

the spyglass



spring issue
twenty twenty-one



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NATURE IS CALLING

I have never been an outdoorsman. Like many of my fellow peers, I prefer to spend my time indoors playing games, watching movies, and sleeping in. Now, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, I don't need an excuse to stay in my room all day. In fact, there's no better justification than a lockdown to remain in the safe confines of my home.

As we pass the one-year anniversary of this life-changing event, it's become increasingly more difficult to remain positive about our current living situation.

In our efforts to contain this virus, the social isolation we endure led to many cases of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and emotional distress. This is especially true for students, as we have to cope with the expectation to perform well in our academics while navigating through the unknown waters of adolescence. In summary, this global outbreak has been extremely difficult.

Even the technology we rely on to provide us with an escape from our harrowing thoughts only adds to our growing pile of insecurities and fears. It can rapidly become overwhelming to maintain a state of wellbeing and positivity online while the world seems to be collapsing at our feet.

It wasn't until I heard the term "Nature-Deficit Disorder" in my Social Science class that I began to notice the fragile relationship we have with the natural environment. Nature-Deficit Disorder is not an illness, but rather, a term used to describe the belief that humans who are alienated from nature are more likely to develop behavioural problems, such as negative moods, depression, or anxiety if they lack a connection to nature.

It's during times like these that I must consider revoking my resignation as an outdoorsman.

There have been multiple studies over the years

analyzing the psychological benefits of being immersed in a natural environment. The sensory stimulation provided from being exposed to nature has shown significant improvements to our mood and can reduce feelings of isolation and stress. But what is it that makes nature so significant to our wellbeing?

The biophilia hypothesis is an evolutionary theory that suggests humans are innately predisposed to seek connections with nature and other life forms. Thus, by being disconnected from the natural world, we are unable to maintain those connections, which can lead to an increase in stress and unhappiness. Now, this theory remains entirely hypothetical, but a plethora of evidence has proven that being exposed to nature can be a successful form of treatment to mental health decline.

One form of treatment for mental decline is ecotherapy, which involves patients participating in outdoor activities. Some common ecotherapy activities include nature meditation, conservation, gardening, and physical exercises outdoors such as walking, biking, or yoga. Just by unplugging from electronic devices and spending time immersed in nature, many patients return feeling rejuvenated and refreshed, proving the value in venturing outdoors.

So, next time you feel like the world is collapsing around you, take some time away from the virtual world and step outside into the natural one. Go on a socially distanced walk, open a window to let in some fresh air, surround yourself with various life forms, like plants or animals. There's always time to unplug, even for a moment, to appreciate what the planet has to offer.

// SARAH GRISHPUL
PHOTOGRAPHY // NADJA MARJANOVIC
DESIGN // CELINA XIAO

which famous art piece are you?

// LEAH BEN-TZUR
PAINTINGS // GUSTAV KLIMT
LEONARDO DA VINCI
VINCENT VAN GOGH
JACKSON POLLOCK
DESIGN // ANASTASIA BLOSSER

When asked to present in front of the class, you...

- a. Take the opportunity and exhibit your strong communication skills
- b. Take the opportunity, though reluctantly and only if nobody else will
- c. Stay quiet out of shyness, even when nobody else is speaking
- d. Stay quiet, but only because you weren't paying attention and focusing on something else

When given homework, you...

- a. Do all the material assigned from every subject feverishly and without fail; you want to have strong grades in all your classes
- b. Prioritize your subjects based on necessity; you want to have strong grades in only the classes you need to, you do not wish to tire yourself out
- c. Ask your friends and family for help, understanding the material through them as you work through your tasks
- d. Ignore it in favour of doing something else; you do not want to be laboured by work, nor do you like the homework system in general

When shopping at a convenience store, you...

- a. Buy a lottery ticket or the chocolates on display; you have a proclivity for the riches
- b. Buy snacks and a soda, giving some to your friends if they ask
- c. Stay outside, counting cars as they drive by while you wait for your friends to come back
- d. Play with the small nicknacks on the shelves to satisfy your boredom

When writing an essay on a novel, you...

- a. Focus on the plot and characters, pointing out interesting developments through dialogue and action
- b. Focus on the major themes of the story, spending hours at a time writing about all the details contributing to the story subtly
- c. Focus on the context behind the story, such as the author's previous works as well as the era in which they wrote their piece
- d. Focus on the author's diction and syntax, basically anything and everything practical that the author does

mostly a...

The Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, also known as *The Woman in Gold* (1907)

Painted by Viennese artist Gustav Klimt (July 14, 1862 – Feb. 6, 1918) during his “golden phase”, a period in which he painted ostensibly with golden hues, this commissioned portrait depicts Adele Bloch-Bauer, a Jewish Viennese woman shrouded in luxurious colours. From its theft in 1941 by the Nazis from her husband Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer to its reclamation by his niece Maria Altmann, this painting has endured much suffering since its conception. You have a content and truly incomparable determination and strength, paired only with your moral compass; you are known to fight for what is right, even when that brings you to the opposition of authority. Finding yourself in a difficult situation, you tend to choose the more altruistic approach, one that takes into account everyone's perspectives.

mostly b...

The Mona Lisa (c. 1503-1506)

Painted by Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci (Apr. 14/15, 1452-May 2, 1519), this piece is regarded as one of, if not, the greatest and most well-known in the world. It depicts a woman, neither smiling nor frowning, sitting in a reserved position before an imaginary landscape. Famous for the subject's languid, soft expression and the expertise of its elements, this painting is on permanent display in the Louvre as it is the property of the French Republic itself. You have a calm maturity, one that has come from years of observing rather than speaking; this makes you an excellent listener and a great person to ask for advice. Finding yourself in a difficult situation, you tend to only comment when you feel the situation has become too chaotic and requires a grounding back to reality.

mostly c...

The Starry Night (1889)

Painted by Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh, this piece of art is widely regarded to be his “magnus opus”, or his most important piece of artwork conceptualized. The painting depicts his view out of his asylum room window at Saint-Remy-de-Provence; van Gogh's mental illness is infamous, and the subdued blues and blacks help highlight this accordingly. You are abrasive and limited to others, always anxious about how they choose to perceive you yet never quite happy with the response; you wish to have higher self-esteem but at the same time do not want to be seen as too conceited. Finding yourself in a difficult situation, you tend to stay quiet in an attempt to appease others, not wishing to make the situation worse, even by accident.

mostly d...

Number 11, 1952, also known as *Blue Poles* (1952)

Painted by American artist Jackson Pollock (Jan. 28, 1912 – Aug. 11, 1956), this piece of art is only one out of the many that helped to define the abstract expressionist movement. Made using the “drip technique” of splashing paint over a horizontal canvas (which allowed for perspective on all sides by the artist), this piece is full of movement and chaos. You are nothing if not a free, chaotic spirit with a love for humanity: you hold yourself both above and below others, constantly questioning your place in life through your ability to live it compared to others. Finding yourself in a difficult situation, you tend to trust your gut in the sense that you use your emotions to guide you; while this usually

The Wanderer



She wasn't planning on staying for long.

The town was quite uninviting. At the entrance hung an old sign under a flickering street light, and a gust of wind swept through the streets as the visitor's eyes swept over the many apartment buildings.

Only at the town center was she finally met with the familiar sight of bustling life. Commuters from all across the country gathered here, if only for a fleeting moment of time everyday. No one lingered or spared time for conversation. It was as if everyone was in a rush to get to their next destination.

Even for a wanderer like her, who travelled across the continent and encountered people of all kinds, the visitor had never felt more unwelcome. Regardless, she wasn't planning on staying for long. She never really stayed for long in any town, for she didn't need a home. Reminding herself of her purpose, she sat on the park bench and waited for her bus to come.

The bus was running late, so she took out her briefcase to fill the empty time.

"This," she said, holding up a small stuffed dog, "was given to me by a merchant in one of the first towns I'd visited. He rewarded me with this doll when I bought his whole stock of picture frames."

The wanderer wasn't talking to anyone in particular, but she – or rather, the doll – had piqued the interest of a little girl. The girl climbed onto the bench, wanting to hear more of the foreign woman's stories.

Once again, the wanderer reached into her briefcase and held up an extremely small fork. "I remember I ate a whole ten plates of spaghetti with only this minuscule fork a few years back," she chuckled lightly, "Sometimes, I can still taste the sauce if I think hard enough."

The talk of food attracted a few young boys, who joined the wanderer and the little girl on the park bench. Not minding the growing audience around the bench, the wanderer continued on with her stories and held up a new item from her briefcase each time. After all, she was a wanderer! The tales of her travels were her pride and joy.

Three days passed with no sign of the bus. Nevertheless, the wanderer found her smile growing wider than ever with each hour of delay, and the crowd of commuters became larger with each new item she pulled out.

The wanderer revealed the last item from her briefcase. It was an old camera coloured in a faded lavender paint. For the first time in a while, the wanderer's face returned to her usual solemn expression, eyes gleaming with a hint of nostalgia and realization.



