





WRENDA GIBBARTS CHITRETTA VHS



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It's nearing the end of 2020. Yet there is still a pandemic going on, and a vaccine is still barely in sight. In other great news, MONGA FAN NO. 1 has just received their copy of the MONGA magazine.

FADE IN:

INT. MONGA FAN'S ROOM

A playlist is playing from a laptop/phone. A magazine is lying on the bed, open to a page of instructions.

INSERT - A PAGE ENTITLED "HOW TO READ MONGA"

The page has two Spotify codes on it that looks like the ones below.

MONGA Fan No. 1 READS OUT QUIETLY:

MONGA FAN

How to read MONGA. Enjoy this magazine with this playlist curated by the Editors of MONGA. Take a break from studying, curl

up and have a nice cup of tea!

In agreement, Monga Fan walks to their kitchen. In their mind, instead of tea, they would have their guilty pleasure, coffee spiked with a little bit of liquor. They always liked that warm funny feeling in their stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. MONGA FAN'S ROOM - MIRROR - CLOSE ON MONGA FAN'S FACE

MONGA Fan notices the slight bags under their eyes. They had been studying for a few hours, the digital screen causing the weary gray of eyebags. They had decided it's time to take a break.

PAN TO - MONGA FAN'S BED

Curling up on their bed, MONGA Fan reads the magazine, appreciating the beautiful aesthetics, pretty and well shot photographs, and the human stories. They can't wait for the year to be over.

FADE OUT.

SHATTERED GLASS PLAYLIST:



MENDED HEARTS PLAYLIST:





Image courtesy of MONGA 2019





Image courtesy of MONGA 2019





Image courtesy of MONGA 2019

JENAMA JUS No 1
Tropicana
DI DUNIA

Khasiat
Buah Sebenar

Tropicana
Twister

100% JUS
100% 2008



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en 3 dat zal...
me moet...
t gaat 3...
die wij he...
e rouw...
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rouw...
qua...
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dyomen...
pr. d'ou...
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a verdie...
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...te het uis...
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...en een...
...lo hij es...
...vooral...
...an de...



We live in interesting times, don't we?

Whether you read this through a little screen fitted in the palm of your hand, or physical pages held between grazed and calloused fingers; concepts seemingly too broad for our understanding—climate collapse; political strife; a global pandemic, still with no end in sight—plague us, yet we're still hard-pressed to deny that it's happening, just a little bit beyond our worldviews, yet more relevant than ever. It'd be even more terrifying to deny their implications.

But you're not here to read about our shared, impending doom. God knows we're not here to write about it, either.

Instead, let's talk about the little things that have been tiding us over, things that we've come to learn to appreciate. Let's talk about the *then*: study-turned-procrastination dates our academic transcripts regret, but we don't; late night FamilyMart runs, pouring our lives out over odens and sofutos; dozing off onto a friend's shoulder in uniquely cold lecture halls. Let's talk about the *now*: texting friends at 5.24am only to find they're just as much of an insomniac as you are; holding virtual mukbangs-turned-heart-to-hearts over Discord calls; picking out boba orders for friends over Grabfood, only for the delivery to find its way to the wrong household. So much has changed, and yet, nothing at all.

Let's also talk about the *better*: learning to engage ourselves in collective action, with a passion against injustices we've unveiled within ourselves; learning to listen, to elevate to the voices of people towards causes that matter more than ever before; learning to pay more attention to ourselves, what we need to ground ourselves in an endlessly ruthless, yet hopeful, world.

Because we're pulling out all the clichés today; every cloud has a silver lining, and if there's anything we should get out of this year, it's to be kind—fiercely and unapologetically kind—and to empathise with one another. Calling it hell is criminally lowballing the grief these times have caused many of us, but the fact that you're reading this now is a testament to the human spirit, *your* spirit, and the lengths pure kindness has taken us all.

So be excellent to each other, and most importantly, be excellent to yourselves. It's what the world needs now, more than ever before.

This is *Shattered Glass, Mended Hearts*. Thank you for perusing our humble little labour of love, created just for you. We hope you enjoy.

Yours, Editors 2020.

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HUMANS OF MONASH.

By: Christie Wong, Irshika, Ivan Liew, Jayshree, Jia Ying, Kieran, Ruben, Wei Shang, Xenia Lee, & Zoe Yap.

Content warning: death, mental illness, sexual assault, etc. If any of these themes may be distressing to you, please avoid this section of MONGA.

"A lot of people say you need to get over it, but you can never get over someone's passing, especially if that person is your family member. One of my relatives told me, you just have to take it one step at a time; you'll never move on from it, you just deal with the pain one day at a time."

- Hyqel

43

KODAK PORTRA 400

12

KODAK PORTRA 400

43

KODAK PORTRA



1



2



"I want people to get to know me first then what happened because it's just one of the many unfortunate things that people can go through, but it shouldn't be something that defines them. It's possible to get back up from traumas like that and go on with their life. At the very least, this is what I'm doing."

- Clary

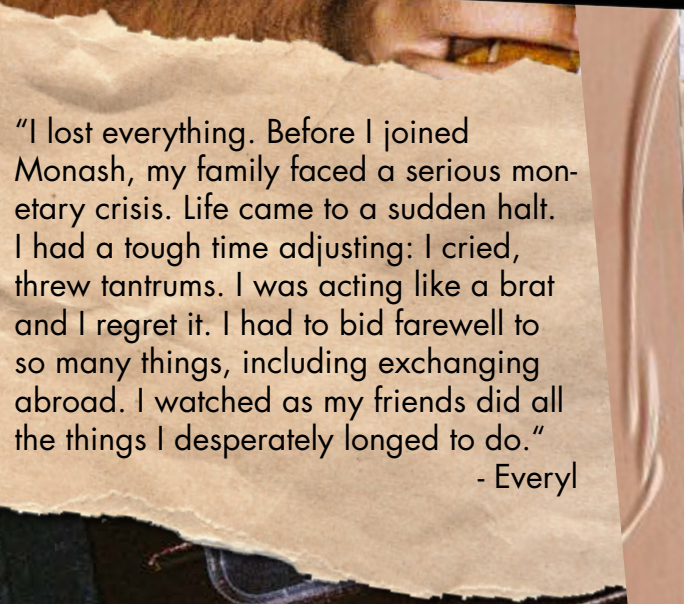


"Months after my trip, tragedy struck. One moment, the cities were bustling and lively. Chatter and cheers filled the streets as street performers gathered to entertain. Attractions filled with such reminiscence and beauty. The next thing you know, the streets became deserted and eerily silent as people retreated into the safety of their homes."

- Rowena

"When someone tells you that you can't do anything, they're wrong. Because only you can tell yourself that, and only your own intuition and hard work can define how you're going to end up. You don't know how good you are until you actually try."

- Gavyn



"I lost everything. Before I joined Monash, my family faced a serious monetary crisis. Life came to a sudden halt. I had a tough time adjusting: I cried, threw tantrums. I was acting like a brat and I regret it. I had to bid farewell to so many things, including exchanging abroad. I watched as my friends did all the things I desperately longed to do."

- Everyl

Note: you can read these full stories on Instagram @musamonga.

Inspired by Humans of New York, our photographers and writers document the people of Monash, one story at a time.



Christie.

I'm diagnosed with clinical depression and severe high functioning anxiety. For 20 years, I didn't know how dismissive I was being towards myself. I was obsessed with always, looking fine, not letting what I go through define me.

During A-Levels, I didn't have any permanent friends nor did I have a typical 'gang' to hang out with. I was basically a leftover person in the entire class of 45 people where I fit in nowhere, shunned to the seat in the corner in every single class I went to.

I developed severe anxiety every time I went to class. I stopped going to classes early to avoid waiting outside alone while everyone else would stand together with their friends, timing my journey from my dorm to college. Even if I did arrive early, I would spend most of my time in a toilet cubicle hiding.

I never really came out from my mental illness during my college days but I knew I didn't want to have any more days where I would wake up disappointed, wishing I didn't.

This story isn't here to say that I'm weak minded. I want to let everyone know that you are not alone, when you feel like everything in the world is going against you and everyone is out to get you. We are meant to be survivors. My counsellor told me 'A lot of people have to be strong as well, but they choose not to be. They choose to let their circumstances control them, you didn't. You picked yourself back up on your own. Always be grateful for that'.

I'm working on it. One day, I'll get there.

12

KODAK PORTRA 400

43

KODAK PORTRA 400



Liyana.

"I was on a plane before I could remember walking. Knowing how to cycle goodbyes and hellos was in my blood from a very young age. My life was constantly uprooted as I followed my parents 'country-hopping' for my dad's work. At first glance, it sounds like an incredibly rewarding adventure, of which it is. I was privileged to be exposed to so many different cultures and people.

However, I had no fixed national identity. I was an amalgamation of Germany, Canada, India and Philippines: a unique blend of cultural norms. Even though my parents are Malaysian, I couldn't call it home because I was raised in equal parts elsewhere.

Yet, how could I call myself Filipina when I couldn't speak their native tongue? My relationships with my cousins crumbled due to language barriers and other frustrating ethno-religious factors. Rejecting my Malaysian identity, I tried to be more 'Westernized'. I believed it equaled progressiveness and comfort.

Returning to Malaysia (and not knowing when the next goodbye will be for the first time) made me acknowledge the problematic notion behind that ideal. I found solace in people struggling with similar identity issues and 'fitting in'. I realized something: being a steadfast, proud Malaysian doesn't take anything away from my life in other countries. I still carry the pieces of who I was in everyday doings. To those facing similar plights, embrace the confusion. Be as open as you can be. Find out which puzzle pieces make the best you."

"Staying alone in a foreign country during a global pandemic has made me realize how many things I took for granted.

Not being around my friends for most of my day and not hanging out with them makes me sad. The little things like taking a walk at night, going to get some beers at Rock Café or spending the whole night on campus and drinking chai with my best friends are not so little after all.

My friends are a big part of my life here. They are always up to have fun and do the most random things. I never thought about the impact that they have in my life; they are the ones who cheer me up when I'm sad or need a break from studying all day.

I'm learning to appreciate things that I would usually not even think twice about. Waking up and seeing ducks from my window makes my day. Little things like cooking with my flatmates who I barely spent time with before, watching Korean dramas and dancing to old Bollywood songs make me so happy. Even blasting songs in my room, dancing with my banana plushie and eating oat crunch cookies cheers me up.

Long phone calls at 2AM with my boyfriend, Netflix Partying Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham and doing random push ups on FaceTime made me appreciate the little moments that we usually don't think much of in a relationship. Instead of thinking that my life is on hold, I've started to live in the moment and have fun."



Sakshi.

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Do you know how it feels like to love something so much but have to suffer because of it? Bear with me, it's a bad analogy, I know, but that's how I feel when it comes to singing. I love performing, but because of my anxiety, I used to not be able to fully enjoy myself. All that overthinking was what made me doubt my abilities as a singer. In fact, after rehearsals during a school event, I ran straight to the toilet because I had a literal breakdown. All those voices in your head telling you tons of negativity, the discouraging and draining type. So, I stopped.

It wasn't until recently in uni that I finally had the courage to start performing again in front of audiences. I'm forever grateful to the true friends that have stuck by me through thick and thin. When they heard me sing, they encouraged and pushed me in the right direction. I may not be as good, but I know I'm not bad either. Our first gig was at SMR and even though I was feeling hel-la nervous, I'm still glad I did it. Performing on stage, having the spotlight on you, it's just, other-worldly. The world would just fade away and I felt at peace.

I had relationship issues -both platonic and romantic. Singing in a way was therapeutic and helped me find my bearings again. I just can't wait for this pandemic to be over. I miss my friends and the jam sessions. The silver lining here is that our band is in the process of composing some originals and we are looking forward to performing once more. Let bygones be bygones and keep moving forward.

Qistina.





Melody.

"Your mental illnesses don't make you less worthy in any way. That's a lesson I learned too late.

Three years ago, I was in love. It was genuine, true and everything I could ever wish for, but I was oblivious of it until I no longer had it. I had to lose him to see what I'm worthy of. Had I just believed in him for choosing me, had I just believed that I was good enough to be able to love someone, I wouldn't be haunted by my mistakes.

I kept lying to myself that I was doing fine, but the whole time, I was in constant war with the voices in my head, and more than often, I was at the losing end. Needless to say, the voices appeared to be stronger than my feelings for him. I began ignoring his texts, avoided him, and eventually pushed him out of my life without any explanation. I loved him so much that I had to let him go - let him be free - because he deserved more than someone who is struggling with herself

Truth is, everyone's broken to a certain extent. The difference lies in how you deal with it. I'm still in an intense battle, but this time, stronger and better. I so badly want to undo my blunders, but they're all in the past. I can only write about my pain in sheer hopes of it helping others. Your illnesses only define you if you let them. You're equally capable of loving someone wholeheartedly - don't let your demons take that away from you!"



Indunil.

"Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your actions".

Travelling between countries has not been the easiest, but I've learned to come in terms with it: Sri Lanka, Qatar, England, back to Sri Lanka and now, Malaysia. Every time I'd adjust to a new country, meet new people, and make great friends, and then it's only a matter of time until I'd have to leave everything behind once again. Slowly but surely, I've learned to get used to things and be grateful for all the opportunities, memories, and experiences that I'm subjected to. I want to be remembered as someone who had a wonderful time living life, not someone who's miserable with uncertain changes.

I'm always intentional to spark some good energies wherever I am. Happiness, to me, means everything and that's all I care about. It's what I like to project out of me to other people.

I've vividly learned to adjust to different cultures and people - which has helped me grow so much as a person. Embracing everything we're fortunate to have in our life is undeniably the first step to freedom. Life is shorter than we think. We never know what tomorrow brings and all we have is now- so why not make the most out of it? Sure, you can be held off guard even at your best, but never fail to give optimism another shot; because, at the end of the day, that's what life is about. Besides, how else can we live life to its fullest potential if it isn't for its ups and downs?

"Ohana means family, and family is everything to me. There was this significant event that had particularly shaped me when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I was molested by a close family friend, and it affected me so much so that I became closed-off, grumpy, and basically a total bitch. It didn't help that I was an only child, I was so self absorbed and I had this complex where I just didn't give a shit about other people. Now, even though I never really told my parents the details of what exactly happened, they were able to connect the dots and were just very supportive and understanding overall which I am very grateful for. Regardless, I still felt ashamed and it caused me to isolate myself from everyone around me. Trust issues and what not.

It wasn't until 7th grade when I realized I couldn't continue living in fear and give him the power to control me. So, I had a major personality shift; my parents would say that I was being possessed by a nice demon now. I think they didn't say angel because I still had my rebellious moments while growing up. Eventually, I started being more vulnerable and opened up to people and just overall be nice to everyone. Fast forward to our first sem in uni, genders class had helped me to accept what happened, that it wasn't my fault and I can now say that I am in a good place where I'm surrounded by loved ones. Since then, I always try to be kind to everyone I meet, and keep in mind that everyone has some kind of shit they are going through; all pains are valid. Not everyone has the same pain tolerance.

Spread the love."

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and both flung the
car.
ward! Uncle Ed
nging to see you.
elightful thing was



Sneha.

MANCHESTER, MONDAY, JULY 21, 1963

@MONASH_WEIGHS

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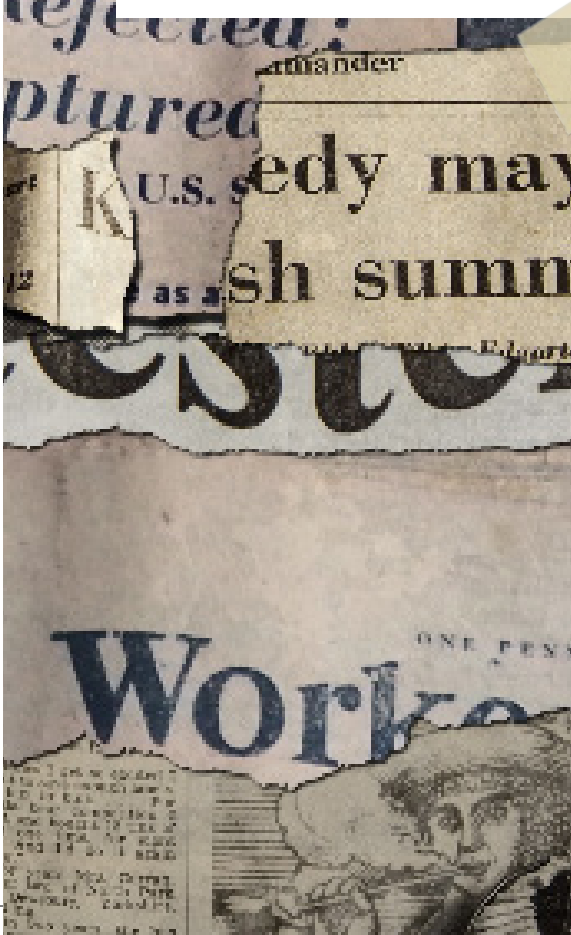
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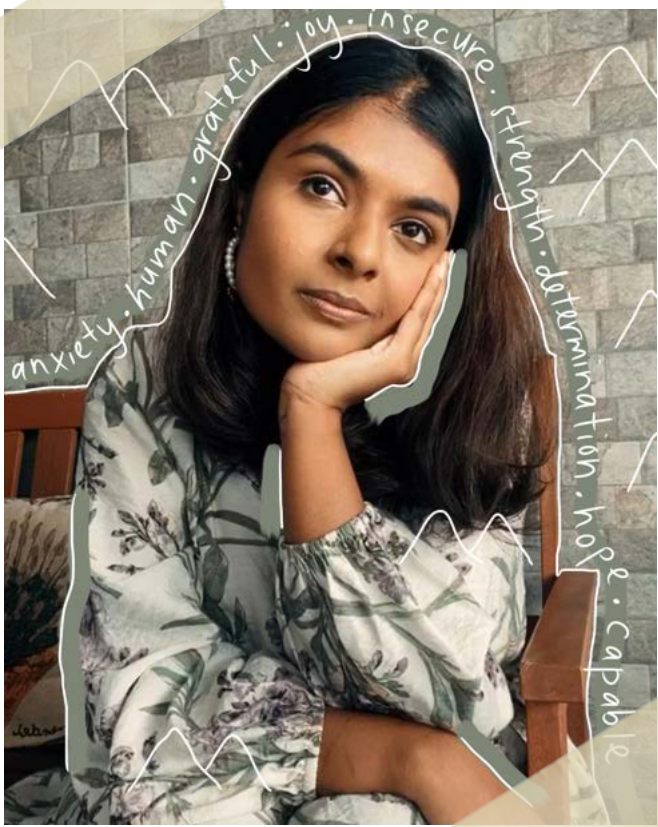
stories of overcoming adversity, inspired by @i_weigh on instagram
find their full stories on our instagram
@musamonga

BERT R. BROCCOLI &
HARRY SALTZMAN PRESENT

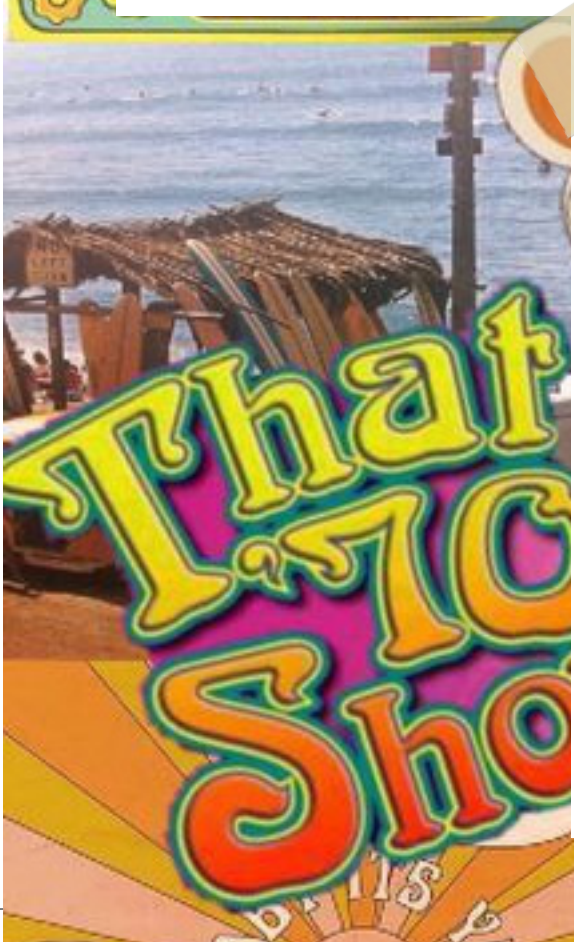
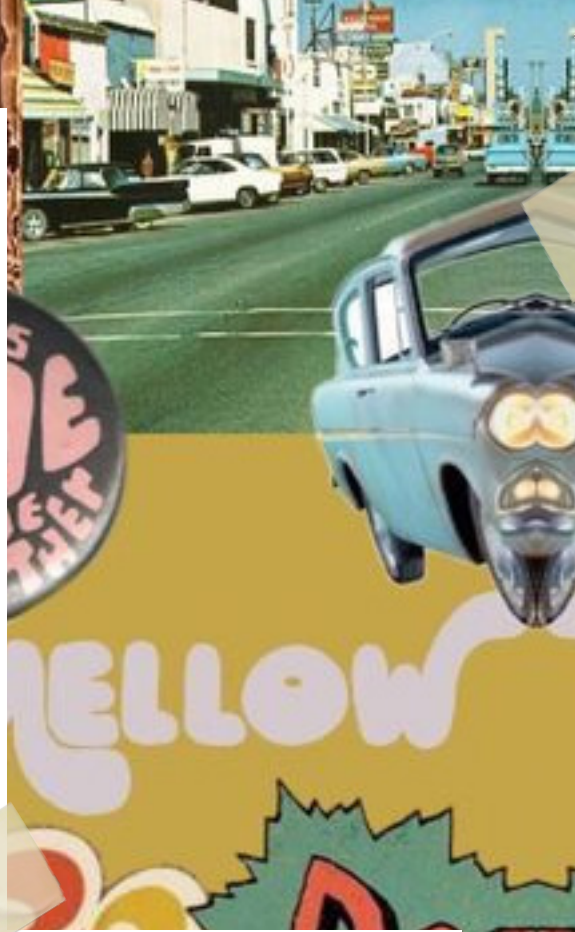
SUN REPORT
MRS. FLO
TAYLOR
koola bear Tutu
Wool Ber nancy
No one will
CUTTER

TECHNICAL
SCREENPLAY BY RICHARD MATHIN & PAUL DEN
PRODUCED BY HARRY SALTZMAN & BERT R. BROCCOLI
DIRECTED BY GUY HAMILTON - EON PRODUCTIONS LTD





anxiety · human · grateful · joy · insecure · strength · determination · hope · capable



support

expectations

hopeful

reinvention

pressure

new opportunities



INFP-T

intersectional feminist

perfectly imperfect

complex

empath

talkative

competitive

leader

people pleaser

easy going

friendly

passionate

naive

insecure

main character

loyal

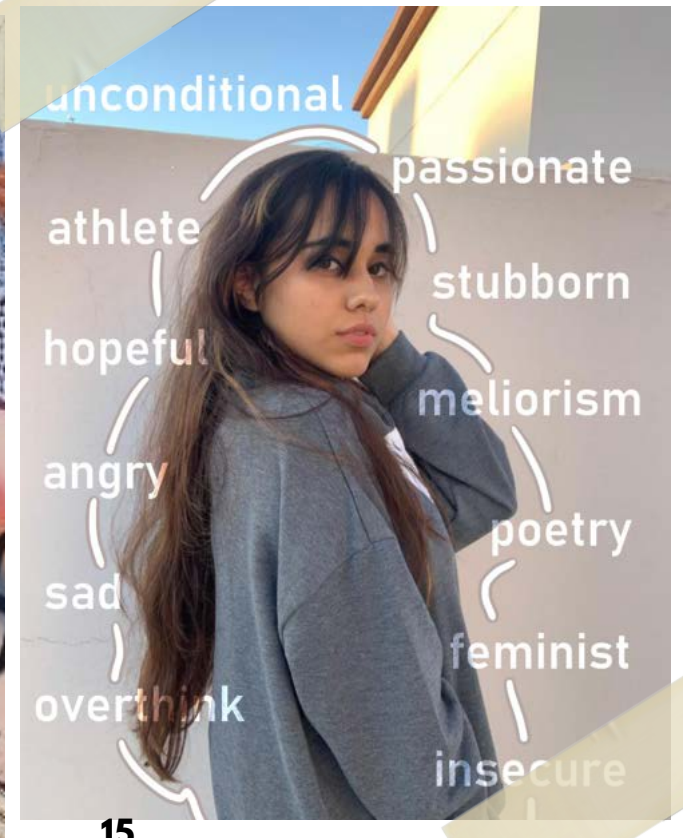
inner demons

overthinker

strong

selfless

honest



LET'S
GO
SURFING

APPRECIATE
WHAT WE HAVE
IN LIFE - & -
REMEMBER TO
HELP THOSE
IN NEED





TAKE
PRIOR?

The logo for 'mason' is displayed in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'm' is blue, 'a' is yellow, 's' is red, 'o' is orange, and 'n' is green. The letters are closely spaced and centered on the page.

mason

I think the hardest part about going to college was the part about fitting in. I look kinda Chinese, but I'm really not. And people would come up to me and start talking to me in Chinese, and I would be like "I don't speak that", and they would look at me in confusion and judgement. So I would start to just be not myself. I would be a different person, and it felt like shit.

Then I went to Monash, and I didn't know anyone. It was only nearing the end of my first year, I really rediscovered a side of me. I was involved with MPAC, Malaysian Performing Arts Club. I auditioned for the year end production, and I got a role! That was the turning point for me. I could be myself, and that was when I really started to *feel* university life. I found a clique that I could really just hang out with, be myself. I started to experience new things, meet more people, and have fun.

It was really the highlight of my uni life. I've worked on 8 productions in the last year, there's really a kind of fun and exhilaration when you're working on something that you're really passionate about. Getting out there, and showcasing your hard work. There's really something to be said about that.

Take pride in your culture, your heritage, where you came from. If people start to judge you, fuck it. You're unique the way you are. If you don't stand out, what's the point?



centre yourself around the things that matter



YANIKA

I was very thin when I came back from my student exchange. I was never very thin, but I really slimmed down when I was abroad, and it was because I was eating one bowl of rice a day with like one piece of chicken or something. I was always hungry when I was abroad, I spent less than 3 euros per week on food. When I came back, everyone was saying oh you're so pretty now. And when I started to eat again, three meals a day, my parents were like hey, be careful, you're gonna get fat.

I really hated it. Is getting fat going to ruin my GPA? It just reminds me of waiting for the clock to count down so I can eat. My friends are always worried about eating too much, because then they'll gain weight, they'll get fat. It's so uncool because it's not really getting fat they're worried about - it's being laughed at, it's being shunned, being not pretty. You have to centre yourself around the things that matter, like are you a good person, are you trying your best.

Especially now that everyone's confined to the house, there's fears of getting fat and being not-pretty, but I'm supposed to maintain my GPA, look for a job, be not-depressed and be skinny? One of these things literally don't matter. The culture in Malaysia is so strong that you are always watchful of how much you eat, and how you look in new clothes, or whatever.

I'm happy and healthy. I never want to stop myself from eating again. If you're hungry, you have to eat.



jack of all trades

reserved

independent

witty

athletic

charming

listener



ISABELLE

When I was younger, my dad would bring me along to his friendly football matches and I spent a huge portion of my childhood on the field, watching them. Ultimately, I grew interested in playing football. Although it started with football, my love for sports did not stop there and I dabbled into frisbee, futsal, weightlifting and even cheerleading.

Sports has often been regarded as a masculine activity. When I'm on the field playing with dozens of male players, I often get comments like 'you play very well for a girl' or people assume I wouldn't play very well simply because of my gender. I also get told that I should play less because playing sports makes me look less feminine. Having received these comments for years made me question whether I should stop pursuing traditionally masculine sports like football or weightlifting.

But I love sports and I love the way it makes me feel. Being able to play better than boys or being able to lift heavier than them does not make me any less of a girl. I'm proud of my athleticism and at the same time, I'm also proud of my femininity. You can be both feminine and athletic, without sacrificing one or the other. To me, if you enjoy playing the sport, there is no reason why you shouldn't be playing it. There is no gender in sports, and anyone can excel in it, regardless of gender.

THIS IS

passion for environment

Sentimental

confidence

idealistic

forgetful

honesty

resilience

perseverance

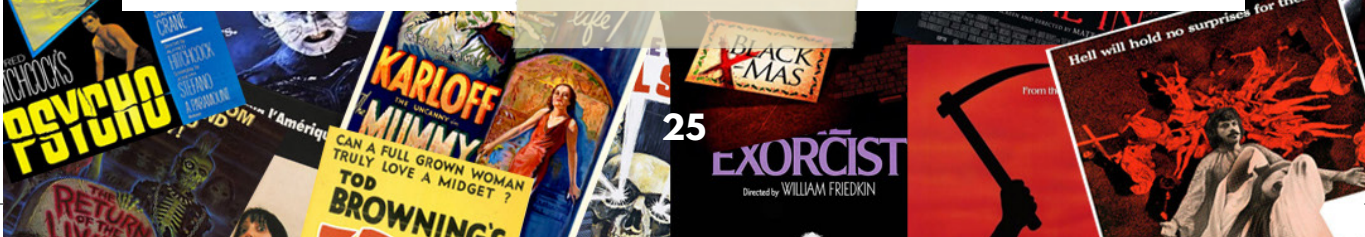


evon

I remember saving bits and pieces of leftover colour paper after every craft. I never thought about questioning the habit because it all seemed so logical to not waste an almost perfect piece of paper when I can easily reuse it for another time. But in school, I would see kids balling up sketch paper or tearing pages out of their books simply because it was just 'conteng' paper or their writing didn't look right. I would try to overcome my shyness and talk to them about recycling used paper instead, but to no avail. That would be years before sustainable living became more mainstream and widely practised.

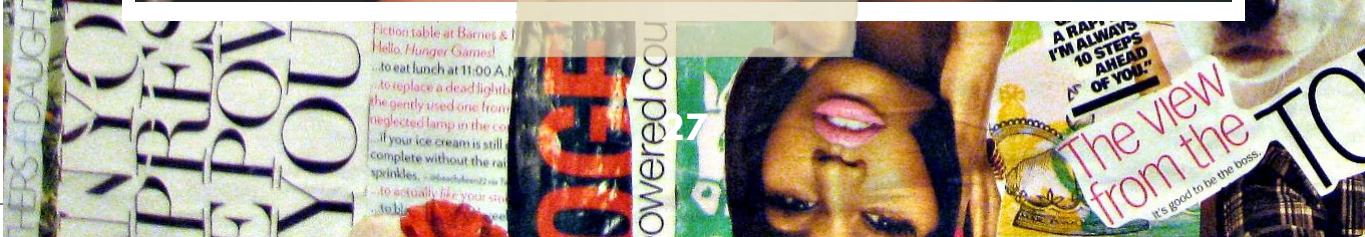
One of the biggest challenges and lessons I've learnt throughout my sustainable-living journey is that you can't force people to change their way of life. You can advise, but not dictate them on what they can or can't do. I learned that the best thing you can do is to lead by example and hope that people are inspired enough to do the same.

It's really important to remember that no one is perfect. There will be misinformation so a willingness to admit that you're wrong is important throughout this journey. There will also be times where buying from ethical and sustainable brands is financially impossible, but we're all just trying our best. I know that no amount of thrift shopping and plant-based eating can singlehandedly save the earth but please don't use this as an excuse not to care about the environment.





resilient · understanding · fighter · courageous · generous · kind · capable





NORIE

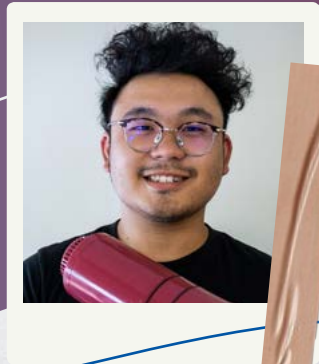
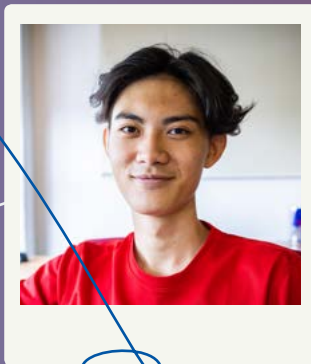
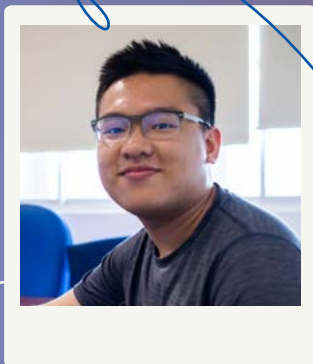
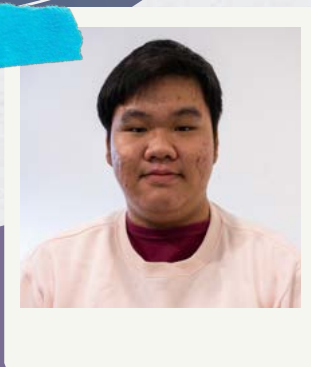
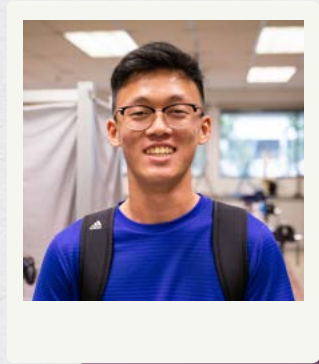
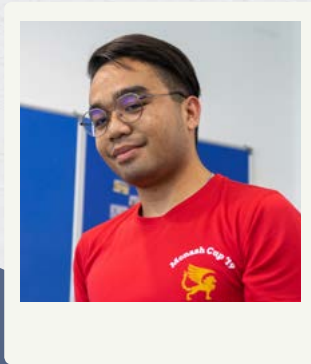
Someone once told me "Norie, your life is like a never-ending rollercoaster, when will it ever end?" and I have to admit, my life has been one hell of a ride. I transferred schools a lot and I got to meet and acquaint myself with a lot of people, but not all of them were good. When I was 11, I was severely bullied. I didn't know why or what I did to warrant the treatment I got, but I wanted it to end, so I thought why not please them? If I'm nice to them and try to be like them, then wouldn't they like me more and stop bullying me? So, I did. I was a people-pleaser back then, to an obsessive degree, desperately trying to fit into a group that I never belonged in the first place by putting up a constant facade.

