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The Flow of All Things is dedicated to all those who have suffered and to all those who are currently suffering.

The Flow of All Things

The Newborn grew out of the universe much like everything else throughout time. Vulnerable and unaware of itself, the Newborn fitted in with the rest of life, resonating love to all beings everywhere whilst feeling its own presence. The Newborn, like all other life forms, was the beginning, the middle and the end, nothing and everything all at once.

Gradually, the Baby developed its senses: seeing lights, hearing sounds, touching surfaces, tasting flavors and smelling scents, experiencing life. Everything was something new, something different to play with. Everything was beautiful.

But then the Baby produced its first thought, *Mom*, and impulsively spoke the word that came to mind. The Baby's Mother and Father turned in amazement and asked their child to utter the word again. And the Baby did. The Mother and Father were elated, laughing and embracing each other whilst the Baby instinctively giggled and occasionally repeated the word, "Mom," to witness its parent's response and playfully prolong the celebration. But without realizing it, this was the dawn of the Baby's demise. This was the moment the Baby's innocence was corrupted.

I came out from behind the tree, ran down the dirt road and looked under the gigantic rock formation, but nothing was there. And so, I turned around and kept searching. But there was nothing.

Later, I was eating with Mum and Dad.

"How was the big game?" Mum asked me.

"Terrible," I replied.

"Oh? What happened?"

“I couldn’t find them.”

“It’s a game. We don’t always win games.”

“Why not?”

“There are always winners and losers. That’s how games are played.”

“But why can’t we all be winners?”

“Because then no one would play the game.”

“I think we should all be winners.”

“You’ll get them next time.”

I stopped eating and looked away from Mum.

But then Mum leaned towards me, gave me a kiss on my forehead and started to tickle my belly.

I couldn’t help but laugh.

And eventually, Mum stopped, with a smile and started to eat her dinner again.

I smiled back and also started to eat again.

I was sitting in class, watching the rain outside form two puddles.

“Am I boring you?” my Teacher asked me.

I just kept watching the rain.

“...Have you solved the first problem?” my Teacher inquired.

“No,” I answered.

“Why not?”

I turned and read the problem.

“...A lady has five apples and then buys another two apples,” my Teacher said. “How many apples does the lady have now?”

Seven apples. I know that. But it doesn’t feel right. Is it seven apples?

“...I don’t know,” I answered.

“You don’t know?” my Teacher asked.

I looked towards the rain again.

“...I’ll make it easier for you,” my Teacher said. “What is five plus two?”

I kept watching the rain.

“...Five apples plus two apples?” my Teacher asked.

I just kept watching the rain fall, one raindrop at a time and slowly, my attention drifted towards the two puddles, only to notice that the two puddles had merged into one.

Wait.

“...Seven apples,” my Teacher said. “The lady now has seven apples.”

“No, she doesn’t,” I responded.

My Teacher kept looking back at me.

The other students in the class turned to face me.

“...The puddle,” I said.

“What about the puddle?” my Teacher asked.

“The puddle was two puddles before. But now the two puddles are one puddle.”

“What’s your point?”

“How come there aren’t more puddles? Doesn’t one plus one always equal two?”

“...You’re using the wrong measurement. When you measure liquids, you have to use volume. When you measure solids, you have to use units.”

“Why?”

“Excuse me?”

“Why is it like that?”

“Because it is.”

“But why?”

“Because volume is for liquids and units are for solids.”

“But why can’t I use units for liquids?”

“Because you can’t.”

“Why?”

“Because volume is for liquids and units are for solids.”

“But why?”

“Because volume is for liquids and units are for solids!”

Everyone fell silent, as my Teacher and I stopped, looking back at each other.

And then, gradually, a few of the students started to laugh at our Teacher.

“Quiet!” our Teacher shouted.

Our Teacher looked around the class, staring us all down, before turning to me.

“Do you want to see the Head Teacher?” my Teacher asked me.

“No,” I replied.

“Good. Now, do your work.”

My Teacher turned around and wrote down more problems for us to solve.

The rest of the class moaned.

But I smiled.

Not everything is what it seems.

I was with Mum and Dad when I told them about what happened in class.

“Are you mad at me?” I asked them.

“No,” Dad answered. “You were just curious. But you shouldn’t stand up to your Teacher like that, even if your Teacher is wrong.”

