

The end of the world is nigh(ish)

Peter Sefton (c) 2023

Abstract

This is a song, written in English and usually performed by its author in the key of B Flat Major, though the chords are not provided here. It was inspired by an offhand comment from musician Scott Cook about the line between *nonchalance* and *negligence*. The author/composer used the ChatGPT service as an aide which not only provided a wrong answer to the question “In a list of english (sic) words, sorted alphabetically, what comes half way between **negligence** and **nonchalance**” (it suggested **negotiate**), it *also* provided a working computer program (see Appendix A) which gives a *correct* answer (for the word list it chose). The answer is ‘nighish’ - which may or may not be fully legitimate but you *know* what it means, and it is, like, totally close enough for folk music.

Verse 1 Between Negligence and Nonchalance¹

Lies a lonely dusty road
Tho Sixto² was wrong, roads might long
But they don’t get lonely, people do
Don’t worry, won’t happen to you

Pre-chorus Old fashioned roads need winding
Ancient ways need minding

Chorus

The end of the world is nigh (ish)
There’s pubic hair in the soap dish
The creeks are full of the wrong fish³
The robots are taking over⁴ Trish⁵
The end of the world is nigh (ish)
There’s dog hair in the butter dish
The creeks are full of goldfish
The robots are taking over

Verse 2

Between *The Violent Femmes* and the *The Velvet Underground*
You found the perfect sound, kick some names around

¹I heard Canadian Musician Scott Cook use the phrase “Somewhere between Nonchalance and Negligence” on stage at the Kangaroo Valley folk festival 2019 – I think it was in reference to his (Australian) band and their level of preparedness but it seemed like a song to me.

²Sixto Rodriguez wrote a song (one of my favourites) called “Sugar Man” which has the line “Sugar Man, met a false friend on a *lonely dusty road*”.

³The state of NSW spends significant resources breeding predatory, non-native, ‘alien’ fish to put in waterways and it’s *illegal* to remove them except in ritual ways (tickling trout is a no no, for example).

⁴At the time of writing, CHatGPT and Bing Chat had just been released and there was much talk in the mainstream news, and more in the tech world, about what this all means.

⁵My Wife, Gail McGlinn, wanted to know “Who’s Trish”? I had to patiently explain to Gail that not all my songs have to be about her. I mean, if Gail McGlinn rhymed with *fish*, then maybe. But look, she already has 2 really *good* songs written for her and has inspired characters in several others. Is being *called* “Brave and strong and kind and clever” not enough for the woman?

Vespoidea, super family of wasps⁶
In capes, on motor scooters⁷
Get on the buzz
*Dolce con Cappuccino*⁸
We'll take this show on the road with the
Bunnies and cane toads
Most of us are feral fauna
Dogs not dingoes, don't know the lingos⁹

Pre-chorus Old fashioned roads need winding
Ancient ways need minding

Chorus

The end of the world is nigh (ish)
There's pubic hair in the soap dish
The creeks are full of the wrong fish
The robots are taking over Trish
The end of the world is nigh (ish)
There's dog hair in the butter dish
The creeks are full of goldfish
The robots are taking over

Verse 3

Between Nonchalance and Negligence
Lies the Great South Stolen Land
We raise a glass
Khardonnay in hand¹⁰
We're pack of chunts
Emotional runts

Appendix A – the original Python code ChatGPT wrote¹¹

```
import urllib.request
url = "https://raw.githubusercontent.com/dwyl/english-words/master/words.txt"
response = urllib.request.urlopen(url)
words = response.read().decode().split("\n")
start_word = "negligence"
end_word = "nonchalance"
start_index = words.index(start_word)
end_index = words.index(end_word)
mid_index = start_index + ((end_index - start_index) // 2)
mid_word = words[mid_index]
print(mid_word)
```

⁶*Vespoidea*, the word midway between Velvet and Violent in the word list ChatGPT chose, might not be an ideal band name as it is used by a stock-music YouTube account. This method of naming bands occurred to me in the early '80s, the days of flipping thru record bins. The Vs should be less crowded than having a C-word for a band name, as much as I love *Culture Club* (My original idea was to call my imaginary band Vermicide, or Vermicidal Vendetta for short).

⁷Apparently the the Vespa motor scooter is so named cos it it buzzes like a wasp

⁸Not part of the song: "Play in a sweet and frothy manner?" Maybe?

⁹There are hundreds of languages indigenous to this continent <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/living-languages> – how many do you know?

¹⁰Sorry, forgot to warn you this song contains traces of "Kath and Kim", is that Chath and Chim?

¹¹I subsequently got the bot to improve this a bit, normalizing all the data so everything is lower case and allowing you to choose your words like Violent and Velvet rather than having them built-in to the program