

Vl: one greater than two

A vision assailed me yesterday while hiking along Moore Creek. A bony alder held hands with a stately, ochre madrone, both framed by a soft Douglas fir and backlit by a soft blue-and-grey winter sky, all saturated by a breathless atmosphere, an enveloping silence, an austerity. That scene, all components, the sound and feel and sights, they touched something in me, and it seemed deep, deep in the recesses of memory, of lost lives. That scene - it fired memories of the Upper Truckee's dappled blue-and-white sky shrouding pines and firs this summer, it tripped the east-facing Mayacamas overlooking Sonoma Creek in winter a year ago, it triggered the stormy mouth of the Mattole in 2012, Shellrock and Hideaway lakes eons ago in my life back in Portland, a white picket fence edging a verdant field peppered with oaks on some rain-covered road in the southern California of my youth, a cheesy painting in a Carl's Jr. of a pastoral Wyoming-esque scene framed by a dilapidated shack window while Lancaster's slate skies pounded out more rain than my child's soul could leach tears. It felt primeval, primitive, digging so deep that it penetrated past the Cenozoic into the Cretaceous with *Tyrannosaurus* and *Triceratops*.

Features of all: cool but not cold, moist, silent but for the raindrops drumming, trees (oaks, conifers, and, in that painting, a cottonwood). Could've been a west-central European racial memory being plucked since those scenes resemble what Ireland and Poland and Germany must've looked and felt and sounded like to my ancestors. Could've been even further back in time to simply humanity, before differentiation of the races, where cool, damp, tree-covered habitats were most conducive to human survival, and entering a similar area tapped an even older genetic template in the mind, tugging and pulling with the promise of flourishing. Could've been, even as a child, the flowering of my misanthropy commensurate with the increasing realization of humanity's association with ugly-ass fucking urban right-angled roads and strip malls and asphalt- and concrete-embalmed cities, and the calming contrast bucolic scenes promised. Those open pastures and swaying oaks sweetly signified a dearth of people, rendering 'em safe to my mind.

While standing stock-still and staring at that surrealist vision of Moore Creek's, I tried to *feel* the fucker, tried to fuse my minds and emotions with the environment to become one, tried to broach that undeniable, forceful sensation to something profound within my reach. But I just couldn't break through, just like so many times in the past - just couldn't do it. I then tried to think my way to it, but shunting the experience through conscious, logical thought, through serial processing, it fucking fails - it's too slow to absorb and integrate all the sensations streaming in at once through eyes and ears and nose, the course it runs through is way too constricted to funnel everything billowing forth in a sliver of time, so reducing the experience to linear sequencing, it captures merely a fragment.

It's a holistic understanding, recognition, relationship that extends beyond words and into music and integrates both. My error: I heard the melody, I read the lyrics, but, somehow - I missed the song.