

8 Clicks from August 2026

A BLOG FROM NOWHERE ANTHOLOGY

Brad Salomons

8 Clicks from Nowhere Productions

8 Clicks from August 2026: A BLOG FROM NOWHERE ANTHOLOGY

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About the Author



Hi, I'm Brad the author of this little blog... and I have a complex and multi-faceted relationship with creativity.

But the simplest way to understand it is that I dabble.

Yes, I take a lot of my work very seriously and in multiple capacities am available for hire and to work, but you'll find that facet of my work over on my corporate website, 8r4d.com

This site is more personal.

This site is about the dirty side of creativity, the getting down on the ground and exploring through hobbies and habits.

It is about writing strange fiction and tangling it together with audio exploration vibes.

It is about coding games and mashing it up with art and weird logic.

It is about snapping photos and blurring them together into a narrative of something larger.

It is about creative play.

I live in a small city on the Canadian prairies, eight clicks from the middle of nowhere but right in the middle of a million interesting ideas.

On Blog Anthologies

These words were never specifically intended as a book, but if you are reading this as a PDF or an ebook then you'll understand that the difference between a bunch of blog posts and a printed wad of dead trees glued together is often little more than semantics.

I wanted to make these posts more accessible to people who don't like flipping through hundreds of webpages, but would rather read them as a collection.

As I wrote each of these posts they were meant both as (a) standalone articles on a daily blog, but (b) part of broader themes and topics that were defined from day one.

The book version (that you are looking at right now) is an anthology of many standalone posts strung together in something resembling that originally intended order and structure. All that is to say, sometimes articles might clearly fit and make sense where they live in the book version, and sometimes they might seem like a bolt out of the blue with a weaker connection. This was never intentional, but it is a side-effect of the format and the way I wrote stuff.

Enjoy it for what it is.

Part 1 - Setting out to Nowhere

The creative self, from the one you left behind to the one you are looking to become, is an introspective look at the very basics of creativity. The heart of who we are, how we came to our craft, the preconceptions we bring along, and the tools to which we have access, this is the story of the steps we take to start a creative adventure.

Sound Filling

August 4, 2026



Another equipment confessional.

I've been making music for well over a year now, and having stocked my makeshift studio with a growing list of instruments, audio interfaces, microphones, pedals, and other acoustic accoutrements I am almost ashamed to tell you I've been patching it all through an aging set of old computer speakers.

For a while I had an old stereo amp plugged in and was routing some of the sound through that, but it became a bit of a hassle and we did some basement remodelling that borked up my configuration.

And then, as I posted about recently, I found myself in the park one summer afternoon with my little synth and pair of headphones, and I was thinking about just how mellow that feeling was, specifically the portability of it and... well, long story short, pocket amps were on sale last week and...

I realize all too late that the hobby equipment rabbit hole is deep and deceptive.

I picked up a little battery powered five watt pocket amp with a blue-tooth speaker and a quarter inch input jack, and even now I'm wondering why I am sitting at a computer typing when I could be plugged in to some music making outside in the park.

I feel a little guilty for buying yet another toy for my profitless endeavours, but alas, life is too short for bad speakers at the end of your signal chain, huh?

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Tiny Details

August 6, 2026



There are so many forms of photography to pursue it would take a year of posts to give each of them their due here—and I'm sure I'd still miss something.

But if you are stuck for inspiration with a camera in your hand might I suggest you think smaller: personally I have found macro photography immensely interesting.

The trick to capturing the super-tiny perspectives of the world, of course, is having the right equipment. A dedicated macro lens used to be the only gateway to this world, but many modern smart phones have a respectable macro mode built into them these days. While one is not going to shoot magazine quality pics from such, I'll be the first to

argue that having good enough equipment is often the best way to sample a new hobby or form to see if it piques a deeper interest.

As for subject matter, the world is filled with tiny things.

I have a vast collection of insect photos, but creepy crawlies are hardly the only mini subjects even in nature which is full of textures and tiny twisting tales to reveal to a curious photographer.

