



BAISMAG

the miracle issue

issue 30



Dear Reader,

It is getting colder and, somehow, the weather continues to worsen. Between grey skies and deadlines, it is hard to stay motivated, despite the holidays being within an arms reach. In times like these, coffee isn't always enough to combat the urge to just stay in bed beneath toasty warm covers.

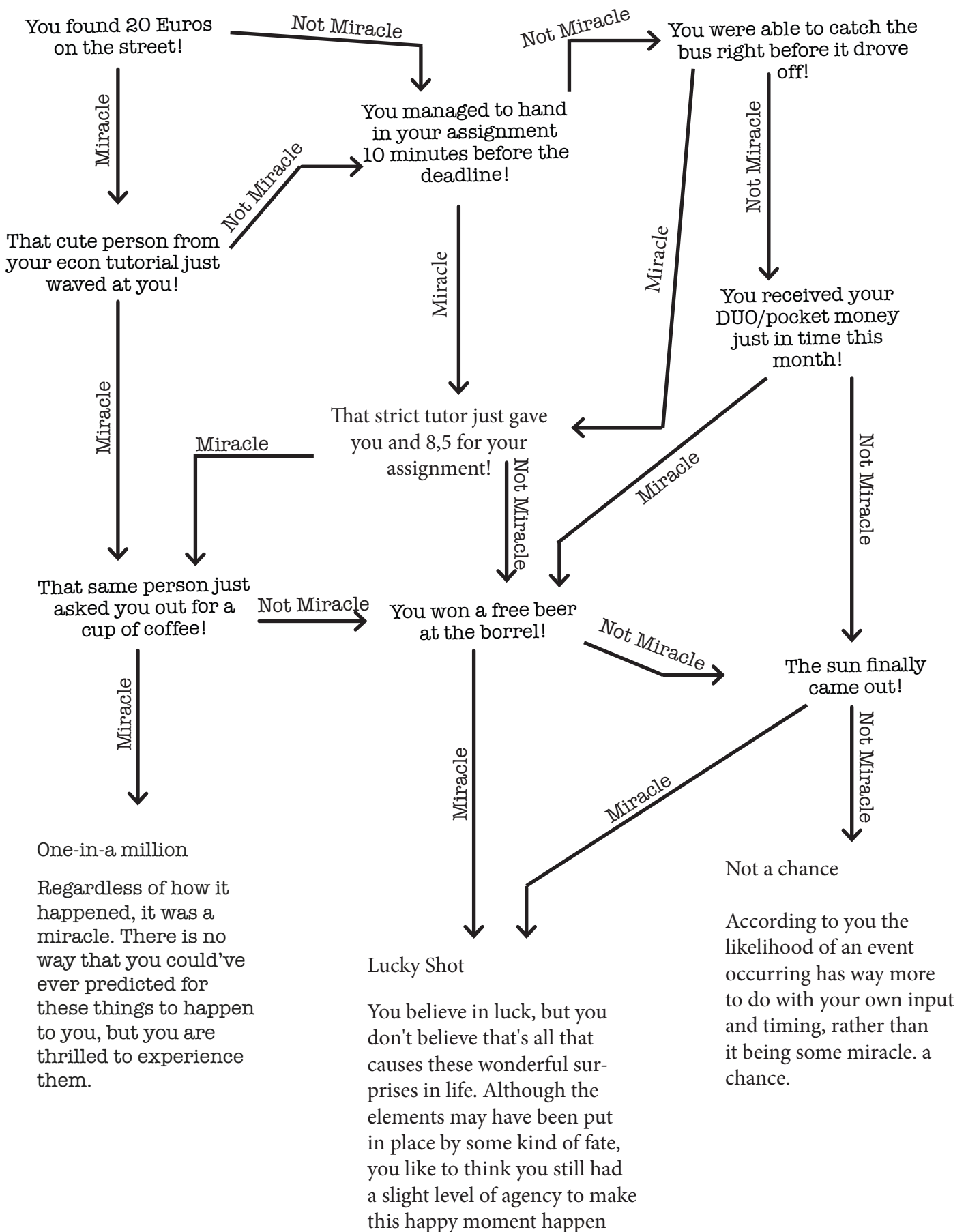
Hence, our theme "Miracles". Throughout the last push towards the end of the semester, we must keep an eye out for the small miracles to continue marching on through the headaches, assignments, and unlimited amounts of readings. In short: Because it is cold, it is good to find things that warms your soul.

