

# Status Check

Ø2.Ø4.  
— 29.Ø5.2Ø22

Trans. Larissa Kyzer

Gerðarsafn

2020

Bergur Ebbi

When you read this, it's 2020. It doesn't matter when you read it, because it was written after 2020 came a-knocking and 2020 is the last year.

Before this, we'd thought 1999 would be the last year because we thought computers would have trouble counting up to 2000. But computers did not have trouble counting to 2000. They powered right on through, and then just kept on going. 2000...2001...2002 and so on and so forth. Computers are actually great at counting. That's the problem, really. Asking computers to keep track of dates is like asking someone who's good at turning water into wine to pour you a glass of water. And what's even the point of being fixated on dates right now, anyway, now that computers have given us access to this whole parallel digital world? A world in which we can fast forward and rewind at will. Yes, in 2020, we sailed into the Imagination Age wherein phenomena like dates don't really matter anymore.

Also, 2020 is a beautiful endpoint. 1969, the year that homo sapiens first stepped foot on the moon, would have been a nice time to quit counting, too. But there's something kind of uncomfortable about the internal composition of that number that simply demands we keep going. Beauty matters a lot in this context because in the Imagination Age, beauty—which we've thought of as a pretty relative concept up until now—has become deadly serious.

And that's why it's best for us to treat 2020 as the final year, the last date. This is good stuff—great even. Not to worry, though, it's not the end of the world. These are just numbers we're talking about. And, of course, we'll still have stuff to count from here on out. The Vatican will count, and maybe the state broadcaster, too. We'll show respect for the calendar the way you give a deferential nod to the cool kid from grade school when you run into him at the shop—out of old habit. You know?

Kópavogur

Art

Museum

The Situation  
Fríða Ísberg

all my past I've been  
hungry for the future; only now  
I want to hover in place  
like an air bubble in a level —  
sip coffee, snap a biscuit in two  
and eat both halves, slowly; only now  
the present is no longer a pool wall  
I kick off from but rather  
a hot pot at 38 degrees;  
I've just sunk into it, it's 2 o'clock  
and there's almost no one at the pool;  
I can close my eyes and just be

only now is it possible, and so I calmly  
sail across the days and nights; ferry  
my own body between morning and evening  
and then morning and evening again; sometimes  
with eyes open, sometimes closed —

don't misunderstand me; I'm aware of  
all the brouhaha, I study it through  
my fingertips, the soles of my feet, my spine  
but in order to really be able to be, to actually  
be, one needs eyes; to be; closed

Climate Emergency  
Jakub Stachowiak

animals kiss sunless greenery  
lend it their light  
which disperses

through the roots  
and out to the four corners  
of the world

but we

both awake  
and asleep

stuck in our own beforetimeswhining  
stuck in our own butwhatifwading

we see nothing  
we hear nothing  
nothing nothing nix

Dreaming Of Chaos  
Halldór Armand

Q:

A: The decision to cancel myself was, of course,  
not an easy one, but I thought it for the best. The  
idea is to acknowledge that this is in my character.  
I genuinely don't find anything entertaining or  
interesting, let alone funny, unless it's in some way  
horrifying, too. A little example: I wasn't into Sigur  
Rós at all until they were charged with major tax  
fraud, and then other offenses after that. They were  
far more interesting to me after I discovered it was  
tax evaders who were making that kind of music.  
You get me? There's nothing I can do about it.  
Sometimes, I read the Supreme Court website,  
I look up the worst cases, and as I read, I feel this  
great sympathy for the victims but at the same  
time, I have this intense interest in the perpetrators,  
too. The things I enjoy the most, the things that  
make me laugh the loudest and the most often,  
that inspire me and, in my eyes, make the world  
a poetic place, are always the things that  
simultaneously fill me with the greatest sadness  
and pain—the things that I most wish I was in  
some position to change. I dream of chaos and  
destruction. There's nothing contradictory about  
this—what you find most lamentable in your  
character can absolutely be what you love most  
about yourself. So you know. I love nothing better  
than my hatred! I'm never happier than when I'm  
angry! But there's also a considerable amount of  
shame that goes along with this because to tell  
the truth, it clashes with everything I believe in,  
which is, simply put, brotherly love, warmth and  
affection. I'm a really polite person—more than  
the next guy, I'd say—I'm prepared to make that  
claim. I never put myself first, not under any  
circumstances. I voluntarily take the worst desk  
at work, I've never laid a hand on another person,  
I always fill everyone else's glasses before mine,  
I let people merge in traffic, and, generally  
speaking, I think it's more important that other  
people feel good than that I do. This probably plays  
into my decision to cancel myself.

Q:

A: So, I've definitely thought about this a lot—  
whether I'm just hateful by nature, whether I'm  
some kind of genetic hater or what. But, you know,  
I'm really a pretty sensitive person and always have  
been. Which is, again, the whole reason I decided  
to cancel myself.

