

case study

Poetry • Virginia Wayt

Ladies and gentlemen, gather round,
for one night only at the Generation Zoo
you have the once-in-a-lifetime chance to witness,
in real life
a member of the species known as Generation Z

pay 5 cents to see a spectacle like you've never seen before!
notice the carefree smile but the bags under her eyes, her premature
grays this arguably live specimen, like many of her kind,
has no job except investing in her fear of failure,
keeping up her instagram presence, and obsessing over tom holland

this one even writes poetry, but only about boys, anxiety, and existentialism,
(because what else is there for a teen girl to write about?)
tonight we'll let her out of her cage and watch
as she interacts with a group of her species in the wild

they think they're having a party, but if you'll look closely you'll notice
they're all just sitting around on their iPhones.
look even closer and you'll see this is all just a
run-on self deprecating joke

look, the baby activist opens her mouth,
as though she's going to become the voice of her entire generation,
just like the kids from Parkland,
Listen! she speaks.

I am not a Millennial, so the news cannot get mad at me except for causing
a nationwide plummet in self esteem and spike in shameless vanity
most of us are still spending parents' allowance
so we can't yet be blamed for ending any industries

we are no cold-blooded killers for corporations because our riots are
mass existential crises
that end with putting knives in my own back

I may not be a typical self-obsessed teen
flowing self-reflection and narcissistic tendencies in the words on my

lips instead of posting twisted hips and duck lips on instagram

The most Gen Z thing I do is laugh at my own self-loathing,
and collect glasses with colored lenses
because they automatically apply an instagram filter

purple and pink
are the color of walking dreams
sleep-walking, fever-breaking
the horizon is perpetual sunset and last judgement day

stepping into a painting by Dali, surreal and melting into a blue sea
blue is like picasso's tragic guitarist,
making every cloud look like rain,
making every puddle look like ocean and saltwater and always a little
bit darker, but richer

yellow makes everything look vintage
feels like a simpler time
line drawing of the sun in the corner
scrawling of a child's drawing of an aster
yellow is everything you thought the world would be
before the world opened up like an oyster with no pearl inside

the whole world is bright and green

And that's why Immanuel Kant was wrong, with his rose colored glasses
we're all wearing fancy fashion glasses,
but we don't see the world in the same way

some people have clear lenses, #nofilter,
but most have yellow, blue, purple or pink
do not hail the optimist for her sunny days
or blame the pessimist for her endless cynicism,
it's just the shade of her reality

there is no glass full or empty
only yellow or blue lenses
and day to day, we may pick our pair
or it may be picked for us, but you can't deny
there are some days or weeks or months or years when the whole world
just looks blue, and dark, with a sadness as deep

as the Marianas Trench, looking back at me in the reflection of the water
pooling in my hands in the sink
and then one day, out of the blue,

you wake up and the world just looks greener, and brighter,
but somehow not as blinding look outside,
it looks more welcome out there
more ready to take me in
and finally I can step out into the sunlight