



On a grey day I still play.

No scoffs, no sighs. It is what it is. I'll be outside doing the thing that maintains balance in my world. Riding my bike. With my body in motion, my mind quickly becomes adroit. The cadence produced converts struggle into idea and idea into action. The blight of not participating exceeds any premonition of pain that could arise; graciously I accept the conditions and acclimate for mobility.

For clarity, the outside I'm speaking of is not a secluded mountainscape, but a city. New York City. A civic wilderness that is as glorious as any scenic overlook. This perception can be obscured by traditional transactions of daily life. But the city's broken streets exhibit the rugged terrain of a true trail system that must be routed with caution and confidence.

Here the bike represents.

Some days, euphoria. A field of all-greens as I float & stunt through the city, blocks at a time. Others, a critical calculated crawl as I attempt to not let my momentum fall victim to the deadlock.

The bike is the blade to score the city. A precision instrument that quickly transforms the metropolitan landscape into a frontier. The bylaws of the city's thoroughfares disappear; vastness forming in its place as the pedals of exploration begin to blossom.

Maneuverability is now in the 4th and most precious dimension —time.

Up and down the aves and streets, over the bridge and back in minutes. Traffic is a non-factor. Space and time, just variables whose terms are renegotiated to no longer hold dominion over how the city must be traversed. The shift in power has redefined the landscape and revealed access to the 4th dimension, ultimately paving a unique relationship with the immediate outside. A landscape nouveau rather than a landscape deferred.

Allegory aside, the fact still remains, this is a city. While towering monoliths offer a vision of opportunity through a picturesque skyline, this is a stark contrast to the reality of limitation and confinement. The harshness can make it difficult for some to see value in the metropolis' raw outside, but not impossible. Case in point: Harold Hunter, who ventured beyond the Campos Plaza Housing Projects and found outside through skateboarding, forging from it a career that would turn him into a legend and icon even before his untimely passing.

There's an article from The FADER with a photo of Harold that holds more depth than just a fashion op. In it, with his back to one of the city's housing units, he dons a jacket designed to shield an alpha alpinist through severe conditions. A truly powerful image as it serves as an example of the harsh stifled life the city offers to some and the ability to climb above it.

Valuing outside, only when it gives itself to us conveniently, is a fruitless enterprise. But rain bears fruit which makes questioning the weather—pointless.

In his sixth race as a professional F1 driver, Aryton Senna piloted an uncompetitive car through a monsoon to what should have been a victory if it weren't for race officials calling the race off. Ten years later on a dry sun filled day at the Tamburello corner in Imola, he crashed into a concrete barrier and perished.

Weather is a constant and unpredictable conflict.

I've abandoned the notion that the day must be perfect in order to participate. Does 70° in the shade somehow quell the prospect of calamity? Rain or shine, I'm outside. There is no contract of contingency. The offer is available for any and all who seek it. Perfection, presumably, is the discernment of the seeker.

Eddie Merckx said, "Cyclists live with pain. If you can't handle it, you will win nothing. The race is won by the rider who can suffer the most."

My race to win has never been for a purse, but the freedom afforded by the ride. It can be brutal at times, but instead of accepting suffering, I've learned how to endure.

Endurance may be evolution's greatest tactic in pursuit of freedom. A testament to human existence pushed to the extreme. But any attempt at freedom has a debt of war that must be waged to protect it. And with it, pain.

Pain is inevitable. The evolution that we experience through endurance isn't freedom from pain, but rather, a freedom from an adverse reaction to its pressure. Spirit intact but a dermis broken. A special tool is needed. From the inside out, the spirit persuades a second skin to form, a protective callus—a hardshell.

As I have committed myself to outside, more so the bike and the freedom it offers, I welcome battle through these articles of clothing. For that, I have never been able to view them as a collection. The term seems removed from purpose. Instead they are tools, necessary in preserving my effort to endure.

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