I traded everything about myself for their acceptance, yet in spite of it all, their acceptance was as fleeting as my facade, it wasn't bound to last forever. Most of the people in my past either left or betrayed my trust, but I came to accept the fact that friends come and go, one true friend is worth a hundred fair-weathered ones. Looking back in hindsight, it would be a lie if I said that I didn't feel regretful over the friendships I've lost along the way. But, I realised that every step I've taken thus far has strengthened me and made me the person I am today.

My advice is to not dwell on past mistakes and learn from them to be better as a person. The only opinion that actually matters is yours, so never live under the shadow of others and be your own person because nobody else can dictate your worth and identity. Be the best version you can ever be, not because others told you so, but do it for yourself.

Portraits of Monash

By: Ivan Liew, Jia Yao, Khai Chen, Nadiah, Tatiana & Zara Abbas

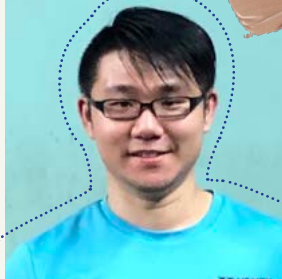


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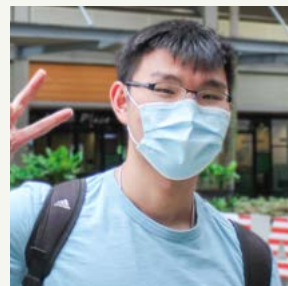


Portraits of Monash



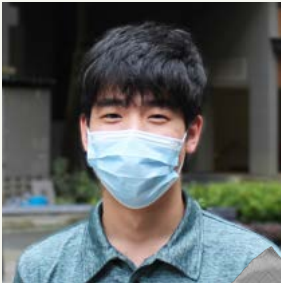
Portraits of Monash

By: Ivan Liew, Jia
Yao, Khai Chen,
Nadiyah, Tatiana
& Zara Abbas



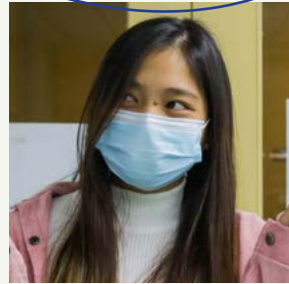
Portraits of Monash

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Portraits of Monash

By: Ivan Liew, Jia Yao, Khai Chen, Nadiah, Tatiana & Zara Abbas







PROJECT LOCKDOWN

BRUNEI



Just like that the sun returns to the horizon and takes the stillness of the world in its hand as it sets. It's daunting to experience the tranquillity of the vast sea and the empty roads. With hardly any car in sight, or people at the shore, various thoughts invade our minds with the constant fear of how the world has been in lockdown for over a month now. Brunei has become quiet, too quiet to accept it. COVID-19 has become a massive disruptor dictating the shutdown of countries globally. The impact of the pandemic has reached beyond those who are directly affected by it. Massive economies and businesses have both seen an unfavourable turn of events predicting an inevitable downturn which may become just one of the long-term effects of the virus. It is undeniable that our lives have tragically changed since the past couple weeks, however as humans we possess the ability to dominate our thoughts. Now is the time to focus on the silver lining; the peaceful roads, clear skies and the stillness of everything and the earth finally is breathing. Tough times should make us ponder about the uncertainty of life and how minute we are. Amid all the chaos, it leaves us in awe to realise how things may be a blessing in disguise.

— Mehar Allidina



Ever since the Restricted Movement Order in Malaysia - that has since been extended - other countries have soon followed, some have even taken a step further and gone into lockdown such as Brunei. The once iconic streets that promise a smooth drive throughout your journey are now deserted, leaving the lovely neighbourhood once full of life and vigor now looks like a ghost town. On the bright side, eco-fascists would be thrilled to celebrate Mother Nature healing our planet Earth from all the damage we have inflicted on it over the years. The sky has never been so clear and neither the sea so blue. Indeed it is a beautiful sight to see and heartwarming to know that the Earth is recovering. However, the truth remains, once this is all over, the virus has been contained and a vaccine has been found, will we revert back to our bad habits or will we be conscientious enough to care for the environment better? Know your facts, the innocent are paying the cost for others' greed. "How dare you" indeed.

— Xenia Lee

Life goes on, tentatively, as the sun sets over the South China Sea. With no difference as the rest of the world does, their daily routines start with a bit more caution, with a touch more thinking and for some, perhaps a sprinkle of discomfort and a sliver of distress. Underlying each thought, in layers, are the aftershocks of the aftershocks of the pandemic that has ground the world to a stop in screeching halts, in some places more than the others. To Kuala Belait, where a short distance to the west lies Brunei's completely closed borders, there is only that small change in attitude and outlook. Anyone can go out and relish the sunset on that beach vista, unknowing of the many who can not do the same.

— Wei Shang

JOHOR

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a white face mask and a white t-shirt, is shown in profile on the left side of the page. She is looking towards the right, where an empty road stretches into the distance under a cloudy sky. The road is flanked by trees and a street lamp. The overall mood is contemplative and quiet.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and in this case, a lot more is being said. The empty road, with not even a figure in sight, sums up the harsh reality we are forced to live in today. Sometimes it takes tough times like these to make us realise the importance of every moment and a thousand moments that just go by without even a thought. The multiple things that we cannot live without every day, yet we seem ungrateful for them. When this passes by, we will have a whirlwind of questions to ask whether we want to return to the normal life or bring some transformations in our new routine. We might wonder whether we can live without the things we didn't have during this period like vacations, clothes, or anything luxurious. It reiterates the idea that these times have altered our lifestyle.

After this, I hope we spend more time reconnecting with our families and friends, take more pictures willingly, start chasing our dreams and realise the gravity of just a touch, one last hug, in-person gatherings and all those little moments that we allow easily to slip from our minds. If anything, we should have learned from this, is that we need each other now more than ever.

— Mehar Allidina

Throughout the MCO, existential questions that plague us sound like: attend tutorial on Zoom or watch Netflix? When will it be over? The WiFi is slower than usual because everyone is home, our fathers keep buying the wrong vegetables, while we continue to resent how boring our bedrooms are getting.

What the MCO has really done is magnify a form of suffering that will remain invisible to us: social inequality. The pandemic has unpacked how wealth affects people, and the narrative that unpacking leaves you with is that poverty is being walled off in these trying times. Labourers and bottom feeders are stripped of their only means of survival: work. Many of them are paid by the day, meaning their wallets will be empty throughout the partial lockdown. Relief measures will cushion the fall of many, but not all. Those with no buffer (money, food or medicine) will find themselves in extremis.

And yet... true to habit, trivial thoughts emerge. When can I go back to the gym? I'm losing my gains.

— Patricia In



The hospital seems busier than usual. Nurses clutching clipboards bustled around and the wards were so crowded that it reminded me more of a busy bus stop than a healthcare centre.

I walked out and just as I was about to take a breath of fresh air: "Oi wear face mask lah!" I didn't know Malaysians could be that disturbed by my breathing mechanisms. It's not like I'm going to infect or anything. Moreover, what happened to the times when people would litter used tissues or spit on roads?

My stomach began grumbling, I walked to the nearest grocery store to grab something to snack on (Gardenia maybe?) Why is there a queue to enter a normal convenience store? I stepped back to look at the signboard just to make sure my mind isn't playing tricks on me. Nope, still Pasar Raya Ahmad.

Great, people are hoarding food now? Is it a TikTok trend or something? Like the one where people were wasting milk cartons. I sighed and picked up whatever that's left and called it a meal.

— Irishka

Social distancing seems like a common phrase these days. "Stand 1.5 meters away from everyone and everything around you!" It does seem to give out a bleak visual to accompany an even bleaker situation. However, I personally feel like social distancing is an act of solidarity. We agree to have barely any contact, physical or social, with anyone to protect ourselves, our families and our society. We cooperate and we work together, we have patience and we are kind to those who need help the most. Sundry shops that operate to serve our needs, making sure stock is enough to fill up their shelves for us, they deserve more credit than just being storeowners. Because of them, we have what we have in our kitchen right now, we are able to put food down on our dining tables and our family won't be going hungry during the 'lockdown'.

— Christie Wong



KUALA LUMPUR



Those brick red chairs whisk me back to another time - an entirely different place. The sounds of people shouting out orders, humidity gathering itself on my skin in the form of sweat. The smell of char kuey teow and sizzling meat from a nearby stall. And most importantly - the burst of flavours on my tongue, jostling each other for room on my tastebuds.

All of that is gone now. The kopitiam is now devoid of chatter and noise, but silence screams louder than ever. What is left behind is a few stalls, shying away from one another like scared children. What is left is an owner of a chicken rice stall, struggling to sell more than a 100 packets each day, trying to encourage customers to visit for dinner too. Dwindling customers are silent behind the masks stretched across their faces. The difference between the kopitiam merely weeks ago and now is scary, strange, every fearful word there is. There are people longing to go out, and people longing to return home. There are people who are able to return but unable to touch their loved ones.

Hawker centres are a constant, something I've always taken for granted. I'm sure I speak for all Malaysians when I say I really, really look forward to the day it returns to what it once was - crowded, humid and familiar.

— Zoe Yap

EVERYWHERE ELSE

With love,
PORT DICKSON, KUANTAN,
CHERAS, SUNWAY

What was once a road packed with a glittering train of cars has now vanished into thin air - replaced with a lone car during 'peak hour'. Weeks ago, people would honk as loudly as they could, complaining into their phones about the traffic, eager to rush into a nearby restaurant for a meal. Such simple luxuries are a rarity now - instead, people rush out for necessities.

The glare of passing cars that once outshone the night sky have vanished, allowing beautiful purple-blue hues to flourish. Humanity has vanished temporarily but left behind the same sky full of stars. It stretches beyond our line of sight, across countries, across houses full of families crowded together in comfort. It stretches across hospitals full of nurses, wanting to help the best they can but aching to see their children back home. Humanity may speak different languages, but the people who make such an enormous sacrifice are truly the best examples of what it is to be human. After all, we are made of the same atoms; phosphorus, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen - the very same star stuff in the night sky.

— Zoe Yap

They say that nature will eventually reclaim what belongs to her, all it takes is just time. Now, two months into the movement control order, with one extension looming after another, overgrown shrubs are all that is within our sights, everywhere. It's truly a sight to behold, but equally terrifying how much some parts of our cities are starting to resemble a post-apocalyptic wasteland.



Things changed so quickly within the span of a month. Rewind time to a month back, and I was casually cruising down the alley with a pack of my other cat mates. Now? I'm confined to a cage, occasionally, I get to go out to see the Sun and answer nature's calling. When it's 8 PM, I see my master running straight in, locking up, chaining the gates of the house. He's itching to get out, he just can't stand sitting tight within the corners of his home. What about me? I've been doing this all day. At least, I'm getting more food, more time with my master.

Something tells me, despite the brevity of this extended lockdown that seems to be happening, I'm quite certain me and Captain America would gladly be able to say; I can do this all day. Maybe not all year long, I miss my daily hustle on the street. But I'll be fine, I'll get by, I'll be okay. For now, it's almost time to get back to my cat-nap.

– Ruben Joseph





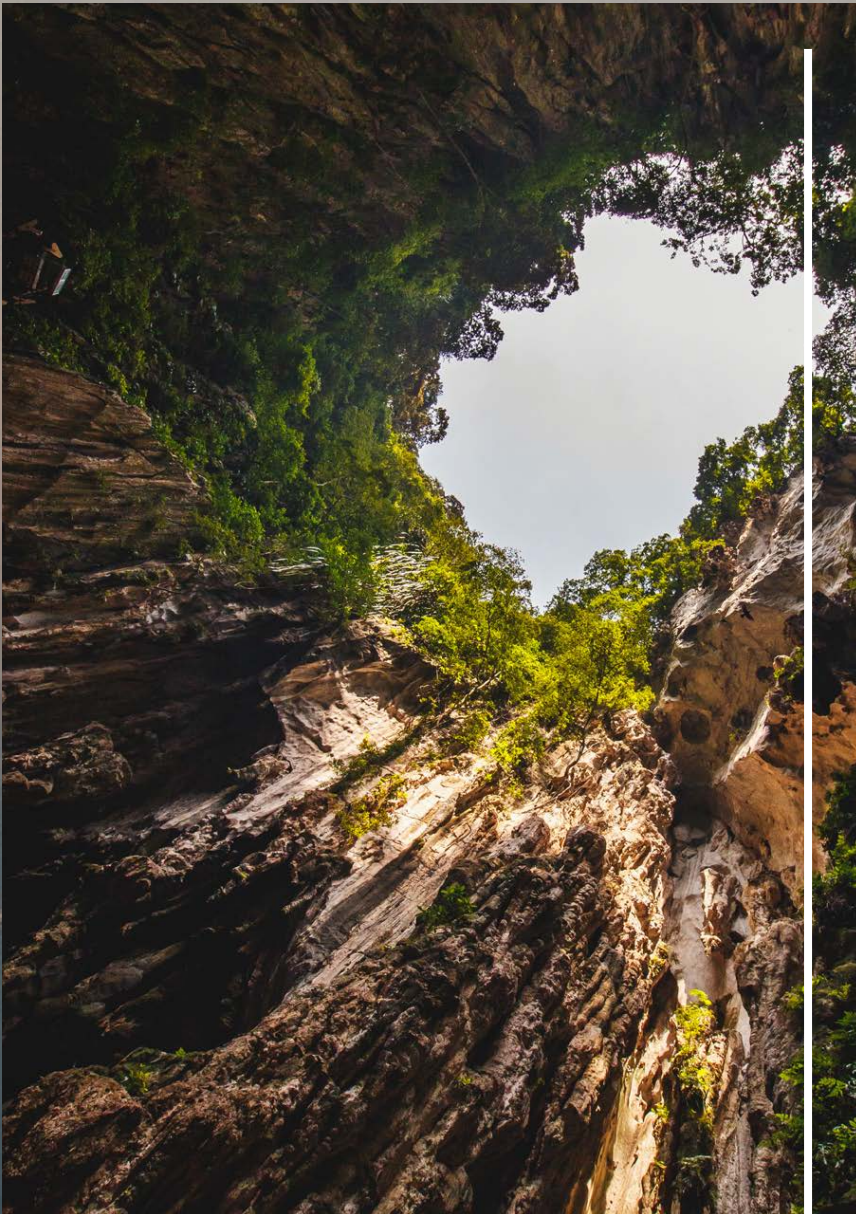
WARNING:

Images that you see may look too good to be real.



*bea-
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MALAYSIA



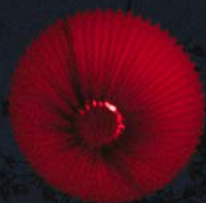
Kuala Lumpur

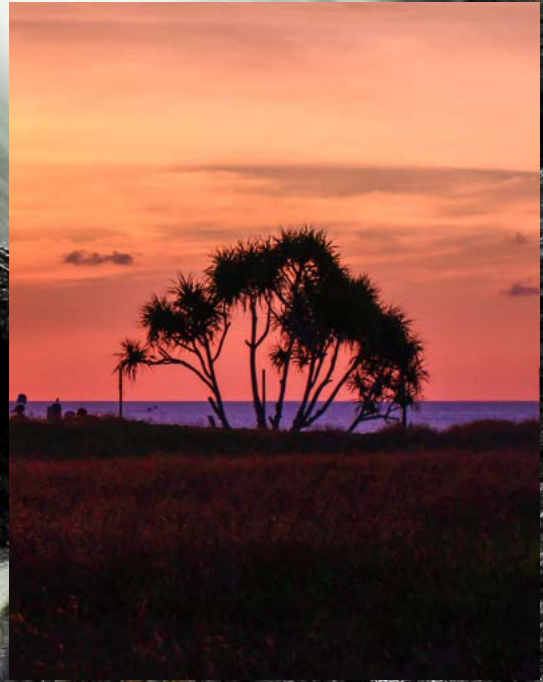
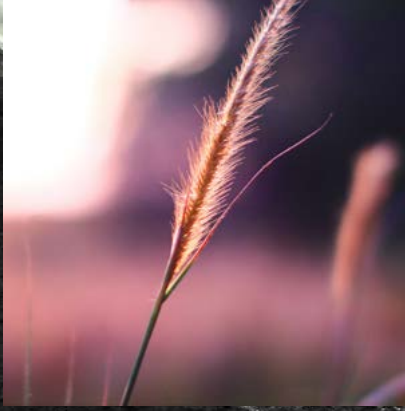
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Kuala Lumpur

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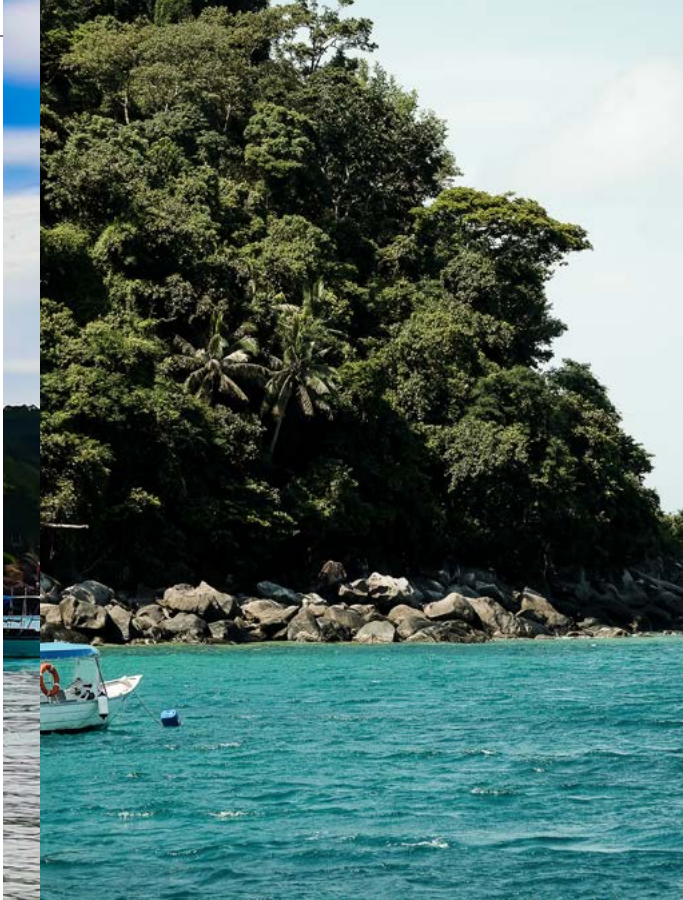






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Tioman

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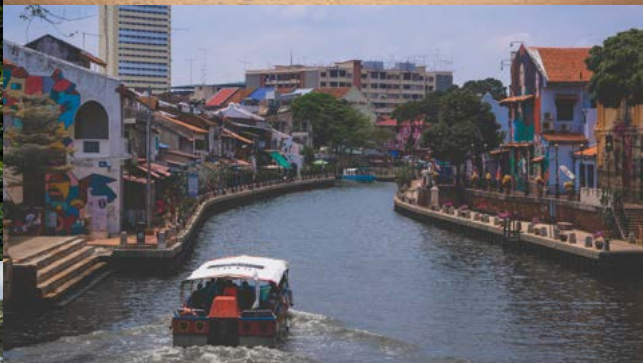


Cameron Highlands



07./



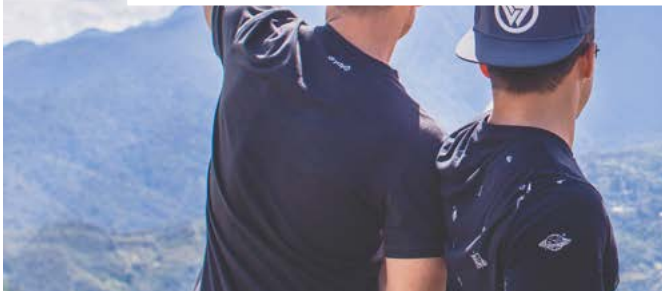


08./
Melaka



Kota Kinabalu

09./





Ba'kelalan
10./



Jalan-Jalan

in

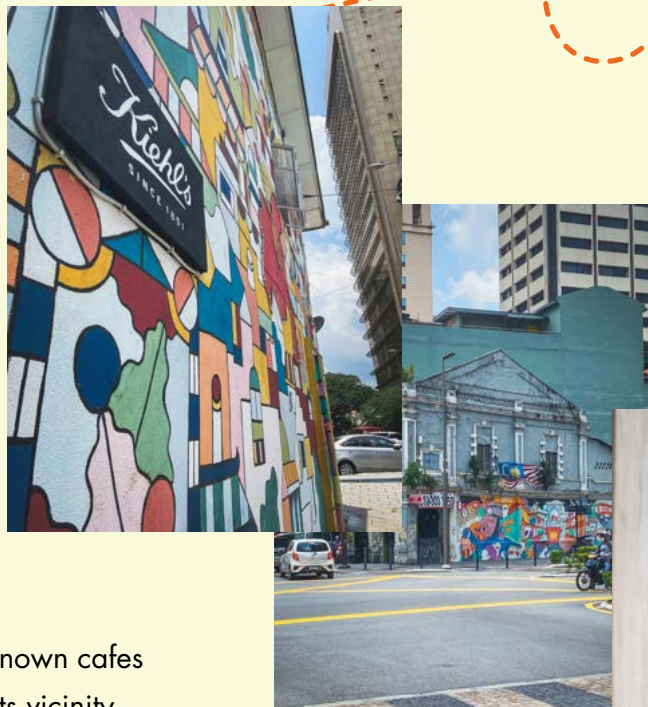
Kuala Lumpur

Written by Chua Jia Ying

Photographed by
Chua Jia Ying & Kieran Li Nair

Golden Triangle, Kuala Lumpur

Home to the busiest streets, tallest buildings and their own collection of stunning murals, including the Kiehl's mural. Yes, another one and this one lights up! The Golden Triangle of KL encompasses three arterial roads; Jalan Imbi, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Jalan Raja Chulan. It is the shopping, entertainment and commercial hub of Kuala Lumpur, with many well-known cafes and shopping destinations situated in its vicinity.



Merchant's Lane, Jalan Petaling

This beautiful cafe which exudes old colonial era vibes and aesthetics is one of the many unique cafes within the Golden Triangle. Merchant's Lane is an old-school cafe which serves hand-crafted teas and fusion-style cuisine at moderate prices. With its entrance tucked discreetly behind a bamboo shade next to a stationary shop, eagle eyes are a must-have to be able to spot it!





VCR, Jalan Galloway

For fans of modernism, the aesthetics of VCR is definitely up your alley. Situated in the outskirts of the Golden Triangle, the sleek, all-black exterior of this cafe is hard to miss. VCR serves a variety of handmade coffee and again, fusion cuisine. Their prices do not vary much from Merchant's Lane but the industrial-style cafe is certainly more spacious and calm compared to the former.

APW, Bangsar

Bangsar is the up and coming entertainment hub of Kuala Lumpur and this 63-year-old commercial printing factory sits right in the heart of it. This

industrial space is home to many cafes and the iconic concrete stairs on everyone's Instagram feed!



Niko Neko Matcha 1.0, Lorong Maarof

A stone's throw distance away from APW is Niko Neko Matcha's very first concept store, a matcha-lover's go-to place for matcha-based specialty drinks that pays homage to the traditional Japanese tea. Unfortunately, this particular branch was closed when we visited, but good news is, a second branch has since popped up in Bukit Bintang!



The Hive Bulk Foods, Lorong Maarof

The pioneer of sustainable and zero-waste shopping in Malaysia, The Hive has since expanded from a humble store front in a townhouse to 5 branches across Kuala Lumpur. This interesting shop was just a few stores down from Niko Neko Matcha.





Lisette's Cafe & Bakery, Bangsar

Merely a 5-minute drive away from Lorong Maarof, this cafe is tucked in a small residential street in Bangsar and offers a dining experience like none other. Lisette's is famous for its outdoor dining area where an iconic flower wall has been featured in the backdrop of many Instagram pictures. However, their 'Dining with the Stars' dinner programme is definitely romantic and unusual.



Sunbather Coffee, The Sphere Bangsar South

Sunbather Coffee sits in a refined and sophisticated lifestyle hub called The Sphere that is located south from Lisette's. This cafe serves Yoshoku (洋食) which are Japanese interpretations of Western cuisine. Enjoy a cup of exquisite, hand-crafted beverage while working, in this tranquilizing cafe.

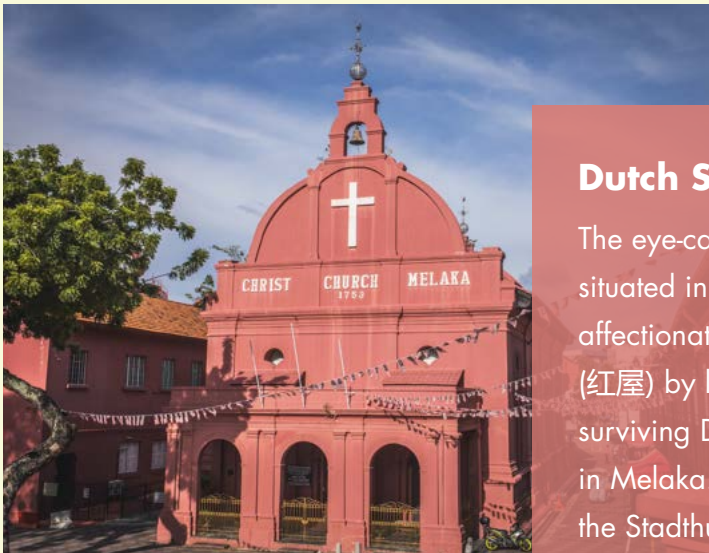


Jalan-Jalan

in Melaka

Written by Chua Jia Ying

Photographed by Kieran Li Nair

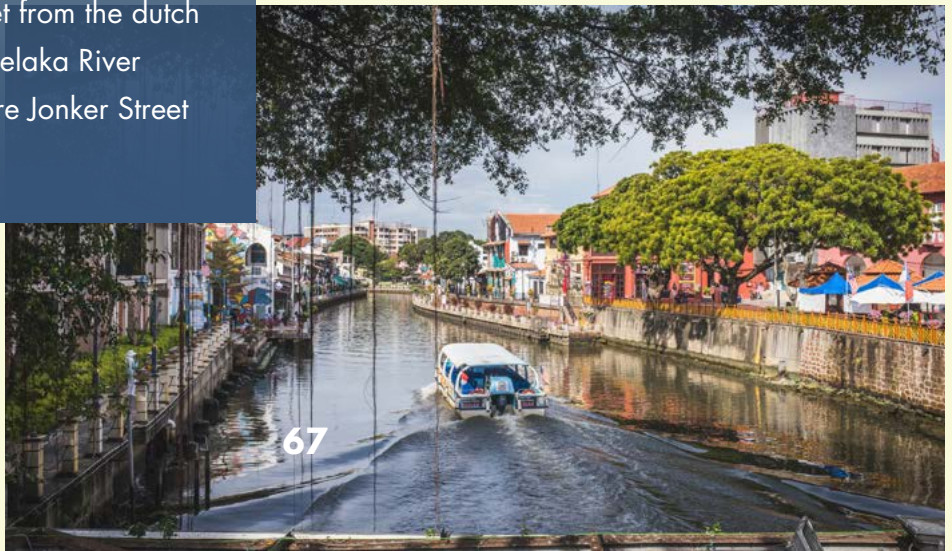


Dutch Square, Melaka

The eye-catching red buildings situated in the heart of Melaka is affectionately known as Hong Wu (红屋) by locals. These are the oldest surviving Dutch colonial architecture in Melaka. The Dutch Square includes the Stadthuys, a clock tower and the Christ Church, which is the oldest functioning Protestant church in all of Malaysia.

The Melaka River

Across the street from the dutch square is the Melaka River and this is where Jonker Street starts.



Jonker Street, Melaka

Jonker Street (雞場街) is the Chinatown of Melaka and was formerly home to the dutch colonists. Many years later, Jonker Street became home to Peranakans who started living there, but nowadays, it is undoubtedly the biggest tourist attraction in Melaka. Reminiscent of Melaka in the colonial-era, these antique store-fronts dating back to the 17th century encapsulates the essence of Jonker Street and Melaka as a whole.

Taman Warisan Dunia, Jonker Street

From the entrance of Jonker Street, there are two roads that you can take! If you head left for about 300 meters from the main entrance, you will find a memorial park located on your right. The centrepiece of the park is a sculpture of Datuk Wira Dr Gan Boon Leong, the Father of Bodybuilders in Malaysia, which is accompanied by sculptures of the 12 Chinese Zodiacs. This public park is a nice rest-stop for those seeking to catch a breath whilst in the midst of exploring Jonker Street.





Kiehl's Mural, Lorong Hang Jebat

Heading north-east from the entrance, along Lorong Hang Jebat, for about 75 meters takes you to a vibrant street art, the famous Kiehl's Mural! First of its kind in Malaysia, this lively mural makes a beautiful backdrop for your pictures.



Sin See Tai, Kampung Jawa

Sin See Tai translates to 'New Era' and it is a bijou cafe that shares the same founders with The Daily Fix and Sharing Plates, two of Melaka's most notable cafes. Sin See Tai carries a smaller and experimental menu that is vastly different from its sister cafes but shares the same rustic aesthetics. Coincidentally, when we visited, we

had the opportunity to order from their Tuesdays-only menu, which featured asian dishes only.



River Street Art

The Melaka River can be found behind the row of the store-fronts that is situated across the street of Sin See Tai. If you walk along the Melaka River, there is a collection of enchanting murals that is often overlooked and overshadowed by the Kiehl's Mural. If the renowned mural is too packed during weekends, you know where to look for alternatives!



Jalan-Jalan

in Brunei

Written by Wei Shang

Photographed by
Ivan Liew

This time, we're going a little ways out of our cozy peninsula, to the small nation-state smack dab in the middle of Borneo, Brunei!

A tad bit underrated, Brunei is host to cities and wildernesses on the same level as those we typically see in the many nations of South-East Asia, and today we're going to have a walk with pictures!

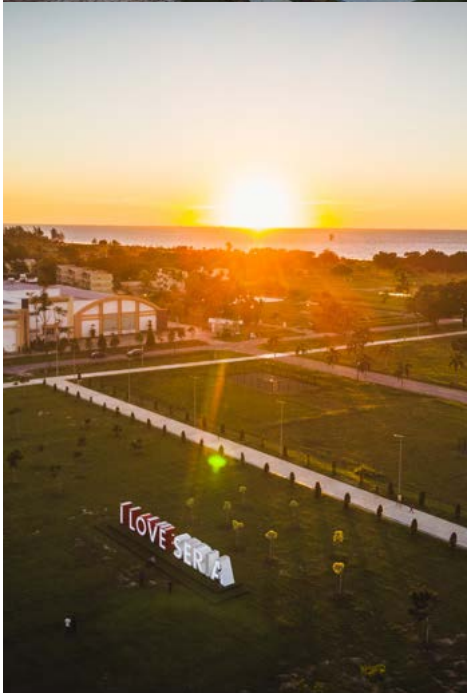
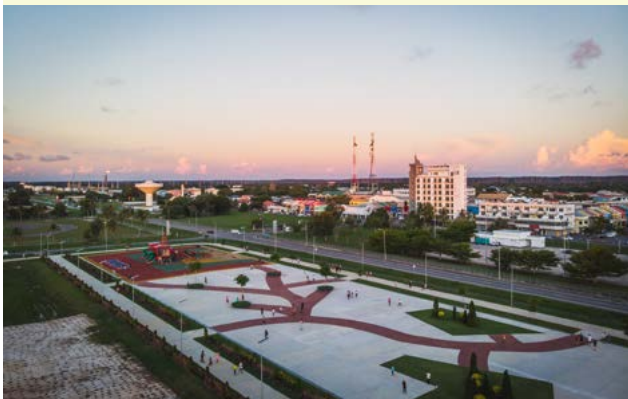


Seria

If you squint hard enough towards the horizon in the direction of the South China Sea, you can just make out the outline of an oil rig, unmoving in the sunset.

Oil was struck in 1929, and thus the petroleum industry of the nation was born. From swamp to town, the town's namesake has its roots from the British colonial era barely a century ago. According to the Historical Dictionary of Brunei, the name is an acronym "South East Reserved Industrial Area". In modern times, it serves as the beating heart of the oil and gas industry of Brunei, hosting the main oil companies of the country.

