

8 Clicks from September 2026

A BLOG FROM NOWHERE ANTHOLOGY

Brad Salomons

8 Clicks from Nowhere Productions

8 Clicks from September 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.

CHAPTER 1

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.

Blog Lore, Part Three

September 2, 2026



I've been on holiday, I'm jet-lagged, and yeah: I need a few days to recover, so...

I was digging through my archives which are stuffed away on a cloud drive where only I can see them and I found this blog advice thing I wrote in 2008.

Enjoy.

The Seven Sins of Blogging

Original Published Date : Friday, June 13, 2008

I was thinking of writing an entry explaining two things: (1) my motivation for writing and posting as much as I do and (2) the apparent arrogance and self-importance that tends to come across in this blog.

First, I write because I am as compelled to write as I am to breathe.

And second, that WOULD be arrogance did sin number seven not apply. I am mindful of that, and my explanation — not directed at ANY-ONE at all but me, really — evolved into the following:

Do you have a blog? Thinking of starting one? Seven years, multiple blogs, thousands of entries, and encyclopedic quantities of text later, I have the following advice... of how you can completely screw up.

Those seven sins of blogging are:

Lust

It's not what you think. And unless maybe you are writing a sex-advice column, literally detailing your lust is a very sketchy idea for any blog (as you never know when your mother-in-law is reading.) However, if we take a similar approach as Dante, defining lust as the "excessive love of others," you may be lustful if you are peppering your readers with (a) too many links, (b) opinions that are not your own, or worse (c) more quotes than content, and thus you should not expect your

sad little blog to amount to much of anything. Your own opinion may be completely wrong and suck, but at least it's yours — so don't lust after someone else's ideas: it's just uninspired and lame.

Gluttony

In blogging, gluttony is measured in units of your reader's time. Your sad little blog commits gluttony if it eats too much of that irreplaceable resource: the pages may take too long to download, your spelling and grammar might suck thus consuming all of our time with abandon as readers try to decipher your thoughts. It may drone on—and on and on and on and on—about nothing of significance and thus consume our time merely looking for the point of your ramblings. Or it might simply be horridly designed and force the consumption of our time purging the pain of viewing it from our eyes and brains with hot poker. As attributed to Kurt Vonnegut: “Use the time of a total stranger in such a way that he or she will not feel the time was wasted” — or you suck.

Greed

If your readers can't find your content for the barrage of advertisements on your sad little blog, guess what: you're a greedy ass. Do we think you have something valuable to say, or are you simple a shill for Google? Don't tell us it generates revenue. Don't tell us it pays your hosting fees. If you expect anyone to believe blogging is how you earn your grocery money—or that targeted ads are the only way you can afford to pay for something that costs less than a pint of beer—do you really expect readers to believe anything else you write? One or two ads: cool. More, get over yourself.

Sloth

Commitment. Do you have it? If you are going to write a blog, then do it: pull up to a keyboard and go. The alternative is finding the delete button. Many would argue: but blogs are media. And most of us recy-

cle our old newspapers and delete anything older than a few weeks past from our PVRs. If your sad little blog is stagnating because the gap between entries is measured in months, you have committed sloth and you need to make a decision. Chances are if two months have gone by without an update (the unofficial statute of limitations on this particular time line) no one will even notice if “whatilikeaboutcheese.randomfreeblogs.ru” suddenly disappears from their feed.

Wrath

We get it. Blog spam sucks. Scrapers suck. Flamers suck. But if you are going to run a blog, dealing with any and all of these is like dealing with commuters on your drive to work; It's just part of the traffic. In that particular analogy, wrath would be represented by driving to work in a Hummer: sure, being involved in a collision equals multiple fatalities and you get to drive away, but your gas mileage sucks, and every other commuter thinks you're an arrogant ass. The same goes for your sad little blog. Wrath comes in the form of you implementing overly cumbersome or restrictive tools to fight and prevent spam, scraping, or unwelcome comments. Sure, easy for you to manage on the back end, but grow a pair and don't make your readers suffer for your fear and anger.

Envy

Green shades are so unbecoming on a blog. We all know that envy is defined as wanting something that someone else has and you currently do not. Envy is stealing. Envy is pilfering content. Envy is filling your blog with snippets of content from other sites prefixed by the words “Check this out!” Your sad little blog has committed the sin of envy if you are simply writing your blog to “keep up with the Joneses” as it were. Don't blog to fill space and seek to mimic the apparent notoriety of someone else's efforts, or your blog will truly suck. Blogging for the sake of blogging means you have absolutely nothing of consequence to say and thus you should not be allowed access to a keyboard. Blog-

ging itself is not cool, but entertaining and informing people in a meaningful way via a blog might be.

