

The background of the entire page is a monochromatic blue photograph. It depicts a hand reaching up from the surface of the ocean. The hand is positioned in the lower center of the frame, with fingers slightly spread. The water shows gentle ripples. In the distance, a dark, low-lying shoreline is visible under a vast, slightly cloudy sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

The Churchill

CHRONICLE

ISSUE 3 | JANUARY 2023

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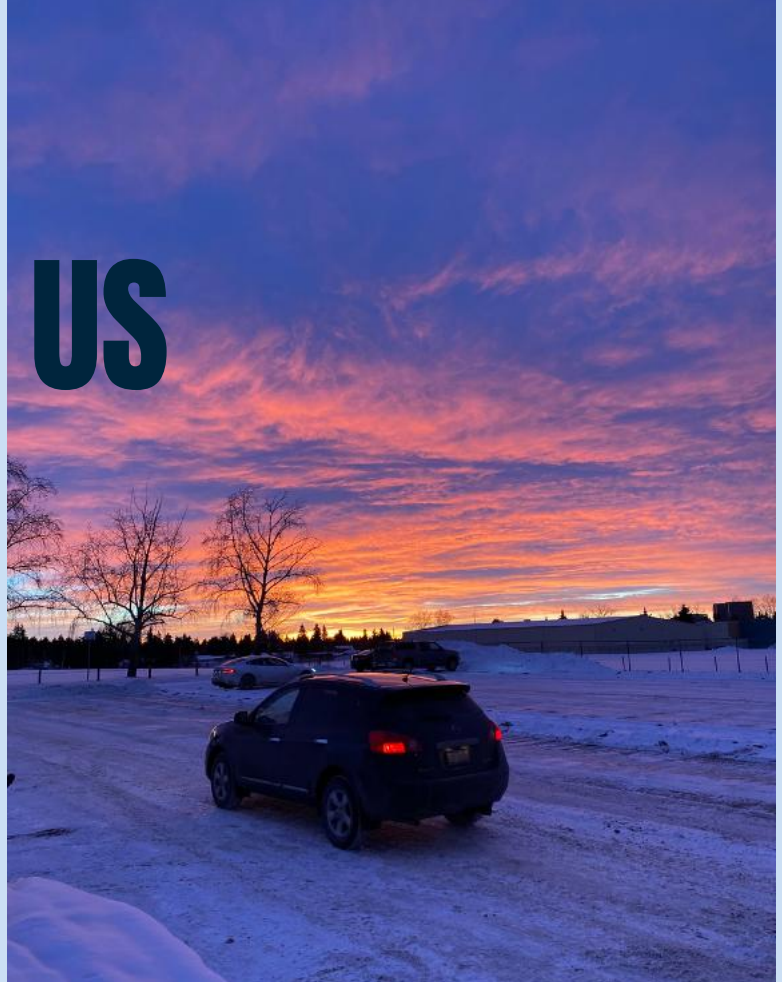
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FORGOTTEN MEMORY OF US

Moumita Murshed

She sits close, shoulder-grazing mine with hesitation as if her cold touch would convince the woods to let me keep her. I know it's pointless, and I know her sickening hope will only make our final breath hurt more. Yet, I can't bring myself to move, to bring her closer and let crimson and ebony bleed together—like I so desperately want them to—across the leaves we wait restlessly upon.

All because her smile is too poetic, and I fear that with a single ripple, I will lose it in the waves. Her beauty, etched in the sand, would wash away with such ease that I would then forget the pretty shape of her teeth, the way her bones sound against mine, and the taste of her blood.



So, silence stretches over us, like a swirling tide. The ocean and the woods meet often like this, but I am forbidden from speaking ill of the alliance, for she and I are the same. While nearly drowning in pine and salt, I try to take the very being of her into me, trying to convince the forest that if our memory is beautiful enough, it will almost be real. Time inches closer to the Sun and the Moon's kiss, glistening over the glass water almost mockingly. I find myself mourning for a loss that has yet to come.

The premature grief doesn't relieve me of anything, in the end. When she stands, leaning away from me, I find myself aching for a touch that barely was. She waits for me to look at her, to look at her the way I did when she watched me, what seems like millennia ago, with metal eyes and a red gaze.

I don't. Carmine doesn't meet ink, despite the way I begged for it in my head just an eclipse ago. She peels away from me, lingering and sticking in uncomfortable places, like a water-soaked book of poetry. The thicket makes sure she is swallowed, eaten, and then forgotten. Just as quickly as we were something, we are suddenly nothing.

Afterwards, I find myself almost happy—in a sick sort of way—to not remember the sound of her voice, the cold of her tears against my skin, or how heavy her heart felt in the cage of my ribs.

How Far Higher by Fatima Masoor

They teach you from the start
Your goal is to get a good-paying job
A couple of degrees
A family

They make it sound so easy
I've never had to work this hard until now,
Studying for hours on end for a unit test
Getting every possible support I can
Every test mark that doesn't reach my expectations
It feels like a knife to the heart
Hours of studying
Gone.
But-

Just keep going.

How will I get into university with these marks?
Will I not be able to get my dream job?
Will I have to change my career?
What if I get rejected?
How do degrees work?

Just keep going.

Don't you dare take your eyes off the goal?

Bad marks? Boo hoo.

2 more hours is nothing.

More

More

MORE

6 hours?

Daily.

study till the words blur and all you can think of is work

Study and get good grades, you pathetic excuse of a student

Everyone will praise you for getting into a respectable school

Shove their kid a little and say "look! She got into a good school. You better do that as well"

Your parents will forgive your past and shine at the prestige

...but

What about me?

What about what I want?

No one cares about that

You know that too

...just how far higher do you want me to climb?

to the top of the pyramid

Beyond.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Thank you for giving me life, but I'm afraid I'm going now. I tried. I really tried, but no matter how much I did, I was never perfect enough. I'm not blaming you for what happened, I understand that you just wanted the best for me. Just know that I'm in a better place than I was over here. Mom, Dad, did you know that my only dream in life was to make you guys proud? I tried my hardest by achieving the best grades possible, I worked day and night, but still, I couldn't satisfy you. I request that you understand my mental state; I couldn't take it any longer. I'm sorry, please forgive me. I'm so proud of you both, I just wish you could say the same for me.

With everlasting love,
Alicia

Her eyes scrolled over the note, rereading it, trying to process the first line.

"Thank you so much for giving me a life, but I'm afraid I'm going now."

