

# I want the blogs back

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Where is the wonder, where's the awe? Where are the sleepless nights I used to live for?

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Years ago I followed blogs of friends and subculture "icons" (*they hate when I refer to them like this, but it was true that time*) and around 2009-2010 most of them went silent. Some even used services that are dead as doornail<sup>[^1]</sup> nowadays and disappeared without a trace; others though still update once in a blue moon.

Until very recently I was not aware that a few restarted blogging on Tumblr a while ago, so when I found them, I started following them. It took only a few days for me to feel like this:



**thrash can vs pool prank**

Let me explain.

## You're all individuals! Yes! We're all individuals![^2]

There are countless articles on how our attention span is becoming shorter and shorter, how today's children are suffering from hyperactivity and that we constantly require new stimulus minute by minute - but just a fraction of them are trying to figure out why.

One of these reasons could be microblogging and the way microblog is (not) structured. Content is usually coming from countless followed people, in your face, in one big mass, within a short time you end up with monstrous amount of pictures, quotes, reshares, things. If I was not looking at the URL I would not have been able to guess whose tumblr/twitter/whatever entry I was looking at - and this is bad.

We're loosing our uniqueness! **It does not matter if you reshare tonnes of things you're interested in, it's not you, because you're not adding yourself to it.**

Years ago we sat down and constructed our "blogs". We gave them a part of ourselves, to make it a reflection of ourselves, in our own style, our own language. It took time and it took effort.

If I look at my wall, my timeline, or any other stream, it's a mess which I'm not proud of. It's a never-ending scroll of things, without structure, without separating the less important from the more important, without me, without focus. *"regaining focus" is becoming much of a buzzterm but there is truth behind it.*

A picture can worth a 1000 words, but it does not necessarily replaces words, especially if the picture was not taken by you. Usually there are fascinating stories behind good photographs, long anecdotes behind a piece of art and these all give an additional layer to them.

There is a book, *Light on the Earth: Two Decades of Winning Images of Wildlife Photographer of the Year*<sup>[3]</sup> where next to every photo there is a short story how it was made. It gives people and idea how patient ( or how lucky ) one had to be to see the even happen and take those pictures. When an biographical work is written on someone their works is surrounded with narratives, interviews, memoirs and they all add to the art itself.

There was a talk about and idea, momentum.im, and in that talk there were serious and important questions asked: are the things you share on the social networks the moments you want to keep? Are those the memories you're actually fond of? Do they represent you?

I believe most of us would answer no. I'm not sharing my most important moments, because those are not for the general public. The things I share are the ones I would like others to hear about, but they do not describe me. And therefore: status updates are not really important things at all.

# Eew, writing? Reading long articles? Ain't nobody got time for that!

Twittering time comes out of dead time, usually - time in taxis, or waiting in corridors. Blogging time usually comes out of sleeping time. - Neil Gaiman<sup>[4]</sup>

It's hard to argue with those two sentences, yet Neil Gaiman was about to abandon social media for half a year<sup>[5]</sup>.

We have so much dead time, right? Waiting at the take-away/restaurant, commuting in the morning and the evening, walking on the street and we're not doing anything, right? Well... How about talking to the take-away guy? They are usually friendly, they could offer you some specials, at least a smile. *Or a cup of tea after a while, if they are Turkish. Turkish tea is good.* Commuting? Read news, read books, read science - make it worth, make yourself up-to-date and interesting. Walking on the street? WATCH OUT FOR THE TRUCKS, not for Facebook updates.

Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away. - Antoine de Saint-Exupery<sup>[6]</sup>

Ever since Apple redefined design ( *yes, I do give them credit for this* ) everyone is trying to live up to the idea, leading to things like Twitter. 140 characters should "embrace" your creativity by limiting you. Or Instagram: limit you to square, the hardest composition of all.

Sometimes it does help. Sometimes "640kB should be enough". Sometimes not. Creativity will not become stronger with restrictions and you should never believe this. Use whatever you want to use, whatever the way of expressing yourself requires; you don't need restrictions to create. It could help you train, it could be useful as an excersize and it will probably help you focus, but it will not bring instant creativity.

Probably this is another reason why posting short statuses, single pictures, resharing and reposting became this popular. We're trying to be minimal, but minimalism is extremely hard, and if not done well, it's just "meh" - something to forget in a minute.

## attention whores thirstiness

A long time ago I started cross-posting from my blog to everywhere I could. I revisited this experiment from time to time, with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, WordPress.com, Flickr, Deviantart, etc., and all for one goal: fame.

It's hard to admit and hard to make myself admit that yes, in some cases, I was posting for attention. I wanted my photos to gain success, to be seen by many, like it happened to others.

Then lately I started asking a question: do I want my post to be seen by thousands and be forgotten in minutes or seen by a few, but remembered for a long time?

This is a very important question and it made me think about the old web, the internet that was homely. I was so happy with less than 10 views per day! I received comments in my guestbook and mails about banner-exchange.

If I enjoyed those times I value the few, but important visits and views to the many, faceless, momentary pageloads.

## for the end

Where is the wonder, where's the awe? Where's dear Alice knocking on the door? Where's the trapdoor that takes me there? Where the real is shattered by a Mad Marsh Hare

Where is the wonder, where's the awe? Where are the sleepless nights I used to live for? Before the years take me I wish to see the lost in me

I want my tears back! I want my tears back now! Nightwish: I Want My Tears Back<sup>[^7]</sup>

UPDATE Not so surprisingly, even the main(er)stream media<sup>[^8]</sup> had started to think about reviving blogs, thanks to their journalists<sup>[^9]</sup>.

### Links

1. <http://archiveteam.org/index.php?title=Deathwatch>
2. [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Life\\_of\\_Brian](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Life_of_Brian)
3. <http://www.bbcshop.com/science+nature/light-on-the-earth/inv/9780563522607>
4. <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2014/05/important-please-read-this-now.html>
5. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jun/14/neil-gaiman-social-media-sabbatical>
6. [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Antoine\\_de\\_Saint\\_Exup%C3%A9ry](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Antoine_de_Saint_Exup%C3%A9ry)
7. <http://grooveshark.com/s/I+Want+My+Tears+Back/4kLW1q?src=5>
8. <http://www.theverge.com/2014/8/20/6049259/the-future-of-blogging>
9. <http://lockhartsteele.com/blog/2014/08/back-to-the-blog>

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