



Writings by students of the University of Bamberg *for* Bamberg's readers

> In Cooperation with Chair for English Literature Studies



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Finally, our appreciation also goes to all who have submitted their writings for consideration.



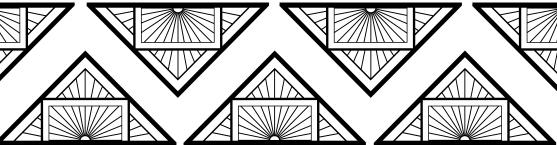
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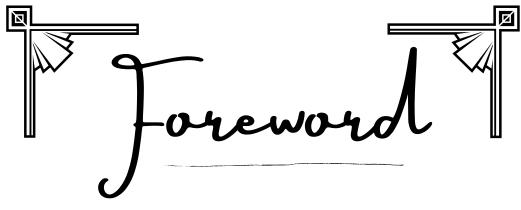
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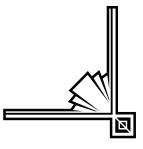
This is the first edition of *Just Write*, the creative writing journal in English at the University of Bamberg. Due to impediments arising from the global pandemic, progress on the issue was delayed; however, we are here now, publishing it in the winter semester. The task of selecting contributions, formatting and printing was challenging; but after a careful and meticulous reviewing process, we are fortunate enough to present a selection of wonderfully written material to our readers.

We certainly hope that our very first edition will find favour with you. The edition concentrated on a specific theme, namely that of "golden twenties" and its interpretation from a variety of perspectives and genres. The edition includes contributions that interpret the theme as a timeframe and a stage of life, rather than focusing on the early twentieth century historical/socio-cultural phenomena of "Golden Twenties" or "Roaring Twenties." Additionally, this edition of Just Write includes a few non-fictional opinion pieces on the current Covid-19 situation.

We hope that you, the readers, will enjoy reading the contributions and possibly be encouraged to contribute to *Just Write* yourselves!

The Editors Just Write









Maria Bittner The hangman

Your lifestyle – golden leaves in your last meal. Everything you do is an act of your own immaturity. Everything you say are words of your self-made reality. Everything you stand for are lies of your own illusions. Your fame – a golden stage that is slowly turning into a trap door.

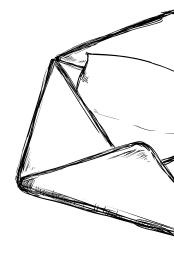
> You'd like to show the world what you can do. But you have forgotten who you are. And in the end there is nothing left. Your fortune – a gilded hangman's rope. Your idea of fakery. Your illusion of life. Your failure of being real. A golden hanging is still a hanging. You are just gilding your life.

I have nothing golden to show. But the little color I have Is true.

Sophia Bruni Waiting for that day

Same place, different day I long to get out of this cage. Now I comprehend, how birds may feel So much talent to flourish yet, So much aptitude to explore, out there! Gardens filled with welcoming airs, Even the sun is kissing this cell Inviting myself to just slip out, Though, stubbornly, I need to withstand. As presumed, my consciousness knows better -sometimes I wish it didn't-what a dishonor! Apparently I am still human, after all. Except, now I see why the caged bird sings, To find joy in this loneliness of his, Leaving behind that illusory reality, Running away from all the thinking there is, Reaching out for felicity In this new ordinary. Until the day blows in, When these unbearable walls might vanish, Empty cages will be left behind However, never forgotten How what ought to be our interminable clock Brought us back to our roots in the sand Where we'll bloom again, at last

Hannah Rebecca O'Neill Waiting for the postman

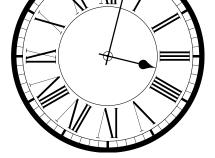


waiting for the postman anticipating every day, revelation on the way while waiting, remaining afraid, decision's made, anticipation fades postponed for the day

> what should I do? while waiting for the postman yet another day, another thrown away and if he doesn't come? let's go, let's go, but nothing to be done

thinking remains, insane to think that hate will wane and go away lonely now but still the same another one, that man of rage, returns to show his truest face,

waiting for the postman



Melanie Hoinle Past and Present Glories

"Hello, dear Jack. How are you today? It's so lovely that you've called. You know, since Louis, your Grandfather, passed away I've been thinking about bygone times a lot."

"Ah, life sure was a glorious back then I was young and danced with glee. Louis's company I enjoyed most of all the men And it was wonderful that he also fell in love with me."

"After we got married in nineteen twenty-eight Your aunt and later your father was born. One night at the end of the Thirties - it was very late -Louis mumbled that soon there would be war."







"I didn't believe him at the time - of course not -Why shouldn't our blissful life carry on? But soon enough he left with the rest of the soldier lot And at first, without him, I felt quite forlorn."

> I hear her cough and take a deep breath, Ere, she continues her story: "But thank God! Louis escaped death And came back home to me."

"After having raised the kids on my own It was strange to have him back at first. To the children he wasn't known

But believe me, Jack, his absence, he quickly reimbursed."

"Ever since, he took care of us - more than I can tell And always stayed close to his family. Being with him was a life spent well... Ah, Jack, thank you for listening so attentively."

I hear the smile through her voice on the phone And I can picture her having teary eyes. "My love, I am sorry for keeping you so long. I've been this reminiscent since your Grandfather's demise."







