

8 Clicks from Summer 2026

A BLOG FROM NOWHERE ANTHOLOGY

Brad Salomons

8 Clicks from Nowhere Productions

8 Clicks from Summer 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.

Summer Words

I came up with the idea of writing about inspiration and personal creativity deep in the middle of winter. Around here, in the middle of nowhere, our winters are brutally cold and filled with short days, long nights, and a lot of time indoors avoiding the whole mess of weather.

It's easy to find hours upon hours to write when the world is like that.

Summer was a whole other beast. The temptation to be outside exploring the world, setting up in the park or the beside a view and sketch or paint or make music or, really, do anything but write navel-gazing essays about creativity... well that's a strong temptation.

I've compiled all my writing from the summer of 2026 into this anthology for that reason. It is the first time I'm trying it, but I'm trying it because I think there might be something bigger to be found among the sixty-seven odd posts that are strung together. They were all written despite that aforementioned temptation and represent me not just fighting the urge to do something simpler outdoors, but they represent the third season of this project and a kind of hitting of a stride in the identity of the same.

Enjoy.

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.

Insta Warrior

June 24, 2026



I just opened up the app and counted: as of this writing I have eight active accounts on Instagram.

Each of them is unique.

Each of them is maintained.

None of them are popular.

Look, I am not some kind of dabbling influencer wannabe, just so we're clear on that point.

I just see it as a tool for expression. It is a blank wall upon which to scrawl the products of my art, as tempting as a passing train car might be to a graffiti artist with a backpack full of fresh spray paint.

It is there, so I use it.

My most recent work on the platform has been me posting monochromatic photos: I only upload black and white pics that I've captured, from textures and abstract shadowy artsy-fartsy illusions to simple monotone landscape shots from my wandering adventures.

It is not meant to build a following or create a brand or generate an audience or—forbid—become a revenue source. It is nothing more than a creative outlet that caught my inspiration one rainy spring day and has grown the barest semblance of metaphorical legs that has kept it going for a couple months (so far).

Art is expression.

Art is filling blank spaces with humanity.

Art is using the tools that are right in front of you to spread a bit of joy, drive a taste of curiosity, and cast a feeling out into the universe without knowing what the result might be—if any at all.

It is the silent warrior.

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Voice Work

June 26, 2026



I broke and I bought a new action camera.

I'll spare too many details, but the short version is that I've been meaning to upgrade for a while and we have three travel adventures planned over the next year, not to mention a long list of local walking and running adventures, and I've been craving having a (reliable) camera back in my hands for action videography. Long story short, I splurged and... well... new toy.

One of the upgrades from my decade-old model tho piqued my curiosity: the new one has a front facing screen intended, as I am given to understand, for video blogging selfie-style recording.

Ugh—was my first thought. I'm not very good at that.

Hmmm—was my second thought: maybe that's actually a skill I should try to learn.

New camera, new approach, new skill. And oh look! I have this place where I write and post about just that sort of thing: honing creative skills.

Not everyone has a voice for video. Not everyone has a confidence for turning the camera on oneself and hitting record. And heck, I would be the poster model for those two hesitations and probably a long list of others I haven't even considered.

Maybe it's time to remedy that.

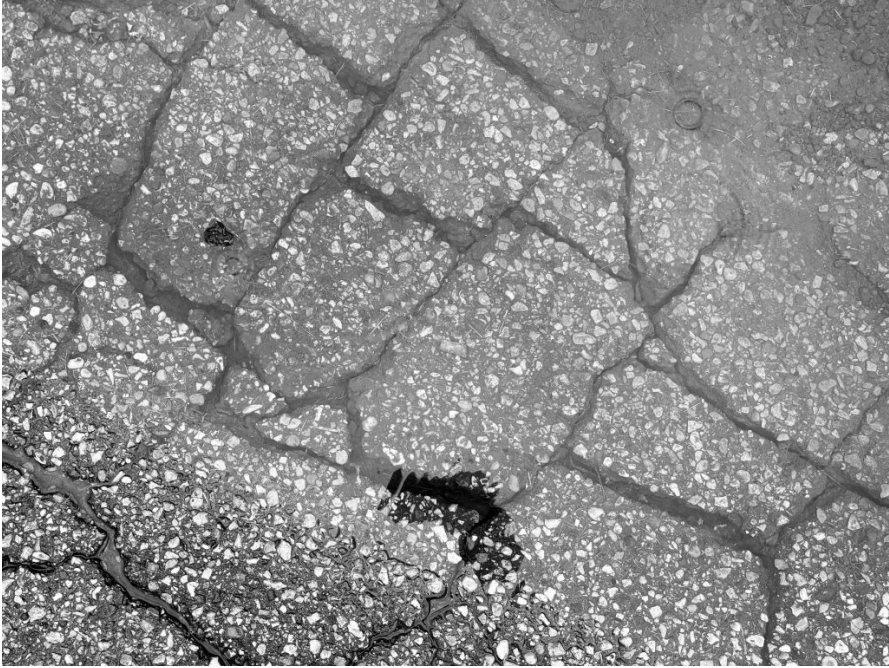
Maybe.

Or maybe I'll just take some good running videos.

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Saxo Phone

July 29, 2026



I remember the day in the sixth grade when the band teacher from the junior high school came to our elementary school and assigned instruments: I was rocked to find out I got to learn to play the alto saxophone. I don't know how I landed it. It was the coveted beast of the band, and I had rolled a Natural 20.

That was, hot damn! Forty years ago!

I still have my original saxophone. It's not a high quality instrument by any means, a simple student model Yamaha, but it's my first and only. I've replaced the corks over the years and bought a new mouthpiece (apparently they go sour, who knew?) and it has (sadly) sat in a corner in the house idle for a very long time: decades.

I tell people in my orchestra (where I play the violin) that the saxophone was a stepping stone for my amateur musical career: I could read treble clef so I only needed to learn the instrument when I took up violin at forty, not learn to read music, too.

It's mostly the truth.

As it was my experiences during that era—in band and junior high school and keeping up with the practice required and a long list of other tween drama—soured me long before my mouthpiece went bad. It was a kind of low grade creative trauma and avoidance, and the thought of performing as a saxophonist has left me thinking I must harbour some residual subconscious vibes of aversion and recoil.

Even so, something compelled me the other day to pull the saxophone out of its case and ensure it was still playable.

It needed a new neck strap, but otherwise (and to my surprise) together we could still make a few reasonable tunes emerge from this brass-hued beast.

I don't think I'm getting the band back together, but maybe I'll keep a reed at the ready in case I decide to jazz up some musical therapy in my basement.

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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.