Despite being a grim reminder of the fossil fuel industry, Seria has the clean cut look of a modern town, with large green spaces and few cars, that those who love calm and serenity will love.





Alai Gayoh, Tutong

Deep in the jungles of Kampung Bukit Udai, there is a traditional Dusun house. Built on a small islet inside a small lagoon, it has a sense of rural charm; it blends into the background of the mature forests surrounding it, built on wooden planks that looked like it was sourced from its very surroundings. It was built in 2010 as an architectural replica of traditional Dusun homes, as its namesake stands for, Alai Gayoh translates into great house.

Its history stretches back two centuries, and throughout that era it would be frequented by researchers when looking for a place to stay during their varied expeditions to study the forests around, the forests being a tropical treasure trove-slash-time capsule of ecology. If the mind is green and curious, you can stay at this wondrous place, now a B&B for tourists.

A true reminder of our origins and roots.





Temburong

It's time for more beautiful green national treasures! Temburong is a national park on the extreme east of Brunei, next to the capital (southwards). I think the pictures are self explanatory, it's beauty unique, rivaling perhaps the vistas from the mid-peaks of Titiwangsa.

Ulu Temburong National Park covers about 550 square kilometers (twice the size of KL!) of pure, green wilderness. Now known as the "Green Jewel of Brunei", it's not to be missed if you ever end up in Brunei. It takes a 2 hour speedboat then overland then speedboat AND land route, but and I must say again, damn, is it worth it.





Bandar Sri Begawan

Our final stop, before you head back home on a flight (on Ivan's private jet), the capital of Brunei.

It has pretty much everything you want, the city and a beach. Besides the stunning display of architecture that is that bridge up above (a mouthful). The name of the city used to be Brunei Town, which is apt; the city represents what pretty much is Brunei: rich, spacious and pretty. Jerudong Beach, one of the three beaches nearby, has its own share of beach-specific beauty.

Hope you enjoy your *Jalan-Jalan!*



monash snapshots

in collaboration w/
monash photography club

i. friendship

9 KODAK 5062 PX
winner: @denishots



12 KODAK PORTRA 400

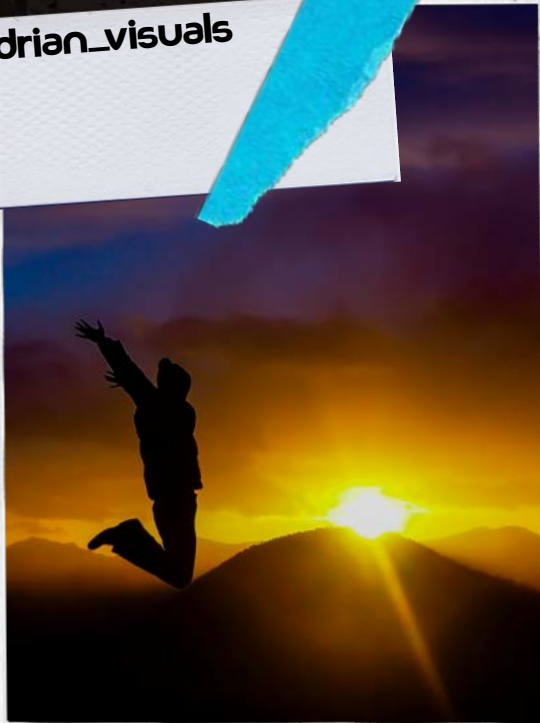
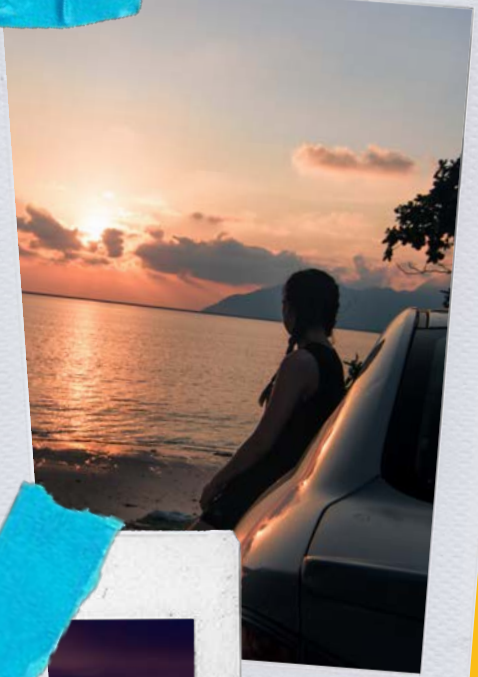
runner-up: @lyfestuff



ii. hope



winner: @adrian_visuals



runner-up: @praveenthomas

iii. pets

winner: @mochi.thepupper



winner-up: @sandertrr28



KODAK PORTRA 400

43

K PORTRA 400

LEICA M6



R





4th floor



entrance



back

front



sky

WARNING: MONGA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CRAVINGS INDUCED BY THIS SECTION.

MONCH!





MONASH COOK-OFF!

NOTE: SOME ARTICLES FEATURED IN THIS SECTION HAVE BEEN TRIMMED DUE TO LENGTH CONSTRAINTS. FIND THEIR FULL VERSIONS AND RECIPES ON [MUSAMONGA.COM](https://www.musamonga.com)!



MONGA FRIED CHICKEN

WRITTEN BY: CHEAH WEI SHANG

EDITED BY: CHUA JIA YING

PHOTOGRAPHY: IVAN LIEW

FREELoader: KIERAN LI NAIR

The conversation went something like this:

“Did you know there’s a restaurant called Monga that serves fried chicken?”

The Editors’ Team collectively: **Holy shit.**

On that note, we drove to MONGA Fried Chicken in SS15.

It wasn’t far from Monash, only needing a 15 minute drive. The place itself was at the most outer rings of the heart of SS15’s trendy/overpriced district, its aesthetics matching the vibe of the district.

You’d think that MUSA Monga had hit it big, to have a restaurant named after us. We had the opportunity to talk to the owner and found out that the restaurant is actually Taiwanese-owned!

With that being said, it turns out the name of the store was inspired by the 2010 Taiwanese movie, 艋舺 (romanized: beng kah) starring Ethan Juan and Mark Chao amongst many others.

Okay, we have to admit, we didn’t know much about the restaurant besides its name. Turns out, it’s a really premium version of Shihlin’s (which we’re sure you’ve heard of it) chicken. Costing at least RM16 and above for a single piece of chicken, with sets upward of RM20, the mind will balk at the price, especially for the starving student.

Once we got past the reality of how expensive our dinners were going to be, we quickly placed our orders at the store-front. There are 6 flavours of fried chicken on their menu which you can choose from and you can opt to make your meal into a combo with their wide selection of sides and drinks.

Here's what we ordered:

1. The King (seasoned with Salt & Pepper) RM14.90
2. Hot Chick (Homemade Chili Powder) RM14.90
3. Taiker (Japanese sauce and Seaweed) RM14.90
4. Chee-Z Signature (Cheese & Tomato sauce) RM17.90

Since we topped up for a combo meal, we also got to try out some of their sides and drinks:

Sides: Seaweed Chips

Drinks: Black Dragon (Brown Sugar Bubble Milk Tea) & Green Dragon (Matcha Bubble Milk Tea with Brown Sugar)

Once we've placed our orders, we moved inside to secure ourselves a table. Early impressions were that the place was not at all suited for large groups. Our group of 4 had to squeeze into a small round table. The tiny store was split into a seating area and an open kitchen where you can watch your dinner being prepared. Although an open kitchen, ventilation was good so we didn't leave smelling entirely like fried chicken. Overall, the atmosphere was nice – well lit, not too noisy and air-conditioned. And the toilet was unanimously voted pretty good.





Customers are supposed to self-collect their orders at the window once their number is called, so no service crew bustling back and forth in the tight space. Service took a little longer than we expected but we assumed it was because we came during dinner time and the restaurant was packed with a good amount of customers then. But hey, as long as we got our food, it's no biggie!

But the chicken, boy o boy, the chicken. It was literally the juiciest piece of chicken this author has ever eaten. And it wasn't small either, the whole piece being larger than the size of our four combined fists. The generous portion size had the girls struggling to finish their chicken. If you're a small eater, we'd recommend you share!

Though, the seasoning only earned a not-bad, with Hot Chick not being nearly as spicy as we had hoped for, and the cheese in Chee-Z tasting only a little dissimilar from store bought. The Taiker was seaweedy but a touch too salty like the original, The King. While the crust of the chicken fell short in the seasoning criteria, it was a 10/10 in the crunch criteria. The same goes for the seaweed chips we ordered. The cut of the chips was thicker than your usual McDonald's fries but in terms of seasoning, we couldn't really taste much of the seaweed.



As for the drinks, they were pretty standard brown sugar bubble tea, their sweetness balancing out the saltiness of the chicken. One thing we noticed was how many pearls were in that cup! It was literally a never-ending chain of pearls, you could take a minute long sip and the pearls would just keep coming. But, if you don't have much of a sweet tooth, these drinks might be too overwhelming for you.

The consensus was "not-bad-pretty-good, will come again". Despite having to squeeze together on one round table, all of us ended dinner with more-than-filled and extremely satisfied bellies. We vowed to come again, but only if it were free!

Food – 7/10

Ambience – 8/10

Service - 7/10 (for service time), but 10/10 (for the friendly staff members!)

Toilet – 9/10

And with that, we're proud to say, Monga Fried Chicken is... MONCH approved!



MONGA Fried Chicken

Operating Hours: 11am–11pm (Mon-Thurs, Sun), 11am–12am (Fri, Sat)

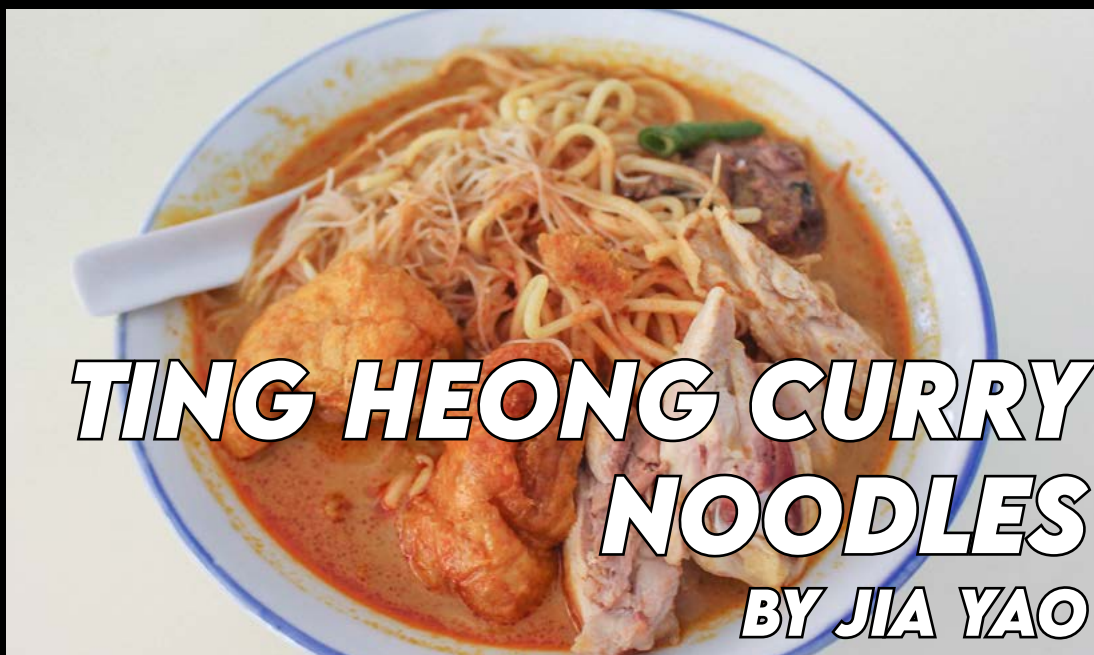
Address: No. 46, Jalan SS 15/4d, Ss 15, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor

Contact Number: +60 12-901 5558

Online Orders: https://mongakl.oddle.me/en_MY/



MONCH! DAPAO EDITION



TING HEONG CURRY NOODLES BY JIA YAO

CURRY CHICKEN NOODLES

- ◇ Curry was not too spicy, suitable for people who can't handle spicy food
- ◇ Gave generous amount of clams, noodles, chicken (might not finish noodles)

CHAR SIEW MEE W/ MINCED PORK

- ◇ Minced pork was delicious, chewy
- ◇ Generous amount of char siew
- ◇ Sauce were provided adequately on noodles; Not too dry
- ◇ Char siew was well seasoned and crisp





SALTED CHICKEN RICE

- ◇ Salt on chicken not evenly distributed; some pieces saltier than the others
- ◇ Rice is slightly dry, great if more gravy is provided
- ◇ A little too salty (personal taste)
- ◇ Generous portion of everything
- ◇ Texture of chicken was great

CHAR SIEW FAN

- ◇ Well seasoned, perfect amount of salt
- ◇ Crisp
- ◇ Generous portion
- ◇ Rice was dry

OVERALL

Generous servings for everything; rice was a little dry. Reasonably priced, especially delivery fees. (Can look up on FB for exact amount).

Tin Heong Curry Noodles

Address: No. 26GF, Jalan Perdana 2/3, Pandan Perdana 55300 Ampang, Kuala Lumpur

Contact Number: +6011-1870 9818

Facebook: Tin Heong Curry Noodles - 天香咖喱面



LAU TEE KUEY TEOW

BY JARED AND TATIANA

Lau Tee Kuey Teow has been around since my grandma's generation. The store's recipe of delicious mee pok has been passed on to generations.

Despite it not having a fancy store, many customer's still visit it till this day to get a taste of its springy mee pok.

Mostly the older generation, visit the shop with their friends to remind themm of those nostalgic years. Their springy noodles with the hot yet not so spicy chili sauce makes their mee pok savory. Combined with their home-made fishballs and meatballs, this tasty yet affordable dish remains famous in Johor Bahru.





Their kuey teow is also one on their famous dishes. The difference between their store is that they add bean sprout (aka taueh) into their soup.

While this might have some two-sided opinions, it surely remains a characteristic of their store.

Teh tarik is one of the traditional drinks of Malaysia. Mixed with tea and condensed milk, giving it the tea bitterness but sweet taste of condensed milk. It is an iconic Malaysian drink that everyone loves.



Restoran Sin Kee, a 30-year old restaurant established in the heart of Brickfields, KL.

The restaurant's signature dish is it's Hainanese Steam Rice. Super mouthwatering

- ◇ White rice steamed with pork, fishcake, squid and egg and vegetables.
- ◇ Covered with thick sauce
- ◇ Best eaten as soon as it is put on the table, does not taste as good if kept for some time

SWEET AND SOUR PORK

- ◇ The portion of meat provided is worth the price
- ◇ Meat is tasty
- ◇ The sauce is thick and delicious
- ◇ Overall better than most restaurants I've tried

Both costs Rm 11.50



SPADES BURGER

BY SHAUN

Spades is honestly the way to go when you're craving juicy burgers. I got the chickenception combo with fries and the beefception with the porkers and owh boy it was a mouthful. Here's my take on it.

The chickenception was extraordinary, and before you think that's a stretch it's cheesy goodness and its crunchy savoury bacon bits will prove you wrong.

The porklets that came with it however tasted like the good old chicken nuggets, not much of a wow factor.

Now, the beefception on the other hand was good but quite dry. When topped off with the BBQ sauce provided, it was a little too sweet for my liking but if you're into the sweet-sour vibe you're absolutely going to love it. Overall the portion was decently sized, more than filling and if you're a first timer let's just say you're first bite is going to be a memorable one.



The Daily Fix is a hidden (literally) gem situated in the heart of Jonker Street, Malacca. Since its establishment in 2014, the café has remained one of the most popular and recommended cafes in Malacca City. It is almost always packed with customers and its success has paved the way for two more branches to be opened by the masterminds behind TDF. The entrance to the café is discreet as it is tucked away behind a souvenir shop. These days, it would be hard to miss as there will be long lines of hungry patrons waiting outside for a coveted seat within the popular café.

As you make your way towards the dining area, the rustic architecture and artfully arranged vintage décor instantly send you time travelling back to the old days.





The Daily Fix is certainly captivating to look at, but what truly catapulted the once relatively unknown café into its massive stardom is its specialty, the 'Pandan' Pancakes.

The Pandan Pancakes (RM13.00) are made with fresh pandan juice, directly extracted from the leaves of the plant. It is served with 'Gula Melaka', otherwise known as palm sugar, and dusted with powdered sugar. The texture of the pancakes was moist and airy to the bite. They were fragrant and had a mild sweetness on their own. When paired with the gula melaka, they tasted saccharine, almost, but the two elements complimented one another impeccably. With five pieces on a single serving, we highly recommend sharing if you are a light eater!

The Daily Fix also offers an assortment of other dishes, mostly western breakfast/brunch dishes but some with a local twist. We tried another item on their menu that was highly raved about – Eggs Benedict. The Eggs Benedict (RM18.00) is two poached eggs, chicken bacon, tomatoes, eggplants, and their in-house hollandaise served on ciabatta bread with salad on the side. Yes, the eggs were perfectly poached and the hollandaise is rich, creamy, and tangy to the taste, complimenting the natural flavours of the other ingredients on the dish.





During our visit, we also tried the Creamy Carbonara (RM17.50), which is your classic carbonara pasta topped with mushroom, chicken ham, crunchy smoked duck, poached eggs, and shaved parmesan. The carbonara sauce was silky and muted, giving way to the smokiness of the ham and smoked duck to shine through.

Writer's Note: As the self-proclaimed carbonara addict, I am truly impressed at how the flavour and consistency of the sauce turned out. Carbonara can often overpower the flavour of the other ingredients, but that was not the case with The Daily Fix's. The taste was muted but not bland and I believe it was made that way to bring out the flavours of the ham and duck.

We visited rather early in the day and there was no way we could leave without trying the TDF Big Breakfast (RM24.00). The Big Breakfast had toast, scrambled eggs, gourmet chicken sausages, chicken bacon, baked beans, and salad on the side. The toast was buttery whereas the scrambled eggs were light and airy. However, the chicken sausages were a tad too salty.

To wash all of that down, we ordered the Salted GM Coffee (RM12.00) and the Mango Passion smoothie (RM13.00).



By now, you would have already noticed that The Daily Fix is not stingy with their portions and their portion sizes are anything but small. Don't ask us how we finished it all. *Just* don't. Overall, we really enjoyed the ambience of the café and the dining experience was pleasant. It took a bit of time for our food to be served but that was nothing out of the ordinary for cafes as popular as this. While prices are a bit steep, the portion sizes compensated. It was definitely a hearty meal that filled us to the brim!

Food: 9/10

Ambience: 10/10

Service: 8/10

Parking: 1/10 (Equivalent to the success rate of finding a parking spot in Jonker Street)

And with that, we conclude that The Daily Fix is... MONCH approved!



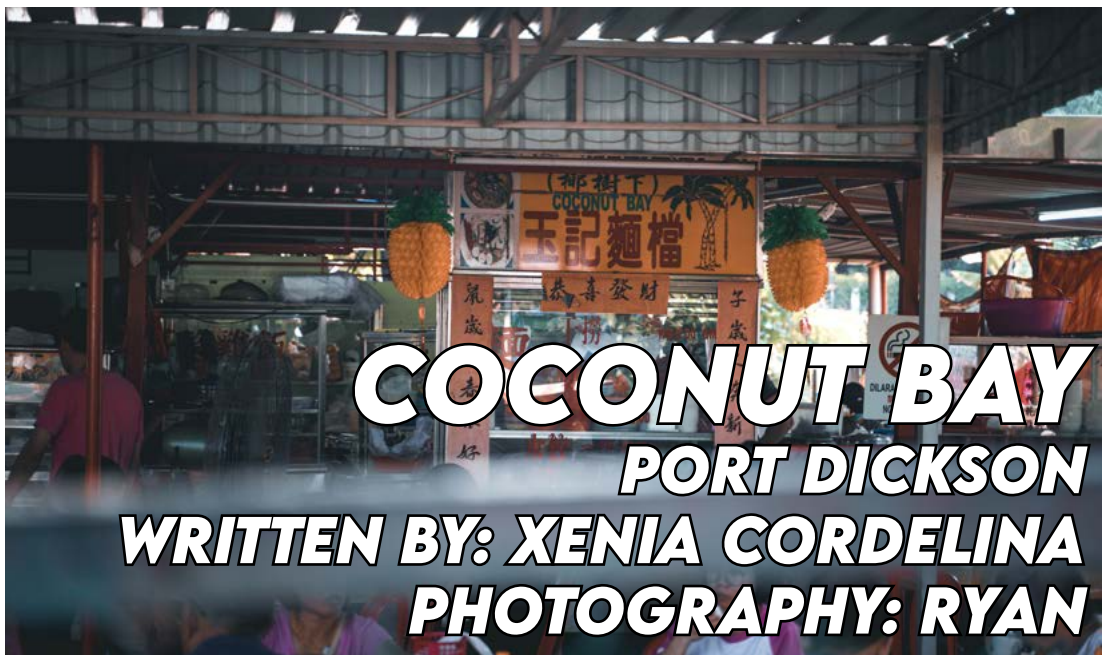
The Daily Fix Cafe

Operating Hours: 9:30am - 5:30pm (Mon-Sun)

Address: 55 Jonker St, Malacca

Contact Number: +6013 290 6855





Disclaimer: Before reading, note that this location serves non-halal dishes.

If there is one thing Malaysians can agree on, it would be food. Here is another hidden gem for all of you, it is famous among locals of Port Dickson — the infamous Coconut Bay 玉记面档! It looks like your everyday kopitiam whereby time has clearly left its mark with its iconic, rustic 1980's look. Oftentimes, it brings a sense of nostalgia for all three generations of a family; it is part of its charm. It may be a little hard to find, but, just ask the locals if google maps fail you, we swear they won't bite.

This traditional coffee shop has managed to survive the test of time and remain standing thanks to their loyal customers constantly flocking in. It may simply be an above average kopitiam (similar to the size of a mini food court) there would always be a full house -even before the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). This place is not big on aesthetics or gram-worthy picturesque, but it does bring a new perspective on 'simple is best' and to not judge a book by its cover. Their layout is pretty open-aired and customers can watch how their food is being prepared.

Their customers are loyal for a reason, and of course it is because the food speaks for itself. Now, think of all your classic kopitiam favourites. This place has all the classics, they don't even need to have a menu. That being said, to the foreigners reading this, it may be wise to bring along a local friend, in case of emergencies -the more the merrier as the saying goes. Here's a pre-view of some of the famous dishes and drinks that are must haves.



The siew mai dumplings are freshly made daily and have a variety of options to choose from. Feel free to mix and match, it's usually served in small portions of threes. Most siew mai's are made out of pork meat, so, not halal exactly, but they may have chicken meat options too for those who are daring enough to try it out, it would depend on their availability. They also have a selection of baos, these white fluffy buns with different savoury or sweet fillings inside. The famous ones are tau sa (red bean paste) and cha sau (pork) & char siew (pork).





Now, those are some suggestions of the appetizers you can snack on before the actual meal arrives. They have the classics -roasted or steamed chicken rice, some mee hoon soup, and kon lao mee paired with some fried dumplings is another fav. However, they're also famous for their laksa; rich in flavour and they don't hold back on the meat! Chef's kisses xx.

As for the drinks, of course, they have coffee. The direct translation of a kopi-tiam is a traditional coffee shop. It would be more surprising if they didn't have any. Besides that, they also have some herbal teas to choose from to get that quick detox and feeling healthier after all the eating. However, the drink that you should really try is the sha bi milk tea, direct translation would be silly milk tea. It is a messy drink with volcanic bubble foam. Your inner kid will be elated and can't wait to get that milk mustache or even play around with that swirly straw.



The cherry on top is that you get quality food at an affordable price! Imagine paying more at a fancy restaurant but the food is not good. At the end of the day, as overused as this is, it really is what's on the insides that count, and in this case, the insides are the delicious foods for our insides. Ba dum tss*

Food - 9/10
Atmosphere - 8.5/10
Price - 9.5/10
Accessibility - 7/10

And with that, we conclude that Coconut Bay is... MONCH approved!



Coconut Bay 玉记面档

Operating Hours: 6:00am – 2:30pm (Mon-Sun)
Address: Kampung Dhobi, 71000 Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan
Contact Number: 019-622 8893





BOTANICA + CO

KUALA LUMPUR

WRITTEN BY: ZOE YAP
EDITOR: CHUA JIA YING
PHOTOGRAPHY: JIA YAO

Amidst the concrete jungle of Bangsar, Botanica + Co is a pleasant breath of fresh air. Despite its command of a large crowd, you hardly feel the heat and bustle of the waiters rushing around you.

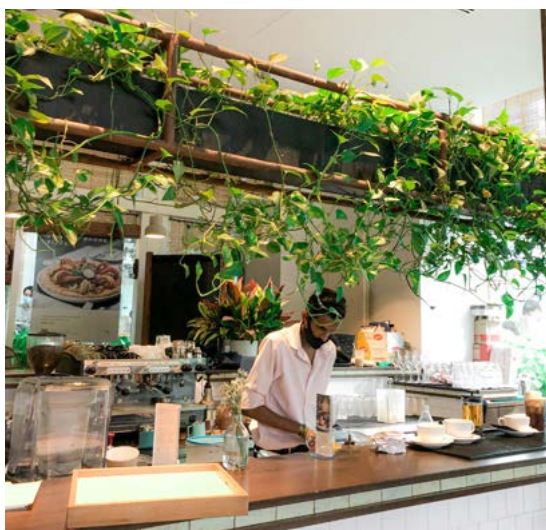
The combination of vibrant greenery and natural sunlight creates an airy, tropical ambience, hard to replicate anywhere else. You may recognize Bo+Co by the black signboard that pops up occasionally on your Instagram feed, or simply by the plant-filled interior-tall, Ficus trees and dangling lamps.

The menu boasts a rich variety of options. Although the Malaysian dishes sounded amazing, we first decided to try the Strozzapreti Aglio Olio (RM34). It was beautifully plated: a single poached egg that sank into a bed of soft pasta, topped with shredded cheese, turkey ham, and spinach. The tomatoes gave the dish a fresh jolt of sourness, accompanied by the tang of olive oil. This helped to create room for the richness of the pasta. However, the turkey ham made it a very salty affair-taking away the potential for other flavors to shine through. The poached egg was slightly overcooked and had a rubbery texture.



We also had The Bo+Co Club sandwich (RM30). True to the menu's word, the chips were indeed freshly fried. A fresh, crunchy burst, it served as the perfect side to the main star of the show. The simplicity of the sandwich made it better-layers of turkey bacon, grilled chicken, melted cheddar and sourdough bread. The bread had the perfect, chewy texture, crisp crust and just the right amount of tangy flavor. The chicken was disappointingly dry and was a rough accompaniment to the turkey bacon, which stole the flavor away with its saltiness. However, the portion was huge and definitely lived up to the price!

Besides the mains, we also tried out the Broken Chili Fries (RM19), one of the most unique and highly-raved about sides available on their menu. The fries were fried to perfection, topped with sambal and grated parmesan cheese, a Malaysian twist to the classic western side dish. This dish is perfect for spice-lovers and the enormous portion certainly makes the price tag worth it!





Now, for the strange part. The menu described the Broken Cheesecake (RM18) as “served with summer berries and crumble.” We happily ordered and it was a pleasant first sight- a thick, creamy swirl of cream cheese, topped with blackberries, strawberries, a touch of crumble and shards of jagged white chocolate. The first bite tasted like how cream cheese should, but the fifth and sixth bites became too “jelak” for us to continue. It lacked the base every cake has- which was what the crumble tried so hard to offer. Overall, the berries give a much needed break from the richness of the cheese. Although the name said ‘broken’, we definitely didn’t expect a cheesecake deconstructed to the bare minimum.



Botanica+Co has an infectiously upbeat, carefree atmosphere which is difficult to capture. The food definitely lived up to the restaurant's philosophy of "fresh and quality food". Although the wait was long, that was to be expected in such a popular restaurant. While prices were high, the ambience, service and food made it all worthwhile! (although the cheesecake was misleading). We would definitely come again!

Food: 7/10
Ambience: 10/10
Service: 9/10
Parking: 9/10

And with that, it's safe to say that Botanica+Co is... MONCH approved!



Botanica + Co at Bangsar South

Operating Hours: 11:30am – 10:00pm (Weekdays),
9:30am – 12:00am (Weekends except Sunday)
Address: G5, 8, Jalan Kerinchi, Bangsar South, 59200
Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur
Contact: 016-965 6422





BREAKFAST
THIEVES

BREAKFAST THIEVES

KUALA LUMPUR

WRITTEN BY: CHUA JIA YING
PHOTOGRAPHY: KIERAN LI NAIR

Breakfast Thieves was founded in Fitzroy Melbourne, Australia by Malaysian-born co-founders Brandon Chin, Edwin Koh, and Joel Teh back in 2012. The original branch sits in the remnants of an old chocolate factory, serving Australian cuisine with a touch of Asian flavors in an industrial-chic, hipster café. Since 2012, Breakfast Thieves has witnessed overwhelming success, often winning many awards for their unique and scrumptious dishes and it only made sense for the Malaysian founders to bring BT back to homeland. Breakfast Thieves, Kuala Lumpur (BTKL) is the resultant triumph of that success.

In the heart of Bangsar, in a 63-year-old commercial printing factory, sits the first-ever, Malaysian branch of Breakfast Thieves. The design of the café is essentially a glasshouse with wood boning. The expansive windows and high ceilings let plenty of natural light into the space whilst the concrete floor, exposed piping, metal lamps and naked light bulbs gives contrast to the wooden furniture and establishes the urban-industrial vibe of the café. The moment you enter, you are immediately enveloped by a welcoming warmth and the smell of fragrant coffee beans.





One thing we noticed about the menu is that a lot of the dishes are packed with flavorful ingredients like a variety cheeses, truffle, and homemade sauces. We were skeptical on whether the ingredients would make the dishes overly 'jelak'. So, we opted for plain water to cleanse our palates instead.

For our first dish, we started off with Danny Ocean (RM29.00) which is tea hot-smoked salmon, fresh seaweed and poached eggs on guacamole buttered English muffin, topped with brown butter hollandaise and garnished with ebiko and dried seaweed. (Phew, that is a mouthful to say and eat!)

The brown butter hollandaise was easily the most flavor-packed component on the dish. It was nutty and aromatic, adding a completely different dimension and intensity in terms of taste. The light, refreshing crunchiness of the seaweed helped create balance and tone down the hollandaise, whilst the roasted cherry tomatoes and guacamole added a bit of tartness to the dish. Both the egg and salmon were cooked to perfection but compared to the flavors from the rest of the dish, it was nothing remarkably memorable.





Next, we tried Croque Madame (RM27.00) which is an alternative for those who are not huge fans of seafood. Croque Madame consists of chicken bacon which sits atop a bed of cheeses (American cheese, mozzarella, and cheddar), tomato slices, gherkins, and buttered whole-meal bread. A sunny side up egg, roasted cherry tomatoes, parsley and more cheese are added as garnish. The chicken bacon had a similar texture to turkey ham and was a tad bit too salty.

However, the cheese mix was great. The blend of three cheeses was milky, creamy and salty altogether, with a hint of sharpness to the palate. Although not a fan of gherkins or roasted cherry tomatoes, their sourness really helped tone down the saltiness of the dish.

We were not joking when we said almost every dish in their menu consists of cheese. As if you aren't tired of reading about cheeses already, the next item we tried was the B. Marley sandwich (RM19.80), easily one of the cheapest items on their menu and also chock full of cheese. B. Marley boasts a blend of parmesan mascarpone, mozzarella, and American cheese, accompanied by roasted mushrooms and black truffle paste sandwiched between ciabatta bread. The parmesan mascarpone was nutty and sweet with a hint of acidity that is enhanced by the mozzarella whilst the American cheese added saltiness to the mix. The black truffle paste enhanced the umami of the dish, but the roasted mushrooms were rather muted in comparison.



If you're a small eater (like me), meals here would be on the more filling side, the good thing is there are plenty of photo spots around the café, so you could take a walk around the compound for some light exercise after a hearty meal! Overall, we're just glad we opted for plain water to cleanse our palates after that flavor-packed and filling meal. Prices are no surprise, as it is one of the more popular cafes in the heart of Bangsar, but the food and ambience certainly made Breakfast Thieves an interesting dining experience.

Food: 8/10

Ambience: 10/10

Service: 8/10

Sharpness of cutlery: -12/10 (An arm workout to cut through that piece of toast!)

And with that, we conclude that Breakfast Thieves is... MONCH Approved!



Breakfast Thieves Kuala Lumpur

Operating Hours: 9am – 5pm (Tues-Sun)

Address: Lot M, 29-5, Jalan Riong, Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

Contact Number: +603-2201 8829





KAFEIDIAN PETALING STREET WRITTEN BY: CHRISTIE WONG PHOTOGRAPHY: TATIANA

The words 'KaifeiDian' literally translates to coffee shop in Chinese and by the looks of this place, they have truly brought a modern twist into the traditional Chinese coffee shop we used to go while growing up. Located inside an old bungalow that used to be a post office, the Malay and Tudor style architecture is a hard one to miss.