"But let me tell you something, dear, Now that you are twenty-one. Live your life to the fullest and keep your loved ones near And... allow yourself some fun."



"Make of your glorious time what you can-There's so much out there to experience. It's alright when your intentions don't go according to plan, Since what counts is how far you've come once it ends."

"Now...I will let you go; I love you, Jack - infinitely -And I hope I wasn't too much of a bother. One more thing though, when you're unsure of something, just think of me And the advice of your loving - Grandmother."





Adrian Kuqi The brilliant splendour of the sun

I have divined your presence for my whole lifetime. Though only now do I perceive your raw beauty, which lightens the very depth of my heart. You make me know that your warmth is grand indeed – the warmth you're emitting with your pure smile has enchanted me ever since our first encounter and moreover caused a profound hope and yearning for a common comprehension of our two beings. My hope has grown beyond all my fears and worries – the fear of you turning frigid towards me, the fear of you spurning my longing and desire, the fear of you burning my naked soul and reducing it to mere ashes on the dirty ground. Thus, I now dare address you up there from down here: Oh great sun, behold me and embrace my nature! Put your arms around my humble, earthly figure, as I cannot bear seeing you from a distance no more. So I plead you for exceeding the cold and dark within, for only you possess the sublimity of doing so by your brilliant splendour which I seek to sense as well.

Fiona Lina Golden Twenties

golden sunrays - beaming - lighting up my face as I lay there in the garden fingers softly touching grass my eyes open slowly

to look at clouds - moving - ever changing as I watch them I'm in awe of my mind making up stories

while birds sing
sweet melodies
pure and clear
as they let go
one beat of wings
above my head

time flies - the sun sets - days, just gone as I lay there in the garden everything around me





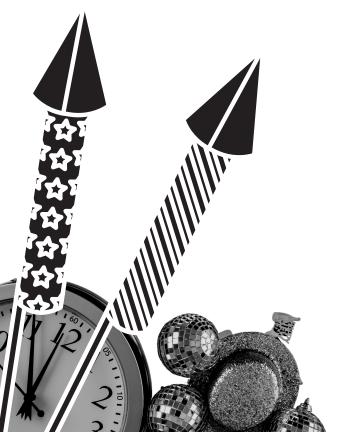








Sophia Koch Golden



Golden flashes fill the cool air around and above the crowd as eyes open wide and mouths fly open wider beneath the starry night, the moon and the stars and the gold that is being woven through the dark blue sky.

Four gigantic numbers appear above heads that are thrown back as far as they will go against thick hoods and collars, scarfs and the occasional arm thrown around the occasional shoulder, keeping these little patches of skin just a tiny bit warmer in the black shining night air. It's so cold, breath steams as pale vapour coming from cool, bluetinged lips and champagne in dream-thin glasses almost freezes. Four numbers, each of which is so big it could fill a whole world on its own with the flashes it's made of, and spread further and further apart in the night, never stopping until they collide with each other and become one to share their worlds, which will become one in turn.

The crowd's mind can barely take in their size as they gleam and glitter high above amidst the stars and clouds. To imagine them closer to the earth is as impossible as plucking them from their black night canvas and holding them between one's fingers in the dark.

Music fills the air, weaving into the gaps between the booms and thunder of the fireworks and gasps spilling from kiss-bruised lips as all around clocks strike twelve and the darkness itself is banished from the night for a moment of violently bright outbursts that fill the rest of the sky. They turn it into a living thing—a breathing, pulsating thing that seems to scream and proclaim life and vigour with each of his bright and booming movements, with each flicker and spark that joins from below and leaves the cold and soggy place that is the earth on the 31st of December as it becomes the first day of a new year, a new decade, a new life. Each spark leaves the cold and the old behind down below, burns off all traces of either of them on its way to the stars to shine beside the moon, which hides its own gloriously silver gleam behind a sliver of clouds, shy amidst the unusual company that is stealing its show.

Minutes later, minutes which themselves feel like hours, like days and nights and weeks, months and so much more like a year than that heartbeat that has passed during 2019, like a whole century minutes later, darkness reappears and sinks like a thick star-strewn blanket over the music and smiles, wine glasses which are now proudly displaying kisses in all shades of colour and ecstatic smiles on ice-cold lips. Darkness blunts everything that is too bright and sharp and clear in the beginning of this new thing, that is just taking its first breaths, not yet knowing what to be, what to become.

Night returns and with it comes the new year, all swaddled up in its dark blankets like a newborn ready to grow and start living—what will its life, its one-year life, look like, for itself and for everyone else?

Two twos and two zeros slowly fade from the night sky and reality returns to the last crowds that have gathered in the cool night air of a December that is finally running out and of a decade that is closing its doors behind itself for good.



Dona Jalili Birthday Chat



Yesterday, I turned 21. The year of legally being able to drink as much alcohol as your body can handle. At least, that's the case in the U.S. There are countries like Belgium with no minimum drinking age in place. And there are countries who prohibit any kind of alcoholic beverage, like Iran.

The whole drinking thing doesn't even relate to me. I do not drink. The only alcohol I've sipped on was my dad's beer when I was five years old.

This birthday is just like any other day of the year. It is nothing special to me. My family lives six hours away, so they haven't thrown me a surprise birthday party in years. You would think I could still celebrate with my friends living here. Well, I'm a loser who is too socially awkward to make any friends at college even though I've been studying there for almost three years.

