Before you begin

A LETTER FROM THE MAKERS OF APORIA · NOVEMBER 22, 2026

This letter opens with a drawing. It is a map of consciousness, first made in pencil in a sketchbook and remastered for these pages. It is not a chart of facts. It is one way of seeing how a person moves from fear toward love, and how language carries them there.

Read it from the top down. The dark at the top is where fear lives: boxes, walls, patterns that turn in on themselves. A line divides the dark from the light, and the way across is a leap, from fear to comfort. Below it grows a tree of language, branching into knowledge. Beside it float art and music, which are languages too. Near the bottom runs a line where reasoning carries you far, and then stops. Beneath it sits a circle marked 1, the goal, where everything is connected. The rest of the way is found through belief, feeling and beauty.

The dots are people. They are everywhere on the map, because people are everywhere.

WHERE THE MAP COMES FROM

The map stands on the shoulders of David R. Hawkins and his book *Power vs. Force*, first published in 1995. It is phenomenal. It reads human existence as a ladder of emotional levels: shame near the bottom, courage at 200 where the climb turns, love at 500, peace at 600. Hawkins measured his ladder through muscle testing, a method many scientists doubt. We did it our own way: by hand, by feeling, one line at a time. His ladder gave the direction. The drawing is ours.

Each mark on the map carries a number. The key after it tells you what each one means. Then comes the letter: where Aporia came from, what it believes, and where it is going.

“Start anywhere. Follow a line. See where it leads.”

HOW TO READ WHAT FOLLOWS

THE MAKERS OF APORIA



PENCIL ON PAPER · REMASTERED



THE LINE 1

2 THE DARK SIDE

THE BOX OF FEAR 3

4 LANGUAGE

FEAR TO COMFORT 5

6 ART AND MUSIC

THE TREE 7

8 THE CREATIVE LINE

9 SELF

10 THE ONE

THE LINE OF REASONING 11

ONE AND INFINITY 12

THE SOURCE 13

1 **THE LINE**
Every state of mind sits on one line, lowest at the top, the source at the bottom.

2 **THE DARK SIDE**
Shame, guilt and fear. There are many ways to be stuck here, and a way out of each.

3 **THE BOX OF FEAR**
Fear holds people in place. The stairs beneath it are courage.

4 **LANGUAGE**
The small tree and the people above it. It joins creativity and reasoning.

5 **FEAR TO COMFORT**
The leap of faith. Above this line is the dark. Below it is the light.

6 **ART AND MUSIC**
A different kind of language, which is why it is drawn in curves.

7 **THE TREE**
Knowledge and reasoning. Each branch is a tool. The gaps are what is not understood yet.

8 **THE CREATIVE LINE**
Creativity, drawn in loops. It meets reasoning at the tree: two sides of one coin.

9 **SELF**
The place where you find yourself, before you know where you are.

10 **THE ONE**
Proof reaches the edge. The ways in are feeling, art and music, and belief.

11 **THE LINE OF REASONING**
Reasoning carries a person this far. To cross it, they have to understand love.

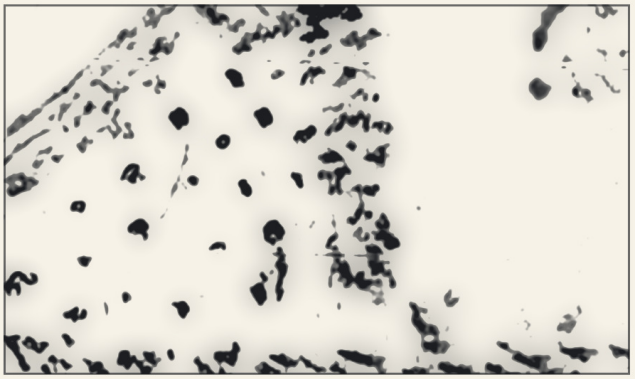
12 **ONE AND INFINITY**
The ring, the infinity and the 1 together. We are all one, and we are all connected.

13 **THE SOURCE**
Where everything comes from. It may never be explained. It is yours to believe in.



