



# "Émile" in Ego Comme X #7 by Fabrice Neaud

<http://comixinflux.com/influx/show/46>

## Contributors

Travis (TravisMcGee)

Comix Influx - Spread The Words

## Page 1

(1) *Émile* // From the spring of 98 to today // (History in progress) (2) I met *Émile* at the public garden. // It was in May or June of 98. (3) On all the habitual wanderers and myself, he quickly made an impression. // His stature, his assurance, his tranquil virility made a lasting mark on us. (4) I believed him to be some heterosexual soldier who had come here for a little illicit treat. // Obviously, nothing happened. (5) Three weeks later, I saw him again with a guy. They entered a bar. I followed them. It was a Sunday, I remember. // It was three weeks after the burial of my sister. (6) He sat on this chair. I'm drawing only it. I still keep for myself the drawing of him on top of it. // They talked for a long time. Time to spoil five sketches, succeed in making one. (7) I know this bar well, since it's here that I followed the five nations championship in the spring of 99 and the World Cup that autumn.

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(1) It's here, around about this spot, that I assisted in the victory of the French National Rugby Team against the All-Blacks... (2) And it's in thinking of the prop Christian Califano that I recall a little the chunky and boyish traits of *Émile*. (3) *Emile* also played rugby. // Of course (4) I saw him again very irregularly at the garden, often with the same person - a guy who, as it happens, was a very beautiful boy. // Every time, he seemed to be having a good laugh in seeing the regulars go past ... which included me, undoubtedly. (5) Then their visits became more spaced out. I found *Emile* again, alone, but only for a short time ... He would rapidly sympathize with someone. They would then talk for a number of hours. (6) I even often had the time to leave with someone, do my "business", come back to the place and see him again, still talking away with the same person! (7) As if this soldier loved good conversation. (8) On that subject... // I dared to approach *Emile* on the 4th of October 1999

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(1) I finally made myself decide to go talk to him at the window of his big car (A Ford, I believe. I don't know anything about cars). And we talked for an hour. // Indeed, this soldier loved conversation. (2) It's here that I learned that he was not a soldier, for that matter, but a salesman in a marketing office. // Nobody is perfect. (3) On the other hand, he really had played in a rugby team, when he was a little younger. // Heck. // One doesn't only have flaws. (4) Then we spoke a little of the World Cup that was starting. Of course, he preferred to be on the field than in front of the television. // Pow (5) It's here that I asked him if there were other things that he preferred to do on the field rather than watching them on tv... // Here, he gently laughed. (6) It was 2 months ago, almost a year after his arrival there. I should have suspected it. If he had wanted, that could have happened a long time ago. (7) Yet... // I saw *Emile* again. And I saw him again still.

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(1) I had even, curiously, (this thing is so rare) managed to tame him on another field, unexpectedly. (2) During one of the coldest nights at the start of November, *Emile* and me, we discussed things again. // Yes, Yes. (3) And our discussion prolonged itself late into the night, where we confided in each other up to the point of sharing our family histories. (4) He spoke to me of an aunt that hadn't seen anybody for some years, who came just for the funerals of family members, and who now (5) Regretted it. // She wanted to reconnect the links, finding it a shame that they had broken apart so fast. (6) *Emile* sent her packing in assuring her that she wouldn't reconnect anything, but would surely await a new death to regret. (7) I shared with him the regrets my sister had expressed to me by telephone, who had encouraged me for the first time to do what I did. (8) She had been pained in reading my first book, but she understood. (9) My boss, adorable man, had demanded of me that I make up the day taken for her funeral.

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(1) I found him a little hard with this aunt who, after all, made a gesture. // He conceded, a little embarrassed. (2) He found it a little dishonest that I put more emphasis on the day to make up than the sorrow of my bereavement. // I couldn't prove him wrong. (3) He was, nevertheless, satisfied to find in me an interlocker who knew how to - I cite - "argue his opinions" (4) We left each other around three in the morning, after three hours of discussion... (5) Largely due to a city employee (himself a player of these hours) no doubt jealous that we had talked for so long while he swept. (7) Am I never going to do better than confess myself to the most unsettling of my nocturnal eagles? // It's in returning to my place that I remembered *Fabien* (that beautiful athlete in sports studies) with whom, last summer, I made a confession of myself at least as long. // Sole result obtained from my assiduities...