Going where? She quickly folded the note and took out her phone, speed-dialling Alicia's best friend and praying to the universe that her daughter was okay. No luck. The friend did not know where Alicia was.

She checked her wristwatch. In nearly half an hour, her husband would walk in the front door and ask about their daughter. What would she tell him? Where had she gone? She started frantically searching every room in the house. There was a lot to check because they lived in a big house with a big lawn and massive windows. Everything was grand and luxurious. "This is what came out of studying at Harvard, becoming a lawyer and marrying an accountant?" she thought. Now she didn't know where her only daughter was in her own house.

As she searched, she read more of the letter. With every line, her hunt became more desperate. It was true, Alicia did work hard to get top marks, but grades weren't everything. There was more to life, and she had tried explaining this to Alicia, but she supposed that the lecture she gave her about receiving a 93% on her latest test did contradict that a bit. She came to the last line just as she opened the door to the basement bathroom,

"With everlasting love."

THE LETTER

ANHAD CHAUHAN

RAISA TATHOI



Wasted Potential

By Farah

Textbooks and loose pieces of paper sprawled across my bed which was covered with eraser shavings. I stared at the random letters and numbers floating around on the page, hoping my brain would somehow absorb the knowledge. This assignment was due yesterday and I, once again, procrastinated on it. This wasn't supposed to happen. I'm supposed to be perfect and finish all my schoolwork on time with full marks every time. So what was wrong with me? Usually, I could process any information and have no trouble completing whatever homework or assignments my teachers threw at me, so why did this small assignment take up all of my energy? I slammed my textbook shut before any more intrusive thoughts crept into my mind.

I thought back to last week when I stood drenched in the rain in front of my friend's doorstep, not knowing why I ended up there. Saying nothing, she merely wrapped a towel around me and brought me inside. We sat in silence for the longest time before she finally asked me what was wrong. I gave her a vague answer, something about school and stress which she didn't seem to appreciate. One thing led to another, and we were screaming insults at each other. She yelled at me about how other students would be elated to have my grades and that I should just try harder if I wanted the grades I used to achieve. I bitterly told her how she would never know my struggles and to leave me alone while harshly shutting the door on her.

Maybe she was right; I wasn't trying hard enough. Maybe my past teachers were lying when they said I was a gifted student. Blinking back the tears that burned in my eyes, I opened my textbook again and started working, all of my wasted potential weighing heavily upon my back.



Small Things That Make People Like You

By: Anonymous

- Sending songs and saying “This reminds me of you”.

This has more to do with the fact that you were thinking about them when you didn't have to. Shows that you don't just hang out because it's convenient but because you enjoy their company and think about them in their absence.

- Asking someone to continue talking when they were interrupted or talked over.

It is so frustrating and somewhat embarrassing when you were excited to share a story or your thoughts and someone just talks over you or completely disregards you. When you tell someone that you are still listening, it makes them feel heard and encourages the shy ones to speak up more often.

- Random hugs throughout the day.

Hugs aren't everyone's thing, a lot of people don't like being touched. But if you are a physical touch person, don't be afraid to embrace it. Ask permission if that is something you fear the other person would dislike, but people don't get hugged enough, and a good hug works wonders for a tired mind.

- Initiating conversations and hangouts and not being afraid to text first

Texting first often feels like you are too keen to hang out, but sometimes, the other person just doesn't know if you want to. Asking them if they want to meet up or texting them throughout the day will lead to them eventually opening up and thinking higher of you.

- Understanding when someone needs to be loved rather than advised.

When someone you love shows signs of distress, the first instinct for most is to try and fix the problem. Often that is not the answer. It is important to know when your friend wants your advice and when they just want to feel supported. Not everyone wants advice when they rant. Some just need to be heard.

The Effects of Your First Love

By: Sing Kan

One's first love can have a lasting impact on an individual's life. It can shape one's future relationships and understanding of love. The feelings of passion and intensity that are often associated with that feeling of first love are influential and memorable. The experience of falling in love for the first time is exhilarating, but it is also emotional and confusing. The outcome of a first love impacts an individual's future relationships. If the relationship ends in a positive way, it is a learning experience that will help an individual grow; they will have a better understanding of what they want in future relationships. On the other hand, if the relationship ends negatively, it can have a more negative impact and lead to feelings of hurt, mistrust, or insecurity in future relationships. Your first love ultimately defines your view and how you proceed with your relationships down the path, thus making it an extremely important part of your life.

Study, cry, eat, repeat.

This will be a slightly introspective mediocre paragraph

BY EMA GETACHEW

To me, the pursuit of academia has become fruitless. After middle school, we stop learning about what is important. We learned about adding and subtracting, but then we started learning algebra. I don't know how algebra will help me, but I'm learning it. At some point, I will graduate and have no idea how to manage my finances. Right now, many of us are preparing to take our finals. Over the next week, I will intermittently cry and study because of my final math test, which I will most definitely fail. Sometimes you have to prioritize your studies over mental health, which affects your studies making it counterintuitive. Sometimes I feel that if I start prioritizing my mental health, I'll be happy, but I realize if I prioritize my mental health, my grades will impact my mental health. And the vicious cycle starts again. Education is a good thing. It brings people out of poverty and improves their lives, whether it is a high school or a university degree. But then again, if you ask almost any high school student, you'll get the same answer, there are one or multiple subjects that are causing all their problems in life. At the end of the day, there is at least one question we have to ask ourselves; what is the point of high school? What are we learning? Will we need it in our daily lives? How will it impact us? If we can't answer these questions, then maybe it's time for a completely different education that helps people learn things. Do I need algebra or William Shakespeare to do my taxes in a few years? I don't think so. People aren't learning anything in schools. As one of those people, why should I try and not do things at the last minute when it works? I get good grades and immediately forget everything I learned, and I still don't know how to manage myself as an adult.

The Effects of Over-Studying and Healthy Study Habits

BY SHARLENE ARCEO

With finals dawning upon the students at our school, we're all rushing to get our studying in. It's a safe assumption to make that we all understand the hardships, and exhaustion of studying. Those emotions are completely expected if you're attempting to study all day and night for that big final coming up, but you need to realize the effects of over-studying on your physical and mental health and how it is not helping you succeed.

First of all, over-studying can show through physical symptoms that hinder your ability to focus. Some such symptoms are headaches, stomach aches, fevers and more. This results in discomfort and inability to study efficiently and effectively. If over-studying continues this can result in burnout as well as mental health struggles because of the lack of self-care present in your routines. Mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression affect social functioning as seen in studies that show that students who over-study are more likely to refrain from social activity with others.

