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Likeness

magazine

*Refinding
The Past.*

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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About Low Entropy: Founded in 2015, the Low Entropy Foundation is home to free programs and events that focus on personal and community growth through empowerment, authenticity and meaningful interpersonal connections.

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Foreword

Sometimes it seems, to me, like just about everything is memory.

Whatever the present is, experiences seem to pass through its tissue-thin membrane so quickly that it feels nearly impossible to perceive them in each instant moment, before they melt into the immense reservoir of things-gone-by. They become tiny drops in a pool where we can so often be found, adrift and remembering.

One might think, with us so often steeped in memories mixing and melding into an intoxicating chemistry of anxieties, fantasies and premonitions, that we'd become expert navigators of the past. And indeed we might be, at times. But I think, every so often, that we surprise ourselves with some of the details we allow ourselves to forget.

Whether during an involuntary flashback or something more methodically calculated, these formerly lost memories - or fragments of them (smells, songs, skin) - feel like bottled messages, once precious and romantically tossed out to sea, only for the ocean currents to ferry them back years later to remind a new you of who we once were.

For this issue of *Likeness*, we asked people to relive and to allow us to follow. We did this with reverence: sharing of this sort emerges from the personal, communal and sacred - a gift plucked from the deep and marked with the indelible fingerprint of the gift-giver - but is also made more special by the audience who receives it.

Thank you for being here.



Editor, Low Entropy

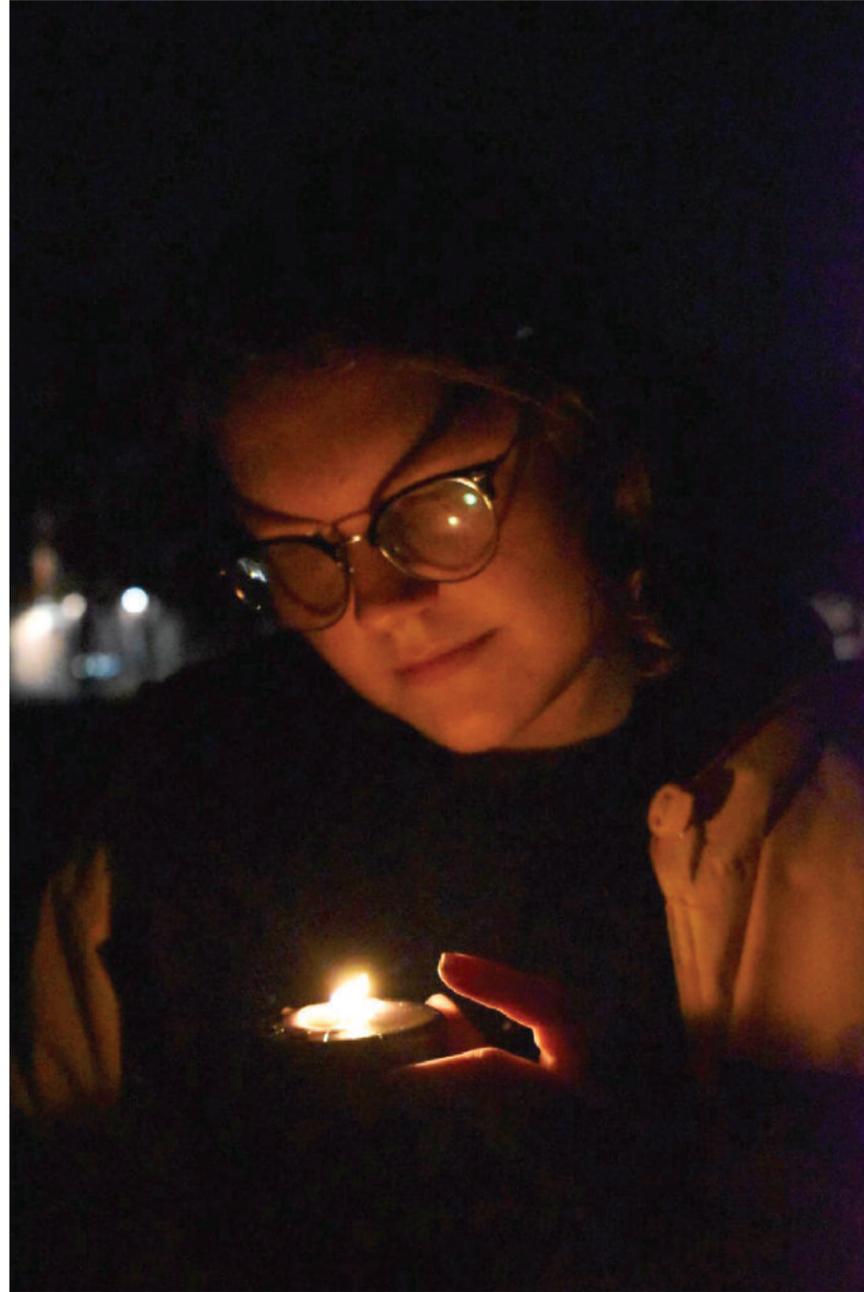


Photo by Bethany Howell

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Photo by Beth-
any Howell



BETHANY HOWELL

I am a third-year university student majoring in psychology and minoring in family and child studies. I have a passion for writing and mental health and my ultimate goal since age 13 has been to make a difference in the world through helping others, which is how I ended up here at Low Entropy!

Tehran, 1989

Simin Ghaffari

I was working in an urban engineering company in Tehran.

At the time, the economy wasn't that great in Iran, and the war was about to end.

One of the employees talked to me about how difficult it was to be a father, and how he couldn't afford to do the best for his children. He touched my heart and mind, and opened my eyes: I thought about my father and all the parents in the world, and how difficult and challenging it must have been to take care of a family.

I asked him to bring all of the employee files, and then asked him to go back to work. His job was serving tea and food to all the employees, and then cleaning up. It was one of those jobs that no one really appreciated. He was over 60 years old and still working.

