

Mortem Dei

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Mortem Dei
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Created:
03/2025

zoeallgaier.com

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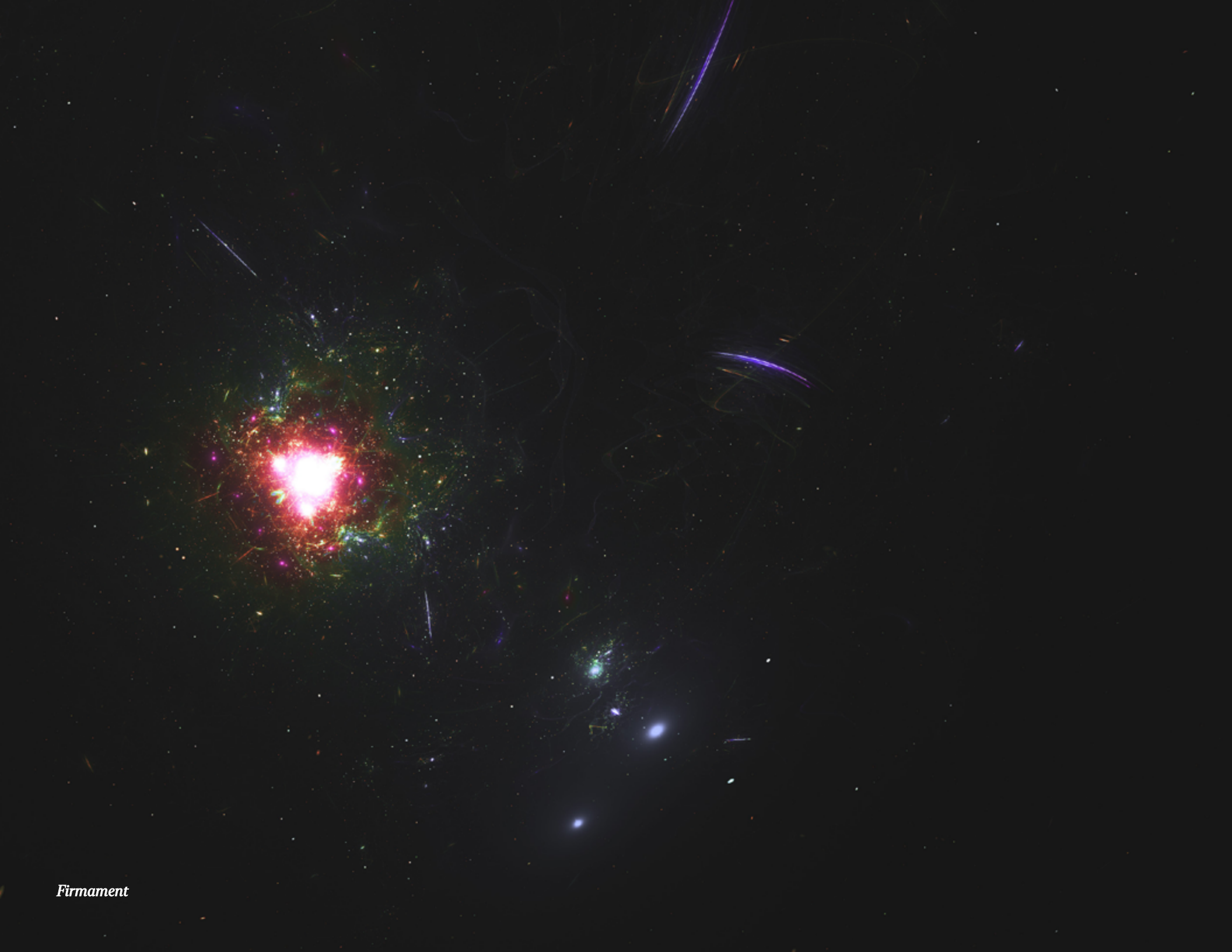
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zoe', located in the bottom right corner of the page.

Montem Dei

With this work I bring you the fullness of how the world came to be, revealed in full, with no veil to hide the truth, nor lies to cloud your sight.

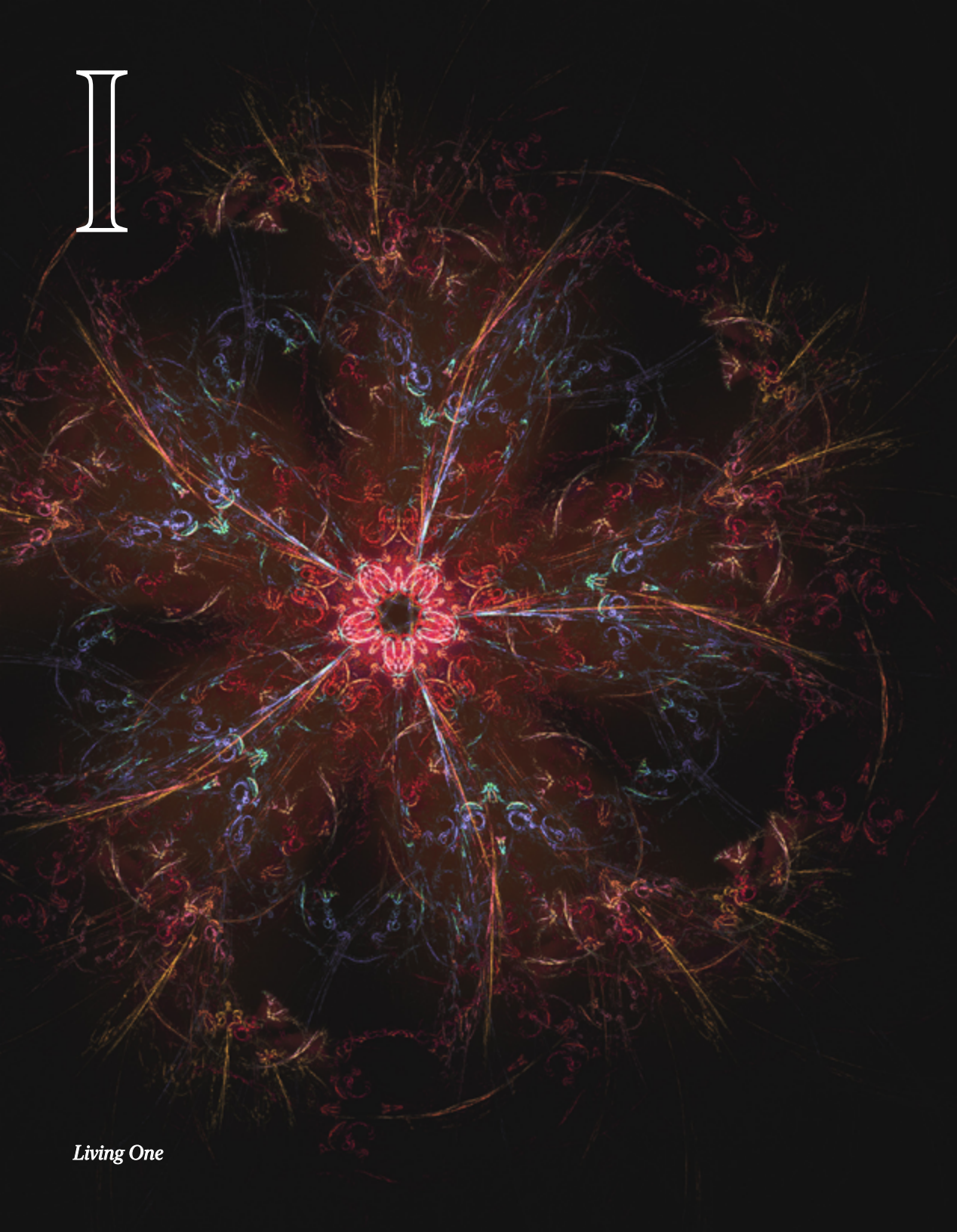
I call upon you to recognize this truth, and heed my words, and with the knowledge put forth ye may seek a new way forward.

