



Pleasures and Days

Marcel Proust, A.N. Wilson (Foreword by)

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A stunning volume of philosophical reflections, short narratives, and prose poems, *Pleasures and Days* provides an early glimpse into Proust's genius as a collector of exquisitely poignant sensations and recollections. Set amid the salon society of fin-du-siècle Paris, these sketches and short stories depict the lives, loves, manners, and motivations of a host of characters, all viewed with a famously knowing eye. By turns cuttingly satirical and bitterly moving, Proust's portrayals are layered with imagery and feeling—whether they be of the aspiring Bouvard and Pécuchet, the deluded Madame de Breyves, or of Baldassare Silvande, steeped in memories, regret, and final understanding at the end of his life. Novelist Marcel Proust was a prominent figure in the French salons of the late 19th century; he is best remembered for his seven-volume masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time*.

Pleasures and Days Details

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Shyam says

Proust, as well as being a great storyteller, is also a sage. There are more wise maxims in Proust's pages than in La Rochefoucauld, and as many wise pensées as in Pascal. It is remarkable that even in these early stories he had developed this faculty. (Foreword, A. N. Wilson)

In all this there were small things that bore the precise memory of episodes of sensuality or affection fabricated from the most insignificant circumstances in his life, and it was like a vast fresco, depicting his life without narrating it, selecting only its most colourful and passionate moments, in a way at once very vague and very precise, with great and poignant power.
(Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies, 7)

Doesn't that quote from the Section, *Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, make for a beautiful description of *In Search of Lost Time*? To a lesser extent, it also describes the short stories, poems, and philosophical reflections that comprise *Pleasures and Days*.

If you're at all hesitant about beginning *In Search of Lost Time*, start here, and if you find you enjoy the stories and reflections contained in this Apéritif, your appetite now whetted, you'll be ready to commence the seven-course dinner of *À la recherche du temps perdu*; all the major food groups are present: Memory, Time, Desire . . . the ingredients extracted and distilled from 3000+ pages and freshly squeezed into a cocktail of ~200.

But if you've finished the *Search*, you can equally enjoy *Les Plaisirs et les Jours* as a Digestif: loosen your belt, let down your hair, sit back, relax, and raising this glass to your lips, you'll smile as you taste

with melancholy pleasure and without any pain, the vast roar of bygone days.

Alas! the soul I had at fourteen can still awaken within me, but at the same time it is far away from me and outside of me. I know full well that it is no longer my soul and that it is no longer within my power to make it so again. And yet at that time I did not think I would one day look back on it with nostalgia. It was merely pure, and I needed to make it strong, and capable of performing, one day, the highest tasks. (The Confession of a Young Woman)

I let myself take my time; I was sometimes sorry to see time passing, but there was still so much of it ahead of me! (The Confession of a Young Woman)

Then, like all men, he died. (Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies, 7)

" . . . Did you not bring me, in exchange, incomparable friendship, exquisite tea, conversation both natural and ornate, and how many bouquets of fresh roses? You alone were able, with your maternal, expressive hands, to cool my burning fevered brow, to pour honey into my withered lips, and fill my life with noble

images." (*The Death of Baldassare Silvande*)

Women incarnate beauty without understanding it . . . Let them allow me at least to say this: how few women understand the aesthetic which makes them what they are! (*Fragments from Italian Comedy*, 12. A painted fan)

Their lives spread the sweet perfume of hair that has been let down. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 5)

. . . the lovely profusion of sweet blond hair. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 27. The chestnut trees)

You cannot have simply let it evaporate — all the perfume with which the air of her bedroom, the fabric of her dresses, and the touch of her hands or her knees imbued you. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 8. Relics)

I plant my lips on my hand and draw in, deeply and slowly, the perfume which, in the heat of memory, breathes out dense whiffs of tenderness, of happiness, of 'you'. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 20. The pearls)

And I, between your lips . . . would find perfect oblivion. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 22. Real presence)

Her most real beauty existed perhaps in my desire. She lived her life, but perhaps I was the only one to dream it. (*Nostalgia — Daydreams Under Changing Skies*, 8. Relics)

" . . . Platonic love doesn't amount to much." We shall see that she would shortly come to the conclusion that sensual love amounted to even less. (*Violante, or High Society*)

Society people are so dull that Violante merely had to condescend to mingle with them to eclipse almost all of them. (*Violante, or High Society*)

He came to see her, and explained why she was bored.

