

THOUGHT CRAFT
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Tapestries

The evening draws in quickly. At one moment the late afternoon sun is there, mellow orange against the sky, and the next minute it is almost twilight, and time for me to leave my rooftop plants and flowers, and return to my flat. As I take a last stroll around the jasmine, an aroma of warm ghee floats up from some nearby kitchen, and soon after, a long-forgotten and much loved familiar fragrance—the smell of curried chicken—as it was cooked in my mother's kitchen in olden days.

In that moment, Proust-like, I am transported, back to my childhood and I feel a homesickness that I have not experienced in years. My memory key is not an elegant madeleine dipped in tea, but nonetheless the fragrance of my modest curry takes me home again just as surely, and I am wrapped in the warmth and security of my parents' comforting presence once again, surrounded by the familiar sounds and smells of everything I hold dear. Forgotten pictures of my childhood come flooding back, memories of my parents and my siblings, school days with beloved teachers, and afternoon games with the friends of those times.

We all have stories and cherished memories of our childhood and the past inside us, woven into a bright, rich tapestry that lies hidden, and even forgotten in some corner of our hearts, until somewhere a golden angle of light falling on a side street, or the sound of a distant bell becomes the key that brings back long-distant recollections of joy, dreams, and loves.

There is beauty in every tapestry, and poetry inside us all. Sometimes the poetry in us cannot be heard except when there are real listeners, and it is quiet; during peaceful lamp-lit evenings or on moonlit verandas, and even in the stillness of early morning. At other times, the songs remain unsung until long years afterward when a solitary picture or a letter uncovers a story.

As I write, my domestic angels are seated near me on the floor, sewing. They are quiet as they bend over their work, and I wonder what songs remain unsung in their lives, what dreams were thwarted, what disappointments they must have experienced. I enjoy watching their quiet concentration, involved entirely in the work of the moment, and I smile as I realise that I do exactly the same.

In the end, we are all the same in the deepest recesses of ourselves, accepting the commonality of the human condition, with all its compensations and drawbacks. We all look forward to the coming day, the tasks at hand, and everything else that is so much a part of life. As we rejoice in the present, and look forward to the future, the memory keys come back at odd times to remind us that we carry our life tapestries in our hearts, memories of the best moments, the best places, and our best-loved people. We can always go home.



A decade or two ago, people would rush to get their negatives printed, and they would cherish each and every photo, bind them, and beautifully arrange them in photo books. If one was ever lost or found, the feeling was exceptional, and little would make one happier. Today however, no photo can ever be truly lost as all we have to do is scroll down long enough to find it, and although that is not necessarily a bad thing, it lacks the soul and feel once associated with a printed photo.

Social media has made it possible for us to store hundreds, even thousands of pictures without any cost, or losing any space. However, as every picture is relegated to the virtual realm, the weight and meaning of those pictures somehow disintegrates with it. All of this makes 2018 one of the best times to get back into printing photos again.

It makes for one of the most inexpensive gifts. If you have not noticed, giving gifts have become harder as people's choice undergoes constant change, but mostly because they probably already have everything you would want to gift. However, nothing beats a good old framed picture, and it might just be moving enough to even bring out some tears.

Printed photos have a certain significance, which sharing on social media can never provide. Holding a real photo from back in school for example might give you goose bumps, and take you on a trip down memory lane. By comparison, a virtual one would not pack such a punch.



It is, without a doubt the best backup for the times your phone decides to let you down and you end up losing those precious vacation photos. Printing out those special and precious photos mean you are never going to lose them no matter what, whereas technology has a risk of failing you from time to time.

If you have ever sat down with friends or family to go through photo albums, you will notice it will bring up stories, memories, people and so much more. You take minutes to see a picture instead of a few seconds, and time seems to fly by as you do. That is something a digital picture online would never be able to replicate.

A printed photograph is one of the most tangible assets one could have. The weight and feeling of it is something much greater than simply scrolling through truckloads of digital versions of it. We all knew these qualities by heart a while ago, but perhaps somewhere down the line, we seem to have forgotten about these.

It is time the printed photos make a comeback, and for a lot, it already has. More people have actually started to get into this old habit thanks to Instax cameras and portable printers, and we could not be happier to have this tradition back. As we enter a new era, it is nice to be able to hold onto these little pieces of the past.

By Anisha Hassan
Photo: Collected

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