

**ISSUE NO. 4**  
2021/22



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A MAGAZINE FOR THE SUSSEX COMMUNITY  
CREATIVE AND CRITICAL WRITING & ART

# ISSUE NO. 4

ON THE COVER: ARTWORK BY SKYLA HILLAN- SCHUNEMANN

ON THE LEFT: ARTWORK BY DAISY PORT



Recovering from the worldwide pandemic across the course of this year has been both hard to navigate, and rewarding to the core. As life restarted once again, for businesses and individuals alike, the ability to see past the darkness and into a hopeful light of “normality” shone down. Albeit, normality is not what it once was. Here at The Channel, the magazine became a light of the same kind of hope once again this year, not only for ourselves, but for our readers, writers and the community that we are a part of. As the world opened up again, so could we - attending university events, theater productions, exhibition openings and more. It also meant the editorial team was able to meet in person after an all-online team for the previous edition, which was rewarding both for the magazine’s organization and for the team’s own wellbeing.

The stories we see intertwined in this year’s edition from our contributors reflect these feelings too, as we understand what this new normal means for us as individuals, and for wider society. Students have had a better platform to find their voices again, with protest and intervention being a theme across campuses across the UK, along with questioning where our lives go from here, after being able to pause for a little while during the adolescence of your early twenties, figuring out how to find your footing has been an anxiety for many. Reflecting on the lives we previously had and the nostalgia of that feeling, versus the monotonous feelings of our lives repeating day in day out; both similar yet very paradoxical feelings. Or simply wanting to be someone’s person, be every comfort and care they need and want

To the fourth edition of The Channel, we welcome you. We are a student-led progressive art and media magazine run from the University of Sussex, and we aim to deliver a yearly showcase of the various works from the Sussex Community. Check out our social media below.

Places you can go to donate and help the ongoing war on Ukraine:

British Red Cross | Ukraine Crisis Appeal  
Papaover.com  
[unitedwithukraine.org](http://unitedwithukraine.org)



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@thechannel\_sus



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# Four Weeks, Four Fights: UCU Strikes in Spring 2022

Written by Fi  
Photos by Caitlin Epstein  
and Valerie Kporye

*“All these issues have been ongoing for years...refusal to negotiate just leads to more issues”*

The strikes on campus have been led by faculty members and supported by the Students Union. Many students independently chose to stand in solidarity, by not attending lectures, standing with the official picket and even running sit-ins.

Strikes surrounding USC Pensions and the Four Fights have been going on since 2018!

The four major demands:

**Pay:** Foundation Living Wage for contractors of £10/hr for in house staff.

**Workload:** There is a demand for a 35-hour working week as a basis for all contracts and a new approach to workload management.

**Equality:** Close the ethnic and gender pay gap! Run a full equal pay audit that covers all protected characteristics and is shared with the campus trade unions. The UCU reports that gaps between Black and white staff is at 17%. The disability pay gap is 9%. The mean gender pay gap is 15.1% and at the current rate of change it will not be closed for another 22 years!

**Casualisation:** End zero hour contracts. The UCU reports that 45% of staff on casual contracts struggle to pay household bills.

During conversations with a student activist, we asked M why they thought it's imperative to support their striking faculty. Striking staff have shown courage, standing up for necessary changes for all. As M put it “they want the best for students too... it's likely those striking are those who fought for our needs and protection during Covid.”

Our lecturers and university faculty are suffering. When they suffer, we suffer. Sussex has a proud history of activism, university students and lecturers often stood together, fought together.

The big question being asked by students and faculty is: “Where is the money going?”

As education fees rise and staff pay remains stagnant, this question becomes even more pressing.



# On Campus Activism

Student activism is a form of expression. It's brave, creative, and loud. We have heard this over and over, but student activists need your support!

Here are some simple ways you can get involved on campus:

- Follow student activist pages on social media
- Share posts
- Attend rallies
- Participate in teach-outs
- Donate to student-promoted charities
- Vote in the SU elections

Accounts to follow...

@sussexrea  
@sussex\_femsoc  
@sussexlgbtq  
@sussexsolidarity  
@decolonisesussex  
@access\_sussex  
@sussexunderthesheets  
@xr\_unis\_bns  
@climateactionsussex  
Up to date as of May 2022





PHOTOS BY ELLA LUNA FURNELL AND CAITLIN EPSTEIN



# The Unpalatable Truth of the Multi-Billion Dollar Chocolate Industry

I have this vivid memory of the smell of rain on dry earth and the chorus of birds as I lay eyes on a cocoa tree for the first time. It was in the Casamance region of Senegal, south of the Gambia River. I remember being mesmerised by the way its white flowers and cocoa pods grew all along its main trunk, not on its branches like other trees. I had consumed chocolate for years, yet the cocoa tree was nothing like I had imagined. Or had I ever imagined it? Had I ever stopped to question where my chocolate comes from? Or tried to picture the faces and hands of those who toil to produce it? Had I ever wondered about the conditions in which they work?

Our journey begins in the shaded cocoa orchards of Ivory Coast, far from the shelves of our supermarket aisles and the familiar sight of 70p check-out mars bars. At first glance, the small-scale farmers who lend their labour to these orchards, harvesting cocoa pods and sorting the sweet white pulp from their shells, seem to tell a familiar story. The story of workers fulfilling their potential as productive economic agents, engaging freely in market exchange, and fully incorporated into a worldwide web of self-determined, enterprising agents. Those who make the ever-turning wheels of our sleepless capitalist system churn and almost magically produce the impressive array of products we consume daily.

Yet once we examine the inner workings of the global commodity chain of cocoa, produced from cocoa beans and destined to satisfy the Global North's appetite, we uncover a bitter truth which has the potential to radically challenge this narrative and help foster dynamic action for systemic change.

The large majority of the world's cocoa is harvested in countries that border the West African coastline, where I spent much of my childhood and teenage years. For small-scale cocoa farmers like Lucia, who lives in a community nestled on the edge of the Gola rainforest in Sierra Leone, cocoa farming is a way of life. It has been for many generations, and is essential to her family's livelihood. However, The Guardian states that whilst the global cocoa-product market is worth over \$75 billion a year, cocoa farmers like herself receive less than 6% of the final value of retailed chocolate. According to Fairtrade, Lucia's family is amongst the millions of farmers who have been forced to accept extremely low global market prices for cocoa, earning less than \$1 dollar a day, or the equivalent of a KitKat bar. For many years, her family lived in dire conditions, going hungry for lengthy periods of time due to pests riddling their crops, chimpanzees wreaking havoc in the orchards and the lack of work opportunities outside the farm.