'Your liking for music, for reflection, for charity, for solitude, for the countryside, can no longer find any outlet. You are obsessed by success and held in thrall by pleasure. But one can find happiness only by doing what one loves in the depth of one's soul.'

'How to you know that? You've never lived,' said Violante.

'I've thought. That's life enough,' said Augustin. 'But I hope you will soon be seized by disgust at this insipid way of life.' (*Violante, or High Society*)

Why do you travel so much? Carriages take you slowly to destinations you could reach so quickly in your dreams. In order to be at the seaside, you need only close your eyes. Let those who have only bodily eyes force their entire household to follow them and settle in Pozzuoli or Naples. You want to finish a book there, you say? Where will you work better than here in town? Within its walls, you can elaborate the most grandiose settings you desire. Above all, why do you insist so strenuously on enjoying the present, weeping when you cannot manage to do so? Man of imagination, you can enjoy things only in nostalgia or in anticipation: in other words, you can enjoy only the past or the future. (*Fragments from Italian Comedy*, 13. Olivian)

Rezvan says

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ZaRi says

Edward says

*Foreword, by A.N. Wilson
Introduction, by Andrew Brown*

Preface, by Anatole France (1896)

- To My Friend Willie Heath
- The Death of Baldassare Silvande
- Violante, Or High Society
- Fragments From Italian Comedy
- Bouvard and Pécuchet on Society and Music
- Mme de Breyves's Melancholy Summer Vacation
- Portraits of Painters and Musicians
- The Confession of a Young Woman
- A Dinner in Town
- Nostalgia -- Daydreams under Changing Skies
- The End of Jealousy

Note on the Text

Notes

Nahed.E says

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Kelsey Hathaway says

You would think that spending countless hours with Proust's "Swann's Way" for the biggest paper of my college career would mean I had tired of him. Not so the case. I stumbled upon this book inside an antique secretary's desk at a consignment shop in my hometown. It's a first edition English from 1948, so clearly whoever sold it had no idea what they were giving up...or just doesn't appreciate French literature in translation.

I can't express to you how exquisite I think this writing is. I have often compared sitting down in front of a good book to eating a sumptuous steak. There is no other way to describe it but meaty. The language is rich, the stories are sweet and still ring true. Proust was a genius, totally under-appreciated in his time and still today. He is my literary love affair.

Louise Carlson Stowell says

This is a volume of short stories that are very touching. I had originally started this book back in 2013 while my husband was dying of cancer. One story in particular, "The Death of Baldassare Silvande" touched me deeply. One paragraph was especially heart wrenching:

"They looked into each other's eyes, and saw their two souls peering from their depths, their melancholy and passionate souls that death had been unable to unite. He understood her hesitation; his lips contracted painfully and he said gently, 'No! No! Don't promise. Don't break a promise to a dying man. If you are not sure of yourself, you must not promise.'

I was in tears at that point. I closed the book and put it aside for two years when I started it again from the beginning. It was no less poignant.

I went on to read "A Young Girl's Confession" and then "A Dinner in Society" and on and on. Each story is every bit as fresh and relevant today as it was when it was first published in 1896.

Proust's rich prose and descriptive narrative captures you and brings you in as an observer to the many events

he describes in the stories. You become a guest in the houses he creates. Simply marvelous!

Sean Chick says

Beautiful characters portraits are matched here with an eye for detail. Proust seems to be that rare thing, the romantic realist.

Kourosh Ghaniyoun says

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Amir says

Roya says

Steven Godin says

An early look into the psyche of Mr Proust from 1896 prior to his most recognized work, this collection features delightful prose poems, philosophical recollections and short stories, all carried through with a gracefully poignant sensation. Told within the salons and high-society of fin-du-siècle Paris, the love and charm of characters are depicted all under his gazing eyes, creating page after page of utter bliss.

