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Intro

When I check what I have written in typography, I realise that my words are so pessimistic.

Why does this world that nurtured me and raised me to be an adult, full of sunshine and rain, often make me feel miserable?

I was going through a period of depression and I wanted to record the present moment I was experiencing for people to read, that's all. Some of my elders would wonder why my generation is so weak-minded and often hang on to depression. As a depressed Gen Z member, I would like to say something about my thinking and feelings. I know that everything in this book is from my own perspective and is hardly representative of any person or group. Still, I would appreciate more understanding.

Thank you for reading this book.

To this moment, years and centuries from now.

February 2, 2023

I browse through the diaries I've written. The first time I had the idea to write a book was on February 2, 2023. I spent a few days writing a foreword and haven't written anything since. Other than that, it was just a day that I had long forgotten about, day after day.

It reads:

Foreword

The motivation for writing this book came at the time of the anxiety or depression attack on 2 February 2023. This foreword was written after the symptoms had subsided on that day and the original text was illogical, so I have rewritten it about a few days later. It will be a little easier to read.

I clearly remember feeling numbness and chills in my hands and feet, a sudden sensation like a bunch of snakes slithering through my veins. It's a sensation I've gotten used to since I came to London. Perhaps it's because I'm optimistic most of the time and think that a short bout of anxiety or depression won't affect me for long, or even that it's something that should happen. So I generally just lie on the sofa and allow whatever happens. Each time the experience felt terribly overwhelming and the effects it had on me lasted for days afterwards, and it was not quite the same each time. But for the most time, I never thought about dying voluntarily, except for this time on February 2, 2023. But I would say the chances of this happening are zero.

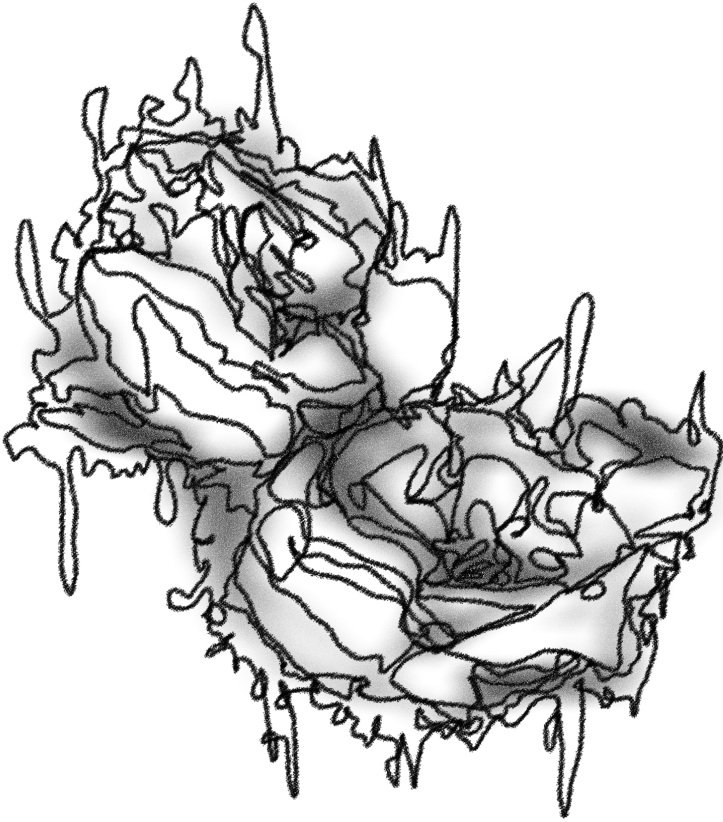
In the past, I had not yet explored the meaning of being alive, but also the meaning of death. And at that time, I did think about what would happen if my heart stopped right now. How my family would be upset, whether my friends would be shocked, whether people I knew would care more about me... I couldn't get rid of these thoughts. I watched TV and played games to distract myself, but gradually it felt like my body was shutting down my awareness of everything around me. I couldn't understand what the actors on TV were saying, and I didn't know why I had turned on the game. I stood up, walked quickly to my room and took some calming pills, then went into the bathroom shower to warm up. The moment the hot water hit my skin from the shower, I felt better.