We all want to get through our finals with flying colors, however, over-studying only constructs obstacles for your path to your goal. The biggest lesson that students can take away from years of education is to pace themselves, and understand their limitations. To direct you to safer and healthy study habits, here is the most important rule; take care of yourself. When you eat enough, sleep a solid eight hours, and take breaks this allows you to ensure top academic performance. Be consistent with your studying. This will help you get into more of a routine that you can adapt to. Study for 20-25 minutes, then take 5 minute breaks.

I hope you use these tips to try and study faster and more efficiently. I wish you the best of luck with your studies!



LOW ON ENERGY, RYAN LIANG.

The teacher hands me my test, and he congratulates me
My friend looks over as she tells me she wishes she got that score.
A sudden wave of relief hits me, but never happiness.
All the shouting from my parents that went into this result wasn't worth the sadness
The three hours of sleep I received wasn't worth the risk to my health
The dinner I never got wasn't worth the unbearable stomach pain I received from starving myself
All the stress from memorizing equations wasn't worth the massive headache bestowed upon my head
The truth is none of it was worth it.
I don't even care about grades and academic success
If I could have it my way, I would escape to a quiet garden where the plants dance and waltz
I would become a florist and sell them as I watch everybody's day light up
I wouldn't care that I made 23k a year since I'd be doing what my heart calls me to do
I don't care about being a doctor, engineer, or lawyer, I simply want to be happy
But for my parents, that's never enough
So after class, I head back to my house and tell my parents about the 100% I got
They both hug me and tell me they're proud, but I simply fake a smile and head to my room
I sit at my desk, pull out my books, and start the cycle again.

- Tiffany Archibong

December 16, 2022, the long-awaited Avatar: The Way of Water dropped in theatres. Armed only with a summary of the first movie, I walked into the theatre skeptical and doubtful of whether or not this movie could satisfy me in any way. And I can say with definite certainty that all doubts I had disappeared after the first 30 minutes. Even after finishing the movie, I was thoroughly impressed with how well it managed to deliver a heartfelt and beautiful story that could live up to the original Avatar without requiring too much previous knowledge about the original Avatar.

The visuals in this movie are incredible. Every scene was just filled with breathtaking scenery and incredible detail. Every splash of water, swimming fish, or glowing plant all had incredible depth and attention to detail that I often stopped paying attention to the story. The scenes that took place underwater were especially well-done, the shading and the way that light interacted with the environment made it a visual spectacle which especially blew me away since all of it was made using CGI. And just when I thought it could not get any better, the final act of the movie proved me ridiculously wrong. The action sequences were grand and explosive and left you feeling awestruck. The way the movie contrasted the flaming ships and calm nature underwater made watching the final act so much more immersive and intense. Everything about this movie just screamed eye candy. Now, of course, a movie isn't just a bunch of nature shots and people doing mundane things, it needs story and character. After finishing the movie, I can say that it has a good story. It focuses heavily on family and the implications of being family. It's a story filled with emotion and has some guttural and raw scenes. The characters themselves have depth and they did a good job of developing their individual stories and motivations. While the story is not revolutionary in any way, it was well executed and was told in a way that complimented the true strength of the movie, its vivid and realistic imagery. Overall, The Way of Water is a solid movie that focuses on stunning visuals and a heartfelt story about family. I give it a final rating of 89%.

-Eric Xu

Everything and Nothing makes...

KIRA BECKER

Grades are the lifeblood of Sir Winston Churchill High School. We are hungry for high grades because we know that we can improve. There is always more to achieve, always a higher grade. As the semester draws to a close, (diplomas fang into the jugulars of grade twelves,) burnout lurks. There's a bombinating energy. It's frenetic, restlessly lethargic. Marks can only plummet or be maintained at this point. Everyone is out for themselves. People turn to surreptitious forms of cheating and work smarter, not harder. The apple watch flashes in the dull lighting of the chem classroom, people skip tests/quizzes, scribbled notes are furtively examined, and during tests, people disappear to the washroom for half an hour. (No one believes that you were there to wash your face.) The inverse is those that study religiously, frantically tabulating 2+2, paranoid, because it could've changed in the split second that they blinked. Worrying late into the night after a test has been written thinking that they've failed. People think grades define them and their self-worth. As someone who subscribes to this, it's easy to lose perspective.

People who've completed the hellish five-forty of high school simper that everything will work out-you shouldn't worry so much. To those people: Kindly shut up. Preaching a generic epiphany that you discovered thirty years later won't alleviate the stress of present students. We want everything. There's a triumph in academic success, high marks= attending university and getting out of Calgary. But above all, it grants assurance. I find people, including myself, believe that there's an endgame. Once high school concludes, it'll be university, med school, doctor, and happy forever. No. I've never met anyone who's truly satisfied and admirable, however, we rarely acknowledge our achievements because they're eclipsed by what we failed to achieve. There's always more. (Nihilism starts looking wildly attractive.) However, the theory that life is meaningless provides meaning to life. Nothing is certain. Control is artificial. Struggles are perpetual. (I despise the first two statements.) Ergo, eventually, you should consider letting it be. You can criticize yourself and think you deserve more-it still won't change anything. Use failure, not necessarily as a learning moment (that phrase infuriates me), but as a crossroads. You have two options: yield, marinate in the past-obstruct the future. Or, brush it off, and have the intrinsic motivation to continue onwards because life won't wait.

Keep moving forwards

Hope & Evil

By Simrah Zamaan

HOPE IS THE MOST VICIOUS EVIL OF THEM ALL.

*THE VERY THING
THAT HAS MANAGED TO SAVE US,
MAYBE THE VERY THING THAT KILLS US.
IT IS THE VERY THING THAT PROLONGS THE PAIN.*

*THE VERY THING
THAT HAS MANAGED TO THRIVE IN PANDORA'S BOX,
AMONGST WRATH,
AMONGST GREED,
AMONGST PRIDE.*

*AND WHAT COULD ENDURE
ALONGSIDE OTHERS WITH SUCH TEETH,
IF IT DIDN'T HAVE GHASTLY CLAWS
OF ITS OWN?*

HOPE IS THE MOST VICIOUS EVIL OF THEM ALL.