I have often walked for hours looking for a great scene or a landscape worthy of a picture, but pointing a close up lens at ordinary things in my home or own backyard can be a virtual safari when inspiration is otherwise lacking.

Don't overlook the tiny details of the world when seeking creative inspiration... sometimes literally.

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Good Vibrations

August 12, 2026



The little speaker that I bought for roving musical adventures has a quirky side benefit—or, at least, a curiosity that has yet to become annoying.

Regular readers may recall that I picked up a little battery powered five watt pocket amp with a bluetooth speaker and a quarter inch input jack. Specifically, it is the Positive Grid Spark Go (not an endorsement, just a side note) meant to be plugged into an electric guitar but simultaneously useful for both an aspiring electric violinist and his semi-regular synth jam sessions in the park.

Then too, I threaded the output from my MIDI controller keyboard from the weakling computer speakers directly into the amp, so that when I

sat down at my desktop in my home office to practice. I could make use of the richer sounds from the new speaker.

It's not great for more natural piano sounds, but as I explore the extensive instrument library that came bundled with the MIDI controller I have been building a collection of favourites that are a few standard deviations from natural—hybrids and bells and strings intermingled with raindrops—and many of those have rich bass ranges.

The Spark Go has an interesting feature for a little speaker. If you lay it down on its back it has a bass pad that acoustically enjoins the surface of whatever it touches—the table or desk, in my case—and adds an audible and physical dimension to said surface.

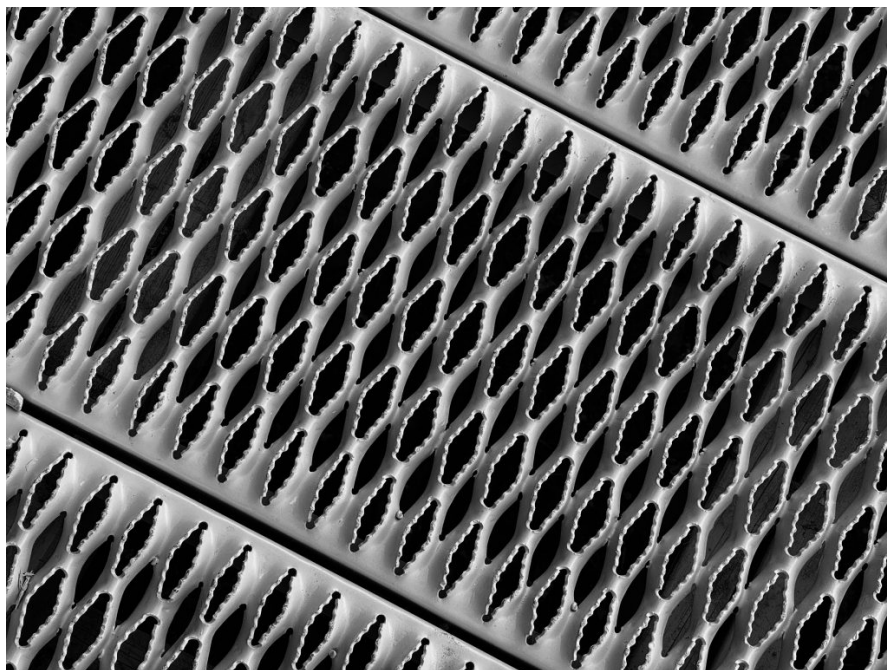
All that is to say, that when I've been playing bass heavy instruments on my MIDI controller and the speaker is on the desk the whole thing rumbles with a tactile joy that brings the music to life from and then right back through my fingertips.

Curious technologies lead to simple joys.

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Blog Lore, Part One

August 21, 2026



There's more than one way to do this thing.

Look, I know you probably stumbled on this site because some search engine plopped you over here or you read the little clip about high performance blogging on a social media feed, but writing for the wrong reasons is not my jam.

I've spent too many years trying to find a community of like-minded writers who use blogging as their medium.

Who are those people?

Are you looking to optimize your search engine ranking so that you can serve targeted ads and increase your revenue so that you can pur-

sue positive cash flow via your website? Um. You're probably in the wrong place.

