

# 'They turned from the known world behind and faced the moors'

I found myself standing yet again at a metaphorical and physical crossroads. I had been here before, facing the ultimate question. Is an escape from the cycle, the endless repeat of the same experience in the swirling terrifying whirlpool of my life and the world around me, worth it to lose the small amount I have?

The moors have always fascinated me. The stretch of desolate wilderness leading to a different world, an unknown clean slate of opportunity. Peaceful tranquillity. A place beyond the city and larger urban area which have been the walls trapping me inside my miserable routine. As a child the enchanting nature of the moors enticed me, nothing more, but the older I grew, the yearning to be free also firmly took its grip on me. I've never truly been happy with what I have, the rewards I reap for the work I do always seem unjust. The mundane task of typing away or filing away piece of paperwork after piece of paperwork and receiving just enough to live with comfort, as if that's enough to keep me happy and complying to everyone's needs. Exhaustion with no profit.

I find the world to be a subtle dystopia, the type you can only see if you look in the right places. I, unfortunately, seem to be an expert in finding such places. My family have always done the bare minimum and occasionally a little more but never enough to win over a child with a will to truly experience life to the fullest extent a colourful imagination can visualise. Dreams lost in the sands of the time. This sense of supposed unjustness and always feeling incomplete carried itself across my life and across my existence. A need for something just out of reach doesn't leave you, and every time you complete a goal it stretches itself a little further. How long until the goal disappears forever?

Guilt has rooted itself deep inside me too, on paper I should be very happy and content with what I have been given by Earth's lottery. "On paper", apparently, amounts to nothing. Battling with the idea of why you feel like you do always takes a grave toll on the mind; I wear myself

down with my own inner conflict. Yet I still force the mindset of looking for a conclusion and an answer to the cause of my dreary nihilism.

Over years of pondering this and letting emotions fully manifest themselves inside me, I believe that all I truly want is to make a difference. I see myself in everything around me, which is a problem. I am an inconspicuous, irrelevant cog in a ginormous machine in which every movement of every part mirrors each other. The issue eating away at me is that if one cog breaks, it will not bother anyone to simply replace it and forget it ever existed. If I go beyond the moor, will my cog be missed in the machine? The fact I have to even consider that is perhaps a sign that the light from my candle of hope has been smothered. Everything is dark and cold.

I live on my own and my social interactions and connection with others are limited, isolation has become the norm for me throughout my life and I don't expect that to change anytime soon. Methods of escapism change drastically throughout one's life and I used to find comfort in my solitude, however, that feeling has all but evaporated. I see it as more of a psychological prison designed to coerce me into letting my worst thoughts overwhelm and tease me, with no end ever being in sight. Forever fighting an unwinnable battle. In the moors I would still be alone, but the stresses of the world which birthed such thoughts would lie far behind me, as if in a separate universe.

Something still forced hesitation from me as I stood on that damp and long mound of grass just past the road. But what? The feeling was a horrifying yet mildly pleasant mix of nostalgia, regret and a need for some form of companionship, a way in which to end my never ending and draining pure loneliness. I thought I had left the naive thought of human connection far behind me, however, it somehow latched onto me like a disgusting parasite. Eating at my cynicism. The emotion itself is not inherently disgusting, but I saw it as a regression of all my progress towards a more logical way of thinking and understanding of where the deep self loathing and escapist dreams came from. I had betrayed my own pathetic nihilism and I almost wanted it back.

I still couldn't put my finger on what exactly instilled this thought of staying. There was a furious back and forth in my head between my undying yearning to be free of my mental prison and my newfound appreciation for what I did have. Small things matter. My regular day has minor happiness within it too, a small smile exchanged with a passing stranger, a freshly cooked meal with a beautiful aroma, getting a pressing piece of work done, the few minutes with my family when I don't feel rejected and out of place. The negatives may outweigh the positives but is it worth waiting to see if the positives become more frequent?

If I was able to feel positive about myself during my most depressing moments, why could I not see things like that all the time? Perhaps I could try and socialise more with colleagues or see a light through my semi-functioning family. I can improve and better myself, bringing back the outlook of tentative optimism I once possessed. Maybe there is no one who truly cares but I can care for myself. I now work backwards from my past progression and attempt to manifest my own future ; and if all else fails the moors are always waiting.