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# Likeness

magazine

from head to toe

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the sə́lilwətaʔt təməxʷ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Stz'uminus, Qayqayt and S'ólh Téméxw nations.

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## Foreword

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We're just passin' through, I suppose. We might call it a journey, or a mission, or an experience . . . whatever you prefer, I'm not too particular.

But there is one requirement: we need a vehicle. Each of us. Something can't pass through without something passing through. Something to feel the wind against its skin, or the worry that wells up from the bottom of its stomach. It's that thing that might rarely look how you want it to look (trust me, you look lovely, always, because you're you) and shifts and bends and sags depending on the time of day.

I hope you care for it, this thing. It (and you, definitely you) deserves pampering and hardship, in measures necessary to keep it (you) in good working order, from head to toe. You'll need it, to flip switches and pull levers and push buttons to see what happens next.

One exciting thought linked to all the creations we've tucked into this growing collection of tomes is that every one of our creatives, they've all encountered so much more than they actually share with us, their selves hurtling through space and time on this spectacular tour of everything. Flowing, bumping forms in a beautiful, astonishing, horrifying machine.

And, what's more, each one as fascinating inside as out. That's right. You are.

*Simon Cheung*

Editor, Low Entropy

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# "I document ambitions for the forthcoming 365 days."



Photo by Tayrn Ellio

**JAYNE SEA-GRAVE** Jayne Seagrave is a BC bestselling author. The ninth edition of her book *Camping British Columbia, the Rockies and the Yukon* was published by Heritage House in April 2023. Over 60,000 of her camping books have been sold. She also writes fiction, non-fiction and freelance articles, and occasionally teaches writing and publishing courses.

## I WRITE, THEREFORE I AM

Jayne Seagrave

Ask me what I was doing on April 14, 1977, or January 3, 1992, or October 20, 2010, or last Friday, and I can tell you. I have kept a diary since January 1, 1976, when I was just 14 years old. Every day for the last 48 years I have written between 200-300 words detailing the day that has passed, my adventures, my frustrations, my emotions and more. It is an addiction, a passion, a necessity for me. In no uncertain terms it defines who I am.

I write by hand, at the end of each day. There have been days when I have gone to bed too drunk (in my younger years) or too tired (in my older years) to write, and in these rare cases I write the following day, but never with as much passion—these tardy contributions are way more clinical and, if I'm being honest, fail to reflect the reality of the day just passed. There have been two periods when I was hospitalized and unable to write, but when recovered these experiences were recorded. In 1991 I broke my right wrist and had it in a cast for six weeks. I wrote badly with my left hand.

In addition to my words, these hard-backed books also contain an eclectic collection of

**personal memorabilia:**

a 1981 airline ticket to Karachi, birthday and Valentine cards from boyfriends now long-forgotten, entrance tickets to European museums, embossed invitations to friends' weddings, invoices from foreign hotels, a theatre ticket for an opera in Latvia, pressed flowers that now have no meaning. All items placed between the pages, providing

**additional evidence of a past life.**

At the start of the year, I document ambitions for the forthcoming 365 days. The following December these intentions are reviewed, and I pen excuses (or accolades) on why they have/have not been achieved. In purchasing a journal, I always ensure there is space for these additional thoughts. In earlier diaries I often copied lines from songs, verses from poems or paragraphs from novels I particularly identified with, usually when the author touched a nerve and articulated emotions I recognised but failed to have the vocabulary to describe. These writers accessed my mind, knowing my thoughts and feelings. Occasionally, I transcribed lines from a letter received from, or written to, a man (usually) I thought I was in love with.

I find writing amazingly therapeutic. Although uncertain why I started, upon reflection, and with the

benefit of hindsight, I think it could have been because of the emotional, hormonal upheaval I felt during the challenging, adolescent years. Writing my feelings helped with

### the complicated task of growing up.

And this totally self-serving, selfish action has continued over the years. When I cannot remember who I really am, why I am acting in a certain way, why I am taking a specific cause of action, why I am concerned over what the future will bring or why I am stressing over the actions of friends and family, or when I just need time to reflect on what I am doing with my life, this daily ritual provides the therapy needed. I have been doing it for so long that it is as normal as brushing my teeth or looking for my glasses.

The autobiographical tirade is done entirely for myself—recording achievements and reflections in a totally honest way. I never lie in this book. My diary is not for publication, nor for others to see. In my teenage years I hid the journal, now I never do. My spouse, children and friends may come across it and are free to read what I write. I trust they do not.

