

Winter 2023



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2 CULTURE

Tempest in a Tea Cup

The art of making tea and what it can teach us

by Mila Frattini

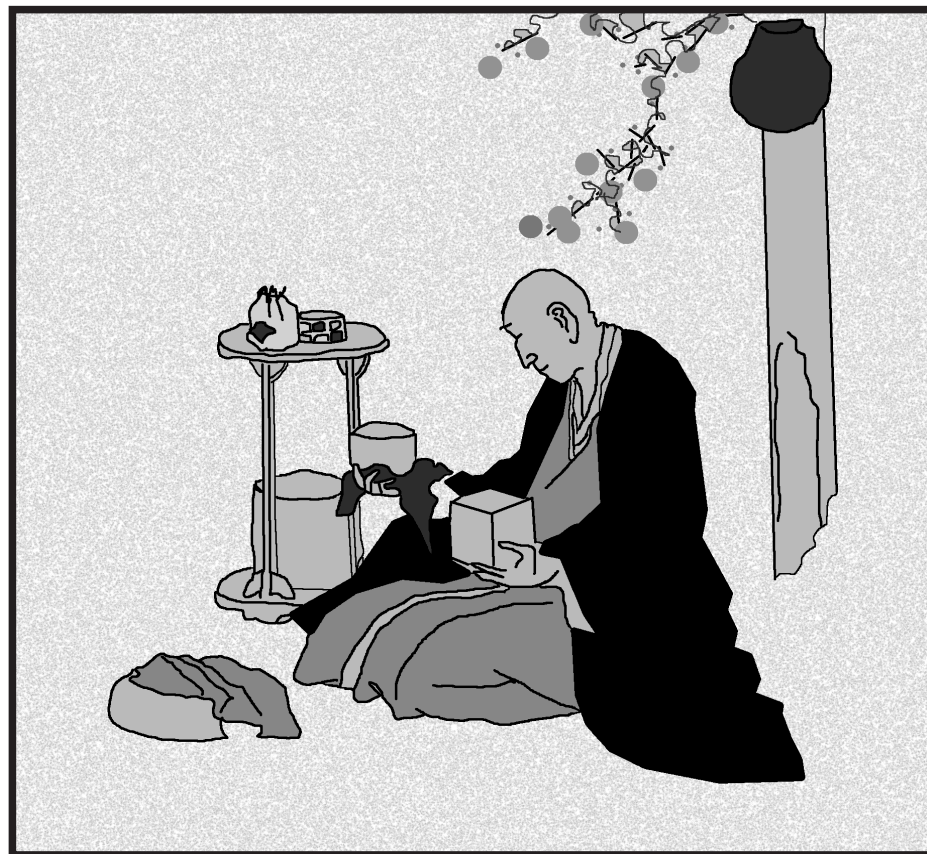
“Why make so much of a tea cup? Because when I look around I see we are restless; keen to reveal.

Trodding the roji, a garden path leading from the machiai (a traditional Japanese covered waiting bench) to the tea room, is the first stage of meditation. You step over irregular ground, led by the light of moss-covered lanterns, and as you tilt your head towards the surrounding evergreens, you are uplifted above ordinary thought. A return to yourself and to your most immediate environment. This is how Okakura Kakuzo, a Japanese scholar and art curator, describes the walk that leads to a Sukiya (tea house). The tea masters' work begins with the ideation of the roji, which is usually as conducive to the effects of serenity and purification, but can give rise to other sensations. Master Rikiu aimed for utter loneliness, while Kobori-Enshiu strived to recreate the feeling of being newly awake, looking ahead with a lingering mellowness behind the eyes, like “a bit of the sea, a pale evening moon” (old Japanese verses). At the end of the Roji, the guest has arrived, silently. If a samurai, please place your sword on the rack beneath the eaves. Bend low to cross the metre-high door, so small to instil humility, notice the flower arrangement, take a seat. The only sound that fills the room is the boiling of water coming from the iron kettle; the note of it is a peculiar, echoing melody, obtained by arranging pieces of iron at the bottom.

Tea time did not start with the tea we are generally acquainted with. No filter paper bags, sold in different coloured boxes to match its flavours, bought to be fiercely consumed by the British monarchy or students fending off the winter cold. Tea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage, embraced as a poetic act in China in the eighth century, and later on as a part of the Japanese Zen aesthetic ritual in the fifteenth century. Teasim, like art, has its periods and schools. There have been three main methods of making tea: the cake-tea which was boiled, the powdered-tea which was whipped, and the leaf-tea which was steeped. These correspond, respectively, to the Tang, the Sung, and the Ming dynasties of China. Luwuh, considered the first master of tea, wrote the *Chaking* (Code of Tea) at a time when Buddhism, Taoism and Confu-

cianism were seeking to converge. He found an emblematic answer in the tea service, for it contained the harmony reigning through all things. The Sungs were less symbolic, more practical: maintaining that Nirvana was always within grasp, the tea ceremony became one of the ways to achieve self-realisation.

“Tea time did not start with the tea we are generally acquainted with. No filter paper bags, sold in different coloured boxes to match its flavours, bought to be fiercely consumed by the British monarchy or students fending off the winter cold.



sense of proportion to the universe. Tea was accessible to the entirety of the population, even making its way into common expressions. You could say someone had *too much tea* in them to describe a person who, regardless of day-to-day dread, was easily swept away by beauty and the emotions it arouses. While someone with *no tea* is almost insusceptible to it.

The tea room mirrored the essential aspects of Zen monasteries. It is the *Abode of Fancy* for it is built to meet an artistic impulse, the *Abode of Vacancy* as it is bare except for ornaments necessary to satisfy the current aesthetic need, and the *Abode of the Unsymmetrical* insofar as it is a host of imperfection, leaving it to the imagination to complete its furnishing. Everything is clean: a tea master is only a master if there is no dust in the tea room. Tea masters have influenced Japanese architecture, botany, art, and people's way of living. As students of Zen, they taught the importance of the mundane, of significance in the small incidents of life, and the meditative nature of meticulously carrying out daily tasks.

“So I look to the art of tea as a token of concentrated presence, beauty, fluid incompleteness, passage, and relativity. I turn to Zennism to practise 'feeling the polar star in the southern sky', as a master defined it.

Though Japan followed China in its tea practices, it was only in the fifteenth century, through the influence of Taoism on the southern Zen Buddhist sect, when monks performed the first Japanese tea ritual in front of the image of Bodhidharma, establishing tea as ceremonial. While China's struggles against the Mongol tribes lost the wealth of Sung culture, and with it the ideal of tea, in Japan it evolved into an art of refinement and meditation. Undisturbed and rhythmic, the ceremony united the host and guests in the appreciation of simplicity and unity with oneself and the act, away from the 'outside'. During Japan's long period of isolation, from the early seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century, Teasim became representative of the way of life the country was trying to preserve. Kakuzo wrote, in 1906, that tea expressed a view of man and nature: a moral geometry, defining one's

Why make so much of a tea cup? Because \ when I look around I see we are restless; keen to reveal. Because we cling to a linear idea of progress that begs us to never stop moving in the *right* direction (and yet, I am suspended, awfully self-conscious). We deal in absolutes; work with boundaries and binaries to achieve symmetry. Define smallness and greatness: scoff the first, worship the latter. What is the present moment? Bracing for the future. Take ourselves so seriously when the world is so ridiculous. So I look to the art of tea as a token of concentrated presence, beauty, fluid incompleteness, passage, and relativity. I turn to Zennism to practise 'feeling the polar star in the southern sky', as a master defined it. Kakuzo points out, why *not* make a tempest about a tea cup – mankind has done worse.

In Defence of My Liberal Arts and Sciences Degree

by Alejandra Monerri Revuelta

I was looking at Masters' programmes in maths the other day and felt so stupid. When I graduate, I will barely qualify for any, even having taken all of the UCU Maths courses and labs. It's true that UCU is especially limited when it comes to maths, while the course options for other subjects are far more developed. Even so, our liberal degree, no matter the direction you take it in, doesn't qualify you for an overwhelming majority of Masters' at the UU. Considering that a Masters' is the way I want to go, it got me thinking about what on Earth I'm doing studying Liberal Arts and Sciences. And I'm sure every UCU student will ask themselves this very same question at least once throughout their UCU lives. So, I come with an answer: an article looking at the disadvantages, but more importantly the advantages, of a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree.

The general idea is this: a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree is useless in the short-term, but excellent in the long-term. You will feel absolutely stupid, like I do right now, because we don't cover as much content as a degree focused on a specific subject. Taking my very non-mathematical mathematical curriculum as an example, I don't qualify for a Masters' in Mathematics because UCU doesn't cover all of the topics a Bachelor in Mathematics covers, which makes me less knowledgeable in maths than your regular "I-have-a-Bachelor's-in-maths" kid, and therefore I feel stupid. In terms of the Literature aspect of my degree, I feel the same. We don't even study Literature from a specific country, which would be the usual; we don't do 'English Literature' or 'German Literature', we do 'Literature'. We learn about Shakespeare one week and Brecht the next. In other words, Liberal Arts and Sciences students do not receive an in-depth education on one specific subject, which is why I don't qualify for a Masters' in maths and my unit-mate can't immediately pursue Clinical Psychology after UCU.

But, do not despair, a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree does teach you something. I mean,

otherwise this degree would probably not exist anymore. The Liberal Arts and Sciences education gives you the tools required to think within different fields. How is that useful you ask? It sounds like I'm romanticising our degree, you say?

As I mentioned, a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree is excellent in the long-term. You can't get into a Masters' now, but there are solutions to that if it's truly the way you want to go. For example, there are plenty of pre-Masters' programmes for maths across the Netherlands that would allow me to pursue a Masters in the field. Short-term problem solved! Long-term advantages unlocked! So, what are they? According to Udemy, the top 8 in-demand skills in the workplace are all skills learned in a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree, something no subject-specific degree can do.

“A Liberal Arts and Sciences degree is useless in the short-term, but excellent in the long-term.”

Firstly, UCU teaches us *communication skills*. How to write effectively and how to speak effectively through essays, portfolios, presentations, documentaries, etc. The ways in which we're assessed develop our skills of communication, even in subjects where you wouldn't normally be tested in such unconventional ways. For example, a Bachelor student in Maths won't write an essay or do a presentation until their Thesis. And yet, at UCU, that's not the case. Because you are taught effective communication skills across the Humanities, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences, you learn how to be *flexible*.

