

The Pros and Cons of Twenty Twenty-Four: A Reflective Timeline

Walking beneath the latticed dome
of the Louvre Abu Dhabi—
a kaleidoscope of shadow and light.

Flying home for my half-sister's wedding, during a wintry January in Madison, WI. Her matrimony on Tết—nuptials and the New Year intertwined like the savory filling of crispy egg rolls.

Glimpsing my estranged father
at my sister's wedding
—unspoken words spanning
a schism only we can see.

Staying in the Al Ahli ICU,
elevated cardiac enzymes.
Sliding into the deafening hum
of the MRI chamber
—the results, thankfully, fine.

Staring at long black hair
flowing down the supple back
of a tattooed woman
in a Pattaya laundromat
during Eid break in Thailand—

Following signs only I could see,
bumbling my attempt with you
—your hand withdrew from mine.

Eating lunch on the hood of a Land Rover,
in the middle of the Serengeti—
an unbroken circle of life
journeying on the open savannah,
the air thick with the taste of dust and rain.

Discovering my sister is expecting twins—a boy and a girl, the news unfolding in stages like delicate origami.

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Nurturing the web of relationships
of family and friends
over a long summer in the U.S.—

Revisiting after
another year away,
everyone a year older
—I continue as incremental
Rip Van Winkle.

Imagining retired life back in Winona
as the crinkly caretaker of a used bookstore,
slowly mummified by the aroma of dusty pages—

Driving across the U.S.
with my youngest son
before his deployment—
relishing the silence between us.

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Arriving in the boiling heat of Qatar
for my eighth school year cycle—

Spending another night in the ICU,
elevated enzymes, again.
Stress test: normal
—Doctor: "Maybe that's just your norm."

—Enduring a friend's scathing words,
sundering our friendship.

Checking my email—
Subject line: Congratulation!
You have been accepted as an
English Language Specialist.

Flying across the Atlantic,
my youngest son
deployed to Kuwait.
On the same side of the world
—yet now a world apart.

Crawling into the
Great Pyramid of Giza—
a one-way journey
to the afterlife.
A reminder: make my heart
lighter than a feather.

Swinging America back,
the Hegelian dialectic¹
—Trump 2024.

Working on a business idea—a pivot from my current work life. (For now, that is all I can share.)

—Yelling at more people
in my dreams this year
than entangling
with long-haired beauties.

Overflowing from
another year
of things unsaid
—my subconscious brimming.

Moving forward
another year—
another chance
to err or thrive;
wandering through
the kaleidoscope
of shadow and light.

Iterum Atque Iterum

¹ “An interpretive method, originally used to relate specific entities or events to the absolute idea, in which some assertible proposition (thesis) is necessarily opposed by an equally assertible and apparently contradictory proposition (antithesis), the mutual contradiction being reconciled on a higher level of truth by a third proposition (synthesis).” [Source](#)