

Quarantine and 'A Moveable Feast'

Writers and photographers have a similar language. By constantly explaining the mood of a place to the viewer, both are connected through word usage, metaphor, and meaning. As Hemingway recalls memories of his formative years in Paris, I understand this procedure to be one of a pure visionary. Everything from the smell of food to the feeling of hunger, and how the paths bend to get from one point to another. His illustrative writing of the details of cafés, rooms, and bookstores creates an aroma of familiarity. Because Hemingway's contemplative assertions about the art of writing can easily be substituted for the art of photography (painting, sculpting, etc.) I was able to respond to this book naturally. Every detail came to me organically as if the recipe for the response was hidden in his words.

This book takes place from 1921 to 1926, and because of this I chose a period specific camera that would possibly be one Hemingway would've used if not the pen and paper. These images are made with the Kodak No.2 Folding Cartridge Premo camera.

Much of Hemingway's musings are self reflections of his past as he was becoming an artist / writer. Since he wrote this book at the end of his life, it felt more like he wanted to share these thoughts not as in a memoir, but as intimate letters to someone he cherished from his past. Therefore I chose to print the photographs onto postcard paper. Some are direct quotes from his book, and some I've appropriated. Each postcard is stamped with a time specific replica stamp and canceled out with city, date, and title of that particular image. Each are addressed to the same person, Flo Axis, which is an anagram of the person I'm collaborating with. You'll note the postal code is the Toronto Zoo - another quirky thing within this fake address that adds to the collaboration.

Below are the details of each photograph:

Paris, Juin, 1921, Transplant

Dear Friend,
Quarantine.

That was called transplanting yourself. Able to recollect memory in a different location, or to understand better a scenario elsewhere.

Sincerely,
Jessica

This short series starts out with me holding a map of Paris while overlooking an open field with one lonely tree. Not quite winter and not quite spring. Definitely not Paris, but more of a metaphorical Paris - a place held dear to myself. A place I am lucky enough to be quarantined in and able to move about at will.

Paris, Avril, 1923, Memory is Hunger

Dear Friend,

There are so many sorts of hunger. In the spring there are more. But that's gone now.

Hunger is good discipline and you learn from it.

Sincerely,
Jessica

Remembering what was and comparing to what is now creates a certain type of hunger. This type is the kind that makes unknown voids come to light and demands attention. Having a hunger for knowledge creates a determined way of searching. A self reflection that hastily reveals truths.

Paris, Mars, 1925, Omit

Dear Friend,

I could omit anything if I knew that I omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the photo and make you feel something more than you understood.

Sincerely,
Jessica

A self portrait is made with dogwood blossoms as a frame. You see me with dark eyes and a mask, heavily obscured by the tree branches, the vintage camera's quality, and overall surreality of it. Just as the 'current situation' has us all. If I omit the mirror that creates the self portrait then it could mystify the image more... or would it dull it by being just another picture of spring blossoms? Leaving a bit of mystery for the audience keeps them a little hungry.

Paris, Mai, 1926, Bel Esprit

Dear Friend,

The idea is that we will all contribute a part of whatever we earn to provide comfort. We're all in this together.

Either you have Bel Esprit or you do not.

Sincerely,
Jessica

The Paris map is shown again, to complete this short series. This time a somewhat busy field is ahead with a hesitant distinction between seasons. The addition of brambles and trees can suggest an emergence of coming out of quarantine and into society once again. To conquer fear is a step forward. To crush paranoia can be another step forward. But can you slip the mask down past your mouth to reveal the smile underneath, and make that your first step?