

Why I Run

by Nicholas Triolo

INSPIRED BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS'S "WHY I WRITE";

It is just after 4:00 am. I was dreaming about Missoula, running around Mount Sentinel just before dawn. I threw on a blue hoodie and began reciting in my sleep why I run:

I run to remember. I run for order. I run because I fear disorder. I run because the folds of my belly say run. I run because wolves run. I run towards. I run away. I run to feel, to feel, to feel. I run because it's free, because it's egalitarian, because it's subversive, because people tell me I shouldn't. I run because there aren't memberships or green fees. I run because 4.5 billion years of evolution watch me and wonder if I'll keep using these legs. I run to thank heart and lungs. I run to praise gravity. I run for those who can't. I run to feel strong. I run until I'm weak.

I run for a view, for a longer view. I run to stir up red-tailed hawks and magpie iridescence. I run because it's hard. I run to listen. I run to learn my limits. I run to escape. I run to leave. I run away from claustrophobia, from the condensed, human-made world. I run to encourage others to run. I run to check in with that streambed, that great-horned owl, that throne of granite at the summit. I run on roads at rush hour because passing cars on foot might be one of the best feelings in the world. I run to play. I run to rely on myself, to know that I'm good enough. I run so that I don't have to stare at my laptop and make these ridiculous lists. I run to think, to follow, to earn that breakfast burrito. I run from anger. I run from commitment. I run to commit.

I run when the world becomes too sad, too divisive, too full of hate for me to bear, and the only antidote is singletrack and breath and raven croak. I run to hack at the digital. I run to feel young. I run for structure. I run knowing that some outings will be light and fast, while others will be lead-footed and gassy. I run because if all else fails, if our machinery dies and all we have left are our two legs, I'll be ready. I run to honor what's already been lost, as oil fields pump dry, as greed and populations exhaust ecosystem after ecosystem hinged on man's ecosystem. I run because when the old world ends, there will be a new world waiting, and that world is etched not in strip mines and eight-lane freeways but in game trail and footpath.

I run towards this new world, a world where humans remain fair-footed and landscapes bubble with life on the move, always on the move, running and flying and swimming and dancing. I run to catch up, to join this movement, the movement towards attention, towards subtle mind, towards pumping heart, lactic burn, and clenched teeth.

I run to remember.