18 Days & a Backpack

A collection of moments & memories from July 8 through 26, 2019

by Joe Timmerman
Color photos taken w/ 
  • Sony A6000 w/ Sigma 16mm 1.4 lens
  • iPhone X

Black & white photos taken w/
  • Pentax P3 w/ Pentax 35mm 2.8 lens
  • 2 rolls of Ilford HP5 400 film, one roll in Yosemite & one roll in Redwoods
  • 1 roll of Kodak Tri-X 400 Film, shot in double exposures, first 24 exposures from
    train & San Francisco, second 24 exposures from
    Yosemite & Redwoods

Original maps included from the trip, recolored to
show the trails we traveled, w/ black circles drawn
roughly where we camped each night

Daily writings, drawings, & dates taken from my personal
journal, some names of places & dates added to fill blanks

‘The Cali Trip’
This book contains my own thoughts & perspectives taken
from my journal & photography during the 18 days I spent
traveling across the United States & through Northern California
with Jalen Cleser, Remi George, & Joey Fields.

July 8 through 26, Summer 2019
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<tr>
<th>Train Number</th>
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Passing through Illinois 7/8/19 5:10pm CT

The high sun shines above our silvery chamber of reflection for the next two days. Warm rays of light float through the air, illuminating the spotted glass barrier between us and the ever changing landscapes.

While the wheels spin below, life cycles before our eyes. A lone bird soars east finding the dust in the air as our journey continues west. Trees and factories, graveyards and small town locals, boundless crop fields and small gardens resting eyes and lively conversation. Looking through the train window, life looks back at us with eyes full of wonder and possibility.
As the summer sun rises and sets, our journey on wheels slows down. Awakening to cool hues of peach and pale blues far beyond the sifting drops of rain from the night before.

While the continuum of time passes slowly on the stagnant rails, the waves of varying life within the cars stir. Though a collective agitation hangs thick in the air, our peace and love keeps the vibes alive.

A beautiful transgression of life is shared between the folk on this train. With each seat comes a different story; a cultural backdrop, a family waiting for a father, a mom and son adventure, a general hope for the future.

Laughs and connectivity fly through the chilled airs. Hiccups in the plans of the train turn to burps. Though the unforeseen problems, a smile on my face keeps us moving.

Whether we are stuck, or behind schedule, or both... we are in the midst of the adventure of a lifetime. The plains and plateaus of Colorado hold home to spots of cow and buffalo as the wind blows lone wooden mills.
Splatches of white patch the sky, drifting along the painted sky. As the exposure turns down, white clouds grow longer and fade to darkening blues. Hues of reddish orange and deepening blue contrast in unison. Vibrant yet comforting oranges float across the plains, quickly fading as the setting summer sun retreats below the horizon.

The shade of night is softened by the yellow passenger lights. Lines of red and fluorescent whites pass by as our conversations fill the air. Our vibes, radiate through the train as we cross the country.

A day well spent with the spread of smiles.
As the world turns and time passes, we are left with a constant choice. Take advantage of the opportunities presented to us, no matter how small, or ignore and live in negativity.

The third day of our two day train journey is nearly upon us, and the vibe are rolling. After a morning walk in Granby, small town Colorado, the cool air and serenity in the mountains bordering the horizon line all around us spoke its peace.

Once the wheels started turning again, we found ourselves moving through the canyons between towering mountains and crashing white water. Tanning orange, cliff sides climbed up the baby blues above.

Morning turns to afternoon across the western terrain as mountains turn to deserts. Utah grasps my eyes in its beauty.

Warm rays of sunlight bless the unmoving lands. Golden hours paint the desert hills and roots a natural saturation of orange and yellow.

Any set of stress or release vanishes in the dust of the hot trades below us. Our
Silver engine rolls through God's land as
the holy scapes sit untouched in their purest
form.

The striped cliffsides of orange rock become
silhouettes in contrast to the darkening blues and
purple of the setting sun.

White clouds absorb the pinks and deep yellows of
our colorful companion. Two metal rails through
the breathe of America host traveling
dreams and moments that seem to stop time.

Stop this train
-John Mayer
When a mind wanders, follow.

Dreams are reality waiting to be painted. Once you pick up a brush and find your colors, the world is your canvas.
San Francisco 7/11/19 2:00 am

As Remy sings ‘Ooh in low harmony beautifully, our night finds itself complete. Walking into the city of San Francisco, a strip of homeless and locals looked at us with wobbling eyes.

Once we checked into the hostel and enjoyed the blessing of running water and locked doors with a comfortable bed – the night began with high energy circa 8:30 pm.

En route of the advice from the front desk, a winding tale at a Thai restaurant in the local neighborhood hosted site for a night’s beginning. Good conversation, great noodles, and two hours later the city of San Francisco feels hopeful for an adventure.

Human connection and communication is the most important thing in the world. When people talk in person and share their perspective with
love, life continues in harmony. Even with billions of human beings in the world and hundreds of millions in the US, an exchange of words can lead to genuine connection.

A first night in San Francisco cleared by design.
Yosemite, CA

July 14, 2019

The golden rays of the setting sun
kiss the peaks of the mountains rising
pass.

"Dreams that I wrote down they came to life"

Conversations traveled from junior year in
forensics class to this moment entering Yosemite
with my friend J.

A fading blue gradient falls overtop the
rivers and roads of the valley as we approach
The ambiance of the Yosemite Falls sets the
scene for our first night in the park. A
Full moon glows in the blue night.