The Internet is replete with findings documenting the advantages to writing, and is not telling me anything I do not already know. According to the expert academics and psychologists writing provides the following benefits:

- It boosts happiness.
- It sharpens the mind and leads to mental clarity.
- It fosters an understanding of oneself, with self-reflection.
- It facilitates thinking through problems.
- It increases productivity.
- It builds discipline through daily writing.
- It leads to productive goal-setting.
- It helps the writer deal with and reduce anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

While I am in total agreement with the above, I did not start writing with any of these objectives in mind. The benefits were discovered over the years.

In summary, writing daily adds order to the chaos of life. It relieves stress and can act as a brain dump—unapologetic and self-indulgent,

### it provides a time to reflect,

a time when the writer is allowed to gain a better understanding of themselves. Traumatic life experiences—failing an exam, illnesses, the death of a close friend or family member, rejection by a lover, can all be recorded, analysed, understood and addressed within pages of words. A diary becomes a best friend. It costs little to nothing, other than time. My advice to everyone is to find time to keep a journal.

**NAVEED SIDDIQUI** Before immigrating to Canada, Naveed Siddiqui ran his own family law firm back home in Karachi, Pakistan. A former third-generation lawyer, he has a passion for writing and presently runs his own business management firm, SNCO Business Consulting, in Mississauga, Ontario, and is also a director of a fast food franchise, Paradise Chicken, in Ontario.

## SUFFER- ING . . .

Naveed Siddiqui

Drowning among scattered reflections of your thought,  
The more I struggle for surface, deeper I plunge inside,  
Attempting to fasten the wind that's fearless in desert,  
My failure to wash stained heart that once used to sit beside.  
Closing my eyes against what's coming, believing it'll be alright  
Its entrance shatter every notion peeling every layer of pride.

And delusion kept forming beside shores of sea sand dunes,  
Blowing away strength of voices that awaits far outside,  
A strange look, an indifference keep floating side-by-side,  
When hope cry aloud its existence underneath my ruins.  
Sip-by-sip from cup of echoes, drop-after-drop of light waves  
bounces without a pause,  
Repeatedly stabbing my already wounded heart, still not satisfied . . .

**BALREET SIDHU** After recently parting ways with some special people in my career, I found myself ignoring my emotions. We had just grown distant. I am hoping to have figured out my next move by my next writing.

## Blank

Balreet Sidhu

It may be real  
It may be fake

I continue to live  
on in our place  
for past's sake

Someday reality will  
give me a shake

And I will find my place  
like a serene lake.

" *krissy* hair attracted as much negative unwanted attention as the dreaded wooden spoon"

## The Earthquake

Sue Turi

**T**hey say there are usually warning signs before an earthquake. A tremor, a sudden flight of frantic birds, a cat seeking shelter. But on the night the earthquake of '69 struck, there was no warning.

We had just begun to fall asleep at the group home when we woke up in our iron beds sliding from one corner of the dormitory to the other. Since we had never had an earthquake strike before, we ran out into the street in a panic, where we found the church steeple lying in pieces on the cracked sidewalk. Deep fissures ran the length of the walls of neighboring houses. In the distance beyond the no-man's land of bushveld, Koeberg's twin towers continued to steam, though their lights were out.

When I say we ran outside, I mean me and the rest of the girls in the segregated group home, which numbered about 10.

I don't recall many of them, except for Lynette and Shenay. Lynette because she had mousey hair and often received the wooden spoon across her face, and Shenay because she had kinky hair, or what we called "krissy" hair.



Photo by Reyhaneh Ahmadi



In South Africa in 1969, you were not supposed to have *krissy* hair, because that would allude to your “secret” and make people question whether you were in your designated zone or not. If only Shenay had known about the “whirling technique,” she could have spared herself the

### unnecessary stress

of being frequently stared at or asked petty questions about why her hair was *krissy*. Was it from the mother’s or father’s side, or did it infiltrate down from a grandparent . . . ?

The whirling technique I found out about years later via my half-sister who had somewhat *krissy* hair that she tried to tame to avoid similar attention. It involves wrapping your wet hair around your head in a whirl before you go to bed and securing it down with many long flat copper clips that must’ve been uncomfortable to sleep on, though you’d wake up to nice straight hair! Unless it rained, of course.

Shenay escaped the wooden spoon and may have worn glasses. At 14, she was the oldest at the group home and no one wanted to be friends with the oldest kid at the group home.

As is the mindset of kids living day-to-day rather than thinking of the future, we felt more sorry for anyone having *krissy* hair like Shenay than for someone whose parents had disowned them or who had survived an earthquake. It could be argued that *krissy* hair attracted as much negative unwanted attention as the dreaded wooden spoon.