Are you curious about a form of writing that is a self-publishing platform for personal expression that is not controlled by some corporate social media algorithm, where we work towards building curated collections of niche content for the love of simply doing it? Yeah, this is probably your stop.

And I realize that ninety-eight percent of you just clicked away.

I've been online for over a quarter of a century and it's taken me almost that long to realize and embrace the notion that I'm nothing short of a techno-idealist. I hate that the thru line of this incredible communications tool we created as a species has become the pursuit of wealth at any cost, damn the truth, damn reality, damn the harm it is doing. I hate that.

When I started writing online I had no delusions of making any money. It was a passion project. I wrote online for the sheer joy of expression and sharing ideas. Sure, I have put ads up on my site on occasion, but always in the hope of turning my sites into self-watering flowers, not content engines making me money.

Is that privilege? Damn right it is. And so what? We use that excuse too much in this capital-focused society. Anyone who does something for a reason besides profit is sneered at for having the time or inclination of going against the money grub.

Why do you blog?

If you've made it this far maybe it is because you are doing it for some other reason than milking ad revenue from your words, and if that is the case I not only applaud you but suggest you mark this topic where I hope I'll write a bit more about my experience in writing against the

grain and share a bit of the lore of what makes blogging so much bigger than just farming for clickthroughs.

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Bell Tolling

August 25, 2026



There is something genuinely important about pre-established patterns, of course, but I also think that the conversation should not end at a wall of conventions.

I have been reading me some Sylvia Plath recently, specifically *The Bell Jar*^[1], and the tragic author's particular style caught me off guard. It was a random pick, hitting different from my normal fare, and an unexpected treat. Specifically it was so much more modern feeling than I had expected. The writing is personal, poetic and visceral, and I would suppose likely bending perceptions and expectations from a female author of that era. I was captivated.

Now I don't know if this rings true in the particular case of Ms. Plath

but I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest that she was probably not following what passed for conventional patterns in fiction of the early nineteen sixties.

Those early years of the cultural revolutions that shook up western culture are often only visible via media artifacts and what remains of music and television and media that prevailed from that decade, particularly to those of us who missed the sixties by a decade or two.

It is also probably the case that we remember her work not merely because it is twisted up in her personal story that ended in sadness shortly after *The Bell Jar* was published.

But too, I think, it might be that Ms. Plath broke down walls of conventions and stepped outside of the expectations of popular patterns to mark her own voice and style. I think she was probably setting trends in how her literature opened up in honesty to her readers, bending rules that had likely been finger wagged at her from the start.

Those old styles defined an era, but styles change. None of what has come before is ever so sacred that we can't try something new. She did.

She would have been an artifact of that era herself, well into her nineties had she been around today, and maybe, well almost certainly, interested to see that a style she embraced, maybe even pioneered, was an inspiration and a convention itself sixty years later.

References

1. [↑](#) Plath, Sylvia. (1963). *The Bell Jar*.

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Blog Lore, Part Two

August 28, 2026



I've been online for a very long time.

In the early 2000s I opened up a notepad on my desktop computer and started typing what would become my first blog post. It seemed like an interesting alternative to writing a bunch of individual emails back home to all the people I'd just left behind to start a new job in a new city.

Blogging was novel. It was trendy. It had not yet become this big commercial shell game of trying to lure visitors to your site by any means necessary for the purpose of generating advertising revenue. It was still a genuine and personal act of creativity.

I've been stuck in that mindset for a quarter of a century, doing what

the folks who need to label everything might call “life blogging” ...

And I guess that’s the real trick to having a real blog: one needs to first have a life to blog about.

For most of mine—and if I’m being particularly honest—having the blog has become the reason for having an interesting life. I pursue hobbies, travel to interesting places, tackle local adventure, and take on personal challenges to give myself something to write about. None of it is performance or faux influencer-type obnoxious behaviour, but rather waking up in the morning and becoming an interesting person by interacting with the world in a meaningful and positive way.

After a while having a life becomes a habit.

...and writing about that life becomes a lifestyle.

