

this thesis was made to be listened to. what you are holding now is a transcript, available for the sake of accessibility. if you are able to listen, i would recommend you to do so.

in case you don't have access to a CD player, a digital copy can be found here > <https://archive.org/details/material-of-the-moment>

00:00

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When my grandpa passed away, my sister and I were given one task. While the adults sat around the dinner table, bent over the administration side of loss, we were sent to the local flower shop. In a dark back room, we faced a friendly employee. She asked us lots of questions about flowers and ribbons and what words we wanted him to have in his final resting place. These were things that we'd never have to think about before, and we had no idea how to answer. Does it even matter? I guess like all mundane things when you're going through grief, it felt absurd. But I'd be lying to you if I said it wasn't a welcome distraction.

Now, ten years have passed, and that same flower shop is soon getting knocked down. Following the

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owner's passing at age 72, the family business started by his father in 1946 will come to an end. I remember the inside of the long, glass roofed building only vaguely. It was humid and cramped, with more plants and pots than should fit per square meter. Most vividly, I remember the damp smell. I didn't spend much time there after early childhood, but it was familiar, and (literally, physically) close to home.

I have always felt a strong attachment to material objects and places. Sometimes it's so strong that losing an important place can feel as painful and uprooting as grief.

When I was younger, I would to spend hours visiting them in my head. Places like the home I grew up

in, its familiar textures and sounds bring me safety and comfort. Or my old primary school down the street, with long hallways that I would walk down in my dreams, moving between classrooms, reminiscing over the years that I spent in each of them. Or the sunny neighbourhood of my childhood best friend. Its dizzying alleyways and overgrown playgrounds that we explored as if they were mystical lands inhabited by ominous figures.

As we get older, memories degrade and mental time travel becomes a lot harder. I need to visit these places to refuel my memory machine. But unfortunately, inevitably, change has come in and taken my anchors. Without physical reminders, it becomes harder and harder to

02:21

travel back. My home now belongs to someone else, the old school made way for a new neighbourhood, I haven't spoken to that friend in years, and of course, the flower shop is soon to be replaced by apartment blocks.

Such is growing up. You may have also lost a place dear to you at some point. What did that mean for you? And how did it affect your perception of time?

In the following 40 minutes, I will guide you as I attempt to use my own struggles with change and loss to dive into time, the relationship between memories and material, astrology, and alternative experiences of time as we know it. My goal is to develop my own framework for

thinking around time: one that feels more true to our experience of it.

03:10

I would love for you to join me, if you have the time (:



Loss and change are natural elements of time, some might even say they are time. Aristotle considered this a long time ago. Quoting him, physicist Carlo Rovelli writes:
*"Time is the measurement of change. Things change continually. We call "time" the measurement, the counting of this change."*¹

But Aristotle was born before the invention of modern clocks and calendars.

04:00

He was born before 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII instituted the Gregorian calendar, named after himself.²

Born before the international Meridian Conference of 1884, when the Greenwich meridian was agreed upon as the zero-point of longitude. This meridian is one of many longitude lines, imaginary markers dividing the earth. British mariners would keep at least one chronometer on Greenwich Mean Time to calculate their position from the Greenwich meridian. This eventually led to the standardisation of GMT globally.³

These are the things that I think of now, when I think of time. But these measurement systems are very recent, and the fact that they are now seen as 'the standard', has deep roots in colonialism.

In fact, as Jay Griffiths describes in her book, *A Sideways Look at Time*:

*“the great breakthrough of time-keeping—making clockwork of sufficient accuracy to discover longitude—was done in order to gain control of the seas, to colonize, if you like, the wildness of ocean-time, a feat which led to Britons ruling the waves and, through this, ruling both empires of land and empires of time, for it was due to Britain’s maritime supremacy that Greenwich was accepted worldwide as the zero meridian. Ruling the seas meant ruling the standard of world-time.”*⁴

In addition, portraying indigenous societies as being ‘time-less’ (i.e.: culturally lacking regularity, order and uniformity) became a tool for colonisers to portray those people as an inferior, ‘irregular other’.⁵

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Griffiths gives us a few examples of existing native cultures that use alternative ways of telling and describing time, most of which are rooted in the natural environments they inhabit.