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(1) Height of the paradox. // ... it's with them that I have the richest conversations. // If with *Emile* we spoke together of family, with *Fabien*, we'd speak of Freud // ... All the way to the point of talking with each on the subject of *Deluze!* // (Refutation of Psychoanalysis.) (2) Alas! I still hadn't managed to talk again with *Fabien*, even though we crossed each other's paths often. (3) ... nor of leading him, for that same matter, towards the fulfillment of zones less platonic than our two spirits. (4) On the other hand (did that make it worth more?) I saw *Emile* the next day. (5) But also the day after, and so on for four days in a row. (6) It's at this point that I nourished the vision I had of starting this history. // Just in case. (7) I started these pages. // Generally, the rest follows.

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(1) I attach myself a little more, (2) I want to make a portrait. (3) Last November on the third, the night of our long conversation, in my little black notebook, // I drew *Emile*... (4) Holding myself back being outside of my power. (6) Do I draw because I am in love, or is it that I fall in love because I've drawn? (7) In any case, the execution of each trait of his pitiless face made me love him // A little more

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(1) It had been 5 years since I had felt that. My heart had remained barricaded off and dry like a stone, by guilt following from my last history, soiled, dirty. // Back with renewed vigor today. (2) How many days am I going to keep myself under his gaze without telling him? A hundred? Twenty? Ten? Then I must keep it for eternity. (3) I don't have the right to love like before ... especially if he doesn't respond to me. (4) Especially, sparing him from my desire. Do not speak to him. Do not telephone him. Never write to him. (5) I am in hell. (6) (My *Belgium Gendarmerie's* vest, acquired in Brussels that summer) (7) The last day, proof of a commitment that seemed essential for him, // He admitted to me: (8) I want to say to you... // I'm very bothered... // Because I lied to you. (9) I said to you I was a salesman // Ah well, that's not true!

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(1) I am a sergeant-instructor in the local marine regiment. (2) I can say it to you now that we know each other better. (3) That's why I'm not keen that I'm kissed when I'm at a club, blatantly, when I'm with colleagues. (4) That doesn't matter to you, of course; we don't see each other elsewhere than here... // But I must mistrust myself. // Huh? (5) You're not angry with me?

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(1) 4th December 1999, I saw Bruno Dumond's "Humanity". (2) Two major references in this film. (3) Courbet's "Origin of the World" (4) And Duchamp's "Given: The Illuminating Gas". (5) By their abrupt character, they augment the rawness of all the individual elements, by way of a craftsmanship purified to its outmost limits. (6) Story of a trio: Pharaon, Domino and Joseph. Pharaon, the principle protagonist, is a police lieutenant // ... lead to an inquiry on the rape and murder of a young girl. He is in love with Domino who is the fiancé of Joseph, a school-bus driver in the Northern district. (7) Pharaon lives alone with his mother. His wife, pregnant with their daughter, died two years previously. // Pharaon is exempt from all malignity. He is gifted with a superhuman empathy. Pharaon is stamped with an absolute purity, his attachment to Domino being equivalent to his compassion for humanity. (8) Pharaon suffers for and with others. He forgives all the sins of the world. (9) I think of Piersanti and Mattotti's "Stigmates"...

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(1) Behind my eyelids, in front of my eyes, dance indistinct colours. // Nothing more seems to exist. // I know what it is before my eyes and which I do not see. // I use this warmth and this dance as a guide in what I know and do not see. // All is in our head, the world and its order. // What I want, I command. // I feel infinitely good. (2) Then I briskly make a 180 turn on the spot, and reopen my eyes. // The countryside has transformed itself. The shadows and the sky are tainted a metallic blue (3) ... and then slowly retake their initial colour // This beauty, accessible to all, is the sole peace to which I can hope to aspire