It's difficult to put into words just how this made me feel, lying naked on a bed of cotton wool being gently brushed by a warm breeze whilst staring up at the stars on a clear night listening to Claude Debussy would just about do it. Either way Proust made my soul vibrantly shine, with this second reading being even better than before. Genius!

Personal favourites,

Bouvard and Pécuchet on Society and Music
Mme de Breyves's Melancholy Summer Vacation
Nostalgia – Daydreams under Changing Skies

Luís C. says

Pleasures & Days

' Hate bad music, do not despise it. As one plays it, it sings much more, more passionately than the maid, much more than it gradually filled with the dreams and tears of men. May it be venerable to you. Its place, null in the history of Art, is immense in the sentimental history of societies. '

' Ambition intoxicates more than glory; Desire flourishes, possession possesses all things. '

' The house shouts leeward like a boat, you can hear invisible sails swell, invisible flags flapping out. Keep on your knees that clump of fresh roses and let my heart cry in your closed hands. '
(In the countryside Sea Wind)

Zeynep K says

...tiksintiyi, küçümsemeyi, hatta can s?k?nt?s?n? alt eden, hesaba katmad??? bir güç vard?: al??kanl?k. / 38

fabrice'in metresi ak?ll? ve güzeldi; fabrice bunu hazmedemiyordu. 'kendi kendini anlamamas? gerekirdi! diye dü?ünüyordu inleyerek. akl? güzelli?ini lekeliyor; bakarken bir yandan mükemmel olsa da bir ele?tirmenin söylevini dinlemek zorunda kalsam, mona lisa'ya her bak???mda hala hayran olur muydum? fabrice onu terk edip güzel ve aptal bir metres tuttu. ama kad?n?n insafs?z münasebetsizli?i güzelli?inin tad?na varmas?n? engelliyordu. metresi daha sonra ak?ll? olma çabas?yla kendini okumaya verdi, ukalala?t?, ilk metresi kadar entelektüel oldu, ama onun kadar do?al de?ildi, gülünç beceriksizlikleri vard?. fabrice susmas?n? rica etti ondan; konu?mad??? zaman bile güzelli?i aptall???n? ac?mas?zca yans?t?yordu. sonunda zekas?n? sadece incelikli zarafetyle sergileyen bir kad?nla tan??t?; ya?amakla yetiniyor, do?as?n?n büyüleyici s?rr?n? somut sözlerle aç??a vurmuyordu. derin bak??l?, zarif ve çevik bir hayvan gibi tatlı?yd?, sabah vakti rüyalar?n duygulu ve mu?lak an?s? gibi bir etki b?rak?yordu insanda. ne var ki di?er metreslerin yapm?? oldu?u ?eyi yapma zahmetine katlanmad?: fabrice'i sevmedi. / 39 - 40

zeki insan?n zaten sohbet ederken fark?na vard??? için gözüne sokulmas? gerekmeyen ?eyi size anlatmaya çal??mak bo?una nefes tüketmektir olivian. hayal gücünүn ve ruhun sesi, her ikisini de bütünüyle ç?nlatan tek sestir; ho?a gitmek için harcayarak öldürdü?ünüz zaman?n bir k?sm?n? canl? tutsayd?n?z, k???n ?öminenizin ba??nda, yaz?n bahçenizde okuyarak ya da tahayyülle besleyeydiniz, daha derin ve daha dolu saatlerin an?s?n? ta??yor olacakt?n?z. kazma küre?i elinize alma cesaretini gösterin. bir gün haf?zan?zdan a?z?na kadar dolu bir bahçe?van arabas? misali tat? bir rayihan?n yükseldi?ini duyumsaman?n zevkini tadacaks?n?z.

niye bu kadar s?k seyahat ediyorsunuz? seyahatte arabalar sizi hayalinizin çabucak götürürebilece?i yerlere çok

daha yava? götürür. deniz k?y?s?nda olmak için gözlerinizi kapaman?z yeterli. b?rak?n sadece bedenin gözlerine sahip olanlar p?l?y? p?rt?y? toplay?p pozzuoli'ye ya da napoli'ye yerle?sinler.

