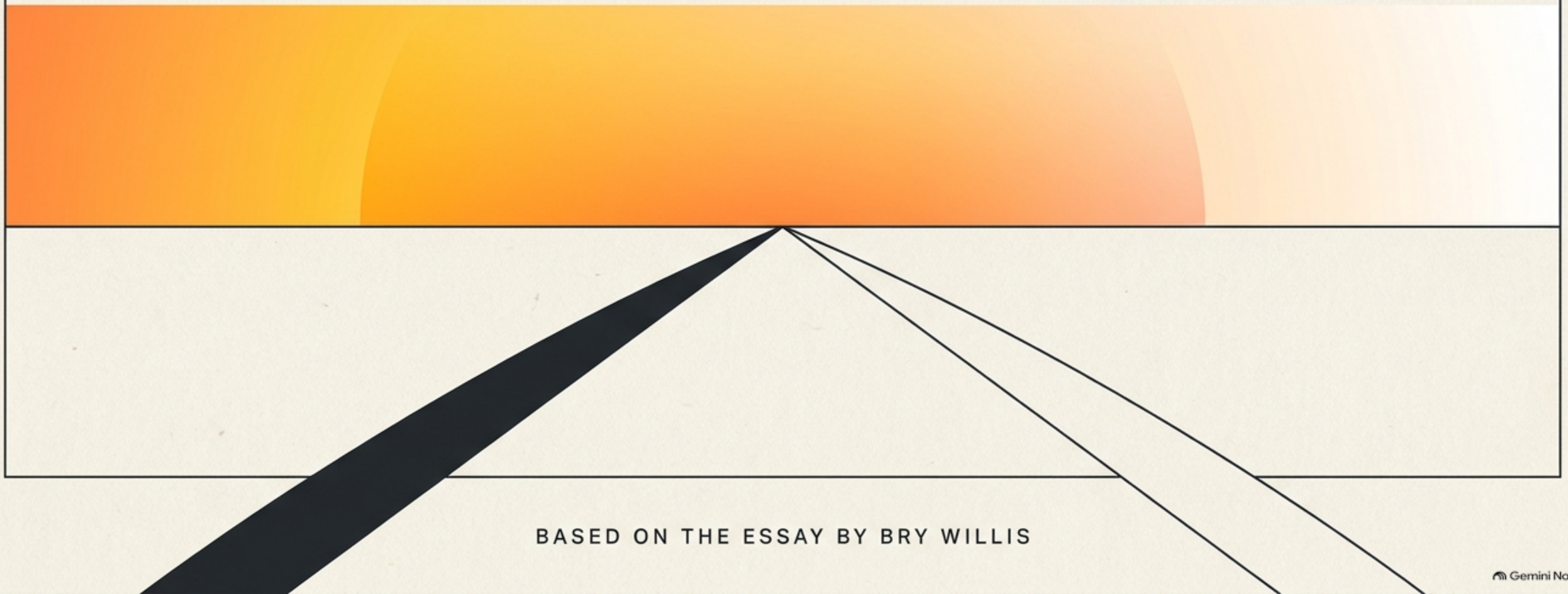
The Acceleration of Time

When Tomorrow Loses Its Promise



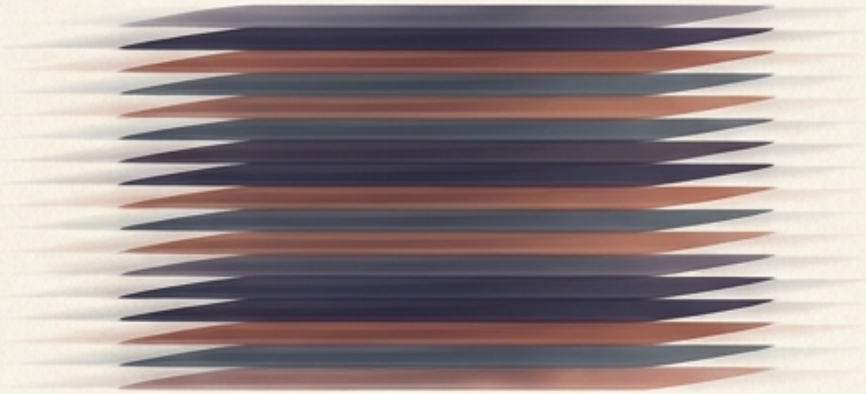
BASED ON THE ESSAY BY BRY WILLIS

Gemini Notebook

Why did the summer holidays last forever when we were children...



...whilst whole years now slip past more or less unnoticed?

