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BAISMAG

The Away from Home Issue

Dear Reader,

Nothing resonates with International Studies students quite as deeply as the phrase “away from home,” our theme for this issue. Similarly to many of you, I’ve been trying to figure out what exactly this phrase means for me throughout the past year and a half of my life. The word “home” for me isn’t static or fixed; it is instead a feeling. A stranger in a bar in Washington D.C. once told me, “Your mind is the sound of your heart strings.” I remember going home and writing this in the fog of my shower door that evening. If your mind is indeed the sound of your heart strings, I am led to believe that home can be just about anywhere that creates a melody inside of your soul. I hope that the poetry, articles, and artwork in this issue resonate with your own heart strings and the sounds they make while you are dreaming.

Julia Moore

(Editor-in-Chief)

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home

*My hometown is a big city
It's not even a town, really
But when you live in the suburbs
It seems small because you know your neighbors*

*My home town is a place from a fairytale
I know the names of the neighbors there
And the name of the school through the woods
That place was a town, really*

*My home was an apartment that I saw twice a year
We couldn't run there
It would disturb the neighbors
In that place I watched "Avatar: The Last Airbender"*

*My home was a house with three floors
And doors that wouldn't shut unless you slammed them
We replaced the windows in the living room
That is the home most of my friends knew*

*My other homes never had trams
Or beaches
Or people speaking in so many languages
Or bills I have to pay myself*

*Sometimes this home is just
"The Apartment"
"My Room"
But it's still home*

by Kira Paynter

Refuge Far from Home

By Julia Hernandez

What does it mean to be away from home? To be away from familiarity. To be cut off from understanding. To be deemed voiceless.

For the nearly 70 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced peoples worldwide, the discomfort wrought by being far from home becomes part of existence. If home is a natural part of one's identity, the state of being away from it becomes second nature.

As many international students know, being away from home means much more than a location change. It means being dunked into an alien world, where what people say and think glitches with your expectations and understanding. As very few international students would know, being forcibly displaced exacerbates this distress, and combined with the inevitable change in social status brought on by displacement- from contributor to dependent, from local to foreigner- it can render everyday existence harrowing.

To pretend to understand what it feels like to be away from home in such a forced, final way would be a disservice to those who suffer it. But what we can do instead is use our empathy. To empathize is to convert our personal experience into a tool by which we can understand others. Through exercising empathy, we can discover commonalities and, ultimately, foster altruism.

There exists a multiplier effect regarding human behavior. Committing inequities at the smallest level is multiplied in our worldview. If we can't be kind to our peers, how can we support others in the global community in times of need? If our worldview is highly competitive, how can we be sympathetic to those at a disadvantage? If we believe in kindness at the most basic level, we need to carry this out on a global scale; if we believe in altruism on a global scale, we need to enact it in our everyday interactions.

By accepting this notion, we can contribute to creating an environment in which everyday interactions are less harrowing and more rewarding for those resettling in our societies. Fostering benevolence at the most individual, localized scale results in successive waves of thereof, moving outward toward the broader community. To create a destigmatized, de-prejudiced life for displaced persons moving to a new home, we must also confront the motivations behind which we might not naturally be empathetic or benevolent. A culture of kindness would be much easier to integrate into than one which does not prize empathy at even its most basic level of interaction. And this is why each individual should advocate for empathy at the very foundation of society: their personal interactions.

Empathy benefits all people, but especially, and most importantly, it eases life for the most vulnerable- those away from home.



Illustration by Alex Kastrissianakis

How a Writer Prays

by Julia Moore

Energy flows freely out from me, sort of like electricity I can feel sparking inside of my brain. It travels through my arms, cascades down my skin, and magically manifests itself in the scribbling of my pen on the notebook. Moments like this, I am so inspired all at once that my fingers can't keep up with my mind. The feeling of a forest fire burns within my veins and pulsates through my fingertips; words drip off the pages sweet like honey. The letters are curly and winding, just like the entanglement of thoughts my mind is vigorously unraveling.

