They say that you gotta live your life right here and now. They say that you have to live it as if each day were your last. I suspect most of that comes from people who have an unfulfilled desire for *things*: women, money, power, satisfaction, experiences… anything. Is it projection then that opens their mouths when they say “Live each day as your last?” I presume it is.

Life isn't a sprint though. More like a marathon. Don't win any prizes tiring yourself out at the second lap. Just gotta keep on moving.

But its not a race either, although you meet people who act like it is. Life is more like a *walk.* Doesn't have to have a definitive goal. Doesn't have to be in a particular direction. What are we doing? We're all just walking. Hey, isn't that nice? Smell the breeze.

Caustic red slithered its way from a steady hand. It started wide and then arced upwards, thinning as it went until you could barely see it. But it was there. Below it was a yellow sorta pattern, and when the hand stopped the eye took over.

Everything looked right so far. The traffic was low and probably would be for the rest of the night. There was time.

The air was crisp and the soft spray of the cans was the only sound besides the crickets.

The hand reached up again, clouds emerged from its guiding grasp, blue and white, swirling around in a sea of fog and mist. They weren't just patterns or colors; they were truly there, palpable and real.

An arm wet with the condensation, cool and light against the skin. The clouds breathed, and they exhaled the same breath as lungs.

But there too was the earth, beneath them, crackling and spitting. Surely there needed to be something of a balance? If the sky was cool, the earth would be hot. The cans weren't the tool, rather, it was the mind and eye and hand made it real. A yellow and red pattern became flames, hot and flickering in the night sky, smoke reaching its way upwards.

And where the fire and clouds met? It all just came together. All the colors. All the feelings. It wasn't in one place. It wasn't even a horizon. It was all around. Fire and sky were *together –* in all places*.*

“I've gotta say, this fucker's persistent...” Claude said, stepping back from the overpass. He waved his hand at the concrete wall, which was now improperly adorned with what someone thought passed for art.

Joe chuckled and backpedaled, moving until he could see the whole thing in view.

“He's certainly outdone himself this time. He even got all the way to the second column.” Joe said, scratching his wild beard and assuming a critical pose.

“I can't quite say what he's going for, but he's certainly capturing whatever it is.”

“Its that Chinese thing, that they have in those martial arts films.” Claude offered.

“I guess so. But he's got the colors wrong. That things black and white. And Korean.” Joe corrected.

“What?”

“The symbol. The ying yang symbol. That's what you're thinking of. Its not Chinese. Its Korean. I know because I see it every time I go to that barbeque place.”

“Huh… So you say. Well, he's obviously never seen one close enough. And there’s some other stuff here off to the sides.” Claude pointed out, and then checked his watch.

“And we better get started. This one looks like it might take hours.”

*“*It does, doesn't it...*”* Joe said with a grimace. “I'll hook up the equipment.”

He waddled back to the truck and clambered into the front seat. Claude backed under the underpass and watched the truck beep its way until it was close enough for the hoses to reach.

Joe threw open the door again and came to the ground with a heavy thunk, making a sound of exertion.

“Back bothering you again?” Claude asked, taking one of the hoses from his partner's hand.

“Isn't it always. But its on and off. I'd go to the doctor but I know what he'd say, same thing he always does, and then I'd be out another grand. Better just wait until next year when the wife and I can retire.”

“Hmm. So you're sure of it?” Claude said, adjusting the settings on the pressure.

“Sure as I've ever been. Look, you may like this kinda stuff, but I don't want to be scraping gum off the side walks and washing off paint for the rest of my life. Besides, I've got grand kids on the way.”

The conversation was interrupted by Joe testing the pressurized hose. A violent spray of water formed a line between the nozzle and the concrete where it impacted and splattered in a thousand directions.

“Whoops. Bit too much there.”

Claude adjusted the pressure again and the two started spraying.

“Wow, so Caitlin's expecting?” Claude yelled over the noise of the hose.

