

After an Illness

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This past week, illness visited me unprepared, as it always does. A familiar heaviness settled into my bones, and with it came that peculiar mental fog. The mind's agility vanishes, projects halt, and the world narrows to the immediate necessity of recovery.

However, perhaps the illness serves a hidden purpose. In forcing me to pause, it creates space for questions that I usually avoid. Those who know me understand that I constantly wrestle with questions of trust and intention. Are potential collaborators genuine partners in the pursuit of knowledge, or do they view others merely as resources to be utilized? We sense the organized pressure of institutional power, the subtle coercion that bends individual curiosity toward collective metrics.

What troubles me most is how easily we surrender our research autonomy. The academic structure often resembles a construction site hierarchy: professors as foremen who secure funding and distribute tasks, while students perform repetitive intellectual labor. This model may produce publications and impact factors, but contradicts my initial vision of doing research. Saying “no” to organized institutional pressure requires courage, especially when career advancement seems to depend on saying “yes.” Yet without this courage, research becomes mere business, a transaction of effort for credentials, rather than a passionate pursuit of understanding.

The structure of our collaborative organizations inevitably shapes our working culture and daily experience. When hierarchy dominates, creativity suffocates. When metrics overshadow meaning, we lose sight of why we began this journey.

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”

— Albert Camus

Recovery brings not just renewed health, but renewed clarity about what kind of researcher I aspire to be.