Reading your own feelings written down, as if your brainwaves have a direct connection to some arbitrary scrap of paper, is not meant to be understood, just felt. Something the writers of the world all have in common, but none of us could ever explain. My writing is clumps of my thoughts that somehow get strewn across a blank sheet of paper, construct some sort of relatively viable meaning, and ultimately bring clarity to my otherwise chaotic mind.

Racing electrons; that's what my mind feels like in the moments that I write. No, I mean the moments that I really write. The ones where enough emotions are spilling out of me to fill the Grand Canyon. The moments when my eyes are wet with sadness, dry with anger, my smile bubbling with happiness, or my face red with embarrassment. These are the ones where everything feels like something.

This is when my mind is rapid fire, boom, boom, boom, moving from one thing to the next without hesitation, without pause, without caring whether or not I actually get everything written down. My mind is concerned with the feelings and spitting them out into the open regardless of whether they make sense or not. Going a mile a minute, increasing velocity with each passing second, whirling through the universe that lives inside my mind at the speed of light. Electrodes spit out from my fingertips into the night sky, turning into stars that dot the sky, words that dot the paper.

Tonight, I felt inspired so I thought about colors and I questioned free will. I watched Paris, Texas and ate pizza with olives and I wondered in my mind whether the exaggerated presence of the color red symbolizes communism or death. The end of the movie didn't confirm either of the

proposed solutions, but it didn't offer any alternatives either. I thought about Jane's sweater and whether bubblegum pink meant something and if it did, I really couldn't figure it out. Maybe innocence? Femininity? But I knew for sure that her black outfit suggested mourning since Travis basically gave a eulogy for their relationship during the phone scene.



After the movie I asked myself, if God is omniscient, how is it possible for us to have free will? If God already knows future, thus proving that no other outcome besides that which God is already aware of is possible, is he controlling us? Would the assured existence of an all-knowing entity completely strip us of free will? Can I really decide my own fate or is it already written up in God's plan as signed, stamped, sealed, and approved? Assuming the absence of free will, would hell cease to exist? Or does our all-knowing God program this life like a video game?

Like this, the energy starts flowing again. Bouncing off the walls of my brain, rushing excitedly through my arms, and out onto these pages. Thinking of everything I've ever been taught, contemplating how these words fit into the puzzle of my life and the ebb of the tides and the evergreen trees that somehow, despite the snow, always manage to remain green. The world trains us to let cement dry out our minds, but this outflow of passion is not something worldly. If God really is omniscient, and I really don't have free will, he sure knew what to give me to make me believe it.

Brace yourselves, I'm about to play the philosopher card: when we think about what it means to be "away from home," shouldn't we first identify what "home" is? (Imagine me saying that with a deeply confused and pensive look, staring into the void, brows furrowed as if I'm trying to solve the clash of civilizations itself.) To me, home is where you think of when you picture yourself happy, comfortable, and safe. It's the place you think of when letting out a frustrated sigh as you're waiting for a delayed train (and maybe stamping your feet a little bit, too), it's that spot on earth where you yearn for on a particularly tough day, and the meeting point of your fondest memories.

As for the "away" part, our philosophical investigation should, in my opinion, continue with a look around on our very own campus and the years that preceded our arrival here. Seeing as how I tend to illustrate whatever I tell you with my own examples to justify my arguments, here you go once again: Growing up, home meant always having someone to rant to about how ridiculously unfair my math teacher was or how mean the other kids were, coming home in the evening and being greeted by the smell of dinner, finding my laundry clean and neatly folded, and all the other stuff that may leave you thinking about what a spoiled brat I may be. But it also meant huddling together in front of the fireplace when the gas company cut us off, or sharing a room with my two siblings during our first year in a house with little electricity or warm water (don't get me wrong, these were good times.) Home meant familiar faces, speaking the same language, and those common values and traditions anyone who's followed Cultural Studies is tired of hearing about.

