

Water and Vitality

Every morning, I make a walk towards the waterworks here in Philadelphia. Yesterday, I learned that City Hall was the original location of our water pump before the municipal building was constructed.

Why?

Water is the ultimate source of vitality and the first thing that a community needs in order to thrive.

Don't Poison the Well

One sick and scary thought I have is that if somebody wanted to destroy a community, a city, or even a country, all you would have to do is poison the well, the water source.

I'm reminded of my time in Zambia, Africa as a volunteer. I would draw my water from a well every day, boil the water, add iodine, put it through a gravity filter, and then safely consume it. Here in the West, in America, Philadelphia, I have the privilege of turning the tap on, and I have clean, running water. **This is probably one of the greatest features of living in an advanced city with modern technology.**

Some families in the village have around ten children per household, so you can imagine the number of buckets that people must travel with to the well and back to their homes. Some people spend the entire day transporting water back and forth as they live extremely far away from the well itself. Needless to say, **the accessibility of water is a vital role in a flourishing society and a symbol of prosperity and wealth.**

Think of Rome and the implementation of the aqueduct. Some of these aqueducts are being used to this day, one in particular being the source of water that is displayed at the Trevi Fountain. The Trevi Fountain showcases a plethora of

baroque-style architecture and sculpture.

A statue of Oceanus, the god of water, stands in the background of the fountain. The sculpture of Abundance is directly next to it, depicted holding a cornucopia, a symbol of prosperity and wealth. **The Trevi Fountain is a location that I've been visiting since I was a little boy, around six or seven years old.** I remember visiting this fountain, and throwing a coin over my left shoulder, making a wish. There's something special about myth, folklore, and stories that shape our reality.

Become a Savage

When I consider the myth of Rome and how it was founded by Remus and Romulus, being raised by a she-wolf, La Lupa, I become invigorated. There's something about this story and the way in which the two boys were raised by a wolf, in the wild, in the unknown, that inspires me. **Think of the wolf, this fierce predator, where when it slays its prey, the first thing that it eats is the liver from the animals.**

Why?

Liver is the most nutrient-dense food that we can consume.

Also, when Prometheus decided to steal the fire from the gods at Mount Olympus and give it to humans to create technology and civilization, he was punished—tied to a rock, having vultures come and eat at his liver over and over again. He was immortal and would inevitably feel pain forever, unless Hercules, the hero, did not come and save him.

During my time living in Palestine, I remember Eid Al Adha, the day of sacrifice. Hundreds of sheep, goats, and cows were slaughtered throughout the streets of Jericho, the stench of blood filled the atmosphere for around a week straight.

When I was a volunteer, I was greeted with a goat hanging from a tree when I met my host family for the first time. **This was the ultimate symbol of respect, as I was handed a knife to slaughter the goat, and we feasted all day and week.** I'll never forget riding my bike to farmers, purchasing live chickens, slaughtering them,

plucking the feathers, cutting it into pieces, and preparing food directly from the source. I've never tasted chicken so good in my life, which is funny because I never eat chicken here in the States, as I believe it tastes disgusting.

Consider the human being, as the apex predator in the world, life, the animal kingdom, and nature itself. **We kill the animals, we make the sacrifice, and we increase our power.** This increase of power that you feel from consuming the flesh of other animals will satiate you and fuel you with strength, unlike any other food group, such as fruits and vegetables.

Why, in the food pyramid, is red meat painted in a bad light, telling us to eat it sparingly?

Perhaps this is one of the greatest flaws of modern life here in the West, and is the reason why we have such an increase in obesity. We have been sold a lie that red meat is bad for you and that you must watch your cholesterol.

Why?

My theory is that maybe the less red meat you eat, the hungrier you become, leading you to purchase goods from these large corporations, such as General Mills, fueling yourself on carbs, protein bars, cereals, grains, starches, and other things that have addictive qualities. Eating these other food groups merely makes you a consumer, fueling the economy, making more purchases, buying things you don't need, and fueling your body with subpar energy.

Consider fat as energy.

Apparently, Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert. If you have 60 pounds of fat, this technically means that you could go 30 days without food. I'm not saying that you should do this, as it could definitely lead to a lot of problems, but it's just a fun thought experiment. When you consider fat as energy, and the way that it is stored within your body, things start to make more sense. You often hear these notions of calories in, calories out. I believe that these notions are scams, as people love to go for these long runs, in hopes to burn calories, and then go back home and eat. **This approach to health is an endless loop, a hamster wheel, leading you to no results.** We should stop considering calories, weight, and focus on fat more. The

goal for you is to lose fat, not weight. However, eating protein and fat satiates you and keeps you strong and powerful. **The more red meat you eat, the more energy you will have.**

Gear Obsession

What is the #1 mistake 99% of photographers make?

Gear obsession.

I believe this is the leading contribution to the decline of great photographers, especially in street photography, where people constantly obsess about the gear to use, or choose to take out. **This is what's going to hold the majority of people back from ever improving and becoming the best version of themselves.**

My biggest advice for any photographer is to simply purchase a Ricoh GRIII or Ricoh GRIIIx and just stick to the best. Especially if you want to become prolific and simply make more pictures. There really is no better option than a compact digital camera. I think Fujifilm is good too, and I had positive experiences using a Leica M3 film camera. The problem with film is that it is insanely slow and not worth the hassle in 2024. The beauty of the Ricoh is that it's so small, where you can simply throw it in your front right pocket. **This is the goal, to feel as though you have no camera on you.**

The Ricoh becomes the closest thing to not having a camera—the closest thing to having an extension of your body and your eyes.

Society and Beauty

Is man permitted to be excellent?

My thought is that in a world that promotes equality, mediocrity will be the ultimate result. If everybody is mediocre, this is no world that I desire to live in. However, the antidote is to strive to become the hero, to become excellent. Think of the

Greek Olympic Games, and the physical excellence that was on display. **This is something that we should try to aspire to be like—the ancient Greek heroes who strove for excellence—which becomes the ultimate antidote to weakness in this modern world.**

My other thought is in regards to beauty, and surrounding yourself with it. I believe that nature is the apex of beauty, as it is God's creation. When it comes to man's creations, you can find beauty in architecture and sculpture. **My thought is, anything that you find outside, in public works of art, becomes the most beautiful.** Think of City Hall, standing so tall. Just wake up early, and watch as the sun kisses the columns upon the tower as the sun rises. The sculptures, detail, and tunnels never cease to amaze me.

However, human beings are funny creatures. Just this morning, the first thing I witnessed while waking up was a woman, a grown adult, pulling her pants down under a street light as I walked by, and she clearly saw me, peeing into a sewer. Yesterday, as I walked on Market Street, a young woman, seemingly in high school, threw a Dunkin' Donuts wrapper from her doughnut up into the air, and it gracefully landed at my feet. She had no care for the streets, the workers, or respect for her environment or city. **I'm not too sure how these people are being raised these days, but they are certainly lacking any sort of respect and appreciation for beauty.** I believe the best thing that we can do is simply ignore these people, don't react, respond, pick the trash up, and move on. We are on the path towards mediocrity, but keep striving to go beyond equality by striving for excellence and transcendence.