The only things that keep me from getting bored, besides my bearable job and manageable college courses, are random generalknowledge facts and an online multiplayer game called "rixa xenos." My username, *lOud_lyon365*, is kind of lame, I know. I have my group of people who I join for daily raids. That's why I kind of hoped for them to wish me a happy birthday when I logged in yesterday. But nobody did, even though I told them about my birthday a week ago. I mean, what did I expect? They aren't my friends, just people I play with online. They probably didn't even listen to me or saw no need in memorizing the date.

In my everlasting boredom, I log-in today as well and anticipate nothing, as usual. As soon as I was in the game, I am proven wrong. Someone out of my raid group has sent me a gift with belated birth-day wishes attached to it. It was the user by the name of *golden_goose254*, one of the few girls in this game. I know she is a girl, since we sometimes meet on our discord server to talk while playing.

Come to think of it, she always asks me about my day and frequently talks to me about my college major, since we have the same one. Maybe she considers me a friend. I shouldn't assume things, but I should probably thank her. As if she could read my mind, the green light beside her name pops up, showing her status as being online. I begin to type her a message.

lOud_lyon365: Hey, Goose. Thanks for the gift and the birthday wishes. Thought nobody would have noticed.

golden_goose254: Hi Lyon :), Nice to hear you liked it. Why wouldn't I notice? You told us a week ago. Did you have a nice party? You turned 21, right? Was the party wild? :D

lOud_lyon365: Nope, no party. I don't have any friends at college and my family lives too far away. I just ate some really good pizza.

golden_goose254: The pizza sounds nice, but the rest sounds kind of sad. Don't you want to celebrate your birthday? When I had no friends in high school, I would get the most depressed on my birthday. If you want to talk, I'm always open for it :)

I don't understand why she's so nice. I'm not sure I want to speak about it with her. I'm uneasy to talk about myself in general, but especially with a stranger. But what could I possibly lose? My fingers started to type before I could really make a decision.

lOud_lyon365: To be honest, it kind of bothers me that nobody seems to care about me. Even the others from our raid group don't care. I don't know how to approach people in real life. It scares me to talk to them. I don't know why... Maybe I just fear being rejected. I only had a couple friends in high school, but we haven't kept in contact. Oh man, I feel like I'm burdening you with all of this. You probably won't talk to me after today.

golden_goose254: I feel you. I still have social anxiety, but I'm trying to be brave and approach people. Therapy helps a lot and my friends are also very patient with me. You don't burden me in any way. I like talking to you :) We should hang out sometime.

I still don't know if I can trust her. But I kind of feel relieved by her answer. The last part kind of confuses me. Hanging out virtually kind of sounds funny. I chuckle a bit and write her back.

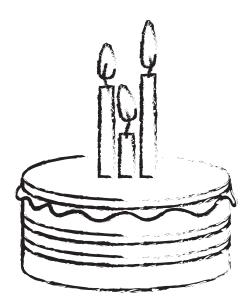
lOud_lyon365: Thanks for understanding. I like talking to you, too. And haha, as much as you can hang out online :D.

After that, I log out. I realize I don't want to play today. Rather, I feel motivated to be productive by doing some coursework. I grab my notepad that I bring with me to each of my courses. Right as I open it, I find a little note on the first page.

It says, "Happy Birthday, Lyon," with a goose-like bird drawn in gold liner next to it.



Nora Haselmayer Happy Birthday



Ben woke up to the buzzing of his cellphone on the nightstand. He sighed deeply and waited for the caller to hang up, but the buzzing persisted. "Yes?" he answered sleepily, still lying down.

"Happy Birthday, Benny! Were you still sleeping? It's 11 a.m., honey. Don't you have anything planned with your friends today?"

"What? No, um, I don't know yet." He slowly sat up in his bed and tried to put his thoughts in order. When he stood up, he stepped on a pointed object. Ben cussed under his breath and kicked the heavy grey folder titled Digital Finance towards a pile of dirty clothes in the corner of the room.

What did his mother just say? "Anyway, thanks, Mom. I'll call you back soon!" he said and hung up. After putting on a pair of jeans and an old sweatshirt, Ben dragged himself to the kitchen.

Finally, he had some time to think about what he wanted to do with the day. He helped himself to a bowl of cinnamon flakes. Shouldn't he be excited right now? He was pretty sure that he used to look forward to turning twenty because that meant that he would no longer be a teenager. When he was sixteen, he had been desperate to get out of high school and constantly found himself wishing to be a couple of years older. Old enough to go to college and only study what he really wanted to study and old enough to go out the whole night while drinking beer with friends. And maybe even old enough to be found attractive by college girls. Ben absentmindedly leant back only to be reminded that the wooden chairs around the kitchen table were long past the condition that could have supported his full weight. Quickly, he readjusted his posture and leant forward, putting his elb-ows next to his forgotten bowl of cereal. Loud steps were approaching from the hallway, causing Ben to busily shove a few spoons of his rediscovered breakfast into his mouth.

"Hey, man!" Drake nodded roughly in his direction as he entered the drearily furnished room. He then turned on the naked lightbulb dangling above the table.

