

The Tartan Times

May Edition 2025





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There is So Much Good In the World

Ronnie White

There are so many horrible, evil, fundamentally unfair and unjust things in our world. It would be remiss to ever forget the thousands of innocent people who die at the hands of politics every day, the past and current cultural and ethnic genocides that must be talked about and known (ie. the genocide currently unashamingly so happening in Gaza at the hands of the Israeli government), the quickly declining rights of women everywhere in the world (cisgendered or otherwise), presidencies built on the need for a lack of proper education, the seemingly millions of white people repeating the racist cycles of white supremacy their ancestors first developed. At times like this we must go back to an epitome of the AID's crisis, with Dan Savage writing, "During the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, we buried our friends in the morning, we protested in the afternoon, and we danced all night. The dance kept us in the fight because it was the dance we were fighting for."

To have the energy to fight and to make the world a better place, it is of utmost importance to find things that bring you joy to avoid the risk of becoming disengaged as a result of a constant stream of rage. To be clear, the anger is important and entirely necessary, but its importance does not

diminish the importance of having an outlet for positivity. There *is* good in the world, and I know this because if there wasn't no one would care to fight for anything at all.

Hope is so often overshadowed by the bad, but once you start to allow yourself to see the light in things seemingly obsolete or pointless everything won't seem so awful all of the time. There is good in the moon, good in the eyes of your best friend, good in an after school nap, good in your favourite scene in your favourite movie, good in sunlight streaming through a window, good in the first sign of spring, good in someone referring to you as their friend for the first time, good in those who remember your birthday, good in your favourite colour, good in receiving an unwarranted compliment, good in finding people who understand. The second we start to lose sight of the joy and love humans have always been meant to feel is the second the evil wins. Don't forget why you started fighting in the first place!! Don't forget who you are and what has happened to you, the good and the bad!! And most importantly, don't let everything happening right now diminish your light!!

Find people you love and hold onto them, fight for things you're passionate about and have the courage to speak up about it, and be willing to see the joy evident in every corner of your life. "If you aren't amazed most of the time you aren't paying attention." - Michael Lipsey

Sports and Clubs 2025 Finale

Charlotte Tunison

Our Tartans have been killing it all year long and have wrapped up some great seasons. All of our athletes learned and grew as both individuals and as part of a team. We are sad to see our Tartan athletics come to an end, but look forward to more great seasons next school year. We would like to thank all of the wonderful staff, coaches and athletes for their dedication and participation in this year's extracurriculars, our school wouldn't be the same without them. As for clubs, we have had many new clubs start up this year and grow in members. We hope to see them continue to grow and to put on great events and fundraisers that have allowed so many youth to learn and have their voices heard. Our clubs have been home to many students who have met great people and have had to face real world problems that have given each student the chance to excel in their current, as well as post secondary lives.



***Extra Curricular Awards Night**

Music Taste Analysis: Charlotte vs Alex

Alexander McMurchy

Alex: As an homage to my many reviews over my writing career and the friendships I have made throughout my time here at Campbell Collegiate, Charlotte Tunison and I have agreed to write joint articles, one where I review some of her songs and one where she reviews some of mine. I submitted ten songs for her to review, which you will see in the other article (and which I highly recommend listening to). Her ten songs are here for me to rate today. I will briefly go over what I liked and disliked about each song and give each a score out of ten as well. Let's begin!

Good Riddance (Time of Your Life) - Green Day

- Obviously a classic from a great band. The acoustic guitar strums which play throughout the entire song carry the dynamic and emotional weight of the song, aided of course by gentle, beautiful strings. Billie Joe Armstrong's voice, as usual, is great, and his soft, passionate performance in this song comes as a slight surprise when you've only heard his more intense pieces. The song could've been longer and had more build-up, but quite good overall. **7.7/10**

Whistle - Flo Rida

- Another acoustic piece (if you could call it that) that is comedically contrasted by Rida's autotuned voice

and the synthy bass. I can only hope that whistling is a euphemism for kissing in this context. The subject of the lyrics combined with a pretty guitar line, a corny whistle motif, and the corporate rap style truly make this song an experience. Whether it is a positive or negative one is up to the listener.