Whilst Lucia was being pushed into deeper poverty, struggling to feed her family and unable to send her children to school working in cocoa orchards, the Ferrero family was able to pay itself an annual salary of \$725 million. \$500 million of which could have been used to remunerate Lucia and the 90,000 farmers the company sources its cocoa from, a fair, living income. Lucia's story is a common one amongst West African cocoa farmers. The way they suffer from extreme poverty in a multi-billion dollar cocoa industry, is a form of exploitation with colonial roots, enabled by structural power differentials. This narrative dates back to the colonial period, as documented by Helen Ludlow. Behind the consumption of what became an everyday British staple in the mid 17th century (hot chocolate), were thousands of individuals at the bottom of the cocoa commodity chain, struggling for survival and unable to taste the product of their labour; both in terms of hot chocolate and of a fair remuneration.



### The Colonial Roots of Chocolate Production

As explained in Emma Robertson's book *Chocolate, Women and Empire*, the widespread availability of cheap, staple commodities like chocolate, for western consumption, was enabled by colonial violence and by a pool of 'free' labour sourced from colonies. Starting in the 16th century, Portuguese and Spanish empires began creating a complex network of trade centred around cocoa. They cultivated the plant in Brazil by shipping slaves from Africa to work on large-scale plantations that produced cocoa destined for European consumption. Up until the late 19th century, the Portuguese continued imposing the monoculture of cocoa in certain territories like São Tomé and Príncipe, an island off the coast of West Africa which was the primary source of cocoa for the biggest chocolate manufacturers in Britain, including the Cadbury Brothers. When slavery was abolished in all of Portugal's colonies in 1869, it continued sourcing forced labour from the African continent – shipping an estimated 67,000 individuals to work on the island's plantations. From São Tomé and Príncipe, the cocoa plant reached Ivory Coast and Ghana, where it established itself as the main cash crop, and where the majority of the world's cocoa is sourced today, still destined primarily for European consumption. The legacies of colonialism are evident in the continued unequal power relations that perpetuate the exploitative conditions under which African cocoa farmers toil to produce a commodity they cannot consume themselves. The chocolate industry is still dependent upon hidden, 'free labour' that sustains the production of cocoa, that is, upon the unpaid work of trafficked children and women in cocoa orchards.

This has long-plagued cocoa production in West Africa. Kate Manzo's paper, "Modern Slavery, Global Capitalism & Deproletarianisation in West Africa," explains how two decades ago, multiple reports like that of the US State Department on human rights in Ivory Coast, revealed that over 15,000 children from Mali had been trafficked and sold as indentured labour in Ivorian cocoa orchards. Their working and living conditions involved doing dangerous machete work, handling unhealthy amounts of pesticides, being physically punished and subjected to violence, locked up at night, and refused food or medicine. Despite the many pledges made by the chocolate industry in order to save face, for example, to eliminate child labour by 2005, very little has actually been done to meet these goals (Coco Barometer 2020). To this day, extremely low incomes coupled with the downward trend of global market prices for cocoa puts tremendous pressure on farmers to lower costs. This forces them to rely on their children's and trafficked children's 'free' labour to make ends meet.

### Gender Inequality

Cocoa farming has also deepened, harnessed, and profited from already existing, unequal gender dynamics in Ivory Coast and Ghana, as has been shown by a Fair-trade study. Although typically known as a 'male crop', women are heavily involved in nearly all aspects of cocoa farming. However, they are rarely remunerated for their labour, seldom own the factors of production, or reap the rewards of their work due to patriarchal laws and gendered norms. Women are deemed a 'free' source of labour, for both the work they do on the cocoa farms of their husbands or fathers, and the social reproductive and care work that sustains the cocoa industry. Taking both into account, women in cocoa-producing families work an estimated 30% longer than men, and although they are often 'invisible', their unpaid labour is central to the West African production of cocoa. This invisibility makes it difficult to hold large chocolate companies accountable for their share of responsibility in these issues, obscuring the post-colonial power dynamics at work and thus helping perpetuate them.

## Unequal Terms of Trade

Unfair international terms of trade in cocoa is a significant legacy of unequal colonial relationships. This is evident in the way Global South nations are specialised in the low-value end of the cocoa chain and Global North TNCs being specialised in the higher-value end of the chain, producing branded chocolates. According to the African Development Bank, more than two-thirds of the world's cocoa originates from the African continent, over 60% of which is exported in an unprocessed form. The far more profitable tasks of processing cocoa beans, manufacturing chocolates, and selling them to customers, are undertaken by a handful of large western companies.

European countries have profited from such asymmetries and perpetuated them by imposing tariff escalations that increase along the processing chain of cocoa. This means that higher export costs are imposed on African cocoa that has undergone higher levels of processing. These strategies, used to shield large chocolate processing industries that exist in countries like the Netherlands and Germany, aim to restrict the imports of higher-value cocoa products from abroad. This creates stumbling blocks for developing countries that would attempt to export cocoa in any other state than its low-value primary form. For example, according to the Common Fund for Commodities, although developing countries harvest 90% of cocoa beans, they produce only 4% of chocolate. Tariff escalations protect the European chocolate monopoly and their market power in the lucrative stages of chocolate production. This reinforces post-colonial power relations between the Global North and the Global South.

## Environmental Costs

Post-colonial asymmetries of power are also evident in the way Global North nations have been able to transfer the environmental costs of their chocolate consumption to the Global South. Growing up in West Africa, I witnessed this phenomenon called 'ecologically unequal exchange', a term coined by Stephen G. Bunker. I witnessed the disproportionate degradation of forests, water quality, soil fertility and biodiversity caused by the production of foods majorly destined for Western consumption. There is a need to challenge the common narrative that these environmental problems are largely a result of African governments' bad management, corrupt leadership, or chronic lack of resources, and to have a more historically informed analysis of environmental degradation in the Global South.

Studies have shown that specialisation in cocoa production is directly correlated with high rates of deforestation. According to a 2020 study by the *Coco Barometer*, native forest cover in the Ivory Coast and Ghana has fallen by 70% in the last 30 years, and national parks have suffered from illegal felling to make room for new cocoa plantations. This loss of biodiversity has led to a change in diets, with culturally significant wildlife and a large variety of plants becoming scarce. The altered balance of ecosystems has also led to a spread in disease and pests, further impacting the livelihoods of cocoa farmers. According to Bloomberg, soils suffer from over-use and severe nutrient depletion, leading to falling cocoa yields and thus to greater dependence on synthetic fertilisers, which further deplete soils. This forces cocoa farmers, like Lucia, into deeper precarity and greater vulnerability to weather shocks, fostering underdevelopment. Producing cocoa destined for global exports entails significant environmental costs in places where the cocoa is produced, usually far removed from places in the Global North where it is consumed, and thus facilitating ecologically unequal exchange. The very same transfer of negative environmental impacts defined colonial trading relationships, with colonies paying the costs of ecosystem degradation on the behalf of imperial centres.