Pride

“What! Only five hundred hits this year?” And four hundred and ninety of them are likely your own clicks. No one cares what you have to say. No one cares, even if what you are writing is wise and insightful. No one cares what you thought of that movie. No one cares that you ate pizza for dinner in April 1997. No one cares: really. So if you are writing your sad little blog for an audience, forget it. Humble yourself and write for only you because in five years when you are paging through your archives (if they both still exist and you even care enough to do so) we can almost guarantee it won’t be for the purposes of submitting them to so great historical archive. You earn hits. And even those you earn are hits for which you are undeserving.

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Just Sounds

September 9, 2026



In my rollercoaster relationship with corporate social media I have gone through a variety of phases, one big one being the tipping point of frustration that caused me to start building my own version of Instagram.

That bit of code was never meant for the big time, but rather simply as a place where I could post a gallery of photos without being beholden to algorithms, account signups, and cloudy terms and conditions that gave up permission for my pictures to mega-corporations.

The thing about making your own software, though, is that you can add features in that no other platform might attempt to include. For me, one of those quirky features is the ability to post a sound record-

ing and attach it to any post.

The feature was nothing too complex: simply the ability to upload a few seconds or a minute of sound to a post and have it appear right there between the text and the image.

I actually set it up so that the quick button on my phone is now used to trigger the voice recorder, so if I find that I'm taking photos and the ambient noise is interesting I'll click that button next, grab a minute of sound, and then add it to the post.

The result is that more and more, as much as I'm out snapping pictures, I find I am also clipping sounds from the world around me—and then uploading those clips to my little “gram” site.

It makes the little photo archive I've created a bit richer and bit more multi-sensory, and scrolling back through my own history of posts a curious and enjoyable sensory experience that is greater than the sum of its parts, even from just sounds.

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Curry Surprises

September 10, 2026



We recently returned from a mini family vacation to France. And yes it was a long list of the lovely things you are probably thinking, including the food.

Oh, the food.

France is bursting with great food. Cheeses and breads and wines and it often seems like a pastry shop on every corner, and could we have tried it all in our short visit we just might have.

It did get me thinking about cooking, of course. We cook at home a lot—a creative outlet of its own sort, yes—and we do that not only because it is the more economical and healthy choice, but because we love to do it. Too, it's a family tradition, of sorts.

All that said, I started my home cooking career late. I moved away from home having learned how to fry an egg and heat some pasta sauce from a jar, and maybe grill up a cheese sandwich if I was brave. But realistically, at twenty, I was very much a beginner.

Beginners in the fine art of cooking can find themselves with many outcomes, but if one wants to eat on a student's budget the one outcome that cannot afford to manifest is surrender: you just gotta keep trying.

My wife uses it as a punchline now, but one of my early beginner experiments in cooking as a broke student was a dish I affectionately called Curry Surprise—a mix of ground beef, pasta, cheddar cheese, curry paste and a few other add-ins—that was a weekly staple in my campus housing kitchen. It was pretty terrible. But it was better than another bowl of macaroni and cheese from a box.

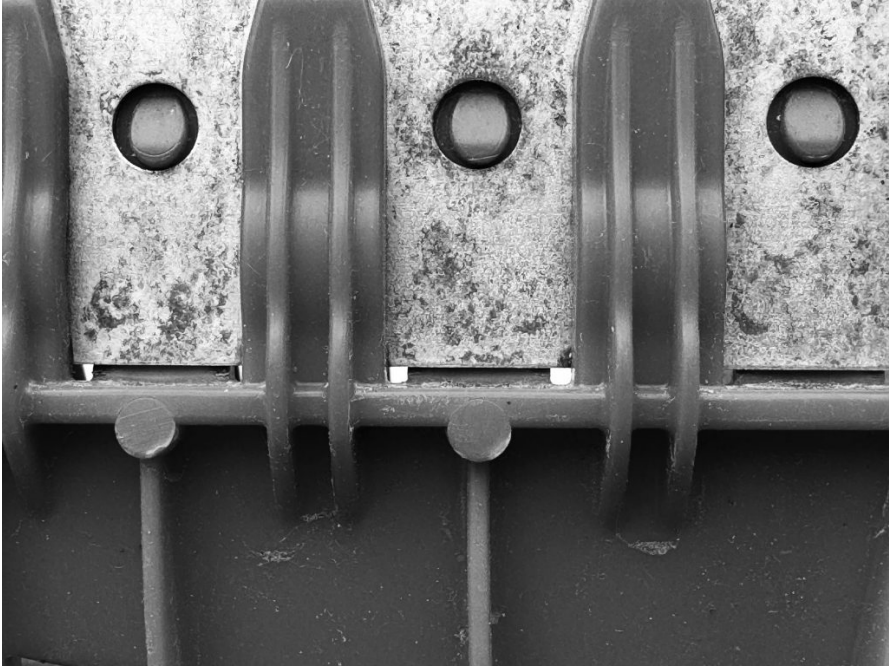
These days we cook elaborate pasta dishes, grill amazing sandwiches made from homemade sourdough, and dine on a long list of honed and practiced recipes.