Staying true to its name, the menu mostly consists of local Malaysian delicacies ranging from typical breakfast foods such as 'Bao' (buns) to main dishes such as Penang Prawn Noodles.

Entering the café, the first thing you notice would be the ambiance of the place, families littered around and chattering, typical stacks of dimsum containers stacked up sky high and of course, the old fashion way of air conditioning, fans being attached at the wooden 'attap' (roof).

Being in the middle of busy Kuala Lumpur, it was no surprise that Kafeidian attracts a number of patrons with its authentic vibe, offering the solace of local foods and giving out a nostalgic feeling from the olden days, a stark contrast from the skyscrapers we see more and more these days.





When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Of course when we're at a local place, we had to have the typical Malaysian breakfast consisting of two half boiled eggs and toast with butter and kaya. Nothing can literally go wrong with those two as a pair. Although the eggs were slightly overcooked, the taste was still decent. The toast on the other hand had a perfect balance of kaya and butter.

We washed our first serving down with a cup of Kopi O, served in the famous Ipoh White Coffee cup. Kopi O basically means black coffee with sugar and no milk. The rich taste of the 'Kopi' (coffee) blended together with a subtle sweetness truly made me think of home.

Next, being inspired by the flood of insta-worthy posts of dimsum, we decided to order a serving of the famous Liu Sha Bao (custard cream buns). True what we saw on social media, the moment we split open the buns, custard cream started oozing out all over our fingers. Trust me when I say the trademark 'Finger Licking Good' should belong to these buns. The custard cream tasted like melted salted egg yolks, contrasting perfectly with the slightly sweet bun.





We also had a taste of both Prawn Noodles Soup and Chicken 'Hor Fun' (kueyteow).

The Prawn Noodles Soup consisted of Mee Hoon aka Rice Vermicelli, topped with fish cakes, an abundance of prawns, 'kangkong' (water convolvulus) and fried shallots. The broth was sweet and when paired up with a spoonful of silky noodles and fish cake, the combination was close to perfection.

The Chicken 'Hor Fun' consisted of 'Hor Fun' aka flat rice noodle, topped with shredded chicken, bean sprouts and prawns. The chicken broth was slightly bland but the sweetness from both the chicken and prawns made up for it.

What was truly impressive about both the noodles were the amount of prawns that were generously topped, and the portion was large enough to keep you full until the next meal without snacking.

(Writers Note: I was born and raised in Ipoh, where Chicken Hor Fun is from. Forgive me if I sound slightly biased in this review, I may or not may be using the one in Ipoh as the bar.)



If you're someone who loves the aesthetic of vintage Malaysia as well as rustic vibes, this is someplace you definitely need to come at least once. The food arrived quickly, which was surprising for the size of the restaurant as well as the amount of people that were there. It was a miracle that we could get a table for two so easily, given the line of families that were waiting outside. If you're coming with a group of friends, you might want to call before heading over! The prices were decent, given the portion and quality of the food. It was definitely a great experience and if you're a true Malaysian (or might want to be a Malaysian for a day) you definitely need to check this place out.

Food: 7/10

Ambience: 9/10

Service: 10/10

Accessibility: 8/10 (It is located a stone's throw away from the Pasar Seni MRT! Or if you're driving, there's a parking lot right next to the building.)

And with that, we conclude that Kafeidian is... MONCH Approved!



KafeiDian 源昌隆咖啡店

Operating Hours: 7am – 5pm (Mon-Sun)

Address: 15-1, Jalan Balai Polis, City Centre, 50000 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur

Contact Number: 011-1019 3159



MONCH! BRUNEI EDITION THE CAFÉ HOPPER'S VERSION OF GREAT PLACES

WRITTEN BY: CHEAH WEI SHANG

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PRIVATE JET OWNER:
IVAN LIEW

Ah, Brunei. One of the smallest countries in the world, population just barely below the 500 thousands, while also one of the richest in the world. Right now, it's one of the safe havens of the world, having had barely any local Covid-19 transmissions since June. So, you know what that means, we're going on an adventure! A cross-country food adventure!

Well, kind of. The places we're going to visit essentially are in two towns, Bandar Seri Begawan (the capital) and Kuala Belait, on nearly diametrically opposite sides of the country. This adventure is focused on taste and also equally important, environment.



Our first out of two in Bandar Sri Begawan, the storefront may look like a bakery at first, and indeed, walking in you would see the typical bakery's paraphernalia; the glass displays with assortments of pastries and cakes, but also a generous seating area, which you then realize this is also a café.



The environment of the café gives out a very casual Saturday daytime-night-mode vibe, opting for a very well lit room with dark walls and light accents. Seating is ample and uncramped, long hours would pass by comfortably. Food-wise, the café serves up a basic variety of beverages – coffee, teas, milkshakes - and sandwiches.

The order was a Smoked Salmon Wrap and a Portobello Mushroom Ciabatta, with a Banana Milkshake and a hot Mochaccino. Both dishes came with a side of rocket and red radish salad, and all in all, it was a decent meal. Come here for the ambience, and maybe stay for the meal if you're treating yourself.

Food – 7.5
Environment – 8
Service - 8





The sun is setting, and you're probably feeling a little peckish. And you definitely want some (non-halal) meat with your potatoes. Danes Café is just a short while away!

Walking in, you're greeted with a very distinctively un-Asian setting. Hardwood walls and concrete floors and warm dimmed sodium-yellow lights, it feels like a small world tucked away from the city outside. Colourful murals adorn the walls, and for October, Halloween jack-o-lanterns and spooky spiderwebs hung from the ceiling. Combine these together to get a sweet dinner ambience for your typical Friday night – quiet, pleasant and homely - with the promises of the weekend.





The seating was around the mid-range of spacious: comfortable with the potential of clashing elbows. Meanwhile, the menu is a broad Western selection with a hint of Asian; burgers, noodles, salads and all-day breakfast, with beverages along the same line.

Our picks were the Danes' Kolo Mee and Pork Meatball Pasta, which both delivered in terms of taste! Of course, Danes specializes in all matters pork related, so pick a pork dish. Overall, come for dinner, stay for dinner, and enjoy the nice environment Danes has created for you.

Food – 8/10

Environment – 9/10 (Changes seasonally!)

Service 7.5/10





THE CORNER HOUSE KUALA BELAIT

Now imagine, you've done whatever you've wanted in the city, and have travelled (at 10km/h) overnight to Kuala Belait. The sun has risen a few hours ago, and now it's breakfast time, but you also want a bed.

Turns out, it's a B&B. From the outside, you might think, is this the 1960s? The outside of the building might be reminiscent of the past colonial era, but the cafe inside is a pleasant postmodern (read: lots of white), halfway-minimalist/industrialistic aesthetic. The café itself was located on the top floor of the building, so looking out of the window gives you a picturesque view of the Sungai Belait river. This, combined with very generous seating space, created a nice morning vibe.





If you're following the exact route of our adventure, this would easily be the highlight of your trip, food-wise. Hence, I'm going to lay down the details more than I have previous dishes.

Let's get something straight: the gold standard of pancakes is and always will be - fluffy. And the pancakes here were just that. And when you two stacks of those with chocolate sauce, seasonal fruit (bananas this time) and apple crumble AND topping it with whipped cream and cinnamon powder, it becomes a dish fit for the gods. Ambrosia from Olympus itself.

I don't think I've salivated this much at a picture: Pulled Beef Sandwich. It has pulled beef, caramelized onions, homemade BBQ and garlic yoghurt sauce on a toasted brioche bun with coleslaw on the side. Pulled meat is meant to be meat cooked on hours till tender, and this beef was just that.

Pair these with Chai Latte and Berry Crush Loose Leaf Tea, and it'll be a meal to remember. A true package of a place, come for the food, environment and service.

Food – 9
Environment – 8
Service – 9

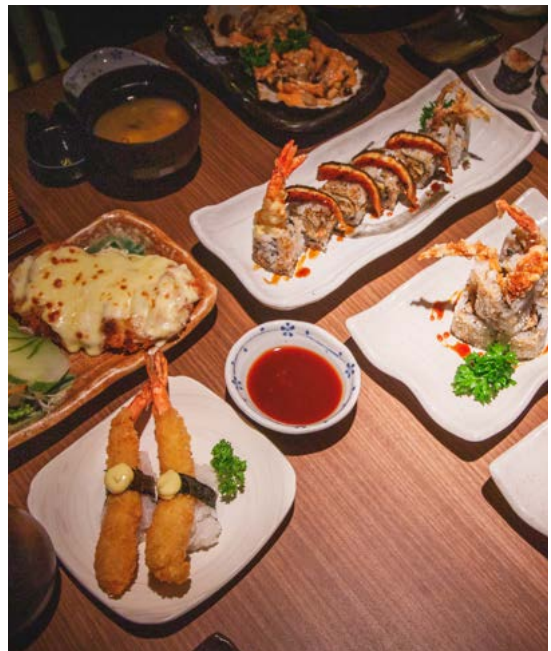




Last stop, 晩ごはん (dinner) in Japan, Kaizen Sushi.

I think there has been enough said about Japanese aesthetics on and outside the Internet, that I don't need to elaborate.

Clean, simple, nicely lit and welcoming, I always think the all wood builds of the restaurants in Japan should be a standard to aim for. The seating was comfortable, ambience nice and quiet, gold stars all around. A classic Japanese restaurant.





To this date, it's undeniably the best sushi ever. Kaizen Maki, Jurassic Maki, Tori Furai Cheese, Sake Belly Aburi Sushi and more, I must say "damn!". Easily beats any local chain sushi joints. The rice was sticky but not too sticky, a feature of great sushi rice, while the toppings especially were just delicious. It almost felt like Japan.

This dish, Kaizen Maki, is 100% worth a mention. A typical maki roll, coated with salmon roe and a sprinkle of sesame seeds, with soft-shelled crab inside topped with a piece of deep fried salmon, is a wondrous palette of flavours from the sea. Just amazing.

Come here for everything. Just the best.

Food – 9.5
Environment – 9
Service – 9

AND THAT'S THE END OF OUR ADVENTURE! THANKS FOR TUNING IN!

MONASH COOK-OFF!

STUCK AT HOME

SALMON RICE BOWL BY TEE KAI LOON



Written and edited by: Chua Jia Ying
& Cheah Wei Shang

With one extension after another, it's no doubt that the Movement Control Order that has been in place since the 18th of March has got us feeling out of touch with reality. "Boring, very boring," as Kai Loon would describe it. On the bright side, it's the perfect opportunity to hone your culinary skills!

Kai Loon recalls having a few ingredients lying around in his kitchen and decided to try putting something together. He calls his dish the Salmon Rice Bowl. For those of you who are really missing and craving Kubis & Kale or any other Poke Bowls, you might want to read on to find out how to make your own version at home.

Everyone has their own preference when it comes to Poke Bowls and the freedom to choose your own toppings/condiments is what makes them so delectable. Poke is one of the main dishes in Native Hawaiian Cuisine. Traditionally, Poke is actually made with Tuna or Octopus instead of Salmon, paired with condiments and seasonings such as maui onions, Inamona, Limu, soy sauce, green onions and sesame oil. More recently, these toppings have been adapted and influenced by Japanese cuisine. The Poke we find in Malaysia are often topped with fresh vegetables (carrots, cucumber, corn), edamame, ebiko, sesame seeds, seaweed, furikake and more!

So, Kai Loon, what are the main ingredients in your dish and how do they differ from your traditional Poke?

"It's the big mix of random ingredients. The bottom half the bowl is steamed Japanese rice. On top of that are layers of shredded red cabbage, edamame, beansprouts, pomegranates and guacamole. The star of the dish is the baked salmon, seasoned generously with salt before baking 45 minutes in the oven. To top the dish, I added some ebiko (fish roe) and sesame seeds." *(Kai Loon says that's all for his dish, but we spot with our amateur eyes some freshly chopped chives).*

"Oh! Those beansprouts are from my garden," he adds on, proudly. *(Pro tip: Growing your own herbs and vegetables can really cut down on your monthly grocery bills!)*

We can already tell that the dish is a feast for the eyes through the picture, but more importantly, how was the taste?

"Refreshing, fruity, herby, lemon-y and fishy." According to Kai Loon, the acidity comes from his homemade guacamole. Guacamole is an avocado-based dip which usually calls for lime juice, cilantro and jalapenos. However, Kai Loon didn't have any jalapenos on hand at the time so, he mashed the avocados with some potatoes instead.

That sure sounds like one filling dish packed with an abundance of nutrients. It isn't a difficult dish to recreate and really easy for you to put your own spin on it, so Kai Loon hopes that you'll give it a try at home!

Kai Loon, before you go, we have one last question; what are you going to do with your winnings?

"I'm going to buy a new grill pan."

STUCK AT HOME



GOOD OL' DOUGHNUTS BY LEONG PUIYEE

Written and edited by: Chua Jia Ying
& Cheah Wei Shang

Ah, doughnuts. Most of us are familiar with these round confectionaries, always glazed to perfection and will never seem to fail to satisfy our sweet tooth. Pui Yee's usual remedy for her particular malady is Krispy Kreme. Yet our current situation has made short stock of her type of medicine. So, she decided to make her own.

"I don't really have a name for this, it's just sugar and chocolate glazed doughnuts."

Doughnuts are fried pieces of dough

that are round or ring-shaped! Traditional doughnut recipes call for the dough to be deep-fried, however, being more health conscious nowadays, people have developed a way to make these delicious treats more healthy and less guilty; by baking them! Alas, baked doughnuts can hardly measure up to those deep-fried, sweet, delectable treats from Krispy Kreme, Big Apple or Dunkin' Donuts!

So, Pui Yee, what's the inspiration behind this dish?

"Actually, yes. There are two reasons behind this. First, I've been craving Krispy Kreme doughnuts and second, it was my boyfriend's birthday. He's a fan doughnuts just as much as I am and I thought why not kill two birds with one stone? So I made some doughnuts, took some pictures and sent it to him."

Wait, you made doughnuts for him but only sent him pictures?

“(laughs) Yeah! Since I can’t leave home.”

Okay, that’s kinda funny and sad. But, good on you for being a responsible citizen and obeying the MCO! So, tell us more about how you made these delicious doughnuts.

“Lemme get my recipe book. The dough calls for flour, sugar, salt, yeast and eggs. Oh, and also milk and melted butter. Make sure to mix the ingredients until smooth. Then, use a cup or something round to cut the shapes. Finally, fry it until deliciously golden brown! I recommend using tasteless oil like canola or sunflower.”

What toppings did you opt for the doughnuts?

“I made some glazes, a sugar and a chocolate glaze. The sugar glaze is made by mixing milk, powdered sugar and butter and the chocolate glaze was done with just store bought dark chocolate which I melted down in a bowl.”

That sounds delicious and we can’t wait to gorge on some doughnuts when this is all over. Before we go, Pui Yee, we have to ask; what are you going to do with the sweet, sweet money?

“I’m gonna split it with my mom for groceries, and then those delicious Krispy Kreme doughnuts.”

If you’re looking for something to satisfy your Krispy Kreme withdrawal, you can find Pui Yee’s donut recipe on our website!

SAMBAL MATAH FRIED CHICKEN

BY TANTYA
PUTRIMILENIA



Written by: Patricia In Wan Ting

It goes without saying that self-isolation has had some surprising spillover effects, notably people exploring their culinary sides. Tantya, who has been pushed to the kitchen during the lockdown, is no exception.

Originally from Bali, Indonesia, 'Sambal Matah' can be translated loosely into 'raw sambal', or 'raw chilli sauce'. Tantya first had a taste of Sambal Matah at a cafe in her hometown, but it was with 'Ikan Gindari' which is a type

of fish. It left a lasting impression on her. "It tastes really good, it's savoury, tangy, and in the right balance!"

The defining characteristic of Sambal Matah is its spiciness and freshness. It does not need to be paired with fried chicken. It can be eaten with almost anything, including grilled seafood or even roasted pork belly.

Alright, Tantya, what inspired the dish?

"(laughs) So I couldn't sleep one night. Suddenly, I received a notification from the Indonesian Community group chat about a 'Monash Cultural Food Cook-Off'. I wanted to do it, but I didn't know what to cook. I went researching until I found this dish – Sambal Matah – which seemed easy to make. I recreated this dish with fried chicken and a sunny-side up, just like what's trending right now: rice boxes."

You're making me hungry. How do you prepare this dish?

I first separated the ingredients into three portions: to make the chicken, the Sambal Matah, and the egg. I used chicken breast cubes for the chicken, then I fried it with wheat flour and corn flour, chilli flakes, garlic powder, salt, pepper and an egg. The Sambal itself is simple because it does not need to be cooked. You just use different chopped ingredients to place on top of the fried chicken. The ingredients used in the Sambal Matah are shallots, lime leaves, lemongrass, garlic, chilli, lime, sugar, salt. These ingredients need to be chopped, mixed, and then combined with hot coconut oil. The chilli used can be personalised to a person's spice level. As for the fried egg... I used an egg, salt, pepper and thyme. But thyme is optional."

Any other fun facts about the dish?

"Hmm... no I guess not. I never really planned this. I just couldn't sleep one night, and the next day, I found myself at AEON shopping for ingredients to make this."

I see. Did you like to cook before?

"Surprisingly, no. I only started cooking during the Covid-19 quarantine period. I started trying many different recipes for baking and cooking. I personally prefer cooking."

So would you say you're a natural at cooking?

"(laughs) I don't know. I just try different recipes. I do a lot of experimenting in the kitchen."

Okay last question, what are you planning to do with the money you won?

"I'm planning to open an online business where I can sell the dish to people who pre-ordered it online. But I'm changing the rice from white rice to lime leaves rice to add a touch of uniqueness."

CULTURAL FOOD



PRAWN MEE BY LIM TIAN FU

Written by: Cheah Wei Shang and Patricia In Wan Ting

It's easy to eat food in Malaysia, given the amount and variety of dishes in every corner of the country. But to remake the dishes... apparently it's easy as well, according to Lim Tian Fu. He calls his dish, even himself remarking that it's nothing spectacular, "Prawn Noodles".

Prawn Noodles, or in Penang Hokkien Mee (it's a whole discussion, don't @ me), or in KL, Hae Mee, is one of the staples of Hokkien dishes, believed to be brought from the Fujian province in China all the way to Penang, where it has then spread through the rest of the peninsula.

For those wanting a street food-esque Prawn Noodle experience, there are plenty of hawkers and kopitiam in KL. If you're willing to travel a little, the Wai Sek Kai in SS2 has a great

Prawn Noodle.

The main accentuate of the dish is usually the broth, where prawn shells and shallots are boiled up to 8 hours to create an extremely fragrant and delicious soup, whereby the soup is poured onto the noodles and various toppings added to the dish. But if you don't want to wait 8 hours, and can neither time travel nor nap that long, fret not, Tian Fu has a cheat code for you.

I solemnly swear that I am up to no advertising purposes:



So, Tian Fu, can you tell me why you wanted to make this dish?

"Well, you can say I just really missed the dish, and then one day I just went out, saw some Prawn Noodles and decided to make Prawn Noodles. I hadn't eaten it in a long, long time, it just struck me at the moment: 'Why don't I just make some Prawn Noodles?'"

How exactly do you make this sumptuous dish?

"This dish is very, very easy to make. There's actually even instructions on how much water to how much paste you should use on the packet. It just takes boiling the water and adding the paste to make the soup.

I just wanna say that the rest of the dish is very flexible. You can just use any store bought noodles and simple toppings. I used yellow noodles in my case. The toppings I used were fried shallots, fishcakes, pork slices, kangkung, boiled eggs and prawns. You can just boil the toppings for a few minutes and then add them to the dish."

In other words, it's just instant noodles with some extra, simple steps?

"(laughs) Yeah, basically. Like I said, it's very easy."

How did your dish taste like?

"Obviously, it tasted like prawns. Very spicy too, I would go for this if you like spicy seafood."

Alright then, thanks a lot! Wait, before we go, what would you do with the money?

"I would just buy more ingredients, and make more food. I love food!"

BROWNIE ICE CREAM CAKE

BY MARIAM ZAIDI



Written by: Christie Kitlam Wong

Ah cakes, the one true constant in life, a food that even the lactose intolerant will risk his/her bowels for.

Fun fact: the brownie was named for its colour. I know! Anyway, brownies are bars of chocolate-y cake-but-not-a-cake that you see in those American shows. Honestly, this author has never tasted one.

Ever since quarantine happened way back almost 3 months ago, I'm almost sure that everytime we open social media, most of us will be blessed by stories and posts of people cooking and of course, baking. What's a lockdown story without at least looking at something trendy online and attempting it in your own kitchen? For Mariam it is no exception.

So tell me, how did you come up with such a unique looking cake?

"I call it the brownie ice cream cake. It's kind of a funny story actually. I saw it on Pinterest and tried to make an ice cream cake with a magic shell topping. I ended up forgetting to freeze it beforehand and the topping ended up mixing into the ice cream. Hence, the brown layer we all see on top (laughs). I had to refreeze everything and improvise with the biscuits and other stuff because it was too late to go out during the lockdown. Another thing was that I was making it for guests so it had to look good, even though it ended up looking nothing like the one from Pinterest. "

Would you say you have a sweet tooth since you made such a sweet treat?

"Funnily enough, I don't actually eat a lot of sweets myself because I'll get sick. I prefer making them for other people because desserts make everyone happy."

That is very sweet of you. Have you been making since you were young or was it something that sprung up during the lockdown?

"I love cooking and baking so I've been doing it since I was a kid. In Malaysia, I don't get to bake as much since I don't have much time. Of course, I would feel more at home in my own kitchen."

I see. So did anyone special encourage you to join the cook-off?

"My sister kind of did because she's usually the photographer for my creations and because I didn't tell any of my friends to vote, we thought there's no harm in sending the picture because I wouldn't win anyway. I had no expectations of winning at all."

Things turned out for the better and you won anyway with that beautiful creation of yours. I can never stop staring at all. Would you mind telling me how you made it?

"Alright. So, I used your typical brownie mix where I baked the brownies according to instructions and added it to the bottom of my preferred pan. Then I layered the ice cream over the brownie and froze it. You can skip the freezing if you want a colour similar to the picture. I made the magic shell by adding a 1:2 ratio of coconut oil to chocolate chips and heated it in a saucepan until it melted together. I then added the hot mixture over the ice cream. Be careful because the chocolate solidifies if the ice cream is frozen beforehand and mixes into the ice cream if not. Then I topped it with my preferred toppings and froze it for 4-5 hours."

Wow! That seems like an easy recipe to follow, even for beginners like me. Alright, what do you plan to do with the money that you've won?

"I'd like to buy something nice for my sister or my friends. Or maybe I'd save it up."

DESSERTS

MOCHA CAKE BY KOK XUE LIN



Written by: Christie Kitlam Wong

Baking comes easily for some but while for others, not so. Well, based on the picture below we all know which category Xue Lin falls into. One surprising fact is that while she has magic hands when it comes to sweets, she doesn't consume as much as she makes.

Mocha is typically a blend of choco-

late and coffee, and mocha cake is the same thing in cake form. The tastes usually are varying balances of bittersweet, with some taking the coffee flavour to new dimensions by adding kahlua (coffee flavoured liqueur). Even though it's found in your everyday bakeries and cafes, Xue Lin has her own take on the cake (heh) above.

To start, what would you call this cake?

"It's mocha cake with chocolate mocha cream and walnut crumb filling."

Wow, that sounds heavenly! What inspired you to make this cake, any interesting backstory to it?

"It's actually a birthday cake I made for my best friend for her 21st birthday. Since I couldn't celebrate it with her due to this quarantine, I thought it'd be great to make it up to her with a homemade birthday cake. (laughs) I love baking for other people."

That is very sweet of you and I'm sure she loved it. I can see that you enjoy giving your treats out to other people, rather than keeping them to yourself.

"Yes! Sweets make everyone happy and it's like a win-win situation for me because baking is my healing space and the fact that what I bake can make someone else happy is like a big bonus. My friend was the one who encouraged me to join this competition since I was already baking, so I took the leap of faith and joined. "

I'm very glad you listened to her then, that cake looks fantastic. Now, let me in on your secrets as to how I can make that masterpiece of yours in my own kitchen as well?

"It's a genoise cake which means it's more of a sponge-like cake. To make the mocha sponge cake, you need to make the coffee mixture first by adding butter, hot milk and coffee powder together. Then you'll need to sift the cake flour a couple of times to ensure the texture of the cake is fine. Separate the egg yolks from the whites and make meringue by adding sugar in three batches into the whites, beating them until they reach a 'soft but not too stiff peak' stage. Next, add the yolks and beat them until they're all incorporated. Following that, sift the cake flour and fold it in gently with a spatula. When that's done, add some of the batter into the coffee mixture prepared earlier and mix that too. Then we pour that mixture into the cake batter and mix everything gently to prevent too much air from being removed. Lastly, pour the batter into a 6 inch cake mould and bake at 160 degrees for 35 minutes."

Whew! That sounds like a lot of work just to make the cake! Tell me about the toppings.

"Well, there are three components for that. First would be the mocha syrup. You basically just mix water, sugar, cocoa powder and coffee together. For the mocha cream frosting, just boil the heavy cream and melt the chocolate and coffee powder into the cream. Lastly, the crumbs are just a handful of toasted walnuts and crushed McVities biscuits. Very simple. "

It seems like you have a lot of passion when it comes to baking! Last question, what do you plan to do with the money that you've won?

"Well, I'd like to buy more baking tools."

SHAKSHUKA

BY WAN POH YEE

BREAKFAST



Written by: Patricia In Wan Ting

Is it tomato soup? Some egg dish? What is it? I must have it in my mouth.

This dish is called Shakshuka. Shakshuka literally means 'a mixture', and traditional versions of this dish use tomatoes, onions and spices as the base, with poached eggs on top. This dish is said to have its roots in North Africa-Tunisia, but it's quite popular in the Middle East, where variations of this dish can be found mainly across

Israel, Egypt and many other places.

It may look overwhelmingly grandiose, but in the Middle East, it's simply breakfast food. A bright, flavourful way to kick start your day, usually with bread served on the side. Made of everyday ingredients, this vegetarian dish is healthy, satisfying, and relatively easy to make!

Congrats on winning the Cook-Off! Could you tell me a little about your dish?

"The dish is called Shakshuka, it's a Mediterranean dish (laughs). I didn't know this until I Googled the recipe to make it. Basically, it's just eggs cooked in tomato sauce with bell peppers, onions and some other spices. If you were to order it in a cafe, it will probably cost more than 10 Ringgit, but if you cook it yourself at home, it costs less than that. You just need time."

Why did you choose this dish, Poh Yee?

"Okay, so, when I saw the theme for the Cook-Off, I immediately thought of the usual English breakfast set... But then I wanted to make something more unique, something I haven't made before. And I remember seeing this dish in cafes, it's such a pretty dish! Plus, the name is so fun to pronounce. SHAKSHUKA! So I stepped out of my comfort zone to make this."

Interesting! I'm learning a lot here too. So how exactly do you make this dish?

"First of all, you cut onions and bell peppers into diced sized pieces, sauté them, add in tomato puree with fresh tomatoes, then let it simmer for around 5 to 7 minutes to let everything soften up. Next, you add in the spices. Like, cumin, chilli flakes, cayenne pepper, salt, pepper... anything really, it's according to your taste.

(deep breath) Finally, the eggs. Crack them into your flavourful tomato sauce, and let them cook. For garnish, just sprinkle some chopped parsley and you're done."

You're making me hungry now, but I have to ask, did anyone special encourage you to join the cook-off?

"Hmm... a friend of mine shared the post to me and encouraged me to join, so I did. No one special in particular (laughs). Just a good friend!"

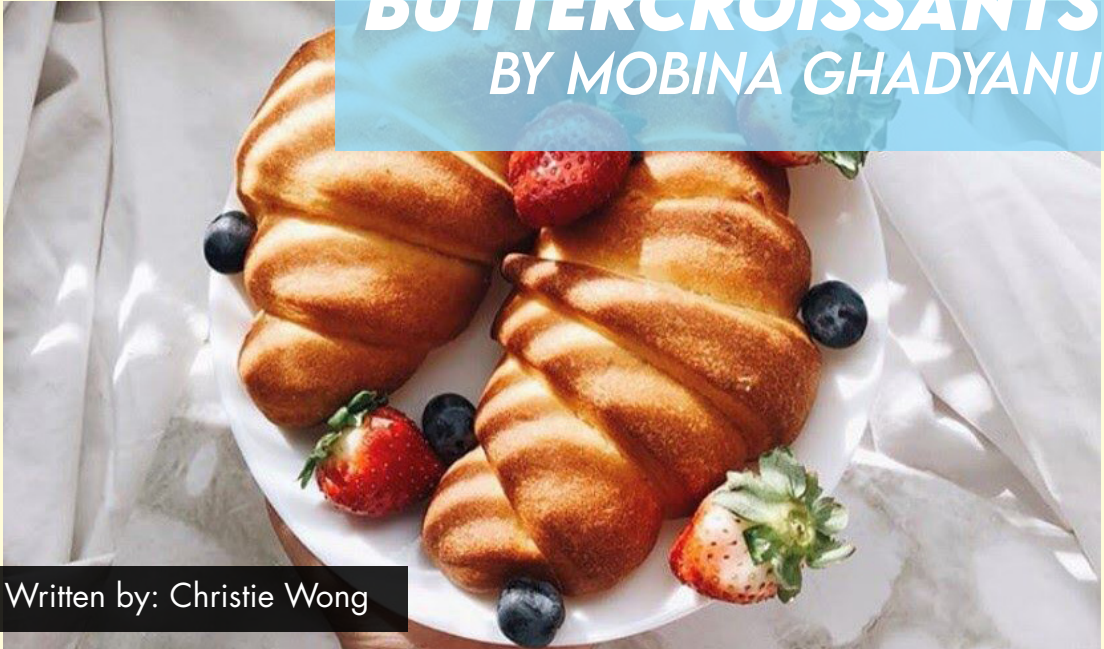
Alright, before you go, do you mind sharing what you plan to do with the prize money?

"Probably treat myself to a nice meal. Maybe get some real cafe Shakshuka..."

BREAKFAST

BUTTERCROISSANTS

BY MOBINA GHADYANU



Written by: Christie Wong

Ever heard of the saying ‘Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper’? For Mobina, she’s not the type of person who sits down to eat a 5-dish breakfast like the ones you see in movies. She usually breezes through her breakfast, grabbing a croissant, popping it into the microwave, opening a box of fruits and when the ‘Ding!’ of the microwave blares through the kitchen, her breakfast is done in a simple 3 step and 10 minutes routine.

When we hear ‘croissants’, we automatically associate them with the

French. But a little bird named Google actually said it originated from Austria. It only became French when people started making it with puff pastry. Another fun fact? A baker in the 17th century was working through the night at the time when his city was under siege when he heard a faint sound underground that upon investigation, was caused by enemies attempting to invade his city by tunnelling the walls! The baker asked for no reward other than the exclusive right to bake crescent-shaped pastries which is what we know now as the croissant.

Do you make your own breakfast every day? Or was this just a one-time thing? (laughs)

“Oh no, I do not make every breakfast on my own. My mom owns a bakery here in Iran so while I don’t have much time to bake and cook, my mom steps in to be the chef of the house.”

Ah, so your mom was your inspiration to bake these fluffy croissants?

"Yes, my mom inspires me to bake. She wasn't a baker from the start. When I was younger, she wasn't always at home but once she stopped working, she took professional baking classes. I would sometimes follow her to baking classes back then to learn together. Something like a bonding activity. Now, she has been baking professionally for over 10 years."

That is so sweet! I love how you bond with your mom over baking. So, I can safely assume that croissants are your favourite breakfast food?

"Definitely! I really like croissants because it has so many layers of dough and butter. The buttery taste is to die for, and did you know that the croissant dough is known to have 100 layers?"

Guess we can say you got your talents from your mom then? (laughs) So, do you enjoy baking?

"I enjoy it, sometimes it can be frustrating but it's a good way to take your mind off stressful things. I once took a psychology course that said baking can cause anger issues but I honestly don't feel any anger. If I fail, I just laugh it off. Even if I made a mess, it's okay because you can learn from the mess. Of course, it won't be Instagrammable but you can still eat your failures as long as it's not burnt."

Any food is good food as long as it's edible, am I right? (laughs) Any fun facts that come along with your dish?

"Actually, from the plating, you can see some berries. At first glance, those look like blueberries, but they are grapes! Blueberries are rarely found in Iran and if they're available, it's usually very expensive."

You really fooled me with that one! I was thinking about how juicy the blueberries would have been too. Lastly, what will you be doing with the money you've won?

I actually joined this challenge in hopes of winning the voucher so I can order Ben & Jerry's ice cream! (laughs)

TOM YAM GOONG BY WESLEY CHUNG



Written by: Cheah Wei Shang
Edited by: Chua Jia Ying

Ready to salivate?

Tom yam has its roots in Thailand, and there's no exaggeration when saying that it's one of the most iconic and even legendary flavours of South-east Asia. Any Thai restaurant out there will most definitely have a tom yam or a form of it; its flavour associated with the word Thailand. Here in Malaysia, you can Thai restaurants on most corners, and even buy some instant noodles flavoured with it.

"Tom Yum" translates to boiled and mixed, indicative of how the soup was prepared. Traditional Tom Yum

soup is spicy, sour with a distinct fragrance due to the abundant of spices and herbs used to season the broth. Amongst the seasonings used are lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, galangal, lime juice, fish sauce, and crushed red chili peppers. Then, poultry and prawns are placed in the boiling broth. Today, there are many variations to the traditional Tom Yum, with one of the most popular being Tom Yum Nam Khon which means Milky Tom Yum. This version contains coconut or evaporated milk in its broth, giving it a more curry-like appearance.