her ?eyden önemlisi, bugünün tad?n? ç?karmak için niçin u?ra??p didiniyor, ba?aramad??n?z için a?lay?p s?zl?yorsunuz? hayal gücüyle ya?ayan bir insan s?fat?yla ancak özlem ya da bekleyi?in, yani geçmi?in ya da gelece?in tad?n? ç?karabilirsınız. / 54

daha mutlu bir haldeyken tan?d??m mme de breyves'i trouville'de gördüm tekrar. onu hiçbir ?ey tedavi edemez. m. de laéande'yi güzelli?i ya da zekas? yüzünden sevseydi ondan daha zeki, esprili ya da daha yak??kl? bir genç erkek onu oyalayabilirdi. ona iyi yürekli ya da kendisine a??k oldu?u için ba?lanm?? olsa bir ba?kas? daha büyük bir sadakatle sevmeye çal??abilirdi onu. ama m. de laéande ne yak??kl? ne zeki. ?efkatli mi kat? m?, ihmalkar m? vefal? m? oldu?unu mme de breyves'e kan?tlama f?rsat? olmad?. dolay?s?yla mm de breyves'in sevdi?i, ba?kalar?nda yüksek düzeylerde bulunabilecek meziyetler ve cazibeler de?il, bizzat m. de laéande; kusurlar?na, vasatl???na ra?men sevdi?i bizzat o; dolay?s?yla da onu her ?eye ra?men sevmeye mahkum. peki onun ne oldu?unu biliyor mu? tek bildi?i, onun sebep oldu?u umutsuzluk ya da mutluluk ürpertileriyle kendinden geçti?i, hayat?n?n geri kalan?n?n, ba?ka hiçbir ?eyin art?k bir önem ta??mad???. en güzel görüntü, en özgün zeka onun kendine has, esrarengiz özüne sahip olamazd?; bu benzersizlik sayesindedir ki hiçbir insan?n say?s?z dünyada ve sonsuz zamanda bir e?i daha olmayacakt?r. kendisini bütün masumiyetiyle mm d'A...'ya götüren genevièe de buivres olmasa, bütün bunlar olmayacakt?. ama ko?ullar bir araya gelip onu hapsetmi?ti; sebebi olmad?? i?çin çaresi de olmayan bir derten muzdaripti. / 79

bu kadar gücsüz olmasam, aya?a kalkabiecek, d??ar? ç?kabilecek iradem olsa les oublis'ye, on be? ya??ma kadar bütün yazlar?m? geçirdi?im bahçedeye gidip orada ölmek isterdim. hiçbir yer oras? kadar annemle dolu de?il: annem o bahçeyi varl???yla ve bilhassa yoklu?yla damgalam??t?. seven ki?i için yokluk var?klar?n en kesin, en etikili, en canl?, en sa?lam, en sad?k olan? de?il midir? / 90

... i?i hep bir gün sonraya erteliyordum. kendime zaman tan?yor, bazen zaman?n geçti?ini görüp tela?a kap?l?yordum, ama daha önmde o kadar çok zaman vard? ki! her ?eye ra?men biraz korkuyordum; iradesiz ya?ama al??kanl???n?n y?llar geçtikçe üzerimde a??rla?an bir yük olu?turdu?unu belli belirsiz hissediyor, her ?eyin bir anda de?i?meyeye?ini, hayat?m? de?i?tirip bir irade yaratmak için zahmetsiz bir mucizeye güvenemeyece?imi üzülerek tahmin ediyordum. irade sahibi olmay? arzulamak yetmiyordu. / 93 - 94

versailles, pasl? ve güzel, muazzam ad?n?z? onca ki?iden sonra anmak istemezdim; muhte?em yaprak, uçsuz bucaks?z su ve mermer mezarl???, gerçek anlamda aristokratik ve moral bozucu, onca i?çinin hayat?n?n ba?ka bir ç?a??n zevklerinden çok bizim ç?a??m?z?n hüznünü i?leyip geni?letmek u?runa harcanmas?ndan ötürü vicdan azab? bile çekemedi?imiz mekan. / 111

h?rs insan? ?an ve ?öhretten daha çok sarho? eder; arzu her ?eyi ye?ertirken sahip olu? soldurur; hayat? ya?amaktansa dü?lemek ye?dir; kald? ki ya?amak da bir bak?ma hayat? dü?lemektir, ama hem güzemi hem de netli?i azalm?? bir dü?tür bu, gevi? getiren hayvanlar?n c?l?z bilincindeki da??n?k dü?lere benzer, karanl?k ve a??r bir dü?. / 116