But once, long ago, we were beginners and we played with terrible ideas that literally nourished us and taught us how to break away from instant meals and ever more deeply enjoy amazing foods at home or abroad.

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Short Fiction

September 30, 2026



I've always had a space in my heart for short fiction.

Short story is a form that is often under appreciated, and I would chalk this up to a couple strange reasons.

First, I think it's a value proposition. I figure it probably costs about the same amount to publish, ship, and market a twenty page book—something that will take a customer a lunch-break to read—as it does a five hundred page novel. Thus, they cost the same at the store. We get around this by publishing anthologies, but I think the whole equation often breaks down for people standing in a bookstore: buying a bunch of small stories glued together in one paperback, or a whole novel—most people, I wager, pick the novel.

Second, the mental investment. We do like strong characters and getting to know imaginary people through the course of a five hundred page-long story. Ideas are important, too, but my experience with short story is that it often leans more into exploring an idea than it does exploring a fleshed out character—that's the realm of novels with the space to do that well. It's not impossible in a short story, but I think you can only create so much personality out of ten thousand words. People like people, so I think we tend to gravitate towards novels about people over stories about ideas.

Just my speculation.

In the coming months I want to write more short fiction, I think, filling that gap in my heart with explorations of big ideas and crazy concepts.

I fully expect it to be under appreciated.

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 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.

Significance Gap

September 3, 2026



I am as bad as anyone when it comes to looking for meaning in what I do.

I spend my days working towards significance.

Oh sure, I write for the sake of writing, make art without care for anyone ever seeing it, and play music with my headphones on so that no one ever hears the sounds but me—but nearly all of it is in service to some future significance, I wager.

We practice to improve.

We groom our skills towards a purpose.

We reach out for significance—which is something that cannot reliably be measured.

What is significance? What is purpose? What is meaning?

In a way it might be something parallel to the idea of wealth. Wealth is the acquisition of money in search of a tipping point from insufficient to more than enough. Wealth is relative. It's a marketing term for banks. It's an ineffable concept. For some wealth might simply be financial stability. For others wealth is riches beyond imagination. Wealth comes in a variety as diverse as there are people on Earth.

Purpose is similar, I think. Meaning and significance are intangible and indefinable, and likely they mean something different for everyone who utters the syllables. There is a gap in communicating what my definition of significance is to you and vice versa. For some it might mean something personal or linked to a small community, while for others nothing short of worldwide fame and history shifting effort would suffice.

My only advice then: define it for yourself.

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Start Writing

September 16, 2026



At the heart of this blog, the core of this little creative project I've been working on here, there is but a single message burning with the inner heat that drives the whole damn thing: it is one piece of advice. Start writing.

Oh, I get it. You don't have the passion or the time or the urge or the patience.

That device in your hands is so great at capturing your attention and entertaining you with the ideas and thoughts of other people—or maybe now I should include algorithms and slop—that you can't be bothered to use it to make something.

But writing is at the core of creativity. It is the uber-skill that shapes

and refines all the others.

Writing is the materialization of thoughts—reflective and critical, personal and communicative, coherent and scattered—upon the page.

Writing makes you better at evaluating yourself and whatever you do.

Writing closes the loop and fills the gap and bridges the points of something you cannot articulate is missing in your soul until you start writing.

It's not difficult.

Open any app that takes text: your notes, your word-processor, hell, write yourself an email... but write something. And then write some more. And keep writing after that. It will improve you in ways you cannot fathom until you've written enough to see it for yourself.

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.

Rolling Randomness

September 18, 2026



Back before AI could gurgle out a list of spit-polished ideas replete with some sycophantic grovelling towards our imminent greatness, I was in love with random idea generators.

Don't confuse one with the other.

AI makes ideas by stringing together patterns that make sense.

Idea generators are the Frankenstein-esque cobbling together of digital randomizers and curious arrays of word-bytes that when triggered result in a mad-lib-style shuffling of the input data towards an often nonsensical list of results. There is no intention. Only chance.

“Write A ROMANTIC DRAMA about A FISH set in HISTORICAL ROME.”

“Write A SCIENCE FANTASY about A BARISTA set in A SANATORIUM.”

“Write AN EPIC POEM about LOST KEYS set in A FAST FOOD KITCHEN.”

