

09•12

Today is my 23  
birthday, my mother  
shared a small but  
profoundly meaningful  
story about my name –  
A-ether

**New thought: Can  
something proven “non-  
existent” by orthodox  
belief be entirely  
without presence or  
value?**



I don't like calling myself by my  
name. I don't know why, but it can  
be easier for me to call myself  
“Zero” or something else, it can  
be everything, but please don't be  
A-ether, my true name (or not?)

Every time I hear my name, I feel  
like I am reaffirming myself, my  
existence, in some unknown way, for  
the invisible threads that weave  
life into coherence.

Oh! See, “a-ether” and “a-other”  
share a similar appearance  
[The perceiving subject, “a,” -the  
external “other”?]  
And “a-ether” and Author sound alike

My name is so Playful! :)

6:00 AM

A gentle warmth cascaded over me, mingling the faint chirping of birds outside with the low hum of my alarm. Slowly, I opened my eyes, allowing a sliver of sunlight to seep into my gaze. My body felt like a stifled box, weighed down by an invisible force. I turned over, trying to shake free of this unseen constraint, and stared at the ceiling.

A: What day is it now, this heaviness lingering?

(I murmured to myself.)

A: Each day feels like an endless loop—wake up, eat, study, talk to my parents or friends, then sleep again. I need to figure something out. But what?

(My thoughts scattered like puzzle pieces, fragments of an image I couldn't quite piece.)

A: Today, I'll break the pattern.

12:00 PM

I wandered through the streets, letting the light dictate my path. A soft golden hue streamed through the trees, casting shifting patterns on the ground. Outside a quaint café, I paused, bought a coffee, and settled by the window. My notebook lay open on the table, its pages scattered with sketches and disjointed ideas. Absentmindedly, I drew a simple hourglass, its fine grains slipping endlessly between the chambers.

A: I wish I could make it stop.

(Thought surfaced unexpectedly.)

A: Perhaps, in stillness, I could find clarity.

I wrote in my notebook: How do I capture a fleeting moment? The words rested quietly on the page, unanswered.

6:00 PM

The setting sun stretched shadows across the streets. By the riverbank, I lingered, gazing into the shimmering water. The surface mirrored the sky's orange glow, its ripples alive with light. Closing my eyes, I listened to the rhythmic murmur of the water.

A: What am I trying to capture?

(I Picked up a small stone, tossed it into the river. )

A: Waves radiated outward, breaking the reflection..... Perhaps clarity isn't about stillness.

12:00 AM

Back home, I shut off all the lights and drew the curtains.

A: I need to leave a gap, let a single beam of moonlight enter this dim space.

(I said softly.)

And so, the projection began. On the wall, a faint, inverted image of the outside world emerged—a fragile, flickering interplay of shadows and light.

A: I need to figure something out...

(I whispered to the ghostly image.)

A: I need to figure something out...

(My voice felt hollow)

The faint, trembling projection—delicate yet alive—responded in its silent way.

At that moment, I realized not all answers arrived immediately.

For now, I let the moonlight speak for me.



After the morning's chat, I walked without purpose today, letting the streets and the golden October light guide me.

My feet carried me to the edge of the city, to an old bridge overlooking a winding river. I leaned against the railing, the cool metal grounding me as I watched the water below.

The image was perfect—the light glinting off the ripples, the faint silhouette of trees in the distance. But I can't press the stop.

The water below swirled, never the same twice.

A: What are you looking for?

(I asked myself, confused)

A: If I'm not defined by belief or action, then what am I?

(I pulled out my notebook and wrote, The words stared back at me, stark against the page. )



Today I listened to my mother and came to the temple to join her in a psalm meditation, which she believed would help me.

But all I know is I have become a contradiction, a paradox contained within myself. Somewhere along this journey, I lost not only my grasp on the "truth" of the world but also the sense of who I am.

The weight of this realization is unbearable.

I need to step outside this nebulous realm I've confined myself to. I don't know where to go, what I need, nor how I will get there, but I know it must be now.

12.19

Today, I asked my parents to look at me with my camera. At first, I was full of expectation that this little box would present a clear image of me. I thought I could have a perfect self-portrait, but it failed.

