

Whadya Know?

Nobody asked but ...

This past Spring, while I was the organizer of a discussion group on philosophy, a groupmate hit me with a question for which I had an immediate answer. She asked, cordially and sincerely, “what do you know?” My fast response was, “very little.” I have done a great deal of thinking about that since. First of all, I took it to mean, what does the man who calls himself Kilgore Forelle know? Then I realized it may have been a more human-centric question, “what does a person know?” My quick answer still holds. But I was on good ground answering from personal experience, not from some cosmic point of view. What anyone might know is limited to his best objective review of his personal experience. Here is how I would demonstrate what I know. Select any pixel from the screen you are now viewing. Magnify the content of that pixel until it fills the screen. Select another pixel. Repeat ... until you are lost. Then one pixel on the latest screen represents what I intuit that I know. In Taoism, this kind of vastness is frequently referred to as the ten thousand things, a very large number of things in the day of Lao Tzu. Today, I think in terms of terabytes, but the spiritual goal is the same — how shall one reconcile herself to life with ten trillion things?

Kilgore