embrace  
The longer I'm away

But they're dying outside  
I wanna hide away  
Away until it's safe  
Please save yourself

The future's uncertain now  
And I pray we get through it

With our purpose around  
Is this all an act?  
What is truth  
And fact?

We will prevail.  
We will get through it.  
All will be well.  
I need you to do it.

And I'll do the same  
From your side  
You will remain

Baby can you hear me calling?  
Callin for you to reply  
Baby can you  
Do you hear me calling?  
Callin for you to survive

Are these chills  
I feel  
from me  
still missing you?  
Am I now going insane?  
Distance is drawing me further out  
Will we ever be the same?

Can you hear me?  
Can you hear me calling?

**Speak:**

<https://soundcloud.com/kennichanel/black-woman-speaks/s-pNYhI9vatGK>

(Not the actual lyrics/delivery, but the poem I wrote that inspired them)

If I were to die today  
I pray  
That you would love me  
The same way  
As though I never passed

Leave a legacy  
For all to see  
Eternally

Want you to fight the fight  
Want you to live your life  
Want you to speak the truth  
Baby your future's bright

Were i to die today  
What would you say  
About me

For me to go  
I gotta make sure  
I've said everything  
I want you to know

And if I didn't  
Well i missed it  
I've failed myself and you

So What's the point  
Of living  
If I don't leave  
All I could be giving

For you to see

I have  
Cried  
For you to fly  
And you  
Should know  
All that I have inscribed

And inside should be out  
My truth should be fact  
For you to know  
For you to hold  
Right by your heart

My daughter  
If mama died today  
And you wondered what I'd say

The answer is love  
And honey you're always enough  
Know life can be tough  
But mama said you're enough

You were made from love  
So go out and love  
You're enough  
Honey just trust  
In love  
That's the answer

You live through me



Know that even  
If you can't speak to me  
Believe inside your heart  
That I've left everything  
For you to be  
The next in line  
You'll do fine

Were I to die today  
I pray you'll have everything  
I needed to say  
Left no rock until  
So I sing this for you  
My baby

In all you do  
Do it with love

This is your gift from above  
Do all you do with intent  
And baby never give up

If mama died today  
And you wondered what I'd say

The answer is love  
And honey you're always enough  
Know life can be tough  
But mama said you're enough

You were made from love  
So go out and love  
You're enough  
Honey just trust  
In love  
That's the answer

## **Elaborations:**

### Illusion:

This introduction was written while I was in Paris. I wrote it as a letter to myself, but also to anyone else who also might struggle with the idea that none of this might even really matter in the long run. "Life truly isn't for the weak minded". And sometimes when you are weak, you get left behind, but that's nothing to cry about. It is just how things are. Life will take you where it wants, so you might as well ride along with it. The harmonies in the beginning of the song intentionally arrive in your ears like a truck moving at high speeds when the song begins as a way to mimic the intensities at which life moves. Ultimately in the midst of it all, I remind myself that life is going to be as it wishes and all that I can do is be down for the trip. My advice would be to share love and keep it moving and that love will always be the only answer in the end.

### Burn:

This piece was also written while I was abroad in Paris. While there, I came across a few artists on Twitter who were working with astrology and exploring themselves by using astrological analyses of themselves to help them better understand their own minds with the hopes of being more efficient in their creative endeavors. Naturally, I became extremely fascinated by astrology and spent a lot of time reading about the basics of it trying to figure out how and if I could put it to work. According to astrologers, there is a concept called "Capricorn karma" that happens because the sign Capricorn is always seeking to maintain order and balance. Capricorn is known for being hardworking and the epitome of the phrase "you reap what you sow." This makes this sign the perfect vessel for distributing and regulating karmic energy. It is said that people with placements in Capricorn cause crazy things to happen when they wrong people or are wronged by others. A person with a placement in Capricorn has a planet that was crossed by the sign when they were born. For example, those whose zodiac sign (Sun sign) is Capricorn were born while the sign Capricorn was crossing the Sun. This also applies to other planets.

During my time in Paris, I had been mistreated by the city in general and was very unhappy. I encountered rude Parisians, was in the midst of an identity crisis and confronted with conflict that was not originally advertised upon my arrival. One specific

incident however sent me over the edge: I was kicked down the stairs by a French man. This is a long story in itself, but just know that I was pissed about it. Ironically, a few days later, Notre Dame was on fire...The correlation between my misfortune in Paris happening during the same time that the city also had a huge misfortune? You may wonder. Well my Moon sign is in Capricorn (which a Moon sign in case you didn't know, is just as a significant placement as your Sun sign, if not more important, in providing insight as to why you are who you are and a major aspect of your personality.) Was it a coincidence? I truly don't know, but I was very very upset and mildly comforted by the fact that it seemed that the city had been karmically dealt with for mistreating me. Think of it as the universe avenging me if you will. Burn was my way of channeling these emotions and explanations of what had transpired.

