Chicago, Ilinois July 31, 2020

Dear Pete,

Greetings from Chicago. The leafy northside and mild weather belies the earlier heat and general unrestful feeling aloft. Again the autumn approaches. Esme is heading off to kindergarten. Her school is just a few blocks (or an instantaneous Zoom meeting) away. I find myself all of a sudden, though not so sudden nor out of the complete blue, on a “MID-LIFE TECH SABBATICAL 2020”.

Two years ago on the advice of Dave Oliver I picked up a book on Ruby and began working my way through the text book. I started toying around with my first IDE (ATOM) and making some simple programs: “a baseball simulater”, a rudimentary RPG called “Wildwood”, tons of example code which I rather meticulously filed in a retrieveable way to start my reference system. I have really enjoyed building my reference system. Utilizing an Excel document which I use as my clearing house “INDUSTRY TERM DICTIONARY”, as a quick reference- have I taken any notes on this? Have I taken this next level into my DevSite?

So my DevSite is this locally hosted site that I have been building as my first website. It is essential a jungle gym for my developing CSS/HTML know-how as well as a customized learning and project center.

I am also inspired about the writing possibilities there are with tech.

All-in-all this is why I have jumped in both feet forward. Without a job and with the time and space in front of my and a wife and family that has been more than supportive I feel the folly factor has mostly been mitigated.

Now I just have mornings. Following the summer, tracing into fall. We have weekly Sunday outings and walks in the neighborhood. I am hoping to get my jogging going again. { run, code, run } seems like the right mantra to repeat.

02/06/2021

I don’t know where here is. Began working with RAILS, server side programming and databases. Have continued to push forward with the most intensive writing project I have ever attempted, the goal of which is to overcome my writers block and fully settle on and commit to my 40-year-old practices.

02/11/2021

In some ways, many ways I am very grateful for my time in the retail world. I had to make my own way. I went from one of the shittiest positions in the luxury goods industry to one of the “best” and I had done it by myself while bringing a couple of kids into the world and establishing a baseline economic hold and security for my family. I had used my Mandarin to make money. I had improved my Mandarin. I had discovered my aptitude and interest for computer. An aptitude and interest that weren’t like a lightening realization, but have been cultivated through a gradual and intentional “opening up” to technology and the use of technology to create lightweight, adaptable, responsive, easily maintainable systems for growth, reference, learning, and grounding to resolve my digital dislocation and vastly increase my comfort level and competency of exploring and employing with digital technologies.

Totoro: girls love of it. Our love of it. Totoro cake. Totoro living in our Christmas try. She sings the song and wants to play it. It’s nice to tap into that kiddy fandom, without having to contest with the McDonald’s tie in. Culture is manufactured. Culture is created. It is truly a beautiful thing, but beauty can also hide ugliness and malignancy. McDonald’s could be framed around a pleasant story of a retired man minority man connecting with his ambitious, enterprising son or grandson for coffee and breakfast at one of the many community restaurants. Or you could indict the whole bullshit institution for doing much to create a culture that produces a disproportionately obese and unhealthy populous. Many people thrive in this system and have the wherewithal over time to find their niche, to settle into their value system, both on a writ large ideological level, but also on a street level pragmatic “how am I going to manage my day and find some sort of flow of consumption and production that doesn’t lead me to losing my mind as I am surrounded by all of these swirling and contradictory messages which I must either react to and oppose, agree with and acquiesce to, or disagree with and absorb. So often these poltically spun asides- “implying that the windmills were a big part of the blame for the suffering in Texas”, that the Biden administration was somehow responsible for Katie not getting her maternity leave approved. You rancor makes you saw things that really don’t make any sense and also pollute a perfectly non-partisan conversation with your dogbreath partisan grievance. I find it offense and annoying and I have for a long time. And if you want to take this as me “cancelling you”, my message for you is grow up. Your politics make you unkind. Your politics are an earthly consolation. You are attempting to turn your eternal truth into earthy power. You are framing an eternal struggle as an earthly one. Now I am not saying that you are wrong to care about politics and care deeply or even to engage, but when this this comes to dominate you conversation patterns and your thinking and the way that you see the world- the good people, the bad people, the people who care about American, the people who don’t care about America, this is an earthy consolation. This is an attachment that is inevitable as all attachments are inevitable, but it is one that I see shading your, in my opinion, deep, more powerful, more radiant, more inviting messages.

Crank: an eccentric person, especially one who is obsessed by a particular subject or theory, a bad-tempered person