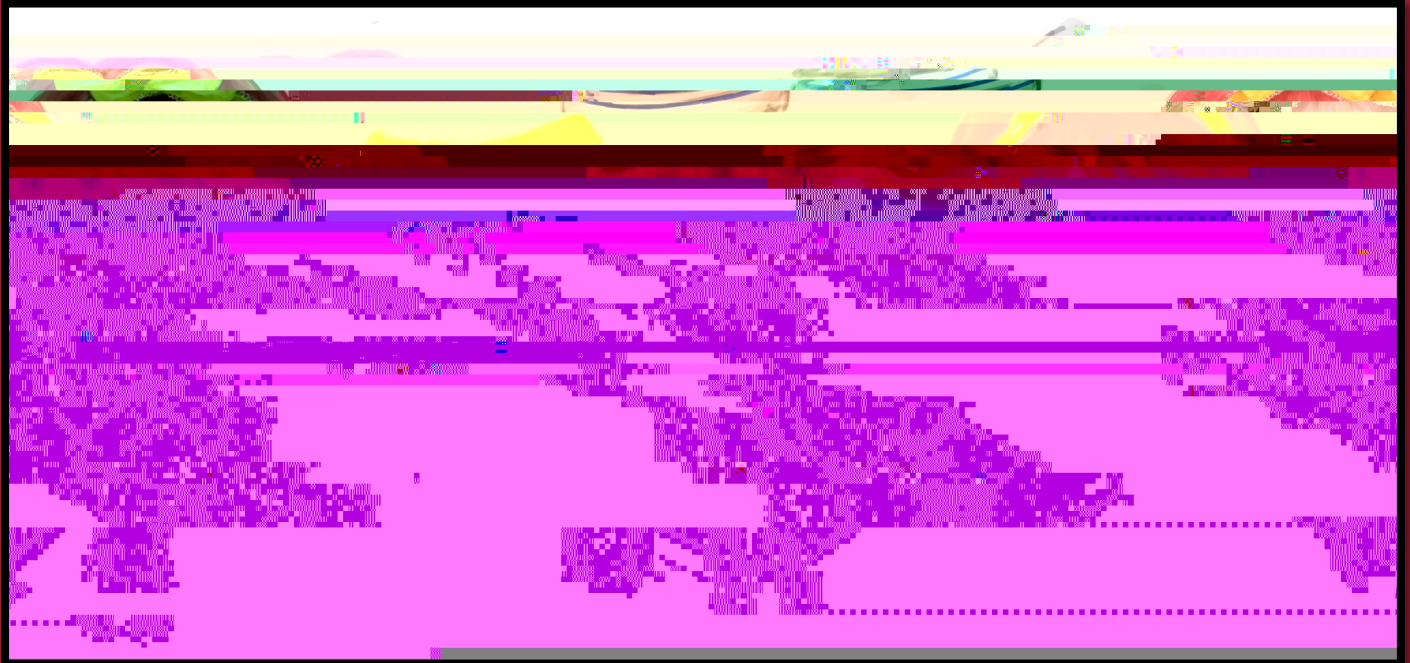




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My generation is blamed for failing to understand the complexity of love. My generation is presented as one that frowns upon hand

By Nandini Bulchandani

I stand back in awe
As I witness the birth,
Of a glowing orb of blue and green
The planet which shall be named "Earth"

I stand back in awe
As I listen to the sounds,
Of life beyond imagination
Of beauty that knows no bounds.

I stand back in awe
As I look upon kindness bloom like a flower,
An eternal Umm Far



By Nanci Burbidge

December 2015 saw the release of debut album "*Blue Neighbourhood*" by Australian singer-song writer, Troye Sivan. The ten-track record follows Sivan's EP *Wild* released earlier in September of last year.

Troye Sivan, 20, who was shortlisted as one of *time.com's Most Influential Teens* in 2014, first made a name for himself on YouTube, where he now has over three million subscribers. It was here where he was spotted by a Hollywood producer and went on to have a role in 2009's *X-men Origins: Wolverine*.

