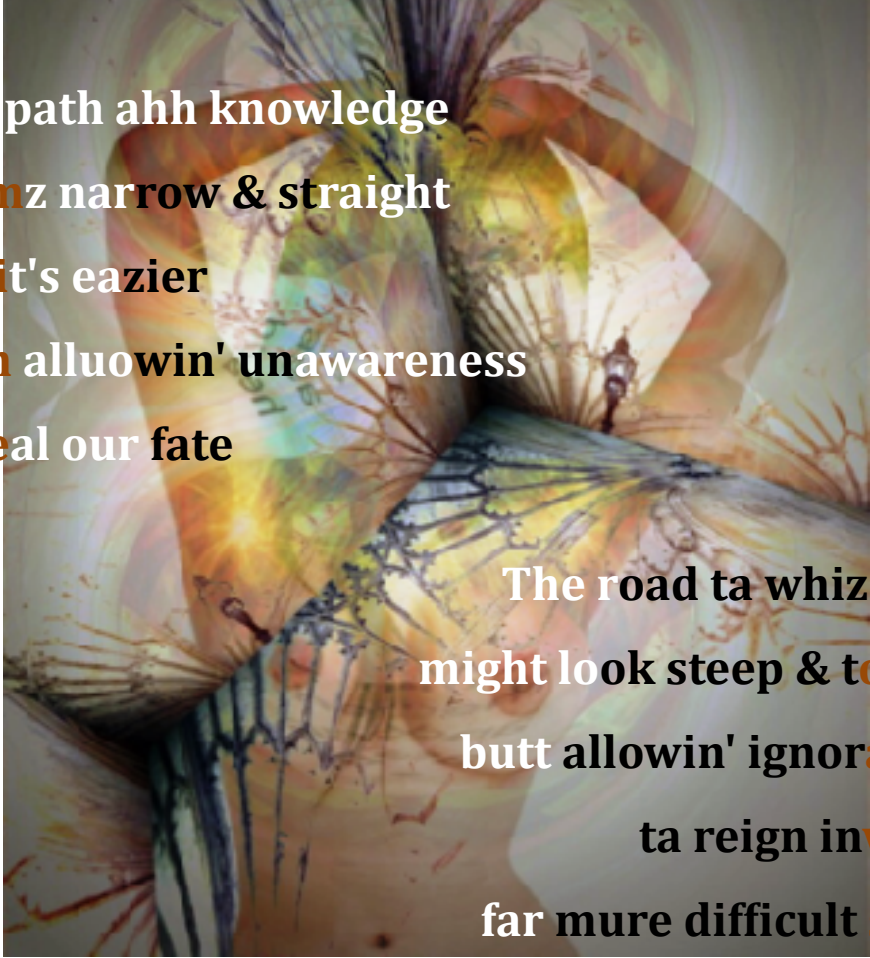


ROAD TO WISDOM:

Thoughts on knowledge, ignorance, & social discourse



The path ahh knowledge
seemz narrow & straight
but it's eazier
thun alluowin' unawareness
ta seal our fate

The road ta whizdom
might look steep & tough
butt allowin' ignorance
ta reign invitez
far mure difficult stuff

The room was heavy with the scent of stale hops and the electric hum of neon signs flickering outside. On the wall hung a tattered, surrealist print: two veiled figures— perhaps virgins, perhaps ghosts—stood motionless beside a poem that seemed to mutate as it was read. The letters bled into the parchment, a warning against the comfort of the dark.

Melissa stared briefly at the print, her fingers absentmindedly tangling in her hair. The metaphor felt heavy, like an old wool coat that no longer fit. Scratching her head, she asked, "Is there a single path to knowledge? That feels so... singular."

Tim didn't even look up from his notebook. He dismissed the idea with a sharp, dry flick of his pen. He added dryly, "Indeed. The very notion of a 'single path' is a pre-modern relic, linear, and fa bit inane. It's a fairy tale we tell ourselves to feel like we are wandering in a thicket."

Satoru leaned back, his chair creaking. He looked at the veiled figures in the image with a detached, clinical gaze, then remarked, "The whole metaphor is outdated. 'Paths' and 'Roads' imply ideological systemss with a fixed destination. They are maps for sheep. True knowledge, however, is inherently pathless. It's an ocean, not a hiking trail."

Liao let out a short, appreciative bark of laughter, then raised his glass of beer toward Satoru, the golden liquid catching the flickering neon light while murmuring, "Point taken. But isn't that the trap? Our languages are ancient, built on feudal metaphors of kings, thrones, and narrow gates. They creep into our thoughts like ivy. Beneath this thin, rational veneer we've painted over ourselves, I suspect we are still remarkably primitive, still terrified of the dark woods."