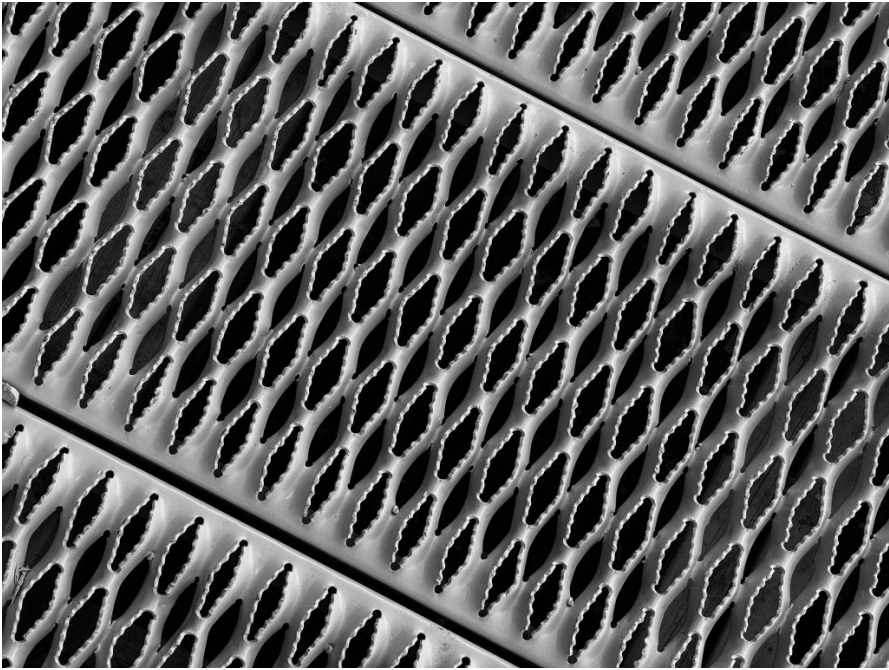
All that is to say, that when I've been playing bass heavy instruments on my MIDI controller and the speaker is on the desk the whole thing rumbles with a tactile joy that brings the music to life from and then right back through my fingertips.

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.

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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 motiva-

tion 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 purg-

ing the pain of viewing it from ours 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 recycle 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. Blogging itself is not cool, but entertaining and informing people in a meaningful way via a blog might be.

Pride

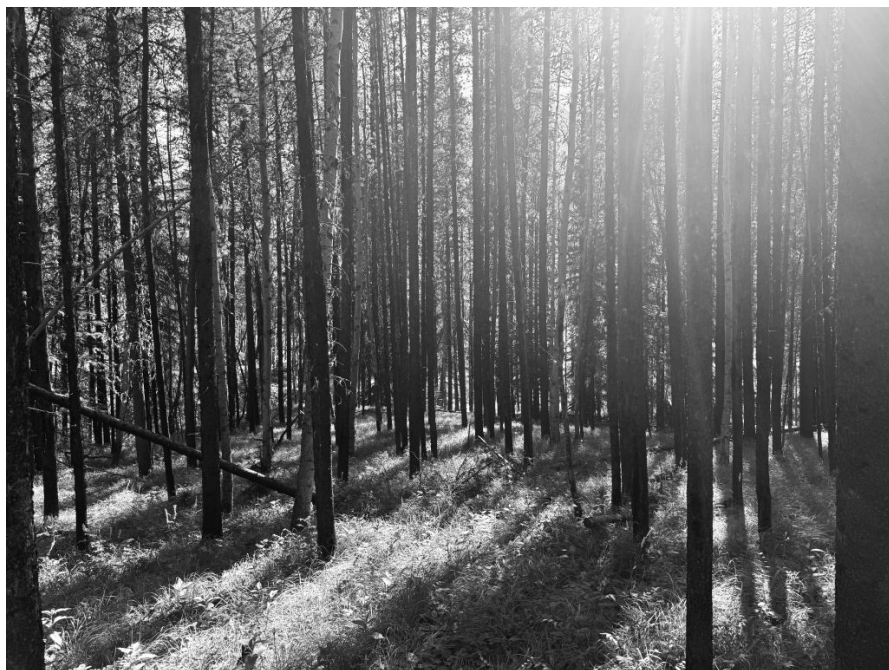
"What! Only five hundred hits this year?" And four hundred and ninety of them are likely your own clicks. No one cares what you have to say. No one cares, even if what you are writing is wise and insightful. No one cares what you thought of that movie. No one cares that you ate pizza for dinner in April 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.

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.

November Novel

July 9, 2026



It may be July as I write this, but that's just all the more reason to wonder why I can't seem to crack the secret writing formula that four times pushed me to write a complete novel in one month.

For something like twenty years there was an online challenge called NaNoWriMo, or National Novel Writing Month (poorly named because it was really a borderless event, little ole me here in Canada participating). A bunch of scandals^[1] left the organization which was behind the event-proper now but a footnote creative history. Yet those of us millions who participated while it was still in good standing are left with memories... and in my own case, a small stack of unedited, mediocre novel manuscripts.

Controversy aside, something about the urgency of a deadline broke the procrastination hold that I all-too-often find myself tethered by and... well, simply, productivity resulted.

It is a fallacy of a sort, this whole writer's block thing.

When pushed by something as simple as a pretend, arbitrary deadline, I found that I was suddenly able to crank out thousands of words of coherent fiction every day for an entire month.

Secret writing formula? Or another lie I tell myself when I sit at the keyboard that needs to be pushed aside so that the productive side of creativity can happen?

References

1. [↑] Unknown. (2025). Nanoscandal. <http://nanoscandal.com>.

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Hard Numbers

July 15, 2026



Here's the thing about a job that many people overlook: everything ultimately needs to lead back to some kind of measurable, fungible value. Ah capitalism, you nasty freak.

I managed a team of web developers for half a decade and as manager I had a lot of tasks—but not the least of these (and in fact arguably one of the most consistent and time consuming of these) was tracking metrics.

I had to put numbers to productivity. I had to match quantifiable costs against measured returns, make graphs of employee time spent per tasks, public page interactions, project cost recovery models, marketing investment return projections. Everything had to to be tracked,

measured, plotted, and understood.

Now that I've been create something of my own, for the sake of art, it has been too easy to fall into this same trap: measuring word counts, tracking web stats and search engine placements, allocating resources to audience building and working to balance effort with return based on numbers, even if some of those numbers are only tracked in my head.

When your profession and passion collide, what is there to do?

How do you stand arms length from the quantifiable measures of your art, words, and music as demanded by the professional side of the craft—often inseparable and important—and yet still find the mental space to think of it as a qualitative act measured in vibes and feels and beauty?

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Professional Games

July 21, 2026



In early 2025 I founded a game studio.

Sounds impressive, no? In a way it is like any other clever idea: you give an idea a name and send it off in a direction and it becomes important and meaningful. It becomes work.

Why did I found a game studio?

Because I write code. My profession for two decades has involved technology and systems and building things on computers. The gaming industry may seem lighthearted and playful, but at the end of the day games are just more code (and art and music and databases and stories) built inside of a computer.

I spent the next five months working on the soul and systems of a simulation-meets-cozy style game and pushing it through various iterations of functionality until I was actually able to load it onto one of those handheld gaming PCs and sit on the couch playing my buggy (but functional) game.

It's now mid-2026 as I write this and the game development has been stalled for about a year. I've poked at it. Prodded it. Added tiny nudges to the system. But stalled, really.