Ultimately, 1969 turned out to be an important year, with the moon landing, the earthquake, and my departure from the group home soon after. But it would never be a good year for many left behind there like Shenay, eternally hopeful for a parent to come take them home and beholden to any technique or product that disguised their

### unique differences.

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*This is from a collection of short stories written about the pettiness of racialization. My experience as a child growing up living on the fringes of Apartheid in South Africa, exposed me to many difficult but poignant stories.*

SUE  
TURI

Sue Turi is a writer, illustrator and painter living in Montréal, Canada with a degree in fine arts. She began her career as a production artist for design studios and ad agencies, before deciding to devote herself purely to self-expression through writing and painting.

ALEX  
ANDY  
PHUONG

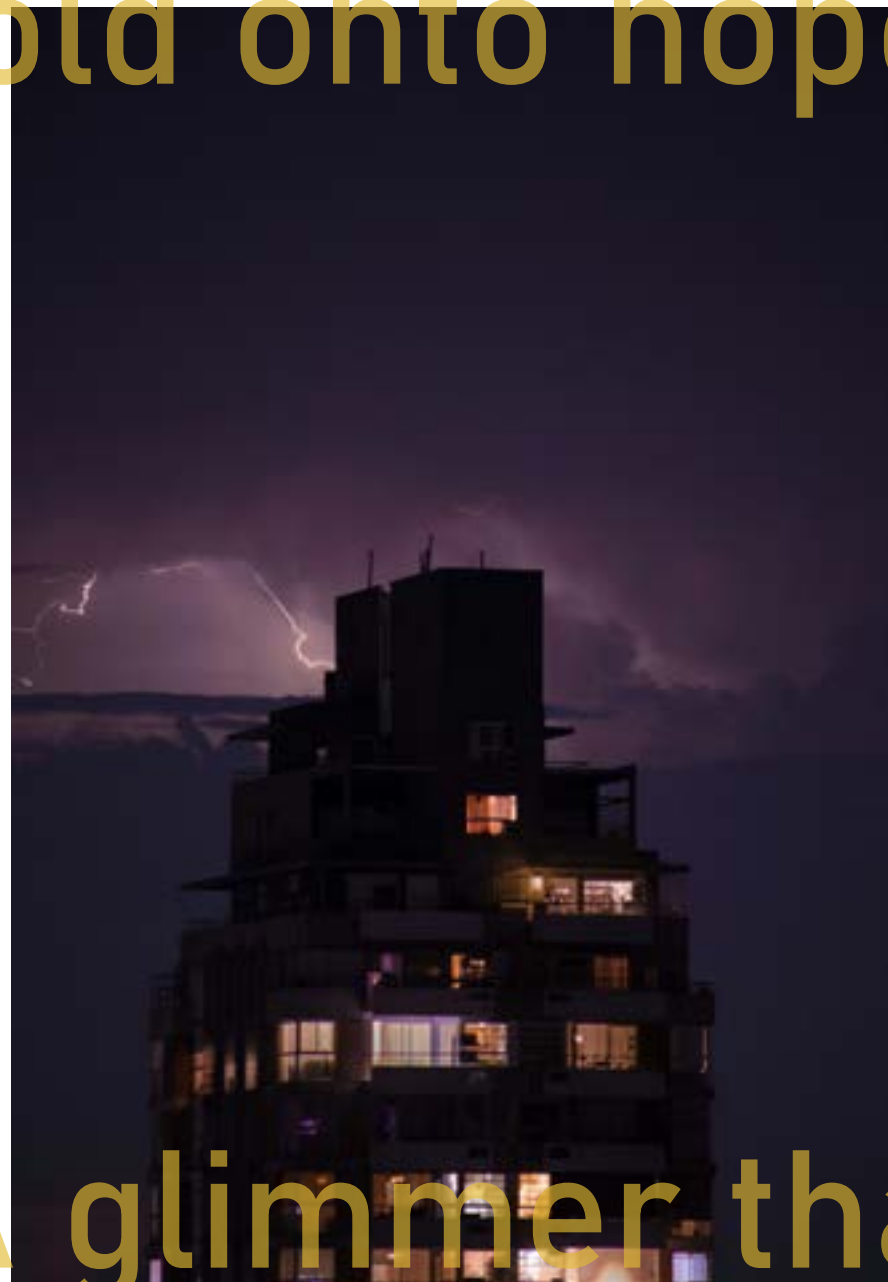
Alex Andy Phuong earned his bachelor of arts in English from California State University, Los Angeles in 2015. Emma Stone inspired Alex to become a poet. He now writes hoping to inspire dreamers everywhere.

