

NOSTALGIA



Echoes of the Past

A Journalism Collection

Written by Nushpress

Nostalgia: Something that everyone has felt, at least once in their lives. A longing for anything lost to the sands of time. The Journalism Club collectively decided to work on this theme in early 2023, and explore the concept of nostalgia itself. In this collection, we delve into experiences with nostalgia, the light that it brings and the shadow that follows in four categories: Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction, Interviews and Podcast.

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A photograph of a swing set on a beach. The swing set is made of dark metal and has several chains hanging down. The background shows a calm ocean under a clear sky. The text "CREATIVE FICTION" is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

CREATIVE
FICTION

FLASHBACK

Written by Zachary

Gene woke up with a start. Another day, another bad dream. He'd had them for as long as he could remember, which was three years. He'd woken up and been told he had amnesia, and he'd struggled from there on out. He began to drag himself out of bed, shrugging off the exhaustion. The dreams were always the strangest things. It was like... layers upon layers of reality were being compressed onto one another. The doctors had told him that if he tried hard enough, he would be able to regain his memory through his dreams. Well, he'd tried that, and subsequently failed. Organising and making sense of everything and who he'd used to be, even with help and contributions from his friends and family, was just too difficult. It felt like he'd never return to whoever he was before... if what people said about his past self was true. They said that before the accident, Gene had been kind and compassionate, witty and intelligent, and one of the greatest people they'd known. But now, Gene felt... persecuted by his past self, a past self he could never return to. Every day was a blur, a grey blur formed by all the colours and scenes he saw each and every day. And one of those most prominent grey blurs was the school. The school he was standing at the gates of.

Gene trudged through the social warzones that were the halls and corridors of school. No-one even knew his name. All he was, all he could claim to be, was "that amnesiac kid". Things had been getting worse and worse, especially when he would dive into random flashbacks, typically at the worst possible times. Sometimes they were when he was in class. Sometimes they would occur just when he was walking. And worst of all, they'd occur when he was alone outside of his school, his home, or anywhere he frequently went. Once, he'd been jolted into a flashback of studying while on a bus, and he'd wasted an entire afternoon after missing his stop and ending up in a place he'd never been to. Often, his flashbacks were like his dreams — memories of his past self. And just like his dreams, he'd struggled to confront them, and fix whatever was wrong with him.



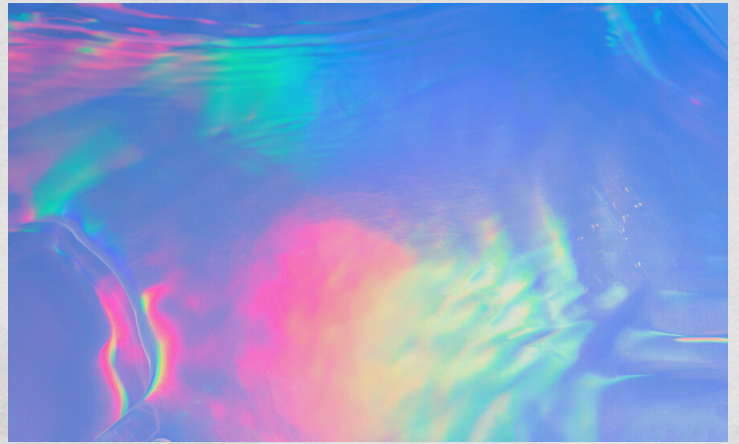
FLASHBACK

Written by Zachary

The classes flashed by, voices and colours going over Gene's head in seconds. What did it matter? He paid little attention to them anyway. He probably could've done more. He wasn't unintelligent. But concentrating on anything was always a chore. He was haunted, torn, halfway between the reality of the present and the concept of the past, kept firmly behind the locked doors of his own mind. He hated it; he hated the situation he was in. But he'd never been able to do anything about it, much less drag himself out of his pit of disappointment and anger to fix his problems. And soon, the swirling mess that was school faded away as Gene walked out the gates. Hours had gone by in a flash. The power of apathy truly was amazing.

The rumbling of the bus, almost quiet enough for one to ignore it, hummed in Gene's ears. He sat in a seat, his bag in the adjacent one, and gazed out the window. All of a sudden, he felt a drowsiness come over him, and black spots started to appear in his vision. He almost started to move, to stop yet another flashback. But as the black spots disappeared from the corners of his vision, and he was almost about to return to reality, normal, old reality, he stopped getting up, and slumped back into his seat. A short bit of relief when everything was hurting.

