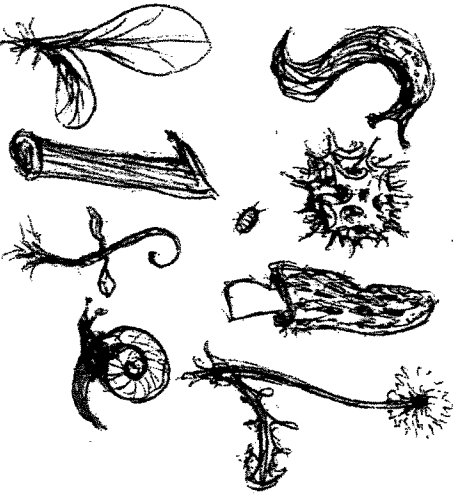


1877
more quietly
& plant things
JULY 2020



the STATE of the GARDEN: garlic is FINALLY OUT

WITH delicious
 AND ridiculous
 bc my
 pool
 braids
 required
 some
 SKINNY



Scrawny southern green
 looks more like a daisy
 from picture up speed now
 bean seeds from Carol Depp
 tomatoes are trying
 winterpeas & peas: three (3)
 beans harvested so far
 squash still slowly growing
 volunteer cucumber is doing
 THE BEST of them ALL
 & will be harvesting 5-10 tons
 Only a handful of tomatoes
 so far - and below-average
 year in a row
 - Chives, always!

Excerpt from "On the Political Dimensions of Solarpunk" by Andrew Dana Hudson, 10/14/15, via Medium.com

Even more relevant today 2015!
I see solarpunk emerging as a reaction to this sensation of strangling decay. People want to feel the vibrancy of progress, not just the anxious giddiness of capitalist churn. We want to seek out and apply our true talents, not warp our lives around making money for other, richer people. We want our work to mean something more than survival.

In light of their power, overthrowing the mega-rich is a dicey project, and one perhaps left to a different kind of political aesthetic. Instead solarpunk can challenge the capitalist status quo by nurturing alternative economic arrangements at a community and network level. Encourage resiliency that insulates towns and neighborhoods from economic shocks. Forge mutual aid pacts that protect members from fiscal predation. If we can prove that we don't need them or their money, the chokehold of the plutocracy will loosen.

I also suspect the institution of the nation-state is being hollowed out. In part a consequence of globalization and the drive to "free markets," this isn't exactly a collapse. Instead we see government at every level losing its ability to act with authority, maintain order, mobilize emergency resources, build lasting infrastructure, provide public services, and otherwise be effective in the lives of its citizens.

At the same time these governments become less democratic, more corrupt, more bureaucratic and more beholden to special interests. Public services and utilities get sold off to private corporations. Municipalities become highwaymen that exploit the poor and passersby to enrich a small few (Ferguson). Infrastructure crumbles. A nation's states squabble among themselves. Cops become gangs as violence serves where authority fails, and gangs themselves take on new authority in their communities. Through all this, the nation-state doesn't go away — it just fades from relevance, overshadowed by global network society and outcompeted (or captured) by criminals, corporations and other non-state powers.

While this hollowing out is a challenge for civilization, for solarpunk it's an opportunity. Radical political upheaval is difficult and dangerous. "Revolution is not a tea party." For a great many reasons (not least of which is the aging population), I don't think we can count on mass movements taking to the streets to fix our problems. Instead we can build our solarpunk society in the places

and moments that the state neglects — particularly in response to the climate disasters and black swan shocks that will punctuate the coming century. If we do this right, Solarpunk could be the philosophy of those who fill in the gaps, the aesthetic of the assemblies that coalesce where government fails to show up.

This isn't exactly a strategy, but a way to think about how solarpunk might emerge. Imagine a tree, growing amidst rubble, rooting around rocks into open spaces, occasionally pushing cracks wider. The tree can't remove the concrete, but the concrete is too poorly maintained to stop it. In the same way I think solarpunk should work to reinvent civilization from within. Through local free association and global networks, solarpunk can create connected pockets of vibrancy and resistance amidst a larger world of decline and oppression.

This is not a new idea. From the autonomous zones of anarchist theory, to the reincarnated American localism of the Resilient Communities and Strong Towns movements, to the mutual aid networks of Occupy Sandy, many have responded to the crises of recent decades by planning and practicing radical forms of organizing that require neither mass revolution nor democratic reform. Solarpunk can use these methods to rally people to build spaces and infrastructure out of place in a failing world. What I want to note here is that while we should think big and abstractly about what kind of ideal society we want to live in, I believe solarpunk will be most effective if it seizes the initiative where the state has dropped it.

You've heard of the hacker slogan "move fast and break things"? Solarpunk should move quietly and plant things. Don't ask permission from a state beholden to oligarchs, and definitely don't expect those oligarchs to do any of this for you. Guerilla gardening is the model, but look further. Guerilla solar panel installation. Guerilla water treatment facility restoration. Guerilla magnificent temple to the human spirit construction. Guerilla carbon sequestration megastructure creation. 

Figure out what a community needs to be prosperous, peaceful and sustainable in as long a term as you can wrap your head around, and start building whatever piece is most in reach before the absent state notices. Doing so just might create pockets of more effective, horizontal politics. As the state wanes, these pockets can grow in size and influence, creating a better world even if some government claims the authority of law and holds a monopoly on violence.