Unfortunately, I am a listener. **4.0/10**

Treat You Better - Shawn Mendez

- As a Canadian child who listened to music almost exclusively through the radio, this song was among my favourites as a child. It was one of the better tunes that played on Z99, but that's not really a high bar. The percussion truly carries the song, making it sound full even with the barely-present guitar lines. The sound effects throughout the chorus and verses are what truly make this song unique, being quite unique and contributing to this song's fame. The vocals are great, but not Mendez's best performance. A solid and nostalgic song overall, but could be better. **6.3/10**

Never Going Home Tonight - David Guetta & Alesso

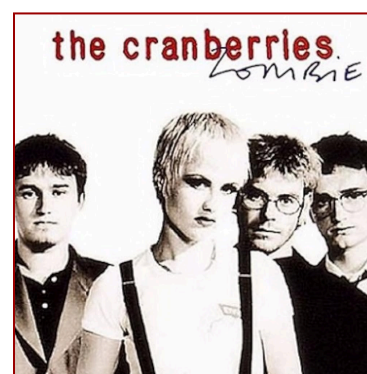
- I hate David Guetta. I'll get that out of the way. I think he has zero artistic integrity and embodies everything wrong with the music industry. However, this song is pretty decent. The chorus is your bread-and-butter EDM, but the verses hold this ethereal vibe that can mostly be attributed to the singer and piano line. There's almost a Lana

Del Rey vibe to it, which even as a hater I can admit augments the song a bit. The sample is nowhere near as egregious as his newer works.

Overall a pretty good song that is brought down a bit by its generic percussion and chorus. **6.8/10**

Zombie - The Cranberries

- If any song deserved the name "Zombie," it's this one. The grumbly guitar opening followed by intense, mysterious, pleading-like vocals. The singer's near-constant shift in cadence truly aids in making this song sound as emotional as it does. There is not much more to say about this song that hasn't already been said. I mean, it's the Cranberries, do you want me to say something bad about them? **8.2/10**



In the End - Linkin Park

- Another classic, but one I'm not sure I can take completely seriously due to how internet culture has made it another meme anthem. Ignoring connotations, however, this song is quite good. The contrast of the deeper, more serious voice with the higher, more emotional vocals make the verses as iconic as they are. The

chorus' raw emotion and intensity make it my favourite part of the song. The simple piano line works very well to set the tone. The instrumental overall is actually quite simple, though effective. Very solid song, no major complaints. **7.5/10**

Every Breath You Take - The Police

- Yes yes, we get it, this is a stalker song. Doesn't mean it isn't fire. The vocals are great throughout the entire song, demonstrating impressive range and amazing intonation. I will admit, I don't love the guitar throughout the verses, but the sudden intensity in the chorus are what make it great. The subtle strings serve to fill the song's sound and harmonize extremely well. Classic for a reason, just ignore the lyrics. **7.8/10**



Hurts so Good - John Mellencamp (Cougar)

- Possibly my least favourite genre of rock. Clearly meant to be a radio-friendly, exciting anthem and it accomplishes that. However, the vocals for the most part are boring, are simple, and like I always say, "insist upon themselves." The instrumental is nothing special, not

taking any risks or trying anything interesting. The chorus has one good part, but it ends right after that. It's not a bad song, but not my style.

5/10

In The Air Tonight - Phil Collins

- This song is, like I've said before, a classic for a reason. The mystical, otherworldly feel that builds throughout the song is absolutely iconic, not as iconic of course as the mini drum solo that signifies the shift in the song. The tune is a bit boring at times, but the combination of Collins' powerful vocals, the subtle, synthy instrumental, and of course the drums make me unable to consider this song anything less than quite good. **7.0/10**

One Thing Right - Marshmello & Kane Brown

- Oh, Marshmello, how I have beef with you. I'm just glad I don't have to review *shudders* "Miles on it." Kane Brown has the typical, generic country vocals you hear assaulting the Top 100 on the charts, but my prejudices should not interfere with this extremely objective rating. For a Marshmello song, the instrumental and especially the percussion is so painfully bland. Kane Brown puts almost no effort into his singing. I guess the main guitar line in the chorus isn't awful. The rest of the song is. I HATE COUNTRY. **3.7/10**

If these ten songs are meant to embody Charlotte's music taste, then I

would say it is a solid music taste. The variety especially is extraordinary, as she is clearly not bound by any genres, eras, or trends. There are a number of classic bangers along with more modern hits. She's certainly more receptive to mainstream-radio music than I, which is not a bad thing. Overall, I would rate her music taste a solid 7/10, with a couple stinkers mixed in with many bangers. In the grand scheme, however, my opinion of her opinion is ultimately meaningless. She, just as anyone, is free to listen to whatever music she likes and she should be proud of her developed taste.

Charlotte: Straying away from reporting on sports and clubs throughout the year, I and Alexander McMurchy have agreed to present one another with ten songs to write a review on. He and I have very different music tastes, but this is based on only my opinion and I will be giving a rating out of 10 for each song. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to listen to any music they enjoy without judgment.

