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Fluency Portfolio

Edited Works

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 *What my childhood tasted like*

 ***Bittersweet[[1]](#footnote-2)***

 Have you ever tried frozen juice? Doesn’t it taste like summer, like freedom, like nothing you’ve ever tasted before?[[2]](#footnote-3) Just like ice cream, only so much better. Ice cream’s plain taste and texture, one and the same in every mouthful, can’t compare to the crisp feel given by the mixture of ice and juice.[[3]](#footnote-4) One might[[4]](#footnote-5) say, “Juice isn’t supposed to be frozen, it is meant to be consumed like pure liquid!” No. Why obey the socially accepted standards?[[5]](#footnote-6) In my childhood memories, I see tons and tons of plastic cups filled with frozen juice. It reminds me of the carefree[[6]](#footnote-7), slightly windy days back in the village, when nothing seemed to matter but the flavor of my frozen juice. Strawberries, oranges, apples, and smiles. I’d hide it here and there, because to my mother it was nothing but a cup of ice and artificial coloring. Oh mom, you just don’t get it, do you? I feel like adults will never truly appreciate[[7]](#footnote-8) the simple pleasures in life. My sweet, sweet childhood was[[8]](#footnote-9) only ever bitter when my mother tried to deprive me from what makes me happy. Like[[9]](#footnote-10) the irreplaceable sensation of sugary[[10]](#footnote-11) ice slowly melting in your mouth, releasing the fruity liquid that tickles your senses[[11]](#footnote-12) and settles in that tiny space in the back of your brain where memories are kept. Forever.
 During the time I spent at the village, I would often[[12]](#footnote-13) go to the local shop, an insignificantly small place where you could buy basic necessities, most[[13]](#footnote-14) of which already far beyond their expiration date. The seller would curve his lips in an understanding smile and ask me, “What flavor?”, and I would willingly give the few coins clattering in my pocket[[14]](#footnote-15) for a cup of happiness. Whoever said money can’t buy happiness never tasted frozen juice. And then it would finally be mine. My palm would freeze and tremble as it holds my frozen juice in its warm embrace. The juice was always ready to melt for me, ready to sweeten and refresh my summer day[[15]](#footnote-16).
 It is a major part of my every summer memory, a symbol of those endless days and nights, of the empty streets which me and my friends filled with laughter. Pure laughter. Genuine laughter. I remember exchanging cups, strawberry for apple, orange for raspberry, as if our friendship was all based on frozen juice, the bond between us[[16]](#footnote-17) as strong as the bonds between the water molecules in ice. As long as we drank frozen juice, we were friends. And friendship was real back then, still uncorrupted by responsibilities, by worries and all sorts of drama.[[17]](#footnote-18) Today, I rarely go to the village and I rarely drink frozen juice; it’s pretty unhealthy after all. But the small shop in my village is still there, preserving my most precious childhood memories.