A violent wind rushed past the wanderer's face, the distant memories of her travels jumbling up in her head. The rhythm of her heart echoed in her ears, as if trying to scream that she was no better than the bustling crowd rushing towards their next destination, not paying any mind to the seemingly trivial things in life like the items in her suitcase.

After a while, she spoke. "My family gave this to me when I left my town, telling me to send them a picture when I found my new home."

She wasn't planning on staying for long. The town was quite uninviting, greeting her with empty streets and detached hearts. But the town had turned into a family with the help of a wanderer with no home and the fleeting commuters who took the time to sit down and listen.

The long awaited bus came to a gradual break, wheels screeching against the pavement. Instead of rushing on, the wanderer gathered everyone around the park bench and raised her camera.

The wanderer's eyes twinkled with delight, as if to say "I'm finally home."

// SAMANTHA LEE
PHOTOGRAPHY// KERRY YAN
DESIGN// ELLIE LIANG

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with warm orange and pink hues, with the sun partially visible on the horizon. A bright vertical streak of light reflects the sun's path across the dark, rippling water below.

Solis Occasum

// YASMIN ANNING
PHOTOGRAPHER//NADJA MARJANOVIC
DESIGN // DAVID WANG

It was a late summer evening that I found myself wandering the darkening wilderness alongside my closest friends. Prompted by a dreary summer, we had decided to go camping as a little lighthearted adventure. To pass the time, we aimlessly wandered through the forest until streams of bright orange light began to spill through the forest canopy. Enticed by the ambrosial glow, we followed the light, eventually breaking through the treeline where we were met by a rocky shoreline and a large lake. However, it was the fiery sun setting across the lake that was the most captivating part of the landscape.

Settling ourselves on an old bench, partially submerged in water and barely able to accommodate all of us, we peered across the shimmering water reflecting the vibrant oranges and pinks illuminating the sky. In an unspoken agreement, we all sat in complete silence; an unnatural scene for our usually eccentric group dynamic. The only communication between us was through hollow nods, acknowledging and agreeing that we all wished to take in the gorgeous scenery on our own accord.

Gazing at the peaceful faces of my friends, I was struck by the sheer hypnotic power the sunset held over them. In an abrupt change of emotion, they appeared somewhat melancholic, almost as if the beauty of the setting sun forced them into deep thought and remission. Basking in the light alongside them, I began to disassociate from my awe and fascination with the scenery and became increasingly more conscious of my surroundings.

Watching the sun descend into the water lining the horizon caused a sudden eeriness to wash over me. Witnessing the sunset was reminiscent of witnessing the death of a day. The day could have been one of excitement and enjoyability or one of misfortune and dread. In either case, it was still the foreclosure of a small-scale era. By its very nature, "sunset"'s Latin origin echoes this philosophy, as the ladder term of "Solis occasum" describes ruin, the end, and death.

The idea of death is intimidating in itself, but the thought of what happens after death easily surmounts it in terror. Despite the strong winds and waves crashing against the shore, the world around us was oddly still, empty—almost as if time slowed for the final moments of the day's dying breaths—like the calm before the storm. Perched on the bench at the water's edge, I felt as if I was on the precipice of a climax, as if the night would lead into a grand final act by welcoming a new day of complete reformation.

One of mankind's oldest fears, the fear of the unknown, fits seamlessly into this narrative. As days go by, and as our life progresses, we are constantly left to wonder what the future holds in store. The feelings of anxiousness, uncertainty, and even the inability to understand our place in life are recalled after perceiving an ordinary sunset as the end of known time.

Instinctually, normalcy is preferred over unfamiliar change. Helplessly watching as the sun's gradual descent forces time to move forward is an ominous thought. Fixating on how the sun—a colossal star—appeared decently-sized in the vast sky, truly speaks to how insignificant each of our lives are. The now pink-purple sky I gazed upon was merely a facade for the infinite void of space. As much as my own fears and personal conflicts concerned me, I realized that my tiny being was entirely inconsequential. I sat on the shore, letting the waves roll over my toes and watching birds dive into the water, yet the universe remained apathetic to every action.

Taking in the most passionate hues the sunset had to offer as it finally sunk into the horizon, I accepted my fear. It's a bizarre notion to explain to most people; sunsets, natural phenomena of beauty, have the ability to unnerve me wholeheartedly. Near the hour mark, my friends and I got up from our resting place on the old bench and headed back to the camp. With one last look at the darkening sky, I understood that another day had ended and that, as the new day came, it would be up to me to make the most of the uncertainty brought by the future.



The sun's heat is crackling at the back of my neck. Wax drips from my wings, streaking across my burnt skin and dripping from my fingertips. It's painful, but it's all I've ever known, and I am afraid to venture away from my prophecy.

