

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

What is Life?

(Original)

Ysiana Agalliu

(Age 21, Albania)

University of Tirana

Many years ago I wrote: "The day I was born, the planet was invaded by a storm!" I think this was the first moment that I felt truly alive, and that realized that for me, Life can be a lover, whom I love passionately sometimes, and other times I hate it for breaking my heart as my tears fill lakes and my loneliness stabs my foolish heart.

But our love story doesn't last long. My Life acts like a chameleon, that changes its appearance from one second to the next. It does not leave me enough time to get to know her well. From a beautiful lover, in whose bosom I could rest my head for the rest of eternity, feel warm and happy, my Life turns into a Nonpacific Ocean. Her hair turns into waves of challenges, the pores of her silky skin turn into the ocean floor, in which I could sink and drown from moment to moment, her warm breath, like the Gulf Stream current, bestows moments of happiness in my life. And I have to sail in the little boat of hope, until I reach the shore, like Dante on his journey to freedom.

As a haunted sailor, I sail in the currents of Life, with a question in my head, which like a whirlwind of troublesome letters, question marks, and philosophies, causes destruction in the space of my mind: "What is Life? What is Life? What is Life ..." Oceans and hurricanes, raging waves and winds, a desire for an orienting compass, a need for a map, a dream for a direction - this is what the journey of my Life is like.

In my opinion, the meaning of Life is hidden in the earthquakes of its challenges, when the tsunami of pain rises from its sleep, and together with the wind tries to drown me as I try to save myself from the flooding boat. This is Life: to cling tightly to that rotten and ruined piece of wood, which is now my salvation because Life is wide and because I want to live it!

Suddenly I can feel the warm sand on my feet. I'm on the shore. It feels like I'm born again. I realize that in life we die and are born incessantly.

After such an experience, I finally feel that I have discovered the meaning of Life. I think to myself: "Maybe Life is a series of challenges and its value lies in my ability to successfully overcome these challenges, to give meaning to my existence on Earth." However, I am once again mistaken. This is a selfish point of view.

Now, Life has transformed again with its ability to metamorphose. It is no longer a turbulent ocean in the storm of existence. The ocean has turned into a sky. Life is a sky with many warm sunbeams that caress my shoulders, that fill my soul with the most beautiful feelings of the spectrum of human emotions. Our world lies between death and madness, between the dream and the scorching and transcendent reality, and you must first dive into the depths of yourself and then understand the mission of your life.

I can feel the life flowing in my body, feeding my heart with new sensations, embracing my soul to confess something. I do not know how to put into words what Life has confessed to my soul, yet it is enough that I feel it. What I feel is love, happiness, peace, and tranquility. I already know that my purpose in life is to share and give these beautiful human feelings to others. So I choose to cherish my life on Earth. Life takes on value and meaning when your deeds do good to yourself, others and nature.