Delighted by Cindy Cheng

Growing Pains

By Fatima Sabir

*GROWING UP IS REALIZING
THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE KIND AND
SMART*

*DOES NOT MEAN THAT EVERYONE YOU'RE
KIND TO*

*EVERY PERSON YOU HELP WITH YOUR
KNOWLEDGE*

IS GOING TO APPRECIATE YOU.

*GROWING UP IS REALIZING
THAT SOMETIMES FRIENDS DRIFT AWAY
OR WON'T PUT THE SAME EFFORT INTO YOU
THAT YOU DO TO THEM.*



By Ore Aine

Tunnel Vision

Academia. Relating to education. The pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge. A powerful thing isn't it? Powerful enough to discover the complexity of the body, to understand the components of the earth we walk on, to provide the necessities of life, and powerful enough to engulf an individual's whole being.

Words that are thrown around the ears of young individuals are cliché statements like "Shoot for the moon and you will land among the stars," or "Be the change you want to see in the world." These words fuel the oxygenated blood that flows out of our hearts. Working parallel to our hearts, these words motivate us to make a change.

We strive for greatness. Some want to be the next Edward Jenner and plan to dedicate 12 years of their lives to saving lives. Forgetting that, while saving the lives of others, we lose ours. Others aim to be like the Wright brothers and invent objects that provide convenience in the life of others. In doing that, they deprive themselves of the comfort they provide others. Do not misinterpret this. Doing good for the world is an honourable action, however, what is the benefit of sowing a seed where you are unable to reap the benefit?

Is your determination for the good of society that strong? Do you lack the selfish nature that all human beings possess and think of yourself differently? Different enough to risk your well-being for individuals that may never even know your name?

Knowledge is power. A good tool to make life a better place.

However, do think twice about the challenges you'll face.

Right now, you may look forward and see a light that shines at the end of the tunnel, that is how the story is told. However, people hardly discuss the journey to free one's self from the darkness, the isolation, and the deathly stillness of the tunnel. Knowledge is power. Like an individual who can quench their thirst after deprivation, the light at the end of the tunnel brings an unfathomable reward.

So, what is it going to be? Will you play it safe and avoid the fear of being in the tunnel? Or will you reach for your goals and enjoy the beauty of the light waiting at the end of the tunnel?

Whatever you do, I hope you feel fulfilled.

Taken By Sadra Shamanian





is it too late to tell you? to tell you how i miss laughing so hard that tears would streak down my cheeks? how i miss how the sound of your voice let the warmth seep into heartbreak; later, in a room so silent, my breath came in whispers of gratitude. i miss how you broke the ice when no one else dared to walk across it. now, i am stuck with numbers. i am tired of waking up before the sun; before the clock even hits six as i throw around cries of desperation "i need help" based on the desire to succeed rather than break down and grow. i am so sick of it -- "please". i need you to hold me close, far from the well-oiled gear i am becoming. my footsteps pound cracked tiles. at last. i can breathe. without my hands trembling and legs shaking under wooden curtains of fear.

i would chase stars to be young and naive if it meant being with you for even a moment longer, staring out into the depths of sea blue and wishing with every ounce of insanity we have for tomorrow to never take away these precious delicate feelings between us. to dare for it not to give up on us today.

i miss you dearly!

love,

Subashini



MACARONI ANOMALY

BY FINCH GINN

The other day, a friend of mine asked me, "Do you think macaroni and cheese are good?" At first, I figured answering this question would be simple yet I found myself stumped at finding the correct answer. Are macaroni and cheese good? It certainly doesn't have many nutritional benefits, but the healthiness of a meal certainly doesn't determine how good it is. However, macaroni and cheese isn't a bad meal by any means. In my household, good ol' mac and cheese aren't a staple food, but we do have a small tradition surrounding it. My family and I go camping numerous times throughout the year, and after every trip, on the night we get home, we have macaroni and cheese for dinner. This is because it's easy to make, easy to portion and decently tasty. So even if I don't feel that anything is particularly great about macaroni and cheese as a meal, I do have a fondness I associate with it. If I were told that I was having macaroni and cheese tonight, I wouldn't be particularly

excited. However, after a long camping trip, I find myself comforted knowing I'll be having a warm, familiar meal even if it isn't worthy of much praise. So... is macaroni and cheese good? Maybe I'm just conflating it with positive memories. So does it taste bad? I don't think so, but I'm fairly picky; Surely, I wouldn't eat it if it was horrible. Had my friend asked me: "Do you like mac and cheese?" my answer would have been simple. Yes, I do. But that's as far as it goes: I like mac and cheese. I don't love it or hate it; it just sits neatly on the positive side of the scale of my likes and dislikes. This realization has brought me to my conclusion. Yes, macaroni and cheese are good. It's not anything better or worse than good. People who claim to love mac and cheese are kidding themselves. And people who claim to hate it are taking simple food too seriously. Now, an answer that I struggled to arrive at is clear. Macaroni and cheese is perfect for what it is. It is what it is meant to be... just good.

Grandparents

by Eva Blakney

To care and to love, a beauteous act of affection

To hold and admire, a duty of compassion

It seems as though grandparents put in heart and soul,

Through it, all, and cherish every day in hiding,

Behind the most appreciative of faces,

Always giving support and guidance,

No one seems to notice the amorousness and sentiment

Behind the everyday heroes, that you all call grandparents

The Long Wait

by Gian Cayabyab

The legendary series of Fantasy Books 'A Song of Ice And Fire' is nearing the completion of the first of its two-book finale. The series, created by author George R.R. Martin, has spawned a wave of pop culture icons through the shows created by his books, such as Game of Thrones and the new hit TV series House of the Dragon, the former being heavily criticized for its finale, wherein a large part of the show's failure was due to the lack of book content to adapt.

Finally, after nearly 12 Years since the release of its last book, George R.R. Martin has announced he is nearing the planned completion of the second-to-last book of his series, 'The Winds of Winter', affectionately called by fans simply 'Winds'. His novels are often released every half a decade. With 'Winds' being the longest delay yet, fans often make jokes about when the book will finally release, although it seems the wait is almost over. Most fans of the books eagerly wait for the release, however, many fans are pessimistic, with 'Winds of Winter' taking 10 years to write and it isn't even the series finale.

Although fans are excited about the release, they know the series is now almost over with waiting for the next novel to come out.



