This I Believe

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If you didn’t already know or suspect this, let me be the first to inform you that coming out is awkward as hell. Probably even more awkward than watching people double check the sign on the door of a restroom because I don’t look like I belong in a women’s restroom. That’s not pretty either. The first time I had to come out, I was shaky, nauseous, and filled with an immeasurable amount of dread. As I sat down at the kitchen table with my mom, I was completely unprepared and I didn’t have to slightest clue of how I wanted to come out. Instead of opening with “mom, I’m gay”, I spent ten minutes describing the girl I had fallen in love with, which in retrospect was probably not the best way I could have gone about that. This is who I am. I struggle to say things outright. I have a much easier time if I tell a story to open up a conversation. I’m more likely to share things that have a story behind them.

So I wasn’t too surprised with my method of coping when I had to experience losing a friend. As soon as I heard that he was gone, I went silent. Minutes felt like days passing, and soon, those minutes turned into hours that turned into days. I couldn’t speak to anyone. Any communication was held through words in a text. I spent most of my time wandering around campus listening to music at the highest volume I could manage. And whenever I returned to my room, I simply went to sleep. No one is supposed to die at eighteen.

The next day, I woke up to more news about how it had happened. A complete accident, moving between trains, he slipped. So I repeated the day before. No words. Nothing that could come out of my mouth was going to be enough. Get back to the room, and go to sleep. Days disappeared out from under me. That’s all it was. Things taken away from me. By the time I was able to talk to anyone again, I felt numb and doped up. The only way I could let anyone know what was going on was by telling them about how we met, and how incredible his writing is. I didn’t have enough words to do him justice, but I used what I could. Telling those stories over an over again was the only thing that pulled me out of the shell I had backed myself into. There’s power in communication, even when there are only so many words to use. I believe in the power behind telling stories.