

ENGLISH BREAK

*21st Edition
May 2022*

You Will Read:

- **Looking Back at *V for Vendetta***
- **The Literary Ontology of Affect**
- **i remember**
- **A Brief History of the Theatre of the Absurd**

English Break

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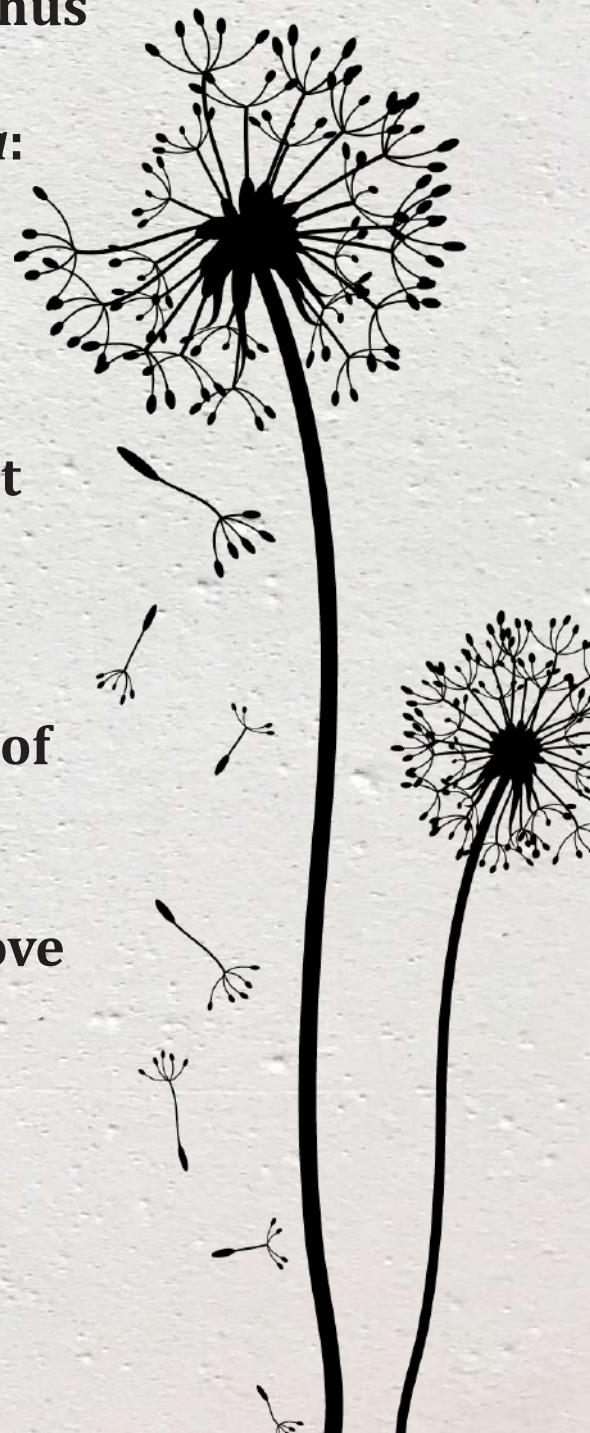
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Arezoo Izadi

B.A. English Literature Student

One Last Ride

It is as if it were only yesterday that I sat down, with a million worries of what could go wrong, opened a word document and started writing my first ever editorial for the 17th Edition of English Break. Now I am sitting, equally as jittery, ready to pen the last editorial I would ever write for it. People say all good things eventually come to an end someday, and to say that having the opportunity to manage English Break has been a blessing for the past two years is most definitely an understatement. For the past two years, it has been an absolute honor to be able to hear the voices of so many young women. It has been a greater of an honor to be able to make those voices heard with this platform; voices so different, yet so harmonious. Soon enough, you will witness even more colorful voices taking over English Break.

We have always attempted to put what we find enthralling, thought-provoking and gripping on paper for our audience to appreciate, and we have done nothing short of that in the 21st Edition. In this Edition, you will be reading analysis of poems, movies and essays on top of creative works such as poems and short stories.

As always, I would like to thank all my fellow writers and editors who accompanied me on this long road with their creativity and hard work. Besides that, it is only fair to pay gratitude to each and one of those who aided me in the past two years in English Break.

With that, let us go and enjoy this one last ride together.





