

A COMPILATION OF DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS  
INSPIRED BY A GLOBAL ART PROJECT

# BEFORE I DIE BELGRADE 2016

BEFORE I DIE I NEED TO DECIDE ON MY CAREER...

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO DO ILLEGAL  
BUT REALLY COOL GRAFFITI

BEFORE I DIE I WANT  
TO BE A REBEL!

BEFORE I DIE I DON'T WANT TO GROW UP!

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO RUN A MARATHON.

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO FIT IN THOSE JEANS.

BY THE BALKAN WRITERS PROJECT



# **BEFORE I DIE - BELGRADE 2016**

**A compilation of dreams and aspirations**

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**Photographs © Katarina Šotić**

**Print and bind:  
Grafčki atelje Sanja, Beograd**



# BEFORE I DIE BELGRADE 2016

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BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO GET A STREET  
NAMED AFTER ME, OR AT LEAST  
A RESTAURANT.

**BEFORE I DIE - BELGRADE 2016**



Before I die, I want to experience a perfect sunset.

To stand on the edge. To see the bursts of dying light, off to rage and burn somewhere untouched. Where spices are hot and people have strange smiles. I want to stand at the end of blue, to dip my fingers in the crimson and paint flowers in the snow.

To be so high up that Everest would seem like an anthill.

To sink into the bruised night, a comforting blanket full of holes - those pinpricks of extinguished stars and smoldering dreams.

- Ružica Matić (28)

BEFORE I DIE I  
WISH TO FIND A  
FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

Before I die I wish for love.

Once, I read about this woman and her life. Strong-willed, self-sufficient, she made her place in the world on her own. She married, but she was apart from her husband for years, and when they finally meet, there is a scene where he was sitting in an armchair, and she comes and sits on the floor by his chair, puts her arms around his legs and her head on his lap. She found peace. No words, no pride, no shame. Before I die, I hope to love and be loved like that.

Is this a small, not so important, slightly pathetic wish? Or is it a great one?

Oh, well... if not that, then I would like to be a rock star, a bit crazy, a bit sad, always free.

- Nataša Dostić (34)

Before I die I want to become an astronaut.

I've had this dream since I was little. My dear father would usually take me out to a place where there was little light and show me the different constellations, name them, and soon enough I'd have them memorized. Up to this day, whenever I see the sky is clear of clouds, I pack the necessary equipment and prepare to stay outside for the night. It surely might sound adventurous and, not going to lie, the feeling is amazing.

At the moment, I'm getting ready to enter an educational institution, like university, where I will learn to use better, high-tech equipment to enhance my knowledge of the stars. I believe dreams can become reality with a little practice and a little more research.

- Denitsa Yanakieva (18)



BEFORE I DIE, I NEED TO DISCOVER THE REASON FOR MY BREATHING, AND PUSH MYSELF TOWARDS THE GOAL BEHIND THAT REASON.

MY BIGGEST FEAR IS THE ONE OF WASTING TIME, AND SOMETIMES I FEEL THAT, MINUTE BY WASTED MINUTE, I AM DRIFTING AWAY FROM TRUE PURPOSE. AND THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE. TO TRULY BE ALIVE, ONE CONSTANTLY NEEDS TO OVERCOME HIS WEAKNESSES. THROW AWAY HIS DOUBTS AND BECOME GREATER THAN HIS FORMER SELF.

THAT IS THE COURSE OF MY SHIP.

- SINIŠA GOJKOVIĆ (20)

Before I die I want to go on a quest and slay a dragon!

Before I die, I want to travel the world until I find my soul's reflection in the secluded face of nature.

Before I die, I want to heal your unspoken broken desires and engrave my longings for you on your skin and on your heart.

Before I die, I want to reach home. A place I don't yet know/ nor can guess, but will surely recognize at that instant when the restlessness that has been weighing on me since I can remember how to love and how to fear... stops... calms itself... and dissolves.

Before I die, I want to get into a fist fight with good ol' Mr. Life and come out of it smiling!

- Divna Vukadinović (30)

Before I Die... I want to make things right with her.

I want to apologize for all the harsh words I said. I want her to know I never truly meant half of them. Many of the things she said never went fully into my head. At that time we branded as "ours" - I was wrong and she was right.

I should not have tried to control her, I should not have tried to shape her to my molds, I should not have been so severe and cutting, I should have loved her for who she was. I want to have her know how much I still think of her. She continues to be amazing and inspiring and when I see her struggle I want to support her, but I still have not apologized and I have no right to her.

I just wish I did.

- Mirjana Markotić (26)





ALEXSANDRA (20)



NEVENA (23)



Before I die I want to tell him how I feel

Before I die... I would like to choose where I would die.

I would like to visit all the little places full of lumpy walls, crooked streets and extremely polite people. I want to be surrounded by colorful parks, strange ideologies, cozy cafés and water. I want to feel different people, understand their Earth, and through them change my inner shapes. I want to feel various kinds of freedom and enjoy their transformations. I want to experience the reflection of myself in people close to me.

I want to create my own paradise, so that the paradise on the other side doesn't feel like a new environment.

- Vana Filipovski (24)

Before I die I want to be  
someone's first choice  
for a change.

Before I die I want to live a life worthwhile.

Our lives are short and they will pass, regardless of what we believe. Every second is another word written and it cannot be erased. Whether they be about friends with whom nights passed in the blink of an eye, treading on foreign lands far from those we're accustomed to, or finding that one person who makes each breath taken a bit more meaningful, sentences fuse together to create chapters.

Life is a conglomerate of good and bad experiences, of chapters that tell the story of our lives. Though I do not yet know what exactly will lead to a fulfilling life, I'm sure that time will tell. When the day comes, I want to be positive that if I read my story, I will find it to have been a worthwhile read, and not a waste of time.

- Mirjana Ilić (18)

Before I die I want to accept at least a tiny, tiny part of this crazy modern world we live in.

The more I see and hear, the less I feel inspired about the future. I have my own little dreams and hopes, but will they remain abstract if they keep colliding with the selfishness and mechanization? God, I sound self-involved, but I don't deny that I too am part of that world. I just want to save myself before I start living in a box with the broken pieces of some imaginary life. Art, nature, open-mindedness, understanding – this is the essence of purity and what we need to remain human beings, and not some bloodless creatures eager to live but not to be truly alive. And this is what I need in order to accept it.

It may sound too naive and childish, but isn't that kind of the point?

- Jasna Karamehmedović (26)



BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO VISIT 100 COUNTRIES!

Before I die I want to learn how to do cartwheels

I WANT TO MEET all of my INTERNET friends

Before I die I want to call up some people I don't like and tell them that and hang up.

Before I die I want to quit smoking, before I die from it... I WANT TO INTERACT WITH AN OCTOPUS.

Before I die I WANT TO DISCOVER WHAT I WANT BEFORE I DIE.

Before I die I want to get married just for the hell of it.

I WANT TO FUCKING GRADUATE.....

Before I die I want to see Nature thrive over Humanity

Before I die I want to get a good night's sleep just for once

Before I die I want to adopt a dog and a cat and a kid, not necessarily in that order.

Before I die I want to learn when to shut up.  
I WANT TO EXTERMINATE SARCASTISM

Before I die I'd like to see aliens. I'm sure there are some just waiting.

Before I die I would like to visit Poe's resting place.

I WANT TO GET A PENGUIN TATTOO

Before I die I want to not lie when I say "I can do this."

Before I die I WANT TO FALL FOR SOMEONE I FEEL COMFORTABLE

SINGING IN FRONT OF.

Before I die I would like to spend a night in a lighthouse.

I want to be gay for one day.

Before I die I want to think of something cool to write here.

Before I die I WANT TO SPEND LESS AND EARN MUCH MORE...