Just for a few minutes, he told himself, as he slipped into a pocket of time that he'd otherwise have no access to. *Just a few minutes.*



An overwhelming sense of a strange euphoria. A repetitive, lively sound in the background. Laughter? It sounded so. A warmth, both physical and mental, on both sides of him. People. His friends. A board; sixty-four black and white squares. A vibrant, empowering sense. Confidence, it seemed. A train of thought connecting figures on the board. A careful, deliberate movement of his hand. A small sense of doubt, just for a second. A cry of anguish from his adversary. More laughter. It seemed like his own. More sounds, more confidence. Compliments? Maybe. Probably. An uplifting sensation that radiated throughout the area... but still couldn't reach Gene. It was like looking in through a window. No-one could see or hear him, and whatever he saw or felt was just... different. More unclear. Images were blurrier, sounds were more muted, but emotions still felt the same. The relief Gene had been looking for. He smiled, which was rare for him. He wanted to sit there, behind the glass panel and bask in the comforting light, with its slight yellow tint, reliving the life he'd had before the accident. And just as he felt comfortable, the bus ground to a halt, jerking him out of his memories and dragging him along, all while he was kicking and screaming, firmly into the present.

FLASHBACK

Written by Zachary

Surprisingly enough, Gene had ended up at the right stop. Bleary-eyed and tired, he casually walked across the road. He wasn't sure what it was — nonchalance, apathy, fatigue, or all of them — but he crossed that road without watching either side. Well, it was no surprise what came next. The muted sounds which filled his ears, like someone was playing them through a layer of water, wore off just enough to hear the blaring sound of a horn and the screeching sounds of rubber on tar, as Gene turned around and was met with a crimson car hurtling toward him.

Gene could never pinpoint exactly what happened next. A pushing sensation from his legs, his vision going black, the drowning effect returning to his ears, and the next thing he knew, he was in another flashback. Another road. The fog clouding his eyes. Brought on by sheer tiredness, he suspected. The quiet clacking of his shoes on the black surface. And its subsequent interruption by the sounds of an orange car, screeching as it sped towards him. Strange how history repeated itself, over and over, like a broken record, or a recurring flashback. But then, the image became clear. He'd been here before. On a road, not different from the one he'd just been at, he'd been hit. By a car. The accident. That was what had caused his amnesia.

And Gene was filled with the overwhelming, suffocating desire he'd felt when the orange car had been rushing towards him. He'd wanted to continue. He'd wanted to live. He'd been filled with the desire to live. He wanted to live and see his friends and family again. He wanted to do everything he'd always wanted to do, to pursue his dreams and ambitions. He wanted the feel that warmth that came from true happiness.

He wanted to live.

And so, Gene was jolted out of his flashback, and pulled back into cold, hard, reality. Surprisingly, he was still alive. He'd jumped out of the way just in time, and was lying on the tarmac. He turned around. The crimson car had sped off into the distance, no doubt running from whatever consequences the driver would have to face. Gene got up. The road was empty. He briskly walked across. As he walked back home, memories and flashbacks flooded back into his mind through the barrier of his amnesia, bringing with them shores upon shores of nostalgia. He remembered everything he'd had, and everything that he now wanted back. He remembered the experiences he'd had in the past, and he remembered the people that he cared about. He was filled once more with a surge of energy, the surge of the will to live. The ability to think about what one cared about the most, and use that to carry oneself through just one more day. And to do it again, and again, and again. And Gene returned home.



LEFT BEHIND

Written by Ariel

The presence of a spectre
haunts what's not close to mind.
The humming nag of clockwork
that only time can wind.

A shattered mirror glinting,
which to it memories bind.
Each single shard
an aperture
to view what's left behind.

While winds and tide endure for none,
and thoughts fleeting as time may run,
my sole solace lies in the one
which though stifled
glows radiant as the sun.

When verdant pastures languish
and frost winds petrify,
dusk descends like a louring mist
enveloping the sky.

What echoes of past likeness fade
as shrouding darkness lies ahead,
but imbued in each fragment blade
are tales of what once was,
but now is dead.

Like beasts' claws deep down to the bone,
a stab of irony:
That what I was when I cared not
I now can never be.

Items hither, thither, yonder
bring back times all filled with wonder.
How can one not stop to ponder:
How time moves in
a cold, soulless saunter.

The burden of memories
is not what one should bear.
The pull to revive better times
from inside-out will tear.

But when ahead I face my plight
to step into the daunting night,
I grasp the radiance, burning bright,
the bittersweet of sentiment
glowing with light.

If I rejoice in times gone by,
than mourn the loss of time's swift fly,
what then, will be, to bring back I,
into the past,
with no time left
to bid
goodbye?

