

POWER OF ART

Olivia Laing explains the possibilities of art and what it means to be alive.

Olivia Laing, a writer and critic, explores sorrow, loneliness, art, and much more in her memoir, 'In The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone'

"There are so many things that art can't do. It can't bring the dead back to life, it can't mend arguments between friends, or cure AIDS, or halt the pace of climate change. All the same, it does have some extraordinary functions, some odd negotiating ability between people, including people who never meet and yet who infiltrate and enrich each other's lives. It does have a capacity to create intimacy; it does have a way of healing wounds, and better yet of making it apparent that not all wounds need healing and not all scars are ugly.

If I sound adamant it is because I am speaking from personal experience. When I came to New York I was in pieces, and though it sounds perverse, the way I recovered a sense of wholeness was not by meeting someone or by falling in love, but rather by handling the things that other people had made, slowly absorbing by way of this contact the fact that loneliness, longing, does not mean one has failed, but simply **THAT ONE IS ALIVE."**

OLIVIA

LAING

SEARCHING FOR MAGIC IN

DARK TIMES

Harry Potter's Albus Dumbledore talks
about how one can find happiness,
regardless of the situation.

In Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, headmaster Albus Dumbledore explains to the students of Hogwarts the value of staying positive, even when hope seems to be lost.

**"HAPPINESS CAN BE FOUND, EVEN
IN THE DARKEST OF TIMES, IF ONE
ONLY REMEMBERS TO TURN ON THE
LIGHT."**

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

written by Steven Kloves for
the screenplay of the 2004 film
adapation of the third installment
of J.K. Rowling's beloved
book series.

THERE IS NO LOVE OF LIFE WITHOUT DESPAIR OF LIFE

Love and despair. Two words that Albert Camus uses to express life.

Albert Camus, a french philosopher, expresses that in life, there is love, but there is also despair. They all go hand in hand and there is no love of life without despair of it.

“Without cafes and newspapers, it would be difficult to travel. A paper printed in our own language, a place to rub shoulders with others in the evenings enable us to imitate the familiar gestures of the man we were at home, who, seen from a distance, seems so much a stranger. For what gives value to travel is fear. It breaks down a kind of inner structure we have. One can no longer cheat — hide behind the hours spent at the office or at the plant (those hours we protest so loudly, which protect us so well from the pain of being alone). I have always wanted to write novels in which my heroes would say: “What would I do without the office?” or again: “My wife has died, but fortunately I have all these orders to fill for tomorrow.” Travel robs us of such refuge. Far from our own people, our own language, stripped of all our props, deprived of our masks (one doesn’t know the fare on the streetcars, or anything else), we are completely on the surface of ourselves. But also, soul-sick, we restore to every being and every object its miraculous value.

A woman dancing without a thought in her head, a bottle on a table, glimpsed behind a curtain: each image becomes a symbol. The whole of life seems reflected in it, in so far as it summarizes our own life at the moment. When we are aware of every gift, the contradictory intoxications we can enjoy (including that of lucidity) are indescribable.

There lay all my love of life: a silent passion for what would perhaps escape me, a bitterness beneath a flame. Each day I would leave this cloister like a man lifted from himself, inscribed for a brief moment in the continuance of the world...

**THERE IS NO LOVE OF LIFE WITHOUT DESPAIR
OF LIFE.”**

**ALBERT
CAMUS**