Before I die I want to permanently deactivate Facebook

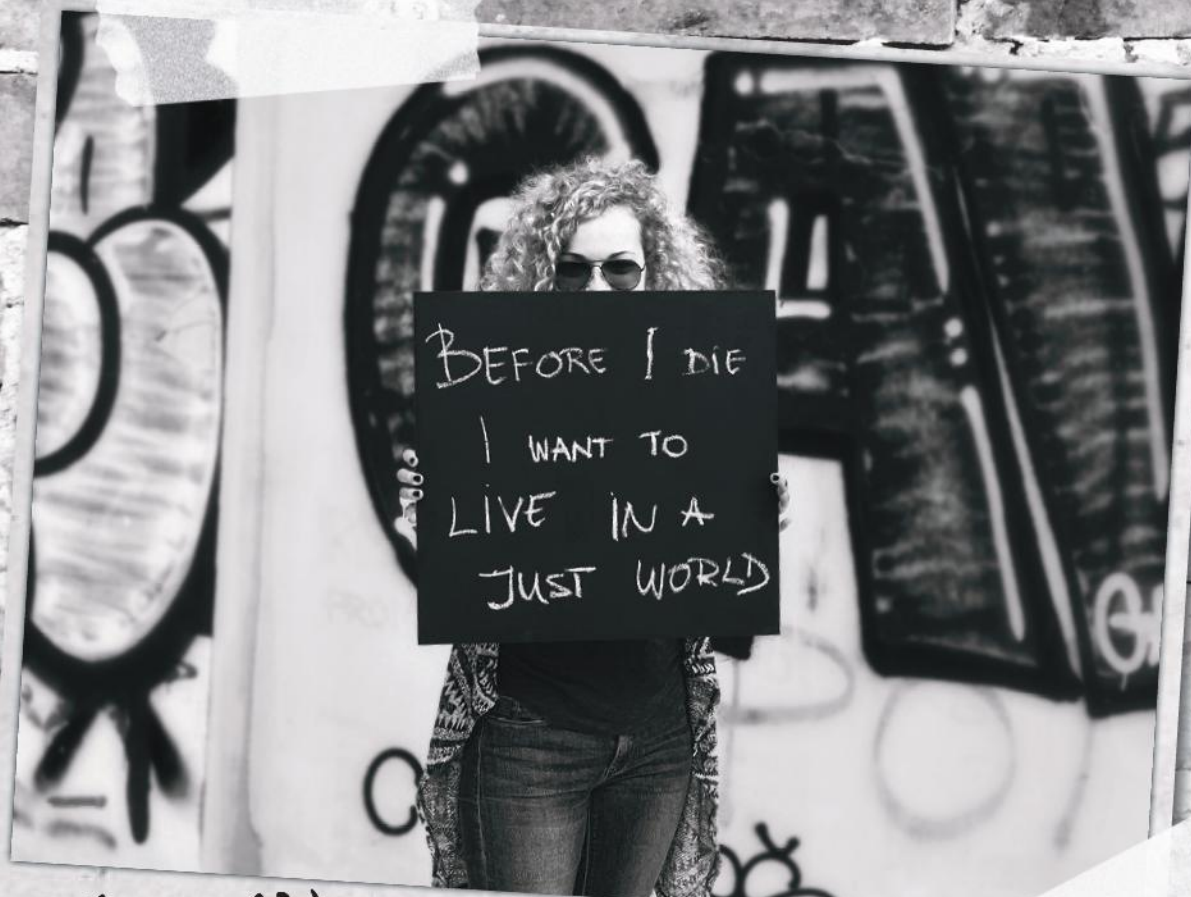
Before I die I want to be in situations out of my comfort zone



SUPER PONUDA :)



ANJA (20)



MILICA (23)



Before I Die

I would ride  
A cold blue wave  
Over the endless white desert

Bubbles tingling around me

In a distance  
Next to the infinity  
I wanna feel the soft warmth  
Of the red Sun

Rotating slowly

Float in the air  
Fall into the fresh grass  
While watching white shapes  
Remember the innocence

Hug of my son

Kissing my only love  
Upload her soul  
Into mine  
Watching our clones

Sex

Before I die  
I wanna  
Leave everything  
And bring with me nothing

And then I can Die

- Goran Ristić (39)

Before I die, I want to stop asking for approval.

I want to stop asking for permission to live the life I want. Because when you start asking permission, you really aren't living at all.

I want to send him a message that's been in the back of my mind, the tip of my tongue. I want to quit the job I hate and volunteer in a different country just to see what it's like. I want to run a marathon, pick up a hitchhiker, practice photography. I don't want to be afraid to go out to dinner alone. I told my friend that I applied to be a cab driver the other day, and he told me, "That's not something you would do."

Don't box me in. I'm limitless. At least I plan to be before I die.

- Lindsey Bouzan (25)

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO  
RIDE AN ELEPHANT.

Before I die, I want to hear the words "You've changed my life."

Life is so big, so immeasurably big, that we can forget that it's really just a lot of little things. When it's good, we barely notice them, but when things are tough, the little things start to seem a whole lot bigger.

If I could be the reason for making someone a better person just by doing "the little things", I would be the happiest person in the whole world.

- Andrea Šebalj (23)



I want to throw out all the shit I don't need...

Before I die I want to use Harper's monologue from Perestroika

FOR AN AUDITION

Before I die I want to send a letter to a random address and see if they write back

I WANT TO PUNCH MY EX IN THE FACE. HARD

Before I die I want to own a polaroid camera and take cute photos!

Before I die I want to stop pretending I'm fine and healthy, I want to be able to cry when I want to.

I WANT TO GET A CURE FOR MYSELF.

Before I die I want to throw a dart at a map and travel

to where it lands

Before I die I want to fix my broken motivator...

Before I die I want to be like my father, because he is my greatest inspiration :))

Before I die I want to spend a day holding up a "free hugs" sign.

I want to make out with a stranger!!!

Before I die I want to be able to wear short skirts and not shave my legs.

Before I die I want to know this sadness is a passing thing and  
that I will be alright.

Before I die I want to try all of those things my parents told me were bad for me.

Before I die I want to stop giving a damn about some people who  
never gave a damn about me.

Before I die I'd like to start writing, seems like a way to finally start living.

I want to shave my head!

Before I die I WANT TO HEAR LYRICS THAT WOULD MEAN SO MUCH TO ME I'D TATTOO THEM!

Before I die I want to eat spaghetti to forgetti my regretti

Before I die I want to turn up at her door and kiss her just once more.

I'd like to master time travelling.

Before I die I want to receive my Hogwarts acceptance letter!

Before I die I want to learn parkour in order to jump over my problems. I WANT TO LEARN HOW TO BLOW GLASS!



Before I die?

Hmmm...

I want to gaze at the stars and watch the magnificent Aurora Borealis light up the Arctic sky,

I want to unveil the Bermuda Triangle's mystery and enjoy the undisputed beauty of Phuket Island,

I want to ride an elephant and climb Kilimanjaro just because I can,

I want to ski in Val Thorens and relax on the stunning white-sand beaches of the Maldives,

I want to go scuba-diving on the Great Barrier Reef and watch humpback whales breaching near Hawaii,

I want to walk among the ruins of Machu Picchu and ponder upon the ancient civilizations,

I want to be mesmerized by the Angel Falls and go whitewater rafting on Tara, well, what the hell, I want to traverse this vast majestic world for the rest of my days,

But if not,

Seeing no more hunger, illnesses, and wars would suffice,

Yes,

Before I die.

- Jelena Spasić (43)

Before I die  
I want to pass  
my driving test

Before I die, I want to make better pupils.

As a student and future teacher in primary education, it makes me really sad to hear the complaints that kids are getting worse and worse. The planet we live on is not safe, there are way too many wars, global warming is no longer a thing of the future, and I truly believe that we, as a community of people, can do something to make it a better place, starting from parents, kindergartens and teachers standing united.

Because it is not about making a better world for our kids, it is about making better kids for our world.

- Marija Mihaljević (13)

Before I die, I must see their eyes. Only then will I know what I've lived for.

I must sense their remorse and see every drop of insecure sweat on their faces. I must watch while they slowly fall to the ground and take a glance from above. When all this hatred turns to the pleasure of feeling their sorrow, there will be nothing more worth breathing for for me.

When I see them biting their fists in reaction to my success, I will know I haven't fought for nothing and I will peacefully pass on.

- Ida Nikodijević (22)



Before I die, I want to be able to say "I draw the line", for no one else will be able to draw from my own eyes a sketch of everything that lies beneath.

It is my pitfall to dig, it is my skyline to swallow, it is mine to reach, it is mine to follow.

It happened long ago in the corners of my lungs that I decided to take my matter in my own hands.

How?

By every breath I draw.

I draw the line I stand on.

- Jelena Petrović (23)

Before I die  
I want to  
learn how to  
braid my hair.

Before I die I want to  
become a nicer person...

Before I die, I want to fulfill my dreams.

I want to pursue higher education in the writing and film field. I want to work in these fields as long as possible, as much as possible. I feel that writing novels (and directing movies) is my calling.

Since I can remember, writing has been my second family, my best friend, my most trusted friend, my student and my master. It is my inspiration, my relief, my support and at the same time, it can be my curse, because it takes a lot of hard work, and professional writing (and directing) can be a double-edged sword.

Maybe my dreams are childish and unworthy, but they are mine. I matured faster with their help. It's my responsibility to make them real. And I wouldn't give up on them for the world. Because they are my world.

- Slaveya Zaharieva (16)

Before I die, I want to stop caring what people think of me.

I don't mean this in the sense that I wish to disregard the opinions and emotions of loved ones, nor that I want to lead a reckless life. I want to not care in the sense that I want to be free of the fear of judgment; to stop being so self-conscious and so subdued. For instance, if I feel like taking a stroll 'round my neighborhood in my pajamas (as I'm sure we all do sometimes), I want to go ahead and do this without thinking twice.