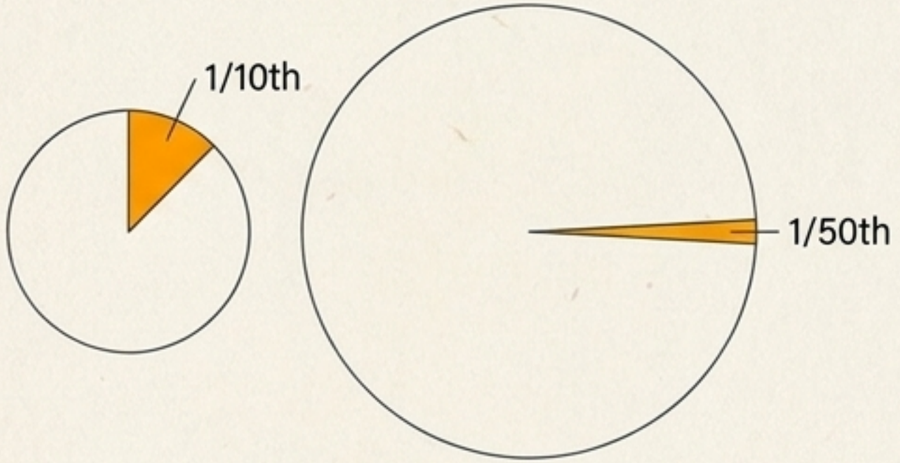


It’s an old question, but the familiar answers remain insufficient.

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Paul Janet, 1890

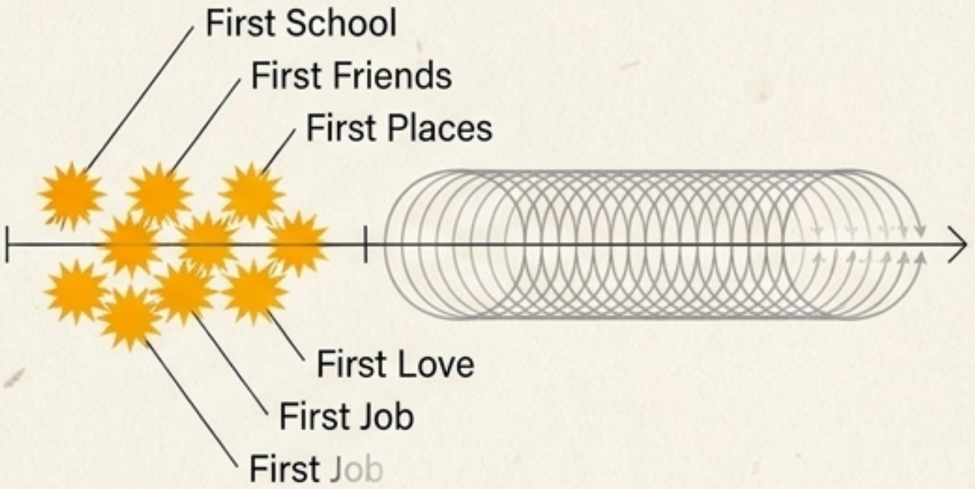
The Arithmetic of Life



Time feels shorter in strict mathematical proportion to the life it is measured against.

