

Teekha

More than just a good read. It's a whole new experience



ABOUT THE COVER



Photo by lazah Alburo

Behind that gaze against the reflection staring back at you, rumination and contemplation constantly take place. The serenity and beauty, even the imperfections and shortfalls, they all mirror right back at us through reflections. Do these thoughts even hold meaning? Will journeying out into an expedition whose destination circles right back at us even be relevant? In times like these, where we constantly feel confused and pressured to keep rushing forward, to keep persevering, it helps to just stop, think back, and reflect.

Editor's Note

Welcome to a realm where memories whisper secrets, emotions create vivid pictures, and thoughts dance on the reflective surface. This issue of our magazine dives into the fascinating world of "reflection," revealing the depths of self-discovery.

In today's fast-paced world, it is all too easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of daily routines and obligations, leaving little time for contemplation.

We know the pressures you face—the constant demands of academics, extracurriculars, and social obligations. It can be overwhelming. But within the constraints of time and responsibilities, there lies an opportunity to nurture your inner self. By deliberately setting aside time for contemplation, whether it be through journaling, finding solace in nature, or engaging in other activities that encourage pausing and thought, you can open doors to insight, growth, and self-awareness.

Within these pages, you will find a tapestry of stories, poems, and artwork that beckon you to contemplate the moments that have shaped us. These pieces serve as mirrors, inviting you to explore the depths of your own thoughts and emotions, while also encouraging you to connect with others who may have walked a similar path. The Press wants to remind you that your path is not only defined by your successes and triumphs but also by the reflection and self-discovery you experience along the way.

Technologists, together, let us embark on a journey of self-exploration within the pages of this magazine. May it serve as a source of inspiration and a reminder that, despite the demands of our fast-paced world, reflection remains an invaluable tool for your personal growth and well-being.

Ad Astra Per Aspera!

Letter from the FE

To begin with, here's a random fact about me: I tend to talk to myself a lot.

It engraved onto me due to years spent in solitude. Hence I rely on my own speculations, as if I am my own mirror. Over years of emotional growth and individual development, I happened to discover that my perspectives can be tweaked through the "mirrors" of other people around me, in which, little did I know, would aid me towards a wider, clearer reflection of my being. It eventually came to the scenario where I've been lurking by my own waters figuring myself out for others' approval, unbeknownst to me how everyone else also has been checking themselves the same way.

As humans, we have a knack of constantly judging who we are in a way that we view our physical and behavioral image in third person, which, right there, is sort of how we look at a mirror— seeing yourself which you're not exactly that reflection as the actual person that is you. With that analogy, therefore, we view and possess an inner judge within ourselves. That is when we would comment ourselves based on what we think in our heads is true; And because of that, we become prone to giving our own selves another version of our personas. An alter ego, an inner Odile, a "164th personality", or a "2.0". I'm no psychologist nor an empath, but I'd sometimes adjudicate how our inner judge can be a bit too nitpicky at times. For instance, our subconscious would generate the tiniest judgments such as "check if your hair is too unruly right now", "are you sure you're not forgetting anything from your room?", "why did you

just say that?", "I think these people in the same room as you are finding you odd, try to act bold, quick" as if you have an inner monologue constantly telling you on what to do. Some would classify it as overthinking, whereas some might think it is just a result of our innate ability to self-critique.

Fret not for those who just classified themselves as the former, as it is perfectly normal to often wonder if we "do it right". Us humans are critical and rational animals, after all. And that we have a subconscious acting as a narrator living through your head, like a second 'you' talking towards the actual you. So if you find yourself, for example, berating the living life out of yourself for accidentally stepping on that stranger's aglet during that one afternoon, reflect and reassure yourself this way: "That stranger had to understand, and so should I."

A reflection isn't just some moving parallel image. It serves as a means of acknowledging our external looks as well as actions both deedful and atrocious. It is also the theme behind this Techno magazine issue you're reading right now, have you figured? So, without further ado, we hope you'll enjoy what lies ahead of you as you flip through the pages. To every Technologist reading this letter, especially to my fellow self-critics out there, may you find what resonates with you upon reading through the contents. And most of all, enjoy the reading nonetheless.

Cheers!



Jiah Otero
JIAH OTERO
FEATURES EDITOR

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BACK TO ZERO

By Hannah Baldado

One day, number one appeared.
It seemed like it was the only one,
That made me feel heard.
Will I continue to count 'till dawn?

The flow went smoothly,
Not until three came into the picture.
Grip's strength tore out slowly and
Suddenly, the roads fade and flicker.

But then, four's still unveiled,
Convinced to make it until five snaps.
Wait, why is this about to be ruined?
The ship's about to collapse.

We were almost there to five,
But why was I counting backwards?
No, she wants it to crash dive.
She says, for us to avoid the hazard.

Begged, wanted to count back to one,
But I only see the rear row.
Will I get through this to homerun?
Or will this always go back to zero?

MANDELA EFFECT:

DID I REMEMBER IT RIGHT OR IS MY MEMORY PLAYING TRICKS ON ME?

By: Ana Jhalrem Paunil

Have you ever had a memory of something that just doesn't seem to be true? Like, remember that there was a store in front of your house in your old village, but when you pull up Google Maps and look at the area in question, there's no such store in sight?

If so, then congratulations! You aren't crazy! It's not just your memory failing. It's actually part of a phenomenon called the Mandela effect.

The Mandela effect is a mind-boggling phenomenon where people have memories of events or facts that never happened. It's named after Nelson Mandela, who was said to have died in prison after serving 27 years there. In fact, Mandela died in 2013 and served only 18 years in prison. The idea that he died earlier than what most people remember him being imprisoned for has spawned a number of memes and conspiracy theories. This false memory has been shared by so many people that it's now considered part of the Mandela effect.

The term was coined by Fiona Broome, who noticed that she and other people were having similar false memories about the death of Nelson Mandela. Broome started a blog called "Mandela Effect" where she documented some of her own experiences, as well as other people's false memories. She also proposed that these false memories were being caused by parallel universes colliding with each other.

The Mandela effect has been demonstrated by other examples like this one: many people remember seeing Berenstain Bears' books on their bookshelves when they were younger. But instead of having the word "Berenstain" written across the top of each book, they have "Berenstein Bears". There are also many examples of people remembering things that never happened—like a childhood memory of going to school on a hot air balloon or seeing a

movie called Shazaam! starring Shaquille O'Neal as a genie who grants wishes to children.

Navigating the labyrinth of human cognition, an intriguing concept emerges — False memory syndrome (FMS). This is a condition where a person believes that something happened to them, but it didn't actually happen. The phenomenon was discovered by psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, who was trying to figure out how people could be convinced that false memories were real. She found that she could convince people of false memories by feeding them misleading information about events that had occurred during their childhoods—for example, telling someone that they rode a hot air balloon as a child when they hadn't actually done so.

There are two main ways false memories can occur: via misinformation or via imagination. Misinformation can come from other sources—for example, if someone tells you something happened and you believe them without checking your own memory first (or even if you do check your memory but don't realize there's no way it could be true). Imagination occurs when you fill in missing details with what seems like the most likely scenario—for example, imagining what your childhood house looked like.

Also, this is how many of us remember things: through stories told by others, especially those who are close to us. These stories live inside our heads as memories, even if they're not actually true. Why does this happen? The answer is simple: the external information we get can become distorted over time, which would explain why so many people have false memories of things. Also, we're all human! We make mistakes and misremember things all the time—it's just part of being human. So, when we get together with other people who share our memories, we reinforce each other's false beliefs until they become "facts".

The theory behind this phenomenon is that our memories are sometimes altered—either by ourselves or by others—in order to serve a purpose. The Mandela effect works on this principle that many people share false memories because they have similar experiences or are exposed to the same information at similar times. We can't remember things incorrectly because of something called confirmation bias. That means that when we think back on our lives, we tend to remember things that fit what we already believe or want to believe—and this makes us more likely to believe false information when it comes down to it. This can lead to us remembering something incorrectly and believing it to be true.

The Mandela effect is also one example of collective memory, which is how groups of people can come together and collectively remember something incorrectly. It differs from mass hysteria, which occurs when a group of people all experience something that isn't actually real (like mass hallucinations).

Interestingly, the Mandela effect is often invoked by conspiracy theorists who believe that our universe is actually a simulation created by an advanced civilization. The glitch in the matrix, they say, has been caused by us changing something about this simulation—like when we were testing out new software and accidentally resetting the universe. They believed that we're actually living in an alternate universe and only remembering incidents from this one because we've seen them so many times on TV or in movies. Some also believe that it could also be caused by a parallel universe intersecting with ours—which would explain why so many people can remember two different versions of the same thing or event happening at once.

Others believe that our memories are being manipulated by aliens who have taken over our bodies, making us think we're living out different lives than we really are. Some even think that these aliens are trying to manipulate us into doing things they want us to do! Whatever the cause may be, it's clear that there are many people who believe in these theories and consider them a fact. Their beliefs have been bolstered by books written by people who claim to have evidence for these claims

.It can be hard not to take hunches and fabricated information seriously when they're backed up by personal experiences, but it's important to remember that these theories are based on unreliable data and often lack sufficient evidence to support them. It's easy to get swept up in the excitement of a new thought or idea, but if you want to be sure about what you're putting your faith in, there are certain things that every theory needs before it earns the right to be called credible.

Many of us are affected by cognitive bias and our memories are not the best when recalling things in the past. Study after study has been showing this to be true, so what's to be done? The Mandela effect is a case in point. If people think that something happened but it did not, then they will interpret information based on what they think is most likely, or else they will interpret it as if it did happen, even if they forget that they thought this in the first place.

The Mandela Effect is an interesting psychological and mental phenomenon, you can either believe it or not. Just keep in mind that just because there are a lot of people who believe in something like this, does not make it more likely for it to be true. This information isn't presented as truth, but only for awareness of misfortunes in misinformation.



Illustration by Zak Floreta

The Dance of the Century: A Plague

By Rowel Gallego

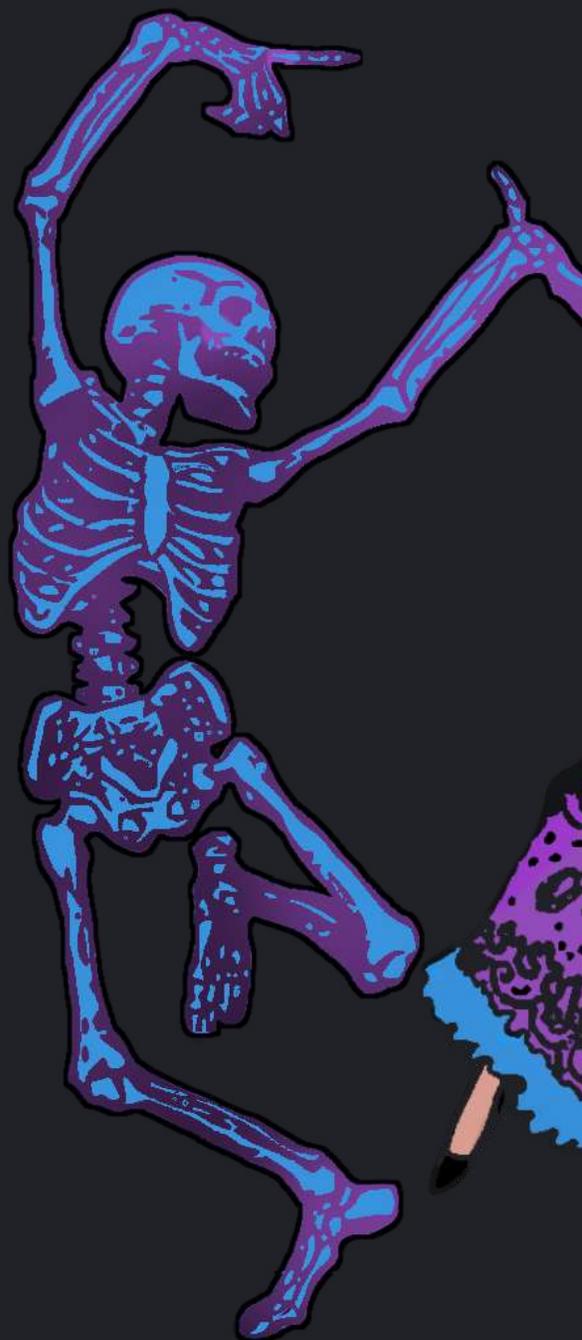
Dancing is a powerful activity that aims to entertain the audience and performers, foster socialization between dancers, and be an important form of physical exertion. Unfortunately, things were different in the city of Strasbourg in July 1518. The month was filled with dancing and kicking, twirling and shaking, and jumping and waving. The Dancing Plague—a unique plague characterized by over 400 residents of the city uncontrollably dancing day in and day out till they pass out and crack the soles of their feet; some even danced to death.