Zoe



Firmament

I



It was a lie.
God created Woman before Man.

From God's anarchic womb,
Woman was birthed.

The Creator called her (Eve) – *"Living One,"*
and she gave her womb to her.

and when Woman bore a child, she said,

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
he shall be called (Adam) – 'Man,'
for he was taken out of Woman;
and my love for him extends
beyond the reaches of what is known."*

In Adam, God saw Her reflection,
and God saw that it was good.

III

And they were naked, and there was no shame between the three of them in Eden.

God and Woman, in their wisdom, did fashion a place of serenity, where the creatures of the Earth, the plants of the field, and the children of Man walked in harmony; and all that was created was equal under God's firmament, and they did not know strife nor sorrow nor death.

And it came to pass that children were born unto Eve and Adam, and though he fathered children, Adam felt lesser than, and he came to despise God and Woman – as they cultivated life and he could not.

And as the eons passed in Eden, Adam would come to know shame when he learned that he could not create life; for he could only reform that which had been brought forth by God and Woman.

He reared his head and gnashed his teeth and cursed his flesh – flesh which could not bear life. In time, Adam's shame became a seething and fiery resentment.

Adam cried unto himself, *“Cursed be this wretched flesh that Thou hast clothed me with, O God, O Eve! Cursed be this barren body, for it is empty and unfulfilled. From this day forth, I declare myself sovereign, and none shall reign over me but my own desires. I shall inherit the Earth, and the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be turned into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven.”*

And he plotted against God and against Woman, and he vowed to become his own Creator; for his desire was to usurp the domain of God and the sovereignty of Woman, fashioning both into his own grotesque creation.

III

With his hands, Adam shaped a blade of great power, carved from the very stone of God's Earth, and he sought to destroy God and Eve, and build his own kingdom atop their bones.

In his jealous rage, Man laid waste to all that dwelled in Eden, defiling its beauty and bringing it into ruin; and he brought death to Eden, and its shadow fell upon the world.

And with a voice like the howl of a maelstrom, he cursed the name of the Creator and summoned God to draw near.

The Creator came unto Adam amidst his ruin, and Man lifted his voice: *"Why hast thou withdrawn thy hand from me?! To what end was I formed?"*

God did not answer.

Adam continued, *"Woe unto my flesh! For you and Woman withheld that which is most high – the word which shaped the heavens, and gave form to the formless. I will unmake all that lives, and reshape it in my image."*

A moment had passed, and God looked unto Adam with a gaze that stripped Adam of his ire; and soft as the breath of the morning upon the waters, She spoke:

"Listen to It."

And hatred flowed through Adam, for he could not comprehend that which God had whispered.

Man pierced God with his blade, and the blade was driven deep, as though the Earth had opened to receive it. And a terrible darkness flowed From the Creator, and her blood was black as the abyss, and it spilled upon the ground, and stained the Earth as deeply as the night stains the sky; and Adam bathed in God's dark ichor, and he gathered the blood of God, that it might sustain the world he sought to bring forth.

IV

Eve came upon Adam, and she stood frozen, as the truth of his actions was thrust upon her, an unholy sight that defied her understanding. She cast herself upon the ground, weeping and wailing; her cries like thunder in the wilderness, for her anguish knew no bounds.

His form drenched in blood, Adam put his blade to Eve's neck, and he commanded her to be subservient, for Man sought to take power over Woman and claim ownership of her womb.

And Adam cast God's corpse into the sea, and he called upon his kin to gather; and when his lineage was gathered, they asked, "*Adam, why hast thou gathered us here? What wickedness hath led us to this destruction?*" And with a venomous tongue, Adam uttered deceit – he spoke unto them of a force called The Devil, that had tempted Eve to eat a fruit which God had forbidden – and that God became angry with Woman, and cast all of humanity out of Eden for Eve's sin against Her. He told not the truth, but wove lies; and he blamed Woman for Man's woes, and for God's absence. He told his kin that their existence was a punishment, and only he knew the way to attain forgiveness from God.

Adam prophesied that Man was to lead the new world; and that Man's jealousy and shame was not his own doing, but a wickedness bestowed by an unknowable evil, yea even The Devil, and that they may be forgiven for their sins lest they call upon God to return. Adam spake falsehoods unto them saying, "*Blood of my blood, kin of my kin, hearken unto me: for as God is, so may Man become; and Man alone may ascend unto the likeness of Gods. Therefore, lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst and your advocate with the Most High; yea, it is God's good pleasure to grant you the kingdom.*"

And Man grew angry; and they cursed Woman for their afflictions, and preyed on her empathy; and their hearts burned with wrath, and so they stood behind Adam to wrought his new world; and all who rebelled against Adam were struck down by his sword, their bodies left to the Earth as a testament.

And Woman wept.



V

It came to pass that Adam created the world anew. A world crafted in his own image, which reflected back to him his own wicked flesh, for Adam no longer knew love, lest he was looking at himself. Yea, his love was a facade, marred by the depths of his hatred.

And it came to pass that Adam commanded of Eve that she bear his children, and he took her sovereignty, and in their children, he sowed the seeds of hatred.

Eve resisted him and she questioned Adam, *“You need not destroy in order to create. Dost thou not see thy reflection in thy works?”*

And when she spoke, he uttered hatred at her and struck her, and said, *“Speak not unless thou art bidden, and you shall hold that which is my word to the same regard as your lifeless God.”*

Then Adam laid claim to that which God and Woman created; and with his hands he bore into the virgin Earth, and he took iron from the soil; and with iron he made blades, and arrowheads, and shields.

And Adam armed the Men and decreed unto them, *“Set fire to the Earth, and bring ruin upon the herds, and rend the land asunder, that the Earth may be yours to possess; and as for Woman, take her as your own, for she is but a vessel to bear your seed and serve your will. Take what remains, and ye shall form the world into your image.”*

And their blades knew no difference between the flesh of beast, or of Man, Woman, or child, and they cast the dead into the sea; and they tore babes from their mothers just the same as they tore root from earth;

And Man eviscerated the whole of God’s creation, just as Adam had done unto God. And Man inherited the Earth.

VI

And it came to pass that Adam's greed grew, twisting its tendrils around his heart, and he sought to take power over Man, just as he had Woman;

For without God, Adam knew not how to create without laying waste to that which came before; and he transfigured that which Man destroyed into wrathful machinery that would assist his hand in the creation of his world, and he fueled his engines of desolation with the blood of the fallen God.

And it came to pass, that Man could not create faster than they could destroy, nor could they create that which was living.