“Yes sir. Just heard yesterday after the shift. Supposed to be a girl.” Joe shut off his hose suddenly and Claude did as well as the other man whispered to him.

“Don't tell anyone, but I kinda wished it had been a boy.” He said with a chuckle. “Could have taken him to the games when he got older.” He stepped back again and turned the hose back on. “Oh well, I'mma spoil her rotten anyways!” he yelled with a grin.

“Congratulations! They know when?”

“I think they have a range of dates, but its not for a bit. I think it'll be enough time to request leave.”

Joe was still spraying, but Claude has suddenly stopped, and tapped for Joe to stop.

“Hey, before I forget, lemme say that I'll definitely cover for your shift, whatever the office says.”

Joe nodded, a smile forming on his face. “That's nice of you. I might take you up on that. I might just *need* to take you up on that.”

They started spraying.

The paint was resilient but it couldn't stand up to the pressure of both the hoses. In minutes the colors started to run together, forming brown sludge colored puddles.

The two worked in silence for a long time.

But this time it was Joe who broke the wait.

“You ever wonder why this guy doesn't use a different kind of paint? He always comes back to the same place, night after night.” He gestured at the concrete. You could just make out the remains of other previous works.

“I mean, he's gotta know we're just going to spray it off again right?”

Claude shrugged.

“Maybe its a long haul thing. Thinks the county will stop sending us out here.”

Joe shook his head.

“If he chose another damn spot you'd probably be right, but this is right on the main haul here. You come in from the city, you're going to be seeing this.”

“Maybe he's just stupid then.”

But Joe shook his head again.

“I don't think so. He's not like the other taggers we get around, right? Those just people put their name on stuff, or their gang sign. I think this guy's gotta be older.”

The hoses were doing their work now, and the center of the pieces was falling, melting into oblivion. Beneath rivulets of water lay the firm gray concrete.

“What makes you think that?” Claude asked, spurting his hose particularly hard at a section of yellow faded red that refused to come off.

“Well its like I said, he's older. He's got to think of this as real art.”

Claude laughed, and Joe could make the cough even over the hoses.

“That's bullshit. This isn't art. No one's going to pay to look at this. I've got a cousin, real smart guy, went to the coast and ended up finishing college. Thing is, he hung out with these real hippie types, smoked a lot of pot. Parents wanted him to become a banker but now he runs a damn gallery in the city. Huge frames with all sorts of kinds of stuff. That’s art.”

“This? This is graffiti. This is nothing.” Claude said, waiving his hands.

Joe shrugged and finished turning a particularly dense set of clouds into smudges, and then into nothingness. Another long moment passed. Time stretched on as the hoses did their work.

Claude smiled as the concrete emerged from behind the paint, until it was all one could see.

“There we go! Good as new!” He said, clapping his hands together. Joe gave him the hose and nodded in satisfaction.

“I guess so. He's just going to be back though.” Joe said, fumbling in his pocket for the keys to the truck.

“Maybe... I don't mind if he does though.” Claude admitted as they climbed in.

“Really? It sure beats some of the other stuff they have us do, but I'm not sure I'd want to do this every day.”

Claude shrugged this time as Joe started the truck.

“It annoys me that this guy puts his crap all over the place, but there's something satisfying about taking it down, every time. Look. We did a good job. You can't even see any paint.” Claude pointed.

“I guess you're right. But lets say a bunch of these guys came out and started tagging up all over. We could be cleaning this stuff up every day! Would you really want to do this every day?” Joe turned around to back the truck onto the road.

Claude paused, and looked forward at the overpass one last time. The concrete, now already starting to dry in the hot summer sun. The puddles of water running through the broken rocks. Shards of discarded glass, and old cigarette butts.

He nodded, and leaned back, seeing the place he had hidden the duffel of paint cans.

“Joe, to be honest, I think I could do this forever.”

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