## Page 16

(1) 29 December: My friends leave me at Tarbes from where I am going to get back to Bayonne to pass the New Year. But, following a violent storm, all the railways lines are cut. (2) I make use of this day by inspecting the surroundings. From my hotel, I call my mother who lives on the coast badly hit by the storm. (3) Then I go to a sporting goods store where I let myself be charmed by the official shirt of the French Rugby Team. // (Size: Small) (4) It's in the spirit of a respectful and emotionally moved fetishist that I am going to hesitate for some weeks before wearing it // First of all from fear of being taunted by my friends, ready to make fun of me for my bimbo-like compulsions. // ...but also and especially for keeping as long as possible the odor of new cotton. // It's only at the comic festival at the village of Angouleme that I am going to finally decide to wear it.

## Page 18

(1) February 2000 // I print out the totality of a discussion board of which the subject is my work. // 60 web pages that are only a vast torrent of abuse. I had hoped for some reactions... // One can say that I have been // Served. (2) I am accused of a whole load of wrongs: of lacking "generosity", "sincerity"; of pretending to "true reportage"; of hiding my desire to settle my banks accounts under the alibi of a work of art; of being irresponsible and especially of outstripping all bounds of morality, not to say the law. (3) They compare me allegorically to Celine, Artaud, or Guyotat (That's right) but they go to the point of citing Hitler, which does shock my old Jewish origins a little. (4) Around me, they are only people "traumatized", "victims", "targets" sexually harassed, defiled innocents... Assuredly, I am filth rotting with hate and incapable of enjoyment. // The portrait is flattering. (5) Some call for the court, others prefer to give me a slap, especially the so-called "concerned" individuals expressing themselves through the keyboard for those that are not there to call for my quick hanging. (6) Which is interesting since not one of these "true" "protagonists" has omitted to congratulate me, in front of witnesses, of the excellence of my incriminating work. (7) Without doubt it was the caution on their side as much as the dangerousness of my mental illness that seems to be established on this site.

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(1) In this way of speaking of a possible contemporary sainthood. // [Panel text: \_Sleep, we won't be like animals anymore\_] (2) But I think equally of Terrence Malick's "The Thin Red Line", which extends compassion for humankind ... // to all of nature, therefore creating a total requiem, a cosmic misery. (3) Before seeing "Humanity" I passed by the public garden. (4) It had been a long time since I had been there during the day. (5) The start of December, the same occurrence takes place every year: The trees, having no longer a single leaf, start a nudity of four months. (6) I then prepare myself for an amusing experience. (7) I turn myself in the direction of the sun and shut my eyelids. // I remain like that, bathed in a gentle warmth for ten minutes or so

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(1) Monday 13th December 1999: Get-together with Stephanie and Jean-Pierre. I hadn't seen the latter since the events described in my third opus, which ought to arrive the day after tomorrow. It seemed that Jean-Pierre had come back to a better disposition with respect to me. If that could be true! I regret so much what has passed between us. (2) Wednesday 15th December. My monster has come out. 3cm thick, more than a kg. The beauty of the object tempers my distaste for the content. (3) I would have preferred never to have made that book. // Thursday 16th: I listen to Davitt Moroney's "The Art of the Fugue" on harpsicord. (4) Moroney has put forward a convincing execution of the 14th Fugue following the theory of Tovey, who demonstrated that it still lacked a principal theme. (5) What a totally abstracted joy in hearing the embodiment of the four themes finally reunited! (6) December 23rd. I found Frank again. The infinite comfort of his big arms is such a rare thing that I'm driven to the edge of tears. (7) December 25th at the family home. I finally received Renard Camus' Journal of 88, "Augets": Literary joy in sight. (8) 27th December: First and only ski trip with Delphine, Corinne and David. Night at the chalet. (9) 28th December: I hesitate to buy myself the blood-red and gold shirt of Perpignan's Rugby Club in a sports store in Bagnères-de-Bigorre