This leads me to the next point: *creativity*. UCU encourages, and even teaches, creativity. Whether it be the unconventional form in which we are assessed, or courses that inspire us to take advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of our curricu-

lums, we learn to be creative here. This extends beyond the classroom and into extracurricular activities, like committees. They allow us to turn our ideas into a reality by offering us a budget!

You know what else we learn through committees? *Initiative* and *independence*. Student life on campus is completely student-led, so it's up to us to not only make our food, do our laundry, and go fix our bikes when they break, but also to join a committee and offer other students something to do with their free time. This also requires *organisation*. And so does planning your own curriculum! Academically speaking, these skills are also present, as well as *research skills* and *analytical reasoning*, when asked to do a project in a subject.

All of the skills I listed are known as "soft skills", and they are skills you will need throughout your life, not only for your work. However, a subject-specific degree focuses on subject-specific skills known as "hard skills" that get you into a Master's programme, yes, but they can easily become outdated.

“When I graduate, I will barely qualify for any, even having taken all of the UCU Maths courses and labs.”

To conclude this little "to be or not to be in a Liberal Arts and Sciences Degree" internal monologue, in the long-term, subject-specific degrees aren't as prosperous as our Liberal Arts and Sciences degree. Once you get over your "how am I getting into this Master's programme" phase, you will have a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree that helped you develop into an ideal candidate to take on leadership positions, as we learn to be strong communicators, use our versatile knowledge, and be adaptable.



On Being a 17-Year-Old 25-Year-Old

by Katrina Joy Funk

Your twenties are an odd decade, but I don't think I have to tell anyone in their twenties that. You feel old and young at the same time, a child and an adult all at once. For me, the strangest part is the variety of lifestyles permissible for a twenty-something-year-old. It's perfectly normal to be in university, nervously determining what your next step will be. It's also normal to be married with children or have a serious and stable, grown-up career. It's the vastness of possibilities, and the knowledge that you could do or be anything, that creates angst in me.

“ *How can it be that I feel mentally nineteen and yet be only five years away from thirty? Shouldn't I be further along in life by now, with a career, a house and a garden?*

Many of us, perhaps in the back of our minds, compare our lives now to the lives of our parents, siblings, or friends when they were our age. Are we successful enough? Have we accomplished enough? It's okay to not know what you want to do with your life, right? Here I must note that, though I'm in my twenties, I speak from a very specific perspective. I started UCU relatively "late", at the ripe old age of twenty-three. I have experienced my fair share of feeling out of place. In many ways, I felt as though I reverted back to my highschool self – uncertain, self-conscious, anxious to please. UCU is many good things, but empowering it is not. Though it champions itself as a place where students can be independent and self-reliant, designing their own curriculums and taking charge of their learning, UCU functions largely as a boarding school. I have always felt that the underlying message to students from staff and the administration is "we know better than you."

“ *Unfortunately, I don't think there's any cure for coming to terms with the struggles of being a twenty-something, other than being kind to yourself and embracing where you are at the moment.*

Of course, I must note that this is a generalization, and as I said, UCU has many good things. The point I'm trying to get across is that it was strange for me to enter into a place where I felt seventeen again while simultaneously seeing my friends back home

getting married, going to graduate school, and starting careers. I must admit, I have always been one to compare.

While twenty-somethings today perhaps experience less pressure to follow a "traditional" life plan than our parents or grandparents, this doesn't mean that we don't feel pressure in other areas of our lives. There is no manual for transitioning from your teens to twenties, or from your early twenties to mid-twenties. To this day, when someone asks my age, "nineteen" flashes through my brain before I manage a sheepish "twenty-five." In the days leading up to my twenty-fifth birthday, I experienced an age-related crisis. "Where did the time go?", I wondered. How can it be that I feel mentally nineteen and yet be only five years away from thirty? Shouldn't I be further along in life by now, with a career, a house and a garden?

“ *It has less to do with your actual age and more to do with the narrative that you tell yourself about that age. What I've discovered from experience is that no one is ever as concerned about your age as you are.*

My parents laughed at me in spite of themselves when I came to them with these worries. "Oh, you're so young," they told me, rolling their eyes at my claim that I should've purchased my first house by now. My mom then told me that at thirty-five she felt practically ancient, then at forty-five she felt young, and now at sixty-five she feels mentally and physically forty-five. Apparently, it has less to do with your actual age and more to do with the narrative that you tell yourself about that age. What I've discovered from experience is that no one is ever as concerned about your age as you are.

Unfortunately, I don't think there's any cure for coming to terms with the struggles of being a twenty-something, other than being kind to yourself and embracing where you are at the moment. Comparison is your enemy, but a hard one to shake. For me, it manifests as a



Illustration © Alejandra Monerri Revuelta

running list of "shoulds" and "should-nots." "You should be doing this by now", "you shouldn't be doing that anymore." This kind of self-talk only digs a deeper hole for your confidence to climb into and disappear. The flip side of there being no manual for being a twenty-something is that there is no manual for being a twenty-something! There's no right way to "do" your twenties. There is only what you feel is best and what makes you happy. It may sound like I'm writing this article to reassure myself, and I can assure you that I am. But sometimes a pep talk is much needed. As I'm getting ready to leave UCU and venture out into the "real world", I naturally feel an amount of anxiety. However, I also know that outside of UCU, outside of our respective comfort zones, is where life really starts. Beware of the "shoulds" and the "should-nots", and allow yourself to be lost and make mistakes. It's okay if the relationship doesn't work out, or if you don't land the job or internship you applied for. You have the rest of your life to figure it out.



Friday Night

by Hilde van Son

*Mother opens the door to her heart
and places the garlic butter chicken right inside her.
She is attacked from all sides by the fire
emanating from her chest now,
but she wears her life like
a lion's skin.*

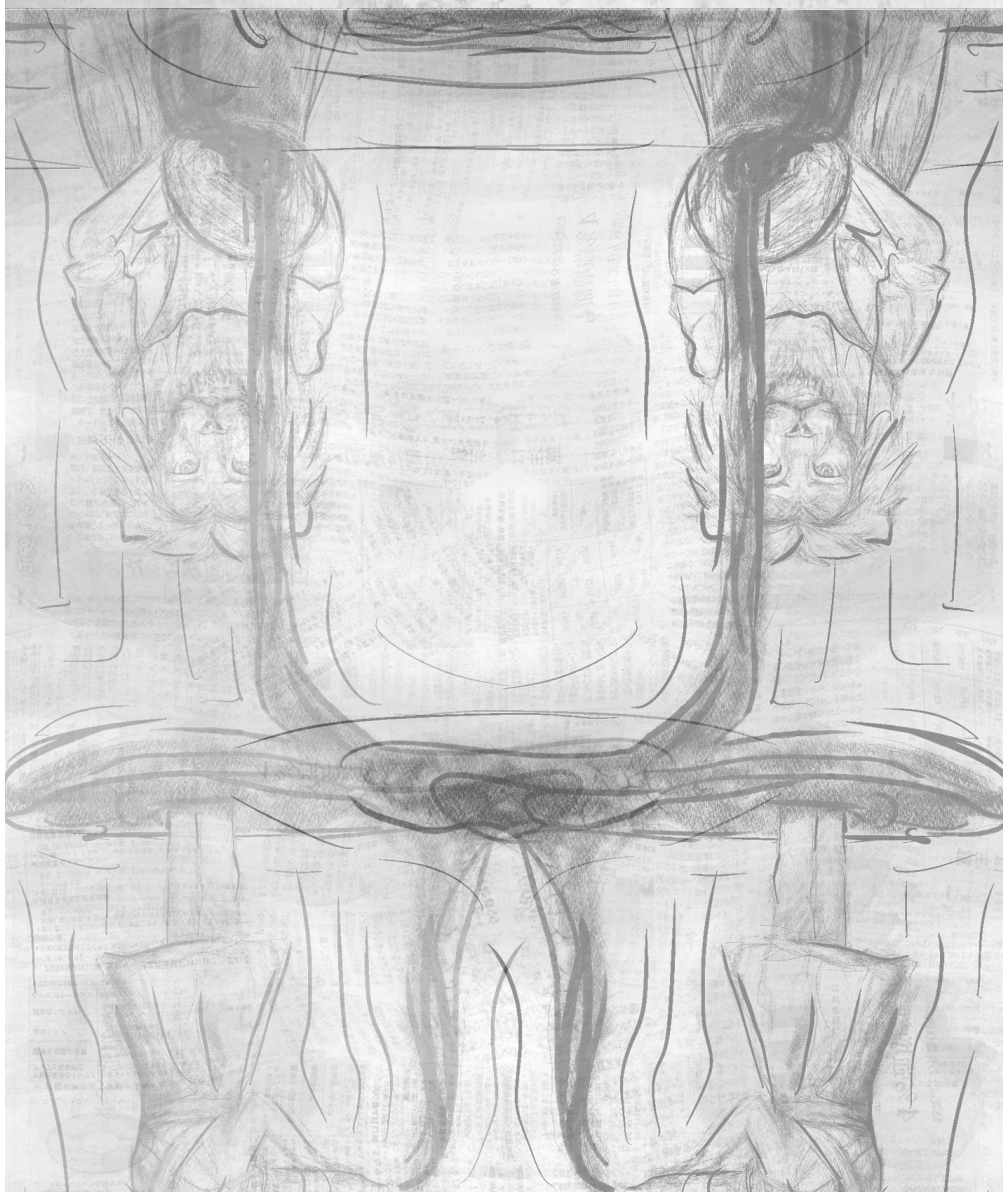
*She sets the table, ar-
ranges paper plates to hide the
breaking that takes place.
She lets me gnaw on a fork that is un-
doubtedly not silver.
She has so many sides to her
that she starts shaking, always
something that needs braising.*

*I imagine ploughing into mash like after a snowstorm,
I imagine starchy precipitation.
Mother places her hand on my shoulder
and guides me to the table,
there is a special place there
for me to hide.*

*I braid our flowers into baskets
and I fill them with warm water.
Mother asks me to get out the wine,
I burn my lips on the rim of the glass
and start sizzling.
It's the chicken that is sizzling in my mother's oven now.
She opens herself up again, so
selfless in her labour.
She enacts the divine feminine,
explains the encagement.*



Illustration © Anonymous



*I start to believe in something that
isn't the end but
is a sort of ending.
Mother turns her desire into belonging,
lets the symptoms of her sacrifice
become the reward.*