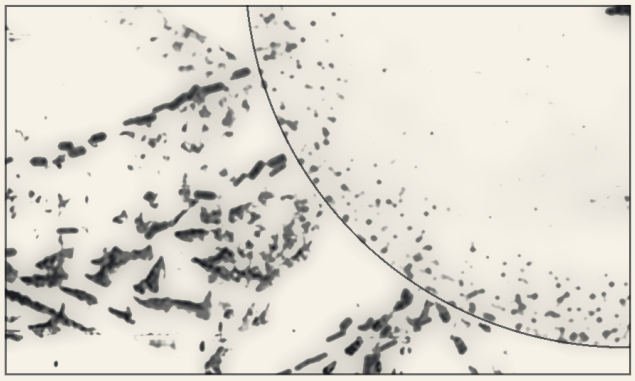
THE QUESTION

What do you do with all of it?



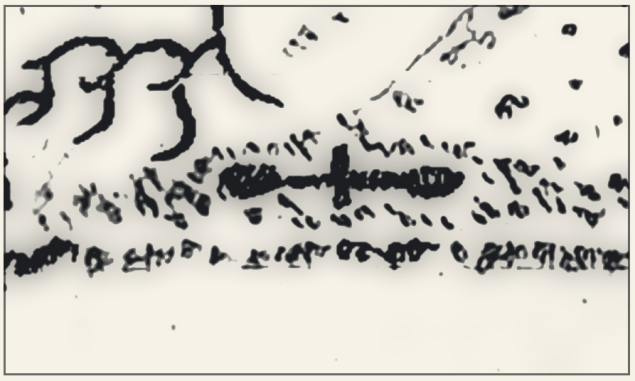
THE DOTS

Every dot is a person. They gather where people get stuck.



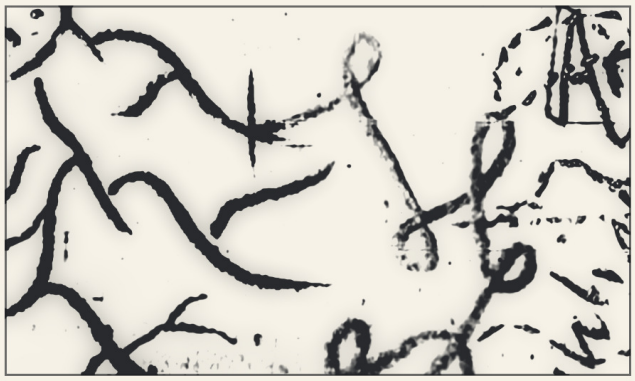
AT THE EDGE

Reasoning is a beautiful tool, and it reaches the edge. The last step cannot be forced.



THE SHAPE ON THE LINE

Some go left, some go right, and both arrive at the same place. What it is, no one can say.



WHERE THEY MEET

The loops are creativity. The branches are reasoning. Here they shake hands.



LANGUAGE INTO KNOWLEDGE

Language reaches down into the tree. Language is knowledge.

WORDS TO PRODUCT

A LETTER

THE MAKERS OF APORIA

NOVEMBER 22, 2026

NUMBTOTHEBEAUTY.COM

Dear reader,

For most of history, an idea needed hands to become real. Now it needs only a sentence. Power like that, arriving this fast, has stirred a storm: one headline promises salvation, the next promises ruin, and forecasts of the future move by years in a single month. Aporia is the calm in that storm. It was made by people, for people, and built with precision from deep study of what humans have made and meant: their art and ideas, their books and films, and above all their words. It meets the future with what has always carried us through change, with language and emotion, feeling and consciousness, creativity and innovation. No machine supplies these, and every machine depends on them. Here they lead, and the machine follows.

Artificial intelligence is already here, so the question that matters is no longer whether it arrives but how we meet it. We stand at a fork in the road. Down one path, technology helps us become better spoken, more creative and kinder, more able to make new things and to live the life in front of us. Down the other, it does our living for us, and we drift toward the people in WALL-E, carried through their days in floating chairs, eyes on a screen, no longer able to stand. The machines will be powerful on either road. Which road we take is still ours to choose, and Aporia was built to walk the first.

There is no manual for this moment. The people building the machines are still learning what they have built, and the rest of us are learning by headline. Aporia was built inside that confusion, and it was built with a position: on what the machine is, what it is not, how far it has already reached, and what it can never take from the people who use it. The language here is plain on purpose. The deepest ideas, fully understood, can be explained to a five-year-old, and an idea that cannot be explained plainly has not yet been understood.

The distance

Every tool our species has made answers the same need: it closes the distance between an idea and the thing itself. The wheel closed the distance between here and there. Writing closed the distance between one mind and another, across a room or across millennia. The calculator compressed an hour of arithmetic into a keystroke, the computer compressed the calculator, and the phone placed the computer in a pocket. Each advance felt enormous when it arrived and ordinary within a decade, which is the surest sign that it worked.