I wrote my fair share of these generators. The code behind them was simple: a couple data arrays chock full of verbs and nouns and settings and styles, a random number generator, and some user interface bits. It was all coding spare change compared to the corporate-billion budgets of modern AI systems that barf out polished gems of inspiration that could never match the lightweight brilliance of a digital dice roll.

Creativity, I think, often emerges from serendipity. Something amazing and unique can tumble out of our brains when we trigger those brains with curious nonsense.

I have asked AI for ideas, nudged it to brainstorm, and it comes back with clever concepts, sure. But none of it stacks as a trigger for the

weirdest flights of my imagination compared to the raw random indulgence of a simple idea generator.

I think maybe the more we extract ourselves, remove our humanity, from the process the more boring the final result—and rolling dice, digital or otherwise, is just random enough to preserve our involvement in the loop.

Try my randomizer:

Locals swear the deep mountain lake is cursed — a skeptical journalist brings a augmented reality glasses to prove them wrong, but an insomniac trucker is the same person, from another timeline.

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Cheerleader Types

September 24, 2026



Not everyone is a creative production engine, and that's okay.

Building a community is an effort that requires not just surrounding yourself with other creative people, but finding good people who support you from the sidelines.

This step is easy to overlook when it's missing, and even easier to take for granted when it falls into place.

Having people in your life who want to read your writing, hang your art, and attend your concerts is never automatic. It's precious and a reminder that someone is paying attention. It can be all that holds you together on those too-frequent days when it seems like obscurity and irrelevance is your only companion on a creative adventure. It can hold

it all together when the path is unclear.

Cheerleaders are, of course, not devoid of creativity or otherwise lacking in motivation. Heck no. But they might be people who appreciate your efforts in a field that they themselves do not excel. They are almost certainly people who understand the soul of creative effort and know that encouragement and support are the lifeblood and fuel of its continuity.

And most often, they come unasked. You can't beg and plead for them to cheer and you cannot be anything but thankful that they stay for a day, a month or a lifetime.

But when you find them, notice them, and cheer right back.

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.

Permission Trap

September 8, 2026



I fell deep into the permission trap while on vacation recently.

We went on a summer trip. It was exciting. It was picturesque. It was the city of lights and every turn seemed like a new reason to point my camera and click the shutter. I took a lot of photos.

So of course... I posted a few of the best pics on Instagram so that my collection of friends and fam who follow on my private account could enjoy those same photos. And, genuinely, the first day that I posted the response was overwhelmingly positive.

But... well. I posted more pics on the second day, and a couple more on the third...

The following days were less positive. People had tuned out.

Fair enough, I suppose. Vacation photos while everyone is back home getting ready another work day. The patience for that is limited. I get it.

But we are funny to each other this way, aren't we?

I'm not saying this to dive into a pit of self-pity about my social engagement. There are an array subtle social cues that are conveyed by modern interactions on social media platforms, and being shrugged off by one's own friends and family, and I would suggest that a big one is the subconscious permission structure around sharing.

People are online. People are on these apps. People are scrolling, looking at advertisements and AI slop and influencer drivel, so in my own mind I am considering that I can offer something better by sharing: Me, a real person that the people on my private account all personally know, travelling the world and sharing his photos.

But then the permission trap emerges from the inaction of the masses: a fraction of the likes and indifferent shrugs and my anxious, approval-seeking artist's mind reads that right to the thought of least resis-

tance: people don't want to see it. I'm oversharing. I'm boasting. I'm swamping the feeds of friends with a reality that breaks their comfortable slop-ridden, algorithmic vibe and I don't have their permission to break into that for more than a single post.

I'm overthinking it, of course. Because that's the trap.

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.

Show Tell

September 7, 2026



The Kid is a natural performer. She comes to life when attention turns her way and she is at her creative best when she is in the spotlight.

Me, not so much.

I prefer the quiet toil of fingers on a keyboard in a dimly lit cafe or sketching a scene from a vantage where no one can peek over my shoulder and ask pesky questions.

But for either of us, and all of us, there is vulnerability interlocked with the act of creative expression. We all need to turn on, activate, be our best selves and show up to tell the story we are trying to communicate through whatever form we choose.

I would love to tell you that creativity is an easy or a comfortable thing, but I really do believe that the best of what we makes comes from opening our hearts, souls and selves to the universe.

I type away in peace and quiet rarely seeing the people who read the words I write, but despite my shyness I still post them and send them out into the universe for anonymous adjudication. Just by reading these words you have transformed into the second half of a mysterious equation that I know exists when I write but I'll never know much about. That is my personal vulnerability.

Creativity comes from everything we are clashed against everything we are not.