Work comes to gifted children as naturally as light attracts moths. From the moment I realized my intellectual capability, I was thrown into a race to the sun—the desire to "fulfill my potentials" weighed heavily on my heart.

Even the dinner table was a battlefield—so-and-so's son got into Harvard, won first place in a national piano competition, now works at Google, and various other iterations of "my child is better or smarter or more hardworking than yours".

When I was fifteen, my father called me lazy for the first time. I had just brought home my first semester midterm report card, and my math mark plummeted from a 91 in ninth-grade to a 66. I had also just moved from Woodbridge to Richmond Hill (two very different neighbourhoods academically and socially), and was struggling to make friends in an environment where everyone had already established their little cliques. It was like trying to fly with clipped wings. I stretched my arm out to the sun, and felt the blistering heat prickle my skin again.

Maybe I wasn't as stressed as I thought I was. Maybe if I flew just a bit closer, I could catch up with everyone else. Maybe if I let myself burn a little more, my efforts would be acknowledged.

Gifted children in particular are not only pitted against each other, but also against themselves. Every day is like a competition—who got the least sleep? Who has the most assignments due this week? Who among us can proudly show off their blistering sunburns like they are awards pinned to their bedroom walls? We are but crumbling shells of people, afraid to leave for the heat is all we have ever

known. There is a sea of rest under us, but our gazes are too fixed upon the sun to appreciate the waves.

I was content in my sun-kissed suffering. There was a certain comfort in the struggle, a sense of peace in the constant stress. Thus, when I hit the "Submit" button on my last university application essay, I was overcome with a blazing cocktail of emotions—what do I do now? Obviously, there was still work to be done, but with the bulk of everything I had worked for until now completed, I felt lost. The last of the wax dripped away from my wings and I fell, plummeting through the air into the glimmering sea. Only when I let the water soothe my burns did I notice how badly wounded I was—I had been so caught up trying to reach the sun that I had forgotten to take care of myself. And so, after years of burning in the light, I finally allowed myself to rest.

The phenomenon of "gifted-kid burnout" has been shown to greatly increase among college-and university-level students. Even among non-gifted students, the pressure within academically competitive schools is evident.

There is a sort of guilt associated with not being busy that leads students to overwork themselves, often to the point that they are later mentally incapable of performing well. In a way, we are all Icarus, pretending we are unharmed while tending our scorched skin in secret. Perhaps the best way to protect the next generation of scholars is to cast away the romance between an ill-fated Icarus and the sun.

Perhaps, for once, it is more important for us to focus upon the love between Icarus and the sea.

// MICHELLE LIU
PHOTOGRAPHY // RACHAEL PENG
DESIGN // ELIZABETH TSYBEN
IMAGE // PETER PAUL RUBENS

ICARUS AND THE SEA

The Family Plot

Sue Snell, cautious, marriageable, and orphaned, had only ever slept but a short distance from a headstone that already bore her name. In all of her twenty-one years of life, she had never travelled: not North, for fear of

whatever gelatinous monstrosities lounged at the bottom of its treacherous beaches; never once South in expectation of disease and battery; and never East or West due to a general fear of travelling itself.

This was, of course, until the late spring of 1903, when she received a message by wire that tomorrow, weather permitting, a vigil would be held in a town sixteen miles away for a great uncle whom she had never met.

As is usual, the vigil was to start at ten o'clock the next morning. The weather, granted, did not permit; still, the townspeople thought Wharl Green's vigil deserving of immediacy in spite of their black leather funeral shoes, and ultimately compromised by draining into the church a quarter of an hour earlier than customary in order to escape the rain. The eulogy was given by one Mr. Idyllwid, a friend and longtime Écarté partner, but written by his wife, Heidi, who insisted on accompanying her husband to the vigil despite her sex.

"How horrible," Mrs. Idyllwid cried to Sue. "As a Christian, I do not question God's will, but, as a friend, I might say that Mr. Green has been taken from us too soon." What had happened, simply, as Heidi Idyllwid described at length, was that Wharl Green suffered a terrible loss of blood after a small incident the week prior, due, as it is suspected, to a familial blood disorder (of which Sue herself was a carrier). For five nights and six days, he sat up in bed, bleeding profusely, holding onto life the way one holds a grudge against someone they just can't help but love.

"I am not so sure," was Sue's eventual response, "I, for one, was beginning to think that he wasn't ever going to die."