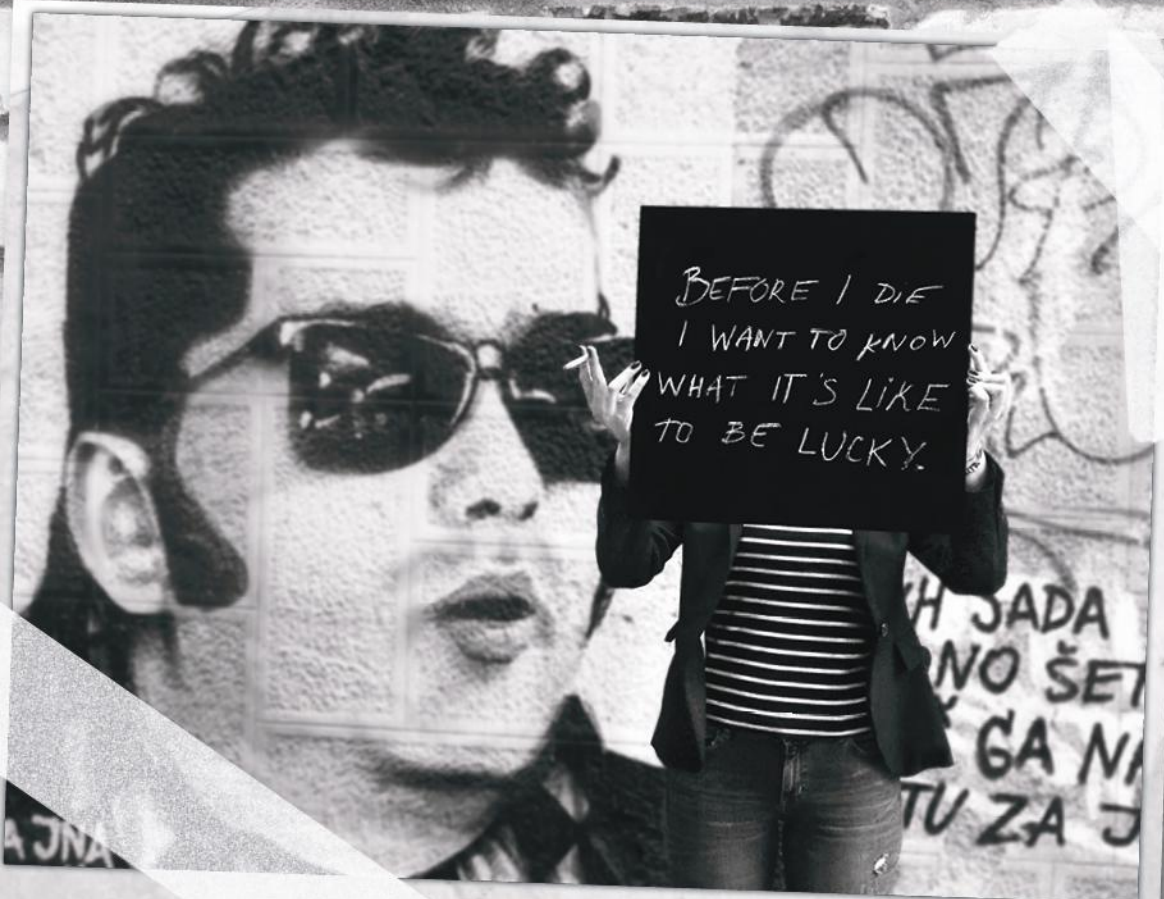
Before I die I want  
to dance in the rain

- Nevena Todorović (23)





DRAGANA (22) & NIKOLA (22)



ANONYMOUS (26)



Before I die, I Would Love It...

If my feet touched the sands of all continents,  
To tread the Earth as if she were mine, as if I was hers.  
I wish to learn to be, gently and in accordance with the war inside.  
I want to carve myself out as if I was a tile of clay, a million years old,  
disfigured by all the wisdom of this life.  
I want to study dying and learn from its mistakes.  
I want to close the curtains and merge the two storms inside of me.  
Before I die, I want to bleed.  
I want laughter and sorrow, love and rapture.  
I want everything that existence has to offer thrown in my face.  
I want to be so close to dying so that, when I finally do, I feel relief.  
Before I die, I want to live.

- Milan Zlatanović (23)

*Before I die I want to lose all my prejudice and hate*

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF AGAIN.

SO, I WISH TO DO SOMETHING CRAZY LIKE FIGHTING  
IN A K-1 CHAMPIONSHIP. I THINK ONLY IN THIS  
"CREATIVE" WAY CAN I BREAK THE WEIGHTS THAT  
WERE PUT ON ME SINCE THE DAY I WAS BORN. THE  
WEIGHTS THAT WERE MADE OF SIMPLE WORDS LIKE:  
YOU'RE WEAK, USELESS, AND YOU SHOULD DO WHAT  
YOU'RE TOLD, AND, OF COURSE, YOU'RE ALWAYS  
WRONG.

IT'S LIKE A HUGE PRESSURE THAT'S PUSHING YOU  
DOWN ALL THE TIME, AND YOU FEEL SO INSECURE  
THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN STAND UP STRAIGHT.

IN ORDER TO CHANGE THAT, I'M PREPARED TO GIVE  
EVERYTHING THAT I'VE GOT.

LET ME WIN AT LEAST ONCE IN MY LIFE! I DON'T  
CARE IF I COLLAPSE AFTER THAT AND NEVER GET UP  
AGAIN.

- JURIJ ROMANOV (23)

Before I die

I want to find  
a portal  
to another world  
or a dimension  
or a parallel universe

Before I die, I will breathe under water.

The sky held a white hole which illuminated my  
skin through the branches, giving it the pale silver  
color of fish scales, or of ancient jewelry laid at  
the bottom of the sea. I moved lightly through the  
soft grass, leaving soft footprints. August is the  
month when one should pamper oneself. In front  
of me was the fish pond. I took off my clothes, in  
silence. This was to be pulled off skillfully, for I  
needed to charge into the water, without waking  
up the carps that floated beneath the surface,  
half asleep. My jump broke their tranquility. A  
school of fat fish turned into an underwater  
stampede. They battered me with tails and ran  
into each other, wild in panic, but mute in their  
alarm. The water boiled and I opened my mouth.  
Before I die, I will be breathing under water.

- Nikola Budanović (23)



Before I die... I want to live for myself.

I don't wear watches anymore. Every hour that passes falls into the pit in my stomach that is the sense that nothing has happened to me in that hour. I have no memories to tell, no feelings to hold on to, only minutes seeping through like grains of sand.

I've spent most of my life indulging people. I got a sense of fulfillment from their happiness so, naturally, when everyone went their separate ways, I found myself lost and empty, void of any emotion. So, I would start to throw myself at the first things to peak my interest. Every morning I'd wake with a busy mind, every night I'd go to bed with a sinking feeling of failure. Yet somewhere in between I crossed from the person I was to the person I am. While today I might feel empty, tomorrow I might just wear a watch.

- Bojana Petrović (24)

Before I die I want to learn  
to speak Spanish fluently

Before I die, I want to write something true.

I want someone else to read it and to think "wow, I couldn't have written that, but it's what I think too". I want that someone to try and find me and revive my carefully buried romantic notions and tell me that I'm not actually quite so full of it. That I might have something worth saying.

Before I die, I want enough people to know of me to know that it actually happened. But I also want to do something important and be good enough a person to be glad to have done it because it was important, not because it makes me important.

Lastly, before I die, I want to not be so utterly indifferent about whether I'm going to die.

- Vera Novković (21)

Before I Die I Want to Be!

Before I die I would like to live

feel and breathe  
and feel again

see the words I seldom speak  
speak for me

then laugh!  
(just enough to not bore myself)

open a door that's not mine  
and find me

looking at me  
as I am looking at me

mountains and the seas  
I see

can all crumble in front of me  
as long as I smile!

(a faint smile--  
to not break the glass that stares back at me).

Before I die I would like to be  
and when I am

I would like to see  
and when I see...

I would like to throw the bucket  
of "Before I die I would..."