Marguax Wu

SARA BAILLIE AND TALIYAH MARSMAN

KHUSHI GREWAL

On July 11th, 2016, Sarah Baillie and her five-year-old daughter Taliyah Marsman were killed. Sarah's body was found in a laundry basket in her daughter's bedroom, wrapped with duct tape around her face, neck, and wrists. Her daughter was found three days after on rural property eight kilometres away from Calgary, in a stand of bushes.

Their story starts with Sarah's best friend, who goes by AB because of her personal history and boyfriend, Edward Downey. AB and Edward's relationship was very toxic, and Edward would abuse AB. On July 10th, a day before Sarah's body was found, AB had broken up with Downey saying she had enough. It's believed Downey blames the breakup on Sarah because Sarah would tell AB that Downey was not a good boyfriend. Then, the next day, AB went to work at the daycare but noticed Taliyah still wasn't there by 10:30 am. As time kept passing, Taliyah never came to the daycare, so AB called Sarah's work phone. She was informed Sarah also never showed up at work. At that point, AB called Sarah's family, who called the police.

The police, along with a few family members, went to the basement apartment in Calgary where Sarah and Taliyah lived. They found Sarah's body, but Taliyah was nowhere to be found in the apartment until three days later. After forensically examining Downey's phone, the police determined it had been near Sarah's place the morning her body was found and in the rural area Taliyah was found in. On the incriminating security footage, they saw Downey's car pull up to Sarah's apartment early in the morning, in addition to finding his fingerprints on the duct tape wrapping Sarah's body. Consequently, Downey was charged with two counts of first-degree murder. It is believed Downey killed Sarah because she was supporting her friend by helping her leave an abusive relationship, and Taliyah died shortly after witnessing the murder of her mother.

Knowledge - What a Dangerous Weapon ...

By Anonymous

Everyone wants to be rich,
Successful, or fulfilled in life.
Yet to achieve it,
What can be done?

Beauty or talent may be the key
Possibly a successful generation may be it
Yet among the multiple answers
One stands out from the rest

Knowledge - what a dangerous weapon it can be
Able to throw off others simply with a speech
Achievable within the rich and poor,
One merely needs the persistence of learning

What a dangerous weapon
Even the richest people say it is
Something that can't be bought with money
Perhaps that is the danger of understanding

Untitled Doc

By Eva Whyte

Daunting is the colour white.

Both an opportunity for greatness,
And a void of emptiness to fill.

It is the gasp of breath before a concert,
Exhaling the vision of a creator.

White is the colour of an undyed canvas awaiting a masterpiece.

Open to the splash of paint and clash of tones,
The unknown is the picture that appears.

It is a blank slate on which worlds are born,
Where love and hate, life and death spring forth.

White is the colour of paper.

Ready and open,
Waiting for ink to dance across its pages,

Thousands of ideas swirl,
each with their page to fill.

White, the colour of new beginnings

The colour of a movie screen before it begins,
The colour of a blank canvas.

White is the colour of an untitled doc.

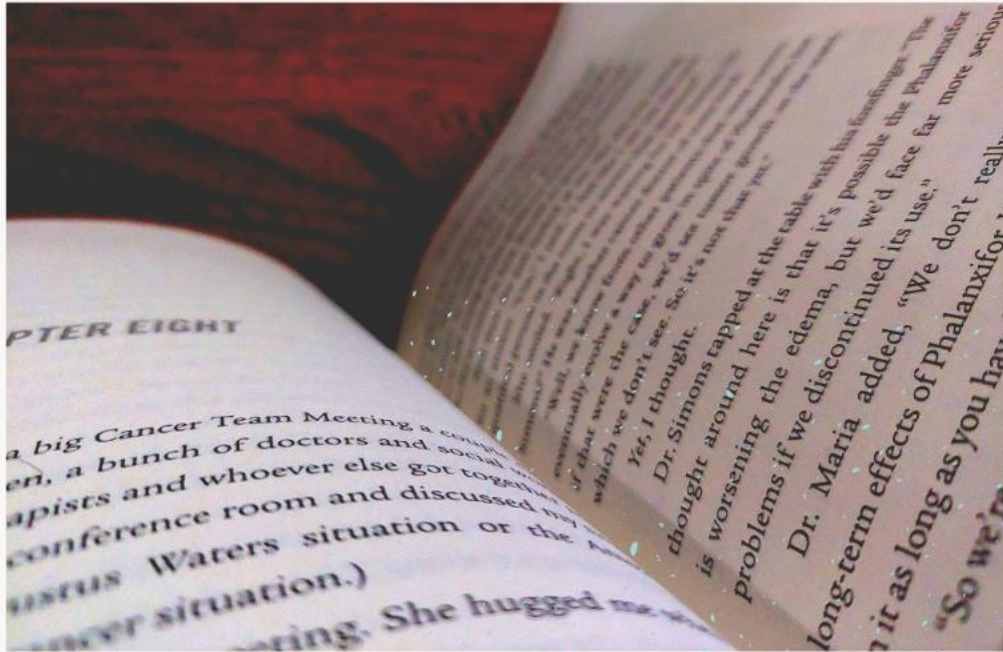
Empty and waiting,
Ready to transform into something new.



Photograph Taken By Brooke Guderjan

LEARNED

by Matthew Osundet



Photograph by Raisa Tathoi

HOW CAN WE BE SO WELL-EDUCATED, YET SO UNLEARNED?

The semester is drawing to a close, bringing a tide of weighty work and dreadful assessments along with its end. But by what measure do we judge these tasks and expectations to be so gruelling? School can indeed be challenging, and the stress felt while taking exams and checking marks is no mere illusion. Perhaps that's why, in these academically cumbersome times, we see all manner of nerves and tension brimming and boiling over in those around us.

Sobs or destitute groans all around when a major test is handed back, lengthy complaints about the demands of life going around groups at lunch, friends closely comforting friends worried about results—none of these are uncommon sights. Of course, a reasoned sense of pressure is appropriate and healthy considering your performance here will affect the direction of your life in substantial ways—but again, I must ask: how can we call ourselves people of any resilience

and act as if our tasks are grievous?

As was correctly defined by Aristotle through his philosophizing, there exist two extremes of every behaviour, one of deficiency and another of excess. One who sloppily moves through his schoolwork and traipses dismissively and unstudied into an exam exemplifies the end of deficiency. His issue is simply amended: he must aspire to more and be frightened of less, (that his dream will pull him along and his nightmare push him away). Then there are those examples of excess, the sobbers, groaners, lengthy-complainers, and those greatly in need of comfort. These souls, properly concerned about their education, have an unfortunate lack of the baser, indispensable learning of emotional stalwartness and virtue.