In some measure, Wharl Green's passing came as a relief to Sue, who had been privately anticipating the

octogenarian's death in the singular aim of reestablishing a confidence in the impossibility of immortality. The Snell family as a whole took to seeing longevity as a result of a sort of mutated fate: Sue's own mother, the precursory lady Snell, died within a year of childbirth; her mother, Ada Green, the same. Because of this, the surviving offspring inherited the perpetual sense that she had not been designed to live past young womanhood. Sometime during puberty, in fact, an agreement was made with herself on the unconscionability of marriage (truly, Sue despised the idea of engendering widowhood in some poor shadow of her father, and even more so the possibility of orphancy in a shadow of her own) and resigned it, as well as every other possibility in life, to that stretch of earth in the family plot that, from birth, was rightfully hers.

The trip home was four hours, closed carriage, through the muddy consequence of rain. After the hearse arrived, three men carved out a hole in the earth and stuck the casket inside. "Do you find it true," Sue asked, "that even in the enormity of the world, one rarely feels anything but lonely?"

The undertakers produced nothing but the tip of their hats. Sue made her way back alone, passing the grave of her mother, father, uncles and aunts, as well as her own, terrified by that familiar conviction that at any time, perhaps even tomorrow, she could live.



// ANNIKA PAVLIN
IMAGES // UNSPLASH & PEXELS
DESIGN // ANASTASIA BLOSSER

The man looked over once more, bemused at this cruel situation they were placed in, until he spotted something that made his blood run cold. Right about the boy's left eyebrow was a scar that looked identical to his own. Only, this one was fresh.

"Where did you get that cut?" asked the man, his shaking finger pointing to the eyebrow, suddenly frightened at who this little boy might be. The boy reached up and touched his cut.

"Where did you get that cut?" asked the man, his shaking finger pointing to the eyebrow, suddenly frightened at who this little boy might be. The boy reached up and touched his cut.

"Oh, this? I think I was running away from something. I don't remember what it was though, only that it brought me here. It chased me away from my home."

The man stood up abruptly, shaken by this encounter with the little boy. The story of the scar sounded familiar. Too familiar. It was time for him to get away. He dusted off his worn out jeans and pushed in the old wooden stool. His large boots thundered across the wooden boards of the pub as the front door chimed his exit. The man didn't dare look back despite the little boy's protests, for he knew there was nothing more he wanted to see. To know. To feel. He breathed in the cool night air and let the fog settle on him once again.

One more trip.

One more trip and then maybe, just maybe, he would know why.

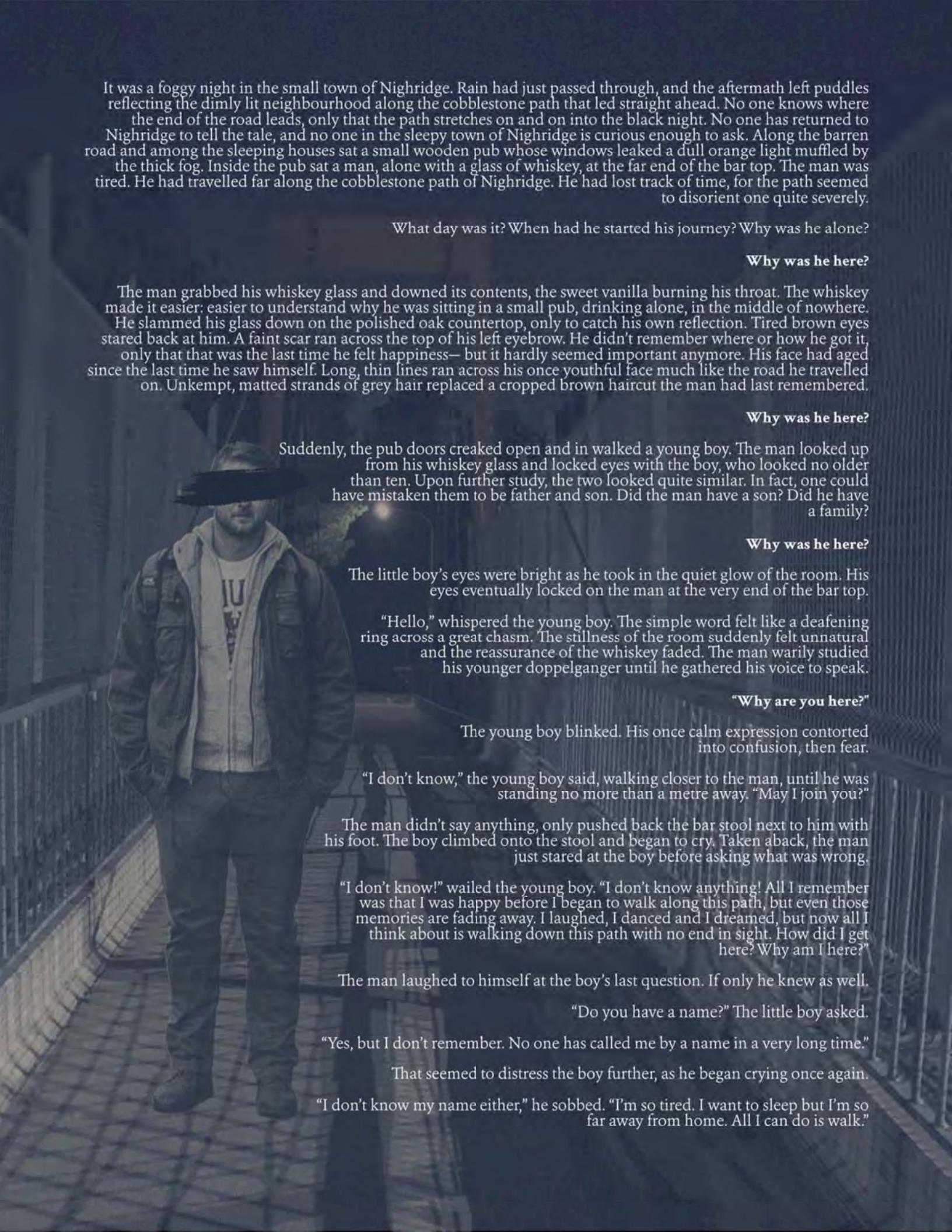
Why was he here?