Elham Hasannezhad

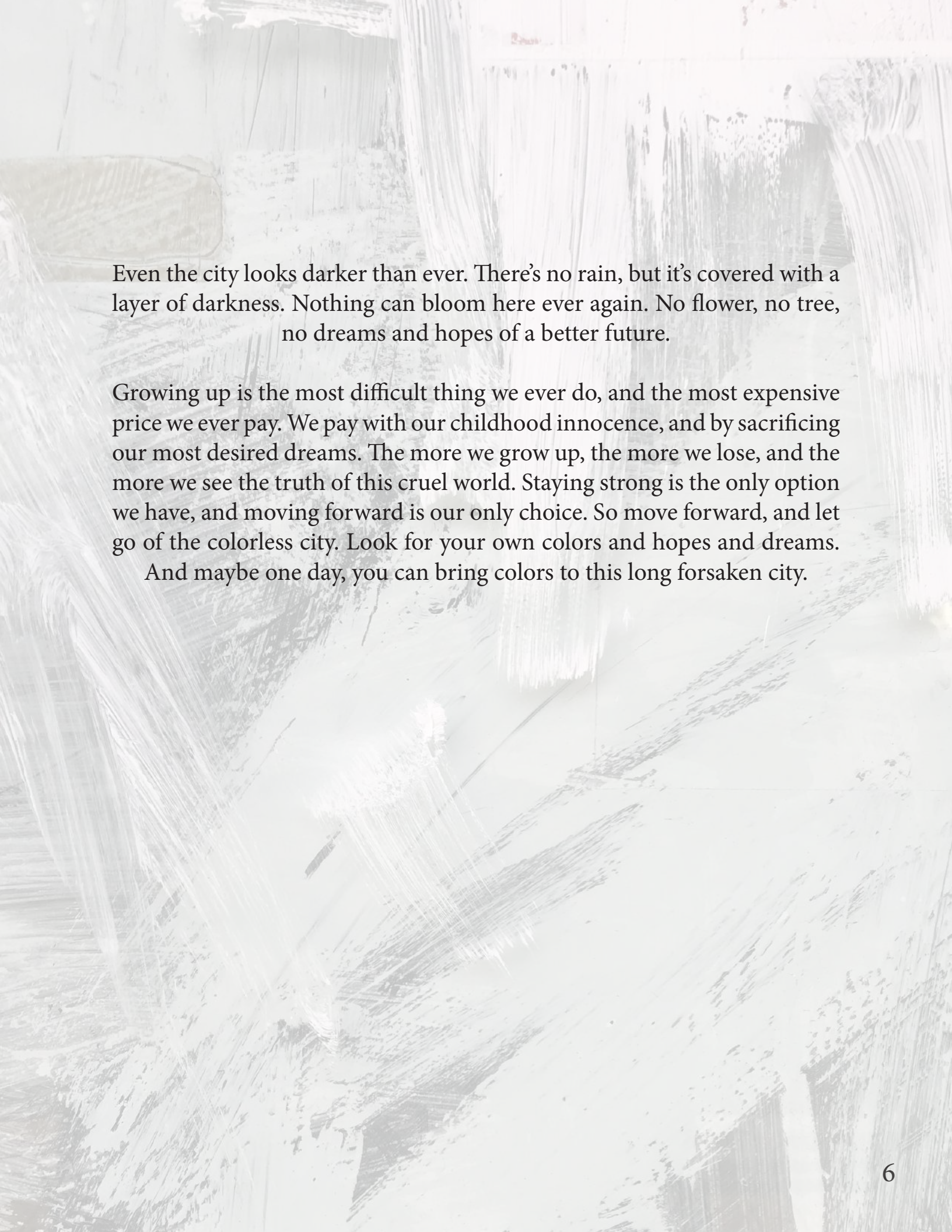
B.A. English Literature Student

A City That Has Lost Its Colors

I was born here, in this small city in a big vast world. Looking up to everyone, and looking forward to anything. Life was full of hopes and dreams, and everywhere you looked was full of colors. Happy smiles and happy faces. Generous strangers offering kindness. The world seemed like an infinite limitless place full of possibilities, and everyone felt like a kind soul helping and guiding you towards your destiny. My head was full of grand plans, and my heart full of passions to reach my dreams. Little did I know what the world truly had to offer to me.

Come with me, and look at this world with bare eyes. Take off your lenses, and see the true colors of this world. Let go of all your fantasies and look at it the way it really is. Cold, broken, ready to cave in. Growing up means facing the world for yourself. Seeing your beautiful dreams and fantasies all fall apart as you face the cold reality. The world isn't as big as you imagined. There are boundaries and restrictions in every place and every corner. Walls that you cannot walk through. Barriers that limit you. There are people who aren't as kind as you imagined. Glares and fingers pointing at your every mistake. Laughters and sneers that accompany your every action and failure. The world isn't full of possibilities, and for everything you want, there's a price to pay.

Now I can see this city the way it is. Or has it changed alongside with me? The city that has lost all its colors. The city that consists of only black and gray. I look around and I see no other colors. A gloomy place, and gloomy people. There are no smiles anymore, and no happy faces. There's a trace of sadness on every passerby's face. Everyone looks worn down and tired.



Even the city looks darker than ever. There's no rain, but it's covered with a layer of darkness. Nothing can bloom here ever again. No flower, no tree, no dreams and hopes of a better future.

Growing up is the most difficult thing we ever do, and the most expensive price we ever pay. We pay with our childhood innocence, and by sacrificing our most desired dreams. The more we grow up, the more we lose, and the more we see the truth of this cruel world. Staying strong is the only option we have, and moving forward is our only choice. So move forward, and let go of the colorless city. Look for your own colors and hopes and dreams. And maybe one day, you can bring colors to this long forsaken city.



Kiana Sanei

B.A. English Literature Student

Analysis of “The Myth of Sisyphus”

“The Myth of Sisyphus” is an essay published in 1942 in the middle of World War II, when everyone had lost their reason to live, by Albert Camus, the French philosopher. In this essay, Camus introduces the philosophy of the absurd—man’s futile search for meaning, purpose and clarity. Camus believes that we will never find the meaning that we want to find. Some will search for the meaning through a leap of faith, by placing their hopes in a God beyond this world, and some conclude that life is meaningless. But Camus suggests a third possibility; that we can accept and live in a world devoid of meaning or purpose. Camus claims that although the universe we are living in is meaningless, we can create our own meaning.

Who was Sisyphus?

