

Why Light Is Thumos: Sunlight, Courage, and the Photographer's Soul

Check out this big tree that has fallen here in the Centennial Arboretum.

What's poppin people? It's Dante.

Today, I'm thinking about **thumos** and **light** — and why I believe that *light ultimately is thumos*, in a way.

What Is Thumos?

Thumos means *spiritedness*.

Plato, in *The Republic*, describes thumos as:

- Courage
- Honor
- A sort of indignation
- That deep **willpower** somebody possesses within their heart

I think about thumos in the context of **Achilles in the Iliad** — driven by that kind of **rage**, that **fire**, that **relentless hunger for honor**.

The Child and the Forest

"When I think of thumos and spiritedness, I think of a child."

For me, when I was a boy, I would explore in the forest. I remember climbing trees as tall as these in the canopy. *I'd be so high that if I fell, I'd die.*

I'd build teepees with sticks, sharpen spears, try to hunt deer. I had this *inner thumos* when I was born. This call to adventure.

Maybe modern society sucks it out of you as you get older.
But I can tell you — since I was a boy — I had this **inner explorer** within me.

Light Charges the Soul

Now thumos in the context of light — that's where it gets interesting.

I look at it practically. *Light gives me energy. Fire. Fuel.*

When I wake up for the sunrise and let the light pour into my eyes, I'm literally:

- Setting my circadian rhythm
- Rising with the sun
- Sleeping with the sun
- Regenerating my cells
- Recharging my spirit

"Jesus famously says that your eye is the window to the soul."

So maybe, **by letting the sunlight enter your eyes**, with **no sunglasses**, you're literally **charging your soul**.

Courage Is Core

The word *courage* comes from *cor* — meaning **heart**.

And thumos is that exact same thing.

"Courage, I think, is the number one virtue to possess as a human."

Crossing the Creek

Here I am at a stream. I remember, as a little boy, I'd make bridges with stones to cross these.

And now at **29 years old**, I'm doing the same.
Still building, still crossing, still living my childhood dream.

"It requires courage to go out into the open world. To move your body, frankly."

Because when you're out there, anything can happen.
A tree could fall and kill you — like the one you just saw down on the road.

Light = Energy = Courage

I believe courage, spiritedness, thumos — *it all stems from light*.

Not in some mystical woo-woo way.
But in a **physical, tangible, practical** way.

By aligning with the light —
letting it **beam through your eyes** —
you wake up **refreshed, rejuvenated, powerful.**

That physiological power becomes *spiritual* power.

It gives you the *courage to move.*
The *curiosity to explore.*
The *fire to conquer.*

Soul As Body

Forget the mystical. What if your body *is* your soul?

"Realistically, when you consider your physical body as the soul, it sets things into perspective."

So for me, thumos isn't abstract.
It's in the **sunlight.**
It's in the **trees.**
It's in the **clean air.**
It's in the **movement.**
It's in the **testosterone firing** from walking under the sun.
It's in the **physiology** of it all.

Photography as a Spiritual Practice

"What is our goal as photographers? To follow the light. To wield the light. To draw with light."

Photography = Light + Surface

Phos (φως) = Light

Graphe (γραφει) = Drawing

We draw with light.

We **etch moments into eternity.**

"Maybe you can't live forever, but at least you can make a photograph."

Let the Soul Live On

By photographing the light — by photographing life —
maybe pieces of your **soul** can live on.

So practice photography with courage.

With **thumos.**

***"By taking the light and bringing it to flesh... our spirit will live on through
the work we create."***

Final Word

Yeah, maybe I shouldn't put my Ricoh in my pocket... too much dirt out here.

But the message is simple:

Follow the light.