

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

Seize the day and trust the destiny “Carpe diem, amor fati”

(Original)

Walid Mohamed Lakdari

(Age 16, Morocco)

Elbilial International High School, Casablanca

I lived through many book characters; I observed men and women on the busy streets of my city. Everyone seemed to have a purpose; all were running after something, perhaps dreaming. That is what we all do. It is so pleasurable to have all you ever wanted before your eyes, shaping it as liked without the walls of reality. What if it was this simple? Dreaming. But it is not. We are slaves in front of the mysterious temper of the ocean. Odds are that we can wake up to a day when the sky is perfectly blue, sunrays soaking us in their loving warmth. Or we might rise to a violent torrent, when every time we try to breathe, another wave so viciously destroys our hopes. These moments are when I feel most alive. Not on the days when everything was just fine and monotonous, but during times when each second will be so intensely heightened that I am able to sense with perfect focus everything crossing my way.

Remember that instant you fell in love with that person. One profound look into their eyes reveals the meticulously hidden gems of this precious being. That peculiar tension you sense near them when each of their touches lasts for an eternity and the sensation is anchored forever in your mind. Are these moments not when you felt so present, so alive? Then, moving to a further memory, you are now sitting on the blunt wooden bench of the church; your only view is a coffin sheltering your dearest friend without empathy. Many people were mourning with you, yet you felt alone with all as company an inert corpse. The world was crushing around you and your fall could not find an end. It is then when you felt most alive. You were nowhere but on that bench at that precise moment.

Being alive is diving into that quiet lake. In a calm where you realize you can feel, hear, see, taste, smell, and sense everything. Nothing escapes your consciousness. All these signals reach you as one, so harmoniously merging. Each unit brings you joy, ecstasy, fear, love,

worry, sadness, or hopelessness. These are invisible life forces, secret powers held within our hearts.

Writing this, I am floating on that exact surface. I am alive. Here, time and place do not matter. My words follow the river, pushed by the delicate hands of these invisible forces. They reach the waterfall dropping straight to you. I am alive contemplating each emotion I feel, letting my mind freely conceive and shape my thoughts. Maybe life is this freedom of being there, nothing stopping neither our thoughts nor our actions. This can lead you falsely if you think that facing obstacles makes us less alive. These are nothing but physical borders. Nevertheless, blocking the stream of emotions you might feel is a poison to a meaningful existence. Sensations and feelings cannot and should not be stopped. Still, we mistakenly try to do that.

Life is calmly contemplating all that is around you without any form of judgement, just acceptance. It is damaging when you attempt to make a turn or push the brakes whilst at full speed. Thus, you can only take initiative to change how you live when the flow of what you feel is manageable enough. I must confess that I also have dreams and would not mind if nothing was holding me back. However, remember that once you have the dream, there is nothing you can long for anymore. So it is better to appreciate this long journey whose end is magically hidden, shamelessly exposing herself when we less expect it. My wish for you is a passionate journey where all stops and turns would lead to an even greater destination, so when life comes to an end you will flip through the pages of your book with a wide smile and a sincere relief.