The man walked onward into the endless night, with no horizon in sight- just the winding cobblestone path ahead. Was there an end to his misery? He didn't know when his trip would end. He didn't know if this journey was worth it. There were too many things he didn't know. All he knew was that he had to keep walking and that he wasn't going to miss sleepy little Nighridge.

// JANICE KO
PHOTOGRAPHY // KERRY YAN
DESIGN // ELIZABETH TSYBEN
IMAGES // PIXABAY

The End of the Beginning





It was a foggy night in the small town of Nighridge. Rain had just passed through, and the aftermath left puddles reflecting the dimly lit neighbourhood along the cobblestone path that led straight ahead. No one knows where the end of the road leads, only that the path stretches on and on into the black night. No one has returned to Nighridge to tell the tale, and no one in the sleepy town of Nighridge is curious enough to ask. Along the barren road and among the sleeping houses sat a small wooden pub whose windows leaked a dull orange light muffled by the thick fog. Inside the pub sat a man, alone with a glass of whiskey, at the far end of the bar top. The man was tired. He had travelled far along the cobblestone path of Nighridge. He had lost track of time, for the path seemed to disorient one quite severely.

What day was it? When had he started his journey? Why was he alone?

Why was he here?

The man grabbed his whiskey glass and downed its contents, the sweet vanilla burning his throat. The whiskey made it easier; easier to understand why he was sitting in a small pub, drinking alone, in the middle of nowhere. He slammed his glass down on the polished oak countertop, only to catch his own reflection. Tired brown eyes stared back at him. A faint scar ran across the top of his left eyebrow. He didn't remember where or how he got it, only that that was the last time he felt happiness—but it hardly seemed important anymore. His face had aged since the last time he saw himself. Long, thin lines ran across his once youthful face much like the road he travelled on. Unkempt, matted strands of grey hair replaced a cropped brown haircut the man had last remembered.

Why was he here?

Suddenly, the pub doors creaked open and in walked a young boy. The man looked up from his whiskey glass and locked eyes with the boy, who looked no older than ten. Upon further study, the two looked quite similar. In fact, one could have mistaken them to be father and son. Did the man have a son? Did he have a family?

Why was he here?

The little boy's eyes were bright as he took in the quiet glow of the room. His eyes eventually locked on the man at the very end of the bar top.

"Hello," whispered the young boy. The simple word felt like a deafening ring across a great chasm. The stillness of the room suddenly felt unnatural and the reassurance of the whiskey faded. The man warily studied his younger doppelganger until he gathered his voice to speak.

"Why are you here?"

The young boy blinked. His once calm expression contorted into confusion, then fear.

"I don't know," the young boy said, walking closer to the man, until he was standing no more than a metre away. "May I join you?"

The man didn't say anything, only pushed back the bar stool next to him with his foot. The boy climbed onto the stool and began to cry. Taken aback, the man just stared at the boy before asking what was wrong.

"I don't know!" wailed the young boy. "I don't know anything! All I remember was that I was happy before I began to walk along this path, but even those memories are fading away. I laughed, I danced and I dreamed, but now all I think about is walking down this path with no end in sight. How did I get here? Why am I here?"