Moving here meant moving away from home. Leaving behind the comfort and adopting new responsibilities, along with becoming more independent. I think it's safe to say we all went through this, even those of us who haven't technically "left" home yet; by choosing this path (studying in the Hague, but also studying in general, making choices that will likely shape our future), we have all already taken a step away from our childhood homes and everything they stand for.

That doesn't mean we lost our homes. We may indeed be moving away from them, but only because, like true metaphorical architects of our own future (sorry, that was my last deep thought, I promise), building our new homes is an ongoing work in progress. We are, in that sense, going back home rather than going away from it (in my case, literally, as my lecture is almost over.)



Comic: "Just Another Day in International Studies"

An (un)familiar Journey

by Ta-Shé Moscher

Dangerous, mystifying, uncanny;
The things I heard you were
But between your nooks and crannies
There was no reason for my demur

From Isis to Osiris
From Kings to Queens
Bygone times to inspire us
To reveal the yet unseen

The gliding along the Nile
Whilst sailing along the past
Squally winds, mile on mile
Reminding the Arts outlast

Sunsets ebbing song birds into the distance
Palm trees scattered along the shore
Testing time's infinite existence
Of dreaming of what is here no more

The sight of you swallowed by the dust
A goodbye I must condone
But farewell is doubtlessly not a must
Because away you made it feel like home

February 2019: How About Peace?

by Tim Jan Rozendaal

February 2019: a month after New Year's Eve. The beloved January-break of International Studies is over. I told myself that 2019 would be a new beginning, hopefully with lots of health, success, happiness, and peace. This made me wonder: how peaceful is the contemporary world actually?

First of all, our time is definitely one of peace and stability in comparison with the historical record. The horrors that the two world wars of the 20th century brought upon us have urged mankind to collaborate and coordinate more actively. This has resulted in a wide variety of regional organizations, transnational platforms, and free trade agreements that have led to a highly interconnected world: the European Union, the African Union, the G20, NAFTA, ASEAN, NATO, and the United Nations are prominent examples of mediums through which states have deepened ties with one another.

Truth be told, the first 46 years after World War II, we faced an intricate clash of ideologies between the Soviet Union and the United States that, in case of a genuine fight, could have destroyed planet earth in its entirety. Even though no single mutual agreement would have prevented this, I think it is still fair to say that cooperation has fostered peace and stability on our globe. We should continue on this path.





Does that mean that we are close to a state of ‘perpetual peace,’ to invoke Kant’s famous essay of the late 18th century? Not quite. In the Middle East, the tensions and conflicts are so complex that I would barely know what to focus on: the Syrian Civil War? ISIS? The guerilla warfare of the Taliban? And what about Yemen, where a severe humanitarian crisis is exacerbated by a variety of warring factions? And the warlords of Central Africa, jostling for power at the expensive of the local population?

In addition, the gradual unraveling of the liberal world order and the slowly increasing great-power rivalry between the United States, China, and to a lesser extent Russia, obscure the geopolitical future and do not make the prospects for a state of perpetual peace much rosier. In the meantime, the United Nations is vehemently searching for the most appropriate approach to humanitarian intervention. An ambitious doctrine shift occurred in the early 21st century, but the case of Libya proved that it is as difficult as ever to simply impose peace and stability from the outside.

This does not mean that we end on a pessimistic note. Our achievements of the past 74 years should further spark our desire to create a world in which peace is the rule. To that end, we need to collectively believe in the viability of such a world. February 2019, with a new year well underway and another semester at International Studies, might be a good moment to realize how important our own personal faith in such a world is.

