

## Thoughts and Smiles – July 21, 2025



There's a legendary story about Winston Churchill that, by now, is impossible to prove or disprove. Maybe it's pure fiction—but it's too good not to share.

One day, Churchill was headed to a radio station to address the people of Britain. He arrived by taxi and, as he was getting out, asked the driver if he could wait for half an hour to take him back afterward. For whatever reason, the cabbie didn't recognize Churchill. (It sounds unlikely, but maybe the driver was just having a busy day, or perhaps Churchill didn't look quite like the portraits in the papers—or maybe it was early in his career.)

Anyway, the driver replied that he couldn't wait—he needed to get home in time to listen to Sir Winston Churchill's speech on the radio! Churchill was delighted by this answer and paid the driver a generous tip. The cabbie glanced at the money, then looked back at his passenger and said,

"Well, to hell with Churchill's speech, sir—I'll wait for you right here!"

Sometimes, the best stories are the ones that reveal just how much people value a little extra kindness—and how quickly priorities can change!

On October 17, 1961, a painting by French master Henri Matisse was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. If not for the title, almost no visitor would have guessed what this simple image depicted: ten wavy purple lines and two blue triangles on a pale beige background. Wings? Sails? Or maybe something straight out of a psychological inkblot test?

A total of 116,000 museum-goers passed by this artwork, finding nothing remarkable about it. Many thought it looked like something a child would draw.



But here's the twist: it was a boat. Matisse titled it simply "Boat," and he intended to show clouds, a sail, and their reflection on the water. Imagine how many people must have wondered, "Why would Christie's auction house pay \$30 million for this? I could paint a whole fleet of such boats myself! Anyone interested? I'll sell ten for the price of one..."

Today, this very painting is one of the most valuable works by a French artist, now worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

But the real drama came 47 days after the exhibition began. For all that time, "Boat" hung unnoticed—until a sharp-eyed visitor spotted the artist's signature... at the top. The staff had hung the masterpiece upside down! Cue the art world chaos. Outrage! Headlines! Calls to fire the curators! The painting was quickly rehung, this time right side up, and suddenly—what had seemed an odd doodle was revealed as a modernist masterpiece.

With the horizon line now making sense and the sail and reflection aligning perfectly, some even spotted lilac seagulls in the sky. Critics rushed to praise Matisse's genius all over again: "His work is brilliant in its simplicity," they said, "designed to spark imagination."

To this day, Matisse's "Boat" inspires debate—and often gets compared to Malevich's infamous "Black Square." (Speaking of which, did you know that, thanks to a museum mix-up, "Black Square" once hung upside down for two whole months? True story!)

Art isn't always about what we see at first glance. Sometimes, it's about the story, the mistake, or the imagination it awakens in all of us.

What's the most mysterious or surprising artwork you've ever seen?





Before John Lennon became world-famous, he was just another Liverpool teenager obsessed with his guitar. His aunt, Mary Elizabeth Smith, used to scold him and repeat her favourite warning:

*“Guitar is all well and good, my dear John, but you’ll never make a living from it.”*

Years later, after John had become a legend and earned a fortune, he purchased a beautiful villa for Aunt Mary. On a marble plaque inside, he had her old words engraved for all to see—a playful reminder of how dreams sometimes prove everyone wrong.

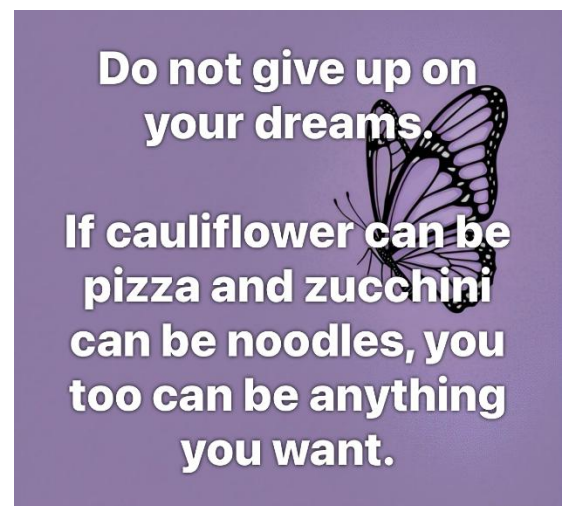
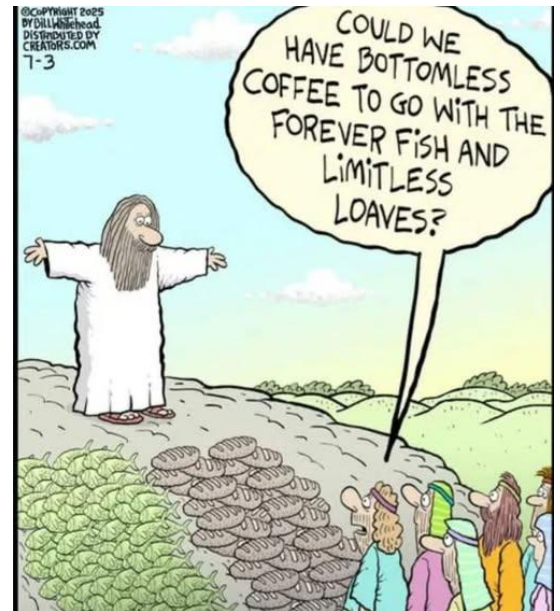
Never underestimate the power of passion (or the sense of humour of a rock star)!

What’s the best *“you’ll never make it”* advice you’ve proven wrong?

*Oh, those Thoughts and Smiles are just a flash in the pan, you’ll grow tired of posting them, mark my words, you’ll see!!!! - source, my own warped mind.*







Blessings to you all!

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Check out "David's Blog" on the Sauble Beach United Church website.

<https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-blog/>

Are you free? We're all burdened by the chains of our thoughts, overthinking, behaviours, lusts, anxiety and attachments; or maybe it's by those of somebody else, our past, or worry about the future. Jesus says, "The truth will set you free." But what does that even mean? What is truth, and how does it set me free?

<https://youtu.be/IFp1EJVMnQ0?si=OkhdRA3eVQoqa5fp>