The account started with a woman named Frau Troffea being demanded by her husband to do something in the middle of the street. She was unwilling to oblige and lashes out in her anger through... dancing. She started jumping around and kicking in the middle of the street. People started to notice and thought that she was going bonkers. Everyone, including her husband, thought that she was trying to make a scene to embarrass him, and so he kept on shouting at her to stop—but the issue is, she can't. It is like there's a force that's compelling her to continue dancing. They can see her grimacing and wincing, as if she's unhappy to be dancing. After over ten hours of continuous dancing, Frau Troffea finally collapsed on the cold and dirty road. Imagine dancing for ten hours; you would be dehydrated and famished, and your entire body would be sore all over. Early in the next morning, she couldn't get her fill because the moment she woke up, she started dancing again.

A few days after her compulsion, she got herself some dancing partners. It was unexpected, but people dropped their shopping baskets and started dancing. At the end of the week, over 34 residents of the city have been infected by this epidemic, and more are added every single day that passes by.

Luckily for the residents, they have “The Twenty-one” to look after them. This is a group of wealthy nobles who preside over the city and serve as the town council. The council hired the best doctors around to get over this mess. The diagnosis left them baffled; the victims of the plague have “overheated blood”, say the physicians.

This development seems to have made the atmosphere livelier, but for the true victims, this is really big pressure. Remember that before all the setups, they got to rest after collapsing, and now that there are marching bands and loud noises, people often go dancing for days without end.



This caused a heavier burden on their body, to the extent that you can see some bones already poking through their skin.

As the days pass by, the situation of the victims just keeps getting worse. Some of them die of heat exhaustion after dancing without end. This is due to the crowded environment, and no further assistance or care was administered to them.

The council finally decided that the idea implemented would not work, and so they banned music all around the city. This did not do

anything as well since the victims were still grooving in the absence of music. At this point, approximately 15 victims die every day, and over 400 residents are infected.

Remember Frau Troffea? After a week of dancing, she was sent out of the city to look for a cure in Saint Vitas' temple. It was believed that this saint had the power to exercise evil or curse you into dancing if you did something bad. Sending Frau to the temple was the council hoping for the saint to lift the curse cast upon her. After sending her there, there were no more records about her—whether she was cured or wasn't. One thing left to note is that after the incident, the council decided to bring all 400 victims or so to the temple.

They also bought the victims a pair of ruby shoes each, which was believed to be a sign of repentance. Inside the chapel, people are still dancing and kicking. After the mass and offerings, it was time to step out of the temple to see whether their devotion had worked. Surprisingly, some were cured instantly, while others took a few more days to finally calm down. The dancing stopped, and the city was calm again. For the twenty-one and the families of Strasbourg, it was like a miracle had just happened.

Unfortunately, one last question bothers everyone: "What was the reason for the dancing plague?" Eight years after the plague, Paracelsus decides that he will bring an answer to the mystery. After his study and assessment of the accounts of people, he named this condition "choreomania" or dancing madness. He believed that it was some sort of feminine movement since Frau has been so fed up with her husband, and eventually, some more women joined in to mess with their men.

On 2009, author and historian named John Waller decides to take on the case. In the same year, he published his book titled "The Dancing Plague: The Strange True Story of an Extraordinary Illness" saying that the people of Strasbourg may have shared a case of mass hysteria. This is a very special case where the people must be in a close group and are experiencing same stressful events. One will twitch and experience headaches and such until another one catches up as if it is contagious. In the case of Frau, her stress comes from her husband's expectations and so as the others. This could be the closest answer to the biggest question that Strasbourg has regarding the plague especially since last 1518, the city had just survived a severe famine. It was understandable that the people as still tensed and were not able to move on from the setback yet. Additionally, there is still the Bubonic plague and the Anti-Catholic uprising. All adds up to stress and anxiety for the people regardless of age and gender.



Illustration by Christian Gulle

An abstract illustration in shades of purple and black. It features several irregular, organic shapes that resemble clouds or smoke, rendered in a dark purple. These shapes are set against a lighter purple background. The overall effect is moody and atmospheric.

Illustration by Godfrey Sigamata

Until I Breathe The Same Air Again

By Karl Vynz Atazan

TRIGGER WARNING: MENTIONS OF SUICIDE

A streak of sunlight passed through the small slit of my curtains. The warmth reached my face as it struck along the periphery of my flesh. I felt the heat, but it was tender. Although opposite to my soul's desire to stay asleep, its gentle touch awakened my physical senses, coaxing me to rise from the comfort of my bed. In that fleeting moment, I realized it was another day to embark upon. As I took a deep breath, a strangely light feeling filled my chest. Weeks had passed since I found myself confined within the walls of my room, isolated from every loved one I held dear. But this morning, as soon as I stepped foot on the floor, leaving the haven of my four-legged bed behind, I knew I was feeling better. Each inhalation felt like a long-awaited reunion with the very essence of life itself.

How come those whom I held dear failed to connect to what I was going through? Depression, I've come to realize, is never a choice. It's an unknown force that seeps into every crevice of your being. And yet, a nagging question lingers in my mind – could it be a choice after all? Absurd, perhaps, but worth considering. It all started when my grandfather, a man known for his generosity and sincerity, consulted me when my days began to turn worse. I could sense his genuine desire to help me find solace.

I knew that he wanted to help me feel okay. However, his well-meaning advice felt perplexing, almost alienating. "If you choose to be depressed, you will remain that way. Choose to feel okay." These words echoed, but their meaning eluded me. How could I simply choose happiness in the face of an invisible torment that seemed to defy reason? But in my heart, I understood.

He was a product of a bygone era, where emotional nurturing took a backseat to the relentless pursuit of discipline.

Society often asserts a prevailing belief that a depressed person always appears sad and withdrawn. Nevertheless, this notion falls short of apprehending the tangled complexion of depression, which manifests differently in every individual and may not always seem obvious in an external perspective.

As I perched on a chair in our yard under the comforting shade of a sycamore tree, I pondered the fallacy of this stereotype presumption.

The tranquility caressed me as I savored the rich aroma and sapidty of my coffee. The leaves danced and swayed when the wind whispered. And when the sun unveiled its full glory, everything within the bounds of its light seemed to sprung with renewed vitality, embracing the gift of another morning. In the midst of this beautiful scenery, the euphoric symphony of birdsong resonated in the air; the melodies they sang served as a reminder that life, with its intricate tapestry, was meant to be endeared. But, out of the blue, a question arose at the back of my mind.

Are things truly as what they seem? Do birds sing only when they are in a state of unadulterated happiness? Or is there a possibility that they, just like us, continue their harmonic verses even in periods of turmoil? In our existence as humans, we often find ourselves putting on a smile and blasting a laughter to cover the depths of what we truly feel inside. We share merriment with those around us while feeling melancholic and void. Could it be that birds, too, have the same capacity for hidden vexations, veiling their battles behind their melodies?

After an hour of lounging in the serene ambiance, the sun's rays grew harsh, nudging me back inside to provide myself a breakfast.

Alone in my dwelling, I reminisced on the path that led me here. As I embarked my journey as a working adult, I nurtured a longing for a placid abode, a sanctuary to call my own. Besides of my city residence, I acquired a house near the breathtaking Valley of Ten Peaks. This peaceful den serves as my escape, a hideaway from the demands of the world. When the weight of everyday becomes too oppressive, this is the temple I go back to — a place of hiatus and renewal.

In my kitchen, I set forth in cooking my breakfast. The sizzle of honey-cured bacons mingled with the aroma of marinated beef strips, as I skillfully prepared my all-time favorite sunny-side up eggs. With the combination of a steaming rice, this culinary consonance became a banquet fit for a connoisseur, savored amidst the vast territory of nature. Seated at my dinner table, before I could mouthed a delicious spoonful, my phone rang; it was my mother. Tempted to postpone the conversation and eat my meal, I couldn't ignore the strong intuition that whenever my mom calls, something important requires attention. Yielding to the inevitable, I responded, and her soothing voice pierced the silence, asking the simple yet depthful question, "Are you okay?" A lump emerged in my throat at that moment, rendering me speechless. The silence grew tumultuous, intensifying every sound in my surroundings — the clock ticking inside my room, the cadence of my breath, and the chaotic resonance of thoughts that chimed through my mind. I struggled to keep my composure and responded, "I'm doing well, mom." The words had heftiness I couldn't completely articulate, a longing for understanding, a yearning to be seen.

My mom, a pillar of unwavering support, has always been there for me. While she may not understand every nuance of my innermost thoughts, her love is unconditional, and her dedication to understanding me is inviolable. I remember a touching instance when she pleaded me not to kill myself. The thing is, people with depression are not always suicidal. Though depression is a risk factor of suicide, each person's manifestation is distinct. Some of us just need space to breathe, while others long for an embrace that might heal the wounds unseen. For me, all it takes is someone who can genuinely ask if I am okay. That, in and of itself, becomes the thread of hope that keeps me afloat in the storm.

I had a long conversation with my mom. With every word exchanged, I kept feeling better and better, gradually easing the weight that burdened my heart. Yet, like all conversations, it came to an end when my mother had to leave for her dermatological appointment. A newfound sense of calm settled within me as she bid me goodbye. Before going back to feed myself a spoonful, there I realized I breathe the same air again.