... bunlar?n sadece birer gölge, ba?ka yerde yanmaya gitmi? alevlerin gölgeleri oldu?unu ve onlar? bir daha asla görmeyece?ini bile o gölgelere tapmaya, yak?ndaki mutlak unutu?a tezat te?kil eden, ba?r?na bast??? bir ya?ant? afetmeye ba?lad?. ve bütün bu öpü?meleri, öpülen saçlar?, bütün bu gözya?lar?n?, dudaklar?, sarho? etmek için dökülen ?arap gibi ok?ay??lar?, müzik ya da gece gibi yo?unla?an, ebediyen gizemle, kederlerle dolup geni?ledi?ini hissetmenin mutlulu?unu ya?atan umutsuzluklar?; vakityle onu s?ms?k? ele geçirmi?, a?k?na hizmet edemeyecek her ?eyi silip atm?? olan, ?imdi silikle?ip giden, art?k

elinde tutamad???, mantosunun dalgalanan eteklerinden yay?lan kokuyu bile yakalayamad??? o tap?n?lan sevgiliyi, bütün bunlar? tekrar ya?ayabilmek, canland?rabilmek, kelebekler gibi kar??s?na rapt edebilmek için inatla çabal?yordu. ve her defas?nda daha çok zorlan?yordu. kelebeklerden hiçbirini yakalayamam??t? hala, ama her dokunu?ta parmaklar? kanatlar?ndaki serab? al?p götürmü?tü biraz; daha do?rusu onlar? aynada görüyor, dokunabilme için aynaya beyhude hamleler yap?yor, ama her defas?nda aynay? biraz daha donukla?t?rd???ndan art?k onlar? belli belirsiz, büyüden yoksun halde göründü. ?imdi gençli?in ya da dehan?n ar?nd?r?c? nefesi onu ok?ayamayaca?? için kalbinin bu kırlenmi? aynas?n? da art?k hiçbir ?ey temizleyemezdi - mevsimlerimizin hangi bilinmez yasas?, sonbahar?m?z?n hangi esrarengiz ekinoksu uyar?nca?...

her defas?nda onlar?, o dudaklar?n öpüçüklerini, o sonsuz saatleri ve daha önce onu hezeyana sürükleyen rayihalar? kaybetti?ine biraz daha az yan?yordu.

daha az üzüldü?ü için üzüldü, sonra bu üzüntü de geçti. sonra bütün üzüntüler geçti gitti, hepsi; hazlar? göndermeye gerek yoktu, onlar zaten uzun zaman önce, ba?lar?n? çevirip bakmadan, ellerinde çiçekli dallar?yla, kanatl? topuklar?yla kaç?p gitmi?lerdi; kendileri için yeterince genç olmayan o evden kaçm??lard?. sonra bütün insanlar gibi o da öldü. / 119

kederlerim ans?z?n da??lm??t?; babam?n kararlar?, pia'n?n duygular?, dü?manlar?m?n kötü niyeti hala bana hakimdi, ama art?k onlar?n alt?nda ezilmiyordum; kay?ts?z kald???m do?al bir zorunlulu?a dönü?mü?lerdi. / 121

önümüzde bir ?ey par?ldad?; geri çekilmeye vakit bulamay?p yana çekildim; bir a?aç gövdesine çarpac?m?z? sanm??t?m, ama engel ayaklar?m?z?n alt?nda yok oldu; mehtaba bam??t?k. ba??n? ba??ma yakla?t?rd?m. gülümsedi, ben a?lamaya ba?lad?m, onun da a?lad???n? gördüm. o zaman anlad?k ki mehtap a?l?yordu; bizim neredeyse her zaman a?lad???m?z gibi sebebini bilmeden a?l?yordu, ama o kadar yürekten a?l?yordu ki, kar?? koyulamayan tat? umutsuzlu?unda orman?, k?rlar?, yine denize yans?yan gökyüzünü ve nihayet onun yüre?ini aç?kça gören yüre?imi sürüklüyor. / 123