I checked all managers' and company presidents' birthdays, and we had one who was proud and kind of selfish, but with a kind heart. His birthday was so close. I checked our meetings and schedules and chose a day for his birthday surprise.

That day he was so happy. He had a meeting with another company and his friends that I arranged. They were all kind of wealthy people. In front of everyone, I asked him how he liked the birthday surprise. He and everyone else said they loved it.

I asked him if he would like to use the same idea for ev-

SIMIN GHAFFARI I am a person who doesn't give up easily. I stand up when things are not right, no matter what I have to lose. I am friendly, minimal and concerned about the environment. I enjoy photography, dance, music and nature. I enjoy everything, and I am eager to learn new things.

eryone else too. He said yes! I was so happy because my plan worked!

The employee I wanted to help, his name was Ali. I planned his birthday and asked everyone to give me money for a gift for him, and asked the president to double his contribution and give him a raise in salary too.

I opened a bank account for him. With that account he could ask for a loan from the bank to pay back his daughter's university fees and use a little bit to pay for her engagement (I spoke with the bank and arranged for them to discuss the loan with him).

Almost every month of the year in that difficult time we had fun in our company, supporting and being kind to each other.

Five years ago, when I was back in Iran, I visited that company. There were a lot of changes, but one thing was still the same: the birthday celebrations and fun.

I was surprised when I heard that, and so happy. Helping someone made me cry and feel so good, and I gave everyone hugs.

If we can feel each other's needs and address them with passion and respect, we can have a peaceful world.

Illustration by Sue Turi



A Lesson in Courage: The Fine Line Between Ignorance and Bravery

Sue Turi

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions” is one of those expressions that I’ve come across from time to time that has always perplexed me (the other one being “Everything happens for a reason”), mostly because it’s an apparent paradox and undermines the idea of giving the benefit of the doubt to someone’s well-intended actions, generally painting a cynical picture of humanity. It took some reflection and investigation to decide whether my disagreement with this proverb was more out of suspicion of terms used flippantly, or whether there was a deeper meaning that eluded me, as I always assumed that one’s intentions, supported by good principle, were all that mattered, even to excuse ignorance. For hell is certainly not reached through doing truly good deeds, and who is to judge whether an inten-

tion was innately bad, if it was acted on simply without foresight, leading to disastrous conclusions?

So what does this expression mean, beyond my initial reading and personal lament to see it used on social media or thrown about in conversation? Rummaging through my treasure chest of memories, searching for a point of reference to help me figure this out, I recalled an incident when I was an 11-year-old — the age when one generally begins to realize stuff about life. I had sustained a large injury to my elbow from falling off my bike and the wound refused to heal, leaving it exposed and oozing to the elements and, specifically, into the cotton of my school shirt. My well-intentioned mother had an idea to sterilize the wound, which involved nightly seances of submerging the wound into a bowl of boiled water, fresh from the kettle. Needless

T i k e n e s s

Photo by Josh Hild



to say, I would dread these baths, as they were painful and made matters worse — after a few weeks, the wound still remained raw, clinging stubbornly to my sleeve, the reformed scab torn away every time I bent my arm or removed my shirt. I don’t know when it was that my mother finally decided that her remedy wasn’t working (perhaps my wincing face finally got to her), and that I had to see a doctor.

My mother had good intentions, I believe, but I was travelling a path to hell every night. A trip to the doctor eventually sorted it out, as all the wound required was to be kept reasonably clean, hydrated and covered with a bandage. I recall being amazed at a healing solution without drama, in contrast to the violence of using boiling hot water, which felt like mild torture with unpleasant regularity every 8 p.m.

My mother’s heartfelt, yet medieval treatment could be seen as a bold but misguided attempt to play doctor, a kind of scorched-earth attitude in subjecting me to “sterilization.” My role involved repeated acts of instinctive bravery

— instinctive in terms of having blind faith in my mother’s home remedies and good intentions.

Which brings me back to the expression and its meaning. Could it be that the road to hell is perhaps paved with brave ignorance instead of good intentions?

Another word closely associated with bravery is courage. Bravery and courage are often used interchangeably, but there is an important difference between the two. Courage takes awareness, and awareness grows out of knowledge acquired through experience. Since bravery is an instinctive trait —

devoid of reflection

according to the dictionary — the expression “The road to hell is paved with good intentions” could be an example of the grey area between ignorance and bravery, as subjecting myself to those seances was certainly ignorant, but would not have been possible without a necessary dose of bravery.

While bravery can help a traveller endure an uncertain, difficult path, this can also be a path that leads to blind martyrdom. Courage, on the other hand, requires knowledge to build the strength of character necessary to sustain its convictions. It demands self-honesty and moral commitment as much as it

T i k e n e s s

demands awareness and experience. Being brave is thus only as worthwhile as the quality of its associated, courageous endeavour.

Rebelling against my mother's authority and perceived good intentions, at the time, would have demanded a greater knowledge of wound care and the medical limits of my mother. More than that, it would also have demanded courage to speak up for myself over a painful and ineffective healing remedy. A brave person faces the unknown unwittingly, but having courage is about consciously taking difficult decisions despite obvious dangers and one's own fears. My fear of and reverence for my mother was greater than my own wellbeing, which had persuaded me to bravely endure a remedy which, in hindsight, would have been better left to the school nurse.

It was bravery fueled by ignorance that kept me a willing martyr, clinging to my mother's antiquated medical beliefs of purification, most likely born from her own fire-and-brimstone puritanical upbringing.