I bring it up here because it comes to mind when I think of the idea I'm trying to get across in this chapter of the blog: creativity isn't just a whim. It can be work and a product and an invention that may someday wind up in a store being sold to people who would pay for it.

And on days that I'm being particularly honest I think I would tell you that the game development didn't stall for lack of time or motivation or direction. It probably stalled because the profession that morphed in a newfound passion quietly transformed back into a profession when I wasn't looking. And it took me a few months to get my head around that idea.

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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.

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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.

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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.

People Places

June 22, 2026



I am writing this from within the abyss of the political dark ages of the mid twenty-twenties.

Nationalism is in a kind of haphazard resurgence. The media is faltering. Artificial intelligence is clouding the internet with a seemingly unlimited supply of slop and misinformation.

It is dire.

And artists have this important role to play: continuing to make stuff despite the inanity.

Despite wars. Despite clashing cultures. Despite self-dealing politicians. Despite generative algorithms pumping out dead-on-arrival content.

And to top it all of, half of the people that could read this will discount it as the words of a man sitting across on the other side of a funhouse mirror making up a reality they disagree with. We can't even see eye to eye on that anymore.

Culture is opinion. Opinion is truth. And truth (whatever that might be) has always shaped the stories we tell through our words, sounds, music, and art.

I write this very blog in competition with countless algorithms that will fight to ensure it only get seen if it generates money for a shareholder somewhere, profit for a corporate bottom line, or revenue for someone who is probably not me.

We are humans caught up in a system and we are treading water in a creative torrent that we can barely understand. The abyss is below. The sky is above—so long as we can keep our heads above the flow of society.

Under the category of People & Places, I'll be writing more on this top-

ic as the months wear on.

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Science Politics

June 29, 2026



I spent four of my years of post-secondary education studying for (and receiving) a bachelors degree in biological sciences. I studied molecular biology, genetics, and a bit of ecology, cellular biology, botany, and entomology blurred into that mix.

I got a job doing computer stuff and never really looked back.

But you don't spend four intensive years studying the methods and tools of science without it changing how you look at the world. And it definitely changed how I look at the world.

Now I find myself right here... and in this moment: we exist in this highly charged political time, a time when truth and reality are constantly being questioned.

One half of my very soul and identity often seem political and running against the grain of the populist movements that shape our news each day.

I figure I could choose to reject it, go against all that I know and understand, or I can do what I've always done and embrace it—use it as the backbone to what I make, how I engage with the other half of my soul and identity: the creative artistic writer guy.

Here I am. Take it or leave it.

Science, rational evidence-based thought, and critical thinking are part of who I am, what I make and how I engage with both sides of my personality.

Under the category of Science & Politics, I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Unworthy Comparisons

June 30, 2026



Don't ever let me hear you say that what you are about to write... and then post ...and then share is "not worth it" or doesn't measure up.

Do let me remind you what passes for *paid for* media these days. I opened up my news app this morning before I wrote this and here is a selection of some of the more absurd articles I saw in my "top news" list, and again... I pay for this feed.

There was a celebrity gossip story explaining that such and such a celebrity had posted an image of herself on Instagram. The article re-capped the insta post. That was it. That was the article.

There was an article explaining how to use a kitchen drawer, including an explanation of stacking objects inside so that they didn't tip over or

misbalance the cabinet. That's it. That was the article.

There was an ordered list of the best foods on the Costco menu. There are only about ten things on the Costco menu and "best" is, of course, at best a subjective measure of anything. That's it. That was the article.

We judge ourselves far too much and too often self-censor because we think we can't stand up to the yardstick of social validation.

But just write what you want to write.

Tell the story that is important to you.

Don't compare yourself to the rest of the world because often the world is often too absurd and basic—too unworthy—to bother comparing with.

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Social Community

July 6, 2026



We've been watching one of those reality competition shows where a group of artists in an eclectic field are brought together to participate in a multi-episode grind where every nuance of their niche artistic talents are tested.

You've seen these: glass blowers, knife forgers, puppet makers, miniature modellers. The formula is usually the same: artists, judges, tears and hugs.

Yet I've often found the particulars of the art itself are less interesting than the side effect of bringing together a group of people with a shared interest. As much as the production demands of the show oft only glimpse at it, a keen eye can often spot that these people some-

times seem more torn about losing and being cast off one at a time per episode not because of the money, but because they are being torn out of a community.

Social media is a pale substitute to gathering with your artistic peers, I would argue. It can help find your tribe, sure, but there is something irreplaceable about the collaborative energy of a crowd and the erasure of the usual loneliness of a being a creative soul.

Not everyone need apply for the next reality television production, but seeking and nurturing an artistic social life is arguably almost as important as learning and practicing one's art.

Under the category of Social & Community, I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Reality Thirst

July 7, 2026



As insurmountable as the social media algorithms often seem to me, occasionally I break through for a few moments and sense the craving beyond.

I started taking a lot of black and white photographs lately. If you are reading this post where I published it, on my blog, you may have noticed that each is accompanied by an often-unrelated black and white image. There is nothing particularly secret or hidden in the connection: I just like taking photos and was using the effort of writing here as a place to showcase some of my other (very human) work.

As I was taking all these photos it occurred to me that I should be sharing them with others besides the handful of readers on this (very new

and very obscure) blog project: so I started a fresh Instagram account, gave it a silly name, and started uploading monochrome pics, including many of the ones you can see at the top of these posts.

Viral is the wrong word.

But there was certainly a gush of unprovoked interest in my photos.

Raw. Simple. Often just fuzzy macros of textures from my yard and neighbourhood, these pics are not works of art. But neither are they slop. They are intentional snaps and observations collected from micro-adventures by yours truly.

And people flocked, are flocking, seem to be continuing to flock to follow and like and comment on those pictures.

It was a side effort that spun off from the main effort that has become orders of magnitude more public than the original.

People, it seems, are craving, yearning, thirsting for something real and interesting.

This post was original posted on of poets & processors.

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Pitch Brand

July 13, 2026



I'm pretty sure I once missed out on an interesting job opportunity because my head froze up when the interviewer asked me if I could make his social media profile go viral.

What does that even mean?

I mean... I get it. He wanted a million followers. He wanted to be influential. Fame. Adoration. Social capital. He wanted to be known and heard with a notification tab that needed to be silenced lest it wake the neighbourhood.

To me, the shy auteur and guy who values meaningful connection and measured interaction with real people, I found myself floundered by the question that came out of nowhere in the middle of a seemingly av-

erage job interview.

They keep telling us we live in the digital era, but I often think they've got it wrong. We live in the influencer era: social media has invaded every aspect of every layer of our lives and we have all become no less than personal brands who spend the day crafting illusions of our lives to share into those spaces. Even choosing to not participate becomes a meaningful action, one that defines a person and commodifies their social footprint.

Personally... I loathe it.

But it is inescapable and pervasive—and the reality of our times.

What's a creative soul to do but figure out how to not get swept up in the digital river and washed away by the social networks.

Under the category of Pitch & Brand, I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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Story Mistelling

July 14, 2026



Beloved vlogbrother, Hank Green, has made or otherwise alluded to the point in a few videos^[1] over the last couple years that sometimes the story is more interesting than the truth.

