



Hi there,

Did you watch the Simpsons in the early aughts? I did, back when I was first developing critical thinking skills and eating well-done steak with frozen lima beans every night, still wearing my starched charter school uniform. There was a comforting set of TV prescribed those weekdays: *Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy*, *Family Guy*, *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, and if my brother and I were allowed to stay up late, *American Dad*.

Anyway—not that I'm the first to posit this, but—the Simpsons were supposed to be this paragon of the middle class: two old cars, three kids, a couple pets, and one house in the suburbs, all on one income. You went to church, asked your neighbor for favors, and let cul-de-sac shenanigans ensue. It was enough to get by if you pinched pennies and rarely took a vacation. It didn't seem so bad to my eleven-year-old brain; in fact, it looked a lot like the kind of lifestyle my parents had established.

Now it's an absolute fantasy to my generation. We're shunted from the housing market unless you're one of the few lucky enough to have generational wealth. Wages have stagnated, college tuition is a gazillion dollars for a degree that feels increasingly less valuable, upward mobility is limited, and inflation only tightened the squeeze.

Roommates used to be a rite of passage in young adulthood, now they're (hello) necessary if you want a remotely affordable place to live. A starter home used to be attainable early on in your career; now I don't even own a car. I know *Wired's* whole shtick is writing about how an ever-expanding internet makes things feel small and paradoxically dissociative, but our economy isn't helping things, either. How are you supposed to foster community when your

commute is over an hour, and you can get kicked out of your housing with nothing more than a month's notice?

It's no wonder people are waiting to have kids—or not having them at all. So next time grandma pressures you into family planning, speak a language she'll understand: "IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID!" (and maybe if you hadn't burned both the climate and the economy into the ground, you would have grandkids by now.)

I digress. What even is the middle class anymore? Am I in it? If so... what a fuckin' downgrade. We deserve better. We deserve privacy, opportunity, joy, and relaxation. We deserve more money. We deserve a four-day work week. We deserve reliable public transportation, attainable childcare that doesn't feel like the hunger games, and a space to call our own. That should be the floor, not the compromise.

As I'm writing this in the coffee/pizza shop I treat as my second living room, I overheard a group of friends talk about a job offer in what sounds like a soulless—and perhaps evil?—company: "My comfort trumps my morality," he's saying, half-joking. "This isn't going to move the needle on anything. I don't want to live in debt for the rest of my life... I'm gonna take it."

## LET'S CONSUME MEDIA

### Books

- ***A Court of Mist and Fury*** by Sarah J Maas. Those of you who told me to read this (you know who you are) I want those hours of my life back.

### TV & Movies

- Yes, I am still watching **The Leftovers**. Every time I boot up an episode, I'm like ooh what fresh horrors will Justin Theroux endure today? Can't wait to see this guy be put in situations.

### These are called "pieces" for some reason!

- **[The Open Secret of Google Search](#)** Are you also adding "site:[reddit.com](#)" after every Google search? Then this article is for you.

- Some practical advice for making a difference in the new abortion fight. Posting is praxis! (sometimes)

**thanks for reading**

Will there be a newsletter next month? Hard maybe. Ciao for now!!!

Rachel