MERIDIAN

The Quiet Revolution

How slowness is reshaping modern life

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Our October issue gathers essays, portraits and photography from people who have stepped off the treadmill. It asks what we gain when we stop optimising every hour, and whether a culture built on speed can learn to value patience again.

Culture | Elena Marchetti

The Case for Slow Mornings

A growing movement trades the sprint to the inbox for an hour of unhurried light

At 6:40 on a grey Tuesday in Lisbon, Marta Figueira is doing something that would have embarrassed her five years ago: nothing in particular. She stands at a window with a cup of coffee, watching a tram climb the hill, her phone charging in another room.

Figueira, a former logistics consultant, is part of what sociologists have begun to call the slow-morning movement. Its members share no creed or hashtag so much as a habit: a deliberate refusal to hand the first hour of the day to other people's urgencies.

An hour that belongs to no one

Researchers who study daily routines say the appeal is easy to understand. Early hours are the only part of the day not yet colonised by obligations, and people who protect them report lower stress and a firmer sense of authorship over their lives.

The practice is modest by design. Some walk; some write by hand; some simply sit. What unites them is the absence of optimisation. There are no streaks to maintain and no metrics to beat.

> *“I used to think mornings were for getting ahead. Now I think they are for catching up with myself.”*

Critics note that slowness can be a luxury, available mostly to those with flexible jobs. It is a fair objection, and the movement's more thoughtful voices accept it. Yet the idea travels well: even ten unhurried minutes, they argue, can change the tone of a day.

Culture | Tomás Reyes

The Return of the Letter

In an age of instant replies, handwritten correspondence is finding a new generation

The post office on Calle Mayor in Valencia now keeps a basket of pens by the counter. Clerks say the number of handwritten envelopes they process has risen steadily for three years, driven largely by customers under thirty.

Among them is Inés Carvajal, 24, who writes to a friend in Montréal every second Sunday. A letter, she says, forces you to decide what matters before you begin, because you cannot delete a sentence once the ink has dried.

Writing with a delay

The delay is precisely the point. A letter takes days to arrive and days more to be answered, and in that gap something unusual happens: anticipation. Correspondents describe a feeling closer to gardening than to messaging.

Stationers have noticed. Sales of fountain pens, heavy paper and sealing wax have grown, and several independent shops now host monthly writing evenings where strangers draft letters side by side.

> *“A message says I am here. A letter says I thought about you for an hour.”*

None of this signals the death of the screen. Most letter-writers remain devoted users of their phones. They are simply discovering that some forms of attention cannot be rushed, and that being waited for is its own kind of gift.

Thank you for reading Meridian.