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1 i k e n e s s

m a g a z i n e



LIFE ENERGY

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the sə́lilwətaʔt̚ təməx̣, x̣ṃməθḳʷəỵəm, 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

Life persists. Here, certainly, and maybe elsewhere. It seems to have a compulsion to continue, as if it is fully aware that it will end countless times, and is resolute in its steadfast determination to begin at least once more, and once more again.

Indeed, one could be forgiven for concluding that life is quite common, given its high volume of repeated content from day to day to day. It doesn't feel rare, not when you're standing in a bustling, churning marketplace or a jungle teeming with myriad vibrations.

And yet, for the most part, we linger to watch it unfold, never quite certain of the next reveal. In that uncertainty, that titillation, life feels particularly precious (especially when it's relatable to us): life is an individualized perspective, plucked from infinity, an experience of an ephemeral glimpse. Because of that, we hunger for more, even after the sombre awareness dawns on us, almost inevitably, that we won't persist to see it.

This *Likeness* attempts to channel this energy, this obsessive force that possesses and propels us to bear witness to sublime nature, navigate torrential social waters, rend our bodies to their physical limits, or simply bask in the light of the sun. We live, and we try to live more — in doing so, we create.

This is, hopefully, some evidence of that.

Thank you for being here.



Editor, Low Entropy

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Photo by Ba Phi

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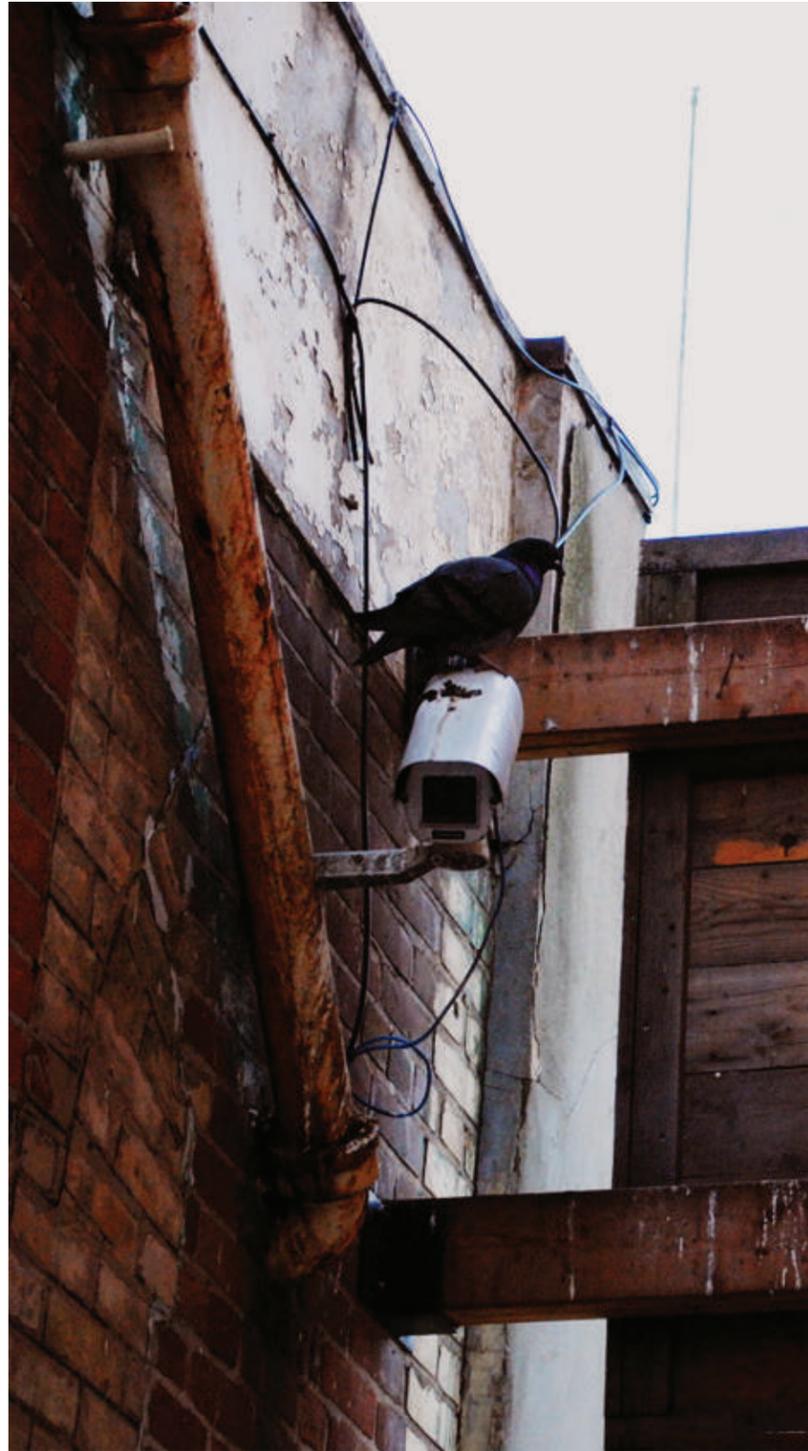


Photo by Bethany Howell

Not Yet

Neema
Ejercito

Hunched over
Fingertips poised on the tartan
Cold sweat drying as the wind and sun beat on me
I remind myself, “My spikes are my wings.”