Without courage, bravery can be short-sighted,

which brings me to a final image imprinted in my mind from watching a recent documentary: that of

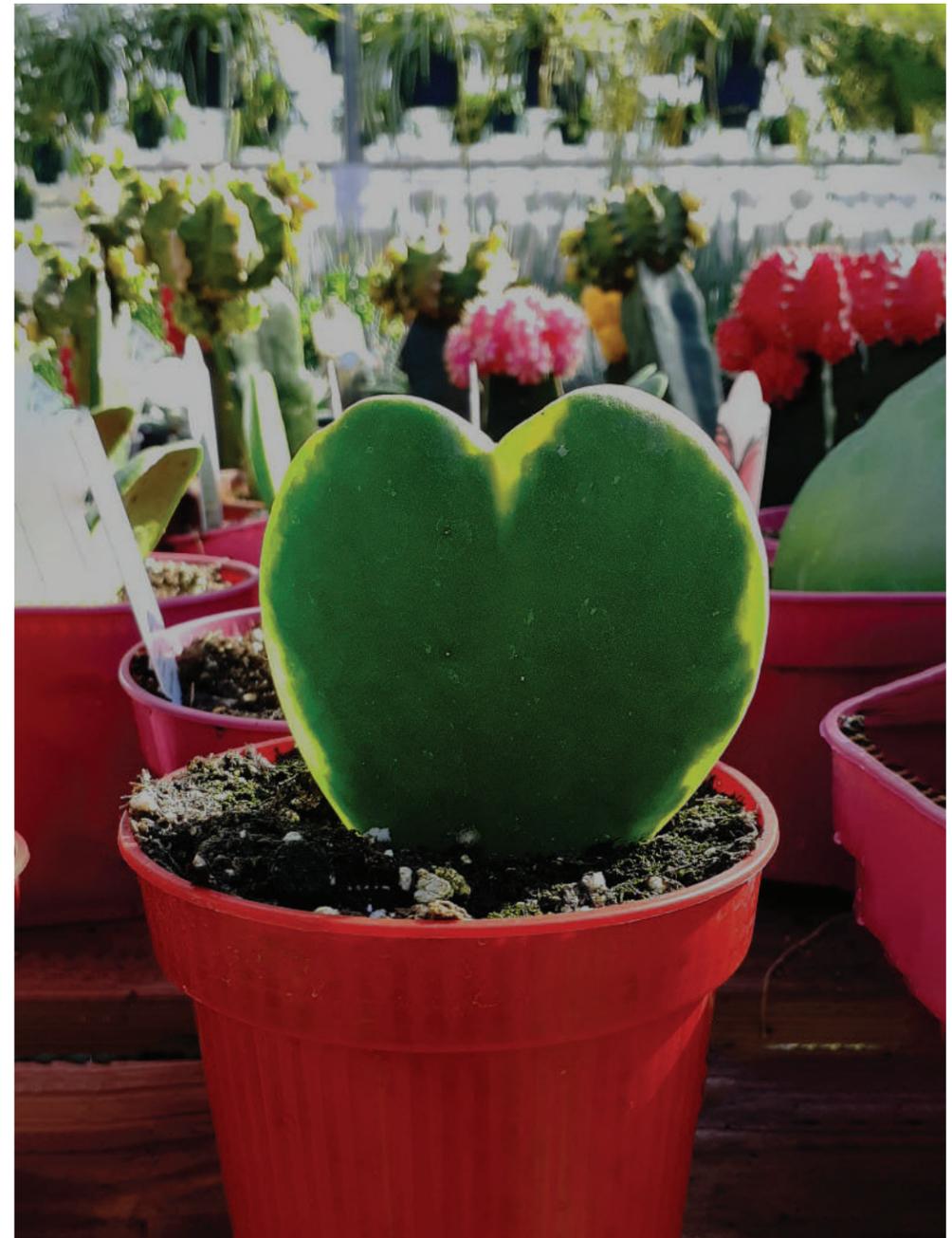
the death-defying climb of an Alpine ibex goat kid, following his mother up an almost vertical dam wall to reach calcium-rich salt deposits seeping through stones near the 50-metre-tall summit. It is from licking these stones that the kid will get the nourishment he needs for his bones to survive his environment. Whether this is an act of courage or bravery can be disputed, as the kid is instinctively dependent on this climb and his mother's lessons of survival, and he cannot afford to feel fear. But without awareness, instinctive or not,

bravery can be as faltering as a wrong step and a tumble to one's demise.

The road to hell may actually be paved with brave actions — rather than wise courageous intentions — and their sometimes terrifying risks.

SUE TURI I am a writer, illustrator and painter living in Montreal, Canada with a degree in fine arts. I began my career as a production artist for design studios and ad agencies, before deciding to devote myself purely to self-expression through writing and painting. I am currently at Concordia University majoring in Creative Writing.

Photo by
Jeehea
Park



JEEHEA PARK

I am a blogger who has been writing about life in Canada as a Korean since 2009 — I include in my journal pictures of special moments. Life is wonderful. Carpe Diem!

“Lee’s perspective,
her experiences and



Photo by Bethany Howell

her privilege heavily
influenced the
novel.”

AVA My name is Ava and I'm a passionate reader and writer. You can
SAN- either find me curled up on the couch reading Harry Potter or
DLER at my local pilates, barre and yoga studio (or more realistically,
drowning in school work).

A Crisis of Conscience

Ava Sandler

Please note that this article contains brief references to sexual assault and a racial/classist slur.

I recently read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Harper Lee’s controversial 1960 novel has invaded my mind in my waking hours, and my dreams in my sleep. I define a literary triumph as a work that provokes me to deeply consider its perspective, its nuances, for days on end. *To Kill a Mockingbird* elicited such a response. With a critical and perceptive approach, Harper Lee explores the racial injustices and class disparities that plague a Southern town in the midst of the Great Depression. But at its root, *To Kill a Mockingbird* traverses the complexities of the human conscience and the difficulties of understanding alien perspectives and experiences. Despite the inflammatory legacy of the novel, it retains these subtle projections. After finishing the closing chapter, I came to recognize the magnitude of the controversy that surrounds this novel. I have therefore struggled to find justification in my passionate, yet still-uncertain response. In our current sensitive political climate, it is difficult to feel confident and empowered to express and explore contrasting opinions — even when one

strives to be sensitive and understanding — without fearing a scathing reception.