So, what must these excessive stressors do? Pursue the golden mean between intensity and flippancy, starting with recognition of an uncomfortable proclamation: most of what we have declared 'difficult' in school is not hard at all. Truly, if you sit down and do not allow distractions, your homework will get done. If you hunker down and do the research and writing, or the drawing, that presentation, position paper, or project will get done. Moreover, it will be done all the better if you pour more intention and time into it. Learn to be unfazed when you come short just of where you want to be, and never be content to remain where you don't.





The Secret by Charlotte Brontë

Reviewed by Mikayla Girard

The Secret by Charlotte Brontë is a collection of five of Brontë's short stories: "The Secret", "Lily Hart", "Albion and Marina," "The Bridal," and "A Peep into a Picture Book," as well as a short screenplay entitled "The Rivals." Not to be confused with her sisters Emily and Anne, Charlotte Brontë is most well-known for her novel Jane Eyre. While some of the short stories contained here are intriguing mysteries, others are more evocative of a Jane Austen slice-of-life. Many of the characters overlap between stories, such as the title characters in "Albion and Marina," who were truly just pseudonyms for Arthur and Marian from "The Secret." I found this added a unique layer of depth to the already curiosity-inducing plot, as there was more time to get to know each character in differing situations. Brontë's writing is reminiscent of a modern Shakespeare; the sentence structure is flowery and elaborate, while the diction is mostly updated with the occasional dated word or phrase. This book wasn't exactly my favourite, as some sections were quite difficult to understand and all the female characters were portrayed as either weak and submissive or evil and manipulative. However, I still believe Brontë's writing is a unique opportunity to read, and everyone that has the chance should read at least some of her writing. Even if I didn't enjoy it as much as I anticipated, it was still a worthwhile read to me as I enjoyed being transported back to the 1800s and learning about how people lived during those times. If you like light academia, or want to read Shakespeare but can't understand his language, I'd recommend checking some of the Brontës' work out.



Book review - The Lies of Locke Lamora

Mannar Fatima

A quick summary of the first book in an octology: Locke Lamora is an orphaned child. As his cleverness becomes too big a burden to bear, he is sent to live with an eyeless priest named Father Chains, who trains Locke and a group of other kids to be the best thieves in their city-state. The group calls themselves the Gentlemen Bastards, and Locke Lamora becomes their infamous leader, the Thorn of Camorr. Passing as petty thieves, the Gentlemen Bastards swindle nobles and thugs alike. The most powerful person they fool is Capa Barsavi—yet a stronger opponent lurks, waiting to pounce on Locke's eventual vulnerability. The Gray King. Slowly, the Gray King kills Capa Barsavi's most trusted men, eyeing Locke and eventually controls him as a pawn in the game he has orchestrated. Locke decides that he will either make the Gray King beg for his mercy or die trying.



The world of the Gentlemen Bastards pulls a reader in like no other. I became obsessed with this book and the characters. Unlike a lot of fantasy books, this book has realistic characters that are multidimensional and understandable. Locke Lamora is shown as a physically weak character, to a fault, yet has characteristics that make him incredibly intelligent and give him strength in different ways. Readers can feel why he makes the decisions he does regardless of how sensible they may be. The author, Scott Lynch, does an awe-inspiring job writing action scenes and dialogue between characters. The conversation never seems pointless or overly dramatic, simply realistic and fun. Action scenes are packed with emotion and desperation, showing the reality of Locke's motivations and decisions. If you mind cliffhangers, I would not recommend starting this series as only three out of eight books have been published. However, if you do start, I believe that this is the most enjoyable of the three so far.

(Also: If you would like to read this, please search for age ratings first.)



IMMINENCE PT. 3

ABLAH GADALLAH

"A glass sphere?" the professor stated plainly. "This is what you call me, ranting and raving, at two in the morning about?"

Cillian doesn't remember this. He doesn't even know this professor's name, but after countless unanswered emails and awkward phone calls he must've expanded past his former colleagues and begun contacting just anyone. Regardless, he nods to the professor, his messy hair nodding along with him.

"I see..." The professor draws out, glancing back at Cillian. Shifting from foot to foot, Cillian is made suddenly aware of his haggard, disheveled appearance. Normally he would've taken the time to carefully groom and perfect his appearance before stepping out the door but lately he had been preoccupied. "I'll keep this here and begin running tests, you were correct about the unusual material, where did you say you found this again?" The professor continued. Cillians blood ran cold, panic suddenly flooded his system at the thought of leaving the orb with the professor.

"I'm afraid that's not possible," Cillian smiled shakily.

"What? Have you forgotten where you found it?" The professor raised an eyebrow.

"No, not at all, but I cannot leave it with you."

"Well then, I don't suppose you intend to return here every time I need to run a test on it."

"That can be arranged," Cillian replied, his body loosening from relief. He had expected the professor to immediately turn him away at the soonest inconvenience.

The professor looked him up and down before shaking his head and returning the orb to Cillian. "I'll email you the schedule."

Cillian softly cradled the orb in his hands, bringing it close to his body. "Nothing that might damage the orb as well," he added.

"Of course," the professor said, dismissing Cillian with a wave of his hand and turning back to his work on the far side of the room.

Cillian walked home staring down at the orb in his hands. The swirls in the orb had become clearer the more he looked at them and he was certain that given enough time he wouldn't even need the professor's fancy tests to figure it all out. He does not know how he got home that day, only remembering looking up from the orb to find himself in his dark room the next day. He got up to eat and drink, then returned to the orb.