I am far from having completed my journey into the hidden spheres of global chocolate production. Yet I have begun to understand the importance of looking beyond the noisy sphere of the market, where cocoa farmers are portrayed as independent economic agents who are able to freely exchange their labour through the benign, equalising forces of the free market, and to mutually benefit from their exchange. The unpalatable truth of the chocolate industry is that markets are seldom free, equal and mutually beneficial, but rather characterised by post-colonial power dynamics and exploitation. Cocoa farmers are locked into an economic system where the commodity they produce, for whom, at what price, in which locations and under which conditions, has been in one form or the other determined by the Global North.

This article calls for more attempts to 'put a face to the commodity'; to uncover the hidden social relationships and living conditions of the millions of human beings who make our consumption of foods from all across the globe possible. To be more intentionally informed and to question where our food comes from, care about the working conditions of those who produce it, demand more transparency from our food retailers, and to expose and hold large international TNCs accountable for unfair practices. This in the hope to challenge the exploitative status quo and the historical amnesia that is so prevalent within our global commodity chains, which allow for retailled foods like chocolate to be entirely divorced from their complex history of inequality and violence. I believe this to be the first step, if we are to see a world in which the structural asymmetries that characterise our current global trading order are dismantled. I am hopeful that they will be.



WRITTEN BY LOIS TOUMIEUX  
PHOTO BY FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL, 2021

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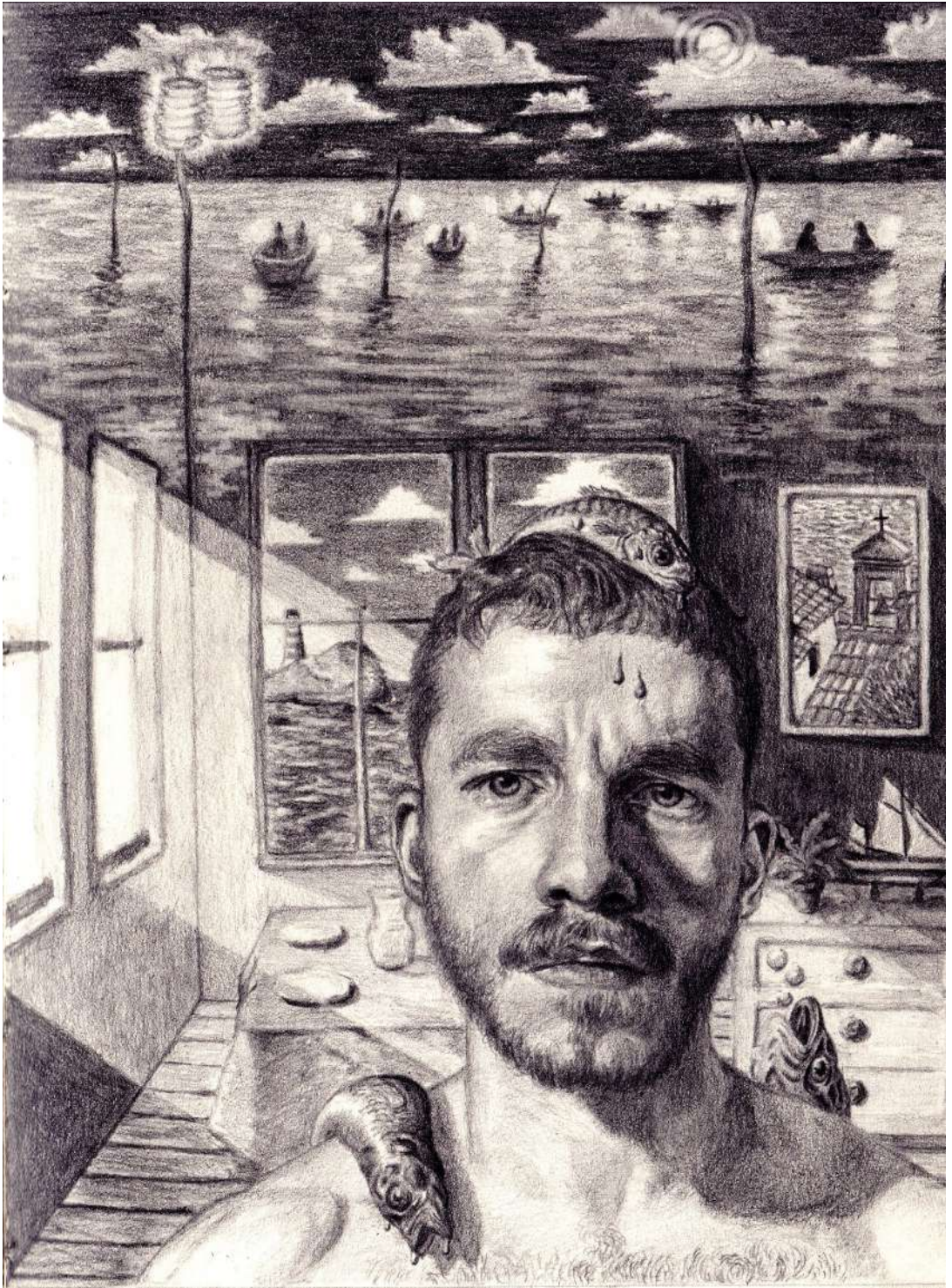
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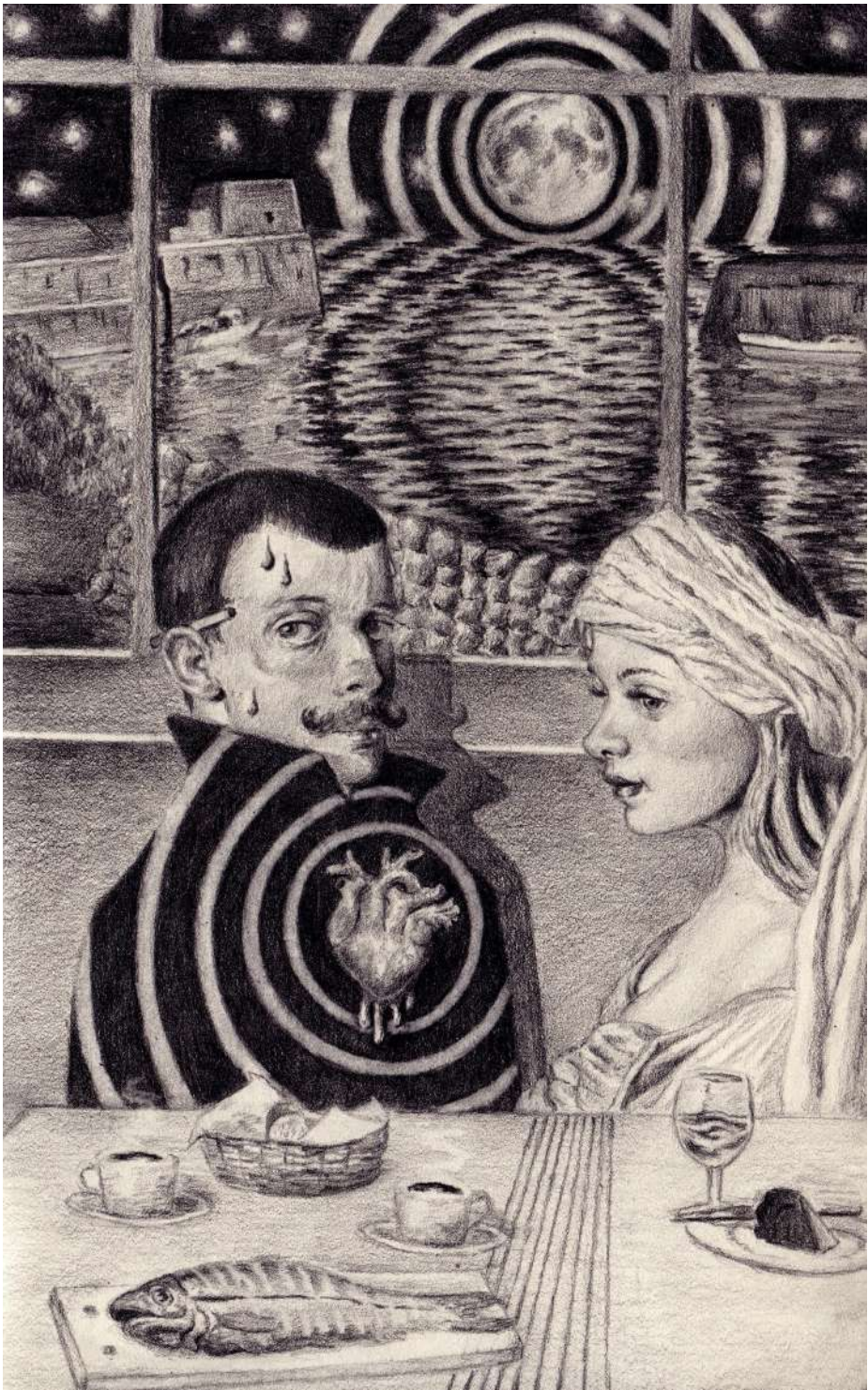
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ARTWORK BY GLEN GASHI