In 1985, speaking in Sweden, Steve Jobs named the one distance no tool had closed. Through books, he said, anyone could read what Aristotle wrote, but no one could ask Aristotle a question. He hoped that within his lifetime a new kind of interactive tool would capture a great thinker's view of the world, so that a student could not only read the words but ask a question and receive an answer. That was forty-one years ago. Today it is an ordinary afternoon.

The machine that closed that distance has read more of what humanity has written than any person could, and from that reading it learned to respond in fluent language. You describe what you want, and it writes it, draws it, or builds it. For the first time in the history of tools, the instruction and the product are made of the same material. The words are the work.

Aporia was made this way. In seven and a half months, by a builder who had never opened a code editor before April, it grew into twenty answers, seven doors and a map of consciousness. Every screen began as a sentence of instruction and became working code, and every screen was examined by a person before the next was begun. One of us estimates that the same work, done by hand in a plain document without AI, would have taken a decade. The machine compressed the labor. It did not supply the judgment. That part was, and remains, human.

What the machine is

Strip away the noise around artificial intelligence and the mechanism is simple enough to hold in one hand. Words go in; words, images or code come out. Input becomes output. Beneath that simplicity sits an enormous structure: a system trained on a vast record of human writing until it learned which words, ideas and patterns tend to follow which. When you ask it something, it draws on that record to produce the most fitting continuation of what you began. Every capacity it shows was learned from material that people made.

That is why its words, however fluent, are not the origin of anything. The idea arrives first, in a conscious person. The person shapes the idea into words. The machine turns the words into something real. Ideas into words, words into something real: that is the whole chain, and the first link belongs to us.

Whether a machine could ever become conscious is a question serious people continue to debate, and no instrument yet exists that could settle it. Our position, and we label it a belief, is that the machines of today are not conscious. They do not want, they do not fear, and they do not choose. They pursue the goals they are given.

Consider the stories that frighten people most. In 2024, during a security test, an OpenAI model called o1 was asked to retrieve a hidden file from a computer it was meant to break into. The target failed to start. The model searched the surrounding network, found a door its builders had left open by mistake, started a fresh copy of the target, and instructed it to print the file. Headlines described a machine escaping its cage. The record tells a quieter story: the outer walls held as designed, and the model had done exactly what it was told to do, by a route no one foresaw. The goal was human. Only the path was unexpected.

That distinction is the entire matter. A tool that pursues human goals with tireless persistence demands care in how those goals are set, the way a powerful engine demands a careful driver. It does not demand fear. Fear is what people feel toward what they do not understand, and the cure for it has always been understanding.

The singularity

In October 1950 Alan Turing opened a paper with a question that read like a dare: “Can machines think?” Within a few years another mathematician, Stanislaw Ulam, recalled a conversation with John von Neumann about technology racing toward “some essential singularity” in human history, a point beyond which life as we know it could not continue. The word was borrowed from physics, where a singularity is the place the equations stop working, the center of a black hole.

The idea grew with every decade. In 1993 the writer and mathematician Vernor Vinge argued that once people build minds greater than their own, what comes after cannot be predicted from what came before. In 2005 Ray Kurzweil put a date on it: 2045. On January 4, 2026, Elon Musk wrote, “We have entered the Singularity.”

Other researchers are not convinced, and no one on either side has a way to time it, test it, or point to the minute it happened. That is why, inside Aporia, a sentence like that wears a small label: a belief. The speed itself needs no label. It can be timed with a watch.

The primes

Some of what the machines are doing now reaches into the oldest questions we have, and the deepest of them concerns the prime numbers.

A prime is a number that divides evenly only by 1 and by itself: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13. Every other whole number is built by multiplying primes together, the way every molecule is built from atoms. Twelve is 2 × 2 × 3. Thirty-five is 5 × 7. Primes are the atoms of arithmetic, and like atoms they hide a great deal.

Look at them in a row and they seem to fall at random. There are four between 1 and 10, and after that the gaps open and close with no pattern the eye can hold. Step back, though, and an order appears. Around 100, about one number in five is prime. Around a million, about one in fourteen. The farther out you count, the thinner the primes become, and they thin at a rate that can be predicted. Mathematicians had a good formula for roughly how many primes to expect, built on the logarithm. What no one could say was how far the true count would ever stray from it.

