

Editors Column



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## Book Review: Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop



I encourage you to read *Welcome to the Hyunam-dong Bookshop*, a book about books, healing, and warmth.  
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

Some books are like a game of chess, tricky and mysterious, leaving the reader to put together the pieces. Other books are like roller coasters, bold and thrilling, making readers feel the same action-packed exhilaration. Other books take readers on a whirlwind romance or make them experience bone-jarring grief. *Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop*, by Hwang Bo-reum and translated by Shanna Tan, is a Korean novel that

feels like a cup of warm tea in a well-lit cafe on a cool evening.

Rarely seen in the fast-paced plots of popular Western novels, *Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop* has a much slower and poignant take on the daily life of a realistic protagonist. In the novel, Yeongju is tired of her life, which hasn't unfolded the way she intended. Deciding to start fresh, she returns to her first love: reading. She opens a bookshop in Hyunam-Dong, a peaceful neighborhood of Seoul. There, she learns to rekindle her hunger for reading and grapples with all the little challenges of running a bookstore, eventually finding her philosophy, both as a bookseller and a regular human being.

The book is a massive bestseller in South Korea, where it is categorized as being part of the genre of "healing fiction." Contrasting with many best-selling Western novels, the novel intentionally slows down time within the short chapters. Each chapter feels like a vignette; from the viewpoints of many char-

acters, each section focuses on a specific subject, from the types of books that should be sold at the bookshop to the shop barista's dilemmas of choosing between pleasing his parents and living a simple and happy life.

The quandaries lived out by the characters are part of what makes the story so captivating. The book gently prods at societal issues, discussing many topics, such as how hellish it can be to live in a capitalistic world that constantly urges us to aim for success at the cost of our mental and emotional happiness. The characters' dilemmas are genuine and universal: should I follow my dreams? Is it necessary to even have a dream? Should I make my parents happy even if that makes me miserable? Am I a bad person for prioritizing myself? These questions seem simple, but as the characters quickly realize, for these questions, it is often difficult to reach an answer.

Even more than the characters' struggles and uncertainties, the

book explores the different relationships that develop between the characters, and within themselves, as a result of the bookshop

The prose itself is very simple, and the dialogue can feel stilted at times. As with many translated works, bits of the original writing may be lost in translation. As the author, Hwang Bo-reum, is a published essayist in South Korea, some essay-like qualities are apparent in the story as she delves into frequent philosophical ponderings. Nevertheless, the quirky characters and subtle emotions behind every word make the novel feel cozy and cohesive.

*Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop* is a novel that feels like a warm hug, a safe space. Maintaining a gentle, comforting atmosphere, the book tells readers that it is okay to slow down and spend time doing what we love. It tells us to look for beauty and pleasure in the mundane. Readers will finish this book wishing for their own Hyunam-Dong bookshop to escape into.

Student Reporter

## Holiday Spirit at the Grove



**Angel Song**  
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Every time you try to go out with friends, there's that one thing that no one can ever agree on; where to meet. Fortunately, if one lives near Los Angeles, some great options would be giant outdoor malls such as The Grove.

The Grove has many attractions, but the first thing one should do upon arrival is get something savory and sweet to drink. Some delectable food options at The Grove include the Marmalade Cafe, which offers both breakfast and lunch options, and the Cheesecake Factory, which has a variety of delicious treats for everyone. If these restaurants do not sound like a great option to you, there's always an alternative solution: the Farmer's Market. Various foods are sold at this outdoor market, where people can enjoy their food while sitting down at a table with a little roof or



The Christmas lightings at The Grove in Los Angeles are exciting and stunning.  
[Source: Author, Angel Song]

while walking around, admiring the items on sale. After a good meal, people should get something good to drink. There are many fantastic cafes, including La La Land Kind Cafe, which serves mainly coffee and matcha drinks in cute yellow

cups, Nordstrom eBar, which is not very well-known but does make some great drinks, like fruit juices, or if you want to go for a more classic drink, there's always the Starbucks at Barnes & Noble.

As for the shopping, The Grove has many familiar stores, including Nordstrom, See's Candies, Aritzia, the Apple Store, and Alo. One can quickly get all their holiday shopping done at The Grove, while simultaneously acquiring a new wardrobe. Since the mall is outdoors and quite large, it's easy to get tired while walking around. If so, there's an option to ride the trolley, which runs until 8 P.M. every day, but you must hurry because the lines for the trolley are very long, and in the unfortunate case, one may not be able to get a seat.

Finally, there are tasteful season-

al decorations at The Grove, including beautiful Christmas lights that stay off during the day and turn on at night. These decorations include the classic Christmas lights, as well as a giant Christmas tree with the brightest lights I've seen, and a Santa decoration that floats across the sky near the fountain. If you live in the Los Angeles area, consider visiting The Grove during the Christmas season to see the beautiful lights.

At this time of the year, when one has many plans to meet friends, visiting The Grove can be a solution to all problems regarding food, drinks, shops, and, most importantly, where to meet. This large outdoor mall has many attractions, familiar shops, and pretty lighting, which is perfect for those who enjoy taking beautiful pictures and making great memories with friends.