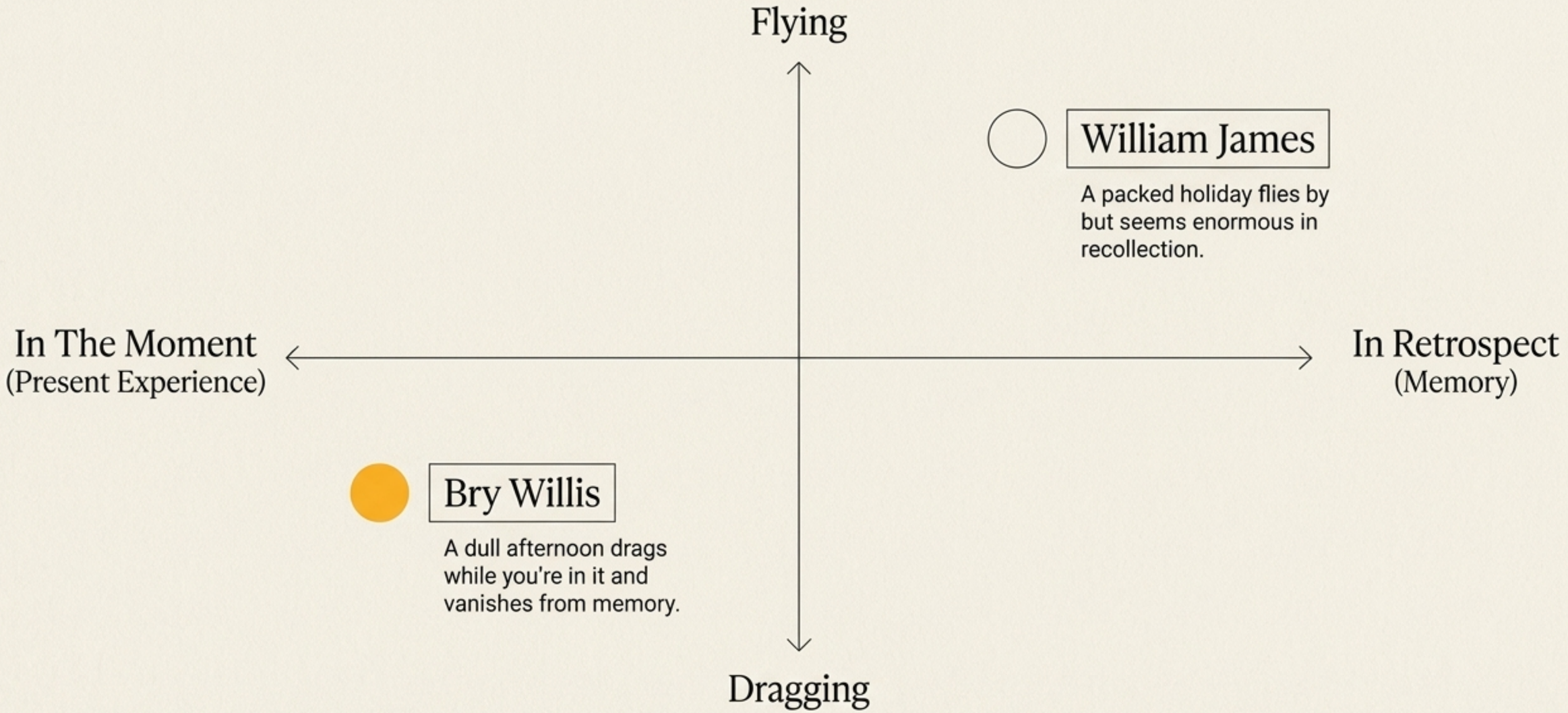
William James, 1890

The Fading of Novelty



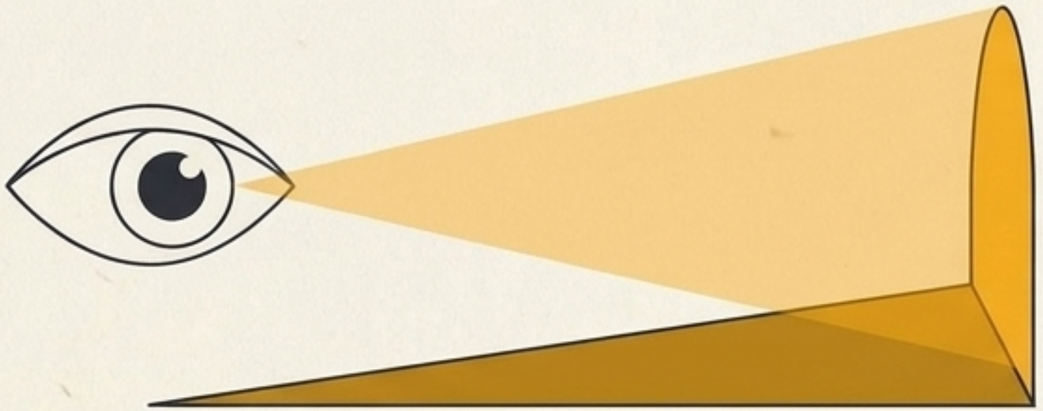
Adulthood settles into routine, shrinking whole years in recollection to a handful of remembered events.

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This exploration is about the present: how what we are looking forward to colors the time we are currently in.