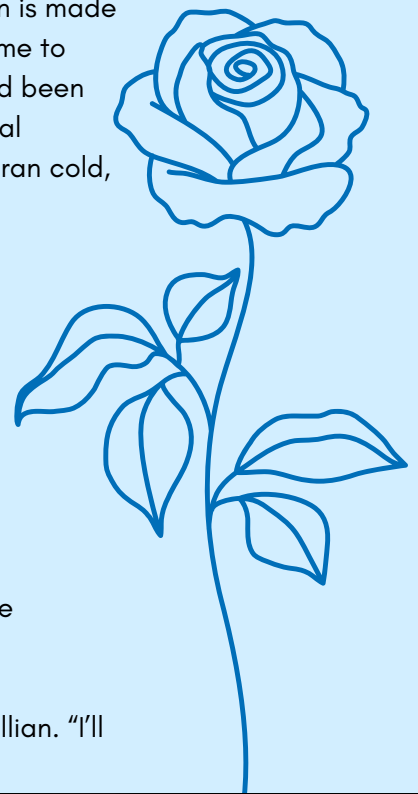


Photo by Raisa Tathoi



Masterminds Within Us All

It is easy to bask in the feeling of never being enough, always wanting more from yourself, and never being entirely pleased with all your accomplishments. We're simply masterminds at giving ourselves little to no credit when we rea

lly need it. Grades, school, and pressure can massively affect how we see ourselves. Whether you agree with it or not, there

is always some sort of pressure with tests, quizzes and presentations. And that mark you weren't quite happy with, seems to always trail behind you as a reminder that you're not good enough. Each step you take, that mark follows you and haunts you like the phantom it is. And you can never shake it until you find a way to change the mark that you have defined yourself with. I never really realized how much I could define myself by a mark. A *mark*? Seriously? I try to think to myself that it's just a number ultimately, not who I am. But the voice in my mind has engraved itself in a spot that seems to never go away. Drilled into my mind without remembering that I am a person too with feelings and thoughts, by someone. And that person is *me*. I have become very good at not defining myself by who I am as a person. Deep down, I am a very open and kind-hearted person who cares for those around them. Those things I can be good at, yes. And yet... I can't get the mark I want? I am very good at never giving myself credit for the things I do well, and at pinpointing my faults. I always feel like I am picking up the pieces from my own mistakes when I don't get the grade I want. I am picking myself up, trying to tell myself it's okay, it's fine I can do better next time. But the idea that I still should've done better torments me. It's all simply impossible. Perfection is nothing easy.

Being no mastermind in math or science, and finding social studies to be a bit heavy and irritating sometimes, I can say that I am the mastermind of self-doubt and self-torment. Most students are, school being such a big part of our lives. Self-destruction because of marks is very real, but it is important to realize that in the end, we are all humans just trying to make it out of here in one piece. So for now, put yourself back together, realize that a number is not you and become a mastermind in loving and appreciating yourself.

By: Niki Honarvar



Cartoon by Rachel Cheng

A Light in the Darkness Avarie Komori

The girl rested her head to face the bus window and felt the cold pinching breeze of the evening air fill the space. As the bus made a turn, she caught a glimpse of an old man holding a cardboard sign that read “no money. no food. no home”.

She felt remorseful for him, and began to think about the state humanity was in. She thought of how the news was constantly filled with horrid stories of corrupt leaders, natural disasters and so on. She put on her headphones to try to escape her dreadful thoughts but couldn’t drown them out.

Her attention was suddenly drawn to a family a couple of seats away from her. Their baby started wailing loudly and their parents soothed and comforted the child. Watching the baby and thinking back to her youth and how oblivious she was to the ways of the world shocked her. She wished she could be oblivious to the knowledge of the real world, she wished she could live in ignorance.

The sun was almost gone and the darkness began to set in, covering the sky like a blanket. The street lights began to flicker and illuminate the night. highlighting aspects of the streets that would never be seen clearly in the daylight. The bus came to a stop at a gas station, she waited still looking outside into the pitch black. Under a streetlight on the other side of the street, she saw another man that looked slightly dishevelled like the man from before. He was shivering from the piercing cold, she took off her jacket and began to stand up but stopped when she saw another man approach him.

He had a bucket of red blankets and gave one to the other man.

Her heart began to feel reconciled by this act of kindness, maybe she had been too quick to judge humanity. If the man with blankets had not known about the darkness of the world, he would not have been able to help the other man. If he lives in oblivion he would not be able to spread kindness into a broken world. At that moment she felt comfort knowing that her knowledge of the world was not all bad but that it could be used for a greater purpose, to help someone going through a storm. To bring some light into the darkness.



The importance of romanticizing high school

AVA MILLER

Growing up and transitioning to being a teenager is usually marked with classic Hollywood movies such as mean girls, clueless and Ferris Bueller's Day Off. all these movies have one thing in common: high school.

Nobody can deny that these dramatic takes on a high school experience can set unrealistic expectations. Frankly, there can be an issue with the fairly-tale-like portrayals of high school that force being a student into a one-dimensional experience focused only on one's social life. But that isn't the reality of real-life high school students, most of us spend our free time studying and don't have time for "romanticizing school".

Romanticizing school is often met with negative connotations and with anything, too much of it can be negative, so finding the right balance can be beneficial.

The idea of romanticizing school can motivate students to study harder and achieve higher grades. Romanticizing your life overall is also often met with self-expression, letting go of the opinions of peers and all the people around you.

Romanticizing your life need not involve a flamboyant manner of living; it can just involve doing activities that bring you joy. Instead of doing what other people desire, try to do things that make you happy about life. It's easy to go through life without appreciating what's most precious, so take some time to relish the beautiful moments that occur every day. It can be simple to let these moments slip by, whether it's a lovely sunset or an amusing time with friends.

But remember, you don't have to be perfect. Romanticizing your school and overall life doesn't have to be constant. Just do what makes you happy. Live your best life and let go of the opinions of others.

Numbers, Numbers, Numbers

By Anonymous

Around me are faceless numbers. My friend is a 97. She eats 94s for breakfast, 93s for lunch, and 98s for dinner. She wears the 90s on her feet and 98s on her sleeves. When I look into her eyes, I see all the overbearing, menacing numbers, a round 9 and an angular 7.

My other friend is 86. When she speaks to me, her frantic voice comes through in a series of 84s, 89s, and 83s. From her lips an onslaught of 82s and 85s come rushing forth, crushing me, pummeling me like rocks. When I glance at her, I am instantly punched by the impact of a symmetrical 8 and a curvy 6.

The numbers are suffocating, so orderly, so perfectly printed in a computer's script. When I escape from my numerical friends, I rush to a quiet space, looking for any task to occupy my racing mind. But even as I crack open a textbook, the words begin to morph. 56, 54, 57... I lean down to tie my shoes, and even the laces are twisted into alternating 3s, running down the top of my shoe. Frantic, I rush to the washroom, hoping to find solace in the quiet space—but even then, as I pass the mirror, I catch a glimpse of a starkly pale 53.

I halt and rush back to the mirror. I lean in.

53. My face is overshadowed by a 53.

A terrible dread rises within me.

Is that all I am? 53%?

