



Epilogue

When I was younger, the books that I enjoyed most were *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Go Ask Alice*—true stories told by a young voice with sincerity, and without the intention of being viewed by anyone but the author.

My letters to Ogre were also never intended to be published. After they were returned to me, a friend suggested they might be of value to others, which led to this book. While I realize these letters and journals are my words, Ogre was my inspiration, and the person who saved everything for me (an act so profoundly kind and caring that it still amazes me), so I first asked Ogre for his blessing. He thought the book would be a positive project and supported the idea.

Revisiting the letters has been a gift in many ways. I observed patterns in my behaviors and my relationships that have helped me to become more self-aware. I realize now that my mother's damaging behavior was not my fault, and it is my responsibility to seek wisdom from what I experienced and not waste energy on anger and blame. I'm also reminded that there is a side to my mother undocumented in the letters; she is a creative and hardworking woman who loves me very much.

Over the years I have had therapy and many wonderful friends, and today I feel healthy and strong. I'm thankful that I had writing and drawing as an outlet during my darkest times. I am certain that when I was feeling suicidal, expressing my feelings on paper and looking forward to the seemingly small things, such as seeing my favorite bands perform, literally kept me alive.

I felt many emotions putting this book together. I laughed, I cringed, and there were moments when I was overcome with sadness. But at the same time I felt a satisfaction that I have been able to realize a number of goals and dreams that I had. Overall, as I pieced these letters together, I saw a young woman with a will to survive and an overwhelming passion to understand herself—the same person I am today. Only today, I am happy.

Jolene Siana
Los Angeles