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

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Worth It

September 11, 2026



We've all done it. We all should do it, at least occasionally. I do it ever few months, in fact.

I Googled myself.

For years, the result has been a modest list of links, many to my own websites, but often to a variety of articles from old jobs and public feeds from old accounts. It's been a trip down memory lane.

When I Googled myself the other day, though: I was greeted with an AI summary of my digital footprint, and a generated outline of who the search algorithm thought I was as a person.

It wasn't completely wrong, but it wasn't a hundred percent accurate,

either.

As a guy who spends his free time in the pursuit of creative public expression I gotta admit: I'm a little frustrated that all the work I've put into building profile and connections online in the last twenty years has amounted to a couple paragraphs in an LLM.

Search and social, after all, were the bridges between the stuff I was putting out there and the rest of the universe—but lately, not too many people are crossing it.

“Keep making stuff.” I tell myself. “People will find it. And if it entertains just one person, inspires one other human to keep the spark alive... maybe it was worth it. Right?”

This is a cross post from Of Poets & Processors.

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Rights Wrongs

September 14, 2026



This blog is coming at you from nowhere. It says so, right in the title. A blog from nowhere. And sometimes it literally feels that way.

Plonk right in backish-middle of my topic list I need to surface a challenge that defines much of my creative existence. I am certainly not alone in feeling this way, but it really is the problem of being in the middle of nowhere.

I have a small, loyal audience of friends who seem to enjoy what I make, and for many people who make stuff that would be enough: the ability to share your art with the people you love, the practice of writing for close confidants, or performing for local enthusiasts who smile when you play or act or sing... it is all right.

But nearly every artist would be lying to you if they were to say they don't feel the indifference of the larger world with every note, every keystroke, every bit of ink scratched onto the page.

Creativity, after all, is an expression of who we are and part of me—as I suspect a part of many who create anything worthy of the thought—crave to express that to a bigger world, to bridge across culture and politics, to link arms right through language barriers, and to muddle our souls with humans living in nowheres on the far other side of the planet.

Being from nowhere forces one to look across the gaps of heart and hands and ask how we can bridge that gap and cure the indifference.

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

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Photographic Oddity

September 15, 2026



I've written a few times about the black and white photography that accompanies the posts on this blog. What I haven't mentioned as often is the shades of vulnerability I encounter in that act of taking such non-traditional photos in public.

Let's define something: I think of a traditional photo as something that someone out in the wilds of a public space might expect one to take a photo of, like say, a scenic view, a bit of shapely architecture, a group of people, an animal, flowers, or some kind of public performance. Everyone takes pics of these things. They are quote... normal.

A non-traditional photo is something else that usually falls outside of that category: say, snapping pics of a crack in the pavement, a macro

of the textured bark on a tree, a storm drain cover, a street sign, one's own feet, or even the whorls of clouds in the sky. Not everyone points their camera at these sorts of things. They are, um... less normal.

My black and white photography tends to stray almost exclusively into the non-traditional realm.

And having partaken in increasingly frequent acts of non-traditional photography over the last few months, I have noticed that with every click of the shutter I have been putting myself into a weird sort of public performance and place and vulnerability.

I stopped while walking through Paris in August (when we were there on vacation) pausing to point my camera at a mailbox. Parisians who for the most part went about their lives indifferent to my existence on that trip, instead turned their heads and paid a bit more attention to my non-traditional moment of photography.

It draws more attention to take odd photos than to take photos of things people expect to take photos of. People's heads turn. There is a moment of "what's that guy doing?" and then they move on... but still a moment.

It didn't bother me, of course.

It was just a curiosity of consideration, and I couldn't help but ponder what was going through the minds of commuting Parisians as some curious Canadian snapped serious pics of the relatively mundane in an otherwise massively photogenic city like that.

I was a standout, an oddity, and temporarily creatively vulnerable to something I can't quite put my finger on.

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Pomp Popularity

September 21, 2026



I always have an eye open for interesting unpolished creative stones when I'm wading through the streams of my social feeds.

There is an urgency in many of us who make stuff to fit in. We work towards a certain grade of production quality. We make to fit into a mould of commercial viability. We try to stand out in a crowded field by following the so-called rules.

It's all so much water rushing past our feet.

It's the stranger things that capture my attention, the jagged, colourful rock stuck mostly in the muck of the riverbed, just poking out and catching the light in an interesting way, that snags my eye.

I have explored this theme routinely on this blog. There is a gentle conflict between the pursuit of high quality products that build one's portfolio, represent one's best work, and meet a threshold of acceptable value—and on the other side, transcend formula, represent something new and interesting, and break the mould.