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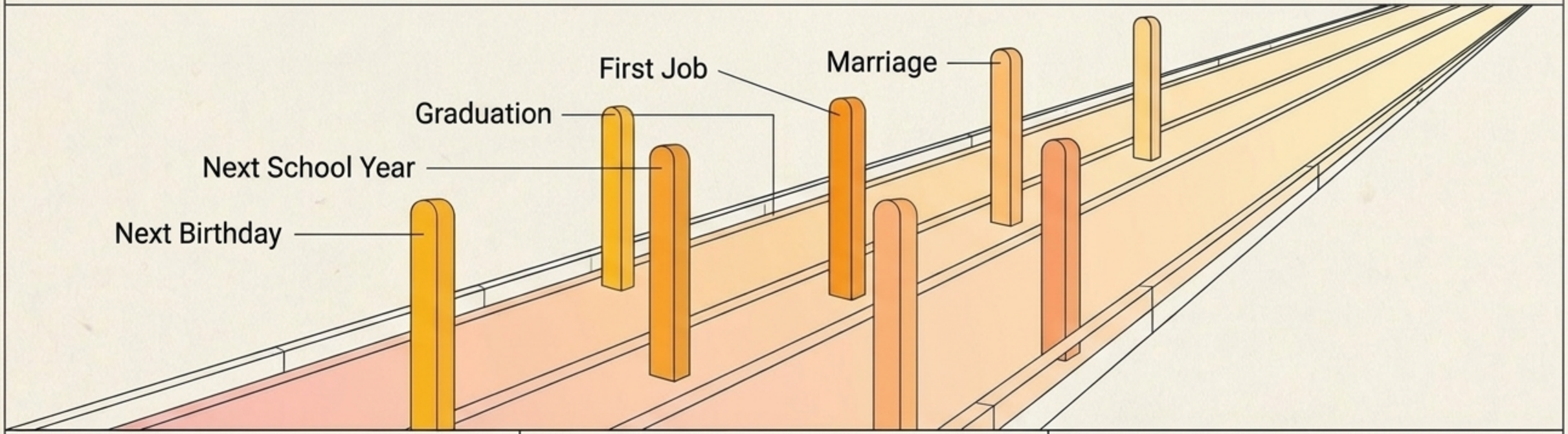


Time perception isn’t dictated by arithmetic or memory, but by Anticipation.

How we experience the present is entirely shaped by our attitude toward what is coming next.

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Youth & The Density of Becoming



The Wait

Children spend a remarkable amount of time waiting to become something else.

The Branching Prospect

The future is a branching set of mostly pleasant prospects.

The Friction

The more impatiently we wait for time to pass, the slower it goes. The present is experienced as whatever is standing in the way.

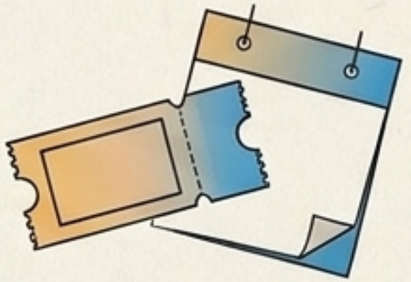
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Adulthood & The Thinning of Milestones



Structural Transitions:

An entirely different way of living



Episodic Events:

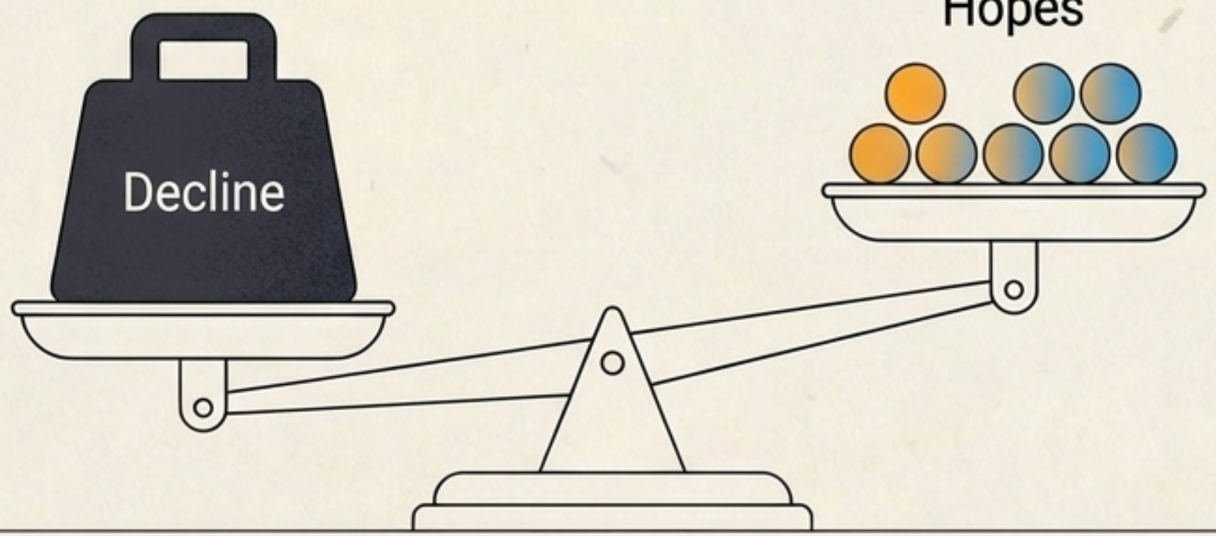
A trip to Paris, finishing a book,
a grandchild's graduation

The milestones that once organized our waiting have been passed or quietly dropped. We don't stop wanting things, but the scale changes. What remains are events within an established life, not transitions toward a different one.

