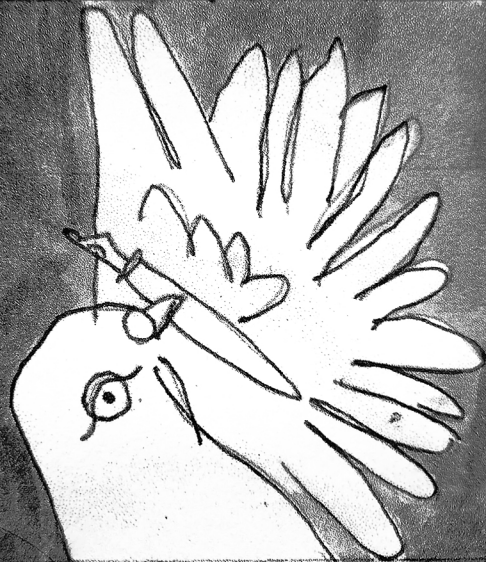


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THIS WEEK ON DUCKS

I come here often, last time it was the bats. They lived on all of these trees, and spent the evening swooping in and out of the big pool. This is Roshnara park by the way, the place they buried the woman - Roshnara, now in the middle of it there's this big pool. There used to be bats on every tree hanging like fruit, now it's just the ducks. Only a few of them.

Back home, me and a friend ran right across a river into the fine and heavy white sand and found across the river some ducks, these were different ones, orange and bright bright green, I will not attach a picture here, you have to imagine this.

And the sun is shining on this river and right across the weeds, there are these ducks floating. You never realize how floating is no less a magic than flying is. We chased up to the few ducks wading on the sand a little far away and laughed a lot.

There is also this other thing, I understood since very young that immortality was a bad idea. I had a small desk full of encyclopedias, one of them - a thin volume on *Life on Earth* had a full page spread on different animals and their lifespan. Mayflies lived only a day. Tortoises lived reliably to upwards of a century. I don't relate to trees. Humans lived for far too long. I liked the idea of living 10 to 15 years (I was 12 at the time I think) something like ducks. I had had enough. I did my time on earth enough to not be satisfied of my time here. I still like ducks, I hope they are doing well.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Let it come to you. When photographing the ducks, do not chase, let it come to you. When on the other side of the bank right across the tin houses and the guy holds up his middle finger and says run, do not challenge.

There are harder ways of figuring things out, the better ways are worked out by circumstance, let it come to you. You will try your best to focus still on the bird across the field, let it come to you. This is not to say that giving up on the challenge is any way the best decision or the most level-headed. It is that you will run, and the crowd will give and most times despite the effort, things will remain undisturbed. The ground before the cycle skids doesn't owe you one thing, the man before he grabs you doesn't owe you one thing. You will do the same things again and again, for hours without acknowledgement. Don't look up how others did it, do not despair the times we are in. Let it come to you. These things come in quiet, when it happens you don't notice, the anticipation is stronger felt. The water only goes one way, there is time, there is time. You do not know every street. Noticing is a thing in itself. One person is enough, for these things to exist for. Only anticipation is stronger felt, pay attention. You are here, remember. Let it come to you.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS

(with Verite)

We sit by the side of the water at Roshnara one Thursday. The sun has already set, there only little light, the sprinklers light up and we find 2 ducks walk upto us. (picture right)

"Give me 4 lines on ducks."

Behind the camera, I struggle to contain my wonder, holding in a dreamy sigh lest it scare away the ducks. I shiver gleefully as the shutter clicks - it could not be more perfect. Are the birds as transfixed as I am, I wonder?

"Coloured water, huh," said one duck to his friend. "That's what killed mom back in January."

"Pollution basically. Is it too drab? Felt very Delhi-based so ..."

MEDIA OF THE WEEK

Excerpt from *The Catcher in The Rye*, Holden Clauffield talks to a cab driver :

"Hey, Horwitz," I said. "You ever pass by the lagoon in Central Park? Down by Central Park South?"
"The what?"
"The lagoon. That little lake, like, there. Where the ducks are. You know."
"Yeah, what about it?"
"Well, you know the ducks that swim around in it? In the springtime and all? Do you happen to know where they go in the wintertime, by any chance?"
"Where who goes?"
"The ducks. Do you know, by any chance? I mean does somebody come around in a truck or something and take them away, or do they fly away by themselves - go south or something?"
Old Horwitz turned all the way around and looked at me. He was a very impatient-type guy. He wasn't a bad guy, though. "How the hell should I know?" he said. "How the hell should I know a stupid thing like that?"

