

# *First and Last Lines That Hold Worlds*

Curated by [The Second Guess](#)

Exhibition Page:

[Objkt](#)

## **Description**

*First and Last Lines That Hold Worlds* is an experimental exploration of transformation, interpretation, and misinterpretation.

My AI-based series, *First and Last Lines That Hold Worlds*, explores the relationship between context, imagery, language, and AI. I selected 21 books—including *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka and *Faust* by Goethe—and extracted the first and last sentences of each to use as prompts for text-to-image AI generation. I then create AI-generated images and transform them by hand into pixel drawings.

Writing a book is often an arduous task, taking months or even a lifetime. Some books are not completed until the very end, while others are edited and continued by later generations. From start to finish, an author's environment and life may change dramatically. As readers, we often begin many books, but sometimes we don't finish them, leaving the endings unknown.

By selecting the first and last lines of 21 classic works, I compress centuries of literary history into tiny, highly distilled fragments. Each sentence carries historical and cultural weight—the context in which it was written, the author's intentions, and the societal circumstances of its time. My project allows contemporary audiences to engage with these texts in a radically new way, bridging classical literature and modern technology.

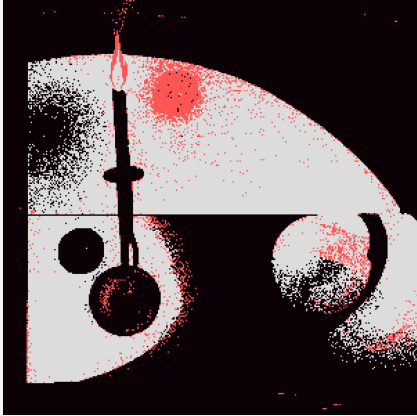
Texts have always been subject to reinterpretation. My project makes this explicit through AI-generated images, reminding us that each generation reimagines literature—and, by extension, the world—in its own terms.

## 1, Daodejing

by Laozi

The Dao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Dao.

With all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not; with all the doing in the way of the sage he does not strive.

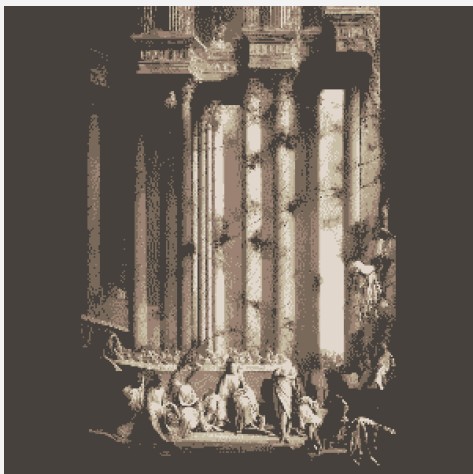


## 2, Phaedo

by Plato

Were you in personal attendance, Phædo, upon Socrates, on that day in which he drank the hemlock in prison, or did you hear of the matter from another?

And it shall be well with us both in this life and in the pilgrimage of a thousand years which we have been describing.



### 3, Zhuangzi

by Zhuangzi

In the Northern Ocean there is a fish, the name of which is Kun.

It was like silencing an echo by his shouting, or running a race with his shadow. Alas!

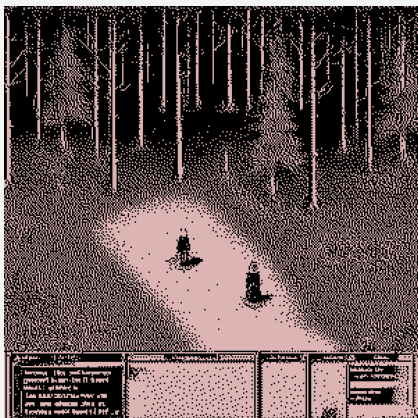


### 4, Divine Comedy

by Dante Alighieri

Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself within a forest dark,  
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy:  
But now was turning my desire and will,  
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,  
The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.