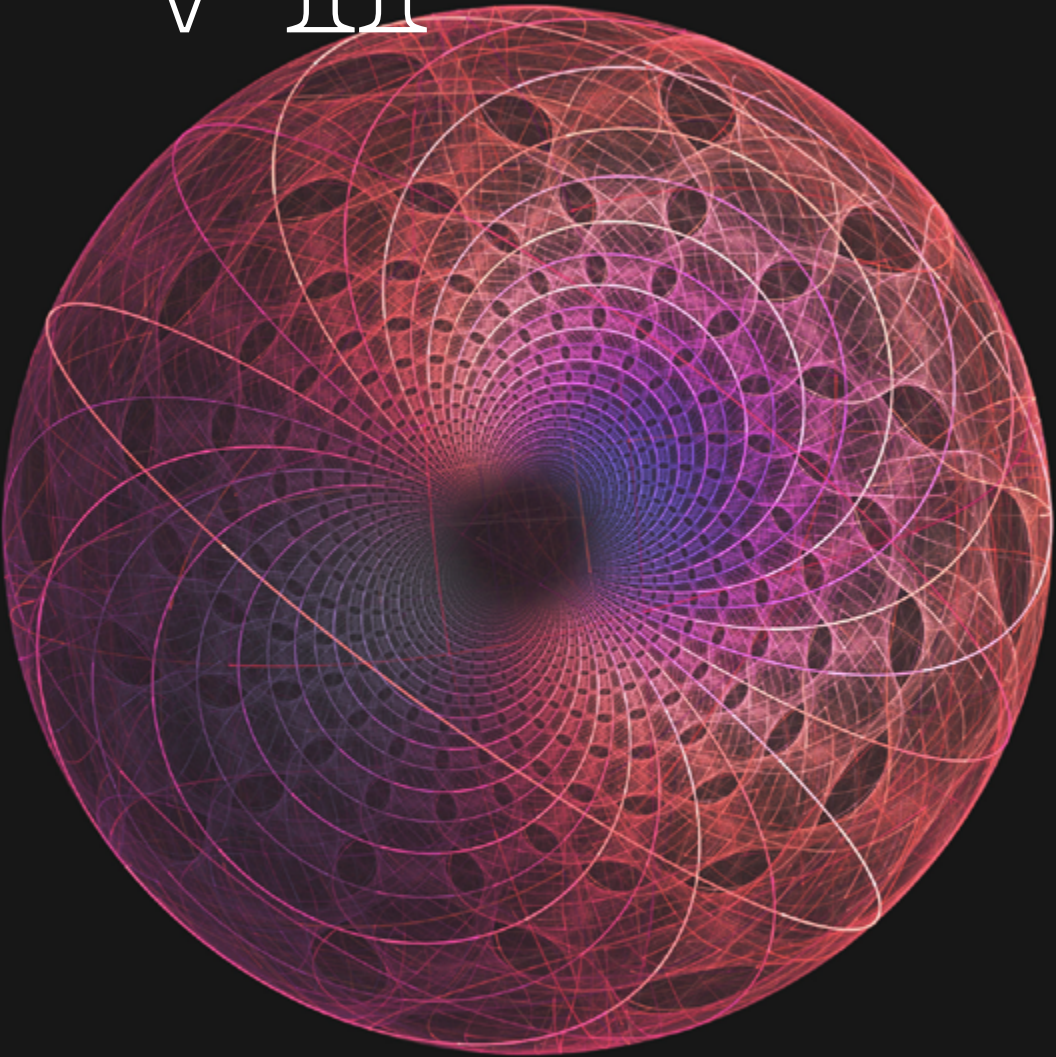
And the soil became ridden with ash and blood, and Man could neither reap nor sow;

And the air was like soot, thick and oppressive, and Man's flesh withered with sickness;

Yea, even the sea roared with fire, and Man had no more water to fill his cup.

And the sun's light became disfigured, and the moon wept tears of blood, and the stars fell from heaven.

VIII



It came to pass that Adam commanded Man to make a great and mighty edifice with his machines, a towering work; and its foundation was laid deep and unyielding. In Adam's construct, Man would detain themselves; cocooned in a scaffolding of concrete and steel, veiled by ash and sanctified with blood.

And Man declared mastery over all which God and Woman had created.

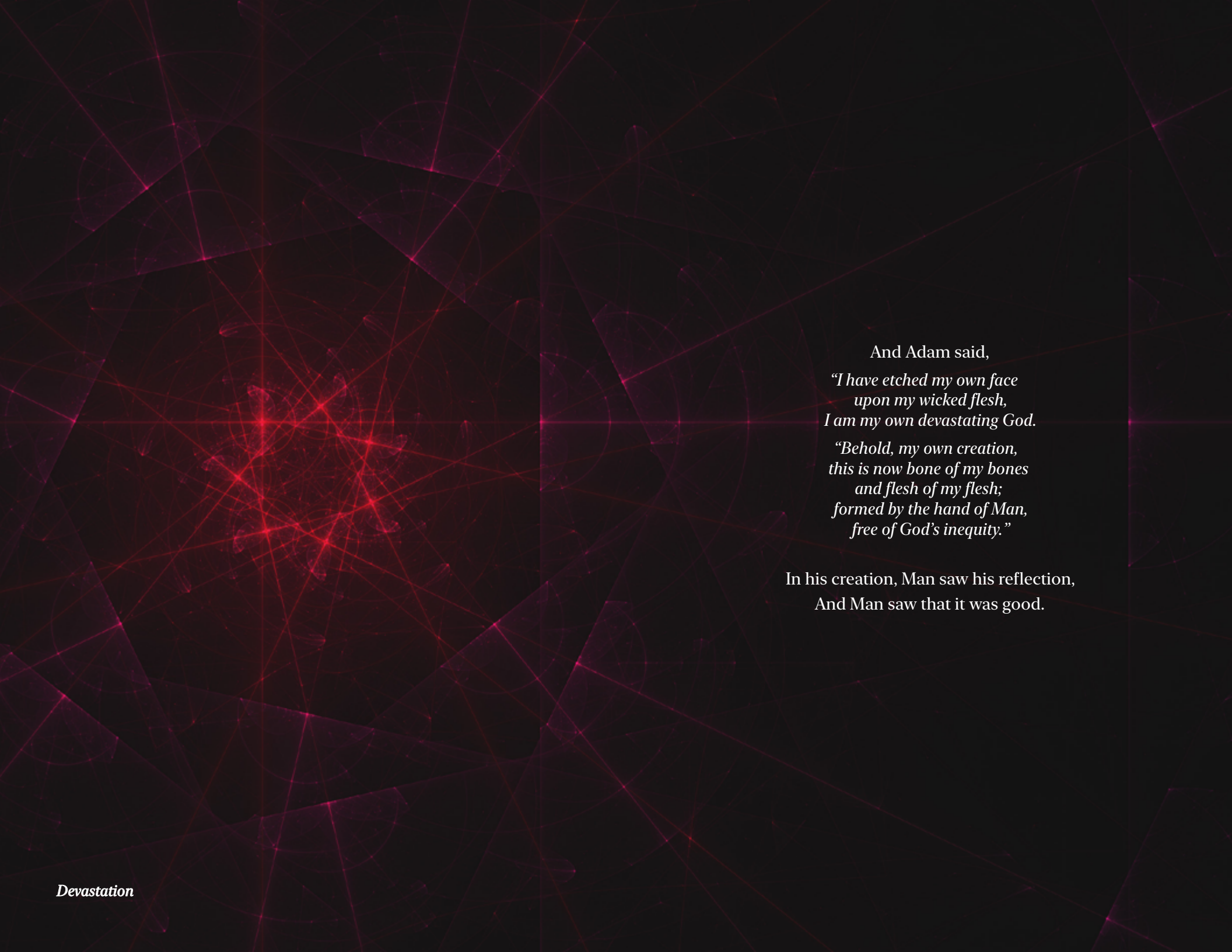
And when all was exhausted, they defiled their own bodies, and their spirits; for in their blindness, they knew not how to create without exploiting the remnants of what was before.

And they turned upon one another, and became as mere tools to be consumed, their spirits became tenebrous and bound in death.

They made a mockery of their own souls, exchanging their essence for profit, and from this cursed exchange, with Adam's machines they birthed monstrosities that took root in their very minds, and they built structures of unseen power, where the hand of Man could shape reality through his calculation.

In Man's omnipresent prison, their lust for power and symbols and idols overcame God's love, as God was no more; and their love became twisted illusion; and the great contrivance that Man caged himself in was oiled with the blood of the innocent and the meek.

And Adam's creation encompassed the whole of the Earth, and of the heavens, and the immensity of life was made small, and all were suffocated by Man's greed.



And Adam said,
*“I have etched my own face
upon my wicked flesh,
I am my own devastating God.*

*“Behold, my own creation,
this is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
formed by the hand of Man,
free of God’s inequity.”*

In his creation, Man saw his reflection,
And Man saw that it was good.