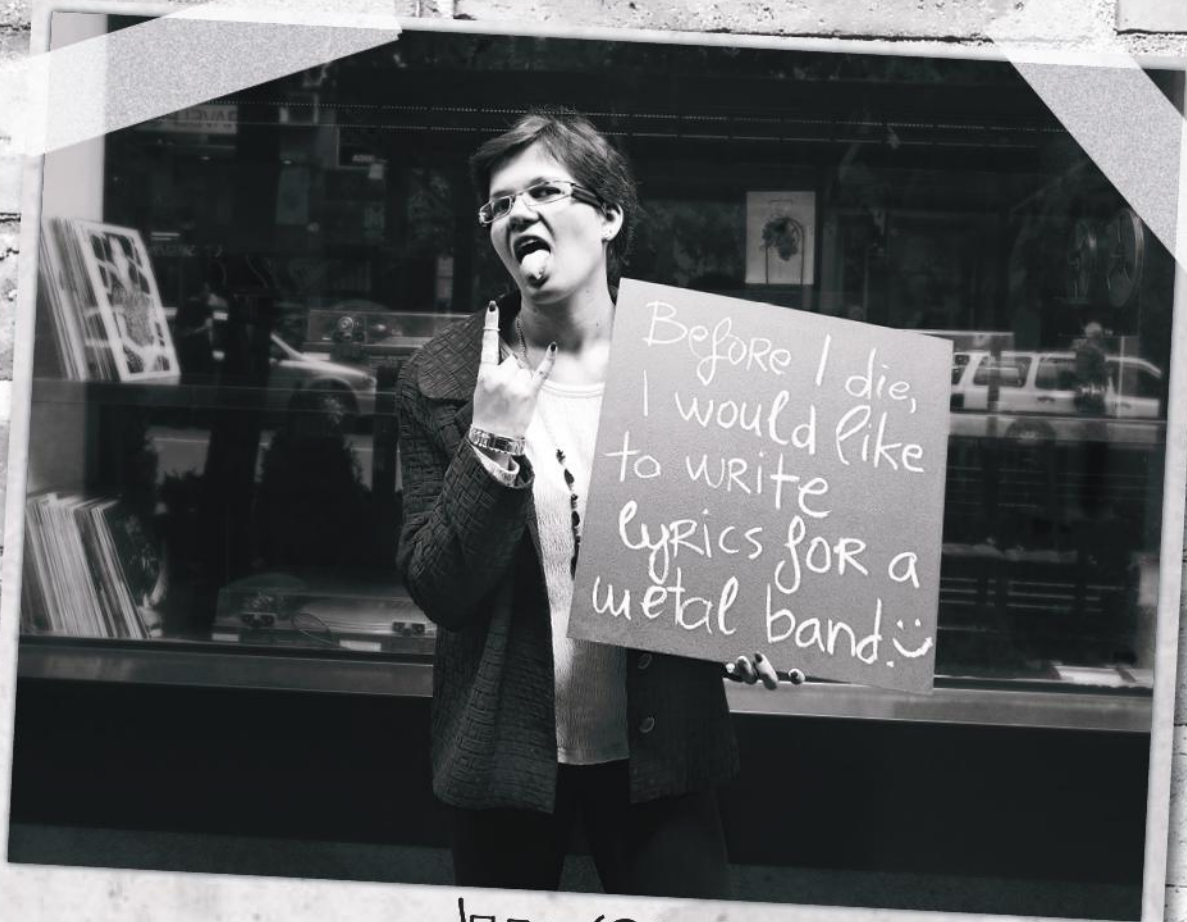
forget life  
forget death

and just be.

- Kushtrim Thaqi (26)

Before I die I want to  
go stargazing





JELENA (23)



ŽARKO (26)



BEFORE I DIE, I WANT TO MAKE SURE I LIVE FOREVER.

IRONIC, ISN'T IT? DEATH IS, AS WE ALL KNOW, INEVITABLE AND I DON'T MEAN LITERALLY BECOMING IMMORTAL AND PHYSICALLY LIVING FOREVER BUT CREATING AN ART PIECE THAT WOULD MAKE MY PREVIOUS EXISTENCE ON THIS PLANET RELEVANT AND SIGNIFICANT LONG AFTER I'M GONE. I WISH TO LIVE THROUGH MY WORK AND MAKE SURE MY NAME LIVES ON THROUGH MY ART AFTER I'M DEAD.

I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING AN ARTIST. AS A KID, I WANTED TO BE A PAINTER EVEN THOUGH I NEVER HAD ANY TALENT FOR PAINTING OR DRAWING, FOR THAT MATTER. BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD AT WRITING AND THAT'S WHAT MY ULTIMATE ARTWORK SHOULD BE – NOVELS THAT PEOPLE WOULD READ AND RELATE TO IN TIMES TO COME. SO I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO KEEP WRITING IN ORDER TO MAKE MY DREAM BECOME MY REALITY.

- STEFAN MIROSAVIĆ (27)

Before I die I want  
to have someone  
I can count on.

Before I die, I would like to forgive myself and make peace with all the regrets. To let go...

There were a few moments when the force of life reached the final point before I realised it was too late to do anything... When the hour hands have coincided, but I missed the perfect moment...

So many words will remain unspoken... The glances I was stealing, because they were forbidden... The desires that grew inside of me, but I never had the courage to make them real... The poems that died in my thoughts, 'cause I could not dare to write them...

To forgive myself, but not to forget... To seize the day and just breathe... This is the first step.

- Vladana Ivanou (33)

Before I die I'd like to have a few more medals around my neck.

I am a competitive Irish dancer and this dance requires a sportsman's endurance in order to compete. You dedicate so much of your time, energy, money; you sacrifice a lot of nights when you could be going out or staying home with your significant other to bring to perfection those two minutes on stage while you're being evaluated.

The music starts and your heartbeat changes, it gets synced with the rhythm.

Were your toes pointed at all times, legs overcrossed, kicks high and loud? Were you genuinely smiling the whole time or were you unnaturally faking it? But once your number is called out, all the blisters and hours and sweat and bandages, everything seems more than worth it, and you're more than happy to do it all over again next year, in another city.

- Milica Đorđević (24)

BEFORE I DIE / WANNA STOP USING SLANG



## Before I die I want to see a lunar eclipse

Before I die, I want to say I'm sorry. I want to say I'm sorry for all the wicked things I did and all the harmful words I said.

Because I couldn't control myself, I've made mistakes in life and because of that, other people have suffered. Because of that, this twinge of guilt is choking me and ripping me apart.

I know that I have flaws and I know that everything I've done is only my fault. I know that this remorse doesn't mean much because the damage cannot be undone.

But at least I'm trying to atone for my mistakes. The first step towards redemption is admitting that you were mean to other people. And because of that, I say again - I'M SORRY. I'm sorry for being just a man.

- Luka Vasić (25)

Before I die, I want to get to know myself.

When I do that, everything else will fall into place.

Right now, I'm not quite sure how many of my wishes are actually mine and how many are of the people around me. I want to know what is left when all the reproaches are gone, when all restraints are broken. I want to know, would I bungee jump if it wasn't for someone else's fear to dissuade me from it? Would I be somewhere else if I did what I thought was best for me and not what someone else suggested might be fit for me? Is this just a way to justify my failures?

I want to find out the answers to all of these questions. Before I die, I want to live with the person who knows all the answers.

- Mirzeta Pajalić (22)

Before I die, I want to travel the world.

The prospect of leaving home for a prolonged period of time might have been scary at first, but nowadays I'm feeling more and more attracted to it.

Over the years, I've acquired a taste for adventure and experimenting - I've started to long for the busy streets of London, the looming shapes of Stonehenge and the Greco-Roman heritage of the Mediterranean. I want to hike up Mount Olympus, rest in the shade of the pyramids and cut my own way through the ancient rainforests of South America. Oh, to get lost in the hubbub of an Indian street market, or absorb the sacred silence of long-abandoned temples?

There are so many places to go, I wouldn't know where to start. Before I die, I'd like to experience at least a fraction of these beautiful things that the world has to offer.

- Valentina Markasović (18)

## Before I die I want to travel to space





KATARINA [26]



IVAN (26)



Before I die I want to be in a relationship for so long we both start forgetting when we started going out.

Before I die I want to find little ways to be more outgoing every day...

Before I die I want to know what it feels like to be confident and not make mistakes.  
I want to show my dad Italy!

Before I die I want to fall in love with someone who will not try to change me.

Before I die I hope to be happy at least for a while. **I WANT TO BREAK FREE**  
I want to visit my favourite movie sets...

Before I die I want to make a burn book and write everything I hate about myself in it

Before I die I want to solve a Rubik's cube (never got even close to solving one of those bastards)

Before I die I want to be able to go back to the town where I was born.

Before I die I want to go to a church and make a confession;  
I want just to love & be loved in return I want God to hear me.

Before I die I wish I'll find out what I want... from myself.

Before I die I want to finish watching all the TV series on my list.

Before I die I hope I hit the right spot. I will do a bungee jump!

Before I die I want to reclaim my own body and say "no" to society.

Before I die I want to move over 400 pieces of writing from my "draft binder" to "finished".  
even if none of the pieces are ever published.

Before I die I want to start a collection of coins or something like that...

Before I die I WISH I WOULD STOP CRUSHING ON MY FRIEND'S BOYFRIEND.  
I want to have my own exhibition!

Before I die I want to learn to speak Latin so I can say - Latin? It's not a dead language,  
I speak it fluently x)

Before I die I want to cry so much that I will feel cleansed and alive again.

Before I die I want to go to a rave



Before I die I want to begin to cook again

Before I Die...