As an openly gay artist, Sivan has used his popularity and large following to help the LGBT community. In an interview with the *Gay Times* during October of 2015, Troye expanded on his involvement within the gay community,

'I have a platform and I should be using it to spread good.'

The record, a series of electronic-pop style tracks, manages to tie together a

Inspired greatly upon the famous BBC4 programme Desert Island Discs the school magazine has decided to take its own slant. Here, every month, we will be asking a member of the school body some quick fire questions about themselves and most importantly, what they would take with them to a desert island.

Mr. Clague, Headmaster

What is your favourite book? Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban. It is a unique view of a dystopian future in which the English language unravels and echoes of the past are misinterpreted. One of the few books I will happily re-read.

What is your favourite film? The Castle. As much as it hate to admit it, something brilliant from Australia. A comedy about a working class family fighting for the right to stay in their beloved home. True laconic Aussie humour at its best.

What do you like most about Britain and miss most about New Zealand? What I like most about Britain is the new adventure it is offering me; new people, different perspectives, the exploration of remarkable places. I relish the profound sense of culture and history, yet the future is exciting and there's no sense of being stuck in the past.

What do you miss most about New Zealand? Having been an Outdoor Education instructor for most of my life, I miss the mountains and forests rivers and the sea. There's plenty of wilderness in Britain of course and to be honest it's probably more the busyness of the job that keeps me away. But I do miss walking through a rugged landscape confidently knowing the names of every bird and tree. Something to work on over here.

What is the best piece of advice you could give anyone? The best piece of advice I could give, comes in the form of a favourite quote:

P"O,

X H

Fog. Fog dipping behind every corner,
every alley. Fog weaving between
each bar and plank of scaffolding,
cluttering every structure throughout
the neighbourhood. Fog nipping the
dripping noses of every shivering

A bear skin rug was strewn across the floor, mouth agape, while the sealing had a series of intricate card patterns coating it. Truly it was a gentleman's library. At the back of the room, however, there were no books, shelving or carvings, just a glass wall behind a clear mahogany desk. Sat stalking the two as they entered was a young, scrawny, pale man dressed in a modern and apparently expensive suit. He might have been conceived as handsome if not for his grotesquely pointed nose and front teeth that appeared to be attempting escape from rest of his mouth. "So you Moody's boys then. You know I should go and pay her another visit. It's been a while since I stopped by the church. I kinda owe them an apology, after that incident with the acidic holy water." He turned his head and sniggered to himself, "That was one hell of a baptism." His attempt at a joke was not well received by Bob who'd now taken the seat across from the man, leaving John to stand behind him, arms folded.

"Moody wanted us to play a game." John had taken to letting Bob do the talking.

"A game?" Rattigan replied. A moment passed and from his pocket the beaming Bob withdrew a revolver and silencer. After clearly showing the armament to Rattigan he opened it out letting all but one bullet from their place.

"Roulette? I was hoping for something more original." He grinned with a mixture of mockery and bliss.

"I have a soft spot for the classics."

"Why are you here?" asked Rattigan, not really caring.

"I told you. You like to play games, take risks and Moody just wants to see how good at it you really are." He grabbed the gun from Bob's hand over the desk, pointed it under his chin and 'clicked'.

"I'm the best." His grin was so large it almost appeared to touch the base of his ears. He passed on the gun. "Your turn," he said expectantly.

"All right." Bob pointed at himself, huffed and 'clicked'. Rattigan's eyes narrowed and sharpened. He pointed, this time at his eye, with no hesitation and 'clicked'. Bob said nothing; he'd begun to treat the game as more of a choir. He started to repeatedly roll his eyes as if to say 'let's get to the fun part'. It was, again, loaded, aimed and then came the familiar 'click'. The mantle was passed on to the now visibly worried Rattigan. He'd reluctantly pointed at his chest and... paused. "Go on, Mr Rattigan." Bob teased, "I'm waiting." His breathing quickened, he turned his head and... 'clicked'. A wave of relief covered Rattigan. Bob was unchanged. The gun was taken, aimed and Rattigan quivered. The both of them left their chairs and the millionaire backed towards the window.