Love,
Kira Paynter
Editor-in-Chief

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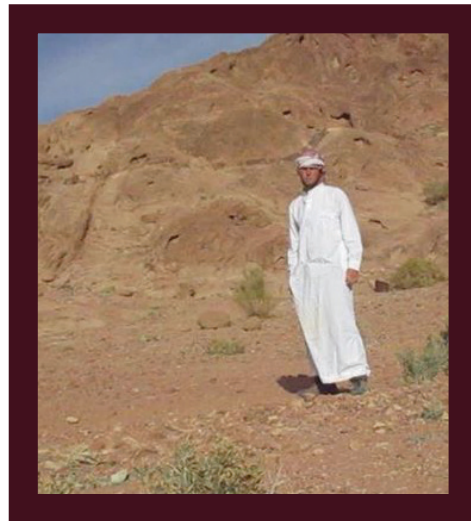
Quiz: Do You Believe In Miracles?



‘A Holy Miracle’ by George Kefford

It's Boxing Day, 2018. I'm in Central Jordan, alone, on a remote mountainside. It was my home for the night, my ever-so recognisable green tent stood against the strong wind coming up from the valley below. The multiplicity of bitter northerly gusts caused the violent flapping of the sheets of my shelter. The festive season had just passed, and it was the second year running that I had not spent Christmas with my family. For some, that isn't a problem; but for me, I missed them dearly. My Mother, Father, Brother and Coco: my chocolate Labrador. I broke. Tears of sadness dripped from my eyes, and steadily ran down my face. Why on earth was I here when I could be back in Australia, soaking up the beautiful summer and spending quality time with the people dear to me? What in God's name was I doing here?

I was in Jordan as part of my route to walk 800km across this part of the Middle East. I started in Northern Israel, and had already walked alone across the Galilee of Israel and the West Bank of Palestine. My mates in Australia thought me as crazy and stupid, and the people I met on my walk thought me as, still crazy and stupid, but they admired my supposed bravery. I had just graduated high school the month before, and this was my first step to becoming a professional explorer; a dream and ambition I have had for the last ten years, much to the dismay of my worrisome mother who, perhaps understandably, fretted over the idea that her 17-year-old eldest son was walking alone across a place she had been indoctrinated to believe as extremely dangerous.



But back to the mountainside I was on. Crying, with a cigarette in one hand and my head in the other; I was just about to give up. During the day I had stones thrown at me by kids who thought I was Israeli, more stones thrown at me from more kids who were angry that I refused their offer for tea (time was running short). I was attacked by a rabid dog, and just before getting into camp I slipped down an awfully steep gravel slope which scraped off most of the skin on my right forearm, and I had been warned that the area I was sleeping in was notorious for hyena attacks. It was bloody cold too.