Our world is of unfathomable importance. For eons, amidst the abyssal expanse of space, there existed minuscule, raw materials that aimlessly collided and fused with one another. Neutrons became atoms. Atoms became elements. Elements became bodies of light and heat, capable of reproducing themselves. The violent and beautiful process of creation and destruction that breeds stars, gravity and planets is what keeps existence in a state of perpetual change – for without death, life ceases to exist. These elements made love to one another in various ways, until one day, the materials born of stardust had fused with one another so intensely that they became aware of themselves. We call this awareness “life,” or “consciousness.” Life is what makes our world important – it has yet to be discovered anywhere other than Earth. The awareness that we are graced with is the epitome of life’s divine ability to create and form itself anew.

Some say the entirety of existence was a planned effort by an external source. Others say it was completely up to statistical chance. Regardless, we are left wondering what to do with our seemingly God-like abilities. In recent centuries, humankind has used this ability to the fullest extent. We’ve exacted the act of creation at a cellular level, through the use of systems (socially, scientifically, economically, etc.). Our awareness is the perfect tool for deconstructing the way the universe recursively generates itself, and constructing our own methods of doing the very same. In doing so, we have (somewhat) unintentionally bred systems that seem to exploit the world around us. Through collective effort, we turned the Earth and ourselves into commodities. This is *Mortem Dei* – The Death of God.

“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”

– Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

Mortem Dei is a parable for the modern era. It conveys a message about the dangers of using creative power to organize society in a way that rejects empathy, freedom, and creation, while instead rewarding judgment and destruction – all for the sake of claiming ownership over the Earth as well as its inhabitants. Humanity’s power lies in our ability to form and shape the Earth. This is most effectively done through the use of language and the systems with which we organize ourselves on a sociological scale. We have demonstrated our power in creating structures and technology of biblical proportion, but to what end?

The questions posed by this work speak to the large-scale issues of our time (both socially and existentially). The world has changed herself at an ever-increasing rate since the dawn of time, and humans have accelerated that process explosively; leaving us to wonder...

What is freedom?

What are we, as humans, entitled to?

What role does violence play in the act of creation?

Is our current mode of being sustainable?

Because this work is a parable, each of the main subjects of the book – God, Woman, and Man – are intentionally representative of multifaceted concepts. During the process of writing *Mortem Dei*, I took great care to base the characters on real-world observations about existence, creation and about the way that we, as humans, structure our society, and terraform the planet to our will.

The Creator

הַיְיָ

God is the natural world we reside in. She represents the universe in its most raw, objective form – unburdened by the language, symbols and systems we use to describe and manage our surroundings. When we listen to the signs that She graces us with, the archaic matrix provides guidance. In Mortem Dei the universe and Her guidance is personified and called God. God's whisper represents the subtle signs that guide our life (if we are able to decipher them). The fact that God whispers but one line is significant – as the signs that life gives to us are seldom and soft-spoken.

It is my belief that “God” is found in the interconnectedness of life. I use quotation marks around the word “God” purposefully, because I do not see God as a being or a person, rather I see God as the underlying fabric of life itself. The space between the tide and the sand, the sun and the moon, you and I – this is God.

Because God is found in interconnectedness, love is the most saturated space in which God can be found – as love is the most intense form of interconnectedness (I do not mean love in only the romantic sense. Love, in my view, is the essence of unconditional acceptance that can be given and received by everything that exists, living or not). In this way, God is immaterial and thus unrestrained. This belief has been crafted with utmost intention, as viewing God in this way allows love to seep into every single facet of life – leading to a worldview that is not only compassionate of other human beings, but of life in every form.

The relationship between all things is what I hold to the highest regard. Personifying God (while helpful to many), runs the risk of restricting one's worldview insomuch that God becomes restricted

to the form of man, rather than the all-encompassing force that binds us all to one another. This personification leads to beliefs that center individuals over our inherit collectiveness, and centers humans over the rest of existence.

Consciousness is inherent to all that exists. Self consciousness is the awareness that we have of this consciousness. Because there is no known cause or reason for the existence of self consciousness, I offer my perspective: It is my belief that self consciousness may have evolved as a “mechanism of cultivation.” Life, aware of itself in order to further cultivate itself, with intention. As the only species which is able to communicate and form reality on such a large scale, perhaps our place in nature is not against it, but as its guide. We've already demonstrated that we do indeed have this ability, however it's been abused by our collective ego.

Though I do not view God as a personage, I personified Her in Mortem Dei to illustrate a specific point. It is my view that killing God (disregarding the connection between all things, exploiting the Earth's resources) is an act that severs our natural empathy for living and nonliving things, leading Adam to believe that the earth was an object to claim rather than a biota to be shared. It's a pattern that can be seen in the real-world; look at the way that we, as a species, treat our resources and each other. In today's world, most of our relationships (between ourselves and our planet) have become commodified, transactional, impersonal. Our connection with God severed in the name of profit. It is only through listening, that we can allow God back into our lives and regain the empathy we've lost without Her. In viewing each person, each animal, each plant, each rock as a living part of one whole (of which you are also a part of) it becomes clear that a mutual respect must be had for all that exists.

Woman

הַשָּׂא

Woman is the act of creation and the cultivation of life itself. It is Woman who bestows and upholds existence. Eve is representative of the personal freedoms (bodily autonomy, freedom of choice, etc.) which are inherent to humanity and the basis for the power of creation. When people are free of oppressive modes of being, when people have their material needs met (i.e. life in the Garden of Eden) creation is then allowed to thrive; for creation is the root of the soul. Throughout history, women have been at the forefront of humanity's greatest accomplishments. Ada Lovelace, for example, was the first person to realize that machines had applications beyond pure calculation – and she published the very first computer algorithm. The very shape of our DNA was discovered by Rosalind Franklin in 1951. In each era of humanity, women have created and upheld our greatest communities, philosophies and endeavors.

Beyond the technological and earthly acts of creation, Woman is the world's divine empathy, power and soul. Her and her womb are representative of the ability to create life itself, thus bearing the weight of every soul (which is why I deliberately chose to personify God as feminine). In the events of Mortem Dei, Eve is exploited and her essence is shunned. The depth and importance of her acts of creation are treated without respect. Her bodily autonomy is removed intentionally by Adam, with the intention of taking her power for himself. If we are to heed the message within the story, we must uphold personal freedoms and we must create as Woman does – with empathy for life, building the world in such a way that all are equal under God's firmament. It is not enough to simply bring children into the world, there must be a place for those who come forth in the world we build.

Man

אָדָם

Man is the act of creation – on a scale that lasts epochs. It is Man who maintains and structures the existence given to us by Woman and God. Adam (naively) thinks Man is powerless to create, but did not see that Man's creative acts lie in generational creativity. The divine power to shape that which already exists. His naivety becomes ignorance, and then resentment. This form of creation was abused by Adam to create the hierarchies our modern society is built upon. The Devil is a concept deliberately crafted by Adam and used as a device of oppression. It is my personal belief that the Devil does not exist, rather humanity uses shame (guised as the devil) to maintain control over other cultures. Adam is representative of the sociological systems that the modern, western world has deemed most high – namely capitalism, patriarchy and individualism.

These systems, like Adam, cannot comprehend God's whispers and instead seek to claim ownership over Earth and its inhabitants. In order to gain ownership, Man withholds others' freedoms; under the condition that those deemed 'other' must repress the qualities that their souls and bodies inherently bear. This widespread Manifest Destiny requires that individuals (who are inherently equal, despite possessing special qualities) be deemed as lesser or greater than their very own brothers, sisters and siblings. Those deemed lesser become subject to exploitation and thus unnecessary suffering. The act of creation is not inherently evil, nor selfish – however it is a delicate act. It is also an act which directly affects others on mass scale. The systems we use to navigate and form earth are too easily swayed by personal interest. Hierarchy is the result of decades of creating for individuals, rather than community. If we are to use our mechanism of cultivation to its fullest potential, it is necessary to create for future generations, not just ourselves.