In ancient Greece, Sisyphus was the clever but evil king of Corinth. He is known for his trickery and deceit. He had trapped, cheated and escaped death twice, which led Zeus to sentence him to what he thought was the ultimate and cruel punishment; something much worse than death itself. Sisyphus was condemned to roll a boulder up a hill in the depth of Hades, world of the dead. But as soon as the rock is about to reach the summit, it rolls back down the hill and Sisyphus has to push it back up again.

To Camus, Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He was trapped in the machinery of fate in a meaningless world, yet somehow he was able to overcome it. You may wonder, “How did he manage to overcome

it if he had to roll the rock up the hill for the rest of his life?”. Well, Camus believes “the struggle itself toward the height is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”

“The Myth of Sisyphus” is an allegory of humans’ search for meaning and the absurdity of it. We are all Sisyphuses grabbing with our personal rocks, trapped under the fate of an inevitable death. You are born, you learn to walk, you go to school, you go to college, work at the office, get married, have kids, buy a house, have grandkids and one day just as you entered from some corner of the world, you quietly exit. The world goes on, the earth still spins

and the indifference still continues. Most of us repeat the whole thing all over again every day. Just like Sisyphus pushes the rock back up the hill for eternity. Yet whatever happens in our fates is completely up to us. “I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one’s burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well.” In the end, it doesn’t matter that the rock will roll down again or that we will inevitably die. It is the struggle itself that we can content ourselves with. The journey itself matters, not the destination. In the end of our fates, we too may conclude that “all is well”.

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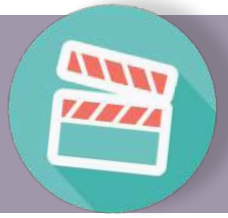
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Nasim Hosseini

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Looking Back at *V for Vendetta*: Movie Analysis

The setting is England, the late 2020s. The world is fighting a pandemic and the U.S. is now a “leper colony” fighting a second civil war while the Norsefire, England’s government was able to provide a cure for both the virus and the chaos in the country. In return, it asked for people’s obedience which it received. The problem now is, Norsefire no longer provides the security it initially based itself on. And now, “the ghost of Christmas past” is finally prepared to take revenge!

The movie *V for Vendetta* was made in 2005 based on the graphic novel of the same name. Originally, the novel was set in 1997, which was the author’s way of showing his dissatisfaction with Thatcher’s government and his support for anarchy. The movie, on the other hand, chose the more universal theme of individuality versus authority, challenging notions we have long accepted, and at its core, are the individuals who seem familiar to all of us.

In this imaginary state, the authority has strict control over the people: they are not allowed to be outside after a specific time, they don’t have access to works of art (as can be seen in Evey’s interest in the music box), and most of them cannot find specific foods, like butter (unless they steal it from Chancellor Sutler). In such an environment, a man who calls himself V lives in his Shadow Gallery, where he keeps all the artwork he has stolen, but that’s the least of his worries!

V wants to overthrow the Norsefire and promises to do so by November 5th next year. He is an intellectual wearing a Guy Fawkes mask with his charming characteristics; he is gallant, constantly uses archaic vocabulary and quotes Shakespeare. He directly explains his ideologies in his speech on

the television and also when he talks to Evey; in fact, they are so important to him that he states there is no longer a man behind his mask, but only an idea. Throughout the movie, we learn about what happened to him which shows how much V's identity is shaped by his surroundings despite how hard he has tried to save his individuality. We are informed that back when he was a prisoner, at some point even he did not remember who he was; thus, his former identity is lost and his new identity, however rebellious and resourceful, has only one purpose and that's "getting back at them for what they did." He devoted himself to hatred and revenge for years, turning into a "monster" because "what was done to [him] was monstrous". Everything he does is a response to what happened to him in the past. He even has his name from the cell he was in: cell number 5, or the Roman numeral V. Only after his encounter with Evey, he realizes he could have had an identity of his own regardless of his past, but it's too late. Nevertheless, V stands for all the people in all societies, only he is given the power to make a change and take revenge if he wants to; as Evey said in the end, "he was all of us."

Evey Hammond is the other central character. She is a young woman with a tragic past but now, lives a normal life. She seems to be a member of the middle class like the rest of the characters we see in the movie; she has a decent job and can afford going to parties. Although the Norsefire took her family from her, she is still attempting to stay out of trouble and remain obedient until she meets V and adopts his ideology. She becomes fearless when she faces her death, but unlike what V expected, she is not filled with hatred; she remains a human and embraces the pain; she keeps the love Valerie sent for them.

While following Evey's story, we see so many parallels between the different characters which emphasizes the fact that everyone is equally vulnerable when it comes to authorities; for instance, she watched her mother being taken away by Creedy's men, and the exact same thing happens with Deitrich who had helped her hide. Another parallel is with Evey and Valerie in prison; their heads were shaved, they were tortured, and eventually were freed from their fear.

Other than rebels and ordinary people, we also have characters who work for the Norsefire, such as Detective Finch who participated in the secret meetings and was appointed to find “the terrorist.” We mainly figure out the truth from his point of view and his “feeling” showing us how everything is related and how everyone is a part of a plan that’s already happening. Although he works for the government, we see his position is not safe when everyone threatens him using the nationality of his Irish mother against him, which shows the twisted nature of the system. By the end, he knows enough about the crimes of the Norsefire and allows Evey to fulfill V’s promise.

