

# FIVE POISONS :

## Temptations on the Road to Awakening

### I

Dream deeply, dream daringly, dare to divine~  
Blaze brazen through vanishing visions and shine!  
Let fervor forge fate's flickering fire  
& fashion fresh futures from phantom desires.  
The present's a prison who lack inner access;  
The future belongs to those who the past undress.

### II

Buy boldly, buy blindly, barter for bliss~  
Bargain for baubles nobody never needs!  
Let plastic-spun promises pile into pyres,  
& pretend bills can be forgotten.  
The cosmos is for creatures who crave.  
Consume, and be consumed:  
All life is but a dream.

### III

Guzzle deeply & grandly, greet each glass with a grin~  
Give your ganglia a giddy, glimmering spin!  
Drown in drink till all doubts are down.  
Enjoy the joys of intoxication.  
Find bliss as you drink & wink,  
Bottle after bottle, rise & sink.

#### IV

*Touch tenderly day and night.  
Trade tangled thighs for dream-tapestries.  
Savor the surge of the skin over soul,  
    & collect carresses casually.  
Let loving be losing & losing feel deep~  
Hearts that gathers most have nothing to keep.*

#### V

*Rest richly, rest ruinously, recline in rest~  
Drift down to Lethe where lies full and laugh,  
    Erasure comes soon after every crest  
The stillest of waters still drown you the best.*

Kasim fell silent for a moment, his eyes fixed on a distant point as the lines of the poem settled in his mind. When he finally spoke, his voice was quiet, carrying the weight of a sudden realization. "Perhaps awakening begins not with seeing truth, but with recognizing illusions." He turned his gaze back to his friends, looking from one face to the next. The afternoon light stretched across the wooden floor of the familiar bookstore, leaving half the room in shadow. "How can we possibly understand light without knowing darkness?"

Wan-Sze leaned back, a smirk playing on his lips, though his eyes remained intensely sharp. His tone hung in the air, slightly sarcastic, yet entirely serious. "Actually, I'm not sure any human can actually awaken. We're a primitive species, not really all that different from apes. Aren't still tethered to instinct, just skilled at pretending otherwise?"

Nadia interjected, "Often those who claim to be 'awake' are completely unaware of their own delusion," her voice cutting through the discussion with a cold edge of realism. She rested her chin on her hand. "Enlightenment is often a mask worn by ambition. The louder the claim, the deeper the delusion."

Will nodded, then shifted in his chair. "We should be suspicious of anyone claiming to be fully awake," he murmured, looking thoughtfully at the table. "Aren't bondage and constraints intrinsic to the human condition?"

A faint, ironic smile touched Nadia's lips as she looked out at the afternoon shadows lengthening across the room. "Perhaps we are only partly human?" she mused, her voice softening into something poetic, almost ethereal. "Maybe we are a strange amalgamation of the human and the divine. Don't we have one foot in the mud and the other reaching for the stars?"

— T Newfields

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Note: This piece was partially generated with AI tools for styling and ideation; human editing was then applied.