Into the Light - Siouxsie And The Banshees: Into the light starts off with a strong intro, making the listener want to hear more. However, I found that the vocals are too quiet in contrast to the instrumentals. The underlying rhythm of the piece stays the same throughout but changes tempo and adds instruments other than the originals increasing the levels of interest to finishing the piece. I found the vocals quite repetitive, but they didn't take away from the enjoyment of the song. This song introduces a wide variety of unique instruments and maintains a good rhythm and tempo

throughout. I have no major complaints, but it is not quite my style. **7.2/10**

Cupid De Locke - The Smashing Pumpkins: As a person very fond of simple instruments seen in any common song on the radio, I found the use of the harp arpeggios throughout the song very intriguing and captivating. I may have enjoyed the harp during the intro, but even so, I found the intro too long and didn't think that the salt shakers used were unnecessary and took away from the rest of the piece. Although I did not enjoy how the vocals were expressed, I did find that they suited the tone and overall theme of the song, being love and pain. This piece is also written in E major which made many areas of the piece sound out of tune, but later on, when the key changes to G#, the instrumentals and vocals sound a lot more in sync. **6.4/10**

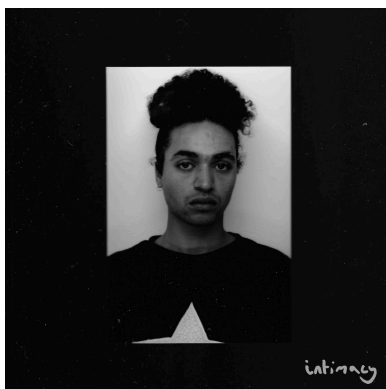


Lovers in Japan - Coldplay: Written by a band known for their ability to be diverse in their music, *Lovers in Japan* has a very upbeat intro of an appropriate length. Their use of wind and string instruments is really well done, maintaining a consistent balance with the singers. The reduction in tempo near the middle of the song has an

excellent rhythm that, even slowly, maintained my attention. It seemed to drag a bit at the end but that's as to be expected after a minute of a quieter and slower outro. Overall a good song, I would consider listening to on my own time. **7.8/10**

Be Quiet and Drive (Far Away) - Deftones: This song had an extremely long and antagonizing intro resulting in an instant disinterest in continuing to listen. It was slow and dragging, many songs are able to maintain joy and interest but this piece does not have the ability to be thoroughly enjoyed due to its displeasing tone. Its beat wasn't too bad and the acoustics improved as the song went on. However, overall I found this song very difficult to listen to as I didn't enjoy the slow vocals that seemed to weaken throughout. **4.7/10**

Intimacy - The Sukis: Very enjoyable and upbeat intro that blends the instrumentals and the vocals very well. The song was very short, but is an appropriate length and is nice to listen to. The guitar solos add tremendously to the sounds of the piece as a whole. The only complaint I have is that this song is written in $\frac{3}{4}$ time but sounds more like a 4/4 time signature. I really liked listening to this song and would recommend it. **8/10**



Fully Completely - Tragically Hip: Build up in the intro was well suited to the rest of the song. The first three verses take a bit of getting used to, due to the unique voice of the singer, but improves. The vocals and instruments balance each other well. This song has a good and satisfying ending that preserves the joy from listening. I didn't particularly dislike this song, but it isn't really my style. **6.7/10**

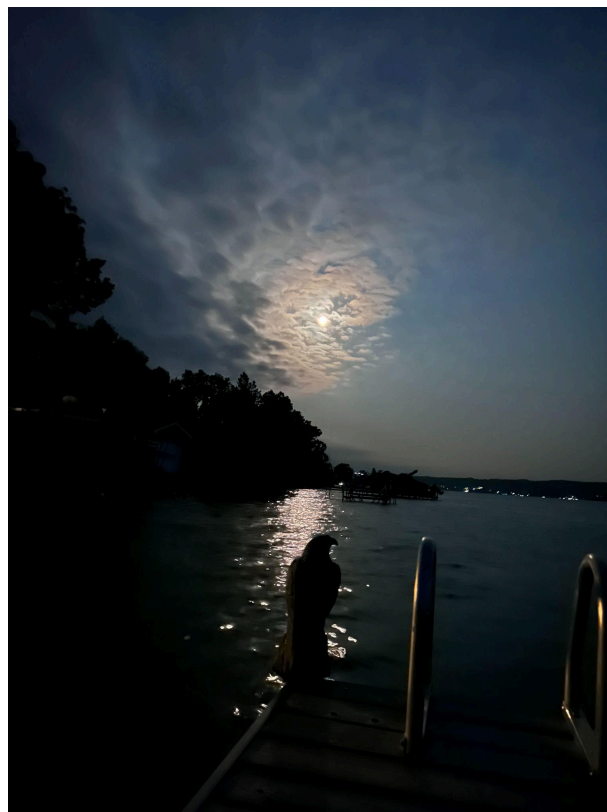
Subterranean Homesick Alien - Radiohead: This song is unlike any I have ever heard, almost otherworldly one could say, which is why *Subterranean Homesick Alien* is a very appropriate name. It has a unique intro that layers many instruments with a soft voice and the added instrumentals add immensely to the tone of the song. **7.5/10**