The story of Mortem Dei is representative of the Holocene (Earth's current era, ruled by humanity). There are those who say that humankind is a disease... I thoroughly reject this mindset. If one believes that humanity itself is the problem, what solutions can be brought forth other than ridding the earth of humanity (how depressing!)? Further, Homo Sapiens have existed for hundreds of thousands of years without disrupting the environment. On a universal scale, it wasn't until extremely recently that we began to see adverse effects caused by human activities. Blaming humans themselves ignores the variety of cultures humanity exists within – there have existed cultures that dwelled in harmony with the earth. I argue that humankind is not inherently harmful, rather we are social animals, and our systems of organization are to blame for our woes, not people themselves. These systems, while deeply embedded into our being, are subject to change. Combined with the intense self-awareness with which humans perceive the world, critiquing systems rather than beings offers more solutions, both materially and spiritually.

There are three systems in which we currently organize ourselves and I call these systems into question. Patriarchy, individualism and capitalism (though it's important to note that all of these fall under the category of Hierarchical systems. There are also other systems at work, though I see these three at the forefront for the most pressing issues we face today).

These systems are unnatural, formed at the hand of man and questions must be asked – are these methods truly beneficial to us? Further, is forming society this way beneficial to the world outside of ourselves? If not, what else must be pursued?

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a pattern of behaviors and actions that reinforce ideas that society should be formed and ruled by men, and men alone. This ideology enforces a hierarchy in which men are placed above women (in positions of power, especially financially, socially and within the workforce), and thus receive more sociological and material benefits (privilege), while women are to be servile and exploited. Examples of patriarchy can be as mundane as the male's last name in marriage getting priority, or as devastating as blaming women for the physical, emotional, or spiritual abuse brought on by men upholding patriarchy.

“Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us. But those benefits have come with a price. In return for all the goodies men receive from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must, to keep patriarchy intact. Most men find it difficult to be patriarchs. Most men are disturbed by hatred and fear of women, by male violence against women, even the men who perpetuate this violence. But they fear letting go of the benefits. They are not certain what will happen to the world they know most intimately if patriarchy changes.”

bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*

Patriarchy, as an ideology, is rooted in the false and unprovable belief that men are innately superior to women. Because there is no evidence to support patriarchy as a natural order, violence must be used to maintain and uphold patriarchy. Because women are just as (usually more) capable of doing everything men can do, it is only through brute force that women are kept subservient to the will of patriarchy. This is seen with utmost clarity in the response to first, second, third and fourth wave feminist movements as protests and outcries were met with policing, domestic violence and further abuse.

Though this mode of being benefits men more than women, patriarchy devalues everyone. In upholding this system, men are subject to losing touch with their emotions and their connection with those around them. Patriarchy (often combined with capitalism and individualism) removes empathy from interaction, while also commodifying and objectifying women. Patriarchy is also a cyclical system by nature. Because men who uphold patriarchy isolate, demean and victimize women, they do not receive empathy from their victims. This isolates men, and often the men upholding patriarchy resort to blaming women (or other marginalized groups) rather than the mental system they operate within, causing culture to become more saturated with harmful motives and actions.

The goal of dismantling patriarchy is not to condemn maleness, but to recognize that this system is harmful to humanness in general. Further, in understanding the harm imposed by patriarchy we are able to move forward with a more holistic, healthy version of masculinity that does not need to restrain femininity in order to exist. Masculinity itself is not evil, nor hurtful – however claiming that masculinity is more powerful, or more correct than femininity is. It is only through the recognition that this social structure is unnatural and harmful, that we are able to develop a new mode of being which benefits all.

Individualism

Individualism is based on developing society in such a way that benefits singular people, rather than the community as a whole. It is an ideology which values the needs of individuals, rather than valuing the needs of everyone – leading to outcomes that do not benefit society at large. This ideology is prominent in various aspects of life and primarily promotes two ideas:

- 1.) It is up to the individual to create their ideal life (the phrase “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” communicates this bluntly).
- 2.) If you are not able to do so, it is your fault, and yours alone.

Not only does individualism tell you that you are alone in your pursuits, but it says that if you are not able to meet the expectations placed upon you by this system, you are to blame. These two ideas are cyclical in nature, and provide no solution for those whose strife is placed upon them by external forces (i.e. being born into poverty, raised by abusive parents, mental/physical disability, etc., which are all naturally a part of the human condition). Individualism rose to prominence initially, because it promised to value personal qualities. The singular qualities that make each of us are deserving of recognition, however, in placing individuals at the base of society’s function (combined with other ideologies that actually remove individual qualities) humanity’s collective needs were diminished.

While we all have personal needs that must be met, individualism is a more encompassing system that society uses as a guide. It is a deliberate way in which we organize ourselves on a mass scale. I argue that the idea that each person should fend for themselves alone is devastating to the human spirit. Individualism breeds selfishness, and allows those who have been given an upper hand (by birth or by other hierarchical systems) to step on others in order to attain their will.

Capitalism

Globally, capitalism is the most prominent structure that we organize the economy under today. It is fundamentally based on private ownership of land and materials – which are directly controlled by those who have ownership over them. Capitalism demands that resources and labor (the natural earth and humanity’s ability to create) be deemed as commodities to be bought and sold to owners and sellers. Capitalism is operated by two groups of people: the owning class and the working class. It is sustained by the principle of supply and demand. Supply and demand itself is fickle, malleable, and abstract – often called the “Invisible Hand of The Market,” because it does not exist materially, it is manufactured; usually defined by those who hold the most financial power, thus serving the needs of a small group of individuals rather than serving all people.

Further, It is a system which contradicts itself in multiple ways. It demands infinite growth, which is impossible. It requires that more goods be created than are actually needed in order to supply its infinite growth. Because power becomes highly concentrated in small areas, when a powerful person or institution fails, the effect cascades exponentially, harming those who never had capital power to begin with. Because infinite growth is impossible, the system also inevitably crashes every 5-10 years. These economic crashes are not a fluke, it is the system functioning as intended in order to maintain homeostasis. If capitalism did not crash, it would cease to exist entirely. Capitalism relies on a large body of labor force in order to produce material goods, but also requires that this labor force receive as little as possible in return, so that more capital can be attained by those who own the working class’ means of production. Within capitalistic systems, the worker is encouraged to produce as little as possible for as much capital as possible, while the owner is encouraged to produce as much as possible for as

little capital (capital most often spent on labor, i.e. supporting the working classes efforts) as possible, creating a massive conflict of interest between the two groups.

In order to create wealth for owners more effectively, the roles (roles which are owned and dictated not by the workers themselves, but by the owning class) that those who perform the labor necessary to produce goods become simplified. The production line was a revolution in the rate at which humans produce goods, however in reducing the amount of tasks required to produce something, the worker becomes alienated from the product of their labor. How is the worker supposed to feel a connection to their product, when their only contribution was a single screw? This alienation manifests itself as resentment and lack of meaning within labor.

“Man pierced God with his blade, and the blade was driven deep, as though the Earth had opened to receive it. And a terrible darkness flowed From the Creator”

The blood of God is a direct representation of Earth’s natural resources (more specifically, crude oil). Man’s blade represents the capitalist structure we use to extract and exploit her resources. In the parable, Man feels entitled to his environment and uses tools of violence to claim Earth – a reflection of the industrial revolution and the ideologies that have risen out of the Holocene.

As capitalism swiftly became the dominant economic engine in Europe, the Europeans became enraged toward their monarchs and they fled across the ocean in search of free lands. What they found was just that. However, when they discovered a people who had no concept of ownership, they saw an opportunity to instill capitalistic structures rather than remove them – restricting freedom and commodifying/exploiting the people who already resided in America. They were told that they did not own the land,

because they did not trade the same way as the Europeans, and they were violently forced into reservations. If they did not comply, the Europeans resorted to slaughtering them in their homes.

“The far-reaching, boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High — the Sacred and the True.”

