Excavation

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We start from this place, and get to that place, me with my boots, you with your bootstraps: algorithms churning, calculating, quantizing.

You explain, there is no fear here, only beauties to unearth. I ask, what is the value of an idea, compared—say to a ruby or a diamond?

You lower your hands, shaking your head slowly. Not unaccustomed to this question, but not really eager to mount the defense.

Yet something in my question allures, perhaps its sincerity, and you persist. You try to reach out across distances, both conceptual and psychological.

Then it comes: this work is not a burden, it is a privilege. The ability to render a structure understandable, to parse, to construct meaning out of desolation—

It is like excavation, hours spent sifting through the dust and dirty sand. You mean a theorem is like a dinosaur? I ask, jittering, now visibly, with excitement.

No, not a dinosaur, those are the bones of what was once living. That which I find is not the end of a life, but the beginning of one. Or the middle.