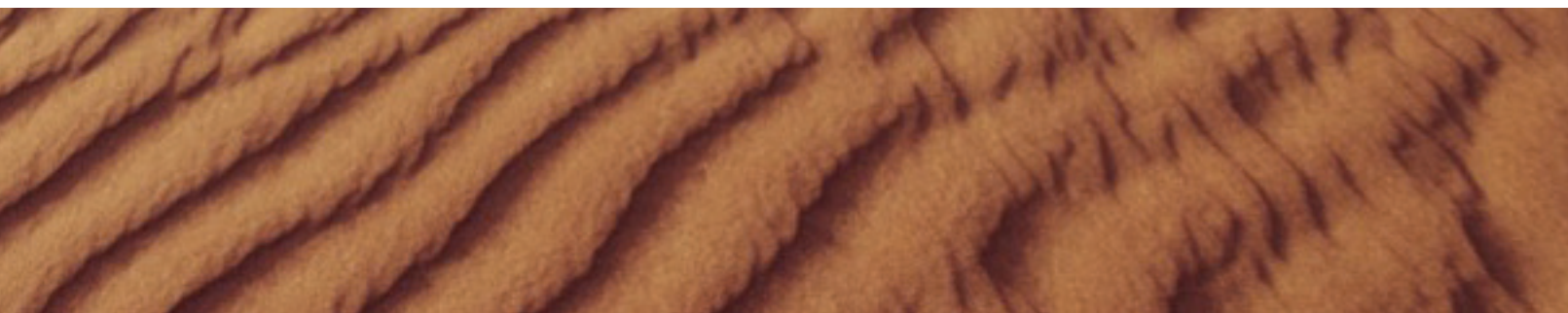
Suddenly, a dirty white utility truck came to a halt by the place I had my tent set up. Inside was a group of men I hadn't seen before. All were heavily bearded, wore turbans on their heads and camouflage from shoulder to toe. They looked bloody scary.

“Asalaamu-alaykum!” Shouted one of them.

“Walaykum-assalaam!” I responded.

This man spoke no English, but I think he said he saw me walking earlier in the day, and that he lived nearby. Out of the car he came, with a metal tin inside of which two fish, rice and flatbread could be seen. He gave it to me and asked that I leave the tin where I was for him to collect tomorrow.

Was this a miracle? No. But it certainly felt like one. I was feeling at my lowest, and then a kind somebody out of the blue changed my world. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart before he drove off.



'Pixies & Mice'

**damn it, i've lost it again
my glasses, my shoes, my favourite pen
it's fine, i'll search, i'll look and see
for my watch, my bag, my usb
it's gotta be here, around somewhere
on the desk, on the bed, on the dining chair
okay, let's move to different rooms,
down the sofa, on the shelves, under the broom?
in the fridge, the oven, the microwave?
that's it! i'm going to cave
it's gone, it's lost, goodbye forever!
left through a wormhole, i'll see you never!
pixies, fairies, really strong mice?
a warning, a sign, a note would be nice
but "make do and mend", that's what mum said
this pain of loss is inside my head
i don't need these things to live my life
but when i see those pixies, i'll give them strife
i go to leave, and from the corner of my eye
i see my possessions, i exhale with a sigh
how did you get there? i cannot recall
i guess the mice felt bad after all**

e.a.

‘Miracles’ by Makayla Freire

What are miracles?