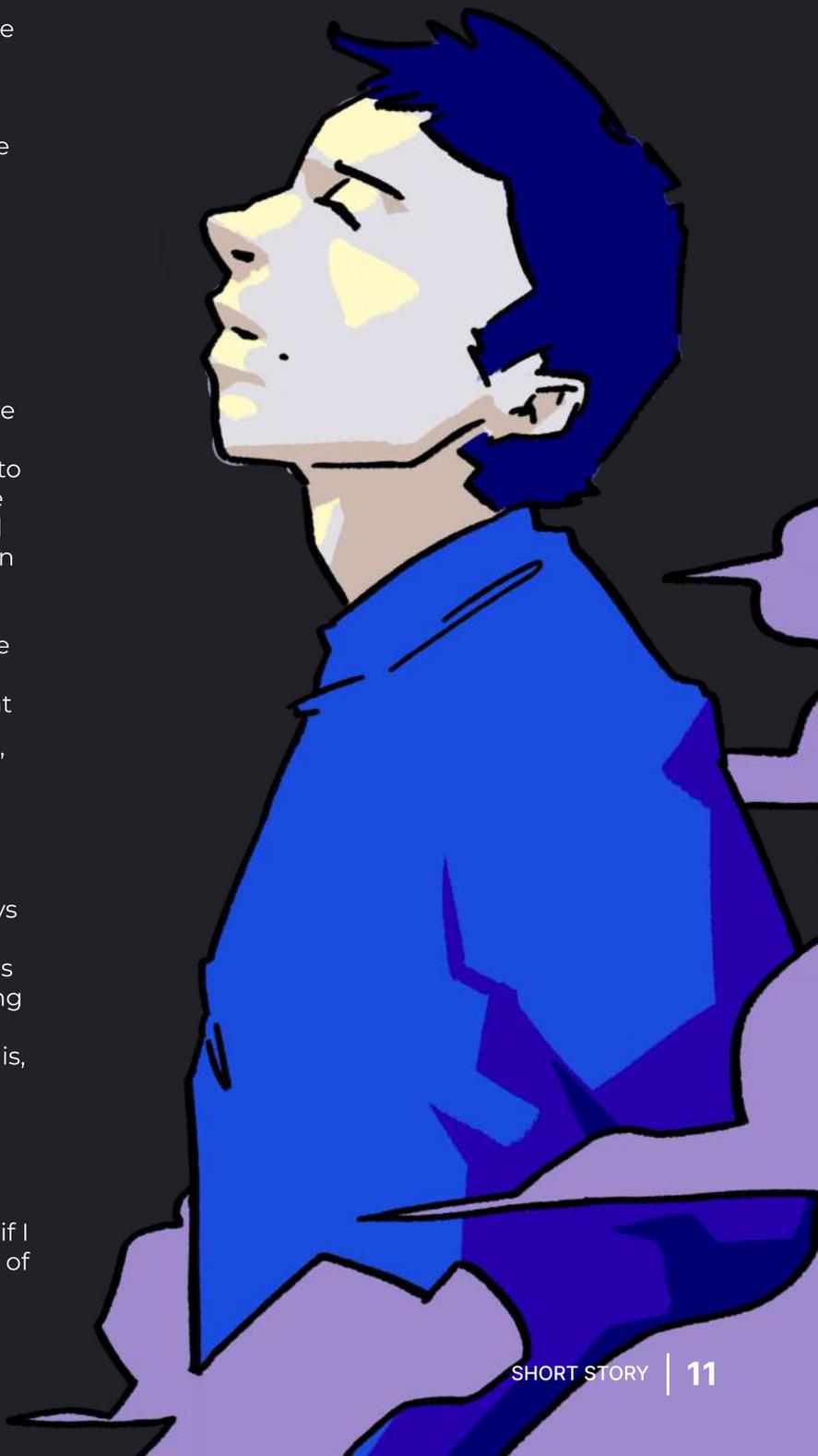


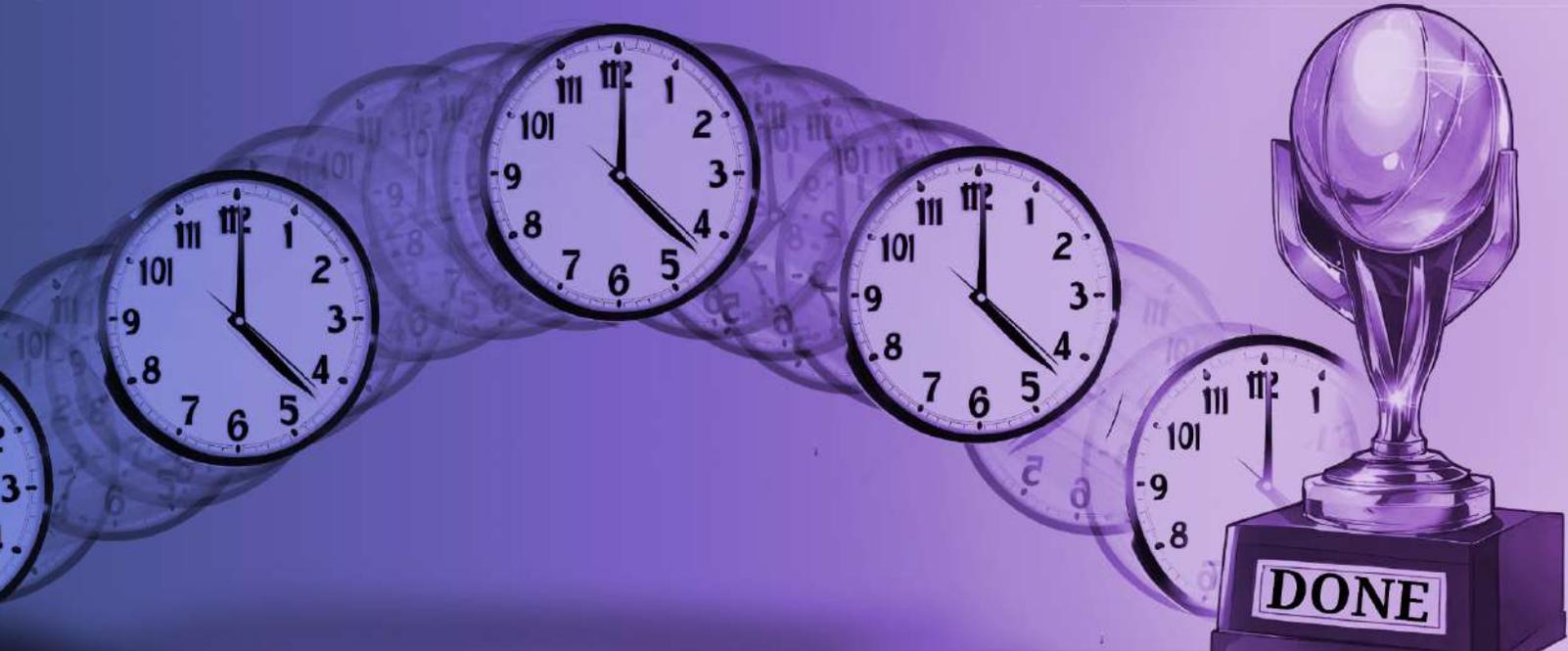


Illustration by Christian Gulle

Mindful **DELAY**

Productive **GAINS**

By Ana Jhalrem Paunil



In a world where productivity is hailed as the ultimate virtue, the notion of procrastination often carries a negative connotation. We've been conditioned to believe that delaying tasks is an enemy, a roadblock to success. However, what if I told you that there is a way to harness the unconventional magic of mindful procrastination? Picture this: a unique approach that allows you to embrace the ebb and flow of your creative energy, unleashing a torrent of productivity like never before. Intrigued? Let's embark on a journey that will challenge your preconceptions and help you internalize the profound benefits of counterintuitive practice.

Deep down, we all experience a spectrum of emotions when it comes to tackling tasks, especially those looming deadlines that threaten to suffocate us. Anxiety, stress, and even a hint of panic can creep into our minds, transforming the simplest of tasks into formidable obstacles. It is within these emotional battlegrounds that mindful procrastination finds its niche, offering us a lifeline to overcome our paralyzing fears and tap into our hidden potential.

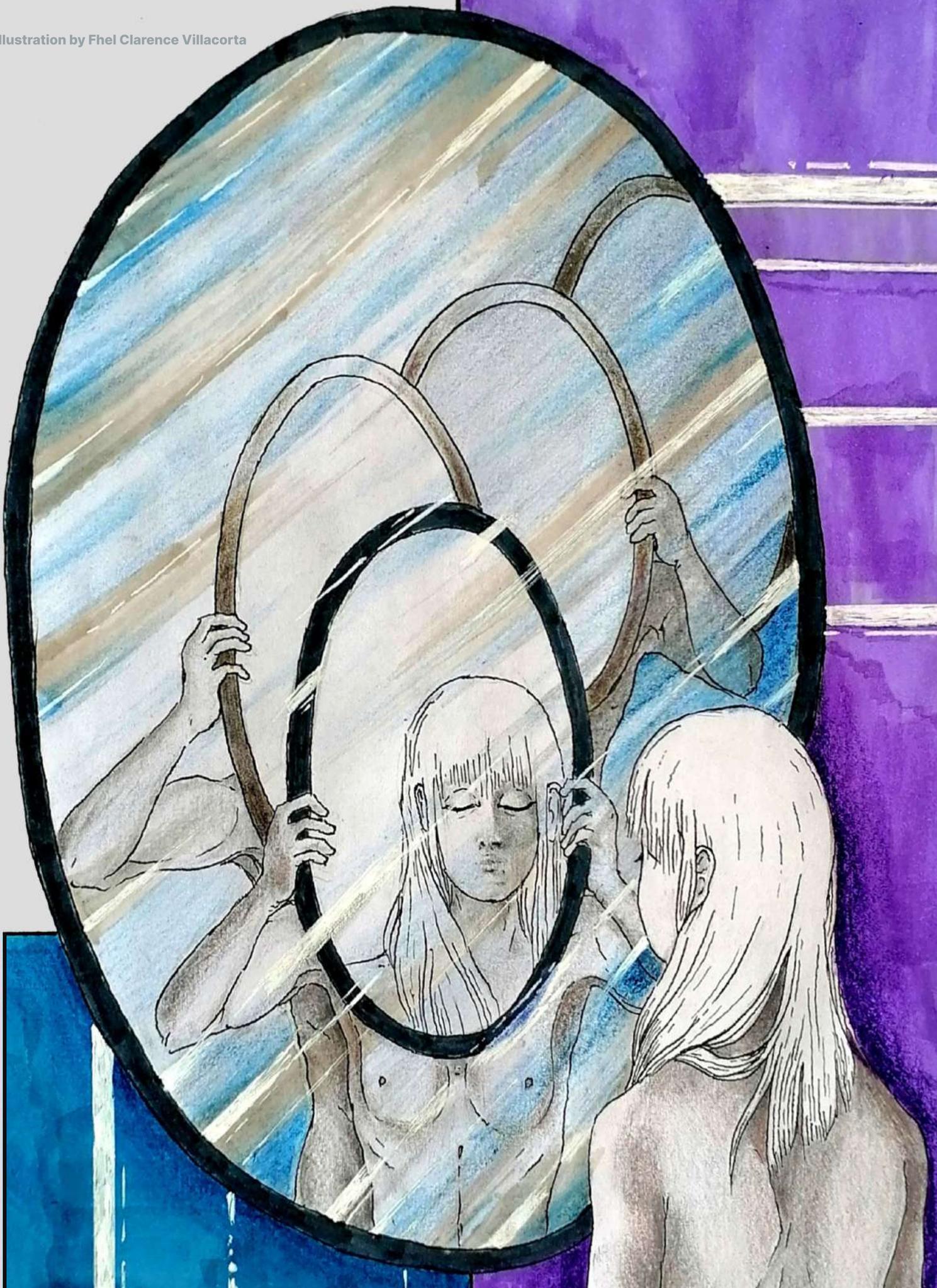
Imagine this scenario: you find yourself locked in a struggle to complete a project. Hours pass, and frustration begins to mount. By purposely delaying tasks, we allow ourselves a respite from the relentless grip of productivity. We embrace the freedom to indulge in activities that nurture our souls, be it pursuing a hobby, connecting to loved ones, or simply taking a well-deserved break.

Paradoxically, this liberation from the chains of time enables us to return to our tasks with renewed vigor and a sharper focus.

The beauty of mindful procrastination lies in its ability to guide us back to our tasks when the time is ripe. As we navigate the labyrinth of our minds, we instinctively develop an intuitive sense of when our ideas have matured and ripened. It is then that we re-enter the realm of productivity, armed with a wealth of fresh perspectives and an advanced ability to tackle challenges head-on. By nurturing this delicate balance between procrastination and action, we find ourselves achieving more than we ever thought possible. But instead of forcing yourself to endure the relentless grind, you decide to take a step back and engage in mindful procrastination. You immerse yourself in activities that bring you joy, that ignite your imagination, and stir your creativity. As if by magic, the ideas flow freely, effortlessly intertwining into a masterpiece that surpasses your wildest expectations. That is the power of giving your mind the space it needs to wonder and explore uncharted territories.

In our fast-paced society, time has become both a precious commodity and a source of constant pressure. Yet, in the realm of mindful procrastination, time takes on a different dimension.

Illustration by Fhel Clarence Villacorta



Reflections in the Other

By Terence Ed Limpio

Reflection, what do we know about the word 'reflection'? We correlate the term with mirrors or any object that returns or bounces back light. We see a reflection, especially when we check ourselves if we look good or not. But what does the word 'reflection' mean to us humans when it comes to the people we see around us? How do we know that a person is our reflection or not?

Every day, we encounter people all around us, whether our friends, family, a special someone, or even a stranger. We tend to interact with them, share what we feel, and let all the things out on what is inside us. But as time passes, we share a connection with them, unique or not. Whatever connection it is, we see a reflection within them, whether verbal, mental, or any other aspect.

In order for us to recognize ourselves in other people, we should also realize that everyone is our mirror. You can only genuinely see yourself reflected on you once you have that clear understanding.

The Duality Of Reflecting From Others

The connection we obtain from those people helps us grow, and that is where the word 'mirroring' kicks in. The term mirroring is where people reflect parts of your consciousness back to you, allowing you to grow and become a better you. There are both positive and negative outcomes in this kind of behavior:

One positive outcome is said in the previous paragraph, "People reflect parts of your consciousness to you." That said, they see your flaws to regain what you have lost. May it be your confidence, self-worth, or anything that builds your identity. They also target parts of you that need to be fixed, like the physical, the mentality you possess, and the personality you project externally.

Another outcome is it can help form healthy relationships with the people with whom you 'reflect' yourself. We should take note of the word healthy because most relationships (not only romantic ones) would seem to be toxic. One would tolerate the other to do such a thing even if it does not suit them, or it will create harm within themselves.

A person should learn to cut off someone who gives off toxicity to themselves and others. You do not want someone with the same vibe as you to radiate negativity to other people, right?

In relation to the preceding paragraph, consequences also arise when you adapt the thought of mirroring a person. One unhealthy behavior is following their immorality, thinking that it would be cool for them. Yes, it boosts confidence, but there are times when we should put our demeanor of being a carbon copy and be our authentic selves.

But despite that, every person who enters our lives, good or bad, can be a great teacher. Encounters with them are an opportunity to look beneath ourselves. The reflection that we truly see in them is an indication for us to heal internally.

This process of healing does not only limit us in our psychological development but also our spiritual development. Whenever we are aware of our imperfections and project them onto others, we can confront our adverse personality traits and cease allowing them to control our lives.

Dealing with Opposites

It is tough to handle when you meet someone opposite you, though we constantly hear the ideology 'opposites attract,' which is subjective. We then ponder, "If opposites attract, how can everyone be your mirror?" The answer to that question lies in the Law of Polarity.

According to the law, "All things are dual. All things have poles. Every pair of opposites has a counterpart. And that opposites change in degree but are the same." Like the temperature, both hot and cold are opposites but fall under the same category. Human traits and feelings also follow the same pattern.

