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The Beauty of the In-Between

Dear Friend,

August has a particular kind of energy. The days are still warm, but they're starting to feel numbered. You're not quite in "fall mode," but something is shifting—maybe the way you look at your calendar, your space, or your priorities. Personally, I like this in-between moment. It's quieter, a little slower, and a really good time to check in with myself before the year picks up again.

A small reset is often all it takes. And if you've been thinking about making a move—whether that's buying or selling, or just reassessing what "home" means right now—I'm always happy to talk through the details, no pressure attached.

Until then, take what you need, leave the rest, and enjoy what's left of the warmth.

All my best,

Jim Urban

The Quiet Comeback

There was a time when silence was expected and was built into the fabric of daily life. Think Sunday afternoons, unplugged dinner tables, walks without earbuds and the hum of a city before the 24/7 noise loop of pings, podcasts, sirens and scrolling.

Now, silence feels rare and almost indulgent.

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Yet it's making a comeback — not just in wellness retreats or remote cabins, but in cities, architecture and even luxury branding. Developers are marketing soundproof windows, minimalist homes promise “visual quiet” and some high-end hotels now include silence as an amenity. Copenhagen even has a “silent bike lane” where talking is discouraged.

During 2019, *The Atlantic* dubbed silence “a new luxury good,” citing how hard it is to find it in modern life and how deeply we crave it when we do.

Silence is not only aesthetically pleasing. Studies show it boosts memory, lowers blood pressure and increases neurogenesis in the brain. Only two minutes of quiet can be more restorative than listening to relaxing music.

In a world that won't stop talking, the decision to go quiet — intentionally, even temporarily — is a power move.

If you find yourself closing the door, pausing the podcast or simply sitting in your car a few minutes longer after work, then that's your nervous system saying “thank you.”

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Greenland's Coolest Natural Resource

Here's a question you might not have considered: Is 100,000-year-old glacier ice better than the ice that's in your freezer?

Thanks to a startup company called Arctic Ice, you can find out. For \$100, you get six hand-carved ice spheres made from ancient Greenland icebergs. The ice is collected from a fjord in western Greenland, shipped to Dubai and sculpted into perfectly clear spheres.

This ice isn't just cold, it's pristine. With fewer air bubbles and impurities, it melts more slowly and adds a touch of rarity to any moment it's used. According to customers of *The Wall Street Journal*, the glacier ice is pure, melts slowly and is visually striking, all of which proves that even ice can be a luxury.



Chilled Coconut Noodle Bowls

This creamy, cold, and addictive dish is akin to pad Thai being on a beach vacation.

Ingredients:

8 oz rice noodles (or soba)

1 can full-fat coconut milk

Juice of 2 limes

1 tbsp soy sauce or tamari

1 tsp honey

1 clove garlic, grated

1-2 tsp chili crisp (Momofuku or Lao Gan Ma)

Toppings: shredded carrots, chopped cucumbers, fresh mint, crushed peanuts, green onions

Instructions

Cook noodles according to package, then rinse under cold water until fully chilled.

In a bowl, whisk coconut milk, lime juice, soy, honey, garlic, and chili crisp. Toss chilled noodles in the sauce until coated and glossy. Top with crunchy veggies, mint, peanuts, and extra chili crisp to taste.



Smart Hydration

Your body loses essential minerals, such as sodium, magnesium and potassium, through sleeping, sweating and even ingesting caffeine. Adding a pinch of sea salt or an electrolyte mix to your morning water is called mineral hydration and can help restore that balance.

Proponents say it improves energy and focus, and might even reduce headaches. Unlike sugary sports drinks, mineral hydration is simple, customizable and easy to fit into your routine.

Just remember: A little goes a long way. Balance is the goal.



Some health experts also note that starting your day with mineral hydration can support better hydration throughout the day by encouraging more consistent water intake.

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THE AUGUST RESET



Who says fresh starts are only for the new year? August carries its own kind of in-between energy. Although summer plans are winding down and the temperature is still hot, fall hasn't arrived yet and back to school and pumpkin-flavored everything are creeping in. Consider this your gentle nudge to pause and reset — your way. No big overhaul and no pressure, but a few small shifts that can bring a welcome boost of clarity and calm.