Photography by Daniel Buwalda

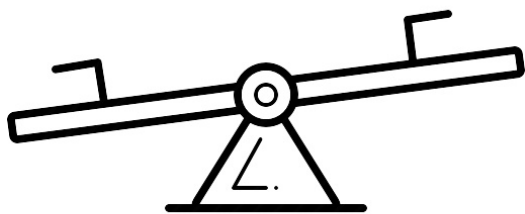
A CENTRIST'S PLEA TO GET OFF THE RIDE

BY TOM BOSS

Trigger warning: sometimes shit has to hit the fan before we realize we should clean it. While this sentiment seems crude, it outlines an important trend in the world today: that trauma on a global scale is the only way to inspire real change. In fact, it can be argued that only at humanity's worst lies the beginning of the next big leap forward. Surprisingly, this isn't a new idea. Edward Tenner, a distinguished scholar, writer, and historian outlined his ideas at TED2011. Looking back in history, he discussed how the domestication of grain would have unfolded if our ancient ancestors could see a few hundred years into the future. The diet and societal changes that agriculture brought in the short term, such as shorter lifespans and greater inequality, would have horrified them and they would most likely have abandoned agriculture altogether. We now know that agriculture was the first step towards civilized society, and without it, we wouldn't have such wonderful things like cities, civilizations, and iPhones. This highlights an interesting point. While the short-term consequences seemed atrocious, if they had hard tacked and gone the opposite direction in response, the consequences would have been even greater. It was only in the long term that these unforeseeable benefits could reward our ancestors with longer, healthier, better lives. That is ancient history, however, and I think we should be looking to the future.

As 2016 ended, the world was perched on the precipice of something new. Whatever your political views, it was clear that right-wing nationalism had not only won in America, but it seemed to be gripping liberal democracies across the globe. For many Democrats in America, that meant they had to gather their resolve and fight back, pushing even farther left on issues such as immigration and healthcare. This pushed even moderate Republicans to side with Trump, and the right got even more conservative, slashing regulations and shutting down the border against "invasion." While this has been heralded by media as a new and unprecedented turn in politics, it's clear this has been happening for a long time. Bill Clinton, who was often seen as a "New Democrat" or "Centrist Democrat," was far different when he was elected to office than the Democratic party is today. His hands-off approach to the economy and deregulation policies were far more center than his successors in the Democratic party, but his unceremonious exit from the White House ushered in a rebuttal in the form of George W. Bush.

The second Bush was even more right-wing than his father, and it was clear the country was starting to shift farther apart on issues, which increased during the Iraq War and the War on Terror. This process was then furthered by number 44, Barack Obama, who seemed to be as left as they come, with plans for universal healthcare and open immigration policies. We can see that this seesaw motion began to spiral out of control in 2016, as Trump represented the farthest right, the alt-right. This movement seemed to be the antithesis to Obama, shutting down the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal. Looking to the future, a new rising star has been born in the form of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. While she may still be unready for a bid in 2020, her rise in politics signals a significant shift to the left for Democrats, delving into socialism. With each election cycle, the two parties seem to be whipping back and forth. As soon as one party gains power, the other slides farther down the seesaw to counteract them. Eventually, someone is going to fall off.



**"THIS SEESAW
OF DOOM
WILL ONLY
SERVE TO PUSH
THE COUNTRY
FURTHER APART"**

This brings me back to my first point. Let's put ourselves in our ancestors' position thousands of years ago. If we had known the benefits of agriculture, despite the short-term losses, we would have maintained our course for the long-term gains. Now apply that idea to the modern era. While the Republican Party or the Democratic Party may seem to embody everything you find truly evil and despicable in life, try to look to the long term. This seesaw of doom will only serve to push the country further apart, as everyone reacts to short-term fears. We've hit rock bottom, folks, and there's only one way up. By understanding that a political loss for you or your party may be what's best for the country and knowing that trying to bridge the political divide is more important than trying to get back at whoever wronged you, maybe we can overcome our differences and put our beloved country back on track. For all of us.

Finding Purpose in Japan

By Teodora Stirbat

The moment I laid my head down on this weird Japanese pipe pillow in my dormitory, I asked myself what in the world am I even doing here? The last thing I vaguely remember was talking to my exchange coordinator, still fairly unconvinced that I would be spending my semester eating rice everyday with my pink chopsticks in Nagasaki. Yet, as the discretionary space deadlines were breathing down my neck, I finally decided to apply in my third year for a semester of studying abroad at Nagasaki University in Japan.

