



## *Neon Nights*

*Dedicated to Alois*

Silently, the shadows surround me and they accompany me on my nightly walk home. Silence gradually descends upon my soul, for I have had inspiring conversations and danced with those who are close to me. A calmness settles within my soul that I rarely find in everyday life. It is long past midnight, and I cannot resist listening to the latest tracks that are displayed to me. Even though I spent the evening at my usual club, my journey to the hostel takes half an hour – enough time to listen to at least a few new releases.

*Endless roads,  
Endless nights. <sup>III</sup>*

The latest piece by Julia de Jouy and Oliver Maier's band enchants listeners with a poetic journey. Rue Oberkampf's piece deals with infinity. Published on 30 October 2025, the song begins with the endlessness of streets and nights.

### **Life's meaning**

This anacrusis is accompanied by the following line: *This is why we are on Earth*. This gives our existence a *raison d'être* on this very same endless path. Infinite paths and nights are associated with a certain disorientation, because a road that has no end probably has numerous junctions and bridges, and perhaps also sections that are difficult to pass. At night, we humans find it more difficult to find our way without aids.

If these things, the endless roads and nights, constitute the meaning of existence, it becomes clear that neither we nor a greater consciousness are following a purpose. In this context, infinity can only be achieved if we do not pursue a goal, because this means finitude. Once a goal has been achieved, we seek a new one.

In the tenth verse, the road is more specifically referred to as the *path of life*. Rue Oberkampf notes that most of us humans are too afraid to feel happiness: they write that we are *too scared to imagine the most beautiful things*. As I walk along the empty street, I catch myself feeling this very way.

### **The good, the bad and the transient**

I am not travelling alone; we are each listening with one earbud. But if I were travelling alone in the middle of the night, I would not be in a mood to think beautiful thoughts. And of course, the song is just right here, as art always is. It strikes at the heart of things, especially when the music is so much in tune with one's own being. Whether it's the newspapers, literature or everyday life, our focus is usually not on the beautiful things in life. Rather, we tend to always assume the worst.

Beauty often leaves less of an impression on us than what we perceive as negative. A wound may heal, but the scars remain visible for a long time, or even for a lifetime. Injuries become engraved in us and remain there, sometimes accessible only to ourselves. When we experience beauty, we breathe it in and often forget the moment, preferring to lament the bad things in this world. Marcel Proust saw it this way too, sending his first-person narrator on *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. One of the insights gained from this search is that painful experiences such as loneliness or loss influence and shape us far more than pure joy does. Modern empirical evidence confirms this: neural activation is stronger in the context of negative emotions, which makes learning processes more sustainable. Nevertheless, the verse also reminds us that the fear of embracing something beautiful is one we should not listen to. Because that is how we lose ourselves. And with that, we ultimately lose any learning process we could have gone through.

### **Images in the cold neon light of the future**

What is remarkable about the piece is not only verses such as those mentioned above, but also the powerful imagery that is repeatedly interwoven with the sound. Now, as I write this text, I only know the words, but they are deeply engraved in my mind. The interplay between hearing, seeing and feeling feels like a great whole<sup>[2]</sup>. At the beginning, we see endless streets and nights, we see – and perhaps also hear – people dancing, the lyrical narrator calls out to a person unknown to us, and later we see neon-coloured light shining into our future. But again and again, rain appears, bringing together the different senses.

The symbolism of rain is multi-layered: in literature, this weather phenomenon usually accompanies a scene of melancholy or serves to purify a character's inner self. But the silence that also arises in the rain is a source of energy, as the band explains in an interview<sup>[3]</sup> about natural soundscapes. The chorus divides the story into three parts:

*Rain is falling down on me. [...]*

*Rain keeps falling down on me. [...]*

*I can't find you anymore.*

Although the narrator repeatedly records, follows and calls out to the other person throughout the song, these traces are lost, presumably also due to the rain washing away the memory. One question comes to mind: this extremely heavy rain blurs the traces of the other person and consequently creates puddles in which we can see ourselves. These mirrors are constantly distorted by the falling water, and our own being becomes blurred. It therefore remains a mystery to me whether the counterpart the narrator is searching for is a mirror of himself or whether a kindred spirit has been lost. However, both interpretations are based on the idea that, in the end, the narrator must reinvent himself in infinity.

## **Past and future**

A second key passage in the song are the two final verses of the last stanza:

*History whispers in the neon glow,*

*While the future flickers – uncertain, untold.*

When I read these verses for the first time, I am thrilled. The image is so powerful that it speaks deep into my soul until the echo fades away into a whisper within me. History remains a whisper in the face of the cold neon lights of our future world. We can hardly hear what the past has to tell us anymore, be it our own personal world of the past or those eras that have been snatched away in the tide of our presence. The whisper is lost in a thousand echoes and has long since been distorted. The future, on the other hand, flickers, and the power cuts are no accident. The stories that lie ahead of us, the ones we may not want to hear, remain untold. For they may be stories of unspeakable sadness and despair, images of a world we never want to know. And yet I want to listen, for they could also be stories of radiant beauty and happiness – if we manage to get through the endless rain.

## **The stories we will tell**

We do not know what stories we will tell about the future. Infinity lies before us – and yet we hesitate to follow it. From a society of courage, we have become one of fear, lost in mirrors in which we have become strangers to ourselves. We have forgotten how to recognise ourselves and instead watch others, as the play accuses: *You're standing in the darkness / Watching people dance between dusk and dawn.*

But the moment has come to leave the submission to our shadows and join the dancers – to bring about transformation, to finally allow it to happen. As inconspicuous as dance may seem, it is the key to revolution. I first heard the words attributed to feminist peace activist Emma Goldman<sup>[4]</sup> in one of my favourite films: 'A revolution without dancing is a revolution not worth having.'<sup>[5]</sup> Perhaps the first step into infinity begins with dancing. And those who dance will find their way even in the rain.

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<sup>[1]</sup> If not stated otherwise, the following quotes are taken from: Rue Oberkampf: «Eternity.» Young&Cold Records: 30.10.2025.

<sup>[2]</sup> In an interview with «Schwarzes Bayern» the band refers to impressions always intertwining: This is how a creative procesus can be begun.: [Wie klingt Stille?](#) [19. October 2025]

<sup>[3]</sup> as above

<sup>[4]</sup> Biography Emma Goldman: [FemBio](#) [19. October 2025]

<sup>[5]</sup> I am talking about *V for Vendetta*: [International Movie Database](#) [19. October 2025]