In the middle is a tension in the heart of many artists of any field. To ignore the rules completely is to be overlooked for failing to meet expectations, but then to become little more than a photocopier for ideas of others before us is to be shrugged off as uninteresting.

We all want to be a polished stone. But someone needs to pluck us out of the river of obscurity before that happens.

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

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Death Taxes

September 28, 2026



I don't particularly dwell on it but, just like the rest of you, I'm getting older.

A few weeks after this post goes live and before the year is out I'll be turning fifty.

Five-oh.

Naturally, as I was putting together the list of topics to write about in this blogging project, the notion of my inevitable post-existence emerged as a real strong contender... because we might not dwell on it, but we do occasionally remember that someday all that will be left of any of us is memory and artifacts of our time here. If even that much.

Creative folks don't necessarily make shit because they are trying to leave a legacy, but a legacy of our efforts is certainly a side product of living and breathing and dreaming big ideas that translate into written words or composed music or clever little bits of art hanging in someone's living room.

Heck, as I walked into my home office I passed a framed cross-stitch sampler we have hanging on the wall that was made by a long-passed ancestor of my spouse. I doubt she sat down to make that, spent hours sewing every single stitch, and pondered whether it would be the one thing that her great-granddaughter someday had left to remember she had ever existed. It's a morbid thought, but these little things, moments captured in creativity and craftsmanship might turn into exactly that much for most of us—if we're even that lucky.

Will some painting I've already painted be all that is left of everything I ever aspired to sketch?

Are there collections of words and photos yet to be pounded into keys or snapped through lenses that will mark my interest in those hobbies?

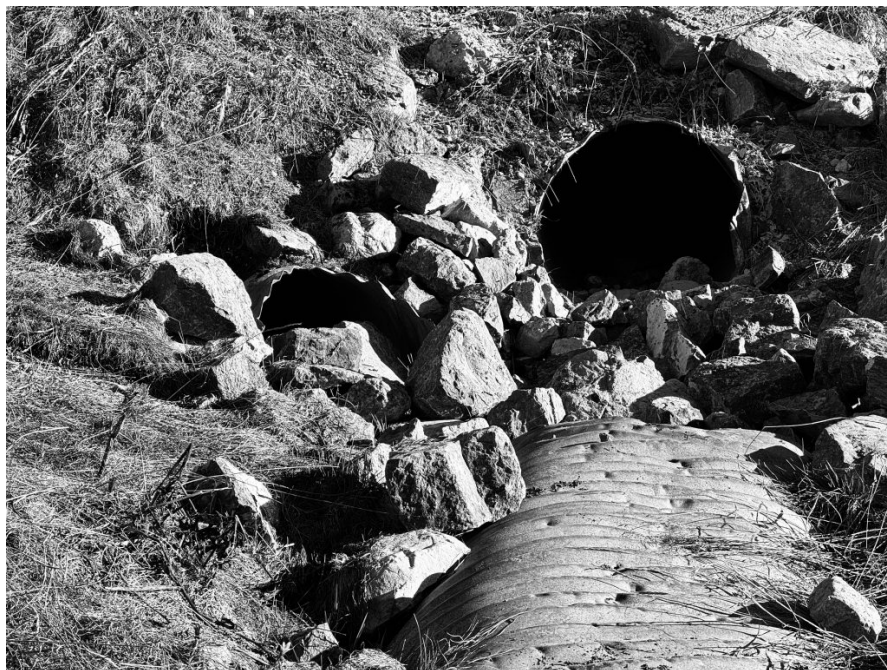
What will the legacy of any of our creative lives become after we die? Like I said, I don't particularly dwell on it but under the category of Death & Taxes I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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.

Excuse You

September 1, 2026



Look around, pay attention and you'll start to notice it everywhere.

I happened to notice it the other night while we were having a family night catching up on a couple reality shows. I made a note that I should write something about it.

Victimhood.

You don't fall into that trap, do you? You don't trip over the wires of opting to blame everyone else for failure. You don't catch on the snare of looking for external factors every time something goes wrong.

We were watching that show—you know the one—where pairs of contestants race around the world and do challenges. One of the teams was lagging, severely, and it was never about them. They played the perpetual victim. Other teams were picking on them. The challenges were so hard. The world was against them. Oh, I'm sure it felt good to dump their successive losses at the feet of everything and everyone else, but wow: it's a game, it's supposed to be competitive and challenging and stacked against you at every turn.

Maybe, sure, it was played up by the editors of the show, but I also recognize that as a personality type. I also know that there are a lot of people with big ideas and ambitious dreams who hit a few little obstacles—and oh, will there be obstacles on the path to creative endeavours—and out come the excuses and blaming everything and everyone else.

The list is endless, but you'd recognize it the second you heard it: someone or something is preventing those people from the win, so they give up trying.