Any inspiration behind this dish, Wesley?

"Honestly, really being honest here, my close friend and I had a craving for Tom yam one night. So, this happened!"

Hmm, alright. Nothing wrong with that. What's in your dish though? It seems very... hearty!

"Yeah, it has lots of stuff. Off the top of my head, shrimp, homemade meatballs, squid, enoki mushrooms, tomato and slices of beef in the middle."

Could you tell us how you made it?

"Real easy. Just sauté onions, garlic and lemongrass in some oil. Then stir fry in some tomatoes and add the tom yam paste. It was some Vietnamese brand that I couldn't remember, but any tom yam paste should do. Add the water to make the broth and then boil the kaffir lime leaves and lemongrass stalks. Then just dump the rest in and let them cook. Honestly, it took more than two hours, but that was just because I had to roll the meatballs into, well, balls. Then pour the soup on top of the blanched bun.

I didn't even think of making it for the cook-off! I just remembered that there was a competition, and arranged them as well as I could. Didn't realize it would turn out this good! Also taking the picture took well over half an hour, heh."

Taste?

"It tasted like your typical tom yam, but on the sweeter side. Not bad!"

Great, thanks for doing this interview! What would you do with the prize money?

"Mmm well I guess probably into getting a new knife? Something a little bit better since one of my old ones broke. Prolly not something like a Wüsthof though @w@ das too pricey."

THE ART OF PLATING

STRAWBERRY MACARON BY TENG SIN HUI



Written by: Zoe Yap

You may know the macaron as one of France's many treasured desserts- elegant, button-shaped treats that vary in color and taste. The word rolls delicately off your tongue, a prelude for what's to come next. With a pillowy shell, it dissolves away into a rush of sweetness on the tip of your tongue. With a single bite, it whisks you away to a rainy day in Paris.

Macarons first gained popularity in 1792. Two nuns, known as the 'Macaron Sisters' sold macaron cookies for a living. Early macarons did not contain any flavour or fillings.

Today's macarons are the perfect fusion of airy meringue, buttercream, sugar and almond flour. They must not be confused with macaroons, which are made of shredded coconut.

Each macaron shell holds silky ganache, jam filling, or cream. It looks almost unreal, too good to be true. However, the macaron is a mirage that holds true to its word.

Although unassuming on the outside, macarons are notoriously fickle to make. The mixture is crucial- too much flour and sugar would create a cakey, crispy texture. Obtaining 'feet', the ruffle at the base of the shell, is considered a sign of success.

A delicious macaron would require the right conditions, precision and consistency- something our Cook Off winner has mastered!

First things first- what inspired you to make this?

"Well, actually, it was nothing much. I learned how to bake macarons in class, and I wanted to recreate it at home. I don't really like desserts, though- they're too sweet! So I decided to make something sourish."

Wait, you learned this in class?

"Yes, I have a culinary diploma!"

How exactly did you make the dessert?

"First, I whipped egg whites, vinegar and sugar. I also added colouring. There's no way I could get that colour naturally. These macarons have a white chocolate strawberry ganache. To get that, I melted white chocolate, lemon juice, heavy cream, and strawberry puree together."

So you mentioned you don't really have a sweet tooth?

"Yes, I'm not really a fan of desserts. They're too sweet. But I think not having a sweet tooth can be important, though. You need to think about how these desserts would taste like for everyone else and how they would like it.

Also, I didn't use a plate as a background! I used a tray instead and no one noticed- (*I didn't either!*)- and the photo came out really good."

Lastly, what would you do with the prize money?

"Well, it depends on what it is. If it was a Grabpay prize, I would probably just buy food with it."

BUTTERBEER

BY TENG SIN HUI

FICTIONAL FOODS



Written by: Xenia Cordelia Lee

As we are half-way through another semester, fellow students and Harry Potter fans alike, remember to take care of yourselves, mentally and physically. “Working hard is important. But there is something that matters even more: Believing in Yourself” – Harry Potter.

This time, we bring back the nostalgia of the wizarding world. And what better way to do so than with a mug of butterbeer! Here’s a ticket to Hogsmeade, there is no need to be sneaking around with an invisibility cape. Let’s get some butterbeer at the Three Broomsticks; served hot in foaming tankards or cold in a bottle -whichever you’d prefer.

This vintage beverage is kept in a barrel in the back room of the Inn.

As fans may recall Luna Lovegood’s necklace of Butterbeer corks or Winky getting drunk off Butterbeer (as it is much stronger for house-elves). We would be as “batty about Butterbeer” as Barny the Fruitbat would be; we may not have any background tracks of “the Weird Sisters” but do continue reading more on this Hufflepuff’s recreation inspired by the classic Butterbeer.

Congrats on getting chosen the 2nd time, your macarons looked so good, it made me crave some the more I look at it. In your previous interview, you mentioned you had a culinary diploma. Does this mean you often have experiments in the kitchen, trying out random recipes and what not?

"Thank you! Yes, I did my culinary diploma at Berjaya University of Hospitality, it's in Bukit Bintang. Currently I'm in my 3rd year right now, actually studying something related to culinary. I'm majoring in Food Science and Technology, it is under the School of Science. We actually had a recent project where we created a cereal drink from scratch, a very healthy alternative, much like a cereal bar. Yeah, I guess I do enjoy cooking up a storm in my kitchen."

That's so cool! What's the inspiration behind this dish? Dare I assume you are a Harry Potter fan as well?

"Yes I am a Harry Potter fan, followed the series for 12 years so I thought why not try recreating it. I did some research before-hand but my food science knowledge really helped a lot in this recreation attempt."

I'm curious, did it taste more like butter or more like beer?

"It's more like drinking champagne. It tasted more than just butter, I would say, a bubbly butterscotch drink. In fact, since I made it to be non-alcoholic, I think it should be renamed as butter soda like how a non-alcoholic cocktail is called a mocktail. Though, there are alcoholic butterbeer recipes online, it is just a search away on Google."

So, did anyone encourage you to join the cook-off?

"Yeah, a friend of mine just came up to me one day and said 'why don't you join the Monash Cook-off' so I did but I generally did it for the voucher prize."

That's reasonable. Alright, thanks so much for your time, but last but not least, we have to ask again; what are you going to do with the prize money (besides buy food with it)?

"Well, I guess I would be using the money for a date with my boyfriend."

GUILTY PLEASURES



SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN & SALAD BY QUAH CHEN YING

Written by: Xenia Cordelia Lee

Ah yes, Southern fried chicken, also known simply as fried chicken. With its crispy breading exterior keeping the meat tender. It's a classic go to comfort food, especially when eaten with hands. The food tastes better that

way; change my mind.

Congrats on winning this weeks' cook-off! What's the inspiration behind this dish?

Thanks! This is my attempt at making fragrant tumeric fried chicken that is balanced with a refreshing salad and fragrant rice. It's the ideal flavour. It wasn't so much as inspiration but rather a random craving one day that brought about this creation. I was craving fried chicken and voila~

As Ariana Grande would say, "I want it, I got it" HAHA. Could you tell us more about it, is this a family recipe or did you look it up?

"If I have time, I would cook something for myself. I can't do much cooking now because I'm busy with the final assignments. There really isn't much more to say to be honest. It's a simple recipe that anyone who knows how to cook can do it."

Would you mind sharing the recipe perhaps? So that our readers can recreate your winning dish for themselves.

“Well, I’m assuming everyone -especially Asians know how to cook rice, I just sprinkled some fried garlic and black sesame on top of it. The side dish is a freshly cut salad consisting of cucumbers, carrots and tomatoes. As for the chicken meat, I smeared turmeric powder to marinate for a bit before frying them then sprinkled some curry leaves on them with mayonnaise and cheese sauce.”

Wow, it really is as simple as that, not that there’s anything wrong with simple. There’s a song that goes, “simple is best, better than all the rest” HAHA. What about, if you could change one thing about the recipe, what would it be?

I would have definitely added more spices and maybe even some spicy sauce if I had some around. I just love spicy foods hahaha.

I see, well, you certainly can handle spicy foods better than me, that’s for sure. Did anyone encourage you to participate in the Monash Cook-Off?

There’s a funny story actually, while making the dish, I thought to myself, ‘why not just try my luck’ and get a chance to win RM100. And I did! Guess I was just lucky that day HAHA.

Could you give me some of that luck? HAHA. Thanks for your time, but one last question before you go, we have to ask, what are you planning to do with the prize money?

I think I’ll buy food for my family!

Be sure to check out Chen Ying’s recipe on our website!

NYONYA KUIH

BY LI TING

GUILTY PLEASURES



If you were born in Malacca, Penang, Singapore or Medan, chances are, you have heard of Peranakan cuisine otherwise known as Nyonya cuisine! The terms Peranakan and Nyonya Baba are used interchangeably to describe descendants of Hoklo settlers who first came to Malay Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago between the 15th and 17th centuries.

These days, the Peranakans are known for their imaginative and unique cuisine that drew inspiration from traditional Chinese and Malay dishes. Peranakan recipes often involve using a variety of indigenous herbs and spices and employs traditional Chinese cooking techniques to create a unique and harmonious blend of flavours in each dish. But the Peranakans are not merely known

for their savoury dishes, some of their most famous delicacies are their colourful, aromatic, and yummy kuihs that come in all shapes and sizes!

This week, we had the chance to interview Li Ting, who hosts a Nyonya cooking class in her hometown, Malacca. Li Ting's cooking class teaches inexperienced cooks, seasoned chefs, and anyone in between to make an assortment of staple Nyonya Kuihs, notably – the Pineapple Tarts, Angku Kuih and Onde-Onde! With the Peranakan culture gradually fading with time as descendants lose connection with their culture, Li Ting is on a mission to raise recognition for Nyonya Kuihs by teaching her guests how to make these delectable desserts at home with extremely simple steps.

So, Li Ting, how did you come to learn about the Peranakan culture and kuih-making?

“Being a Malaccan, I grew up watching my mom and grandmother making kuihs for special occasions like Chinese New Year, birthdays, etc. They were the ones who cultivated the passion of kuih-making in me! Besides enjoying the process, I enjoyed eating them too. I guess this explained why I was the fattest among my 3 other siblings. Haha!”

What inspired you to embark on this venture to teach and share your family recipes?

“I decided to embark on this venture as I wish to share my family’s recipes with people from around the world! I believe our local kuihs are just as good as French pastries and they deserve a spot in the global culinary arena. In order to promote our local kuih culture internationally, I have listed my cooking class on Airbnb Experience and Trip Advisor, two of the world’s leading travel platforms.”

What is your favourite part about hosting such a unique cooking class?

“The best part of my kuih-making venture is getting to know people from other parts of the world (I once hosted 2 lovely guests from the Netherlands!) who share the same passion in kuih-making as me.”

And lastly, what is your favourite kuih?

“Haha, this is a tough one. I would say Ang Ku Kuih as my grandparents believe that this kuih brings good luck and prosperity.”

Li Ting’s cooking class is open for registration via Airbnb Experience and Trip Advisor, but you can contact her if you are interested in enrolling in one of her classes. If you are looking for a fun and therapeutic activity to do when you are on a trip in Malacca, we highly recommend you drop by and learn more about the Peranakan culture and Nyonya Kuih-making.

Melaka Home Cooking Class

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/melakahomecookingclass/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/melakahomecookingclass/>

WhatsApp: +60 16 665 0623

BEVERAGES

CARAMEL COFFEE

BY WAN POH YEE



Written by: Cheah Wei Shang

Honestly, at first glance, I have no clue what this is. But, and I must say, “damn”, does it not look pretty?

Wan Poh Yee has done it again, winning her second of this semester’s Cook-Offs. This time, it’s really a mystery what this drink is, besides the obvious coffee on top. Even then, is it coffee? Or just mystery brown foam? What an enigma of a beverage. Only after interviewing Poh Yee that, yes, this is coffee. Specifically, a combination of coffees and caramel.

“The top layer is the dalgona coffee foam thing, heh, sorry I don’t really

know what it’s called (it’s just dalgona-style coffee). The layer below that is a matcha latte, and towards the bottom – you can’t really see it – it’s a caramel pudding. So it’s like a mixture of everything. A concoction if you will.”

Taste?

“It’s not too sweet and the caramel pudding gives that little hint-sized bite of sweetness. That and the slight bitterness from the coffee. It’s refreshing!”

The swirls and shapes in that glass still mesmerize me. Wherefore could this inspiration have sprung forth?

"I like matcha and I like latte. Well okay, I think it was one of those boba shops, with the crazy toppings you always see, was it Black Whale? I can't remember. But yeah, I really wanted to try to recreate one of those. This is my best attempt at it."

Not gonna lie, I like Poh Yee's recreation better. Black Whale's iteration looks very clean-cut, manufactured. Well, kudos to their photography and editing team, but the au naturale of Poh Yee's interpretation is just very soothing to the eye.

"Since we are in CMCO, like the start of the year (barely audible ugh), I was just thinking like, oh, dalgona coffee 2.0 again. So I'll just add some quarantine elements to it, y'know quarantine essentials. (She's referring to the nature of the inception of this drink, I think.)"

I ask her if it stirs any memories, from back then. Maybe from before the quarantine days?

"Yes it does, and not great ones. And definitely not from before MCO. Honestly, it reminds me of the MCO days, where I was just trying to cook more."

MCO sucks and the world is falling apart. Sorry, my thoughts are leaking. Anyway, second time winner! What are you going to do with the prize?

"Order GrabFood for my parents. They live in Ipoh, yeah, I think you know what it's like there."

Just incredibly heartwarming. Let's end on Poh Yee's wholesome fidelity towards her parents, shall we?

DALGONA COFFEE

BY TENG SIN HUI



Written by: Christie Wong

This one will be a real familiar face in the crowd if you still remember the days of TikTok food trends and our initial transition to Zoom classes, when the new normal was actually still new.

This will be Sin Hui's third time winning the Cook-Offs and I must admit, this is not sheer luck anymore, this is pure skill! Naturally, I'd be curious to know her secrets to success.

Tada! It's Dalgona Coffee!

So any backstory as to how you came up with the inspiration for so many prize-winning recipes?

"I actually joined Cook-Off last semester but I was unable to win anything since there were too many contestants. The really sad thing was that I made a dish that required a week for me to create. So from there I decided to be more realistic about the Cook-Off."

Eh, how so?

"This isn't a competition for tasty food, this is competing to see who can create 'good looking' food. So I began to think of ways to present simple food in pretty ways. That's how I ended up making 3 recipes and 3 photos 3 editions in a row. Basically thinking about appearance first before the taste."

I like your thinking, but from the looks of your photos I'm sure the taste of the food or drinks won't be a problem!

"Ah just a secret between you and me, actually (BLEEP)
(Writer's Note: Sorry folks, looks like my lips are sealed on this one hehe.)"

Anyways, why did you decide to make the ever famous, trendy Dalgona Coffee out of so many other beverages?

"Mostly because I haven't had it in awhile. Honestly speaking, it is one of the most generic and eye-catching drinks that people will vote for."

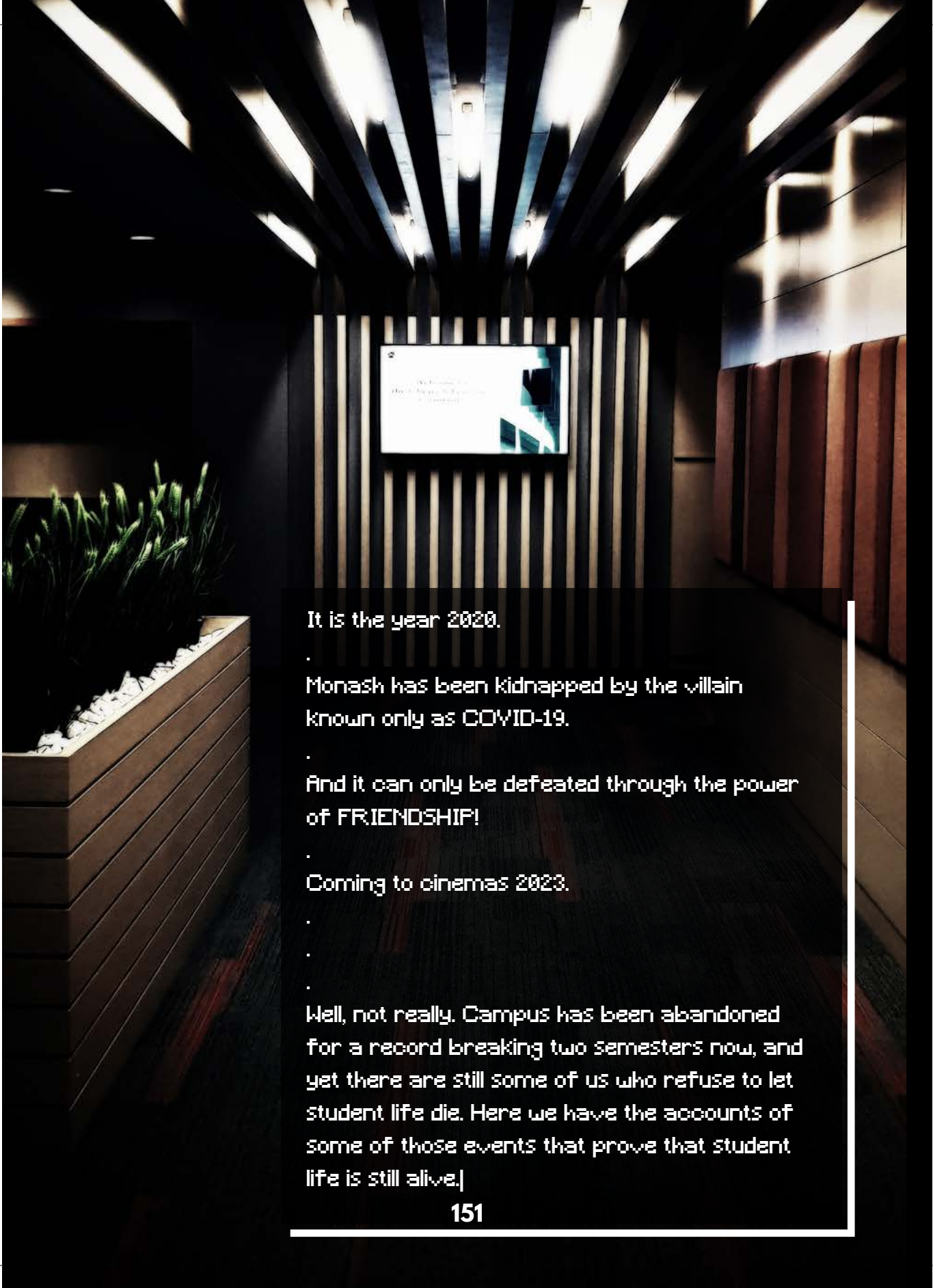
Lo and behold, you did win! Trend setters never lie. What does it taste like?

"The top layer tastes like a sticky, caramel coffee meringue, when you sip it with a portion of the milk from the bottom layer, it tastes just like a milk coffee dessert."

Sounds yummy already! This takes me right back to our days of Movement Control order way back in March, where literally everyone was making Dalgona coffee and posting it on their social media. Does this remind you of quarantine too?

"Yes, it really does remind me of MCO. Back then I even bought a milk frother just for Dalgona just because I didn't want to beat it '400 times'."

I see! With 3 rounds worth of vouchers I'm sure you'll be able to buy a better milk frother soon and who knows, maybe you'll win your 4th round.



It is the year 2020.

Monash has been Kidnapped by the villain known only as COVID-19.

And it can only be defeated through the power of FRIENDSHIP!

Coming to cinemas 2023.

Well, not really. Campus has been abandoned for a record breaking two semesters now, and yet there are still some of us who refuse to let student life die. Here we have the accounts of some of those events that prove that student life is still alive.]

Searching databases for ...

Proof of Life

■■■■■■■■■■□□

80% search completed

Freshies' Night 2020

Usually, Freshies' Night would be a spectacle meant to welcome those new to the campus, a sort of welcoming party if you will. It is meant to be a night that marks the start of your university life, a spark of sorts that lights the tinder of student life. Recreating that virtually would be a feat of its own. Yet there are those bravely ambitious enough to try. Hosted by Celine Chua and Melissa Looi, streamed on YouTube, Freshies' Night 2020 was a change from the norm, from a hall-with-stage to a sit-on-couch type of event. It was not unlike those YouTube and Twitch.tv (Just Chatting) streams you watch. All in all, it was a fun event! Barring the small technical issues, the stream hosted several musical talents, such as the metallic screams of King Violet, incredibly sweet – both voice and personality - of Dina Nasir, possibly the most chill ever live trio of Resort and duo of Lost Spaces, the all-female band rock TimeMachine (which blew me away), ending with the dulcet tones of Jesh Khor and a solo K-Pop performance by Nisha(aa?). Interspersed between performances was a terribly hard Kahoot quiz and the vibes of the hosts, to round out the night.

It was a thoroughly entertaining night, attended by maybe 600-800 or so, yet it lacked the pomp and mood of those live, physical events. But perhaps adjusting to virtual events will take time. To end this with a quote from Melissa Looi, "it is very, very sad."

TEDx

Technology, Entertainment, Design; the X stands for an Independently Organized Event. The objective of a TED talk has always been to engage people, anywhere, everywhere, with whatever ideas speakers have, all in a single event. So, it was no surprise that this year's TEDx was held on Zoom, instead of cancelling the event altogether. Organized by the Vice Presidents of MUSA, Tafhima and Melissa, themed "Defining the Decade", the talks were very much centered around youth, gender, sustainability and business. The speakers were from a myriad of backgrounds, such as My Holland – the CEO of Equest whose talk sought to redefine the Emotional Quotient, to Aaron Sarma – an entrepreneur by nature, who encouraged entrepreneurship in all the youth out there, to dive in without fear.

There was a little bit of surreality watching these talks; these are people you expect to deliver a speech on a stage and in front of a massive crowd, yet they were talking to you in a Zoom meeting, making it feel like it was a personal session. Overall, it was an informative session, and again, it takes getting used to.

Little did we know that the closing ceremony last year was a bid of farewell to this year's "physical" Monash Cup as well. The silver lining of almost everything going online is that Monash Cup 2020 came with its own spin and authenticity. With up to 300 participants, 1K viewers and 2K Instagram audiences, Monash Cup 2020 was a huge success. I hopped on a Zoom call with Peter, the organiser this year, with the help of Monash's eSports Club, to get a glimpse of what it's like to conduct this huge of an event... online.

Monash Cup
before masks
and social
distancing
(2019)

What was your reaction when MCO was announced and the university closed down?

We didn't expect it to be extended until the following semester, so we still planned to have the "physical" Monash Cup. However, we soon realized that we had to think of an alternative—the first thing that came to my mind was an "online" Monash Cup!

Were there any struggles in organising Monash Cup 2020?

People just see the final outcome; they don't see the messy behind the scenes. If it had been the typical Monash Cup, people could just approach us at the office. However this time, many messaged us personally for clarifications. The messages I received during the game day were insane: I had non-stop messages from 6-8PM and I couldn't do anything other than replying! Scheduling the games to

ensure optimal participation was also a very tedious and taxing work because I had to keep track of all the games that were happening every day.

Which part of Monash Cup was affected the most with it being conducted online?

Definitely the games; physical games are now replaced with e-games and instead of athletes, gamers participated. Even if this whole pandemic didn't come up, I would've brought in some e-games (as a category) but not to the point where everything is esports. The hype feels different too because people can't cheer for their teams unless the entire tournament was streamed. Our social media reach played a very heavy role in making Monash Cup 2020 a success this time. Luckily, when we made the first announcement on Instagram, we got very positive and encouraging responses from the students.

MONASH

CUP

2020

Monash Cup
amidst a
pandemic

What were the main takeaways from this experience? Describe a memorable experience.

The entire event actually. I organized something really different from the usual and I have never really done anything online before. That in itself is very memorable to me.

With Jayshree and Cam, the organizers of 2019's Monash Cup.

How do you feel about the Monash Cup 2020?

I think Monash Cup 2020 brought a unique twist to the conventional event that we're familiar with. It had a different medium of execution, but I think the competitive spirit of the houses were alive and well regardless.

What would you like to tell the current Monash Cup organizers?

You did an amazing job guys! Despite the unfortunate circumstances, we're so glad to see that you're still keeping the students' best interests at heart and the tradition of the Monash Cup alive.

In which way do you think Monash Cup 2020 was better than the year before?

It brought an unprecedented element of convenience as participants could compete from the comfort of their homes. Nevertheless, Monash Cup 2019 catered to a variety of interests and subsequently provided more people with opportunity to partake in activities they love!

Rosamund

(Chess, Leviathan)



I joined last year's chess tournament in the Monash Cup. For this year, it was a bit awkward initially as we were not close. We only managed to text in the Whatsapp group throughout the game. But the most important thing as a team is we must stick together until the end.

What defines a united team is how well we rise after falling.

The Monash Cup is a success in terms of recruiting participants through social media and by word of mouth. But, it was not well organised as the arrangement of the tournament was not well planned out. I hope that Monash Cup organisers can recruit someone from the chess club to organise the competition, so that they will have a better idea on how to run the tournament in a more efficient way.

Apart from interviewing the Monash Cup 2019 and 2020 organisers, we have also interviewed the captains of some of the winning teams. Here's what they have to say!

Zachary

(CS:GO, Leviathan)



Honestly I was excited to join as I stopped playing CSGO or any games competitively. I was honestly quite confident in winning although we had 2 fairly new players in the team. The other teammates were quite experienced as we've joined tournaments before the year prior.

The opponents were much better than expected. Our finals against Culebre A was surprisingly tough, they were very well prepared tactically and they came close all 3 maps.

The most memorable parts were the times when we came so close to losing and also our teammate cyn0's insane clutches. Everyone of us had our butt clenched every time he clutched.

Ben

(Valorant, Leviathan)



I joined because I wanted to experience a tournament setting of a game as well as make new friends. We did not expect to win going into the tournament as we were losing all our practice games together but we just pieced everything together along the way.

Honestly, the opponents were tough and individually should've beaten us but I felt that we just played as a team and won as a team. Although we did not get to play Culubre A team, I still think we did a good job beating opponents expected to be better than us.

The most memorable part of the cup was going into the 2nd game of the finals and we were down a map. I was playing really bad the first game so I went to cool off by eating dinner while waiting for the 2nd game. To lighten the mood, we made sort of a funny rule where I can only grab a bite per kill in the game. If you watch a replay of game 2, you can see my character not moving during the start of the matches because I was eating and everything is just history.

Wayne

(PUBG Mobile, Manticore)



The Monash Cup is something I'll take part in annually since I first stepped into Monash. However for this Monash Cup Online, it brings a different level of energy that is required. Unlike a ball game where you still can show some gestures on court, verbal communication in esports is so important as all crucial decisions are made via this manner.

My team never expected that we would be getting 10 WWCD in a 16-round game. We were just looking forward to each game and having the flame constantly burning within us. On the 16th round, despite having 2 players downed early, it was a 2 man squad to carry the entire team and we fought hard to clinch the WWCD still. I guess this was the best memory we can get out of all the 16 rounds that were played.

This Monash cup is not the best as compared to previous years, but I'd say it is at its best it can be with the limitations that we have. Thank you CnS for putting in the best efforts!

Nezza

(League of Legends, Opinicus)



The Monash Cup was quite a memorable experience. Forming the teams was an exciting process and honestly, looking forward to the matches are what got me through the weeks of devastating online assignments haha! Judging from the early games played, I did expect the teams to get into semi-finals or maybe even finals. However, I did not expect the team to run a flawless tournament— losing only one game (out of 12 games played) to our very own fellow opinicus team. Very proud moment indeed!

During the finals, I received a message from the organiser asking our jungler to change his IGN mid-game due to it being "offensive" haha! It was quite funny, he had to pay to change it to "Name Changed"

There were a few issues and complaints from the general public e.g. stream quality, demands that all matches be streamed, lack of hype/ publicity, casters, and etc. However, I still think it was a success and I believe that the organisers did a great job given it was their first time hosting such events.

Shoban

(Dota 2, Culebre)



I decided to join mostly because I knew that two of my longtime teammates were also part of Culebre and that if we joined there was no chance we'd lose as the average player skill at Monash is pretty low.

To be honest, vv most of our opponents we're a lot worse than we expected with the exception of our opponents on multiple occasions, Manticore's A Team, who even managed to take a game of us during the group stages.

Overall, I'd say the Monash Cup was mostly a success. Though some more research into proper match rules could have been done for Dota2 for first time hosting it was not bad. I'd like to thank the organizers for being pleasant and understanding when working with the players during the tournament.

Monash Cultural Night

”

We humans may have our differences, but we are fundamentally the same; bound to the same roots of Yggdrasil. It is from these roots where we grow and branch out to who we are.

”

MUISS 2020

With about 2.3k views now, MUISS' first ever virtual **Cultural Night 2020** has surely brought us across the bridges of different worlds to witness the wondrous displays of culture that our communities have to offer.

With Iram and Keerat as our hosts. I'm here to give you a little run down of what happened. They start off with our home campus, **Malaysia**. A lucky few were asked, "what reminds them of Malaysia" and majority of the responses centered around 'variety' in terms of cultures, traditions and religions coexisting peacefully, our tropical weather, food, food and more food. Oh, and our excessive amount of public holidays.

We were given a brief history of how Malaysia became the country we know and love today - despite the political drama and the pandemic still rampant. We focus on the good things and remind ourselves of what it truly means to be Malaysian. To do that, Team Malaysia has gone back to their roots to showcase snippets of our (my) respective traditional dances.

The graceful Chinese duo dances, enthralling indian solo dance, a classic Malay solo dance followed by sweet acoustics, a Chinese cover. Authentic, entertaining, simple, as the song goes: "Simple is best, better than the rest."

Moving on to Team **China**, its nation being one of the most populated countries in the world with 5000 years a long history of civilization. They started off with a short history presentation on the historical and cultural connections between Malaysia and China. Tales of Admiral Cheng Ho's travels to Malacca and the origins of the Peranakan ethnic group for example.

The collision of Guangdong and Dongbei left its mark on a generation, thus, they give us their version of "Wild Wild Disco" where Cantonese and Northeastern dialects are merged, bringing with it a sense of nostalgia. Then, a compilation of various solo dancers ranging from modern to classical to pop. Absolutely adorable.

Next was **Korea** - the centre of K-wave. Flying through the many iconic landmarks such as Jin Hae Cherry Blossom Street, Ham An Mureung Mountain, Ulsan Mongdol Beach, Sajik Baseball Stadium and more; we then dropped by Luck's striking dance cover of Candy by Baekhyun, showing us a glimpse of just how influential K-pop has been. Then, we get a mouth-watering korean chicken Mukbang by Dong Yeon (Terry) with his sister as a surprise guest!

Goodbye to eye candies and hello to 'Wonderful **Indonesia**,' a tour of landmarks. Jakarta (Capital City), and the Kali Besar Lake (inspired by Cheongyecheon Lake). Then, Team Indonesia presents us with their Indonesia Pusaka song followed by the upbeat Sanjojo dance - it reminded me of Malaysia's Jamilah dance!

Sri Lanka, 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean' and in all its natural beauty, is a cultural heritage surrounded by ancient ruins, spectacular views of tea estates and beaches. Team Sri Lanka gives us a beautiful group singing cover of 'Hey, Soul Sister' segueing to them just having fun, then, a

traditional dance compilation showcasing their different traditional outfits. They surprised us with their creative dance and use of animation were captivating, transitioning to a modern and upbeat dance then back to traditional, they certainly kept us on our seats!

Bangladesh is proud of their nature, culture, people, arts, food, and tradition. Team Bangladesh gives us a highlight reel tour before diving into a history lesson accompanied by different traditional costumes and dances. On the 21st February, it's their International Mother Language Day, they dress in black and white and gather at the Shaheed Minar (Martyrs' Monument) with flowers to commemorate their martyrs. On 26th March, it's their Independence Day, freedom from Pakistan and 16th December is Victory Day, celebrating the end of the Liberation War by wearing their national colours - red and green. 14th April is Pohela Boishakh, Bengali New Year where everyone wears red and white and women desk their hair with flowers.

We're half-way through. Now, we go to a very united country that produces about half of the world's footballs! Team **Pakistan** opens with a history clip from 1947, after the Bangladesh Liberation War - whereby what used to be east Pakistan became a separate country of its own. Then we are given an entertaining compilation of them dancing with multiple costume and background changes. Certainly, a lively and energetic number.

Travelling to **India**, we were given a glimpse of their many colourful festivals. The Maha Shivratri, a Hindu festival celebrated annually in the honor of Lord Shiva accompanied with an upbeat dancing duo. The Holi festival of colors, celebrated in the triumph of good over evil, accompanied with a dancing trio this time, starting off black and white then a splash of colour. Clever editing! Eid al-Fitr, or Aidilfitri, it's no stranger to us Malaysians, it marks the end of the Islamic holy month of fasting (a.k.a Ramadan).

Not forgetting Indian Independence Day, the Onam festival which originated from Kerala, to commemorate King Mahabali's visiting spirit,

then the Ganesh Chaturthi, celebrating the birth of Lord Ganesha, the god of wisdom and prosperity. Next we see the festival Navratri, the celebration of welcoming Goddess Durga through Durga Puja, fasting & folk dancing with a dancing duo, another comeback! Then we are shown the festival of lights, Diwali in honor of Lord Rama after his return from battling the demon Ravana. All were accompanied by duos and trios of dance and song.