## To Be with- in Reality

Alex Andy Phuong

“To be or not to be?”  
Is a legendary question  
With an enduring legacy  
About the nature of reality,  
And strive to thrive  
As a way to be alive,  
While utilizing human instincts  
Necessary for survival,  
And choose to nurture  
A love of culture  
With the hope for  
A brighter future  
Filled with adventure,  
And a sense of wonder

"Admire this storm,  
I hold onto hope —



A glimmer that  
helps me cope."

Photo by Ramiro Pianarosa

## Hard Times

Nishaant Sudhir

The feeling of anxiety is coming back,  
and the scene is all too familiar—  
me giving it my all and yet nothing works.  
I don't know where I'm going wrong,  
nothing makes sense anymore.

I'm feeling all alone, this time it's different,  
So deep, so raw, I'm truly on my own.  
Feeling defeated, I ask myself,  
All the work, the sacrifices and pain— is it even worth it?

Was I foolish to walk this lonely path?  
I miss the friends I had, the easy laughs.  
Maybe I wasn't wise enough to see,  
It's okay sometimes just to be.

Chasing your dreams—why is it so hard?  
It leads astray, leaves you scarred.  
I have given up everything, yet have nothing to show.  
Did I err in letting all else go?  
Is there something ahead, something more?  
Because right now, I'm adrift, unsure.

Underneath all this grief and pain,  
I hope for light after the rain.  
Amidst this storm, I hold onto hope—  
A glimmer that helps me cope.

Perhaps there's a reason for these trials I face,  
A strength to be found, a new path to embrace.  
So I'll rise from these depths, one step at a time,  
Believing in brighter days that are mine to find.



Jayne Seagrave is a BC bestselling author. The ninth edition of her book *Camping British Columbia, the Rockies and the Yukon* was published by Heritage House in April 2023. Over 60,000 of her camping books have been sold. She also writes fiction, non-fiction and freelance articles, and occasionally teaches writing and publishing courses.

# WHAT TO DO WITH MY ASHES?

Jayne Seagrave

Photo by  
Sandy  
Millar

Certain subjects are never discussed, and then suddenly they are everywhere. Such is the case, I found, with the disposal of a loved one's remains.

A friend, out of the blue, decides to seek your opinion on the issue; the CBC advertises it as the subject of their latest podcast; and then you start to receive numerous unsolicited emails advertising services to help with your understanding of this complex matter. Such was the case for me with the subject of what to do with my, or a close family member's, ashes after death.

This is a subject that five years ago I barely gave a thought to, but recently I have seen friends battle (often literally) with their siblings over what to do with the urn full of mum/dad, rapidly gathering dust in a rarely visited area of the house, as the difficult, emotive decision remained unresolved. The disposal of my remains has now been catapulted into that growing list I have of things I really need to address.

But is there real urgency? Can this uncomfortable issue be put off and dealt with later, when I have



more enthusiasm to address the moral and logistical elements involved? It would appear not.

A few months ago, I was on holiday with a friend, swimming lengths in an empty hotel pool, half-heartedly considering the subject. When I got out of the water, I told her how the 30 minutes had passed in a heartbeat, as I was thinking of what I would like to happen to my remains once I was gone. She immediately burst into a long, animated discourse over how she too had recently been considering the exact same issue, describing the ornate earthenware vase she had purchased with

her first love in a market in Morocco in the 1980s as her chosen storage container. A Swiss mountain she hoped her relatives would be fit enough to climb to witness the sprinkling of her remains was to be the chosen resting place. Marriages are a bargain in comparison to some people's

## burial desires.

I have a colleague whose mother's ashes were divided between herself and her sibling, a sister, whom she now has no relationship with. Half of mum is destined to be disposed of in a location totally different to where the rest of her will be.

Another acquaintance, an only child, tells of how her parents wanted both their ashes scattered together on a remote Spanish island where they spent their honeymoon in 1958. These ashes have existed in two identical, large, rusting metal Maxwell House coffee containers in a dark corner of my friend's basement for the last eight years, as she has yet to find the time, or inclination, to make the journey to the Mediterranean. She recently admitted to not knowing for certain which coffee container holds which parent, dismissing this issue as irrelevant, as in the end they will be placed together. She also acknowledges she will never return after the ceremony takes place. It would be goodbye to mum and dad forever.

Should I be giving serious consideration to this topic? Are others under the same stresses? Should I be documenting my wishes so those responsible for administering my estate after I am no more do not have to face this agonizing challenge? Should I state my preferences? Does it really matter?

