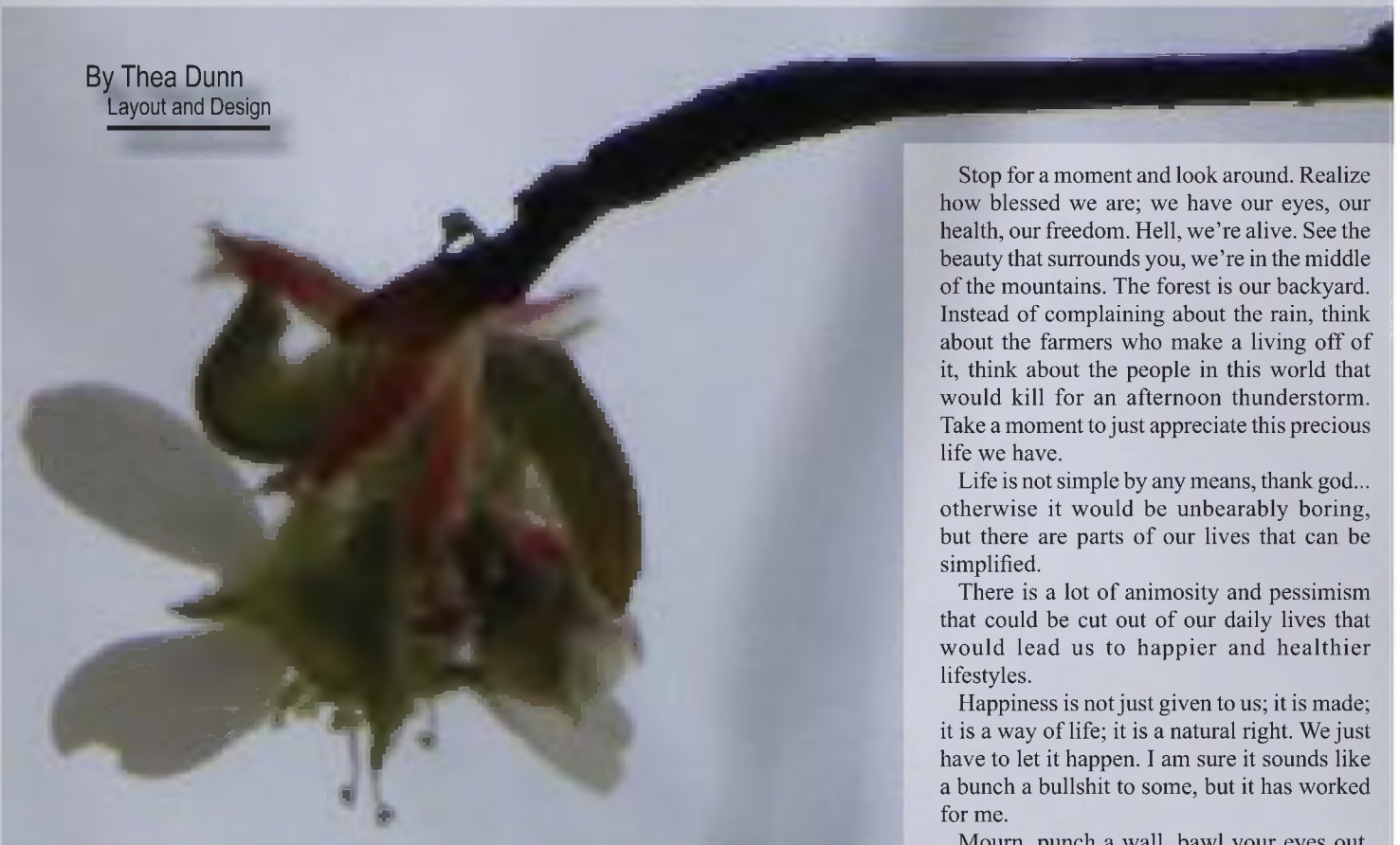


# Surmount the happiness barricade

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Is it easier to look at your life through a negative lens than to just let yourself be happy? I don't see how that could possibly be ideal and yet it has been my observation of late. Throughout my life I have grown to opt-out of wearing those glasses but I feel that the vast majority of people around me embrace them.

Looking through the eyes of a five-year-old might be a good idea for some of my peers. Remember when what really, truly was important was how high we could climb on the playground before the teacher made us get down? Or how much we could push our parents to let us stay up a few minuscule minutes passed our bedtimes? We see what we want, and for some reason it seems like a lot of people's eyes are drawn to the woeful side. But why?

I am so fed-up with the negative energy I am surrounded by daily. If you don't like something going on in your life CHANGE IT. I can hear the whiny defeatist voices now... "it's not that easyyyy." I know that there are situations in life that you can't control, but it

is all about your outlook, the way you see the world and the going-ons in it.

Everyone has their shit. A lot of it is hidden behind fake smiles, snide remarks, or concealer; but why make it the central focus of our lives?

Call me a happy-go-lucky day-dreamer, fine. I have had my shit too, but I have learned to deal. I have learned that zoning in on the negative is mental suicide, and sure as hell isn't worth it.

We make our own happiness if we let ourselves. Before depending on something or someone else for satisfaction and joy, look inward. Look at yourself. Go sit under a damn tree and breathe. It sounds so simple... because it IS. We make various aspects of our lives so convoluted; our jobs, our relationships, even our physique. When does it stop?

William Blake's poem, *Auguries of Innocence*, begins:

'To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And heaven in a wild-flower;  
To hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour'

Stop for a moment and look around. Realize how blessed we are; we have our eyes, our health, our freedom. Hell, we're alive. See the beauty that surrounds you, we're in the middle of the mountains. The forest is our backyard. Instead of complaining about the rain, think about the farmers who make a living off of it, think about the people in this world that would kill for an afternoon thunderstorm. Take a moment to just appreciate this precious life we have.

Life is not simple by any means, thank god... otherwise it would be unbearably boring, but there are parts of our lives that can be simplified.

There is a lot of animosity and pessimism that could be cut out of our daily lives that would lead us to happier and healthier lifestyles.

Happiness is not just given to us; it is made; it is a way of life; it is a natural right. We just have to let it happen. I am sure it sounds like a bunch a bullshit to some, but it has worked for me.

Mourn, punch a wall, bawl your eyes out, scream until the blood vessels in your eyes nearly burst, but don't let it engross you, don't let it define your life or your well-being. It's important to rant, to let your feelings fly, as opposed to bottling them up (something I struggle with) but I am so sick of constantly hearing the same complaints time and time again. It's so repetitive. Are you exhausted yet? If I am so tired of hearing this stuff... how can you not be sick of living it?

**Life's curveballs keep it interesting, don't let yourself flatline on negativity.**

Simplicity can be bliss. Complexity keeps us motivated. Our biggest and most noxious road block is ourselves. So knock that shit down, and *live*.

**Anyone who keeps  
the ability to see  
beauty never grows  
old. - Franz Kafka**