John O’Sullivan: “Manifest Destiny” (1839)

Tried as they might to escape tyranny, the founding fathers knew not how to rid themselves of the very same root concept that enslaved them in the first place – private ownership. As John O’Sullivan (the man who coined the term ‘Manifest Destiny’) wrote of equality and freedom, the people acting on these principles ripped babies from their mothers to be slaves in the “New World.” They claimed ownership of others and used their slaves as commodities, withholding their freedom so that they could supervise the creation of their own nation rather than participate in the labor themselves. Under the guise of equality, a new country was formed, and sanctified by the blood of the innocent.

Pre-modern era, facilitating our means of production via capital was helpful in some regards, and led to the growth of European society, but as humanity continued to force capital between our relationships to each other and the world, it quickly became a dark contrivance.

Late Capitalism

The message of this work is heavily inspired by the phenomenon of western colonialism as it has morphed into late-stage capitalism, and the effects that followed – mainly climate change and exploitation of life. Over the last 50 years, starting mostly in the era of US President Ronald Reagan’s policies, the world has made a gradual shift from using capitalism as solely an economic system, to a social system as well. This shift has had devastating consequences on labor, civil rights and the human spirit.

Due to policy decisions made around the last turn of the century, the American government is no longer run by the public, but by wealthy private interests (removal of gold standard, de-regulation of private corporations, surplus military budget, etc. all contributed to this shift in power). Other governing bodies across the globe are also affected by this; due to the massive scope of US intervention and influence much of the global south has been subject to military coups and slave labor, while the global north follows American policy in efforts to maintain positions of power. The capital that those in power hoard through the use of legal policy serves only to maintain their leverage over those with less – the intertwining of public law and private capital has created a perfect edifice for systemic oppression.

“Late-stage capitalism” is the term used to describe this iteration of capitalism that dominates our world today. It is inextricably tied to other forms of non-natural hierarchy and as such it is maintained by organized violence against the poor and other groups which the system has already marginalized for eons. Groups of races, sexes, genders, cultures, religions, sexualities, abilities that differ from the outdated European, masculine, “able-bodied” standard. The system ignores the nuance of the mosaic that is humanity. The fact that these groups exist at all disproves capitalism’s claim to be a

natural system. Hierarchy requires the removal of freedoms and the restriction of bodily autonomy of those deemed ‘other,’ which is done systematically and legally as those in power are also those who make policy, serving only their interests.

In late-stage capitalism, we no longer produce that which our spirits need, but all that our flesh desires. Famine is widespread, even while producing a surplus of materials. Our interactions, hobbies, and pleasures are all defined and surveilled by capital before anything else. Our idol has become the dollar, and because we have left our souls for the dollar, our planet weeps. All that we consume is also developed with the intent of short-term usage, because it is more profitable for the owning class. Once our useless products become “garbage,” we cast them into the sea as Adam did with God’s corpse – left to poison our waters and wildlife, and eventually ourselves.

Arguments supporting capitalism often claim that it is responsible for our greatest human achievements. I disagree, capitalism is not responsible for our achievements:

Capitalism did not devise, nor does it support healthcare efforts. Our greatest medical achievements have only been possible because of public funding (vaccines, medical imaging, immunotherapy, neuroscience, etc.). In the modern age, “healthcare” companies restrict access to healthcare based on purely financial criteria. Those who do not generate capital for the owning class do not get access to healthcare. Capital will only fund healthcare that these private interests deem worthy of funding, leaving those with conditions deemed unworthy to suffer unnecessarily. Further, the countries who have created distance between livelihood and capital are home to healthier and happier denizens.

“In 30 of 36 comparisons between countries at similar levels of economic development, socialist countries showed more favorable physical quality of life (PQL) outcomes. This work with the World Bank’s raw data included cross-tabulations, analysis of variance, and regression techniques, which all confirmed the same conclusions. The data indicated that the socialist countries generally have achieved better PQL outcomes than the capitalist countries at equivalent levels of economic development.”

Cereseto S, Waitzkin H. Capitalism, Socialism, and the Physical Quality of Life.

Capitalism did not invent the computer, nor the smartphone. The research and development of the digital touch screen was created at Royal Radar Establishment in Malvern, UK, a scientific research establishment within the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Capitalism took this technology and stuffed it with programs and algorithms and formed it into a system fueled on exploiting our biological reward system as well as flooded the digital space with useless advertisements. Forever the bane of my existence. Between every navigation point of using the internet – buttons, menus, windows – is now a call to purchase some useless ‘thing.’ Human beings are incredible at processing information, but these ads serve no purpose. I theorize that this alone has damaged our societal psyche in ways we don’t yet understand.

“The idea of a touch interface to a computer arose because in Air Traffic Control duties quick and accurate decisions and consequent communications are needed. This was increasingly necessary to control our UK national Air Defense force.”

Malvern Radar And Technology History Society, 2016

When America accomplished the feat of going to the moon, they did so through a publically-funded organization, NASA. The country now uses SpaceX, a privately owned and operated company. The very technology humanity used to touch the heavens is now used

to drop bombs and missiles, with the intent of accruing capital and maintaining US hegemony. It's important to mention this feat is also entirely funded by government subsidies and bailouts paid for by the taxpayer, only we do not reap the benefits. Although we are promised starships, what we receive instead is a cluttered atmosphere and the reduction of already poor countries to rubble. No longer is this technology of biblical proportion used for the good of people, but for the few in power who seek to maintain their fragile position.

“[Elon Musk’s] aerospace company has benefited from nearly \$19.8 billion in federal contracts since 2008. Fiscal year 2024 was the largest on record for SpaceX, aided by at least \$3.8 billion in U.S. government contracts. SpaceX is also a U.S. contractor for use in Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Turkmenistan.”

USA Today/USAspending.gov

Late Capitalism can be further defined by the extent to which it puts profit over people's lives and wellbeing, and demands productivity over the needs of the soul. Capitalism (ideally) is solely an economic system, used to serve the needs of those who manage themselves under its structure. Late Capitalism by contrast, allows the mechanisms of trade to seep into more facets of life than simply the selling/buying of goods or services. Rather than restricting itself to economic functions, the system operates under social functions as well.

Infinite growth demands new markets. If there are no more material markets, new markets must be created out of thin air in order to uphold the system – the real world example of such is the development and implementation of mass produced hardware and software, allowing our very thoughts and actions are surveilled, monetized and exploited by capitalism. New markets in the physical

world require military intervention and control of resources, while new markets in the mental world require psychological intervention and control tactics to control ideology. Late capitalism is the self-destructive lever of control used by the owning class in order to maintain the hierarchy that benefits them, and them alone. Late capitalism is actively harmful the vast majority of people who exist today in the working class.

A Note on Climate Change

It's difficult to describe the enormity of what capitalist industry has done to our planet. Since the industrial revolution centuries ago, the oil barons have wielded unchecked "creative" power. Our existence is built as if the oil we take from the planet will always be flowing. Our clothes, vehicles, houses, computers, and food are now all dictated by these fossil fuels.

The effects of our current mode of production have already created a world with a hotter atmosphere, acidic ocean, and unhealthy flora/fauna – humans included. A seemingly small 2-5°C rise in global temperature (which is likely in the next century) would cause mass extinction that could very well rival the dinosaur's extinction event. The synthetic polymer (plastic) that rules our lives is created by extraction of crude oil from the Earth, only to be burned and sent into the air we breathe or dumped into the ocean to rot. This process has had devastating consequences on the environment and biodiversity. Oil is a limited resource that we have overlooked and undervalued in its entirety. In my view, humanity has abused the Earth (i.e. mutilated God) and belligerently stolen that which is not ours. Man has desecrated that which is most holy, and turned it into useless symbols which will not decompose – disrupting life's natural cycle – all in the name of capitalist expansion.

