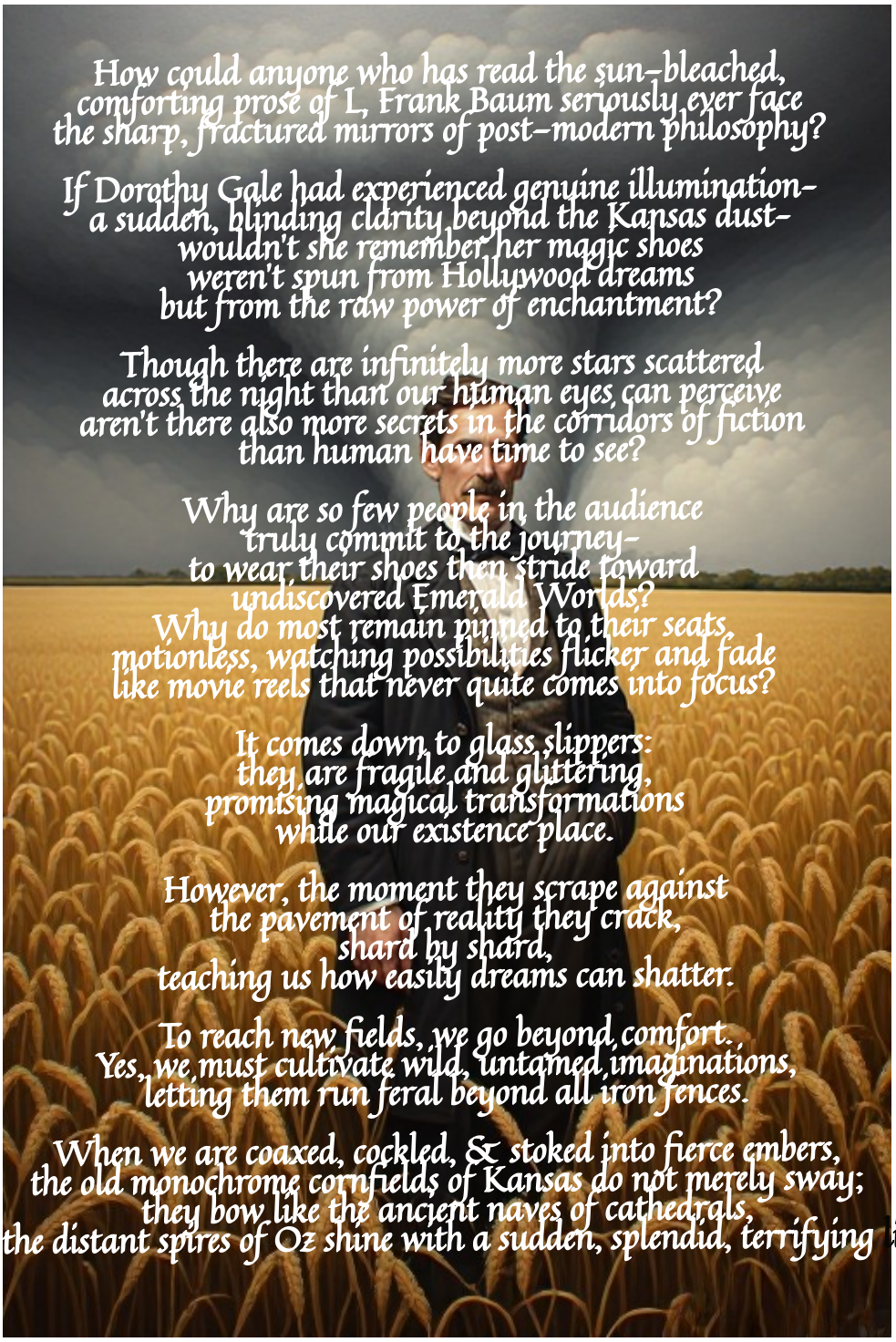
NO LONGER IN KANSAS:
A Philosophical Journey



How could anyone who has read the sun-bleached,
comforting prose of L. Frank Baum seriously ever face
the sharp, fractured mirrors of post-modern philosophy?

If Dorothy Gale had experienced genuine illumination-
a sudden, blinding clarity beyond the Kansas dust-
wouldn't she remember her magic shoes
weren't spun from Hollywood dreams
but from the raw power of enchantment?

Though there are infinitely more stars scattered
across the night than our human eyes can perceive
aren't there also more secrets in the corridors of fiction
than human have time to see?

Why are so few people in the audience
truly commit to the journey-
to wear their shoes then stride toward
undiscovered Emerald Worlds?
Why do most remain pinned to their seats,
motionless, watching possibilities flicker and fade
like movie reels that never quite comes into focus?

It comes down to glass slippers:
they are fragile and glittering,
promising magical transformations
while our existence place.

However, the moment they scrape against
the pavement of reality they crack,
shard by shard,
teaching us how easily dreams can shatter.

To reach new fields, we go beyond comfort.
Yes, we must cultivate wild, untamed imaginations,
letting them run feral beyond all iron fences.

When we are coaxed, cockled, & stoked into fierce embers,
the old monochrome cornfields of Kansas do not merely sway;
they bow like the ancient naves of cathedrals,
and the distant spires of Oz shine with a sudden, splendid, terrifying light.

Shu: *(in a low murmur, gazing into the surrounding darkness)* Where is this place... the place the poem calls Kansas'?

Ella: *(With a faint, cryptic smile)* It's not on any map, dear Shu. It is a state of mind~ flat, gray country where the mountains of aspiration are far away. Kansas is a place where you believe your power is limited to single, black-and-white fields and corn, wheat, and pork pens.

Jack: *(with a dry, cynical laugh)* Yeah. It's where you end up when the color drains out. Sadly, it's a place many people end up. Somewhere between utter obscurity and impending calamity.

Shu: *(softly, after a pause)* Oh, I've been there before.

– T Newfields

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