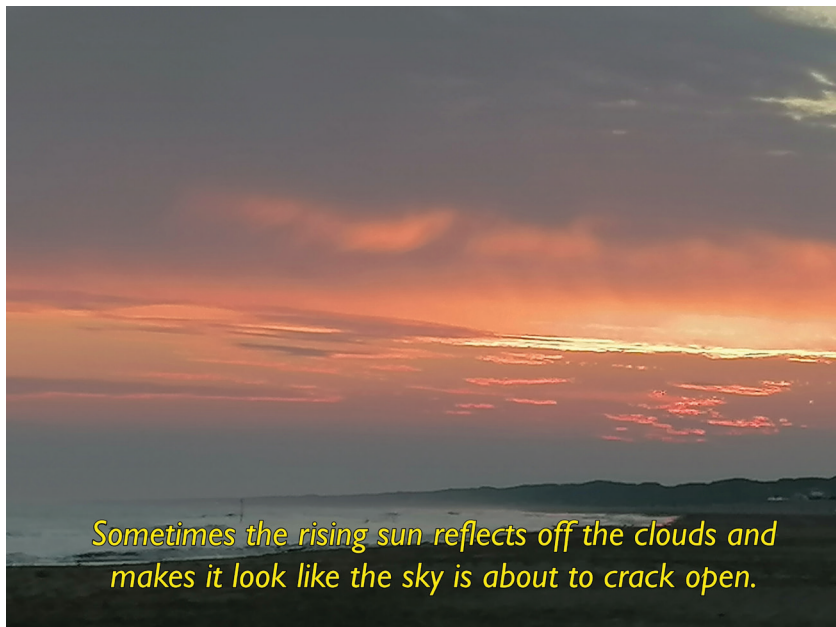
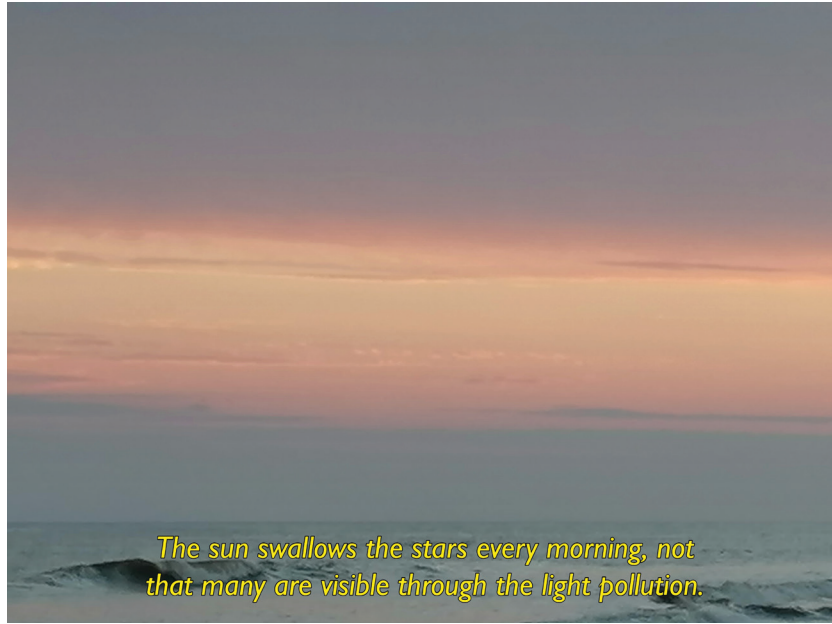
We tend to equate miracles to rare, unbelievable happenings like landing a plane on a river, making it out of a horrible crash alive, or having a malignant tumor disappear. Of course, these are miracles; they’re so unbelievably amazing and life-altering. Really reflecting on it, though, everything is a miracle.

Not to toot my own nose, but I am a miracle. How on earth did this earth even come to be? A whole bunch of miracles were definitely needed for this world to even exist. There are infinite complexities to our daily lives. I don’t even think I can read out the number of atoms that make up my hand. I’m not even going to refer to the fact that there is a never-ending universe because that’s just way too much of a miracle for me. A miracle I can fathom, is a leaf.



photo by Warsha Autar

A leaf can be just that - a leaf. But at closer inspection, we see the structure of a leaf. Suddenly such a short and simple word- leaf - does not do it justice. The leaf contains vessels that allow for all processes inside the leaf to work for it to live. Each vessel has a particular function with a particular purpose. Some take up water and nutrients while others do other biological things that I have completely forgotten about. What I am getting at is that, in the end of all this, the leaf is not just a leaf. It’s a miracle. It’s a miracle, how something so small can be so complex and so essential to our lives. Without the leaf producing its food through photosynthesis, we humans would have no oxygen. It is unfathomable how something so small is so complex and so intricately essential to a much larger and much more complex world. So next time you see a leaf, or step on some leaves, take a moment to think about that miracle.