“There is in the Micmac language –and in most of the Algonquin languages– no word for “time” in an absolute sense. There are words for day and night, sunset and sunrise, the cycle of the year and of the moon, but no “time” as numbered measurement. There are no words for hour, minute or second though there is “now”–neegeh.”

She also describes the Karen, a hill-tribe in the forests of Northern Thailand:

“time and distance are connected in the Karen language: d’yi ba–soon

*—means, literally, “not far away.”
Sunset, therefore, could be expressed
as “three kilometers away,” because
the only way of traveling is to walk,
which takes a known length of time.”*

So interesting how different cultures
share that connection between time
and place!

Griffith continues, *“For North Amer-
ican Indians, there is a reciprocity
between humans and time; F. David
Peat, a Western physicist who has
studied indigenous science, says
that for them the concept of time is
dynamic and “animate” and there is
a sense of deep exchange between
humans and time. “Time is not
independent of us nor of the rest of
nature. Time is addressed in ceremo-
nies and a people’s relationship with*

07:02

*its movement must be renewed.”
Time is alive.”*

Time is alive. How beautiful! What could that mean for us? What if time is actually an ingrained, fundamental part of our consciousness? Does that mean that time will die when life does? Or will life die when time does?

I feel a sense of freedom imagining time like this. Much more than when I think of the homogenised, counting, mechanical time of the clock.



I remember the first time I got my own clock. I was 8 years old and my sister and I shared a bunk bed. But tensions between us had started to rise so my parents decided I needed my own room. When I moved into their old bedroom, they gave me complete freedom over decorations. I chose a princess theme, complete with a pink beaded curtain, gold carpet and a bright pink accent wall. It was perfect.

The only demand my mom made was that there needed to be a big clock, easily visible from my bed. Even then I had trouble getting up in the mornings, and this was their attempt at teaching time management. Because I wasn't great at reading clocks, she glued two pink heart-shaped pieces of confetti to it.

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A small one for the hour hand, and a big one for the minute hand (because that one is the bigger hand), The stickers indicated where the hands would be the moment that I needed to get out of bed.

This was the start of my struggle with clock-time. What I wish I'd known then, but I wouldn't learn until I was in my twenties, is that I have ADHD. And one of the key symptoms of ADHD is something called **time blindness**. This means that I process and perceive time differently than most people.

This is how Rachael Green, mental health and ADD expert describes it:

"The human body senses time in a similar way that it senses light, sound, taste, and other elements of our environment. Based on a

mix of internal and external cues, a typical human brain can map out a reasonably accurate sense of what time of day it is, how much time has passed, and how much time there is before any upcoming events. For people with ADHD, though, this time perception is disrupted”⁶

What this means for me, is that I'm unable to estimate how much time has passed, how long something will take, or how much time is left before an event starts. Despite my best efforts, I'm often late (even for things I'm excited for), I'm bad at planning, I tend to leave things until the last minute, and I often lose track of time.

Because of this, growing up in a world made for neurotypical people, a world that puts so much pressure

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and emotional importance on “being on time”, was hard for me.

Time management has deep ties to love and respect.

This is Jaclyn Paul, reading from her blog, The ADHD Homestead.⁷

Let's say I promise to meet you at a restaurant for dinner at 6:00, but I show up a half-hour late.

How do you feel, having made excuses to the server and finally ordered a glass of wine alone at a table for two?

Showing up late to dates, meetings, and everything in between sends a message: I valued you less than something else. A person left waiting every time feels they'll never be as important as literally anything else

you could be doing.

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But this isn't true.

For people with ADHD, intentions and actions don't always line up. We experience an agonizing dissonance between the self we know and the person our actions present to the world.

To everyone else, it looks like we don't care. And that hurts us, too.