*We celebrate her fatigue with a smile,
and we ask for more,
we make her worthwhile.
She carves into our hunger with
a clean knife, tracing a sharp circle
with the tips of her teeth,
removing all that is unwanted:
the sage and rosemary for the flavour; the turkey baster;
the bones poking into our windpipes;
the passivity that makes her so warm and proper.*

*We cheer and she is silent.
I catch her resentment with the tips of my braids,
it travels upward.
I look shyly at my brothers and father.
I imitate her quiet.
I am my mother's only daughter.
Mother turns her tired eye to the sky now and shudders.
Dinner is served.*

6 CULTURE

the shoal of your hair: a nest. the sweat that
you bead: gold eggs. the ground where you
pray: a ruined temple. for these last few
mornings, the clouds seem to have
drudged. they conceal the
sun, dimming your blood. come
rain, come hail, the scorch occurs
only when you occupy a stage.
swallow every last light, wreck
the set, bait the team. when
they come for you at last,
blanket the room with your
pride. oh and remember—
solange every saturday.



who has seen the wind? who has woven the vines? who
drank the sea, who milked the sky? all day you ask, you
push, you preen. inside your belly, there is a bee that
buzzes with the weight of honey. peek into your shirt
and you will see her little legs stuck to honeycomb
alleyways, sticky stones: a sumptuous mess. what
you lay your hands on will stay forever young (go
on: graze the trees and the dirt and the mold
and the rot and the seeds and the—)

you tend to forget pearls emerge from a casing. tightly
shut, swallowed first, born from expulsion. yet here
you are, cocooned and skittish. your hand shakes
under teacups, the dishes do not gleam. a tear hangs
within you every second you aren't held. it yawns
when you don't come to the moon silvery every
night. petals of every color wish to shelter you, make
a shrine when you sleep, weep when you dream. just let
yourself feel; when the day comes, your shell will crack.



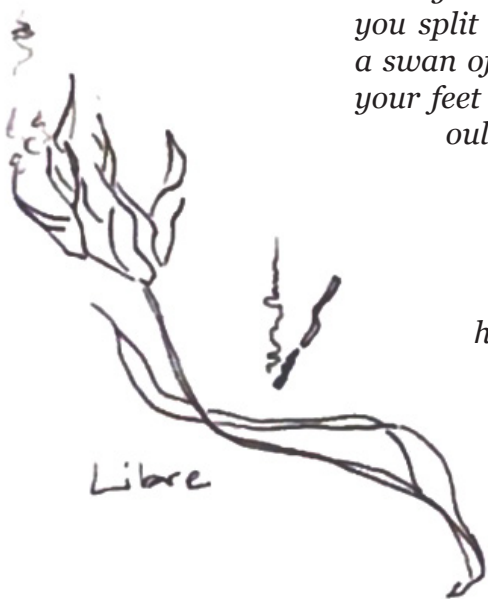
please, please, please, just bake lemon peels and
poppy seeds into your anger. it'll still be served
piping hot and under an examining gaze, but at
least it will melt in a mouth, coat a tongue like it is meant
to. last night when you snored amongst your sheets, a
hummingbird stole your breaths for a melody to coo at
dawn. linger not at the edge of your dreams for whole
rooms will plead when you finally plant the seed of your
imagination (a little joint will still spark in that broad,
broad abyss. pack a lighter, use cherry paper).



sweet thing.. oh, you sweet, sweet thing.
you are a tooth: chipped and cloying,
saved under a pillow for a wish-fairy to
find. for all that, you've always had to
dig for wishes with caked nails, floun-
dering roots, hair askew. only time
knows that death has tried you, decree
too, decay even; but you waded through
the nights still, lids crackling and wide.
you split them like a river, bathe like
a swan of twilight. luxuriate now that
your feet are wet; for rest, rub patch-
ouli lotion onto your neck.



hysteric in a floral dress? emptied
the bottles till the wine stained your
lips? frowning in the backseat? hm? i heard when a meadow gets shy, it
sways to you to learn all the ways to bloom; but how many petals will you
pluck into the night until you arrive at a bud that feeds you full; a stem
that does not sting you? venus scowls when you dilly-dally this way.
yes, you were invited to dance but not like this. light a candle (or five) if
it tempers your choice; or else— a thorn awaits you.



HOROS

by Prern

Check your sun, moon, and ris

shhh, shh, sh. glasses br
remains but the sound
yourself, the breathier
scolds the others. they u
be cared for is a feat bu

well, well, well. of course you are at the party. of course your eyes are dripping tangerine, mint, violet, and blue; the strangest hues. well then? how many meters of skin from the bodies present here have you memorized; how many will stay memorialized? mausoleums break like dams, history crumbles like a crushed pill each time you hop over, duck under, glower snidely

Sagittarius

at love. you can tuck a word behind all your chewing teeth, drink whole maps and tauten your eardrums for every song in the world; but when your palms begin to sink, who will be there to swim in the wreck?



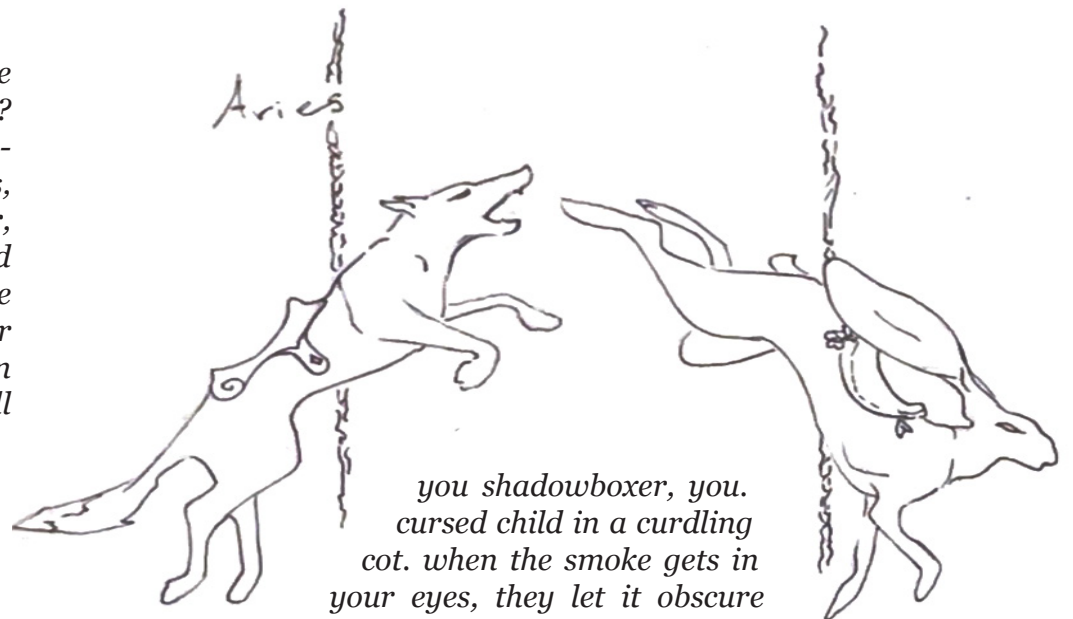
SCOPES

na Bajaj

sing for your optimal reading.

break, plates break, cups break. you too, break. what of shatter? the longer the thread you wind around your skin gets. it purples and curdles, implodes and will like you even if you are wary, wanton, wishful. to t your desk is piled with pens, with paper; vials of power waiting to be spilled. before bed: **reveal** (make a list of your favorite scents).

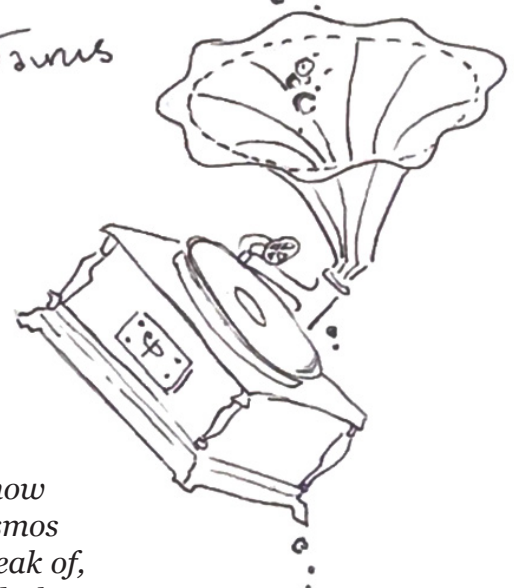
Virgo



you shadowboxer, you. cursed child in a curdling cot. when the smoke gets in your eyes, they let it obscure you instead of sticking their thumbs into all the funeral fires that follow your trail. can't they see? you chase but you are predator, prey, and a winsome treat. so stay seated upon the babbling carousel. budge not until its speed sparks and you become a flame gracing one pillar of a brooding candelabra. and for tonight: listen to sade (she knows. yes.. she knows).

silk on your skin— soft as a sigh. a sight to behold, silence sly like a submarine lodged 6 ft into the sea. a sonnet, perhaps, in your name. go ahead now: seethe with solitude, let your teeth grind like a fist; but please— do it with another, for another, under another. before you were touched, your sermon was of love. don't let it thaw. sing your song. your siren could flood a shoreline. while it eats the sand, bury in it a page with a mary oliver poem scribbled on it.

Taurus



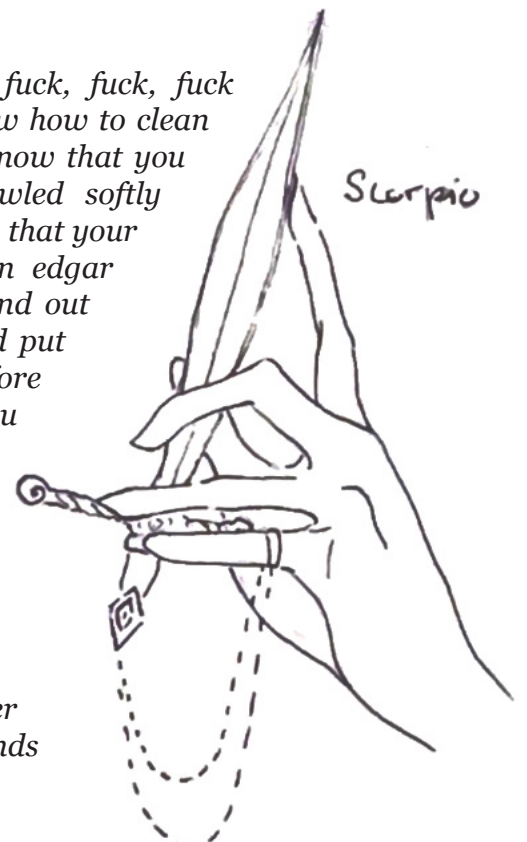
it is only 2pm on a wednesday: how far will your search for the cosmos go? this fictitious god they speak of, even if, even if a fictitious god, she sat and braided every star into the lines of your palm. when you cup them together, modernity trembles in fear, envying how you glow. after all, what good is a life in the face of a vision so vile you only live to tell its tale? but as a compromise... wear those pants you deemed of the scene when you were 14. the years will thank you.