Ah, Nostalgia



SEASHELLS & SANDCASTLES

Written by Bindu

My name is Cindy, and I am at the beach. I close my eyes, breathing in the saltiness of the sea breeze as the sound of waves crash gently against my ears. My feet brush against the sand as I heave a sigh, opening my eyes and narrowing them at the calm sea ahead. How ironic... I smirk.

“Hey! What are you staring at?”

I flinched and gasped, my internal monologue interrupted, as I looked up to see the face of a five-year old girl staring intently at me. My heart pounded loudly against my chest as I stared back, trying hard to keep a serious face.

“Uh...”

“I am the king of this beach!”

“Where are your parents?”

The little girl gasped, shocked. She looked at me with the utmost horrified look on her face.

“How rude! Everyone knows that the kings live in a different kingdom from their parents!” She paused. “...but they do visit occasionally”

“So... you’re with your grandma because your parents didn’t come to visit today?” I asked, sweating from the intensity at which the elderly woman was staring at us.

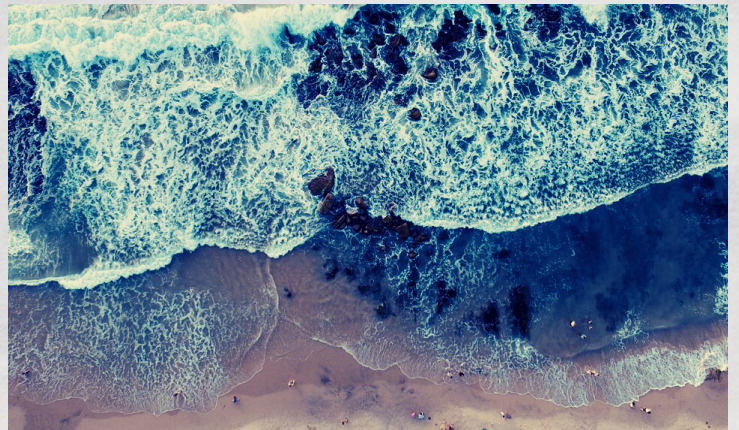
“Yeah! Grandma is the best!” She exclaimed with a big grin, her eyes sparkling.

When I heard that, my expression softened and something within me melted. I gave a small smile and rested my hand on my chin, looking wistfully into the sea.

“Yeah, she is...” I mumbled.

The little girl observed me for a moment, then shrugged and ran off, her giggles filling the air as she ran near the shore, trying not to let the sea waves catch her. She was jumping in the water, drawing in the sand, and collecting seashells. The sun began to set, painting the sky in an orange hue.

I watched her; Watching her filled me with a gentle sense of calm and joy, unlike how my life was these days. Well, what she was doing was the opposite of calm, and it wasn’t as quiet as before. I didn’t really mind that.



“She looks happy... “I thought, standing up and walking towards her. I paused, my expression darkening. I felt a pang of sadness, but I did not know why.

SEASHELLS & SANDCASTLES

Written by Bindu

“What’s wrong?”

Yeah, what was wrong? I wiped my eyes on the right sleeve of my sweatshirt, confused. Then, smiling at the girl who was looking at me with a mix of curiosity and worry, I bowed down dramatically.

“Your majesty, may I aid you in the construction of your grand castle?”

“No.”

“Huh? Why? Why not?!”

“A true ruler does not trouble his people, and always puts his people’s needs before himself!”

“Wow, what has this kid been watching on television?” I thought, stifling a laugh.

“Do not laugh!”

As the little girl grumpily shoved me a bucket and a shovel, I chuckled. We sat there and built sand castles, my fingers working swiftly to sculpt a castle. Then the girl loudly declared that she was going to build the tallest one, swinging her fists and destroying half her castle. I buried my face in my hands, trying not to laugh as she gasped in horror.

Somehow, I found scooping buckets of sand and making mountains of sand so entertaining. I wondered why. They... were going to be trampled on, rained on, jumped on and washed away. Soon, it would become nothing. So, what was the point? Did I want to feel proud of the fact that I created something out of tiny grains of sand, even though it was going to disappear anyways? I gripped my arm tightly.



Nothing was permanent anyways.

“This is such a beautiful shell, isn’t it?” She smiled, excitedly showing me a hollow, fragile but beautifully transparent shell.

The little girl held it out proudly, a light in her eyes. I stared at it for a moment, then smiled and nodded my head.

Nothing was permanent, but every moment was significant.