My family did not quite understand. I had already left behind my cozy Romanian home two years ago, trading it in for an exciting fresh start in the Netherlands. And now I found myself in front of my parents, who think going to the beach in Bulgaria counts as an 'exotic holiday,' trying to explain that I would be leaving again to study on the other side of the globe.

In spite of everything, a couple of months later, I woke up in Japan, a place that was only alive in my dreams until now. Also, it was the place where I was expecting to get at least a couple of life-questions answered rather than become tormented by new ones. I was looking ahead to a comprehensive semester where my Japanese language skills along with my networking opportunities would come together and successfully guide the rest of my future on this earth. It's safe to say that none of that happened, although I can definitely understand anime references a little better now. Instead, what I got are two things which are arguably even more precious: some amazing friends and an endless amount of fun times.

I was confronted with the typical clash between expectations and reality, thinking I should feel somehow ashamed for putting my academic development on hold while choosing instead to experience incredible karaoke nights every week. And although I personally know people who would impeccably handle both parts of the studying abroad experience, I quickly realized that it's sometimes better to let go, take your time, and just live the dream for a while.

In the end, I know that even after walking hundreds of kilometers on Japanese land, this semester abroad will still feel like a dream to me. Please do not think that I will get extra-cheesy and start describing the breathtaking views I have from my dormitory window. It is more the type of dream that you know you will eventually wake up from. In three months, at the end of January, the spell will be broken and I will wake up again in the unforgiving Dutch cycle of housing from hell, cold wind, and ridiculously deep-fried oily foods.

Even so, it is wisest to make the most out of it. And while it seems that I encourage finding your purpose in having fun times with friends over some drinks, I think we can all agree that a little break like this can go a long way. And who knows what treasures you might find at the end of it.



Photography by Dario Moreira



Kiss Me Not

Written by Ilayda Biberoglu

This piece of writing that you are about to read is neither an analysis nor a critique of a movie. It means more to me, not as a reflection of what the movie made me think or feel, but because I saw it thanks to my first experience in Middle East Committee. Although I have been interested in Middle East for as long as I can remember, I had not seen any Egyptian movies before *Kiss Me Not*. That was the main reason why I was so thrilled when I was invited to the Arab Film Festival as the first committee activity. This year's theme was "Changes Through Cinema," an attempt to explore how cinema can portray changes in society and celebrate all the changes that it can initiate, both on a personal and a societal level. *Kiss Me Not*, as the festival's closing movie, truly carried the essence of this theme.

One of the most well-known Egyptian actresses, Fagr (Yasmine Rais), plays the lead role in young director's feature debut named *Tamer* (Mohamed Mahran). After they shot most of the film, she suddenly refuses to participate in a bed scene. Since *Tamer* believes that the scene is vital, all crew members scramble to find a way to make her kiss the co-star. First it seems that the reason of her unwillingness to kiss her partner is because of his narcissistic behaviors. However, it then turns out that she finds the scene sinful and wants to pursue a more religious path. After a long segment of shooting, just when it looks like the kiss is finally happening, a call to prayer interrupts and she runs off the set. Meanwhile, as *Tamer* desperately tries to get Fagr to return for the crucial scene, one of the crew members begins filming a documentary about the history of kissing in Egyptian cinema. While the situation with Fagr is becoming more complicated than they could have imagined, *Tamer*'s producer, once a lover of a big star who decided to veil herself and stop seeing him, suggests a stunt woman or an animated ending instead of trying to turn Fagr back. It is a noteworthy detail that the ex-lover of *Tamer*'s producer is played by Sawsan Badr, an actress whose real-life choice was to cover up at the height of her career.

Although it is labeled as a mockumentary, I believe a more appropriate description would be a film within a film, within a film. It is also criticized for being too broad and local for most art house audiences to digest, and therefore, should have a mostly regional career. However, I strongly believe that *Kiss Me Not* carries some universal messages through the development towards conservative onscreen dressing, which started within the early years of the millenium on a wave of politically-inspired emotion, an interrogation of Egypt's present society and its filmmaking past.

