

## You Can't Make the Same Photograph Twice

### **Good morning. What's poppin, people?**

It's Dante. Getting my morning walk in here at the Centennial Arboretum.

Watching my shadow cast upon the ground, following it—  
Thinking today about Plato's *allegory of the cave*.

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### **Shackled to Shadows**

Plato spoke of prisoners shackled to a cave wall, seeing only the shadows cast by a fire. That's their only perception of reality—*shadows on the wall*. And I think...

***This is a strong metaphor for our modern lives.***

We scroll through our phones, watch TV, absorb media. Our worldview gets filtered, distorted—even manipulated—by what we consume.

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### **You Hold the Key**

Yesterday, on the bus, this man told me, "*The world is cold, man. Everyone's hateful.*"

And while I understand, I asked myself:

***What if I told you that you possess the key to unlock that door?  
You can unshackle yourself and rise above the prison cell.***

Return to the surface. Return to the light. To the fire.  
Treat the world like a **playground**.  
Be the big kid again—*curious, optimistic, lighthearted*.

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## Being vs. Becoming

To be shackled to the wall is to exist in a constant *state of becoming*.  
Everything is filtered. Everything is manipulated. Shadows upon shadows.

But when you **photograph**—when you *make an image*—you're casting your own shadow on the wall.

***A photograph isn't what life is, but what it could be.***

You're abstracting reality. Drawing with light.

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## Life Is Outside the Frame

**Phos** = light

**Grafia** = drawing or writing

Photography is *drawing with light*. Creating *instant sketches* with your camera.

*“Life is outside of the four corners of a frame.  
Life is outside of the box.  
Life is outside of the cave.”*

When the prisoner escapes the cave, he sees:

- Trees

- Sculptures
- Rocks
- Roads
- *Truth*

Adjusting your eyes to that light?

*Hard.*

But necessary.

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### **Enter the Flow State**

Free your body. Free your mind. Return to the surface.

When you do—when you're walking, moving, photographing—you **enter a flow state**.

Time disappears. Past and future fade. You exist in the **now**.

You become a conduit of:

***Being and becoming, simultaneously.***

***Order and chaos. Light and shadow.***

And you use your frame to put **order** to the unknown.

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### **Affirming Life with the Shutter**

When I click the shutter, I'm affirming life. I'm saying yes.

All of my senses are alive:

- The breeze on my skin
- The shape of shadows
- The chirp of birds
- The rhythm of the city

But beyond that...

***A photograph transcends sensual experience. It becomes sublime.***

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## **The Sublime in the Mundane**

The other day, I walked through the mall. I was so present—watching skylights beam down, people moving through stores, stopping at GameStop and wondering:

*How is this all happening at once? How are there infinite worlds inside these discs?*

It hit me hard.

*“It was **beyond beauty**.  
It was the sublime.”*

Not just pretty. **Overwhelming. Emotional. Spiritual.**

And this, I believe, is what I aim for in my photography.

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## **Soul Photography**

I'm not out here looking for anything in particular. I follow **light** as my subject.

I follow my *soul*.

**Soul photography:** *photographing your **being**, your **essence**, and letting that be your subject.*

It doesn't matter where I am. I can make something out of nothing.

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## **You Cannot Make the Same Photograph Twice**

Each day, the Earth tilts. The light shifts.

***You cannot make the same photograph twice.***

- Light etches shape and form
- Shadows dance differently every moment
- The world is in flux
- And so are you

This fact is **empowering**.

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## **Impermanence Is Divine**

Cherry blossoms bloom—and wither.

Quick. Beautiful. Impermanent.

That's **wabi-sabi**.

That's **Daido Moriyama** and the *Provoke* photographers.

That's life.

*“Imperfection is perfection. Impermanence is divine.”*

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## Push the Medium

Maybe we already know what a great photograph looks like.  
But what if the next step is turning *inward*?

Not photographing what life **is**,  
but what it **could be**.

Put your soul into the frame.  
Push photography beyond *depiction*.  
Make it *revelation*.

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## Return to the Fire

Return to **light**.  
Return to **fire**—the origin of all things.

*“Photography is writing with light.  
And light is a universal language.”*

It transcends language, culture, and even time.  
It gives you a **voice**.  
It gives your life **purpose**.

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## Final Thought

***Follow the light. Crush the shadows.  
Draw with fire. Say yes to life.***

That's where I want to be with my photography:

On the edge of **order and chaos**, of **being and becoming**, of **light and dark**.