

Ath·e·nae·um

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Jigsaw puzzle (n.): A puzzle consisting of a mass of irregularly shaped pieces that form a picture when fitted together.

-American Heritage Dictionary



Inside this Issue

1. Jig-saw Puzzles: An Analogy
2. Tim Hartzler: The Flickering...

Jig-saw Puzzle: An Analogy



A jig-saw puzzle is likely the most applicable analogy for learning. From the patience required to separate the pieces into border and center pieces, to the trial and error of finding the place where each piece fits. After time, when the pieces come together, there is a vision of, metaphorically, oneself. All the time, patience, getting it wrong, getting it right, being agitated, walking away, and returning—descends the feeling that you are closer to getting a clearer picture of yourself and transferrable skillset.

The introduction is packed with contexts and elusions. Learning requires finding the border, the parameters for your studies. This takes time. Time has a mysterious way of working with you in proportion to your will. The key is to always return. Once the border is complete, begins the even more arduous journey of the center pieces. The puzzle is an oracle; as questions arise, pieces find home.

Imagine your life and experiences as a jig-saw puzzle. Maybe you exist without even a complete picture of yourself. There may be some of you who haven't even opened the box. Putting your own puzzle together will take some time, but it is more important than anything. Each of us are a jig-saw puzzle, ten-thousand pieces according to the best poets, and the meaning of life is to put that puzzle together.

Just imagine with me. The pieces can symbolize so many things: family, education, community, books, how you learn, your profession, relationship, understanding. It is a question set to safeguard panicking about the future, to be slow and let time help you put the pieces together. The vision will come, there are no doubts that if you stick to it, you will find your answer. The only real trap is anxiety, and the only virtue required is patience.

As the puzzle comes together, you can set to defining your hopes and goals. Often, in our impatience, we define what the puzzle is, say its complete, and spend years discontented. Sometimes we define our puzzle by someone else's. The key is to become what your puzzle is, not what others say it is, socially or personally, or forcing pieces to fit.

Learn: A Project is built upon this simple philosophy of a jig-saw puzzle. If you are an individual who hasn't even opened the box, come visit literacy at the *Fulton County Public Library*. Reading, writing, mathematics, or any discipline for that matter, are simply means to an end. The end is the completion of your puzzle. Come take some time with me and we can at least unbox the pieces.

Tim Hartzler: Beauty in Life and Death



I recently had the pleasure of spending time with patron, Timothy Hartzler, who by definition is a polymath. His disciplines range from study to reading and writing, but he is also versed in the arts of drawing, singing, songwriting, sculpting, and filmmaking. We spent the better part of an afternoon discussing his art as well as writing in general.

Talk a bit about writing as a process for you?

I write stories that are would be screenplays for filmmaking and I also do a fair amount of songwriting. The poetry itself is more often than not born from my songwriting. The content is inspired by difficulties, or existential searching.

Omniscient Epitaph, prose vs. poetry, language; how conscious are you of your expression?

Prose allows me the freedom to express myself openly without the limitations of adhering to rhyme scheme. I am very conscious of my use of adjectives, symbols, and metaphor. To me, writing is intentionality.

Omniscient Epitaph

By: Tim Hartzler

I gaze upon a perennial vastness of which I am, by nature, bound to dwell. Malevolent shades of darkness cascade down landscapes of woeful sorrow. Devoid of warmth, such harsh surroundings generate gusts that, at once, quicken the flickering, but ultimately lead to its demise.

In tragic beauty, the flames of life recede to embers within the passage of time. Yet still, ever so fragile, the human multitude continues its allegorical stride. An inability to engage in these dispassioned pursuits is sure to be my inescapable undoing. A swelling negativity finds germination and evolves alongside awareness, knowledge, then wisdom.

While existential pain manifests from flourishing ignorance among the masses. Thus resulting in life's unflinching tendency to come across as inequitably cold. The coldness occasionally yields to a harmonious but fleeting elegance, giving one something to cling to.

Influences? John Haughm, lyricist for the dark folkmetal band Agalloch, also classics like Poe, Yeats, and Frost. In *Pit and the Pendulum* Poe says, "...the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long and final scream of despair." The words "found vent" are to me the unique poetic sensibility that I strive for. Just two simple words, used so poignantly in context, brilliant, and beautiful.



Artwork by Tim Hartzler

It is this inherent splendor that feeds the flickering, burning brightly within. Life could never possess such beauty were it not for its inevitable end.

For as time steals youth from me and loss empties my world, I become aware that this temporary bliss is to be cherished above all else.

Hear me, world of mankind. I have grown tiresome of you and your undying need to slowly, meticulously murder my soul.

I issue refute unto your crooked kingdom— a maelstrom of cancerous corruptions. I reject your greed-driven endeavors and self-centered ambitions in lieu of my own omniscient reality.

No retribution, I aspire only to uphold the fire and make fruitful this godless existence. When the grave greets me I will return to from whence I came. Nothingness awaits me, as it does you all.

Like a wind hushed ember, we will be extinguished forevermore.