

EXISTENTIAL RE-FLUX: a mini universe. [TRANSCRIPT]

edited and transcribed by:
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00:00 [gentle chatter, echoing speaker in the background]

00:16 I know, but I want a picture with it!

00:19 Hi, my name is Bernie Rhie. *Charcoal scratching on paper*
Hi, I'm Miriam Harshberger, and I am one of Helene's best
friends

I'm a professor in the English department at Williams College.

Hi, my name is Ana Strong Garcia

I'm Emily Marquis I...

00:29 [Helene at show, announcing that the smudging is beginning] Hi everyone!

Thank you so much for coming, um... I guess... feel free to start smudging!

It's 3[PM], so... [nervous laugh] [single whoop in background]

00:38 I'm an American Studies major,

Um, I'm an Aries ☺, I love being an Aries,

I'm a father, a son, a husband,

I'm Leah, I'm 22, I'm a senior...

00:46 I guess when I think about what I feel, or what I wish, or what I love...

I return to this question of knowing myself; and I just feel like I don't know
myself at all.

I feel... tired, and fearful,

00:55 I feel grateful.

I... also love when people laugh so hard that tears come out of
their eyes,

Hi! Um, I'm Siri, I am...

And I'm grateful for anyone who's ever made me laugh so hard
that tears came out of my eyes.

Or, kind of a senior. I have one semester left after this.

01:08 I wish I had more answers... more... clarity in life. And-

Hi! I am Olive—this is Olive [*laugh*]. And—
 ...And I wish I knew what it felt like, to have this sense of... myself, and... who I am
 01:22 ...am lucky enough to be one of Helene's friends,
 To be included in this beautiful, wonderful project.
 Hi, my name is Kendra Brenya. Um, I'm 22,
 Um, I'm excited to leave Williamstown, especially on freezing cold
 days like today.
 01:32 Um. I feel... pretty neutral. Not really happy, not really sad... um...
 Ah, I'm a senior at Williams and graduating this spring. I study chemistry here,
 Um, I'm excited for the spring and the future,
 01:43 I just want it to be sunny, and I don't want to be in class...
 I'm excited for the spring...
 More dynamicism... to this monotony... but,
 01:52 It's so easy, I love people, I love hugs, I love...
 to lose one's way. Good conversations.
 In this moment I feel *tired*,
 What I believe in,
 I love... the way campus smells after it rains
 02:00 ..and it's very scary to me, to think about going out into the world, still so...
 ...lost, and unformed.
 02:08 and, sometimes I think that there's like
 And, one thing I wish is that ... we as a human species hadn't evolved to have
 My full self is waiting at the end of a different path, one I didn't go down
 So much ...skin
 Just kind of like a calm middle.
 02:16 I have like, seven hours of class today
 I think... that... I just don't really like it, I think that if we
 And, that... we'll never meet, and that's very... scary to me, but...
 all had a silky, fluffy coat of fur all over our bodies, that
 Outside, somewhere warm
 My name is Lucas Tolley
 We would be
 I'm really
 02:30
 That things would be really different, and I have a hypothesis
 And... I really hope that next year... that if this were the case, then... religion
 02:40 and a lot more time wouldn't exist in the same way that it does. So...
 ...feeling less tired. Make of that what you will.
 I'm excited to go to *sleep*,
 02:50 I'm a Williams computer science and math double major.
 Something that I've always loved... but that I realized ...so I'm kind of ready
 I wish I... knew myself a little better. Or was confident in... to be out of here
 I am having fun dreaming about the spring, and the summer,
 03:00 I feel fear for the future, and what it may hold.

...the things that I want to believe about myself.

The idea that... there *is* no self; and, um I guess a quote that I just heard on a podcast
I love... doing things that make me forget about my reality. I feel good about the fact that I don't
exactly know what my future is gonna be

03:10 When I look inside, and see that I am nothing,
That's wisdom. [background chatter]

When I look outside, and see that I am everything,
That's love.

03:20 And that quote... [inhale] helps me feel better, [dripping noises]
...about this... dread. [charcoal scrubbing]

...things I can and can't control.

Hi, my name is Taylor McClennan,

03:30 ...before I go to bed, and, I love...

Imagine -- this, or that...

Uhhh... hello? My name is ... Aidan Feurer, ...will bring us happiness.

Feel the world in more of its fullness,

03:40 even if it feels really gross.

That I... love even more slash have been missing a lot, um.... Today, is...

I like to remind myself of the fact that I will die.

...just, like, the feeling of warm Hi, my name is Sarina Prasad

03:50 ...for opportunities I have not... I'm a senior at Williams.

Or things I may not have done. I'm a political science major.

And I grew up in Northern Virginia.

The sound of snow falling in a forest... it's not a sound, it's actually a silence.

04:00 Right now, I'm looking out my window... kinda rainy but I feel like it's
A vibe for today.

[overlapping voices]

...and clean, which is nice because...

04:10 lately I've been feeling a little stressed

And it's like, strangely warm here.

About not knowing what I'm

And I have no way of knowing when.

doing after graduation. And I'm tired

of constantly thinking about it...