"Hey," Ben mumbled through his mouth full of cinnamon flakes. Drake went over to the metal shelf next to the small, dusty window, picked up a protein bar and then casually sat down on the edge of the kitchen table. Ben felt his eyes on him and looked up from his bowl, meeting an amused, somewhat pitiful glance toward his upper body. "You know what, Ben? You should really go to the gym with me sometime," Drake said with a fatherly smile.

"I don't know. Not today, okay?" Ben replied with a cold voice. And then there was an awkward silence in the room.

"Sure," he finally answered, now nodding with an earnest frown on his face. To him, an unathletic roommate seemed to be a serious, almost pressing issue. As he watched his brawny housemate walk away, Ben thought about how surprised he had been that Drake had even let him move into the shared apartment.

When he finished his serving, he decided that it couldn't hurt to treat himself to a second one and reached for the box of cereal on the shelf behind him. The chair creaked and its backrest fell, clattering against the shelf and tipping over the box, which caused the cinnamon flakes to spill across the entire kitchen floor. *This day* *just keeps on getting better*, he thought and went over to the closet down the hallway.

"Hi, Ben! I swear I was meaning to do that today," Liam said as he entered the front door, spotting him with the vacuum cleaner. "I wanted to talk to you about something. Do you have time tonight?"

"Don't know yet."

"I have this neat idea for a new start-up. Could really use your input as the, you know, future businessman that you are." Liam winked at him. Almost everything he said had this ironic undertone to it and Ben was rarely able to detect whether something really did matter to him. Or if anything did. Back in the kitchen, he started vacuuming the floor and tried not to knock over the empty beer bottles next to the fridge. When the cereal was gone, he noticed that his socks were sticking to the floor and went searching for clean rags to wipe up the dried spots of oil and liquor, but he could not find any. He looked at the kitchen shelf and noticed a bag of rotten, sprouting potatoes. Ben opened the trash can and was met with a sweet, pungent smell. The bag inside was filled up to the top with what seemed to be nothing but pale-yellow maggots. His stomach turned instantly, so he let the lid fall back onto the trash can and quickly went to open the window.

After taking a few deep breaths of fresh air while staring at the brick wall on the other side of the backstreet, he eventually turned back around to face the kitchen. Ben spent a lot of time here—eating, listening to music, studying, when he could not stand staying in his tiny room anymore. Almost every weekend, Liam talked him

into sitting down with him here, at this very table, to drink beer and discuss his roommate's most recent idea to earn some quick money. As he looked around now, he could not stand the sight any longer. Every surface was covered in dust, the kitchen counter was filled with dirty dishes and no one had cared to wipe up the bottle stains on the table for a long time.

Why did we start collecting beer-bottle caps? Ben wondered, examining the loaded plastic bag hanging from the doorknob. Impulsively, he grabbed a large garbage bag and emptied the whole collection into it, followed by the empty bottles, the potatoes and everything else that he was suddenly able to smell. He started sweating profusely, pacing around the room and purging the kitchen of anything that seemed to be quietly fermenting. It felt as if all of his senses were heightened and his heart rate was accelerated. Resolutely, he took off his shirt and cut it into two pieces. He then poured half a bottle of dish detergent on the floor, seized one of the fabric pieces with both hands and started scrubbing vigorously. Time did not matter anymore. Ben did not stop at the kitchen floor, nor at the dirty dishes. From the kitchen, he went onto the bathroom, from the bathroom onto the hallway—brushing, rinsing, scrubbing anything in his reach and flooding the floors.

When he finally stopped, the sun was setting. Completely exhausted, he lay on his bed and stared at the ceiling. He did not feel released like he had expected to. He felt utterly aimless. When I turn thirty, he thought, everything will be all right.



Ilona Clayton An end for a beginning



Lucy Winters didn't need to look at the menu of the bar she was in, as she already knew what she wanted to order. Sitting in the Duke of Cambridge, ironically situated in Oxford, she was preparing herself for an awkward conversation. She resisted taking a sip of her cocktail. Tony hadn't arrived yet, but they weren't due to meet for another ten minutes. She wanted to get here early so that she could bag a table for two—not exactly easy to come by in this popular social spot—and prepare what she wanted to say to him. She supposed it was a bit cruel, breaking up with him on New Year's Eve, but it wasn't Valentine's Day, or Christmas, or his birthday, and it was going to be the start of the new decade. She didn't want to start the 20s with him. They both needed fresh starts and they both knew it.

The bar was pretty crowded, even at 8 p.m., and she sighed, remembering all of the memories they had made here. Their second date, both of their birthdays this last year, the many times they had come here with friends when they couldn't think of anywhere else they wanted to go.

What could she say? How could she break it to him? What was best left unsaid? And how would she even start? She didn't want him to feel like she was using the "it's not you, it's me" excuse, even if she didn't say it in so many words. But saying "it's both of us" also didn't feel right. She didn't want him to take any blame. It just simply wasn't meant to be.

She couldn't help but think of them spending hours walking around Oxford, talking about everything and nothing. Traipsing through the book shops on Broad Street, trying out cake in every café they could find and arguing about what was better: chocolate or red velvet. Him laughing when she inevitably tripped or walked into things; her laughing when he blushed because she kissed him when he wasn't expecting it. She tried to only remember the fights, the miscommunication, the things that irked her about him. But somehow, so close to the end, they didn't seem as bad as they had then. Was she making a mistake?

