



A child looks toward a round, soapy bubble that floats through the sky. The bubble catches the light of the sun, and the child delights as a rainbow flashes across the surface. The child reaches out to touch the delicate sphere, but the bubble shatters with a soft "pop". There is a moment of shock -- silence where there once was laughter and empty air where there once was magic. The soapy remains that sprinkle the child's face and the lingering droplets that flutter and fall are the only indication that something that beautiful was ever there.

This age, when we are young enough to stare in wonder at the small things, but old enough to be aware of the pain of the outside world, is our transition period. This time is when you choose the lens through which you see the world. Will I choose not to listen to the news, block out suffering, and be only in my own little world? Do I listen to the pain so much that it becomes the only thing I see? Can I be somewhere in between- have those magical moments, notice the bad, and look for the good?

This year, 2020, has made these choices all the more challenging. Our president denies the threats to our community and continuously downplays the seriousness of what we are facing. We've been stuck inside, given too much time to think, trying to balance the stress that threatens to weigh us down. Happiness brings guilt; sorrow traps you in hopelessness; detachment only makes you feel

meaningless. You want to fight, but you risk so much, and doing nothing means the other side wins; being neutral is not an option.

Through this all, I keep coming back to the bubbles. Like us, the bubbles are doomed from the moment they enter the world. We try to shelter them from the rough winds but it's futile. The moment we touch them, they disintegrate; if we cannot shield them, they fly away and are lost. All that's left is that shock, staring at empty spaces, wondering why the joy has to end.

But *this* is what makes life so special. The bubbles teach us that even though things will end, the short time we exist as humans gives us the power to bring happiness and joy. It gives us the power to create change. And we are *all* human. We are flawed, yet our hearts beat the same. Being human has never been easy, but that only means we are worth fighting for. Our flaws make us stronger, our time gives us power, our end gives us reason to be, to love, and to live.



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