

she smiles. "Tell them to look up. Tell them to remember the stars."

would rather write her a song, because songs don't wait to re-songs mean so much to her. Stories wait for endings, enough to sing when all they know is darkness. These to midnight, between hurricane and harbor, as both her, cocaine is fresh in her system. She hasn't slept of coke, pot, pills and alcohol. She has agreed to leave this broken night. She says she'll go to and say goodbye and it is hard to leave without dreams as a child, the near-constant presence of attempted suicide. Her arms remember razor trapped, two groups of "friends"

but words claim to s in 36 hours a meet us, to liste rehab tomorrow, but her. evil ever since. She has felt the t blades, fifty scars that speak of self-in offering opposite ideas. Everyone is asleep

sun is rising. She drinks long from a bottle of liquor, takes a razor blade from the table and locks herself in the bathroom. She

cuts herself, using the blade to write "FUCK UP" large across her left forearm.

The nurse at the treatment center finds the wound several hours later. The center has no detox, names her too great a risk, and does not accept her. For the

she is ours to love.

next five days, and the possibility of healing fills our living room with life. It is unspoken and there are only a few of us, but we will be her church, the body of Christ coming alive to meet her needs, to write love on her arms.

She is full of contrast, more alive and closer to death than anyone I've known, like a Johnny Cash song or some theatre star. She owns attitude and humor beyond her 19 years, and when she tells me her story, she is humble and quiet and kind, shaped by the pain of a hundred lifetimes. I sit privileged but breaking as she shares. Her

life has been so dark yet there is some soft hope in her words, and on consecutive evenings, I watch the prettiest girls in the room tell her that she's beautiful.

I think it's God reminding her.

I've never walked this road, but I decide that if we're going to run a five-day rehab, it is going to be the coolest in the country. It is going to be rock and roll. We start with the basics; lots of fun, too much Starbucks and way too many cigarettes

Thursday night she is in the balcony for Band Marino, Orlando's finest. They are indie-folk-fabulous, a movement disguised as a circus. She loves them and she smiles when I point out the A&R man from Atlantic Europe, in town from London just to catch this show.

She is in good seats when the Magic beat the Sonics the next night, screaming like a lifelong fan with every Dwight Howard dunk. On the way home, we stop for more coffee and books, Blue Like Jazz and (Anne Lamott's) Travelling Mercies.

On Saturday, the Taste of Chaos tour is in town and I'm not even sure we can get in, but doors do open and minutes after parking, we are on stage for Thrice, one of

her favorite bands. She stands ten feet from the drummer, smiling

constantly, content there in the music, as light as a feather. It is like healing. It is

prayer. She prays for the service to pray for

this her last night before entering rehab. Some a friends tonight. The prayers move from broken to

and, are talking to God but I think as much, we're talking to her,

's loved, saying she does not go alone. One sits in the corner strumming an acoustic guitar, singing songs she's in-

After chouse fi here for a few more moments before goodbye. Everyone has some gift for her, some note or hug or piece of encouragement. She pulls me aside and tells me she would like to

g something surpr talk through the crowded living room, to

She me her or blade and her last lines of cocaine five

high are. She' with hel es that t will be best night and she shouldn't have it.

is what is what s gift with me. It hits me to wonder if this we trade death for life.

at the t t center he stars but we miss them in the dirt and clouds. We

miss the sto tell her hope. We have hope."

I have watched life come back to her, and it has been a privilege. When our time with her began, someone suggested

shifts the lay something better. I have been challenged and changed, reminded that

the ans questions. Don Miller says we're called to hold our hands against the

en v ed so greatly.

to, s of rescue. Perhaps God would ask us to be that rescue, to be His body, to

en we come alive. I might be simple but more and more, I believe God

realec have seen that this week and honestly, it has been simple: Take a

he st seats in the house. Buy her coffee and cigarettes for the

Tell her something true when all she's known are lies. Tell

of freedom, tell her she was made to dance in white dress-

We are only asked to love

TO WRITE LOVE ON HER ARMS

TWLOHA is a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury and suicide. encourage. inspire.