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The Far Horizon & The Visible End

In time, the anticipated future acquires a new feature: an increasingly visible end.

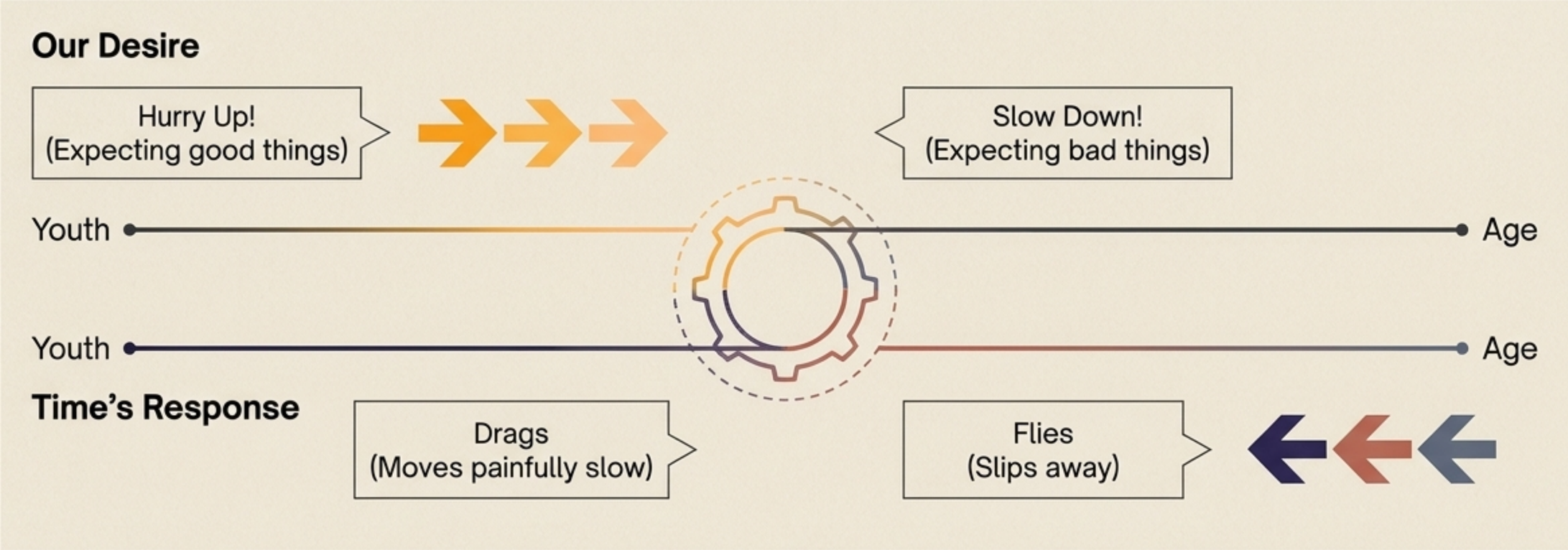


Ambivalence vs. Equilibrium

You can eagerly look forward to retirement while simultaneously dreading physical decline. A dozen pleasant prospects can be outweighed by a single unwelcome one. It is the weight of what we anticipate that matters, not the tally.

