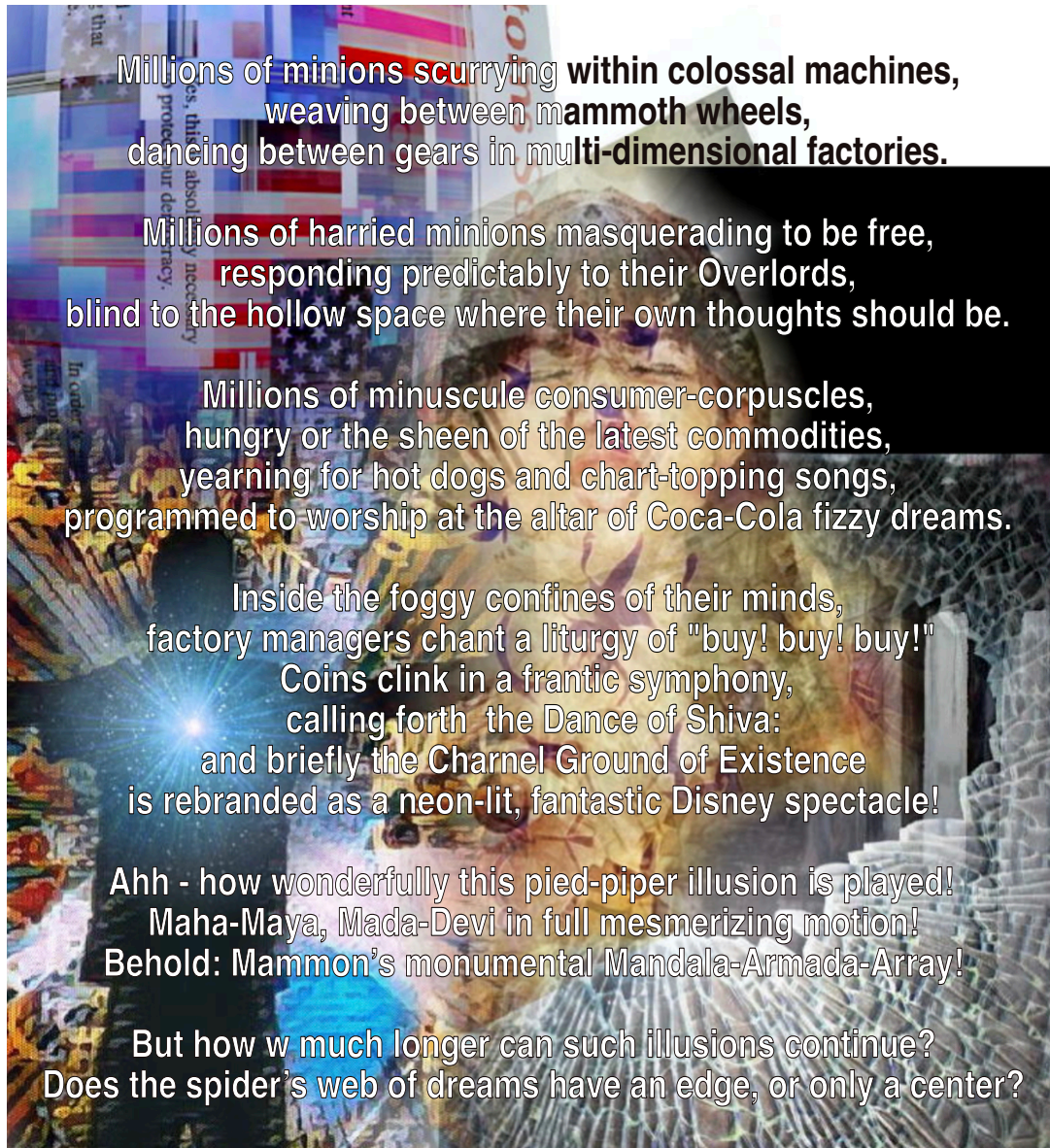


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

The Irony of Slavery in the Land of Liberty



Millions of minions scurrying within colossal machines,
weaving between mammoth wheels,
dancing between gears in multi-dimensional factories.

Millions of harried minions masquerading to be free,
responding predictably to their Overlords,
blind to the hollow space where their own thoughts should be.

Millions of minuscule consumer-corpuscles,
hungry for the sheen of the latest commodities,
yearning for hot dogs and chart-topping songs,
programmed to worship at the altar of Coca-Cola fizzy dreams.

Inside the foggy confines of their minds,
factory managers chant a liturgy of "buy! buy! buy!"
Coins clink in a frantic symphony,
calling forth the Dance of Shiva:
and briefly the Charnel Ground of Existence
is rebranded as a neon-lit, fantastic Disney spectacle!

Ahh - how wonderfully this pied-piper illusion is played!
Maha-Maya, Mada-Devi in full mesmerizing motion!
Behold: Mammon's monumental Mandala-Armada-Array!

But how much longer can such illusions continue?
Does the spider's web of dreams have an edge, or only a center?

In the dimly lit loft, the hum of distant servers pulsed through the floorboards. Kris stood by a window, silhouetted against a skyline of glowing corporate logos bleeding red and blue into the shrouded smog. They turned a small, dull coin over and over, its surface cold and lifeless.

"Is this freedom?" Kris asked, their voice a blend of whisper and defiance, gesturing toward the sea of headlights creeping along the highway below: thousands of people moving in eerie, synchronized harmony. "Or is it just a well-decorated cage, the door left ajar just to tease us?"

Tim didn't look up from a bank of computer monitors. The flickering lights of a hundred scrolling data feeds danced across his glasses, masking his eyes in a static-filled glow. A thin, cynical smile curled on Tim's lips as they tapped a rhythmic beat against the desk.

As long as the screens stay bright and the pixels seem enchanting, few will bother to seek the truth," Tim replied, his voice flat, drained of emotion. Leaning back, the chair creaked in the stillness. "Who cares if the cage is small as long as the Wi-Fi is fast and the dreams are vivid? People don't want the truth; they want higher resolutions."

- T Newfields

Beg.: 2003 Nagoya ☆ Fin.: 2026 Shiruoka