So? My first piece of advice for an aspiring blogger looking to put together an interesting personal collection of writing full of curious topics: get a life. A real life. An interesting life. A life worth writing about. This is the first step.

Part 2 - Nowhere but Everywhere

Who is the creative professional and what does it mean to create at and for work, pay, and career? The work of creating of is more than a job, but rather it can form the foundation of how we work, why we work and the purpose we find in pursuit of making interesting stuff as we contribute to a complex society.

Publish Owner

August 13, 2026



Publish on your Own Site...

...Syndicate Everywhere.

Leave it to Cory Doctorow to drop mention^[1] of a content phenomenon that has been haunting my efforts for over a decade.

Among the most insidious of things that social media does to creators (and that's a long list) is fool people who write words and make—shudder—content to share online, is to quietly neglect to remind any of us that we lose ownership the second we click the post button on any those sites.

No really.

They'll pretend like you can edit and curate and delete and archive, but if you post on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram or LinkedIn or any of a thousand other smaller platforms, they will hand wave around your ownership and rights, but in reality you have few.

I call these places corporate social media for a reason: you are handing over your content not to a community of users but to the corporation that owns the software, server, and algorithms. They can show people what you created if and when they choose, they can censor you, and (as I have witnessed in the outrage rant by many creators over the years who have suffered because of it) they can delete your entire account for vague reasons that they may or may not choose to explain.

We're not going to change that.

But Doctorow has an acronym for an idea I've been screaming from my blogs for years: POSSE or Publish (on your) Own Site, Syndicate Elsewhere.

Or simply, as a creator, it is incumbent upon you to figure out how to make your own central place to keep the things you make—a website, basically—and then syndicate, promote, link, cast, or otherwise surface from there, if for no other reason than you should keep control of ownership of it with every ounce of your digital strength.

This is a cross-post from of Poets & Processors.

References

1. [↑](#) Stewart, Jon. (2026). AI and the Enshittification Era w/ Cory Doctorow. The Weekly Show with Jon Stewart.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dAIJRjb-Bw>.

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Duty Bound

August 14, 2026



Reactive sharing killed my motivation for a while.

I was making art through a prolific period of newness. I was amped about sketching anything and everything. I was painting daily, though so little of it was anything but practice art and rough drafts. But I was damn proud of it, and after I'd finish a piece I'd lay it out on a table and snap a pic with my phone and upload it to Instagram.

Reactive.

Oh sure, I got likes. Mostly from impressed family members or friends who were easily impressed by student-grade art attempts by someone they knew.

None of it was terrible, of course, but none of it was gallery grade either.

I wasn't sharing my best.

I was sharing everything.

Reactive sharing.

Draw, paint, dry, pic, post. (And sometimes I barely even waited for the dry.)

It killed my motivation.

Posting became performance.

Performance became duty.

Passion became obligation to feed the algorithm.

I remember going for a long walk one chilly winter evening because the pressure had built up in my heart around this sense of responsibility I felt to the dozen or so people who were liking everything I posted, and it was driving me nuts. I wasn't even enjoying it anymore. I was walking and thinking, thinking and walking, and I decided there in the snowy streets that I was going to break the thread. I was going to stop posting art.

I wasn't going to stop making art, but I wasn't going to push it out into social media because doing that part of the creative process had gotten out of hand and was ruining the joy for me.

I still draw. I still paint. I still make something that I'm excessively proud of and I'll post it, but I do it for the right reasons, I think, and skip the duty to perform almost entirely these days.

Part 2 - Nowhere but Everywhere

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Success Blindness

August 18, 2026



Do you remember why you started chasing your art?

Do you remember why you started taking photos, painting landscapes, composing music, or scratching out short stories in a dimly lit cafe?

I'm sure a few people have stumbled across this blog and consider it a bit of navel gazing, culture-vibing, self-help sludge from a procrastinating wannabe, and maybe they're right.

I spend a small chunk of my day, nearly every day, doing some reflective writing on my hobbies and interests, and I do it for a very specific reason: I want to rekindle the memory of why.