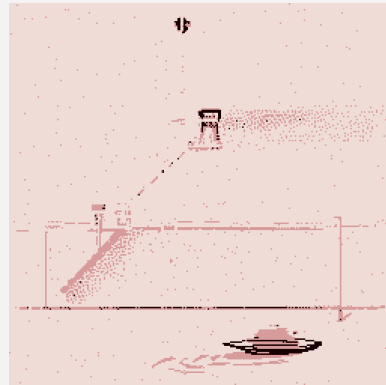
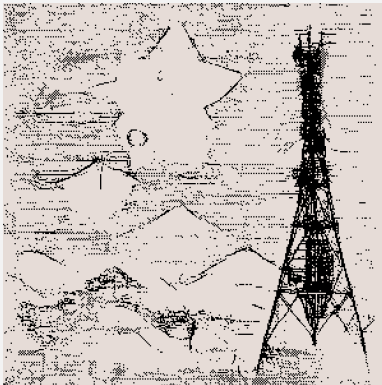


## 5, Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems

by Galileo Galilei

Aristotle acknowledged that the celestial bodies were difficult to see because of their great distance, and that whoever's eyes could depict them more clearly could discuss them more confidently philosophically.

Now, as is our custom, let us go to the waiting boat outside and rest for a while!

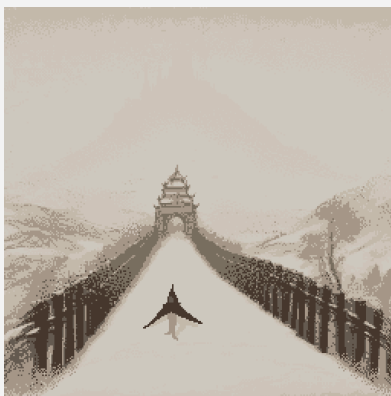


## 6, The Castle

by Franz Kafka

It was late when K arrived. The village was covered with thick snow. The castle mountain was shrouded in mist and darkness, and there was no trace of light to indicate the existence of the huge castle. K stood on the wooden bridge leading from the main road to the village for a long time, looking up at the seemingly illusory space.

K. was already in the hallway, and Gerstäcker was holding on to his sleeve again when the landlady called after him: "I'm getting a new dress tomorrow, maybe I'll send for you.





## 7, Metamorphosis

by Franz Kafka

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from a series of uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a giant insect.

When the tram arrived at its destination, their daughter was the first to stand up and stretch her young body. In their view, this was precisely an affirmation of their new dreams and good wishes.

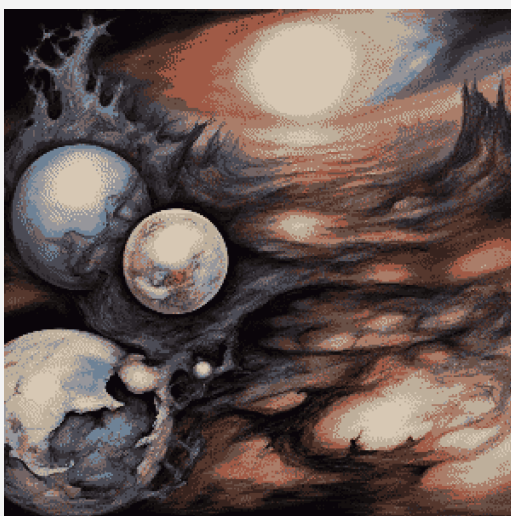


## 8, Journey to the West

by Wu Chengen

The poem says:  
Out of the womb of nature springs the root of life;  
from the discipline of mind and nature arises the Way.

Here ends The Journey to the West.

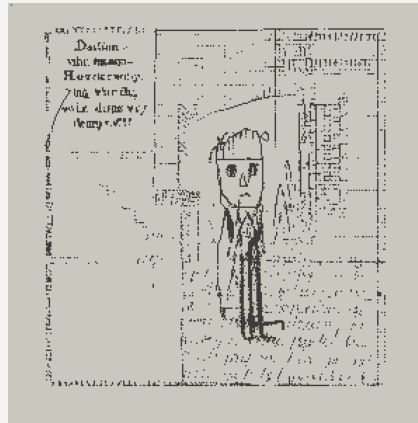


## 9, Diary of a Madman

by Lu Xun

Tonight, the moonlight is very good. I haven't seen him for more than 30 years. Seeing him today, I feel very refreshed.

There are no children who have eaten people, or are there? Save the children...