Headmaster Ritual - The Smiths: Starts off with a good rhythm and blend of guitar and drums. Long intro that leads to the build of anticipation waiting for the vocals. Overall the vocals are well done, but the added yodle type singing takes away from the positive aspects of the song, making it very difficult to enjoy. The tone of the singer pairs well with the rest of the song. **6.8/10**

Monodrama - Benches: Strong rhythm and instrumentals expressed at the beginning with the guitar being the highlight of listening. The singer's voice sounded lazy which took away from the other good aspects of the piece. The drums are consistent throughout making for a very enjoyable listening experience when joined by the guitar. The guitar solos are the reason I liked this song as much as I did, it supported all the faults of the song. **7/10**

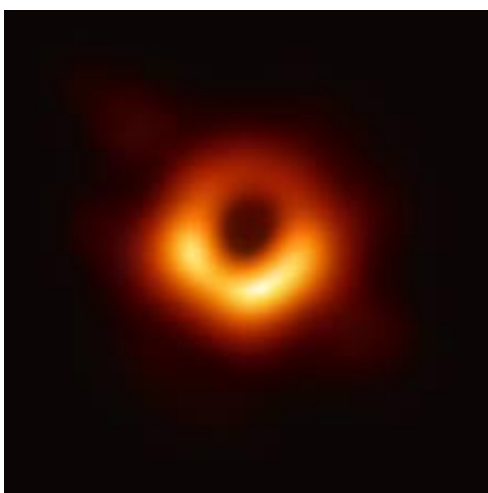
Wax and Wane - Cocteau Twins: I liked the EDM beats at the start with the addition of more instruments layered while progressing to the vocals. The voice rolls in this song took away from the rest of the song and the vocals stayed the same for the duration of the piece. My first time listening to this, I completely zoned out during and for that reason found it very hard to review in a very positive manner. Nothing really stood out as overly good or bad, making this piece very neutral. **5.6/10**

Overall, I enjoyed Alex's music more than I thought I would, he had a few songs I really enjoyed, while others I despised. I would give these ten songs 7/10 because there were many I disliked but they did have many positive aspects. These aspects were able to help expand my knowledge of music and how unique touches can add greatly to a song. This is but only one example of how trying new things with an open mind can expand your universe and open up many doors for the future..



Falling Down the Drain of the Universe: Black Holes

Adi Gupta



All you hear is roaring, all you see is black. Everywhere you peer, nothing but eternal and unforgiving darkness. As it envelops you, the hope dissipates, the light falls over the horizon, and all you know for sure is the prospect of death. Unfortunately for you, time disappears, and the universe appears to crumble. Perhaps that was too dramatic, but this is how you would feel falling into a black hole, the universe's

infinitely insatiable monsters. So, how would it feel before then?

Black holes are the remnants of the cores of dead stars, formed after the star explodes, called a supernova. With gravity virtually limitless and a density thought to be impossible, not even light can escape. Because of this, as we angle our most powerful telescopes in their ghastly direction, we see nothing, Nothing but everything around a peaceful black spot getting violently ripped apart. Seems safe. Now, let's begin our descent.

In the initial approach, the effects are already apparent. You will immediately feel a strong gravitational force pulling you down into the black hole. The closer you venture, the gravitational strength will increase by orders of magnitude. Depending on the black hole, it may have an accretion disk, composed of matter from stars that orbit the black hole at approximately one-quarter the speed of light. This friction creates light and heat. So much heat that it reaches over 10 million degrees Celsius, about as hot as the core of the sun. That being said, you would almost certainly go blind looking at the black hole at that distance. Not only is the visible light harmful to our bodies, but the deadly ionizing radiation that the black hole emits would exceed the dose our body can handle. So you would go blind, and die of radiation poisoning before you can even get close. Still, let's continue.

Once you are next to the beast, you might wish you hadn't done this, but now, it is almost certainly too late. The effects of gravity are at the point where it is practically impossible to escape. Just before crossing

the event horizon, the imaginary boundary of a black hole from which it is impossible to escape, each added meter of distance drastically increases the effects of gravity on her body. Suppose you were falling feet first. The gravitational force at your feet would be many times stronger than at your head. Because of this, you would turn into spaghetti. The term is called 'spaghettification'. This makes you appear long and thin, until you are only a few atoms in thickness.

Once you cross the event horizon, the border, you will never be able to escape. From here, it is only a frontier of darkness that awaits you. From here, all light that enters the black hole never comes out. Of course, in reality, you would be long dead by now, but assume you weren't. You would be stretched beyond reason, as you are pulled faster and faster towards the center. What horrifying beast may you meet in the center?