The man laughed to himself at the boy's last question. If only he knew as well.

"Do you have a name?" The little boy asked.

"Yes, but I don't remember. No one has called me by a name in a very long time."

That seemed to distress the boy further, as he began crying once again.

"I don't know my name either," he sobbed. "I'm so tired. I want to sleep but I'm so far away from home. All I can do is walk."



Following

For You

Pastel lifestyle gurus and wholesome DIY queens are long gone. Welcome to the age of the Influencer. This era began with the rise of Vine (R.I.P) and peaked with the birth of TikTok, making it easier for young people to reach a greater, more impressionable audience. But how have these teenagers been able to reach such supreme power? Is it just by luck or chance that these people amassed millions of followers and grew their net worth faster than GameStop? Is there a secret formula that we're not thinking about? Or is the list of potential influencers determined by a group of lizard people? Frankly, I'm too scared to consider that last possibility, so assuming this is all done by regular humans, we have only ourselves to blame.

In Western media, the modern-day Influencer is typically a picture-perfect, young, attractive, and somewhat talented individual that either disrupts the status quo just enough for it to seem quirky or blends in perfectly. They are a reflection of what the average person assumes they should strive to be like. Putting aside the implications of difficult-to-achieve beauty standards, these influencers are also regular people. They have just as many flaws as the rest of us, but when their lives are on display and under a microscope, it can be tricky for the audience to humanize them. It can also be difficult for people to remember that these people are not necessarily the activists we want or need. Expecting people who blew up overnight to be flawless and politically aware is not only unrealistic but disappointing.

Should we really expect teenagers that have made a career from 30-second videos to use their platforms to spread awareness? It all depends on public duty, and what they chose to use their platform for. Posting quick dance videos doesn't necessarily qualify you for a political career, but tens of millions of followers *does* qualify you to be a

voice that the people will take seriously. This power comes with a lot of terrifying responsibility - particularly that of a public image. Being scrutinized by those who claim to look up to you is incredibly stressful and maintaining that facade of perfection is incredibly difficult, even for those who have been trained for it since birth. We must also consider, alongside the stress, that young people are quite impressionable. Their Tiger parents have that control over their children's minds, which in turn reflects their political viewpoints. A young celebrity with Republican parents would no doubt be encouraged to tweet out a "vote red" call to action, regardless of whether or not they actually believe in Republican values. Putting the responsibility of activism in the hands of young kids who face the same amount of stress, anxiety, and brain-washing as the rest of us do is as smart of an idea as putting a horse in a hospital.

At the end of the day, these people are still growing and learning about the world just like the rest of us. The only difference is their actions have bigger consequences than intended. Partying in the middle of a pandemic sans masks is one of many immature and dangerous things that a number of influencers have done, and that fuelled the desire for regular people to go out more and further the spread of the virus. While we acknowledge that they are mostly minors and might not always be the most intelligent people, their platform gives them immense power over their young, impressionable fans. The only real end-all for this inept influencer epidemic is to cancel all of them, but that's a bridge we'd probably end up burning, should we choose to cross it.

// TIA HARISH
PHOTOGRAPHY // RACHEL LIU
DESIGN // STELLA WANG



A Guide to Unproductivity



“ It’s 4 PM. My body is sinking into the soft mattress, oh so gracefully wrapped into a burrito by my fluffy blankets. I stare up at my phone and scroll through my Instagram feed, wondering if lying down right after eating lunch is a smart choice or not – especially when I’d just woken up two hours prior. My phone eloquently falls onto my face, and it truly feels like the impact could’ve knocked out a tooth or two had it not been for my braces.

”



It's 6 PM. I spent the last two hours (about 6 anime episodes or 4 forty minute K-drama episodes worth of time) reading comics and listening to music as my dying computer starts up a barbecue on my bed and my phone battery drops below half. Then it dawns on me. It's 6 PM. The details of my day suddenly blur together in my mind and all I can see is the word "unproductive" flashing in front of my eyes.

I remember the pending short stories sitting in my Google Drive, the half refined sketches, and the unvacuumed carpets. I see my messy desk, the growing list of shows I want to watch, and the relationships I'm probably neglecting.

"But today is a rest day! It's okay if I just laze around in my bed all day!" is what I say to myself, but my body disagrees. It's an all too familiar itchy feeling that spreads across my skin. It feels like even a dust particle grazing my skin could work up my temper or provoke me into ripping a few hairs out. The feeling persists through dinner time, as I become determined to get something productive done today.

