shadows/footprints

i've spent most of my adult life thinking about material culture. what we use, treasure or cast off in a moment, what we leave behind, how that changes the intersecting perspectives. i'm getting ready to downsize my life in a big way, my kids are grown, my work is remote, i can paint from anywhere.
and i am exhausted from fighting battles that don't exist (while pseudo-endorsing others through blind or convenience-based consumer habits). our ultimate demise will be printed on a receipt with a customer service satisfaction survey at the bottom.
i can't remember who said ignorance is bliss, but i do know that Rollo May said "hate is not the opposite of love, apathy is." in my normal 9 to 5 job i am grateful to be working in a field that pursues equity. the rose coloured glasses version of me wants to believe it's because this is where humanism brought us, the valiant pursuit of human rights, of equity and equality.
but red flags just look like flags with rose coloured glasses on.
in this country we have a declining birth rate, which means we are banking on immigration to keep our economy from crumbling. every Saturday on a high visibility corner we see protestors with signs spewing vitriol against immigration. each day we inch closer to living in the throes of climate crisis and have no concept of how far reaching those consequences will be. tools like the carbon footprint calculator only help so much to minimize the damages that we as individuals cause. but when international governing bodies come up with plans and deadlines, corporations ramp up their lobbying efforts and threaten to leave in pursuit of record breaking quarterly profits and obliterate the gains we've made in job creation. we can't have our cake and eat it too if there's no one to mill the flour.

this is my struggle, and still my walls have no bullet holes. my mind has its own trauma gaps and subsequent coping mechanisms though. ours is a collective battle cry of under breath sighs and a flickering hope.

oh but that hope. light and beauty, love and awe hiding in plain sight and tucked up the sleeves of those that know. the gift of waking on your own accord and seeing the heavens unleash the splendor only a new day can hold. or hearing your best friend laugh or marveling at the wingspan of the osprey or tasting the cleanest, purest spring water shared with you in the most perfect pickle jar vessel. in the depths of long cold winter months on Turtle Island i long for connection. still. my use of colour feels almost pornographic, as our eyes adjust and readjust to the monochromatic palette of winter. but these long nights give way to long days, we will see green, and flowers bloom, ripening berries, flowing rivers and scary summer storms that remind uswho's boss. i continue to pursue that-which-i-cannot-name-but-know-exist, desperate to reveal the connections that bind us all, the love and compassion we all are deserving of.
my name is andrea, i am a mother, a sister, an auntie, a daughter, an activist, a mobilizer, and a painter. thanks to my friend Travis Boschman for taking the photos my heart desperately needs to see. for walking the path and leaving nothing but footprints, while i get lost in the shadows. we are all connected, one would not be the same without the other and for that - **ninânaskomon** - i am grateful. i am thankful.

hiy hiy, nitsiniiyi'taki, mahsi cho, merci, thank you.
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