From this point onwards, many of these hypotheses are just that, hypotheses. We don't know enough about black holes, nor have we ever sent a human or let alone a probe see for sure. Our current knowledge about physics tells us that in the center of the black hole, there is a point. A point of infinite mass, density, and gravity. It is called the singularity. Don't think of it as a point, instead as an infinitely small space. After a while, depending on the size of the black hole, you will finally reach the singularity. Before you can even process what is about to happen, it comes. You are completely crushed into nothingness. You will cease to exist. Time and space will come to a standstill as the laws of physics break down. Long story short, you die.

Some curious readers may feel a sense of dread or even fear at this moment. As much as I exemplified the utter horror of these “objects”, it will most likely never affect us. The closest black hole to the Earth (GAIA BH1) is approximately 1,500 light years from the Earth (light years being the distance light travels in a year). If it were moving towards us, we’d know thousands of years in advance. Imagine space as a skating rink. Some move slowly, while others move quickly. Occasionally, two may get a little too close for comfort, or even collide, but it is unlikely. Space is big, so a black hole collision is not something we need to worry about, especially when we have much larger problems here on Earth. “What about the sun? When it dies, will its core turn into a black hole, devouring the Earth and all that dwells on it?” Well, short answer, no. Our sun is much too small, and its mass is not nearly sufficient to collapse into one. Let’s not worry about that either, because that will all happen in approximately five billion years.

Black holes are the modern-day enigmas of science, pushing physics to its limits, if not outright breaking it. There is still much to learn about their nature, and perhaps in our lifetime, we might witness these monsters in greater detail. But for now, it is probably in our greater interest that no black holes are our cosmic neighbours.



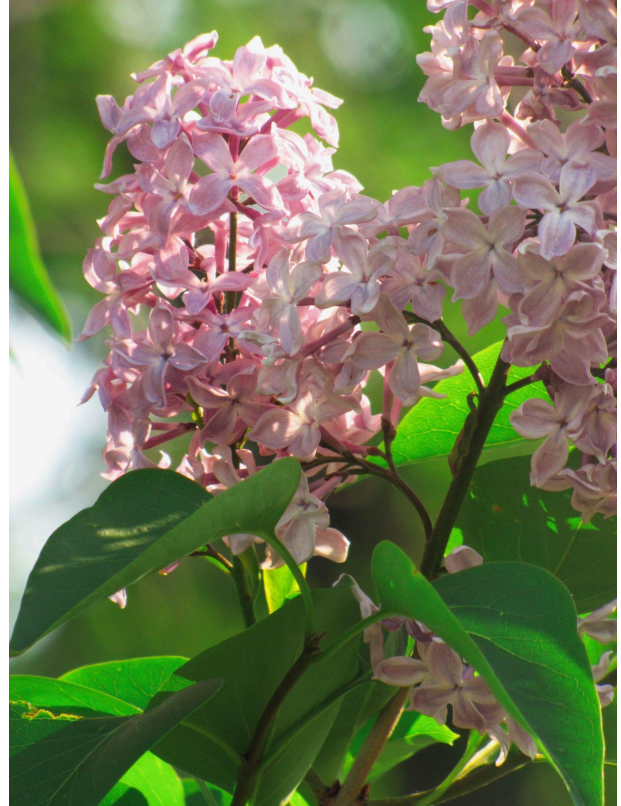
A Crabapple Tree

Gwen Modi

The sunlight began to cast a warm, yellow hue onto the branches in the orchard as it descended towards the horizon. The girl traced the bark with her fingertips, admiring it as she went to sit beneath it, taking out her sketchbook. From behind the girl, a few frantic breaths could be heard. She turned around to discover where this noise was coming from when she saw the boy. He plucked a crabapple from the tree above them and quickly took a seat next to her against the tree. The girl momentarily peered up from her sketchbook, offering the boy a friendly smile before returning to her art. The two sat quietly for a few minutes, enjoying the sound of the soft wind brushing

the leaves, the boy periodically taking bites out of the crabapple. Neither of them are technically allowed to be here, the orchard belonged to an older, lonelier woman who kept to herself with the exception of trespassers in her orchard; however, the two do not know this. Suddenly, the boy stands up and, without saying a word, grabs the girl's hand. Soon, the two are running through the orchard, their giggling filling the air and echoing throughout the field. A wooden door from the farmhouse creaked open in the distance, and an older woman stepped out onto her porch for a minute. She watched attentively as the two teenagers continued to run, jump, and dance together under the golden rays. Normally, the woman would have already grabbed her empty, yet scary-looking rifle and almost begun to yell at the trespassers, but something in her made her hesitate; she opened the door and walked back inside without another thought. The girl and the boy dancing in the field did not see or hear the woman at all, blinded by their contentment. They finally collapsed in a pile of fallen leaves, taking in the peacefulness of the moment, the air was growing cooler as the night seized the sky. The boy took out the pocketknife from his pocket and gave it to the girl; she knew exactly what he wanted her to do. Carefully, she began carving a heart into the bark of the tree. The woman looked from her window, but she did not feel anger or resentment; a wave of gratefulness and gratitude hit her. She watched as the girl and boy began to make their way back home, through the orchard, back to her sketchbook, and continuing until they were out of the woman's line of sight. The woman teared up

as she opened the door again, moving as fast as she could to chase one last glimpse of their happiness, but they were gone; all that was left was a heart in the crabapple tree.