Aquarius



fuck. fuuuuuuuuuck, fuck, fuck, fuck. look: you **do** know how to clean up the blood. you do know that you twisted the knife, mewled softly under its brutish plight. that your exhales trickled like an edgar allan poe verse, into and out of their mouth. you did put on velveteen gloves before leaving the house, you did put your hand inside of them while it was still clothed. do not bother with mercy now; with charity, with forbearance: your embrace is a claw and every last lover still stretches their wounds in your memory.

Scorpio



8 COLUMNS



Bridge the Bias

by Sharvani Shetty on behalf of PoCCo

A random midnight conversation in the hallowed halls of Voltaire got me wondering about something I rarely ever think about: medicine. More specifically, how there are many different kinds of medicine – ayurveda, traditional Chinese medicine, etc. – all of which have been relevant for many centuries in many parts of the world, but which are today called “hippie medicine” (my Voltaire mate used these words) in *this* part of the world. A quick Google search of such “hippie medicine” gives contradictory results. First I came across a Wikipedia description of traditional Chinese medicine (or TCM) as “pseudoscience”, and then came an article revealing a recent discovery that Tai Chi, a Chinese martial art, has been found to slow down the development of Parkinson’s disease.

Parkinson’s is a neurological disorder affecting nearly 90,000 people every year. An incurable disease, it’s known for its debilitating symptoms that only worsen with time. While Western medicine has made strides in alleviating some of these symptoms, it falls short in providing holistic care. Tai Chi, known for its slow, deliberate movements and its focus on cultivating ‘Qi’, or vital life energy, has provided an alternative (and arguably better) approach. The recent study, published in the BMJ Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry found that Tai Chi has “potential disease-modifying effects” on older adults with Parkinson’s. The study found that the group

of 147 patients that practiced Tai Chi twice a week for an hour experienced slower disease progression, reduced need for medication, and improved cognitive function. They also reported significant improvements in quality of life and sleep, as compared to the group of 187 patients who didn’t practice Tai Chi.

“ *We’re told that medicine, as the objective science... But the truth is that nothing can escape human politics. White supremacy is prevalent in every corner of human life, and it’s plain to me that medicine is no different.*

Other studies have also shown Tai Chi to be effective in protecting against dementia and balance disorders. One such study found that people who practiced “cognitively enhanced Tai Chi” on a regular basis could add up to “6 years of cognitive function” to their lives. And this doesn’t just apply to Tai Chi – other forms of traditional medicine such as Ayurveda and acupuncture offer insights into holistic healing, emphasizing connectedness of the body, mind and spirit, all of which are often overlooked in the reductionist approach of Western medicine. The value of most non-Western traditions lies in their ability to treat not just the symptoms but also the root causes of ailments, promoting balance, harmony and holistic well-being.

While the benefits of non-Western medicine have been evident for centuries, especially to the millions of people that have benefited from it, most Western countries are giving it credit only now, following empirical studies. Only after these traditions have submitted to the Western scientific method (which is a lot more recent than these traditions) are they given due credit. This makes me wonder how ‘objective’ medicine really is. We’re told that medicine, as the objective science that it is, merely seeks the truth and has no business with the complexities of human politics. But the truth is that nothing can escape human politics. White supremacy is prevalent in every corner of human life, and it’s plain to me that medicine is no different. The historic disregard for non-Western practices, and the fact that we only consider them valid under Western terms, is proof that medicine is as tied up with coloniality and white supremacy as everything else in the world.

All this is not to say that Western medicine is evil or should be dismissed. On the contrary: the good news is that now that we’ve recognised the value of non-Western medicine, we can integrate these practices alongside Western medicine, and usher in a new era of holistic healing. A new era wherein the mind, body and spirit are all in sync. A new era of truly comprehensive healthcare.

Katrina's Playlist

by Katrina Joy Funk



All songs have a certain vibe or energy that is often difficult, nearly impossible, to explain through words. Something about the beat, lyrics, instruments used creates a kind of nameless, yet magical, aura around the song. And often, when we enjoy a song so much that simply listening to it over and over is no longer fulfilling, we look for songs with a similar “energy.” Two years ago, just before the Spring break, I became aurally fixated on the 1978 song “Right Down the Line” by Gerry Rafferty. I played it in the shower, at work, on buses, trains, and planes. I even listened to cover versions. However, I ultimately reached my limit with the song, despite still craving its energy. That is when I discovered a world of playlists made by Spotify users featuring a selection of songs inspired by a certain song. Luckily, I found “Songs with the same energy as right down the line” and discovered new favorites that scratched my itch. However, this piqued my curiosity. I wanted to see what other

songs had inspired playlists and what the creators defined as the “energy” of the song based on their selections. For example, the “Right Down the Line” – inspired playlist featured songs with the same kind of smooth, laid back, winding energy as the original. To me this felt like coming back to your cozy Manhattan apartment in the early 1970s, cooking dinner with your partner, but with a touch of angst, like you’ve just had an argument.

As I went further down the rabbit hole, I found playlists entitled “Songs w/ the same energy as running up that hill”, “songs with the same energy as blister in the sun”, and even “songs with the same energy as nicole kidman after her divorce”, inspired by the much-circulated picture of actress Nicole Kidman apparently exuberant with joy in a law office parking lot after finalizing her divorce with Tom Cruz. If you’re curious, this playlist featured songs ranging from Icona Pop and Charli XCX’s “I

Love It” to Bleacher’s “I Wanna Get Better.” Sure, these playlists are fun, but what struck me about them was the seemingly universal understanding that all songs carry a particular energy. Though each song is individual, written under specific circumstances, the product of a unique creative mind or minds, there exist certain universal energies, or vibes. Perhaps this is why we crave playlists such as these, or why we often opt to listen to songs that match our current energies. They say it’s more beneficial to listen to sad music when you’re sad, instead of forcing a smile with upbeat tunes. So, because this is my last column of my UCU career, and a severe case of senioritis has made it difficult to come up with creative ideas, I leave you with the knowledge that these playlists exist (if you didn’t know already), the encouragement to check out a few that might appeal to you, and the inspiration to create your own if there’s a song you simply can’t get enough of.

Loco LogiCo

A Planet Named Zeus

by Alejandra Monerri Revuelta on behalf of LogiCo



In honour of LogiCo’s first ever trip to the Sonnenborgh Observatory in Utrecht on November 21st, I want to dedicate this column to the cosmic world of space! As you may or may not know, the astronomical objects (a.k.a. planets, moons, asteroids, etc.) in our Solar System have names that sound oddly like the gods from Roman mythology. And that’s because they were, in fact, named after them (how liberal arts and sciences of them). The following is a list of what planet corresponds to which Roman god and its Greek counterpart, and an astronomical as well as a mythological fun fact about them:

Mercury - Hermes

Hermes (not the committee on campus, but the god of messaging) is the Greek form of Mercury. He’s the messenger of the gods, making him really fast. It makes sense that both the planet in the Solar System which takes the least time to orbit the Sun, 88 Earth days to be precise, and the UCU sports committee, were named after this particular god.

Venus - Aphrodite

A lot of people mistake Mercury for being the hottest planet in our Solar system because it’s the closest to the Sun. But actually, that title belongs to Venus. Hot is the planet, hot is the goddess of love and passion. Some versions say that when Aphrodite appeared one day at Olympus, Hera was scared her husband Zeus would get with her, and decided to marry her off to her son Hephaestos (or Vulcan in Roman). The most beautiful goddess was married to the ugliest god, something Aphrodite wasn’t necessarily grateful for, which led to her cheating on her husband with Ares.

Terra (Earth) - Gaia

Terra, meaning Earth in Latin, is the Roman form of the deity Gaia. Gaia and her son Ouranos, who we’ll meet later, are the

parents of the titans, like Kronos, and the grandparents of the gods (mythology has quite a lot of incest). She’s considered to be the mother of all life, which is very poetic, seeing as the Earth is the only planet we know of so far that has living beings.

Mars - Ares

Mars has two moons. Deimos and Phobos. Coincidentally, Ares had two sons with Aphrodite called Deimos and Phobos. Or maybe it isn’t a coincidence. The fourth planet in our Solar System was named after the god of war, whose children represent the concept of fear. Both Deimos and Phobos are Greek words that mean fear or terror. Deimos is the god of panic, or group fear, whilst Phobos is the god of one’s individual fears, which is where the word ‘phobia’ comes from.

Jupiter - Zeus

Zeus is known to be a very promiscuous figure in mythology, having lots of lovers, including Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Sound familiar? That’s because those are also the names of Jupiter’s biggest, most well-known moons! He also happens to have a wife, Hera (in Greek) or Juno (in Latin), who, as the goddess of marriage, women, and family, must not be very happy with her husband’s extramarital activities. What is particularly interesting is that Juno is the name of a spacecraft that orbits around Jupiter collecting information about its composition, gravitational field, polar magnetosphere, and other physics mumbo jumbo. So Hera orbits around Zeus, as if she were making sure he isn’t being unfaithful to her!

Saturn - Kronos

You may remember that Kronos is the son of Gaia and Ouranos, king of the titans, and the titan of time. He’s also the father of Demeter, Hera, Hestia, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus, the first six gods. He doesn’t get

the ‘best father of the year’ award, though, because he had this strange habit of eating his children once they were born. That is until his youngest son, Zeus, managed to escape that fate by making him throw them up, and overthrew him.

