



IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE BIGGER FOOL

DEAR READERS,



Let's start with something uncomfortable.

When was the last time you touched the ground with your bare hands? Not your yoga mat. Not your artisanal planter box. Not your cats litterbox. I mean actual dirt, muck, the unsanitized slug who crept out of a muddy womb.

Can you remember?  
Most of us can't.

Long before GPS and grocery stores, we knew the forest like the back of our hands. We could navigate it better than the little transient keyboards on our phone screens. We understood migration patterns not through documentaries, but because we followed them. Foot by foot, season by season. You might think of this shift as progress. And in some ways, it is. But 'progress' that moves away from the origin, can it really be considered as progress?

Somewhere between the Neolithic Revolution and the next iOS update, we stopped returning nature's calls. Instead, we speak of "ecosystem services" like nature is a maid we've outsourced our wellbeing to, who will happily mop up our messes while we debate the metaverse.

In Mesopotamia, they worshipped the river. In Ancient Egypt, they designed cities aligned with celestial cycles. The Greeks? They had gods for every natural element. Even when we began asserting dominion, we at least had the courtesy to deify the thing we were plundering. But then came Descartes. The man who gave us the phrase "I think, therefore I am". With a flick of logic, Descartes severed mind from body, man from beast, and soul from soil.

Don't get me wrong, I'm deeply grateful for electricity. And I'm glad to live in a world where "bloodletting" is no longer considered self-care. But somewhere in this transition, we traded myth for metric, leading us to believe we live in a simulation.

The indigenous concept of kinship centric ecology was dismissed by Western rationalists as animistic nonsense. The world adopted this ideology and so we clearcut rainforests only to lay awake at night wondering why we feel emotionally barren. Now, as we unravel under the weight of our own abstraction, we're beginning to see the wisdom in what we once called "primitive." Turns out, talking to trees isn't crazy. It's just good diplomacy.

The problem with modern environmentalism is that it often sounds like a PR campaign for a failing brand. "Offset your guilt. Reduce your impact. Save the whales. Again". We don't need a better marketing strategy for the earth, for we shouldn't have to sell the planet to its inhabitants. Sustaining it should be a basic survival instinct and I'm deeply relying on natural selection to ingrain such common sense.

We speak of "climate change" as though the climate is something over there..... external, manageable, awaiting our technical interventions. Yet the true crisis may be something more insidious. So while climate tech is evolving at a remarkable speed, the masses need to catch up in terms of our emotional maturity.

We do not lack solutions.

So where does this leave us?

It's easy to pity the polar bears, mourn the forests, or get furious at plastic straws. But here's the twist: this isn't just about the planet. This is about you. When we pollute the air, we inhale anxiety. When we pave over wildness, we lose our intuition. When we forget that slugs have voices, we forget that we do too.

Pause here. Let that sink in.

And now to pacify the guilt and anxiety that I have stirred up within you, I give you this:

Start small. Intentionally.

Walk barefoot on grass, not because it's "grounding," but because it's honest.

Sit with a tree like it's your oldest friend.....because it is.

Replace the need to capture beauty with the need to be captured by it.

Saving the planet sounds exhausting, no doubt. But let your attention become a kind of offering. We stand at a crossroads not unlike those faced by past civilizations, all of which mistook dominance for destiny. The earth has evolved through cataclysm before, she does not need us to "fix" her. The Haudenosaunee spoke of seven generations. The San people of the Kalahari shared water with scorpions.

This is not romanticism. This is the architecture of awareness.

You don't need to renounce everything and move to a yurt (though yurts are excellent). You don't need to become an eco-influencer, or brew your own toothpaste. What you do need is to remember that you are not a visitor here. You may not be central to this brewing romance, but you are essential. And that's the quiet miracle we keep forgetting.

So go outside.  
Touch something that doesn't beep.

Ask a tree how it's been.  
It won't answer. But you might.

In wildness and wit,

The Slug

~ Sneha Dixit