V for Vendetta is the tale of the people, no matter where or when they live. It shows how everyone is stuck in the system without a V, although having him would probably not help either. V finally achieves his goal, and leaves the people with their ‘freedom’ although it is not clear what happened to them afterwards; unfortunately, it is likely they will have a new system similar to the previous one since humans don’t yet know how else to live on. The emotional subplot, however, is what we can feel more secure about; our identity and our love is that last inch Valerie was talking about; the inch that nobody can take away from us, and it’s “the only inch worth having.”





Fateme Babaei

M.A. English Literature Student

The Cage

I feel like a bird within a barred cage
Trying to become free with a lot of rage
Bruising herself in this beating quest
Asking God to help her, day after day
Waiting for that moment of neglect
To free herself through the door of unfurled
Opening her wings to fly out of the cage
Shouting shouting freedom is my jest!



Zahra Jazayeri

M.A. English Literature Student




The Literary Ontology of Affect: A Study of Affective Reality in Selected Works of Kurt Vonnegut



Kurt Vonnegut, an American postmodern writer, has been dubbed by many critics as the author of the human condition. In his works, he deals with themes such as free will, mental health, the chaos and absurdity of the human condition, and the individual's struggle to find meaning in a world that oftentimes seems to be ruled by madness and disorder rather than logic and common sense. Some of Vonnegut's most critically acclaimed and commercially successful novels include *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), *Cat's Cradle* (1963), and *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). All these novels feature protagonists who, having suffered some form of trauma, find themselves lost in a world of disorder and anarchy that no longer makes any sense to them. In their struggles to grasp a sense of meaning, fiction and writing have a central place and play an essential role. The significance of fiction in the individual's struggle to achieve a sense of meaning is the string which runs through these novels and connects them to one another like beads on a pearl necklace.





Through the practice of postmodern techniques such as metafiction and intertextuality, as well as other narration methods-for instance self-insertion (introducing himself as a character into the story) and self-aware fiction (fiction that admits its own status as fictional and fabricated material)- Vonnegut offers an answer to his protagonists' cosmic questions and their search for meaning which considers fiction and the artistic act of narrative-making to be essential both to the identity of the individual and the meaning of life.

Vonnegut suggests that in our chaotic postmodern world of war, capitalism, consumerism and environmental crisis, there is no longer any transcendental signified that gives meaning to life. Rather, arbitrariness and mayhem is all that is left in the world. However, this chaos and arbitrariness does not indicate that life is devoid of meaning. Rather, it presents an opportunity for the individual to take part in the invention of a meaning of his own through becoming a part of the never-ending dance of signifiers and adapting to the chaos instead of trying to impose an order on it. Imposing order on the chaos of the world, is in Vonnegut's universe, not only impossible, but perilous too. The individual who takes on such an impossible task risks insanity and madness- two prevalent themes in works of Vonnegut. The way to remain sane is to invent meaning rather than fumble to grasp a fixed, transcendental meaning at the end of the dance of signifiers which is nothing but a mirage: "no damn cat and no damn cradle," one of Vonnegut's characters bitterly remarks. The cat and the cradle must be invented, fabricated and created.



By focusing on the significance of awareness and the individual's active role in the process of meaning making, Vonnegut opens the door to conversations about affect, movement, potentiality, and autonomy. He turns away from representational interpretations of literature and concentrates instead on mediation, asserting that fiction is not simply a mirror in which one can see the world reflected. Rather, it is a gateway through which one can walk in order to create worlds of meaning, each of which have the capacity to be autonomous in their potential.

Affect, in Vonnegut's works, is the movement in between the signifiers which enables the invention of meaning and individual identity in a constant state of becoming. It has the power to weave fiction into the fabric of our reality and in doing so, turns our traditional dichotomy of fiction vs. reality on its head, merging the two into something more than the sum of their parts, into affective reality. The study of affective reality in works of Vonnegut can begin dialogues about the ontology of literary affect and how the encounter it enables, changes our conventional understanding of fiction and reality as opposites and introduces them as parts of the same ever-changing tapestry of human effort to invent meaning.





Arezoo Izadi

B.A. English Literature Student

i remember

I had a pretty normal childhood. The kind you read in all those cliché novels. Good, hardworking parents who went out of their way day and night to provide for me and my sister, a two-story comfortable home in a friendly neighborhood with more families tailored just like us.

We would wander in the streets every day after school, playing all kinds of games. I can still sometimes smell the freshly cut grass of our lawns and feel the caress of the wind on my face.

I left my hometown after graduating. Moved to another city. Good collage. Graduated in Economics. Got married right after. Had two kids a couple of years after my marriage. Pretty normal.

So...yes.

That's my life story.

Or at least, what I think my life story is.

I can't be quite sure at this point. I remember graduating high school. I think. No. I'm sure. Yes. I do remember the gowns, the ceremony, and the hats being thrown up in the sky. I remember the joyous screams. I do. I remember.

I remember leaving town too. I left the town, right? I must have. How else would I have met my partner? My parents would have had no grandkids if I hadn't left the town surely.

My parents... where are they anyway? I do not know for certain whether they're alive as we are speaking. I don't recall the last time I spoke with them. I don't even remember the subject of our conversation the last time we talked. It was probably something along the lines of me being the worst decision maker when it comes to choosing a collage major. Yes. We probably talked about that. Like we always did.

