



MOTO MOUTH MOSHE

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Invincible

It's been a rough month for some of us in the "midlife crisis" age bracket. The universe sent me three cases of temporary invincibility to ponder, in quick succession! If you'll indulge my shameless navel gazing, maybe you too can relate....

November began with an Iron Maiden concert. I've been dutifully attending Maiden shows for over 35 years as a rabid fan of their legendary drummer, Nicko McBrain. McBrain is rightfully famous for creating some of the most iconic compositions in heavy metal history. The concert commenced and I readied myself to be enthralled as usual by Nicko's trademark staccato machine-gun right foot, thunderous tom rolls, and tasteful jazzy ride cymbal patterns. What came instead would make Ringo Starr sound like Neil Peart. Now 72 years old, McBrain strictly kept time, either rewriting entire drum parts to their most basic foundation, or simply staying silent during those sections where he used to dazzle. It turns out that Nicko McBrain suffered a stroke in January 2024, and now parts of his right side are paralyzed. This was a man who once drove that band with unimaginable power, speed, and endurance. One of the greatest drummers of all time, right up until he simply couldn't do what he used to do anymore.

Less than a week later, we all watched

Mike Tyson battle Jake Paul in a bizarre contest of age and experience vs. youth and flashiness. I was a fifth grader when young Tyson was in his prime, and I still remember the arguments we used to have in the schoolyard. "Would you rather get hit once by Mike Tyson, or get \$1,000,000?" For us kids in those days, getting hit by Tyson meant either a quick death, or a long life as a drooling vegetable. (Also, a million dollars was a lot of money back then!) Tyson's ferocious fighting style needs no further elaboration. And yet here he was, clumsily dodging Paul's halfhearted blows and gasping for air in between rounds. I'm not a weepy guy by any means but watching Mike struggle like that choked me up. I wished I had a nuclear-powered megaphone to blare at the world: "This isn't some carnival act for public amusement - this is Mike Tyson we're talking about here!" One of the greatest boxers of all time, right up until he simply couldn't do what he used to do anymore.

And then a few days later, worst of all, there was the phone call from my old friend Tom out in California. Tom grew up as a rancher and cowboy in the Midwest, a real man's man by any measure. Even now in his mid-60s, he's imposingly tall, built like a linebacker, with an intense demeanor. Tom has that rare gift of being able to communicate a great deal in only a few words. I hadn't heard from him in a while, and his voice was forlorn. I'm not as sensitive

as I probably should be with my male friends, but I instantly realized that Tom was deeply sad and endeavored to uncover why. "What the hell is the matter with you, Snookums? You sound like your damned dog just died," I opened sympathetically. "It's my GS," he replied, his voice trailing away. "It's getting away from me more and more. I'm having a hard time picking it up. I don't think I can do it anymore." Tom was referring to his gargantuan R 1200 GS, which he's outfitted with every conceivable bash plate, crash bar, and protective farkle you can imagine--and then some! It looks like something out of *Mad Max*.

There was a long pause, and Tom asked rhetorically: "I'm not strong enough anymore?! Me?" He was utterly exasperated. You see, Tom utilizes his GS as God intended. Far off the beaten track, where only the bravest go solo. To Tom, it's not a real ride unless he's crashed 20 times in a ditch halfway up some godforsaken mountain in the middle of nowhere, completely alone and far away from civilization. He cheats death, over and over again. It's his passion. It's insane, and he knew it, and he did it anyway for many years - right up until he simply couldn't do what he used to do anymore. I consoled him, hung up, and started typing out this very rant as means of therapy.

I'll level with you: I'm knocking on 50's door - no spring chicken, but not yet very old. Not yet at the point where

I can't do what I want to do anymore. But each of these examples - Nicko McBrain, Mike Tyson, and Tom - are far more than simple cases of the relentless effects time has on us. They are powerfully symbolic, metaphorical, and personal. Each one is the shattering of a proverbial concrete pillar that props up an entire worldview! They are each now one less thing which is true as a constant. There are vanishingly fewer constants as we age and watching them disappear is positively heartbreaking. Nicko McBrain is a beast on the drums. Mike Tyson is a lethal weapon. Tom is a highly skilled big GS rider. It's exceedingly difficult for my mind to accept that what is, is now what was. Alas, there is no choice in this matter. Go do what you can while you can, before you can't!