The sharp bite of the starter’s pistol
jolts me from my calm
Everyone’s started without me

But all I see are those ahead
And the curve of the track makes them look farther
So I pick up my pace

Remembering what I watched in the videos
Thankful I ate a banana and a hard-boiled egg
When I thought I might throw them up

I keep my eyes set on the one just ahead
And notice as I pass her
I look to the next one ahead
But her pace is fast

I catch up, but I feel a stitch
My breathing is even
“You don’t want another episode
if you want to finish this.

Take it easy,”
I remind myself,
“You want to finish.”

Someone pushes past from behind
But it’s not who I passed earlier
I swing my arms faster

Because my legs feel heavy
More oxygen, breath—dammit!
And someone’s reached the finish line!!

Wait for me! I’m worthy!
I’m gonna get there before the one who passed me
Watch me!

**NEEMA
EJERCITO** Neema Ejercito is a professional writer, director and creative writing mentor. Her 3D edutainment series for beginning readers, *AlphaBesties*, is showing in YouTube Japan and Prairie Kids. When she’s not writing or mentoring, she manages her household with her very supportive husband and three children.

New Normal

Neema Ejercito

Lip-synced and danced to TLC's "Waterfalls" on TikTok one too many times
Created, wrote, directed, and acted an ensemble script with me in all the roles
Ordered and devoured boxes of cube cheese, pandesal, and sushi bake
Painted a Van Gogh, a Seurat, a Saguil, even a Dematera

Learned to swim the butterfly stroke
Deadlifted, box-jumped, kettle-belled, star-jumped, jumped rope, high-kneed, butt-kicked, duck-walked, front-squatted, back-squatted, overhead-squatted, push-pressed, split-jerked, squat-cleaned, battle-roped, burped, butterfly-sat-up, lateral-jumped over weights, power-snatched
Sad and happy cried at *Crash Landing on You* and *It's Okay to Not Be Okay* and back at *Crash Landing*

Cooked adobo, fish tacos, shakshuka, Swedish meatballs, oyakodon, more adobo
Baked brownies, chocolate chip cookies, creme brulee cookies
Walked our pitbull, Jimbo, all over the village backwards
Drove around in reverse
Zoom-called my family, friends, high school classmates, grade school teachers, ex co-workers, all my old bosses, my exes, my dog's second cousins on his mother's side
Donated to the education of the son of a dear friend who's passed on, to a former student's theatre group, to my youngest's school clothing drive, to warm meals for 160 children in the city where I grew up, to a college friend's burial expenses, to a local hospital's request for PPEs, and the pandemic still keeps going.

Lamenting if this will ever end.

But
Tomorrow
I get
up.

"the effort to reclaim the wandering mind is



Photo by Neema Ejercito

paramount in ending your suffering "

DEREK SAWATZKY Derek received a bachelor of arts in philosophy, and is just a guy who likes to travel and write the occasional short story.

Rest in the Chaos

Derek Sawatzky

Life doles out endless suffering. We often labour through a litany of illusions and delusions, mindlessly grasping at anything that will take us out of the present moment and into some phantom reality of the future. Creating a future that has not, and probably will not, solidify into anything resembling your current reality takes a tremendous amount of energy to maintain. What's more is, nurturing these endless needs, wants, should-haves and should-not-haves only perpetuates the suffering — and so the cycle continues. This exhausting merry-go-round of thoughts flicker through our minds at break-neck speeds, only to dissipate just as quickly, making room for another round of relentlessly intrusive mind-wanderings to sink their sneaky little hooks in.

All of life is lived in this mind.

It's easy to see, then, that the effort to reclaim the wandering mind is paramount in ending your suffering, or at the very least, easing your discomfort.



Photo by Maria Orlova

But where to refocus this primordial energy? How do we rein in meddling thoughts and sharpen them into fruitful and constructive considerations? It seems an impossible task. We're met with selfish and antagonizing coworkers five days a week, eight hours a day. We have an endless laundry list of to-dos and when



to have them finished by. We have families that need almost all of our attention throughout the day, with a small respite in the evening before bed.

