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Poem # 15

Re: Quilt #What Remains

### **What Remains Under the Layers**

A translucent tide pool. A shiny object reflects.  
I disturb the peaceful rest of this stone, or shell or  
perhaps the bone of a long extinct creature.  
The years have worn it smooth, yet it remains.  
And what is found below this ever-changing surface?  
Earth's history covered in sediment, portions  
revealed by the powerful tides of violent storms.  
What lived in this spot 1,000 or 10,000 years ago?  
Perhaps great herds grazing on a vast savannah  
or succulent plants surviving on a wind-blown desert?  
I fantasize burrowing deep, seeing each layer unique,  
the epochs of history marking their existence.

I imagine my memories as having similar layers.  
Recent memories remain vivid and clear. Past  
memories slowly fade into opaque shadows. The  
realization that each memory, important or trivial,  
is of consequence, having influenced all that I am.  
Remove one layer and perhaps a drastically  
different me--different opinions, a different life.  
I search deeper, below my earliest memories,  
until I reach my very soul. The genetic framework  
upon which all knowledge gathers. Predispositions  
refined from the accumulation of ancestral experiences.  
Deeper yet, cellular influences from all past humanity.  
To this pool of evolution, my life now contributes.