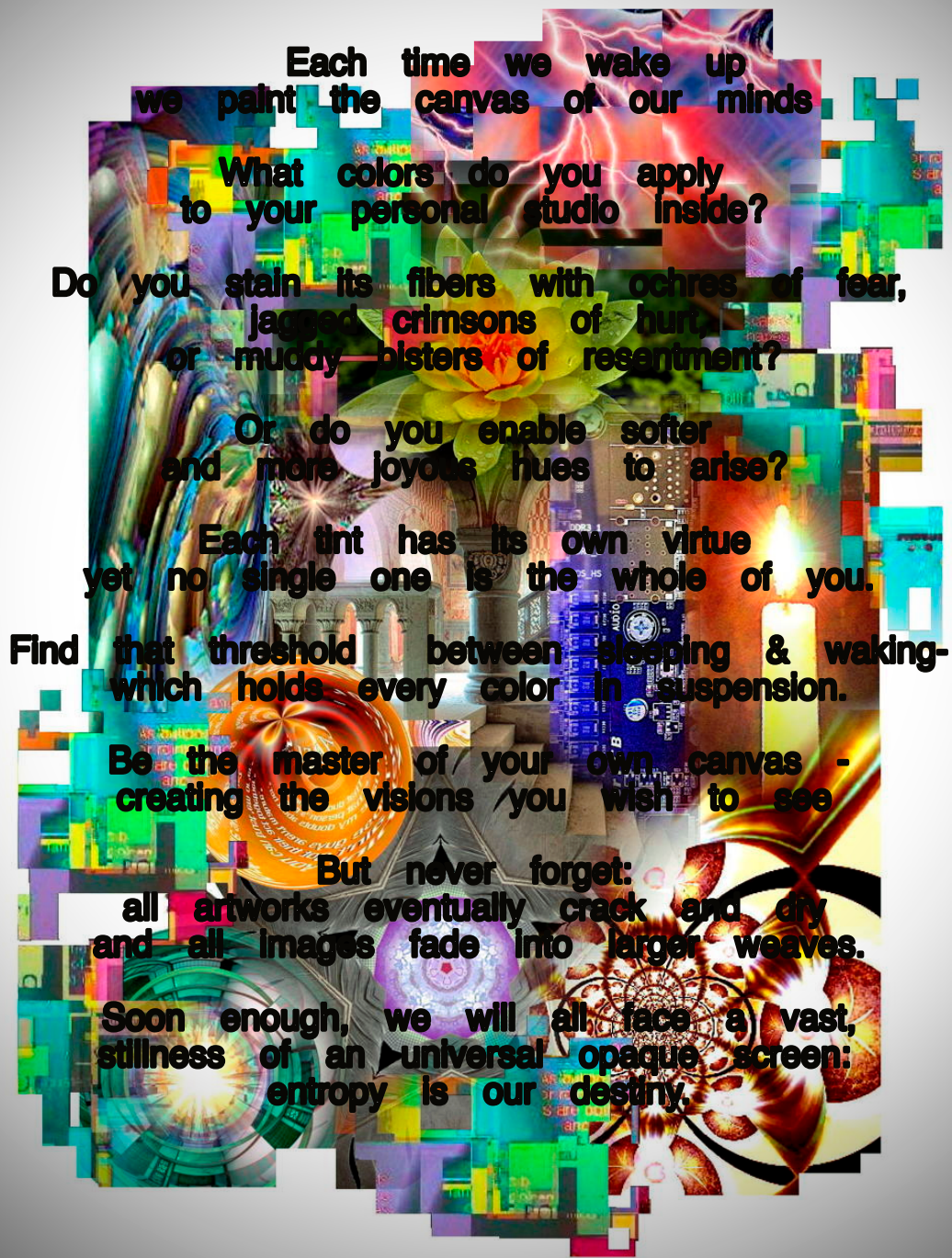


HEART-SCAPINGS:

A message for artists



Each time we wake up
we paint the canvas of our minds

What colors do you apply
to your personal studio inside?

Do you stain its fibers with ochres of fear,
jagged crimsons of hurt,
or muddy blisters of resentment?

Or do you enable softer
and more joyous hues to arise?

Each tint has its own virtue
yet no single one is the whole of you.

Find that threshold between sleeping & waking-
which holds every color in suspension.

Be the master of your own canvas -
creating the visions you wish to see

But never forget:
all artworks eventually crack and dry
and all images fade into larger weaves.

Soon enough, we will all face a vast,
stillness of an universal opaque screen:
entropy is our destiny.



The gallery seemed still, smelling faintly of old linseed oil and settled dust. Jules reclined against the wall, his posture casual yet charged, one eyebrow arching like a question mark as he scrutinized the final stanza.

"So," Jules drawled, in a voice aced with skepticism, "do you actually buy into this? This notion that we're just... painting ourselves into existence, only to crack and disappear?"

Miok hesitated to answer. She traced the edge of her wine glass, her gaze fixed on the floorboards as if searching for a stray brushstroke. "I'm not sure," she admitted, her voice trailing off into a contemplative hum. "There's a part of me that finds the formula a bit too polished. It's a very 'neat' way to describe the mess of being alive, isn't it?"

Cantara, who had been standing undividedly still like a statue infused with ancient wisdom, suddenly exuded an electric energy. Her eyes held a strange conviction. "We mustn't underestimate the weight of the social fabric that binds us," she murmured, her fingers tightening into delicate fists. "The tapestry is heavy, yes. But," she turned to Tim, her gaze piercing and profound, "we must never overlook the sheer, terrifying power of a solitary mind determined to change its own color."

Chris chuckled dryly, shaking his head, as if trying to physically brush away the gravity of her words. "And there it is. We could loop this thread until the sun comes up and still find ourselves tangled." He turned toward the bar, dismissing the conversation with a wave of his hand, his chin raised defiantly. "What's really needed isn't more metaphysics—it's a glass of perfectly fermented, artistically crafted wine. Let's find some truth in a bottle instead."

- T Newfields

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