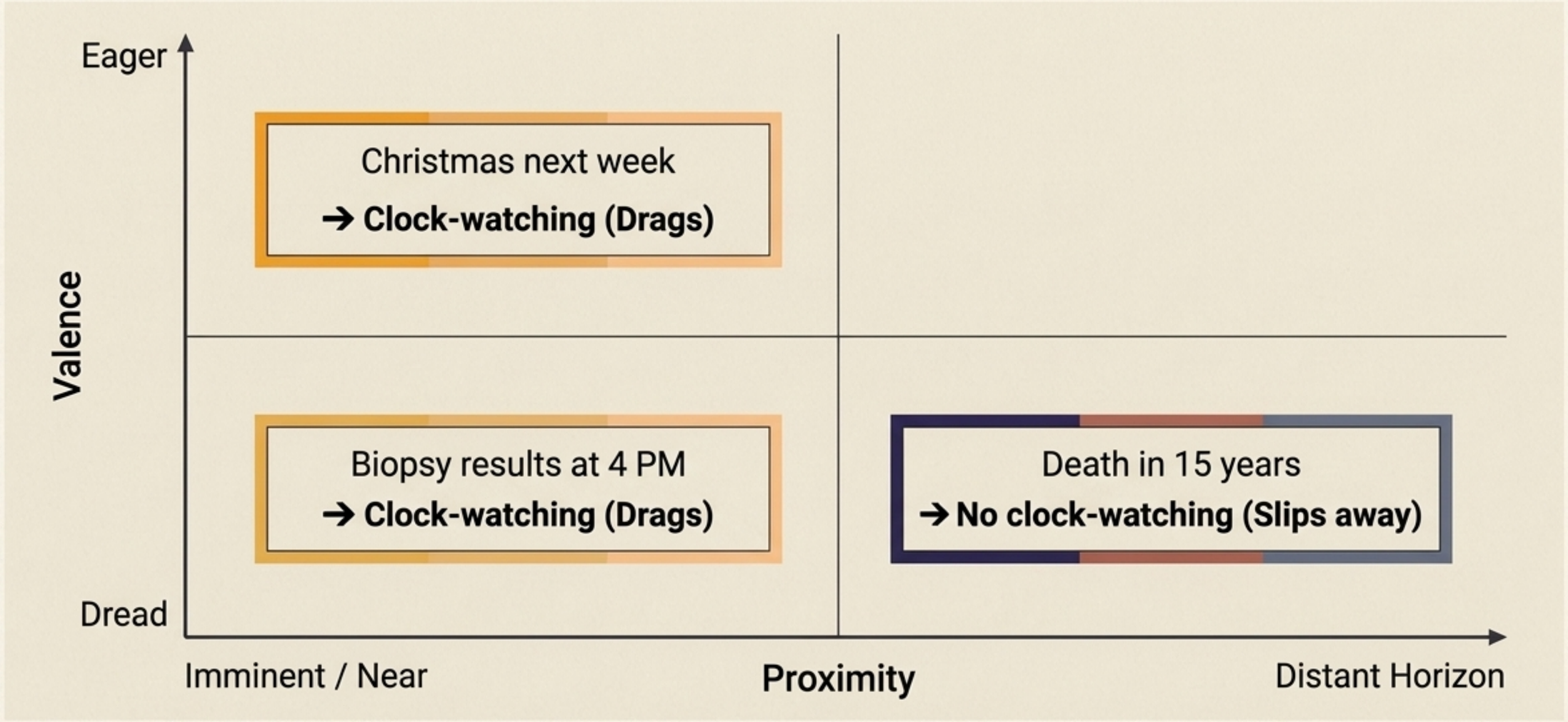
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The Asymmetry of Desire



The irony lies between what we wish for and what we get, not in the logic. Wanting the future to arrive to makes the present drag; wanting to keep the future at bay makes the present slip away.