It would seem that our life energy is spent up in menial and sometimes degrading tasks.

A fair assumption to make — on the surface. Our perception of these menial tasks and the value we place on them can determine our emotional responses to them. Is what I'm doing right now good? Is what I'm doing right now useful? Or is there a way that I can make these tasks easier and make me feel better than

I did before? The mind reaches, desperately, for any way to make life better, whatever that means for you.

The answer is resting in the chaos.

No matter how angry you get, how much anxiety you have, how much you try to exert control, the situation will not change. Your desire to change and control the outcome of the past, present or future will only bring you suffering. If you can accept the universal fact that you have very little control over anything at all, you can focus your energy into things much more profound and powerful. Find respite in the notion that you will die; your life is short and fleeting. Where you place your attention is of the utmost importance. Spend time nurturing good and fruitful thoughts, help your neighbours when they need it the most, and take time to understand yourself. Flight attendants will tell you that when the cabin pressure drops mid-flight, secure your own oxygen mask before helping someone else. This is true for life as well. If you can manage to rest in the chaos that life brings all around you, you will surely be able to spend your life energy in the best way possible.

Photo by
Marissa
Grootes

BETH-
ANY
HOWELL

My name is Bethany Howell and 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!

Write Your Own Myths

Bethany Howell

Do you want to know the most marvelous thing life has to offer?

Tomorrow.

Each day we wake up with the chance to be all that we ever wanted to be.

Each morning is filled with limitless possibilities.

Each night is an invitation to a new world made for you — by you.

We are under no obligation to be the person we were yesterday

And that,

That is incredible.



Photo by Sifat Tanzila Aziz

“Take tomorrow and pave your way”



Photo by Jonas Weckschmied

RHEA G. MANN I am a 19-year-old first-year university student in British Columbia, Canada, and have always been a very creative soul. Writing is my solace, in times of anger, sadness and happiness, and I will always reflect through my words. I hope that through these words, I can tell stories that allow people to feel seen and heard. If you enjoyed this piece, please check out my Instagram for more @rgm_creates

Tomor- row

Rhea G. Mann

The sun will set
And rise
Tomorrow will come

Today is never good
You woke up late
Forgot to call your friend
And procrastinated, yet another day
On piled up assignments and everlasting responsibilities

Do not be disheartened
Take tomorrow and pave your way
The mystique of tomorrow
Lays in the uncertainty

Tomorrow may be the day you win the lottery
Get that phone call
Meet who you've been waiting to meet
You won't know until you live it

Keep on promising and working for tomorrow
Promise tomorrow that you will experience all you must
Work for tomorrow to be brighter, and accepting
Do what you must
Say what you must

For tomorrow will come
And go
As the sun does
Just be sure to soak it up!

GRACE GILL Grace is in grade 12 and plans to pursue a leadership degree. She was born in Surrey, British Columbia, and spent five years in Calgary. She encourages persons with learning disabilities and young females to be themselves. She enjoys nature, cooking and binge-watching Netflix series.

Compliments and Insults Can Increase or De- crease Your Life Energy



Photo by Lucrezia Carnelos

Grace Gill

Compliments sound like inside jokes between your inner circles, shared at random moments. Compliments taste like walking into your favourite pub and getting handed your drink of choice. Compliments smell like the scent of wooden, mopped floors with frankincense oil applied to them. Compliments feel like the first day of spring and a cool wind on your skin giving you goosebumps. Compliments look like receiving a love letter from a childhood friend with your favourite flower inside.

Insults sound like a quarrel between two teenage girls in the hallway of a high school over a boy. Insults taste like waiting in a long line at a drive-through, only to get the wrong order. Insults smell like someone who has just finished a pack of smokes and is returning to their 9-5 job. Insults feel like someone is spying on you from outside your window after you watch a crime show. Insults look like a face-to-face meeting with your high school bully who has received a position at a prestigious law firm.

“A moment of healing is like a single ray



Photo by Bethany Howell

of sunshine after a harsh winter season.”

ANNA DOS SANTOS Anna Dos Santos is a counsellor, clinical supervisor and art therapist in private practice in Abbotsford, B.C. She is a motivational speaker and creativity workshop facilitator. She presented at the Acre 20 International Creativity Conference in South Africa.

Moments of Healing

Anna Dos Santos

A moment of healing is like a single ray of sunshine after a harsh winter season. It introduces itself in the sacred, quiet space where we surrender to an act of unexpected, loving kindness. It does not announce its arrival with great fanfare. Instead, it lingers in the shadows first, patiently waiting for the right time to unfold its warmth and light to beam at exactly the very spot where we need it most . . .