But the game is always stacked. The world is always working against most of us. That's just the universe.

Drift Works

September 4, 2026



Is your creative space a refuge?

I've been thinking a lot about disappearing our minds away into imaginary spaces.

We all do this, I think. Maybe we don't always think of it like this, but letting our minds wander through crafted scenarios, daydreaming, thinking over problems and relationships, pondering strange ideas and realities... it all adds up to a kind of mental drift work.

It feels foundational to creativity, to me at least.

I had a quirky childhood—we all do I suppose—and my imagination was a place I could sneak away to when I needed to get away from reality. Oops. A bit of personal insight there—maybe, but I think there are likely a lot of us who use imagination as a kind of escape from the

here and now.

I'm certainly no therapist, but it does lead me to ponder how much creative expression is intertwined with exploration of our own mental realms—and how much of it happens because we are cleaning out the cobwebs of our own consciousness while we're biding time hiding out from real world problems.

As an adult I escape into meditative spaces when I run or write or just sitting back in a comfortable chair, and some of the best ideas I have are not things I'm chasing down but rather explorations I'm making through this mental space I've built for myself over a lifetime.

I thought maybe that was weird... but perhaps it's just human.

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Every Day

September 17, 2026



Routinely, I drop myself headfirst into a daily challenge.

There is an art to it.

There is a goal embedded within.

There is a entrenched motivation.

Why? Well...

As an example, imagine you want to be better at drawing hands. Hands are notoriously difficult to sketch. They are both familiar and complex. They are easy to draw poorly. So, what you opt to do is practice every day: each day, you tell yourself, you will draw hands. They

will never be the same hands. The hands will be drawn from different perspectives in different poses and perhaps even in different media or styles. But you will draw at least one hand every single day. Period.

You've just crafted a simple daily challenge for yourself.

No spreadsheets. No written reports. No accountability to anyone but yourself. You simply know that sometime each day you need to set aside a small chunk of time to sketch hands.

And you'll do this challenge for a month. Or maybe two months. Or, if you're incredibly dedicated to learning to draw hands, you'll challenge yourself for a whole year.

At the end of the challenge what do you think the result will be? Yeah, you'll be happy to take a few days off from drawing hands, but I can almost guarantee that the daily practice, the grind, the iterative epic learning will have improved your skills by a measurable amount.

Challenge yourself to do something every day. And then give yourself a hand.

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Write Always

September 22, 2026



Don't stop.

You want to be better at anything? Keep plugging away and don't ever stop practicing, and that goes doubly so for writing. Why? It just does—filled as it is with nuance and expectation and alive right there in the heart of everything we do, say, hear, and make.

Writers write.

They just do. And you are almost certainly only a writer when you are writing: actively penning words onto the page, typing characters into a keyboard or brewing the thoughts in your brain for your next opportunity to do more writing.

Writing can be messy. It can be scattered. It can be long or short, formal or stylistically chaotic. Writing can be words strung together in a notepad app, or traced with a lusciously thick felt-tipped marker on a wall. Writing can be private scribbles in a journal or annoying daily posts in a public website launched into the universe with no clear destination or audience.

Whatever it ultimately becomes, the writing itself is an action. To write is a verb.

Writing is the act of filling the gaps between words. Writing is temporary and temporal.

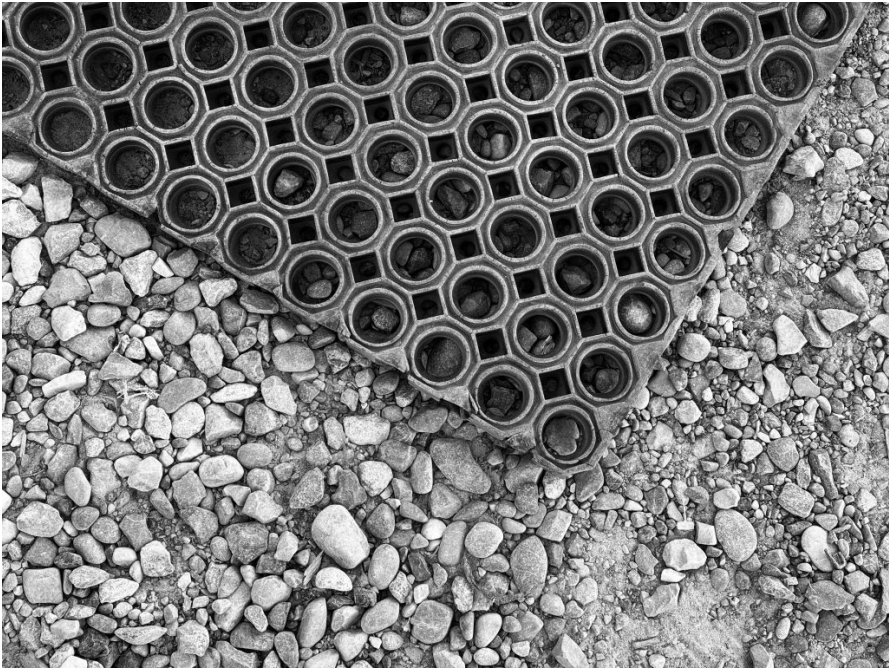
And you need to write always. Why? If you need to ask then you are not one of us.