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(1) Start of January. The captaincy of my dear Ibanes is menaced. I strongly disagree with this (2) But I doubt that Bernard Laporte, the new coach of the team, is sensible to my type of arguments. (3) Return to home. No news of Emile. (4) I start my little personal press-service. A kilogram by post, it's expensive to send... // ...but a pleasure to do for those whom I appreciate. (5) I work on my dedication for the primary figure concerned in it. I really do owe him that. // Adding there a quote from "Sailor's Cemetery" by Paul Valery, a poem that I find strikes one down with its beauty. (6) Before the postbox, I hesitate one last time. I really do know, however, that it is already too late, but I am no longer as confident in myself. I close my eyes at the moment I drop my package. A noise in my head of it rolling to the bottom of the basket follows my movement. I feel dizzy. (7) The weekend from the 14th to the 16th of January 2000, I dedicate to Caen. The Sunday, I see Denis and Valerie again. (8) The weekend from the 21st to the 23rd, I dedicate to Brussels. I find there my friends Xavier L. and Christophe P. I meet there again Laurent De Graeave, we confine in each other our liking for Guillaume Dustan, I talk with a certain Marianne, then I am deeply moved by "The Glider", a short film by Yves Cantraine. (9) I pass under silence the comics festival, beyond my pleasure of having finally been able to talk with Jean-Christophe Menu.

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(1) The 23rd February 2000 (2) Emile came back. // We talked. We laughed, as if we had said goodbye the day before. (3) Yet // Between the day before and today // Two months have passed. (4) Certainly don't mention it to him. // Certainly don't render him responsible for it. (5) Certainly don't express oneself in a wimpy reproachful tone, with phrases like "What have you been doing?" or "All this time". // Since Emile owes me nothing

(1) In 'Moral Harassment – The Perverse Violence of Everyday Life' Marie-France Hirigoyen describes the perverse process of harassment in the workplace, in the family, in relationships, etc // She draws up a typical portrait of the potential victim of this type of aggression. // She defines also the aggressor as follows: // "The subject has a grandiose sense of his own importance // -is absorbed by fantasies of limitless success and power // -thinks himself to be "special" and unique // -has an excessive need to be admired // -thinks that everything is owed to him // -exploits others in interpersonal relations // -lacks empathy // -often envies others // -proves oneself to have an arrogant attitude and bearing" (2) What is described there freezes my blood. // Because it is entirely me. (3) But the portrait does not stop there. She pursues to precision the attributes of those whom she names "The Empty Narcissist" // "A narcissist (...) is someone who believes they can find themselves in looking at themselves in the mirror. His life consists in finding his reflection in the look of others (4) The other exists not as an individual but as a reflection (...). // (...) all starts and explains itself by empty narcissism, constructed in reflection (...) like vampires, the empty narcissist needs to nourish himself on the substance of the other (...) (5) (...) for reasons which belong to the first stages of the history of their life, (the empty narcissists) have not been able to realize (they) feel a very intense envy towards those who seem to take pleasure in life (...) // (...) or possess things that they do not have (...) (6) (hence their love and their hate) for a maternal personality, the most specific figure of their internal life. (7) The narcissist needs (...) the substance of the other for filling himself. But he is incapable of nourishing himself from this substance (...) because he doesn't even position himself for the early stages of the substance that could permit him to be welcomed (...) the substance of the other"

(1) This realization, long suppressed, gives me a terrible moral crisis. // I have so much difficulty in making decisions in my life at the moment. // My social status as evidence. // I am not self-reliant. // I feel ill at ease and lacking in power and I look for the unconditional support of others. // I solicit rejection because my attitude is excessively "clingy" // Then this rejection confirms my negative vision of life. (2) Why hide it? // I'm like that from the start // As for the required support I am lacking, I can make the criticism that I haven't been sufficiently helpful. // That's what has happened, always. // I had been like that with Rene, with Stephane, and with all my friends. // With Xavier, with Richard, and especially with Loic. // But equally with Denis, so rich however in human resources faced to the "badly burnt" of life. // I've had a self-realization.