The mockingbird is a blissfully ignorant imitator: it echoes the sounds, the sentiments, of its subjects without understanding the implications of such noises. Metaphorically speaking, a mockingbird behaves as a mirror, revealing one’s prejudices. Our perspectives seep into the very essence of the noises we produce, but the mockingbird repeats and amplifies such sounds with impartiality. Harper Lee introduces this metaphor to explore the root of our morality and perception of justice. *To kill a mockingbird* is not only to suggest the loss of innocence (as is a common translation of the metaphor), but to compromise one’s accountability and integrity through censorship. If our society focused more on critical listening than controlling speech, perhaps we would allow each other more of an opportunity to constructively analyze differing perspectives.

Harper Lee was a white, Alabamian woman whose father, Amasa, was a practicing lawyer. In 1919, prior to Lee's birth, Amasa was appointed as the defence lawyer on the case of two Black men charged with murder; the two men were convicted and consequently hanged. Atticus Finch, the defence lawyer introduced in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is evidently a depiction of Lee's father. Thus, Lee's perspective, her experiences and her privilege heavily influenced the novel. Through the eyes of a youthful white narrator — Atticus' daughter Jean Louise "Scout" Finch — Lee organically illustrates the ignorance and uncritical approach

typical of a white child's upbringing in a prejudiced Southern society of that era.

In the novel, Bob Ewell, the father of an impoverished disreputable family, wrongfully accuses Tom Robinson of raping and beating his eldest daughter. Despite being widely regarded as "white trash" within the town, Ewell wields more influence in the courtroom than Robinson, the Black man from a similar neighbourhood. Race's ability to disrupt all other disparities in the courtroom ultimately divides the townspeople into white and Black societies, thus reducing the court case to a mere matter of skin colour. Jem, Scout's brother, vocally opposes Robinson's conviction; Scout, however, remains a silent observer. She listens but does not strive to understand. There is a haunting passage in the novel wherein Scout is relieved to discover that Atticus, Robinson's defense counsel, had not expressly sought out the Robinson case, but was appointed to it — a mere professional obligation. Scout's complacency and indifference leaves her unable to disengage from her white perspective and privilege, and she therefore struggles to humanize Tom Robinson.

Meanwhile, Dill, a friend of Jem and Scout's from Meridian, Mississippi, offers more impassioned opposition to the white prosecution's cruel treatment of Tom Robinson. Unlike Scout and Jem, Dill leads a life tainted by instability and poverty. His perspective on the unjust racial treatment of Tom Robinson challenges Scout's complicity, to which she replies, "Well, Dill, after all, he's just a Negro." Dill's capacity to humanize Tom Robinson despite the townspeople's passivity is born of Dill's alien identity. His outsider perspective allows him to readily empathize

— through a nonracial lens —

with the inferior and foreign identity Tom Robinson and the entire Black community are reduced to. Dill is

therefore able to influence Scout and expose her to a perspective that differs from that of her town. In this way, Lee carefully explores how we instinctively resort to ridicule and ostracism when we fail, or are not willing, to understand another's perspectives and experiences.

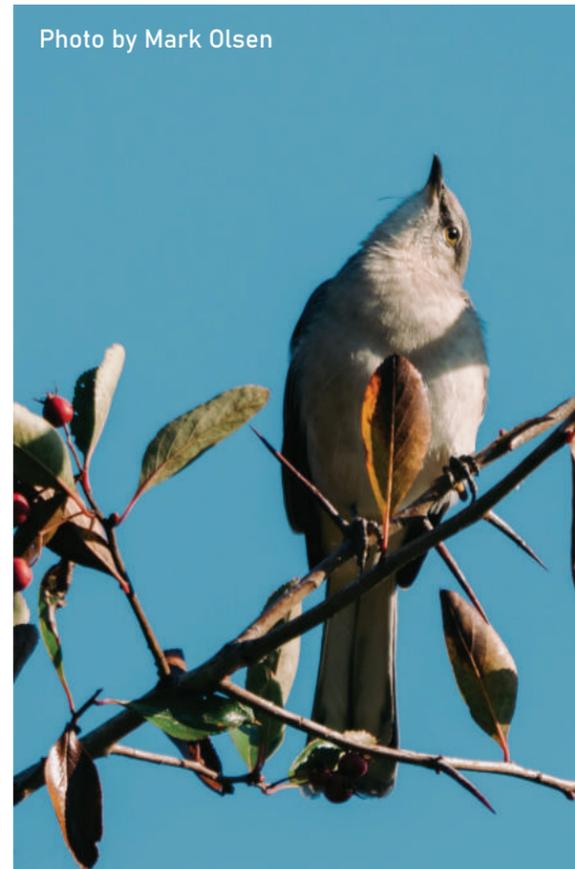


Photo by Mark Olsen

The essence of this commentary appears to manifest as well in the public's evolving perception of her novel. I have read a variety of critical and complimentary reviews of *To Kill a Mockingbird* — there has been a surge of them in recent years, amid our volatile political climate. I only recently discovered that teachers are prohibited from teaching this novel across a variety of school districts, but I frankly do not agree with this censorship. Rather than condemning the novel, I suggest we approach it from a different angle. It should not be used as a tool to educate students on racism; rather, we should dissect its coming-of-age tale and its exploration of the human conscience and alien perspectives. Censorship suggests to students that a discussion — regardless of its nature — about a problematic novel is unacceptable. This neither empowers them to independently explore the novel nor form an

opinion of their own, lest they face ridicule.