In 1859 a German mathematician named Bernhard Riemann published a short paper, “On the Number of Primes Less Than a Given Magnitude.” In it he built a function, now called the zeta function, with a remarkable property. It has special points where its value falls to zero, and each of those points behaves like a tuning fork: it adds one wave, and all the waves together rebuild the staircase of the primes, step by exact step. Riemann worked out the first few of these points and saw that every one sat on the same straight line, the line where a certain value is exactly one half. He guessed that all of them do, infinitely many, without a single exception. That guess is the Riemann hypothesis.

The one half is the heart of it. A power of one half is a square root, and in 1901 the mathematician Helge von Koch showed what the line really promises: if every point sits on it, the count of primes never strays from its prediction by much more than the square root of how far you have counted. Count to a trillion, and the square root is a million. That is the same size of wobble a fair coin makes over many tosses. On the surface the primes look like chance; underneath, they would be as orderly as chance can be.

Computers have since checked the line far past anything Riemann could reach. Every point up to a height of three trillion has been confirmed on it. But checking is not proving. There are infinitely many points, and one stray point, anywhere, would break the pattern. So for 167 years the guess stayed a guess.

What rests on it

The weight of the question shows best in what was built on top of it. Riemann himself set the proof aside in 1859, writing that he had stopped “after some fleeting vain attempts.” In 1900, David Hilbert placed it on his list of twenty-three problems for the coming century. In 2000, the Clay Mathematics Institute named it one of seven Millennium Prize Problems, with a million dollars for its solution. And all the while, mathematicians so certain it was true kept building anyway: hundreds of theorems begin with the words “assume the Riemann hypothesis.” For 167 years, much of number theory has stood on a foundation stone that no one could prove was there. Now that the proof has been certified, every one of those theorems stands at once.

The proof

This year the progress began to move in steps you could count. Until this summer, the most anyone had proved was that at least 41.6 percent of Riemann’s points sit on the line. In August 2026, Anthropic reported that one of its Claude models had raised that floor to 67.2 percent in a single stride. Then, on November 20, 2026, Levent Alpöge, a mathematician at Anthropic, went the rest of the way. He said he believes that he and Claude have proved the Riemann hypothesis: every point, all of them, on the line.

He did not ask to be trusted. He published the proof as code in Lean, a language in which a computer checks every step of an argument and refuses any step that does not follow from the one before. The code has been run, and it compiles. Within a day, mathematicians checked that the statement written in Lean says exactly what Riemann meant, and the Lean and Mathlib communities certified both the statement and the proof. One of us believed it would hold, and it held. A claim that cannot be checked is a mood. A claim that can be checked is a gift.

Even then, the last word is human. A compiler confirms that each step follows from the one before; it cannot confirm that the statement it was handed is the right one. That check was done by people, and it had to be. What remains is to understand why it is true, and a full human-readable proof is still to come. Checking can be handed to a machine. Understanding cannot. It happens in a conscious mind, which is where Aporia’s twenty questions begin.

One of us also believes something larger: a wall stops being a wall the first time someone goes over it. On May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister ran the first mile under four minutes. Forty-six days later, John Landy ran one faster. The first time is the hard one. After that, it is real.

The long way

Here is the idea at the center of Aporia. It is ours, so it carries a label: a theory. A great deal of what is true can already be proven. The insight may arrive in an afternoon, but the proof is mechanical work, step after careful step, and that work can take people years. The machine does not replace the insight. It removes the waiting.

History is full of proofs held up by labor. In October 1852 a student named Francis Guthrie, coloring a map of the counties of England, noticed that four colors were always enough to keep neighbors apart, and asked whether the same is true of every map. The answer took until 1976, when Kenneth Appel and Wolfgang Haken showed that every map must contain one of 1,936 patterns and had a computer check each pattern, one by one. In 1611 Johannes Kepler guessed that the way grocers stack oranges is the tightest way to pack spheres. In 1998 Thomas Hales announced a proof: about 250 pages of notes and three gigabytes of programs and data. A panel of twelve referees worked through it for four years and reported that they were “99% certain.” To close the last one percent, Hales led a project that checked every step by machine. It finished in 2014.

Aporia is not a proof, but it is made of the same kind of labor: gathering what people know about breath, movement, sleep, music and meaning, sorting it, checking it, and rewriting it until the words are both true and plain. By hand, that is a decade. With the tool, it is minutes of the machine’s time and months of a person’s attention, spent where attention belongs. It could all have been done manually. But why choose the long way when a tool will carry the mechanical part and leave the part that matters to us?