"I can't die yet, at least I have to have something left for me." Such thoughts kept coming back to me in my head. As far as my mental state was concerned, I'm not sure I would have chosen to ask for help after that, but I've saved myself now.

I found a very, very clear goal: I was going to write a book, a book about myself.

I felt the steam from the bathroom wrap around every inch of my skin, melt, combine with my frozen blood, and my heartbeat, become inspired to run straight up to my brain. I had everything figured out in a flash, from the form of the book, the font and the typography, and even went to look up how to publish the book first thing after the shower.

Suddenly, I felt the extreme pleasure transmitted by my brain, like a sea in flames.



The world I Live In

If working with others avoids personal bias in the work, then what I want to do as a lonewolf is to talk about the world I live in from my own perspective, with my "bias" in mind. In order to understand my ideas, it is necessary to understand something of what I have experienced.

Painting

I went to see David Hockney's exhibition at the lightroom a few days ago. In the huge immersive projection, I saw him painting in the nature. Every brushstroke he made came from his observations and was blissful and liberating. I suddenly recalled the me who sat in the hot, stuffy underground classroom, holding up my brush carefully and hesitating to put it to paper.

My favourite thing to do before I started high school was to paint. When I was in primary school I painted the classroom decorations every month. When I was in junior high school I was scolded by my teacher for drawing in class. I thought drawing was a lifelong passion of mine and it has now become a haze that I can't escape.

In my country, if you want to study in an art college, you need to take the art exam. And what buried my full of passion was the art exam. Each art school in the country has different standards and preferred styles for painting exams. The best way to get into a specific art school is to join a training near that art school. After high school, I went to three different places for training, and it was then that my passion was gradually worn away.

The most memorable moment was on my first day of class at one of the training center.

Because my unique drafting style, my teacher grabbed my

brush and made some changes on my drawing, then my brush was heavily slammed to the ground by him.

"Change now if you want to go to university, or get out."
The teacher shouted.

I couldn't stand it any longer after a month of living like this. It was the summertime, the classroom was in the basement and there was no air conditioning. We drew from eight in the morning until eleven at night, with only an hour break at noon. After each drawing, the teacher would put the students' drawings on the floor, pick out the ones he was satisfied with using a bamboo pole, and then call out the person who had painted the rest to reprimand them. The harsher the teacher was, the more apprehensive the students were about painting. The only sounds in the vast room were the brushstrokes on the paper, the sound of the fan and the teacher's shouting.

I was living in a 4-person dormitory and did not have enough personal space to relieve my stress. When I felt stressed out, I used to hide in the narrow space between the curtain and the window and weep alone. Until one of my classmates pulled the curtain and saw me there, I never hide anywhere again. A new student drew better after only a few days than I had for weeks, and I labelled myself as untalented. Gradually, my mind was filled with disgust. I was not disgusted by the harsh teacher, but by the incapable myself.

What I hate is not the set training, it's the art exam system. The training is only to teach students how to take the art exam, and the art exam determines who can paint.

I had to quit the art exams.



Since then, I have never painted in my free time. Whenever I hold a brush, I still hesitate before I put it to paper. The moment when the brush stops in front of the paper is a moment of resistance to the rules, of self-doubt and sighing.

The difficulty of words

It's a little strange to say that I'm very good at deriving a strange sense of happiness from the pain of mental self-abuse.

As an example: I suffer from a relatively severe dyslexia, which makes the act of reading have a unique meaning for me.

I do hate words.

Whenever I learn about a book that interests me, I shall be mad to read it. Not just because I want to learn something insightful, but because I want to devour it alive. For me, this is the greatest of human spiritual creations, covered in a thick mist of words. Sometimes the words were occasionally forgiving in showing me the information I needed, but for the most part, I read them in such a tightly arranged manner that it was difficult for me to glimpse into them. I may be keen to learn more about knowledge and ideas, but I don't enjoy reading words. The act of reading is like self-abuse, it is torture. No pain no gain. This pain is the price I pay for wanting to gain more insights and philosophies from the books. At the moment, a weird sense of happiness arises.