Although we might struggle more noticeably, alternate perceptions of time are not limited to just neurodivergent people. Both our everyday experiences and science show us that time and our perceptions of it are subject to constant change.

11:14

"It only takes a few micrograms of LSD to expand our experience of time onto an epic and magical scale. There are dreams lasting an instant in which everything seems frozen for an eternity. Time is elastic in our personal experience of it. Hours fly by like minutes, and minutes are oppressively slow, as if they were centuries.

Before Einstein told us that it wasn't true, how the devil did we get it into our heads that time passes everywhere at the same speed? It was certainly not our direct experience of the passage of time that gave us the idea that time elapses at the same rate, always and everywhere." ⁸

These are the words of physicist Carlo Rovelli, in his book *The Order of Time*. He explains two of Einstein's revelations about time:

1) *“Lower down, all processes are slower. there is simply less time than at altitude.”* and-

2) *“For everything that moves, time passes more slowly.”*

Rovelli concludes, *“Times are legion: a different one for every point in space. There is not one single time; there is a vast multitude of them.”*

So every point in space has its own time with its own speed? I guess time and space really are a package deal.

Rovelli also makes an interesting note regarding the nature of time: While most of the laws of physics do not distinguish past from future (meaning they remain true in both directions of the equation) there

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is one basic law of physics that does make this distinction: the one involving heat.

“In the elementary equations of the world, the arrow of time appears only where there is heat. The link between time and heat is therefore fundamental: every time a difference is manifested between the past and the future, heat is involved. In every sequence of events that becomes absurd if projected backward, there is something that is heating up. Only where there is heat is there a distinction between past and future.

Thoughts, for instance, unfold from the past to the future, not vice versa—and, in fact, thinking produces heat in our heads... “

Huh..

So time and heat are related. Does that mean that we can influence the way we experience time with just our thoughts?

In the mornings, my routine looks like, when I wake up, I have a practice pad right at the bottom of my bed...

You're listening to my friend Jo, a professional drummer.⁹

And immediately, I pick up my drumsticks and I turn on a metronome, which is normally set to 120 beats per minute, which is, like, essentially like quavers at, like, 60 BPM, which is just like, twice every second. And what I try and do is I try and slow my perception of time down, to the point where I can see bigger gaps between

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the clicks on the metronome than what I perceived when I first heard them.

And it's by, um, it's by molding your attention around these specific points and kind of phasing other things out, like a meditation, and then subdividing the gaps. And you find that the more mental appliance you put into the gaps, the bigger they seem.

So, for me, I always start with: so if this is the click, (he clicks a few times) I always try and cut it in half immediately. In my head, I'll play the crotches. I'll just play what's happening on the click. But in my head, I'll do double. And then I'll divide it up into thirds and then quarters, and then fives, and then sixes, then sevens and eights.

I don't normally go above that because it gets too fast. But I change my perception of time every morning in the name of practice, in the name of just, like, mastering time, I suppose.

Here, Jo explains us that our own attention can affect our experience of time. Pay more attention, and seconds get stretched out.

I personally experience this effect very strongly when I travel somewhere new. Being in a new environment doing new things forces my brain to pay more attention, and five days of vacation suddenly feels like ten.

But how about other organisms?
How do their time perceptions differ?
And what could that depend on?
Heart rate, size maybe?

15:43

The general vibe that I was getting was as your metabolic rate increases, your perception increases.

This is Sam, a marine biologist.¹⁰

So if we think of an athlete vs. your average Joe, if we ask them to both go run 50 meters, the athlete is probably going to be perceiving a lot more than the regular person because they're moving more efficiently. Their body's just sort of working more efficiently and can drive more oxygen to your brain. And oxygen is the main food for your brain, that's what it needs to keep thinking.

The study that I was reading was sort of asserting that athletes can perceive more in a short period of time while exercising, than an untrained athlete.