What happened to my kids then? Last I remember they were both about

to start high school. Or was it college? No. It was high school. I remember Dani being excited for the special art courses the school was offering. Yes. Dina was quite excited about that. I mean Dani. Dani was excited for the art courses. Yes, her name was Dani. I'm not sure what Henry was into at the time though. Maybe ... I don't know. I don't remember what he liked. I do remember leaving town though. There wouldn't be any Dani or Harry if I hadn't. I did leave. I just don't recall how or when.

I don't entirely recall anything beyond being cooped up in this place for so long.

I don't know where it is.

It is bright. But there's no sun. No windows either. The brightness comes from these potent lamp lights. A couple of them are installed right above my head. It's too bright.

I don't remember the last time I saw another human being. Hell, I don't even remember the last time I saw myself. There are no mirrors around here. I don't even feel human.

The walls have always been an interesting object to me here. They're all made of glass. Crystal clear, clean glass. The only problem is, I can't see through them. There's only darkness beyond the four walls. It doesn't matter how much I squint to see anything, anyone or any movement. There's nothing there.

I've tried seeing. A lot. But to no avail. I've never been successful. Never in the 293 days I've been here. Has it been 293 days already? Or did I lose count? Maybe it's been a year. Or ten. But the lines I've drawn on the walls in red tell me it's been exactly 293 days. So it must be 293 days. Yesterday and tomorrow, it will be 293 days as well. Although...I did run out of space to draw the lines. I think that's the issue. And I couldn't draw anything on the floor. It's too white and clean.

It's almost as clean as my childhood room. That's how I started to wonder and remember things. Too much looking at the floor was like a bolt straight to my brain. Brought me back to my room, my hometown, moving, college, marriage, kids.

Aren't they looking for me? I've been here for decades. Don't they wonder where the hell I ended up? Have I just vanished from the face of earth for them? Dina couldn't sleep without holding onto my finger. How does she sleep now? And Harry wouldn't go to sleep without me reading a story to him. He would always call me by my name as soon as I started dozing off while reading to him. He would always say... say.... Yes, I would accidentally fall sleep reading. He would shake me and call me by my name.

As a joke. To keep waking me up. He would call me and say.... Each time he'd call my own name and say...

I don't know. I don't know what he called me. I don't remember what any of them called me. I don't remember my name. I don't remember leaving town either. Maybe I did. I don't remember. I don't recall what I liked or what I hated. I don't remember the games we played in the neighborhood. I don't remember my parents or what they called me, or my partner or my kids or anything I studied in college for Business. I don't remember anything.

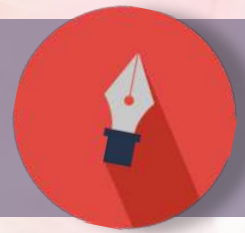
I don't remember thinking, wondering, arguing.... anything. I don't remember my favorite things or things that got under my skin. I don't remember my own beliefs or things I was adamantly against. Did I even have any beliefs or disbeliefs of my own?

I don't remember. I don't remember my identity. I just don't remember.



Negarin Houshmandnia

B.A. English Literature Student



A Brief History of the Theatre of the Absurd

“Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes. It’s awful.”

This famous quote from the famous play, *Waiting for Godot* (1952), gives us a feeling of futility, despair and hopelessness, all of which are the essence of what we now call the absurdist movement.

Absurdism is defined as the internal struggle between a person’s desire to discover inherent value in life and his failure to do so. The term has its roots in Albert Camus’ essay “The Myth of Sisyphus”, written in 1940s. In this essay, he has portrayed the human situation as “essentially pointless and absurd.” This concept arose in response to the “collapse of moral, religious, political, and social frameworks” that unfolded after the twentieth century’s World Wars.

Martin Esslin, the critic, coined the term “The Theatre of the Absurd” in his 1960 book of the same name in

an attempt to clarify and define this radical movement. Among the works of the writers of the time were diverse plays, most of which written between 1940 and 1960. These Absurd plays of Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, and other writers, all share the notion that man exists in a discordant universe. It has no inherent meaning, and man’s position within it is meaningless. He is baffled, concerned, and unable to control his fate. All of these plays stressed the absurdity of the human condition; therefore, Esslin defined it as such.

Absurdist authors abandoned most of classic theatre’s logical and traditional structures. There is not much plot as there is in the classical models; no matter how frantically the characters perform, their busyness and haste serves to

emphasize the fact that nothing happens to change their lives. For instance, Samuel Beckett in *Waiting for Godot* (1952) eliminates plot in favor of a timeless, circular quality as two lost creatures spend their days waiting—but without knowing who they are waiting for or whether the entity will ever arrive.

As a result, absurd plays took on an unconventional, inventive form trying to stun the audience and shake them out of their comfortable, typical life of daily concerns. Hence, it was no longer effective to apply traditional art forms and standards that had ceased to be persuasive and lost their legitimacy in the meaningless and Godless, post-World War society. This was, in fact, anti-theatre. It was bizarre, irrational, devoid of conflicts, and a storyline. Dialogues appeared to be complete nonsense. Unsurprisingly, the Theatre of the Absurd was initially received with skepticism and disdain. It was very different from anything else that had been seen previously; very illogical in comparison to what people thought was rational at the time.

The Absurd drama defies rationality. It enjoys the unexpected as much as the logically improbable.

According to Sigmund Freud, we can experience a sense of liberation when we are able to let go of logic's shackles. The absurd theatre is attempting to shatter the limiting walls of the human condition itself by attempting to break the boundaries of logic and language.