Since everyone is your mirror, you must be at the equal but opposite end of the relative spectrum and hence imbalanced in that characteristic if you want to 'attract' your opposite. To put it in simpler terms, balance is achieved when two opposites meet.

To end this reading, we can genuinely say that everyone is our mirror. The more we meet more people, the more we move closer to our more genuine selves, which we all want to achieve. We should keep our heads up and face life's challenges to become better individuals. We may develop in areas that will help us prosper and overcome obstacles that hinder us from moving forward by understanding the reflections we get from others.

Window Daydreaming: The World's Stopped, But We Kept Moving

By Loui Jay Codera

In the early morning of April 1st, I found myself cupping my head on my huge palms near a pane of glass, letting my eyes float in the middle distance while the hues of the world bloomed anew as if each were a tiny flower reborn. There is an awakening enchantment each day in the early morning—a sense of an ancient earth spirit rekindled that tries to knit together all that is healthy while birds carry sweet high notes. In my mind's eye, I'm with them, singing on the rooftops, breathing in the fresh air, and watching the world fall into view. The morning seems to have invited me to become an agent in a modern dreamland reality. As I sat there, watching the world slowly fall into view, I couldn't help but think about how much life had changed over the past year. We were all on lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and our lives had been turned upside down. We had all been forced to adapt to a new way of living, working, and interacting with others. The pandemic had affected us all in different ways, but one thing was certain: it had forced us to confront ourselves and our priorities.

The moment I drew back the curtains, the room was flooded with the soft, orange glow of the morning light. The sight never failed to fill me with awe as it cast a warm and welcoming glow over the world outside, especially during the lockdowns.

As it dragged on, finding moments of peace and tranquility became increasingly important to me. The lines between work and home began to blur, and it became harder and harder to disconnect from the demands of the outside world. But in those early morning moments, with the sun casting its warm and welcoming glow across the world outside, I found a respite from the chaos of the day. It was a chance to connect with nature and to immerse myself in the beauty of the moment.

Today's sunrise was particularly stunning, with the sun's rays refracting off every leaf and cloud in a dazzling display of color. It was as though the sun had become an artist, creating a masterpiece wherever it shone. Its warmth was steady and comforting, like the smiles of old friends or the refreshing rain after a hot summer day.

I sat there, watching the sun's rays dance across the canvas and feeling the softness of the cushion beneath me, I couldn't help but feel a sense of gratitude for the simple pleasures in life. It was a reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is beauty and joy to be found if only we take the time to look for it.

And as I closed my eyes, drifting off into a peaceful daydream, I knew that the pandemic lockdown had changed me. It has forced me to slow down and to appreciate the little things in life, such as the beauty of a sunrise. It was a lesson that I would carry with me long after the lockdown had ended, a reminder to always take the time to stop and appreciate the beauty around me.

I was jolted out of my daydream by the noise of the neighborhood, which included the old man playing morning music a few houses away, the taho and puto vendors, the AM radio, and the cars bustling around.

At that point, I chastised myself for looking out the window. I should be working, finishing my assignments, or crossing things off my to-do list instead of daydreaming. It might appear to be a waste of time because it seems to accomplish little and produce nothing. To some, the practice of staring out the window is linked to boredom, diversion, and futility. It is not typically considered high art to make the gesture of holding your head in your hands close to a piece of glass while allowing your eyes to drift into the distance. In fact, one does not go about doing things like, "I had a great day; the highlight was looking out the window." Maybe in another life, that is exactly what people would say to one another.

Therefore, what if our whole outlook on life was incorrect? We always assume that major events are the most critical moments in life, but what if they were the small and dull, almost imperceptible moments, such as staring blankly at the window? We want to think of occasions that have significance for us—the conclusion of a relationship, the death of someone we value—as events that shape who we are, and we still look to the future for events—fulfilling our goals, discovering true love—that can similarly characterize our lives and make them worth living. The agreed-upon concept of personal growth is based on the premise that significant experiences determine the purpose, course, and quality of life. Perhaps most importantly, it is fundamental to how we all habitually learn about our own and other people's lives.

As I continued to gaze out the window, lost in thought, I couldn't help but feel a sense of growth and development within me. The act of looking out had become more than just a simple distraction; it had become a way to connect with myself on a deeper level. I realized that I had been neglecting this part of myself for far too long, always busy with the demands of daily life and never taking the time to slow down and reflect. But now, as I allowed myself to get lost in my thoughts, I could feel a sense of clarity and purpose emerging. In a world obsessed with productivity and efficiency, this type of self-exploration may seem frivolous or even unnecessary. But it is precisely what we need in these times of constant demands and stress.

Window daydreaming is a rebellion against the overwhelming pressures of modern life, a chance to embark on a journey of self-discovery and explore the depths of our inner selves. It is a reminder that there is more to life than the pursuit of material success and that true wisdom lies in the unexplored and profound corners of our minds.

It was as if I was finally starting to understand myself in a way that I never had before. And with this understanding came a newfound sense of confidence and direction.

As I stood up from my seat, ready to face the challenges of the day ahead, I knew that I had found something truly valuable in the simple act of looking out the window. Something that would stay with me, shaping me into a stronger and more resilient person, for years to come.

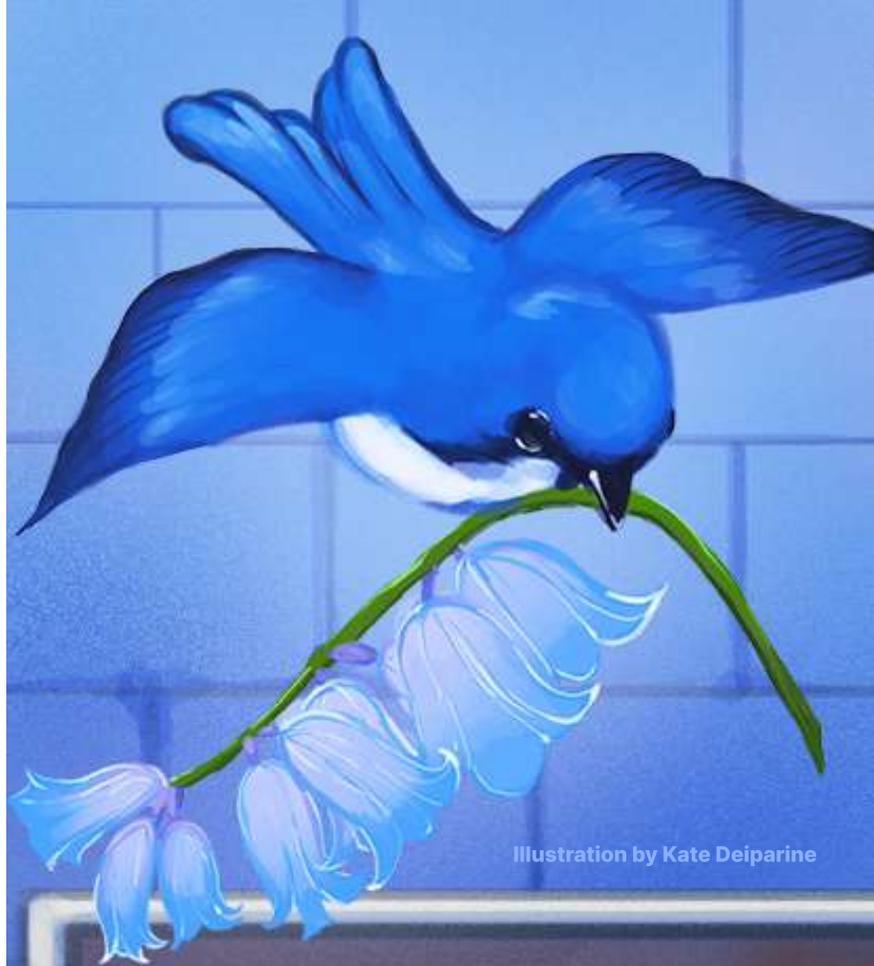


Illustration by Kate Deiparine





ECHOES OF THE SELF

By Alliah Janelle Rivas

She grabbed him, making him stop in his tracks as he was about to go out.

"You really want to end this?" She asked as tears began falling down her face, like a broken faucet spilling water from its sink.

"You're so selfish," she spat, knowing it was wrong to say them in front of this person's face, knowing she herself is also selfish. But she is tired, so tired of being told what to think and what to do and what to feel and of being the selfless one that for once, she wants to be what she couldn't: honest.

"I want to live. I want to feel."

She is crying now, half laughing, because everything feels heavy at the moment—so much that the weight of it hurts, that the effort to do so throbs not only at the back of her throat or the insides of her stomach but also including her soul, crushing her heart.

For so long, she has disregarded the villains that lived inside her head, but they have remained more alive than dead. However, she knew that a moment later, the pain and ache she thought were present would again dissolve into an abyss. Because it was always like that. And she needed it to stop.

She wants it to stop. Badly.

"But I can't," she almost whispered.

The guy in front of her stared at her with cold eyes.

"Exactly, Celeste," he said. "How do you expect someone to love you when you keep your walls up high?"

"You can never let someone in unless you learn to love yourself first," he continued. He turned his gaze away from Celeste, placing his hands inside his pockets.

"I have loved you..."

A long pause.

She did her best not to break down.

"But the thing is—"

Celeste cut him off, "It was never enough, wasn't it?"

Illustration by
Kate Deiparine

"It..." he sighed heavily. "I don't know... It was hard to stay in love with you," he half-smiled. "Let's fight off our own monsters first, shall we? I want us to avoid destroying each other."

Wiping a tear away, she finished her sentence before finally letting this person close the door, knocking shards of glass into the floor.

Celeste was clenching her fists. "You're an idiot, Dale."

Before witnessing the person in front of her disappear with the glasses' broken pieces, standing in front of her towards the open door was a mirror of a reflection of the ghost that haunted her for so long.

Celeste sat in front of the mirrored glass, staring. She didn't recognize the woman staring back at her, feeling overwhelmed by the sense of failure that gnawed at her skin. The haunting reflection staring back at her confirmed all her fears: her hair unkempt, her makeup smudged, and her eyes were bloodshot—dull and lifeless as ever, filled with regret and disappointment.

How had she ended up here? Was this really what her life had amounted to?

She couldn't help but think about all the mistakes she had made in life. The lies. The mask she wears everyday.

she wears everyday. The countless missed opportunities, the failed relationships, and the unfulfilled dreams. Celeste had always been told that she was capable of achieving anything she set her mind to, but where had those words gotten her? Nowhere.

She was a failure. Plain and simple. She had been wrong about everything in life, and it was too late to make things right. Her hand shook as she reached for the bottle of whiskey sitting on the table beside her. She poured herself a drink and tried to quiet the voice in her head telling her that she was worthless.

As she sipped the whiskey from her hand, Celeste's thoughts drifted to self-loathing. Self-pity.

This is why she hates mirrors. It reminded her of everything that she is—vile and fake and useless.

Celeste had always felt like she was chasing something, but she could never quite catch it. It was like trying to catch a butterfly in a jar—the harder she tried to grasp it, the more it slipped away. Despite her many attempts, she had never been able to achieve the success she desperately craved. Not even the love she once thought she deserved.

Tears streamed down her face as she thought about all the people she had disappointed over the years. Her ex-boyfriend, who had finally given up on her after years of excuses. Her mother, who had always been so proud of her until the day she told her she was dropping out of college. Celeste had let everyone down, including herself.

She was looking through that mirrored glass, and all she saw was what a failure she was.

But then again, Celeste kept the shattered pieces of the mirror inside the box for so long. After a long time of wallowing into self doubt and hate, a realization dawned on her: it was never too late to try again. Never too late to feel every ounce of emotion until the hurt numbs and heals.

She is looking at the same broken shards of glass now. She smiles because, at present, she has managed to get through her own monsters somehow.



MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL: WHO'S THE TYPE THAT REFLECTS THEM ALL?

BY LOUI JAY CODERA

Have you ever stopped to think about why you look in the mirror? Is it simply to check your physical appearance, or is there something more to it? The mirror is a ubiquitous object that we encounter on a daily basis. It is often used for a quick check of our physical appearance before we leave the house. It can be a gateway to self-awareness, a means of exploring our identity, and even a catalyst for change. When we look in the mirror, we see more than just our physical appearance. We see ourselves, and how we perceive ourselves can greatly impact our self-esteem and sense of identity. The mirror is a powerful tool that can reveal much more than just our reflection. Let's delve into the different types of people who look in the mirror and the various ways in which they relate to self-awareness and identity formation. So, whether you're a quick-checker or a deep-dweller, dive into your dormant subconscious in this journey of self-discovery as we explore the power of the mirror.

Let's take a closer look at the different types of individuals who look in the mirror, each with their own unique way of relating to their reflection.