Hello, my name is Kenia Cruz Guardado. Hmm, let's see.

04:20 I wish I had a plan lined up, but I don't.

[laughter from people smudging
a portrait of their friend]

[excited chatter, laughter overlapping]

...uh, currently Helene's current boyfriend, uh, from the mountains...

04:30 nature around me... ...life happy.

Hi, my name is Anjali Poe.

And, I also love thinking about the things that I love.

04:40 Overall...

I'm feeling... nervous about graduating,

..that's kind of like a....

I feel love for my friends and family,

04:46 (Anjali at show) "Ahh! I'm so str..."

(Aidan) "You gotta get in there, you gotta mean it."

04:50 (Anjali, rubbing her portrait) "Oh my god, this is so sa... [laughs]"
 (Taylor) Isn't it cool? [Anjali, still rubbing] Wow-
 ...spring, so that's kind of like my... large-scale feeling.
 ...realize what I had until it was missing, so. I—I don't know. Days like today...um,
 05:00 ...are few and far between. [dripping] [charcoal rubbing]

What other points do I have to answer for her, she... needs me to answer what I... wish...
 05:10 *It could be tomorrow.* I feel... confused. Or maybe happy.
 I wish... bathrooms... were a *bit* more spacious,
 And I'm grateful for the friends and the experiences that I've had at Williams,
 05:20 as much as I do complain about the work, I don't think I
 ...they don't really offer ...enough- ...Or maybe sad. [laughs]
 Have supported me... [overlapping voices]... and have my back no matter what.
 05:30 Um, I'm feeling a lot of things... um. I wish that I knew how I felt.
 Some may think this is a morbid thought.

My name is Roman, and I'm a
 I wish, you know... for everyone to be happy... Senior.
 I'm excited about the future, but still waiting to see what my next steps are.
 05:40 Not everything is figured out yet, but I think that's okay.
 Those are all my... thoughts at the moment,
 Hi everyone, um. I'm Gaurnett Flowers, I wish
 05:50 right now, I feel very happy...
 for a safe drive, for... very happy to be a senior, very happy to be wrapping up...
 ...peaceful thinking ? Well, happy *and* sad.
 I wish... you know, to see everyone happy. I think...
 my friends and family to be happy.

Our world is beautiful, and I appreciate every second that I get to be a part of it.
 06:00 Hi, I'm Gigi, I'm a senior from the Bronx,
 Hi. My name is Becca Brody, but ...you can also call me Rebecca.
 and I'm a chemistry and psychology
 I feel, like... I am both... major at Williams.

06:10 the most scattered I have ever been in my life, but also...
 the most calm... I've ever been in my life? Fun fact about me...
 Uh, it doesn't make much sense to me, but... I'm still trying to figure it out.
 I wish I had more time to spend with my friends In 7th grade, I used to be a professional
 Before we all go our separate ways, gamer...
 06:20 but I've had some good times, and made lasting memories with them all.

Hello, uh my name is... Javier Robelo, I am from Managua, Nicaragua, I am... 22 years old.
 Hi, my name is Alexa, most people call me Slug, um... Um...
 Um. I wish that when I was thinking about the future... that... I could imagine more of the happy
 things that are going to happen...
 06:30 Ah, I've been subconsciously pushing back recording this, because... **time is crazy.**
 Um, I love rats. And similarly, um...

06:40 [overlapping voices] college...

I love just sitting in Lee's with my friends... ...we have like, 5 weeks left
 The sun is hitting overhead... I wish... I had more time

06:50 Forgetting about everything else that's happened in the
 Day and just... joking about... looking at...

Sometimes, I wish I had more time. Or the weird food that we're eating...
 ...I think those are some of my favorite moments. [overlapping]
 I... didn't really believe I could be depressed for a long time because of how

Um... sort of like... Happy I felt?

07:00 I feel like... as I get older, I've always been like...
 Time gets like... harder to manage?
 [laughing] I was one of those Tumblr fandom kids in high school...

07:10 [chatter, laughter at show]
 (Jackson, smudging his own portrait) Oh, it hurts.
 Oh, no, I can't touch the beard... can't touch the beard. [laughter]
 Oh, it hurts. [laughter] [overlapping voices, charcoal rubbing sounds]

07:20 In a way, time kind of like, feels shorter...
 [Aidan, recording Rebecca smudging her portrait at show] *How do we feel, Rebecca?*
 [Rebecca] Emotionally distraught. [Jackson] *Yeah, seriously, this hurts.*

07:30 charcoal rubbing noises [laughter]

...If that makes any sense... I was cringe, but I was free, but—
 Um, I guess —I was thinking about my quote,
 What I mean is... I really love performing; it's kind of
 ...days start feeling like... they go by quicker? Just the most important
 ..only get more and more [overlapping]... thing in my life, um...

07:40 ...how they felt... ...who you are, and who you will always be.
 So, it's crazy! I don't know— [overlapping] cheesy.
 But, to be fair, that might be... from senior spring... ...and all that stuff.

07:50 It makes me really sad that... after I leave Williams, I probably
 Won't be performing... ever again, at least regularly
 Hi, my name is Alice Qu, and... ...a full time job, and not...