Uranus - Ouranos

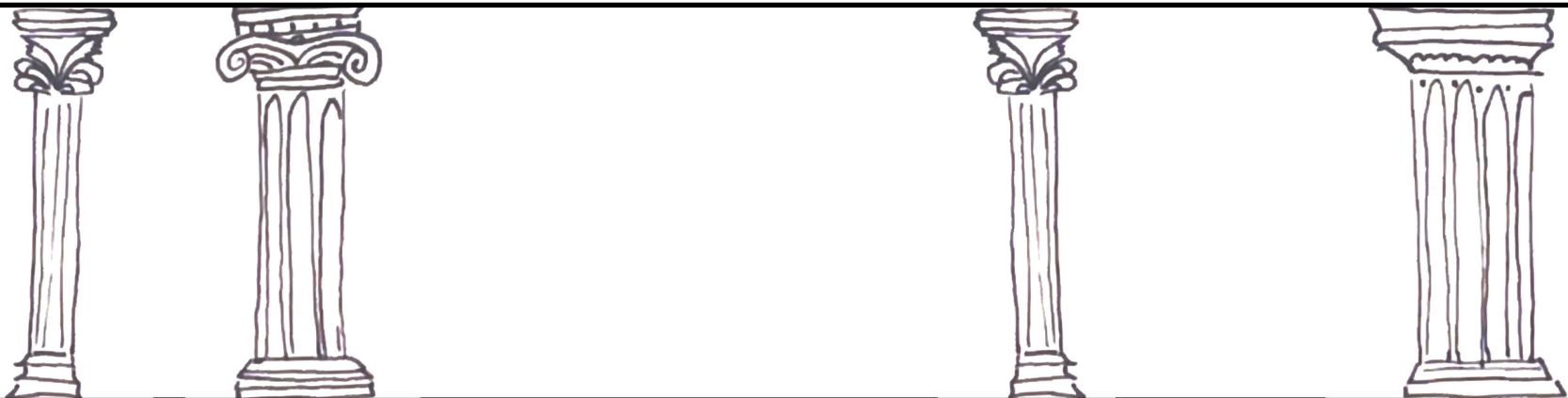
Ouranos is the deity of the sky, son and husband of Gaia, and the father of Kronos. Who, funny story, attacked him with his infamous scythe and banished him into the sky forever.

Neptune - Poseidon

Poseidon is the god of the sea. In Greek mythology he’s very important but, because the ancient Romans were not very good sailors, Roman mythology regards Neptune as much less important compared to other gods. Either that is the reason why only one of the later planets was named after him, or because Neptune is a very blue, ocean like colour as a result of the absorption of red and infrared light by its methane atmosphere.

Pluto - Hades

This little astronomical body was a planet and then it wasn’t a planet and then it was a planet again. I think he’s not a planet anymore. It’s logical, but it makes me sad that Pluto didn’t make it in the end. Especially since ‘Pluto the planet’ rolls off the tongue so easily. It makes sense, however, when you realise that Pluto was named after Hades, god of the dead and king of the Underworld (the mythological equivalent of Hell). He was one of the main gods in Greek mythology, and yet consistently left out. So much so, that his seat was not in Olympus with the other gods, but all the way below the Earth.



10 COLUMNS

Movie Monster

La Legge di Lidia Poët

by Alejandra Monerri Revuelta



The Law According to Lidia Poët is a mini-series on Netflix loosely based on the life of, you guessed it, Lidia Poët. But who is she? In 1881, the real Poët graduated in Law with top marks, her dissertation arguing in favour of women being allowed to vote. Two years later, she applied and passed the exam that allowed her to become a lawyer. Sadly, the Court of Appeal of Turin found her enrollment illegal on the basis that women were, by law, forbidden from practising law. The mini-series dramatises her attempt to write an appeal in order to be readmitted as a lawyer. Meanwhile, she works with her brother, Enrico Poët, also a lawyer, as his assistant. A perfect watch for this Winter break, it consists of six episodes of around 40 minutes each. In each episode, Lidia demonstrates cunning, determination, and brilliance as she uncovers the truth of murders supposedly committed by her (technically her brother's) clients.

In real life, Poët's appeal was rejected, even with the overwhelming support of the public, including newspapers and, most importantly, her brother. An opportunity arose for her to move to America and try to become a lawyer there instead. The United States was, after

all, more open than Italy about women practising law. However, she decided to stay in Turin, fighting for the rights of women whilst remaining in the field of Law, as her brother's assistant. Eventually, in 1919, Italy's laws regarding women being lawyers changed and a year later Poët applied to become a lawyer once again. This time, she was successful, becoming the first female lawyer in Turin at 65 years of age.

What the show does well is suspense. Even though the culprit is usually obvious in each episode, it doesn't matter because getting to know Lidia is so exciting. Her approach to solving crimes is unconventional, making her stand out from other lawyers in the show, and she sees beyond what other people believe to be true. Of course, this type of character isn't unusual in shows per se, yet it works so beautifully in this one specifically.

However, some aspects of the show's portrayal of Lidia are historically inaccurate. Relatives of Poët have criticised the series, saying that it "does not show her true figure", stating that "Lidia's family was not aware of any boyfriends," and that "she did not swear and

did not drink alcohol." In the show, she seems too modern for a 19th century young woman in the way she behaves and talks to her family.

For example, she is very comfortable with her sexuality, having relationships with two men simultaneously, and refers to her brother as "stronzo" (asshole). It is more typical for 21st century youth to act and speak like this than for a woman in the 18th century. And although Netflix never claimed that the show is biographical, there is a certain extent to which the character should reflect Poët if they are to share the same name.

Overall, I enjoyed watching the series and reading about the life of this very inspirational figure. The mini-series is suspenseful, witty, and a second season has been confirmed! As mentioned, it should have been more faithful to Poët's true person or the name of the main character should've been changed, especially since Netflix's choices were motivated by appealing to a modern audience to increase their profits. Either way, it is a mini-series worth watching this Winter!

Settling it over a cup of tea

by Pieter Dolmans



Bigotry. We all know it. Most of us aren't big fans either. Many of us like to think we're above it. But of course, that's not really true. If you were raised in a culture that allows and promotes discriminatory biases (and we all were), it's extremely difficult to rid yourself of bigoted thought – perhaps impossible.

“Our language and actions frame children not as human beings, capable of being annoying as much as they're capable of being anything else, but as creatures that are inherently annoying and undesirable.”

A bias that you know you have can be done away with, or compensated for, relatively easily, but people also carry around many *unconscious* biases which are harder to identify and remove. Besides the kinds of biases against systematically oppressed groups, which all of us UCU progressives are more or less aware of, I believe people often have unconscious biases against *children*.

I won't spend the rest of this text proving to you that children are a systematically oppressed group – I lack the knowledge to give you the full picture in a single 500-word column (and besides, you're perfectly capable of doing research yourself). Rather, I'd like to provide some arguments that might leave you more open to rethinking your biases against children.

Up until not too long ago, I frequently claimed that I hated children. What I meant to say is “I don't want to have children; it's too much responsibility.” But what came out was more like “kids are loud, annoying, disgusting, and I don't want ‘em.” I've heard similar things from people around me. Certainly, many people seem to find satisfaction in calling the crying baby from across the train carriage an “ankle-biting little git” under their breath. And to be fair, people do it knowing that the child themselves will never hear the insult. However, regardless of whether the child hears it, our consistent use of and exposure to such (honestly quite violent) language undoubtedly affects how we view children.

Even without the strong language, many people who're unwillingly approached by a child are bound to give their friends awkward looks as they attempt to dismiss the child as quickly as possible. Our language and actions frame children not as human beings, capable of being annoying as much as they're capable of being anything else, but as creatures that are *inherently* annoying and undesirable.

Even worse, children are ill-equipped to combat any prejudice we hold against them. Most lack the vocabulary and societal understanding to hold a productive discussion, or to make demands like members of other oppressed groups might. But even when children finally gain the ability to defend themselves (i.e., when they grow up), they typically still won't do so. But can you blame them? If there's this reductive and over-generalised view of children, they'll have internalised such bigotry long ago by that time.

I believe there is something deeply wrong with our view of children. I wonder if we can dismantle it in the same way as we've been dismantling many oppressive structures so far.



Jasmine's Book Nook

The Buried Giant

by Jasmine Yi Carder

I'm back at it again with another Ishiguro. I read *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro over fall break and fell in love. Ishiguro has quickly become one of my staple authors and I'll blow money on anything that bears his name no matter what the backcover might say. But, this book specifically, is something very special. I don't think I've ever read something quite like it and I haven't been able to get it out of my mind.

The book is set in the mostly fantastical, sorta historical rolling hills of Britain after the fall of King Arthur. In this world dragons and ogres live side by side with rusted old Britannian knights and spry Saxon warriors. However, more peculiar than the dreamy setting or epic characters is the mist that envelopes them. Although the landscape is scarred by wars and the characters are marred by unfinished conflict, the past is cloaked in forgetfulness, no one being able to hold memories of events occurring even hours before.

It is in these circumstances that our protagonists, the elderly Beatrice and Axl, decide to leave their community in search of a son whom they only vaguely remember. Their adventures will bring them into contact with the complex history of their home, the reality of their past actions, and the state of their love.

This story is beautifully written, and as is characteristic of Ishiguro, very understated. We come to understand the story little by little, always feeling like there's more to discover around the corner. Even as we get to know the gentle couple and the world they inhabit, more questions are asked than answered. What does history mean for a society? What does memory mean for a relationship? Is it better to live in a shallow, peaceful ignorance or fight for more, even if knowledge entails dealing with violent truths? Ishiguro gives us a cast of interesting characters with different perspectives, he gives us melancholy, rain sprinkled scenery, he gives us complex histories, and he gives us a truly lovely

relationship, but he does not give us answers.

“Is it better to live in a shallow, peaceful ignorance or fight for more, even if knowledge entails dealing with violent truths?”

What I love about Ishiguro is that he draws out the most interesting, heart wrenching pieces of life and packages them in soft words and wondrous worlds for us to unwrap. He doesn't boast about how smart he is or how much he knows, he sits us down gently and asks us to consider what we believe.

The story is of a slower pace than other fantasy books and it does require quite a bit of attention. However, if you feel up to it, I highly recommend you brew a cup of tea and sit down with *The Buried Giant* this winter.

Dear everyone,

I thought I'd spice up this editorial by giving everyone a cute little board update! All our lives have been quite uneventful lately, but we've each found our own way to fill that void.

Katrina has been keeping up with her thesis so well that she's not even stressed about it. Alicja had a blast seeing Jayda G at Boiler Room, and Mila experienced a turning point in her quality of life when she found an Emily Dickinson poetry collection she'd never seen before. Ale made everyone jealous at the dance show (my words, not hers), and Jasmine has been having oddly weird and vivid dreams during her few hours of sleep. As for myself I've found shelter from the cold by reliving my childhood – rewatching early 2010s young adult movies (Hunger Games, Maze Runner, that kinda stuff). If you feel like your life is also quite uneventful, I'd encourage you to take inspiration from this.

