

In The Fly's Eyes

Viet Cao, BCHS 2023

Everything leading up to November 9th was another unlikelihood. Medical circumstances meant that I couldn't go. Then my educational advocate did their thing to flip the situation. It worked. I had to go.

The Bushnell Theater? Yo-Yo Ma?

Has-been-playing-Cello-since-he-was-four-years-old Yo-Yo Ma?

Say no more.

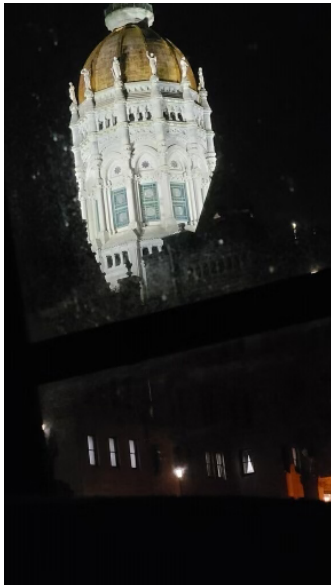
The date is set for the 9th day of November, but I was definitely not.

"I know we're different genders. But what the hell do I wear?"

"A nice casual. I would recommend jeans with a collared shirt or one of those nice jackets that you wear to school sometimes."

"Thank you, Guru."

Some fumbling later, I'm prepared for the night. A competent outfit I completed with a navy Ralph Lauren Jacket. There was a surprising amount of traffic in the black of 6 p.m. And so was seeing our group of teachers and youthful minds dressed for the privilege of their lives ... standing next to the school bus. I stood there along with them, solely backlit by the late functions of Bristol Central, with only a phone flash to reveal ourselves. To reveal the way we all interpreted what was the perfect ratio of formal to casual.



Not true actually, the warm bus lights revealed something else. That we're still a bunch of school kids. All here for another "Extracurricular Event" or worse, a "field trip". For said field trip, the chaperones gave us a baby notebook and an adorable pencil. The warm lights shut off eventually; the bus started driving finally.

Oh and out of Bristol we went! We were big time now, to the theater. To the city of Hartford ... No ... The Forum of Connecticut. It seemed to become more and more real as time progressed. We could barely see each other. But we could look out. We passed big signs and increasingly larger buildings. I could see we were closing in as I saw the Ivory Tower, the white light awashed the spire.

It wasn't really an ivory tower. It wasn't even where we were going. But you could feel it, you know? It foreshadowed the moment we got off the bus. It stuck out in that block, amidst the

grandeur of the theater and its attendees. An insect in the blinding LED signs showing big events and even bigger people. There he was: Yo-Yo Ma! On an LED sign!
On top of that, we walked together through the booth, given our official tickets, with these security bracelets. It was an authoritative orange saying “verified” ... And I could describe the Bushnell interior by just jumbling the words I’ve already said.

Truly, the interior as seen from our seats at the front mezzanine was “awash” with “light” and revealing the “grandeur of the theater and its attendees.”



But when the talk began, we saw the sides dim, and dim some more. The knowledge given to the bright floor was about to arrive. Jeffrey Brown! Sorry, not the guy who this was named after. Yo-Yo Ma! We were the students with the notebooks and pencils. And down there, down there in the light was the man. The faucet that poured the knowledge forth.

And so the talk began.

And it was good. Yeah, it was pretty good.

Before I can continue, I have to say, I lost my baby pencil. I left it on the bus, and when I eventually checked it, the lights did not reveal its location. So I got two more. They are also... missing in action. So during this time of Jeffrey Brown and Yo-Yo Ma’ s conversation, there were these kids in the mezzanine. One asked another to borrow their pencil real quick. “One” is me by the way. I ask someone else to mix things up. But eventually, there was a routine. Tonight’s fashion guru and I kept going back and forth with this tiny pencil. I write, then pass. She writes, then passes right. And ever since it has been stuck in my mind. I mean, we looked amazing, but how could world renowned Cellist see that? He could only see us as a collective. Yes, up there on the mezzanine. The flies above him were looking down at the activity below. But when I looked closer, at us, I learned a little about teamwork. And it’s been stuck in my mind ever since.

This isn’t to undermine Yo-Yo Ma’ s words, but to clarify them. Not to ignore the words, but to live those words. I mean... I wrote them down.

“To gain prismatic truths is something I am trying to do more of”

“What to do with the accidents that can change your life”

“JEFFREY!”

To be clear, my friends wrote the first two and I only wrote the last one. And when the talk ended, we did what anyone would expect. We took pictures, we looked around, said hi, said bye. But then we got on the bus. And we got the opportunity to look behind us. We swapped notes, talked about what we would write. We mentioned how one sign listed prohibited items which strangely ranged from “Laser Pointers” to “Illegal Drugs.” The thing is, Illegal drugs are illegal everywhere! We also created a group chat.

Although these moments seem unrelated, looking back, it was everything. Yo-Yo Ma was conveying that there are different ways to look at things. What is, is a matter of perspective. And that there are ways to live and roll with the unexpected. Things can be a certain way, and that can be true. But it doesn't mean it isn't another way, that isn't equally true.

A final note, the topic of our bracelets came up, how loose they were. I mean they were very loose. Even though they were one size fits all, you couldn't actually adjust after you put it on. So we took off all of our silly loose orange bracelets and took a picture. Which showed the surprising truth that we have eerily similar palms.