Student Reporter

## Light Displays: An Event for All



**Erin Ryu**  
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Recently, I attended a viewing of the LA Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow. This year, the LA Zoo will host its annual light show from November 17, 2023, to January 7, 2024.

To put it simply, the lights are breathtaking. Though easily missed, a brief preview of the show was given as I walked through the entrance. Cacti, bison, birds, and a dozen Christmas trees were aligned under the zoo's name, leaving visitors waiting for more. As I passed the behemoth structures of a valiant eagle soaring above the crowd flanked by a puma and blue parrot, a fantastic overhead display of dozens of white doves illuminated the path. Journeying through the zoo, children received gifts and rode on the carousel, while others enjoyed the brilliant display of flashing butterflies and multiple vendors of churros, hot chocolate, and the occasional cocktail. From gigantic snow leopards to radiant cacti, the

zoo was able to capture the wildlife and nature of several terrains, from the Arctic to the desert. From trees covered in luminous macaws to displays of bison in golden fields, this light show attracts hundreds of people and is a great way to spend the evening with family and friends.

As the holidays approach, the frequency of viewers of light displays and shows grows consistently. But what makes these shows so appealing? Visual stimulation given to viewers is vital. From Independence Day fireworks to modern artwork, such as Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirrors rooms, light is used in diverse ways to entice viewers. Though the LA Zoo holds its light shows every winter, they brought in their Winter Wildlands display for the first time this year. Lanterns of snowmen and crystalline structures line the pathways, all filled with rainbow colors and a fantasy-like glow. Additionally, overhead canopies of dazzling



Many displays showed animal lanterns in brilliant surroundings, such as bison in golden fields.  
[Source: Author, Erin Ryu]

light were commonly found at the zoo, a creative tactic to give viewers an other-worldly experience by surrounding them with an atmosphere of pure light.

Furthermore, the artistic exaggeration of blooming flowers abundantly scattered throughout the grounds feeds into the human affinity towards novelty and variety. Liquid light shows were introduced in the 1960s as a form of artistic expression, which eventually fed into pop culture, often accompanying electric and rock

music performances, commonly known as "avant-rock". Fast forward to today, and many concerts utilize many forms of light to captivate their audiences.

Lastly, light displays, especially in festive seasons, give viewers a sense of hope and cheeriness. As seen from experience, walking around with my family while surrounded by a gamut of ages, from toddlers in strollers happily giggling to elderly couples peacefully strolling, one small exhibition can be a lasting memory for all.



Editors Column

Does Turkey still have a place on the Thanksgiving table?



Sean Kim  
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For this year’s Thanksgiving, my family decided to eat honey ham. Turkey hasn’t been on our table for over a decade!  
[Source: Author, Sean Kim]

Since its conception in 1621, Thanksgiving has revolved around one key food: turkey. But, in many cases, traditions morph over time with changes in societal and cultural developments. Has the people’s palette changed since then?

To get an overview of my community’s poultry preference, I asked friends and family whether they had consumed turkey this past Thanksgiving. Of the families surveyed, less than a quarter answered they had not eaten turkey; the vast majority of families had continued to put turkey on the

table to celebrate the holiday.

However, while the Thanksgiving turkey seems to remain trendy, looking deeper reveals another story. When I followed up with the youth on how they personally felt, many answers failed to reflect the survey results. David, a high school senior, opined that “Turkey is too dry.” Many others echoed this sentiment, with another senior, Raihan, answering, “[I] hate turkey actually.” Despite over 75% of families responding affirmatively to turkey consumption, the actual case seemed to show an

overall disapproval of the protein.

What does this mean for the future of Thanksgiving turkeys? Moving forward, it is entirely possible that as the youth begin to have more say on the Thanksgiving dinner, turkey consumption may plummet to unprecedented lows. As someone who, like David, believes turkey is a bit too dry, alternative options like chicken or ham are far preferable. Some families do not even celebrate Thanksgiving, more so using the occasion as an excuse for a happy feast, though perhaps that’s all the holiday ever meant. The pilgrims and Wampanoag natives, who celebrated the first Thanksgiving, are said to have eaten goose or pig, not turkey. Plus, more and more people are opting for foods traditional to their own cultures in lieu of turkey. Families with origins in other countries cook food together to bring a sense of home and nostalgia to their November. The future

appears bleak for turkey eaters.

But there is another, more patriotic possibility that argues in favor of the traditional Thanksgiving feast. It is entirely plausible that families continue to consume turkey despite a preference for an alternative. People like me, David, and Raihan have existed for centuries, yet turkey has remained a prevalent part of Thanksgiving. It may seem more patriotic and righteous to celebrate the holiday in line with tradition.

All in all, the point of Thanksgiving is in the name: to give thanks. Remembering what you’re grateful for and expressing kindness to others is by no means bound by food choice. Judging from my observations, turkey remains the centerpiece of Thanksgiving feasts. While this may change in the future, I doubt Thanksgiving will leave any time soon. After all, everyone loves a holiday!

