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Document A

Seamus Heaney, 'Personal Helicon,' from *Death of a Naturalist* (1966)

for Michael Longley

As a child, they could not keep me from wells
 And old pumps with buckets and windlasses.
 I loved the dark drop, the trapped sky, the smells
 Of waterweed, fungus and dank moss.

5 One, in a brickyard, with a rotted board top.
 I savoured the rich crash when a bucket
 Plummeted down at the end of a rope.
 So deep you saw no reflection in it.

10 A shallow one under a dry stone ditch
 Fructified like any aquarium.
 When you dragged out long roots from the soft mulch
 A white face hovered over the bottom.

15 Others had echoes, gave back your own call
 With a clean new music in it. And one
 Was scaresome, for there, out of ferns and tall
 Foxgloves, a rat slapped across my reflection.

20 Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
 To stare, big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring
 Is beneath all adult dignity. I rhyme
 To see myself, to set the darkness echoing.

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Document B

Timothy Egan, "Grand Tour of the Self," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2014.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/22/opinion/timothy-egan-grand-tour-of-the-self.html>

BARCELONA, Spain — From the castle grounds atop Montjuic, you can see the warrens of the old city running into the Dr. Seussian spires of the new one that sprouted from Antoni Gaudí's imagination. Below or up high, Barcelona is a tapas menu of urban surprise.

5 But a new breed of visitor bouncing from one sight to another in the warm November sunshine barely pauses for a taste. These peripatetic pilgrims may be at the Boqueria market, or inside Gaudí's unfinished masterpiece, the Sagrada Família basilica, but they are not lingering to sòak in Catalonia's ageless delights. Instead, they are looking at themselves from smartphone cameras at the ends of thin poles — selfie sticks, the latest and most obnoxious tool in the kit of digital narcissism.

10 The intrusive extensions are everywhere you want to be, waving above Roman ruins or ribbons of sliced jamón, poking strollers along La Rambla, all to get the best view of Me While There. The stick looks like the kind of tool used by convicts to pick up roadside litter. It operates by timer or Bluetooth wireless remote. And the purpose — to avoid the fisheye angle of a hand-held selfie — is understandable.

15 But viewing the world through a selfie stick is like skiing in that artificial snow park in Dubai. It further isolates and cocoons the visitor inside a zone of self-projected experience.

As an advertisement in the current shopping magazine of Lufthansa airlines put it: "Gone are the days when you had to ask a perfect stranger to take your photograph." Right, because you wouldn't want to actually speak to a stranger, perfect or otherwise, in a foreign land.

20 Sad to say, these elongated facial recorders are all the rage among travelers. "Like it or not," a recent post on BuzzFeed reported, "everyone is going to be wielding a selfie stick."

Everyone? It's annoying enough that people taking pictures of their food have made restaurants resemble the runway ramps of fashion shows. Check out this kale stack! We can't just shut up and eat, as *The New Yorker* pleaded in its recent food issue. We have to
25 shoot and post our paella before tasting it. Let's hear it for chefs who are banning food selfies from their tables, no doubt fighting for a lost cause.

Technology, when it shrinks the globe, or makes life less burdensome, or provides easier access to knowledge, is a wonderful thing. The smartphone has dramatically changed the world, mostly for the better. The jet aircraft opened far reaches of the planet to average
30 people. And the selfie stick, as a simple device to take a better portrait, is largely harmless.

But when technology changes the travel experience itself — from immersion and surprise to documentary one-upmanship — it defeats the point of the journey. We travel to freshen senses dulled by routine. We travel for discovery and reinvention.

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35 Not long ago, a park ranger in Washington State told me about a group of kids trying to get a
fix on 500-year-old trees at the lower elevation of Mount Rainier. They could not fully fathom
what they were experiencing, he said, until they could filter it through their phones — as
pictures or Wikipedia definitions. Nature deficit disorder, so called, is a symptom of being
connected to everything, while being unable to connect to anything.

40 Of course, it's nothing new to place yourself for posterity in the middle of the Colosseum or
atop Mount Kilimanjaro. No proper grand-tour rite of passage in 19th-century Europe was
complete without a commissioned portrait of a dandified squire posing in a room with a view.

45 But the portrait was not the point of the travel. Take it from Mark Twain, in "The Innocents
Abroad," his account of an 1867 trip overseas. "Day after day and night after night, we have
wandered among the crumbly wonders of Rome; day after day and night after night we have
fed upon the dust and decay of five-and-twenty centuries — have brooded over them by day
and dreamt of them by night till sometimes we seemed mouldering away ourselves."

Twain made great fun of his innocents. But as the above passage shows, full immersion,
even from a professional smart mouth, was the point of transporting your worldview to take in
another.

50 There is, blessedly, a selfie-stick backlash. In several languages, I heard people snarl at
clusters of boom-wielding tourists. The urge to say "Put that thing down" is great, but no one
wants to be a grumpy Luddite.

55 When Tom Wolfe called the 1970s the Me Decade, he could not have fathomed what
Instagram, Facebook and Twitter have done to allow everyone to be the star of his own
movie in the twenty-teens. And perhaps travelers of today are no more self-absorbed than
those of any other time. But you wouldn't know it by how they billboard the experience.

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Document C

Mat Collishaw, *Narcissus*, 1990, Tate Gallery.

Photograph on paper, 193 x 292 mm