A shadow fell across the table and she looked up, smiling, knowing who it was already.

"Hey," he said. Nothing else. No "Hey, you" or "babe" or even "Lucy". He knew why they were meeting up. Why else would just the two of them meet up at a bar in town at 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve?

He sat down, no drink in hand. Clearly, he wasn't planning to stay long then. "Hey," she said. Nothing else. Why bother pretending?

She breathed in deeply and started: "Look --"

"I know, Lucy. You don't have to say it. You don't need me anymore and I don't need you anymore. Our whole relationship was based on our interdependence, and now that we've found our feet, we don't make sense together."

She could see that he was hurting, his eyebrows were drawn so close together they almost touched. She hadn't planned to say anything quite so blunt, but that was always Tony. And that's what she had always loved about him.

"Thank you for understanding," she said. It sounded so hollow, so

unfeeling, but what else was there to say? She took a sip of her drink, cringing at the sudden loud sound her straw made.

"Don't worry about it," he replied. "Besides, what better time than now? It's the start of a new decade. Who knows what the 20s will have in store for us? You'll meet someone new, I'll meet someone new, and we'll both be grateful for the lessons we taught each other. It's time to break free from things holding us back." He was speaking a bit too quickly, words almost merging together. He was nervous. So was she.

"You're right, Tony. New year, new me. That's what they always say, isn't it? Feels like we need to be even newer when it's a new decade."

"I wonder what people do when it's the start of a century," he said and gave a wry laugh.

"Maybe they do everything at once," she suggested. "Break up, dye their hair, move to a different country, change jobs. Anything to keep moving, keep changing."

There was a pause while they both sat lost in their own thoughts.

"Do you think that we'll just keep searching forever?" he asked.

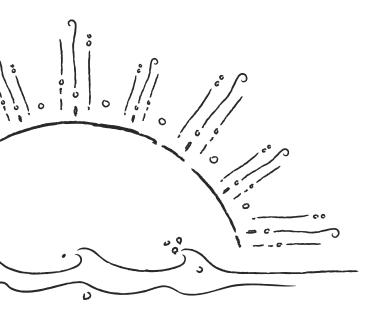
"What do you mean?" Lucy seemed perplexed.

"What if we keep changing our circumstances because we're searching for fulfilment? But what if fulfilment can never be found?" Lucy hesitated before answering. "I don't know if we can ever fulfil ourselves. I think we need someone or something greater to do that."

Tony raised his eyebrows, then nodded. "I suppose you might be onto something. It certainly doesn't seem like we mere mortals have found the solution. Money, fame, love... nothing lasts and everything lacks."

She smiled in response. She would miss their conversations. Only they could go from going through a break-up to pondering the purpose of human life in less than five minutes. But it was time for a fresh start. Maybe she could finally find what she has always been looking for.

Charlotte Empt New Beginnings



She cannot bare it anymore. Her pale fingers pull at her dark curls, scratching across her scalp and digging into her temples. In the sink, the tap is dripping and the old tea set from the afternoon tea is clinking softly as she leans against the counter, eyes closed, and teeth clenched. Her tears join the dripping of the faucet at irregular intervals. She wipes her blushed cheeks with the sleeve of her silk robe. In the dark windowpane, her large eyes reflect in the indigo of the night and the electric yellow kitchen light. The glass of former cold milk in her hands turned warm by now, but she stands there, frozen, holding her remaining strength like lead in her shoulders. An eternity passes, three blinks of an eye, then she puts the glass to her lips.

Suddenly he stands behind her. "Come here!" The baritone in his dark voice seems to vibrate in his throat, she turns around and milk spills onto the black and white tiled kitchen floor. He speaks softly, whispers almost. He leans against the door frame and gazes at her seriously. "You know I'm sorry, you know that" he looks at her compassionate, or at least tries to give his face that expression. But it feels more like he is speaking to a child, which, after being scolded, has asked for the reconciliation with the father which is granted to it. There is a long pause. He does not take his eyes off her.

"Listen... I'm sorry!" She does not move, and he smiles at her with a fatherly good will. "It's late." He reaches out to her and takes a step forward, but she moves even closer towards the sink and lowers her eyes so that she does not have to stare into her own eyes mirroring in the dark kitchen window. "Come, darling," his voice gets an irritated undertone, but he does not let his outstretched hand sink, on whose fingers the family's old signet ring is still emblazoned next to the wedding ring. She stands there petrified, watching his reflective outline in the windowpane; the hat, the dark short hair underneath, the horn-rimmed glasses, the clean-shaven chin, the grey suit, the striped tie, the golden watch, the outstretched hand, the chunky rings, and finally swallows the warm milk in her mouth. The tension in her body slowly regulates itself and she breathes out.

As she turns to him, his eyes widen hardly noticeably. The scissors on the dark marble of the kitchen shelf shimmer silver like her wedding ring in the cold kitchen light. In silence she slowly pulls the ring from her finger and places it next to the old tea set on the counter. "From now on you will never touch me against my will again," her voice is soft and yet determined. He laughs. "Ah yes, the weak mind of women," he says with a smile. "Striving to be heard in a world full of men who never do. All you hear from us is about work, politics, business, then the Corona crisis, then work again." He laughs again and his voice drips with sarcasm. "Or how is it again? We never listen to you women, think only of ourselves, don't understand y'alls feelings?" He has stopped laughing now.

