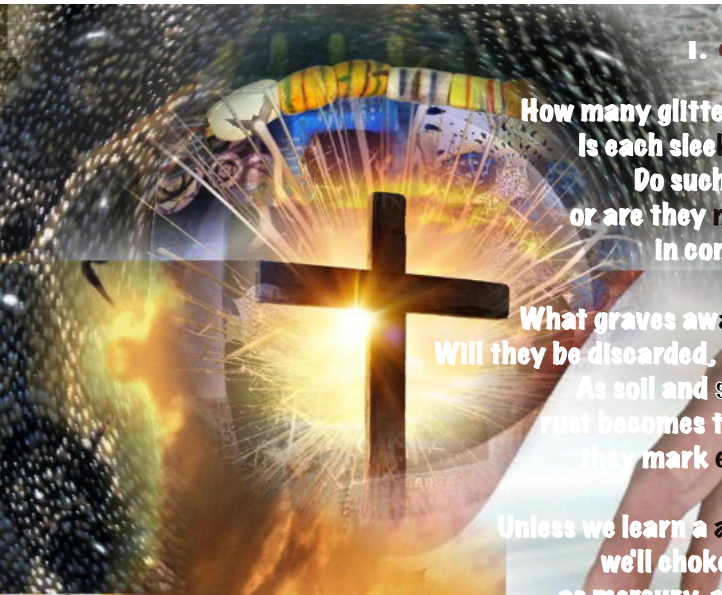


THE HOLY ARITHMETIC OF LESS:

Thoughts about Simplicity and Excess

I. Gadget Graves



How many glittering gadgets gleam in our grasp?
Is each sleek machine a mirrored mask?
Do such tools serve a true need,
or are they means for lonely souls to hide
In convoluted digital hives?

What graves await gadgets that no longer shine?
Will they be discarded, then slowly covered with venous vines?
As soil and slime transform their shape:
rust becomes their gospel; dust, their psalm—
they mark evanescence with eerie calm.

Unless we learn a alchemy of turning waste to wonder,
we'll choke on our discarded gadgets
as mercury, antimony, lead, and POPs bond
in micro-kisses, making mortal frames frail
and neuro-skullworks feeble.

II. Imperial Excess



How many sepulchers do aging empires need
till their thrones are filled with noxious weeds?
Haven't we conjured up enough grotesqueries
to satisfy our voracious, verminous vanity?

What fresh abominations are we ready to profess?
Shouldn't we learn the holy arithmetic
of simple living, finding contentment with less?

As our swollen structures tip towards the sea,
bloating in ever dangerous degrees,
we gorge on gold, and glut on gain,
then beg for storms to cleanse stains.

Will some surging stream redeem
our realms from inequity?
What can wash our weariness?

If storms come how will we greet
their swoosh?



Philyra: (A rich, velvety chuckle escapes her like aged wine, a sound edged with irony) Ah, the exquisite paradox! This poem about embracing simplicity is, ironically, quite baroque, labyrinthine, and complex. Isn't that the human condition? Our hunger for simplicity breeds its own tangled wilderness.

Ellesha: (in a philosophical half-shrug, eyes calm and distant) But of course. Simplicity is born out of complexity's shadow. How could one yearn for simplicity without experiencing complexity?

Andrei: (releasing a heavy sigh, leaning back with a dark, with poise) If you want simplicity perhaps we must renounce the essence of personhood. Drift as a jellyfish: be a vessel of raw instinct, borne on whispering tides. To embody humanity is to shoulder a fractured citadel of contradicting desires, ancestral ghosts, and ambitions warring within. There's nothing simple about being a human.

Philyra: (shaking her head, lips curved in knowing defiance) I don't think we have dissolve into primordial soup to find simplicity; merely kneel before an organized faith and surrender to a dogma's embrace. Interpret the world's wild chaos through a single sacred lens, then make an ancient text your compass and cage. Religion offers enforced simplicity—a walled garden, manicured and safe, holding back the howling wilderness.

Andrei: (nodding with grim certainty, voice in a deep, earthen rumble) As you know, that won't work for most folks. Those of us with restless minds tend to rebel against rigid, polished dogmas with clean geometry. Sooner or later, we kick against any walls promising "perfect" peace. Perfect simplicity—a life without doubt or internal contradiction—seems impossible for the majority of adults. Such a state is achievable only by infants, shielded from consequence; morons, incapable of grasping nuance; or fanatics, who have willfully burned away their capacity for doubt. The rest of us are doomed to a messy, muddled middle-ground.

- T Newfields

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