On a more serious tone, it's time to say goodbye to a couple members of The Boomerang. After three long years of UCU, our lovely Katrina is finally graduating. She's one of the goofier board members, and the vibe won't be the same without her. We also have to say bye (even if temporarily) to Ale, who's going on exchange to Dublin. She'll be back by summer, so we'll just have to chug along for the next four months. In the meantime, finding a new Art and PR Manager is still in the works – more details on that in the next edition ;)

Kind regards,
Pablo

THE BOOMERANG BOARD

- Pablo Ruiz Delgado | Editor-in-Chief
- Katrina Joy Funk | Editor
- Alicja Anna Chojnacka | Editor
- Mila Maria Grazia Frattini | Editor
- Alejandra Monerri Revuelta | Art & PR Manager
- Jasmine Yi Carder | Layout Manager

12 LOGICO PUZZLES

© LogiCo

Eyes Wide ---, film		Grasp, embrace		Aloe ---, soothing gel		accustome	
Assistants							
Level of excellence		Church walkway		Rally		Get out of bed	
Mixture	Beverage chiller				Worn down		Sanitary measures
Ooze	Upright in posture		Heed				
				Throw		Jetty	
Wording		From Baghdad?					
				Expected			
Carve		Wash					
				Staining substance			

SUDOKU

		5					4	
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1	5	6			4	9	7	
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			4			6	2	
					7	4		

SWEDISH CROSSWORD

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3																
						4										
			5												6	
			7			8										
9																

Across	Down
1 guiders of Santa's sleigh	2 Namesake for Tchaikovsky's Christmas ballet
4 To keep your hands warm in winter	3 the personification of winter
5 Dutch Winter festivity celebrated on December 5th	6 Man with a carrot nose
8 the Dutch play it on grass, everyone else plays it on ice	7 relating to North or South pole
9 the shortest day of the year	

WORD SEARCH

Swedish Crossword Solutions

Really good!	→ M	Skyfall villain, --- Bardem	→ J	Piebald horse	→ P	Two at cards	→ D
Scrutinise	→ E	X	A	M	I	N	E
Cruel	G	Enthusiasm	V	Small duck	N	Tennis coach, --- Lendl	U
→ S	A	↓ D	I	↓ S	T	↓ I	C
Blazing	Unseat	→ R	E	M	O	V	E
→ A	F	I	R	E	Avoided	A	Intensify
Urgent request	Soldier's time off	V	Travel	→ W	E	N	D
→ P	L	E	↓ A	Bottom-less pit	V	Prima donna	E
Jelly ---, sweet	E	Wesley Snipes film	→ B	L	A	D	E
→ B	A	B	Y	Quick swim?	→ D	I	P
Acquires	V	Actor, --- McQueen	→ S	T	E	V	E
→ G	E	T	S	Karate grade	→ D	A	N

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Crossword Solutions

6	7	1	3	9	2	5	8	4
5	9	3	7	4	8	2	6	1
8	4	2	1	6	5	3	9	7
2	3	9	5	1	4	6	7	8
7	8	6	2	3	9	4	1	5
1	5	4	8	7	6	9	2	3
3	1	5	9	2	7	8	4	6
4	2	8	6	5	1	7	3	9
9	6	7	4	8	3	1	5	2

Sudoku Solutions

*Solutions for last edition

KEEP UP WITH THE BOOMERANG



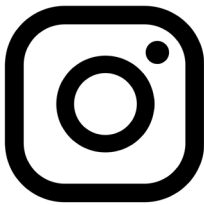
Illustrators
Groupchat



ISSUU
(Archive)



Writers
Groupchat



7 QUAD QUERIES

“What’s the sexiest major?”

“Cog neuro because a lot of sassy women do it”

“Politics and law cause they care about human rights”

“Math majors because they know the best angles... and that’s all I’m going to say”

“Double degree physics because they’re committed and I love women in STEM”

“Literature majors because they can read me bedtime stories”

“Geography because Rom is hot”

“Bio because we know a lot about the body wink wink ;)”

“Chemistry for obvious reasons”

“Performance Studies because even if it’s fake you wouldn’t know”

Lifeline

by Anonymous

Trigger Warning: Mental health issues, eating disorders

Sympathetic. Caring. Supportive. Words that have always been used to describe me; ones that most would take as a compliment. Yet, at some point, these felt like my greatest faults. Because when it comes to survival, what good is a bit of compassion?

I would do anything for my sister. But that might be where the problem lies.

We used to do everything together. She's my best friend. We'd spend all day by the water, soaking up the sun and playing in the waves. I was so preoccupied with the sights around us, that I didn't hear the thunder in the distance. I didn't see the clouds darken, or the wind swirl around us. By the time I realised the storm we were in, she slipped away. Despite the blame I felt, all I could do was worry. I decided I wouldn't leave the water until she had reached the shore.

“Even if I do finally scream for help, only I would hear myself.”

At some point she let me throw her a lifeline. It started small, letting me eat with her as a distraction, or hold her as she cried. Then I got to make meal plans and coach her through panic attacks. I slowly saw her grow, and learn how to skim the waves all on her own. But every drop of rain filled me with anxiety. A text or a tear and I felt her slipping. Her lifeline had to be the most stable thing around, so no one could know that I too was sinking. My anxiety could be her end.

It wasn't just for her sake, though I would've held it together for her alone. It was for my parents too. They couldn't handle any more, needed everything else to be okay. It's not like they wouldn't have been there for me, but I couldn't do that to them. My dad looked more tired than he ever had before.

I caught my mom pacing the room at least once a day. The worry wasn't good for them either. I could not, and would not, crumble.

“Her lifeline had to be the most stable thing around, so no one could know that I too was sinking.”

I've been out at sea for about three years now, and she's almost reached shore. Some days are rockier than others, but I have to acknowledge how far she's come. Yet, I forget how far I've sunk. Everything I did was to help her recover, no matter the cost. Stay up late so she wouldn't spiral? Done. Skip my workouts so she wouldn't over exercise? Done. Wear big sweaters so she couldn't compare herself? Done. I never hesitated, because it kept her alive.

The better she got, the more I feared that it was just temporary. I've gotten good at it though – worrying while staying afloat. It's simply

part of my day-to-day, yet another item on my to do list. I barely notice it anymore. Only some days the wave crashes over my head, when she says she slept through breakfast, or went on a run. Suddenly, I'm the one having the panic attack. I've realised it's easier to save someone else than to stop yourself from drowning.

“Because when it comes to survival, what good is a bit of compassion?”

When she finally makes it to the shore, no one will notice I'm still underwater. I told them not to worry: I wouldn't blame them for not looking into the waves. Even if I do finally scream for help, only I would hear myself.

I realise, I need to be my own lifeline now. I'll pull myself to shore. It'll be a relief to stop swimming, breathe the fresh air. I'll savour it, knowing when the tide drags her out again, I will be her lifeline all over again.



5 BLACKOUT

Family Lore: What Do Your Parents (Not) Tell You?

by my bastard son and also my daddy

I find that even though I've known them my whole life, I keep finding out new things about my parents. Most of our conversations have mundane subjects. How's it going over there? How's your thesis? Have you talked to your sister recently? Please tell me you've found an internship. Why does commencement only give you three guest tickets? When I ask questions, they tend to be of the same substance, just in the opposite direction.

Maybe the topics of our conversations are simply the consequence of distance; I see them in person twice a year at most, and I haven't lived in their home for half a decade at this point. There's a whole Atlantic Ocean between us, too. But when I do see them, bits and pieces of stories find their way into conversations. They slip through when my mother and aunt joke about their childhoods over a glass of wine, or when I tell my father about the frats on campus and he casually reveals that he was a frat boy himself decades ago.

“It paints a vibrant image of my family before I came about, before my parents were parents. I get to meet them as they once were, removed from the context of myself.”

Some of these stories end with laughter. My mother once inaugurated the opening of a KFC in a town of 7000 people after a long chain of comical misunderstandings. My dad is some sort of low-level nobility, and the Mexican government hates him for it. Apparently I have Japanese cousins. My aunt divorced a guy she exclusively refers to as “Mushroom”. It paints a vibrant image of my family before I came about, before my parents were parents. I get to meet them as they once were, removed from the context of myself.

I revel in these moments. They come fleetingly, and I have so many questions I want to ask, but before I can choose which loose string of personal history to tug on, they've moved on to an entirely different

experience. These anecdotes are given anachronistically. I don't know when exactly things happened, beyond a vague notion of “a long while ago, but not too long”. And it's never full stories, only memories that only link together within their stream of consciousness. All these jumbled chapters of their stories assemble themselves into constellations of family members, scatterings of information that I draw lines between in a connect-the-dots game of looking into the past. I try to see how they made my relatives into who I know them as today. It's more of a mythology than a history.

There are different stories, as well. Not-so-nice ones. I learned why I've never interacted with my uncle's wife. Why I don't know anyone on my mother's side, other than my mother's immediate family. Lists of topics that I should avoid if they come up in conversation with certain relatives. These tend to come more slowly and are recounted methodically. They're parables, similar to those told to children to teach them a lesson. This is mythology too, I suppose.

Again, I wonder how these experiences molded my relatives into who they are today. What lessons did they learn from them, and how have those shaped the image I have of them? I still think of how vastly different their lives were from mine. The biggest example is that of my mom. I once asked her about the earthquake of '85, which occurred back when she was in her early twenties and leveled entire sections of Mexico City. I read in a book that one of the consequences of the earthquake was the democratization of Mexico, since the government was forced to adjust as a response to the

catastrophe. I asked her if she thought it was true, and she said it probably was; Mexico was at a tipping point regardless, she's just happy it didn't have to be through a civil war.

“All these jumbled chapters of their stories assemble themselves into constellations of family members, scatterings of information that I draw lines between in a connect-the-dots game of looking into the past. I try to see how they made my relatives into who I know them as today. It's more of a mythology than a history.”

My knowledge of Mexican history ended sometime around the sixties, so I asked her what she meant. “We were pretty sure there was going to be some sort of conflict,” she said. “We had a plan and everything. Your aunt, grandma, and I would flee North into the US, while your uncle and grandpa stayed behind to transfer our assets and meet up with us later. We all kept a luggage case ready, filled with our essentials, in case we had to leave. I remember your grandma would get mad at me for taking out my favourite dress”. She laughed when she said this, a spark of humour in an otherwise dreary story. She brought up how her neighbours were a wealthy Jewish family that owned a toy factory, and that they fled to Israel sometime before the earthquake. Apparently they just left their house as it was, they even told the neighbours that they could help themselves to belongings they found.