(1) I want happiness for Emile. I don't want him any pain. // But what do I know of it at the very bottom of it all? (2) I only want my happiness and maybe I'll hurt him if he doesn't want mine, who knows... (3) The 23rd February, in leaving me, Emile had assured me of being there the next day. It's the 24th. (4) I am in a bar with Loic. We've just been talking. It's already late. One by one, chance leads our friends to our table, all the Brunos, the Jean-Christophes, the Nathalies, the Thierrys, the Zabes. I feel extremely bad. I cry. (5) Undoubtedly they think it's all the ill that has been spoken of me which affects me still this night. // Dear friends. (6) They do not know that what affects me is the part that's true in all the insults made against me. ... and that I am soon going to lift myself from the table to go commit the irreparable. (7) I am going to go to the public garden, to meet up with Emile. In my bag, a copy of my Journal volume 3 dedicated for him with a little caricature that is meant to be kind. // I'm confining in him the account of the hardest period of my life.

(1) On this page, it was foreseen that I would show the drawing made for Emile, of which I kept a copy in my notebook. It was also foreseen, a little further on, to show a big picture over two pages that I had wished to consecrate to the victory of France over the All Blacks last October. A beautiful portrait of Ibanez, captain of the époque, ought to have paid homage to him along with the drawing of this postcard - the photograph side - that he sent me on the 16th December to thank me for my support // I'm not going to make it. // I probably am never going to make it. // The guilt and moral upheaval provoked in me by the accusations brought upon the publication of my last work have got the better of my love of drawings of adored visages. // I capitulate. // The reader is therefore going to have to imagine Emile's face. Maybe the suggestion of it is here, and for once gives it a success in dramatic terms? But the loss in terms of intimate satisfaction is incalculable. No fortune in the world could compensate for the consequences of the sacrifice that I have been obliged to make. The absence of Emile in my life, like everyone else, was unbearable; the absence of his face in these pages makes me crazy with grief.

(1) "Prisoners of the rigidity of their defences, they try to destroy freedom. Incapable of taking full enjoyment of their body, they try to hinder the enjoyment of the bodies of others (...) being incapable of love, they try to destroy by cynicism the simplicity of a natural relation. (...)" (2) The motor of the perverse core, it's envy; the end, it's appropriation (...) (3) (...) what the perverted envies, before anything else, it's the life of the other. They envy the success of others, which puts them face to face with their own feeling of failure. (...) Nothing is ever okay, everything is complicated, everything is an ordeal. // They impose on others their pejorative image of the world and their chronic dissatisfaction concerning life. (4) (...) The perverted absorb the positive energy of those around them, nourishing themselves and regenerating themselves, then they discard on these people all their negative energy. // The victim gives enormous support, but it is never enough. Never being happy, (they, the narcissists) are always in the position of victims, (5) And the mother (or really whatever they project the image of their mother on to) is always held responsible. The perverted attack the other in an effort to get out of the status of a victim that they experienced in their childhood. (6) (...) this attitude of a victim seduces a partner who wants to console them, to mend them, before putting them in a position of culpability. At the moment of their separation, the perverted pose themselves as abandoned victims, which gives them the easy job (7) And permits them to seduce another partner, sympathizer" // Is this what awaits Emile?

(1) I'm an empty narcissist, I have all the symptoms of it. // Is it because of that that one has so much trouble to love me? (2) Is it because of that that I find no-one? // One says to me that it's still possible, that everything is possible. (3) And after all, that's five years that I hadn't fallen in love. But if it's possible, what action should be done to win him over, even if it's only for a single time? // If each of my actions is the action of a vampire? If each of my actions is exactly that which I shouldn't be doing? (4) Concerning Emile, I can say that, for four months, we've kept going a privileged relationship. Yet not an address, not a telephone number, no means of taking him to a bar, or a restaurant, anywhere else than under these branches // How to make him yield? (5) And I, from now on knowing myself to be so dangerous, how can I love him in these conditions? (6) Emile ... // This name so quaintly old-fashioned (7) This little morsel of a man so funny, so full of life... // Emile.