Absurd Theatre, as opposed to the traditional theatre of sequential actions, is a theatre of situation. It displays a series of lyrical visuals. It accomplishes this by using visual components, movement, and light. Unlike traditional theatre, where language reigns supreme, the Absurd Theatre's multidimensional poetic vision is built of many different elements.

Language defines our individual identity; having a name is the source of our individualism; the absence of logical language leads to a unity with living things. The absurd theater is anti-rationalist: it rejects rationalism because it believes that rationalist thought, like language, simply deals with the surface features of things. Nonsense, on the other hand, allows us to see into the infinite. It connects one with the essence of life and is a brilliant source of comedy.

The Theatre of the Absurd that once was shocking in its defiance of theatrical convention and popular for its apt expression of mid-20th

century preoccupations, had begun to fade by the mid-1960s; some of its innovations had been absorbed into the mainstream of theatre while serving to inspire further experiments. Some of the Absurd's most famous authors have moved on to new projects, while others continue to work in the same style.

If you are interested in reading absurdist works to have a better understanding of the movement and its criteria, here is a list of six notable plays you can choose from:



Waiting for Godot (1953) by Samuel Beckett

Endgame (1957) by Samuel Beckett

Rhinoceros (1959) by Eugène Ionesco

The Bald Soprano (1950) by Eugene Ionesco

The Birthday Party (1957) by Harold Pinter

The Sandbox (1959) by Edward Albee

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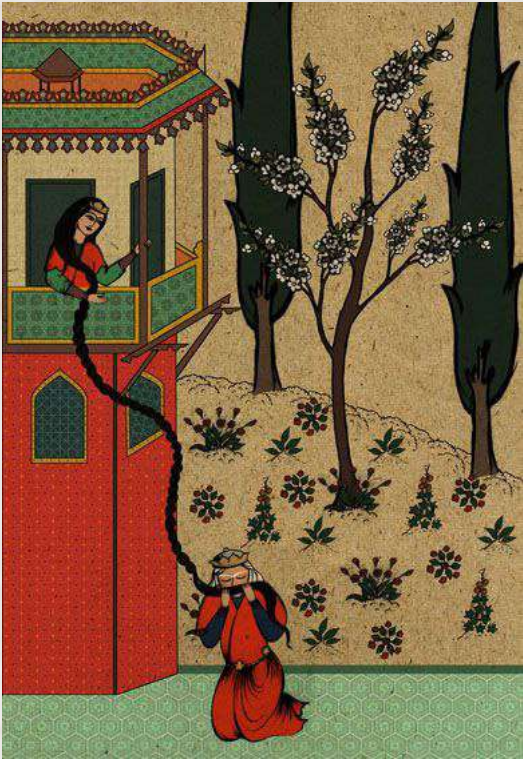
Zal and Roudabe, A Story of Love and Patriotism

Many people regard *Shahnameh* as an anti-feminist book, but the truth is that women have a key role in it. The point is that the form of feminism in this book is different from what we know these days and has an ancient traditional form. Having talked about heroic aspects of Gordafriid, now we want to talk about a woman who was the bravest in the battle of love; she is Roudabe, daughter of Mehrab, who was in love with Zal.

If you're a fan of *Shahnameh*, I'm sure you know the white-haired Pahlavan called Zal, son of Sam, the great Pahlavan of Iran, and for sure, you have heard the story of him being banished by his father after he was born and left in the mountains to die and how he was found and raised by Simorgh, the legendary bird, until he became a young worthy man, with great strength and wisdom.

After so many years of no connection between father and son, Sam had a strange dream of his son being alive in Alborz Mountain. When he traveled there regretfully, Sam found him an impressive young man with white hair, eyelashes, and eyebrows. Sam apologized for the bad things he had done to his son and promised that he would never reject him again. Zal went home with his father and started studying with the help of the wisest men of the time then.

On another side of this world, Roudabe, daughter of Mehrab, ruler of Kabul, heard about this young man and fell in love with him by what she heard of his description. She became so restless of this love that she sent her servants to go and see if all of these things they say about Zal is true or not. Five girls of her servants went near Zal's camp where his group of men were resting and staying for hunting. They told Zal that if he wants to



meet the princess, he should come near the wall of the castle late at night so no one will know about the meeting.

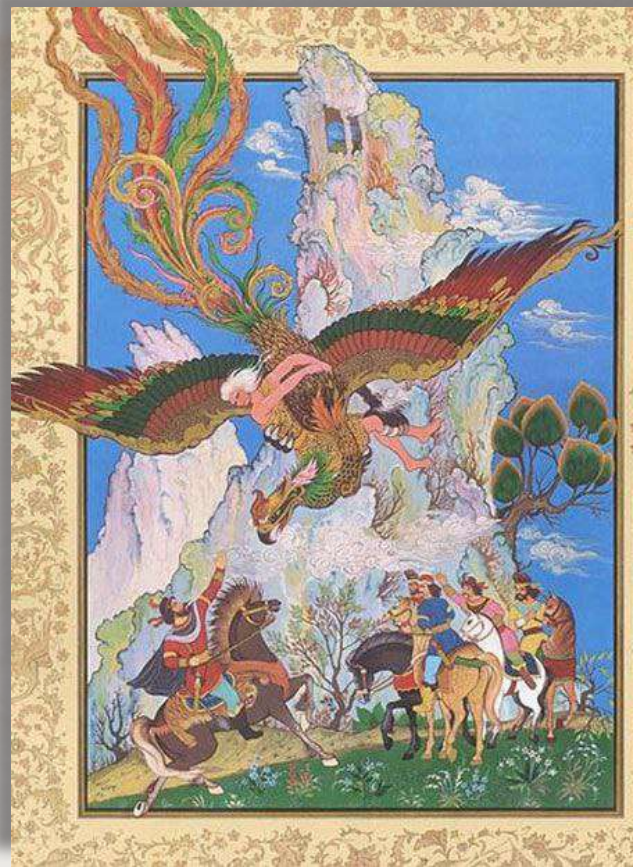
Zal came to the wall at midnight and Roudabeh threw down her hair so Zal would take it and climb the wall, but Zal kissed her hair and said that the time he uses that hair as a rope would be the end of his life, so he climbed the wall by the rope he had brought with himself and visited Roudabeh for the first time. They talked all night and fell in love with each other even more than before, but there was a big problem in the way of their marriage and that was the fact that Roudabeh was a descendent of Zehak, the great enemy