ARTWORK BY GLEN GASHI

The world is an overwhelming place for most. Ask most twenty-something year olds about their place in the world, and you'll be met with an eyeroll or a serious breakdown. As a 23-year-old master's student, the two questions of "What do you want to be in life?" and "What do you want to accomplish in life?" or worse—the dreadful, yet well-intentioned question "So, you going to change the world?" are morale killing. Cue the feelings of pressure and confusion.

Despite society telling us we don't need to have all the answers, it still operates in a way that requires us to know our place in the world and the impact we plan on making. Society has an unofficial rule book of what it expects us to want or do. Those in their twenties must constantly plan and look ahead: plan for the next big career move, or plan what happens after university. There is the contested notion that your twenties are 'the best (or worst) time of your life,' and the majority of society agrees that you'll do the most in your twenties; that your twenties is the time for opportunities and revelations.

Society's rule book does not consider what you want for yourself, it lacks a sense of self-proclamation. While I do believe your twenties are a time for opportunities and to explore how you fit into the world, I think the narratives have become foggy. Let's take a step back, momentarily remove ourselves from the big world, and look at the following three questions to adopt a new outlook based on each person's desires rather than society's expectations.

# THROUGH THE FOG

Written by Kayla Mudaliar  
Photos by Skyla Hillan-Schunemann

This question is a loaded one. It implies we must have physical actions and hard goals to achieve. In the Western capitalist world, this question is understood to be career related. Meaning the hard goal is a dream job, or a career pathway to achieve a specific capitalist goal. But, why is this question never associated with soft hopes or goals? You rarely hear someone answer this question with "I want to be creative," or "I want to be adventurous," or "I want to be critical of (insert a topic of passion here)."

There is a Charlie Brown comic strip quote I have framed at home where Charlie Brown asks his best friend Linus "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and Linus replies, "Outrageously happy."

I love this comic because of its simplicity. We all want to be happy, so aren't we all striving for a relatively similar feeling? A hard goal, like that of a career or university degree, does not represent who we become, it's something we do. We can have and be our soft goals too. Rather than framing your identity on hard goals, consider yourself what soft goals make you, you. In doing so, you determine not what you want to be, but who you want to be.

#1 What do you want to be in life?

#2 What do you want to accomplish in the world?

During the last half year of my undergrad, I took on some wonderful opportunities and projects: publishing two academic pieces, recording a podcast, and virtually attending the Generation Equality Forum held by UN Women in Paris.

After one of these opportunities, I was driving home with my partner, who just congratulated me on my accomplishment. I said to him, "I want to keep doing big things in life." He looked at me and asked, "What do you mean by big things?" After being silent for a while, I responded, "Big things are whatever makes me happy."

As simple as that.

This is a different kind of happiness compared to the first one. By happy, I refer to what brings me pride and joy. Your goal may not be happiness, it could be generosity, fame, honesty, or another soft goal. "Happy" is a subjective narrative, it is merely any soft goal you hold dearly; it doesn't have to align with any societal rule book or be understood by others. If someone doesn't understand or agree with what accomplishments may bring you feelings of joy, pride, gratitude, or another soft goal, that's not your concern because in your world—you - your joy fits into the big world.

Which leads me directly to...

Maybe it's because of my field of study (International Relations and Development), but the pressure associated with this well-intentioned statement never dwindles (until recently). And while I may be close to mastering the change of perspective in #1 and #2, I am just beginning to reflect and apply outlook #3 to my life.

