

IRIS,  
SOUSHA,  
INGRID,  
MIRJAM,  
VANESSA,  
NADIE,  
MADIEEN,  
JOHANNA,  
LANA,  
KARMA,  
HELMI,  
MARIJUS,  
NADJA,  
~~MIRJAM~~,  
LINDA

LANA - melen  
Linda - melen  
Helit  
Kenna  
Johnna  
Jredya  
melen  
myle  
eja



'Isn't this book just part of the mourning process of what you've been through?' she says on the phone, the first time we've spoken in years. She's referring to the break-up of my most recent relationship, some eighteen months previously.

'Do I really want to be in your new book between all your other ex-girlfriends, on a Polaroid, taken at a time we were still happy together?' I'm talking to my old flame K, the girl I was in a relationship with for seven years. I tell her about my last girlfriend, who unashamedly cheated on me by starting a relationship with another guy. 'She left a huge *exit wound* as a reminder.'

'There's nothing you can tell me about *exit wounds* that I don't know already', she says. I don't need to explain what they are to her, she's a huge fan of TV crime shows.

'Did you know that there are also such things as *entry wounds*?' she asks rhetorically. 'That's the damage a bullet causes when it enters the body. And sometimes', she says, 'there isn't even an "exit". The bullet stays in the body. Inflicting even more harm.'

That was new to me.

I admitted to her that I'd cheated on an ex-girlfriend once. 'Karma', says K on the phone. I detect a hint of cynicism in her tone.

The girl I'm dating now considers 'ex' rather a distasteful term. 'It makes me think of an exit. As if you can just walk out of a building. But a relationship's something that stays with you for the rest of your life, however short it may have been.' She's right about that.

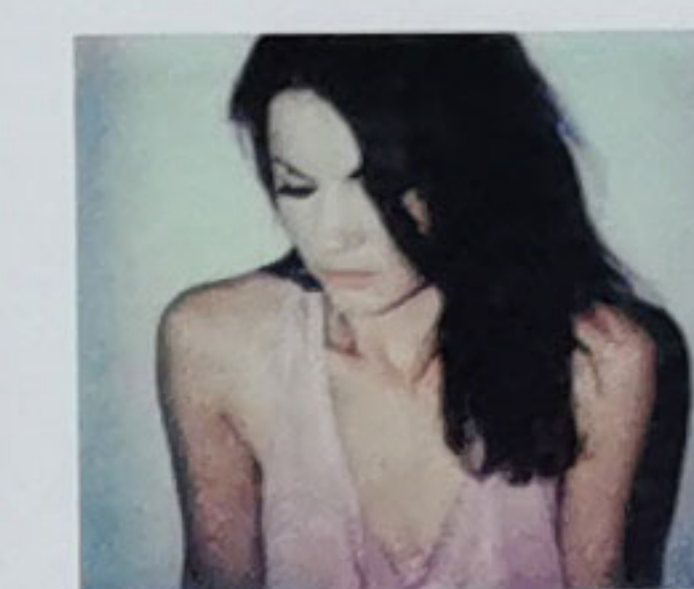
I'm more careful now about choosing my dreams for the future. Looking ahead makes you so vulnerable.

The end of a relationship might not always leave a wound. But *if* there is a wound, time will heal it. Sometimes you're left with scars and sometimes with wonderful memories. Usually both.

*Exit Wounds (as if)* features the girls behind my scars and memories. Polaroids of former girlfriends, flirts, muses, good friends and other beauties. I dedicate this book to them. I don't make any distinctions. I just present them in all their beauty. I show their vulnerability, my insecurities, my desires and my dreams.

You won't see any photos of my girlfriend here. She doesn't want to be on a list. And I don't want her to be on this list. That's when you know you're in love; it feels as though it will last forever.

Of course I've registered her beauty on camera. But there are some things I'd rather not share with the rest of the world.



EXIT WOUNDS (AS IF)

LEAF BY LEAF AND PAGE BY PAGE  
THROW THIS BOOK AWAY  
ALL THE SADNESS ALL THE RAGE  
THROW THIS BOOK AWAY  
RIP OUT THE BINDING AND TEAR THE GLUE  
ALL OF THE GRIEF WE NEVER EVEN KNEW  
WE HAD IT ALL ALONG  
NOW IT'S SMOKE

(‘SMOKE’ BY BEN FOLDS AND ANNA GOODMAN)



202 / 300

*MARTIJN*

MARTIJN VAN DE GRIENDT