

1982

Shortly after takeoff, **Air Florida Flight 90**, a Boeing 737 jet, crashes into Washington, D.C.'s 14th Street Bridge and falls into the Potomac River, killing 78 including four motorists.

1985

A passenger train plunges into a ravine in **Ethiopia**, killing 428 in the worst railroad disaster in Africa.

1986

A month-long violent struggle begins in Aden, South Yemen between supporters of **Ali Nasir Muhammad** and **Abdul Fattah Ismail**, resulting in thousands of casualties.



1988

**Lee Teng-hui** becomes the first native Taiwanese President of the Republic of China.

# 92-year-old woman

learned to walk



Two years after arriving on the continent, she married an Australian named Leonard Lee, and by the early 1980s they'd moved to Queensland.

In a nearby cafe we spoke about what she sees as her life's purpose: conveying to younger people the importance of living right — a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. Oh, and stairs: "One of my mottos is take the stairs, not the lift. Always."

"I'd like to be a role model for women in their middle years who are putting on a few pounds or thinking of slowing down," she told me. Age, she argued, "is no barrier to anything, really."

Perhaps, I thought, the fact that she began race walking so late in life was a gift: Her future triumphs promise to outpace her past accomplishments.

I asked Lee how she felt about the beginning of 2019.

"This year's a big one because — is it going to be better than last year? Twenty-eighteen was an amazing year for me."

I laughed, thinking of the people I know, myself included, who are dreading what this year could bring. Yet here was a 92-year-old widow who introduced me to her friends by showing me a drawer of memorial booklets from their funerals. And she is full of nothing but good cheer.

"If you push me to the limit and I drop," she said she tells her trainer, "do not resuscitate me." Would she, I asked, like to die while walking?

She didn't skip a beat. "Wouldn't that be lovely?"

(Bari Weiss is a staff editor and writer for the New York Times Opinion section.)

contacted me and asked me how I went. And I gave him my times for the four different events. He said I was within world record times. And I sort of thought, 'Wow, this is something.'

From there, she was off.

Lee now holds the world records for the 3K, the 5K and the 10K for her age group (90 to 94). The competition is not exactly fierce. There is a 92-year-old Romanian named Elena Pagu. And that's about it.

But Heather Lee sets out every day to beat Heather Lee. "I have become very competitive with myself," she said. "All there's left now is for me to break my own world records."

By 8:30 a.m., according to Lee's Fitbit watch, we had walked 9,206 steps in temperatures nearing 100 degrees. She was ready for a flat white. I was ready for air conditioning.

# Insomnia

essential

realms of insomnia frequently resemble the dippy altered states induced by psychotropic drugs. (And of course, like a bad trip, the night can be full of terror: hypnagogic hallucinations causing mysterious shadows to sway before your open eyes or inducing furniture to hulk and loom.)

Just as artists, writers and seekers have used drugs to expand their minds, so have many sleepless souls wondered at one time or other if the insomniac mind, pushed to its lateral limits, might not yield insights as well as torments. Might there be some small comfort amid the suffering?

After all, once in a while, an unexpectedly profound thought will suddenly coalesce out of the dying remnants of a dream — and then I chase it down, all my insomniac energy bent on its capture. Again, I am reminded of Nabokov, delighting in the way his insomnia would explode in a "sunburst," filling his head with ideas and fancies to feed his creative soul. The challenge involved, as Walt Whitman saw it, is to "see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid earth" and then

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"sweat the night into words," as the poet Bernard Spencer more practically put it in his poem "Night-Time: Starting to Write."

Maybe insomnia itself is a portal that encourages trafficking between the conscious and unconscious minds. On the one hand, as Alice Robb argues in her new book, "Why We Dream," you can train yourself into lucid dreaming, exerting directorial control over the night brain's filmic productions. Think of it, perhaps, as a form of scenario planning. Flip the direction of

travel, though, and you become alert to the process Freud described when he wrote that during the day we "drive shafts" into our fresh chains of thought, and these shafts make contact with "dream thoughts." This is how night and day fertilise each other. This — I've come to believe — is how creativity is born.

