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Nothing happened in the most important moment of my life.

I remember everything perfectly, but I can't explain it all. It was in the hot tub, random AirBNB, middle of the Colorado Plateau¹. A silent breeze flowed all around, slowly escorting me to the public pool area. It was 4th of July, but the fireworks already ended, leaving me alone, listening only to the hushed exhales of wind, and my own bare feet wearing away the asphalt. At the end of the road there was a squeaky metal gate, which I quickly slipped through, drawn in by a soft white glow². I almost melted the water was so warm. The first minute was normal. Then I started playing music, and stuff became real weird. Mr. Rager³: I heard the drums, and the hands playing them. I heard the short strum of the electric guitar. "I'm off on the adventure," he said. At this point, I think I was as well. My head was layed back on the rocky edge, cool and sharp in contrast to the rest of my body. The music felt as though it was coming from way in the back of my head, from the single point where I felt the ground and the sharp cold and also where maybe my conscience was. I gazed up at little white specs, not thinking at all. This is where my story becomes hard to understand or write. I myself can't even understand what really happened, but nothing felt real, and my existence just felt different. It wasn't derealization⁴ though, I don't think. No

¹ Specifically Moab, Utah. The AirBNB was slightly distanced from the main town, and in a small complex of renter's property.

² Welcome to **the** Hot Tub.

³ Song by Scott Mescudi(Kid Cudi). From: *Man on the Moon II: The Legend of Mr. Rager*. Highly recommend this.

⁴ Also known as Depersonalization, a condition where during a heightened stressful experience, a person may feel their perception has suddenly shifted into something strange.

Rodney Luster, Sep 30, 2021: [When Life Doesn't Feel Real Anymore | Psychology Today](#)

Derealization/Depersonalization can involve feeling like an outside observer to one's self, losing one's sense of "self", physical or emotional numbness, unfamiliarity to one's surroundings. Distortions in time, distance, and sound are common, as well as an almost "dreamlike" effect to your vision. I don't believe this is what happened, because I was lacking the physical or emotional sensations. However, I do think the shift in perception and blurring of a sense of "self" could apply to what happened. I might describe it as feeling partially disconnected from reality.

tingling either. The music must have been important though. It rang out the whole time, even though I never had a thought acknowledging what I was listening to or that I was even listening to anything. I never sang the song, or even hummed it, but it was important. That song was connected⁵. Even when the physical sensations vanished⁶ I could still hear that, and envision the stars and the moon he spoke about, as well as the man up there.

Maybe that was me on the moon.

Or somewhere else. I certainly started the adventure in that isolated hot tub, but who knows where I went while my eyes were closed? I don't. I was seeing a picture, the night sky, that was based on, but removed from reality. I could have been years away. Another dimension⁷? Hopefully not that far.

And then it all suddenly stopped. I lifted my head up off the cool stones and looked around. Nothing changed. And that was it I guess.

The End?

Probably not, since this always comes back to me.⁸

⁵ Music has been known to influence illness, depression, productivity, mood, and our perception of the world.

Nina Avramova Feb 20, 2019: [How music can change the way you feel and act | CNN](#)

The type of music you listen to can also influence specific things you notice and certain sensations. Despite the confusing and complex nature of this experience, and despite the fact that to this day I am not confident about what even happened, I am almost certain that the music plays a role. Whenever I hear Mr. Rager, this vivid memory is replayed, and I can feel everything.

⁶ I also have considered that perhaps this was a result of the warm water, or that the sensations of being in the hot tub played some part.

Daryl Austin Aug 31, 2021: [Bath benefits: Soaking in hot tub can improve physical, mental health \(usatoday.com\)](#)

When the body's temperature is raised, the dilation of blood vessels increases blood to the muscles in those areas. A sudden rush of blood all around my body maybe? I'm not so sure about this one.

⁷ A bit far out mate.

⁸ You were probably confused for most of the time reading this. Sorry, but that's a given since so am I. I don't have any solid explanation, as you can tell, and I think this project for me was almost a way to explore this memory/experience, and maybe find an answer for myself. I tell people this was the most important moment of my life, since when I have nothing to think about, no worries, this memory always just pops into my head. Then I get to sort of relive it again. I wonder how long it will take me to understand. I wonder if I will ever forget. Honestly, I don't believe I'll do either.