Then we crossed over to the country with no history of international conflict, an island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, **Mauritius!** Well known for their nature, variety of food, and diversity in languages and people, speaking English, Creole, French, Hindi and even Punjabi, putting bilinguals to shame.

Besides Indian culture, Mauritius is also home to many more cultures, making it almost like utopia with their unity a perfect colourful blend by being in between Africa and Asia. We are given snippets of them dancing and even singing to portray some of the different cultures and ethnicities they have - Telugu, Marathi, Chinese, Tamil, Hindi and Sega Mauricien. Let's just say, it's not just their traditional costumes that are colourful and flowy, they sure know how to have fun, that's for sure!

Lastly, some final words from the Heads of MUISS. They are disappointed they weren't able to carry on with the plans they originally had planned since last year due to the ongoing pandemic and had to make do with what they could do because 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.' They have certainly done their best to make the most of this entirely online semester. With thanks to all the performers, models, editors and the MUISS team, virtual MCN was possible and wonderfully made as we are reminded how beautiful and diverse Monash University community is. What an amazing way to end their term as MUISS heads, with gratitude and humble hearts; they extend their thanks to viewers and the team.



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stig(ma)s & stones

THE FIGHT.

by Kieran (cw: suicide)

You're five years old when you learn you're not really as cookie-cutter as everyone else around you seems to be, from the tone of your skin to the quarrels that serve as lullabies through the night. You're a hero set out on a grand quest too quickly, delegated to mutism because that's just easier for everyone.

You're 15 years old and expelling the linings of your innards before the fleeting thought of maybe this isn't right stares back at you through the reflection of a toilet bowl, through the haze of your latest overdose.

You think you'll be 25 when you can finally draw out laughter from the bottom of your bowls, when you'll finally feel like you want to stay grounded in your body, among the camaraderie you're owed from the reel of coming-of-age films you've lived vicariously through, but instead you're sat in a pool of tears in your therapist's office finally admitting to yourself that you deserve better than what people and society's lobotomized you into thinking of yourself as.

This isn't a sob story, really. It's everyone's story. That's the catch, isn't it? The ideal suburban life isn't as typical or as attainable as we're conditioned into thinking. Maybe you've gone through your whole life never once holding another person's clammy hands in the back of a classroom, maybe you've never gone a day not quelling your tears into the creases of a pillow. Maybe the thing awry in your life only ever seems to belong to yourself, so this isn't for you, right?

But this is still an ode to you, especially. It's an ode to everyone who's ever felt uncomfortable in their own skin, whether it be a zit on the tip of your nose or a dysphoria that's ingrained into your bones. If you're heart's got the habit of beating too fast in your chest for people you're told you can't fall for, if the only way you seem like you can properly make up for your existence is by putting yourself down, down, and further down yet.

I see you, and I love you. You're worth more than you'll ever realise, and you know that, too; after all, it's the one thing you'll find when you've gone all the way to the bottom.

And there's nowhere else to go from there but up, right?



A friend said, "Stigma? No, that's an addiction. Why don't you write about your obsession with cutting split ends instead?"

I do cut my split ends, in an almost mechanical, religious way. But I first want to tackle a very ghastly, very sinful act that many people condemn.

Before I delve into how I used to snort lines to get through my days, I must first bring up morality. Morality is subjective, relative in fact. When people bring up relative morality, they're also being relative in what they include in things they deem worthy of relative morals. In other words, something like 'doing illegal drugs' would typically fall under 'relative morals', because it doesn't harm anyone, not if it doesn't affect an individual's ability to work for the betterment of society. The fact that one might have the money to acquire drugs demonstrates that they have put in their requirement to society. So no, I never did think there was a moral issue with illegal drugs on it's own.

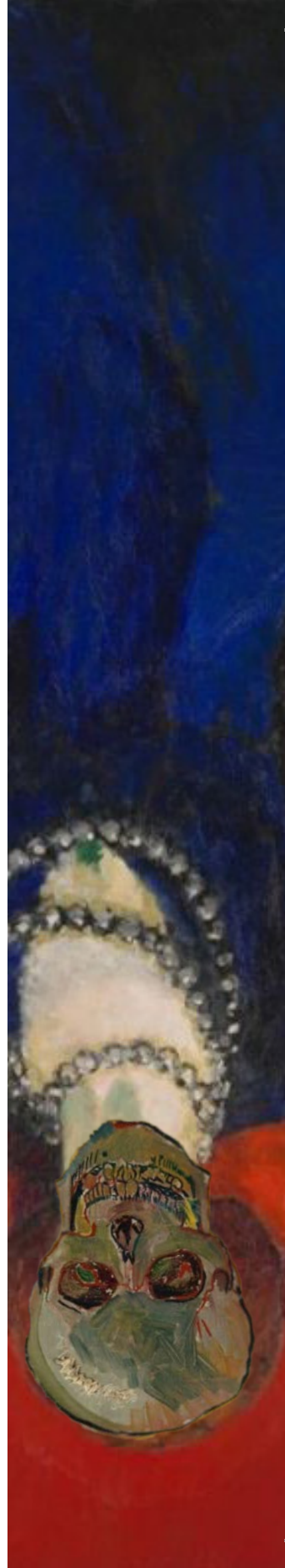
When I was younger, no one told me weed was a gateway drug, because the topic in its entirety was so stigmatised that schools instead opted to say anything straying from the law was wrong, wrong, wrong. But I regress, weed is indeed a gateway drug. Because it made me realise illegal drugs may not inherently be bad, not when responsibility is exercised. I wasn't a fan of weed: it made me unproductive, and it made me want to eat twice my stomach's capacity... so I started exploring my options. I liked uppers, I disliked downers. I supported the usage of drugs to enhance one's reality, I did not support the usage of drugs to escape one's reality. But the line is thin, faint and almost invisible.

For a long time, I thought crushing up ecstasy, coke and ketamine to snort was enhancing my reality. I fell in love with viewing life in vivid technicolours, there was so much love to be felt, so many emotions I never dreamt of feeling sober. I wasn't the biggest fan of life, but through dilated pupils, I could swear I loved life. It sat fine with me, as long as I wasn't hurting anyone, or going overboard.

One day however, I stopped. It may or may not have been lockdown related. But the day I stopped, I fell out of love with life. Left with one pathetic gram of ketamine, I had some careful rationing to do. But that baggie I hid in my wallet was the hand lifting me out of bed when in the morning. It was the small ray of sunshine when I had to study past sundown. It was the pat on my back when I got through a productive day. Does it spell codependency? Perhaps. But I've been sober for three weeks, and I realise I've been a-okay. I do think life's too short and fragile for humans to simply work their whole lives to put a large nest egg away for retirement.

Every other aspect of this topic then falls apart because we have society's completely legal, but equally destructive drug of choice: alcohol. Illegal drugs, when used responsibly, being an issue of moral turpitude is such a farce because there's nothing logical to argue against. Legal and religious factors aside, I think the dogma in society relating to drugs is heavily emotion-based.

Now about my split ends. I get them because my hair is long, and bleached.



I was a child when I began to grasp what the word 'belong' meant.

I grew up intertwined between two languages: English and Cantonese. Although my family spoke mainly English at home, they often alternated between both. However, I was still left with a good grasp of only one language: English, although I also understood Cantonese. However, I began to realize that many of my friends at school spoke Mandarin. Often, they would crack jokes in Mandarin among themselves. When I asked them to explain it to me, they could never properly convey the message. I could not blame them- things were often lost in translation. The attempts I made at speaking Mandarin were laughed off- what kind of Chinese girl can't speak her language? I felt deep shame. There was no excuse.

They called me a 'banana'- yellow on the outside, white on the inside. I may have looked Chinese, but to some, I was not a part of my race. It became increasingly obvious that I was an outsider. The word is stamped across my face- many have said I have that banana look. My features seem to have been permanently altered by the word; shifted into place by someone else.

"You are not Chinese," someone once said to me. "You cannot speak Mandarin, so you will never be."

I stopped trying to speak Mandarin with friends and relatives. My poor grasp of the language was embarrassing, almost laughable. When people of different ethnicity- particularly Westerners said ni hao, they were praised. Although I had no excuse for my lack of Mandarin speaking skills, I wished to receive the same kind of encouragement.

In an effort to prove myself, I delved into books. I read hundreds of stories, memorized the words by heart. If I could not speak Mandarin, the least I could do was become good in English. I developed a deep love for the written word and a fascination for the authors themselves. It was almost miraculous- how people could stitch words together into the most beautiful ways. I began to love the art of writing and how it allowed me to express myself. Through writing, someone else could see the world through my eyes. It captured my passions, my wonder, and my pain.

To this day, I still carry the shame of not knowing my mother tongue. I celebrated Chinese New Year like everyone else, loved the same food, cooked the same traditional dishes. Yet, I lacked what defined me as part of my race.

I understood Mandarin as a beautiful language. Each Chinese character was

I understood Mandarin as a beautiful language. Each Chinese character was wonderfully unique; each brushstroke had to be numbered and shaped carefully. The lilting of the words on your tongue had to be carefully spoken. One wrong roll of the tongue and you could say an entirely different word. For example, the word shu (书) meaning book, could be mispronounced as shu (输), meaning lose. It is a language carried with great pride and respect. It was carried through the boats that sailed from China to Malaysia, molded through the different dialects and the tongues of my ancestors. I hope to one day speak this graceful, lilting language- and feel proud of it.


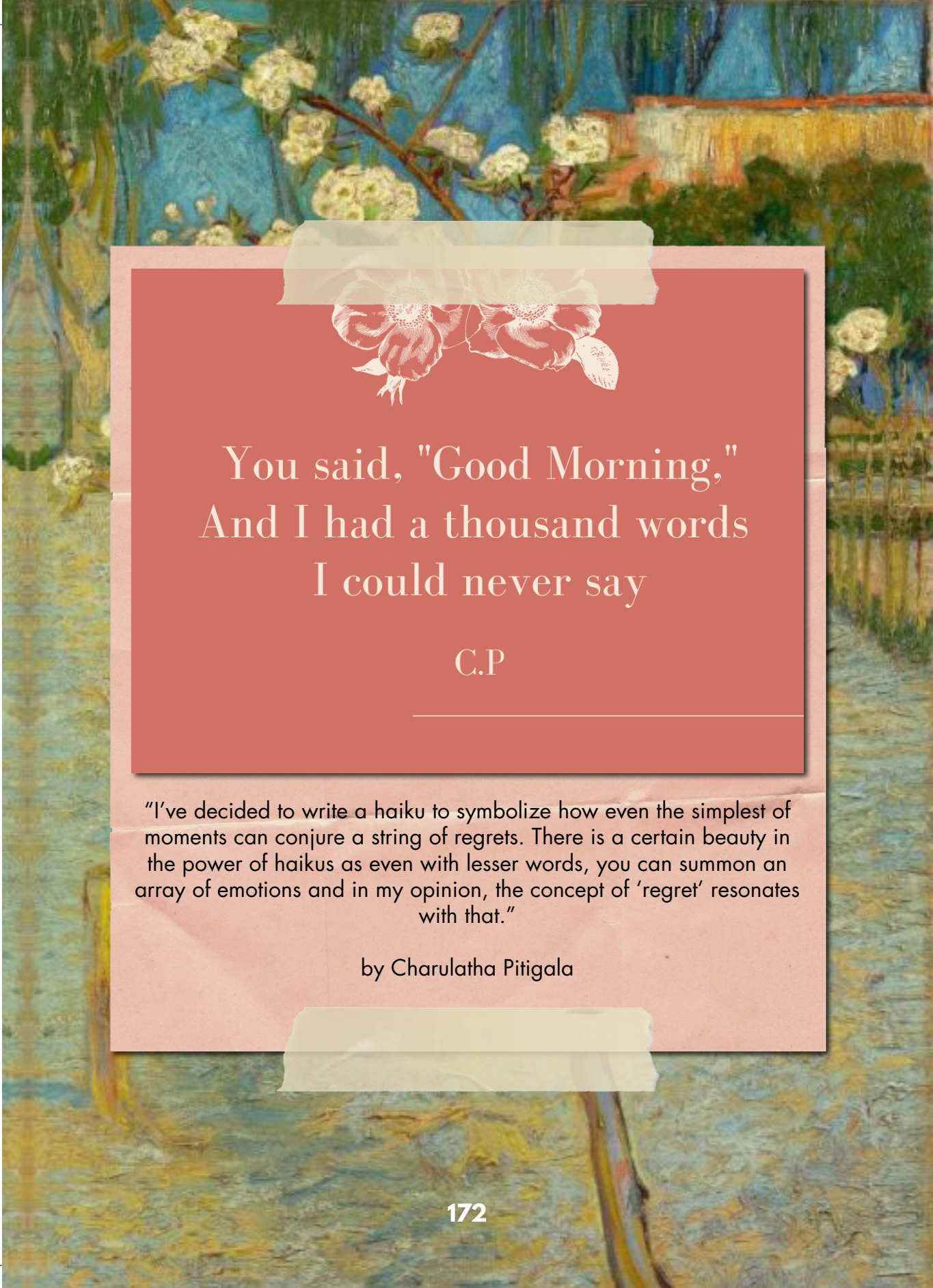


Lost In Translation

By Zoe Yap



Graphic by Raegel Cha

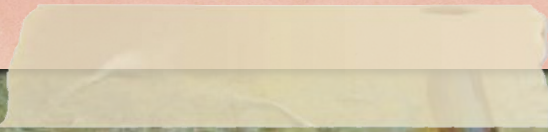


You said, "Good Morning,"
And I had a thousand words
I could never say

C.P

"I've decided to write a haiku to symbolize how even the simplest of moments can conjure a string of regrets. There is a certain beauty in the power of haikus as even with lesser words, you can summon an array of emotions and in my opinion, the concept of 'regret' resonates with that."

by Charulatha Pitigala





WALLS.

by Christie

I hate this feeling, I really do. The deep ache in my crevice of my chest, my head spinning with the “what ifs” and the “I shouldn’t have”, swirling together with the feeling of betrayal and followed by a waterfall of distrust. The way I trusted people was like letting them into my version of the Forbidden City, buried deep within the Great Walls. I’ve always kept everyone at a great distance; think of social distancing, but with friendships and relationships. I would know a lot of people, but I would never let anyone close enough to actually see my surface unless I let them skim the top layer. Not many do I actually let into my stone cold brick walls; it’s funny because someone actually said my heart was made of ice. Imagine the amount of regret I had, when the few people I let in, probably could be counted on one hand, betray me. Ever heard of the people who are the closest to you are the ones who you’re voluntarily giving permission to hurt you the most? I wish to death that it wasn’t true but it is. It felt like I gave them the shovel to hurl away the bricks that made up my walls so tall and mighty, I let them come in just for my home, my peace to be damaged.

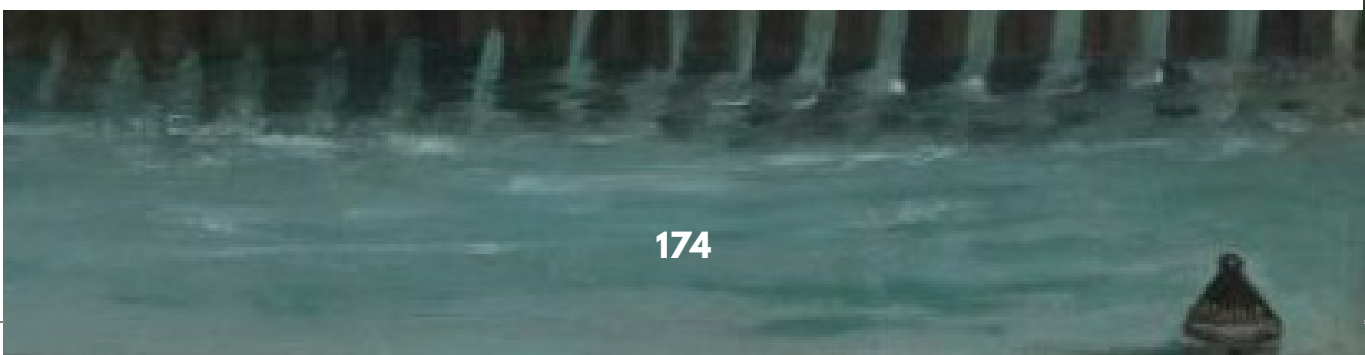
I have so many stories of betrayal; picture me sitting next to a fireplace with a thick book consisting of my life in my lap. My fingers, caressing each page to find which chapter will be the most interesting and least painful for me to narrate. To put it in short, my naïve and fearful self begged my ex not to leave me. Months later, he didn’t have the heart to look me in the eye to say he found someone easier to love, didn’t want to be the bad guy, didn’t want to say the words so he did everything to drive me away and when that didn’t work, he left me for someone else. I regret letting myself continue a relationship that turned so sour and toxic as the months went by and yet, I still held on, just wishing every day that maybe if I were to try hard enough, I could change his ways. Sadly, it doesn’t work that way. No one will change for you no matter how hard you try unless they want to change for themselves.



I was always made to feel like it was my fault. My fault for being too sensitive, for being too controlling, for being the way that I am. I suffered from depression and anxiety yet I had to baby a man-child that often guilt tripped me by saying turning my issues against me. When we broke up, everyone had questions. We always seemed fine, so why break up? No one ever knew that we were secretly suffering in that so-called perfect relationship so naturally, everyone had something to say about it. About me, especially since I never really opened up about my side to anyone. I would hear things about it every single day from people whom I didn't even know. Over time, my self-confidence took a hit and went down under, I didn't love myself. I regret letting myself even believe an ounce of what everyone said about me because in the end, I would be the one lying in bed awake at 4am, wondering if the problem was always just me all along. I regret forgetting that my own feelings exist too and that I needed to prioritize my own happiness above others.

I saw this quote, "if someone does not want me, it is not the end of the world, but if I do not want me, the world is nothing but endings."

Today I stand tall with my head high, my past still a burden but not as heavy, the whispers in my ears are still there, but not as loud. Things get better, they really do.





LITTLE BIRDIE

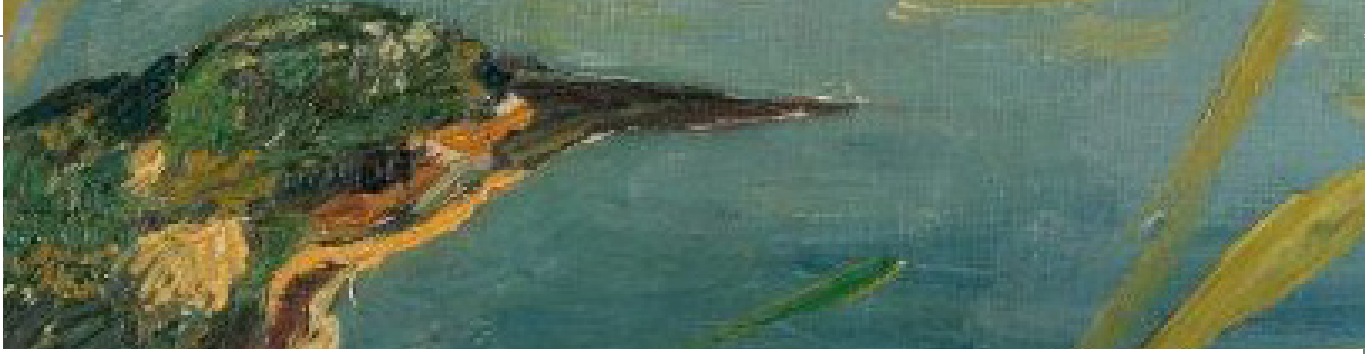
by XOXO (cw: disordered eating, sexual harassment)

Based on a true story...

There was once a girl who grew up in a loving family. She was their precious princess, locked in the tower to protect her from the evils of the outside world. Their love for her was a double-edged sword. The constant breathing down her neck suffocated her. She felt like a bird locked in a cage. Poking at her daily with a stick to 'pet' her, constantly feeding her with insecurities so that she wouldn't dare leave the nest prematurely. However, when she came of age, she finally had the chance to fly away from the nest; what a happy day it was. She was finally able to be more independent, explore her identity and just try everything! It was all so exciting, but all those beautiful sights and lights blinded her. Poor naive little birdie; did not know what she was getting into.

In the process of learning to love herself again and recovering from an eating disorder, she was approached by a tiny sketchy snake. She could've eaten him easily but instead he offered her an apple. It was no ordinary apple. She thought that that apple would be able to help her deal with her insecurities. So, she took a leap of faith; bit into that forbidden fruit and made an agreement. However, when she started having second-thoughts, he didn't let her back out easily. He was persistent. Adamantly insisted she continue to help him. His word play is to be applauded, offering the alluded way out just to have it lead to dead ends. She felt troubled and did not know how to escape. Needless to say, before she realized what he was doing, it was too late.

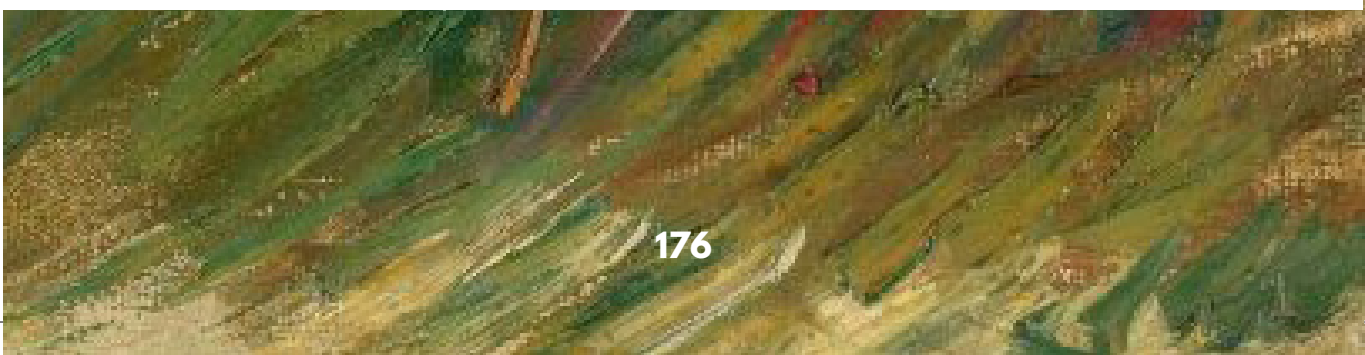
There was a spell casted that prevented her from flying away from what was about to unfold. His little project was sickening. He wanted to capture the beauty in nature, then twist the subject to match his sadistic desires. He had plucked her feathers, slowly undressing her, stripping her bare. And she let him have his way with her. She had dissociated from her physical body. It was



like watching a horror movie, you would tell the characters what not to do, to not go in there but it would be futile. She had reverted back to the obedient little girl that did whatever was asked of her. Everything had turned hazy after that. Next thing she knows, she is back in her room and struggling to function normally, trying to process what happened.

The first month became her personal hell. She couldn't sleep because he constantly haunted her dreams, she was so ashamed, she had no appetite and barely ate. Instead of improving, her anxiety worsened. All she could do was focus on her work and pretend everything was fine. To alleviate some of her paranoia, she drastically changed her appearance and style, and it worked. He didn't recognize her or remember her. It was comforting, and I hated it. I hated the fear. I hated the feeling of regret and the constant self-blame. Most of all, I hated the amount of control he had over me without even knowing it. It took me so long to finally be able to say "I'm okay" again.

I just hope that anyone who is still struggling to find their bearings, I pray that you surround yourself with a good support system. The scars may never heal but the regret felt is gone. I know now that it wasn't my fault. Remember to be kind and gentle with yourself. This too shall pass. Patience, love. xoxo



You know how sometimes in TV shows or anime, when they're trying to show days passing, and it's just a shot of the calendar dates changing?

Lately my life feels a lot like that montage. Time just passes by so quickly. In the blink of an eye, a year passed, and then two, and then three. What have I done in that time? What have I accomplished?

I know, I know. I graduated high-school, got into a good university, and so on. But what have I DONE that's actually worthwhile?

That sounds terribly bleak, huh? So, you know, I've been trying to do this self-love thing people have been talking about. "Look on the bright side!", "Think positive!", "Treat yourself, sis! Things aren't so bad." They'd tell me to "try this", and "try that".

So, I do. Some days I try to literally count my blessings. I'd look in the mirror and hold up ten fingers. It's like that "Put a finger down if you ..." TikTok trend we see so often, except I'm alone in my room looking at my own reflection, talking to my damn self.

It feels silly, but I've heard that doing stuff like this actually helps a lot in dealing with your internal shit.

One. You have a great group of friends who've got your back and make you laugh every day.

Two. You do pretty well in your classes and have yet to fail a unit.

Three. You're fortunate enough to have all your necessities covered.

But sometimes, things would escalate and I'd end up listing out shit I hate about myself. Don't ask me how or why, my life would be 1000x better if I knew how my brain worked.

Eight. Ah, you probably shouldn't have spent on coins for fucking webcomics. What is wrong with you?

Nine. Maybe if you procrastinated less and actually started work earlier, you could've scored an HD. You really are useless.

Ten. If you actually knew how to fucking connect with people, maybe your so-called friends wouldn't all secretly hate you.

Man, that took an incredibly dark turn. Here's the problem, though. My life has been fairly comfortable, I have a lot to be grateful for, and I can't say that there has been any major life-changing or traumatic event that made me who I am today. It's these small, everyday-type regrets that haunt me everywhere I go. They drive me crazy.

Are you like that too?

Maybe someday I'll learn how to deal with all this in a healthy and responsible manner. Maybe one day I'll be able to see myself in a better light.

Maybe one day it'll be better.

Maybe one day *I'll* be better.

Right now, though. This just...

feels bad, man.
by buzzards21





PARANORMAL

When I Was...

by Irshika

When I was 8...

I was watching a horror film with my family today. I don't get why ghosts in every horror film look the same: long hair, white dress, burnt and ashy face, and for some reason, they don't talk—they just teleport here and there. Anyways, I slept halfway through, not sure how the movie ended.

When I was 12...

"Can you come and watch *Conjuring* with me? I'm scared to watch alone". "I don't understand how someone could look at THAT DOLL and think of bringing it back home".

"I'm scared to go alone le, can accompany me ah?"

"Don't off the lights, wait for me!"

When I was 15...

My friends were saying the school's locker room is haunted by the spirit of a janitor. Some of my classmates went there during recess to act "rebellious". Why would anyone even think of digging their own grave? I'm definitely staying away from that entire corridor. After all, how can you get possessed if you are careful with your choices, right?

When I was 17...

I'm alone but I hear voices. I didn't go out with my friends today. I just couldn't bring myself out of those doors. I locked myself in the room and cried. Why am I sad? How do I "fix" myself? I often find myself crying in the toilet cubicles too. I miss hanging out with my friends to catch up with the latest gossip. My friends confronted me the other day and said "I've changed" and my parents are worried about me—I'm fine.

When I am 19...

I'm being consumed. Consumed by my own thoughts. They're so dark and so horrid, and I'm afraid. It's wrecking me from the inside out; but no one else recognizes it. Does that mean I'm possessed? These voices in my head check every other box to qualify as a ghost except for the generic looks. Well if that's the case, I'm possessed in ways that I definitely never thought myself to be. I want to leave to somewhere that is quiet and dark; maybe somewhere those "voices" repeatedly demand me to go. Anyways, I wanted to sleep but I couldn't.

PARANORMAL

by Jayshree

Paranormal. The word itself sends chills down my spine. Anything that has to do with the supernatural would make me squeamish from a very young age. But, there was something inherently fascinating about it which drew my attention and peaked my interest with the paranormal.

Horror films give me nightmares and headaches but there is something that draws me back everytime. Everything about horror films, from the suspicious-looking houses to the creepy and haunting music terrifies me. It also peaks my curiosity; I often wonder if people have truly experienced such traumatic incidents in real life. The ambiguous nature of the word makes me question if we are indeed aware of true paranormality. Ghost stories that we all hear during sleepovers only amplify this ambiguity.

Growing up with these films and stories, I always associated paranormal with horror. My own experiences however proved me wrong in my assumptions about what is paranormal. What ended up being more terrifying were my own dreams.

I would dream about the people I see around me everyday. I would dream about people that I randomly notice while on a walk. It started out pretty normal, nothing unusual about the dreams. But, that was quick to change when I realised pretty soon that I would dream about conversations or events that were going to take place. Initially, I dismissed the thought, because it seemed so childish. A conversation with my mother one day however caught me off-guard. I knew exactly what she was going to say because I had already dreamt about it. It felt surreal and scary at the same time.

I started to write about my dreams regularly to see if I was merely imagining things. I felt like I had lost my mind. It did not make any sense. There was no rationality in this situation.

It only got more confusing from that point on. I would have incredibly vivid dreams that almost felt real but they were not. None of my dreams were manifested into actual real life events at this point. I felt relieved and slept peacefully but it would always be in the back of my mind.

migraine. I couldn't stop thinking about it. It's still something that I cannot stop thinking about now.

I was so scared about dreaming that I could not fall asleep anymore. I kept thinking all night long. I would be so tired all the time. But I could not tell anyone. What if they would think that I'm insane or delusional? What if there was something wrong with me? These thoughts gave me chills every time.

It's as if my dreams were calling out to me, trying to tell me something.

There's something about it that feels haunting and eerie, like the feeling you get while walking alone in a dark alley at night and hearing the wind howl and whispers in the air.

Paranormal


by Anonymous

My school was many things before it became a school. The land it sits atop used to be the sea and it had been an orphanage back in the 1800s. Due to its strategic location in the heart of the town, it was occupied by Japanese soldiers and used as a military hospital in World War 2. We knew the 200-year-old building has its fair share of horror stories, but we never expected to live through it.

It all began as an ordinary assembly at the start of the new school year. After sitting through an hour of speeches and lectures from our teachers who urged us to get rid of our holiday mood and be serious about our studies, we were standing in lines and getting ready to be adjourned. There were chatters everywhere as we reunite with our friends as the head prefect futilely asked us to quiet down. Just as she was about to repeat herself, a blood-curdling scream emerged from the middle of the crowd and silenced us all.

Looking at the wide-eyed expressions of my classmates, it was no doubt that the scream had sent shivers down our spines. Suddenly, more gasps and shrieks could be heard as more people gathered towards the centre of the hall to catch a glimpse of what had happened. Someone laid on the ground; seizing and foaming at the mouth as their eyes rolled to the back of their head. The sight of it alone was enough to petrify us.

Quickly, our disciplinary teacher ordered us to disperse and stop crowding around the poor girl lying on the ground. She quickly instructed the prefects to usher groups of students back to the classes and had a few more teachers help carry the student onto a stretcher. Before we were forcibly removed from the hall, I caught another glimpse of the girl as she looked directly towards my friends and I. Her eyes widened as her body started contorting and twisting violently. She then let out another shriek that was louder and more horrifying



than the last. I was startled and quickly stumbled out of the hall because whatever that was coming out of her mouth, surely did not sound human.


The chaos quickly died down, although we did sit around the cafeteria to discuss about what could have possibly happened. My friends denied ever hearing a second scream and said the girl appeared almost limp and lifeless as the teachers wheeled her towards the chapel. I'd watch one too many horror movies to know that what I witnessed cannot be something good, so I decided to not put too much thought into it and just focus on getting through the day.

The next day, however, I was down with a fever that put me out of school for a little over a week. When I returned, I was told that a similar incident happened during the following assembly. Later, we found out that two girls went on a camping trip together with their boyfriends on a hill. There, they disposed of their used feminine hygiene products carelessly in the woods. Whether or not their ignorance was the cause of this bizarre incident remains unsolved.

It's that moment every single M*nash student has dreamt of since they set foot in the university. Fixing your cap and gown, you took a deep breath before the announcer called out your name. It echoes in the S*wnay Lagoon Resort Hotel & Spa grand ballroom, followed by sounds of clapping, mostly by polite parents who only cared about their own children there. You went on stage with the biggest grin on your face, trying to not trip on the train of your Al*a B*astamam dress you rented online specifically for this special occasion.

As you held the certificate in your hand, you smiled at the official photographer capturing this once-in-a-lifetime moment. You also caught the eyes of your parents standing up from their seats next to your significant other, beaming while waving at you. You could see your dad trying to take your picture with his phone, with his glasses halfway on his nose and him holding the phone in the way the older generation do. A wave of affection passed through your heart. This event was especially meaningful for him, who has sacrificed more than half of his life to work and apply for loans to make sure you could get a world-class education and develop into a holistic person.

You joined them afterwards. When the ceremony ended, it was a bittersweet moment of taking pictures with people who have made your life much less lonelier in your three years of university. A pang of sadness hits you as you realized that you might not be able to see some of them again as they return to their home countries. You made a promise with each other to always keep in contact on social media. You eyed through the crowd; there was the person you had a crush on for one semester, the coursemates you've awkwardly only sat in the same classes with, the group mates who have all leeches off you, the clique who tried to create drama with you by spreading rumors, the person you can't stand but have pretended to be nice towards since first year, and others. You'll miss them.



You held the graduation certificate tighter in your hand. You did it. Amidst all the breakdowns, purposeful walking in front of moving cars so that they can hit you and you no longer have to submit your assignments, of sleepless nights finishing those reports and thinking you can't make it - you did it. And it's over now. You've already secured a well-paying job in a prestigious company beforehand, and you're ready. You're ready to take on the world. The world is in your hand. Your boyfriend kissed you on your head and grabbed your hand, promising to take you to the 5-star restaurant for dinner while your parents looked on fondly.