I want to keep the fire lit under the reasons I do any of this at all.

I've felt burnout. I've encountered the darkness upon a long and lonely path and I know what it feels like to forget why you bother doing interesting things. Burnout cares not for strength of spirit or power of will. It only knows of despair and indifference. It wants you to forget the why. It wants you to overlook the origins of your passion and limit your recollection of the reasons you started out on the adventure in the first place.

I stave off the darkness by writing these little short essays, often to remind even just myself of the answers to all those questions. I recall the beauty of a sketch gallery I wandered into in Dublin. I remember the vibe of yearning to play the violin whilst watching the symphony one winter evening. I recall listening to a beloved children's author speak of the transcendent joy of the written word.

All of it lights against the darkness. All of it reminds me of successes lost to my own blindness.

Part 3 - Clicking In

The creative human fits into a bigger picture spanning the gamut of society, technology and tradition. The grit of creativity sometimes means grinding through external pressures and expectations, creating against the grain of the worlds in which we live and play, and existing beyond the vacuum of self.

Meta Creativity

August 5, 2026



I blame the processors for the rise of meta creativity.

It is us, too. It is our penchant for gossip and rubber necking at disasters, but I would argue that it wasn't until the algorithm turned it into a cottage industry and a lucrative product that meta creative content blossomed like an algal outbreak in mountain lake through our feeds.

Let me interject here with a definition. When I use the term "meta creative" I am referring to a genre of published media that falls somewhere in the uncanny valley between genuine creative works such as film, music, art, and literature on one end and critique-slash-analysis on the other end. In the middle there is a new variety of lazy, reactionary performance that often involves belittling, mocking, panning or otherwise pointing and laughing at (sometimes literally) the work of other people (and this is the important part) with nothing of value to add besides the raw reaction.

Honest critique and analysis plays a vital role in creativity, and any art school grad will tell you that learning how to gather and act on genuine feedback is vital to improvement.

On the other hand, the kind of sloppy green screen overlay of a mocking primal reaction to something, positive or negative, serves very little besides its own self promotion and amplification on the work of others.

It is a spectrum, of course. There is no perfect critique and there is no absolutely pointless meta creative reaction, but the algorithm certainly seems to reward the lingering gaze of any and all of us who stare a little too long at the simplistic emotional takes of reaction clips.

We've lost something for that, and I write that as both a creative soul and as grumpy old guy who knew a more supportive creative era, now passed.

This is cross post from *Of Poets & Processors*.

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Devaluing Uncommercial

August 7, 2026



What happens when worth is no longer judged by standards except for sales?

No really? Art for the sake of art is like science for the sake of science: Serendipity takes us to interesting places we never would have planned.

But when the only goal is profit the road has often been well travelled by thousands before us.

I have a bachelors degree in science and while I never pursued academia nor research, I often throughout my career ran in the tracks of businesses, governments and charities that (in their own self interest, realized or not) would put pressure on the research industrial com-

plex to create output with profitable outcomes.

The counterbalance to commercial science, of course, is often referred to as pure science, research driven by raw curiosity and following the data down interesting paths, an effort that has arguably both squandered a lot of money but also led us to discoveries that have reshaped the modern world in immeasurable ways. And more importantly, many of those world reshaping discoveries were not profitable... until they were, and so in retrospect businesses clap their hands at the ingenuity of the people who fought back all those profit-motivational barriers to discover interesting things despite it all.

Many of the same people who scoff at pure science will, too, flatly argue that the best art, the stuff hanging in museums, say, was created under patronage—the church, monarchies or otherwise rich benefactors—and so to claim anything artistic can be created lacking the same is a fool's errand.

The modern equivalent of course is corporate contracts, government grants or—for the smaller among us—algorithmically-driven fame leading to online fan sales. And it's hard to argue that the folks who go viral are often the ones filling a commercial demand be that for trendy teen lit, spectral watercolour prints, or studio-quality family portraits. All of it is wrapped in sales metrics, of course, and all of it is considered “good” because it sells—it makes a profit.

So I'll repeat: what happens when worth is no longer judged by standards except for sales? What happens to art for the sake of art?

