

A Letter to Future Generations

“Childhood ambitions don’t make good careers.” That’s what they told me.

They told me I could just do that in my free time.

They told me it was a hobby, not a skill.

They told me it wasn’t worth anything.

They would look the other direction; divert their eyes.

“Oh.” They told me.

But what they meant to tell me, “There’s no future in that.”

But let me tell you something that they didn’t tell me.

It’s so much more than just words. It’s not just about the career. It’s not just about the money. It’s not just about your future.

It’s about what was, about what lived, about what breathed.

It’s about what will be, what should be, what could be.

What it gives to you is worth so much more than what they told me.

Let me tell you what I’ve learned; what I’ve experienced; what I’ve come to know.

It’s a fragile art, so gentle as a whisper that cracks in the wind. It’s the leaves that beckon the wind or wait to be carried away. It’s the leaves that hope to soar as wild as the air does turn.

It’s the clouds of wildflowers breaking with the wind. They all crowd to the top of the hill to be lifted off their feet. Rooted, they bleakly watch the leaves dance down below in the valley, carried off to the rhythm of the wind. This scene may be quiet and hard to find,

But let me tell you something, *the gift you have will deliver you there.*

It's the secret an artist delicately hides on the canvas between the shadow of the barren tree, crippled by age and bad fortune and the tombstone where its better years were laid to rest.

There's a secret buried there only you and I are skilled to see. On the crook of a sinister branch, twisted curiously towards the moon, reaches a seed to the most beautiful flower. Its hopes are tossed in the wind. No one knows how it got there, but only you, I, and the artist know where it's going. You are able to paint the destination vibrantly in your mind.

It's the broken heart, erupting into pieces, exploding from my chest, searching for anywhere else to be. Longing to be heard, not silenced, it falls to the page. Splattering blues, violets, fuchsias, and maroons across the page, shaping itself into words. Colors you've never seen, will never see; colors you can't describe, but damn it, you can feel them.

You feel my heart resting, exhausted. You see me at my weakest. Barely breathing, but held together by the strings of a vision. Now with your eyes, you can see that vision, too.

I laugh. Relieved to have it out of my chest. You cry. We both cry. You look everywhere for answers, because no matter what, you can't shake this feeling. It's contagious. It's poisonous. It stings, but most of all, *it's nurturing*. You want it there because you know, a feeling like this is as random as a treasure found at the bottom of the ocean. As rare as a seedling among darkness.

It's the music of your soul, pouring into the ocean. Each note, each key, each beat. Each rhythm moving along to the waves, conducted under the might of your hands. You tell it where to go, when to stop, when to pick up. Only the musician knows the song it's playing. We all hear it, but only you and I know how it feels.

What you see and feel and hear may be different, but what you know to be true is what defines your practice. Please listen to me, here's what I want you to know.

It's every smile you see, every tear you witness, every drumming rhythmic laugh you hear, every heart you touch, every heart that touches you.

Because, without the study of humanities, humanity itself would cease to exist.

Your skill may not be worth it to them, but to me it means all the world. It's important that you do it. That you use it and that you never let it go; never let it wilt; never let it stop beating.

Dear Future Generations,

Please read until you know all the answers, because I swear to you, you never will. You'll only find more questions to ask.

Never be afraid to ask them.

Please write until your fingers bruise, until your mind cripples. Satisfaction is only found by those who bleed deep shades of blues and purples.

Please keep listening. Everyone has a story to tell; every story has a lesson to be learned; every lesson has a student ready to begin again. Every student writes a story.

Never stop being a student.

When the time comes for you to speak, do it. When you don't know what to say, fall back on what you have learned.

I swear to you that the words will travel farther than the speaker.

The world may be huge, but it's never farther than an arm's stretch away. Never more than a page turn away. Never farther than a heart can reach.

Never farther than thoughts can dream.

But please, I beg of you, don't ever let their words speak louder than the ones I am telling you.

Please don't ever let their words be heavier than your pen.

Dear Future Generations,

Keep reading. Keep thinking. Keep asking. Keep writing. Keep creating. Keep listening. Keep stretching because I promise you, someday the wind will sweep you off of the top of the hill. Someday the seed will find the light it was hoping for. Someday, your heart will bleed more colors than just red onto the page.

*Dear Future Generations,
Please keep studying the humanities.*

Sincerely,
Hope for the Humanities