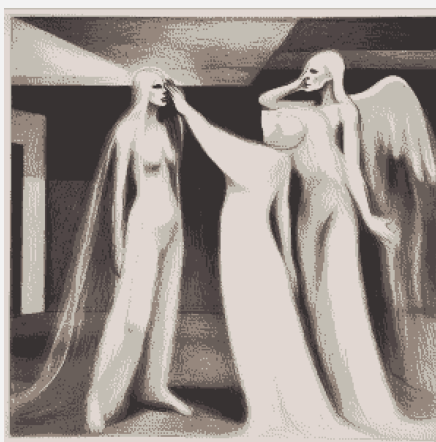


## 10, Critique of Pure Reason

by Immanuel Kant

It is beyond doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience.

If the reader is willing and patient to follow this path with me, he can now judge whether - it is up to him - he can contribute his own strength to make this narrow path a broad road, and perhaps achieve what has been elusive for many centuries, that is, to give complete satisfaction to that to which human reason has always been committed but has not yet achieved anything.



## 11, Anna Karenina

by Leo Tolstoy

All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

I shall still be as unable to understand with my reason why I pray, and I shall still go on praying; but my life now, my whole life apart from anything that can happen to me, every minute of it is no more meaningless, as it was before, but it has the positive meaning of goodness, which I have the power to put into it.”

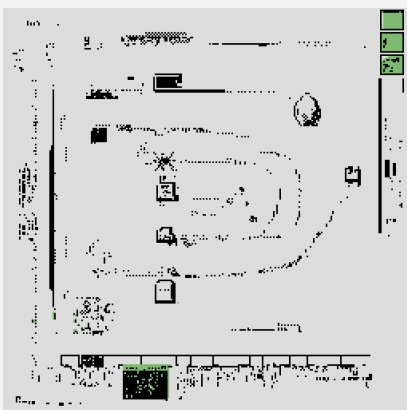


## 12, The Interpretation of Dreams

by Sigmund Freud

In the following chapters I shall demonstrate that there is a psychological technique which can be used to interpret dreams.

However, the ancients' belief that dreams can foretell the future is not entirely without reason, because by showing us a fulfilled wish, dreams are of course leading us to the future—it's just that this future, which the dreamer believes to be the present reality, has been shaped by the indestructible wish and has become the same as the past.



### 13, Dream of the Red Chamber

by Cao Xueqin

This is the first chapter of the book.

Speaking of the bitter part, the absurdity is even more tragic.

It all comes from the same dream, don't laugh at the foolishness of the world!

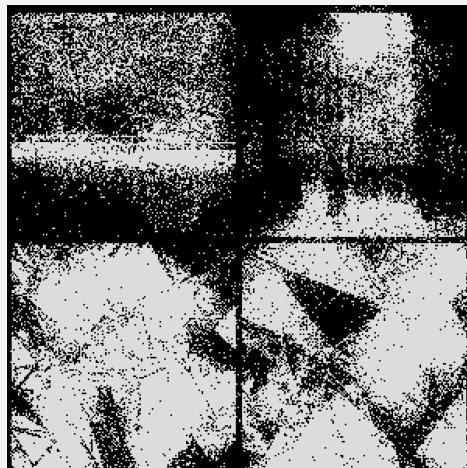


### 14, The Garden of Forking Paths

by Jorge Luis Borges

Liddell Hart's History of the European War, page 242, records that the attack of thirteen British divisions (supported by 1,400 guns) on the Serre-Montauban line was originally scheduled for July 24, 1916, but was later postponed to the morning of the 29th.

He knew that it would be difficult for me to report the name of the city called Albert in the midst of the war, and there was no other way except to kill a man with that name. He did not know (no one could know) my infinite regret and boredom.



## 15, The Circular Ruins

by Jorge Luis Borges

No one saw him disembark in the unanimous night, no one saw the bamboo canoe sink into the sacred mud, but in a few days there was no one who did not know that the taciturn man came from the South and that his home had been one of those numberless villages upstream in the deeply cleft side of the mountain, where the Zend language has not been contaminated by Greek and where leprosy is infrequent.

He knew with relief, shame, and fear that he himself was also a phantom, a phantom in another person's dream.



## 16, The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

by Victor Hugo

It was three hundred and forty-eight years, six months and nineteen days ago when the bells of Paris rang out, echoing through the three walls of the old city, the university city and the new city, awakening all the citizens.