of all Persian people, and Sam and Manouchehr, King of Iran, would not approve this marriage at all. They promised each other that they will not take someone else's love until they find a way to marry each other.

Zal went back to his base and wrote a letter to his father and reminded Sam of the promise he had made that he would never reject his son again and asked him to talk to Manouchehr and convince him to this marriage. Sam got deeply upset when he found out that his son was in love with a girl of Zehak's bloodline but was relieved when he was informed by the astrologers that the result of this marriage is a son who will save Iran and all Iranian people from many troubles. He went to Manouchehr's palace, but Manouchehr who had known about this love story beforehand, did not let him talk about his request and asked him to go to Kabul with his army, defeat Zehak's descendants and destroy them all.

Sam, ashamed and sorrowful, went to Kabul and stayed near the castle right before Zal madly went to his father. Zal reminded his father of his promise again and that he would rather die than fight with his love's family and destroy her hometown. Sam, who was stuck between his love for his son and his devotion to his King and his country, asked his son to go and talk to Manouchehr again himself and convince him of this matter. Zal took the fastest horse and rode to Iran as fast as he could.

Let's see what was going on in Mehrab's palace. When Mehrab found the Iranian army behind his walls, he got mad at his daughter because she had made the wrong choice of men and caused all this trouble. But Roudabe bravely told his father that she would rather die than choose and marry another man but Zal. Sindokht, Roudabe's mother and Mehrab's wife, went to Sam with many treasures to convince him to go back to his homeland and not to fight with them, but Sam rejected her favor and told her that he was waiting for his son to come back and say what the King's command on this matter was. He was surprised that Mehrab sent a woman for negotiation



and when he understood that this woman is Roudabe's mother, he told Sindokht that if her daughter is like her in regards to wisdom and reason, she will be the most suitable girl to be Zal's wife.

By the time Zal arrived at Manouchehr's palace, the King asked the astrologers to see the future of this young man's love, and when he heard about the result of the marriage, he agreed to it and sent Zal back with a message of congrats for Sam.

They were all so happy in Kabul when they found out about the message and celebrated their marriage for a month, before Zal and Roudabeh came back to Zabolestan together and became the commanders of that land for a very long time with their son, the greatest Pahlavan of Iran, Rostam.

Roudabeh is one of the many female characters of Shahnameh who has beauty, wisdom, and bravery at the same time. She respects her love and does whatever is needed to reach it, without fearing the customs and what is set in her family and culture. She is a woman of reason and makes decisions by thinking about them and analyzing different sides of it; as we can see, she sent her servants to find more about Zal before meeting him herself, or kept her love a secret to avoid any harsh reactions. She also has all the characteristics of a young Iranian lady in the way she respects her family and how she treats Zal as his love who hasn't married to her yet.



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“I Felt a Funeral in My Brain” Analysis

“I Felt a Funeral in My Brain” was written by Emily Dickinson and published in 1896. Like many other poems she had written, it talks about how the human brain works under pressure. She marks the stages of a person’s mental breakdown and collapse. It signifies human consciousness in a poetic form.

Many people have the experience of being in a funeral, seeing a funeral, but not feeling a funeral. In the first stanza, the poet depicts feeling a funeral. It is often interpreted that she is talking about somebody else’s funeral, but as you read it more deeply, you can figure out it is related to her own. It’s totally different from the usual sorrows coming from loss, but it’s something completely personal. The funeral is a metaphorical one, she has probably lost her psyche or a part of herself.

She capitalizes some words as if they were proper nouns to personify and show they are hers, as she capitalizes the words “Funeral”, “Brain” and “Mourners” here.

In the second stanza, everything goes silent. The mourners are sitting in the funeral. The drum is beating, and its sound intensifies the idea of pressure there. Using the word “Mind” here, the poet suggests a psychological state; maybe her mind is losing its feelings. The word “Numb” is capitalized here to show that something is taking over her mind.

In the third stanza, the mourners are lifting her coffin. She states that she feels a creak across her soul, which indicates that she feels the funeral is her own. Tolling refers to the church toll, and anyone who has the experience of being close to a church toll on a Sunday morning, knows that its sound is so high and powerful.

In the fourth stanza, all of her becomes an Ear and she hears the heavenly sound calling her. The Bell is also a single entity calling her. Then she feels that she is surrounded by silence, so she cannot speak. As a result, she feels strange and becomes aware that she's alone.