Before I die I want to be talked about.  
Before you take me to be vain, give me a chance to explain.  
Ever since I've been aware, I've had this fascination with humane.  
Yes, I want to create in a comforting and affective way.

Before I die, I would like to build a family.

It was only when I found out I was sick that I started to think about this. Don't get me wrong, it's not that kind of disease from which you die, but it made me realize how short life is.

I would like to give children to my boyfriend, and I would like for my parents to become grandparents to my children. It was the people around me who always told me to enjoy life while I'm young and that I don't understand what kind of a responsibility having children is. But why do I have to wait? I don't need anything more than a modest, fulfilled and loving life with my family. It was my boyfriend and my parents who made me feel like the happiest girl in the world and now I want to give all of that to them.

- Ivona Orban (23)

Not all of us know how remarkable one can grow  
Here many get lost and forget what they've always known.  
So whether it be by this poem, an entire novel or just talk  
I want to remind them that they can fly, not only walk.

Then when my bones are laid and I'm deep in my grave  
My life will have been full of thanks  
On the thought of that, don't be sad for with that same flame  
I'll come back and do it all over again.

- Marina Jovanović (20)

Before I die I would like to  
learn how to sail.

Before I die, I dream of seeing my book in a bookstore.

I dream about writing it, publishing it, seeing it on my shelf one day. After all, having one with my name on it. Since I was a kid, I wanted to do something meaningful, to leave a trace. To make sense of my world, to get words to really matter and, even if it is just on paper, to make them immortal.

And I finally figured out how I can do it all: by writing. So what I'm saying is: I want to be a writer.

And the only way to do so is to just write and read, and write a little bit more. And to stand here before you and to promise you: writing can save you. And if you are a struggling writer, just trust that it will.

Because it sure as hell saved me.

- Milica Popović (25)



Before I die, I want to break a chain of "history repeating" in my small world.

Growing up in blissful ignorance, without proper understanding of the real world, protected by family and a peaceful environment, the day I woke up to reality was already too late. I don't want to believe in the fact that every Serbian generation has to face two wars in their lifetime.

Historical statistics.

I don't want to feel that fear again, that I might die in a place unmentioned in a history book, without leaving a trace. I am going through life, unable to get rid of this collective experience, to which I paid my debts, just to find myself at the beginning of history repeating.

I want to help my sons through my paid tolls, to avoid more history repeating, marching towards the beginning of the new revolution for a final evolution.

- Nebojša Milenović (43)

Before I die I want to dance at Coachella.

Before I die I Want to See You...

Keep loving yourself.

Being proud.

Keep smiling with your heart.

Being brave.

Being more curious every day.

I can't do this instead of you.

My job is to teach you how to DO IT BY YOURSELF.

That is my life purpose and I will accomplish  
it WITH YOUR HELP.

Do you know what we NEED TO DO to reach that?

Be together, smile, talk, run, touch the sky  
and stars, read, play in the mud, jump in puddles,  
feel the rain, swim and fly. We have a lot of work,  
so we cannot stop, my love.

Because, Viktorija, you are my ray of sunshine.

And my dream will come true.

- Ivana Grujić (32)

Before I die, I don't want to touch  
the sky, since my curly head has been in  
the clouds since I was born.

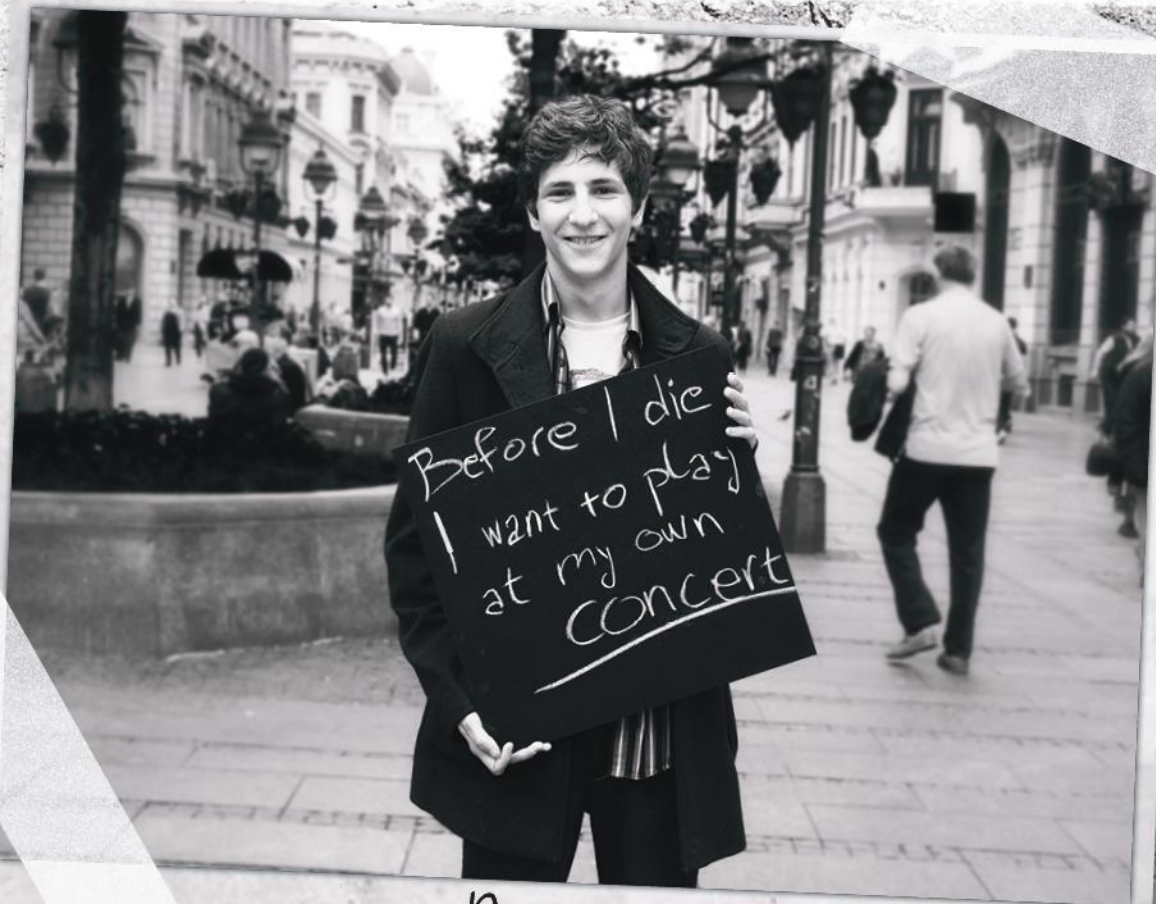
The perils of life have rooted my feet,  
so inevitably connected to this head,  
and made it think practically, think in  
terms it wasn't made for. But, once  
you forget who you are, the Universe  
makes sure to remind you - only if you  
listen.

I gave birth to two boys, two heavenly  
heads so unearthly and so special, so  
unlimited, who reminded me of a six-  
year old, whose first poem was read on  
the radio by Dragan Lukić, making her  
great-grandmother so proud, and who  
just wanted to become one thing -  
writer. Those thoughts got lost, but  
now are found and I am determined  
to fulfill them for that curly child  
that is still here, clumsily disguised  
as an adult.

This, my friends, should be the start.

- Jelena Bulić Milenović (38)





NIKOLA (17)



NIKOLA (17) & NIKOLA (18)



Before I die, I want to quit my job and head to New York City.

It's very important that I go alone, so that when I get there, I have to rely on myself and the kindness of strangers. Planning how long I'm going to stay in New York is not a part of this dream either. All this will not only add TO the sense of adventure, but I also won't be able to bring too much stuff with me, which is great, because usually when I go on a trip, I fill my make-up bag with lipsticks I then rarely wear and miss that one pair of sunglasses I forgot to bring more than I miss my Mom's mashed potatoes.

And maybe I won't even like New York. But that's fine because this is not really about New York, as you have probably already guessed.

- Milica Joksimović (23)

Before I die I want to look back and have none of the regrets I have right now.

Before I die... I want to live.

It may sound like an empty phrase, but so does everything else, if you consider reality commonplace. I know day-to-day life can't always be exciting as jumping from a plane, but I want to go through every "ordinary" moment with my eyes and my mind open like a parachute. Things are prosaic until we start reading the hidden poetry in them. I wish not only to read, but to write, and I will write with passion - short stories and my future. For both works, I will be mindful and creative, making originals out of things that are mundane, waking up as eager on holidays as on Mondays!

How? By wanting. By doing. By being. I write these words to remind myself when I feel low where I want to go - nowhere but here where I choose to be just... happy.

- Dušan Arsenović (22)

Before I die, I want to participate in a panel discussion on a topic dear to me in front of a full auditorium.

It may seem trivial and awfully specific, but I've chosen such a small step in order to make change less scary. An improvement like this means that I've let go of all the fears that were tying me down.