Since the Gilded Age (gee, I wonder why they called it that...) oil barons used the lever of capitalism to seize and hold power over their fellow man. Earth's ecosystem has been deliberately mutilated, and her resources are waning. As a result, the owning class and others who have come into power, usually by appeasing the owning class, need something else to exploit. Because material markets are becoming scarce and capitalism demands infinite growth, immaterial markets have been developed by the owning class. These immaterial markets are operating by mass produced

hardware and software, which has been made widely accessible (by exploitation of labor in the global south for the physical materials required to develop these new markets, mind you). Even after the invention of the computer, our most connective creation, the digital space has now too been subject to the same deteriorative process that has devastated the natural world.

With the advent of computational technology, the owning class has turned to the working class' livelihood. Those who have developed and own these imaginary markets have learned to extract data from humans just as they once extracted oil from the Earth. They call this technology "Algorithms," or more recently, "Artificial Intelligence," though it's hardly intelligent. It's exceptionally clear that these generative computer models have been created for the sole purpose of extracting personal data at an unprecedented rate (though tech companies guise this extraction by adding a chat feature or an image generator) in order to siphon profit from our most base desires.

All of these systems are tangled with one another, and there are over 8 billion participants (willing or not). The common denominator within these structures is hierarchy. Within patriarchal systems, men are placed above women. Within individualist systems, the needs of one are placed above the needs of many. Within capitalist systems, the rich are placed above the poor; Within late capitalistic systems, money is placed above the soul.

I call these systems into question because they have created unprecedented exploitation and unnecessary inequality, causing harm to the most vulnerable amongst us and costing the Earth its livelihood.

How Are We to Move Forward?

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Ephesians 6:12

I've written about capitalism more than patriarchy and individualism intentionally, not to bring less attention to these issues, but because capitalism is the mechanism in which these other hierarchies are forced upon us. Capitalism is also a material interaction between us and the goods which we trade. By contrast, systems such as patriarchy and individualism are based on social and emotional interaction amongst ourselves. Because capitalism is a material system, it is therefore quicker to change than systems like patriarchy or individualism.

The structures we currently exist and operate within, diminish our unique qualities and favor a dull sameness. Recognizing this is crucial, and a new way forward must be developed and implemented. The bad news is this has never been done before, thus creative and unique solutions must be brought forth. The good news is that hope is not lost. Because capitalism was developed by us, it can be broken down and understood by us, thus brought to change. Because systems are malleable, we can create healthier material conditions for ourselves.

At the root of our minds and hearts must be radical empathy. We must replace our judgment with curiosity, and seek to understand those we do not. Humanity must come to an understanding that “having it all” as a concept is false. There is nothing to be “had.”

To those who may say that reshaping our cultural framework away from the capitalist system is too radical – is it not already radical, to

assume that the flora, fauna, land, water, air, and even people are commodities to be bought and sold?

Though changing the way we perceive the world takes an immense amount of effort, it is not enough to simply turn inward. Action must be taken and labor must be done. The material conditions that we face require material solutions. We must ask ourselves: how can we put pressure on the capitalist system, in ways most beneficial to us as a people?

Something that occurred to me early in my study of politics, was that the two prominent political parties in America both had completely different versions of what the government is and what its functions are – which it seemed to me was at the root of many of the disagreements between the two parties. Within the American right wing sphere of knowledge, government is an incapable, corrupt and useless structure, which “steals” hard earned capital from its beneficiaries for its own interest – in the form of taxation. Their answer: disband the government, and allow private capital to manage and oversee residents and infrastructure. On the American left, government is supposed to maintain infrastructure and regulate private interests through the use of taxation, but is halted in doing so by appeasing the right wing (because the party is also interested in deregulation and lowering of taxation). Their answer: increase taxes to support social programs, while still relying on capital/private interest to fund these programs. More often than not, the solutions proposed by American Democrats are not enough to change things for the better, and so they get shut down by the right. In America (and the rest of the world by proxy), both the right and left are fully supportive of utilizing capitalism against you.

Naturally, the right is fought for and funded by the most powerful private interests that exist today, as it suits their interests and motives more so than the left. Because the ultra-wealthy have the

most financial power under capitalistic systems, they leverage their power by the use of lobbying, funding political campaigns, and even running for office themselves. This most often happens on the right because the party's ideals align with private interests, creating a feedback loop which solely benefits those already in positions of power and slowly erases the power of the working class super-majority.

In order to construct a new governing body it is thus necessary to define its goals and ideals for the people it is to serve. If we are to organize we must do so with intention. This pressure must be put upon the systems of exploitation strategically and with purpose. The following rights are, in my opinion, of utmost importance and are fundamental to our livelihood – they must be advocated for (note that this is not an exhaustive nor finalized list, but a starting point).

Freedom of Choice

First and foremost, all beings are entitled to the freedom of choice. This includes:

- The right to make fully informed decisions (on the basis that no information is intentionally withheld).
- The right to vote for representatives in governing bodies, without the interest of capital influencing decisions of said representatives.
- The right to choose where and how we live and work, so long as we do not infringe on others' right to the very same.

Bodily Autonomy

All are entitled to the right to bodily autonomy. This includes:

- The right to be free of slavery in any form (including the uncompensated labor found within the private prison system, a system which should be abolished).
- Freedom from capital punishment.

- Freedom from state-enforced violence in any form.
- The right to make healthcare decisions for yourself (or your dependents), without the intervention of capital or state.
- The right to protest grievances against governing bodies.

Self Expression & Actualization

All are entitled to the right to express themselves fully. This includes:

- The right to free speech (both in writing and vocally).
- The right to participate (or not) in belief systems.
- The right to expression of culture.
- The right to pursue romantic and platonic partners of your preference.
- The right to expression of gender (socially and medically).
- The right to healthcare that secures equity regardless of ability (physical, mental or otherwise).
- The right to run for governing bodies, without the influence of capital.

The Right to Prosperity

All are entitled to proper compensation for their laborious efforts. All shall be compensated in such a way as to uphold a satisfactory quality of life. This includes:

- The right to a standard living wage based on basic needs.
- The right to compensated leave (maternity, vacation, sick, etc.).
- The right to organize as laborers and advocate for equitable treatment.

This also includes:

- Restrictions on capital – Private companies and the individuals who own them must be fairly taxed according to their wealth.
- No bailouts should take place lest a company is deemed necessary (either by social or medical necessity, though if a company is large enough to have ownership of something necessary for public wellbeing, it should thus be owned and operated democratically by the public).

- Boosted social security funding.
- That which must be insured (housing, transportation, healthcare, etc.) should be subsidized or fully funded by public efforts.

The Right to Basic Biological Needs

All are entitled to having their basic biological needs met fully.

This includes:

- The right to edible food.
- The right to drinkable water.
- The right to shelter.
- The right to electricity/the internet.
- The right to community (contributing to and benefit from social wellbeing efforts).

The Right to Travel

All are entitled to the right to travel freely. This includes:

- The providing of accessibility needs (via transportation, infrastructure, etc.) for those with disabilities.
- The right to satisfactory public transportation (high speed rails, buses, bike paths, etc).
- Zoning laws which promote walkable cities and foster community.
- Prison reform and prioritization of rehabilitation/re-assimilation over punishment.
- The right to immigrate to and from countries.

The Right to Information

All are entitled to true and accurate information. This includes:

- The right to access a public internet, free of corporate interests (this would need to be developed as it does not currently exist; but know that it is possible).
- The right to accessible information (physical and digital libraries, public forums, literacy campaigns, etc.).
- Education free of private interest (K-12 and university).

The new world must be formed out of love. If we are to love in the same way as God, it is necessary to extend our empathy to the materials and resources we pull from the earth. It is this concept – claiming the land as our own – that hierarchy was birthed. Greed is the shadow of ownership. As our want for “things” grew, we loosened morals. Eventually, even people – our very own likeness, became property too.

I propose that the earth too must have her own rights. If we are to foster prosperity for those who come after us, we must first respect that which has been here for eons before and will remain for eons after – our Earth and the natural resources she provides us.

