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POETRY, PLATO, AND THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH

This is a book about poetry, but what is poetry about?
Is poetry about truth? Let's consider...

Human beings are the species of ideas.
We do not live on this planet merely by reacting
to its physical stimuli and pursuing our senses of taste and smell:
we think. In human history's earliest scenes, people are making
myths, expressing reverence, constructing philosophies,
and arranging abstractions to bring the chaotic diversity
of nature into understandable form. These myths, religions,
philosophies, mathematics systems, and abstract vocabularies
of all kinds are new to the planet; together they form a vast
collection of ideas that we created, that *we added* to the Earth story.
In a sense, if humanity were to vanish, then all ideas too
would vanish—switch off like city lights in a blackout,
though the underlying realities, if there to begin with,
would continue to exist. The ocean would roll to the shore,
but our idea of its being beautiful would be gone.

Ideas are the human dimension.
For us, surviving on our planet is not enough;
we want to comprehend it.

TRUTH

Of all the ideas that we have made, the most important—
and the most challenging—may be the idea of truth.
At first glance, it may not even seem that truth *is* an idea.
After all, some things *are* true, aren't they, whether we think
so or not? Whether we wish them to be true or not? Isn't truth
independent of human control? Isn't truth...true?