And that on average, these athletes can have a higher metabolic rate. And it does sort of make sense to me that if you are a tiny mouse and you need to be aware of all predators all the time, and fractions of a second can be the difference between life or death. There's going to be a lot more selective pressure, in that the animals that are more sensitive and can pick up on those quick changes in their environment are going to survive much more often.

So generally, those small prey animals that do also have higher heart rates, they are going to be more alert of their surroundings and processing more in a given period of time. An elephant doesn't have anywhere near as much to worry about as a field mouse, you know? So I think the short answer is yes,

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probably. And I think it's sort of related to the concept of animals experiencing time more slowly or more quickly.

So, if there are infinitely different ways to experience time, it starts to make less and less sense to use standardised clock time. I wonder what an alternative system could look like?



Maybe I should tell you a bit more about myself. In addition to time blindness, I also experience time synesthesia. This means that when I imagine a year, I can clearly visualise a circle. Every month has its own place on the circle, with the summer months on top, and December in the bottom right (or southeast, if you imagine a compass). Some of the months are longer and kind of blur into one another, while others are very short and clearly defined. But regardless of what year it is, the circle always looks the same, with each month in the same place.

It's no coincidence that my year looks like a circle. Like the ouroboros biting its own tail, past and future are intimately connected. While life is always changing, energies and themes repeat over and over again.

19:06

Astrology centres on this idea of repetition. Kay, a dear friend of mine, and one of the most knowledgeable people I know on this topic, once explained to me how astrology can be simply seen as a form of pattern recognition:

Can you say that thing again about the little dance?"

Ah, so the reason I really like astrology and I'm really into it and what kind of is my core belief behind it. It's like, I believe we're all doing a little dance in, like, in the way we kind of go live our lives.

So there's a dance that happens on a really little level, and there's a dance that's happening on our level, and then there's a big dance that happens

in the sky, and it's all mirroring each other. It's like how you see the golden ratio turning up all over nature as well, that sort of thing.

So the reason I love astrology is, like, you're looking at the biggest dance, you're looking at the planets in the sky, and you're learning to read that. So it's like not that the planets are literally beaming down and like affecting us. It's just a big replication of everything that's happening on every level, and that's just the biggest one, so we can read it. Yay!

Time doesn't just move in Einstein's arrow, it's also cyclical. Future, present and past spiralling on. The same cycles of life, like seasons, repeating. Patterns reappearing at every level. Planets complete their orbits, history repeats itself.

20:36

Astrology is a way in which we can study and understand these patterns. And many people have done so, over a long period of time, providing us today with a deep pool full of generations worth of knowledge.

My ascendant is in Virgo. Which means that the moment I was born, Virgo was the constellation coming up on the eastern horizon. Because this placement changes every two hours, it is a highly personal point in your birth chart. Astrologer Chani Nicholas describes the nature of this placement as: *“what gets you going, gets you out of bed, and sets you on the quest of life. It is your motivation for living and what you wish to be known for.”* ¹²

About Ascendant in Virgo she writes the following:

“With your Ascendant in Virgo, you’ll be known for your ability to make the information you have access to useful. Practical. Applicable. (...) Virgo is exacting, critical, deeply introspective, intrigued with intelligent systems—especially ones that are healing, efficient, and naturally occurring.”

21:20

Can you name a more healing and naturally occurring intelligent system than time? They do say time heals all wounds..

“Your Ascendant is motivated to analyze, digest, and integrate the information that you acquire. Virgo purifies and, in love, Virgo needs a partner who is willing to constantly process the material of the moment.”

The material of the moment..

22:10



Let's talk about material. Or rather, material objects.

Others with ADHD might recognise the feeling of cleaning your room and getting lost in every single item you pick up. You start off with good intentions and two hours later you're completely sidetracked, wearing a snap bracelet and mismatched hair clips, while googling how to set up your laptop to play your old CD rom games.

It's not ideal when you're trying to be productive, but I have always really enjoyed enveloping myself in the things that surround me. Mainly

because, when I stop to spend time with the objects I've collected in my life, it feels like I can remember that life better.