“Why is that?”

“People don’t like to feel embarrassed. You can understand why.”

“Did my Teacher feel embarrassed?”

“That’s not our place to say. Also, try to pay attention in class. We don’t want your lessons to go to waste.”

“Ok.”

“...Is there anything else I can help you with?”

“...Yes.”

“And what is that?”

“What does curious mean?”

“It’s when someone likes to...seek answers to questions.”

“I’m a seeker then?”
“That’s correct. A little seeker.”
“I am a little seeker.”

I found my Teacher looking over notes for our class and approached my Teacher.

My Teacher looked up at me.
“...What is it?” my Teacher asked.
“...I’m sorry,” I said.
“For what?”
“For yesterday.”
“...We’ll see.”
“...I’m sorry, what do you mean?”
“I mean, we’ll see if you live up to your apology.”

I kept looking back at my Teacher until I eventually turned around and sat down.

I was walking home, when a student from my class ran up beside me.

“Where are you going?” the student asked me.
“Home,” I answered.
“Why are you going home?”

I looked back at the student.
And the student kept looking back at me.

“What is it?” I asked.
“What is what?” the student replied.
“Why are you looking at me like that?”

“Looking at you like what? I’m not doing anything wrong.”

I continued to look back at the student.
But the student wouldn’t look away.
And so, I started to walk faster.

But the student started to walk faster too, quickly walking up alongside me.

“...Why are you rushing?” the student asked me.
“I’m not,” I answered.

“Yes, you are.”

The student stepped in front of me.

And so, I stopped, looking back at the student.

And then, eventually, the student took a small step toward me.

I took a small step back.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

And then, suddenly, the student punched me in my stomach.

I curled up, wrapping my arms around my stomach.

“Why did you do that?” I asked.

The student pushed me to the ground and kicked my stomach.

I grasped for breath and tried to pick myself up.

The student just watched me.

“Why are you hurting me?” I asked.

“...If you tell anyone about this, I’ll hurt you more,” the student said.

And then the student ran off and left me in pain.

I walked down another path, with my right arm over my stomach, while still wincing at the pain.

Why did that Bully hurt me? Was it something I did? Something I said? It must have been. Why would that Bully have picked me?

I came to a stop and noticed that there were two paths before me.

“...You seem lost,” a voice echoed.

I jumped back and quickly turned around, only to find a homeless person, sitting on the ground, casually looking back at me.

“Are you lost?” the homeless person asked me.

I froze, staring back at the homeless person.

“I can help you,” the homeless person said.

“...I’m ok,” I answered.

I hesitantly turned around and looked back at the two

paths before me.

“...Are you hurt?” the homeless person asked me.

“...Are you hurt?”

I turned back to the homeless person.

“Huh?” I responded.

“Are you hurt?” the homeless person asked again.

“...If you're hurt, I can help.”

I just kept looking back at the homeless person.

But then the homeless person stood up and started to walk towards me.

I instinctively turned around and just ran down the first path.

“Wait!” the homeless person shouted.

But I just kept running and running and running and after some distance, I looked over my shoulder to find no one behind me.

That homeless person must have given up.

I continued my way down the path, only to realize that the path was starting to stray away.

What do I do? Keep walking down the path that I'm on? Or walk towards home? I don't know.

I began to cry. But the sadness quickly passed and I took a step towards home.

I've come this far and am not home yet, so why don't I just walk towards home?

And so, I continued my way towards home, occasionally making my way around large logs and moving heavy rocks, but eventually, finding my way back home.

I entered and Mum and Dad ran towards me and clung onto me.

“What happened to you?” Mum asked frantically. “Are you ok? Are you hurt?”

“I'm fine,” I answered.

“What happened to you?” Dad asked.

What do I say? If I tell Mum and Dad about the Bully, then the Bully might find out and hurt me again.

But I can't lie. Lying is wrong. So, what do I do...? I can't lie.

So, I told Mum and Dad what happened.

I walked to class with Dad and pointed the Bully out to him.

Later, I was heading home, consistently looking over my shoulder, until I was alone and took a deep sigh.

I made it.

But then, suddenly, the Bully jumped out of nowhere and pulled me to the ground.

“You told on me!” the Bully screamed.

