

Indifferent

To be indifferent is have no particular feeling toward something. I am indifferent to the outcome of the Dodgers-Giants game. I am indifferent to the referendum on gay marriage. Sometimes we become indifferent to what was once a matter of great interest, even obsessional interest, to us. I look at the old house where I was brought up, and where I had invested all my affection, and it looks like any old house.

Examples

1 I look at my first girlfriend, on whom I once riveted adoring attention. All I can see is the riverbed of wrinkles that has carved up her face. I cannot see under the surface. I cannot see the person I loved. Was I then ever in love with this person, or was I only in love with her envelope? If the latter, I stand convicted of a powerful shallowness.

2 Like us all, I follow the news. I am interested in knowing about the new fair trade bill, who will host the 2020 Olympics, or the hottest films at the Cannes Festival. But long before the outcomes of these events are known I have forgotten them and grown indifferent to them. Was I then ever really interested in these outcomes? I was, yes, but less interested in them than in knowing whether my daughter is going to graduate school, or my new volume of poems is going to be successful. A time will come, well before death if I am lucky, when even these latter outcomes will seem to be of no interest. But will life as a whole, even at its end, seem to have been of no interest?