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### **The Turnip That Spoke Latin**

As told in the highlands of Lower Saxony, circa 1843. Source: Esteban J. Würmholz, *Uncanny Harvests and Rooted Spirits* (unpublished).

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Once there was a farmer so poor that even his scarecrow had holes in its coat. One spring, in a final act of hope, he planted a row of turnips in soil so lean it had forgotten the taste of rain.

Months passed. Most withered. But one turnip swelled and glowed with an amber sheen. When the farmer bent to pull it, a voice — low, sonorous, and dry as parchment — issued from the ground:

**“Cogito, ergo tuber.”**

The farmer yelped and fell backwards. The turnip continued:

**“Tempus edax rerum. Sed quid est homo?”<sup>1</sup>**

It would say no more that day. But each evening, as dusk dyed the field, the turnip spoke again. Latin only. Phrases from nowhere. Fragments of a vegetable mind.

The farmer, with only his grandfather’s Bible and a cracked grammar, began to learn. He neglected his goats. He stopped going to market.

In time, he understood:

“You pull me to eat me. I speak to be known. Must wisdom perish  
so that hunger rests?”

The farmer wept.

“I am root, yet I reason. I know your hunger. But must necessity murder the sublime?” the turnip asked.

For days he did not answer. Winter was coming.

On the seventh night, the farmer entered the field with salt and butter. He whispered, “Forgive me.”

The turnip did not speak again.

He ate it slowly, reverently. Then, on the back of old tax records, he wrote down all it had taught him.

No turnip in the village ever spoke again. But his field was never empty.

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<sup>1</sup>“Time, the devourer of all things. But what is man?”