

We are all Cosmic Distractions

By Aasha Sriram

In Carlton, the sky has three dimensions. The first is the surface-level fluff, the third is a deep hollow, and in between is a patch that offers a seamless transition between both. I see three blues in the sky; this, only in Carlton. It might not look the same from Fitzroy or Brunswick. Depending on the vantage point, you can see the surface blue masking everything under, but as the day goes on, the blue peeks out from deeper within. By sunset, the fluff flits away, leaving one, dominant shade of deep blue which stands stoic against the wind, leaves, and rain.

Rare are those times when the sky stands empty without any distractions passing by or ornaments embellishing its skin. On most days, the moon is arriving just as the sun dissolves, or birds flutter by in panic fearing the dark is approaching faster than it seems. Or, you see fireworks or a rainbow. Or if you're lucky, you see a comet or a shooting star.

Sometimes, these everyday distractions can seem like a treasure. Spotting a plane fly by today, my eyes followed its journey up until it disappeared behind a heavy white cloud. I haven't heard the monotone drone of a plane in a while, so it seemed like something worth cherishing, even though it lasted only a few moments.

These are the moments that stand out for me nowadays. These little distractions in the sky become the highlight of my day. They invoke feelings and reactions in me that always needed to be chemically engineered by my brain. Instead of following these reactions, I observe them. I observe the pre-explosion the cosmic normalcy creates inside my head, sometimes linked off from my heart — two separate explosions occur in the same body with no way of making the connection and being complete.

All our memories and experiences are isolated explosions that happen in someone else's life. We are the cosmic distractions of each other. The background noise we represent grew too loud and flowed out of its isolated chambers into a vast vat. Colour mixed with colour and background noise became a canvas at the forefront of our everyday. But, on a day like this one, you can look up at the sky and spot a distraction you took for granted and forgot existed.

I looked at the sky and saw three stars — all close together but miles apart. Every star only exists in relation to the other. Depending on the spatial scale, a few stars may be close to one another, but it has its own solitary space within which it twinkles. From where I was standing, I could see the star, but I could also hear the cars driving by, the sounds of the trees rustling in the wind, the cries of an infant being rolled across the uneven concrete. From up there, it must be quiet, I thought.

That's how our lives probably are. We exist in relation to each other. We are all cosmic distractions for each other. Sometimes, we are forced to look up and experience the calm for a moment to remember that each of us is close together but miles apart. We co-exist.

And as I pick up my cup of tea, I hear that familiar whir again. Placing my dry lips on the cold ceramic, through the baseless steam that is pulled upwards, my eyes spot the flickering lights and wings of a plane. Where is this plane going? How many people are in there? Where are they going? Are they relieved to be leaving or arriving?

Are they all wearing masks?