I quickly placed my hand on the back of my head and then looked back at my hand, only to realize the blood that was dripping down my fingers. I pressed my hand over the wound.

“You won't even deny it,” the Bully said.

What do I say? What do I say? I don't know.

The Bully took a step forward.

I jolted back, turned around and pushed off in the other direction.

But the Bully quickly grabbed me, held me to the ground and raised a fist in the air.

“You did this,” the Bully said.

“Violence always comes back onto those who commit violent acts,” a voice suddenly interjected.

The Bully and I turned to the voice.

It was the homeless person, standing a few steps away from us with a smile.

“...And therefore, violence never solves one's problems,” the homeless person concluded.

“What do you know?” the Bully asked the homeless person.

“Nothing. Nothing at all.”

“Then you can leave.”

The Bully stood up and turned towards the homeless person.

“I very well can,” the homeless person said. “But I think I’ll stay.”

“No!” the Bully lashed out. “You have to leave.”

“I don’t have to do anything. And you don’t have to do anything also. You don’t have to hurt anyone or anything.”

“Go away!”

“Why?”

“Just go away!”

“Why should I?”

“Because I said so.”

“Why should I do as you say?”

“Because I said so.”

“And why should I do as you say?”

“Because...”

Tears started to stream down the Bully’s face and so, the Bully looked away to hide the tears.

“You have nothing to be ashamed of,” the homeless person said to the Bully. “Many of us experience fear when we look deep into the eyes of the unknown. The lesson is not to let fear drive you to hate, but to let fear be a reason to love.”

Wow. Let fear be a reason to love. I really like that. I really, really like that.

I eventually faced the Bully.

And then the Bully turned around and faced me.

“It’s okay,” I said to the Bully. “...It’s okay.”

The Bully’s eyes widened and eventually, the Bully looked back to the homeless person.

The homeless person just looked back at the Bully.

And then the Bully shed a few more tears, turned around and stormed off.

Then the homeless person faced me.

“...Are you hurt?” the homeless person asked me.

What do I say? I shouldn't talk to strangers.

But then this stranger helped me.

"Can I see your wound?" the homeless person asked me.

I carefully took my hand away from my sore.

The homeless person looked at my head.

"Does your head hurt?" the homeless person asked me.

I nodded.

"...I can help you if you want," the homeless person said.

"...Where?" I asked.

The homeless person pointed in the same direction I was headed.

"A little down that way," the homeless person answered.

"...I don't think I should," I said. "My Mum told me not to go anywhere with a stranger."

"That's wise of your mother to say."

Then the homeless person giggled.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It's going to be difficult for me to go anywhere with you."

"Why?"

"Because I am a stranger to all."

"What do you mean?"

"I have no name."

"What do you mean, 'you have no name?'"

"I was never given a name."

"Your Mum and Dad never gave you a name?"

"My Mum and Dad weren't around."

"Why?"

"Lack of appreciation."

"What does that mean?"

"It's when someone doesn't recognize the good things in life. In a way, it is the foundation for all of the problems we make for ourselves."

Lack of appreciation is the foundation for all of the problems we make for ourselves. I don't get it, but it feels right.

"...We should get you home," the homeless person said.

And so, I stood up, tidied myself and began walking with the homeless person following me from a distance.

I would occasionally look over my shoulder and see the homeless person keeping the same distance.

I'm going to be ok. There have been so many chances for this stranger to hurt me and yet, this stranger hasn't done anything to hurt me. I'll be ok.

How can this stranger go around without a name? It must be difficult. This stranger has to have a name.

I turned around and waved my hand to the homeless person.

The homeless person walked up alongside me.

"Why don't you give yourself a name?" I asked the homeless person.

"But I don't want a name," the homeless person answered.

"Why don't you want a name?"

"Because if I have a name, then others will reduce me to an impression."

"What do you mean?"

"When you have a name, others think of you as your name. And I don't want that."

"Why?"

"Because we are not our names."

"Then what are we?"

"So much more. And those who have names are reduced to their name."

"So, it's not good to have a name?"

"I think so."

"Then I don't have a name."

“You don’t have to give up your name because I don’t have one. You should do what you want to do.”

I should do what I want to do.

But what do I want to do? I don’t know.

“...I don’t know what I want to do,” I said to the homeless person.