Material holds memory. Jan Assmann describes this 'memory of things' in his book, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilisation*:

*"Objects reflect ourselves – they remind us of who we are, of our past, of our forebears, and so on. The world of things in which we live has a time index that refers not only to our present but also, and simultaneously, to different phases and levels of our past."*¹³

This can be true for personal memories contained in a toy from childhood, but also for relics containing collective cultural memory.

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So it follows that the removal of cultural objects (as was done during colonial rule) has had a devastating impact on the cultures from which they were removed. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the Director General of UNESCO in 1978, wrote about this in his appeal to the return of cultural heritage to their countries of origin:

“Architectural features, statues and friezes, monoliths, mosaics, pottery, enamels, masks and objects of jade, ivory and chased gold in fact everything which has been taken away, from monuments to handicrafts were more than decorations or ornamentation. They bore witness to a history, the history of a culture and of a nation whose spirit they perpetuated and renewed.”

The peoples who were victims of this plunder, sometimes for hundreds of years, have not only been despoiled of irreplaceable masterpieces but also robbed of a memory which would doubtless have helped them to greater self-knowledge and would certainly have enabled others to understand them better.”¹⁴

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Jewellery is a good example of the kinds of objects that bear witness to history. Because of the material often used in jewellery making, pieces stick around, often outliving the people creating them. Precious metals can withstand many years of wear, and due to the high monetary value, people are more likely to take good care of jewellery items or pass them down through families as heirlooms.

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Allison Cicero Moore writes about this in her thesis:

*"Heirloom jewelry, (...) conveys family sentiment, and can serve as a reminder of loved ones who have passed on. Through its connections and associations, specifically its mediation and moderation of entities' relationships in networks, heirloom jewelry pieces can help perpetuate family history. This family-specific history, in turn, can be used to supplement broader cultural history."*¹⁵

I wear a ring around my left pointer finger every day. It's a thin gold snake with two small gems for eyes. The circle is closed by its bejewelled face biting down on (you guessed it!) its own tail. When my mom gave me this ring, I don't think she saw it as

an heirloom. She's not the kind of person to wear jewellery of any kind, so last year she gave me a box of all of her old pieces, hoping that I would maybe get some more use out of them.

Over the past year I've grown very attached to it. It's part of a small number of jewellery pieces that I wear every day. I feel a close connection to it, but I actually don't know that much about its history. I don't know how old it is, who made it, or even how my mom got it. It might sound silly, but before I started working on this project, I'd never even noticed it's similarities to the ouroboros.

But even if the oral history of this object is lost, it still carries some

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history in its material. Because the ring is so thin, long term wear has dented the gold and caused it to lose its original circle shape. The inside of the snake head is hollow, meaning dirt and grime tend to collect inside of it. Both of the eye gems are still intact, meaning it was well made, and well enough taken care of.

The snake it depicts also holds a tremendous amount of history. Although the word ouroboros derives from greek (roughly translating to *'tail eater'¹⁶⁾*, The earliest record of this symbolic serpent or dragon eating its own tail was actually found in the tomb of Tutankhamun in the 14th century BCE. ¹⁷

Fun fact, my dad used to joke that we were related to this pharaoh,

because Tutankhamun sounds similar to our last name Kamoen. Anyway, back to the ouroboros.

27:15

The symbol has been interpreted in many interesting ways and by countless different cultures since its inception, but, according to Egyptologist Jan Assmann, *“the ouroboros in its original Egyptian context symbolised repetition, renewal, and the eternal cycle of time.”* He says the symbol *“refers to the mystery of cyclical time, which flows back into itself”*. *“The ancient Egyptians understood time as a series of repetitive cycles, instead of something linear and constantly evolving; and central to this idea was the flooding of the Nile and the journey of the sun.”*¹⁸

There they are again! Alive time and the intimate connection between

28:07

time and space! But what happens when the climate changes and the Nile stops flooding? This river that their very understanding of time was based on.. How is it doing these days?

