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Rough for Me
by David M. Valadez

Deshi: We train very martially here.

Sensei: How do you know that?

Deshi: I can feel how effective things are, how hard, intensely, and rough we train.

Sensei: To the moth, the spider's web feels like a steel trap. To the wind, the spider's web is but a wisp away from destruction.

Deshi: Am I not to judge things by how they feel upon me?

Sensei: Who can do otherwise?

Deshi: Is there some shortcoming to doing so though?

Sensei: The shortcoming is in doing no more.

Deshi: What else is needed?

Sensei: You need a critical mind, one by which you can orient your self-reflections beyond your subjective preferences.

Deshi: What will such a mind show me, in this case?

Sensei: It would give you questions by which you could verify your opinion – from more than one point of view. Know this: What is true is rational, and what is rational is reasonable, and what is reasonable is reasonable from many points of view.

Deshi: Which question am I missing?

Sensei: You are but a beginner, correct?

Deshi: I have trained but three years.

Sensei: The warrior is a cultivated person. His or her craft comes through acquisition alone. Acquisition requires the passing of time. How martial can something be if but a three year old survives the technique with but a sense of having been roughed up a bit?

Deshi: Then, the technique is not martial?

Sensei: You should have gone the other way.

Deshi: What do you mean?

Sensei: Rather, you should note how what is martial cannot yet be experienced upon your body, because you are not cultivated enough to survive adequate application of such a technique.

Deshi: The intensity tells me nothing?

Sensei: In this case, it tells you only how much more cultivation your body/mind requires, not how martial our applications are.