

The Tyranny of Hope

By Claire Beeli

Hope binds every living thing. Hope, for another day of life, another meal, a better future. For success, whatever that is, or for your planet. Hope, for a day when you can breathe among friends and relish a moment's simplicity without the danger of spreading a virus.

Hope is alive. It can be a horrible disease, one that infects and spreads until every fiber of your being *is* hope, reaching, striving, grasping at a misty mirage. A brilliant dream that fades fast as soon as you wake, leaving behind nothing but a vague feeling you find yourself always searching for. Something missing, something you know intimately yet not at all. Never quite gone.

It can be a simple light, a bright one; a distant bird's caw, or a final breath still hoping for another. Hope can be perfect, the last piece, or it can drag you down and tether your everything to something you can never achieve. It can connect your will, your love, and your happiness to lives that can never be, simply because there is only one for us each to live.

And still, we hope. In the deepest of hours, we look to the light, even when there is none. To the stars, even when they are clouded over.

We look to freedom. Hope itself is a desire to be free, for the very nature of hope opposes that of freedom; in pure, whisked-away-by-the-wind freedom, there is nothing more the soul longs for. There is no oppressive darkness, no injustice, no hunger or loneliness.

Because this freedom is impossible, we always will hope. Even if it is just a shard, even if you hope to get ice cream later or to see your friends again soon. We have thousands of little hopes, created and crushed and fulfilled every day. That paragon of freedom is impossible to

achieve, thus we always will hope. Without hope, there is always freedom; without freedom, hope.

The hard part, though, is to master your big hopes. If you give them the chance, just an inch of slack or a bit of breathing room, they will destroy you. They will pounce, like a lurking cat, and tear every other hope to shreds. Let these big hopes drive you, but do not let them control you. Do not tie yourself up in them so much that you lose the very essence of you to a far-off dream.

Dreams can be wonderful, but they can also be devastating, for they are just another type of hope. A romantic, breezy hope that smells like sugared summer nights, but a hope nonetheless. And unlike hopes, most dreams are very, very big. Enormous. They can buoy us, bring us together; but in the densest cores of our selves, hope is nothing more than an insatiable longing to realize a fading dream. A desperate need for something not quite tangible, and always just out of reach.

What hopes rule you?