

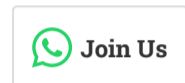
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# The burden of borrowed expectations

A mother's fear of scarcity gets transmuted into an urgency around money which the child internalises as her own personality.

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Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, an unannounced transfer occurs. A parent's unspoken fear becomes our ambition, a family's definition of what counts as a life well lived becomes our standard.



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And the community's old shames settle into the nervous system as something that feels indistinguishable from personal guilt. We do not remember accepting any of this. But by the time we are old enough to notice, the weight already feels like part of us.

The weight was placed before the question of consent was even available to us, and not all of it in the same way.

A mother's fear of scarcity gets transmuted into an urgency around money which the child internalises as her own personality.

Similarly, a father's equation of dignity with professional rank subtly shapes the child's aspirations and perceived shortcomings.

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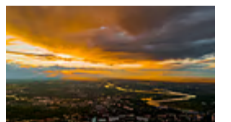


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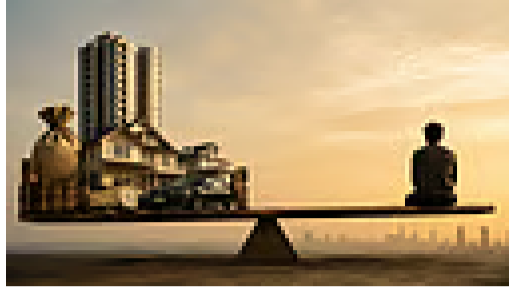
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simply accumulated, the way things do when no one questions them.

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Years pass, and the absorbed becomes the assumed, and what is assumed long enough, we defend. What entered us as someone else's anxiety we now call our values. What was handed to us without our knowledge we now guard as conscience, as responsibility, as the shape of a good life.

We feel guilty when we begin to question any of it, as though the questioning is the betrayal rather than the original imposition.

But where did it actually come from? The weight was someone else's unfinished business: their incompleteness, their fear of what might happen if things were done differently.

It was usually passed on not from cruelty, but from their limited understanding. We were not consulted, we were simply near.

The question is not what to do with the weight. That comes later, if it comes at all. What is worth sitting with first is simpler: have we ever actually looked at what we are carrying, and asked, honestly, when and why we picked it up? Or have we only carried it, and named the carrying our 'selves'?

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