And then you woke up. Then, you remembered. COVID-19. Full online learning. No graduation ceremony. Your lecturers catching you discussing exam questions with your friends on Zoom. Zero marks. Your boyfriend cheating on the girl living closer to his hometown. Your parents always shouting for your name to pick up the laundry while you are in the middle of your class. Your mum appearing behind you to show your discolored underwear from the washing machine while you were in the middle of a 20% graded presentation in front of 30 other classmates that one time.

You screamed.



A M*NASH H:RROR ST:RY
by Durrah Sharifah

A painting of a woman sitting at a table, looking down. She has her hair styled up. On the table in front of her is a large spool of red thread. The background is a textured, patterned wall. The text "breaking stereotypes" is overlaid in a bold, black, serif font across the center of the image. A black rectangular redaction bar covers the woman's eyes.

breaking stereotypes

A Woman.

by Christie

I've heard it all from "You're being too much!" to "Tone it down, be less aggressive" to "Why does she talk so much?" I have always wondered whether was it my problem, was it me that needed to change? Did I have to make myself smaller because other people feel like I am too big?

In my past relationship, I remember being upset because I wasn't getting the same effort back that I was putting in. He made me feel like I was wrong for asking for the basic, minimal things. I made myself smaller by only focusing on him, not doing anything else to improve my own life, academically and mentally. I dressed up way less, hid my expensive jewelry and kept quiet whenever I went shopping. I wasn't doing the things that I liked, only living to please him.

One night, an acquaintance posted a misogynistic statement saying 'Women should cover up' on social media to which I replied to him that everyone has the right to love themselves the way they want to. He ended up calling me arrogant and disrespectful for voicing out my opinion. "Women are asking to be sexualised by men" "All the feminists are always posting things that make men sexualise them" He could openly imply all of this to me and in my good conscience as an advocate for gender equality, how could I have just agreed with him?

My relatives have always told my parents how I should be more ladylike. How I should be primmer and more proper. How my clothes look like on me, how my piercings look bad. I never understood how people who hardly see me throughout the year, have so much to say. Also, is there even an official description for what a 'proper' girl is?

My problem is that I always think I'm the issue, I will always apologize first. It took a long journey, with days where I couldn't even stand looking in the mirror where I would only see an ugly broken monster staring back at me, setting alarms to cry for an hour every day with the shower running in the background. But today, my biggest achievement won't be my long list of experiences on LinkedIn nor will be my WAM. It'll always be me realizing I don't have to be what people want me to be. I realized it's not me.

I'm not too much, I'm just enough.



UNTITLED

by Anonymous

I remember hiding in the bathroom, with the shower on so that my family could not hear my muffled sobs as I broke down in there. This happened when I was 12. Looking back at it in hindsight, you would think that I was just throwing a childish tantrum but being 12 was not as easy as it seems. As a child, I always struggled with my identity and was insecure with myself. I always felt anxious that I would be deemed useless and could only equate my self-worth to achievements that could be quantified. I would use that to validate myself and have a sense of security. So, it would always take months for me to accept that I had made a blunder and to rebuild the faith and trust I had in me. I made sure I was perfect, but no matter how hard I tried, all this would come crashing down one fateful day.

I had bangs when I was a child, they were slightly overgrown because my parent was too busy with work to take me to the salon. I did not find them to be a bother, but a teacher I had in primary 6 was infuriated. She was always strict to the class and spoke with a stern voice. I always thought she was just trying to push us to do better. Little did I expect that she would call me to the front of the class and had me turn to face my classmates. Then, she began speaking in a demeaning tone, asking the class if I looked like someone who is fated to do well in life. She pointed out my bangs and the way my uniform hung over my skeletal figure and said that someone with such an unkempt appearance, like myself, will never be able to do well in the upcoming exams, nor in life. I looked too gloomy, too dull. If I am not putting any effort into upkeeping my appearance, surely, I am not putting in effort in my academics either. So, let today be a lesson for all, always put a cheerful expression on your face and smile, if you want to succeed, you are already in second class, the only thing you can work on is your appearance at this point. She then looked back at me and said 'if you cannot do that, then do not bother burdening our country with your subpar achievements, instead return to where you came from, the Chinese back to China and the Indians back to India.'

It was not just the humiliation and embarrassment I felt when she critiqued



my appearance that made me cry, it was also the racial annihilation I felt coming from an educator. That night, I doubted if I could truly succeed in life. I wondered whether it would be my body, my appearance or my race that would hinder me from achieving greater good. I wondered if the confidence that I can do well was just all in my head, after all, my own teacher saw me as nothing worthwhile. I really struggled with regaining my confidence in my self-identity afterwards, but thankfully, I did end up scoring straight As for UPSR and SPM. I would go on to graduate college with a high achiever's award and receive a scholarship in university.

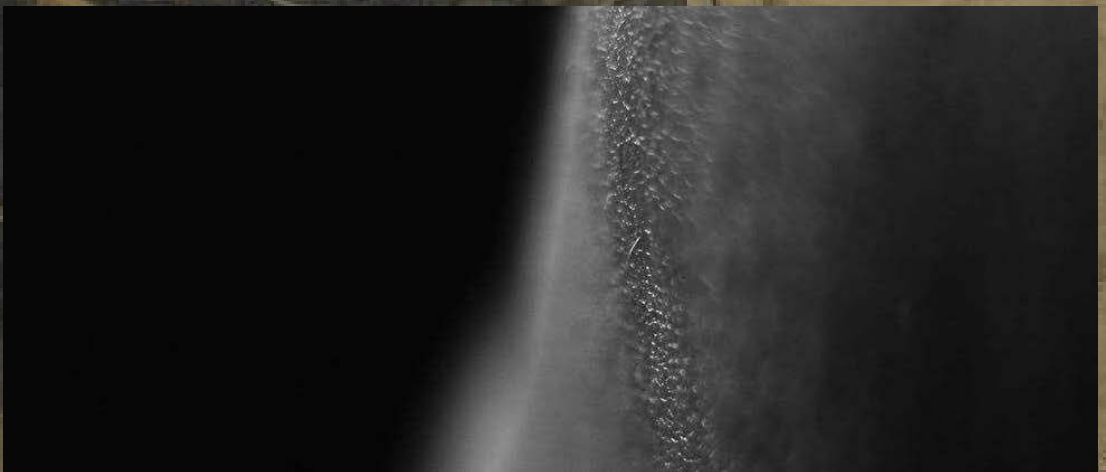
Her words used to haunt me every night as I studied for exams, I used to cry myself to sleep and pray when it was all too much. I like to believe that God was looking out for me in some ways because I have met incredible educators since then who were supportive and encouraging. They taught me that it is okay to not be great and that neither my appearance, race nor academic achievements can define my self-worth. They also taught me that what happened that day was not my fault and should not have happened in the first place. While it will take some time for me to truly be emotionally healthy again, I am glad to say that her words no longer echo in my head and someday, I will be ready to forgive her for what she said. Whether or not she is aware of the emotional damage her words have caused me, I am beyond ready to put an end to this chapter of our encounter.

Breaking Stereotypes

by Zara Abbas



1. Body positivity: painting - "Body Goals" is not a linear progress.



-2. Body positivity: three images for - Soft Bodies - "Stretch marks are normal".



3. Street Photographer: A female conquering the streets; alone.

Background: I am a female street photographer from Pakistan. We all know the risks females face when walking in the street alone, from cat-calling to the risk of being approached. This poses a risk for any female street photographer but in Pakistan this is amplified even more. It's a rare enough sight to see a woman on the street with a camera anywhere but in Pakistan women rarely go to crowd markets alone because they are dominated by men who will stare at you, follow you and maybe even rob you, no matter how covered you are.

space

by Anonymous

There's beauty in being different from everyone else, although the pain is just as alienating. I have no qualms with this, although others will, to each their own. It's something I've come to acknowledge with time; I don't need platitudes of being brave just for being true to myself, because I know who I am, nor do I need to be celebrated for the pain those very platitudes simply remind me of. All I need is space.

But most of the time, it isn't even about me. I often think of what you would think, if I were to tell you the truth. What you would think if I were to admit that I've never been what you thought of me as; that I've never been what you trusted me to be. That reclaiming my space would rob you of the integrity you've assigned to me, not knowing just how wrong you are.

Thing is, it hurts me just as much as it would hurt you, if not moreso. I could not bear to live with the reality of you knowing that I've failed you in every sense of the word. And perhaps it's rather defeatist of me to think this way, to have given up on both of us so easily and remorselessly (I know you would criticise me for this); but the truth of the matter is that it's simply easier for me to live with the brunt of the pain, the certainty of *what if* rather than the possibility of *I don't think we should be associated with each other anymore*; to only let one of us down instead of both. It's easier for me to live with myself than for others to do the same.

But nothing is constant. I will not stay long enough to tell you the truth, and you will no longer think of me when it matters.

I know myself, that much is certain. Loving myself is another story; it is always easier to love others, to love you. But it will always pain me, I think, a dull ache that will live with me till the end of time, that you will never know or love me the same way I do you, more than I could ever love myself; and you will never know why, either.

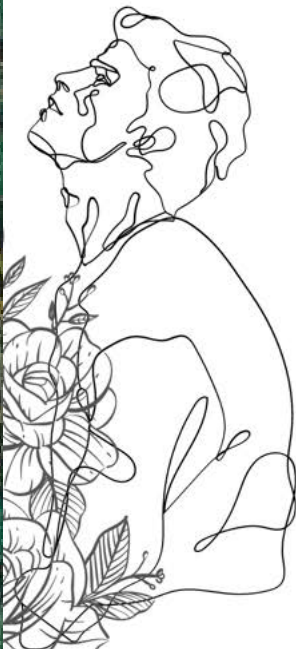
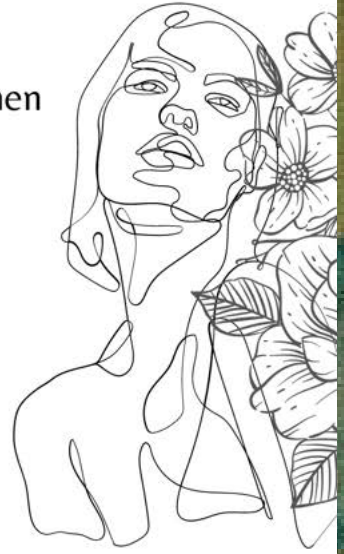
Perhaps the worst of it all is that you'll never know the meaning behind these words, and how they're addressed to you, even as you read this, if you ever read this. After all, it surprises even myself that I write this with you in mind.

All I ask is that you grant me the privilege of loving you, and grieving us; so it hurts a little less than it does now, when it's over.

A textured painting of a white flower with a yellow center, surrounded by green leaves. In the foreground, a white envelope is centered, with a red heart on its flap. The word "amends" is written in bold black text on the envelope.

amends

I could not bear to tell you when
I first felt our spark flicker
A moment of gloom
Was enough to
Make me
Doubt
If what
We had was
What I wanted so
I left you and saw you cry
But I have been yearning to ask
If you could forgive me
I understand if you
Do not want to
For I am the
Sinner
Who hurt you
I wish I told you this
When I had the chance to
But now the only way of amend
Is here in this poem
That you will
Never ever
Read.
- J.





Time Ticks Away from You

by Aamirullah Sa'adullah

my dearest grandmother,

it's been close to 10 years now since we last spoke to one another. it's sad really, not at the fact that it has been that long since i heard your voice, and seen your beautiful face, but because i don't particularly remember how the interaction went.

but i do remember kissing your delicate cheek. i remember holding and shaking your thin hand. i can still vaguely remember your kind smile- if i try really hard- and that sad look on your face when i waved goodbye and my family car slowly drove off into the distance.

10 years later, i still hold on to that memory and it really bothers me how my prepubescent, premature, under developed brain never cherished you back then. at the time, i knew you loved me, but did i really understand what love is back then?

to a 13 year old boy, love meant nothing for me. love to me was my infatuation with a boyband with mediocre music that i would play on an endless loop on my computer. love to me was having a pathetic little crush i had for the girl with glasses that wouldn't even talk to me in school. love to me was obsessing over the knock-off iPod that my parents bought me from a local mydin because we couldn't afford the expensive real thing back then.

nor did i grasp the concept of time.

for me time was me having to wake up at the crack of dawn to go to school. time was the ticking of the clock that i had hung on my wall. time was the three hour journey i would have to take in order to see you back then.

i don't think i even uttered the word love around you. well maybe i did, but i doubt the younger me meant what i said. it was just a phrase that the adults used, and i would simply copy what they did. i remember being mad at you for scolding me for something i did. and for that i hated you just for a second before falling into your arms and pretending nothing ever happened. i knew that you loved me, calling me your *putih wan* (my sweet fair boy).

never did i properly reciprocate your love for me and never did i comprehend the importance of your existence and grace in my life.

your age wasn't a concern for me then. we had all the time in the world, right? everytime i turned away my parents' invitation to go back, i would simply say i will meet her next time.

but you're gone now, and my regret eats at me alive every-day.

i love you. i love you. i love you.

if i could go back in time, i would say the words again and again. if i could go back in time i would tell you how much you meant to me, and how the little time we had together is now a cherished memory i will never ever let go off . if i could go back in time, i would ask for your forgiveness, for not knowing your worth back then, and for not knowing any better.

i'm not religious, nor do i believe in religion anymore. but during the moments i am forced to pray, i would find myself praying that you're at peace wherever you are now. and on random quiet nights when i find myself reminiscing about you, i would pray- to the sky, to the universe, to the gods who have clearly abandoned me- that you're happy and well out there. and despite not believing in the afterlife, i find myself asking for forgiveness and that you'd look out for me. i would tell you the words i never got to say, reassuring you that i still think about you and that my love for you lives on. even now. even beyond.

maybe one day we will meet again. maybe one day i will be in your arms again and maybe one day this regret will finally be lifted off of me and we will live a life we never could in this lifetime.

as for right now, i miss you. and i love you, very, very, much.





Amends

by Patricia In

Ever permanently cut someone out of your life, or had it happen to you?

I like to call it the door slam. Some people talk about it, some people trash it, but few people are able to explain the phenomenon in simple terms. It's different for everyone. The golden rule of a door slam is that it's aimed at a person you've previously "let in", never at the general public (as that would have been a fairly regular occurrence). It's called a door slam because, to the person being cut out, it seems abrupt and out of nowhere; they seldom recognise they have been abusive or toxic for years. Amends are impossible past a door slam.

Personally, I forgive easily, I don't door slam people. I gently guide them through the doorway, out of my life. But I continue to wave from my window.

So the fact that my childhood best friend continues to keep me on door slam mode is bewildering. We've had a rocky past dating all the way back to 2006. The amount of fights we've had: numerous like the stars in the night sky. But, the stupid space I reserve in my heart for her: regularly maintained and upkept to standards.

The last fight we had wasn't even bad. Just the usual snide remark and the usual "I can't believe you've said that". I was at fault, but it wasn't like I haven't tried making amends. I've apologised so many times there's a whole explosion site on my ego - a permanent crater that can only dream of being patched up.

It has been 3 years since we've communicated two-way. I continue to search for signs and signals of our feud ending. The Cold War lasted 45 years, I can wait. From time to time, common sense reminds me to stop trying to bulldoze a bolted door down. From time to time, I cave in to the urge of sending an "It has been years, I hope you're doing well" text message.



The beauty of non-existence

by Anonymous (cw: self harm)

i want my absence to leave
a chasm in the distance
between our existences
i want to be felt
as a rift between spaces
you threaten to perceive
i want to linger the way
one does with deliberance
when i cut across but not downward

the anomaly of my staying alive
with every laboured breath
and the way you do not feel the difference
while i wait for your deliverance
for your waking, one day
witnessing in daylight
the amalgamation of traumas
freckled across my skin
and the liberation you fulfil to me
when you finally tell me
that you could never love me
the way that i am

it is not my needing your love
which drives me
but the knowledge that there would be no one to grieve
yet someone to feel
my absence; the same way
an old routine is broken
a habit on the precipice of loss
a l'appel du vide
before you go about your life once more

Dear Diary,

Happy Birthday to me. I'm writing this in hopes that I would finally be able to forgive myself for the self-harm I have inflicted on myself and emotional abuse I endured throughout the 21 years I have been alive. A sort of reflective piece, if you will.

The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb. No more shall I hold this grudge for what she has done. Nor shall I seek an explanation from her, because I know she has none. I long for those simpler days of innocence, the days when it didn't feel like pretend. No more playing house, walking on eggshells and being the ideal nuclear family; I am tired. And I see that you are too. Please. Let us take off the masks we wear.

Day by day, I see you slowly wither, leaving behind an empty shell of who you used to be and it worries me. You are too stuck in your tradition and ideals to see the self-destructive pattern. It took me leaving the nest to see the cycle, and now it's my responsibility to break this generation curse. The story you wrote is not meant to be followed, your obsession with control is the cage you trapped yourself in. I see that now.

Your words and actions were all done out of love but also insecurity. For years, the cage you locked me in — out of fear for the worst — was all in vain I'm afraid. I'm sorry. All those years I had longed to be free; I fear it became a contributing factor. Regardless, I shall not play the blame game, it would defeat the purpose of this letter -that you may never see. I shall not linger on the "what if's" or "should have's" and stay stuck in limbo. All I want to say is, I forgive you.

Is ignorance truly bliss? For so long, my melancholic heart has left me to drown in a pool of tears and self-pity. Those subconscious anxious tics nobody noticed — the pink scratches along my arm never stayed long, the layers of skin picked and peeled till my finger tips bled were soon smoothed over with a new layer (until I repeat). All the invisible scars left behind and those hidden in plain sight. I just kept telling myself: they did it out of love; they did not know — they were scarred as well.

Trust is the foundation of love, but can there be true love without trust, I wonder. They were united in holy matrimony through a common pain. Their shared trauma shaped them to be who they are and thus, passed it down. I unfortunately know not of love; I crave it ever more so and yet have a distaste for it simultaneously. "Your closest friend is your worst enemy" they tell me, but I

never could grasp that concept.

I used to rue the day I was born, but now, as I celebrated it with my extended family by the beach in my hometown, I was thankful for all of it. Forgiveness. Can you imagine? Feeling the wind in my hair, the sand in-between my toes and watching the waves lap the shore. I'm grateful to be alive and able to enjoy all the little things Earth had to offer. Nevermind all the chaos that is happening in the world, Covid-19, the political drama and the disasters — natural and man-made catastrophes.

Amidst the chaos, for once in my life I felt content and blessed, no longer felt like a burden to others. I couldn't hear the voice in my head telling me the world would be better off without me. I wonder how long I can hold onto this feeling.

Until next time, xoxo.

sincerely me,
by Little Birdy

The background is a painting of a decorative wrought-iron fence with circular scrollwork. The fence is dark, and the background behind it is a mix of light pink, blue, and white. In the center, there is a circular inset showing a plate of food, possibly a salad or a small dish with green herbs and brown elements. The text "GHOSTBUSTERS!" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

GHOSTBUSTERS!

size, of yellow and ros
 hiding acorns and chestnuts; the dogs rolled among
 them, and scampered after them as they fluttered
 through the he
 robins; the
 land cl

at bead-eyed
 in the wood-
 the beeches
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Can we always be this close

forever and ever?

GHOSTBUSTERS

by Zoe Yap

Everyone has ghosts. They live in Pandora's box in your brain, waiting to be unleashed. They live in small moments. Maybe it was that careless, insensitive remark your colleague said to you. Maybe it was that casual comment on your appearance. You know, that one comment you've laughed off, but cried about when you were alone — simply because it echoed all the insecurity you've been feeling lately.

For some, battling these ghosts is a daily occurrence. Much like the crappy, CGI ghosts in *Ghostbusters*, they can take many shapes and forms. They can stay buried for years. Whether it's grief, resentment or anxiety, these ghosts are parasites. They come without warning. Nothing precedes that sinking feeling that follows you everywhere- feeling like you're drowning in a mass of people, choking only on oxygen. It may lie next to you at night, long enough for the clock's hands to tick past sunrise.

Sometimes, we get fooled — it seems it might stay forever, childishly refusing to go, only to fade away when the sun stretches across the horizon.

Many ignore their ghosts throughout their entire life. They carry them in bottles, like genies in lamps. But these genies don't grant you wishes. If you don't take care of them enough, they bubble and fizz and leak, pouring themselves all over the people you care about. You might not mean it, but your ghosts can be lethal. There are days we've felt their presence the strongest. No matter how much I try, I can never put that feeling into words. But I know that ghost still lingers in my everyday doings: it makes me halt in my tracks, slam on the brakes even though I've barely started the engine. It's trapped me one too many times, like a pinned butterfly beneath glass, watching as the world hurried on. That immense fear of trying something new because of a bad, hurtful experience still holds me back to this day.



Yes, we all have our own, unique ghosts. From whoever or whatever they have stemmed from, they have shaped you into the person you are today. However, there's a common mistake we all make. Yes, these ghosts may be unique to us, but the emotions we feel are not. Plenty of us mistakenly believe that nobody will understand the feelings we struggle so hard with. Struggles, pain and sadness are a universal experience, as hard as it may be to believe. Knowing that we aren't alone in our feelings may make it easier. It may be easier to overcome the scary ghost waiting under your bed. With help, we can overcome the little ghosts that linger, until we find the courage to face that particularly big, scary one.

It is still our responsibility to battle our inner ghosts, but there's no harm in rallying some loved ones to support us through that long, winding road. Maybe you won't automatically get that happy ending, but rather, an ending that suits you the most.

No matter how much you wish for it, no team of Ghostbusters will barge in to save you — you have to do it yourself.



"You are a handful."

I heard my parents mumble as they dropped me off at play-school. It was my first day, surrounded by strangers. It was a dull kind-of colourful and very dim inside. I didn't like it here. I wanted to run back into my parents' car but as I looked outside the gates, they had already left. That's when I burst into tears and screamed until my voice was hoarse and exhausted myself to sleep. I had accepted my faith. Their words kept repeating in my head. Maybe if I just stay quiet and be on my best behaviour, they would want to keep me at home instead of sending me here.

"You could've done better."

My parents would say every report card day; every time I brought back an achievement or an artwork. Those words haunted me. The saying 'there is always room for improvement' meant to be encouraging but it only made me obsessed with perfection. Their words kept repeating in my head. It reached a point where I burned out. I just didn't care anymore, to hell with it all. There will always be someone better than me. And that someone became a good friend and my worst enemy.

"You are so stupid."

My father said in frustration as tears pricked my eyes. "Why can't you be more like your friend? She is all-rounded, top of her class in academics and sports. Learn from her, be more like her." His words kept repeating in my head. I'm so stupid indeed; to think he would be any help to me when I'm struggling. This was a hopeless attempt to bond.

"You are such a crybaby."

They teased as I started crying during a thunderstorm. I can't help that I get scared easily. 'At least I'm not scared of bugs and reptiles like you are!' I wanted to retort but I couldn't find my voice. I was a sobbing mess, the hiccups didn't help. It fueled their laughter as the teachers tried to keep the class under control. She sent me out to clean myself. Their words kept repeating in my head. Great, now I'll forever be known as the crybaby. I sat down by the door and rocked myself, covering my ears waiting for the booming thunder after the flashes of lightning.

"You are getting fat."

My grandma says a month after I returned back home for semester break. I wanted to say 'it's because of all the food you force feed me' but I didn't know how to say that in Chinese so I bit my tongue instead. No point getting her grumpy over not eating the food she worked hard to prepare for us. Her words kept repeating in my head. Maybe I should increase my exercise reps and make my portions smaller.

"You are not as pretty as you think."

My mum said in conclusion over my choice of clothes for our weekly family outing. She continues her lecture and nitpicking all the flaws she sees in me. All her words kept repeating in my head; no matter how much I tried to tune her out. Maybe this is why no one likes me. They are all just fake smiling and being polite.

My mind is filled with everything other people have commented about me. Describing what they see in me. All my mistakes and flaws became attributes in their eyes. I was a nobody. It made me feel inferior, it made me shrink smaller and smaller as I grew bigger. Because everything just felt loud in my mind, in the back of my head, all I could hear was a voice, my voice telling me,

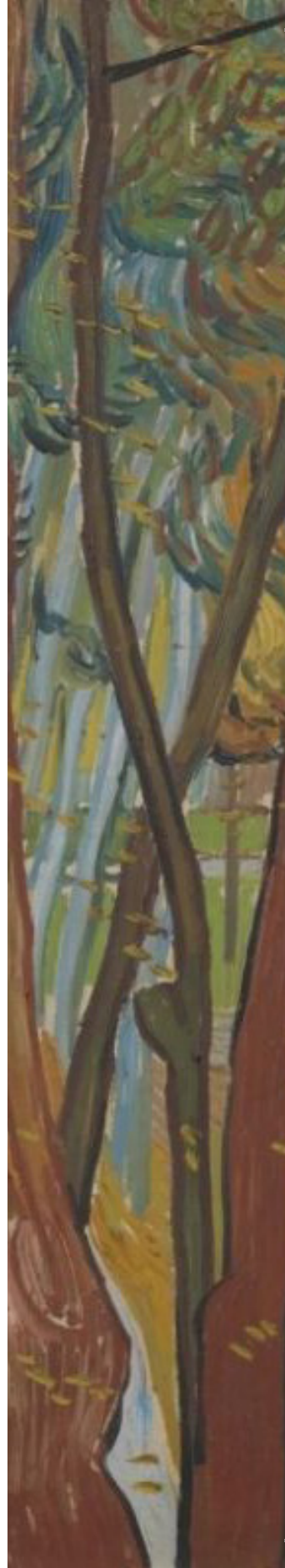
"You will never be enough."

And I believed it. For so long I felt alone in a crowd, like I never belonged no matter where I went. No matter how fast I ran, I couldn't run away from me. It wasn't until I saw this little girl sitting alone in the dark. I should've been scared but all I felt was her sadness. 'Being lost and alone is no fun. I'll go over and comfort her,' I decided.

"You're enough."

I told her. She looked up with her tear stained cheeks and swollen eyes. I gave her the biggest bear hug I could and said, "today is going to be a good day because you are you, and that's all that matters."

"Yes, I am enough."



ghostbuster

by Anonymous

I heard a noise from the other room.
A series of rustles followed by a busy
stir—
and your voice paired with another.
I made my abrupt entrance, afraid
of what I might find
but did so for the peace of my mind.

You stared at me bewildered,
wondering what I expected to find.
"I'm just looking for my lighter," you
said,
"Help me, would you be so kind?"

Your complexion was flustered,
as if you've been busted.
But your stance remained relaxed,
not reciprocated by the beads of
sweat
Running down your shirtless back.

Your voice wasn't alone—
I could have sworn.
Those feminine moans must have has
a host.
Or was I hallucinating? Could it be a
ghost?

"I'll look in the bedroom,"
I feigned my exit, remaining behind
the closed door.

There was something off— I could
sense it.

The closet door creaked open
and with that, my heart was broken.
"That was close," her words were
spoken,
a confirmation to your lack of
devotion.

I stood still,
unknowing of what to do next.
I felt gutted, my suspicion being right
all along
I guess you and I just don't belong.

You sought for her,
the one I thought was a ghost.
Although I gave you my most,
your heart was never mine to host.


I guess to you,
I will always just be

a buster

of

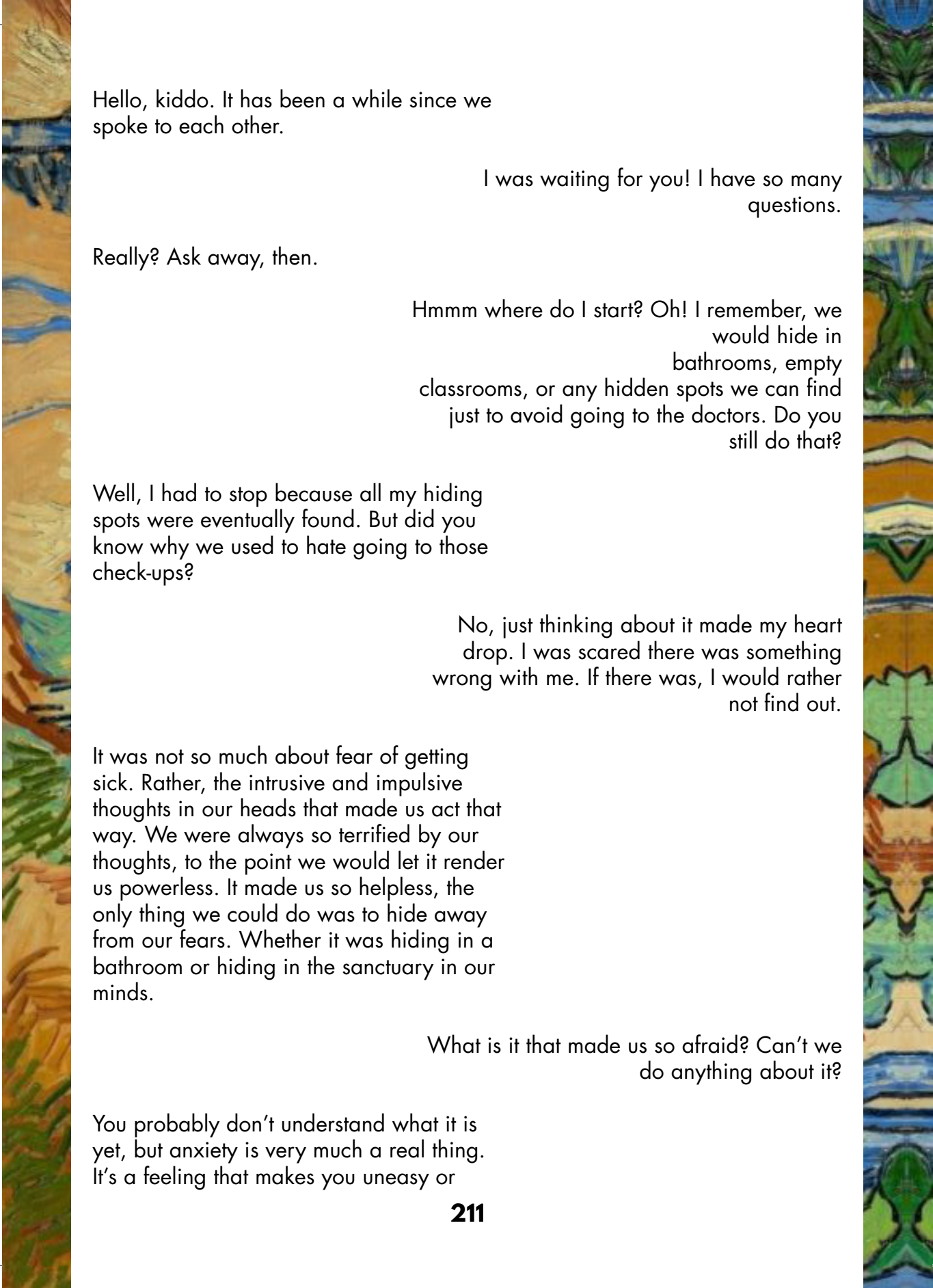
the

ghost.



ghosting /'gəʊstɪŋ/
the practice of ending
relationship with someone
and without explanation
from all communication

by Kieran



Hello, kiddo. It has been a while since we spoke to each other.

I was waiting for you! I have so many questions.

Really? Ask away, then.

Hmmm where do I start? Oh! I remember, we would hide in bathrooms, empty classrooms, or any hidden spots we can find just to avoid going to the doctors. Do you still do that?

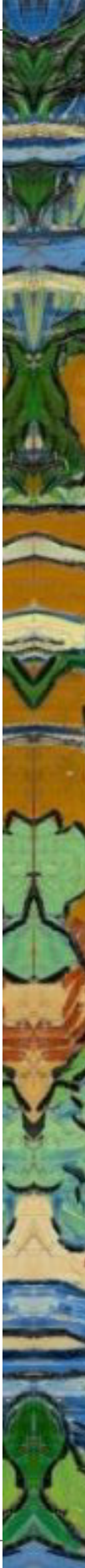
Well, I had to stop because all my hiding spots were eventually found. But did you know why we used to hate going to those check-ups?

No, just thinking about it made my heart drop. I was scared there was something wrong with me. If there was, I would rather not find out.

It was not so much about fear of getting sick. Rather, the intrusive and impulsive thoughts in our heads that made us act that way. We were always so terrified by our thoughts, to the point we would let it render us powerless. It made us so helpless, the only thing we could do was to hide away from our fears. Whether it was hiding in a bathroom or hiding in the sanctuary in our minds.

What is it that made us so afraid? Can't we do anything about it?

You probably don't understand what it is yet, but anxiety is very much a real thing. It's a feeling that makes you uneasy or



nervous about uncertainty. Growing up, people will try to tell you that it's not a real illness or that you have to just stop overthinking. They will try to diminish and trivialise your experiences. Sometimes, you might even start to feel that they might be right.

There are going to be days where you feel sad, angry, or confused by all these emotions and there are going to be days where you feel exhausted by it all. But don't you ever give up. You're strong, you're capable and you're loved. You will not be beaten by the words people say or by the mere thoughts in your head.