bizi mutlu eden insanlara minnet duyal?m; onlar ruhumuza çiçek aç?ran sevimli bah?vanlard?r. / 124

kötü müzikten nefret edin ama onu küçümsemeyin. kötü müzik iyi müzikten çok daha fazla ve çok daha tutkulu biçimde çal?n?p söylendikçe, gitgide iyi müzikten çok daha fazla dü? ve gözya??yla dolmu?tur. ona bu yüzden sayg? duyun. sanat tarihinde yeri olmad??? halde toplumlar?n duygusal tarihinde muazzam bir yer kaplar. / 125

her soylu ve e?itimli kula??n dinlemeyi an?nda reddedece?i sinir bozucu br nakarat binlerce ruhtan olu?an bir hazineye sahiptir, binlerce hayat?n s?rr?n? saklar; onlar?n canl? ilham?, piyanonun üzerinde hep aç?k duran, her an emre amade tesellisi, hayalperest lütfu ve idealidir. birkaç arpej, bir tekrar, nice sevdal?n?n, hayalperestin ruhunda cennetin armonilerini ya da bizzat sevgilinin sesini ç?nlatm??t?r. kullan?lmaktan a??nm?? bir romans kitab? bizi bir mezarl?k ya da köy gibi etkilemelidir. evlerin bir üslubu yokmu?, mezarlar zevksiz yaz?larla süslerin aras?nda kaybolmu?, ne gam! estetik küçümsemelerini bir an susturabilecek duyguda?l??a ve sayguya sahip bir imgelenin kar??s?nda, bu tozlar?n aras?ndan, gagalar?nda öbür dünyan?n önsezisini kendilerine ya?atm??, bu dünyada güldürmü? ya da a?latm??, hala körpe bir hayal dal?yla bir ruhlar sürüsü havalandırabilir. / 126

insan asla yaln?z kalmamal?, yaln?zl?k hüzün üretir. / 130

kimi hat?ralar?m?z vard?r ki haf?zam?z?n hollanda resim sanat?na benzer; bu tür resimlerinde figürler

genellikle yoksul kesimden ki?ilerdir, hayatlar?n?n basit bir an?nda yakalanm??lard?r; önemli bir olay yoktur, bazen hiçbir olay yoktur, dekor ola?anüstü ve görkemli unsurlardan yoksundur. tablonun ho?lu?u ki?ilerin do?all??ndan, sahnenin masumiyetinden kaynaklan?r; mesafenin resimle aram?zda soktu?u yumu?ak ???k onu güzellikle sarmalar. / 133

her ?eyi isteyen ve elde edecek olsa her ?eyle de yetinmeyecek ki?i için biraz?n?e lde etmek abes bir lüzumdu. / 136

benim bir ?ey söylemem gereklidir kalmadan her ?eyi anlayacak, daha do?rusu hat?rlayacakt?n; yukarı?ya t?rman?rken kendini b?rakacak, a??rl??n? biraz bana yaslay?p bu kez gerçekten yan?mda oldu?unu iyice hissettirecektin bana; ve ben do?u sigaralar?n?n kokusunu hafiften koruyan dudaklar?n?n aras?nda unutu?u bulacakt?m. s?rf hiç kimsenin bizi i?itemeyece?ini bilerek ba??rabilmenin hazz? u?runa, ba??ra ça??ra saçma sapan laflar söyleyecektik; k?sac?k otlar yükseklerin esintisinde tek ba?lar?na titre?ecekti. / 139