But then in the fifth stanza, this solitary comes as an aid for her and she describes her feelings falling down and down, on the ground. The sensation of falling and hitting a world could be interpreted as a psychological or mental breakdown. Now, she understands and becomes aware of everything. She knows that the coffin was real, those mourners were real, the toll was real and it was her own funeral. She capitalizes the word "Reason", because she becomes fully aware of all these. She has survived and reached the state of full awareness and knowledge.

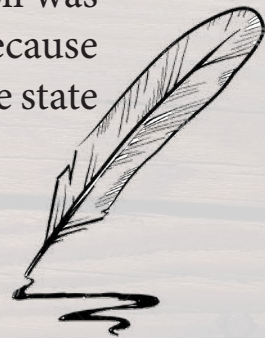


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A Reason to Be

I remember that day. I remember it so clearly. I was on my way home after working for 18 hours. “Could I be any more exhausted?” I thought. I was cursing every single creature on earth, “Why should working be such a terrible thing in the world? It’s so ordinary! I will die of boredom one day, I know.”

As I was walking along the pavement, I saw a young boy lying on the street. At first, I thought he might need help, but then I hesitated. “What if he’s a vampire, stalking for a prey?” I was so bored that I wished vampires were real, but unfortunately, they were not. So I ran to that fellow to help him.

He was so charming at first sight. His face was sculpted by the Greeks, his eyes were heavenly emeralds, his hair fine as silk, gold as the sun, but there was no wound! I asked him why he was lying there. “To commit suicide, silly!” replied the angelic boy. I said, “Why? Don’t be stupid! Life is... beautiful!” “Oh really? Then why do you look even more miserable than I do? Tell me... give me one reason to live for.”

I looked him in the eyes, and then sat right in the middle of the street to think. It was a deep question. I didn’t have any answers to give! After a couple of minutes, when I was drowning in the ocean of my thoughts, I felt him pushing me away to the pavement. I hadn’t noticed a truck coming toward me. “Why did you do that?” I asked surprised. “Well, I was supposed to die, not you! And clearly, you weren’t on earth at that moment, so... I couldn’t let you die.”

We stared at each other; he blushed like a blossoming bud, then he took his eyes off mine and asked scoffing, “So no reasons worth living for, huh?” I said, “No, it seems I’ve lost mine too! But there has to be something. I should find it, we should find it!”

“Sure!” He said. I didn’t expect that persistent boy to agree so soon, but anyways, I was happy he did.

Then, he got up and took my hand to help me stand. “So, when do we begin?” “I don’t know. Let’s have a coffee first! I had a rough day.” Then, we started to walk and meanwhile, he told me about his life. Contrary to his decision to commit suicide, he laughed a lot, and he was a master in making funny jokes; he knew how to put a mask on and fool you! You wouldn’t have known he was depressed at all! He was that kind of guys that when they commit suicide, people would say he looked so fine and ask, “why did he do that?” assuming he had ended up an addict, but he was not! He was just a simple good boy with lots of traumas.

We continued chatting about ourselves in the café. I ordered a chocolate cake, and he had a black coffee. “Well, chocolate can be a good reason to live for!” I said, and then we burst into laughter.

We walked all day and talked. We agreed to meet each other, every day, on the street we first met, at that exact same time.

The next day, when I arrived home, a strange pain in my stomach took power over me. It was so acute that I had to go to the hospital. I went in and came back with a long prescription of medicine. I told him nothing about my pain and what had happened in that clinic.

One day, I took him to the top of a hill I used to go to when I was younger. We sat to watch the sunset, and we observed how people were scrambling for their lives.

“Do you see how these people are struggling? Do you think all of them have a reason?”

“No, they don’t. But I don’t think we have to know our reason! We are here, we have a life, we entered a game, whether we wanted to or not! You can’t cheat in the game and finish it without finding the treasure; you will come back all over again until you reach it. Do you know what I mean? I’m saying none of us knows what and where our treasure is, but we should pave the way and find it. Maybe finding that treasure is the reason why...”

A long but delightful silence came between us. We were both thinking and enjoying the sunset and those orange clouds.

We had spent almost two months together. We danced, we sang, we read; we did everything together, but we never asked each other’s names! Like

we knew we wouldn't last long, and we shouldn't fall for each other. We were just a phase in each other's lives and one day, we wouldn't remember anything about these events.

One day, when we were dancing, I felt that pain again, but this time, I couldn't control myself, and the last thing I remember is I heard him calling me out repeatedly.

I woke up in the hospital, with him sitting next to me. When he saw me, he started to cry and kiss my cold hands. "You scared the hell out of me!" And with a Pause, his happiness turned into obvious anger. "Why didn't you tell me? How long have you known this?" I didn't want to answer him, but his eyes were constantly asking me, so I couldn't run from it. "After the second day we met each other, I got sick and headed to the doctor. After blood tests, he said I had signs of cancer in my liver and I won't have much time because it is spreading so fast that no medications can slow it down. He asked whether I wanted to be hospitalized or not, and I chose not to because I knew I would die either way, and I wanted my last months to be happy..."

One month passed, and we spent most of our time in the hospital. I grew weaker each day, but I was happy I had met that poor boy the other day, who changed my life. I was happy you were lying on that street! As I'm taking my last breaths, and I'm at ease with the pain inside me, I want one final thing from you; I want you to be strong and restless until you find your treasure! And when you do, help others to find it too...

“The great miraculous bell of translucent ice is suspended in mid-air. It rings to announce endings and beginnings. And it rings because there is fresh promise and wonder in the skies.”

- Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*