What kind of psychological effect does that have on a person? On an entire country? It's hard to look into the minds of generations before us, but I suspect there's always something big hidden in the background. What else do my parents not tell me? What do yours not tell you?



An Involuntary Resurgence in Disordered Eating

by Anonymous

Trigger Warning: Eating disorders

Three years ago, I struggled a lot with disordered eating, self-doubt, and self-harm. I would voluntarily put myself through the excessive dieting routines touted as “intermittent fasting” or the next “ultra-low-carb-vegan-sugar-free” weight loss methods. Predictably, none of them worked for any sustained length of time, and I swung wildly from method to method, thinking constantly about food, and about how to eat less of it.

Until now, I would say that I had made a full recovery, to the point where I rarely thought about food except in anticipation of a delicious meal, or wondering what recipes I should try out. I ate well, exercised frequently, and the entire dynamic between myself and my body had changed. However, since coming to UCU, the same disordered eating pattern has emerged again, but this time, instead of being hyper-fixated on weight loss, it's due to an inability to properly feed and cook for myself.

“My mental health is dependent significantly on my physical health. When I don't eat, my mood and perspective plummets – I get more existential, it takes more energy to be excited for things I normally love.

The old patterns have started to reemerge: skipping meals, feeling a constant, low-level hunger, lack of energy, and negative self-talk. When I don't eat, I don't have enough energy to do anything other than sit and think about how hungry I am. This often alternately takes the form of waking up, staring at my phone for an hour, and then going to classes without eating breakfast, which makes me incapable of paying

attention or gaining lasting knowledge.

“Since coming to UCU, the same disordered eating pattern has emerged again, but this time, instead of being hyper-fixated on weight loss, it's due to an inability to properly feed and cook for myself.

My mental health is dependent significantly on my physical health. When I don't eat,

harm your body, you are harming your life. Self-harm is never a viable solution, because it will only ever exacerbate the problem.

The reason behind my unwillingness to cook for myself is my disgust in my unit. I find it nearly impossible to even exist for extended periods of time in the kitchen, much less cook there. The lack of counter space was one of the biggest issues when I first moved in – now it's the constant grime and uncleanness that makes me viscerally uncomfortable. The list of things I have to do – wipe down the table, clean the sink, wash the dishes, dry the dishes, put away the dishes, reorganize the dishes – grows continuously longer, costing me mental energy. Lack of unit cohesion among my unitmates means that we don't have a cleaning schedule, and as the one most distressed by the lack of a clean cooking space, I feel it's both unfair and unrealistic for me to constantly be the one to clean things up.

“If you struggle with what I have described above, even if it's 'not as bad', know that you are not alone.

Eating disorders in universities is still a major issue, along with other mental health disorders that prevent one from cooking or adequately providing for

themselves. Even without a mental health disorder, simply having the organization and mental energy to provide three meals for yourself each day is a daunting task that every student has to struggle with. If you struggle with what I have described above, even if it's “not as bad”, know that you are not alone. Existing in a healthy manner is a daily struggle, but I am nevertheless optimistic that both my own experience, and the experiences of others, can improve.

my mood and perspective plummets – I get more existential, it takes more energy to be excited for things I normally love. This even veers into more dangerous methods such as self-harm, which thankfully I haven't done at UCU but which had been a facet of my life when I had an eating disorder. The important thing to realize here is that your body is the thing you have to live in – you can never escape it. I still have self-harm scars that my younger self did not consider would follow me for the rest of my life. If you



3 BLACKOUT

A Lesson to Myself

by Anonymous

‘Your words don’t matter.’

Being a child of a doctor in a reputation-dominated world can be difficult. Don’t get me wrong – as a straight, white, European, high-income person, I know my childhood was full of privilege. However, I also do know in what ways it wasn’t, writing this article right now. In my country, doctors are among the ‘prestigious’ kinds. If you’re the child of a doctor, you have to look a certain way and speak in a certain manner, you cannot disagree with your parent or question anything they say. They’re the ‘doctor’, they got through med school and have succeeded in life. And of course their children have to reflect this success: they need to look impeccable for their colleagues, always better than others, always talented, always intelligent, always the best, always on top, always... However, this is not a sad story about how I wasn’t listened to as a child. It’s not a story of how I found my own path, how I chose to not be another one of the ‘doctor family’, or how I wonder if I’d make the same choices were the clock to rewind. It’s about you, dear reader. About all of UCU. About the people you meet in the streets, strangers sitting together in cafes, about this one little kid chasing the dog in the park.

“It’s when you stop envying and battling for the spotlight, that you find yourself loving the stories around you. You’ll find more love in your own story too.”

‘You always have the power to flip the coin.’

You see, I always had to be ‘the one’ – the one who’s best, who excels at academics, who has their all future planned out, who knows everything about anything. I had to be liked, be the star of the room, the talk of the town, the picture sent to all the family members you want to show off to. I was taught that silence is a bad thing, that you have to fill it to keep up your performance. You have to talk and talk about your greatness and make things about yourself. All the qualities I do not stand for. Yet, they shaped me into who I am as a person.

I would call my time at UCU a bit bizarre. I went from having almost no friends to being what could be called a ‘social butterfly’. I was always out there, doing things, speaking to anyone I could, unconsciously making my presence as loud as possible. In my friend groups, I was always the loudest one, breaking silence, and trying to seem as likable as I could. And yet, it was never enough. There

was (and still is) always a voice in my head whispering that nobody really likes you, they only like your performance. What would happen if you lost your smile? What if you stop being as excited? What if you stop caring as much? What if they don’t like you? What if you fail to impress them?

I attributed everything to myself not being good enough, and having to try my best to be likable. But I never connected the dots. I never thought of the countless hours arguing with my parents about my outfits, nor of the countless times where my words were simply ignored, nor of the countless times when I had to argue to prove my worth to my parents all over again, trying to perform as best as I could to be noticed. I had to be ‘the one’ amazing and likable student... until I hadn’t. This is when I started healing.

‘When you love people around you, it’s also a way to love yourself.’

One of the greatest things that I’ve learned is *silence*. What I learned is that you don’t always have to be the main character. You don’t have to be the one knowing it all, being the funniest or the loudest. There is a lot of value in silence, in listening, in getting excited for your friend, and seeing their eyes glow when they speak about things they love. Of course, I still struggle with it – a lot – but I’ve learned that love can help one heal. The type of love that you feel when, for a split second, you see someone light up as they become the main character and you witness ‘their moment’ in the background. It’s the type of love you feel when you see two strangers dancing in the rain and you appreciate their inner children coming out. Remember that everybody has their story, one they write every day, and you’re a supporting or background character. Because it’s when you stop envying and battling for the spotlight, that you find yourself loving the stories around you. You’ll find more love in your own story too.

Remember to also acknowledge your story, as it shapes who you become as a person. You cannot change the story that is already written, but you can most certainly take up a pen and write a new one. Just remember to leave other writers to express their feelings and emotions. Make sure their story is not only being heard, but also listened to, just as your friends would listen to your

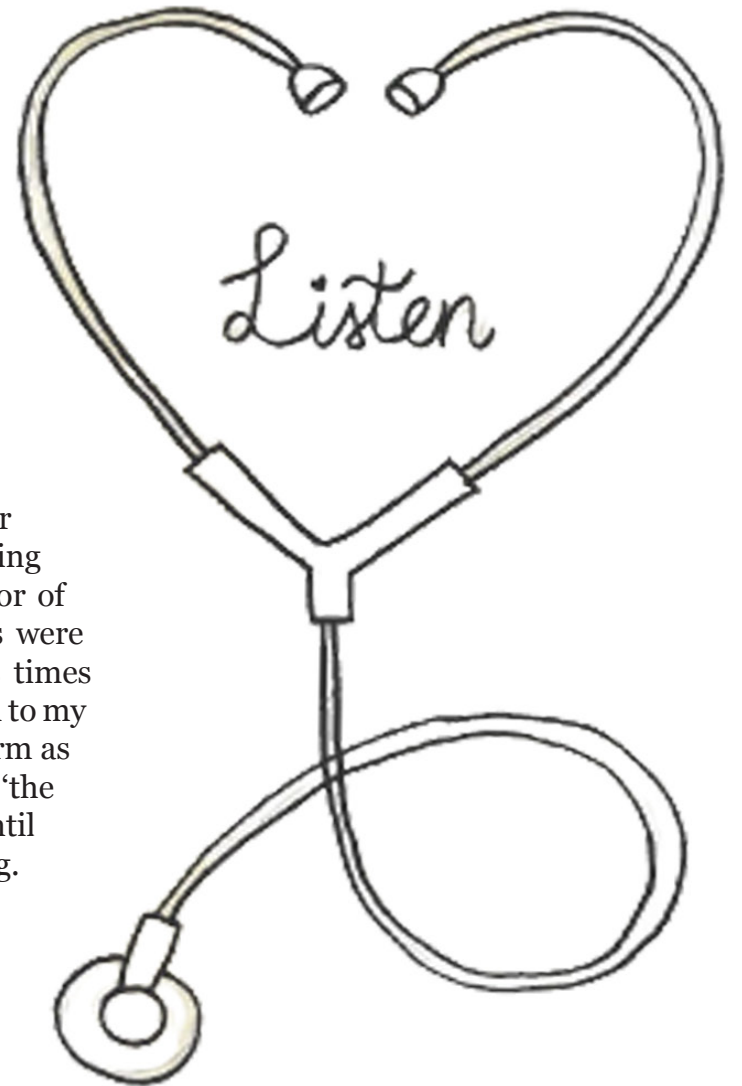


Illustration © Alejandra Monerri Revuelta

story as well. The spotlight is shifting constantly, but it will never stop on one person. Not on me or you, any of the doctors, or any other ‘prestigious’ individuals. Enjoy the moment and let it happen, even if it happens around you.

“In my friend groups, I was always the loudest one, breaking silence, and trying to seem as likable as I could. And yet, it was never enough. There was (and still is) always a voice in my head whispering that nobody really likes you, they only like your performance.”

[a boyfriend kissing his girlfriend on the forehead, two friends whispering in conspiracy, a girl laughing so hard she fell off the chair, a friend wearing a magician’s hat, a person you see in the corridors in her red dress, band playing and dancing on stage, the smile of my tutor when she talks about her fiancé, my new friend high-fiving me on his bike, my close friend thriving on stage and so so so many more moments. Thank you for being here guys. old friends, new friends, friends to come, and strangers. love. X.]

