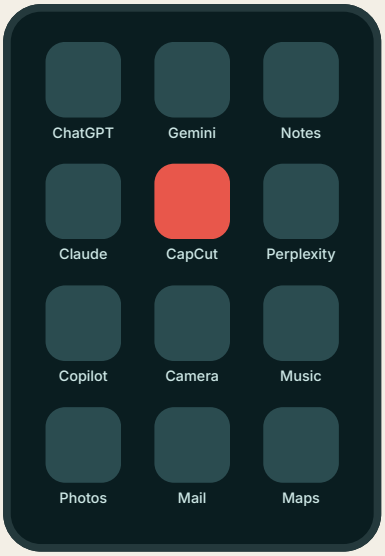
SATIRE

I Relapsed: *A Confession*

A tongue-in-cheek letter about slipping back into making things by hand, in an age that expects everything to be made by AI.



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WEDNESDAY, BETWEEN THE HEALTHY AI APPS…

"…was CapCut, just above ChatGPT and below Gemini, with Claude on its left and Perplexity on the right."

— Suhani Sadana

I am sorry, brother. I have been making things again. I know I am supposed to use AI… it's so much faster. But I'm sorry… I… relapsed.

It's actually been going on for a while now. The first time it happened, you were asleep. It was midnight. The Monday blues were quite heavy. I saw the notebook in the drawer beneath the almirah—yeah, weird place to keep a stash—but at least you didn't find it this time. Trust me, I really tried to take your advice. I asked AI to help me with the sinking feeling, but it just irritated me further. So I took it. Just one dose, though. One page of a poem was enough to get me through the night. Honestly, I didn't feel anything; I guess I have become pretty tolerant to such substances.

But my college is pretty woke, and I forgot what happened that night after a few days. They ensure that the youth doesn't get destroyed by these current waves of creativity and originality. In fact, there are posters everywhere and workshops on how to use AI—to just live. I do admit that I feel pretty nauseous sometimes when I see AI graphics on Pinterest, Batman vs Voldemort videos on Instagram, and good morning messages on WhatsApp. I still have withdrawal symptoms.

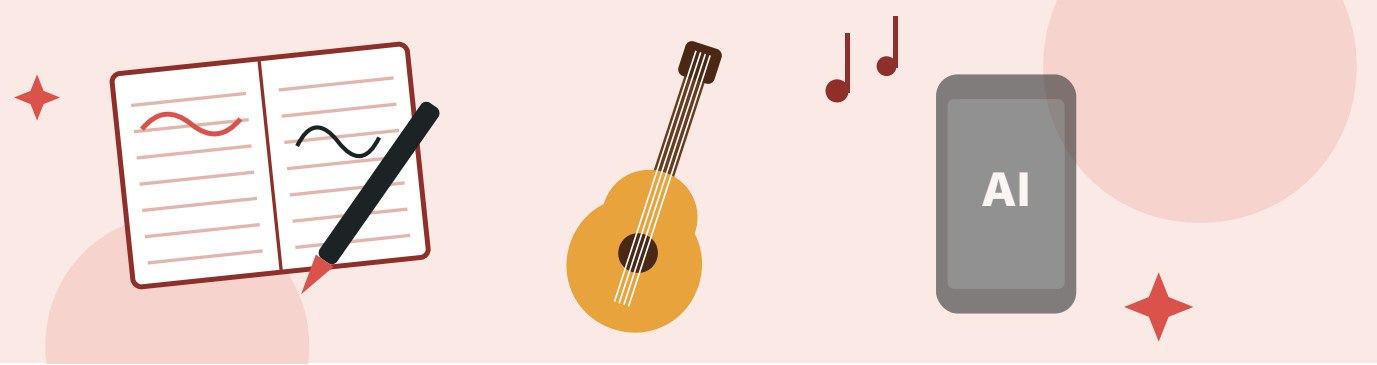
So I was fine for a week, but then the second time happened. It's partially your fault. You were supposed to uninstall all editing apps permanently from my device so that I couldn't inhale any cinematic experience anymore. But on Wednesday, between the healthy AI apps, was CapCut—just above ChatGPT and below Gemini, with Claude on its left and Perplexity on the right. All the flashbacks came at once: my teenage self making fan edits for Harry Styles, and then birthday edits for my friends. I couldn't resist anymore. Ik you said that in life, ChatGPT is enough to listen; it will always reply on time, answer you, and create videos for you. But I decided to line up the right amount of CapCut, using my credit card… to pay the subscription fee.

And oh my god. I had never experienced such a high in my life. The dots suddenly connected when I joined two videos together. My neurons were dancing. It felt like I was flowing through the night, with no track of time. I was in an altered mental state, where ideas were coming out of me naturally. My body relaxed when I saw the full video together. I was making strange associations between pictures and transitions. Text was coming out of me in a flow, with fonts that looked aesthetic... and me. I hadn't felt such emotional intensity in a while. I was able to say everything that I can't otherwise. I get why people do these drugs... you can't keep all your feelings to yourself. You need to express them, and sometimes a few doses of writing and filming do it for you. From time to time.

I thought it had been a week. It was November. I was completely addicted. Gemini was waiting for me to give it a prompt, but my hunger for the drug made me ignore every other socially acceptable app. In fact, when the CapCut dose finished, I saw another dealer with a new drug in the market—the guitar. It's pretty expensive but worth it. It's very strong as well; your brain can actually create its own melodies and rhythms with it. I swear I reached a state where all that mattered was to smoke my own thoughts away, and I couldn't stop. You can have nothing, but once you inhale this guitar thing into your veins, music gets created— literally.

Later, when I got sober, I was filled with guilt. Who will ever hire a druggie like me who can't use AI to save her life? Moreover, I know the long-term impact of psychedelic creativity is harsh—you may end up becoming an artist and doing actual drugs. But you need not worry; normal people have ensured that artificiality is present everywhere human intelligence was supposed to be doing its magic. So, one way or another, I will somehow be back to it.

Now, I don't want you to worry. I felt so much shame that I went to rehab myself. It's called 'How to Use AI to Create Art, in This Economy'. Once I am at least 100 days clean, I'll come back. For now, **this confession letter is the last evidence that I ever took the drug of creativity.** ■



Making things by hand: notebook, pen and guitar. Illustration: U-Talk.