

Everyone is born original, but sadly,
most people die copies.

-Abraham Lincoln



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Snowflakes: A Hushed Trumpet



Just yesterday, I looked out the window and saw it was snowing. Some people love snow, others can't wait till it is over, and some just wish it would snow for Christmas Day, then melt the next. Snow is rather captivating. From having to be the perfect temperature before the moisture forms into flakes, to the magic in what, or who, shapes each snowflake... differently? Why wouldn't each drop of moisture be formed to the same shape, or a shape at all? It has always been a long held belief that there are no two snowflakes alike, nor has ever been. When I was omnipresent, which it's been a few years, eye carefully caught every snowflake in the universe, from the beginning of time, and scientifically proved this theory true.

Abraham Lincoln's quote and a snowflake? Two wings, one angel, and a hushed trumpet? I was always told whenever you hear a trumpet sound, rush to wherever it

is sounding, nature herself is unveiling a message. We are each unique, like a snowflake. Often though, social pressures, expectations, and the mathematizing of the mind have drawn us away from seeing and hearing with our magic I.

No one in the world can have the message intended for you. They may have the same discipline as you, but not the same message. The message has always been within you, and there may have been times you have heard it, yet all too often the message falls silent before the roaring cares of this life—the hushed trumpet no longer heard. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Life is learning, uniquely who you are and what is the message that you can share with the world. Often we follow in the footsteps of others, as not to appear strange, hiding amidst the masses, not believing in our own message. Don't die a copy, find your message and don't be afraid to blow your trumpet. Whatever discipline you are inclined to, use it as the means to share your message. Never lose the message though, that's what sustains and guides the discipline.

Remember, when the snow begins to fall, that maybe, there are as many snowflakes as there are individuals who have ever lived. With eyes to see and ears to hear, remember the wind, the hidden sculptor, with infinite apophatic virtuosity, blowing his hushed trumpet, sharing her message. Remember this year, to not just shovel and curse the snow, but catch a flake and read it. Isn't that literacy? Go ahead, blow your trumpet... quietly though, this is a library!

The Least of These Photography



Through the end of December the Area Arts League is displaying a film project at the FCPL Rochester Branch from local film photographer Kendra Leigh titled *The Least of These*. It is a project that captures the personality of rescue animals.

When did you first discover photography?

In 2007 when my father purchased my first DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera. I think I have always been interested in the visual arts. My vision has taken many different forms over time. I have studied design, from interior to graphic. I also studied pottery, as well as painting.

Photography is a bit art, science, and mathematics- using light as the paintbrush.

What type of cameras do you use?

I first started with a Canon 20d digital camera. It was a unique experience viewing the world through a lens. It was truly my first intentional discipline; one that I often ran from. I later became interested in medium format film cameras. It developed within me even a more disciplined eye. I now shoot with older medium format film cameras- Pentax 67 and Mamiya 645 .

What is it about photography that interests you ?

I personally became fascinated by the concept of “the instant...” capturing a moment in time that will never be repeated. Even the idea that a picture paints a thousand words. In film this became even more beautiful; not knowing the moment captured until the film was developed, the waiting. Sally Mann, one of my heroes, in her documentary “*What Remains*,” details an interpretation that is quite esoteric, “One of the things I pray for is what I have referred to as the angel of chance.” The idea is that no matter how one frame the pictures, there are times light, or various “angelic” unknown variables, play with the film.

What is the meaning of *The Least of These*?

As a child, one of my first memories was of my father rescuing a cat from a dumpster. She came home with us and lived with us on our family farm until she was 20 yrs. old. During my life, many more rescue cats and dogs would become a part of my life. I realized from a young age, that they were often neglected and that they truly were among the least cared for; a second thought was hardly ever given to them. I witnessed them as all having very unique personalities and no two animals were the same. The *Least of These* is a contemplation of Christ’s teaching recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, “as you have done to the least of these, you have done unto me.”

What is your vision for this project?

My initial hope was that one day it would be used as a conversation for us think about our relationship to animals. I have done pet photography as a business, which is rewarding, giving the pet owner memories, though I view this project as more of a display- library, or an art gallery. In the end, I think its an important message to share.

Do you have any photographers you look up to?

I was first inspired by the work of James Nachtwey. He is a photojournalist that uses photography as what he calls, “a voice for the voiceless.” His work is sober, and sometimes terribly realistic. I watched a documentary on him called “War Photographer.” What I respected about him was his dignity. He has a famous quote that left an impression on me, “I have been a witness, and these pictures are my testimony. The events I have recorded should never be forgotten and must not be repeated.” I have also been influenced by Nick Brandt’s “*On This Earth: A Trilogy*.”

Do you have any other projects that you are in process of contemplating?

I have recently been inspired by another of Christ’s teachings, “For those who have eye’s to see...” I wonder how this can be translated through photography.



Rosie



Phoenix



Fiona and Jigsaw



Snook



Xenia



Maxwell