

Isolation Distance

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I once tried to create a garden, but nothing grew because of unwanted cross-pollination. Now, it is spring in my thirtieth year, and I have given up on gardens. However, remarkably, the world seems to keep turning. The rhinoceroses are mating at the zoo, as are the cats in the courtyard. To make matters worse, all of my friends are having children. Although I do not have children, and do not plan to have any in the foreseeable future, I often find myself—especially when I'm alone, without my spouse—thinking about all of the advice and lessons I will one day impart upon my hypothetical, improbable children: Learn to love the world, the ugly, and the flowers as an extension of yourself (because, arguably, nothing is ever truly ugly). Forget the wrongdoings of others and, instead, reach to remember what it was like before you were born, when you were still partially a spirit (because, arguably, nothing is ever truly wrong and we are all, still, partially spirit). With a fire extinguisher close at hand, learn to burn a candle from both ends (because everything, arguably, is already aflame). And as for bridges, understand that, arguably, they are never truly burned. Under no circumstance

should you write a prose poem about improbable advice that you probably won't give to your improbable children, especially if social media refuses to let you ignore that everyone you know who is your age is experiencing either pregnancy, birth, or child-rearing. If you still write that prose poem, you must immediately burn it. Because your father was a superstitious man who contemplated an improbable spiritual pre-birth existence and was once told by his superstitious mother to never wish for things you want to come true. These pieces of advice, I know, are as practical as they are probable. And this is why I keep them to myself, like plants that only grow in isolation, until, by chance, they all come to fruition.