She looks up. "No, not the men themselves, only you do not do it, never have done it," she says almost thoughtfully. "I'm going to leave now." He pushes himself away from the door frame and crosses his arms in front of his chest. "What are you going to do now?" He now says in a raised voice. She remains silent and pushes herself past him into the hall. "I'm gonna go to university and will finally start building my own life." She smiles at him softly. "I had this kitchen designed especially for you," he presses out with his eyes closed. "We were young back then, too young. I wasn't ready for that marriage and neither were you." She opens the front door, not looking back. The cut-up mask on the kitchen counter and the ring are the only things she leaves behind with him. She goes out into the streets and blinks. And there is her former roommate, standing between old posters with long forgotten hashtags and adjourned demo boards, waiting for her with a cigarette in his hand. For quite a while they stand side by side by the river. Noisy groups of students pass by on their way home from dancing.

The sun throws its first dirty white rays through the dead foliage as they share the last cigarette. The morning dawns, but they just stand there, soaking up this papery-, tobacco- and tar-tasting freedom, which feels odd and fake, trying to convince themselves that everything will turn out for the best; finally believing in the quietly exchanged scraps of words that wander through the city's dingy streets.

Touhid A Chowdhury A Photograph



An old photograph hangs in the corridor of Xen's house. It is a picture of a house at the edge of a green field dating back to the early twentieth century, taken when Xen's father had not yet been born. The house is rather peculiar—standing alone with its tiled roof and round towers in each corner. Every time Xen walks past the photograph, it reminds her of the past, a past that is foreign to her and when people did things differently.

One morning, something strange happenes to Xen that causes her to wake up early. She comes out of the bedroom and stops right in the corridor, facing the framed photograph. She stands in front of the photograph, staring at it like a lover who cannot take her eyes off of a man. She has not had this feeling of foreignness before; all of this seems to be alien to her. After an hour and a half of staring and scrutinizing every single bit of the photograph, Xen suddenly came to the realization that it's her presence here in front of the photograph is alien and not the photograph itself. It reminds her that past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the midst of a forgotten time. People forget too often that the past is where home is and we are living in a constant continuum of the past, which creates the present, she wonders.

Xen takes the photograph down and looks for any clues that can provide any hints to an address, but she finds nothing. Finally, out of impulse, Xen goes through the telephone directory and looks up her grandfather's name. Out of the blue, there it is: his name, old address, and an unchanged telephone number. It is as if her grandfather had never left that house, which is an cerie discovery. Xen feels as if she had been claimed and had been informed of the facts that her faraway life is an illusion and that this continuity is her reality.

An interminable mail-train has just passed on the railway tracks, which formed the horizon that could be seen in the gap between the platforms of the train station where Xen arrived a couple of minutes ago. The train station itself is designed asymmetrically to give it a look reminiscent of the early twentieth century, but one can easily see that it is not actually built in so long ago. From its inner structure, this building is of modern architecture and only 'foreshadows' the old style. Xen walks aimlessly for a few minutes around the train station, taking a few pictures and admiring the practice of pastiche in modern-day architecture until it dawns upon her that she has only a few minutes left to catch the bus! According to Google Maps, Xen needs to take 90B bus from the train station, get off at Martin-Heidiger Street, and then walk 200 meters south, finally to come to the end of this small town. From that point, she will have to trek up the small hills and terrain for about 15 minutes before reaching the house, which is her final destination.

Xen comes out of the train station only to find that the 90B bus no longer runs due to road construction. So, she rather unwillingly takes a taxi to Martin-Heidiger Street. On the way, she has a chat with the taxi driver and learned that this town was bustling with businesses and people in the ninteen-twenties because of gypsum mines in the nearby mountainside. It was a prosperous town until the WIFOs[1] took over the mine to use it as a fuel and chemical depot for Nazi Germany. During the war, most parts of the town were bombed and demolished into a big pile of rubble. At the end of the war, almost half of the inhabitants left the town, abandoning

[1] Wirtschaftliche Forschungsgesellschaft

their homes. Xen's grandparents were among that group of people who left their former homes and never came back. After a ten minute ride, the taxi driver drops Xen off at the foot of the hill. From here, she needs to find her way to the house. After a half an hour trail, Xen finally finds the house. All of a sudden, she becomes overwhelmed by the fact that she is there, right in front of the house, which was in the past until this morning. It is a feeling that she could not fathom. It is like the old is dying and yet the new cannot be born.

The way history is being portrayed shape our understanding of the past, she thinks. Standing right in front of the house, Xen, for the first time in her life, realizes that her memory of this house is seeped out of her mind's eye; and now her real eyes are assaulted and disturbed by reality, by the grandeur and scribbling of the tiles scattered here and there, by the yellow-edged half-rotten pine tree leaves, by the decaying structure of the age-old house!

Xen does not know how long she has been staring at the house. This is the house that bears all the history of a family; it bears all the good and all the bad memories of a century, Xen thought. Suddenly, there is movement in the clouds and lighting stirring in the air. Oh! Xen must return, but she stands there, lost in thoughts and unable to move as if she had lost herself in the oblivion between now and the past!