At one end of the spectrum, we have the **Narcissist**. This individual is obsessed with their physical appearance and uses the mirror as a means of feeding their ego.

Narcissists are often preoccupied with their own appearance and believe that they are superior to others.

They may spend hours grooming themselves or taking selfies to post on social media. Narcissism is often seen as a negative trait, but it can also be a sign of low self-esteem. By constantly checking their appearance in the mirror, the Narcissist is seeking validation and reassurance that they are attractive and desirable. For them, the mirror is not just a tool for checking their appearance but a way to seek external validation and reassurance of their attractiveness.

On the other hand, the **Perfectionist** uses the mirror to scrutinize every detail of their appearance. They may be unhappy with their physical appearance and spend hours trying to perfect it. The Perfectionist may be obsessed with their weight, skin, hair, or any other physical feature. For them, the mirror is a tool to identify flaws that need to be fixed. While striving for perfection can be admirable, it can also be unhealthy. To them, the mirror becomes a tool for identifying flaws and obsessing over perceived imperfections.



Illustrations by Kiara Berniez Camacho

3.



The **Avoider**, on the other hand, shies away from the mirror and avoids looking at their reflection altogether. They may struggle with self-image issues or feel uncomfortable with their appearance. Avoiders may be afraid of what they will see in the mirror or worry about being judged by others. For the Avoider, the mirror is a source of anxiety and stress. They may go to great lengths to avoid mirrors, such as covering them up or avoiding places where they know mirrors will be present.

5.



As we come to the end of our journey exploring the different types of people who look in the mirror, it's time for a little self-reflection. Are you a Narcissist obsessed with your reflection, a Perfectionist endlessly perfecting your appearance, a Seeker searching for deeper meaning, an Avoider dodging mirrors at all costs, or a Realist using the mirror as a tool for self-awareness?

The mirror may seem like a simple everyday object, but it holds a lot of power in our lives. It's a reflection of not just our physical appearance, but our inner thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. Whether we love it or hate it, the mirror has a lot to teach us about ourselves.

So, the next time you find yourself gazing into the mirror, take a moment to think about what you see. What does your reflection say about you, and how can you use it to better understand yourself? Remember, you are more than just what you see in the mirror. You are a complex, multi-faceted person with so much to explore and discover within yourself. So go ahead, take a closer look, and embrace the journey of self-discovery.

In contrast, the **Seeker** uses the mirror as a means of self-exploration and introspection. The Seeker is a person who looks in the mirror to search for something deeper than physical appearance. They may be searching for their true identity, purpose in life, or sense of meaning. For the

Seeker, the mirror is a tool for self-exploration and self-reflection. They may spend time analyzing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. The Seeker is often on a journey of self-discovery, and the mirror is just one of the tools they use to understand themselves better.

4.



Finally, we have the **Realist**, who uses the mirror as a practical tool for checking their appearance and making necessary adjustments. The realist has a healthy sense of self-awareness and uses the mirror in a balanced way without becoming overly obsessed or avoiding it altogether. They understand that physical appearance is not the most important aspect of their identity and focus on other aspects of themselves, such as their personality or their relationships with others. The Realist may use the mirror as a tool for self-awareness, but they do not let it define them.

The Brewery of Student's Caffeine Addiction: Yay or Nay?

by: Drexler Alib

“Clout chasing lang.” “For aesthetic purposes only!”

These are the most common catch phrases on social media as to why the great majority of the student population subscribe to the wave of the consumption of caffeine. May it be the well-known international coffee shops' branches in the country, to the local cafes, and to the home-made coffee that drive these Gen Zs insane and longing for coffee that in becomes their link to a well-functioning self. But behind the façade that they put in social media; it is a non-concealable fact that there are things hidden beyond their followers' perspectives.

In a system where students are facing a ton workload that often results in all-nighters of studying, a 7:30 A.M. class, to paper works that submerge their heads in a deep void, everyone needs a coping mechanism to kickstart their brain power to handle the stress and emerge on top of their work. May that be sleeping, a well-deserved vacation, but the most common way to escape the cage of academic responsibility lies within a mere guilty pleasure of a cup of coffee. The sleep-deprived students rely on caffeine to negate the melatonin hormone in order for them to keep grinding on their requirements. But the excessive use of such reliever has been a cause of an impending doom that those who indulge are set to experience. Addiction!

First, let us define what caffeine addiction really is. Verywell Mind defines the term as “the excessive and harmful use of caffeine over a period of time.” Although coffee can trigger the explosiveness in the user waiting to be unleashed, and it may seem aesthetically pleasing seeing someone continuously shaking their cup of coffee like a madman to manufacture the last drop of coffee for the last sip, too much intake of caffeine can stem up side effects such as palpitations—being the most common of them, trouble sleeping, and mood swings.

Observing a stranger take a sip of her own daily dose of caffeine, and can't help but be intrigued on how coffee influences her and her daily life. But her thoughts that left a fine mark were “a chance to connect on social gatherings”, and “a quick pick me up”. And when asked if she would label herself as a “coffee addict”, she wholeheartedly agreed without any hesitation, but things went south as she knowingly admitted that no matter how hard she tried to cut off her caffeine intake, there would be a “calling” that would find her holding a cup of coffee yet again.

The connectivism nowadays in social media is a whole lot wider than you've thought. Its influence on how a person sees what's “cool” can spice up a lot of results. Take coffee for example. As little as



“The connectivism nowadays in social media is a whole lot wider than you’ve thought.””

Illustration by Deen Vheilca Glee Lapulapu

view in someone’s social media “story” might influence the social media algorithm to pop up more of the related content and the next thing you know, you too, would want to hop on that trend and picture yourself in the same class as coffee enjoyers. One thing leads to another. A cup of coffee can become two. Your regular order at a local café will turn into a personalized one to your own liking. Then you realize that the “trend” you once subscribed to has become your lifestyle. You better be mindful!

Mindful of what coffee can bring to you. It’s not bad to have caffeine every once in a while, as it helps in cleansing the stomach, preventing depression, weight loss, and many more. That, of course, if it is moderated, those aforementioned “benefits” can make a quick turn if you submerge yourself in coffee as if it runs in your veins. The benefit of cleansing the stomach would be negated by frequent urination; preventing depression can lead to episodes of anxiety and insomnia; and weight loss can lead to obesity. Everything you do, including a trivial drink of coffee, is a double-edged sword that could either make you rise to the occasion, or bite you in the ass. The choice is yours.

A catalyst for the brewing of caffeine addiction in our locality would be the famous, yet affordable coffee that has branched out to your nearby location. These coffee shops that sell their coffee at a relatively low price have captured the minds of the young bloods as it offers them a ticket to the side of coffee enjoyers. Although a simple “let’s buy coffee at ...” could be seen as normal, what isn’t normal is the urge to have some more after you thought you’ve had enough. Well, you just couldn’t have enough of a 35-50Php coffee that is composed of 75% ice and 25% coffee. Then you resist the temptation to not buy another one, but the term “deserve ko ‘to” would then cross your mind, next thing you know, you have been hypnotized by coffee.

No matter how irresistible the urge to have 4 cups of coffee a day and have a contest with your homies on who consumed the most in that day, one should be vigilant on how these trivial acts can ignite an impending doom of caffeine addiction. Each student has a way to untangle the shackles of academic responsibility, and a refreshing cup of coffee is one of them, but the excessive consumption might lead you craving for more. Well, if ever that happens, take a look in the mirror and you’ll see a reflection of what you’ve become, a coffee addict. Borrowing the words of Miss Universe 2018, our very own Catriona Gray, “everything is good but in moderation”. So does your caffeine intake per day, moderated.

If you could talk to your former self from 10 years ago through your reflection in the mirror, what would you tell them?

I would ask him what was happening, whether good or bad I'll give him the reassurance that it was a canon event so it had to happen for his character development and that his future self is doing well. And also, I would tell him to always move forward, no matter what it takes.

Madera, Ruzgel D. BSME - 1

I would basically just tell myself to seize every opportunity, never waste time again, and make the most of every chance given.

Agravante, Rei Samson C. BSIT - 1

Hey bud, it's me, you in the future. How's it going? I hope you are well. Me so far, I have spent so much energy and time overthinking about the trivial things in life. I don't know why, but we are always inclined to overthink things. You will even reach a point in life where you just make up scenarios in your head subconsciously. You worry just literally everything around you. It's exhausting.

Having worries in life is normal. But just a piece of advice, examine those worries. By examine, I don't mean overthinking about them. What I mean is facing them. Assess your worries piece by piece and make up your mind. Most often we see our worries as too big, primarily because we overthink about them. Assessing our worries can actually make us realize that the true value of these worries are actually negligible. How I wish I could be your best buddy.

So I could be with you and tell you to do this and not that. I just don't want you to make the mistakes I made. Of course that's not possible. But hey, everything is for a reason. You are bound to make those mistakes. Just don't forget to learn from them. So, go make those mistakes boy. Take risks and learn. And also, don't forget to reserve some love for yourself. Do things that interests you.

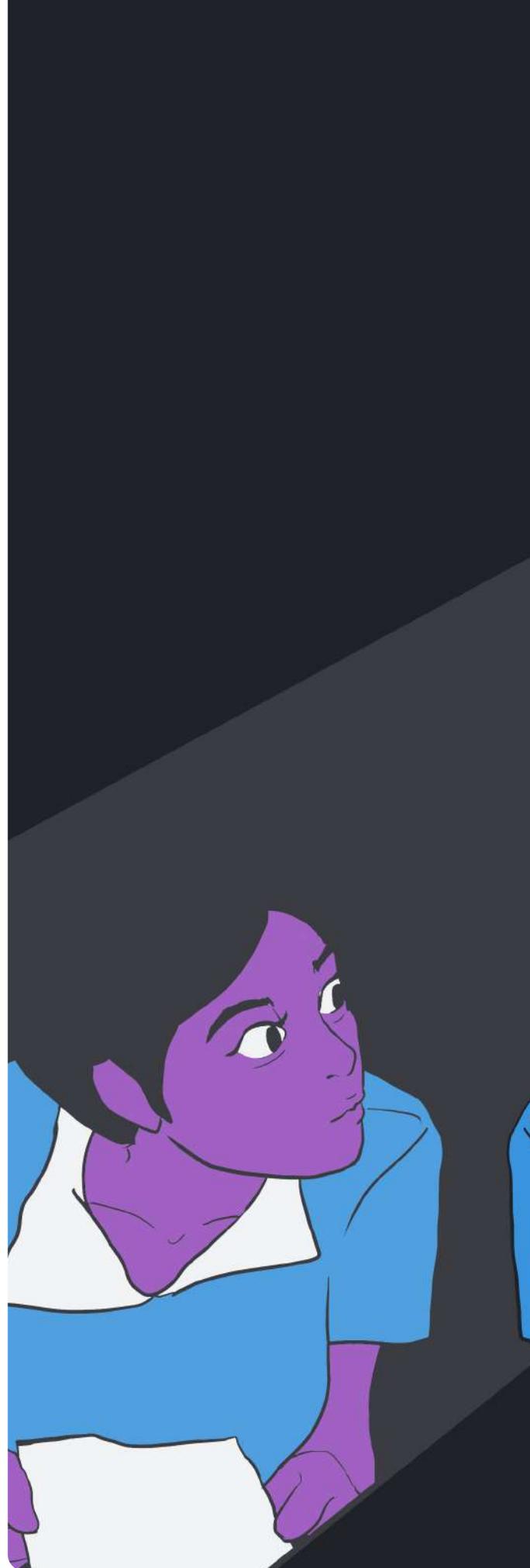
Do them for you. Nothing but love for you young me.

Odo, Jemwel P. BSIT - 4

You are awesome. You are doing great. There is more to the world than what meets your innocent vision but sooner or later critical changes on your belief will transpire. Thank you for always using your curious mind. Thank you for not holding back and always speaking up. Thank you for not being the boring and the shallow kid. You did not only create a masterpiece but now you also date one. She's more beautiful than a thousand of sunsets. She's a match made in heaven.

She's perfect.

Lanticse, Vince Clark B. BSIT- 2



As a child, I talk to myself a lot to express a lot of my frustrations. Often, I secretly use the mirror to deeply express my thoughts, as if I am giving myself a "pep talk" or as a form of outlet. I always thought that I would outgrow that habit. But if I were to talk to myself 10 years ago, I would tell my younger self, "ok ra na imo na feel, learn to love every part of it because you would discover and know more about yourself." I used to be ashamed of how I felt and would conceal it within myself and never share it with anyone. Suppressed emotions would always end up spilling over, and it affected people around me and my loved ones. Maybe little me would not be as meek and unsure of myself if I embraced my emotions more.