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Joy Busters

August 20, 2026



Why are we in such a rush to automate the things that give people the most joy?

I have seen no shortage of posts, cartoons, reels, and tweets on the topic and usually it goes something like this: a person is begrudgingly doing the hard labour while the computer is joyously making art and composing music.

The irony is thick.

We built complicated algorithms and robotic mechanizations to churn through calculations and work in factories and clean our homes, and instead we're having this crazy conversation about how we can distinguish generative music from human compositions in our playlists or

avoid buying slop produced novels published in droves via online booksellers.

Over at another blog I write about the blind pursuit of technological advancement and the cost to our humanity. You might find it interesting, too.

AI.

Generative content replacing our creative efforts. Our intellectual property slurped into algorithms that spit it back out through chatbots and neural engines meant to automate creative effort and pull humanity out of the business of using our imaginations.

We work hard all our lives so we have time to pursue hobbies, and for many hobbies are painting in the park or playing in a band or cozying up with a keyboard and trying to write the next great novel.

Are we so eager to hand these things over to algorithms?

Of course not, you scream into your screen, that's why we're all so angry about this so called revolution of generative artificial intelligence. You're just stating the obvious!

But someone is eager, no? Someone wants to suck the joy out of humanity, and why is that?

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Influence Less

August 27, 2026



Look, it's a blurry line between being someone who wants to make stuff and share their creativity with the world on one side and being someone who wants to be the main character of the internet on the other.

Blurry, but not invisible.

I personally struggle with my own identity on the modern internet. I make stuff for the joy of making it. I write stories because I feel the very human need to be a storyteller. I draw and make music and build games because I am compelled to use the half of my brain that is steeped in creative urges to do those things.

The tepid pool of what becomes popular for all the wrong reasons,

though, is a little sad.

I see reels that are staged or commercial or generated or simply rage bait.

I see posts that reek of corporate pandering or identity grooming or culture shifting.

I see profiles that are bots or resume acts or cons or worse.

It's all fake.

What is to be done about those? Nothing, maybe, but looking away and being better than that, not stooping to that grade of duplicity, treating people everywhere—your audience and the people around you in real life—with the respect they deserve. Maybe that will help a little.

It's old fashioned, but here's the real:

Be genuine. If you are out there making stuff that is fake or even whiffs of influencer-grade performance, just... don't. Be better than that.

Part 4 - When Nowhere Clicks

From birth to death, we are souls who imagine our worlds and make them real through our actions, but the aging self manifests differently across that span we call life, and what each stage of that life might teach us about making things changes like the seasons.

Exist Deny

August 3, 2026



When I was in middle school I would have told you with absolute con-

viction that I was going to be a famous published author by the time I was twenty-five.

In a few short months I'll be twice that age and neither published nor famous.

Nuances of that pipe dream aside, having found myself firmly in the middle of middle age and midlife, I can't help but also look both forward and back as I recognize this deep and urgent need to make something that matters.

I'm sure we all stumble upon this kind of existential crisis sooner or later, and while some might sooth that thirst with a fancy car or a quirky hobby or a dangerous liaison, there are more than a few of us who look at middle life as a moment to evaluate our creative output and try to get our minds around how to adjust its trajectory for a rapidly decreasing timeframe.

I don't have the first real clue towards a solid answer, if I'm being honest, but I do have a lot of questions and even more thoughts on the matter. Maybe you have some of the same questions.

Under the category of Exist & Deny I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Late Ready

August 10, 2026



Everyone starts somewhere, but some of us start later than others.

There are a few hard realities of learning a new craft after a certain age. Heck, like almost anything there is a ticking clock for greatness. Me picking away at the piano at nearly fifty is almost certainly not going to open up a spot at The Juilliard School any more than my dabbling in urban sketching this late in life it going to give me the time and energy to pursue a scholarship at Emily Carr University.

The reality is that after certain doors in life, close most of the world will almost certainly regard your pursuits of artistic and creative skill as little more than a retirement hobby.

And maybe that's fair.

...but it also isn't.