On Not Feeling Safe in Your Own Home

by Anonymous

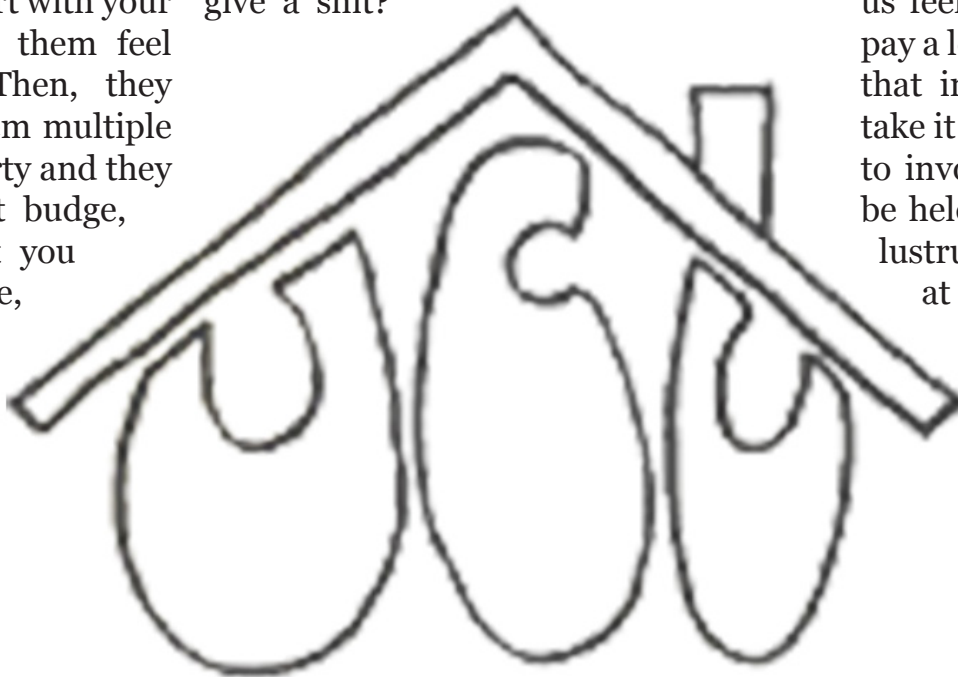
Imagine this: you, a White 18-year-old first-year girl, are having a private birthday party in the BPA. Some Brown men, in their 40s and dressed in suits, try to force entry into your party. They flirt with your very young friends, making them feel incredibly uncomfortable. Then, they bring more men. You tell them multiple times that this is a private party and they are not allowed. They won't budge, give you the finger, cuss at you and your friends as they leave, making you feel disgusted in your own skin. Imagine the outrage this would cause.

“So we ask you, the White majority of this campus, to be better people. To lead by example so that we can make this a radically better place for everyone.

Yesterday was the Primus lustrum, and a (POC) friend of mine was harassed in this way by 40 year old Dutch men dressed in suits who were drunk out of their minds. During the UCU lustrum, which occurred less than a year ago, another (POC) friend of mine was drugged at the UCU bar. We found out later that she wasn't the only one; at least 4 other girls were drugged that night. In addition to all this, add the hostile humiliation we had to face earlier this year, when a bunch of Dutch teenagers spit in our faces and on our windows (see UCU Students).

This is supposed to be “our home”. And for non-EU students who cannot escape this place for a weekend-away, it really is our home. Except a home is supposed to be safe, and we are definitely not safe here. “Important” UCU alumni haranguing us, throwing racial slurs at us, does not make us feel “at home”. And now another lustrum, to celebrate UCSA, will be happening. Yet

again, multiple people on campus will be made to feel unsafe, especially POC women, since we are always the first ones targeted. Does the campus give a shit?



“If there is an event that involves drunk middle aged men, take it off campus. Lustrums do not need to involve alcohol. Nor do they need to be held on campus.

We are done with your claims of innocence. Of your constant “it's them, not us”. Of you saying “slowly, but surely, things are changing”. Of you being selectively supportive and anti-racist when you need to join the East-Africa programme, but not in your everyday lives. If you do care,



fucking show up. Show us that solidarity. If you are amongst one of the ‘good ones’, do something about what happened. This is not about you. This is about us. About us feeling unsafe in our homes that we pay a lot of money for. If there is an event that involves drunk middle aged men, take it off campus. Lustrums do not need to involve alcohol. Nor do they need to be held on campus. Especially a Primus lustrum: it does not need to be held at the UCU bar. Fraternities have a misogynistic, oppressive history. A conversation with a faculty member last month revealed that less than 10 years ago, campus culture was ruled by White frat boys. We cannot deal with these situations a-historically and cannot treat them as individual coincidences. So, if you give a shit, acknowledge that you take up space. Acknowledge that you are oppressive. And then do something to change that.

“‘Important’ UCU alumni haranguing us, throwing racial slurs at us, does not make us feel ‘at home’.

Because we are tired. We are so done. We are so done with always being the ones to ‘start up a conversation’. Of having to deal with the mental health issues that come from feeling unsafe in our homes. Of the panic attacks, of feeling disgusted in ourselves after we're harassed.

Because our perpetrators won't, but *we* will have to bear these scars. Because those (White men) in power are not going to jeopardise said power for the sake of a few POC women. So we ask you, the White majority of this campus, to be better people. To lead by example so that we can make this a radically better place for everyone. To show the solidarity you all claim within the classrooms and on social media. We are asking you to show up now, act now, talk now. Let's see what you got.

The Blackout

Winter 2023

The Elephant on the Quad

by Anonymous

Every morning I'm surprised, and ultimately disappointed, to discover that we're still not talking about the elephant that has occupied the global room. I remember when I first came to UCU, how surprised I was by the way we talked about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It surprised me, even though it shouldn't have. Coming from outside Europe, I didn't comprehend just how earth-shattering this event was for you lucky few who live behind the safety of NATO's curtain. I thought maybe this was just political awareness. This past month showcased my naïveté.

updates; perhaps only an occasional story when a new unexpectedly deadly weapon is used; and then, it will eventually go back to nothing. A new status quo, a fresh order of the same death and colonisation. We won't be talking about it then, so why talk about it now? Can you tell me when the war in Syria ended? It ended when CNN stopped talking about it. Don't mind those who died for so many years after – they weren't discussed. No death toll was updated to include them, so what did they bother dying for?

“Can you tell me when the war in Syria ended? It ended when CNN stopped talking about it.”

It's too early for the news to stop talking about it, but eventually they will. It will soon turn into silence, until the next set of bombing raids, the next neighbourhood is settled, the next iteration of the same Nakba. It's too early for the news to stop talking about it, but UCU seems to be ahead of the game, stopping long before they ever needed to. But some are trying to keep up the energy. Students wrote BDS on the quad in giant letters, right across the path you all walk across daily. Did you see it? You must have. Did you read it? I can't believe such curious minds as UCU students didn't bother to read the message carved under their feet. Did you bother to look up what it was? Did you figure out for yourself what these words could mean after the university had torn down the message that explained it? Did you talk about it? Or, did you walk across the quad with your bestie discussing where the bar's sign could have gone and ignoring that the ground shifted beneath you?

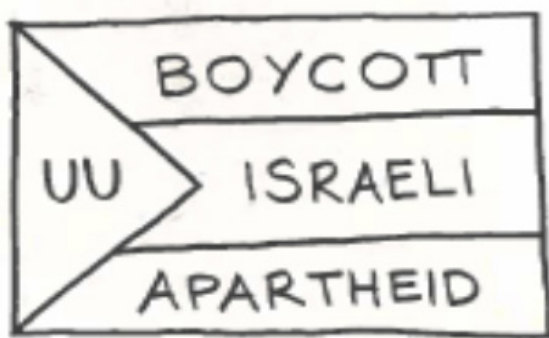
I suppose I'm simply disappointed to realise how impossible it is for the world to change. Rumours of the new, radical, politically engaged, and progressive generation were greatly exaggerated. But I'd hoped that students who paint themselves as politically engaged, progressive, and willing to learn, would've at least had some conversations. But no – not in classrooms, not outside them, not even in politics classes, and certainly not during events organised by the politics committee. Of course, you're not to blame, you're just students whose beer-drinking habits are as imposed on you by prior generations as your silence. A silence that only serves the

oppressor. This institution has certainly done nothing to help. The UU's guidelines for teachers discussing this issue are feckless at best, and outright colonial at worst.

However, my disappointment remains. Students so often stand at the forefront of politics and discussion, yet none of that is happening here. I look back at my home and see huge demonstrations organised by university students, and all I can feel is sorrow. Sorrow at how empathy has been so openly and completely erased in the West. Of course, I had always known that it didn't exist – how else could you extol your welfare states built on colonial wealth? But I thought that when suffering was so visible, you'd at least make allusions to empathy for those without your blonde hair and blue eyes. I knew that you didn't care about East DRC, Darfur, or West Papua, but I thought that in this case, you would at least make an attempt to care for a moment. This didn't come out of nowhere; you've had twenty years to learn what's going on in the most well-known occupation in the world, yet you hide in your Western silos of soft-spoken sensibilities.

“The UU's guidelines for teachers discussing this issue are feckless at best, and outright colonial at worst.”

I understand that this article is seemingly useless, and I don't want it to result in a self-gratifying discussion that only alleviates the emotional burden of the previously silent. I want discussion because I want to empower you all, by showing you what power you have. This institution is complicit in this issue, but it need not be. This is one of the few instances where *you* can change something. UU cut ties with Apartheid institutions in 1979, and it's time they do it again. Sign the petition calling on UU to stop its engagement with Israeli Apartheid institutions.



Of course there was discussion about Russia-Ukraine – how could you not discuss something that struck too close to the bone to be ignored? But that's the thing: it was discussed only because it was so close, so obvious, and the answer was ubiquitous: blame Putin. But when a war seems so much further away – in skin tone and religion, not in kilometres – you are silent. When a war doesn't come with inflation of the price of your next beer, why should you care? There is radio silence.

The small static sputtering of the engaged few who share events and discussions happening outside campus is commendable, but far too poorly received. Events liked on Facebook and then unattended. A heart reaction to a WhatsApp message, only to swiftly move the conversation onto whether the bike pump is still missing from reception or not. Soon these will dry up, as the same messengers grow tired of the same heart reactions and the same swiftly ended conversations. The question is: will you notice? Will you suddenly realise that you haven't heard anything about it in so long that you no longer care?

Eventually the news will stop covering it. It'll be slow: no longer a rolling 24-hour update on every website; no more daily