(1) Attached to this little caricature of Emile, on the last page, a quotation of a passage of Renaud Camus in his book "Incomparable" published by POL in collaboration with Farid Tau. // I know that it's a mistake // I know that with this gift, Emile enters straight into a process that is going to overtake us. // The 25th February, at midnight, I give my book (2) ... to my little sergeant Emile. And I think of my dedication. // [Camus dedication: ...His beauty stems from the simplicity but also from the rarity and of course from the extreme purity of figure – which in its turn stems from his extreme youth, of course, but also, and especially, from the austerity without ornamentation not hesitation of the skeletal structure. It's an elemental beauty, that of certain drawings of Ingres or Matisse, of an Ingres or Matisse that would have liked boys. The most bravura passage of his being – but the expression is absurd, so much much of what is there being of a refined and pitiless asceticism – is the arch of his eyebrows: two lines without remorse, of a lowered arch, which do not realize that they devastate you... // "The hair is very short but has a dense spread, and their ends only confirm to me, therefore, the general bias for abstraction."

(1) 25th February.

To attract, to not attract. Such is the alpha, such is the omega which presides over our encounters. Emile wasn't attracted to me. And even if the encounter had taken place today, I wouldn't be able to attract him. But the worst, it's that we can't even be friends. If he organizes a get-together in another town, everyone could join him there, except me. If he goes to a nightclub, all could accompany him, except me. If they go to a bar, all could follow him there, except me. If an amusing show screened on tv, they could laugh at it, without me. // I have neither car nor television. That seems as if it's nothing and yet... // All these banalities which exist in common, and which matter so much for nourishing the start of friendships, create links between those who will not become attached to me. Before I can even act, a hundred thousand connivances will have already attached him to others than me. Without a car I have freed myself from a joy easy to consume and freed myself from projecting myself to other possible places of experiencing joy, having also dug a trench that isolates me from my contemporaries. No email, no computer screen, no vehicle and I cut myself off in isolation from the rest of the world. Without a place to go comment on the shows that we will have seen, making a song and dance about them, we will have nothing to share. // For satisfying Emile, I only have my vague presence and my chattering teeth on the battlements of a public garden. Such is the price to pay for this artificial freedom: a freedom from the pleasures of a society that I have, through an absence of wheels, been excluded from for such a long time. // It's too expensive. // I don't consent to this tax. // I would be game for anything to keep Emile: to follow him to his nightclubs, his bars, to watch the shows that he watches, to comment on them with him. I would do everything to keep him. I would even stop drawing. // Yes, even that. If that could make him happy. But, outside of a few hours that he grants me when chance or pique leads him to this place, we never encounter each other, he and I. Because before even attracting him to me, it would be necessary that all the flowers and the leaves of its trees that I offer to him would be able to keep him. We are not the same under the trendy lights of a nightclub that make us "move with the times" as we are in the cold of this park. Even after not being able to attract him, the lone treasure of my conversation wasn't capable of being enough to hook him so that he'd raise me in his regard.

(1) We are extremely alone. Nothing leaves any traces anymore. Whatsoever be the length or the quality that my words leave in his memory, they'll still fade away: everything's become reversible. Everything will stay like this. The scandals, the tensions, which formerly would have made this garden a crossroads of possible encounters, have ceased to produce enough anecdotes to stimulate the attention of another. We live under the insane victory of the domestic ideal. Each fantasizes his life according to the model of the simplified nuclear family: meetings in places of pre-planned leisure activities, and consumption within an individual niche that is optimized by our ability to acquiesce to a reflection that is sent from ourselves, to ourselves, through the media. // With my archaic public garden, and the absence of the bare minimum of social attributes, I live in an enclave where the encounter is never going to take place. // Everything conspires to abolish the freedom of places and of hours where another could still surprise us. These pages are trying, with the littlest of sense and meaning, to produce an account of what one must give up in life to be taken as being important. But that which my books put forth from now on falls under the stable cut of a castrating superego; this gaze being charged with criticisms for the faces that were drawn in the past. // The impossible encounter, I forced it here. // The 31st October 1999 // France wins against the All-blacks. (2) Then // They lose the world cup. // Ibanez is no longer the captain of the French team. // And the picture is no longer possible.

*Encountering nobody, // But finding only moments. // Who knows? // Maybe eternity is that? // [Postcard Text: \_I thank you for all your encouragement, even during the difficult times // amicably, // Raphael Ibanez\_ ]*