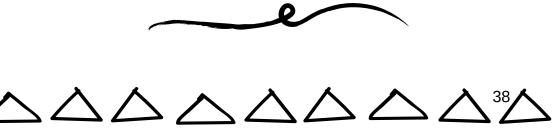


Paul Stöhr All people in their twenties





Sometimes, I don't understand people in their twenties. They're inconsistent in their behavior. They're not in school anymore, at least most of them, so you'd think that they would ... I don't know ...behave like adults, right? Wrong! Everyone is secretly in their twenties; I can prove it. You're usually able to see it when you provoke somebody; it gets me every time. For instance, I called my girlfriend's mother a fat slob the other day and it was enlightening. I didn't do it because she isalthough she really is, by the way-but because of what happened after that. Have you ever seen one of those movies where the main character gets called out for being a dumbass and he or she says something really cool and confident and they don't seem to care about whoever accused them? People in real life don't do that, because people in real life are not confident and cool, because people in real life are not adults. Even the most adult person in his twenties still behaves like a child and that's a fact. After I called my girlfriend's mum fat, she was all like "That's so disrespectful!" and "Why did you say that, you little brat?" It was amazing. I didn't say a word. I just leaned back and looked at my pissedoff girlfriend and then back at her mother, who said, "I bet you feel really cool right now." And I did, so I started smiling, and then, she said, "You're just an angry little kid." My smile vanished. I wanted to say something, but I couldn't articulate a thing. I'm an adult. I don't act like one, but that proves that I am, right? Oh, what the hell. I don't care. Whatever. They just don't get me. I couldn't tell them why I was right at that point in time, but if I would have, they would've probably treated me like an adult. Inconsistency. See what I did there? Neither did I. That's because I'm in my twenties.



Lina Boerner Back to Basics - Life in a Lockdown World



Corona: a word that is now understood in any language. After it first appeared in the Chinese province of Wuhan, the virus spread around the whole world. Soon enough, it made its way to Germany and we realized that we were also affected. Since then, measures have been taken and public life came to a complete halt. The whole world is in a state of emergency—and all due to a supposedly small virus.

In spite of the measures taken to control the spread of the virus, everyone can decide how to handle their emotions. All of us had plans that have now been impacted, whether it was holidays, concerts or events one was looking forward to for a long time. Now we must choose how to deal with the given situation. Sadness, anger and frustration may all be emotions, which are understandable; however, over a longer period of time, these emotions may cause severe damage. Instead, we should try to focus on the positive. Suddenly, the coldhearted Germans have started talking to each other in the supermarkets; helpfulness and solidarity are at an alltime high within the population. When was the last time one could see that within Germany? Society moves closer together in times of crisis, and the feeling of unity is stronger than ever. Additionally, for the first time in ages, we have time. Time-a precious commodity in the modern era. Without possible distractions, any pressure or excuses, we can finally be creative and do all those things we have been meaning to do for a while. We can tidy our rooms, learn a new language, revive an old hobby and let creativity run free. Didn't we all need that? As a reset to factory setting, so that we can get back to basics and finally realize what really matters. Especially in times of social media where it seems like your whole life is based on numbers. Likes, wages, steps, burned calories and, if possible, all of it quicker and better than the person that po-sted it in our feed. A person we barely know that somehow ended up classified as a "friend." Finally, we have the possibility to put all of it on hold and think about what we really need and want. What matters to me? Who matters to me? And when exactly did we stop asking these important questions? Suddenly, old friends that you have not talked to in a while text you. People recognize how important physical contact is. How creative we can be and how we only have to take some time and the ideas start flowing again, the neurons just have to disentangle every now and then.

Nevertheless, one should not forget the advantages that social media has, notably in times of crisis. People can organize themselves in groups, help each other, get active and connect. That's how most of us avoid going stir-crazy, that's how we provide hope for those in need and that's how we prevent loneliness and boredom. One can find many videos and stories of people sharing their creativity online. Some people sing together on their balconies, some start working out together, others support each other mentally by providing some sort of social interaction and others finally thank those who keep our system running. Finally, we thank people who have always deserved more appreciation. Now, there are gourmet restaurants providing meals for nurses and caregivers, organized groups going grocery shopping for elderly people and companies donating protective equipment. Isn't that awesome? Isn't that what we, as a society, needed?

Nonetheless, it is sad that we needed a worldwide pandemic to make us realize our grievances. All of a sudden, birds have returned to the multimillion city of Wuhan, as smog has disappeared. Venice's canals are clear and without rubbish for the first time in decades. Harmful air pollution in Germany has drastically decreased, and thanks to Corona, we might even achieve our climate goal for 2020. For the first time, 52% of all used electricity in Germany was produced by renewable energy due to a cut in industrial use of energy. Many more examples like those can be found all across the globe. But why could the masses of demonstrating people out on the streets not achieve anything like a virus just did? Why do we need a worldwide catastrophe, in which thousands of people are killed, to finally reflect and realize that Greta was right the whole time?

