

MY HIGH

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

Salinger wrote, “The worst thing that being an artist could do to you would be that it would make you slightly unhappy constantly.”

That quote has resonated with me since I first read it years ago, but it wasn't until recently that I really understood it. I don't want to cater to the stereotype that all writers are brooding and melancholic creatures who shy away from sunlight. However, it is in my personal experience that the words spill out much more easily when my emotions are on the darker side of the spectrum than when life is cupcakes and daisies. Writing is a cathartic experience for me. When I'm “normal”, writing is like work. Well, it is work. I do what I have to do. It's like eating or sleeping.

But sometimes, when my body bloats due to an excess of emotions and moods (be it bright or dark), writing releases the pressure and I become normalized again. Sometime, it's almost as if I shed my skin and become a newer, purer me. I know that sounds weird, but I think if you do any kind of writing—I guess it works for other arts too, but writing has the story that so easily captures you—then you'll understand what I mean. You'll understand that high, that irresistible high you get when you create. It elevates you into the clouds and lets you sink into your subconscious. The world just melts away into nothingness. The colors of life blend together. Reality becomes a mirage. Imagination becomes real. And it's hard to remember where one world stops and the other begins.

I guess, in a way all writers are junkies because they're always running to search for that high that's sometimes elusive, yet sometimes incredibly generous. But when you catch it, when you feel it rushing through your bloodstream, you're certain that the nagging unhappiness constantly tugging at the back of your heart is worth the high of a moment.

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