Five Simple Resets To Try This Week:

1. Declutter your camera roll: Delete the screenshots you'll never look at, archive the blurry photos and create space—for your phone and your mind.
2. Take a “fake commute”: Even if you work from home, get out for a coffee, take the scenic route and queue up a podcast that has nothing to do with work.
3. Audit your calendar: Are you still honoring your boundaries? Clear out the obligations that drain you. Make room for what fuels you.
4. Do one thing purely for fun: It doesn't have to be productive to matter; for instance, catch a matinee, treat yourself to lunch away from home or wander without your headphones.
5. Pick a word for fall: Skip the goals and pick a guiding vibe instead: Centered. Brave. Rested. Focused. Choose which word feels right and let it shape your next season. Save it. Share it. Send it to a friend who needs a reset, too.

Camping With Watson And Holmes

Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson were on a camping trip. They had gone to bed and were lying awake while looking at the sky.

"Watson, look up," Holmes said. "What do you see?"

"I see thousands of stars."

"And what does that mean to you?"

"I suppose it means we will have another nice day tomorrow," Watson said. "What does it mean to you, Holmes?"

"To me, Watson," Holmes said, "it means someone has stolen our tent."



THE FRONT PORCH: A BRIEF HISTORY

Before backyard patios and central AC became the norm, life happened on the front porch, which was part living room, part stage and part neighborhood watch — minus the group text.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, as American homes shifted from vertical rowhouses to horizontal bungalows, the front porch emerged as a symbol of warmth, hospitality and social standing. According to *Smithsonian Magazine*, porches became a national obsession — “an outdoor room that served as a threshold between public and private life.”

They were cooling centers during summer, gathering spaces during the evening and — according to an 1890 article in *Ladies' Home Journal* — “a necessary room in every well-appointed house.” But everything shifted after WWII. As *Smithsonian Magazine* noted, air conditioning, television and the postwar push toward privacy moved Americans inside. Suburbs favored backyards over porches. We swapped waving for fencing.

And yet, something about the front porch stuck. It shows up in our design choices, our Zillow saves and our quiet desire for stillness after a loud, screen-filled day. Even the rise of Ring cameras and Adirondack chairs is a modern remix of an old idea: watching the world go by from a few feet above the sidewalk.

What's Old Is New Again

If you lived through the mid-20th century, you might remember the bold color pairing of avocado green and mustard yellow that now screams “vintage.” For those who were born during the 21st century, those hues are making a fresh and stylish comeback.

According to Living Etc., the earthy tones of the 1970s are trending again. Think mustard yellow, avocado green, burnt orange, chocolate brown and deep purple. Today's designers are reimagining these retro shades in modern ways, often by using neutral walls as a backdrop and letting the colors pop through furniture, textiles and accents.

Even the infamous avocado bathroom of the '60s and '70s is returning, and this time with a sleek twist. Clean lines and geometric designs have replaced floral patterns. Expect to see bold greens, even on bathtubs, giving a nostalgic nod to the past with a distinctly modern vibe.



IT'S TIME TO BREAK UP WITH YOUR OVERHEAD LIGHTING

Fall in love with lamps, moonlight and a better vibe. If your space feels cold or chaotic, then your lighting — not your furniture — might be to blame.

Overhead lighting, especially the bright, cool-toned kind, can feel harsh and overstimulating. It flattens textures, casts odd shadows and creates a subtle stress response that your body picks up on, even if your brain can't name it.

Ready for a change? Here's what happens when you switch it up:

1. **Softer Light = Softer Mood.** Table lamps, sconces and indirect lighting (sometimes called "moonlighting") mirror natural light — warm, low and gentle. Your nervous system reads it as safe, which helps you relax and feel more at ease.
2. **Better Sleep Starts Here.** Bright lights during the evening can confuse your internal clock. Switching to softer, warmer bulbs — or even candlelight — helps signal your body that it's time to wind down.
3. **An Instant Ambiance Upgrade.** Warm, layered lighting transforms your space. Whether it's a cozy dinner, a solo evening with a book or just winding down after work, the right light makes everything feel more intentional and more beautiful.

Pro Tip:

Start small. Replace one overhead bulb with a floor or table lamp using a warm-toned bulb (look for 2700K or lower). Your eyes—and your mood—will thank you.

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