An Unsettled Nostalgia

Hafsa Pervez

Sometimes, looking back upon certain times feels less a warm, comforting embrace and more so an empty lingering in the shadowy darkness amidst your brain. The famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle, once remarked that *“Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action... affecting through pity and fear the catharsis of such emotions.”* Personally, I interpreted this philosophical statement as an indirect metaphorical reference to the average mind

of a teenager. How, you may ask? Well, let me break it down for you.

In cases where we bury the complex emotions deep down, we are unable to achieve catharsis. Now, catharsis is an outcome which's resulted from the emotional effects of tragedy. As we process all of which we endure through our lives, ultimately, we stumble upon the final stage in which we reach an emotional cleansing and acceptance. That my friends, is the catharsis from your very own, very personal, and very tragic, experiences.

A 'normal' ideal that has been standardized around nostalgia is the feeling it can provide a person. Often, we assume that nostalgia can only really be felt in a positive way; through comfort, sweetness, and happiness, but there's always two sides to a story. Nostalgia comes with discomfort, bitterness, and sadness along with all the greater good. Almost like a relationship, whether it's platonic or romantic. The remembrance of such bonds that we once shared with other individuals can also result in a sense of longing and sorrow. Now don't get me wrong, when I experience nostalgia, I never feel either or because my feelings are always a mix between somber and bright. Most often, starting off with the pleasures that came with a person or an experience, to the seeping realization of the temporary role that that occasion contributed to my very mortal and temporary happiness. It's almost like an understanding of how certain things enveloped an ending before they even began. Whether you see it as destiny opposed to decisions, "*it's just the way life goes*", said a very wise, American artist and songwriter, Lil Uzi Vert.

With numerous causes, unsettled nostalgia can be triggered with ease depending on the person.

Potential triggers may consist of a sound, a place, a scent, and so on and so forth. But one primary trigger that is not given due consideration is time. If we really ponder upon it, we can see that time reshapes not only the mind, but the memories we carry inside it. Sometimes, I tend to find myself drifting away from who I once was and losing myself within the harsh reality of this earth and its beings. In relation, a trauma stimulus that can somewhat be associated with time is change. Whether that may be personal growth, or circumstantial change.

Thoughts and apprehensions such as these are what result in me getting caught in the barbed-wires of *an unsettled nostalgia*. Now even though the bulk of individuals perceive such complex feelings as their achilles heels, I tend to find a richness among the yearning of the elapsed time from my life. Because at the end of the day, we must learn to adapt within the habitual conducts of our brain and undertake the fact that we are not in control.

Perhaps the twinge we refer to as nostalgia is less in regards to memory and more so an undefined yearning sewn into the fabric of who we embody.



The Endless Pour

Alexander McMurphy

I walk through an endless pour. An infinite rainfall confined to my being. A path of nothing but the constant drench of water.

An endless white hall stretches forward, seemingly perfectly level. At least, all I can see of it is a white infinity as water pours over my head without relent, impairing my vision. There is no apparent source, only that it pours exclusively from above me. At times, the amount of water being poured will increase, akin to standing at the base of a waterfall. Other times, it will reduce simply to a small drip atop my head. It never stops, however. Never. And even when the amount of water being poured seems insignificantly small, the knowledge that the drip continues, that the pour has yet to come encases me with dread.

Occasionally, I will encounter a staircase that leads me either above or below, though what lies at the end of it is always the same. The familiar, blank hall that never ends.

I know not how this situation befell me. My memory fails to reach beyond a few years, though I doubt I lived before this. It's all I know. I cannot consider it torture, for I've placed myself here. At least, I believe so.

What my limited memory also provides me is the knowledge that there is an end to the path, wherein a great reward lies. My consciousness hungers for this treasure, longs to know what it is, pleads to finally escape this tedium. I question whether this reward is even worth it, if it would be better to simply lie down where I

am. I wonder if doing so would stop the water, or if it would simply grow worse.

As if prompted by my thoughts, the pour grows heavier. The sudden increase in volume and force brings down my body for a moment, nearly to a kneel. A grunt escapes me before I adjust to the increased weight of the water. I walk once more, though at a fraction of the previous speed. The stream pours down my face, over my cheeks, through my gritted teeth. It's as if I'm walking through a building's collapse, the water as heavy and unpredictably dull or sharp as burning debris. And it only worsens.