As this well-timed film takes place in the days while the film industry is questioning the abuse of actresses by highly powerful actors, producers and etc, the movie has something to tell its audience. To begin with, almost everyone on the set during the countless shootings is an impatient male, and even Fagr's mother and a makeup woman urge her to get the scene over with by kissing the co-star. At some point, her mother becomes too insistent and makes her angry as she asks, "You are driving me to sin again? Are not you worried about me?" Fagr's sudden dramatic decision is ridiculed, as she is unsuccessful in acclimating to her new lifestyle and the challenges it poses. However, it is clear that Fagr is being forced into a situation she does not desire, to do something she does not want to do.



I believe another key point is linked to the question, “Is kissing that bad?” which also illustrates *Kiss Me Not*’s satire about increasing prudishness and self-censorship in Egyptian cinema. As Tamer’s mother said, “If it was a beating, instead of a kissing, they would not get angry.” Nobody would say anything and it would be condoned if it was a wife-beating or any kind of violence towards women. It is unfortunately a continuous problem around the whole world that people tend to watch violence as an outsider but they do not refrain from rebelling if they feel uncomfortable with any kind of seduction

I can definitely understand why *Kiss Me Not*’s comedy could be seen as too broad and local. For instance, Fagr’s psychological vulnerability to her religious guide who suggests that she follows her heart, is more comprehensible to local audiences. Nevertheless, it is my firm belief that the film promises much more and encourages the audience to think about some current, universal problems and relevant concepts such as tradition, gender roles, religious practices, and abuse.

SAUDADE: THE DECEMBER BLUES

'Saudade' is a Portuguese word that has no translation and is defined as a feeling of longing created from the absence something, someone or some place. Sounds quite similar to homesickness. However, as soon as you experience both, they are quite easy to distinguish.

The time before Christmas means getting more into the holiday spirit, and consequently, missing my family, friends and home more than ever. In November, it had been very long since I had seen them and probably my biggest motivation during exams was the future possibility of taking the Christmas tree out with my parents or watching Home Alone with them. But I would not call that homesickness. Just like Kevin McCallister, it's more of a "my family's in Florida, and I'm in New York" situation. It wouldn't matter where I am as long as I am around my family.

I also would not describe it as homesickness because the second I leave the Netherlands I feel the same way. I miss Turkey when I am in the Netherlands and Netherlands when I am in Turkey. It is more of a constant feeling of being incomplete.

I would say I have two homes. One is my home that consists of my past and my family and my friends. The other one is my new life and my new friends. What I feel though, is that I am standing right in the middle of the two. On one hand, the desire for my old home is keeping me away from the current one. On the other hand, I am genuinely happy with where I am now and people I am with and I do not want to miss that as well. Two strings are pulling me to two different sides and I am far from both my homes.

You can reduce the feeling of homesickness. You can go back and visit wherever you call home, or try to find small pieces of your home surrounding you. Saudade is more related to the absence of the feeling of home and people that created the obscure definition of what home is. And that feeling never comes back to what it once was.

Saudade is not nostalgia either. Nostalgia refers to yearning for a period from the past. Nostalgia is more about reliving moments from the past through memories. Sure, I also get nostalgic sometimes but it's usually followed by the happiness of great memories.

Holidays are all about joy and happiness with people who are around us. Even with the small yearning for my friends and family, it's important that I always live the holiday season to its fullest. As Kevin McCallister once said, "Okay, this is extremely important. Will you please tell Santa that instead of presents this year, I just want my family back?"

BY SELIN BASAK GUNGOR

Knowing You

By Kinan Aldaioub

Every time I see you
It is as if I see you for the first time
Your name is a secret
And like every secret
I have it on the tip of my tongue
And while you stand on my tongue
Waiting to be emancipated
Your shadow is cast on my heart
Your shadow is heavy
As heavy as a secret
As heavy as a tear
A tear I keep hanging like a thread
From the edges of my eyes
My eyes that guard your eyes
My eyes that found your eyes
Which are more familiar to me than my own eyes
As if they were in my mind when I was born
Like I learned your eyes before I learned words
And words now stand on my tongue
Casting a shadow onto you
A shadow as light as a tear



Dear No One,

How have you been?