Sunrise by Kira Paynter

'For Grammy'

**I remember winter:
I was dressed in a sweater
that was black with blue stripes**

**It was cold enough for gloves and scarves
but not enough to cover the world in white**

**With my little brother, I sat in the very back on a couch
with a flower print that reminded me of your bedroom,
where they found you**

**I have my dad's bible from when he was a kid,
it's not something I believe in
but I like to think you hear me sometimes**

**On Christmas we took the unwrapped presents for you
from underneath the tree
it is one of the saddest things I have ever seen**

**The set of golden clip-on earrings with a matching necklace
I have from you do not suit me,
but I continue to keep them**

**Now it is cold again, enough for gloves and scarves
but not enough to cover the world in white**

**I remember summer:
you wore a strange frilly swimsuit
as we played by the pool**

I miss you

anonymous

‘Why We Should Listen To More Music From The 60s’ by **Arturo Simone**

When we are talking about music, it is easy to see how people tend to stick with the popular genres of their generation.

Therefore the majority of people only listen to the music provided by current artists, to which they think they can best relate. Some of them also feel the peer pressure of friends and their own environment, suggesting them to listen to certain genres and avoid others.

Nevertheless, the history of music is to be seen and understood as a process in constant evolution, always crafted as a consequence of what was there before. Moreover, as in every story, there must have been certain events which revolutionised the way things are.

The importance of the ‘60s, musically, lays exactly on this topic.

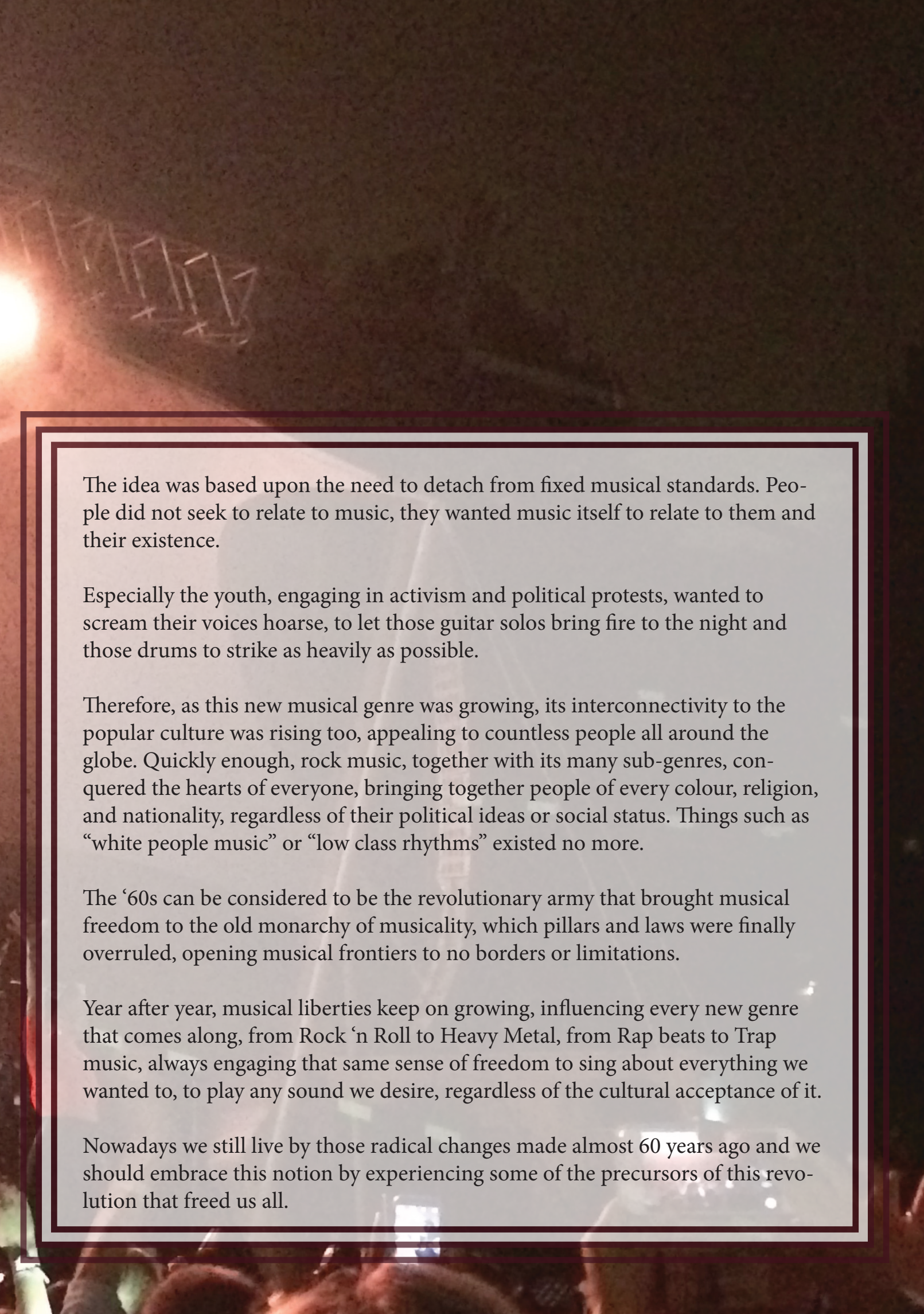
It was a time of major political changes, ideological polarisation of the world and Youth revolutions.