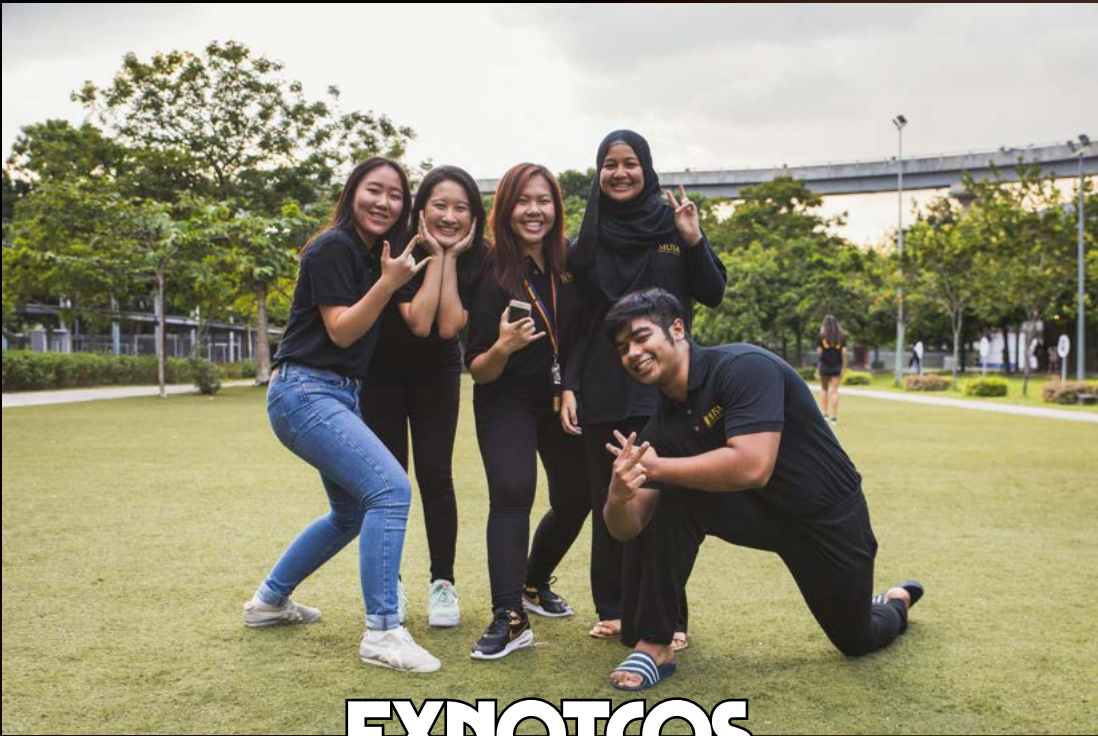
It will take us many years to finally find someone who will believe us, who will understand and empathise with what we went through. And when that day comes, you will finally understand what it feels to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I am here, aren't I?

Everything will be okay, kiddo. Everything will be just fine.

How do you know we'll make it?

- r.



EXNOTCOS



**EDUCATION AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE**



MEDIA AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



ACTIVITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE



BUDGET COMMITTEE



WELFARE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



CLUBS & SOCIETIES



INTL. STUDENTS SERVICES



SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES



Yim Kyt Mun President

This experience will always have a special place in my heart. Never did I know, the decision of starting an election party back in 2019 would lead such awe-inspiring experience. It was beyond just leading a student association and contributing towards the student community. MUSA 2020 was indeed a roller coaster ride. We will always be the unique team caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Thank you to the MUSA 2020 teammates whom have been the most important support system of MUSA 2020. Utterly grateful for everyone whom trusted team MUSA 2020. Signing off with love.



Vice Presidents

Melissa Looi: You would think I'd be happy to say goodbye to sending emails at 4am in the morning. Although my year in MUSA didn't go as planned, this pandemic taught me to view things from different perspectives and how to handle things differently. It's been a bumpy journey, but I couldn't have done it without my partner Taffim and my subcommittee.

Mir Taffim Raiyan: Being a student representative during a pandemic has been a taxing yet rewarding experience. I am grateful to everyone in MUSA for their tireless commitment towards student welfare. My takeaway from this experience is this: "Every crisis is an opportunity to serve your community and better yourself. Do the best you can with the resources you have."



Alia General Secretary

Explore everything you could because you never know your true potential.



Publicity Officers

Tahiyat Ahsan Sandra: Being a part of MUSA redefined my otherwise mundane university life and I am grateful for that.

I most cherished working alongside my fellow office bearers who are just the most passionate people and I often found myself admiring their work ethic which is what I intend take back from this experience. I believe you grow a little every time you push yourself and getting out of my comfort zone to run for MUSA has helped me affirm that belief. So, take risks and keep going folks, we shall all get there!

Celine Chua: Ciaos.



Treasurers

Felicia: Started my term off rocky, but ended up with the most hardworking partner anyone could ever ask for. I'm thankful and grateful to the team of 2020 that has supported me through time of difficulties, and also being the cause of those difficulties (jk I love y'all). To hoping for a better year in 2021 for everyone, cheers.

Matthew Ooi: MUSA 2020, the MUSA with never-ending crisis management and problem solving propped up by the COVID-19 Pandemic. If students only knew the actual amount of time, effort and paperwork taken in communicating with the University to bring reforms (cough) Grading Policy/SFR (cough) Examity removal. Nevertheless, after 2 full years in MUSA, I'm actually glad to be part of a MUSA that puts the well-being of students over themselves, and especially to have Felicia as my partner-in-crime, who had to tolerate working with me super-last minute before a meeting/deadline or 3AM in the morning. "And now my watch has ended."



Actitivites Chairpersons

Rachael Dukes: Nothing is too challenging if you put your heart into it.

Guryon Leong: Too much haiyaa and fuyoh this year, be positive!



Wom*ns Officers

Chin Joe Yee: "To yeet, or not to yeet—that is the question," Here's to sleepless nights and getting names misspelled.

Amanda Liew: The silver lining is being on the receiving end of Joey's lovely friendship and collaborative spirit, it's breathtaking. Thank you, thank you to our team of passionate creatives – 2020 kickstarted with a pandemic, to which all of you responded, "Nay, nay" as we continued to roll out of bed, crusty-eyed, and straight into afternoon huddles. Despite your personal hardships (and sleep deprivation), thank you for merrily realizing amazing initiatives. Finally, a quote, "let's experience our present fully, observe our past without judgment, and gleefully create a future we want."



Welfare Officers

Chieng Xiao Shuen (Angel): "We love to love people."
- Angel, MUSA Annual Election 2019

Zoe Wong: Let everything you do be done in love :)



Heads of Clubs & Societies

Quah Yik Hao: Haiyaaa~~~ All I can say is "Go Corona, Go Corona, Corona Go"! Jokes aside, I hope Monashians get to enjoy the thrill of Monash Cup ahead like old times :)

Darren Chiam: MUSA 2020 was so exhausting, because we were in unexplored territories, constantly fighting an uphill battle with many of our expectations subverted. But MUSA isn't all that bad. The same way I've given my sleepless nights, sanity, and tears to MUSA for the past two years; MUSA has given me friendships, a wonderful team and partner to work with, and the honour of serving the students (even if it was behind the scenes). I would do it all over again. To future/potential MUSAs, my advice is this: MUSA is only as strong and integrous as the people bearing its name and positions. When all odds (or even students) are against you, you stand tall and do the right thing. Represent the students, and represent them well. Godspeed.



Denishia
C&S Publicity Officer

This year has honestly been a roller coaster ride. But being a part of the C&S Team made it all worthwhile! Would I do it again? maybe not in this lifetime. But nonetheless, it's been a great experience! Cheers to MUSA2020!!



C&S Treasurers

Ler Kay Voon: Although disappointed that we couldn't do many things we expected to this year, it has been a fun journey and I have learnt a lot through this experience, really grateful for the C&S fam!

Ghanaanjani Jugurnauth:
Team work makes dream work, and I couldn't agree more. I found a new family far from home in the C&S Division, however they became online calls as well. Nevertheless, the experience has been so challenging yet enriching at the same time. The year is ending and it's time for farewell, but the job is done and so is the bond.



Asma Shaaban
C&S External Officer

Being a part of MUSA has enlightened and enriched my experiences at university and I am very grateful for being part of such a fantastic team. Being part of the CnS team has been so much fun and I have made some great memories which I will treasure.



Sophia
C&S Secretary

If I could do it again (minus COVID mayhem), I definitely would!



Peter Lawrence
C&S Sports Officer

"Will you shut up man", the quote that I live by being the sports officer. Jokes aside, although disappointed that everything is online this year, I'm really grateful for the the chance to experience MUSA this year!



Heads of MUISS

Everyl Yevita Kosasih: 2020 is like a theme park full of extreme rides - rollercoaster, drop towers, haunted house, you name it. However being a part of MUSA 2020 feels like finding a ferris wheel in the midst of all the chaos - thrilling and exciting. It was a truly great experience, 10/10 would recommend to family. Now it's time to catch up on my non-existent social life, byeeeee

Jesslyn Clarissa: This whirlwind year felt like it started and ended within 3 months, yet I feel like I aged 5 years. My time and experiences in MUSA were like no other, and though it's been mostly bittersweet, I do not regret it. Thank you MUSA 2020 <3



Jonathan
MUISS Secretary

This year has taught me a few valuable lessons but... 1. The going is tuff but the tuff get going... 2. Sometimes you just gotta say "it is what it is" and move on!



Rashik Sharar Khan
MUISS Treasurer

An unforgettable experience being with MUSA 2020 team. This year being very difficult for everyone, we still managed ourselves to pull off exciting events and cater the student body of Monash. Love to all and will miss being a part of this amazing team.



Maha Nasim
MUISS Publicity

"If you're offered a seat on a rocket ship, don't ask what seat! Just get on." - Pretty much summarizes my time being a part of the student body, hehe! It's been a wild ride and I enjoyed every bit of it.



Shivani Sarawagi **MUISS Activities**

I had very different expectations when I got elected in 2019, I had so many ideas about all the activities I wanted to carry out. But obviously things took a turn. Nevertheless, the experience I gained was amazing and I will definitely miss it! Thanks everyone!



Darsameen Khan **MUISS Welfare**

Can't wait to exaggerate everything that happened in 2020 and tell my kids I still managed to study and work in MUISS. As a brown kid its my duty to carry on this legacy. IYKYK. xD



MUISS Country **Representatives**

Iram Mohamed Imtiaz: With everything that happened this year, it felt amazing to be part of a team that was resilient and had great spirit throughout. Regardless of covid, we made this year - our year and a memorable one. So, Thank You MUSA 2020 and a big shoutout to all the Country Reps and Sub-coms who have helped out! You guys are awesome <3

Kanoklada Sethichaiyen (Keerat): 2020 has been a ROLLER COSTER! ngl I loved being a part of it but also ciao



MUISS Editors

Layalee Ibrahim (Lalli): 2020 has been the most ultimate shitshow but hey thank goodness for good friends, hella good food, and power naps! (This may or may not be how I've spent 99% of my time shush)

Balsam Ahmed Shimau: Being in MUSA taught me more things than I could have imagined. I believe the commitment and effort required didn't just help me grow as a person but also prepared me a little for the corporate world that I hope to have a future career in! Overall, it was such a fulfilling experience!



School of Arts & Social Sciences Reps

Nur Liyana Hares: MUSA 2020 was a challenge like no other (2 partner changes + a pandemic anyone?). Regardless, it was a super rewarding experience that made me think outside the box and grow in unexpected ways. Grateful for the people I've met - my SASS and MUSA 2020 team, y'all are rockstars.

Time for a little less guilty Netflix, shorter to-do lists, and much-needed sleep.

Ethan Rozario: I wasn't a rep for very long so Liyana and the team did alot of the heavy lifting:). I was lucky enough to have a partner and team that did the best when during the worst in these uncertain times. And, that was the main take away in my short time here; do the best when its worst.



School of Business Reps

Renee Tan: I thank the School of Business committee, for their amazing efforts in connecting with the student body from behind their screens, be it locally or from abroad. Differing time-zones and sluggish internet speeds were no match for the virtual family we created. Together, we put our best foot forward to be the change; though we owe it all to those who paved the way before us. Thank you, dear reader, for your trust in MUSA, and for weathering the online academic year with us. Cheers to 2021!

Nelson Wong: MUSA has always been an essential companion for my university journey. Saying goodbye to a great companion is somewhat difficult for me. And that's okay, and I am ready to let YOU go now. So we both can savour every moment we have left together. I want to wish every student all the best for your journey through Monash. It doesn't matter if you are not involved in activities and events. Success will always find you no matter where you go and what you do!



School of Engineering Reps

Murtaza: Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will.

Riddhi Sawant: Super grateful to have had been a part of MUSA this year! Although we wished we could have gone through with all events we planned initially, we still had many good times. Props to my partner and the SOE Subcommittee! Honestly, could have never asked for a better team.



School of Information Technology Reps

Sabrina Leong: Shiet my partner called me awesome though I know I'm far from that. MUSA 2020 has been one hell of a ride and I can't thank you enough for everyone's hardwork especially my team. Hope that everyone leaves with no regrets despite not being able to do much in this unexpected situation. To MUSA 2021: Ecclesiastes 9:10 (don't take it the wrong way)
K. Thx. Bai.

M Hyqel Razali: Gotta give props to my awesome partner + subcomms for sticking hard throughout this entire year, wish I could name everyone of you but ya know... i'm lazy hahaha. To our successors, aiya - I know you'll bloody ace this shit. Now, let's get this bread and graduate. Thank god.



School of Pharmacy Reps

Emily Chin: So grateful to be part of MUSA 2020! I have learned so much from MUSA 2020 committee - working with them is always fun. I can't thank my partner enough for being so understanding and brilliant; and also our subcoms for being such supportive and fantastic Pharmily!

Low Chan Yew: There were so many things in 2020 that are really unexpected, like the pandemics and how I get to serve as a school rep. I couldn't be more grateful for having so many awesome subcoms in our team, and also Emily for being an amazing partner. Fingers crossed that things will get better by next year!



School of Science Reps

Muhammad Safuan: First of all, I would like to thank all students for your patience and engagement with us and MUSA 2020 in general. I do apologize any shortcomings and limitations on my part, it was definitely a valuable learning curve to adopt and adapt during the pandemic. Shout to my partner, Michelle for lending a hand throughout our journey as SOS Reps. To students, do continue your engagement in the student body and community as your voice is equally important for the proper governing of MUSA onwards. Signing out.

Michelle Seow Seak Fong: MUSA 2020 gave me an opportunity to overcome a different set of challenges while getting through a pandemic. I'm beyond grateful to have a supportive Monash staff department & committee, subcommittee team and the entire MUSA team. We hope that you have enjoyed the activities and events we held this year, as well as our service. Anyhow, feel free to let us know if there is anything you would like to suggest for future improvements!



School of Medicine & Health Science Reps

Joe Wong: Being part of MUSA in this extraordinary year of 2020, I'm extremely grateful to have worked with such an amazing partner and fellow colleagues of MUSA. A little disappointed to not have things carried out as planned but I mean, what's life if everything goes by plan right.

Amanda Chan: Eternally grateful to be given the opportunity to be a part of this amazing team. It was pretty unexpected for 2020 to turn out this way but we hope we made your experience somewhat similar to when Covid wasn't around. We still have a truck load of things to improve on and we would like to thank all the SOMHS students for being so patient with us. Thank you for everything MUSA and the best of luck to our successors in 2021!

MONGA EDITORIAL TEAM 2020 presents: So Long, & Thanks for All the Fish.



Christie, Writer: Even though we had online learning and had to work remotely, I loved the challenge of working on new projects like Monch! (who doesn't love food?) and Thematic Month (cue sad music). Can't wait to see MONGA again in 2021!

Irshika, Writer: This year has been crazy—online classes, all-nighters, unhealthy caffeine consumption! But I'm so proud of how we've been able to run MONGA despite everything! Thank you to everyone who've worked with me, and I'm extremely grateful for this platform and opportunity <3



Angeline, Contributor: I am very grateful to finally have the opportunity to work on a magazine this fun! Really glad to have joined the team in my first year of university. I have always loved designing and working on this magazine made me love the hobby even more as I get to read many wonderfully-written articles along with well-captured photographs; it was refreshing. Can't wait to work on another MONGA magazine!

Xenia, Writer: This was certainly an experience that I didn't know I was craving all these years. Should've signed up earlier, so that I would've had more than just a year working with MONGA. I wish I could've gotten to know my fellow co-workers more but I'll take what I can get. We are all struggling with Covid-19 still at large and ruining our plans. I digress. Best wishes to MONGA. Things will get better - have some faith and hope because I do.





Patricia, Writer: I've learnt so much about my own university and its people from being a writer.

Zoe Yap, Writer: There's a joy in learning about a person's story and what brought them to where they are today. MONGA gave me that opportunity, and I am grateful for amazing team that made everything possible,



Fahad, Designer: Who knew what? This year was all about new experiences to me (not getting into detail as to what was good and what wasn't). I had always wanted to work with a diversified team and create an artistic treat. We got to do it, but it's unfortunate that I couldn't meet the team in person. Maybe it's all for the better; our stories don't end here.

Zy Eyen, Designer: Being part of MONGA for the first time has been a highlight for me in the past year. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn new things, especially using unfamiliar software to edit in a format I wasn't used to. It was an honour to work with talented people and gorgeous photography, which was a motivation for me to ensure the designs to do them justice.



Nadiah, Photographer: It is a bummer what happened in 2020 but being part of MONGA is regardless still fun and exciting! Thank you for opportunity.



Shaun, Photographer: It was an absolute pleasure to be part of MONGA one last time during my final year. Although 2020 happened, I must say that the MONGA team pulled out all the stops to make the best of an unfortunate situation. It was an honour to serve alongside them and I hope to work with them in the future as well.

Yu Hang, Photographer: Bye 2020.



Ng Khai Chen, Photographer: Thank you MONGA for giving me the opportunity to let me learn some new experiences. I feel so grateful to be one of the members in MONGA. It was my pleasure to join this big family.

Thomas, Photographer: It was a unique experience, but nonetheless glad to finally to be able to utilise my passion and contribute through Monga. Taking photos especially during lockdown was a bit of a challenge due to the restricted options and places to move during the pandemic. Nevertheless, it was super fun to do, along with the various other shoots done. Hope to work with the team again next sem!



Tatiana, Photographer: Photography and picture editing used to be my biggest passion for a long while, however studying engineering did not leave me enough free time to pursue my hobby and my camera was lying in my closet with no use. I was the happiest person when I found out that I can combine my photography passion and university life working for MONGA. Hopefully, I will be able to join MONGA 2021.

Zara, Photographer: Ever since I heard about MONGA, I have been so excited to capture and share everything that I love about Monash and Malaysia. Even though there were movement restrictions it has been a fun and kind of nostalgic process of co-ordinating and digging through my archives to find moments to share.



Jared, Photographer: Loved the experience! Hope 2021 will be a better year than 2020 and MONGA will have loads of fun together!

Jason, Photographer: [Insert meaningful quote here]



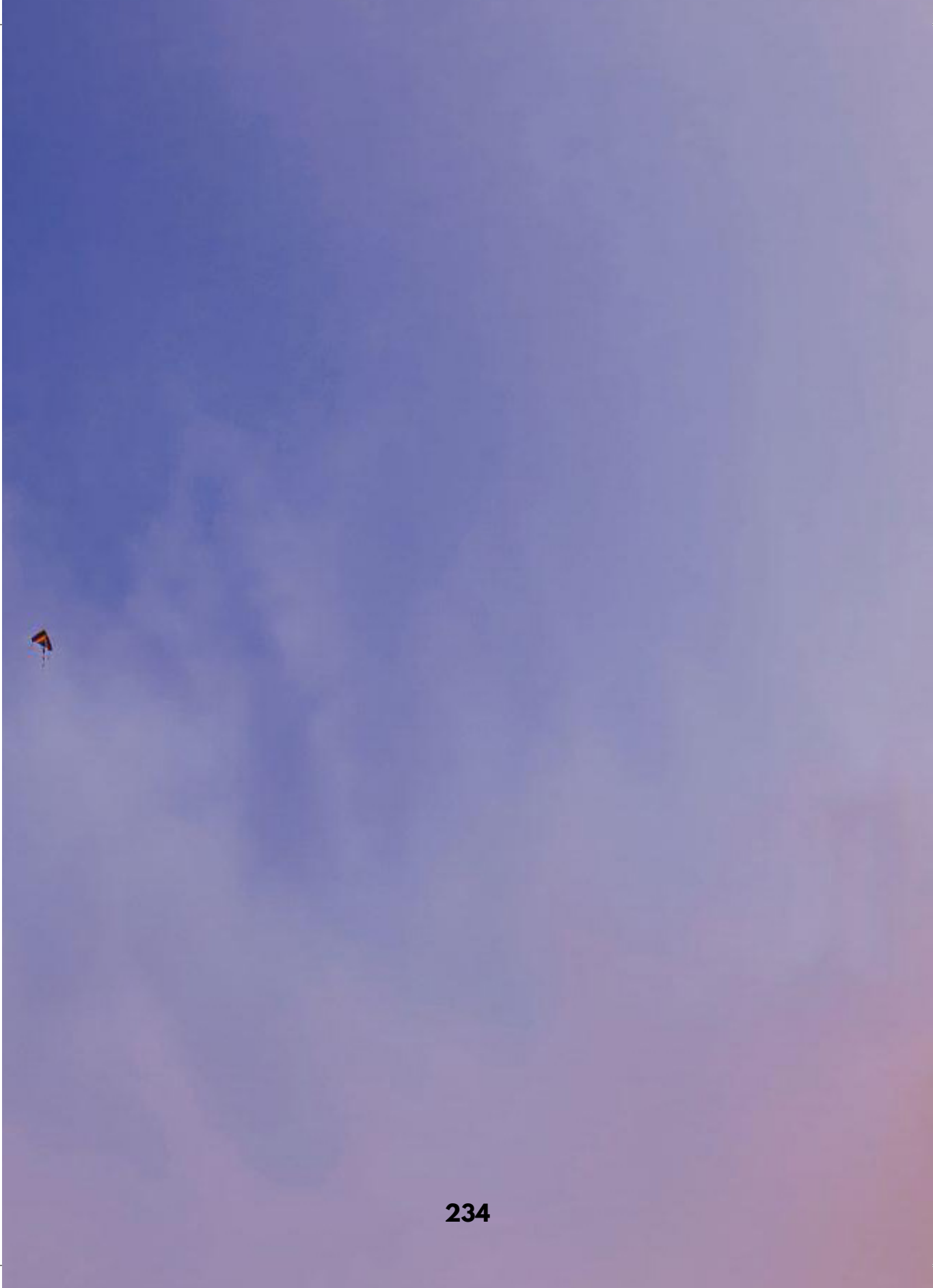
Jia Yao, Photographer: Thanks for the experience, it was nice getting to try out photography and editing. I wasn't even aware of the capabilities of lightroom prior to joining MONGA. It was a pleasant eye-opener. Cheers!

Yeo Yu Quan, Photographer: Looking forward to more projects with the team.





Zhung Khoon, Photographer: 2020 happened?



monga'20.





As a subcommittee for MONGA ever since 2018, I have been recommended to be one of the heads of Editors for 2020. At first, I don't feel confident at all taking the position because of my lackluster results in uni, however I decided to go ahead anyway, because it is to do what I love most, creating content for everyone to enjoy! When 2020 started, we as a team were so excited to move in the office and prepare ourselves what we thought one of the best years of uni.....

And the pandemic happened (haha, fuck), I took the escape route and went straight home to my family here in Brunei before uni even started. I thought that would be the end of it in terms of making content, but we pushed on. To Jia Ying, Kieran and Wei Shang, thank you so much for the support you guys have given me and to each other in fact, I think we did tremendously even if what is frankly, one of the worst years of our lives. I will never forget our times together, even though it is short but sweet. WE MUST MEET AGAIN AFTER THIS WHOLE PANDEMIC IS OVER TO CELEBRATE! ...or you can come here, I will be waiting for that trip hehee.

To 2020, *screw you and your bullshit.* (I put it in italic so you know I

am serious)

To all my beloved subcomms, thank you for going through these tough times with me especially when content creation is at its most difficult without meeting physically. I wished I could have done more for you guys. Special shoutout to my subcomm Jason Han and Tatiana, you guys have been amazing to work with and I hope that you both will excel at creating contents in the future!

To my mom and dad, thank you for supporting throughout my whole life, at first maybe you don't see me with my creative mindset of being a photographer, but you still bought me a camera anyway to give it a go, and look where I am now, making my university's magazine along with amazing teammates! This magazine will be something that I will put on my living shelf for a long time.

There's all from me, 2020 you suck, but MONGA has been amazing, I can't wait to see what's coming next year and beyond.

K thx bai.



ivan lieu.

When we were first elected to office, there were expectations, disappointments, frustrations, and challenges when all our on-campus projects were scraped. With every single day that passed where MONGA's social platforms remained stagnant as we scrambled to manage MONGA from behind the scenes, the immense pressure to live up to the standards our amazing predecessors' have set was all the more overbearing. You cannot help but to feel demotivated at times. There were a lot of things we could not experience during our term, but there were also a lot of things you would not be able to experience in any other terms and I cannot be prouder of what the entire team has managed to deliver despite going through unprecedented times. As Victoria Justice would say, I think we ALL did a great job.

To Ivan, Kieran, and Wei Shang, you guys did a great job bringing all the projects to life. The one (1) day we spent in office (*disappointing, I know*) and the group photoshoot we did despite being in 2 different countries were easily some of the most memorable experiences to

date. If we were to do it all over again, I would say; Fly us to Brunei la, Ivan.

To my mystery subcommittee, Rowena, you never failed to pull through when we needed help most, *ikyk*. Even though you were adamant on not being a subcommittee this year, you ended up being featured and helping out with so many of our projects anyways.

To our poor treasurers, Matthew, and Felicia, I know our department probably put you guys through a lot with our issues but thank you for working so hard and pulling through with our monies. Just know that we are super appreciative of everything you guys have done for us!

And to my mom, dad, and grandma, *make sure to display this magazine on the coffee table during Chinese New Year. This is the one thing your (grand)daughter did that no other relatives have done so, show it off and brag about it.* All jokes aside, I know I may not have been the best or the most filial daughter and yet you have given me your endless support and trust. Along with Ah Gong who is watching over us from the skies, I hope that you are proud of everything I have accomplished. Like I always say, everything I am is because of you and everything I do is for you.

So, I guess this is it!
Thank you for the wonderful year, MONGA.

jia ying.



I've never been good with farewells, nor have I ever enjoyed talking about myself or the future. Writing this is no different. I'm just as tired of talking about what this year could've been, as a final year student, as MUSA'20, and as many other things; because if I'm being truthful, it's been some of the lowest points of my life thus far, and this is me speaking from my narrow, selfish little point of view. It's been difficult, but then again, hasn't it been that way for us all?

As I write this, I can't remotely fathom what the future will hold for me. In many ways, I don't want to let go of what I have right now. And I don't have to, but it's also the part and parcel of moving on. I think I will always be afraid of what's to come, but to move forward in spite of this fear is what's important to me, so it's the promise I'm making to myself here. It's as corny as it gets, but I get to write whatever I want.

It's impossible for me to name everyone who's touched my life during my time in Monash. I don't regret what I've done to step out of my comfort zone, because it's introduced me to people who'll never begin to know how much I owe them in the three years I've spent here, Monashian or otherwise. Thank you for trusting me and helping

me grow into the person I am today, and I'm sorry if I could've been better in any way. I have never been fond of myself, but you've earnestly made me a little more comfortable with my own existence. If you're reading these words, I hope you know that they're meant for you.

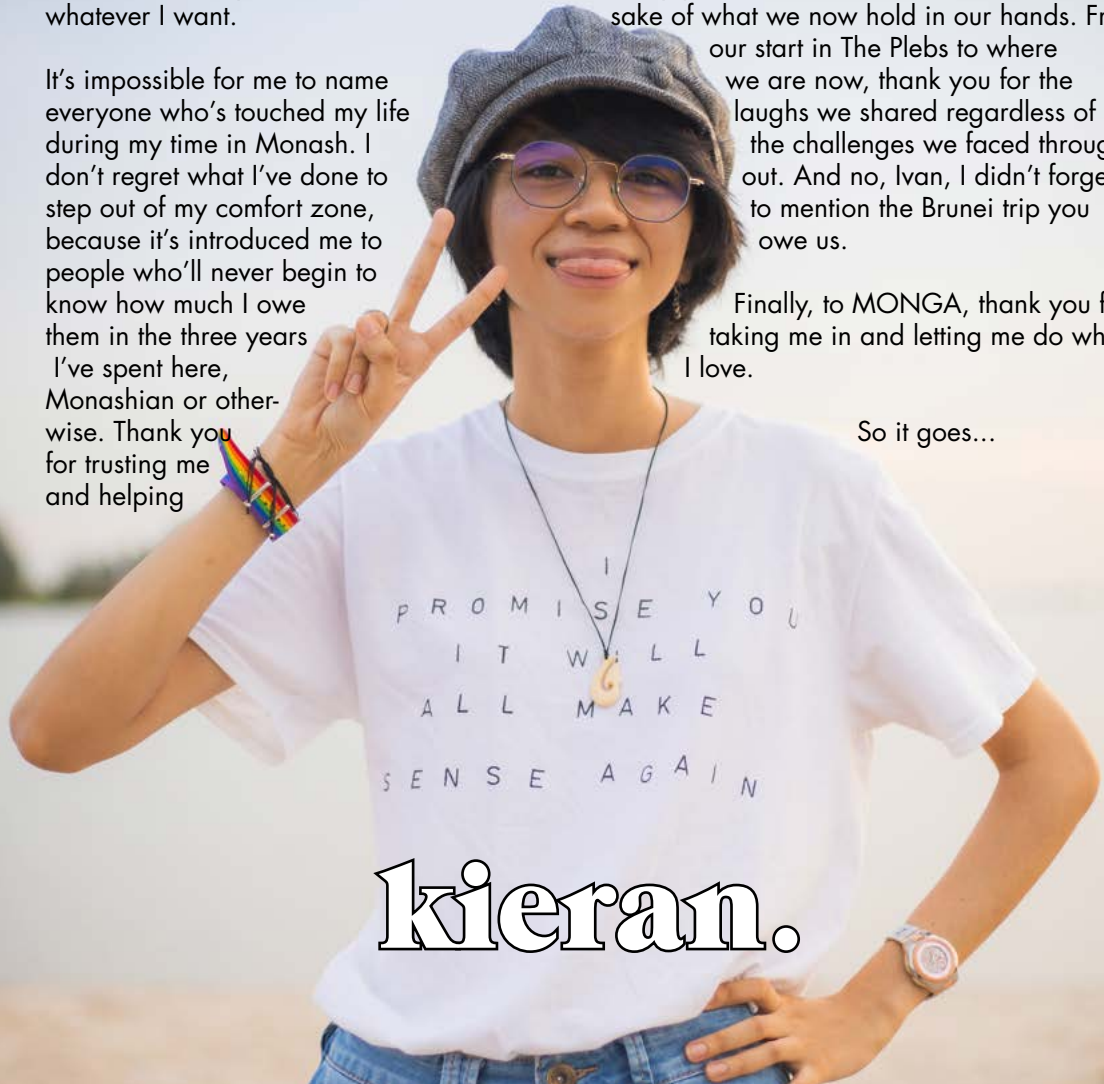
To my subcommittees, Angeline, Fahad and Zy Eyen, thank you for outdoing me at every step and making an already hectic year easier on me. Keep doing what you're doing.

To Ivan, Jia Ying and Wei Shang, while I wish we could've worked together under better circumstances, you have to admit that producing a whole magazine in the middle of a historical event is pretty fucking impressive, so be proud of what we've accomplished in spite of what we were dealt with. The three of you really pushed me to strive for the best, for the sake of what we now hold in our hands. From

our start in The Plebs to where we are now, thank you for the laughs we shared regardless of the challenges we faced through out. And no, Ivan, I didn't forget to mention the Brunei trip you owe us.

Finally, to MONGA, thank you for taking me in and letting me do what I love.

So it goes...



kieran.

I've always liked the theme that my predecessors in MONGA 2019 used, Same-same but different. It's a line that really, and truly, can be used anywhere, think an umbrella term for life. After all, it's the same MONGA this year, but different in an infinity of ways.

I admit that it was really not what I expected, but who can predict the future anyway? Events were diminished to a shadow of their former selves, the campus was (probably) empty, no classes, no lecturers teaching, no more errant winds on the third floor stairway. MONGA goes on anyway.

As always, expectations were set. Ambitious me, comes up with audacious plans that are often futile when put under inspection. This time they never had a chance to be inspected on that level. 2020 is a year I would pay to forget. Masks, hand sanitizer, social distancing have become a routine of daily life, a far cry from a year ago. Yet, it's a year to remember,

whether it was a poor year to do so, or not. Plans we the Editors made for months, would not come to fruition, no matter what we do some things aren't determined by how hard you work.

But it's all the same. Just, well, *different*.

And for my last words as Editor, I wish to say thank you. Thanks to my subcommittees, who did great work, some way above expectations. Thank you to Celine, Joseph, Sam and Fatyn, who had faith in me, to nominate me to this position.

Lastly, to the rest of the Editors, Ivan, Kieran and Jia Ying, who are kind, understanding and mature, who have probably worked much harder than I over this past year. I haven't been the perfect teammate, and I apologize for any of that.

Signing off, Wei Shang.



wei shang.