"I don't take chances."

"Shame." Rattigan threw a punch hitting Bob's face, then a second knocking the revolver backwards. Seconds later the two rolled round in a frenzy on the floor each lunging for the other. The brutal, yet brief cock fight was drawn to a swift halt with a single word from the now armed John.

"Next time Mister, watch which way you whack a gun."

"Good boy, Johnny."

"Get up!" he now referred to Rattigan. He gestured for Rattigan to face the glass; with no unwillingness whatsoever he did.

"Ok Johnny I've had enough. Go on... John?"

"Don't..." pleaded the man

By: Madalina Macadrai

The world is filled with beautiful places, but looking past the usual very popular touristic destinations, a fresh variety of holiday spots could become your new favourite places.

For the lover of exotic places (with a twist)

Curaçao -Southern Caribbean Sea

This island is owned by the Dutch and has been voted one of the best islands in the Caribbean. It's not a common island- the town is built in the Dutch style, however it is surrounded by tropical areas. Basically, you get the best of both worlds- an exotic Holland.

The island does have the typical characteristics of a holiday island: you can visit the beautiful beaches, lay in the sun and also go to amazing parties. The weather is stable and the nature is splendid with a lot of vegetation but also a rich marine life. The place to be!

For the lover of oriental, cultural sites

anliurfa - Turkey

The city is commonly known as Urfa and dates back 3,500 years. It is a town with stunning architecture but also the Turkish legend that Abraham was born in a cave there, make this historical city both mystical for the 'explorer', but also relaxing for a different holiday experience. The main attractions

TOP 3 UNIQUE TRADITIONS

Liberty Guillamon

One of the reasons I was so excited to come to Bromsgrove was because of the many different nationalities that this school has and its abundant diversity, and I definitely was not disappointed. In just over a term here, I have learnt so many interesting things about different cultures, many of which seemed like odd concepts to me at first but played such a massive role in peoples' lives. The top three most unique ones I have ever heard about are:

I have a confession to make: this essay was never intended to be written. I still remember clearly how, at the moment of hearing the title of the essay, all of my neurons fired at once, producing the thought "I can't write this!" I am too logical, too absorbed by the complexity of our world, too easily distracted by the "how" and "whys", to let myself fall in love, fall into the vicious circle of relationships, fall into the normal trap of teenage emotions. I could spend hours defending the genetically inherited selfishness of humans or debating if our Universe was just a matter of pure coincidence, but day dreaming about finding true love always seemed too... clichéd for a 17 year old girl.

Still, I found thinking about what I would have written engaging: would I have analysed the biological explanations of what is love? Would I have dissected the mathematical truths about finding true love? Or maybe I would have proudly presented my own conviction that knowledge is above all?

One day I got distracted by the pile of books spread next to my bed, trying to recount all of the ideas hidden between those pages. Randomly opening them, I suddenly got caught in a thought experiment: if we were to remove love from who we are, from the world we live in, would all the knowledge accumulated by humanity have any value? Would these small treasures suddenly turn into the dust of ignorance?

Give it a moment of thought: these days, cosmologists are "playing" with the idea of multiple universes, in trying to get to the conclusion that our universe is just an alternative to the uncountable number of different worlds. There is nothing special about us, except for some well-placed random numbers. In the same manner, the evolutionary theory reduces humans to simple products of nature, removing any sort of spiritual reason for our existence. Now, our obsession with finding a scientific explanation to everything, leads us to efface profoundness even from some of the most deeply rooted human emotions. But if the final answer of science is that humanity as a whole has no significance - then shouldn't we give up on it all?

No. Our lives are made of more than knowledge, more than facts, more than a constant pursuit towards universal truth. Our lives are made of stories, experiences, people and a huge amount of emotion- c1 on w anse