

THOUGHT CRAFT

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Inner light

I was delighted when cooler weather arrived last November. I had been looking forward to carrying my cup of hot, sweet tea up to the roof to sit there and dream in the fresh cool breeze.

At 26 degrees, though, it is just more summer without the humidity.

As my foreign friends like to say, it is what it is. Reconciled to the reality of what it is, and since there are no forests in Dhaka for forest bathing, I go up to the roof with a glass of cool lemonade instead of hot tea, sit among the myriad plants that I have collected, and do plant bathing, while taking deep breaths of what I like to imagine is pure oxygen.

Face turned to the sky, I lean back and enjoy the feeling of just being alive. The birds chirp, parrots fly past and a breeze

stirs gently in the palms.

The hours pass peacefully, while the mind has time to wander its streets of memory. The by-lanes and alleyways of the heart are filled with colourful images from both past and present, which have a life of their own. As many writers have demonstrated already, the past, experienced in retrospect, takes on extra beauty.

Proust wrote of the power of past joy and memory in five volumes. I remember clearly even today, among his beautiful pages, his eloquent and beautiful description of great arcades of pink hawthorn near his local church; every image made all the more vivid for him because he wrote his master work (Remembrance of Things Past) many years later.

While thinking of Proust, and admiring the subtle tints of light moving gently from morning to evening, as the white of noon shifts to blue, lavender, coral and rose, another memory comes to mind: that of Lawrence Durrell writing in his Alexandria Quartet not only of the bustle and red dust of his beloved city, but also of the "light filtered through the essence of lemons".

We all dream of expressing with facility the light and stars hiding in our hearts: for example, I wish I could have written these long-gone poignant words of T E Lawrence: "I loved you, so I drew these tides of Men into my hands, and wrote my will across the sky and stars to earn you freedom, the seven-pillared worthy house."

Although we cannot all be a Monet, a

Keats, a Kibria, or a Kalidas Karmakar, our appreciation of beauty and our own small creative contributions to that world have value, not least because they have been shaped by events that are particular to us. Love, loss, joy, and sadness have helped form us, and have given our personae the unique dimension that makes each one of us so special.

We each of us carry within ourselves a hidden trove of artistic, emotional and spiritual feeling. We too live our days in vivid colour through the lens of our own perceptions. We lack only the ability to shape our visions into tangible forms.

When we experience great art in all its forms, we rejoice because it is a reflection of our own inner light, the essence of what is purest and most beautiful inside ourselves.

#GUIDES

Being happily single on Valentine's Day!



With romance being everywhere on Valentine's Day, it is natural for us singles to feel a little left out. Romantic relationships sure can make some happy, but it's never a necessity.

The spirit of V-Day calls for us to celebrate 'love.' So, we ask you to take this opportunity and acknowledge the ones who are always there for you.

Make this day special by showing appreciation to those who are constantly lifting you up with their relentless love and support. It can be your family, friends and even *you!*

Instead of being hard on yourself, enjoy the day with loads of self-pampering fun activities.

Here's a few ways to stay happily single on the day of 'love'!

Take your family out for a nice dinner

The unconditional love of your family should never go unnoticed. So, how about you celebrate the day with the ones closest to your heart? Spend a wholesome evening with your family by taking them out for dinner. A fine feast and quality time together is sure to make you feel blessed.

Have a movie/game night with friends

Your friends are there to make you smile through life. And a sleepover with them can turn V-Day into a fun-day (get it?)!

Invite them over and enjoy a night of entertainment. Watch a good movie together or play your favourite games, anything is amusing with friends by your side!

Set a date with your bestie

Who said you can't take your best friend on a date? Spoil her just as you would spoil your man. Get your bestie out on a girly-date; have fun together with your usual gossip, yummy food and Instagramable selfies. Treat her with a nice gift. After all, life is so much better, so don't miss this chance to let her know!

Host a one-dish party

Get all your single gal-pals together by hosting a one-dish party. Ask each of them to cook an item while you take care of the hosting-duties. As they come over, enjoy dining together, tasting each other's dish and sharing the love. It's such a grown-up way to party and a beautiful way to appreciate each other!

Give yourself some attention

It is important to love yourself before you

love anyone else. So, take this day to give yourself the love, attention, and affection you deserve.

Take yourself out. Buy yourself a thing you desire. Engage in self-care; lose yourself in your favourite book. Make the day all about you because at the end, you're all you truly need.

By Zohaina Amreen

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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