Art, fiction, music, all of it is as much about translating life experience into something outside of our memories. Fine whiskeys are aged to make them better, so why not artists, too?

I am on the fringes of an age category transition myself, looking at much of middle age as something I've been through and starting to think about not just age, but the general idea of starting on a creative path as a late entrant.

I got into watercolour when I was older than my first instructor.

I took up the violin at forty.

I didn't start seriously trying to play the piano until just a year ago.

And something tells me that my flailing sense of urgency about aging might be a wee bit overblown.

Under the category of Late & Ready I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Hobby Hope

August 17, 2026



One piece of retirement advice I have been hearing for years—even though I am more than a decade away from officially hanging up my work hat—is get a hobby.

My grandparents were knitters. My grandfather spent his life as a mail carrier working for the the postal service here in Canada. Then he retired and bought a whole lot of cheap yarn and made mittens for the neighbourhood kids. So. Many. Mittens.

We spend our working years being productive for other people, for our employers, and suddenly it seems as if the default is keeping productive for ourselves and our sanity.

I write in a similar overlapping topic about being Late & Ready, the

ideas of picking up new skills late in life as a creative pursuit, what that means about our expectations, and what it contributes to the output.

But also I find myself thinking a lot about nurturing hobbies and creative life skills that will keep me active, happy and interesting when I'm the old grey-haired guy, it's me, with his laptop in a cafe.

I certainly won't be running marathons anymore, so planning on having skills and interests that fit with my age, health capacity, and the demands of the craft is a two-sided coin of figuring out what works as age creeps in—and learning to start letting go of everything that doesn't work.

I'm just here pondering this stuff now, thinking aloud because I know it's inevitable, but then maybe I don't have a clue what's really in store for me.

Under the category of Hobby & Hope I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Patient Portals

August 19, 2026



As I write this I'm preparing for a little end of summer vacation. We're jetting off for a week for a family adventure. And I'm bringing my sketchbook, of course.

I came back from Japan last year with a dozen urban sketches in a notebook, and it has become one of my favourite souvenirs. And yet, invariably, when I show anyone their first question is always: how long do these take you?

Sketching isn't a camera, obviously.

It's not fast, and so saying that I can draw pretty fast is a relative expression of time investment. I can draw pretty fast, but that means I usually spend less than thirty minutes with my pen sketching out the

details of a scene.

Again, it's not a click and go. It's find a place to sit, out of the way of the bustle, and then work through the scene, chewing out the shapes and shadows, poking in the details, and trying to get as much as I can before either I attract an audience or annoy my ever-patient wife.

Urban sketching is the opposite of urgency.

I may have enjoyed it in my youth, and maybe even been pretty good at such forms, but I think my patience would have been less available to the pages. Sitting somewhere with no pressure to keep exploring the bigger place but instead soaking in the details of just one spot, one scene, one moment... that's the persistence of maturity, I think.

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Broken Bewildered

August 24, 2026



The universe is messy, and to some of us that's the most interesting part.

We live in a world far too impressed by perfection. In my opinion, we want too much newness. We overvalue mint condition. The concept of new-in-box might be ideal if one is buying underwear, but the scuffs and stains and cracks and creases in a vintage sweater might be the very thing that gives it character.

I bought my violin eight years ago and I was not the first owner. I bought it at a shop that sold exclusively old violins. There is a label inside that says it was built in Germany in 1929. That violin is ninety-seven years old and has travelled the world, traversed history, and been

held by more hands than I can imagine. It has a story.

There is a concept in Japanese called wabi-sabi (侘び寂び) or roughly defined, the embracing of the imperfection of an object, maybe because the scars and cracks and rough edges tell a story.

Perfection and newness is a commercial trait, not a human one, I think.

Decay and error are hallmarks of life and humanity.

As an artist I think about how to put my own humanity into the things I make: my art and my stories are richer, I think, when imperfection gives them an edge and the perception of something deeper than the vibe of boring manufactured aesthetics.

There are layers to beauty.