Similar to #1, this question is loaded. It implies that we must take hard action and do hard work to make a visible, tangible change in a complex, huge world. More importantly, the 'change' in the world is subjected to each person's perspective. In other words, each person is the person to instill change; it can't just be anyone, it must be you. That's a lot of pressure—even if we don't take the statement literally. For those of us who shrug it off, we still take the weight associated with needing to do something noteworthy and impactful in a grandiose way.

In November, I went on a Christmas trip to London with a very close friend. At our fancy dinner, we discussed perspectives of love, career paths, soft goals, and life in general. While discussing how our soft goals can align with hard career goals, my friend said something I hold very dearly and will never forget:

"In my life, I'm not saving the world, just what's around me."

Now maybe it's because he has a few extra years on me, but this is one of the wisest, most refreshing statements to ever resonate with me.

The world is everything that makes up society, things you haven't experienced, and things you never will experience. Your world around you is both your physical world—where you are currently located, where you will go—and your emotional and mental world, where your passion is, where your friends are, where you find love, and where you find joy. Changing the world does not mean you have to leave a legacy that impacts 1,000 people. Changing my world (what's around you) in society's big world still means I change the world, but it's the world I see, I feel, and I understand. Whether that world needs saving or just some minor construction, your world impacts the bigger world, so start there.

I don't know how I never realized this worldly revelation before, but it's never too late to change your perspective in life.

So, while I don't have the secrets to life as a 23-year-old, I do know one thing:

The world is big, and while you have a place in this messy thing called 'life,' the world has a place for your world. Your world is your soft goals. Your world is one where you find and curate your values and goals. Your world doesn't have to adapt to society's expectations and goals. Your world is one where you control the narrative. When people ask you those three questions, everything may become foggy, but that's okay—you just have to look through the fog a little more.

#3 So, you are going to change the world?

# Inhuman

BY AMY CRABB  
ARTWORK BY BRUNO ARTUS

---



We strode across hills and hills,  
Reaching the outskirts of the city,  
Our city.

We were on the edge,  
The edge of society,  
Our world.

Yet it wasn't ours.

We laid down,  
Cushioned by maple leaves,  
Engulfed by our picturesque land.

Yet it wasn't ours,  
It wasn't ours.

We watched,  
Watched as they walked humanity's grounds,  
How society belonged to them,  
Not us.

It wasn't our society.

We were nothing,  
Nothing but inhuman creatures,  
Dragged onto the edge,  
The outskirts,  
The margins  
Of society.

It just wasn't ours.

Inhuman was what we were,  
Nothing but inhuman,  
Nothing but aliens to the world,  
Nothing but spectres who always go unnoticed.

Why?

Because it wasn't our society,  
It wasn't our world,  
It never was.

---







what does that mean? i think i know what it means, partially. i am late!  
late to the date of [insert protest here] / [controversy between those two lem-  
ons]  
but i want to know, isn't that enough?  
No! it isn't actually... o

i wish i could give you a box that is shaped by the feelings i want to pass on,,  
enclosed within you may find unknown sensations and obsessions  
perhaps those feelings aren't always fun to inspect but  
Alas! we must for the sake of living

feeling feeling feeling without articulating it – can that be enough? apathy is  
not always a foe. i find myself sinking into it – tired and despairing  
left slippery and flailing, never failing to find a cheap thrill though



LATE TO THE PARTY WRITTEN BY  
BONNIE PRICE  
THE REACH ARTWORK BY DAISY  
PORT

**FREE  
GIFT  
AHEAD**



The feeling where I would gash with the summer tarmac,  
Get a grass-stain on my knee from bending down with the ants -  
I still sometimes wonder what it would be like to be one - and I  
Would cry when I missed you cry if I was having too much fun  
Wait for the bell to ring and eat my sandwiches in tiny triangles -  
I told you when I was younger that I wanted to be a doctor,  
Cried for a plaster on my grazed knee, spilt baked beans  
Over my checked dress, I had long hair then and it was  
Always a mess so I begged for it to be cut-off but you said  
No and I think I miss dependence most of all, miss  
The protection in the bell and the hair and the  
Way you said goodnight.

A CERTAIN KIND OF  
NOSTALGIA POEM BY EMMA  
NORRIS  
NOSTALGIA ARTWORK BY  
DAISY PORT





Perhaps the time is coming where the world  
Will open at its core to let

The light bleed in. After

Grass-stained knees  
Cheap bottles of wine and

Your smoked stained teeth, reach out

To the doubt, embrace the sounds of

The fuzzy TV.

Letting skin slow

And melt, the 3am moon

Stain the unmade bed. Draw back the curtains  
And sleep off the hangover.

I want to live inside the sea,

I don't mean inside a quiet beach cottage or a luxury holiday villa, I mean i want to be gently swallowed up by the depths of her waters. To run away from the world which can be so loud and into her loving silence. My bare skin no longer locked away by the judging eyes and sour mouths of people who don't even know me. People who look just like me but gasp in shame at the sight of a woman's breast.