Soon, the sky was covered in a million stars. In the distance, I could hear her grandma calling out for her. She had made her favorite, chicken rice, for dinner again. There was a moment of silence, and the only sound that filled our ears was the gentle crashing of the waves on the shore.

“I have to go” The little girl finally said, twiddling her thumbs together and looking down sadly.

“Yeah” I nodded and sighed.

SEASHELLS & SANDCASTLES

Written by Bindu

I watched as the girl ran toward her house in the beach, a warm and familiar hut, where her grandma was waiting for her with open arms.

Before she reached the hut, the girl turned and waved, smiling.

I waved back, and the girl shouted across the beach.

“My name is Cindy!”

My eyes widened. But before I could say anything, she was gone. A strange sense of emptiness overcame me as it hit me.

She was gone. There was nothing left.

I clenched my fists.

A half-made sand castle, a half-completed drawing in the sand, and a single shovel was all that remained.

“Oh... nostalgia” I sighed dramatically, picking up the shovel. It was strange. I felt empty but yet...
... I also felt oddly comforted.



WHEN TIME OPENS

Written by Kyan

time is a curtain
sometimes it will close
revealing the folds
and memories it holds
through our life it follows
and when parts overlap
it ties you to a strap
through the path with some gaps
it pulls you. take a nap
as the curtain withdraws

a past world restores
have you seen it before?
you ask, absorbed in a vision
a vaguely familiar version
of a world you once loved
one that should be preserved.
the curtain unfolds again
you have found your place
reached life's next phase
the curtain made space
for growth, when it opened

DELIRIUM

Written by Ri-Yen

The film he was watching had an intentionally low quality, with the only colours present in it being the various shades of black and white. *Such pretence*, he could not help but think to himself as he saw the supposed buildings of the past being stomped by soldiers wielding rifles. This was clearly a filming set, and a horrible one at that. It didn't even look remotely close to anything of the past, especially what happened during the war. He could not stop a small scoff from escaping as he saw the actors try their best to hold the prop rifles properly, let alone pretend to beat victims up with it.

So inaccurate. He should know, because unlike the actors in this WWII documentary, he was there and loved every moment of it.

It was 1942, and rifles were the predominant weapon used in the war. Despite his impeccable rifle-shooting skills, he always valued beating the victim up first. Being heavy and dense, the rifle was an ideal object in building his world of delirium. His fantasy, his dream that he had power.

Growing up in a time where his father worked as an army commander, he never had control over his family. His father could be whisked away to battle at the mere request of the government, his life on the line for anyone to cut. His mother, whose love was worn down by the years of waiting and worrying for her husband every day, had a long-lasting affair before leaving the family all together.

He grew up in such a household, one where he had no control over anything that could happen, living in constant fear of his father leaving him too. This was how he spent his first few years, powerless and only being able to pray, pray that fate was on his side and that he wouldn't lose the remainder of his family. But now, he was finally in control of everything.



DELIRIUM

Written by Ri-Yen

At least, of the prisoners of war that he was assigned.

Those memories came flooding back to him, an overwhelming feeling of nostalgia, so sweet that it tasted bitter. The glorifying screams of those at his mercy, the look of pure resignation in their eyes... This was his revenge on fate. His yell at the heavens as he silently beat the prisoners up, each blow filling him with a strange high, leaving him feeling in control. And that was the high that he chased every single time, his sole reason for “fighting for his country”.

However, what happened in the past could never come to the present. He was a changed man now. Many would say for the better, being a quiet and independent elderly citizen that never gave society any

trouble. But he was back in his childhood, back to the weak and whimpering child that could only pray to fate.

He was, once again, powerless.

All it took was for one person to take umbrage at his past to put him on trial for war crimes. All it took was for the landlord of his house to realise that someone else could offer a better rent price than he did to evict him with a pathetic excuse.

All it took, was for something out of his control to come and change his life in an instant.

Silently getting on his feet, he proceeded to go to the kitchen, using the sharp, steel knife to chop vegetables for his dinner. These nostalgic memories were nice to think of but so painful to come out of. Nostalgia, nostalgia, nostalgia... all that it was doing was adding insult to injury.