As ever, Freud's grasp of the mind's quirks proved prescient. Sleep scientists now speak of states in which the brain is neither awake nor sleeping, but both. According to Rubin Naiman at the Centre for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, parts of the brain can drift into sleep during the day, effectively making sleepwalkers of us all, or shut down entirely, producing a flash sleep that endures for milliseconds and is experienced merely as a fractional slip of attention or momentary blackout. Perhaps, after all, sleep, not wakefulness, constitutes the mind's default mode. And if that is the case, then perhaps insomnia is consciousness's determined revenge.

(Marina Benjamin is the author, most recently, of "Insomnia".)



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Heavy traffic on Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman highway towards Manama near Hamad Town because of road work that will continue until Sunday dawn. Kindly follow traffic rules and if possible take alternative roads.

@moi\_bahrain

02



We have come a long way. Back in the day, aeroplanes would wait to escort middlemen who were close to one party and one family. Now, middlemen are being forced to return to India. What they looted will have to be returned and those for whom they looted will be punished.

@narendramodi

03



I have been FAR tougher on Russia than Obama, Bush or Clinton. Maybe tougher than any other President. At the same time, & as I have often said, getting along with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. I fully expect that someday we will have good relations with Russia again!

@realDonaldTrump

04



Bhopal & Indore are the cleanest cities in India. They have taken radical measures: door to door collection of waste; No plastic garbage bags; heavy fines; segregation of waste; recycling of all waste material; Effective monitoring and execution; Delhi needs to learn from these cities.

@amitabhk87

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

# Necessary Death of Israel's Labour Party



SHMUEL ROSNER

Political parties have a tendency to hold on for a while even after they are no longer useful. But sometimes, you have to recognise that it's time to say goodbye. With Israel's April 9 general election fast approaching, Israelis can finally say farewell to the Labor Party.

In Israel, nearly every election sees the birth and death of political parties. This year's will be no different. But the two parties that could meet their demise aren't newcomers or hastily cobbled together coalitions. Labor is the heir to the party that founded Israel — David Ben-Gurion's party, which ruled the country for its first three decades.

An average of recent polls shows that Labor, once a party fighting Likud for political pre-eminence, will take only about eight seats in the Knesset; Jewish Home is predicted to win fewer than four seats, the minimum required of any party to get into the Knesset.

How did they get here? It is easy to focus on the petty problems that put them in such a dire position.

A year and a half ago, Labor Party members elected a leader who does not have the charisma necessary for the job. A month ago, Jewish Home was unceremoniously abandoned by its two popular ministers and is still trying to pick up the pieces. But the problems these parties face are not temporary hiccups. They result from a major change in Israel's social and political landscape.

The Labor Party is chained to its historical role as the party of a patriotic, non-traditional Israelism. It is the party formed by a generation of pioneers who cast aside traditional Jewish practice and aimed to create a new Jew, a Jew whose connection to a Jewish past and whose tendency to perform Jewish practice is relatively weak. Today, this population is small in number and seems to be shrinking. But Labor continues to cater to it, and to some of the dwindling pool of people who still have a hope for a peace process. This still allows for political survival (our study identified a group of about 15 per cent of Israelis who score high on Israeli patriotism and low on Jewish tradition) but it isn't enough to win an election.

When a political party outlives its usefulness, it becomes a distraction. Political energy goes to waste on platforms that are no longer necessary. A new reality, including a new culture, demands a new platform. Israel's new reality is this: Israeli Jews are much more in agreement about basic ideals than meets the eye. We are dominated by "Jewish-Israelis." And so it should be no surprise that the parties established to represent other portions of the electorate are losing steam.

(Shmuel Rosner is a senior fellow at the People Policy Institute and a contributing opinion writer.)



Avi Gabbay, leader of the Israeli Labor Party.