What does it mean? Am I only worth 53% of a human being? Where are my features? My long hair, my green eyes, my lips?

As I start to grasp at my face in the mirror, the mirror begins to clear. Slowly, the fog is lifted, and the number slowly begins to fade, its features melting into the scenery. My cheeks and eyebrows gradually become defined, and I see myself again, for what I am: 100% a human being.

I return to my friends. When I look at their faces, their eyes, so soulful and full of human life, stare back into mine, and I remember. A number can never truly represent a human being.

I look at my grades. The numbers, although not without their weight, now lay contained within my phone, where they belong—they are not who I am or what I can achieve.



The Devil of Christmas

By Celena Zhang

What better way to celebrate Christmas than telling traditional Christmas tales? I will share my favourite Christmas lore in this article, so I hope you enjoy it!

The Legend of Krampus

When you think of Christmas, you think of snowmen, hot chocolate, presents, and all things jolly, but you might be blissfully unaware of the danger that lurks in December. I bet most people don't ever think about a Christmas Devil visiting them during the holiday season, but this legend might just put a damper on your idea of Christmas.

Krampus is said to be the original "Bad Santa" who arrives on December 5th with Saint Nicolas. While Saint Nicolas rewards the good children, Krampus is in charge of punishing bad children. It is said that Krampus whips and chains the naughty, stealing them away to take back and eat in his lair or just dragging them down to the underworld as the ruler of Hell. According to mythology, Krampus is the Norse god of the underworld, and according to the Catholic church, they could not suppress the celebrations of Krampus. Did I mention that people celebrate this "Christmas Devil"?

The people in Tyrol, a state in Austria, are crazy about Krampus. In celebration of him, they drink alcohol, dress up as Krampus, and party in the streets. They hold a festival revolving around Krampus because he was said to be part of pagan rituals for the winter solstice. People celebrate by doing the Krampus Run, The Krampus Parade and wearing Krampus masks. So, if you feel like getting in on the Christmas festivities, buy a Krampus mask from Amazon and go wild!

Krampus originated in Germany and dates back centuries; his name comes from the German word "Krampen," meaning claw. He looks like a half-goat and half-man-like creature with a long pointed tongue and sharp fangs. So, you better watch out for this devilish creature this Christmas. But unfortunately, this is a fictional creature, and if you do see any "Krampus," it's just some dude celebrating the Krampus Parade. Although Krampus is a fictional character, it still gives parents a story to keep their children behaving and an excuse to party and parade. I hope I have added a little more to your holidays. Merry Christmas!



Lisa Chen

THE "REAL" SANTA CLAUS

BY JINJOU WANG

Since the time of the earliest recorded human existence, stories have provided a lens into the many magical worlds that have captivated the human imagination. As our world has grown and changed, so too, have the stories it tells. Many of these stories have become part of our culture, allowing us to pass down our beliefs and ideas from generation to generation. Of all the stories that are told, no other has been as universally beloved as that of Santa Claus. For centuries, boys and girls around the world have expressed faith in Santa's existence, buoyed by the promise of holiday cheer and present galore.

Whether Santa Claus is a "real" being who travels the world in a single night has an obvious answer: no. Santa is not objectively real. However, looking beyond the imagination and wonder that keeps Santa alive, one could make a powerful argument as to why Santa is "real" in a deeper sense.

The story of Santa and his giving spirit is a reflection of the core values of human nature - empathy, compassion, and generosity. Since its inception, the Santa myth has been used to motivate and inspire acts of giving and kindness during the holiday season, and throughout the year in general. After all, who can forget the iconic phrase "it's better to give than to receive," a phrase so famous and adopted on such a large scale that it has become a part of the common cultural lexicon?

Santa's influence can be felt most profoundly in the idea that our annual season of giving and spending time with loved ones serves a higher purpose, of uniting us as one human family. Stories of Santa or otherwise provide us with the opportunity to come together to celebrate the spirit of the season, providing a powerful reminder of why we should strive to care for each other all year round.

At the end of the day, while Santa may not "really" exist in the way that some people believe, he has been responsible for a lasting and meaningful impact on humanity. For this reason, Santa Claus should not be dismissed as a figment of our collective imagination, but instead as a true symbol of hope and wonder, a figure whose power reigns in the hearts of children and adults alike throughout the world.



Christmas's miracle

Distance, COVID-19, and grandparents who still grapple with technology's follies were only a few of the wreath-covered hurdles that stood in the way of a family-full Christmas. This year, we stand closer than ever with family and friends after the pandemic billows smoke over holiday spirits and daydreams. But the snow falls with grace, and roofs and streets are covered with white dust that screams Christmas joy. The numbers on the December calendar grow, and malls are filled again with the patter of electrifying energy as shopping carts are filled with strangers' hereafter happiness. Outside, children sled down hills, their toboggans wielding a boundless revelry, always reflected in the smiles on their faces and laughter that pours helplessly from their throats. On the rink, toddlers waddle in their animal-print snow pants along with inexperienced couples tripping over the ice together. This year, I sit under the lights and dot my Christmas card 'i's in red pen and sign my name off with hearts. I revel in all this holiday has given us. This year, we can finally bask in the joyous warmth of our family and friends' infinite pools of warm love. This year, as we notice our parents' hair grow a little grayer and our little siblings a little taller, we'll spend every magical minute of the holidays accompanied by our undying intimacies that, along with plenty of presents, shroud the Christmas tree. Happy holidays. That is the real miracle of Christmas.

The Quest - Nola Biglin

There it was. After years of searching, he had finally found it. All he had to do was reach out in front of him, and it would be his. He had sacrificed to reach this moment: his friends had stopped reaching out to him because the quest became his life. His parents were dead, and he missed the funeral because he was in France following a lead after spending the family fortune on airplane tickets. That's probably one of the reasons his siblings no longer speak to him, but he was sure that there was more water under the bridge.

"Everything will work itself out when I find it," is what he told himself countless times over the years. But now as he stood within arms reach of it, of infinite knowledge, he couldn't even bring himself to face his entire life's purpose. It was a simple piece of paper, folded in quarters, sitting in a seemingly normal reusable container. After noticing the label that stated "infinite knowledge," he almost thought it was too good to be true. He had come a long way to get here though, so with pounding heart and dread at the thought that he had come all this way for nothing, he opened the container -the same kind that he used to have in his lunches as a kid he noticed absently- and with shaky hands, he unfolded the paper. Written on it was a single word:

"Google".

EE