It means I'll finally dare to approach that drummer I've always fancied, dare to play my guitar in front of a crowd, dare to dance like no one's watching... dare to believe in myself.

A move like that would open the door for many more of my silly but salient dreams and that's why it's important. It would mean that I am finally ready to go beyond the expected and to be myself in all my glory. I'll make it happen through small changes, this being the first.

- Marina Dimić (20)

Before I die I want to eat all the tasty food.



Before I die, I want to know that the world would remember me.

Like, not only my character and appearance, but for something that would really matter. For instance, I will be on cloud nine if I find a cure for diabetes. You ask me why? Let me tell you: won't it be better to see everyone with diabetes smiling and no longer suffering? What's more, everyone loves sweets, so I don't want even a single person to be deprived of the opportunity to eat them.

Maybe you would say that my dream sounds impossible to achieve, that I might give up, since I can eat chocolates whenever I want. But believe me, I've seen people suffering from diabetes and I can feel their struggle. So, let's dream big and conquer the world together.

- Daniella Ivanova (16)

Before I die I want to wear a flower wreath.

Before I die I want to go dog-sledding

Before I die, I want to bet everything on one roulette spin at Casino de Monte-Carlo.

Ever since I was a little kid, one particular dream has been mingling around my head, captivating my imagination night after night. A dream so vivid and intense that, even today, it often leaves me dumbstruck by the way it seductively twists and turns the boundaries of reality.

One dream.

Entering the world famous Casino de Monte-Carlo dressed up to the nines as if I have just strolled out of a photo shoot for GQ magazine in a baby blue shirt and a navy linen suit with a small blood red lapel flower. Walking down the magnificent gold marble corridor, heart beating faster and faster with each and every step. Arriving at the central roulette table, taking a deep breath and dumping chips on the deep green suede layout.

"All on red".

- Nikola Radenković (22)

Before I Die

Before I die, I want to travel.  
That's the greatest of all pleasures,  
To explore and to unravel  
All of nature's hidden treasures.

I want to fly a kite  
On the beaches of Dubai  
And see the polar light  
Painted in the Arctic sky.

I want to camp, one night,  
In the wild, wide Amazon,  
Then next day take a flight  
And party in Saigon.

I want to see the plankton glow  
In the Maldives' calming nights,  
Then see a cabaret show  
In the city of love and lights.

I want to feel the L.A. sun,  
Or the London chilly rain,  
To take a journey with someone  
By the long-distance train.

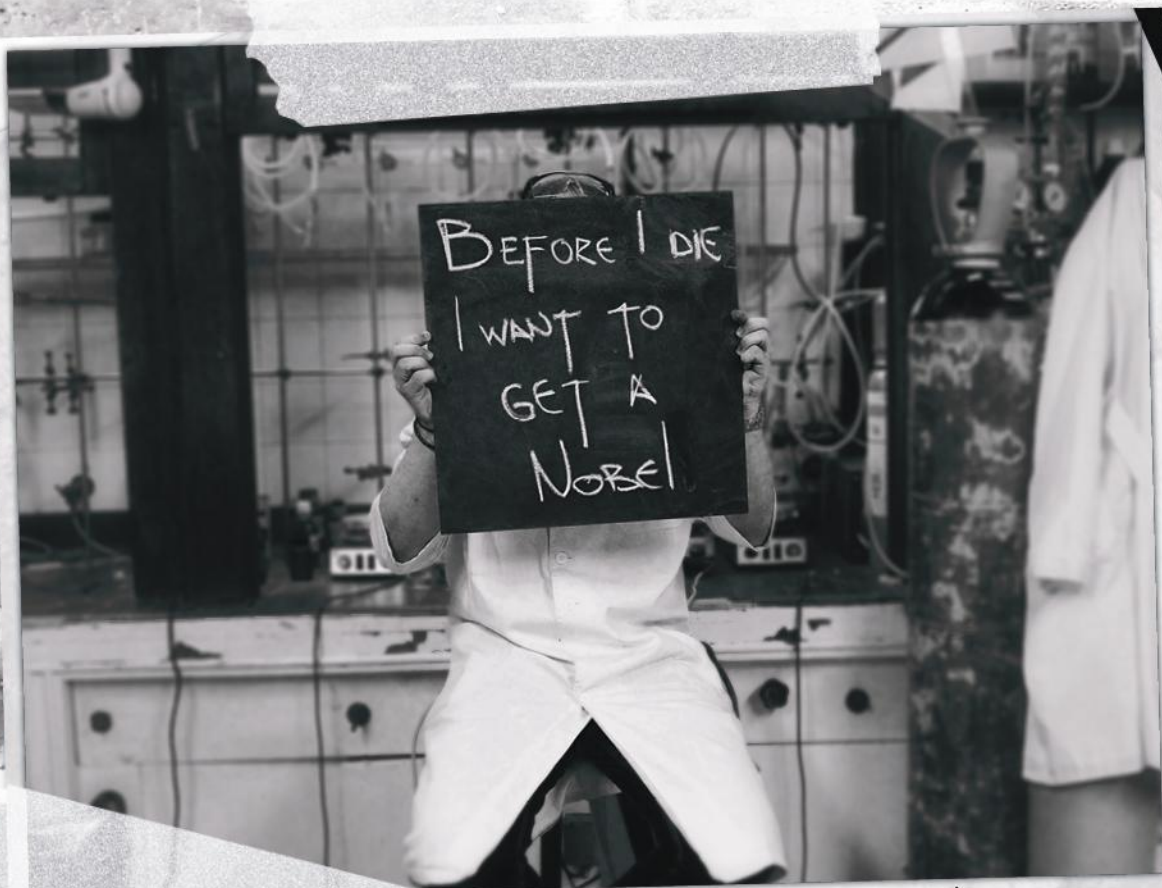
We would stick our heads out  
And enjoy Nature's art,  
Knowing, there's no doubt,  
That travel fills our heart.

- Ivona Đorđević (21)





JOVANA (20)



LUKA (26)



Before I die, I would like to start all over again.

Before I die, I would like to remember all the people and the places that I used to love, and to remember them so well they will stay with me forever. I wish there was a way to go back to and relive the most cherished moments of our lifetimes and imprint the faces of loved ones onto our souls. Because souls are immortal.

Before I die, I would like to get to a place where there are no regrets or remorse, no sense of guilt over the past, the things I did or didn't do. Forgiving others is easy, forgiving yourself is much harder. I will get there by accepting the truth and by loving my life. I will then, before I die, realize that my life was good and worth living.

- Nataša Ristić (41)

*Before I die I need to book my resurrection plan.*

BEFORE I DIE, I WISH TO LEARN HOW NOT TO FORGET TO BREATHE.

OUR MINDS ARE SCATTERED. MY MIND IS SCATTERED. RACING, A CAR HONKING, IN RUSH HOUR. AT THE CEDAR TREE, A SPIDER WEAVING A WEB FOR THE APPROACHING FLY. SO I BREATHE. TO SLOW THINGS DOWN. TO COLLECT MYSELF. I BREATHE SO I CAN SEE AND NOT BE SWEEPED AWAY. OUR LIFESTYLE HAS MADE A MARATHON OUT OF OUR LIVES AND PHILIPPIDES OUT OF US ALL.

THAT IS WHY REMEMBERING TO BREATHE IS SO IMPORTANT TO ME. WHEN WE BREATHE WE SLOW DOWN, APPRECIATE THE THINGS AROUND US. WE DISSOLVE ANGER AND DISSIPATE FEAR. WHEN WE BREATHE, WE TRIM DOWN MANY UNNECESSARY ACTIONS, SO IN A WAY, I GUESS WE EVEN GAIN MORE TIME.

I WILL HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF EVERY DAY NOT TO FORGET TO BREATHE, BUT HOPEFULLY ONE DAY I WON'T HAVE TO.

- MARKO RADULOVIĆ (23)

Before I die, I want to learn to live without fear - of what others think of me; of what I think of myself; of mistakes and failures and disappointments.

I want to discover what I want and not hesitate to get it. I want to stop doing things because I thought I was supposed to, without stopping to think about what I truly want.

Before I die, I want to love wholeheartedly, madly and passionately, without wasting time on the people I find neither interesting nor attractive, who don't make me laugh or who make me feel uneasy about myself.

I want to learn to recognize my emotions so I can accept them and stop running from them; to feel comfortable in my own skin and be proud of being myself with all the parts that I dislike.

Before I die, I want to learn to enjoy living.

- Bojana Todorović (26)

*Before I die  
I want to take  
dance lessons!*



# Before I die I hope I will stop being afraid of being so small and insignificant

Before I die, I want to leave a trace.

When I say that, I don't mean that I have to paint a painting, or write a song, or a book; I don't want to be mentioned or cherished. What I want is to make a change, make an impact on future generations.

