

I was born in Portland Oregon, and have lived my entire life in the Pacific Northwest. Growing up in the 80s and 90s, I was exposed to many environmental topics, reading books like “50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth” and later “A Sand County Almanac” and “Silent Spring”. I became an enthusiastic recycler, pulled ivy in Portland parks on the weekends, campaigned in my high school against old growth logging, rode a bicycle as my sole form of transportation well into my mid-twenties, and in early adulthood began to engage in activism around tree-sits and other forms of environmentally focused direct action. In becoming vegetarian, by eschewing consumerism, honing a DIY ethic and living outside mainstream American culture, I believed I was part of a noble counterculture that would unravel the destruction of modernity and give birth to a utopia of ecological consciousness, solidarity, and human fruition.

In my late teens and twenties I attended Evergreen, studying politics and art, and eventually finding a place within the discipline of photography. I thought, and still think, that creating art and culture is one of the most potent ways to build empathy, explore difficult concepts, and shift consciousness in modern society. I have spent the years since my graduation in 2006 continuing to work within that medium but especially within music, which had been my constant passion all along, weaving mythos and human history and spirituality into music and performance in a way that still hoped to shape reality toward a more holistic future. I began to put more and more energy into my band, Fauna, and the curation of a Yule festival that has been a cultural touchstone in the underground Northwest music scene for the past 18 years. Both of these projects have been important vehicles for the exploration of ecological consciousness, building community around - and creating cultural space for - the discussion of perennial topics, like what it means to be human in the modern world, the importance of relationship to land, and the observation of natural cycles. Even after graduating I have continued studying, digesting all manner of material covering subjects including philosophy, deep ecology, Indigenous culture, and spirituality, in a continued attempt to make sense of the world around me and my place within it. Over time I became more cynical about humanity’s capacity for change, and pursued more self-serving goals, working in my free time on my own artistic projects and education, without the deeper drive for service that had animated my youth.

After the birth of my first child in 2007, I wanted to move more toward the holistic ideals that I had long espoused, to provide the kind of immersive natural existence that was in my mind the ideal condition for child-rearing. In early 2009 I purchased an old forested homestead off Delphi Road not far from Evergreen, and in the many years since I have experimented with permaculture methods, intentional community, regenerative agriculture, natural building, and wildcrafting. I have raised goats, sheep, ducks and chickens, managed a medium-sized garden, planted an orchard, cut my own firewood, hunted and fished, and overseen a riparian restoration project. In the process I have had many disappointments and many run-ins with wildlife. It has been as educational as any university could be. I initially bought the land both for my own purposes and those of my family, but also because I wanted to preserve the wild spaces I love. But as time has gone on I have seen how limited the scope of my impact is, and have yearned for the ability to do more, and for others to have the quality of life and purpose that I have. I don’t think that an ecologically entwined life should be accessible only to the privileged few; it is every human’s birthright, and I firmly believe that the entire world would be better off if that

were the norm rather than the exception. In this way I have transitioned back toward a mindset of service, wanting to fundamentally alter the way that humans inhabit the world.

Throughout all of this I have come to appreciate how much more complex the world is, and how challenging it can be to address it with simplistic ideological frameworks. Indeed, there is an entire ecology in the interplay between human culture, political movements, social systems, and the inertial structures of human civilization. And I have come to really yearn for the opportunity to engage in deeper study, to facilitate a deeper engagement in doing the important work. For years I have intended to return to Evergreen for an MES, as the logical conclusion to these currents of thought that have permeated my life.

In all this time I have had two children. I have worked construction jobs, deconstruction jobs, as a bartender and as an audio engineer. I have done landscaping, photography work, been a touring musician. But my abiding faith has always been the natural world, laboratory of all epistemologies, balm of all sorrows. And when it comes down to it, the thing I have always been doing is trying to serve Life, to heal the world, to create lasting and elemental beauty. There is no greater calling I can imagine than restoration ecologist or wildlife manager or environmental artist. The natural world in all its chaos and fecundity seems such an unambiguous good that it seems almost self-evident as the true path. Long before I abandoned the belief that the modern world would change for the better, I figured one day I would study ecology. I am only now finding my way back to that surety, a little older and hopefully wiser, but no less animated by a love and a trust in the lessons of a life lived close to nature.