Writing is the same for me.

I usually write while thinking. I don't write in a regular order, sometimes I start with the last sentence of a paragraph and finish it backwards.

I write without a strong logical connection between each

sentence because it is difficult for me to write as fast as I think. So I would roughly finish unrelated sentences by adding logical connections between sentences through recall and rewriting the sentence structure to make it readable. This felt like building a bridge in my head, and every once in a while I would double-check and modify it. When I came back to read what I had written, it felt like I was reading someone else's writing. But when I realise it's my written words...

Happiness.

So the experience you get from reading my words may be quite different.

(This sentence was added three days later)

Mental

I have discussed with my tutor the idea of today's society breeding more anxiety. I think the main problem is reflected in modern education. In the environment I grew up in, teachers and parents always taught us that everything we do depends on effort. Many people feel that this is the truth. If I did not do as well as others, then it must be because I did not work hard enough. In such an environment, an individual's ability is never denied, which makes everyone seem to have infinite possibilities and ignores the fact that there are gaps in ability between individual of human beings. Like many stories in films and novels, each person is the protagonist of their own story, the most special individual. However, I think that just like molecules make up matter, each individual makes up the concept of 'human'. So from the larger point of view, no matter how special an individual is, they are still just an ordinary human being. If what is more difficult than accepting failure is accepting one's own mediocrity, they resist, they roar, they fight their fate with all their might, embrace the pain, and sing the praises of individual heroism even when their hearts are beating against them.

I was chatting with my mother on the phone the other day and she was talking about how a friend's child had been diagnosed with depression. She was a bit puzzled as to how the child could be depressed when it was obvious that the child was well-behaved and there was nothing unusual about the parents. In fact, from what I have observed, I am surrounded by people who have a tendency to be depressed. And all the negativity grows in silence.

I was slashed apart.

From my part.

From the world I live in.

Spine from flesh and blood.

I met friends.

I went to Brighton a few days ago. A friend of mine is studying there. We were roommates before and came to England to study in different places.

I had been talking to her a while ago and sensed that she was not in a very good mental state. Being depressed, being in the same situation, I am going to visit her.

The weather was nice and sunny. I came from the station and saw her running to me. I had a moment to react, stepping over the flowers and the dirt as I ran at her as well. We hugged. her strength light, but I felt soft and warm, like the sunlight passing through the shade of the trees and falling on me. Until then I had never really felt that I was leaving my small room. A friend of hers was with her, and we went together to visit a vintage market and then to the beach.

Sea.

Just thinking about the sea makes my nose sore.

The sound of the waves washing over the gravel on the shore is delightful.

I take a deep breath, trying to exhale the dust in my lungs.

As soon as the sun sets, the light of the dusk falls on the waves, a golden wave overlapping the silvery sea, like an elegant invitation.

I wish I could be here for an eternity.

My friend was beside me reminiscing the past. As she spoke, I lost.

People I know Witness what I have been through. But the fact

that something happened a few days ago, a few months ago, a few years ago, I didn't care. Just like when I watch a TV series, when I see the end, the stimulation the production can bring me stops. The brain cleans up unimportant information. My experiences and memories, the drama's plot, wash away like a wave carrying debris and quicksand. It is difficult for me to bring myself back to any previous period of my life; the memories of me are just strangers who are similar to me. We couldn't communicate, separated by thick walls, not living in the same world. I recall the past as if I were reading a book, just looking over someone else's life without feeling. It feels like dreaming while dreaming brings me more realness rather.

...

I am just a person with few friends.

I don't remember my friends' birthdays, I don't share my life with them, I don't check their social media much, and I rarely chat with them even. Many of my friends have expressed the feeling that I am moving away from them, but in fact I have been in the same place. I understand people who can't stand my attitude, yes it's hard for me to be friends with someone like myself too. I am thankful for the few sweet friends around me who are still there for me and for tolerating me as a bad friend.

