

AOF Survey of the Apocalypse

Commission	Department of Futurity: Archive of Obsolete Feelings
Researcher(s)	The Archivist [true name: unknown]
Season/Year	Fourth season, 20XX [true date: variable]
Location	Scattered Lands [true location: variable]

Overview

Thank you for expressing interest in completing this survey conducted by the Archive of Obsolete Feelings (AOF), branch of the Department of Futurity. Our goal is to ensure the preservation and continuation of forms of expression that have been abandoned or rejected since the world changed: feelings that have no discernable place in the world we now inhabit.

Your responses will be compensated via resource trade—ex: a book, a cast iron pan, a packet of seeds, a new pair of boots, a song, an embrace, a ride across the river. Value will be approximated through collaborative means between you and the researcher(s).

Response Guidelines

- We deploy the word “apocalypse” broadly—please respond to the term however you see fit, in whatever way you envision and have experienced your own corner of this apocalypse.
- You can respond in paragraphs, full or half sentences, bullet points, sketches—in whatever way seems best to answer these questions. If you will be responding by hand, we will send you a guide on how to scan and return your responses.

To confirm your participation in the survey, please provide your name and location below. We thank you in advance for cooperating.

Name: TX (Alias: Heen the Bean)

Location: Sector of Corporate Miscalculations

Questions: Set 1

1. What have you packed in your bag to survive? What does your gear/kit look like? Do you carry any memorabilia or objects of personal significance?

I carry around a years-old bag of lemon lozenges. I find that the most insignificant items can sometimes be the most difficult to throw away. When this all started, I tried not to lose anything. I think the impulse to keep things has faded. Being here has to be good enough.

2. Are you alone or with companions? Nonhuman familiars? Old voices? Imagined or remembered friends? Who do you reach for?

I run into old acquaintances on the net at times. You can't really control who runs into you. The other day I saw an old celebrity in the distance. They looked the same age as when I was in middle school, when we danced to their song at the talent show. I always wondered how they programmed it to be like that—to preserve the moment in your life when you loved yourself the most.

3. What landscape, physical and/or emotional, are you traveling through or situated in? Do you have a desired destination in mind? What carries your body?

It's all just net now, isn't it? I'm not sure what they've done with my body.

4. What is the one act or habit that roots you in this apocalypse? Are you able to afford any kind of daily routine or practice?

Um, I'm not sure if I should say this, but sometimes I deprogram for a day or two. I know it's not good for my avatar, but sometimes it feels good to not wear the person I used to be.

5. Please use the space below (or, if elsewhere, please specify) to draw/sketch something you've seen in this apocalypse. It does not need to be "realistic."

I think that if the net shut itself down one day, it would just look like .

Questions: Set 2

6. How do you feel when you look outside the window, or tent, or shelter, today?

Fine. It's too blue. But it's always like that.

7. How do you feel about yourself in the alternate universe where there was no apocalypse? *Jealous, betrayed... thankful?*

I mean, that's not the universe I'm living in, so. Why bother thinking about it, you know?

8. How do you feel about the mechanisms of this apocalypse, as it's played out? *Maybe you'd rather have had to brave another element, a different plague...?*

I do wonder what happened to everyone else, how many people got stuck in the net, etc. I think they tried to do a census when it all started, but space doesn't really work the same here so we weren't able to reach everyone.

9. How do you feel about the secrets you carry? How do you feel about the stars that have seen them, the winds that have heard them?

Sometimes I think it was my fault, even though I wasn't any of the bigwigs that made this in the first place. I participated in it, it was fun to exist online more than in real life. But I guess this is real life now. That's not really a secret I guess. I guess I try to forget the secrets I keep so I don't tell them on accident.

10. How do you feel when you think about the "end" of this apocalypse, wherever that marker lies, when the next, less-defined period of existence begins?

Ha. There probably isn't one.

Questions: Set 3

11. What is the thing you wanted to say or do before the world changed?

I used to

12. What songs do you remember from before? What songs have you returned to? Have their meanings changed? Would you sing these songs differently now?

I heard it in a video—that songs are memories, and that musicians are always trying to make memories for their audiences. I like when it goes the other way too, like when the audience hears a memory from the musician. “Summer of 2012” from that Rina Sawayama song. It’s a song about regrets, right?

13. In this apocalypse, what mundane occasion do you miss? *A county fair? Going to the grocery store? Chatting with coworkers? Sleeping at the cinema? Watching life pass outside your window?*

I miss smells the most. Sweat. Grass. Sautéed onions.

14. Have you survived other apocalypses? The 2012 apocalypse? Middle school? What makes this apocalypse different from others?

You know, I feel like I'm a “things just happen and I have to deal with it” kind of person. I don't really feel like middle school was that world-ending, maybe just a little sucky at times. You know, that Franny Choi poem: “The world keeps ending, and the world goes on.” The world has always been ending, and we usually aren't paying attention.

You may use this space to reflect on anything we have not brought up in the survey:

Hope this helps with your project, I guess.