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## **Our Desire to Escape is a Desire to Keep Grounded**

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We live in a fast-paced world, a world of progress, a world of speed and chaos. And when we feel the burnout, the stress, the heavy weight on our shoulders, we seek solace in our desires and imagination – to escape, to slow down, and to find relief and grounding elsewhere so as not to lose ourselves.

I painted this scene with Paris in mind, particularly an idyllic Parisian town where cycling is freedom and doing nothing but witnessing the beauty of ancient European architecture is an art. I pictured myself by the window, smelling the scent of wild roses and allowing the thick and cold wind from Montmartre Mountain to ripple through my clothes and skin. “It’s beautiful” is all I could whisper to myself.

“Why do we want an escape from routine? Why do we desire to go somewhere, to travel, to leave temporarily what we are doing? What does this signify?” I would usually ask myself. In musing, I realised that travelling does not only allow us to appreciate the rich culture and history of a country and their people, but also to discover ourselves in the journey – what our desires and goals are, what we are capable of, and what else we can do for ourselves and the world.

To go there is not simply an escape, but a calling. We are responding to a call that echoes through the ages, which allows us to listen to our core, our voice, our humanity, and to keep grounded in who we are and why we keep living. Our desire to escape is a desire to keep grounded because we cannot afford to lose ourselves, and we cannot afford to forget that the world, despite disruptions and chaos, remains a beautiful place to live in. This painting is a testament that I hold on to this thought, no matter what happens.

**Note:** Painting by Esther Wansing Soo. Description by Nimrod L. Delante.

### **Bionote**

**Esther Wansing Soo** is a lecturer at the Language and Communication Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She teaches undergraduate courses such as interdisciplinary inquiry and writing, as well as engineering communication. Her current research interests include semiotics, presentation skills, critical thinking skills, and pedagogical approaches in the classroom using generative AI. Painting is a hobby she pursues when she has the time.