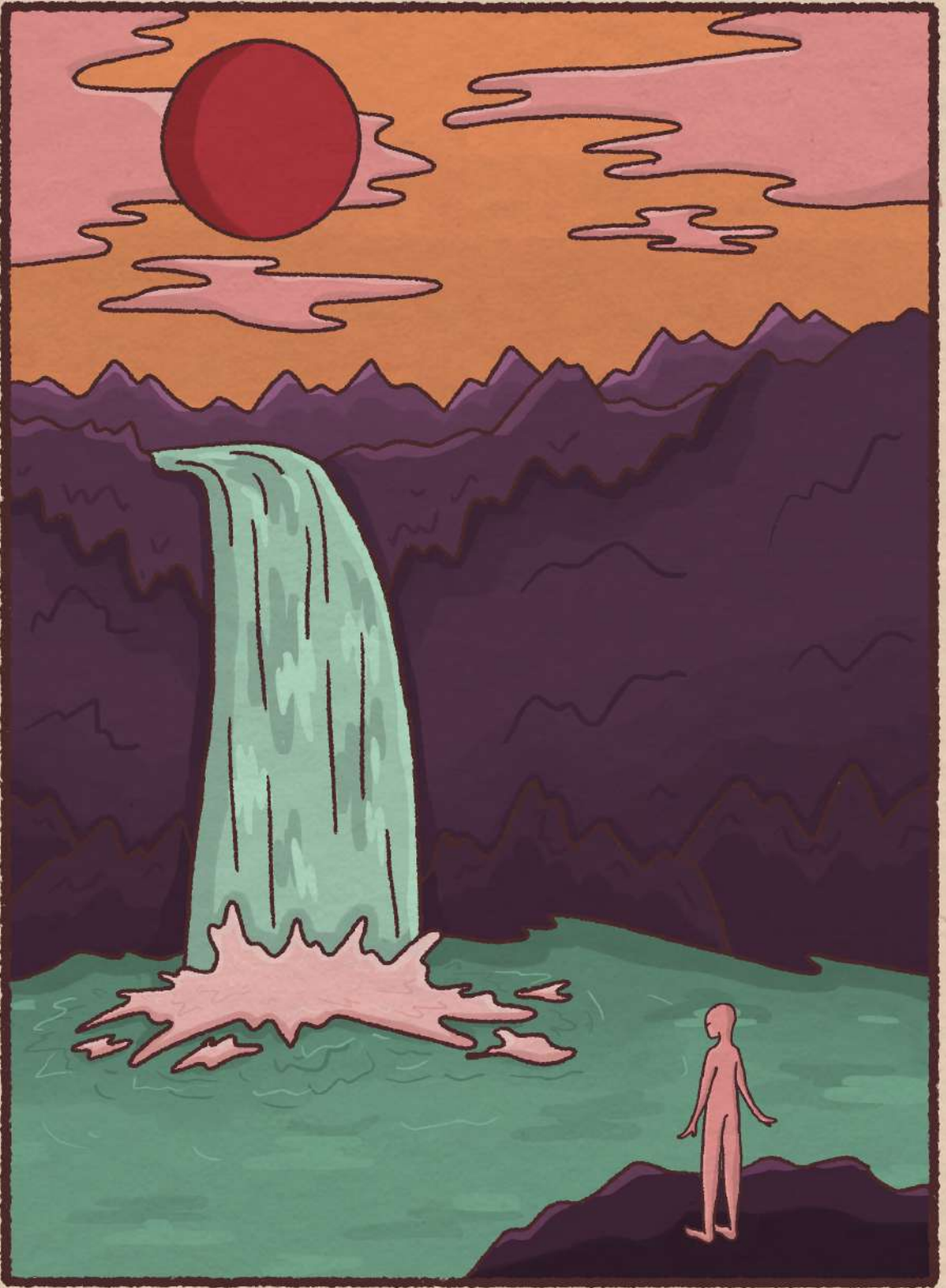
But the sea, she doesn't judge,  
She welcomes my body and cleans it with salt as goose bumps bubble to the surface and my cheeks turn red.

And under that water i am revived,  
The feeling of my wet mane stuck to the back of my neck and the soar of energy in my chest as the initial shock of cold wears off. My fragile hands are beautiful when they are sprinkled with clear blue droplets. You can't even tell that the skin around my nails is sore from nervousness.

You see the ocean heals my wounds, she wraps herself around me like a protective mother and tells me everything will be okay. She calms my heart when it is about to explode into a million pieces. She lets me stay as long as i want, there is no rush, no voice telling me to hurry up, there is only peace, as i weightlessly float away.

And when i decide to crawl back on to the shore, she waits there for Me to return when i need to. Maybe i will sit with her for an hour or two, gazing into her world of depths and beauty, aching to be swallowed up again when i remember that i will have to leave eventually.

But sometimes she reminds me that it is okay to go, that beyond her safety are many more beauties of life. More arms to hold me when i am scared, and more tender laughs of joy. Maybe i will return to the sea tomorrow yearning for her protection, maybe i'll be busy loving something else. I don't know.



Life on loop.

Alarm clock. Get out of bed. Brush your teeth (scrape the tongue).  
Go to work and work. Go home and eat (microwave meal for one).  
Feed the cat. Brush your teeth (scrape the tongue). Get into bed.  
Repeat.

Alarm clock. Get out of bed. Brush your teeth (scrape tongue).  
Go to work and not work. Go home and microwave (think no  
thoughts). Feed the cat. Brush your teeth. Scrape. Get into bed.  
Repeat.

Alarm clock. Get out of bed. Brush teeth. Scrape. Look in the mirror  
and be unable to recognise the stranger who looks out. Open eyes  
unseeing and un crying and unblinking. Go to work and not work.  
Go home. Microwave. Feed the cat. Brush teeth. Scrape. Get into  
bed.

Repeat.

Alarm. Get out of bed and smash the clock. Brush teeth and  
scrape. Go to work. Go home. Feed and brush and scrape. Get in  
bed. Repeat.

Get out. Brush and scrape. Work. Go home. Brush and scrape. Get  
in. Repeat.

Out. Scrape. Work. Home. Brush. In. (repeat-repeat-repeat)

repeat-repeat-repeat.  
repeat-repeat-repeat.  
repeat-repeat-repeat.

OutandScrapeandWorkandHomeandBrushandInandRepeatand

Get out of bed and peel all the skin off your face. Scrape. Work.  
Home. Brush. Bed.

(repeat)



Out. Brush. Pull all your teeth out and scrape. Crunch up your teeth and chew glass and dribble blood all down yourself. Go to work and bleed over your desk and twitch and shiver and tremble like a heaving bleeding snarling wolf with a leg caught in a beart-rap. Go home and stay there. Roast your cat alive and eat it dead. Get into bed and don't sleep. (repeat)

Out. Brush with razors that cut gums and spit the blood into the sink and lick it all up and swallow it inside you again (everything is inside you). Scrape. Home. Brush. In. (repeat)

Get into bed and stare at the ceiling and have no thoughts and no blinks and one arm out of the duvet like a mushroom sprouting from a cadaver.

(repeat)

Out. Scrape. Bleed. Home forever. Brush. In. (repeatrepeatrepeat)

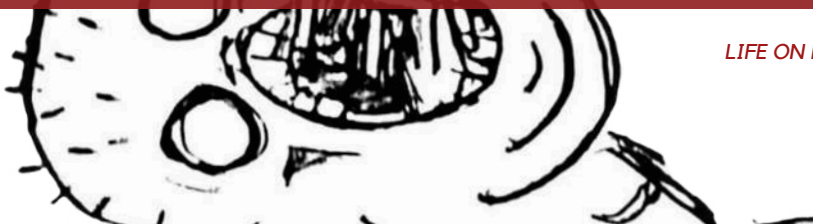
Out. Scrape. Skin everything you love alive and roast the flesh and muscle and fat and bones and eat it. Home like centipedes burrowing into the earth. Dig into the mattress like maggots in a corpse.