Annotated Bibliography

Luster, Rodney. "When Life Doesn't Feel Real Anymore: What is depersonalization-derealization and ways to take control back." *Psychology Today*. Reviewed by Vanessa Lancaster, Sep 30 2021. [When Life Doesn't Feel Real Anymore | Psychology Today](#).

Rodney Luster draws information from a multitude of academic papers and studies to analyze and explain the conditions of Depersonalization and Derealization. He covers what they are, as well as diving deeper into the different symptoms and causes. He also explores possible treatments to escape these kinds of experiences, specifically practices that help quell the psychological causes.

I found this article useful because it revealed a possible explanation for what my experience could have been. Since I found some similarities between what happened to me and what Luster described, I decided to make use of his article in my essay. I also wanted to have many examples of different explanations, all with the end goal of revealing that despite the abundance of information, I am still unsure of what it was, and this helped because it was one example which I eventually ruled out.

Avramova, Nina. "How Music can Change the Way You Feel and Act." *CNN Health*. Feb 20, 2019. [How music can change the way you feel and act | CNN](#).

In this article published by CNN Health, Nina Avramova covers the interesting phenomenon surrounding music's effect on human thoughts, emotions, and perception. She synthesizes information from various studies, academic papers, and even a book by musicologist Lily E. Hirsch, to convey a summary of how music affects our minds, and presents examples of this actually happening.

This article, which I found myself to be very interesting, was used as evidence in my essay to support one of my main ideas: that music was closely connected to the apparent shift in perception I had during this experience. I resonate with a lot of the ideas that were presented in this article, and it worked well to back up my claim.

Austin, Daryl. "Looking to improve your mood and sleep better? Experts say to take more baths." *USA*

Today. Aug 31 2021. [Bath benefits: Soaking in hot tub can improve physical, mental health \(usatoday.com\)](https://www.usatoday.com/story/health/2021/08/31/bath-benefits-soaking-hot-tub-improve-physical-mental-health/8111111002/).

Daryl Austin's article addresses the benefits and effects on physical and mental health of bathing in hot water. He cites multiple studies to analyze these effects, and to explain in detail the connection between bathing and reduced stress. He also covered how it can be beneficial to bathe before sleep, and overall the main focus of this article is about the benefits of bathing.

I decided to use this article as another source for a possible explanation for my experience. Similar to the first source, I personally don't believe this is the true explanation, but I still wanted to include it to put out a multitude of possibilities, all for the sake of building the theme of confusion and a lack of answers which my essay ultimately concludes with.

Rubric for the Lyrical Essay (12 points possible):

	Excellent (3 points)	Satisfactory, but needs some improvement (2 points)	Partially complete/ needs significant improvement (1 point)
Focus	Purpose of the lyrical essay is clear and compelling. Writer represents the complexity of the subject perceptively, reflecting deep, sensitive, and sustained thinking.	Purpose of the lyrical essay is clear but could be more compelling. The writer could be more perceptive in their representation of the subject and its complexity.	Purpose of the lyrical essay is unclear. Or, the essay represents the subject too simply, neglecting complexity.
Style	The writer employs a variety of stylistic techniques (poetic devices, narrative perspective, varied prose forms) to challenge the reader to interpret meaning and shape the reading experience. Metaphors are fresh, original, and apt representations of the subject matter.	The writer employs several recognizable stylistic techniques but could do more stylistically to challenge the reader and shape the reading experience. Apt metaphors are present, but could be more specific or original.	The writer is fairly one-dimensional in their application of stylistic techniques. Or, metaphors fall into cliché territory.
Research	Writer uses accurate Chicago-style NB footnote format , indicating clearly at least 3 research sources in the text. Annotated bibliography follows proper format and conveys insight into the writer's thinking about the value and purpose of each source (describe, evaluate, and explain why/how it is relevant to your lyrical essay). See here for guide.	Chicago-style footnote format has some errors. Writer indicates 3 research sources in the text. Or, annotated bibliography has some errors or does not include all required elements for each source (describe, evaluate, and explain why/how it is relevant to your lyrical essay).	Chicago-style footnote format is missing, or, writer does not cite 3 sources in the text. Or, annotated bibliography is incomplete.

Mechanics	The text is free from errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. From a mechanics standpoint, this essay is ready for publication.	The text contains some errors. These errors do not impact the reader's ability to comprehend material. One more round of editing/polishing is necessary.	The text contains some significant errors. These errors affect the reader's ability to understand the material in some places.
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Score: __ / 12