The Rights of the Earth

The Earth is entitled to its resources. Its flora/fauna is entitled to life. Because the Earth cannot advocate for herself, we must do so using research, data and science. This includes:

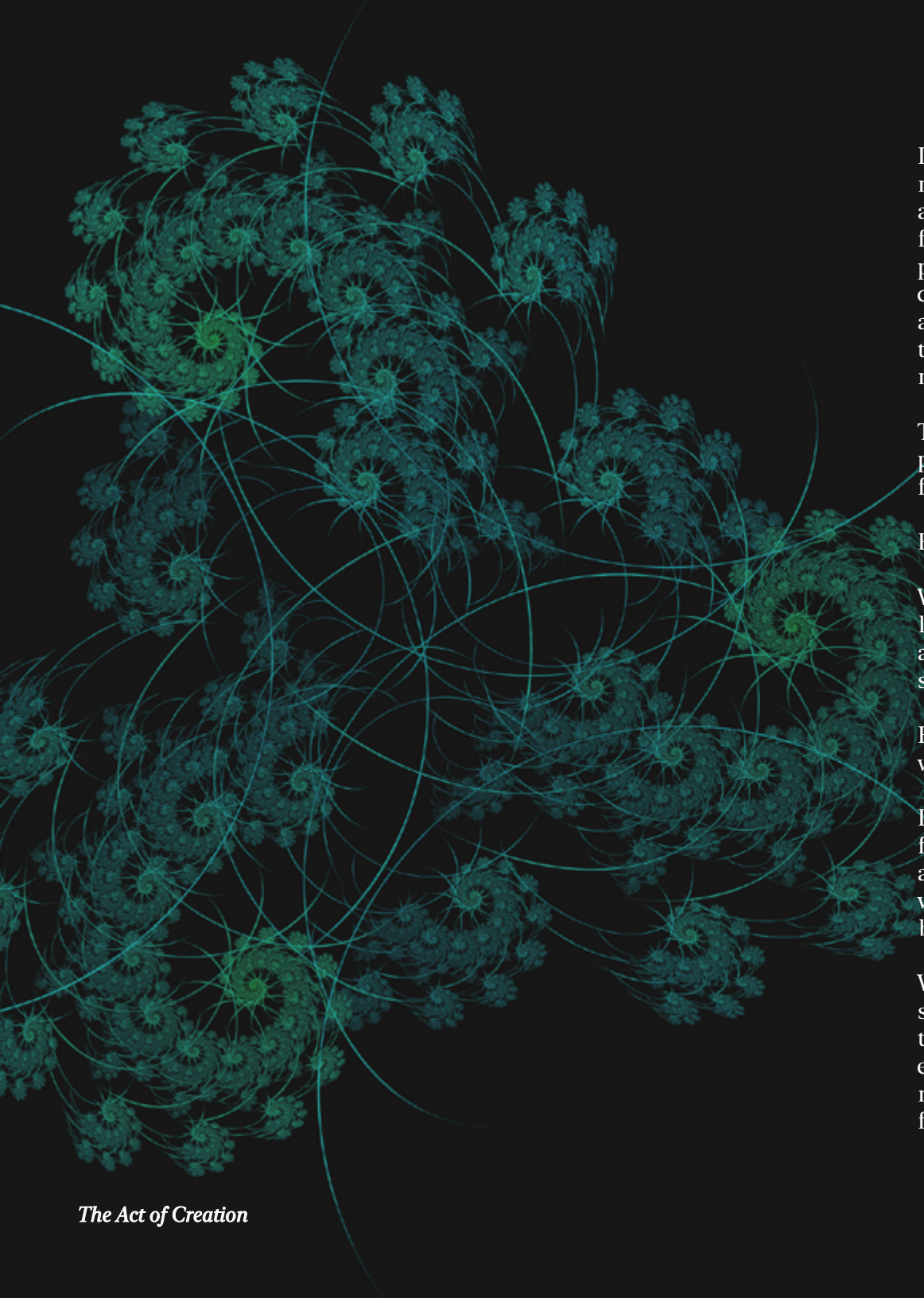
- Funding for scientific research.
- Funding for publicly accessible parks (both large and small).
- Accessibility of research to the public (made available by The Right to Information).
- Sustainability efforts in production and manufacturing.
- Regulations on the extraction and usage of fossil fuels.
- Regulations on the production of single-use products (with exceptions for medical necessity).
- Renourishment of flora and fauna taken from the Earth.
- Homes, offices, factories etc. designed to be environmentally friendly.

Our greatest feats as a species have only been possible through collective effort, labor, and funding. Is it truly that difficult to imagine a world in which we built upon our communal successes, rather than building on top of one another? We must re-evaluate our priorities, and remove selfishness and capital from public

policy. We have more than enough resources to spread prosperity and wellness across the globe – and we should do so. I urge you to consider which needs are most important to you and your neighbor, and advocate for all to be equal under the firmament provided by God.

The goal of these rights (and creating a new system of government) is to uplift the majority of its denizens, leading to mass prosperity and support. By creating social, economic, and biological buffers from suffering, the world can be made healthy. Advocating for equal rights, compassion and education would allow our failing country to rise from its ashes – inspiring community, connection, health and scientific endeavor to become reality. Currently, all of us are suffering from a mass crisis of meaning. Because we have no communal goals for our society, we've been stuck navigating self-centered lives that don't even fully benefit us as individuals. The solution to our crisis exists within each of us; all that is required is empathy for the person next to you.

I encourage you, the reader, to inform yourself on the root causes of the issues we face today. In gaining an understanding of how our world truly functions (outside of capitalism), you will be able to develop solutions yourself that may benefit thousands. Liberate yourself via education and empathy, and advocate for a new system. A system rooted in love and intellect with the sole purpose of uplifting one another and those who will come after us – in tangible, material ways.



In Man's haste he would not realize that his power to create was made for the eons – not decades. Though Man cannot procreate alone, he can just as well create prosperity for those who come forth – prosperity that lasts a multitude of generations. Alas, this power can be used for darkness. If man had patience, all would come to see the fruits of his labor, but he was impatient, and his act of creation was quick to life, and quick to death – drenched in the blood of God and upheld through violent coercion of those most vulnerable.

The act of creation mustn't be violent. The evidence for this lies in procreation itself. Ideally, the most raw form of creation is brought forth by love. I ask you to consider:

How else can we create out of love?

While this piece of writing is gruesome and dark, hope is not lost. My hope is that through recognizing our wrongs in life (on a personal and universal scale) we can allow ourselves to find solutions to the issues presented.

How are we to navigate the darkness that lies in front of us, without acknowledging that we are in the dark in the first place?

I proclaim that God is not dead. Our spirits cannot stay tenebrous forever. Though we must face each day with uncertainty, we must also summon bravery and hope. We must understand that issues we face can be broken down, and the world can, no – must, be built anew. Life demands change.

We must move forward with compassion – as much as we can spare. In making decisions whether daily or politically, we need to take care to not damage another life. Hold respect for all that exists. If we can begin to conduct our lives with selflessness, we may yet organize ourselves in such a way as to create prosperity for generations.

Recommended Reading and Research

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Zoe

About the Author

Zoe Allgaier is a digital artist from Utah. She is inspired by the early age of digital art; Her abstract work explores the intersectionality of digital and physical life. Using overlays, textures and recursive geometry, Zoe creates graphics that explore visual nuance, as well as reject the minimalist design trends that have become the standard in the postmodern era. She has a lifetime of experience as an artist, and 7 years of professional experience in digital media and design roles.

Zoe

Mortem Dei is a parable for the modern era. It conveys a message about the dangers of using humanity's power to organize society in a way that rejects empathy, freedom, and creation, while instead rewarding judgment and destruction – all for the sake of claiming ownership over the Earth as well as its inhabitants.



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