Still, many people do not seem to understand the urgency and importance in this given moment of time. Plenty of people that are at risk are still going about their daily lifestyle while obviously ignoring the danger. Repeatedly, one can see elderly people grocery shopping and not making use of any voluntary help. For those people, we are risking our welfare, our economy and possibly our prosperous future. Is it worth putting all of it at risk to protect a generation that can obviously not care less? These people are being ignorant and stubborn and claim that it definitely will not happen to them-a fatal assumption. When the elderly say that they do not care if they get the virus or not, when they say that they do not need help and that they can manage themselves, when they say they just quickly popped into the store and that they were only in there for a few minutes, they are seemingly unaware that a virus does not care if you are in a store for only 3 minutes or 30 minutes. And when they are so incredibly resistant towards advice, is it worth it? It doesn't seem justifiable to put our jobs, economy and education on hold with a not-yet-foreseeable outcome to protect a generation that does not want to be protected.

Furthermore, it wasn't just social and ecological issues that were discovered but also technological ones. For a long time, young peop-ple have complained about digitalization in Germany. Experts have warned that the country will be left behind if its citizens do not act. Such a highly developed place like Germany has no nationwide broadband connection and there are still, to this day, households that do not have any possibility to access the internet. Even the mobile network is not fully developed. All those problems are now omnipresent. Servers are crashing and universities and schools are struggling with the provision of online education while other countries have been teaching and adopting those technical operations for years. It is a bit ironic how "less-developed" countries seem to be doing just fine while we are struggling to provide basic online services.

In the end, all that we have is our strength. We have no other choice but to adapt and try to make the most of this unique situation. Yet, uncertainty and insecurity are pervasive. People are worried. Worried about their own health, their loved ones, their jobs and their future. Many will not be able to endure this situation much longer. If it takes too long to get life back to normal, then the positive aspects of this time will be shadowed by worries and loss. Until now, Germany has been doing fine; until now, our death rate has been very low; until now, the economy has not been under too much pressure; and until now, the heroes of our society have managed to support and protect the weakest. But the clock is ticking. It is ticking louder and louder. Let us hope that it does not explode.



Ognjen Ognjanovic Exibitionism as Corona-Cure



A gloomy, scarcely lit basement, and in the middle of it, a poker table with distorted cards upon it. This scene is not borrowed from a clichébased 90's movie where the special agent kicks in the door to disrupt Russian mafia business. It's the subject of the chat between my friends and me, and more precisely, the imagination of how we would secretly meet amid the lockdown announced a few weeks ago. Lately, we've been meeting and entertaining ourselves virtually over WhatsApp. A few minutes before writing this text—it's the 17th of April—one of my friends sent us an article about a man from a nearby village who was reported for potential exhibitionism. Rather than being arrested, the suspect asserted his human rights of caring for his health by referring to his low vitamin D, which had needed to be refreshed—hence the harmless, shirtless walk in public. Laughing and joking about content like this is what keeps our spirits high.

During the epidemics of the previous centuries, it probably would have been considered a blessing to still be able to socially interact whilst quarantined. The Spanish Flu, which lasted from 1918 until 1920, is estimated to have taken almost 50 million lives as a toll. The pandemic was caused by the H1N1 influenza virus, which couldn't care less whether sanitary conditions were worse and social distancing was more solitary than now.

Is the article's intention to invite more appreciation of today's abilities to deal with a pandemic such as the corona crisis? Perhaps.

However, Markus Söder, Minister President of Bavaria, announced yesterday that there will be further extensions of social restrictions, including the prohibition of "Großveranstaltungen," meaning large social events, until 31st of August.

Given this announcement, COVID-19 will still have its lock on our freedom by the time you read this text, but we too will still be humorizing the daily newspaper.





Adrian Kuqi graduated with a BA in English and American Studies from the University of Bamberg. Currently, he is doing his Master's in General Linguistics at the same university. His favourite pastimes are reading prose and poetry, watching films and series, writing his own prose and poetry, and studying as many languages as possible.

Charlotte Empt is originally from the beautiful Rhineland but moved to Bamberg a few years ago to study Communication Science with a minor in English and American Studies. She inherited a passion for literature and writing from her mother. She loves reading books as well as collecting books. Currently, she will be found reading Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* with a big mug of coffee when she is not out with friends or at the gym.

Dona Jalili is a Master's student in Psychology at the University of Bamberg. She likes dancing, going to the gym, listening to all kinds of music from Hip Hop, Rnb to Pop, or Folk. In her free time, she also listens to podcast on true crime and loves to draw pictures or to write down her thoughts in the form of poems, lyrics, or short stories.

Fiona Lina is a second-semester Psychology student at the University of Bamberg. As a self-proclaimed introvert, she loves to read, watch shows or movies and listen to music in her free time.

Hannah Rebecca O'Neill is in her last semester studying Political Science at the University of Bamberg. After writing her own fantasy book as a teenager and having worked for a music magazine in the past, she has begun writing poetry. Besides reading, she enjoys playing the cello and is engaged in political activism.

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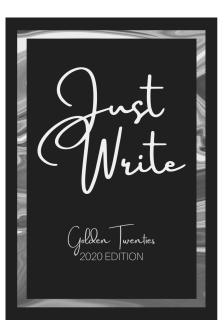
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Sophia Bruni is an aspiring writer who was born in Brazil but raised in Germany. She has always been a mixed bag full of different passions and half-talents, which she is continuously working on. She likes dancing, taking photographs, reading, and writing in several languages. Fascination and obsession with languages had led her to studying Communications and Intercultural studies.

Touhid A. Chowdhury is an avid reader and occasional writer. He is a PhD student at the University of Bamberg. In his free time, he can be found reading books or watching documentaries.



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