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Dome of 100" Hooker Telescope, Mount Wilson Observatory, California

For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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Issue #21: April 29, 2022

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Join The Conversation On Discord.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been running a Discord community for friends and family.

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Photo by [Clark Tibbs](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Do Something

Every day it seems we are faced with news stories of some atrocious, abusive, and even

deadly policies and actions. Most recently, ProPublica published an investigative report on Illinois Public Schools that were issuing police citations and fines to children as young as 8-years old. In any other school, these would have been mere disciplinary issues, but these were escalated to crimes. Once this was disclosed people across the country were up in arms about it and immediately called for it to cease.

(See [The Price Kids Pay: Schools and Police Punish Students With Costly Tickets for Minor Misbehavior](#))

Any time I see a story such as this the same thought occurs to me – if this was such a heinous policy, why did it take such a long time for it to come to light? Surely, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of people who knew of the policy – and found it atrocious – and yet no one person or group did anything about it. Only when it was exposed by the press did anything happen. Why?

Fear

First, there is fear. People may fear for their jobs, their social position, and – in the worst cases – their lives if they speak up. Faced with these fears they actively participate in policies they find abhorrent, illegal, or dangerous. We can all understand these fears and yet we also know that allowing abuse to occur is anathema to our beliefs of ethics, fairness, and legality. If we allow abuse to happen because we are afraid, we are failing society in a fundamental way.

Lies and Rationalizations

Second, most of us are happy to ignore things and let "someone else" deal with the problem. We excuse our behavior by blaming the organization for these failures, not ourselves, even though we may be the day-to-day enforcers of such policies. We might think, "It isn't me who is oppressing people. It is the government/corporation that is oppressing people. I am simply a cog in the machine with no power." Oh, the lies we tell ourselves.

As much as we might like this to be true, we are lying to ourselves as much as others. We are looking for an easy way out – a salve for our conscience – and that is horribly wrong. So often, we treat others in ways that we would find abusive and damaging if they were ever applied to us. Imagine yourself being treated as you treat one of your customers or clients. What would your reaction be? Would you be angry? Would it put your life in danger? Yet nearly every day we ignore any feeling of empathy or anger and continue on our way.

We need to stop excusing, ignoring, and rationalizing such behaviors when we see them and DO SOMETHING about it. We have the power, individually and collectively, to address these issues before it requires the press to investigate and expose them. Of course, sometimes it might take public exposure to solve some problems, but we can first look to our own, local, power to see if changes can be made. We have to take responsibility for our actions when they harm others and work towards a solution.

Doing Nothing

There is a quote that reads, *"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."*

This is probably a paraphrasing of a longer quote by John Stuart Mill,

"Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing. He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject."

I believe that anyone reading this will recognize the truth of these quotes both in ourselves and others. Too often we do nothing and allow evil to triumph. We ignore injustice to protect our comfort. Sometimes we even do direct harm to others to avoid someone harming us. This creates a vicious cycle of abuse that we can't escape, except by taking action. Our inaction locks us into an abusive spiral which becomes harder and harder to escape.

Despite your fears. Despite your rationalizations. If we want the world to become a better, safer, bountiful, fair, and equal, place then we **MUST DO SOMETHING** about it – now, today, tomorrow, forever. We ignore it at our peril.

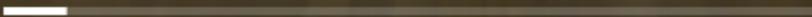
Video

TikTok

@nationalgallerylondon



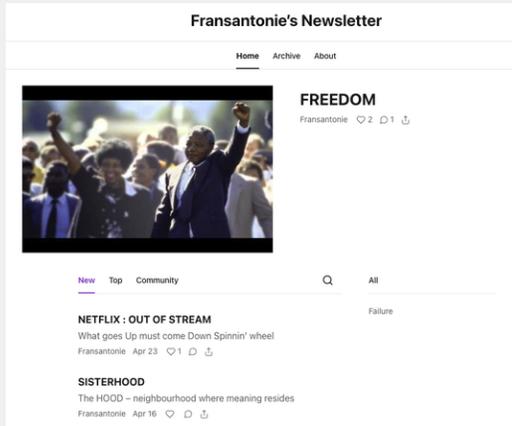
Have you been told there's only one way to look at paintings?



