

# THE EPHEMERAL THREAD OF *Mujōkan* AND AWARE

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All that is good is fleeting:  
a pale moon behind a shroud of mist,  
a ripple in a still pond  
that cannot hold its shape.  
Justice whispers and vanishes;  
kindness, a brief bloom,  
falls to the ground with a sigh of petals.

They say this is the way of the world—  
that impermanence is beauty,  
that fragility is grace.  
But why, then, does it ache?  
Why does the soul break  
against the banality of shadows,  
the relentless tide of things that stay?

Evil persists,  
not like the cherry blossom,  
but like moss upon forgotten stone—  
patient, unyielding, thriving in cracks.  
It endures not for its strength,  
but because it asks nothing of the wind.

And yet, I, too, am called fleeting.  
To speak of justice is to be dismissed  
as a dreamer—  
as if care is arrogance,  
as if knowing the weight of the world  
is to deserve its scorn.

What wounds most is not the fall  
of democracy, kindness, or beauty.  
It is the silence of those we call friends,  
their eyes turned to safer horizons,  
their words like distant echoes,  
falling before they reach the heart.

Still, the seasons turn.  
And though spring may return,  
its blossoms will not soothe this bitterness.

To see beauty in impermanence  
is to also feel its cut,  
the way it carves absence  
into the air we breathe.  
Perhaps this is the only truth:  
not that justice is an illusion,  
but that it exists only briefly,  
fragile as the reflection on water.  
Not that kindness is a lie,  
but that it lives only in moments  
too small to grasp.

And yet, there is a quiet dignity  
in witnessing the world fall apart,  
in naming what is lost  
without turning away.  
For to turn away  
is to deny the aching beauty  
of the transient,  
the sharp, fleeting grace  
of all we will never hold.

If evil persists,  
let it persist.  
But I will not call it eternal,  
nor mistake its banality for power.  
Instead, I will bow to the impermanence of all else—  
the tender, fleeting truths  
that rise and fall like breath.

For in the end, it is not hope that remains,  
but the awareness of impermanence itself:  
a thread unraveling in the wind,  
a single petal drifting toward the earth,  
its beauty complete  
because it was never meant to stay.

## NOTES

1. *Mono no aware* is a Japanese aesthetic concept that refers to an awareness of the impermanence of things, accompanied by a gentle, melancholic appreciation of their fleeting beauty. Often associated with the ephemeral nature of cherry blossoms, it encapsulates a sensitivity to the transience of life and a deep emotional response to its passing. *Mujōkan*, closely related, is the sentiment of impermanence itself—a recognition of the constant flow and change of existence. Rooted in Buddhist philosophy, it emphasizes the inevitability of decay, loss, and transformation, not as a cause for despair, but as an intrinsic part of life's beauty and truth. Together, these ideas invite a reflective acceptance of life's fleeting nature, finding meaning in the transient and embracing the sorrow and beauty of impermanence as inseparable elements of existence.