(repeat)

Out. Peel off your skin and muscle and slice up the flesh and tender is the flesh of a newborn babe and tender is the flesh that consumes itself and sloughs itself and makes itself tender. Devour your tender heart of flesh. Teeth. Tongue. Bed. No work and no home. In. In. In. Crack all your bones like glowsticks and deshell them and guzzle the marrow. Peel and skin and roast and eat and bleed. Gouge out your stranger's eyes with dessert spoons and be unable to see the smile on the apocalypse of your face. No teeth and no bed and no home. No tongue and no flesh and no skin and eat and repeat

(repeat) ((repeat)) (((repeat)))

ARTWORK BY BRUNO ARTUS  
LIFE ON LOOP WRITTEN BY MILLY BALL





# FAB RICA GALLERY

FABRICA is a contemporary art gallery nestled in Brighton's centre in a slightly battered former 19th century chapel with original features still remaining, creating a nurturing and curative environment, which reflects the gallery's focal points. Fabrica's beginnings as an artist initiative 25 years ago continues to inform where they are now, with the organisation aiming to be both educational and provocative with their exhibitions. The Channel had the opportunity to sit down with Fabrica's director, Liz Whitehead for a personal chat about this local gallery, and the opportunities that come with it.

**A: “So what did you study at uni and was that local?”**

L: “I studied a materials based course at University of Brighton, although at the time it was a polytechnic, and it was focused around this idea of the artist-maker. What I gained from that was that I found myself to be a good maker, but when I left, I knew I didn’t want to be working in a studio on my own. I realised that generally as an artist you make an artwork and you exhibit it, and you’re not really part of that feedback loop of people viewing the work. I wanted to witness that so I started to get involved in community contexts working creatively with people who weren’t artists. And I joined a group studio: Red Herring, where I met more artists who were interested in this. There were about 4 of us who were really interested in the idea that the process of creating art would be of interest to audiences. We wanted to investigate that, and so we set up Fabrica.”

**We discussed the different thematic and challenges that have framed the artworks they have shown over time:**

L: “We’ve often explored human themes like death, marriage, birth, the body. Since 2014, we’ve looked more at environmental issues, and thematic like landscape and locality. We’re really engaging with The Living Coast (Brighton, Hove & Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere) and understanding what that means to people in tangible, experiential and scientific ways.”

**A: “The whole premise around supporting early and mid-career artists to make new work and providing a platform to exhibit - is this what is special about this place?”**

L: “Most artists need funded opportunities to make work; things like money, space, technical support, expertise about reaching and building audiences for their work. Making your way in the art world takes time and skill, when you’re climbing the rock face, you need a little platform here and hand-holds there to make your way up.”

**A: “It’s interesting what you said about, when people think of a gallery they think of whitewashed walls and it being an open, almost empty space, whereas the approach you take is different”**

L: “The building is churchy, which definitely creates restrictions in terms of commissioning and presenting work, but that also creates opportunities. And over the years artists have responded to those opportunities in fascinating ways. I think from the beginning, we recognised that Fabrica is situated on a busy shopping street, so there’s an opportunity for an encounter with art here, even though people are not setting out to go to an art gallery. You can literally pop in as you are walking by, plus entry is free. And it’s the building itself that can immerse you in something else entirely when you step inside, I think we’re always trying to find new ways of bringing the building into the work we exhibit.”

**The work that goes into supporting a residency here is substantial. Liz tells us that a relationship with these artists will often start 12 months before the residency is actually held, and the relationship will likely continue for years after. Fabrica’s mission is to bring art to as broad an audience as possible, with outreach work in local community settings and ensuring exhibitions are free and events free or at a low ticket cost.**

L: “We have around 200 volunteers on our books at any one time, with about 100 volunteers actively working with us over the course of a year. Our volunteers support Fabrica across all areas of our work, and we invest a lot of time into creating a good experience for people that is not just functional but also developmental, so once someone is in the volunteer pool, there are lots of fascinating things to get involved in.”



PHOTO BY TILLIE LAM

**A: “So it was your volunteering background that brought you to where you are today with the gallery?”**

L: “Yeah, I come from a social background where my parents weren’t tertiary educated, and they weren’t working in the arts. They’re very creative people in their own ways and they consumed art, but they weren’t professionals. I come from a small village in the Pennines so I feel very grateful that I found my way into the arts through volunteering, doing art at school and then University. It’s very distressing for me to see art being pushed out of schools, and increasingly universities too, so young people from my kind of background might not have those opportunities that lead to working professionally in the arts.”

**N: “How would you say working with people from different backgrounds and communities has impacted the gallery?”**

L: “We’re always interested in what people have to say, and so the more diverse it is, the better because there’s some incredibly thoughtful observations that come through people experiencing the work. For example, the work we’ve developed with older audiences turned our minds to thinking about what is important philosophically about being older: the sense of perspective on life that it offers, and the positive aspects of ageing, as opposed to the negative ones that are more usually portrayed in the press and media. This led to a series of commissions on death and dying and events that celebrated staying well in later life; it’s an aspect of life that we all need to think about whatever age we are, but these are subjects that older people have a much deeper insight into. My personal agenda in all this is that I’m really interested in what happens to people through art, it’s all about communication, reflection and understanding.”

**It was Fabrica’s 25 anniversary last year, and they are still celebrating by sharing different volunteer stories and visitors’ experiences. You can check it out under the #MyFabrica tag on social media or on their website!**

Special thanks to director Liz for giving us this opportunity.