Father's reminder made me realize that the problem was the focus. The light was coming in, but it wasn't converging well. As a result, the image became blurred-as I often feel about my existence.

Back in my room, I sat on the floor and stared at this camera in a dark box. It felt like a metaphor - if the light from the outside world couldn't align with my inner perspective, clarity would remain elusive.



**I have to go!**


A new thought: when we look at ourselves, how do we reconcile the external with the internal?

While a lens can only reflect the external world, a camera obscura has the potential to capture the connection between the two. This is exactly what I wanted to create - a device that could accommodate different perspectives and adapt to different focal lengths.

Perhaps the process of finding the right focus is the process of finding myself.

Dad said I need more.  
I need an adventure...

The light flickered slightly, as if in quiet agreement. For now, I let the moonlight speak what I couldn't put into words.



At that moment, in this dimly lit room, I resolved to create a vessel of darkness—a container that is empty, yet brimming with potential. I picked up the wooden planks at hand, as though extracting remnants from the ruins of time. With nails and glue, I joined them together, forming a small boundary. Within the box of darkness, the void became its essence. I smeared it with ink, covered it with fabric, as if mirroring the ancient philosophers who sought to fill the emptiness, only to discover that the void itself holds power. Darkness nurtures the unknown, much like stars are born in the void or belief arises amid doubt.

12.17

I am waiting for the night.

(Again.)

I was staring at this dark little box in a daze as I contemplated how to fit the outside world's presence inside, and I thought of every feasible way to do it. (Maybe?)

But after a day, I had no choice but to give up.  
(Maybe?)

But, this time, maybe all I could hold onto was a little light.

A: I needed light. To invite it  
in..... Maybe a hole!  
(I whispered. )

Gently, I cut into the box with a blade. like an ancient stargazer slicing through the night sky in search of constellations. This tiny opening seemed like the eye of the universe, or perhaps a wound carved into time. Light would pass through it but could never escape, much like memory, forever subject to the filter of time. The light pierced its wholeness.

A: To capture the image it carried, I had to weave a net for it.

A: What better than paper?

(I whispered and pick up a piece of paper beside me. )

Fragile, weightless, yet capable of holding the illusions of the external world—a solidification of the ephemeral.

## The Origin of My Name

M: Do you know the story of your name, Aether?

A: Sure, Mom.

(I nodded, curious to hear it again.)

M: It was your grandfather's influence.....

A: But I remember my dad mentioned he gave me my name.

M: Yes, that's true. Your dad wanted to honor your grandfather, he loved Aristotle's teachings.

(Mom said gently, a soft smile on her face.)

M: So your dad chose Aether—a word from ancient philosophy. Aristotle described it as the pure, invisible substance of the universe, connecting stars and planets, guiding their paths in perfect harmony.

A: But, Mom. Einstein's theory of relativity came along, Aether was dismissed—spacetime replaced it. Science proved it didn't exist. My dad knows that, right? Why he still.....

(Mom interrupted my eager question with a firm tone.)

M: Aether, Does that mean something proven 'non-existent' has no meaning or value?

(Mom paused for a moment, looked seriously at me, and said gently)

M: To your grandfather, Aether wasn't just a scientific concept; it was a symbol of connection and boundlessness. And to Dad and me, it was more than that—we wanted your name to remind you that you are limitless, like the heavens, and grounded, like the universe.

(I thought for a moment)

A: But Mom, my name is only a reflection of my existence. It's like a vessel—a container for my consciousness, yes, but also a mirror of how others see me. It holds their memories of my actions and my choices. But it doesn't define who I truly am.

(Mom smiled again, this time with a trace of pride. )

M: Yes, my dear. Maybe it's a starting point, a story to help you explore who you are.

[.....]

## Question Returned

At breakfast, I brought it up again. My father sipped his coffee, the newspaper spread before him like a fortress.

A: Dad, why am I in existence?

F: You're overthinking, life is simpler than you're making it. Do what you're good at, stay consistent, and meaning will follow. Look at me—I built furniture, not philosophy. (He said with a faint smile.)

M: Your father finds meaning in his work. I find mine in faith. Aether, have you tried praying about it? Sometimes, the answers we seek aren't ours to create. They're given to us." (Mom offered a gentler reply.)