Compounding this as an actual issue is that some people value the story—or the value of the story as a political tool, say—more than they value the truth.

In other words: some people lie and invent stories to serve their own ends. Uh, no kidding, huh?

I have written about storytelling on this site a disproportionate amount. I am planning on typing the word “storytelling” at least a few hundred more times before I stop posting here.

So, it makes me wonder: have we reached a pivotal point in history where the art of telling stories is intertwined too dramatically and damningly to think of it anything other than as the dark side of the equation: is storytelling a tool for manipulation, lies, and propaganda?

Well, yeah. Obviously.

Though I don't think Green's point was meant to be taken as a call to abandon the ship of human tales and interesting fiction. Instead, it was a call to vigilance.

After all, I could theoretically bop someone on a head with the hammer and thus use it for dark deeds. I could also fix my fence with the same tool. The former use case does not mean we need to ban hammers. It means that we should teach ourselves and our children to be wary of people who bring hammers into places where hammers are not meant to be.

In the same way we should teach ourselves and our children to be wary of fiction and stories implanted into places where they are not meant to be: politics, science, medicine, and more.

Keep telling stories, of course.

References

1. [↑](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W92bjv8fNTI) Green, Hank. (2024). I Believed These Four Lies. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W92bjv8fNTI>.

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Past Present

July 20, 2026



Over and over I stumble across advice for creativity. Heck, it's the basis of this blog, isn't it? Here's what has worked for me, for others, for everyone else in the past, present and certainly will do in the future, too.

Right?

And the smart money, the guy who wants this site to be successful and to captivate you and to hold your attention would tell you that there are answers buried inside if you read deeply enough.

The honest guy would tell you that creativity is just like any other job. You get out what you put in, and the effort pays off when you do the work.

The fuzzy spaces between, though, are filled with an endless doubting void that slurps up every bit of advice, superstition, ritual, inspiration, and randomness distilled from the universe as possible.

I'm just the guy sitting here telling you to embrace that uncertainty.

Look at the advice.

But also find your own way.

Do the work.

But embrace the chaos.

Dig into ideas that shift your mind, body, and soul to new perspectives.

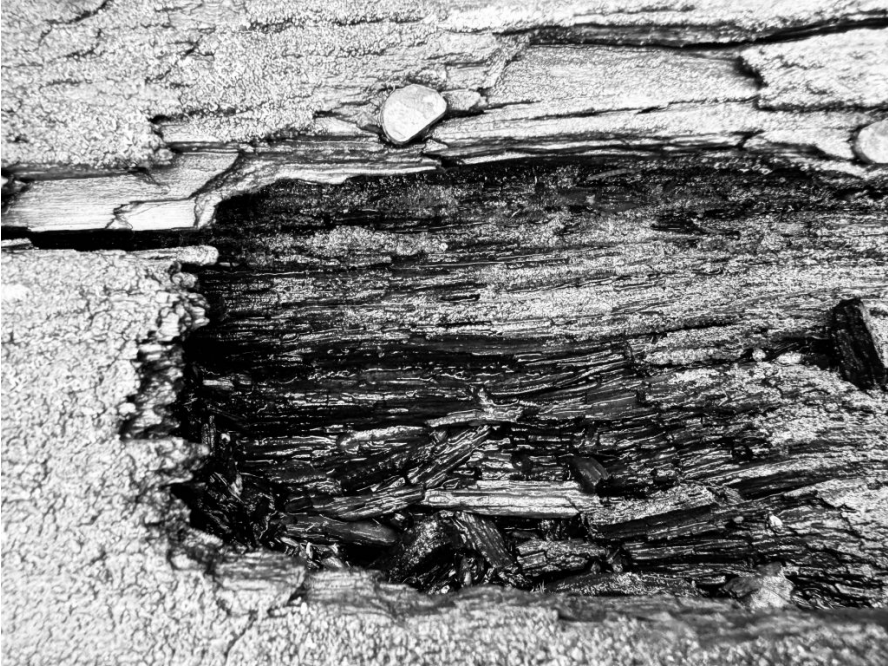
But ride the efforts of a billion people who have gone this way before you.

Under the category of Past & Present, I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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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.

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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:

A encrypted sighting near the parking garage sends a time-displaced soldier racing to infiltrate the truth before it vanishes.

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.

Afternoon Nap

July 8, 2026



Maybe it's getting older (or maybe it's because I gave up caffeine six

months ago) but I find my batteries drain shortly after lunch and a thirty minute nap is in order.

I admit it. I'm going to be fifty this year. Yikes.

(Not that you couldn't tell from guy still writing a blog in twenty-twenty six, but I ain't a teenager anymore.)

I spend a good chunk of my mornings working on creative brain work, getting the important stuff off my plate, and being all professional.

Then I eat a (usually) healthy lunch.

And by one-thirty. Ugh. It's all I can do to keep my eyes open. If life allows, I'll close the lid of the computer and close my eyes, too.

I suppose it's a universal truth of a sort, but if you can swing a nap to recharge your batteries in the middle of the day then do it. Don't be ashamed. Don't begrudge the sleepyheads. Don't frown at someone who can use an extra half hour of rest.

Sleep is not wasted time. It is how our brains rejuvenate.

I always knew I'd get older some day. Heck, as they say, aging is a privilege and a monument to surviving this crazy universe. And if I can experience it a little more clearly after a few extra winks then all the better, right?

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Trek Blurbs

July 10, 2026



Back in grade school I had a million ideas, and no filter.

Of course, following through on any of them was not my strongest suit. After all, I was in class all day and doing extra curricular activities in the evening and, heck, those computer games were not going to play themselves.

But I do recall something that I did with a kind of dedicated passion: I wrote *Star Trek* blurbs.

See, my friends and I (gasp, you're shocked I can tell) were very much nerds. Such nerds were we, in fact, that our lunch hour passion was discussing the detailed nuances of *Star Trek: the Next Generation* episodes (which at the time were freshly aired on television.)

One of the ways I took this a step further than my friends was to pull out a blank sheet of paper, sketch the *Star Trek* logo on the top half of the page, and then write a one hundred-ish word plot outline for a dream episode of my own creation.

I admit now, those plots I wrote were pretty derivative and simplistic, but over the course of a couple years of school I made about thirty, brought them to show my friends, and dreamed of sending them into the writing staff for the obvious fame and fortune that such an effort would bestow.

I never actually wrote an episode (nor have I since done anything in the realm of fan fiction, for anything) but I can't help but be struck now, nearly forty years later, by the raw enthusiasm of kiddo-me not giving a single whiff about what others thought and the joy such a creative pursuit brought me.

Oh, to be fourteen again, huh?

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Memory Waned

July 16, 2026



If I ever need a better reminder that age plays nasty tricks on us all (oh, and that I should keep a notebook or my notes app with me at all times) is sitting here for five minutes trying to trigger the second half of a lost memory.

I remember that last night I had a great idea for an article, but this morning sitting here to write said article I can't remember a thing about it.

