

Neighborhood Echoes

By JC Nordt IV

To be a part of a community means taking pride in it and working towards making that community better. Not just yourself. I was watching documentaries about old soviet union states, and the countries in the documentary were so run down, but the dream that these people had for them was something grand. The people who built them thought that at some point others would come from all over to see the beautiful landscape, amazing culture, and structures they built. However, since time has come and gone along with poor management and corruption that dream has subsided. It's disappeared. Everything that they wanted their country to be and hoped it would be has completely disappeared.

While I was watching this documentary, I was thinking "would it be possible for someone to rebuild everything and bring the country's tourism back to life and have it be something grand that people visit, instead of just another run down former soviet union state?" It seemed like a modern ghost town but I thought it would be possible and something people could take pride in with the government behind them. At one time these places were filled with people exchanging stories and goods. Telling one another about their homeland. I often get caught up thinking about things that people have built that have lost themselves to time. Things like an old house or, my favorite, an abandoned theater.

The Coconut Grove Playhouse is a place where laughter, hate, sadness, and joy were shared and still linger even though the space is now empty. The emotions have nothing to do but permeate and echo around the theater. Bouncing from one wall to another. People attended this space. They went to it for an anniversary, a first date, a reunion with a best friend, or just by themselves because they wanted to feel a part of something for a brief moment in their life. They had come here to see something that would make them feel more human than they had previously felt.

The thought that gets me is the idea that everywhere we step, everything we touch, everything we see, and everything we talk about has a history. It's been touched

by someone else that felt something. This building has seen people been cried to, laughed to, confessed feelings to, shared a first kiss with, exasperated an enormous amount of joy to, enjoyed an evening out with friends to, even proposed to. These emotions expressed to others have embedded themselves in the building. My point is that these places hold stories that are invisible to us. Stories that I wish I could hear from these people, these ghostly individuals, but I can't. People whose memories and emotions fill a space so much that not only are the people who step foot in the area affected but the actual area itself is affected. Cursed one might say. Although we shouldn't see it as something to be afraid of, but rather something that we should all strive to partake in and rebuild. Something that we can all visit with someone else or alone and the building can see a new generation be cried to, laughed to, confessed feelings to, share a first kiss with, exasperate an enormous amount of joy to, enjoy an evening out with friends to, even proposed to.

The areas and land we live our lives in hold memories that last through generations. They hold something that everyone feels and everyone is affected by. These places should be appreciated for those who have stepped there before those who step there now, and those who may be lucky enough to get the chance to step there in the future. At one point, you and I will simply be a ghostly apparition that will linger in one of these spots and hold dear to ourselves our memory that keeps this spot alive along with all the others that hold the spot near and dear to their hearts. I would love for future generations to be able to create these same memories that they can tell to their children. Memories that others feel, as they step through the door to create their own. It's a future that is not so unreal to think about. A future that can stay around for everyone to see and one they know we left behind.