Background:Here

Have you ever been in love? Have you ever been in love with someone who never existed? A version of a person that you created in your head. Who was very real to you, but not the actual person you were dealing with? I have. ALOT. This song was brought on by a particularly bad delusion I suffered from for an entire year. I was so heartbroken when I actually realized that I had fooled myself, that I am still working through the after effects of breaking my own heart. I wrote this song about that in between space. When you have your version of the memories you shared with the person who was, but wasn't. Though they were very real to me, I was the only person who felt them. Does that make them any less significant? I still grew as a person. And what do I do with them now that I have realized that they were fabricated? I don't want to forget the beautiful illusion that I created, but I also am now painstakingly aware of the reality of that relationship that has now come to an end. Where do I put all of these feelings while also dealing with the fact that I have become the background of that person's life story? ...."Here"...wherever that may be.

Caught Up:

Caught Up is an excerpt of a full song. This snippet begins in the middle of the song sans backing track. It is actually a true story that I wrote about being ghosted. The acapella snippet was an artistic choice that I made as a way for me to cope with the possibility of not being able to put out the version of this song associated. In my frustration, I decided to remove the track all together and include it in this project as representation of the nonsense that I have had to endure over these past four years.

The death to my love children projects that will never see the light of day because their parents couldn't get it together. My inclusion of this is me telling them that I am still fighting to show them the love they deserve. Hopefully one day this song will see the light of day, but if it doesn't, I can cope with the fact that at least a piece of it has touched someone's ears even if it was brief and incomplete. In my opinion, it is also quite ironic that a song about absence has also been absent-ed.

Money:

This is one of my more performative pieces as on the surface it seems as though I am channeling a stripper. However, this song is actually a device I used as a commentary about the realities of being a woman. When writing this song, I was frustrated about how in the midst of being and feeling objectified, women still aren't given what they are owed. I decided to "strip" down to the most unappreciated version of women hustling (unappreciated by misogyny of course) and explore the rawness and depth of how that can be applied to different iterations of "womanhood." Meant to be taken both literally and as a parody, I was giving us, the collective, a voice to comment on the "feminine wiles" we have to conjure in order to effectively get things done. This snippet explores the question: What happens when I remove myself from the equation to contribute to capitalism both literally and in the figurative idea of "moving for the man". Highlighting nuances and fetishes I've personally experienced: "country girl not Jamaican tings", I also explain how I have had my appearance exotified by my peers and those I have come into contact with since being in New York. I'm fed up! Why can I not be a Black girl from the South? Why is that even sexualized and commodified and made fun of? AND, If you are going to force me into an exotically erotic position, at least be accurate! But alas, I will still play along as long as it allows me to get what I want and/or need. I have more power and knowledge than you would think, yet I'll "shake it" and play the game as long as you pay me.

Callin':

Callin' was written during a time when I was in transition. I had just arrived back in Dallas after driving three days from New York and was quarantined at a hotel for two weeks due to the virus. I was feeling isolated and missing my loved ones and writing about that distance. I was emotionally and physically drained by my travels and having to pack up my entire life in New York to return home. It was an extremely lonely and alienating experience, but I knew it was for the greater good. It was almost impossible to believe that there were people who didn't think that the virus was real and destroying

lives as I struggled and continue to struggle to hold the little bits of my life that were left intact together. I was suspended and mildly dissociating from life because there was (and still is) no definite distinction in time passing any more. The unknown made itself loud and comfortable and I am not sure if I was ignoring its presence before, but it is a daunting theme as this year has played out. Does anyone agree? Does anyone else feel the same? Does anyone else hear me? Where do we go from here?

Speak:

This is honestly the hardest expansion/explanation to write simple because of how sacred the topic addressed is. It took me the longest to gather my thoughts for this one. It was written with the intention of harnessing all of the Black girl magic that has been passed down to me in order to share it with the young Black girls who I touch and my own daughter(s) should I have them later in life. I imagine what I would say to them, I include things that I have said and wisdom that I feel as though the foremothers would have wanted me to know. I imagine that I would be expected to The collective struggle faced as Black women is an unspoken thing we carry with us daily. I'd want my daughters and those after me to do better than me in spite of these shortcomings we face, so I would offer my knowledge with the hopes that they do better than I do. If we all agree to do this for our daughters, one day they will hold the keys to the universe. The lasting message that keeps me going is love. Hidden in every message of survival is a motivator of love. Every grievance, protection, request, acknowledgement, love is at the root. That warmth that is described when you think of an older Black woman, that is wisdom and love and that is what I hope to leave in my wake. Love.