Student Reporter

Back to the Future



Derrick Ahn  
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The movie trilogy, Back to the Future, is a highly popularized film that travels back in time to show a variety of retro appliances and collectibles, and is usually referred to as the “reincarnation of retro.” So, what even is retro?

Vinyl record players. Cassette Tapes. Typewriters. Polaroids. You may have heard of these appliances—or not! These appliances are all considered “retro,” or retrospective, and hold a dear place in many nostalgic hearts of the older generations. However, recently, these vintage products and ideas have made a comeback, going as far as to state that they have been trending over the last decade.

This throwback of a phenomenon is a product of many factors, but primarily, the vintage vogue stems from the fact that nostalgia sells. Nostalgia, a sentimental longing for the past, was a term first coined as far back as 1688—nostalgia has carried over from generation to generation, and present-day society has failed to differ. Retro has made a splash in our current socie-



One of the most prominent forms of retro comes from the film camera.  
[Source: Author, Derrick Ahn]

ty, with trends such as minimalism and brands such as Patagonia making a massive comeback.

As aforementioned, nostalgia sells, but how did retro become a trend? While older generations are able to feel nostalgia for these retrospective contents, newer generations are experiencing these obsolete but interesting devices and have their interests piqued. This rediscovery, allows older generations to “relive” their first interactions with these retro products while providing an eye-opening experience for

generations to succeed.

I asked a fellow Generation Z peer, Angel Lopez, a proud Latino-American, their opinion on the concept of retro, “To me, retro means remnants of our youth and childhood reappearing as older and wiser people, reminding us to cherish the music and memories of past times to pass on to our future generations.” Retro is not limited to age, race, or any other demographic. Rather, it is an assumed privilege that we, as part of our respective generation as a whole, get to relish and revere for posterity.

Retro comes in all forms of vintage. Not limited to the mechanical wonders such as cassettes or vinyl record players, other areas of interest have been influenced by this surge of classics. I am no fashion expert. In fact, I have zero knowledge of fashion, if I do say so myself! However, even I have heard of terms like “Y2K,” which define a fashion style orientated towards the creative mish-mash of vintage and futuristic, and an influence of late 90s and early 2000s pop culture, which has made its way back through the returning collective love

for pop music and culture, which itself is a form of retro.

Similarly, food, something all people can unite and enjoy, has also been dictated by retro trends. In different cultures, it is said that some culinary dishes sit in the ashes until nostalgia revives them from their graves. I have second-handedly experienced this, as a Korean-American; my parents, first-generation Korean-Americans, have experienced a variety of street food, and one such example of a street food remodernized are Korean-style hot dogs, where the wiener is encased in fried flour and bread crumbs with lacings of either sugar or ketchup. In the US, I am fortunate enough to benefit from this trend, as Korean-style hot dog stores catered toward Generation Z provide a near-accurate experience.

From those in their 20s in the 20th century to those in theirs in the 21st, nostalgia and retro have brought us a long way, perhaps an extra mile. The future of the past is bright, and many, including me, look forward to the experience!

Student Reporter

The Seasonal Trader Joe’s Bags!



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Grade 11  
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It’s officially December! Happy Holidays! The merry season has made its way to Trader Joe’s, a fun and unique grocery store located in areas across America, as well, in which they are selling mystery bags. Each pack sells for \$2.99 and contains three mystery reusable bags that can be used for YOUR shopping trips!

Due to the high demand for these bags, they may be sold out by the time you see this article, but they will be making their way back next year as well! With a diverse range of bags containing images based on the cities of Atlanta, New York City, San Francisco, and another whole variety, there is the fun of unboxing such cute items.

Reusable bags are so easy to use

again and again, and not only are they helping our environment by shifting away from paper and plastic bags, but they have multiple uses, and some cute ones can be used for birthday bags as well! The sturdy bags usually never break a strap as one-use bags do, and they can be used to store blankets and food when going on a picnic, or to put groceries in and carry them back to your house without worrying about them tumbling onto the pavement!

Personally, I was able to unbox a couple of these mystery bags and ended up with ones from states such as Louisiana, Tennessee, Florida, New York City, and Massachusetts. My own favorite had to be the one from Louisiana due to the bright and

well-matching colors that allowed the bag to pop and look exclusive. All the bags had different designs that specifically adhered to the traits of their own states, such as Florida with tangerines, and Connecticut, which is popularly known as the birthplace of the hamburger!

The fun may be receiving such well-priced bags, but another was seeing all the different states with their own unique traits. Learning the different components and fun facts about the different states while laughing with my family was just a fun opening to the holiday season. Because what’s better than three diverse bags with multiple uses?

Many of these bags have already



A sample of the different bags that were unboxed in the Trader Joe’s mystery bags set! [Source: Hannah Lee, Author]

become sold out, however, due to the immense amount of attention and popularity these bags have gained in the past couple of weeks. Oh, well. Perhaps we will see them again next year!