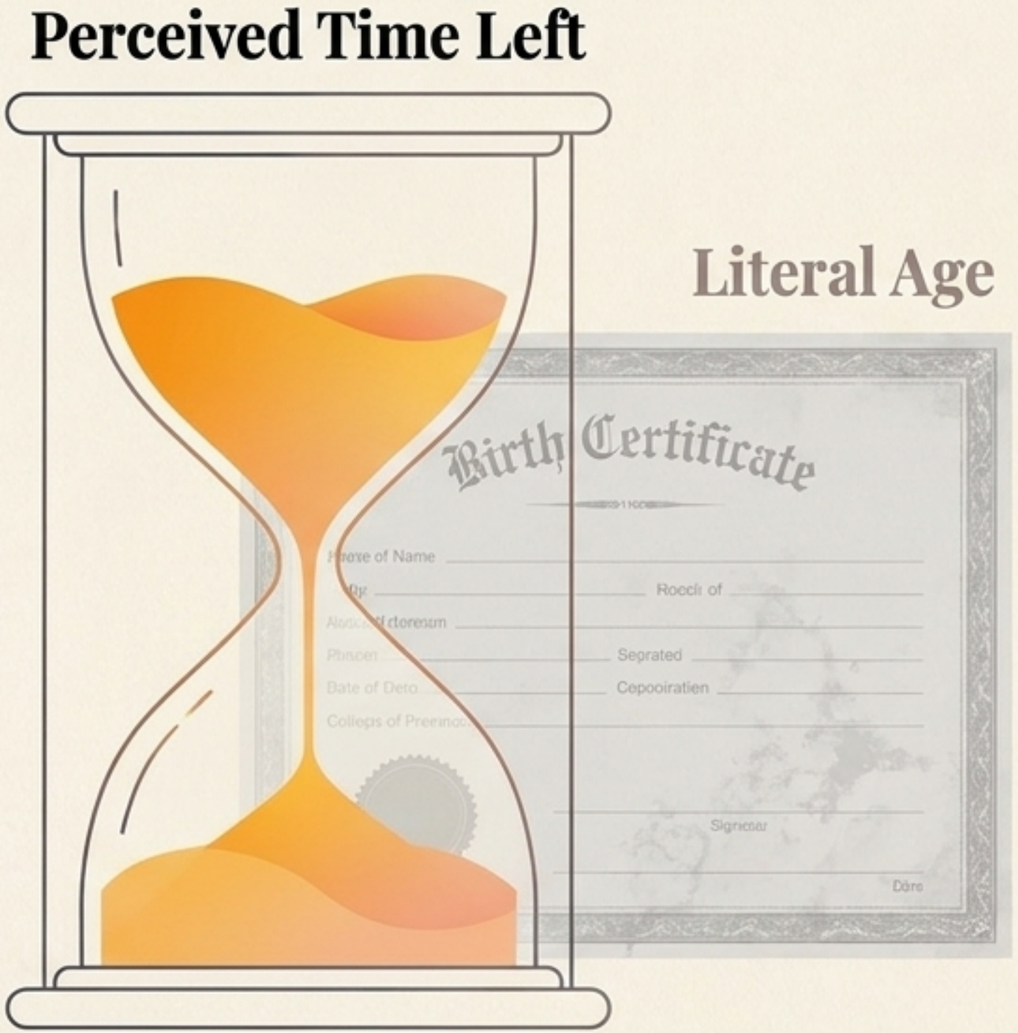
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Dread doesn't always speed things up. The frightened patient and the impatient child share proximity. Youth is crowded with near events that cause clock-watching. Later life leaves a distant, unwelcome horizon that causes temporal slippage.

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The Primacy of Perceived Time



Laura Carstensen's Research

Decades of psychological research confirm: it is how much time people believe they have left—not their chronological age—that changes what they want.

Young people facing a foreshortened future begin to choose much as older people do. The shape of our anticipated future matters far more than the number of candles on the cake.

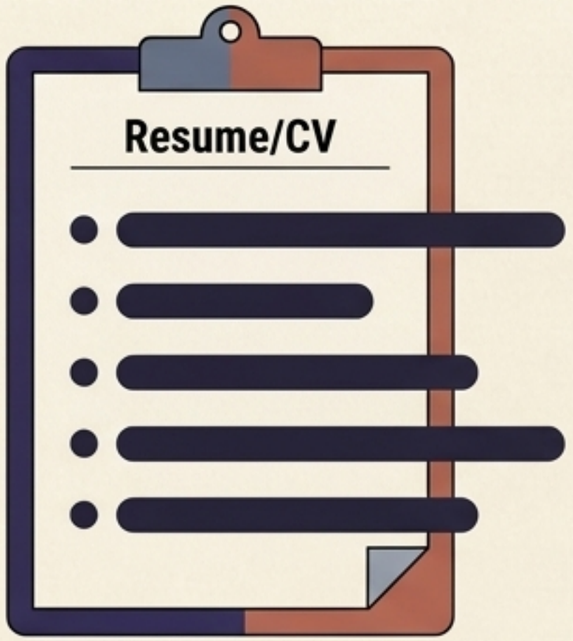
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The False Consolation of Novelty



Padding the Archive (Memory)

Seeking novelty (taking a new route, trying a new hobby) treats a well-furnished memory as though it were extra life.