“None of us really do,” the homeless person responded.

“None of us?”

“No one.”

“Why?”

“Because we can’t know what we really want. We can realize what we want to a degree. For example, right now, I realize that I want to walk and talk with you. But we can’t know what we really want. We can’t know what we absolutely desire.”

“Why can’t we?”

“Because we are not our names. When we pretend to be our names, we believe we know what we really want. But because we are not our names, we don’t know what we really want. And we never can.”

But how does not being our names mean that we don’t know what we really want? This is confusing.

“...Did I confuse you?” the homeless person asked me.

“Yes,” I answered.

“Try this exercise then. Go to someone you know and ask them, ‘what do you really want?’ They’ll either tell you that they don’t know what they really want or they’ll tell you what they believe they really want. And if they tell you what they believe they really want, ask them, ‘why do you really want that?’ If they then give you a reason, ask them again, ‘why do you want that?’ And if they give you a follow up reason, ask them again, ‘why do you want that?’ And if they give you another follow up reason, ask them again, ‘why do you want that?’ And don’t stop asking, ‘why do you want that?’, and eventually, you’ll begin to

understand.”

“Understand what?”

“Understand that none of us can know what we really want.”

“Ok, I’ll try it.”

We continued down the path.

I’ll try the stranger’s exercise. But how will I begin to understand that none of us can know what we really want? I don’t know. I’ve just got to try the stranger’s exercise.

It’s still odd to say that we are not our names. And since we are not our names, what should we call each other? What should I call this stranger? I don’t know. I should ask.

“...Since we are not our names, what should I call you?” I asked the homeless person.

“You don’t have to call me anything,” the homeless person chuckled.

“Why?”

“If you start calling me by something, then to you, I’ll be what you call me, similar to if you gave me a name.”

“And you want to be more?”

“No, not exactly. I am everything. And so are you. And so is everyone else. We are all everything, only we’re pretending we’re not.”

We are all everything? What does that mean? I am so confused.

“...Think of it as a big game,” the homeless person said. “We’re all playing this game, where we all pretend we are somebody, when we’re not anybody. We’re all only pretending.”

A game. A game that we’re all playing. I get that. But how do we win the game?

“How do we win the game?” I asked the homeless person.

“The outcome of the game doesn’t matter,” the homeless person answered. “Whether you win or lose is

beside the point.”

“Then why play the game?”

“Because we like to play the game. We like getting absorbed in the game and seeing who wins and who loses, even though it doesn’t matter who wins and who loses.”

We like playing the game.

“And it is important to realize that we like to play the game, just as it is important to realize that we are playing the game,” the homeless person said.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because when we are not aware that we are playing a game, we might do things that we don’t mean to do, like that child who hurt you.”

We might hurt each other.

And we shouldn’t hurt each other. It’s a game. And games should be fun. Playing is fun. I do like to win. And I do forget that I’m playing a game when I try to win. But it’s the playing that’s fun. And we should just play. Have fun. Stop trying to win. Yeah, I like that. I really like that.

But if it’s fun to play the game, then why isn’t the stranger playing the game?

“If we like playing the game, then why don’t you play the game?” I asked the homeless person.

“What makes you think I’m not?” the homeless person asked me.

“Because...you don’t have a name.”

“Very good. I don’t have a name, but some think of me as the Sage.”

I continued walking with the Sage, until we eventually arrived at a house and the Sage faced me.

“Are you sure you don’t want someone to fix your wound?” the Sage asked me.

Can I trust the Sage? The Sage is still a stranger.

But my head is hurting.

I think I can trust the Sage. Ok. Let’s go.

And so, I nodded my head and went with the Sage towards the house.

We continued towards the house, when suddenly, a Healer came out of the house with a smile and open arms.

“Hey,” the Healer said.

“Hey,” the Sage replied.

“How are you these days?”

“Amazing. And you?”

“Great that you’re here.”

“I have someone that requires your services.”

“Oh? What happened?”

“This one got a bump on the head.”

“How did that happen?”

“An accident.”

“Can I see?” the Healer asked me.

And so, I showed the Healer my wound.

“Ouch,” the Healer said. “Does it hurt?”

“I’m ok,” I answered.

“Your friend is tough,” the Healer said to the Sage.