For the first time in Musical History, artists were taking their chances and starting writing songs outside of the box. Previously untouched topics, considered to be inconvenient and prohibited, were then a major part of the musical experience of the ‘60s.

Artists would combine their political criticisms, personal life experiences and insecurities, in order to give an honest representation of their world.

An example would be the massive production of songs against the Vietnam War, such as the unforgettable “Fortunate Son” by CCR.

Musically speaking, new instruments were brought into bands, and the old ones were reinvented to create sounds people had never heard before. If we consider the rise of psychedelic rock bands such as the Jimi Hendrix experience, Jefferson Airplane or Pink Floyd, we can truly understand the need for new sounds and harmonic rhythms which were shared by a vast majority of the population.



The idea was based upon the need to detach from fixed musical standards. People did not seek to relate to music, they wanted music itself to relate to them and their existence.

Especially the youth, engaging in activism and political protests, wanted to scream their voices hoarse, to let those guitar solos bring fire to the night and those drums to strike as heavily as possible.

Therefore, as this new musical genre was growing, its interconnectivity to the popular culture was rising too, appealing to countless people all around the globe. Quickly enough, rock music, together with its many sub-genres, conquered the hearts of everyone, bringing together people of every colour, religion, and nationality, regardless of their political ideas or social status. Things such as “white people music” or “low class rhythms” existed no more.

The ‘60s can be considered to be the revolutionary army that brought musical freedom to the old monarchy of musicality, which pillars and laws were finally overruled, opening musical frontiers to no borders or limitations.

Year after year, musical liberties keep on growing, influencing every new genre that comes along, from Rock ‘n Roll to Heavy Metal, from Rap beats to Trap music, always engaging that same sense of freedom to sing about everything we wanted to, to play any sound we desire, regardless of the cultural acceptance of it.

Nowadays we still live by those radical changes made almost 60 years ago and we should embrace this notion by experiencing some of the precursors of this revolution that freed us all.

‘Curry Recipe’ by Culinary Committee

Dear food lovers,

A hype, a lifestyle, a movement.

Despite some bad experiences you might have had with vegan food (HOPweek anyone?), it doesn't have to be that way.

Eating vegan food may be a little inconvenient or expensive on the go. However, you have most likely been eating foods that don't contain animal products your whole life. Whether you do it for ethical reasons, the environment, or your health, eating vegan is something worth considering.

Change your habits a bit, try something new. You might like it, you might not, but at least you can say that you've tried. Change doesn't come easy, especially when talking about habits. Because that's what food is to us, a habit. Many of us grew up with certain dishes that your family cooked, you might have started cooking these same dishes since you've become a student. Change it up a little, get inspired by new things and gradually you will be open to more kinds of food. As the Dutch saying goes “Wat de boer niet kent, dat eet hij niet,” (literally “What the farmer doesn't know, he won't eat.”) meaning that someone is very picky and only eats what they already know. Don't be like that farmer and broaden your food horizons!