 *Creating a Dystopia* ***About Scannedinavia[[18]](#footnote-19)*** The noise from the x-rays never muffled, it only grew louder. X-rays were always scanning. You could hide everything else but your organs. They didn’t belong to you. They belonged to *them*. You belonged to *them*.[[19]](#footnote-20) Any healthy kidney or liver, or heart, could be taken away at any time if the x-ray said so. And there were many of them, x-rays, wherever you go, they followed. Invisible shields of electrons, impossible to be noticed by the regular human eye[[20]](#footnote-21). They were planted in walls, in pavements, in furniture, one could even suspect[[21]](#footnote-22) his own mirror was an x-ray. Sometimes they would stop, a word was spread[[22]](#footnote-23), but you could never know if you were scanned or not. The buzzing was there no matter what[[23]](#footnote-24). You had to live your life, fully aware[[24]](#footnote-25) that your organs were not there to sustain your life, but grown and monitored to eventually take it away for a new one to be created[[25]](#footnote-26). One that could actually be manipulated.
 None of the citizens of Scannedinavia remembered the Silent Times[[26]](#footnote-27), what silence felt like, what it *sounded* like. It was as if this constant buzz could shut both the present and the past. In fact, the people were used to the noisiness, their senses[[27]](#footnote-28) had adapted to it to a point that they no longer found it hard to hear beyond the noise. Noise was silence. True fear was caused by the haunting thought of the noise ever stopping. What if suddenly it became quiet and you started hearing your every breath, your every thought? But of course, the Scannedinavian government would never permit that. There was never such a risk. As long as the government could decide, there would be x-rays, there would be noise, and a constant state of commotion.[[28]](#footnote-29)
 The world outside was cold, permanently wrapped in fog. The absolute lack of any vegetation gave the people a feeling of isolation, as though they were all secluded somewhere nothing can survive. There were rumors that the fog was intentionally made to stop them from looking around. And it made sense. Otherwise how could the x-rays see everything clearly and not people. People weren’t supposed to know what’s happening around them. They had to know where their own chamber in the Sanctum is, how to get to the Factory, to the Sportshall, and to the public park.[[29]](#footnote-30) They were a part of a vicious circle[[30]](#footnote-31). The park was the only place they could visit by their own free will. A relatively large аrea where the fog was just a bit sparser and they could ride a bike or do something of their own choice. The Sportshall was obligatory, since they had to keep their body healthy and their organs in a perfect condition. Visiting the Factory, on the other hand, their workplace, served simply as an occupation to distract.[[31]](#footnote-32) The citizens had hardly any idea why they were all appointed to do one and the same thing. The monotonous production of scissors, scalpels, and forceps. In fact most of them never even wondered why they did what they did, they never asked questions, they just knew they *had* to do it. [[32]](#footnote-33)
 Once in a month you would wake up and feel empty. You would feel like a part of you is missing. And most of the time, it was. It was missing and you could do nothing about it. If the x-ray saw something in you, it was already too late. They would take you at night, always at night, somewhere in those buildings hidden by the fog. They would most probably anesthetize you,[[33]](#footnote-34) because in the morning, you would be back in your bed as if nothing had ever happened. Except it had. Scannedinavian citizens, though they existed homogenously, could be divided into two types – the oblivious and the aware ones. The oblivious lived their life exactly as the government wanted them to[[34]](#footnote-35), completely blind for what was being done to them. They went to work, they sweated hour after hour[[35]](#footnote-36) in the Sportshall, until ignorance quickly filled up the empty space where their organs had once been. The aware ones were the smart ones. They knew exactly what was happening, so they had to do everything they could to avoid it. They took on bad habits. Like smoking and drinking. Once organs were damaged they could no longer be used. Healthy organs, ironically, were your death warrant.

