remember to remember - new works by andrea dillingham - lacoursiere

i've been living in a state of mostly comfortable confluence. the kind that comes with being a white, cis gendered woman born into love, in a place that always claimed to welcome me but never quite felt like home. like most of us since March i have swung between dramatic highs and devastating lows in trying to cope my way through this. mourning my plans, relishing in new found time, getting nervous in places that used to be sanctuaries, becoming more aware of and steadfast in my boundaries. wondering what life will look like in another six months or a year or two. worried about my kids, my parents, our world as we kno-

knew it.

if i harp on endlessly about anything, well, it's actually about two things: 1) everything impinges our health and 2) we make 30,000 choices a day. as we continue to learn about the virus, its longer term effects beginning to emerge, we are also wading through the most tumultuous environmental, political, social, economic times of our recent collective experience. we cannot confront one aspect of these critical issues, without it bleeding into another and another. all at once and then on repeat it is panicked or frenzied, with no one wanting to listen but everyone demanding to be heard.

it feels like too much.

i took to outside my four walls in an effort to quiet the noise and quell the urge to run fast and far away. i've spent more time intentionally wandering the streets and sidewalks, side streets, back alleys, trails, back roads, gravel roads, you name it, than ever before. having been a Central Albertan the majority of my life, getting lost in the expansiveness of here was necessary for me. too long have i been an escapist and blamed it solely on coordinates. i wasn't running away from a place, per say, but a mind set, one that is not close to mine, but still connected to me. these prairie skies are unlike any others i have seen around the world. there is an alarming calm, one moment, and a reckoning the next. the most glorious colour palette ever imagined fading out with the day, and the foreboding starkness of a storm that could take everything from us in an instant. the storm clouds are scary. unpredictable, at best, unnerving consistently. but as with every other storm we find ourselves in the eye of: it is how we react to it. we need to get better at remembering the power to change how we see the world, the storm, the virus, our neighbours; is in us.

i was gifted a copy of Richard Wagamese's Embers - One Ojibway's Meditations by a dear friend years ago. so many of his writings have stuck with me, to me, as gentle reminders of how to navigate this physical world with a spiritual lens. this one though, well, we could all use a little reminder to be thankful, even or especially in moments of vociferous trepidation.

Remember to remember. This is what Old Man said to me one time. He was speaking of ceremony, of the act of bringing myself closer to Creator, returning myself to innocence, my original power. Remember to remember. He meant for me, throughout my day, to recall that I've take time to pray, to give thanks, to ask for a return to humility. Remember to remember. When I do that, everyone and everything I encounter becomes the beneficiary. It's a good teaching - as long as I remember.

my name is andrea. i am a mother, a sister, a daughter, an auntie, an advocate, an accomplice and ally, a fiercely loyal friend, a community member, a mobilizer, and a painter when time allows. thanks for reading, for being here.