When someone tried to pull him away from the skeleton he was hugging, his remains immediately turned to dust.



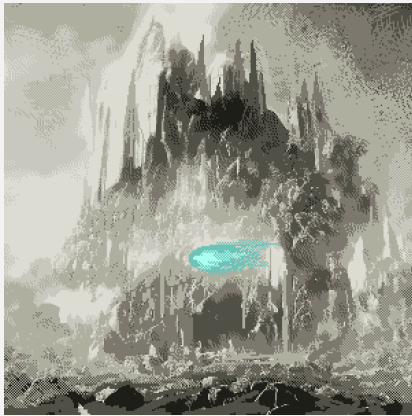


## 17, The Call of Cthulhu

by H. P. Lovecraft

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.

Let me pray that, if I do not survive this manuscript, my executors may put caution before audacity and see that it meets no other eye.

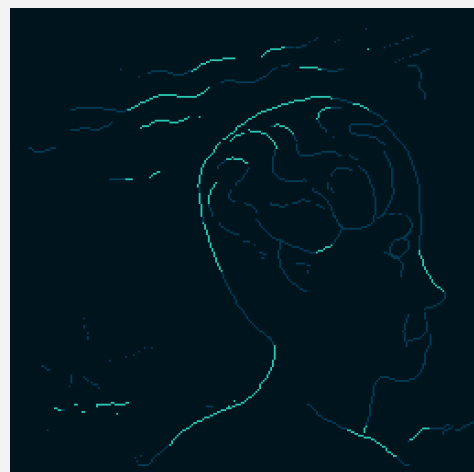


## 18, The Shadow Over Innsmouth

by H. P. Lovecraft

During the winter of 1927–28 officials of the Federal government made a strange and secret investigation of certain conditions in the ancient Massachusetts seaport of Innsmouth.

End: We shall swim out to that brooding reef in the sea and dive down through black abysses to Cyclopean and many-columned Y'ha-nthleij, and in that lair of the Deep Ones we shall dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever.



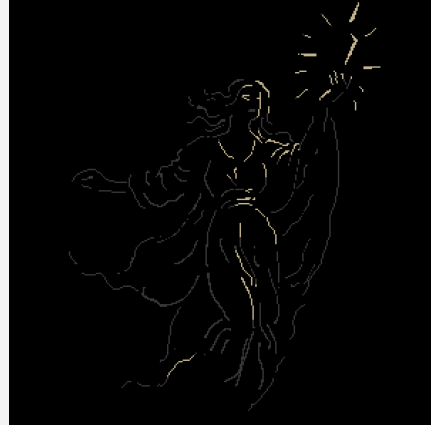
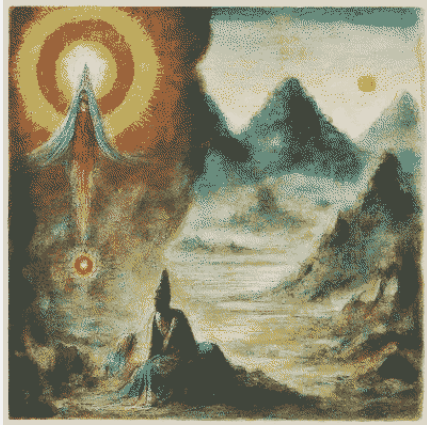


## 19, Faust

by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Again ye come, ye hovering Forms! I find ye,  
As early to my clouded sight ye shone!

The indescribable, Here, is done: Woman, eternal, Beckons us on.

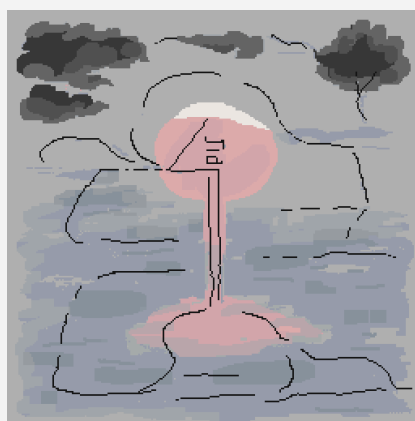


## 20, Ulysses

by James Joyce

Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed.

yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.



## 21, The Odyssey

by Homer

Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who traveled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy.

Then Minerva assumed the form and voice of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.



----- END -----