I can't continue. It's too much. I wish to keel over and let the pour take me, to drown in the rainfall. Has this no end? An eternity, I've tread this path, convincing myself the end lay at arm's reach. My aching legs beg to cease the journey. I fear at any step, I shall blink and find myself crashed into the white, marble floor below. I must rest. I must give in.

A light beckons me. I look forward. An unmistakable white pierces through my watery veil, one that only grows closer, brighter. It was a light I had never seen before, one that truly lied within my reach. I can almost taste it.

My pace quickens, but the water only grows stronger. I trudge my way through it, my vision now completely blocked by the water. I don't care, for I know how close I am to the end. I close my eyes, allowing the gradually brightening light guide me. I'm almost there!

I fall to my hands and knees. I bite my lip in pain, but I do not stop. As the water pounds on my back, I crawl through

the pain. A warmth comes over me, one that I've never felt before. It's exhilarating, granting me a newfound energy that gives me the strength to continue. The light only grows brighter. Until...

I've reached it.

The pour has stopped. After all this time I feel the air on my head, on my neck, on my back. The relief of nothingness washes over me, more euphoric than anything material could give. However, I knew that something greater awaited me here. I rest on my knees, my head facing the sky though my eyes closed. I take the first full breath in years, and stand up. I open them.



A sensation of disappointment crawls over me as I survey the spacious, empty, and, of course, completely white room. It's large, but small enough that I can see every corner from where I stand. There lies not a speck of dust, a broken tile, a hint

of character. There's nothing here. But I was promised a gift, wasn't I? Where is my reward? Where is what's rightfully mine?

"You've made it," a voice echoes from the other direction. My head swivels, now faced with a woman. She's tall, nearly as pale as the room, and her outfit mimics that of someone who works at a hotel. She's unassuming, if any word could describe her, except for one thing: her face carries this bright, understanding smile, one only a loved one could give, that fills me with comfort. It's not enough, however.

"Where am I?" I ask, my voice hoarse and barely recognizable. I realize that those were the first words I had uttered in years.

"Everywhere and nowhere," she answers, unhelpfully. "This place exists between all that there was and all that will be."

I tilt my head with furrowed brows in confusion to the woman's sentence. I clear my throat.

"Uh... who are you?" I ask, my voice more clear and what I remember.

"I'm nothing and everything," she says. "But aren't we all?"

A pang of anger hits my skull at every meaningless remark.

"Well, where is it?" I ask, my tone more stern. She does not respond, making a similar confused look to the one I had before, so I continue. "I walked through that corridor for years. I was promised a reward. I was promised *something*. Where is it?"

Her confused look turns into one of clarity, as she nods her head lightly a single time. Her eyes look diagonally towards

some unseen corner, as if contemplating how to phrase her response.

“This is what you could consider a checkpoint,” she finally says. “A place for rest before the remainder of your journey.”

She points to a doorway I had not seen earlier. It resembles exactly the one I had just exited through.

“When you find yourself prepared, you enter through that gate,” she says.

“So... this isn’t the end?” I ask.

“This could be the end, but what would be the point in that?” the woman asked, her smile unwavering. Though, it provided little comfort now.

Surely, this had to be it? I’ve overcome a seemingly-infinite, treacherous journey, I have sacrificed my physical and mental well-being for the promise of everything, yet all I’ve been gifted is lies. No! There’s something here, there has to be! My eyes dart around the room, in search of any crack, any speck of colour, any inconsistency in the room’s infinite dullness. But there’s nothing. Nothing but me and this woman. Nothing, nothing, nothing!

A cry of anguish escapes me. My fist connects with the nearest wall unconsciously. Yet, I feel nothing. No impact, no pain. In this place, there is truly nothing for me. It’s a mere break from the endless pour.

I slump against the wall, letting myself slide slowly towards the ground. Water inhibits my vision once more, but it is not from the pour. It is my tears. All I can see, all I will ever see, is this endless, dull white that covers every surface. My tears pour more and more, the entire world is blurred into a single plane of white. There’s

nothing for me here. There’s nothing for me anywhere. *I am nothing*. I close my eyes, and the infinite white is replaced with infinite black, flowing tears dripping down my face onto my chest. I wish only to sleep. Sleep and dream of what could’ve been. Sleep and forget what never will be.

Suddenly, I feel a hand on my shoulder, a soft, warm hand. My tears subside a moment, out of confusion or comfort, I’m not sure. My eyes open slowly, wiping away the remaining tears. It’s the woman, her smile more subtle this time, yet all the more easing. In her eyes, there lies a twinkle that I had never seen before. Her lips opened slowly.

“There’s so much more in you that only you yourself cannot see,” she says. “And there lies more for you than you will ever know.”

As she looks into my eyes, I stare into hers. I see infinity. True infinity, not the dread I once feared it was. I see every branching path, every possibility, every overwhelming happiness, every lingering sadness, all pleasure, all pain. It is everything, everything I could have, everything I could be. *It’s beautiful*.