I am pretty sure there are many other people that think in the same way as I do, because I found my inspiration in a single peek at the world as it is. The only thing I can't grasp is: WHAT IS TAKING US SO LONG? It is important that there are individuals who are willing to live for others, sacrifice their most precious and stay in the shadow; to be in the first row when taking responsibility, and the last one when taking credit.

Starting yesterday, I will work for a better tomorrow and devote my life to it.

- Almin Muharemović (23)

Before I die I want to find out who I am.

Considering me from five years ago would stand aghast if we met right now, I want to know who exactly I am. Through my endless changes, ups and downs and lefts, laughter and tears separated with but a moment, I have forgotten whether there are preset values for me and my personality.

Layer upon layer, sheets and threads and thrums and strings, this myriad of feelings that I am is completely unknown to me, unreadable and unfamiliar.

I want to know what core lies within this patchwork of 86 billion connected but disconnected thoughts, what kind of a person dwells behind the curtain of this magic act, who exactly is hiding underneath the exhaustion of being this patchwork of clashing colours and dissonant sounds.

I want to know the factory settings of my self, of who I am.

- Katarina Šotić (26)

Before I die I want to know  
I have not wasted my time.

Before I die, I want to become a screenwriter.

Woah, you think that's childish? Wait until you hear the rest of it, I am not even kidding. I don't want to be just any screenwriter, I am aiming high, not Academy Award high (hey, you never know) but still high.

I want to create a TV show, create characters who will make other people fall in love with them or despise them, whatever works for them really. I want to be able to change someone's life just by creating this whole other world of interesting people to whom someone can relate and I really want to get nasty reviews which would only help me grow as a person and as a screenwriter.

This may never happen, but that has never stopped me before. Like a wise "man" named Yoda once said, "Do. Or do not. There is no try."

- Nina Žderić (25)



Before I die I want to appear in a music video!  
I want to get that tight hug from her that always left me breathless and thankful

Before I die I want to be someone's beautiful bride.

Before I die I want to carve pumpkins with my family.

Before I die I WANT TO BE READY TO BE REBORN

I want to land on the Moon!

Before I die I want to know that someone will miss me when I'm gone.

Before I die I want to get my portrait done on the street

Before I die I want to tell him I'll never forget him. I want to become a model.

Before I die I would like to write a book for the students of Belgrade University School of Medicine

Before I die I WANT TO BECOME MY OWN BEST FRIEND.

I want to open my own coffee shop.

Before I die I want to be kissed in a way that makes my legs tremble.

Before I die I want to let my current self die - I want a new face and name and to move somewhere where no one knows me.

Before I die I WANT TO LEARN ARCHERY AND BE GOOD AT IT I want to find out what it means to live...

Before I die I want to sing and break into a dance number on the street like I'm in a musical!

Before I die I WANT TO TIE A SECRET TO A BALLOON AND LET IT GO

I want to see all the wonders in the world

Before I die I want to thank J. K. Rowling for giving me the will to live.

Before I die I want to say thanks to all of those who helped me when I didn't know I was being helped

Before I die I want to make myself proud of who I am

I want to have my own clothing line

Before I die I want to take pictures of lightning striking



BEFORE I DIE, I WANT TO LEAVE A MARK ON THIS WORLD - AS MANY MARKS AS I CAN, ALL OVER THE WORLD.

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE SOMETHING OTHERS WILL REMEMBER ME BY... OR NOT; JUST SOMETHING THAT WILL INFLUENCE OTHERS IN A POSITIVE WAY FOR A LONG TIME AFTER I'M GONE. I WISH TO JOURNEY THROUGH THE WORLD AND MAKE PEOPLE HAPPIER ALONG THE WAY. I WANT TO KNOW HOW THEY FEEL, HOW THEY LIVE; WHEN IN ROME, I WANT TO DO AS THE ROMANS DO. I SIMPLY WANT TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR THE BETTER, BECAUSE THAT'S HOW I FEEL MY LIFE WOULD GAIN TRUE MEANING. AND, JUST LIKE MOST OF US, I'D LIKE TO LIVE A LIFE SO THAT I'LL BE MISSED ONCE I'M SIX FEET UNDER.

- NIKOLA RADOŠ (18)

Before I die I want to  
go cycling on  
the Pacific Coast Trail!

Before I die I want to  
put up with less shit

Before I die, I want to keep living in a daydream.

I was born in Turin on the 3rd of February. Turin is supposed to have a magical alignment of ley lines. When I was a kid, I used to be impressed by the squatters and the punk youngsters, wondering what there was beyond the 'overground', unconsciously seeking answers. Then I grew up and I dyed my hair and my brain, but still the existential question was open to be reached by a realistic as well as an idealistic answer.

I met thousands of people over the years, some of them were bad, some of them were brilliant, however, nobody was on my way accidentally. I travelled and visited different corners of the world. Exciting and depressing moments came up while walking on the path of research. BYO and AIM to stroll on the wise side.

- Libeth (29)

Before I die, I'll make him immortal.

I'll step into his steps, try to imagine his pain. I'll listen to the voice recorded. I'll hear our laugh, before a deep silence breaks in.

I'll fall asleep with the old photographs, breathing dust. The train will wake me up. That loud machine will take me into the quietness of the old libraries, antiques, archives.

I will learn the words of the language he spoke. My gratitude will be given to the descendants of the ones who gave him friendship, in the times of hostilities. My lens will catch those scenes that will join the old, dusty ones. And every sigh, every word, every speck of dust will start flowing in the river of words. Pages will be his lungs, covers will be his eyes, weight will be his heart.

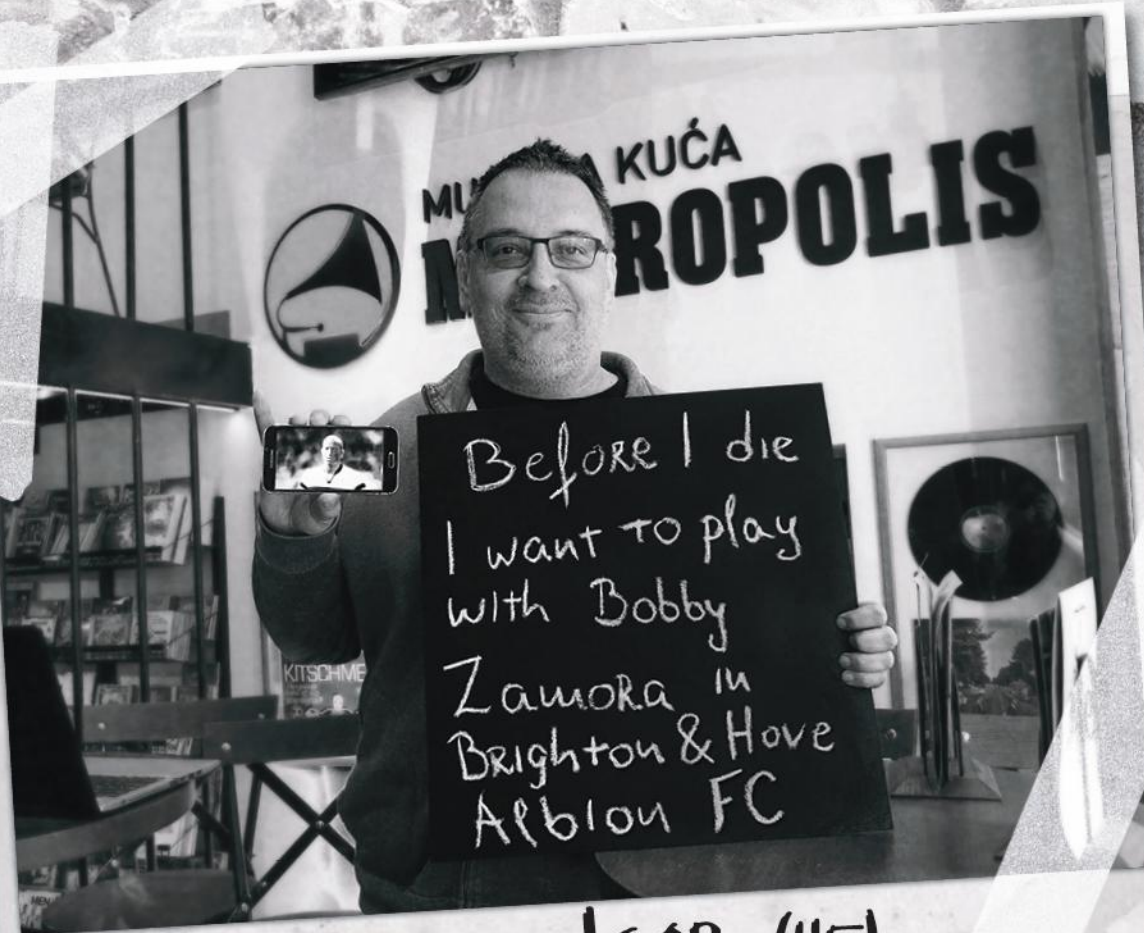
And I'll know... He breathes there... He sees there... His blood flows there.