A: I've tried both.

(I said softly.)

A: I've followed rules and faith. But I always feel... outside of it all, like there's something else I'm supposed to find. Something only I can uncover.

F: Not every answer is immediate, you know. Not all questions need to be answered.

(Father folded his paper, looking at me with a rare seriousness.)

F: But what if they're the wrong questions?

(I asked, more to myself than them. )

M: My dear, there is no right or wrong answer, just your answer-Aether's answer.

[...]

## No answer

At the end of the meditative chanting and on the way home from the temple, I began a conversation.

[...]

A: I exist in the gaps—in the fractures between moments, between beliefs, between what is known and what is felt. These spaces are neither here nor there but somewhere in between—a liminal realm where everything collides and distorts. (I feel I am floating in a fragmented universe.)

M: My dear, you don't need boundaries, you hold infinite potential to take any form.

(Mom said gently)

A: But...Mom, it means freedom, right?

M: If you like, you can think that way.

A: But in this freedom, I feel like nothing at all—an echo, a void, a ripple vanishing on the surface of existence. (After a moment's reflection I replied)

A: Am I sick?

M: My dear! No! You just lost, you can find yourself!

(My mother looked at me painfully and said firmly.)

M: What do you want to do?

A: I need to stop, stop everything, then I can have time to see them.

(I said slowly, afraid of not expressing myself clearly enough.)

A: I hope to find a moment—a fleeting alignment of all the layers of my being. Just for an instant, I want to see clearly.

[...]

## The third test-dark box

Another month, I locked myself in my room.

I trying to make out a tool that can help me capture/stop time.

I turned off the lights and opened the curtains just enough to let the moonlight in.

(Again.)

A dim, inverted image of the outside world appeared on my wall—trees, rooftops, clouds, all flipped and ethereal.

(Again.)

I lay back on the floor, staring at the projection.

(Again.)

But this time, I have a new thought.

A: Maybe that's it.

(I whispered to the shadows. )

A: Maybe meaning isn't something I find in others' answers. Maybe it's something I create in the gaps.

[...]

## A Self-portrait

I am waiting for the day.

(Again.)

I've been playing with my tool all night looking around with it.

(Again.)

I waited for my parents to wake up.

(Again.)

But, this time, I would tell them I was about to discover the truth.

I proudly presented my camera obscura to my parents, eager to share my discovery. Sunlight streamed through the window, casting a soft glow across the room.

M: What do you want to look at first?

(Mom smiled and asked.)

A: Maybe.....

( I looked around, searching for the perfect subject.)

A: Why not look at me?

(Suddenly realizing that I could not see myself through the dark box, I exclaimed)

M: I can't see anything clearly.

(Mom said, disheartened.)

M: It's just a blurry shadow.

A: Maybe it's the lighting.

(I felt awkward and muttered, adjusting the light in the room.)

Father stepped closer to inspect the device. After a moment,

D: Did you think about the focus? The light is entering, but it's not converging properly. How about trying to adjust the focal distance?

## A Self-portrait

I paused, staring down at the camera obscura in my hands.

Of course, he was right.

(Maybe?)

I hurried back to my room, shutting the door behind me, but I was stopped.

D: Why did you choose to photograph yourself first?

(Father blocked the door I was about to close, took my hand sat down, and asked.)

A: I thought... maybe starting with my own image could help me discover something.

(I paused for a moment.)

A: A lens might reveal more than a mirror ever could.

M: What did your camera obscura tell you?

A: That my technique still needs work,  
(I joked with a sigh.)

A: It also showed me that clarity requires alignment—between the external and the internal.

(I added more seriously.)

D: So, what's your next step?

(Father nodded thoughtfully and asked.)

A: I'm going to improve the camera. I need to find a way for it to focus on anything, no matter the subject. I believe light and shadow always hold the answers!

(I looked at my father, expecting him to give me a better idea.)

D: You need more than that.

(Father said softly.)

D: I wish you would communicate with us more, whatever you decide.

I nodded in confusion, I wanted to ask something more but my father left.

M: We all love you very much.

(Mom stroked my head and said)

[...]