00:03/00:49

This painting might be best viewed from a WEIRD vantage point from the National Gallery of London

Fransantonie Newsletter



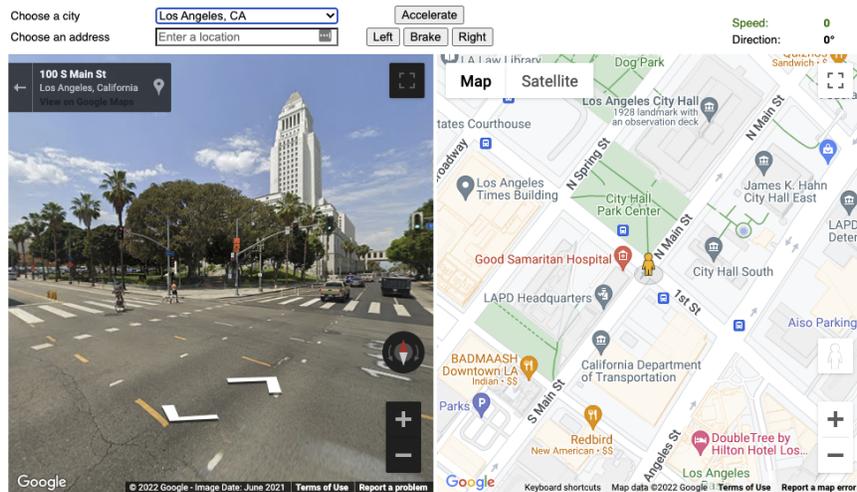
One of the many newsletters I recently subscribed to. I have found a great many excellent sources of news and shared items that both enlighten me and give me items to share with your here. – Douglas

Recent Posts include Netflix: Out of Stream, Showboaters and Hissy Fit Throwers, and Don't Look Away.

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Street View Driver

- Choose a city or address and drive around.
- Drag and drop the marker to adjust your location.
- The Accelerate and Brake keys control your speed.
- The Left and Right keys approximately control your direction.



Street View Driver

Want to get a feeling of a city or town from your work desk? Check out this app built on top of Google Street View. Drive through town and check out the sites. – Douglas

This is an updated version of the original Street View Driver project from 2012.

Coding by [Map Channels](#) using the Google Maps API.

Thanks to [Mike Williams](#) and [Keir Clarke](#) for coding examples and tips

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Best woodland plants for gardens: 12 types for shady spots

via Gardening Etc

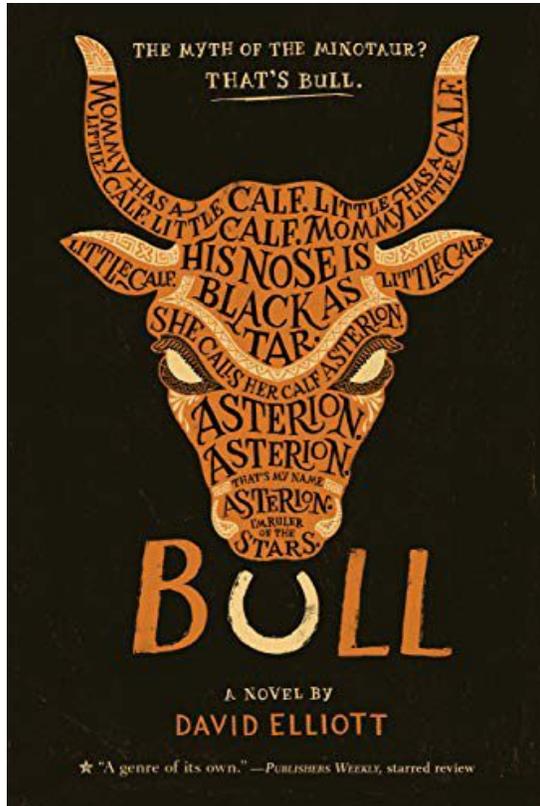
I have just such a shady spot in my garden and I am actively looking for some of these plants to help “green up” this space.. – Douglas

The best woodland plants often come into their own in spring. Light falls through branches that haven't yet come into leaf, bathing the plants below in a golden glow. The show begins with snowdrops and aconites and transforms week by week, with primroses, forget-me-nots and wood anemones blooming in a non-stop carpet of colour.

A woodland-style border is simply a flowerbed beneath deciduous trees or shrubs. Spring is the

highlight, but you can plant a range of bulbs and perennials to give a show throughout the year. Choose white, yellow and pale-blue flowers that will light up the gloom once leaves are on the trees.

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Bull

by David Elliott

A wonderful, easy, read where every character speaks in a different form of poetry. An amazing retelling of an ancient myth. – Douglas

Much like Lin-Manuel Miranda did in Hamilton, the New York Times best-selling author David Elliott turns a classic on its head in form and approach, updating the timeless story of Theseus and the Minotaur. A rough, rowdy, and darkly comedic young adult retelling in verse, which NPR called “beautifully clever,” Bull will have readers reevaluating one of mythology's most infamous monsters.

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