He lives.

- Ivana Banković (25)

Before I die I want to  
paint a mural in my skylight.





IGOR (45)



ALEKSANDRA (20), TAMARA (20), ANĐELIJA (19) & ANA (19)



Before I die I want to make a perfect cake!!

Before I die I want to plan out a daily schedule I will actually follow and not get up at 5PM and realize I slept the day away...

Before I die I want to take a picture in front of the Hollywood sign!

I will make a motivational poster.

Before I die I WOULD LIKE TO READ AT LEAST A MILLION BOOKS.

I want to plant my own forest.

Before I die I want to see Michelangelo's Pietà.

I want to learn calligraphy.

Before I die I want to build something with my own hands

Before I die I want to meet a mythical creature, like a mermaid.

I want to be famous for no reason.

Before I die I want to teach someone something... or anyone anything, just to pass on some skill or information or whatever onto someone else out there.

Before I die I WANT TO KISS MY FIRST CRUSH AND GET OVER THIS YEARNING.

Before I die I WANT TO DISCOVER MY SUPERPOWER!!!!

I want to finish a sketch book

Before I die I want to madly fall in love again, feel the flutters in my tummy and burn with desire in breathless anticipation of the first kiss.

Before I die I want to learn to re-channel my anger into energy and positivity

Before I die I want to kiss someone on a boat on a lake

Before I die I WANT TO BECOME MORE DISCIPLINED.

Before I die I want to stop feeling like a disappointment.

I want to learn how to ice skate

Before I die I want to finish all those projects I started as a kid, all those notebooks with scribbles and words...

Before I die i want to go swim in every ocean

I want to host a killer party

Before I die I want to ombre my hair to resemble my favorite color combination.



Before I die, I would like to write a perfect poem.

A poem that everyone would understand, a poem that would resonate with each and every person. This wish of mine comes from my need to reach out to as many people as possible by means of poetry - it is rather strange, metaphysical and yet rational, this longing that those who write poems (both for others and for themselves) understand.

Even though my wish is intangible, it is still my goal; because it is gracious to know and love other people, especially with art intertwined; because I believe in the universal power of communication and I believe that every word, be it written or spoken, has its own history and weight.

This is why I want to write a perfect poem... however any of us understand the notion of perfection.

- Damjana Ojdanić (23)

Before I die, I want to live in Africa.

When I was very young, and it was a looong time ago, I believed that Mowgli lived there, and that in Africa every single animal wants to be your friend and is really capable of speaking "human". Anyway, I grew up, and learned that Mowgli is not from Africa, but Africa stayed in my heart forever.

My mom told me about all the things she knew and that were happening there and it really motivated me to read more about the continent, so I became aware of slaves, apartheid, Mandela, languages there, nature, diversity within the continent, the amazing people coming from there who influenced the world and today they continue as well...

For me, Africa is freedom and I will conquer it first by living in Morocco for a year and then going south, country by country...

- Bojana Radulović (29)

Before I die, I want to learn how to live.

I admit, I haven't been the best friend to myself lately. I'm guilty as charged. It seems like I'm always stuck with some kind of worry and anxiety.

My dream may look selfish, but being a better person to myself will help me become a better person for others.

We all live lives full of unexpected circumstances and stress, and we are all concerned about the same things. But no matter how hard we try, we cannot defeat time. Why try? All we have is now. Having said all this, one may ask how I plan to live my life then? Actually, by not planning anything, taking care of my soul and hoping that, maybe, one day, someone will find the cure for stress.

- Katarina Delić (23)

Before I die I want to make  
at least one scrapbook

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO CATCH RAINDROPS





Vera (21)



Irena (27)



Before I die, I want to play a villain in a Latin-American telenovela.

TV shows would be soporific only with ingenuous girls waiting in dilapidated cottages for machos from ranchos with God knows how many hectares of land and cubic metres of muscle.

This desire originates from the 1990s, when telenovelas were the No.1 type of TV entertainment. While bombs were falling, people were watching Esmeralda and crying, not because of their own disaster, but for Esmeralda's sorrow.

In order to fulfill it, I need to move to Miami or Mexico City, become famous (as an actor, model or reality show star) and wait for producers' calls. As for Spanish - I've already picked it up.

Although this is not meant to be my career path, I will strive for it since, unlike my life, telenovelas ARE fairytales.

- Miloš Gajić (22)

Before I die, I want to travel around the world.

I want to see beautiful places and monuments, make new friends by meeting new people, learn about different cultures and lifestyles and make the most of other opportunities.

The United States of America is the country I would like to visit the most. Watching American movies and series, I always wanted to experience and see a lot of the things that were shown. That was my dream since I was a child and I hope that it will come true.

- Matea Sopić (23)

Before I die I want to do  
something I will be fondly  
remembered for

Before I die I want  
to go on a road trip

Before I die, I want to live my life without overthinking.

I don't want to doubt every dream I have. I don't want to reject good opportunities only because of the fear of failure. I want to tell that special someone how I feel about him even though I might be hurt; travel around Europe with my best friend, without thinking of all the bad things that could happen.

My closest friends inspire me to live my ideal life and not only to imagine it. One of them moved to Hungary to finish college and the other worked in Chile for four months. The courage and will to turn their lives into adventure inspires me to beat my fears.

I don't know how long it will take, but I know that from this very moment I will chase away my fears and doubts. It is time for my life to begin!

- Tamara Ereš (23)



# Before I die I want to learn how to knit.

Before I die...

I want to open the middle drawer of my wooden desk, crowded with countless rushed diary entries, poems half finished and letters never mailed to the ones they were meant for, and pull out that wrinkled wonder fair that is the scattered collection of everything I ever wrote for you: wishful, naive, desperate, longing, on rainy mornings at 5am and after pointless, wandering nights; things I never got to tell you or show you since you left... and kiss goodbye each one of those scribbled papers, old bills, notebook pages, as I place them in a cardboard box, signed "To my favorite nightmare", to leave at your door.

I would give almost anything to see if your face would light up like an avenue or if confusion would shadow it, as you read all those broken and ecstatic dreams someone weaved around you as you were asleep.

- Anđelka Sredojević (20)

Before I die, I want to run across the world, the immensity I haven't seen, the people I haven't met.

I want to stop there, understand them, not just see them. I want to experience, from poor to rich, from north to south, from cold to warm. I want to live the best of it, the worst of it as well, and to get the strength to just keep the positive.

30 years after my birth, I have seen this whole continent. It is a lot, I need to go further now. I want to know everything of the world, get every single piece of every single place.

Before I die, I will not manage to finish this book. This world is too big to be fully read. I want death to be faster than the time it will take for my vision to fade, contemplating the infinity of the pages.

- Jovan Begović (28)

# Before I die I want to make a mixtape.

Before I die, I want to live.

Or, in the words of Pablo Neruda: "Life is boring, except for flowers, sunshine, your perfect legs. A glass of cold water when you are really thirsty. The way bodies fit together. Fresh and young and sweet. Coffee in the morning. These are just moments. I struggle with the in-betweens. I just want to never stop loving like there is nothing else to do, because what else is there to do?"

As well as Neruda, I struggle with the in-betweens. All I want is that the party never stops, I want to never have a dull moment in my life, to never let the routine swallow me, and to never let my surroundings affect me or force me to do things the way they should be done. I hope to never forget to really live and celebrate life. Each day. My way.

- Milica Žikić (27)



We express our gratitude to all those who made this project possible:

The global Before I Die art project for providing us with the inspiration,  
The English Language Fellows Program (a US Department of State public diplomacy initiative),  
the American Embassy in Belgrade for all their help and support,  
and Mikser House for providing us with a venue for realizing our project;

Nathan William Meyer who came up with the idea,  
and the project realization committee, whose hard work and dedication made it all possible.

And to everyone else who helped us make this project a reality.

A special thank you goes to all the imaginative and inspiring individuals  
who shared their dreams with us for this project.

Before I die I want someone to erase my  
internet browser history for me.



# THE BELOVED GLOBAL ART PROJECT WITH A TWIST

**BEFORE I DIE - BELGRADE 2016** is a creative writing initiative, inspired by the international **BEFORE I DIE** project, originally created by artist **CANDY CHANG**, and re-imagined by **THE BALKAN WRITERS PROJECT**.

Assembled in this book are the dreams of people from all over the region and beyond in a collection of short texts and statements.

Some of these dreams are **BIG**, some small,  
but all of them are equally inspiring.

**CAUTION: MAY CONTAIN HIGHLY RELATABLE MATERIAL**

Before I die I WANT TO see The apocalypse

Before I die I want to  
learn about taxes.

Before I die I want to be  
seriously silly :))

BEFORE I DIE I WANT TO MOVE OUT OF MY HEAD!

**CONTAINING PERSONAL NARRATIVES**

**BY ENTHUSIASTIC AND CREATIVE DREAMERS**