I confess to having a favourite location where I would like my remains to be placed, but do not know if it is legal. Can human remains be sprinkled anywhere, or are permissions required for certain spots? I am

presuming ashes do not pollute . . . ? In these times when protecting the environment is at the forefront of our thinking, I feel sure there are laws and regulations governing the disposal of bodies, even if they are just dust. It is a requirement to bury a corpse in a location specified for this purpose. Is it the same with ashes? Do I need to gain permission from those who own the land? According to British Columbia's Consumer Protection Office, under BC law, if there is a written preference where an individual wants his or her ashes disposed, this is legally binding.

I would like my remains to be sprinkled adjacent to the Cheekye River, which runs through Alice Lake Provincial Park in British Columbia, where I have hiked the Four Lakes Trail on countless occasions over the last 30 years. During these walks I have taken breaks to sit in awe of the glacier that dominates the vista, while removing my boots and socks and soaking my feet in the fast-flowing, milky glacial waters, seated on a large rock, eating my sandwich and contemplating my life. It is tranquil and perfect. Not many walkers know of this breathtaking space. It is all mine. It is special in my life.

**I want it to be special in my death as well.**

I do not at all mind sharing this spot, should others also want to have their ashes sprinkled here. I do not believe I would be doing damage to the environment with this wish, nor contravening any BC provincial park regulations on what you can or cannot do in a park. But I might be wrong. Apparently I do have to have permission from BC Parks . . . so it's probably better to not articulate my wishes too widely, and to let others take the consequences, if there are to be any.

**Bisher A.** I'm a writer, poet and musician, hoping to share some inspiration.

## Worth More than Gems and Jewels

**Bisher A.**

Self-care is crucial to living well and thriving. It is a tool that is useful, allowing one's soul to begin reviving. So care for thyself, and allow life's flow and rhythm, To take its course naturally, so as to invoke clarity and wisdom. Be present and breathe to alleviate tension. And know that this life, designed by divinity, is beyond our comprehension. Remember to be gentle with yourself and go forth with ease. Don't be the embodiment of a strong wind, but more of a light breeze. You will find that a self-care practice is the ultimate tool. For a sound mind and a healthy body are worth more than any gem or jewel. Self-care also extends as care for humanity. So lend a helping hand to become all that you plan to be.



## From Toe to Head

**Shayan Afkari**

From head to toe, the body tells a silent story. The mind, swirling with thoughts, dreams and chaos, sits atop the shoulders, a universe in its own right. As the journey continues down, the heart beats with passion, bridging the gap between the intangible and the tangible. Further, still, the legs—strong, grounded—carry the weight of decisions and the burden of life's steps. And at the feet, where flesh meets earth, the story finds its quiet conclusion. Here, rooted in the soil, every step echoes with purpose, the journey of the self complete.

Hi, I'm Juhi Mehta, a passionate creative and your friendly neighborhood wordsmith! I'm all about infusing passion and personality into every piece of writing I create. Whether it's crafting poems or spinning tales that leave a lasting impression, I'm here to sprinkle a little magic into your lives.

# A guiding light

Juhi Mehta

In the heart of every child, there exists a sacred place where love blossoms, and for me, that place is my mother's embrace. She is not just a mother; she is the deity of my life, the guiding light that illuminates my path through the darkest of times.

words of encouragement, reminding me of my own strength and potential. In her eyes, I see a reflection of my best self, a reminder of the greatness she sees within me, even when

**I struggle to see it myself.**

From the earliest memories of my childhood to the challenges of adulthood, my mother has been my unwavering support, my pillar of strength. Her love knows no bounds, transcending the ordinary to become something divine, something

And in moments of sorrow, when life's trials weigh heavy on my shoulders, she stands by my side, a beacon of hope in the storm. Her pride in me remains steadfast, firm in the face of difficulty. For her, my happiness is supreme, and even in sadness, she finds reasons to celebrate the person I am becoming.

**truly extraordinary.**

In her presence, every moment is filled with meaning. Whether it's sharing laughter over a simple meal or finding solace in her comforting words during times of distress, she teaches me to cherish every second, to live fully and passionately.

My mother is more than just a parent; she is my guiding star, my source of inspiration, my greatest ally. In her love, I find strength; in her wisdom, I find guidance; in her presence, I find solace. She is the god of my life, the embodiment of love, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

When doubts cloud my mind and fear grips my heart, it is her belief in me that gives me the courage to persevere. With unwavering faith, she whispers