My eyes close a moment, opening once more to see that she is gone. The room is empty. All that remains is me. *And everything*. I sigh, standing up. There lies only one thing left to do.

I stand before the doorway. It’s white, it’s endless. It’s the beginning. I cannot stay here, that I know. *What would be the point in that?* No, I must go through. I must see infinity myself.

I take the first step and the water instantaneously descends on me. The pour is

cold, so cold. It comes down harder than before. This will be worse, that I know. I grit my teeth and I begin.

I throw myself into the unknown. Towards an unknown goal, through uncharted territory, knowing, however, that I cannot allow myself to be limited to what I think possible. I go on forward not simply to achieve the end, but to be shaped by the journey it requires. For there will always lie more than which I could ever fathom and it is my responsibility to make the most of the time I am gifted.



***Cathedral Arts Festival**

- Perron, Alidit nico

There is a woman, sitting on my couch.
She is at once alien and yet wholly familiar,
casting strange and shifting shadows on my mind.

I see her in the reflection of the old CRT,
drowning amidst a sea of monochrome static.

I see her in the subtle creases of the blanket
which shields me when the winter comes inside.

I see her in the corner of my eye when I turn,
watching me with alarming interest;
alarming knowledge.

Yet when I turn, she is not there.

There is a woman sitting on my couch; her hair brown and long and curly and with raging waves which across it crash.

She wears makeup, lightly, but her lips are chapped and weary.

Her skin is rough, adorned with accidental patterns and faded cracks; a map she alone can read.

They lend her judgement a weight born of necessity.

Her words shimmer in her jewelry, her thoughts flicker in her eyes.

Her name dances in her features, a tarantella ere she dies.

Her name...

Her name is a menagerie: it's uncommon, which scares her; it's unique, which emboldens her; it's her's, which comforts her; it evokes a cello waking up in the morning, or a thousand-step staircase to the sun; it's simple and warm in a world which

grows ever more confusing and chill; it is—unintentionally—Italian.

There is a woman sitting on my couch, and I know her!

I swear it.

If there was one thing in this world I could declare, one absolute and irrefutable truth that I could display as an anchor on my reality, it is this:

I know that woman.

I have seen her face in the fog of the unknown, watching me.

I have heard her voice in the late-night shuffling of the well-worn house. I have felt her presence in the quiet places of the morning.

I know her.

I know her...

I'm walking out of my house on a cold Monday evening. I had only been there an hour, to collect myself and my belongings for the trip, but in leaving I feel as if I have never crossed this threshold in all my life. Maybe I haven't. The slush of the fading Winter is spread thinly across the bay, deathly and full of silt which sticks to my boots as I step into the passenger's seat of my own car. I can't drive, not in this state. My arm suddenly aches and my head feels woozy, though I am sure I have restitched my skin and refilled my veins. I try to ignore my nerves.

I find myself on the highway, staring vaguely at the space before the windshield. The spray of the cars in front of me casts the world in shifting neon hues, impasto thick and impressionistic. The colours stalk me to

my destination, bearing with them all my reservations and fears.

I exit the car and my legs feel heavy as lead, though my heart beats quicker than a feather falling on the moon. I can not move, nor can I stand still. For a moment, I exist in an agonising state of contradiction before stumbling dumbly forward and catching myself on the door. I want to run, to forfeit all the life I've wasted trying to get to this exact point, to slip beneath the asphalt and simply cease to be. My vision narrows and my veins constrict, my muscles tense and my sinew twists into clumps at the base of my neck. I lower my arms like an infant, unaware of where my body ends and the world begins. I steel myself, take a breath, and cross the threshold.

...I gaze into the captive sea of my television and wrap myself in the blanket.

There is a woman sitting on my couch, and there is no one here but me.



***Queen City Pride Parade**

In Dreams, In Shadows

Hiya Patel

In dreams I fly, in nightmares I cry,
And I don't know the reason why ?

Flights always taking in my mind,
New thoughts always rise.

Journey to the unknown,
But my mind is set.

Desires and wishes to complete,
but in order to earn, you need to learn.

In the chambers of nowhere,
I get a sound that I am something.

A Thank You, A Signoff

Addie Welk

As I publish this year's final edition on our last day of school, all I have to say is thank you to everyone in this year's Newspaper Club, especially Vice President Alexander McMurphy and Outreach Director (and your next president) Angela Xue, as well as Mrs. Cherepuschak, and of course our readers. I have had a very fruitful year working with everyone on this club and with the student body as a whole, and what we've produced together has made me incredibly proud. For next year, I send everyone still working with the Tartan Times the utmost love and gratitude for continuing what we've been building for the last four years. I wish you all the best this summer, and a great future for The Tartan Times! - Addie Welk



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