Is that getting older, or just bad idea management overall?

I think we all probably encounter empty places where we thought we left our creative car keys the night before, and maybe such as it was in my youth I'm just more frustrated by this thinking organ in my skull

that I feel like I should have more control over as I approach fifty.

Online analysts will tell you that technology has allowed us to offload our memories to external devices and this has made the tools in our brains dull and fragile. On the other hand, there's nothing wrong with leaning into a notebook to keep track of fleeting ideas when you don't have time or inclination to open the laptop and immediately start working on them.

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Young Restless

July 27, 2026



I made the mistake of asking an AI chatbot for motivation the other day.

When one leans into these sorts of modern tools for creative inspiration it is helpful to remember that they are the strangest sorts of things often juxtaposing unearned flattery with inhumanly blunt criticism. Grain of salt on standby.

My curiosity was with a very human problem for which I knew the answer but I figured an all-knowing resource-consuming generative search tool might come up with something unique to say: why do I so often run out of steam on new projects?

The joys of starting a new hobby, tackling a new challenge, or learn-

ing a new skill are often gloriously rewarding.

And when we were young, damn, everything was new and interesting.

I'm wheeling in on fifty this year and I find that the joy of newness is not only something I crave, but an energy and vibe that tanks like a bad metaphor with the lifespan of an ice cream treat in the sunshine.

The AI knew why just as well as I did: some mix of psychology and endorphins and reward stimuli in the primal parts of my woefully organic brain.

Fixing the issue is a bigger challenge than just asking a bot, though, and I think it might help to spend some time getting my own very human brain around the problem.

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

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Undramatic Scapes

July 30, 2026



We recently spent a week in the mountains. We hiked. We camped. We stood admiring broad vistas of indescribable beauty and grandiosity.

I took a lot of photos.

No really: a lot of photos.

And mixed in among the obvious well-metered shots of the mountain landscapes and epic sunsets, colourful wildflowers, and happenstance wildlife encounters, I also made sure that I took a lot of photos of the mundane.

I snapped shots of leaves, and moss and bark.

I aimed my camera at interesting shadows.

I photographed light pressing between cluttered stands of trees.

I zoomed in on interesting textures in the stone and boulders and cliffs.

I even stuck a camera into a gushing mountain stream and took images of the bubbles tracing over the rocks.

While the other tourists were standing with their camera pointed out at the obvious vistas, I was the weird guy who did the same and then went to pointing it at the vegetation or the rocks, too.

I have hinted previously at the value of finding beauty in the less obvious, and that story comes from seeing that beauty where others often forget to look for it... because none of those photos were unconscious or happenstance. I went there seeking to find an uncommon perspective. Sure, some of it is far less dramatic than the monumental curves of a world class mountain range, but I might also argue that it's no less interesting or important.

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Exist Deny

August 3, 2026



When I was in middle school I would have told you with absolute conviction 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.

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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 resistance: 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.

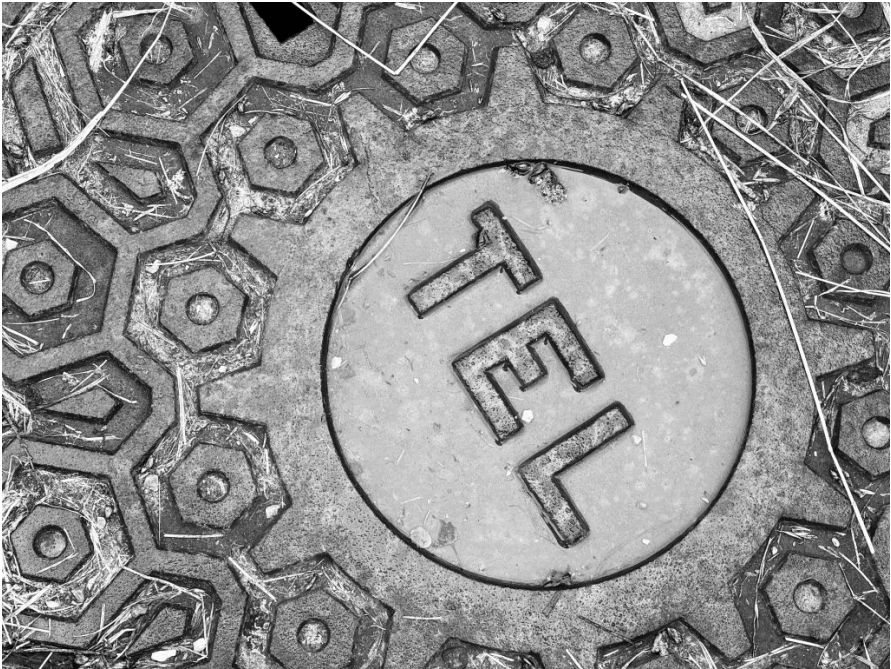
I'm overthinking it, of course. Because that's the trap.

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.

Selfie Guy

July 2, 2026



I took a walk with my new camera.

I wrote about this about a week ago, having just bought a new action camera (an upgrade from the three similar models I've owned over the last decade and a half) I decided to give my vocal chops a test drive.

So, I took a walk with my new camera. And the dog. And the rain. And a glowing mindset of finding a quiet place to make a selfie-video.

I'm not sure if that's the right term. I spun the camera around to face myself and tried to do some vocal word-craft based on a fifty word point form script I put together on my phone, doing my darnedest to record a coherent vlog-like video and do something I've never really done before: spin the camera around and put my face in the lens and not the viewfinder.

A runner ran by once and gave me a sidelong glance.

The path emerged from the woods alongside a freeway exit ramp and at least half a dozen guys each in their F150s turned their heads ninety degrees to offer a lingering stare at the dude and his selfie-stick so obviously talking to the camera.

It's a vulnerable thing this: becoming the performer in a one man production crew in your own neighbourhood when you've never done this sort of thing.

I had been planning to make a whole series about this effort, but the time commitments of recording one of these every week, editing them, and then trying to write knowledgeably on the effort punched me in the face harder than if one of those truck dudes had pulled off to the side of the road to do it for me.

Expertise is earned. I get that. But I think I may need to force this effort a little less.

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Monochrome Me

July 3, 2026



A month into a photo project that is forcing me to post more black and white photography left me pondering an important question about the niche: what is so great about monochromatic images?

I tried to wing this to the camera. I turned the camera on my own face (to practice some of that voice work on camera thing I've been doing) and attempted to talk about light and shadow and tonality and contrasting subjects, all of it in a meaningful way that didn't make me sound like a tourist explaining that this thousand year old monument was neat-o, huh?

It occurred to me half way through filming that while, yeah, I love the vibe of black and white photography, what has been captivating me

about it as a photographer lately is that it is a kind of simple constraint.

As I wander through my fourth decade of photographic hobbyism I find myself wrestling with a paradox: I could go buy more expensive equipment, travel to interesting places, and photograph amazing sights with pixel perfect clarity—like everyone else.

Or I can find a voice of my own.

I can try to stand out for my own style.

Try to tell my own story.

