

MY PILGRIMAGE

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I awake to the sound of birdsong and the silent passing steps of deer moving to their daytime place of rest. Smelling the damp crispness of the woodland air I sink further into the comfort of layers of flannels to keep me warm. Dragging myself from bed the cold instantly hits first thing in the morning no matter what time of year. I go downstairs to leave the house and search outside for the first morning signs of life. Damp cold grass sticks to my bare feet as I look for deer in the yard and the passing destruction of the birdfeeders by the local bear. I make way down to the creek right outside in the backyard slipping on rocks as the mountain cool water numbs my feet. I make my way up the mountain walking through the water and muddying it with every step. Disturbing minnows and crayfish as I make my way forward hearing the plop of frogs as I scare them in my passing.

My destination is called the fish hatchery for as long as I have been around. No fish are raised there now in the mossy, overgrown ruins that remains but once the pens were filled with trout to be dispersed around the State. All it took was one bad flood to fill the intake pipes with mud and that was the last of the trout that once resided there.

After what seemed like ages of branches swatting me in the face I finally arrive to my destination. An open circle of the sound of running water to calm my disturbed soul. The pool constantly replenished by two small waterfalls just loud enough to calm me but quiet enough that I can still contemplate my fate. In the depths of the chest high pool of water I see plenty of trout that can feel the vibration of my disturbance and swim to hide in the deep crevices. Sometimes I will fish them out by hand to have a look but today I just take in the peacefulness of my little bubble and stay dry for the time being.



This piece was written after a virtual session with the British Museum team, exploring material culture related to pilgrimages.