The Sage just smiled.

“...Alright,” the Healer said to me. “Let’s get you fixed up.”

And so, we all went inside the house and the Healer treated my wound.

“Will I be ok?” I asked the Healer.

“Yes,” the Healer answered. “The wound wasn’t too deep, so all I had to do was cover it up so that the wound could heal itself without potentially anything else irritating it.”

“Potentially?”

“... You have nothing to worry about.”

“...Thank you.”

I looked over to the Sage and saw the Sage looking back at me.

“...This is...,” and the Sage clapped.

“...What do you mean by...?” and I clapped.

“Most believe that things are separate. But all things come together as one. Think of a sword. A sword has a blade and a handle, two things. But the blade and the handle make the sword. If we took the blade away from the handle, we wouldn’t have the sword. If we took the handle away from the blade, we also wouldn’t have the sword. The blade and the handle come together as the sword. All things come together as one. This is what I mean by...,” and the Sage clapped.

Wow. All things come together as one. I hadn’t thought of that before.

But is the Sage right? Do all things come together as one?

“Is the blade one?” I asked the Sage.

“Of course,” the Sage answered. “There has to be a swordsmith and steel to make the blade.”

“And is the handle one?”

“Of course. There has to be a craftsperson and wood to make the handle.”

“Is the steel one...? And what about the wood? Is the wood one?”

“...Think of it like this, we can only exist in relation to the environment, just as the environment can only exist in relation to us. If the environment weren’t here, we couldn’t be here. And if we weren’t here, the environment couldn’t be here. The sun is only bright in relation to our eyes. The wind is only noisy in relation to our ears. Rocks are only hard in relation to our soft skin. Apples are only delicious in relation to our tongues. Roses are only aromatic in relation to our noses. We are one with the environment. All things come together as one.”

Yes. It’s so obvious. All things come together as one.

But why do most believe that things are separate?

“Why do most believe things are separate?” I asked the Sage.

“Because most are used to it,” the Sage answered.

“But why?”

“When one believes in an idea for so long they often believe that the idea must be right.”

“And they’re wrong?”

“Not quite. A belief is just a thought one continuously focuses on. A belief is neither right nor wrong, but is just a thought one continuously focuses on. It is important to realize this because when we get so used to an idea that we believe must be right, we can take the game too seriously and can cause harm to others and to ourselves. To believe one is right, when we can never be right or wrong, is the most harmful thing one can do.”

Like the Bully. And my Teacher. They believed they were right and were harmful to me and they embarrassed themselves. I don't want to be like them. I don't want to hurt others. Or hurt myself.

“But...,” I said to the Sage, “...why is it...?” and I clapped.

“Because...,” the Sage clapped, “...shouldn't be given a name,” the Sage said. “Giving...,” the Sage clapped, “...a name would corrupt...,” the Sage clapped, “...as the name would be a false concept that'll forever act as a grimy veil to...,” the Sage clapped, “...and cause harm to all. So...,” the Sage clapped, “...should have no name.”

I like that. I like that a lot.

Later, the Sage and I left the Healer's house and headed home.

I arrived home with the Sage by my side.

“Thank you for taking care of me,” I said to the Sage.

“It's not a big deal,” the Sage said. “...I like how you ask a lot of questions.”

“Why?”

“Because when one asks their own questions they realize their own answers. And this grows one's wisdom.”

“What is wisdom?”

“A strong understanding of things.”

Wisdom. I like the sound of that. I'm going to grow my wisdom.

“...And the persistent application of growing wisdom is the key to one's enlightenment,” the Sage said.

“What is enlightenment?” I asked.

The Sage clapped.

“...More or less,” the Sage added. “Enlightenment cannot be communicated because words, numbers, symbols and images cannot grasp it. But the way to enlightenment can be communicated.”

“Ok,” I responded. “What does that mean?”

“That anyone can reach enlightenment.”

“Even me?”

“Even you. And all you have to do is persistently apply your growing wisdom.”

And I grow my wisdom by asking my own questions. I get it.

“...And it is important to realize that wisdom has little to no weight without positive action,” the Sage added. “That is why we should persistently apply our growing wisdom.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“One who is wise and does not act is a prisoner, just as one who acts and is not wise is a prisoner. One requires both wisdom and positive action to be free, to live life on their terms.”