Try to to turn the camera into something more than a photocopier for the instagram top ten list of popular photo subjects and instead shape it into a mirror for me.

And it isn't (just) about the black and white.

No.

Rather, it's about shaping the experience with the camera, locking in the effort to a set theme, or sticking with a single lens for a span of time, or putting the camera into monochrome mode and... and... AND... finding constraints that challenge me to break out of the perfectionism trap.

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Explain Yourself

July 17, 2026



Anyone who is not a sociopath is probably, eventually going to discover the need to explain themselves to someone. This isn't a weakness. It's a social legacy reality.

We all make stuff.

Maybe you're not an artist or a writer or a musician, as I write about those things here, but you might prepare food, manage money, build roads, fight for justice, heal the sick—or any of countless other jobs—and each of those things the pursuit against the entropy of the universe. It is making order out of the slide into chaos.

And if you are doing any of this making, eventually, probably, likely someone will ask you why you have made the things you have made.

Why? Why did you spend your time on this planet, in this life, doing this thing and making what you made? Why this?

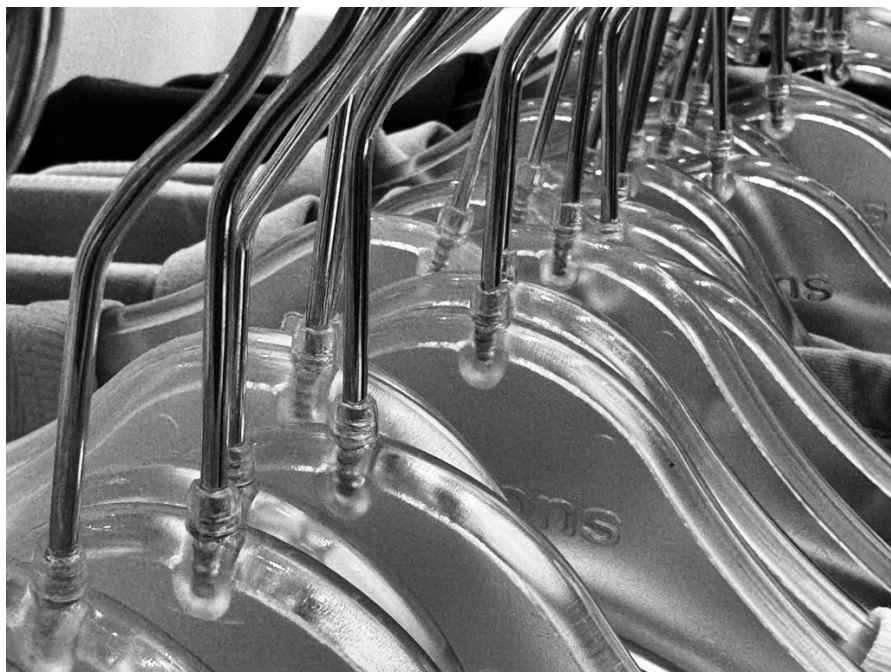
It would be easy to mistake this for a requisite justification of our lives, rather than for what I think it is: the realization by all of us on the side asking the question: that what makes us humans is looking into the heart of someone else's passions and seeking to understand.

So. If someone asks you don't flinch and feel interrogated. Explain yourself. Share your soul. Spread your love of that thing you do.

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Polka Truths

July 24, 2026



If I was asked to cobble together a top ten list of my deepest and strangest creative influences, leaders of thought and individuality, curiosity and cleverness, people who have evoked the best from my introspective heart, near the very top of that list would surely be “Weird Al” Yankovic.

My *first* interaction with the parody artist was when I bought “Dare to be Stupid”^[1] on cassette tape while in grade school, the first album I ever bought with my own money, and I wore that darn thing out listening to it and memorizing every song.

My *latest* interaction with the musician was just last week when I bought tickets to his touring show, one for me and one for my daugh-

ter, which is coming to my city later this year. It'll be the first time in my forty years as a fan that I'll see him perform live.

And that's the thing, isn't it. Forty-plus years (nearly fifty, to be more precise) of making music and entertaining a loyal fanbase is nothing to shirk at, but it also represents a span of time lacking scandal or public outrage, all while being something completely unorthodox in time, space, music, and commercially-bankable content.

And it all really occurred to me as I was walking this morning, having loaded a few classics onto the playlist of my phone: If there was ever a model upon which to look with awe and reverence for what it means to be a truly creative soul, how can we not count Mr. Yankovic as a paragon?

Dare to be stupid, indeed.

That's the real truth some of us are looking for.

References

1. [↑](#) Yankovic, "Weird Al". (1985). Dare to Be Stupid.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dare_to_Be_Stupid.

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Summer Synth

July 28, 2026



What does summer sound like?

Oh sure, it seems obvious—ice cream trucks, and birds chirping in the trees, Vivaldi symphonies and sunshine bouncing off the asphalt—but I was sitting in the park recently and I had brought along my synth.

Remember my synth? About a year and a half ago I bought an Arturia Microfreak digital synthesizer (not a sponsored mention, by the way) which at about the size of a laptop computer has twenty-five solid state keys and about thirty knobs & buttons for tweaking and tuning the sound envelope. It is not a keyboard or a piano, but rather a proper (albeit budget) synthesizer with powerful shaping tools, a ma-

trix-based sound design engine, an LFO, arpeggiator, sequencer and—oh, the list goes on. It's also pretty portable, so I can pop it in a backpack with a battery pack and some headphones and—yeah—go sit in the park and play music.

I have about four hundred patches loaded into the memory banks, presets for interesting sound patterns and pads and leads and bass effects and even all variety of cosmic sound effects.

I thought it would be easy to find a summery sound.

Because I was, as mentioned, sitting there in the park with my synth and my headphones and making music for no one but myself and I wanted a summery vibe.

Synths, and perhaps this was merely a factor of my synth and how I had it configured, seem very wintry: echoey and airy wisps of noise, hulking bass tones, crackling shivers, and creaking sine waves. I tuned through my options, scrolling the knob and seeking something with mood that matched the sun and the grass and the mosquitos flitting about in the same and I struggled.

A tinkling piano sound, a ringing lead that evoked a steel drum, or the croaking higher octaves of a patch named after a frog—I was close.

Summer was all around, but I couldn't put my finger on something that fit. What does summer sound like, after all?

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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.

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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 payed 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.