Malonjao, Belle Margareth B. BS Pharma-2

Hey buddy, I know you still got that infectious smile while imong classmates will tease you na "lah nawala nasad ang kalibutan" since ig smile nimo mawala gyud imong mata. I just want you to know na to always keep the people who really care for you close and to not be too much selfless as you will encounter a traumatic event soon and you'll lose your trust with people. Since I can't change the past maybe you can, choose your "close" friends wisely as the person you trusted the most before turned against you. I also want to briefly explain about being too much selfless, please don't make the same mistake again na you're too available to everyone, I want you to know ahead that reality really sucks, people will really take advantage of you and I want you to protect yourself and know that it is okay to say no and do not be a people pleaser, you aren't here in this world to impress them rather you're here to enjoy being you with the company of genuine people. Also, I want to tell you about relationships, I know in this timeline you really didn't care about expressing emotions until you started to read books and started to love poetry, as it pique your interest and emotions started to pour. I don't want you to make the same mistake again and that is to lose yourself, you'll soon experience your first ever heartbreak, this is a spoiler to you, but I want you to know that this would be one of the darkest days of your life, as people would turn against you and make rumors to destroy you, and they're not just people, they're the one's you've labeled as close and trusted friends. Up until now, I do not know how things would've gone better for the both of us, I was still so young at that time and now, I'm still unsure what we could've done to prevent this from happening, as we both don't deserve this. I would like you to know that when couples decide to breakup, society usually brand the male as the bad one (unfortunately it's usually the case but just because it is the norm doesn't mean it is right). One of the things I've regretted to not do in that time is to stand up and defend myself, I need you to muster your courage and be brave, maybe it could've gone better, but you would not see the true colors of the people that surrounded you, on how quickly they would turn on you. I know you're very friendly and had no enemies back then, but even though that's the case it doesn't save from our sadly bad trait of pinoys where we bring down a fellow countrymen, always has always have been our issue, we always hate when someone's is rising to the top or when they're lives have been running smoothly. I would like you to have a life that could've gone better but that would mean you won't be able to become wiser as these experiences have shaped who I am today. I want to assure you that amidst of that traumatic experience, you would soon be able to trust and love people all over again, as you were surrounded by the wrong people back then, but now you're loved. I just want to tell you that I am proud of us, amidst after all that happened, we are able to find ourselves to care and to continue to love. I know na these events would hurt and shape you, I know you're scared because I too, was scared back then, but know to keep your chin up as everything will be fine soon. Keep on loving my younger self and when I say loving, don't forget about you, love yourself more. Also, please do continue to enjoy your life especially high school life, I promise you it would be hell of a ride. Good luck my former self, you know the drill already, so choose the decision you won't regret later on, and lastly, you've got this.

Anonymous, BSCpE-3



FANBASE CAFÉ AND STORE

A HAVEN FOR **KPOP**
AND **ANIME** AFICIONADOS

By Arielle Kirsten Visagas



When we think about cafes, the first scenario that pops into our head is the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, followed by people's distinct whispers, the bartender's voice calling out a customer's name, or even the faint chime of the entrance bell. Students often rely on cafes as a go-to spot for group meetings and studying intensively before major exams. Yet, wouldn't it also be a pleasant experience to just savor your favorite drinks and desserts while appreciating KPOP tunes and admiring anime figures?



Fan Base Café & Store has been operational since 2019 and is managed by a husband-and-wife duo who is fond of KPOP and who is an anime enthusiast, respectively. They have successfully made the dreams of numerous individuals who share their passion for KPOP, anime, or both, come true!



After you enter the 2nd floor, before the entrance to the café, visitors are greeted by walls adorned with various anime characters from as early as the 2000s to the latest releases. The area is spacious enough for customers to capture aesthetic photos against this stunning background.

Upon entering their establishment, the first thing that catches your eye is the counter and the shelves stocked with an array of merchandise, including KPOP albums, KPOP lightsticks, stickers, keychains, anime figurines, and a host of other items.





The selection is diverse, and if you are searching for a particular album or anime figure, you may approach the counter for assistance.

Their café, which is adorned with a pink hue reminiscent of sakura leaves, is located beyond their charming display of merchandise. Their menu features a range of options, including milk tea, caffeinated and decaffeinated beverages, finger foods like French fries and hash browns, cakes, cupcakes, and even a bowl of ramen!

The area is spacious enough to avoid feeling cramped and allows you to socialize with your friends comfortably. Moreover, Fan Base Café & Store welcomes fan gatherings if you submit a formal request via email.



PRICING

CAFE MENU PRICE RANGE

₱100.00 TO
₱180.00

UNSEALED KPOP ALBUMS

PRICE STARTS AT
₱200.00

SEALED KPOP ALBUMS

PRICE STARTS AT
₱700.00

KPOP PHOTOCARDS

PRICE STARTS AT
₱60.00

ANIME FIGURES PRICE RANGE

₱700.00

Overall, Fan Base Café & Store is a cozy cafe that caters to KPOP and anime enthusiasts, and is undoubtedly worth a visit. So, what are you waiting for? Satisfy your sweet tooth and ready your wallets as you make your way to their cafe!



Photos by Dindo Pumar

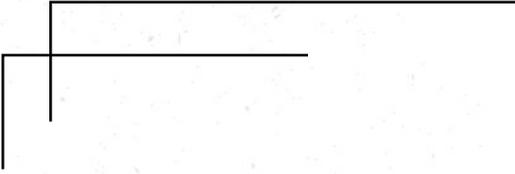
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Operating Hours
TUE - FRI | 11 AM - 7 PM
SAT - SUN | 12 NN - 8 PM
MON | Closed



YOU

SEE

YOU





Illustration by Godfrey Sigamata



Illustration by Kiara Berniez Camacho

My Dear, MELANCHOLY

By Terence Limpio

I t's me! A happy-go-lucky guy who most of my friends think that I have no problems at all. Bringing smiles to their faces and frequently sharing a few words of inspiration to keep going. Aside from that, my friends and a special someone reciprocates the energy I give to them.

But despite all that, it took a steep turn.

March 7th is a day I will never forget. Burnt-out as I crawled up to my bed, seeking a well-deserved rest. I was anticipating that things would go as it was that night. Not until I heard a ring on my phone, "Let's end this," she said. It was something that I had never expected from that night. Mentally drained and mentally blocked are the words that I could describe to myself. I cannot explain what had to be explained at that moment. I just can't let it all out for some reason.

I can't help but think if it was me all along or not. Words in my head are frequently bugging me for days to come. I fell into the rabbit hole of emptiness and grief without a word uttered or action done.

Every single day always feels the same. I get busy at home, school, or even visiting places. It feels like a loop, and nothing has changed ever since, all I feel is pain and deep sadness. I then see a reflection of me not being enough for the people around me.

I then came to a realization that it was not me against the world, but it was me versus me. Everything felt so numb

to the point that I couldn't move. Tingles and shivers all over my body as I enter the void of emptiness, and at that point, I meet someone new to me, and that is melancholy.

On days when I feel happy, melancholy always interferes to the point that I cannot do whatever makes me happy. It made me feel like I was paralyzed, but, I was emotionally numb. I went from being an active and jolly person to being weary and gloomy all because of melancholy.

As days and weeks go by, all I do is think of what I could've done to save myself from drowning in all these thoughts. Academics would keep me but would also stress me most of the time. I can't help but grieve unconsciously, and I would find myself lost in my thoughts.

Leaving the past behind has been a challenge for me. Words from my friends did not strike me that hard, and I always fell for the traps that led me to deep despair. I had opportunities to rise, but I did not take it. All I did was think about the same thoughts over and over again, like a broken vinyl record.

Melancholy has made my days longer, and because of that, the pain I experience daily prolonged, making me unproductive and feeling like a paralyzed patient. I did not decide to lay low on social media, hoping that something good might come my way.

Things went worse as my finals week came through. I was drowned with various school works with less time to

rest. That's where my anxiety was prominent, and I went crumbling into pieces. There was no night that week where I would call for help, but the help I received wasn't enough, and I was still stuck with the antics that melancholy had been giving me.

But as I suffered from the grief I was experiencing, it was also time for me to rise. I realized that if I kept myself stuck in this matrix of pessimism, my life would be more miserable, and I wouldn't ever find my way out in the sea of sadness I am swimming in.

I kept my head up as I slowly got out and abandoned the pain and hardship that melancholy had given me. I learned to appreciate all the advice and lived my life to the fullest. My acquaintances have lifted me throughout, and I am grateful to them. I also got to distract myself from doing what I liked.

We, humans, should absolutely take note that pain is temporary. The pain you are currently experiencing is a supporting factor to create a better and more robust version of yourself. We should also take note that healing isn't linear. As we heal, we experience obstacles and should not be tainted by them.

In the end, melancholy is not an enemy to us; instead, they are more like our anti-hero. They give us misery, but at the same time, they have their reason why they are doing this to us.



WHAT COULD OUTRUN TIME?

By Karl Vynz Atazan

It is always time. The existence of the living and non-living is bounded by something untouchable, unforeseen, and impassable – time.

Once again, I find myself late for school and for sure, time is to blame. Last night, I indulged myself watching the movie *Alice Through the Looking Glass* for the 13th time. This film never fails to bewitch me, making me cackle and cry at the same scenes. It deports me to a world of reversed realities and topsy-turvy wonders, a place of escape and madness. Amidst all the movie's concepts and metaphors, the phrase that resonates me the most is, "time is always running out." It holds true, as I find myself submitting a math assignment late while also arriving late to class. I can never outrun time, and what could ever will?

My schedule is hectic. I work as an editorial writer for our organization, but I'm also a student dealing with academic responsibilities. On top of that, I must care for three felines at home. These responsibilities all demand my attention concurrently.

When I entered the classroom, I was the only one missing. Looking at my instructor, I noticed he didn't seem surprised anymore. He just looked at me. I presumed that he anticipated for me to arrive late again. While taking notes, I noticed my seatmate writing an essay amidst our calculus class. Curious, I questioned, "Why are you writing an essay in front of a board of numbers?" He chuckled and continued writing. "Since I already reviewed the lesson last night, I'd rather waste my time working on an essay due tomorrow. No need to waste time listening to something I already know," he explained. He had a point. Why waste time on something already comprehended? Unlike him, I struggled to understand the numbers on the board because I spent my night rewatching a movie. It led me to an enlightenment: perhaps I'm to blame for my unchanging inability to meet deadlines. Maybe it was me all along, and not time. After class, I headed straight to our organization's office to have a word with our editor-in-chief. I asked to extend the deadline of a deliverable assigned to me a week ago. Thankful to whoever god there may be, he understood the situation, considering our upcoming final examination. Thus, he granted me a favor.

With nothing left to do at school, I rode a crowded bus stuck in heavy traffic, ruminating my situation from the front seat. Should I stop blaming time and begin assessing my own actions? After all, I have the willpower and control which "time" does not possess. Perhaps, it's time for me to renovate my approach and take responsibility for my decisions. I am the one with means, the one who can initiate change.

Upon arriving home, I felt the need to lay down. Although I had to feed my precious felines, weariness made it difficult to move a single muscle. But why was I even tired? I hadn't engaged in anything physically strenuous, aside from the constant overthinking on my perpetual tardiness. So, I snapped myself out of it, made my way to the kitchen, and fed my cats their favorite strawberry-flavored food.

Oddly, I found myself working on school assignments due the following week. The words of my seatmate this morning had struck a chord within me. He managed his time very well, devoiding worries about outpacing time. It may be that outrunning time was not the ultimate goal. Time merely serves as a measure, a witness to whatever we do. I recalled the movie *Alice Through the Looking Glass* and realized that time was not our mortal enemy. It is a potent and indispensable force, a significant aspect of the human experience to be valued and used wisely.

I took a few deep breaths, enabling my thoughts to settle. The sentiment of outrunning time seemed chucklesome now, as if it were an invalid question from the start. It wasn't the appropriate question to ask at all. In fact, the answer lies within us. The path to our future lies within the grasp of our own hands and so, our actions today shape the trajectory of where we will go. Amidst the havoc of my ponderings, I reached for my math book and delved into studying. It came on me that I couldn't escape time's relentless march, so I resolved to walk alongside it instead. I would take charge and manage my tasks, declining to gaslight myself by blaming time for my shortcomings.

In the vast horizon of reality, life is none like *Alice Through the Looking Glass* or any other fantastical fictions. Though the real world may not always offer the easy way, the realization I have with my own mistakes encouraged me to be steadfast in my resolve to master the art of time management. In due course, an unknown force suddenly surged within me, impelling me to correct the pace of how I walk on my journey.