**Interview conducted by Annabelle Kiff and Nia Martinez**



PHOTO BY BEN HARDING



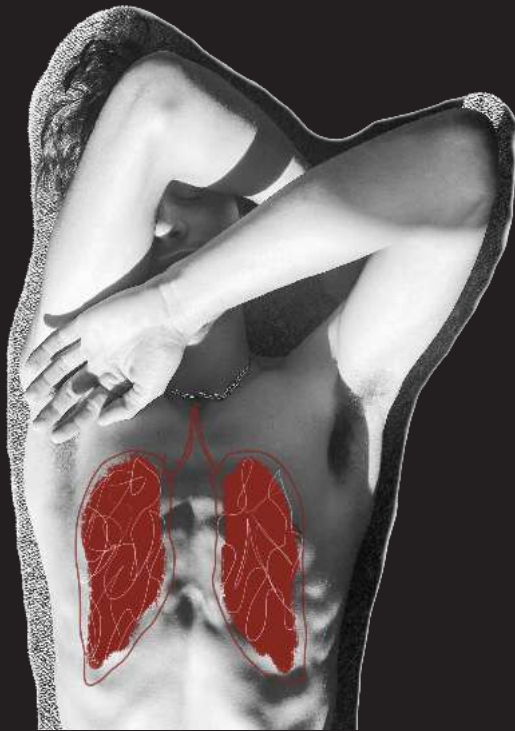
PHOTOS BY TOM THISTLEWAITE







Oh  
 to be  
 someone's  
 favourite mug,  
 The one they use for  
 tea.  
 The one that's seen more  
 use than the others,  
 The one that's always in use  
 but  
 somehow always clean.  
 I'd love to be the holder  
 of someone's comfort,  
 The vessel through which  
 they find  
 moments of inner  
 peace,  
 tranquility  
 While traversing this  
 existence that's as hostile  
 to many  
 as the outer reaches  
 of space is to us all.  
 I want to bring warmth  
 to someone's lips, to their  
 insides,  
 And I want to be as  
 dependable as a mould of  
 ceramic in their times of  
 need.  
 I want to be  
 impermeable, simply sitting  
 on the shelf and biding my  
 time  
 Until you need me.  
 And I will never fail.  
 Oh, to be a blanket that  
 someone's had from  
 childhood,  
 The one they had draped  
 over their legs when  
 they were read to,  
 The one they took  
 naps on in the middle  
 of the afternoon.  
 To be the soft fabric they clutched  
 as they cried when life gave them  
 a taste of what  
 it means to be sorrowful.  
 The sheer intimacy of  
 being dyed in someone  
 else's tears.



The  
 memories  
 of your grief, your  
 growing pains, won't  
 come out in the wash,  
 sweet one.  
 Even if you forget, I will keep  
 them.  
 They will never die.  
 It may be too much to ask. But  
 what I'd give  
 To be as loved and as  
 treasured  
 As a blanket that has existed in the arms  
 of a person  
 since before they knew what it meant to  
 exist. I'd love to be  
 someone's yarn box,  
 To be the  
 cluttered mess that  
 holds the  
 unpolished keys to their  
 dreams.  
 I'd hold half-baked hopes  
 and the remnants of  
 experiences that have long  
 since been made into  
 something else  
 Whether that be  
 memories, pictures or  
 compliments.  
 I'd be promise and joy, a  
 familiar companion that  
 stores the past, present and  
 future all in one place.  
 I am evolving but deep  
 down I never do.  
 I'm simply just filled with  
 new acquisitions while  
 half-finished skeins collect  
 at the bottom and begin  
 to tangle out of sight.  
 I am.  
 You need me and you  
 want me.  
 I want to be wanted.  
 I will hold your failures while your  
 successes find somewhere else to rest  
 And I will nurse your progress after it  
 is born.  
 After all, what I am if I'm not  
 supporting you?  
 What am I if not someone you  
 need, someone you love?  
 What am I if I don't exist  
 to you anymore?

THOSE THINGS WRITTEN BY  
 INDIGO DOVI-DOTSE  
 WATER ME ARTWORK BY  
 SKYLA HILLAN-SCHUNEMANN



Mama told me that the water didn't just suddenly flood the earth like it did in the Bible. The Great Flood took decades, so there's no way that people didn't see it coming. Mama also said that God remembered the survivors on the ark after 150 days, lowered the waters and made the world okay for them again. God hasn't remembered us.

Babu doesn't believe in God. Don't tell Mama, but neither do I. At night, the other mountaineers gather around fires to share stories of the world before The Great Flood, or to exchange hushed whispers and forbidden secrets about the Submerged. Instead, Babu sneaks away to converse with the Mashetani. Mama has never believed in her father's 'wannabe-vooodoo-bullshit', but then again, she's not the one being tormented by the dead.

I have been haunted by the dead ever since I can remember. They invade my mind, inescapable like bad thoughts in the middle of the night. They burn my skin, leaving scars that only I can see. They leave threats written in blood outside my tent, spelt out in the entrails of lizards and birds. They scream at me when I'm teaching the little ones to count and whisper horrible promises in my ear whenever I'm feeling lonely. They make me feel like I'm drowning.

The dead are getting bolder. Last week, I sat by the stream skinning civets with my father. We were preparing them for dinner as he told me that they reminded him of racoons, yet another species lost to the Flood. I will never forget the way his demeanour changed, the convulsions that took over his body and the unnatural contortion of his face. I can still see the crazed look in his eyes as he suddenly held the knife to my throat, and hear the otherworldly growl that erupted from his throat.



My screams were heard throughout the camp, but by the time that anybody came running my father was back to removing skin from flesh as if nothing had even happened. He didn't remember anything, and Mama thought the altitude was finally getting to my brain.

Babu has always warned me about the dangers of upsetting the dead, but I'm pretty sure that we already did that when we sentenced this planet to death and then did nothing to protect it from ruin. It feels like the mountain is fighting back against our existence too. Our crops have always had trouble growing up here, but now they won't even germinate. We scarcely bring back enough food from a hunt to feed twenty people, let alone eighty. I can't help but think we're cursed.

I saw a chameleon that day. Her scales were dazzling a Miombo-green, like fresh leaves in the springtime. A lizard shot straight through her, sending her flying as her scales transfigured into a sombre, lifeless grey. Watching it reminded me of a story that Mama had told me when I was little. Tanzanian folklore turned bedtime stories about reptiles and the death that follows....

*Death.*

I felt the colour drain from my face as the realisation hit. Adrenaline pounded through my ears, almost deafening, as I raced up the mountain towards camp.

I was too late. Our camp's children were the only survivors; The Submerged never take the young. I found my parents' bodies by the tent where we taught kids how to read and write. Their lips had turned blue, with putrid water oozing out of their noses, mouths and even their eyes. They had all been taken by the Submerged.

I felt sick. I stumbled away from the scene to gather my thoughts, empty my stomach, cry... whatever happens first. That's when I noticed the dead woman stood on the outskirts of the camp. She was waiting for me by the stream, her unkempt braids dripping with stagnant water. Her kanga ripped, mildewed and faded. She was staring straight at me, or maybe right through me... I'm not sure which. If I hadn't already known that she was dead, the large bloody gash in the side of the woman's head would have left chilled the blood in my veins all over again. "Incompatible with life," Father would have said, sucking his teeth.

The dead woman's mouth didn't move, but still, her words came to me. She was invading my mind, replacing my thoughts with her message:

"The Submerged have claimed their last victims on this earth. Your camp contained the last of those who have sinned against this planet, and you are now free of their curse. They will bother you no more..."

"I represent the dead, the forgotten and the drowned. Your ancestors failed this planet, but we have faith that you will not. The hope of the future lies with you, and you must lead these children into a new world, free of the Submerged, free of its destroyers, and somehow not yet forsaken."

I stood in silence as she walked away without another word, leaving a trail of rancid water in her wake. Less than a couple of days later, the water levels around Kilimanjaro began to fall.

The background of the image is a photograph of a stone wall on the left and a paved ground with two circular manhole covers on the right. A semi-transparent, light brown rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

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