

Never Alone In New York

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Waking up at 4am, for most, can be the precursor for a difficult day. For others, going to bed past the hour of midnight has the tendency of setting one up for failure. Myself, far more resonating with the former, would prefer 6am, as even this is early for the earliest of us. However, on occasion, especially when not being as social as an extrovert like myself would prefer to be, I find myself perfectly well fit to rise before the sun with a tea in hand sitting besides a candle lit window cracked open in the allowance of the late-spring-turning-to-summer air seeping through its screenless creaves to greet my skin.

A wonderful thing about living on top, besides, and between hundreds of people in a city like New York is the rare chance one would pull back their curtain at 4am not to find a early morning allie in a neighboring apartment window, accompanying us in our wakefulness. It is a distant form of togetherness, our peculiar city-ways of unifying through solitude.

In our Brooklyn brownstones that house more people than they should, our Manhattan skyscrapers with their translucent glass window panels, and the sweet Queens smaller suburban-type homes that offer shelter to a misleadingly number of residents, the living of our lives on top and among one another makes for a unique urban camaraderie. Camaraderie with one's neighbors can be found even among those that live only in proximity to non-human residents of pines and ferns. Growing up, I was well aware of how my father found his form of solace among the neighboring trees and wildlife, eventually having made such preferred neighbors his full-time career as a landscape architect. For me, and perhaps for most urbanites, the buzz of the human neighbor seems to provide an equally nurturing supportive solace.

As I pulled back my heavy blackout curtain, a worthy investment for those that prioritize their slumber in a metropolitan buffet of lights and sounds, the moon appears just slight of full, bright and luminous against the contrast of the black, star-vacant backdrop. With a smile, I notice I am not alone in this hour as I look to the building next store, getting a glimpse of one light shining from inside of what I imagine to be a bedroom. From my small candle lit windowsill, I find myself peering out at this other who I joined in the commencement of pre-dawn hours. Curious what this now-distant friend of mine is entertaining themselves with, I begin to make up elaborate details of their early morning writing practice, their meditation and prayer rituals, or the possibility of speaking on the phone to a distant lover living abroad.

Even if none of what my imagination conjures up lends itself to be the truth, at the very least I am in company. With the current wave of personal development movements often conveying that to be in healthy relationships with one another we must be whole within ourselves, I do not believe that anyone ever feels entirely at one in themselves, as humans from the onset with the joining of two counterparts to create another existence can only truly feel the entirety of

wholeness within the presence of another. This, for myself, is being felt during this early morning hours. Even though not being witnessed, it is the sharing of space, of time, and or circadian rhythms that provides a systemic feeling of nurturance in my body, a feeling being settled and at home.

My imagined new friend's early morning writing practice comes to a halt, as I see their lights go off. It's closer to 4:30am now. There becomes the realization that the romanization of them fine tuning their creative work in the quiet hours before daylight was likely nothing more than a projected fantasy. Living in New York city after all fosters an equal amount of opportunities for late night schedules, not able to get to bed until dawn due to work or celebrative outlets. And yet, nonetheless, even with my realization that our schedules might in fact contrast my original hope for them aligning, it continues to bring me a sense of oneness, knowing we had a moment of togetherness. It's this sometimes shared, and oftentimes removed togetherness that reminds me that I am never alone here in New York.