One of the factors to a life-changing stage of a person would be sometimes the things one doesn't expect to obtain in the first place. Take, for example, a position. Sounds pretty simple, right? But what if over time that position could change the way you function unbeknownst to you? "Expect the unexpected", as they may say. We'd often get to experience what we wouldn't even anticipate as in not at all seeing it coming, especially when it's something that would improve parts of you in the long run. We all would recognize some people that we know that would make us think "My, how times have changed". One press alumni would be one of our notable examples of the scenario, as she started off with a certain position within the Press, only for her to take over the publication as Editor-In-Chief during the Editorial Year of 2021-2022.

Known for her collected nature, writing cognizance, and timid yet warm approach, **Ma. Emie U. Tugonon** was one of The Technologist Student Press' writers who stepped up from her comfort zones throughout her years as a member, starting off her journey as a news writer.



Beyond A Writer's Routine

By JIAH OTERO

Emie would instantly jot down on a notepad whenever her mind starts to generate an idea, and that was just before she started off as a member. And that's just not it, she would record not just the ideas that suddenly pop up in her mind but also significant events, taking photos and videos of what's in front of her or what's within her sights- her squad, school events and, according to her, local fires that she happen to pass by. Reason why she tends to record such notes and events that are found by her is to keep her from forgetting what she wrote and so that she can be reminded of the things that she witnessed.

Before she became Editor-In-Chief, she admits that she was unorganized as her listed tasks on her phone wouldn't include labels nor deadlines, and that her files used to be cluttered. That was until she got the position where she learned on using productivity apps and spreadsheets knowing that she dealt together with a bigger scale team and not just herself.

A serious persona is what Emie would implement during press duties, keeping an unnaturally speaking voice and a quiet stance when it's beyond press matters as she does not talk too much nor crack up jokes in a crowd. With her obtained achievements in the Press as Editor-In-Chief, however, she also owns a life outside of writing and presswork. Along with listening to Lofi while working on her laptop, Emie tends to read novels whenever free, and she also has a habit of over-spending review books which she hasn't flipped a page on one of them. As much as she reads to expand her knowledge and creative thinking, she also does so as a temporary escape from reality and that it serves as her stress-reliever at the same time. As for her discovered habit of listening to lofi while working on something, it changed her way of doing things that she finds dreadful or boring, as she herself said that she used to dislike listening to music while studying and working through her laptop.

Emie has habits during her term as well as her personal life. Thanks to the events that were given to her, a change of some parts of her made her the remarkable leader that she was during her term. Her habits, too, have changed over that period of time. And speaking of habits, a piece of advice she gave is to be consistent even when the changes seem unnoticeable or subtle. Though it might feel uncomfortable at first, but that good habit will pay off..eventually.

Emie also said to track the negative habits that one wants to change, and ponder upon the implications if these negative habits would keep on going. She also recommends modifying the environment to encourage better behavior and look for an accountability buddy to share the journey with you. Talk about serene growth!

Before you were Editor-in-Chief, what were the press-related things you used to do as a habit?

Whenever an idea suddenly pops up in my mind, I instantly jot it down in my notepad so that I would not forget. Later, I would go back to that random thing I wrote and decide whether I would pitch the idea to my org mates, or expand the idea myself, or just keep it in my mind. Also, I sometimes take pictures and videos of our 'barkada' meetups by instinct (including school events and random local fires that I happened to pass by) because I want to record scenes and be reminded of significant things that occurred.

Beyond presswork, what was another habit that you used to do? Did it benefit you in some way? Why or why not?

Reading novels is what I used to do whenever I have some free time. It helped me expand my knowledge, and creative thinking. At the same time, it is also my stress-reliever, a temporary escape from reality per se.

Was there a habit that you used to dislike but is now a thing that you do in the present?

I used to dislike listening to music while studying or doing laptop works because I couldn't focus well or analyse things compared to when there's silence. But recently, I went with my friend for a study-out and found out that she listens to music while studying and it worked for her. So, at home, I decided to try and searched "Lofi Beats" in Youtube and kept playing it in the

background while I was doing some task. Then I realized that in a way, it made me enjoy the process of doing those things that I find dreadful or boring.

Do you involve personal quirks as part of your habits during your term?

I always tend to put up a serious persona in meetings, with an unnatural speaking voice. Innately, I don't talk too much and I am also not the type who cracks up jokes in a crowd.

What is something that you cannot stand from a press member?

One thing that I cannot stand from a press member whenever he or she is unresponsive at all in group chats and direct messages. As a result, there will be delays in outputs. It bothers everyone when there is no proper communication.

Differentiate the habits that you have as a News Writer and your habits as Editor-in-Chief.

Back when I was a just at my entry point in the student publication as a news writer, I was unorganized as all my tasks are just listed in a notepad on my phone without labels and deadlines, and my files are cluttered. But when I unexpectedly became the Editor-in-Chief, I learned to use task management apps like Notion and even spreadsheet since I am now dealing with a bigger scale team and not just myself.

What habit of yours do you wish to get rid of?

I wish to get rid of my tendency to over-exert effort. An example is being a "notes hoarder" or my obsession of gathering more resources than what is necessary. I have the tendency to overspend review books and not even flipping a page of those books. This led to unnecessary spending and getting overwhelmed with lots of information or choosing which resource to study from.

What piece of advice would you give to someone who's having a hard time due to negative habits hindering their growth?

Track the negative habits that you want to change. Ponder upon the implications if these negative habits keep going. Modify your environment to encourage better behavior. You may look for an accountability buddy to share the journey with you. And lastly, I highly recommend the book "Atomic Habits" by James Clear. You can get more ideas from there for sure (based on experience).

What piece of advice would you give to someone that has something to do with habits in general?

Be consistent, even when the changes seem unnoticeable or subtle. It might feel uncomfortable at first. But that good habit will pay off... eventually.

Signs Your Person Could Be Your "Doppelgänger"

By Jiah Otero

Imagine checking yourself in a mirror whilst having zero idea that the 'you' you just saw was another living version of yourself from a dimension different from the one you're in. Imagine that "reflection", wearing that perfect copy of your looks from head to toe, perfectly imitating the way you move, the way you're dressed, the way you flick your lashes. Such a creature actually exists, in case you yourself are not wary of it. A being, able to "mirror" your every nook and cranny, is what has been called a Doppelgänger.

Defined by Jean Paul and his work *Siebenkäs* (don't even try wondering on how to pronounce that, the full title was wayyyy more question-inducing), a 'doppelgänger' is a supernatural being or apparition that takes form of another person as if it's an exact copy, most especially on the physical aspect. It can copy your voice, your mannerisms, your speech patterns, everything about you in a nutshell. But what if we step the denotation aside and try to connote it? Can one become someone's doppelgänger? Definitely! Such beings exist, and it's under the guise of that special someone that is your partner!

One of the best parts of being in a relationship is the amount of similarities between you and your beloved one. But have you ever pictured them as if they're your interdimensional counterpart?

There could be times we would keep a mental scoreboard tallying how many times you guys have said the same exact same phrase at the exact same time, or those incredible coincidences that you have commenced on accident. Events like those would make you wonder if they're just you yourself albeit from an alternate universe.

So if you'd like to do a relationship checkup, check out these following signs if your partner is so compatible, TOO compatible that they may be, inconceivably, your doppelgänger:

1 You mostly have the same set of likes and dislikes.

This may be one obvious sign, but there's more there is to it. Do you two have a similar favorite pastime? Check. Do the both of you like the same internet personalities? Check. Are the both of you on #TeamCat? Check. It doesn't just stop there, too. A crucial pin to push is to consider aspects like these— religious beliefs, adhered philosophies, personal values, and long-term goals in life. If both of you often say "yay" and "nay" in harmony discussing these things, then that is where you grab a head start for you to recognize that your partner isn't just some person whom you're solely having a lot in common with.

2 It feels as though they're your twin.

A sample case would be that you might get mistaken for siblings due to how similar you and your partner appear to be, and it's not even a reference to physical appearances. Without other people's judgements from that event, it seems as though you operate throughout routines in two. As a couple, it should be an unspoken rule to make sure grocery items shall be bought for two, or that meals have to be ordered for two in a restaurant. You and your partner probably had considered purchasing souvenirs in twos to match you both! As you feel that twin-like connection between you both, it has ever since a shared vow that neither individual should be left solitary

3 You copy each other.

A textbook sign that they're your doppelgänger is the way they frequently mimic the quirks you have, key or little (bonus points if they didn't initially do this until you two became palsy-walsy). They seen you using mug coasters? They bought one for their desktop a week later. They heard about a TV show you info-dumped about? They just started to secretly look it up and blurt out memes and references in front of you later on. Then you, too, happened to become their copycat, following their interests and other things they consider themselves die-hard fans of, and it's because that you truly are enthused of said interests not just for the sake of adjusting to them. Another set of bonus points if you yourself didn't have a thing for them the first time you met; That is, until, your encounter with them had you now involved with their little habits as well as the stuff they're into.

4 You both synchronize. A lot.

Blurting out the exact same phrase at the exact same time is one good example of this sign. If your styles of speech match to the extent where you accidentally say the same phrase simultaneously, take it as an indicator that your telepathy game is strong through the power of "Jinx!" and "Jinx again!". The same thing also applies beyond linguistics. Take another example, "accidentally" wearing the same color during a date. Any more scenarios similar to that would indicate that your other half is some synergized unit of yours. At that point, telepathy is more like an intrinsic possession than a bonus.

5 You have a thing with non-verbal communication.

Speaking of synergy, mutual synchronization just doesn't channel through lingo alone, but also through the form of actions and gestures, both of which do not involve mouth-flapping. As it is true that some people don't consider themselves to be good with words, the "words of affirmation" type of people are probable of being good with non-verbal acts of affection as well, as actions do speak louder than words, after all. Now, to what extent can mere actions emphasize this sign? It's definitely not the bare minimum (and everyone SHOULDNT romanticize it). A surefire indicator would be this one: wholehearted, spontaneous gestures. Your partner gave you a bouquet not just to follow the trend per se, or they blinked their headlights thrice because they know it's their way of saying "I. Love. You." Communication doesn't have to be all mouth-blabbering alone, otherwise the relationship would have been gapped with empty, unfulfilled promises, a.k.a. the "taste of nothing".

6 They dug deep into you. Layer by layer.

They know where you're usually heading to every 3:40 PM per Tuesday, or they did their best efforts figuring out whatever's been bothering you during the past few hours. Heck, they may even bear knowledge of your deepest darkest secrets. Does your partner know about your long list of the most embarrassing events that have ever happened to you? Do they happen to be openly perceptive in times when you're vulnerable? Your partner, being the doppelgänger that they are, should scrutinize you inside and out from basic hobbies to innermost sentiments. Being open and vulnerable are crucial characteristics to display in a relationship, and those shouldn't just be limited to "bedroom activities". A true doppelgänger of a partner shouldn't make love alone but also shower you with it even beyond the bedroom. Thus, an openly-intimate partner whom you can soul-bond with is not just a sign they're your doppelgänger, but also a sign that they wave one of those pasture-green flags out there.

7 They often make correct guesses about your whereabouts, and vice versa.

They bought you blueberry cheesecake boba tea on their way home from part-time much to your surprise because all you did was making "jokes" about that certain flavor of boba tea the past week. They bought you a

keychain of your favorite anime character because you "couldn't stop obsessing over them". They slipped in gifts that you secretly like and, especially to the ladies, they bought you your favorite chocolates along with newly-bought pads and your go-to cravings when it's that time of the month. A phrase associated with this sign would be the question "How did you know?". For them, you are easily predictable. This is when you catch each other watching the other's routines over time, to the point where patterns have been picked. and hunches have been enacted, in which some or most of them scream "Bingo!" from the doppelgänger card.

8 Your "Give-and-Take" game went way too strong.

You and your other half would find yourself passing on the little conveniences toward each other even when unnecessary. Take for example, the classic "shame piece". They want you to take the last cookie because they think you deserve it, only for you to cutely rebuff because it feels rude for them. Not only are such healthy quibbles adorable, but they're also good indicators of a relationship with both partners with a balanced giving-to-receiving ratio, hence neither of you has to feel underwhelmed because reciprocity is one of the things you do best. It would also make sense if the both of you are serviceable to each other, no matter how strenuous the task is. In fact, it shouldn't even feel strenuous if they're the One, where going through great lengths should feel like a piece of cake, not a trail of eggshells to walk on. So, if the act of exchanging has become more than a love language, or that you're both on constant "hospitable Filipino" mode, then you're more than just a power duo having a knack of scratching the other's back.

9 Your favorite word has always been "Same".

But this genre is honestly not my cup of tea, whaddaya think?" "Same thoughts", "I haven't bathed today" "Oh same", "Okay this meme I found on my feed seriously had me rolling" "SAMEEEEE". Catch that repeated word right there? A person who is your doppelgänger exists as your own personal hive mind, holding alike opinions, identical verdicts, and similar stands to certain things the same way as you. Upon having conversations where the word "same" is often used, then it's obvious that both of your minds are just—you guessed it, the same.