According to National Geographic, *“Dams have been built to help to tame the river and provide a source of hydroelectric power. The silt and sediment that used to flow north, enriching the soil and building the delta, is now building up behind a dam instead. Instead of growing in size through the soil deposits, the delta is now shrinking due to erosion along the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, routine annual flooding no longer occurs along parts of the Nile.”*¹⁹

It seems the Nile's eternal cycle was halted by the clock time of modern age. Dams are built to tame the river and the artificial clock replaces the natural time cycle. Both time and place now under control, the snake has been charmed.

Jay Griffith writes: *“Western modernity's attitude to time mirrors its attitude to place, and as a key phenomenon of place today is homogenization, the erosion of place-distinctiveness to a global suburbia, so likewise time is increasingly made an indifferent, indistinct suburban same-time. Urban street lamps turn night to day and city shops stay open later into the night than rural shops. The very seasons impinge less on people in cities: the difference between a new moon*

29:45

and full, powerful in a landscape, is all but immaterial in a streetscape. (..) Cities, ever more independent of nature, use the unspecific global rhythm of the artificial clock.”²⁰



Griffiths published these thoughts in 1999. Before digital technology became as ingrained into our lives as it is now. I wonder if a return to de-standardised, alive time is possible without a complete rejection of modern technologies?

Growing up in the digital era has enabled me to spend much of my life connecting to others all over the world. Most of my current friendships would not exist if not for the internet.

The global sameness of the digital space offered a more even playing field, allowing access to places of community and joy.

For me, the internet, much like the places I mentioned at the start, is a place filled with memories.

I've been building an online archive for a decade and a half. I made my first website at 9 or 10 years old, around the same time Facebook was founded. I joined Twitter in 2009 and Tumblr in 2010.

Part of what excited me about social media back then was not just the chance to share my life, but also to save it for future reference, as if in a public scrapbook. I'm not great at journaling, but every time I tweet,

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I can imagine a future version of myself reading that tweet. I can't escape the feeling that publicly documenting my life somehow preserves a part of it. Some imagined me in the future might want to look back, so current me is responsible for maintaining that archive.

Archiving my own past has become an important part of my life. I wouldn't shy away from describing myself as nostalgic, but there is something else too. An anxiety about what might be coming, which I combat by grasping tightly onto what has passed. The head of the snake biting down on its tail. Does it hurt her when she bites?

Every public post I've made in my adult life is still somewhere, saved on

some server. Unless that service of course, has ceased to exist.

32:09

Places like Hyves, Dailybooth and Vine, may they rest in peace. Sometimes traces might remain (thanks to the incredible people at archive.org). But more often than not, when websites go down, they take our archives with them.

Much like the flower shop, these websites go down and with them, my memory anchors disappear. Whether physical or digital, loss remains part of the cycle.

As I wrote this part of the script, #RIPTwitter was trending on Twitter. Since it was bought and taken over by the richest person on earth in October 2022, a lot has changed

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within the company and I, like many users, now fear the collapse of the platform. I made sure to download all of my personal twitter data, but it still scares me to think this digital place could just disappear. The communities, friendships and information I found there will fracture and scatter to different places. I will try to follow them and archive what I can, but it won't be the same.

So what happens to all those tweets? Will they just be gone forever? According to their website, the US Library of Congress has been keeping an archive of all tweets from 2006 until 2017. However, in 2017 they announced they would move to only save tweets on a selective basis, like influential accounts and government officials.

It's kind of fun to know that all my tweets up until 2017 are just in the US Library of Congress, haha.

Our cultural shift to dependence on digital media is a dangerous one, when it comes to archiving. In an article published in the Guardian this morning (Nov 18, 2022), Kari Paul writes: *“Although Twitter’s current downward spiral has been shockingly abrupt, the internet landscape has always been precarious – with the average lifespan of a webpage less than three years. The graveyard of platforms-past has grown steadily over the years.”*

In the article, she speaks with Caroline Sindors, fellow with the UK’s Information Commissioner’s Office.