That said, I am not blind to the inappropriate elements of the novel. By casting Tom Robinson as the victim and Atticus Finch as the white saviour, Harper Lee perpetuates a humiliating portrayal of the Black community and, in turn, romanticizes the white community. Not only is Robinson depicted as stereotypically ignorant, Lee allows him to become a commodity, a convenience to the novel, in the interest of the white cast. By failing to offer Robinson agency in his character and in his narrative, Lee reduces him to playing out suffering in order to fulfill his racial obligations. Moreover, prior to Robinson's trial and following his conviction, Lee offers no insight into his family's perspective or that of any Black person. I understand that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is loosely based on Lee's childhood and is thus written from her racial and societal perspective; however, I do not believe it to be fair or appropriate to write a novel that focuses, in large part, on the trial of a Black man that concentrates entirely on the perspectives of a white cast.

I do not often encounter a controversial novel that leaves such an imprint on my mind. I find it difficult to distinguish between Lee's shrewd intellect and critical exploration of the South, and her lack of racial awareness and consideration. But I do believe this novel was written with the utmost care and observation, and embodies Lee's earnest commentary on race, class, justice, morality and the prospect of change in the quiet Southern town of her birth. At its root, however, *To Kill a Mockingbird* encourages readers to recognize and attempt to understand differing perspectives. Short of hate speech, we need to allow people the opportunity to consider and express ideas that run contrary to the "popular" narrative. Let us each strive to be a critical and understanding mockingbird.



Photo by Jocelyn Morales

GRACE CHENG Grace has an accounting and finance background. She enjoys reading, writing, listening to music, watching movies and playing sports.



Why You Should Reconnect with Old Friends

Grace Cheng

The global pandemic turned all our lives upside down, affecting the ways we did everything, like how we typically went to school and work, and how we connected with our friends and families. It was a hard time for me because I had to start work from home last March and often felt isolated from the rest of the world. I could no longer meet up with a group of friends for lunches and do social activities with them like before the pandemic.

Many of us were unable to be with our dear friends for over a year. This kind of social isolation can harm our mental health.

Did you miss your old friends and want to reconnect with them? Why should you rekindle your old friendships?

When we think about the moments we spent with our friends, it can trigger emotions of joy and hap-

piness. Friends can be a great source of support to us, especially during our most difficult times. Building and maintaining meaningful friendships can be an important part of our lives.

However, even though we might have formed deep connections with our friends, sometimes friendships can fall apart because we grow up and our priorities shift to meet the different demands of our adult lives.

As we get older, sometimes it is harder for us to make friends, especially after we enter the workforce. We should treasure our old friends. If you find that your old friends are supportive, it is worth making the effort to reconnect with them. There is a saying that a true friend is hard to find, so if you have one you should cherish them.

Here are some suggestions how to revitalize these relationships:

1. Send a short text message.

You can simply send your old friends a short text message to just say hi. You can tell them that you are thinking about them. You can make it clear that you don't expect a reply so that they don't feel pressure. Sometimes a simple message can be a nice surprise and even make someone's day.

2. Share your intentions.

When you reach out to your old friends, you should be open with them about your reasons. This will show them that you are sincere and that you value their friendship. When your old friends feel this genuineness from you, they are more likely to want to reconnect with you too.

3. Reach out with a phone call.

You can just pick up the phone and call an old friend that you haven't talked to in a long time, but you may want to send them a text message first and ask them if they have time. I know it can be daunting to be the first one to reach out, but it might be worth it to revive a valuable friendship..

4. Connect on social media.

Social media can be a simple, quick and lighthearted way to message your old friends. You can send a link or a photo to remind them of you on Facebook or other social networks. When I have lost contact with my friends in the past, I found that sending them a funny link or a photo with a tagline saying you are thinking of them and have missed them can open conversations and connections with them.

5. Try video calls.

Video calls through Facetime or Zoom can be an awesome way to catch up with your old friends. They allow everyone to reconnect and have some fun conversations while seeing each other smile and laugh together.

6. Have coffee or lunch together.

Meeting your old friends for coffee or lunch can be a nice way to reconnect, because it is a casual activity in a low-pressure setting. This can remove the social awkwardness of not seeing each other for a long time.



Photo by Good Faces on Unsplash

7. Walk somewhere together.

Going out for a pleasant walk with old friends can be a good way to reconnect with them because you can enjoy nature while having casual conversations.

8. Take things slowly.

It is better to move slowly back into friendships rather than rushing to be friends again, because distance and time may have changed things. Taking time can give you and your old friends the ability to test the water to see how the friendship will go.

Now that you know how you can revisit your old friendships, are you ready to reconnect with your old friends?

Photo by Dane
Deaner

“a small crowd of
people huddled to-
gether,

eager to get out, but
unwilling to take the
first step”

The Dream Job

Isaiah Raimos

“I’m home!” the man called to his wife, throwing his keys on the desk. His wife came out of the hall.

“Did you get it?” she asked, squinting her eyes in curiosity.

“No.”

“They still won’t promote you?”

“Apparently not. I swear they like me where I’m at, and as long as I’m there, they’re not going to let me move forward. I’m sick of it!”

After a short evening of silent brooding, the man and his wife went to bed.

Suddenly, the man woke up. He sat up and looked around. It was pitch black. He looked at his bedsheets, only to find they weren’t there. He was fully dressed: pants, boots, long-sleeved shirt. He was in a dark chamber, a dungeon perhaps. There was something familiar about this place.

Then, someone ran into the chamber, a torch in his hand, and he waved urgently at the man.

“It’s time! We have to get out of here!”

The man stood up and ran over to the torch-bearer. He did not feel tired at all. “What’s going on?” the man asked.

The torch-bearer replied, “The Orcs brought you here, but we took them all out and managed to find you. We were almost out the gate when they took you. Now you just need to get us the rest of the way out. Come on!”

The man had no idea who this guy was or how exactly he was going to get him out. Where even was here? And did that torch-bearer just say ‘Orcs’? Something seemed familiar about this whole situation, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on it.