CHILDHOOD

Written by Le En

Faded photographs,
And yellowed drawings
Fill me with longing

A familiar neighbourhood
The scent of cooked food
And the sight of the old playground
Makes me feel reassured

The familiar theme song
Of a childhood show
The happiness I feel
Makes my heart glow

When I was young
I ruled a kingdom
With a multitude of creatures
Unicorns and dragons

I lived in a castle
Comfortable and royal
Supported by strong towering pillars
Beside glorious rivers

I could be a sorcerer
With an arsenal of spells
I could be the hero
Whose name people celebrate

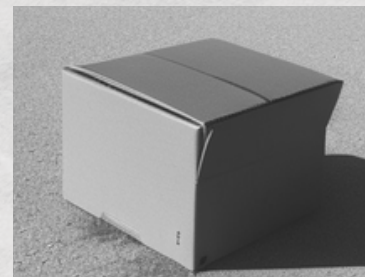
My childhood was full of fun
Tears, smiles and laughter
The convivial times I spent
Were as bright as the sun.

The years have gone past
Things have changed
The questions I had
Have been all answered

Imagination starts to crumple
The kingdom starts to crumble
Life is not as simple

Time ticks past
The creatures are kept
Life becomes busier

But the memories never fade
It waits in a box
Waiting for me to open it.
And be swamped
In waves of nostalgia



A young girl with dark hair, wearing a pink dress, is running across a grassy field. The background is filled with large, leafy trees. The sky is dark, and a large, bright moon is visible on the right side. The overall scene is captured in a cinematic, slightly blurred style.

NON-FICTION

REUNION

Written by Cayden



I was recently invited to a primary school reunion. The last time I saw anyone from my primary school was before the hazy, monotone days of covid, and my memories of that time were indistinct, more impressions than recollection. Nonetheless, the connection I had made still stuck with me, enough that I still felt fondness when their names popped up in my notifications.

So, I decided to agree to come to a class reunion. After a little back and forth, we eventually settled on a time and place, and I showed up, ready to meet old friends. Yet, when I arrived, standing by the MRT station, I stood in a crowd of strangers. People entered, exited or waited in droves, but their faces were unfamiliar, previously unknown to me.

I stood for a good while, until a guy walked up to me. "Hey!" He said, before stopping in front of me, arms akimbo and grinning foolishly. I looked at him for a few moments, uncomprehendingly, before a dim spark crackled within the depths of my memory.

His bowl-cut had grown out into an eye-searing side-parted cut, and the round face had sharpened at the chin, but the resemblance was there. "Lem?"

"Yeah!"

"Where's everyone else?"

His grin faded slightly. "They said they couldn't come." He gestured to his phone, messages of apologetic last-minute cancellations covering the screen. "It's just me and Laura. Since no one else is coming, we're just going to Laura's house instead." The class had been 30 people large.

Mutely, I followed him as he led me to a bus stop. Laura was waiting there, eyes flicking across a phone screen. We nodded cursory greetings, and I sat down heavily, Lem next to me.

"The worst thing about it is that they all hate me, but they're all worse than me." Laura complained to Lam. He nodded sympathetically, eyes still closed.

I turned to her. "Sorry, what?" I asked. "I didn't quite catch that."

REUNION

Written by Cayden



She turned to me, surprised, as if only just noticing me. “Oh, we were just talking just now. It’s just about these people at my Poly, there was this group project, y’know...” her voice trailed off awkwardly, the sentence dangled limply from her mouth. I nodded, even if I didn’t understand what I was nodding about.

The conversation stagnated, a pool whose surface was motionless even as algae multiplied beneath it. The bus stopped with a screech, and we piled on. I didn’t miss Lem’s hand, nestled comfortably around Laura’s waist.

We sat on that bus in silence. It was not a companionable silence, of people enjoying each others company, but of strangers sitting aside one another, with the distance of time separating them. I realised in that moment that the relationships that I looked for in that moment existed no more outside of my own head. Perhaps we were on the same bus, side by side, but we would be departing at different stations. I made up half hearted excuses and late-remembered obligations for the last minute cancellation and stood up, getting off at the next station. Neither of my former classmates said anything more than polite farewells.

MOVING ON

Written by Joseph

I was at my grandmother's home.

The television stood centre stage and the shelf with movies laid alongside it and the sofas sat around it with a respectful distance and the ripe dinner table lounged at the side and the exercise bike slept at the corner of the room and at the back there was a wooden sofa that I always sat on. The room was room temperature yet warm. An inviting glow swallowed the room like dinner. It was timeless.

There were people there, too. My mother, sister, uncles. And grandmother, of course.

We had finished dinner. It was Christmas, yes, I remember now. Don't remember what we had, though. Must have been good. Food's always better during holidays. There were gifts, yes. I can only remember the emotions, now. Joy.

One gift I can still remember. It's in my room.

It is not a vibrant green, but it still has a lustre. It is in some aspects the everyturtle, the stereotypical turtle, the first image that enters the mind from thoughts of turtles. It is also not a turtle. The most pertinent fact is the lack of life, thought the softness of its shell is also an illusion-breaker.

