

SLOG

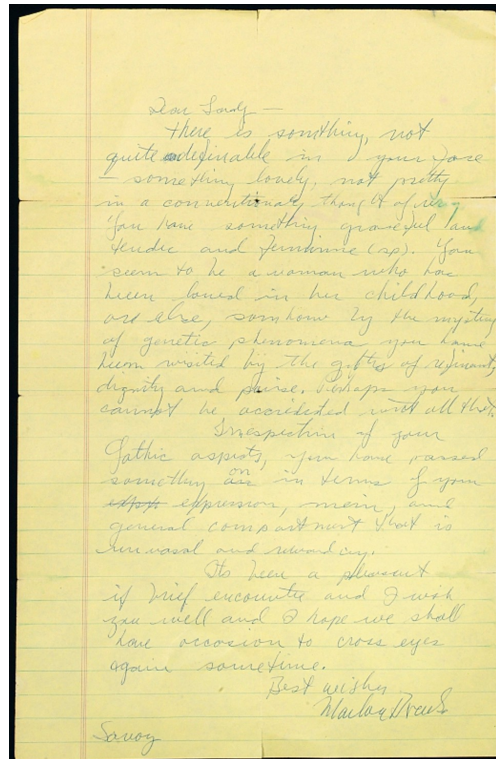
THEATER

Spend St. Valentine's Day Bathing in Other People's Awkward Love

by [Brendan Kiley](#) · Feb 12, 2015 at 11:36 am

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Translation: "It may surprise you to learn that I actually find you attractive." MARLON BRANDO

In 1966, on a transatlantic flight back to the US, Marlon Brando contracted a crush for a woman on the plane and did what any theater-romantic-turned-Hollywood-hunk would do—he wrote her a quasi-flattering and quasi-insulting letter letting her know he deigned to find her attractive.

It read, in part: "There is something not quite definable in your face — something lovely, not pretty in a conventionally thought of way. You have something graceful and tender and feminine (sp). You seem to be a woman who has been loved in her childhood, or else, somehow by the mystery of genetic phenomena you have been visited by the gifts of refinement, dignity and poise. Perhaps you cannot be accredited with all that."

Courtship is awkward, even if (perhaps especially if) you're Marlon Brando, and Valentine's Day can be the most awkward of all—high expectations, low performance, the wrong gift, the wrong words, the explosive diarrhea.

So you might consider spending Valentine's Day at **this round of Letters Aloud**, a reading series curated by Paul Stetler (of New Century Theater Company) and performed this weekend by Jen Taylor, R. Hamilton Wright, and Rob Witmer on accordion. On deck: Love notes from Frida Kahlo and Virginia Woolf, a letter from Fiona Apple to a high-school student who'd just formed a gay-straight alliance, and a break-up letter from Slash of Guns 'n' Roses.

Letters Aloud happens **tomorrow and Saturday at 12th Avenue Arts**—and promises to be a trek from the romantic sublime to the totally ridiculous.

Not featured: The open letter *The Stranger* wrote in 2006, pretending to be a Christian protest organization—C'YA, for "Catholic Youth Abstaining"—angry about **the War on St. Valentine's Day**.



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Sun Jan 17 at 8 pm

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the Stranger

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