“This way!” the torch-bearer called softly as they wound their way through the dark caverns. A light appeared in view as one of the tunnels curved toward an exit.

When they reached the chamber at the end of the tunnel, the man and torch-bearer came upon a small crowd of people huddled together, eager to get out, but unwilling to take the first step, as if they

were afraid of the light.

“Give me your sword,” the torch-bearer said.

“My s—”

The man looked down and found a scabbard tied to his hip. “When did *that* get there?”

He took the belt off and handed it to the torch-bearer.

“Better give me the shield, too,” he added. “Don’t want to feed the dragon new trinkets. He thrives off metal, you know.”

The man had a shield strapped to his back. He took it off and gave it to the torch-bearer.

“Good, now you distract the dragon while the rest of us sneak out.”

“... the *hell!*!” the man exclaimed, his equipment now reduced to a simple shirt and pants. “How am I supposed to fight a dragon with no weapons and no armor?”

“You have to,” pleaded the torch-bearer. “You’re our only hope. Only you know how to defeat a dragon without weapons!”

“I’m almost certain I made no such claim!” the man said. “The only way I would know how to fight a dragon is *with* weapons!”

“Please,” cried someone from the crowd, “We want to get out of here. We need your help.”

The man sighed, frowned, and looked out the tunnel. Across the courtyard was the open gateway. Somewhere out there was the dragon.

He stepped out, hugging the wall, searching for the beast. He saw the shadow first, and then he heard the roar, a powerful blast like a volley of booming cannons. It swooped overhead, and the man took off for the gate like a squirrel toward a tree. The dragon dropped in front of him, kicking up chunks of earth. The man’s eyes and throat burned as he coughed through the thick lake of dust.

When the dust settled, the man looked up and saw the face of the dragon staring right at him. It was as

horrifying as any he had seen in books, and its sheer size only made it more terrible. The dragon shook its head and the man, by instinct, dived to the side just in time to avoid the rays of its fiery breath. The man was afraid, yet somehow he felt the confidence he needed to defeat this dragon, even if only with his bare hands.

He remembered when he fought the Green Dragon of Kalhoon and Forgar the Maneater of Illiore. He remembered bringing down the Red Dragon of Vessland with nothing more than the trees surrounding them. He was the Dragon Slayer.

But then he also remembered why this dragon was so deadly. Its black and silver skin was able to absorb metal, rendering any swords completely useless against it, and its scales were so thick that wooden spears were no match to penetrate it.

The man rolled out of his dive and leapt for the dragon’s extended wing. The dragon flapped and flailed, but the man hung on tight and clawed his way to the creature’s back. The dragon took flight, soaring up high, and the man called out to the villagers below:

“Go now! Run!”

But no one moved. They just stood around. Terrified? Awestruck? The man had no idea. The beast couldn’t be more distracted.

“Go!” he shouted again, but no one moved.

Then the dragon swept low to the ground and, in the midst of a barrel-roll, scraped the man loose from his hide. The man tumbled to a halt and watched as the dragon again landed between him and the gate. He looked once more at the idle people and shot them a questioning look. They offered no response.

The dragon thundered once more, challenging the man for another round. The man got up just as the dragon pressed his head forward, teeth bared, a flying bed of spikes. The man stepped aside and then grabbed the creature’s upper jaw. The dragon again bucked, trying to shake loose the human barnacle, but with no luck.

“Go!” the man cried again, but still the people did not budge. They only stood and stared, now emotionless, as if they were more interested in watching the fight, maybe even watching his inevitable doom.

Finally, the dragon flung the man to the ground. The man did not feel any pain, though he was certainly ex-

Photo by Sean Thomas



cited. He got up on his elbows and looked at the people once more. He remembered something the wizard Satine once told him: “One day, you’re going to meet a dragon you can’t beat. Make sure you know when you’ve met him, and you might live to fight another day.” Maybe this was that dragon. And if this was that dragon, these people needed to get out of here. But it was their own fault for not running when he told them to.

The man rolled from his position just in time to miss the dragon’s deadly kiss. Now under the dragon, the man sprinted toward the gate. If the people were not smart enough to run when the dragon was high in the air, then they were going to have to be on their own. This dragon wasn’t dying today, and neither was he.

As he ran for the gate, it began to drop shut. He reached it just in time to dive under before it slammed to the ground. The dragon no longer paid him any heed. It was satisfied with its victory and needed no further convincing that the battle was over. The man looked through the gate at the people staring from the tunnels. They still showed no expression. No fear, no worry, not even any concern for the dragon who also seemed to disregard them.

The more he thought about it the more he realized, maybe the only reason the dragon fought him was because he was looking to fight the dragon. Maybe the dragon didn’t care one way or the other about him.

The man walked toward the setting sun. He looked back once. The crowd and the dragon watched him, but there was no fear, no malice, nothing. He turned back around and walked as the sun grew brighter.

And then he woke up. He was back at home, in his bed, and daylight was starting to glow in the window.

“What a strange dream.”

Strange, but enlightening. Something in his mind

— or was it his heart? —

knew what he needed to do. He had made up his mind, one way or the other. He had done all he could for his company and he was no longer seeing the forward momentum he was promised all those years ago. There was only one thing left to do.

He smiled as he thought about how he had walked away from the dragon. He may not have been able to kill the beast, but he certainly gave it his all before he let it go. Who else can say they wrangled an invincible dragon and lived to tell the tale?

ISAIAH RAIMOS Isaiah is an aspiring fiction writer who lives in the dusty town of Bakersfield, California. Counting his wife, daughter, cat and two dogs, he’s the only dude in his household, and they inspire him to write. When he’s not writing, he’s playing video games or running around the house with his daughter... probably with lightsabers.



