

A JOURNAL OF ORDINARY PLEASURES

The Small Hours

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THE OCTOBER ISSUE

An hour without a screen

A cup of tea, a library card and a walk around the block. This month, we make room for small things.

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The long way home

An original essay for this sample issue

The shortest route home takes twelve minutes. It passes the supermarket, two bus stops and a wall painted the same grey as the pavement. I know it so well that I sometimes arrive at my door without remembering the journey.

Last Tuesday I turned left instead of right. There was no plan. I had missed a call, the sky was still light, and I did not want to go inside yet. The road led past a row of small gardens. In one of them, a man was lifting potatoes from a bucket.

He showed me the harvest. There were seven potatoes, all smaller than a plum. He seemed pleased. He had planted them with his grandson in spring and forgotten about them until the leaves fell over. We stood by the gate and considered what seven potatoes might become.

Farther on, someone had put a box of books outside a house. I chose a guide to trees, published in the year I was born. Its previous owner had pressed a leaf between pages forty and forty-one. The leaf was still there, thin as paper and the color of tea.

The longer route took thirty-four minutes. At home I made supper, called my friend back and put the book on the kitchen table. I cannot recommend the route. There is nothing remarkable to see, and the box of books may be gone. I can recommend leaving enough time to stop.

A one-hour field guide

10

MINUTES

Make a drink

Use the mug you save for visitors. Let the kettle finish before you choose what to do next.

20

MINUTES

Take the other turning

Walk a familiar route in the opposite direction. Notice one door, one tree and one sound you usually miss.

20

MINUTES

Read a few pages

A library book, a short story or an old magazine will do. Leave your phone in another room.

10

MINUTES

Write something down

Record a sentence, a question or a place you want to return to. A shopping receipt is enough paper.

Colophon: original writing and vector artwork created for this fictional sample zine. Issue 01, October 2026.