1. Instead of including the first step of writing the piece – the brainstorming, I decided to just come up with a title that represents an adjective that best summarizes how my childhood actually tasted like, in relation to the food I’ve chosen to write about. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. I chose to replace the simple statements that “people have never tried frozen juice” and “they don’t know how it tastes like” with rhetorical questions, because I believe they establish a connection with the reader, they’re more specific, and they help explain how I identify the taste of frozen juice. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This is an explanation of why exactly frozen juice is better than ice cream, in my opinion. I tried to compare how the two make you feel and show how frozen juice is a combination of sensations. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. WC: I put “might” instead of “would”, because it’s only a probability. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. I decided to add this question between those two sentences to point out how I accept frozen juice as a way to oppose the tendency for juice to be consumed as a liquid. I want to show that different isn’t always bad, exactly the opposite, different in many cases equals happy. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. WC: I replaced the word “careless” with the word “carefree”, because I realized the second one is more relevant to the meaning of the sentence. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. WC: I replaced the verb “understand” with “appreciate”, because in that case, the “simple pleasures in life” aren’t supposed to be understood, but to be appreciated. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. I added the auxiliary verb ”to be” to the sentence, because otherwise it sounded incomplete and lacked character. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. I added “like” to somehow connect this sentence to the previous one. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. WC/Repetition: I decided to use “sugary” instead of “sweet”, because I’ve repeated “sweet” way too many times and it’s an adjective that sounds irrelevant when applied to ice. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Here I replaced “haunted your every sense” with “tickled your senses”, because it better matches the overall mood of the piece, while the original phrase makes the sentence sound more dismal than it’s supposed to. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Since I previously talked about how I was negatively affected by my mother embittering my childhood and now I want to proceed to the story itself, I think it’s better to start with a time reference that is a bit more specific. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. I linked those two sentences in order to get rid of the feeling of fragmentation. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. I decided to replace “I have” with this descriptive phrase, in order to associate the coins with some feeling, rather than just say that I had them and decided to spend them. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Here I wanted to avoid the sudden switch from first to second person, therefore I made the phrase apply to my case only. I think it somehow fits better in the context and doesn’t interfere with the flow of the story. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The word “between” is a better choice in this case, because otherwise it sounds as if we own some kind of a bond, and not as if we are connected by a bond, if that makes sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. These sentences I added to show how frozen juice was actually a symbol of true friendship and the lack of any useless bothers. Then I expanded my thought to talk about how friendship is purest when you’re a child and you’re free of any worries and responsibilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. This is the title I chose for my Dystopia piece, and I think it is suitable, because it doesn’t reveal too much and only includes the name of the country the text is about. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. I found those sentences necessary to add because I want to show how despite being physically a possession of every human being, organs do not belong to the people, but to the government, as they can be taken away anytime. I referred to the government as “them” to keep the mystery, I guess. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. This sentence serves as a description of what x-rays represent exactly, and mentions the fact that they can’t ever be noticed. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. I considered that “suspect” is a better verb than “think” in this case, for it’s a bit more expressive and “think” by itself would hint that the citizens did possess the ability to think, when most of them really didn’t. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. This clarification I found necessary to add, because otherwise people would have no way of knowing that the x-rays ever stopped. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. I chose to re-write the whole sentence, firstly because the word “overgrowing” in the initial sentence had a meaning, different from the one that the sentence requires. Also, I realized the sentence is identical to the one the piece begins with and they both gave a similar characteristic of “the noise”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Awkward: I altered the phrase “conscious of the thought” into “fully aware that”, because the initial one was long, clumsy, and awkward, which I want to avoid. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. I re-wrote the end of the sentence in this particular way, since the organs aren’t the ones who create the new life. Instead, they are used for artificial humans to be created. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. In this sentence I decided to omit the word “actually” in order to get rid of the repetition, as I used “actually” in the sentence before as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. WC: In this case, the correct word to be used isn’t “sensory”, but “senses”, as they differ in meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. In those sentences I wanted to include the aspect of people being unable to think and act adequately while there is noise. Even though they’re used to it, the buzz still serves as an impediment to the overall thought process of the citizens. I want to imply that this is exactly what the government wants, in order for people not to come to the realization that something improper is happening. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Awkward: I changed a little the structure of this sentence, because it again sounded slightly awkward. Also, it’s more like the people need to know the location of their chamber rather than know the chamber itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Now that I’ve added “they were a part of”, the sentence has a subject. It related to the people, who are involved in that vicious circle. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Awkward: In this sentence, I added the word “visiting”, as well as slightly altered the last phrase, in order to fix the confusion that “the factory” is “an occupation to distract”, which sounds awkward. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. This sentence I decided to remove, because it is related to the next paragraph and serves no purpose when it’s put at the end of this one. It neither contributes to the overall idea, nor can it serve as a concluding sentence. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Here I included the additional detail that suggests that people were anesthetized before put upon the operation that takes away their organs. I found this information necessary to include between those two sentences, because it serves as a transition, and it explains why people didn’t remember anything about what happened when they were taken away at night. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. I replaced the phrase “as they were supposed to” with “as the government wanted them to”, in order to better show that the oblivious ones are living their life to best serve the interest of the government. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. I chose to use “hour after hour” instead of “hours and hours”, because I think it sounds smoother, plus, it adds a feeling that time has stopped and adds to the atmosphere of hopelessness. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)