Remnants of Another Reality

Bryan Tran

The past is a one-way path
 No U-turns to grasp
 Uncompromising
 Plead it to stay
 Fleeting away
 Bleeding at bay
 It accumulates,
 accumulates,
 Until days become
 Weeks become
 Months become
 Years
 At the hands of the clock ticking down that list of our fears
 Moments dissolve to memories
 Dissolve to stories
 Dissolve from distortion, cease to exist
 We were kids swinging
 back in the playground
 The world felt safe, reality sound
 Whatever had us down
 Seems so miniscule now
 How did it feel?
 Are those emotions still real?
 Can't feel the same
 As we speed down this lane
 Miss it so bad,
 Still can't go back
 But you felt it too?
 The feeling still quivers
 Its warmth gives us shivers
 Beneath the time past and all of its layers
 So you feel it too?
 If it's true that you do
 Remind me to forget
 To forget the regret
 Rather remember the moments
 Just how it felt
 And for now, oh for now
 Clock can't call our bluff
 Right now, as for now
 perhaps that's enough



TER- ENCE MA- CLAINE Terence MacLaine is a writer and blogger from Vancouver, BC. He has a lifetime of experiences set against the backdrop of beautiful British Columbia, and brings his stories to the world in his blog, *The Adventures of Yesteryear* (theadventureofmemories.wordpress.com).

With Your Love

Terence MacLaine

This article is an adapted piece from Terence's blog at theadventureofmemories.wordpress.com

The year was 1976. A special memory for me would take the form of a ferry trip I can remember thanks to a song. That's one thing for sure: smells & songs seem to be the greatest memory triggers for me. I can't tell you the number of songs I hear from yesteryear that instantly transport me back in time. It's like an audio time machine. And if you hit me with a song I like & I'm doing something I enjoy, you've made a lifetime memory for me.

So, I'll start with what I remember. I know it was around fall of that year. I had just gotten home from school, and Mom & I were once again off to visit Aunt Agnes. This time, however, we would be taking the city bus to Park Royal Mall in West Vancouver, where we would wait and eventually transfer to the Pacific Coach Lines bus that would end up taking us out to Horseshoe Bay, and the ferry.

This time it was the Queen of Coquitlam, my first ride on the ferry I had watched launch just last year. And 70's? You couldn't GET any more 70's than the interior. I thought I was on some sort of spaceship. But there was no denying she was a true blue BC



Photo by Oskars Sylwan

Ferry, and I quickly adopted her as one of my own.

The newsstand was almost literally a stand. Enclosed in a room not much bigger than a telephone booth, they somehow managed to stock it with all kinds of newspapers, magazines & of course, postcards. Another interesting thing about the design was that the cafeteria was more in the center area of the ship, which I guess made sense as the ship was a double-ender. There was no rear end to speak of: only a No. 1 and No. 2 end.



Photo by Markus Spiske

As usual, we arrived safely at Nanaimo. This time, we took a cab downtown to rent a car & after Mom & the salesman hammered out the details, we were off down the highway in a sporty blue Ford Pinto. I guess Mom had spent whatever funds she had maybe allocated for accommodations on renting the car, because instead of staying at any kind of motel, we stayed at Aunt Agnes’.

When we arrived, instantly I could tell there was some tension, if not some distance, between Aunt Agnes & myself. She still carried bad feelings toward me for ruining her model boat. She wasn’t hostile or anything though. Just distant. I really came to regret having hurt her so with my **STOOPID** childish antics. I mean, if I had known my obsession with a little toy boat would come to potentially cost me my relationship with my own aunt, I would never have even **LOOKED** at the damn thing. But, the damage had been done & I had to adjust to the reality I had set for myself. I think I was so disturbed about how I had affected my relationship with her that I seem to have erased, or at least blocked out, any details of that visit there. I remember spending the night with Mother in the guest room, but that’s pretty much it.

Of course, we would also visit Aunt Dorothy while in town, and I got to see Cousin Cheryl. Cheryl too was

already growing away from me, if she ever was close to begin with. She was now into boys, while I was still into toys.

There really was no connection with her.

But it was at their house where I heard the most beautiful song: “With Your Love,” by Jefferson Starship. I guess someone had the radio on in the background, but my ears picked up on this magical progression, the interplay of the electric piano with Marty Balin’s soaring vocals. This song had me hooked! Our visit to Aunt Dorothy’s didn’t yield very much else, but hearing this song would leave an audio bookmark in my life.

It was about 3 p.m. when we set off back to Nanaimo to return our rented car. Just outside Cassidy, Mom would discover to her horror that the car had not been gassed up. Fortunately, yours truly was too young & too little to be of any great help, so I sat idly in the car while Mom went hiking off to the nearest gas station. She returned a short while later, refueled the car and we were off once again. After she returned the car to the dealership and gave them an earful, I’m sure, we were on our way back out to Departure Bay to catch the ferry home.

This time it would be the Queen of Burnaby. One of the Victoria class ferries’ Seven Sisters & the namesake

But, the damage had been done & I had to adjust to the reality I had set for myself.

of her own Burnaby class subclass, this ship was in the prime of her life back then. Certainly the workhorse of her day, she had everything I had come to love about BC Ferries. The thing I remember in particular about this crossing was the final leg of it. All the foot passengers had just been paged to proceed down to the car deck (they didn’t have the overhead walkways @ Horseshoe Bay back then), we were still a good 10 minutes out, and they had already opened the big bow doors. I was standing at the front, watching the water rush beneath the front lip of the ship as we glided across the eerily stagnant sea with all the lights of the houses sporadically placed throughout the bay in the night. It was like the calm sea was almost made of glass as we sped towards Horseshoe Bay. I had “With Your Love” still reverberating in my head with this scene, and this was yet another personal moment for me. It was really of such indescribable beauty, it almost makes me weep. Deep-rooted memories like this are why I will be forever so tied to our ferries.