A single flame accompanies J, Rembo, Joseph
and myself under the canopy.

Natural beauty surrounds us for the remainder
of our time in California.

We continue to
cruise along our
journey together.
Yosemite Valley

Grounded coffee beans & waves of anticipation fill the Monday morning air in the valley. Our first full week together and our energy remains high.

Today we will climb to one of the high trails of Yosemite, Snow Creek. On Saturday morning we walked across the black sand with our bare toes in the water—now we will be 7,000 feet above sea level with nothing but each other and the warm grasps of nature.

The purity of the valley makes everything worth it. Once your eyes follow the trees up to the rockfaces painted among the blue sky— you feel free.

Mirror Lake

2:00 pm

Yellow wings float across with the wind. Waving stems of green become sleepy meadows holding happiness within.

Shades of green leaves sing in the air. The cloudless sky shares with us its warmth and endlessness. Time feels nonexistant. Moments blend within each other.
Snow Creek

9:03pm

Switchbacks climbing altitude up 3 miles feels like hell until you look up and realize the blessings being thrown at you. Mental, physical, and visible exhaustion try to hold you down. When you're at your lowest, keep pushing. One of the many lessons Yosemite taught me.

Camping in complete darkness was made up for with a starry night sleep in the hammock. Late night bear encounter made apparent by Joey's first-hand experience. Wake up from a second crash closer than the first, and footsteps followed by rustling around the bags. In the morning, miles were restored and teeth marks indented the coffee maker, with some acid ground ER eaten.
Lehamite Creek Falls, west of North Dome  7/16/19 Sundan

Being here in Yosemite at a perfect campsite in the backcountry with three friends, pure nature and a warm fire makes me feel blessed to have such a safe and wonderful adventure with my brothers.

Lucky to be able to have this experience at

happy to have met so many friends and the with diverse ways of life

beyond thankful to everyone who helped me make it here in this moment

Neil Yang  Harvest (min)
With eight adults and six dogs left in our journey, we have found our outlooks who stand in lineless. In the process, we have made friends, experienced the beauty of nature, and shared our stories with others. We hope that our experience will inspire others to take their own path and create their own adventures.
Yosemite Falls

Sitting here at the top of Yosemite Falls feels surreal. Three days ago we were in the valley looking up at the crashing falls in awe - yesterday we bathed in the cold waters only 200 yards from the head of the falls.

Last night I fell asleep in my hammock watching the Full Moon drift across the stars like clockwork.
Yosemite Valley

Three miles downhill, descending 2,000 feet in altitude feels true as we look up at the falling water before our eyes. We have come full circle since we first arrived in the park, just as life usually does.
Yosemite bus to Merced

The more time you spend looking for the good in life, the happier you'll be.
Redwood NP

As a long gray bearded man drives us through the winding roads of Northern California, my trust is completely in his hands.

The pacific ocean crashes along the left side as the fog grows dense over the trees on the right. We arrive at our stop in Prairie Creek and once again, we’re on our own.

Living with your choices, good or bad, and making the most out of them is all you can do in life. The best outcome of every situation in life will not always jump out at you, but it’s there somewhere waiting to be uncovered.

Wonders of the unknown are eclipsed by the enormity of these great trees. Walking the trails takes you back in time, a place far before any of us or anything we use ever existed.
Redwood NP
Gold Bluffs Beach
Emerald

Turning green waves wash upon shore as the gray clouds and fog return to cover the blue sky holding the sun.

The Pacific Ocean sits before me, the rest of America at my back. Three children run into the water to the right of me, a young adult couple lay together to my left.

I sit alone with the whole world in front of me, the sun and the moon pulling each other in continual cycles.
Redwood Creek  7/23/19  2:55 pm
As the sunshine reflects off the rippled currents, my mind wanders along the creek bed.

A mix of nostalgia and a longing for inner peace follow me on this trip.

While we have come across so much love and wonder throughout the trip, it’s been hard to process it all as we’ve continued to move forward.

Another door will always be waiting to be opened. Whether that’s in Northern California, back home in Ohio or somewhere in between or beyond—these pages will continue being filled.

Two feet and a dream can take you a long way.
Redwood Creek  
7/24/19  10:40 pm  

Wide eyes follow rising smoke from the fire up to the stars. The universe, nature, God, omens, infinite energy and possibility watch over us.

Stars shoot across the milky way, burning with the same youthful energy and magic the four of us have traveled with.

Though the time of this trip flees before our eyes, in a way, it will never end. Another page is filled as the story continues. The same love and warmth that brought us together in this moment burns bright in the crackling flames as well as in our hearts.

where are we all going to end up in the next year? who will we each be in 10 years? when will we next sit around a fire together? how will tomorrow find its story?

The answers lie in the stars, the blueness in the sky, the burning fire, the growing trees, the less traveled paths, the unturned stones, the wonder and possibility of the unknown.
Thank you to

My mom & dad, who let us plan the trip the way we wanted & have continued to give constant support through the entire process.

Jim & Lisa Reynolds, who offered advice & gear that I couldn't have gone without.

Enrique, Nico, & Jimmy Flowers for welcoming us to San Francisco, showing us kind hospitality & helping us out.

Jalen, Remi, & Joey for the true passion & energy that carried with us the entire time, & continuing to stay positive when our plans didn't go as planned.

& to everyone else who helped us along the way, who shared with us love & support. To our friends from Loveland, Ohio explore the country.
Joey Fields
Remi George
Jalen Greiser
Joe Timmerman