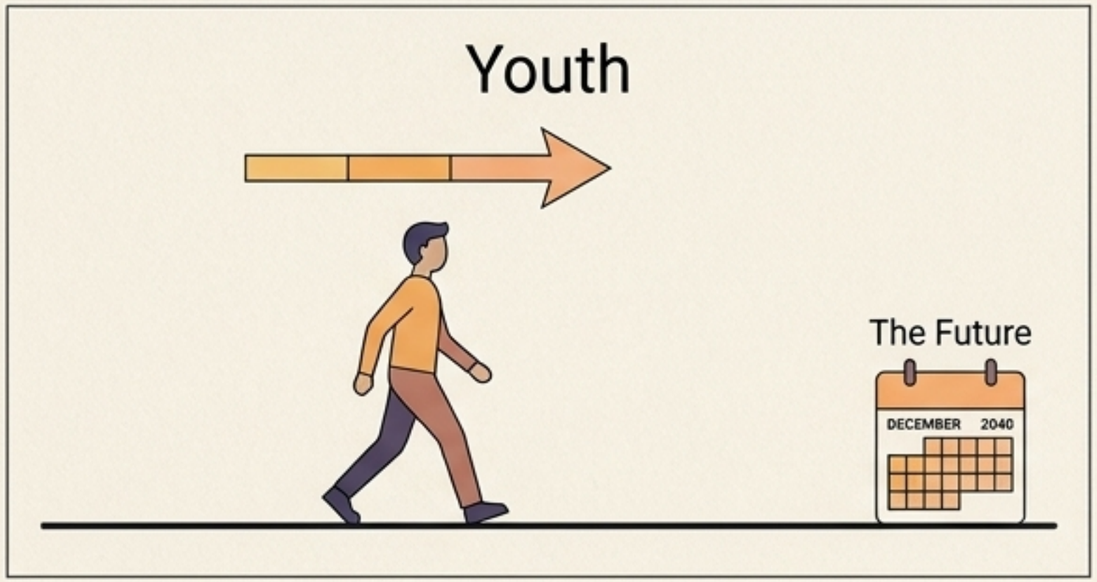


Padding the CV (Reality)

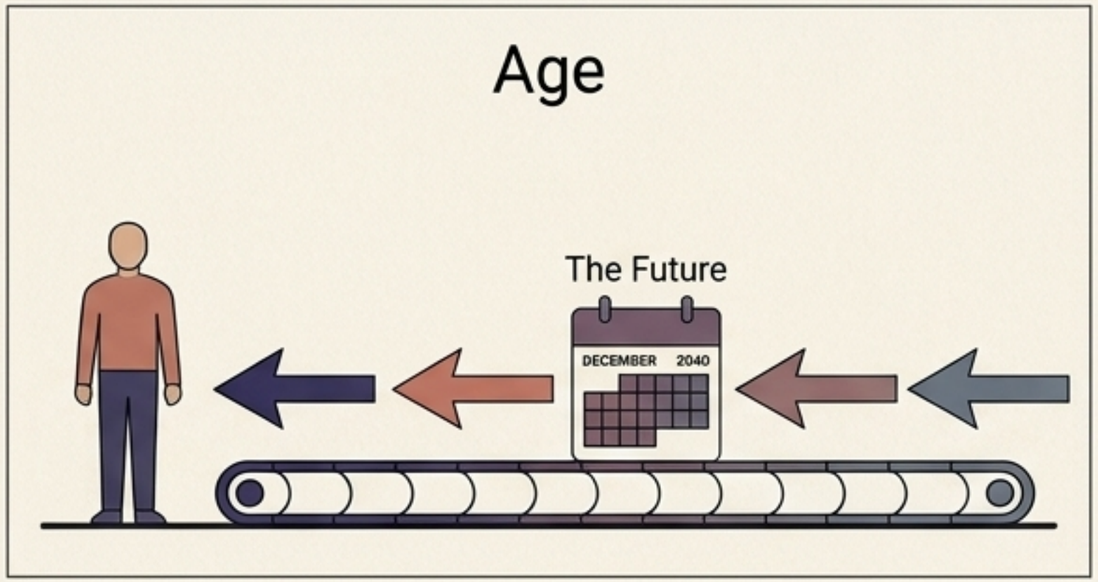
Cramming the memory archive buys you a fuller-looking past, but it does not slow down the present. It is the equivalent of padding a CV and calling it a career.

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The Metaphor Swap



Moving toward time
("We are approaching our sixties")



Time moving toward us
("The years are coming")

**We drift from a future we confidently travel toward,
to a future that inevitably travels toward us.**

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The Architecture of Anticipation

	Youth	Old Age
Goal	Becoming	Being
Scale	Structural Transitions	Episodic Events
Valence	Mostly Eager	Ambivalent / Dread
Proximity	Near / Imminent	Distant Horizon
Metaphor	Moving toward the future	The future moving toward us
Result	**Time Drags**	**Time Flies**

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The calendar doesn’t know if we’re ten or seventy.
It doesn’t know if we’re waiting for a wedding,
a diagnosis, or the last chapter of a book.



**It just carries on. We are the ones
who change what tomorrow means.**

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