Maybe you're a meat eater, or you're a vegetarian. No matter, here is a great recipe that doesn't use any animal products and tastes delicious! And it is up to you to prepare it the way you like. A curry is easy to prepare and can be modified to each person's individual taste, whether you like it crazy spicy or you're like me who starts crying and sweating like there is no tomorrow after a tiny bite of a chilly. That's the beauty of cooking for yourself, you can determine what goes into your food.

Lots of love and chocolate,

The Culinary Committee

(P.S. This recipe was adapted from Tasty, go check out their numerous recipes for more culinary enjoyment!)

Curry Recipe

Ingredients

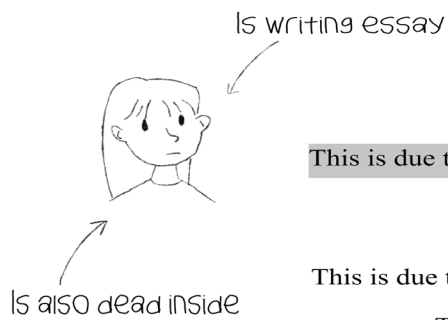
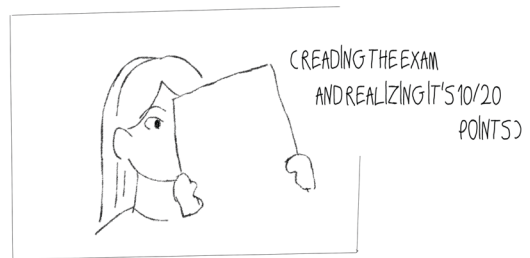
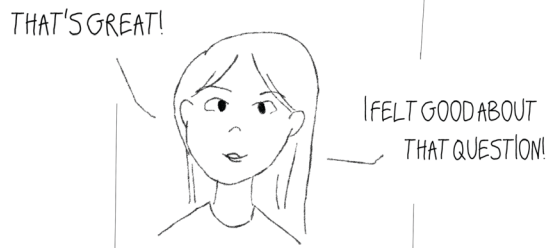
- 1 kg of potatoes
- 1 can of chickpeas
- 2 cans of coconut milk
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 1 medium sized onion
- Spices and herbs
- Rice of your choice
- Garlic
- 240ml of vegetable broth
- 1 tbs of lemon juice



Preparation

- 1) Peel and cut the onion and garlic and fry them in a pot (size depends on how much you want to prepare) with some oil at medium heat.
- 2) Add curry powder and your preferred spices to the pot.
- 3) Mix the spices into the onions and garlic.
- 4) Peel and cut the potatoes into small cubes and add them to the mixture
- 5) Drain the chickpeas and toss them into the pot and mix thoroughly.
- 6) Add the liquids, pour the vegetable broth, some lemon juice, the diced tomatoes and their sauce, and the coconut milk into the pot.
- 7) Now let the curry simmer while cooking the rice and add spices to the dish as you see fit.
- 8) Finally, enjoy!

ANOTHER DAY IN THE LIFE



This is due to North Korea
Word count: 6

This is due to North |

This is due to |

This is due to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Word count: 10



'Our Generation' by Mia Black

We are in a constant state of overstimulation.

Our news feeds are full of the latest tragedies, every corner of the world concentrated within our hands. You can't scroll down your Instagram, Facebook, Twitter feed without stumbling upon a post pleading for donations to save the Amazon, an op-ed on how we're killing the world one plastic straw at a time, images of wars a world away. We're on the front lines 24/7. We can't escape.

Yet somehow, our generation prospers. We continue to stand up, to refuse to let our voices die out. We walk in the footsteps that activists before us have already carved, this time with hashtags and email petitions held aloft next to the cardboard signs synonymous with change. We don our knitted pink hats, our face paint, we raise our voices, and we let it be known that we won't back down.

Every time a politician snidely remarks that children should be in school, not on the streets pleading for a better future, we become stronger. Each time a child loses a day learning about antiquated wars and nonsensical equations, in order to implore policymakers for a second chance at life, something shifts.

