

ONLY A HAMBURGER?

A Reflection on the Ramifications of Beef Consumption

"You're only holding a hamburger," you say.
But that's merely where the story begins.

You're also sustaining an economic machine,
casting your vote for a fast-food way of life.

You're endorsing animal slaughter,
accepting the quiet bargain of convenience.

You're saying yes to engineered livestock,
synthetic additives, disposable packaging,
and wages thin as paper napkins
given to the hands that serve your food.

Every hamburger carries a larger burden:
fields stripped bare, forests sold for grass,
rivers drained, methane rising,
and grain meant for the hungry
funneled into cattle for the affluent.

Look more closely between the buns.
There lies a world of choices—
ethical, ecological, and economic—
pressed together as tightly
as the patty upon your plate.

Every bite tells a story.
The question isn't only what you chew,
but what kind of earth, what kind of future,
your appetite is helping create.



Satoru leaned back, one eyebrow arched as he drummed his fingers across the worn pages of the poetry book. "So," he mused with a faint grin, "What do we have here," he muttered, his voice laced with mild amusement, "some vegetarian credo?"

Ying didn't even look up from her cellphone, letting out a nonchalant sigh that dismissed the text entirely. "Sounds that way," she said, her tone dripping with indifference. "The writer seems to have complicated feelings about meat."

Frida laughed softly. "Complicated feelings?" she said, leaning forward with a mischievous sparkle in her eyes. "Please. We're all meat." Frida interjected. "Time has its teeth in all of us, so why not just enjoy ends up on our plate?"

The room fell silent. Dmitri's jaw tightened, and when he spoke, his voice carried a sudden, sharp anger that cut right through the room. "There's a difference," he said, his eyes finding Frida's and holding them, "between dying—" a pause, deliberate, almost surgical— "and being treated as though you were never anything more than a slab of meat in a supermarket." Nobody laughed this time.

- T Newfields

2005 Tokyo ☆ 2026 Shizuoka