Its time you found your own way. Familiar words, perhaps, as you enter the ‘awkward’ phase, or the ‘acne’ phase, maybe even the ‘Troy Gentile’ phase. Exams are bearing down on you and responsibility is thrust upon you. Out there, the ‘competition’ are outworking you, the job market is constricting you, and Angelina Jolie wants to write another screenplay. Gasping you claim, “I’m not ready!” Well, your weapons of charm (pudgy cheeks and squeaky voice) have deserted, and embarrassed you like Kristen Stewart – but you must hold fast! Should you choose to quit, you will not do well in your, (best Sorting-hat voice) G! C! S! E! (Great. Crapload. of Stress. Important)

How does anyone think fondly of their school years, you ponder. Am I experiencing the ‘best years of my life’? (No copyright infringement intended). Various factual advertisements describe a prolonged and stressful slide into baldness accelerated by your incredible propensity to gain Fat. You sigh glumly and accept the beginning of the end.

Except it doesn’t have to be. Adolescence is a time much revered in many cultures. You will discover your body (you can name it after yourself if you like) and become a valuable member of society. You will be imbued with an energy that is not provided by caffeine and will develop the mental faculty for the first time in your life to understand the world as it truly is. By now you have acquired enough information to form an informed opinion, and for a small time can truly discover who you are, your passions and interests, likes and dislikes, hobbies and small-time jewellery making independent of your parents. Ultimately, this really is a time of great transformation – the transition from child to adult is not always a smooth one, and you may struggle to answer questions like “Who you are?” or “What are you doing in my home?” It may feel like adults around you are holding you back, maybe that you are being shepherded against your will towards full independence. The experience of becoming a man or a woman is unique to you and in the end, like always, it is up to you to make the most of it. There’s a big world out there, so tread carefully: the route yet untraveled is always rocky.

Go explore.