The soft toy is more than that. It is the memories of family, worth more than turtle eggs. Temptation tells me to hoard it, to encase it in glass.

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I am no dragon. Instead, I give.

Moving houses is a time of reflection, for me. Sift through everything I have. Keep the valuable. Discard all others. It is a time of re-evaluation. How much do I really need this?

I look at the soft toys of the house and I know. I will give.

It was my birthday.



MOVING ON

Written by Joseph



This was before birthdays became a minor holiday. Back when I was young enough that every birthday felt new. It was a family affair. At the time, I didn't like the idea of other people entering my home. So it was just me and my mother and my father and we had a good time. I don't remember what happens before I open the present.

It's a handheld console, the 3DS. I remember falling to my knees in elation.

I look at it now. It hasn't aged a day. The last time I used it was years ago. The use it holds is one of recollection, of days spent in play.

On some level, I get rid of these toys and games because they are not truly memories. Even when they are gone, I can still recall the days they bring forth.

But it is more than that. These memories are not mine. They were forged in the age of a younger me, someone who was less cynical and more emotionally charged and blind to the world at large. Someone who is alien to me.

These memories were once everything to me. Now, they are everything to another.

So, I move on.

NOSTALGIA & DIGITAL MEDIA

Written by Ming Hong

BitTorrent is an internet protocol for peer-to-peer file sharing. Anyone from the community can upload files for others to download, without the need for a central distributor.

While many think of torrenting as a shady or even illegal practice, they overlook the underlying culture behind it. As per my simplistic description, there is nothing to be gained from spending a hefty portion of your bandwidth simply to give others some files. The motivations behind seeding likely fall on the emotional side - the hope of sharing a sentimental attachment to a piece of media.

In the context of digital media, nostalgia in the typical sense does not sound quite fitting. You've never partaken in some monumental activity. You've never devoted much effort to finish it. You've only sat back and relaxed while a computer program allowed you to reap the rewards of those who put in the work to deliver the content to you.

But struggle does not translate to nostalgia. With the young age of a digitalised community, mystery and adventure can be found in the foreign workings of technology; only documented by an unfamiliar site, only advised upon by strangers on online forums.

Nostalgia, then, is the excitement I felt while hacking around with an outdated Windows 7 PC, trying to run a trending new game, or to get my hands on software locked behind a paywall. It is perhaps the equivalent of messing with something new, something untested - and gathering new findings along the way.

Nostalgia's role in a digital context

Torrenting is a fading culture. Many streaming services have sprung up with a low subscription cost, providing reasonable entertainment with no hassle. It is the sentiments we hold that sustains the life of our iconic culture, even without a competitive edge in the market.

Works of our past convey our culture and beliefs, just as torrenting will soon be a practice of the past. These memorials keep us focused on the change that improved our level of technology, guiding us on the plans that succeeded and those that ended in disaster. After all, humankind has been driven by tales of success and failures in its pursuit of excellence.

As the internet grows out of its adolescence, it is wise to keep in memory the times we spent figuring ourselves out, be it positive, negative, or downright illegal. These are our foundations, the foundations of our digital community assembled in a mere 50 years.



INTERVIEWS

NUSH'S SECURITY GUARD, MADAM REETHA

Written by Lokesh and Eleos

Like any other Singapore resident, our security guard Madam Reetha loves going to Sentosa. When asked about what she liked, over the musical fountain, monorail, and Underwater World, it was clear she valued familial love the most. She adores her family and loves spending quality time with them.

The Importance of Family

Madam Reetha, from Perak, recalled how during the circuit breaker period she was cut off from her three daughters, who were staying in Johor Bahru. She reminisced of how life was before COVID-19 struck.

Normally, she would wake up at 4:00 a.m. to get ready for work. Then, she and her husband, who got married to her in 2000, would ride their motorbikes to a JB checkpoint before crossing the causeway.

After crossing the causeway, Madam Reetha would split paths with her husband, who worked in Pioneer, and get to school before her shift starts, at 7:00 a.m..



After her shift ends at 7:00p.m., Madam Reetha would then ride her motorbike back across the causeway and back home, arriving at about 10:00p.m., before cooking dinner for her daughters and calling it a day.

However, during the Circuit Breaker, the causeway had shut down and Madam Reetha could not return home. She was forced to stay in Singapore and work while her daughters remained in Johor Bahru. Then, Madam Reetha was faced with a conundrum: how should she take care of her daughters? “I even considered resigning in order to go back and see my daughters,” she said.

