

July 1st, 2025- Dear Diary

Try journalling, she suggested. It could smooth out your thoughts and help to regain some control. I sigh as I write this; my well-meaning psychologist (who, for the record, has been my greatest ally and a huge support in recent years) told me yesterday that perhaps getting the worst of my feelings down on paper could help alleviate some of the conflicting thoughts competing for space in my head. So, "Dear Diary", I guess here we go...

I've recently recovered from the latest supervirus wreaking worldwide havoc.- Fairy Penguin Virus (FPV). Admittedly, as far as viruses (in my experience) are concerned, this one has been quite pleasant. Rather than losing all sense of taste and smell, my nasal passages have been assaulted constantly with a delicious chocolatey odour, and my least favourite vegetable (capsicum) suddenly tastes of the most glorious Chup-a-chup flavour you can possibly imagine. We had a solid few days where I could almost see Oompa Loompas parading around my living room in real time. Honestly, I could definitely handle the old "two weeks to flatten the curve" in these conditions, that's for sure. The feathers- what a strange few days that was- are all gone now, and all that remains is a glowing sense of wellness, and a very strange feeling that something has been lost- but lost in the same way you feel the absence of several bags of garbage after you've done a deep and thorough declutter of your house and you take them to the tip. It's a feeling of "good riddance"! I've been trying to delve into this feeling, because it's quite unsettling not being able to place it. So far, no answers.

I've ventured out for a walk several times; my workplace has a mandatory "ten days since last symptom" policy so I don't need to make an appearance for another four days at least. I'm feeling almost normal (what is normal anyway?) but I had an extremely confronting experience near the Art Gallery yesterday. I was strolling along the boardwalk, coffee in hand, when I spotted some teens who were hanging out, kicking back on the grassy slope under the shade of the gallery's deck. A young couple were walking towards me; she was pushing a pram, he carried hot drinks, and they were chatting, enjoying the sunshine. The teenagers were suddenly on their feet, shouting at the couple. Confused at the sudden confrontation, I stopped in my tracks. The words coming from the teens' mouths made absolutely no sense to me. It sounded like they were implying that this couple were different, spoke differently, and acted differently, and that this was a bad thing. Staring wide-eyed, I looked from the teens to the couple, and back again. To me, they looked identical. This couple were a few years older, sure, but this only made them look wiser, calmer, happier; any number of positive things. The teens were making complete fools of themselves, it was embarrassing to witness, and I could not comprehend why they were behaving like this for absolutely no reason.

Suddenly two people in official uniforms jumped from a nearby hedge. Brandishing tasers, they started shouting at the teens "GET ON THE GROUND!" The two teens brazenly laughed at them, scoffing "what happened to free speech?" In what can only be described as a flash of lightning, both teens fell flat to the ground as tasers were deployed. "Racism is illegal, and the very concept of racial prejudice is drawing close to extinction. You will now be escorted to a facility to be exposed to the FPV virus, which will ensure the removal of these ideologies from your brains, forever."

I gasped as the teens were dragged away; the young couple appeared just as mystified as I, but we all continued walking and exchanged smiles as we passed. I returned home, feeling decidedly unnerved, and made a beeline for my computer, opening a search engine with

unsteady hands as I typed “racism” into the search bar. A term completely unfamiliar to me, I held my breath and waited for the results.

“No results found” stared back at me from the screen.

Confused, I picked up my phone and called my brother, the Tech Whiz. He sounded as bewildered as I was, but his knowledge of the internet and ability to access the Dark Web prevailed, as I waited on the line for him to work his magic. He read aloud the definition he discovered on Obsolete Google: “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalised”.

I thanked him and ended the call. My hands trembled as the confusion I’d been feeling over what had been missing clicked into place. Sure, the couple and their adorable child I had seen today had different coloured skin to me, they looked “different” on the outside, but in what universe did that make them inferior, or not as “good”? This concept was as shocking as if someone had walked up to me, slapped me in the face and told me that the world would end tomorrow. Incomprehensible. I was filled with rage that there are people in existence who hold these beliefs.

Last night brought little sleep, as my thoughts ran on a hamster wheel around my brain. Which brings me to now, early hours, tired as anything, trying this journaling practice. The world has changed; this I know to be true. I am starting to understand that this belief, this “racism”, is the garbage that needed taking out. It is finally clear in my mind. It won’t take too much longer. Soon I know love and acceptance will prevail, forever and this fills me with a sense of hope for the future.

We’ll get there, one little penguin feather (and Oompa Loompa) at a time.