3RD WORLD TOUR:
A Tourist Advisory

Start by stripping down.
Wallet, cards, clean conscience—leave them.
Gold, glass, glowing screens—discard.
Anything that proves you mattered somewhere
will hinder you here.

Give away your polished shoes,
silk socks, and expensive belts-
they'll only slow you down.

Here comfort is contraband.
Luxury is a liability.
Identity—optional, and quickly revoked.

Frustration clears customs without a glance.
Laughter makes it through,
but it is easily confiscated.

Satisfaction? That's a pipe dream
religious folks use as a mantra.

Here, "food" means survival
& "need" is bone-deep.

Let the air teach you
and notice how low baselines can fall.

Most systems fail:
Roofs leak. Roads dissolve. Promises evaporate.
But the guns work & blades stay sharp.
The machinery of hate never jams.

Most people look uncomfortably like you
after a long arithmetic of loss.

Some carry rage like passports—stamped daily.
Some hold joy like contraband—hidden & fleeting.

You might ask, "What do I gain from this?"
Or maybe, "When does this end?"

Those questions are privileges you haven't earned yet.
Ask much later—if such time ever materializes.

Genuine tours don't promise safe returns:
or gentle re-entries into comfort.
There are no convenient guides to escort you.
No souvenir shops.

Genuine tours have only one exit:
when your last breath-
becomes inconsequential
& you merge with the dust
of humanity.



Frida shook her head sharply, her frustration radiating through the small room as she tossed the page aside. "I detest this poem," she declared in a taut voice. It flattens whole histories into a single travel brochure of suffering. It oversimplifies the 'Third World' so that all nuance just bleeds out."

Ying nodded slowly, her expression grave. "Agreed. There isn't a single 'Third World.' Such a broad label smudges reality. This poem pretends there's one place to visit," she added. "But 'Third World' is a flattening. It tries to fit too many different lives fit into one suitcase."

Dimitri went quiet. His gaze drifted to the window, where the day looked ordinary enough to be suspicious. "And hasn't the term 'Third World' become passé?" he grumbled. "Shouldn't it be called the Global South?"

Satoru rolled his shoulders, tired of tired of such nonsense. "Call it what you want," he said. "The exploitation still happens. The roofs still leak. The systems still fail in the same direction—toward people who aren't allowed to be surprised."

Ying's expression tightened. "But directions do matter," she insisted. "Because the 'tour' isn't neutral. It isn't even free. If you can write it like a metaphor without showing the mechanics, you've already chosen to get comfortable. Labels often hide more than they reveal."

Frida's frustration was obvious. "This poem should stop pretending it's a tour guide," she said. "It should be honest about what the tour costs. Honest about who gets to be a tourist."

Dimitri finally looked away from the window and stared at Frida. "Granted, this poem is raises some valid issues," he said quietly. "But it risks turning suffering into a spectacle—something the right readers can consume without consequence."

NOTE: This piece was partially generated with AI tools; human editing was then applied.

- T Newfields

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