Back then was a trying time for Madam Reetha’s family, putting them at risk of splitting up. Fortunately, one of Madam Reetha’s problems were solved: she was able to provide for her three daughters. Her three daughters, as Madam Reetha found out, were extremely independent and more than capable of taking care of themselves and cooking their own meals. This helped to ease up some of Madam Reetha’s problems.

Now, with restrictions eased, Madam Reetha can go back and live with her her daughters again. “I hope one day to take them to Sentosa, and we can all walk together,” she said.

Of course, as we grow up and enter the workforce, we all succumb to the fast pace of the world and soon lose time to reminisce and appreciate the little things that matter.

When asked about her childhood, Madam Reetha recalled that she would use to throw stones at swans in the park to disturb them. In retaliation, the swans would grab the back of her shirt and pull it in circles around her, a laughing Madam Reetha told us. Hence, as a child, she feared swans.

However, it is family that Madam Reetha values most. They have been her driving force throughout her life – through all her nostalgic experiences. After watching the Tamil movie “Vaarisu”, Madam Reetha felt extremely touched and felt that the movie taught the importance of family very well.

What’s past is past; nostalgia doesn’t wind back time to that particular moment. However, reminiscing about our past can help provide a sweet escape from our rushed daily lives and improve our mentality.

NUSH'S JANITOR, MR TAN

Written by Pavana and Danyson



Everyone holds something close to their heart whether it be memories, places, people, or objects. We refer to this feeling as “nostalgia”. Most choose to bury themselves deep in self-pity and simply reminisce about the past, while few choose to move on. One of latter would be Mr Tan, a janitor at NUS High School.

When asked, “What do you find Nostalgic?”, Mr Tan, replied, “What does that mean? I don’t really have nostalgia” Perhaps he did not understand the question, or maybe he meant nostalgia often can inspire a sense of regret – of what could be and instead what was.

Upon explanation that nostalgia is simply the longing for a better time, a simpler life, or a more innocent world, the response we got had not budged an inch. “I do not have such an object, place, person nor memory.” What could have happened in the past for him to not look back for comfort?

“What do you want to be in the future?” came the question hurtling at me. What did that have to do with nostalgia at all? Perplexed, I decided to respond with a serious answer, “I want to do an MBA course”.

“No, don’t do business! You see all the ministers on TV, their all doctors! Become a doctor, don’t be a businessman!” came a piercing response. Such an adverse reaction to the utterance of business had to mean something! Questions arose in my mind, was he a businessman? I had to get the answer to my question, so, I asked him.

“I was once a businessman. It took me 25 years to build my company, but to lose it, just one year! If you want to do business your parents must be rich, so that you can tank the losses, if not just become a doctor!” Mr Tan used to deal in property and his business was doing quite well, until the 2008 Financial Crisis, when the property bubble bust and those that had jobs having to do with the property sector suffered massive losses and retrenchments. The loss of asset value in that one year was enough to offset the labour of Mr Tan’s blood sweat and tears. My heart goes out to Mr Tan for the loss of all his labour.

For most people, they keep things in the past close to their hearts, things they enjoy and miss dearly.

However, they are yet many people who face many challenges and problems in their past they may have affected them emotionally and mentally. Some people, choose to embrace the future instead, after all, we can relive the past, but we can change the future in our own ways.

Mr Tan has taught us valuable lessons on the volatility of businesses and the economy, with there being no indication on when markets could simply collapse and bubbles could pop. If we are looking to work in the business sector in the future, we truly must keep this in mind as we work to satisfy our clients and employers.

If there is one thing to learn, it is the fact that some people stray away from nostalgic memories and feel that looking forward and forging into the future is more meaningful than simply reminiscing about the past. From the experience of Mr Tan, we can see the vast differences between different individuals in their feelings and expressions of nostalgia as some can be more reminiscent of their past rather than thinking of the past as better than the present. Not being nostalgic is not necessarily a bad thing as show by Mr Tan, who looks to the future with a smile on his face!

MIR LIM CHONG SHEN

Written by Lionel and Elgin



Fondness, thankfulness, recollection and reflection are what comes to mind when Mr Lim was asked to describe what nostalgia meant to him. A man with a rich past behind him, he had much to share.

Recalling childhood memories is normally a difficult task for someone of his age, but Mr Lim remembers his easily. “I’m not sure if I was born laughing, or crying”, he recalls with a smile. He describes his childhood to be one that was full of joy, innocence and laughter, and very little sadness or anger; unlike most children who bawl at the most minor disturbances, Mr Lim’s tearful days were once in a blue moon.