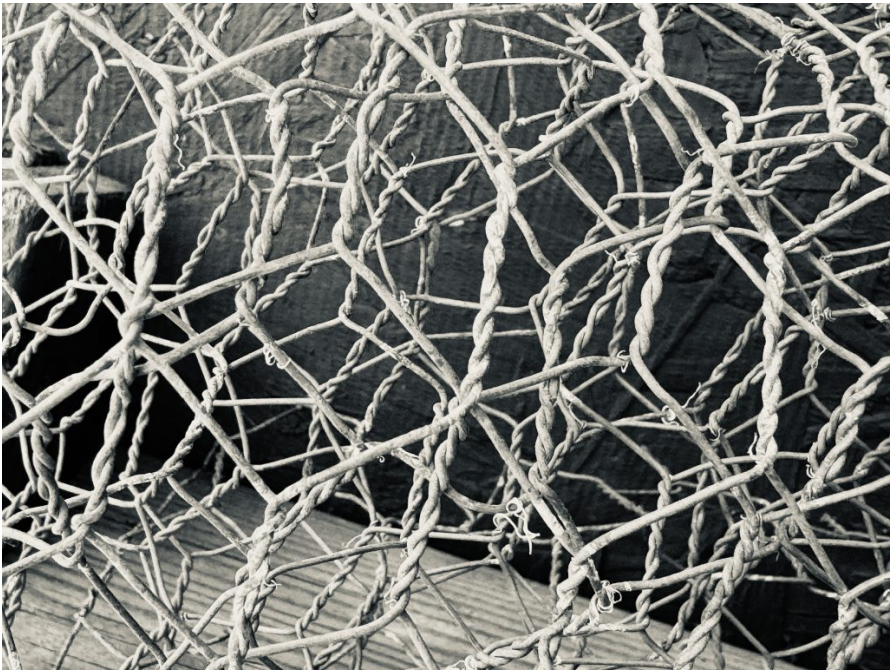
Under the category of Pomp & Popularity I'll be writing more on this topic as the months wear on.

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.

Advice Less

June 23, 2026



You may have found this blog project and be thinking that I've made a

terrible mistake.

There's not really much advice here, you might be thinking.

You're not wrong, but you're not right.

This was never intended to be a manual about being a creative person. No. Not at all. It was meant to be a collection of thoughts on the accidental nature of creativity. I have no solid advice. I have no lists of skills to check off on your way towards success. I have no morals or lessons or cautionary tales with polished insights at the end.

This is a fumbling, imperfect exercise in abstraction. It is an daily exercise in being lost on a path that is as much about the journey as it is about a destination. Imperfection is the goal.

You want a lesson?

Fail more. Because it means you tried something and maybe learned.

Embrace different. Because it might be the only way to stand out in a crowd.

Close your eyes and ignore all the other advice. Because copying is what machines do and the humanity of creativity is something that might not be teachable so much as felt, gleaned, experienced, caught, or whatever.

You're not wrong. There isn't much advice here, just a few notes from the last guy to wander this path and never really find his way out.

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Morning Person

June 25, 2026



It's nearly 8pm as I write this and I'm stumped.

I do almost all my writing for this project in the mornings. I get a hot mug of tea, I set up in a quiet-ish place, I open up my word processing software, and I just start writing.

It's nearly 8pm as I write this and my family is out for the evening leaving me alone with a quiet house, no obligations, and drizzling bit of cozy weather outside. One would think I'd be up to my elbows in motivation, huh?

Instead, I'm stumped.

I'm writing about writing and how I can't find the focus to write, which

is exactly what writers do when they can't find the motivation or inspiration to write what they are supposed to be writing. Ugh! Writers.

Lucky for me I have a whole blog about this sort of thing.

One set of advice will tell you (and I strongly agree) to treat creativity as a job. Sit down. Make the conditions. Get it done. Excuses are people who don't finish their projects.

But then—well—there is also a realistic part of me that acknowledges that productivity and progress on a project is also about knowing the conditions when you work best, having a routine, and being in the right frame of mind.

I'm a morning person.

I work best in the morning.

I'm productive in the morning.

I wrote this in the evening proving that I'm not rigidly locked to that schedule, but given the choice—well, you get the point.

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Canada Day-ish

July 1, 2026



Being Canadian means our annual celebration of national pride falls on the exact-ish half way point of the year. Where New Years Day is the first day of the year, Canada Day, July 1st, is on the first day of the second half of the year.

This year also happens to be the day when I mark the exact six month anniversary of this writing project. It's been half a year of daily-ish blog posts.

What that means for the site is that after six months of working on this project, I have accumulated one hundred and twenty-seven (plus this one) posts on some meandering thoughts on creativity and pursuing a creative-ish life.

Routine can lead to profoundly interesting things. Iteration of effort, keeping at something through incremental addition and improvements can break through the overwhelming perception of size and complexity and spark a kind of driving force that can make anyone successful-ish.

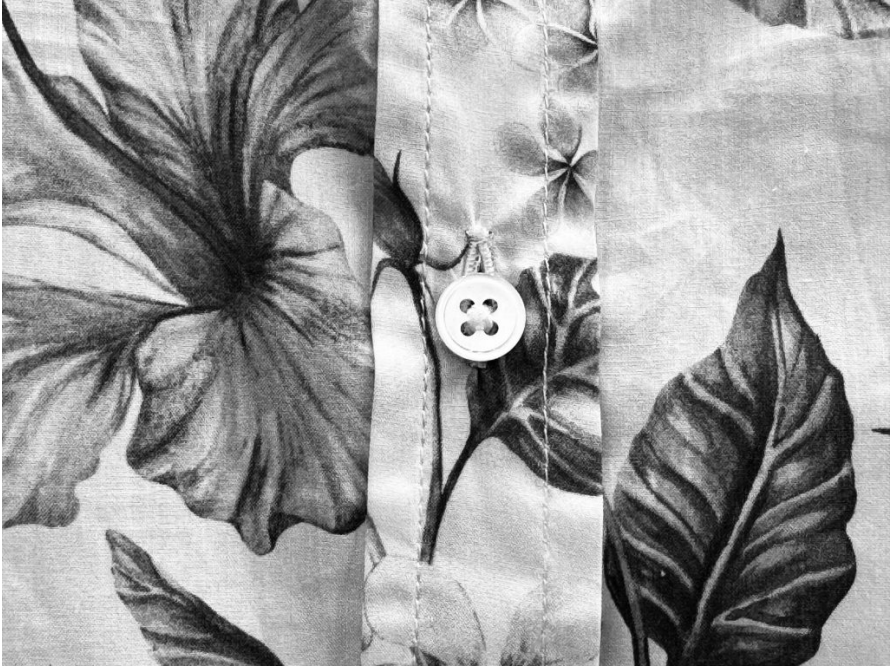
Readers may have already noted that I am an evangelist-ish for the incrementalism of things. Doing a little bit each day can simply get the work done.

And on a day like this, when I've crossed yet another milestone and keep going, posting the next post and the next and knowing that there are likely a few more in the queue even as you are reading these words, is the best I can do to show by example of what twenty minutes of writing per day can accomplish-ish.

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Proper Bookish

July 22, 2026



You'll need to excuse my excitement yet again. I'm going on holiday for most of the front half of July so I've been writing these posts nearly three weeks in advance to get a leg up on the schedule and timing... and I've just this morning (in early July) looked at the word count on this project.

It's now well over fifty thousand. A proper book.

Fifty thousand words was always the novel-length goal set out at the beginning of November when that infamous^{[1](#)} novel writing challenge took place and we all rushed to pen fifty thousand words in thirty days.

I now only point to it as a milestone.

Oh, and as a reminder about my biggest and most core bit of quasi-advice on this project: the power of iteration and incrementalism. Again, and again, and probably again I will point to these very words and just say: twenty minutes a day and a couple hundred words. It adds up.