08:00 [clicks tongue] I don't know what to say, but I guess, doing any shows or
 [charcoal scrubbing] At the end of my life, ...and it doesn't really feel real to me?
 I know with absolute certainty... [overlapping]

...that the only thing that mattered to me in 2 months...

08:10 I wish and hope, that... ...is how well I've loved.

...at some point, time stops feeling like something that runs out,
 Hopefully someday, *Have I lived from the heart?*

08:20 it becomes something enjoy, rather than... *Have I loved well, my
 something to use. family... my friends?
 [dripping] [chatter] My students?*

What is your name? Mae Theodora Stroud.

08:30 [amidst echoey chatter] [Nick, to Mae] Should we draw a butterfly?
 [Mae] Yeah! ... I'm [indistinct]

08:40 Have I done a little bit,
to alleviate the suffering of others? [Nick] Hello butterfly!
You wanna color with that?

And how old are you? [charcoal rubbing]
Six. I'm Anna Ryu, and I'm 18 years old.

08:50 If I haven't done that,
That, would be a reason to feel remorse. I'm Helene's sister—younger sister,
Uhhh, my name's Helene. And regret. And... the daughter of...
Young and Chang.
Who's in your family?

09:00 Kitten... two kittens... and... Kate, Nick, and... Knowl.
I draw things. Right now, I feel both
I feel.... Happy. Really tired but,
09:10 I feel... kind of nauseous right now. ...really at peace in a lot of
[sink faucet running] Um. Different ways...
...um, but mostly tired, I think. And then... ate like, half a cup of almonds after...
I just... would like to lay down, and take a big,
09:20 big nap, for a very long time Um, I wish, that...
I wish... Caticorns were alive.
...with no other obligations attached, just... sleep to sleep.
I love... cats.

09:30 Something I love... There's a lot of things, but I guess,
What else does she need me to say, the biggest things, that...
I ...love... oh, I love, um... take my love right now are...
09:40 the fact that ...this is happening. My sister and my mom, and my friends,
Just talking. And not talking. And...
Sometimes we could just talk or not talk for hours... Just, my family, I love them.

09:50 charcoal scrubbing And, I love mountains, too.
And I also love waterfalls. And I love when mountains... are next to waterfalls.
[Gentle background chatter]

10:00 And I hope I can visit.... somewhere like that one day. [Charcoal]
And take a nap. And be with people I love. [dripping]

Hi, (my name is) what? (my name is) who? (my name is)

10:10 wicka wicka Slim Shady! Just kidding, it's actually Tyler Spiezio.
My name is Rebecca Kuo, Uh, I feel...
My name is Jonah Daniel Martinez Goldstein, I feel...
I'm Alex Giles, I feel right now...

10:20 ...excited. ...anxious ...at peace
about the future. moving on,
Y'know, pretty warm right now? It's about 70 degrees,
And somehow also nostalgic for right now,
...about everything that's to come... I feel like I'm making memories,
...leaving behind a lot of things, and... Right now, that I'll want to be nostalgic

10:30 So much of what I've been thinking about lately is leaving. about

And I'm not sure how to feel about that?

I wish that... I wish I had... been more patient with myself, and with the world around me.

...the sun was out more, because... it really improves-

10:40 ...improves quality of life here at Williams...

My favorite candy bar is a Butterfinger. ...help me... to be more present,

I love... other people's experiences that I don't understand.

and I love... the fact that I get to be a part of this project,

10:50 My name is Bella Nadel, um... I... feel...

I also just got new shoes this week, so my feet feel great,

...and if all I do, is that, ...really, happy!

And I wish... that I had more Butterfingers! I feel grateful,

11:00 ...for the rest of my life,

I think I'll be pretty happy. I haven't had Butterfingers in a while,

Uh, I guess I also wish... there wasn't a war in Ukraine,

Beyond that, I love... Taco Bell...

I wish... I could pause time and not make it go forward.

11:10 [dripping faucet sounds, soap lathering and hands washing]

11:14 [voicemail beep]

[in Korean] [dad]: Helene, it's dad; [in English] today is January 9th, Monday,

11:20 ...I am in your school at the parking lot, I can give you a ride back home,

Don't - don't ride on the school bus, I can give you a ride.

...So... call me as soon as possible, okay?

Bye-it's about 3:45 now.

[charcoal rubbing]

[faucet dripping]

11:36 [voicemail beep] [in Korean] [dad]: Helene...

[in English] 7:17... I'm on my way.

[charcoal smudging]

11:48 [overlapping background noises, ambient noises, chatter]

11:49 May I respectfully remind you...

Great is the matter of birth,

Especially with a lot of seniors that...

And death.

All is impermanent, quickly passing.

And I wish that...

12:05 Be awake, each moment.

...happy, and I...

12:09 Don't waste this life.

Similarly,

12:16 I really... don't want to waste my life.

But to be fair...

Life is so precious.

...and I love...

[dripping noise] [distant voicemail beep]

[charcoal rubbing]

[chatter fading]

[dripping fades]

END (12:31:08)