Everyone can speak of a tale they were obsessed with as a child, and Mr Lim speaks of a classic fairy tale, the Three Little Pigs, a crown jewel among many other stories that captivated his young mind and never let go. He loved it so much that his aunt grew weary of repeatedly telling the same words to him. Yet the story’s spark never left his eyes, and his aunt would find ways to alter the plot for fresh new takes from the storyline. It went on for years, until he completely forgot the original plot of his beloved fairy tale!

All grown-up with an academic cap from the prestigious Hwa Chong Institution, Lim Chong Shen stood at the crossroads of life, and decided to go down the teacher’s path.

His first batch of students came at his alma mater, Hwa Chong. For 6 years, he taught English, ran 2 CCAs and multiple student camps year-round, being an omnipresent figure in school spirit. It was a lively place, with batches of alumni regularly returning to

school camps, even those who had graduated years ago. But he needed a new challenge and decided to move to the newly established NUS High School.

Having been a teacher in NUS High School since the very beginning, he chose the school for its unique and novel teaching environment. An avid motorcycle fan enthusiast always dressed in black; jokingly, he mentioned how one of the perks that drew him to the school was a sheltered car park to prevent his motorcycle from getting wet.

Who would have thought that the school would go from being completely focused on academics and devoid of extra curriculums to a lively place nurturing well rounded students with very strong school spirit and developing friendships with their schoolmates?

This humble culture shared amongst staff and students of always wanting to improve themselves is something he attributes to the growth of the school today. The school is still evolving and improving over time towards a more promising future.

“Teachers here often reminisce about their past, remember ex-students very fondly and feel special when an ex-student achieves something big, or when their alumni make huge personal improvements since their time as students.”

NUSH Alumni all remember the school very fondly now and contribute greatly to its development, even though some may not have liked their time here as a student, he mentions.

NUS High has been a big part of his life, with many precious memories to be cherished. To Mr Lim, it’s the school he hopes to retire in.

A vintage television set sits on a wooden coffee table, surrounded by books, a keyboard, 3D glasses, and snacks. The TV screen displays a copyright notice for 'The Great International Super' from 1988. The scene is lit with warm, low-key lighting, creating a nostalgic atmosphere.

PODCAST

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Best of Super
The new standard in super (this part of a whole team, with a special team
There is a special section here.



PHINEAS & FERB

Hosted by Rei & Lokesh

In the first of two episodes in our cca-wide Nostalgia newsletter, jog your memories of an irreplaceable green platypus and our favourite mad scientist. We discuss beloved childhood show Phineas and Ferb, just in time for it to come back with a new season. Songs, side characters and speculation all included

[Click here](#) to listen!



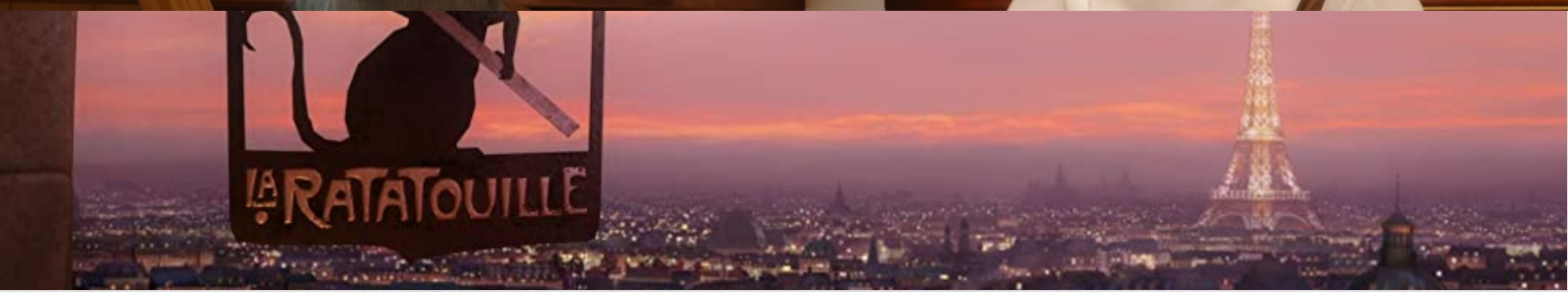


RATATOUILLE

Hosted by Aditi & Skylar

In our second episode, we delve into a quintessential part of our childhoods: Pixar movies! We discuss Ratatouille, little hair-pulling chef that won all our hearts. Tune in for themes, thigh-slapper jokes, and a TikTok musical!

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