

I can't stop looking at your photographs. I can't stop admiring your art. I can't stop these tears that keep flowing- I miss you with all of my heart...

It's hard to compile 6 years of a beautiful friendship into a 3 minute speech when, honestly, I would rather just sit by her side again and say nothing at all. Kat was my best friend and became the sister I never had.

I met Kat in 2008 at Mission Australia's 'Creative Youth Initiative' Art Program. Back then, Kat was in a wheelchair, but still had some mobility in her arms and upper body. As a result, our teachers and I helped Kat experiment with different techniques of making art. I remember Kat controlling the paintbrush with her mouth. I remember Kat making ink-blot patterns by blowing air through a straw. But I definitely can't remember how many times our teachers tried to censor her hilarious yet explicit jokes which constantly kept the class entertained!

Kat was never backward in being forward. Whether we were out at a theatre performance or watching a comedy show, she embraced the opportunity to shamelessly flirt with all the strong and handsome men who carried her up the stairs when there was no wheelchair access.

But, speaking of wheelchairs, Kat took full control (or should I say "went OUT of control") with her motorised chair whenever we were out on excursions. She had no regard for traffic and made her presence known on the road, just as she did in every space she ever graced.

Kat was a pillar of strength and never let her breaking body get in the way of her determined and feisty sense of character. Each time I visited or called her, she had a new piece of poetry or profound idea to share with me – like her brilliant entrepreneurial business plan to become a 'phone sex' operator so she could work from home, and her more recent letter to the Prime Minister (challenging his policy for welfare recipients).

Despite her own circumstances, Kat consistently held empathy for those in need. When I asked her what she wanted for Christmas, she told me that she had already been given the best present of all – a goat, ducks and bicycle donated to a family and a scholarship for a girl overseas on her behalf. To honour her legacy, I encourage you all to think of those in less fortunate circumstances so that her philanthropy may carry on.

Recently, I started writing a song for Kat. Luckily, I had the chance to play her the first verse and she was thrilled. So I finished this 'Song for a Cat' and will play it today. I hope she can hear it. The last words we said to each other were 'I love you' and I know this much is true- R.I.P. Kat x