“What is a prisoner?”

“One who is trapped.”

No. I can't be trapped. That'd be terrible.

“...When one believes they are right, they can become a prisoner of their belief and cause harm to others and to themselves,” the Sage continued. “One should ask questions to grow their wisdom and then consistently act on their growing wisdom.”

Yes. I can't believe that I am right. And I can't be a

prisoner. I've got to ask questions to grow my wisdom. And then act on my growing wisdom.

But how do I grow my wisdom? In class? Does that mean I have to stay in class?

"Does that mean I have to stay in class?" I asked the Sage.

"Do you need to go to class to learn?" the Sage asked me.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I learn in class."

"Can you learn outside of class?"

Can I learn outside of class? I don't know.

"...Class is a great place to learn," the Sage said. "However, it is not the only place where one can learn. One can learn from all books, nature and others. One can learn from all things."

"Then I'll stay in class and learn from all things," I said. "I'll ask questions and learn from all things."

"Very good. I'm going to let you go now. You should see your parents."

"Ok. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

The Sage wandered off.

And I entered my home.

I sat down with Mum and Dad and told them what happened.

"I'm so sorry," Dad said to me. "I told your Teacher about what that Bully had done to you and was promised that the Bully would be cared for so that it wouldn't happen again. I'm so sorry."

"It's ok," I said to Dad. "I don't think the Bully will hurt me anymore."

"Why is that?" Mum asked me.

"The Sage."

“The homeless person?”

“Yes.”

“...It’s good that this homeless person saved you,” Dad said. “But we don’t want you spending any more time with this homeless person.”

“Why?”

“Because we don’t know this person.”

So? I know the Sage. Mum and Dad don’t know the Sage. But I know the Sage.

And did I always know my friends? Did Mum and Dad always know their friends? Our friends were strangers once. All of our friends were.

“Did we always know our friends?” I asked Mum and Dad.

“It’s not the same,” Mum explained.

“Why?”

“Because homeless people can be difficult to trust,” Dad answered.

“Why?”

“Because they can be selfish.”

“What is ‘selfish?’”

“It’s when one only cares about oneself,” Mum answered.

“Wasn’t I cared for?”

“It’s not the same,” Dad said.

“Why?”

“Please, don’t talk to any homeless people. We just don’t know if we can trust them.”

I can trust the Sage. But Mum and Dad wouldn’t. They believe they are right.

But I’m not right as well.

I closed my eyes, trying to fall asleep when Mum approached me.

“How are you feeling?” Mum asked me.

“Ok,” I answered.

“...Do you understand why we don't want you around that homeless person?”

“No.”

“We want you to be safe. And we don't think you're safe around homeless people.”

“Is it because they're homeless?”

“It's because we don't trust them.”

Mum and Dad couldn't trust the Sage because they cared for me. I hadn't thought of that.

It's important to understand how others feel. That's how we'll all get along.

“Do you understand?” Mum asked me.

I nodded.

“...Thank you,” Mum said.

“...Can I ask you something?” I asked Mum.

“Sure. What do you want to ask me?”

“What do you really want?”

“...I want you to feel safe.”

“Why do you really want that?”

“...So that you won't feel frightened.”

“Why do you want me to not feel frightened?”

“So that you feel good.”

“Why do you want me to feel good?”

“So that you can live a happy life.”

“Why do you want me to live a happy life?”

“Because that makes me happy.”

“Why do you want to be happy?”

“...Because it makes me feel good.”

“Why do you want to feel good?”

“...So that I don't feel bad.”

“Why do you want to not feel bad?”

“Because it's not as good as feeling good.”

“Why do you want to feel good?”

“Because it makes me happy.”

“Why do you want to be happy?”

And then Mum froze, looking back at me.

That must be it. We don't know what we really want because we keep going around in circles. And we can keep going around in circles if I keep asking the same question, 'why do you want that?', over and over and over again. The Sage is correct. No one knows what they really want.

"...I'm not sure," Mum said.

"It's ok," I replied.

"...Get some sleep. Ok?"

"Ok."

And so, Mum gave me a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

"Goodnight," Mum said.

"Goodnight," I said.

Mum left.

And I quickly feel asleep.

Read the rest of *The Flow of All Things* via:
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