Because writers write.

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Gold Pans

September 23, 2026



I was out for a walk near the river recently when I came across a guy sitting on a stool panning for gold. He had a small wagon-load of equipment, but he hailed me closer and talked me through the effort while he showed me the flecks of gold he'd dredged from the sand. They were right there reflecting off the bottom of his plastic pan.

It was an encounter that was compelling enough that for a day or two I actually considered going to the local outdoor store and buying my own gold panning pan. I haven't yet, but as I'm often wont to do my brain turned his hobby in an apt metaphor for the creative process in general.

Creativity is after all sifting through a lot of worthless crud to find flecks

of something more valuable.

We often see the final product, but neglect to notice the heaps of debris remaining from the process itself.

My gold panning friend told it me took five shovelfuls of riverbed muck and a couple hours worth of effort to reveal that dim constellation of golden specks on the bottom of his pan. Were they not clinging to the pan by hydrostatic forces they would have fluttered away in a stiff breeze. The heap of rocky mud at his feet was orders of magnitude larger.

How many words does a writer need to write before the best distillation and clearest ideas of value form on her page?

How much paint does an artist need to brush onto paper before something beautiful emerges from the colours?

How many notes are lost to practice and rehearsal and noodling towards refined skill before a musician performs or records a hit?

We're all panning for gold, in our way, and the yields seem microscopic when viewed from the perspective of effort. But too, they are just as likely to glitter in the eyes of a random passerby who we call over to look at what we've made.

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Desire Paths

September 25, 2026



There is a principle in urban design called “desire paths” wherein smart planners pave the shortcuts.

You’d recognize this if you ever saw it. The example that comes to mind for me is the Quad in my alma mater. A big grassy field between classroom buildings existed as a place where students hung out, studied, napped, snacked, and of course, travelled between lectures. The sidewalk infrastructure was in place, but it didn’t represent the paths that students actually walked. The shortcuts wore into the grass as bare-earth trails trampled by a million footsteps. So, when the space was renovated, those exact paths were paved with proper side-walks, voted on by countless students just existing.

Noticing where shortcuts emerge and making those paths formal and proper, then, is something of a smart move. It is an act of recognition that the subconscious of many (or even just one) can tell us something we didn't overtly consider.

Recognizing your own shortcuts to creative expression is a similar act of finding the desire paths leading you towards creative fulfillment. Understanding that no matter what you do, your subconscious may be looking for the shortcuts between idea and product, between notion and outcome.

Forcing formality on your creative process or trying to follow a path that you "designed" based on your conscious consideration, may neither be the best way to get there, or the shortest, cleanest route.

Instead, noticing the habits, being aware of the hacks, and catching those tricks you've stumbled on to get words on the page, ink on paper, or notes into the universe are the shortcuts that you should mix up some mental concrete and pave them straight through to your destination.

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First Thrust

September 29, 2026



Apparently attributable to a conversation published in a book^[1] so out-of-print I couldn't even locate one at a local library, Picasso is to have said that "In drawing, nothing is better than the first attempt."

His point, I think, may have had something to do with character, imperfection and what another famous painter, Bob Ross, probably would have called a "happy accident."

Trying to polish, correct, or refine something that emerged as beautiful from that first thrust of the pen, the initial strokes upon a keyboard or an inspired glimmer of photographic insight is, one might claim, fighting against the artistic instinct. The rawness of the first try carries a beauty that, I might be so bold as to say that Picasso seemed to

suggest, is difficult to replicate through copying the effort or nudging it with a more conscious hand.

I find it captivating, this idea that imperfection has a beauty that transcends a glossy finish. We seem to worship the idea of factory fresh and mint-in-box and too often find ourselves chasing art that fits some commercial vibe or mechanized standardization.

Instead, leaning into a first try—not a try devoid of talent or skill, nor a try devoid of an experienced hand—but an attempt that is a first thrust at a new project, art without a reference draft to glance towards, that is where the richness of creativity might be truly bound.

References

1. [↑](#) Brassai (Also known as Gyula Halasz). (1967). *Picasso & Co.*. Thames & Hudson, London.