Voyager 1

"That's how it is — one is old and a child at the same time. What happened to all those years in between that seemed so important at the time?"

Ingar Bergman

On Wednesday, November 18, 2026, *Voyager 1*, launched September 5,1977, became the first spacecraft to reach one light-day (16 billion miles) from earth. This means that the light reaching *Voyager* from earth is from the day before. To put that another way, if there were astronauts on *Voyager,* when they looked out the window back at earth on Wednesday, they would see earth as it was on Tuesday. They would literally look back in time in real time.

Boggles the mind doesn't it?

I was 20 years when *Voyager* launched, I'm 69 now. Sometimes it seems like 1977 is so far away that it never happened. Sometimes it seems like 1977 is so close you can touch it. So far and yet so close at the same time.

I guess it's all relative.

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I think a lot about time now that I have the time. All the time. The time that has passed, the time still to come. The time left. These days, I have so much past behind and within me, it's as if it bubbles over.

Perhaps that why I cry much more than I used to.

I encounter a young mother and daughter shopping and laughing in a grocery store and my eyes well up. A song surprises me on the radio as I drive somewhere alone and I start to weep. A random scene in an old *MASH* rerun comes on as I channel surf and triggers tears. A sunrise, a thunderstorm, a full moon. The tears come not from joy or sorrow; something just comes over me. It's embarrassing.

An example, one flashback out of countless that come to me all the time.
The other night, suddenly and for no apparent reason, my mind traveled back to 2008 as I was packing up the family home for the last time. As I pulled down a poster in my daughter's room, revealed on the bare wall behind were the words 'Sara's Room!' painted in my daughter's handwriting.

I remembered how those words came to be on that wall. We had built that house back in 1997 when Sara was 15. As a full blown teenager, she insisted on having a room in the basement and a bathroom of her own. So she had defiantly marked her space upon moving in.

My eyes welled up, in real time just as they had in past time.

Where did that come from? I think it has to do with the past, how much past has built up inside me all these years. The past is a strange thing, both present and missing. Yet these days I may tear up not for anything specifically but rather for all the years gone by. Whatever I'm feeling is both gone and remembered.

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Time is relentless.

Sara turned 44 in September. In October my youngest granddaughter turned four. Last week, my oldest granddaughter turned 20.

Yet all of them, had they boarded a Voyager-type spaceship on the day they were born, would not yet be one light day away. So far and yet so close at the same time.

It's about time. So the tears.

That's all I'm sayin'

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