Heck, I don't know if some random book publisher is out there trolling around looking for the next project, but hey... this needs some more organization and polish, but I've got the guts of something serious here. Don't you agree?

Okay, fine. I'll back off the self-aggrandizing and get back on topic.

Fifty thousand words of something is definitely not nothing—nor is it everything—but it is worth noting, particularly as a point about putting in the work.

I did. I am. I will. You can, too.

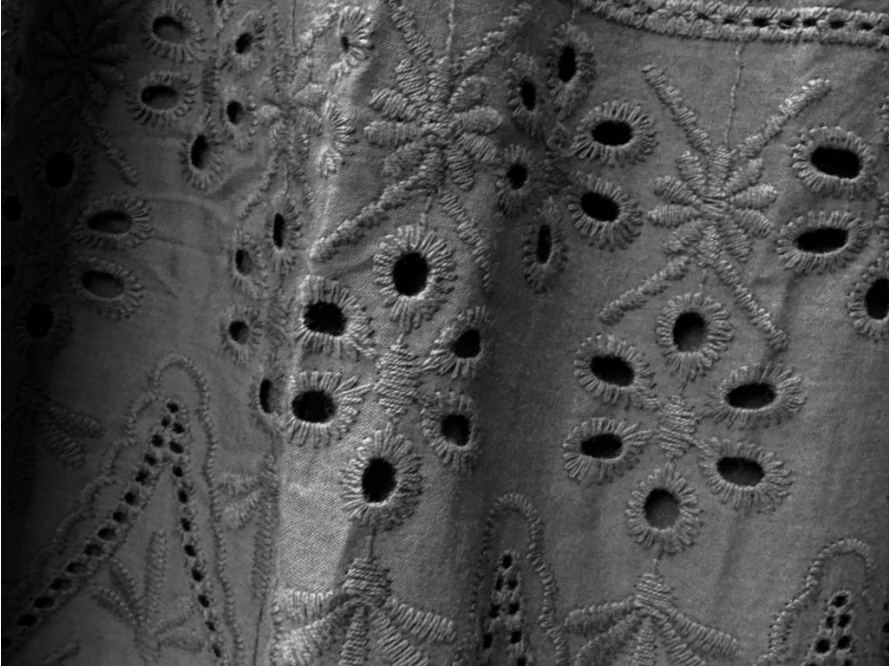
References

1. [↑](http://nanoscandal.com) Unknown. (2025). Nanoscandal. <http://nanoscandal.com>.

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Those Walls

July 23, 2026



Let me walk you through the door I found in the wall that had been blocking my path.

I spent the early part of 2025 building the foundations of a computer game. Code. Art. Story. All the bits strung together into a few megabytes of raw materials that I can compile into a simulation-slash-cozy gamer's curiosity.

But yeah. I hit a wall.

See, building a game is the work of a hundred different skillsets mingling together into just the right blend. A proper game studio would have specialists who focus on each niche skill. A proper game studio would have project managers who coordinate the timing. A proper

game studio would have deadlines nudging their team forward.

I had me.

I am not a specialist.

I am managing my own project.

My deadlines are ethereal.

So a wall, even a metaphorical one, spells trouble.

The details of said wall are not important. What is important is that walls can be impenetrable and project-ending failure points. They often are. And sometimes, often I would argue, creatives run into a wall that they don't even realize was a wall at all.

We can then do one of two things. We can give up—and that's fine. Sometimes it's the right answer. If the wall is insurmountable, spending the rest of our lives looking for a way over or through it may be a terrible idea.

On the other hand we can look for a gap, a door, a foothold to climb over, or the place where the wall has crumbled from the efforts of someone who went before and...

Well. That's what I did with my game development work.

Thus I march on, scanning the horizon for the next obstacle for surely there are many more ahead.

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Mile Stone

July 31, 2026



Once again I am going to pause and point out one of the core tenets of this blogging project: iteration and incremental work leads to interesting things.

This post not only marks the end of July and the end of seven months of regular posting here, but the one hundred and fiftieth mini-essay.

It is all that extra little bit impressive (to me, anyhow) because I also managed to take a week-long vacation where I was almost completely without usable internet for most of the trip and still managed to have set up this project to hum along without human intervention for the duration.

Blah, blah, blah, whatever—you shrug.

But here's my whole point: I do stuff like this all the time. I learn new skills, I build crazy projects. I tackle huge efforts of fitness, art, or creativity. And then people wince and say something like—well, good for you but I could never find the time or energy or motivation.

Incrementalism. That's it. One little bit at a time. One piece each day. A few words. Ten minutes of practice. Pulling your attention away from the screen in your hand and putting it onto a keyboard or a pen or a musical instrument or... whatever.

Incrementalism. It leads to works of substance and beyond.

Seven months ago I started typing a few words about the push behind creative life and at the heart of that was this silly example—which is now a blog with one hundred and fifty articles, and no plan to stop.

Golf clap. Or start something for yourself today. And tomorrow. And the day after ad naseum.

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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 trip-

ping 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.

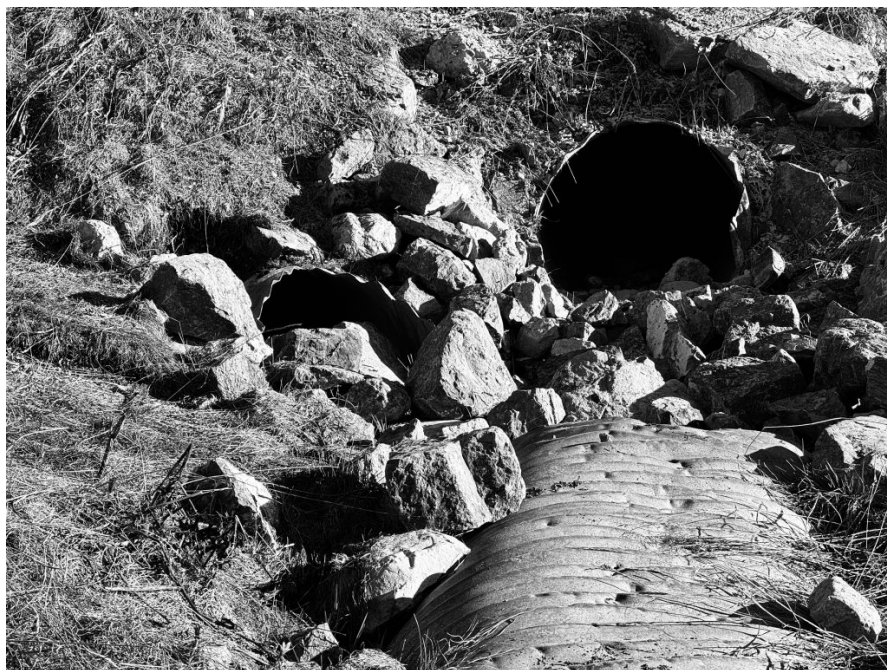
This place is full of stories, and I can reach into my own personal history dating back decades and sometimes even make sense of them.

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

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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.

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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.