gelecekteki bir an ?imdiki zaman olur olmaz bütün büyüsünü yitirir; ne var ki ruhumuz yeterince geni?se ve perspektifleri iyi ayarlanm??sa onu arkam?zda b?rakt??m?zda, hfa?zaya do?ru yol al?rken yine eski büyüsünü kazan?r. ayn? ?ekilde sab?rs?z umutlar?m?zla yorgun k?saklar?m?z? t?rsa kald?rarak ula?t??m?z? ?iisel köy de sokaklar?n?n baya??l???, s?k?? s?k??, ufka kar??an evlerinin uyumsuzlu?u ve içine nüfuz edermi? gibi görünen mavi sisin da??lmas?yla mu?lak vaatlerini hiç mi hiç yerine getiremedi?i gizli harmonilerini tepeyi a?t??m?zda tekrar duyurmaya ba?lar. ama t?pk? her ba?ar?s?z?l??n? tesadüfi ve her defas?nda farkl? bir nedene dayand?ran bir simyac? gibi bizler de ?imdiki zaman?n özünde çaresi olmayan bir kusurun bulunabilece?ini akl?m?zdan bile geçirmeden özel ko?ullar?n olumsuzlu?unu, g?pta edilen bir durumun yükünü, arzulanan bir metresin kötü karakterini, hazırla dolu olmas? gereken bir günde sa?l??m?z?n bozulmas?n?, yolculukta kötü havayu ya ada kötü konaklama ko?ullar?n? mutlulu?umuzu zehirlemekle suçlar?z. ve her türlü zevki yok eden bu y?k?c? nedenleri ortadan kald?rabilece?imizden ku?ku duymayarak, gerçekle?mi?, yani hayal olmaktan ç?km?? bir dü?ün bazen somurtan ama asla hüsrana u?ramayan güveniyle hep dü?lenen bir gelece?e s??n?r?z. / 142

umut inanç eylemidir. biz onun inan?l?rl??n? suiistimal ettik; umut öldü. / 143

deniz hayattan b?kk?nl?? ve gizemin çekicili?ini ilk kederlerden önce, adeta gerçekli?in kendilerini doyurmakta yetersiz kalaca??n?n bir önsesizisi gibi ya?am?? ki?ileri her zaman büyüleyecektir. henüz bir yorgunlu?u ya?amadan dinlenmeye ihtiyaç duyanlar? deniz teselli edecek, belli belirsiz co?turacakt?r. topra??n aksine deniz insanlar?n i?lerinin ve insan hayat?n?n izlerini ta??maz.

deniz geceleri susmayan ?eylerin büyüsüne sahiptir; bunlar tedirgin hayat?m?zda bir uyuma izni, her ?eyin yok olmayaca??na dair bir vaattir, t?pk? yand??nda küçük çocuklara yalnız?z olmad?klar? hissini veren gece ???klar? gibi. / 145

... hayat?n?n ta ba?lang?c?nda ne kadar küçük oldu?unu s?k s?k ?efkatle fark etti?i zamanlardaki gibi ac?d? bedenine ve a?lamak geldi içinden. / 161

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Les Plaisirs et les jours, Marcel Proust

Les Plaisirs et les Jours is a collection of prose poems and novellas by Marcel Proust. It was first published in 1896 by Calmann-Lévy, and was Proust's first publication.

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Alex Sarll says

I read a hundred or so pages of *In Search of Lost Time* at university, and unlike certain other supposed classics attempted around then (LOL Kerouac), I still entertain vague hopes of finishing it. So I thought I might as well give this juvenilia a go by way of a run-up. First impressions: between these pieces and the big boy, Proust went a long way in harnessing a tendency towards excessive preciousness. Some of this is fussy and fiddly in exactly the way you'd expect from the worst stereotypes of French literature (non-experimental variant). Consider the Bouvard and Pecuchet fanfic in which they offer their opinions of contemporary artists, many since lapsed into obscurity; this would likely have been quite annoying at the time, and is now often baffling too. Also, while I never made it to the coded queer sections of *Lost Time*, I can only hope they were coded a little better than the story here purporting to be the confession of a young woman, led astray by unspecified "vice". Yes, Marcel, you're conflicted about cock, we get it (see also: the childishly amusing passage in the dedication to a dear, deceased friend, often to be found "waiting for me beneath the trees, erect but relaxed" - though of course that could be the translator's little joke). Many of the pieces are openly intended to anatomise snobbishness, but while it's always important to remember (as too much of the world has forgotten) that depiction is not endorsement, in this particular instance it can often come across as young Marcel looking down his nose even at the snobbiest of the other snobs.