Under the category of Broken & Bewildered I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

Part 5 - Embracing Nowhere

The soul of creativity is often burrowed deep within a search for a path to connection and purpose in a complex universe. The inspired self and creativity go hand in hand, and the philosophical conundrum of mashing legacy, vulnerability and purpose into our art is worth pondering.

Summer Showing

August 11, 2026



I was back at it in the park recently, sitting cross-legged on a blanket under a tree, far from the path and people, with my synth propped up on a portable camp table, still trying to find a summery sound.

Thanks to a new addition to my gear collection I was no longer playing with headphones, but rather I had propped up my small speaker amp nearby, set it to a reasonable volume, and was filling the local air with a bit of my chaotic noodling.

It was not intended to be a performance.

The reality of being outdoors in a park making art, taking photos, or playing music is that it is public. Eyes will connect. Heads will turn.

We travelled to Europe a few years ago and did a lot of plein air sketching in very public places and it's a whole other thing, let me tell you, to sit near a few thousands of wandering tourists and do your craft.

Back in my little park a man on bike with his dog stopped to look, eyes connected, head turned. He stood in the grass a respectful distance away as if he expected me to crack out a banger and was getting ready for the show. I tapped out the first few bars of a Bach Prelude I had been practicing earlier that week and which was still stuck in my fingertips.

He lingered for another couple minutes then cycled away.

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Inside Outside

August 31, 2026



What is creativity anyhow? I've been writing this blog for over eight months now and I don't think I've actually sat down and written a proper definition—but is that even possible?

Is it a good thing to be creative? Is it natural or purposeful—or maybe just an unserious pursuit?

It's curious though: my social media feed has picked up on the idea that I'm interested in the topic and so routinely it is peppered with bursts of commentary on creative lifestyles, both positive and negative.

And with many questions, I think maybe the negative jabs shine a brighter light on understanding the notion.

Your results may vary, but my received negativity seems to shine through that little screen and mock the very idea of a middle aged guy trying to do art, learn an instrument, or write a novel. The universe, it often seems, finds the notion of artistic expression little more than a privileged extravagance for those less serious among us.

Why am I not feeding the gaping maw of capitalistic pursuit? Why am I not spending time earning or investing or consuming? Why am I telling stories and taking photos?

None of this is a thing I can answer in one post, but I do know that creativity is not an idle excuse to avoid something “real” or “productive” but rather—and for most every self-defined creative person I know—-foundational to who they are. It is who we are. It is the shape of our soul and the way we meet the world each day.

All the rest of it is the mask we wear.

Under the category of Inside & Outside I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

Part 6 - Clicking Deeper

And in the end, some will tell you that the only thing that matters is building a self identity and a methodical life around creative expression, putting in the hours, and learning from the effort, that this the true heart of creating stuff. They may have a point.

Keyboard Less

August 26, 2026



Creation is rarely ideal.

It's messy and short on time and squeezed into the cracks of life.

Don't believe me? I found a cup of hot tea and an unoccupied table at one of North America's biggest shopping malls on a busy Friday evening while my family is off browsing through shoe stores and spending money on who knows what.

I didn't bring a keyboard.

I am resorting to typing this on my phone.

But it was either sit down and write something, or wander around tripping over ten thousand shoppers and their giant bags of momentary indulgences.

I choose to write, ideal situation or not.

Not everyone's first choice, sure, but as frequently as I can I like to do something that viscerally reminds my creative self that writers bring their stories to the page, the page doesn't come and wait for our stories.

I've been haunting this particular shopping mall since I was a kid. West Edmonton Mall has an indoor theme park (which I just wandered thru), skating rink (which was occupied by a few dozen skaters this evening), a water park (which had closed for the evening shortly before I strolled by) and a life size pirate ship parked on an indoor lake (which was by the bookstore that briefly caught my attention before I decided to park here.) My Kid works here. We drive over every month or so and try to not be overwhelmed.

This place is full of stories, and I can reach into my own personal history dating back decades and sometimes even make sense of them.

Why not spend a few minutes spilling out some creativity here, too, ideal conditions be darned. Keyboard less... or opportunity more.