

## Getting Around Trivial Irritations—Before They Get You



It's springtime in New York. Blossoms are blooming! The days are growing longer! The crowds are growing larger. The traffic is growing louder. **"PEOPLE!"** As Gossamer, the pink furry monster screeches in panic at the end of an old Bugs Bunny cartoon. I've got a better answer than running away.

After two years of deserted downtowns, people have come back to populate the offices, the stores, the streets and the sidewalks. It's a bit of a shock to residents and visitors alike. Two years of pent-up anxieties and cabin fever simply add tinder to the low-level irritations of daily maneuvering in a big city. Zen inner calm may work wonderfully at a mountaintop monastery. It's no match for metropolitan mayhem. I've got something that can redirect that unnerved attention to the trivial:

[Desafinado](#), Antonio Carlos Jobim, Newton Mendonça, performed by Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd, 1962

Even Jobim's title for this song is a clever play on discord and structure. *Desafinado* means dissonant, out of tune. But the music has lots of structure, and the dissonant meanderings of the melody always resolve elegantly, nonchalantly.



*The geometry of meandering rivers—David Richeson: Division by Zero*

Try to whistle, hum or hear the melody in your head. **Force yourself to be accurate with each note!** It's not easy. But that's the trick. It keeps us occupied and amused—not gripped by a critical attitude that's dying to derail our composure. And it's a sublime musical escape. As John Coltrane said about Stan Getz: "Let's face it—we'd all sound like that if we could."