Moments of healing, strung together, become a rosary, beads filled with mystery and stories of kindness that we can hold on to during those seasons in our lives when we need to remember that life is good, that people do care. That you and I together each have a purpose and a destiny. That our vulnerabilities and quirks make us unique and special.

An instant of restoration can open itself up to us when we dare to step beyond our hurdles, of what is the norm or expected of us. A few years ago, after a season of tragedy and great loss, I felt quite lost and con-

fused. During that period, I was travelling through North America and found myself, in the heart of winter, on the southern edge of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. About 2,600 feet below meandered the Colorado River. The canyon is about 446 kilometres long. It was quiet, peaceful, and for a few minutes it felt as if the world was also taking a pause to breathe. With so much beauty and splendour around me, I felt small and insignificant.

In the spur of the moment, I inhaled as deeply as possible and bellowed my own name down towards the rocky, fragmented, terracotta-red walls of the canyon. It became quiet again.

And then I heard it, my own voice.

Rolling back through stone walls and caves that were millions of years old, the echo of my name washed over me. *I said hello to myself again!*

Photo by
Christopher
Sardegna



Sometimes it is important that we negotiate for our own moment of healing to take place as well. What does that look like? Well, it is often the most difficult moment to enter. You, like me, are probably also an expert on how to be angry at yourself, or to blame yourself, or to have self-pity, or to feel guilty.

We all need forgiveness, and we all probably can benefit from asking forgiveness for something that we have done wrong. But it does not end there, that is only the beginning. We need to learn the skill of forgiving ourselves. That is a very difficult skill to master. To forgive yourself is something entirely different. It is difficult to do.

Self forgiveness is the key that unlocks the prison door to self-hate.

To do that requires an invitation to self-compassion for a conversation or two first. Thereafter, it becomes eas-

ier to experience your own moment of healing when you can forgive yourself for the harm that you unwittingly caused to your own person.

To conclude, life necessitates that we sometimes revisit our own story, to say hello again. Hello to all the moments of healing that cemented themselves into our history. It helps us to gain self-perspective. A single moment of healing might look small, but bundled together, they become a cluster of sweet, shiny pomegranate seeds, ready for harvest during Thanksgiving season.

Photo by
Neema Ejer-
cito

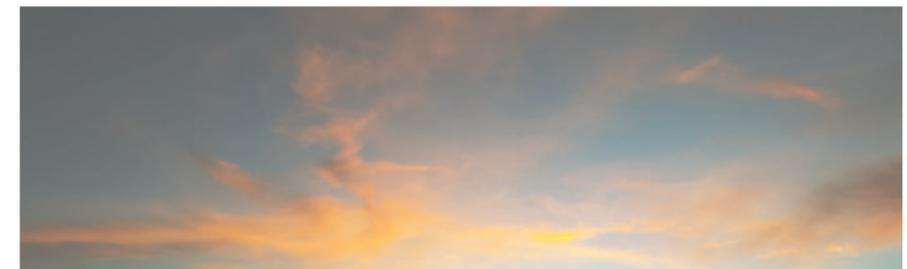
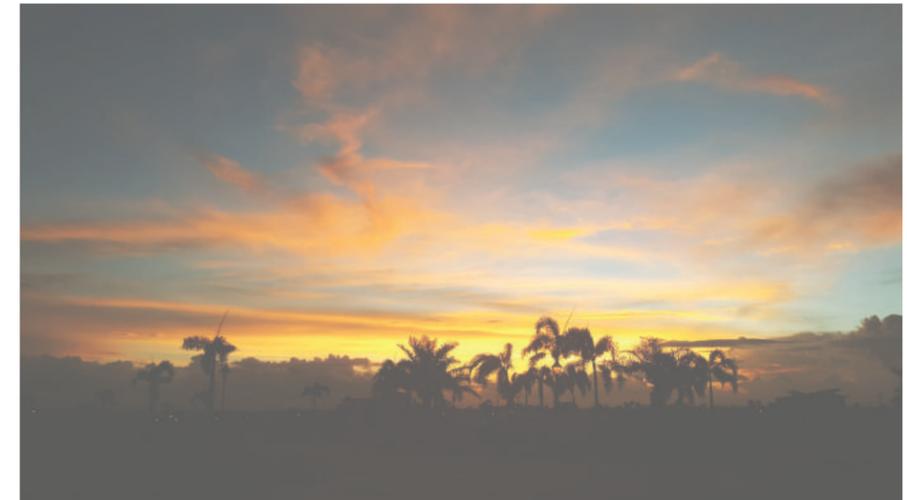




Photo by Bethany Howell