I was sitting on the train back to London, suddenly felt lost because I didn't want to leave. The train was noisy, the people around me were chatting loudly and the female passenger facing me diagonally was glancing at me a few times. It was getting dark outside the window and I could faintly see the woods and shadows of the mountains. I was looking for something to do so I opened up the reading app on my phone. Albert Camus'

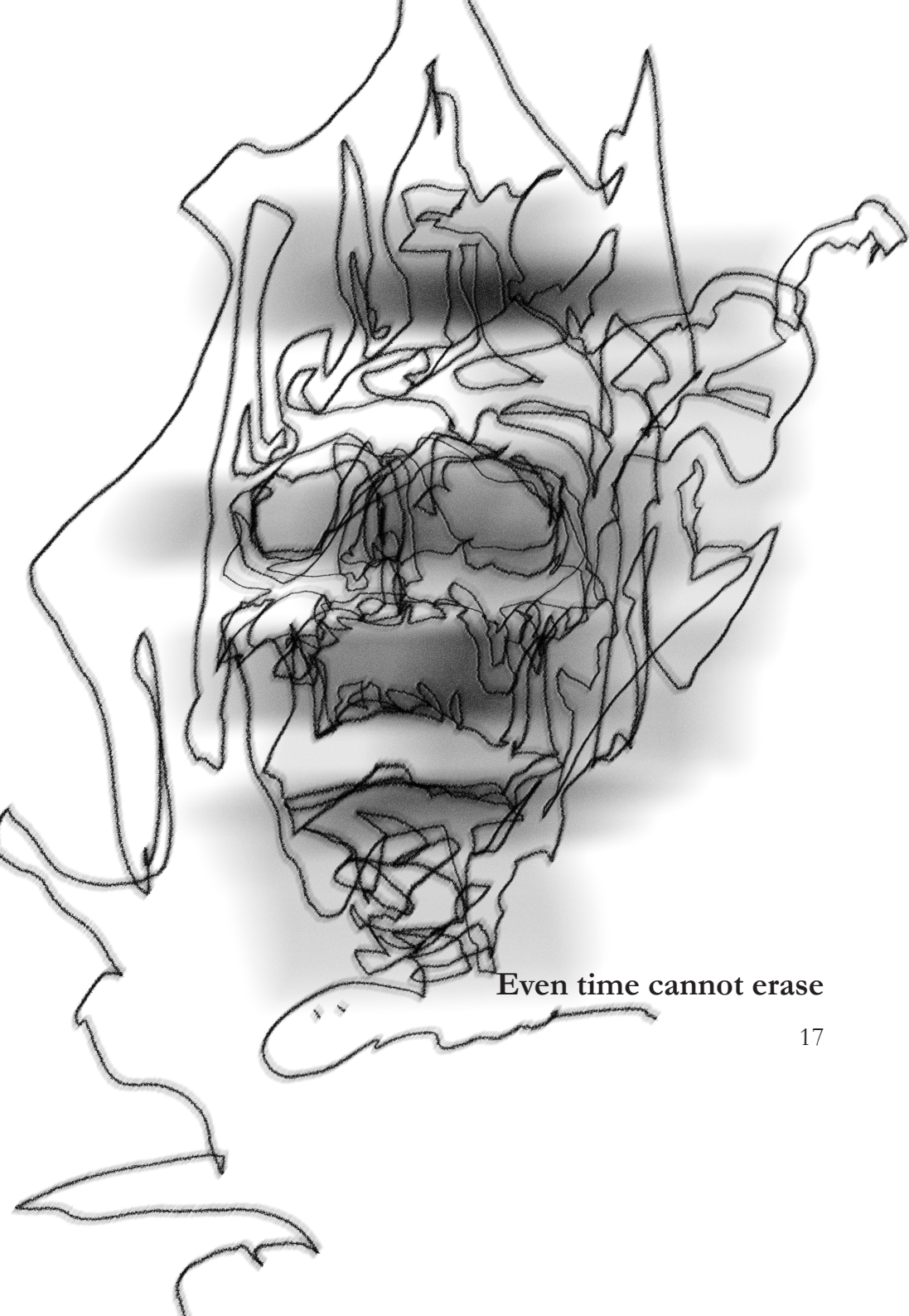
image appeared on my screen. I clicked on it and began to read his book *Carnets 1935-1942*. It's almost a hundred years old and I still get a lot out of it today.