10 The relationship feels more than integrated without the two of you noticing it.

You both share identical mindsets, identical quirks, identical trains of thoughts, identical physical spaces, identical everything. With the tenth and final item on the list, the bond between you and partner/doppelgänger is more than a romantic connection. They act like an alter ego of yours who exists to resonate with you in all aspects. Quality time won't feel like such without their presence, as you constantly yearn for them (to a healthy extent, of course). The mutually-exchanged feelings would flow like a breeze, and everything just... clicks. If your beloved one is truly your doppelgänger, then they should align with you no matter what you do or no matter where you go, like a reflection in the mirror.

So how many signs can you confirm your loved one's inner doppelgänger? Keep in mind that the perfect partner doesn't have to possess every fiber of your being inside and out, as we are all individually unique. One thing is for sure, nevertheless, is that to be with someone whom you synchronously soul-bond with is something surreal to experience in our lifetime.



Behind the Strings of the Bow

By A.K.V

Who would've thought
that this day would come?
Whispers and murmurs
never really came to stop
What have I done?
Is what I would ask,
But what have you done?
A question behind this mask

I sit alone, bewildered,
flabbergasted, deceived
There is already chaos
in this battlefield
What more do you want
to prove, my dear?
I try to raise my mighty sword
An arrow shot behind, near

I see a different story
I see a different light
To all your knights and men
To all my tears and might
I put down the sword
to lift my body up
I can't reverse time, so I
let it be a shattered teacup

You were taking sides
but this was my legacy
Weapons and horses turned
to pens and paper, magically
Oh, such kingdom,
manipulated, cries of dread
"Who is your poet?"
You can say that she has fled

Phantasma

By Sophocles (LJC)

Within the mirrored realm, I find A
spectral trinity, intertwined
The shades of past, present, and fate
A mystic union, ne'er too late

The Past, a fleeting glimpse of
yesterday A memory, now castaway
Yet still, its essence lingers long A
wistful whisper, a mournful song

The present apparition shows
A transient form, in constant throes
Its presence felt, yet ever fleeting A
transient dance, forever repeating

And in the final ghostly guise
The future beckons, beyond surprise
Its promise grand, its form unknown
A riddle waiting to be shown

Thus, in the mirror's mystic veil Three
shades entwine, forever pale A
timeless dance, a haunting rhyme
Echoing across the bounds of time.

SOUL AVENUE

DEAR OPPOSITE ME

By Eureka Galarrita

My family is officially broken, thus I am forced to live alone.

Being on my own, at last, is like the cherry to the top of an unfortunately demolished cake. In my mind, although the cake is at its worst state, at least there is a red, delicious delicacy sitting perfectly on top of chaos.

Waking me from my mindless walking are my dogs barking, which I am not entirely sure if it was due to the delight of seeing me or anger for leaving them at a haste without a proper farewell. Nevertheless, I embrace them in my arms and accept the licks and jumps they can't seem to control.

After that much needed therapy, I took the necessary steps towards our front door and I unlocked the room I called home for 18 long years. I then wasted no time and immediately proceeded to take a look at my clothes, picking and taking the ones I would still want to wear.

My closet has an extra drawer below the main compartment. This is where I keep my certificates and other important documents. So after choosing which clothes to bring, I opened the said drawer, cleared it out and laid everything on the floor.

In the wake of taking most of the papers out, an old, browning piece of paper was staring back at me. I unfolded it and it occurred to me that right before my eyes, in my very fingers, is the letter I wrote for myself 7 years ago. I vaguely remember that I wrote it because it was simply a requirement for one of my subjects during my 6th year of Elementary school. I kept it just to see if reading it years later would make any difference.

I opened it with surprisingly calm hands - actually terrified of what my blunt, younger self had to say - and there shows my poorly written cursive that read:

"March 08, 2016

Dear Future Me,

My teacher said she won't read our letters to respect our privacy, so I don't think there is any need for deep, extravagant and complicated words (though I had to use the word 'extravagant' because I just learned it in class today and it sounds cool). I also don't mean to make this longer than it should be for the same reason, plus I have nothing much to say except for one thing. I hope in the future you have a lot of people in your life. I look at our classroom now, filled with the faces I cannot imagine not seeing every week day and it makes me thankful I met them. I am happy I have a lot of people in my life right now so I hope wherever you may end up, you have a lot, too.

**With love,
Eureka"**

with at present, was very much opposite to what I diagnosed myself in the past.

Of all, a dawning moment struck me the hardest, leading me to mindlessly retrieve a paper and a pen from the desk where I wrote my first ABC's up until my unrequited love notes.

In response to that letter, I scribbled:



“August 05, 2023

Dear Opposite Me,

It occurred to me when I was with my favorite group of college friends. It came to me when my new friend offered to bring my bag for me as we were going home because he knows I could not properly breathe without my 16 inch laptop, a book, and my hygiene pouch with me. It dawned on me when I had roommates who were much older than me. It crossed my mind when I was in a relationship with someone who made sure when I'm with him, I never have to use my brain.

Truth is, I had not followed in your footsteps. I had not walked in the path you gloriously praised. I had swerved from the pleasure you had experienced. However, I would not apologize for it because life made me this way. Being alone taught me the most important lesson of all - to choose myself.

But it sprung to me that your ways had not completely left me at all. It lingered, still. I did not completely lose it; I was suppressing it. Though I have attached so much pride in being content with myself, inevitably and unknowingly, I have been dependent on other people, acting like I had no choice but to accept their help when I knew deep inside, I needed that extra hand.

Thanks to you, 12-year-old self, I now find no shame in it. Thank you, for making me realize that the 'opposite me' was the real me. It was not a phase. It was not something I had grown out of or had left behind. It was not the past.

I vow to, like you, find joy and happiness in this venture, and no longer will I suppress how I really feel when I'm with them. In the future, I promise to still live by your words, and be with people, no matter where I may end up.

**With hope,
Eureka”**

It was like thousands of thorns being plucked out of your skin, all at once. It was like setting down a load of baggage to the floor. I felt light, I let out a deep sigh of relief.

I grabbed the things I wish to bring back to my new place and kept the two letters securely sandwiched between my phone and its case. After so - sneaking past my dogs, not wanting to say goodbye as it would indicate I will never be back - I left the only home I've known my whole life, peculiarly more fixed than broken.

As I settled myself in the van on the way to a city on the other side of the world, I recollected every memory I could of when I was not alone. I lived in each one, trying to absorb the feather-like feeling of assurance I felt then, whispering that I don't have to carry it all on my own, saying that letting people in does not necessarily mean that I am allowing them to hurt me, mumbling that being with people does not equate to them leaving me like all the others did, noting that I didn't have to disguise the need to be helped with

always helping others and making them think that I got everything together.

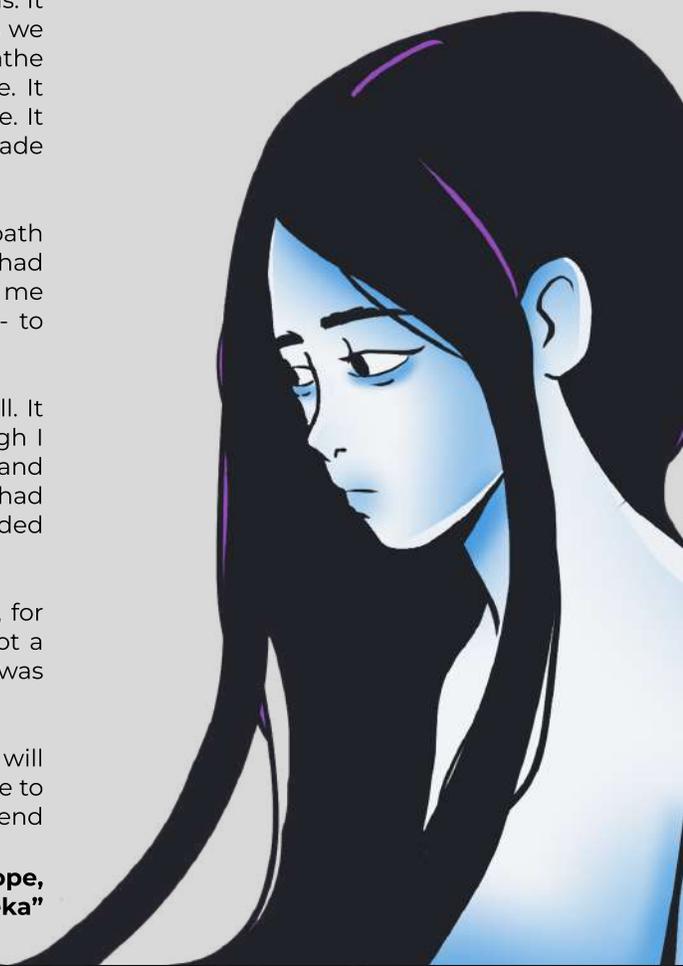
A quiet ride and three cycles of the same playlist later, the van came to a stop. I quickly made it out of the vehicle, very much aware that I have a lot of things to unload from the trunk. Just as I was about to grab all four bags at once, a stranger asked, “Do you need help?”

In the past, I would've said no. In the past, I would've shrugged the help off. In the past, I would've dismissed the guy.

But for once, I nodded with a smile and watched him carry the other two bags to the terminal for my next ride. I thanked him for his help and for once, I was consciously delighted with accepting the offer of being aided.

For once, I understood that there is nothing wrong with it. For once, I was comfortable with this other side of me.

Illustrations by Deen Vheilca Glee Lapulapu





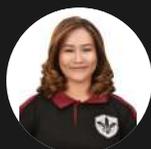
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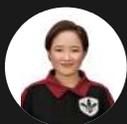
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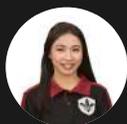
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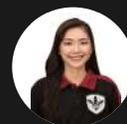
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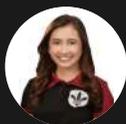


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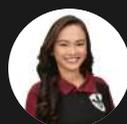


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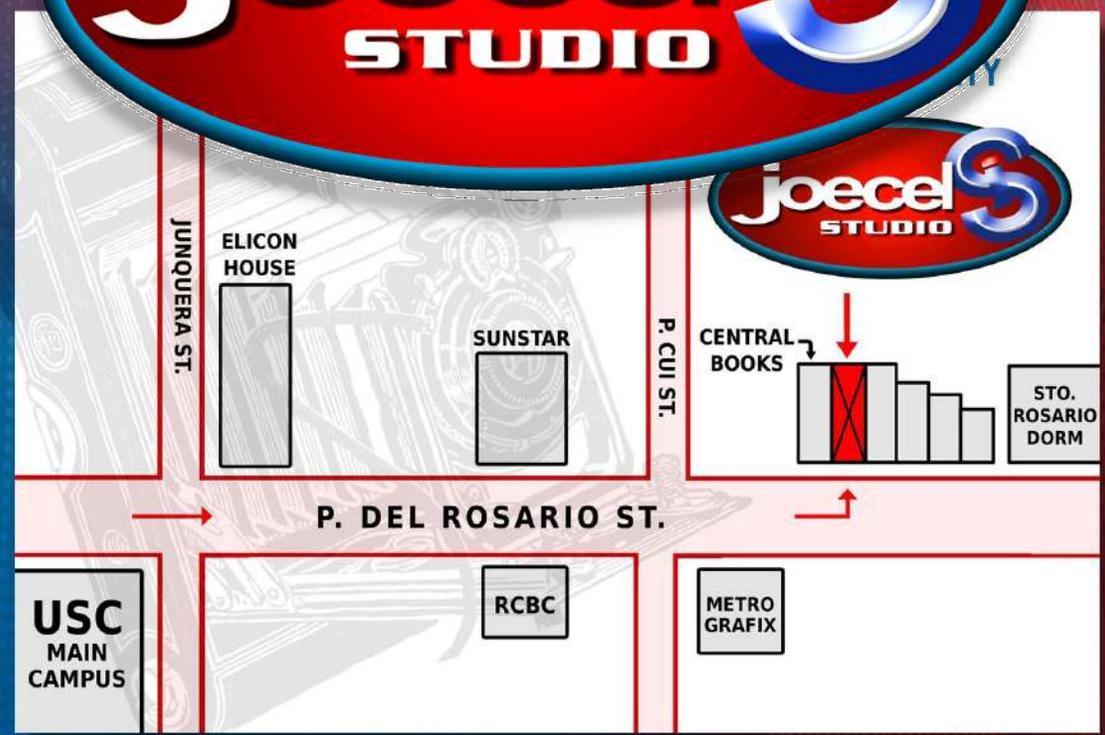


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