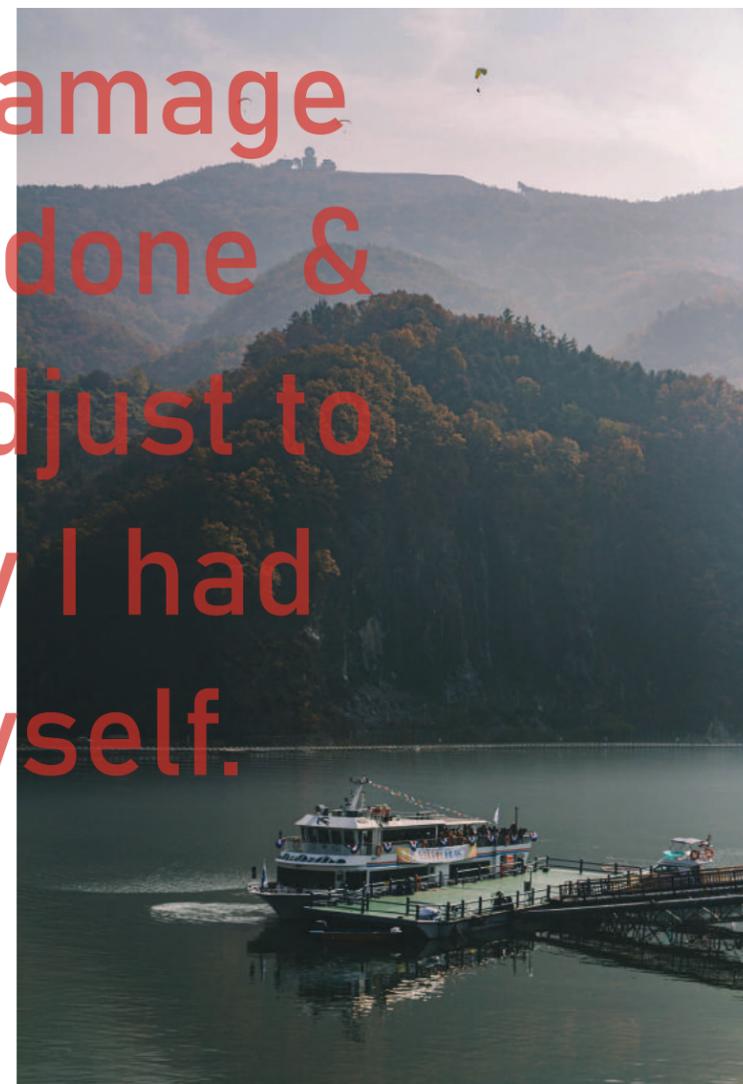


Photo by Bundo Kim

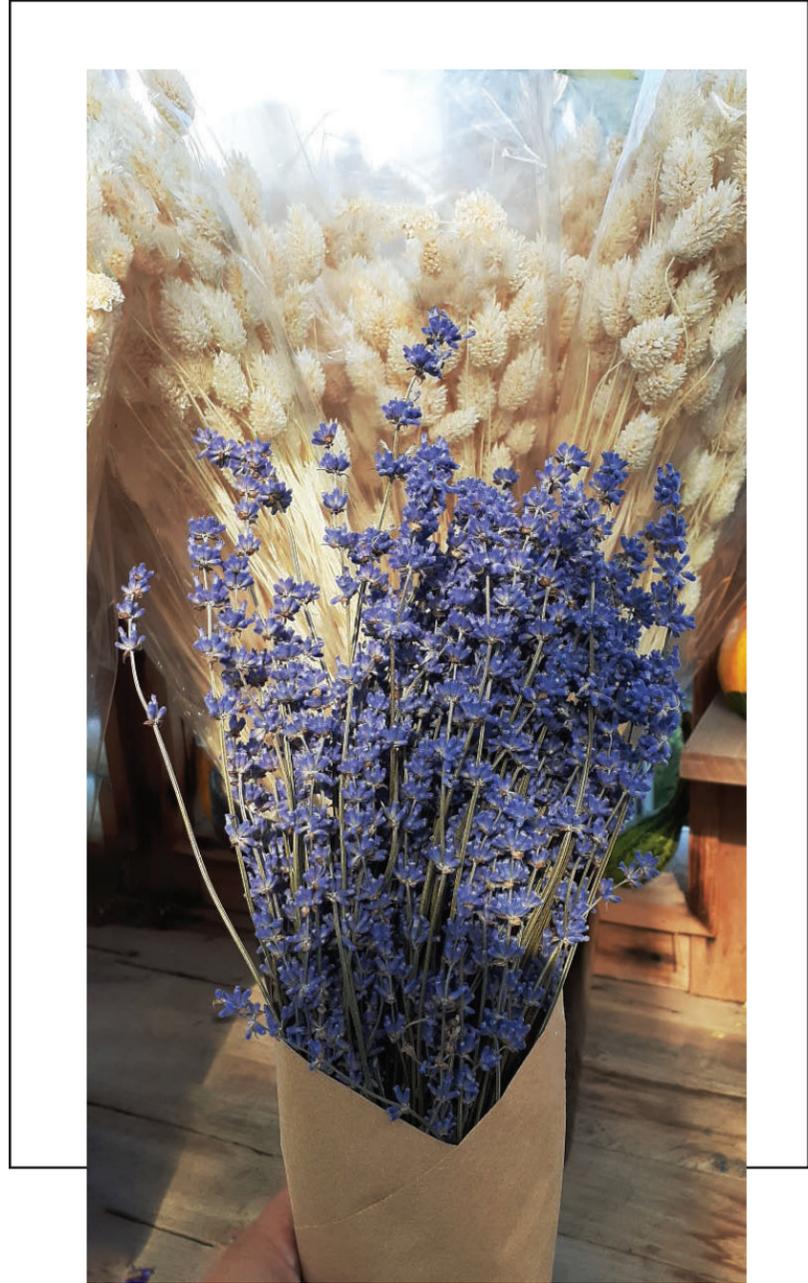


Photo by Jeehae Park