Guess what? In the past academic year I have met some of the most amazing, random, colourful bunch of weirdos. (Because let's be honest, you have to be a little crazy to study International Studies.)

Even though I made a lot of new friends, I already wasn't able to keep in touch with some people. I also lost track of some friends from secondary school... and I can't say I felt too bad about it.

For example, if talking to you makes me more sad than happy, if geographical distance proves too high a cost, if we grow into different viewpoints and beliefs that keep us from seeing eye to eye, letting go of the friendship we shared might not sound like a terrible idea.

Or so I thought.

This past summer I've been able to catch up with a lot of old friends a few of whom I never thought I'd ever meet with again. Giving old connections a second chance didn't seem that hard at all. I have found that in order to properly do so, one has to consider a few things.

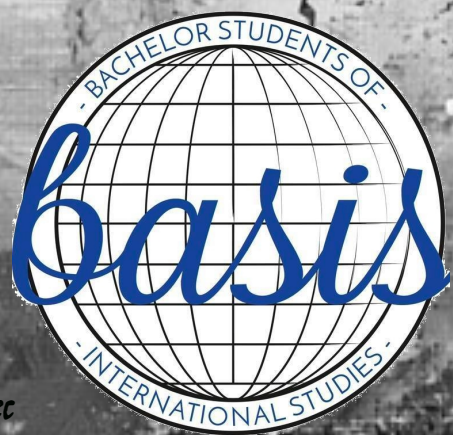
- 1.) Don't be afraid to be the one to reach out first. Especially if you miss them a lot. Sending simple messages like, "Hey, how are your studies going?" or "Hey, you look so cool in that new profile picture" can be nerve-racking. But, they can easily be the start of a whole new conversation. The worst thing that can happen is that the other person ignores you, and well, that's their loss. Because I think you're already an awesome person for at least trying to reach out.
- 2.) Try to figure out what you want from this new connection. I'm not saying you should plan every interaction in detail, but it might be nice to know what you and your new/old friend expect this to be. Do you want to be best friends again who meet up regularly, or old acquaintances who occasionally exchange polite small talk via WhatsApp? I'm not saying that you have to make some sort of relationship contract (this isn't 50 shades of friends with "special" benefits), but at least try to understand each others' wishes.

- 3.) A second attempt does NOT include a third, fourth, fifth, etc. When a person approaches you for a second chance or vice versa, you don't have to feel obligated to maintain contact if this connection fails again. If a person regularly waltzes in and out of your life and takes advantage of your kindness, you have the right to exclude them from your life. You deserve to be loved and appreciated, don't settle for less. If you feel like you're stuck in a toxic relationship, please try talking about it with your friends and family, or seek help from the university psychologist.
- 4.) If it's not meant to be, it's not meant to be. No, I'm not talking about the song. What I'm trying to say is that sometimes, people just don't put in enough effort to make it work, or maybe you yourself don't want to put in the effort. Online chats can run dry if someone doesn't respond enough. Maybe they can't handle talking to you and decide to ghost you. That doesn't mean they're a bad person, it's actually very human of them. Of course you're allowed to mourn the loss of a friendship, but don't be too upset about it. There are about 7.6 billion people on this planet. Loads of new people will come and go in and out of your life. I promise you some of the coolest people are walking around on campus, so don't hesitate to try and make new friends!

People once told me that life was like a train ride and that during this journey, several people will come to sit in your coupé, but they might change seats over the duration of the ride. Although they have a certain level of agency (look at me applying academic terms), you can always try to ask them to sit next to you again. And if they for some reason they can't or don't want to, you don't have to worry about it. Your journey is not over yet, and many more other travelers will gladly join you.

I know I'd be up for it.





Art by Nicole Kadlec

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