Q:

A: Ha, where should I start? Let's maybe start with  
the stuff I love, something benign—Trump, for  
example. I felt like every day was a feast with that  
guy. He was bigger than the game. I laughed for  
four years straight. Because he was a definite  
confirmation, you know? I didn't give a shit about  
his agenda—*build a wall, grab 'em by the pussy*,  
all that stuff—I didn't buy for a second that he  
was some kind of despot, could not have cared  
less, I'm not American and I lost interest in America  
a long time ago. But there was a kind of horrific  
genius, a monstrous brilliance, which was a definite  
confirmation that I wasn't alone in the world.  
Because the more garbage he spouted, the more  
fun I had. And now, today, when people are always  
talking about terrible opinions, information entropy,  
fake news—I love it, all of it. I want to let myself  
be deceived, endlessly deceived, I want there to be  
disgusting attitudes out there, I actually long for this  
total pandemonium, because it's so creative. I'm not  
talking about tolerance, I'm not some overindulged  
boomer worried about freedom of speech because  
he, like, what do I know, read Mill in some law class  
in college or whatever and watched that one guy  
over there...aw, what's his name—the Canadian  
idiot on YouTube—nah, that's not my thing. For  
better or worse, as long as I'm feeling that buzz  
of creation, that's all I ask. And I'll tell you why. It's  
really simple. We're all under surveillance and that's  
why all of us—literally all of us—are governed  
by fear. And a frightened society hates those who  
aren't frightened, that makes perfect sense. I  
gravitate toward people who act like they're already  
free. I could care less if I agree with them or not.

Q:

A: Okay, sure. Programs about environmental  
protection on RÚV. Sorry, I don't buy it. All these  
eco-messiahs. I don't buy it for a second. Actually,  
all politicians. Don't buy them. Icelandic right-  
wingers. Can't stand 'em. Dad always said that the  
main thing that characterizes Icelandic leftists is a  
lack of integrity. And he's right. And guess what?  
It's going a bit far to say that you hate a child, but  
Greta Thunberg, oh, sweet Jesus, if I'd been her  
classmate, I would have 100% lost sleep over hating  
that kid. 100%. I can't stand Trudeau, Bessastaðir,  
Erdogan. Guys who drive Jeeps, people who are  
proud of the fact they bike, the concept of an urban  
planner, in quotes. I can't stand Icelandair, the  
banking system, the airport shuttle. I know this  
is nothing new, but the fishing industry is also up  
there. Civil servants congratulating themselves on  
Twitter. The Rat Race. The Centre Party. Terrible.  
I hate the Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise with  
an almost religious fervor. I can't stand the media,

social media, Nordic cooperation. Let's see. The  
concept of green home loans, in quotes. Harpa  
concert hall. The pension fund system. On the pyre  
with it. The National Church is a joke, sugar-free  
soda, this bullshit about banning plastic bags in  
grocery stores. Weather warnings, dangerous  
airborne particles, and cyber security. Icelandic  
lamb. Dick pics. Do your dreams actually die when  
one of those smacks you in the face in your DMs?  
Alcohol, the financial markets, National Day. Can't  
stand it. Electric cars. I'm allergic to social justice  
warrior authors who write op-eds about how other  
people should live. Shall I continue? Vesturbær, the  
whitest zip code on planet earth—is there a more  
unbearable place to be found anywhere in the  
course of human history? The Oscars, trauma porn,  
the phrase *the future is female*, in quotes. At least  
Icarus got pretty close to the sun. Self-centered  
doctors, the breadcrumb theory, and the concept  
of the rule of law. Those 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectualist  
poets, the *Fjölnismenn*, and Eurovision. The first  
thing that occurred to Icelanders when Russia  
invaded Ukraine was to ban the Russians from  
participating in Eurovision. That was the worst  
punishment we could imagine. The concept of  
acculturation. I give that max 20%, there's 20%  
max in that, the rest is crap—best case scenario,  
it's 80% bullshit. How do you think culture actually  
comes into being? Do you think it springs from the  
void, fully formed, like Athena from Zeus' head?  
All this being said, this is just how I feel, and I  
can't do anything about it. This is what I think in  
the same way that I think Icelandic flatbread and  
cheese tastes good. It's not something I can change.

Q:

A: No, it's more a question of putting my money  
where my mouth is, canceling myself.

Q:

A: So, I'll do it by recording everything I say and  
do on my phone. And then I have a subscription  
to a program that converts sound files to text.  
Then everyone will be able to read it, it'll just be  
in, like, the public domain—accessible to anyone.

Q:

A: I'll cut out everything you say, of course, what  
do you think I am? This is about me.

I Hate Everything That Is Mine  
Kristín Eiríksdóttir

I

Never been entirely happy  
with this  
name  
or physical being  
wanted to eat illustrated food  
or paper  
be made of something  
else

buoys  
numbed cold  
defeat the sea  
somewhere other than  
here

or go up in smoke  
t-shirt after t-shirt  
light a cigarette with a cigarette

always buying  
owning nothing  
hating everything  
that is mine  
as soon as it is  
mine.

II

A scene from a movie  
the crying boy  
or a memory  
an unlighted hall in a home  
a pen pal on death row  
or a scene from a movie  
a crime of passion  
memory  
a raised hand  
scene from a movie  
memory  
ISO  
a scene from a movie  
a pen pal  
understanding  
memory  
a hand that raises  
in a moment of passion  
scene  
memory  
movie.

III

I have a child  
that is bigger  
than yours  
that is bigger than  
a house  
that is held up by pillars  
and used to store  
weapons  
and things I cannot  
throw out  
a hearse  
a ride on a rollercoaster  
packaging  
costumes from a  
movie  
or a set from a movie  
or memories of  
eating  
brittle paper-thin  
bleached-out plastic  
crackling

the child knows everything finds everything  
that I hide  
a whole grape  
dice  
the tie  
of a robe  
and sharp table's edge  
strangers  
traffic  
twilight

the child is out of control but I'm calm

the child is the air that hits the fan  
and I am cool

IV

The child's father is a waterbed  
the light that is lit  
when the mini bar opens  
he sells balloons  
on the corner  
and we turn  
and he lets go of a  
balloon  
which drifts and  
contains the rest  
of the helium  
funny  
voices:

I'm sorry if you feel like I  
have done something  
wrong.