This irritated feeling is normal for me. It's not a skin rash, but how I react when I have deemed the day as "unproductive". I recently found out that my main motivation factor is achievement, which means I always look for ways to feel like I've completed or accomplished something. Even on the weekends or during the summer, I get annoyed at myself for not taking advantage of the free time, since I barely have time for hobbies on weekdays. As a result, I feel an obligation to fulfill all my lingering desires on the weekends, turning my rest days into another rush to complete a to-do list.

After extensive (read: nonexistent) research and intense introspective thinking sessions, I've concluded that I simply need to care less. In other words, I shouldn't be so hard on myself if another week goes by without checking off all the boxes on my to-do list. Essentially, being more lenient because I deserve to rest a little. But this doesn't really help the fact that it's in my nature to actively seek out opportunities to feel like I've achieved something.

Fired up from shower thoughts, I decided a change of perspective was in order. What if I focused on what I did rather than what I didn't do? Instead of labelling everything as unproductive, what if I actively sought out even small achievements, so I don't feel guilty at the end of the day? I'll practice right now. Waking up at 2pm? More like catching up on missed sleep! Watching anime? Amazing. Texting friends? Revolutionary. Reading comics and getting emotionally attached to fictional characters? That's basically writing research so...standing ovation! It doesn't matter how minor or insignificant it seems. It's a rest day, after all.

I think the purpose of rest days is to use the day any way you want. Essentially, giving into your impulses and relaxing. In particular, for people motivated by achievement such as myself, consider setting a goal of finishing the day with a smile on your face. It's quite general and there's a million different ways to achieve it, so do whatever you feel like doing – productive or not.

You just need to change your perspective.

// SAMANTHA LEE
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PHOTO SHOW CASE

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A History of Political Satire

OR, EXPLORATIONS
OF THE POWERFUL
PANEL

Pol·it·i·cal sat·ire
/pə'lidēk(ə)l'sa,ti(ə)r/

- A type of comedy deriving entertainment from the body politic
- The voice of the people at its finest



While the first incarnation of political satire has likely been lost to time (perhaps the truest tragedy of our contemporary age is that caricatural hieroglyphs of Cleopatra have succumbed to erosion), we still hold many early pieces of it: the earliest one is that made by Aristophanes (circa 448 BC-386 BC), an Athenian comic playwright and "Father of Comedy" whose discovered works critiqued anything from politicians such as Cleon, a high-ranking Athenian general, to religion as a whole. It is because of his bold nature that we even know his name, as many other ancient political satirists who were born into such politically-oppressive civilizations usually kept their comedy more subtle: this allowed them to speak their minds while not being forced to a Hemlock cup because of it.

It was around the late 1800s to early 1900s that political satire began to increase its presence, namely through its expansion into different media, such as cartoons, pamphlets, books, and even theatrical presentations. It was in 1864 that French lawyer and publicist Maurice Joly (Sept. 22, 1829-July 15th, 1878) published

Dialogue aux enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu, a pamphlet criticizing Napoleon III with the backdrop of two characters in Hell. Public outcry assuredly followed. The beauty of political satirists is that they do not heed warning, as several decades later, Eric Arthur Blair, also known as George Orwell, (June 25, 1903-Jan. 21, 1950)'s gritting portrayal of communism, Animal Farm, is a well-known classic to this day. To say that his allegories for communism were cutting would be an understatement, that is, unless one believes that portraying the leader of communism as a pig with a lack of mobility is nothing but endearing.

// LEAH BEL BEN-TZUR
DESIGN // ELLIE LIANG

Yet, political satire as a whole felt too attached to these mediums to find a solid footing in future generations, ones that were becoming increasingly dependent on technology. Suddenly, it seemed, the great fire of political satire was not as bright or loud as it once appeared to be.

Then, something great happened: politics came to television.

The variety show Saturday Night Live debuted on October 11, 1975 and its sketches, in all but name, broke the political world. This was due to the fact that its televised medium bridged the technological gap that political satire had been bound by. With it now being broadcasted on television, as opposed to printed in the newspaper, the near-obsolete trade of political satire became much more accessible to the mainstream audience.

Following the variety show came others, not by consequence but by trends in societal views and ways of sharing, all with political satire entrenched into its programming, such as its Canadian counterpart This Hour Has 22 Minutes (Oct. 11, 1993-present), Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (Apr. 27, 2014-present) and Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj (Oct. 28, 2018). These shows breathed life into a medium that was dying not for lack of material, but rather lack of wide-spread communication.

While it cannot be said for certain how political satire will stay relevant for the next coming years, so long as democracy stands true, it will find a way. After all, as comedy transcends the medium it is presented in, so do incompetent politicians and their time in office.

For better or for worse, political satire is here to stay. Thankfully, the ballot makes it so the people they satirize are not.



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