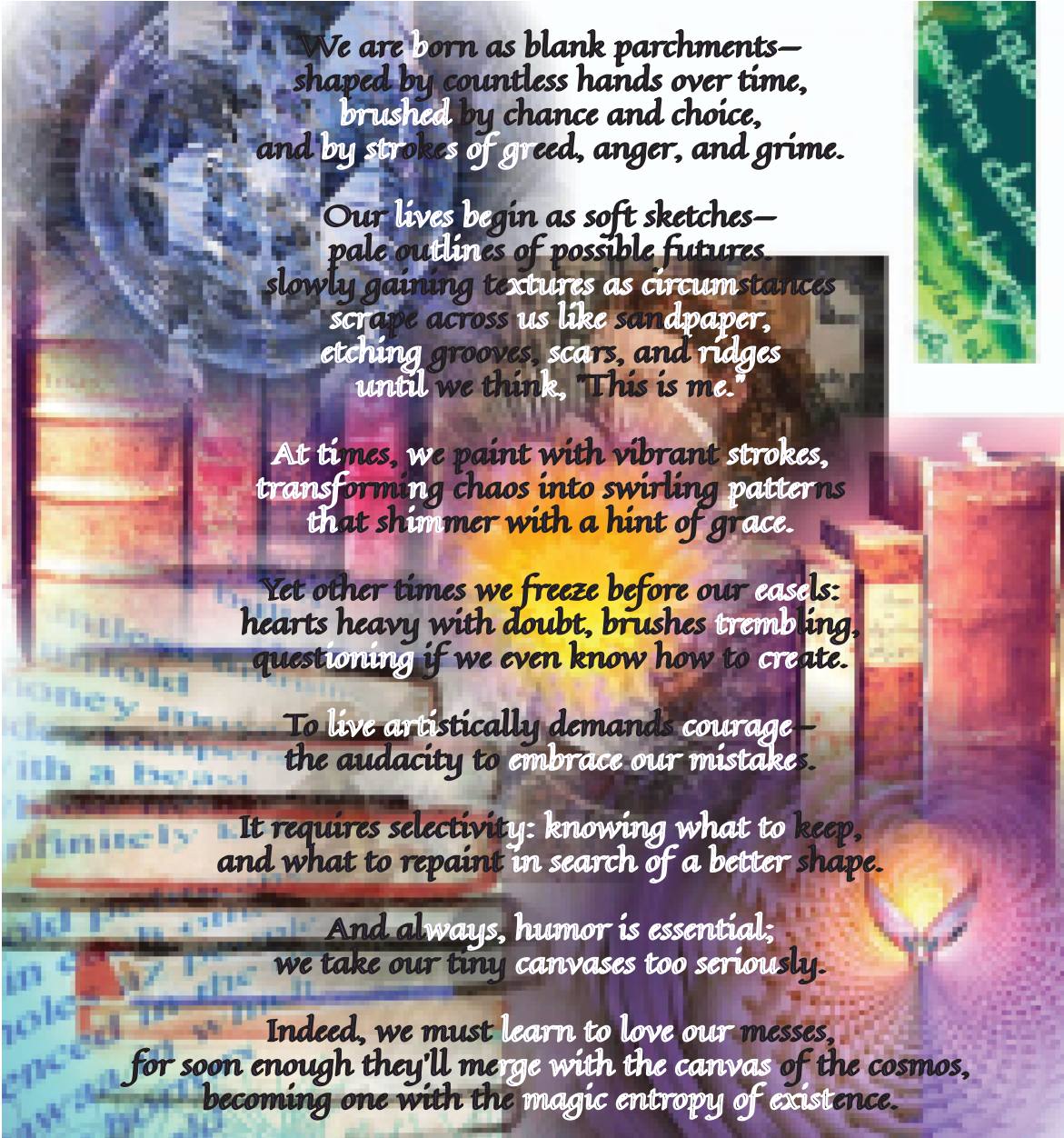


SHARED CANVASES:

Thoughts on Life Scripting



We are born as blank parchments—
shaped by countless hands over time,
brushed by chance and choice,
and by strokes of greed, anger, and grime.

Our lives begin as soft sketches—
pale outlines of possible futures
slowly gaining textures as circumstances
scrape across us like sandpaper,
etching grooves, scars, and ridges
until we think, "This is me."

At times, we paint with vibrant strokes,
transforming chaos into swirling patterns
that shimmer with a hint of grace.

Yet other times we freeze before our easels:
hearts heavy with doubt, brushes trembling,
questioning if we even know how to create.

To live artistically demands courage—
the audacity to embrace our mistakes.

It requires selectivity: knowing what to keep,
and what to repaint in search of a better shape.

And always, humor is essential;
we take our tiny canvases too seriously.

Indeed, we must learn to love our messes,
for soon enough they'll merge with the canvas of the cosmos,
becoming one with the magic entropy of existence.

- Ella:** *(leaning forward, eyebrows raised, a glint of mischief in her eyes)* So tell me—do we script our lives, or are we just characters in someone else's story? Can we choose our orbits, or are we mere satellites of a collective, guiding star?
- Shu:** *(exhaling, swirling her cup, a half-smile on her lips)* Co-authorship seems like the best answer to me. Some of the ink in our lives comes from invisible authors: ancestors, collective karma, the cultures we inherit. Our ink flows from the thousand pens of history.
- Juanita:** *(tracing circles on the table, her voice steady but quiet)* The self isn't a canvas; it's a mirror. Each so-called 'choice' reflects deep, implanted needs from markets, families, or our planet. We think we're painting our own outlines, but we exist in a shared collage made from the brushstrokes of everyone who's touched us. Free will is a powerful illusion, isn't it?
- Jack:** *(glancing at the clock, its second hand ticking steadily, relentlessly)* And all this debate is a beautiful absurdity. Juanita's right: determinism reigns supreme. Entropy is the only true author, dictating our inevitable end. We are just chemical reactions playing out under a clock face. We're just a series of chemical reactions unfolding beneath a clock face, with just enough time to splash on a few colors before everything vanishes.
- Ella:** *(faintly smiling, eyes meeting Jack's in a challenging dance)* Maybe that's the point: don't fret about finishing anything—just keep layering colors! The choice to paint in spite of futility is oddly beautiful!

- T Newfields

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