But just when I was thinking that maybe this was less a run-up than a danger sign, I'd come across something entirely beautiful: the image of fresh shoots in an old forest was the first. There's a selection of poems about various artists and composers that are heartbreakingly lovely, capturing the spirit of their work in a few lines, and recalling that longing glance of life towards art and vice versa which also animated Keats' 'Grecian Urn'. He describes the infinite, poignant promise of skies, the eternal challenge and solace of the sea, and the many finely graded melancholies of nostalgia, like few others. His understanding of love is more pessimistic than my own, but there's still much fine stuff in what he has to say about it as an imperfect approximation of the yearning for an ideal. In short, there's enough glimmering gold amid the pettiness to make it abundantly clear why he might repay hundreds more pages of attention. And yet, even as you're thinking how wonderful he is, with something like the bouquet of 30 vignettes and prose poems about nostalgia...you stumble into a flat-footed parable on how socialising is really shallow and rubbish and it's far more real (not to mention more intensely intense) to be alone all the time. It is, in short, all over the bloody shop.

An aside regarding an aside: the foreword comes from AN Wilson, who in passing seems rather to respect Darwin's work, describing it as "the most earth-changing scientific theory ever propounded". Compare and contrast the born-again/lobotomised modern Wilson, cobbling together moronic attempts to demolish the great man (though the demolitions of the would-be demolition, by people who actually understand biology and/or history, have been most entertaining).

Shaghayegh.l3 says

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Babak says

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Michael Finocchiaro says

For the Proust fanatic, this collection of essays gives you an idea of how Proust thought and wrote when he was not working on *La Recherche*. There are the roots of his mature writing here and some wonderful portraits of some of his favorite artists (Chopin, Van Dyck, Mozart) which presages the myriad of allusions he will make to painting and music across the vast sea of his 7-volume masterpiece.

Joshie says

My first Proust and was honestly a hit and miss collection of short stories (with poems). One cannot deny Proust's passion with art, literature, and classical music as they spill all over these stories; he kept yapping about them and including them as references in almost every 2 paragraphs or so. His beautiful prose was apparent in most of these stories, their themes of mortality, time, and love, but at the same time hindered by the expected lesser word count of short stories. A potential buzzkill if I may say. And it seemed to me they cannot cover every sentiment his beautiful prose was wanting to express and this left a feeling of unsatisfactory in most of them. When I said *beautiful prose* I meant, ** "Ambition intoxicates more than fame; desire makes all things blossom, and possession makes them wither away; it is better to dream your life than to live it, even though living it is still dreaming it, albeit less mysteriously and less clearly, in a dark, heavy dream, like the dream diffused through the dim awareness of ruminating beasts." (p136), ** "Stopping sometimes to listen to the flow of her pain, in the same way that one bends over to hear the sweet incessant plaint of a spring, and thinking of the agonizing alternative between her future shame and the subsequent despair of her family on the one hand, and (if she did not yield to her desires) her eternal sadness on the other, she cursed herself for having created such an ingenious balance between the ingredients of pleasure and pain in her love that she had been unable either to reject it at once as a deadly poison, or to cure herself of it." (p92), ** "And she cursed that inexpressible sense of the mystery of things, when our minds sink into a radiant beauty, like the sun setting in the sea, for having turned her love into something deeper and more

immaterial, more extensive and so to speak infinite, without having made it any less torturing — 'for' (as Baudelaire put it in his evocation of late autumn afternoons) 'there are sensations that, however vague, are still intense, and there is nothing more keenly penetrating than infinity.'" (p94)

Most of his characters were also from high society and struggled from "common high society ailments" — attention, greed, lack of genuine affection, vanity, moral and intellectual corruption, et cetera, et cetera. It was difficult to connect, even more so to invest. Out of these 11 stories, I dearly loved *Mme de Breyve's Melancholy Summer Vacation, The Confession of a Young Woman, Nostalgia — Daydreams under Changing Skies, and The End of Jealousy*.

Although this collection did not exceed any of my expectations, it definitely made me more determined to read *In Search of Lost Time* if not for his beautiful prose then for his sentiments to finally fully come across and I, a sentimental person, will irrevocably bask in them.