We are a generation that, for all intents and purposes, should be numb. We should be anesthetised from the feelings; rage, hope, anger, passion, that hopelessness seems to smother. And yet, we are a miracle generation; we take the streets, we use our voices, we don't give up.

Dear No One,

It is obvious that autumn is upon us and that winter will follow shortly. The trees are shedding their leaves all over the campus garden, the cafeteria is packed with students who don't want to go outside to get lunch, and the lights in the study areas need to be turned on much earlier than before. During this period, it's also difficult to get out of bed in the morning. When it's raining cats and dogs outside, the warmth and comfort from your bedsheets is far more appealing than having to attend that 9 AM lecture.

But what if that's not the only reason that it's difficult to get out of bed in the morning?

The academic semester comes to a close as you have to hand in final essays and study for finals. Most of us are also preparing to go back home and face our family, or rather, their expectations of what we should be. Meanwhile, you try not to worry about what might've become of the friendships you have back home. Surely, all that time and distance apart didn't cause you to grow apart. Not to mention the possible additional pressure of having a job on the side and trying to work enough shifts to be able to afford Christmas presents. And whether you're in a romantic relationship, situationship, or a self-partnership, it can be difficult to keep the spark alive in these dark days, when you're being pulled every which way. With all of these concerns, the negative feelings that students might have tend to grow. Homesickness, anxiety, feelings of depression; it's as if the warm weather took our happiness with it when it left.

It can be difficult to talk about these feelings. Your fellow students seem to be acing all of their exams, so why bother talking to them about how you bombed that midterm. Your cousin who's attending that posh school is so excited to see you, why would you tell them how much it bothers you that your aunt is always comparing the two of you. Even your friends from back home look like they're having a blast in their instagram posts. You're convinced they couldn't possibly understand how you're feeling. You might just be afraid of how this'll make you look.

Generally, this is when the emotions and thoughts pile up. The pressure to perform and the negativity are heavy burdens to carry. The weight of all these expectations can be suffocating. Getting out of bed in the morning seems unnecessary, because you feel like hiding from the world is the only way to stop the hurt from the inevitable disappointment that is to come.

Fuck that.

Fuck stressing about your grades to the point you can't see the readings through your tears.

Fuck faking a smile to that auntie when she makes a comment about your weight.

Fuck liking that post of your old classmates when you don't really care.

And most importantly: Fuck forcing yourself to have impossible standards and then punishing yourself when you can't live up to them.

These months and the events which lie ahead of us and the world which we live in are not going anywhere. So instead of trying to hide, run, or self-blame, take three deep breaths, close your eyes, and think about the little miracles in your life.

Now, little miracles are not life-changing, but they can still help put things in perspective.

Example: Yes, that grade was not the best, but you only messed up on the multiple choice part. You actually received a lot of points on the essay part. Yes, that auntie made that comment, but your nephew was very happy with the toy you got him. Yes, that old friend looks like they're doing far better than you, but you know you look just as happy and carefree in your own posts.

I'm not saying you have to become an optimist. You don't have to eternally expect success or be confident that everything will always work out. I would like to argue, however, that even in the worst case scenario, you can find something to smile about.

Final example: You may not have gone to that 9 AM lecture, but you were finally able to get out of bed, take a shower, and have a proper breakfast.

When you really can't see the miracle, talk to a friend about it. You might feel like you're the only one, but I promise you, they are most likely feeling the same way. Or, maybe you feel the need to talk with the university psychologist. There is no shame in getting the help you need to appreciate the little miracles that make life more bearable.

Love (always),

Warsha Autar

Miracle
Milagro
معجزة
Prodige
Miracolo
Mirakel
Wunder
Mirakel
Milagre
Cud
Miracol
Zázrak
Θάυμα
Keramet
奇迹
奇跡
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Miracle

...so many ways of saying what you are to me

Photo by Longxin Liu



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