Like a bright moon about to rise.

"One must not cut oneself off from the world. No one who lives in the sunlight makes a failure of his life. My whole effort, whatever the situation, misfortune or disillusion, must be to make contact again. But even within this sadness I feel a great leap of joy and a great desire to love simply at the sight of a hill against the evening sky."

The sourness in my heart roses. As a human, Camus' capabilities were beyond my reach. He knew the despair of the world and lived in it without part of it. His words gently swept the dust of my heart away, and I suddenly felt a brightness in my heart.

My **love**, my jealousy.



Even time cannot erase

“Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm—this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the ‘why’ arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. ‘Begins’—this is important. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows. What follows is the gradual return into the chain or it is the definitive awakening. At the end of the awakening comes, in time, the consequence: suicide or recovery.”

The Myth Of Sisyphus And Other Essays, by Albert Camus

I have quoted this quote from Camus in many of my writings, not because I like it so much, but it is a beautiful illustration of the arrival of nihilism. Life is nothing more than three meals a day. A full life is full of being and meaning. Only when one is taken out of the hustle and bustle of life and the sense of nihilism comes in does one begin to doubt and reflect. People like to have order and logic, so a question will often have its answer. But the truth is that many questions are still unanswered. I lie in bed, facing the vastness of the night sky in a void, in doubt about my own existence, over and over again compromised by my shallowness.

What even time cannot wash away is nihility.

What even time cannot wash away is nihility. This was true of the past and the present, and it will be true of the future. The deviation from reality is nihility. Even if people do not believe in nihilism, they live deeply in it.

Awareness of this nihility is the first step out of the cave. Most of the people around me who believe in nihilism follow the Liu Xiaoyan spirit of "I would rather suffer than be numb".

The first time I felt nihility was memorable. I have lived with a reward mechanism since I was a child. The mechanism was simple: when I learnt, I would be rewarded. For example, when I got high marks in exams, my teachers would compliment me, my family would make me my favourite food to encourage me, and my friends around me would be impressed. This is what motivated me to keep learning as a child, thinking that if I learned more, I would receive something from the world in return. But I gradually realised that this was not the case. I came to understand philosophical ideas such as nihilism first from books or other people's introductions, not from a vacuum. As I thought more deeply about the world I lived in, the reward was not activated. I began to think about who I was, and the meaning of my life, and realised that what I could get by

stepping outside my comfort zone was more confusion and vanity. I no longer studied for more reward, but stepped onto the path of finding my true self. With the meaning of my previous life taken away and my dreams smashed, I was reconstructing my world. It was obvious to me that I was growing up, when the world was as apathetic as ever. It was like humanity exploring the universe with love and passion, while the universe was always silent. I struggle, being attacked by a panic caught in the anxiety.

Heart pounding, chills all around, feeling like I'm dying

But I never despaired. The panic gave me a strong sense of "I'm alive". I have always believed that my anxiety is full of meaning, that it is the opposite of nihilism, the mark of my growth.

Nihilism will never go away; it will be found filling every corner as soon as people become aware of it. There are questions that humanity has been exploring for thousands of years without an answer, and may not be there in another hundred years. Even if technology develops and human lifestyles and societies change the Nihilism will continue to exist in various ways. I don't think this is despairing, rather

it brings hope to humanity. The existence of nihilism is a warning to humans that, as Kierkegaard said, an objective and transcendent view of life is tantamount to suicide.

Living in the present while finding my true self, finding my own star in the universe, is what I need to do.

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