

## State of the David

Fall 2022

This year I've kept promises to myself and shown up for my people. As promised, I went on a frog-focused ecotour in Costa Rica the first time it was offered again since COVID, wintered in Santiago de Chile, completed the Chicago triathlon sprint distance, and am on track to hunt for my first time this coming season<sup>1</sup>. I hosted a Christmas party for friends, provided the space for the birthday party of a friend's child, officiated another friend's wedding, served as a groomsman for my cousin, and planned my grandmother's 90th birthday blowout.

My time abroad was glorious and provided perspective on my relationship with my own city. I was able to return with more clarity and balance in my volunteering and donating. I'm preparing to sell my house and move to a smaller place requiring less maintenance in a more walkable area. I enjoyed summertime Chicago favorites: blues fest, jazz fest, summer dance, jazzin' at Shedd, and Ravinia. At the same time, Chicago is renewing herself to me in splendid ways - I'm finding myself in new places and seeing new things.

I am buoyed by curiosity. I am now solidly intermediate *en español*, though I still can't understand Chileans. I'm beginning to play tennis and am eyeing motorcycle riding and dance classes. I've read and listened: Guns Germs & Steel, Bowling Alone, Dolly Parton's America, Mother Country Radicals.

I've felt lonely and isolated at home, which is surprising. Yet several treasured friends of mine have left town or my life in the last couple years: most have gone to other cities or countries, one passed on, and one simply stopped speaking to me with little explanation or opportunity for repair. Working for my family, as privileged of a position as it is, can be cloistered. Dating has yielded some great experiences, but little lasting connection and plenty of disappointment. I am grateful for the connections I have, and remain held by family and friends, but my social nexus is noticeably more sparse.

Generally, I'm finding it harder to do some of the things that I once did and I'm adapting to the terrain of my thirties. I doubt I can throw a party drawing fifty people as I used to; I've found I can host an intimate dinner party. I can't reach the high notes in No Diggity karaoke any longer; Hey Ya turns out to be just as fun. My social calendar is less full; more time to develop hobbies.

I think they call this growing up, or growing old, but the State of the David is growing out. I'm literally growing out of clothes from countless Turkish get-ups, weighted pull-ups, and hefty trout filets. I grew out my hair to almost shoulder length. I'm growing outwards by acquiring new skills. I'm growing without the shelter provided by some dear friends who used to be closer. I must become larger to fill the space.

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<sup>1</sup> Chile, triathlon, and hunting were three of four specific goals articulated in SOTD 2021. The fourth goal was to apply to the CELI clean energy fellowship, which deadline I missed. Oops. I'll try again this year.