

# When The Rooster Crows

When your rooster crows  
At the break of dawn  
Look out your window  
And I'll be gone

Bob Dylan; Don't Think Twice

Antigua, Guatemala  
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You are a morning person. You can't help it. Even when you go to bed late you wake up early. Now what? You are awake and it is dark. Pitch dark. You are confused. You hear a rooster crowing. You lie in the dark. You listen to the breath of the person beside you and you hear the rooster crow.

The room is dark, dark as tar, and you can't see a thing. The rooster crows and you can't remember where you are so you get up, dress, and quietly go out the door. Your shoes click on the tile floor.

The screen of your cell phone glows in the dark. Is it Eastern or Central time? You cannot remember. You remember where you are and how you got there but time is beyond comprehension. The hall is deserted and your shoes click on the tile floor. The man that greeted you when you arrived yesterday is asleep. His head is down on the front desk and you hear his breathing.

You unlatch a gigantic wood door that is the main entrance and step out onto the street. The door swings easily and makes no noise. The door is a portal. It connects and separates two worlds. You step through it onto the hard cobblestone street. You close the portal behind you. There is a click. A faint click. It latches shut, without effort, and you are left to stand in silence on the cobblestone road.

The road is deserted. It is dark, like pitch. The sun has yet to come up. The rooster crows. And in kind, other roosters respond. You stand with your back to the portal. You turn to look at it and you raise your hand to give it a gentle push. You turn your back to the great door a second time and for no reason you turn left.

At the first intersection you come to you turn left again. Maybe you have a sense of where you are going. Maybe you don't. The sun remains buried behind the shadow of the mountains but you notice the sky is brighter. The roads are deserted. The shops that once were open are all closed, barricaded and locked. Some locked with several locks. Everything is locked and latched tight.

Yesterday you saw a cafe. You can't remember where you saw the cafe. It was only the day before. You can't remember so you continue to walk.

You walk past an ancient Spanish Church. It is painted yellow, like the light of the sun, and the trim and the statues embedded in wall cavities are painted white, for pureness. Pigeons roost on the heads of the statues and deposit their droppings on the heads of saints. In front of the church is a square. There are trees, and benches for people to sit. There are people sitting on the benches. You look at them. They at you. And you walk past them. The light is dim and the sun is rising. The sky is brighter than it was before.

You turn right. You turn right because you see the arch. The big arch spans the cobblestone road and acts as a kind of marker. Yesterday the road was full of people. People and cars. And they took pictures of the arch.

Now the road is empty and you stand on the deserted cobblestone below the great arch. The arch is painted yellow, like the golden rays of the sun, and parts of it are trimmed and painted white, for purity. The cobblestones are dark. Almost black and their surfaces are round and worn smooth. You take a picture of the arch because the street is deserted and there are no cars.

Straight ahead, down the cobblestone road, you see the central square. You remember the square like you remembered the big arch. The square and the the arch are like sign posts and act as markers.

You hear the engine of a car. Then a pickup truck passes slowly in front of you. The pickup truck is full of people. The people are crammed onto the bed of the pickup truck. Their hands clutch a metal rail that is there to prevent them from falling out. People stand on the bumper and cling to the metal rail. The truck is crammed full of silent people and it rides low across the black cobblestones. The wheels click on smooth stones. And you watch it pass by.

The narrow streets of cobblestone have come alive. There must be a signal you have missed. Store fronts are open and the streets are filling with people. People and cars and trucks and motorcycles. There must have been a signal and you missed it.

The shadows of the mountains stretch across the city. The sky is brighter. The morning sun, with it's gleaming rays of light, remains parked behind the mountains. You continue to walk towards the central square that is filling with people.

The espresso is dark. It is black, like pitch, like a darkened room, and you take a sip of the delicate nectar. You stand on the curb across the way from the central square and you think about crossing the cobblestone street and sitting on a bench with all the other silent people. You think about sitting on a bench, sipping your nectar, and watch for the sun as it rises over the mountains. But you don't. You turn left. You start the long walk back to the portal. And you hope the doorman is awake. That the doorman is no longer asleep at his desk.