

Bringing the Upstate Back Down

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Within moments of leaving the springtime friends and music gathering held in Monticello, a quiet town in the lush green hills of upstate new york, I took notice of the pace in which I was moving. My driving was relaxed and at ease, with no immediate rush to be anywhere. The muscles holding all my bones and organs in place were far more supple compared to when I drove up from the city. Most apparent was the lack of desire to immediately infiltrate my nervous system with the additional soundwaves of radio or podcast. Rather, it was a quieter self, that self that attempts to gently guide and usher me into managing personal care practices or forgo caffeine during the more hectic weekly hours. It was this self that was quietly cueing me to linger in the simmering silence reaped from the nurturance of nature.

When caught up in the adrenalized pace of new york city, a pace I often enjoy far more than I complain, I find myself attempting to find tangible tools to decompress from the stimuli of the outside world. The plugging in and turning on a podcast or music often offers more nourishment than the plethora of human dialogue exposed to during a subway rush hour.

In the being held by the trees, however, with the scent of bristling pine and sounds of frogs croaking and splashing in the ripple-free pond, there comes a desire to attune to the body's responsiveness to the omnipresent aliveness that nature pulsates with at all hours of a day. When finally extending a moment of our time to the cadence of life's organic matter, nature herself seems to respond with a charismatically devilish laugh, communicating we would have been far better off if we had took a moment to do nothing much earlier. It seems she's charmingly inquiring "where you going off to my dear?

And then I reflect, where am I often off to at the various hours of the day? Perhaps bombarded with the busy scheduling that makes a city like New York the magnetic place that it has become? To this there is nothing unfounded about my response. I'm off to the multitude of responsibilities that give me a sense of purpose and hopefully, in some way, brings purpose to others. It could even be considered a perpetual pursuit to fulfill a destiny. Apart of the rest of the apparently destiny driven folks that permeates New York City's pavement with constant movement.

Similarly to the pulsation of nature, there is a pulsation of motivation and drive in an urban climate. The beauty exists in the notion that both course through our blood line, and at any point when it becomes essential to dial back on the volume of one there is the option to bask and reap the quality of the alternative. Never letting either becoming too familiar in effort to maintain a constant radiating pull toward that which ignites the coexistence of engagement and connection with self and the world around us.

I keep the radio off the entire two hour drive back to Brooklyn. Wanting to hold onto this feeling of quietude however long I can manage, knowing of its ephemeral ways. I become the slower driver on the road, gladly allowing others to pass by. Smiling with a bit of an inner laugh, aware of how much my caffeinated, more stressed out self would despise the pace of my driving now. Enjoying the endless

greenery of the trees, shrubs and grass that accompany my travel back into the Gotham terrain, I begin to yearn for a life that can provide such peace of mind everyday. I stop myself, wondering if I had re-adopted an upstate lifestyle would the consistent exposure to nature prevent me from the overwhelming appreciation I have when received in small doses? A question that remains answerless.

Pulling onto the George Washington Bridge the quiet inner lull begins to subside and once again I get compelled to be back in a state of constant doing. I take notice of the mental to-do list that begins to pour into my mind the closer I get to home. How did none of this become important an hour earlier? Was it because the deep emerald forest created a mental sound-wall, preventing any urban artifacts from entering my consciousness? I pull into Brooklyn, reminding myself to be equally happy and content with this environment as I was on my drive of silence. Perhaps silence is only a friend when one doesn't get enough of it, leaving us parched, continually beckoning for that initial sip of satiation.

I then realize, I am endlessly indebted to NYC for maintaining this constant, insatiable thirst for silence, as in places like these, it is silence that becomes more valuable than a diamond. It's this value that has weighted privilege not to be taken for granted. A value that inspires me to parcel a bit of upstate's rootedness in a symbolic satchel to bring back with me to my comparably cramped third floor apartment. The symbolic satchel of silence now exists somewhere between my mental state and the emanating warmth of my chest, at any point available to turn toward when needing those necessary moments of inwardness in the organized chaos that the urban terrain cultivate. This is how I've learned to bring upstate back down.