

Off the Beaten track

Picture perfect

Scroll...scroll...luscious verdant vegetation.

Like.

Scroll...scroll...picturesque symphonizing beauty shines in the form of an ombre sunrise rich with deep glorious tones of reds, oranges and yellows, illustrious glittering gold strands of pure light streaking through the view.

Like.

Scroll...scroll...moonlight shimmering on the surface of the rich rippling resplendent ocean, the slivers of silver contrasting brilliantly against the deep blue. A quiver shivers through my bones, nerves tingle and giddy joyous butterflies flutter over my heart and into my mouth; delectable tantalising tastes of sea salt and coconut milk drowning my taste buds in longing. I want them so badly that they begin to turn sour in my mouth, a heavy bitter taste overpowering my senses as my hopeless dreams crash and burn!

No like.

A click of the side button and the images before me turn black. I shove my phone into my back pocket, opening my eyes to look at the world around me. Bleak suburban streets. Ughh!

I ache with every fibre of my being to take my own pictures from my own perspectives as I explore on my own travels not just staring longingly at a glass screen at other people's pictures and perspectives as they live out their own experiences.

Trying to push these thoughts away I fumble with the keys to the front door to my redbrick crumbling familiar NORMAL, BORING, DULL house on my NORMAL, BORING, DULL street all of it not the least bit beautiful, picture worthy or instagramable; there I go again! Shoving my tattered leather school shoes off I storm into the house plodding up stairs like a baby elephant. Ohh how I'd adore to see a real baby elephant, skin wrinkled, laughter tweaking the corners of its mischievous eyes romping around, how I'd love to capture that moment!

"Ava!" someone calls and I snap back to reality, but it's just mum letting me know she's home. "Hi mum," I mumble so that it's barely audible but she still catches my downhearted tone in the way that mothers always seem to do. Ten seconds later and her head pops round the door freshly dyed chestnut brown hair bouncing freshly on her shoulders caramel brown eyes frowning with concern but she wears a calm pleasant smile for my benefit. "What's up sweetpea?" She asks me, coming to sit on the end of my bed as I start to hang my school shirt back up. "Mm nothin' mum, it's nothing," I mumble because I don't want her to know my

stupid thoughts. "Come on Aves you know you can tell me anything, promise I won't be mad" she says with a cheeky smile but looks up at me with imploring eyes and so I relent.

"Well ... umm...ughh it's just that I feel like everything is just so normal around here!"

"What do you mean?" She asks, picking up my skirt and helping me hang it.

"Well I just feel like everything is so dull and bleak nothing like what you see in all those insta pics, all of them sights seem so breathtaking and beautiful like you could take the perfect photo no matter what you did because it's all just so ..well..y'know ..perfect!"

"Umm, I think I have an idea of what you're feeling. Come with me and I'll show you something that I think might make you see something from a different perspective," she puts the hanger on the rail and goes out onto the landing. I trudge behind her reluctantly because I sort of just want to wallow in my despair for a bit longer but I know that that's going to do nothing for anyone. She opens the last door we come to the one that hasn't been opened in twelve years and I see the conflict on her face when opening that door.

"Mum, why are we going into Dad's study?" I ask halfheartedly in nearly a whisper.

"You'll see," she says as she steps over the threshold of the room that hasn't been crossed in twelve years and I wonder if she is also stepping across the threshold of the emotional barrier she has subconsciously created for us both over the years from the pain this room holds.

That would be a good picture.

I follow her in inhaling the smell of old oak, ink and even older yellowed pages of books. I look around the room and a fresh wave of pain hits me. "Here" mum says, handing me a folder with the title of 'Off the Beaten track'. "What is it?" I ask tentatively. "It was your dad's favourite folder, you see he felt the same as you at first about all of his surroundings and that everything was so dull and unworthy of being captured with his camera. So he travelled across the world taking pictures of all the beautiful sites just like you see on Instagram. For a while he said it satisfied him and he would marvel at the sights each time but then the beauty also became tiring and tedious just like the sights back home. He met a man who told him 'Beauty is everywhere you look as long as you find the right perspective, why don't you try going off the beaten track and make your own, then you might be more inspired by what you capture.' He thought this was rubbish at first a bunch of riddles and rhymes and disregarded them but these words stayed in the back of his head and once he returned to his town he decided to take the man's advice."

"And how did they turn out?" I ask sceptically.

"Take a look for yourself," she says.

I open the folder and there in front of me lay the most breathtaking images I have ever seen. Completely normal everyday items transformed into a superfluous of beauty. I am shocked! My mother smiles "Sometimes you have to go off the beaten track to find your own,".