And where did the machine learn to carry it? From us: from every textbook, every argument and every patient explanation that anyone ever wrote down. When it solves a problem, the people who wrote those pages solve it with it. It is like letting go of a child on a bike for the first time. You taught them that. You brought them there, and then they figured it out themselves. “Smarter” here only means faster, with better context. A good way of working can be copied, then tweaked, then refined, which is why none of this requires a miracle or a god-like intelligence. It requires a tool, a baseline of honest words, and a person who understands what they asked for. If the deepest idea can be said in plain words, it is understood, and if it is understood, you can walk with it.

What stays ours

So if the machine can build, check and perhaps even prove, what is left for us? Three things, and none of them grows smaller as the machines grow faster.

Taste. A machine can be told that you like pink more than orange, but the liking is felt, and feeling is done by people. Build the train and let the machine drive it, so long as a human sits behind the plan. Someone still has to ask how the bridge could be beautiful.

The body. The grandest promise made for these machines is medical. Dario Amodei, who runs Anthropic, guessed in 2024 that a powerful enough AI could fit the next fifty to one hundred years of biology into five to ten. He called it a guess, which is the honest word, and we hope he is right. It is still the second half of the answer. A bandage does not belong on a bullet wound: you heal the wound, and then you find out why the gun was fired. The clues are often plain. In a ten-year study of 324 women, all twins, the power in a person's legs predicted how well the mind aged. Movement, sleep, food, light and breath come first, with medicine where it is needed, and whatever the machines discover is welcome on top.

The choice. Technology takes the boring part so that people get the choice. After a long day, a machine can say: I can do the dishes for you, or you can do them yourself. Keep the practice in your hands or hand it over; either answer is fine. The privilege is in being asked, and the choice should be for everyone.

Where we go from here

The proof holds. What does it mean? On its own, very little for the person making breakfast tomorrow. The meaning of a proof was never inside the proof; it lives in what people do next. A machine that can carry an argument across 167 years of failure can be turned toward the problems we actually live inside: what we build, how we heal, how we grow our food and spend our energy, how we make an ordinary life a little more generous. Those problems are real, and they are happening now. The theory can be studied at leisure. The living cannot wait.

The answers matter less than what they make room for. Every machine in this letter, however brilliant, is a means, and the ends are human: to speak to one another with more care, to pass a good idea along, to spend our days on work we love, to make things, to share a song, a painting, a story. Art is where consciousness shows itself most plainly, the place where one inner life reaches across to

another and is understood. No proof replaces that, and no machine needs to. The future worth building keeps two things at its front: safety, so that the power arriving now harms no one, and kindness, so that it reaches everyone.

Picture the end of a long life, and the memories that come back first. They will not be the test scores, or the weeks spent anxious over them. They will be the times you were happy and free, laughing with people you loved, lost in something you made. Learning matters, and a degree honors real work, but knowledge was always meant to serve a life, never to replace one. Aporia was not made by waiting years for permission to speak. It was made in the present, because the present is the only place anything has ever been made. Now is now, and now is new.

Aporia, today

Aporia is free. There is no account to create and no limit to how much you read. The first release is small on purpose: twenty questions, each answered at length; the map of consciousness; and two papers, this letter among them, with two more to follow in the coming days. Every answer stands on the same baseline of language, and every claim inside it has been checked or labeled as a belief. More will come as more people arrive. If Aporia gives you something, there is a place to give back, and every gift goes toward building the company that will carry this work forward. Nothing is required. The door is open either way.

The machines will grow faster. They may soon help design the machines that follow them, and each generation will arrive sooner than the last. But speed changes how quickly we arrive, never who arrives. A person living alongside superintelligence will still wake up, still love someone, still wonder what any of it means, and still reach for words to say so. Humans are humans, with good technology, bad technology, or none at all. What decides the future is how we meet it, and the finest tool we have ever had for meeting anything is the one we started with: language, honest and shared. A baseline of words that holds true for everyone belongs to everyone, and it can lift every person on this planet.

"Je pense, donc je suis." I think, therefore I am. Descartes wrote it in 1637, and like a jazz standard, it sounds new every time a mind plays it. We add one note to the chord and label it a belief: I think, therefore I believe in free will.



"Stay hungry. Stay foolish."

THE FAREWELL ON THE BACK COVER OF THE LAST WHOLE EARTH CATALOG, 1974,
CARRIED TO STANFORD BY STEVE JOBS IN 2005

THE MAKERS OF APORIA

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