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“This is highlighting the ephemerality of social networks, and that even if we use them like public infrastructure at times, they are not,” Sinders said. “Companies can make executive decisions that affect all of us.”

She also quotes Jason Scott, one of those incredible people that I mentioned earlier. He is one of the free range archivists at the Internet Archive (or archive.org) who has worked to preserve parts of Twitter over the last 15 years.

“Scott said the questions sparked by the chaos at Twitter could lead to a future in which social media is managed differently, deferred to non-profits, or regulated more closely. But in the meantime, if you want to save tweets – whether jokes from a favorite celebrity or the last thoughts of a loved one who has passed – he

suggests a more analog solution.

35:14

“Print out their tweets, and put them in a box,” he said. “They will last longer in every way.”²¹

There are two ways you might be listening to this now. Following Scott’s advice, I’ve made it available both digitally and on a physical CD. I wonder which will last longer?

According to the Canadian Conservation Institute²², the lifespan of a CD ranges between 20 to 50 years. It seems like despite our best efforts, loss remains inevitable. The snake of time might be eternal, but she cannot help but shed her skin.



36:05

Can you tell us where we are?

We're at Museum Voorlinden looking at the exhibition of Giuseppe Penone.

The work of Giuseppe Penone confronts us with nature's experience of time. I went to visit some of his works with my dear friend Nina.²³

What do you think?

It's beautiful. Very beautiful, very enjoyable.

I guess it, reminds me of, just taking a very, you know, a nice calming mental health walk. Getting away from the world.

Being in nature!

Walking children in nature. (laughs) -

The calm, the sort of serenity that only being in a forest can bring you. Yeah.

36:41

Yeah. It really brings you back in touch with yourself, which is really nice.

I think he has a lot of time in his hands, to be able to make these kind of big artworks. Living slow.

I remember the first time I encountered Giuseppe Penone's work. It was at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2019, where I first saw one of his tree sculptures, *In The Wood*²⁴. It looked like a small fir tree trying to break free from a large, 3 meter tall, wooden beam. Upon closer inspection I realised what I was actually looking at. By slowly and expertly carving away layers of the wood, Penone was able to expose the

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younger, smaller tree that had been inside of the beam all along.

I remember how impressed I was by his skill. I wondered how in the world he was able to find the original tree's branches inside this beam, and how he managed to carve away the space around them carefully enough to prevent breaking them. Back then, the technique was the most impressive part of this work for me, but when I revisit it now, it inspires something more.

I think about that tree, and all other trees. About how their younger selves are still inside. I compare it to my own body, maybe all the me's that I once was, still live inside. Maybe my memories, even if I don't remember them, are still inside me.

Not lost, but invisible building blocks
of who I have and will become. And I
think: maybe forgetting is okay?

38:23



On this quest to a better understanding of time, we've travelled lots of different places. We've asked many questions, and maybe answered a few. I'm sure that this research only skimmed the surface, but if there's one thing I know for certain, it's this:

Time is alive.

It can't be trapped in clocks and calendars. It lives in heat and thoughts and attention. In the trees and rivers around us. In the stories we tell

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and the objects we carry with us. It's circular, repetitive, and ever-changing. Time is the music to which our universe dances.

Life does not exist without death. We started this journey with a big loss in my life. Together we've travelled from the dying tail to the biting head. The circular snake kills to feed. A part of her must die, so she can live on.

Loss is a part of life, it's a part that has always scared me. In fear of losing time, I've held on tight, always trying to capture and archive it. But that which is alive, needs room to breathe. So maybe it's okay for me to let go.

After all, we've got plenty of time.

1875



Thank you so much for listening.

Both a transcript of this audio and any images I describe, can be found in the description of this file, as well as with the physical copy. Here you will also find a bibliography of all of the works I've referenced by other people.

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as possible, including a full transcript that uses the following fonts:

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And lastly, thank you, for your time (:

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