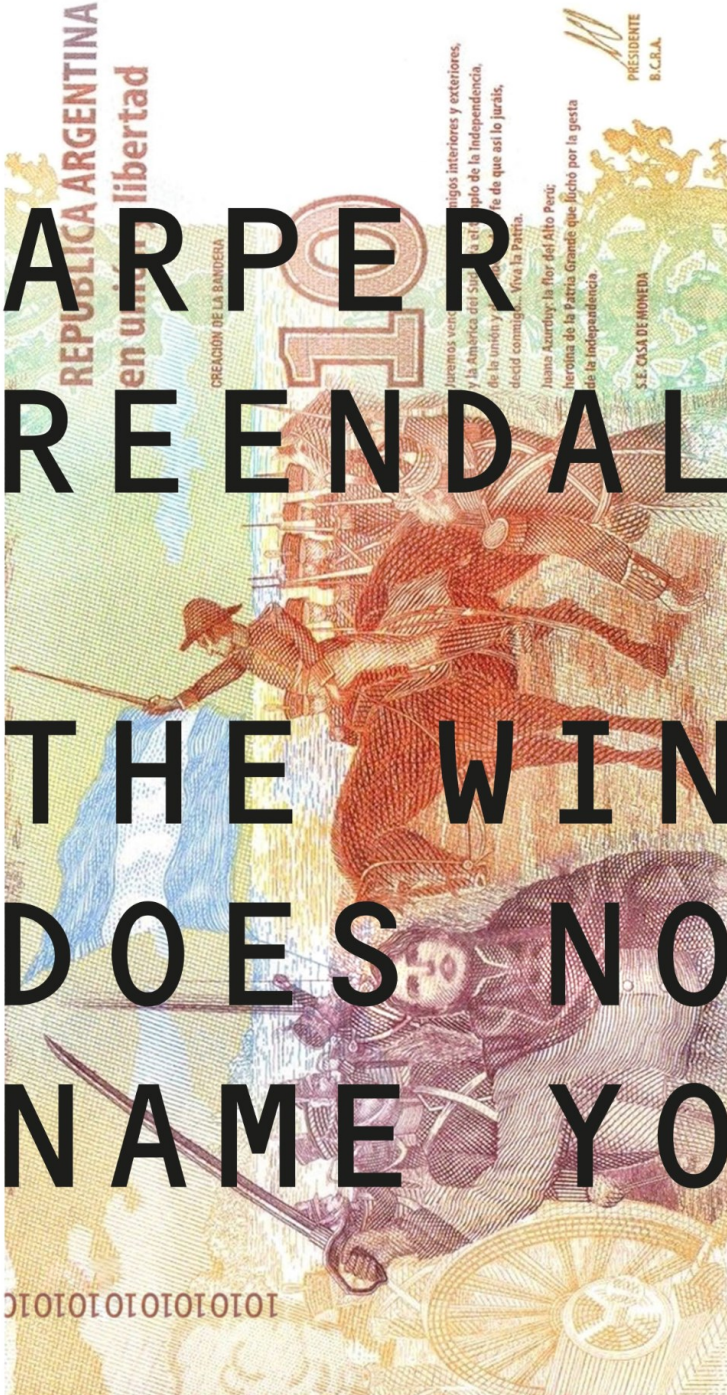


HARPER GREENDALE THE WIND DOES NOT NAME YOU



© Harper Greendale 2024

www.harpergreendale.com

ISBN: 9789083392516

1

At past midnight, only the distant hum of car horns and the clatter of dustmen emptying bins disrupted the quiet of Almagro. The weather had taken a sharp turn and there were rumors of frost. To Emilia, the Argentinian neighborhood felt frayed but enduring—like her father, Pepe’s old, knitted sweater. She wore it despite the gaping hole at the left elbow: it held too many memories to discard. With her cold fingers, she switched on the new Austrian Bitcoin heater: a gift from another of Pepe’s close friends. The concept baffled her at first: *Heating bitcoin?* The thought was both absurd and intriguing. But the device, a mini-miner, used bitcoin-mining to heat their home while minting small amounts of cryptocurrency.

A desk lamp cast shadows over the crowded walls of the small apartment Emilia shared with her parents. Pepe had stacked books and papers on every available surface, squeezing them onto the wooden shelves he built decades

ago. Faded pictures hung from the walls, displaying their little family in happier times. In the most recent image—taken in 2014, right before Pepe had disappeared—Emilia stood between her parents in a cap and gown, flashing a brace-filled smile. At twenty-nine—despite having graduated from the University of Buenos Aires with a distinction in Math—Emilia couldn't afford her own place, and so she still lived at home, working in her father's old office. It didn't bother her, working late, not when the house was this quiet—especially now, with Mumi unwell and asleep in the next room.

Emilia's eyes flicked to her computer screen. A BTCdsk assignment sat untouched in a minimized tab. The email tasked her with writing an overview of Satoshi Nakamoto's frozen fortune: 36,000 dormant wallets, untouched since Bitcoin's earliest days. Another article destined to get a few clicks and disappear into the endless churn of crypto content.

Rolling her eyes, she slumped back in her chair. *Write the obvious*, she thought. *Satoshi's wallets haven't moved. We know. Everyone knows. Groundbreaking.* Instead, she directed her energy to something more interesting: the output of her custom script, running on the full node she kept on a battered desktop tower. The script scanned the blockchain for transactions from wallets dormant for at least fourteen years—over 750,000 blocks in Bitcoin terms. This method uncovered data no ordinary blockchain explorer would bother with. Explorers filtered out 'noise'—dust

transactions—unspendable wallet remnants, too small to cover transaction fees—non-economic activity, OP_RETURN fields. How can you exclude transactions upfront if you don't know exactly what you're looking for? She'd sold her soul to the system by working for BTCdsk, an American company, to pay the bills, but that didn't mean she had to abandon her critical thinking on day one.

Gabriel's favorite band, Keane, played through her headphones, echoing her feelings—not for the first time:

You say you wander your own land. But when I think about it, I don't see how you can.

Emilia missed him and still carried the guilt of their fight, which happened after he treated her to an eight-course dinner at *Aramburu Relais*—one they both knew he couldn't afford. Gabriel had secured a job at the UNDP in NYC. To Emilia's surprise, he'd asked her to go with him. Surely, he'd known she couldn't leave Mumi. And why would she want to join the endless parade of educated people abandoning their home country anyway?

“Look, Emilia,” he'd said, hurt in his eyes. “I get it. I want to see change here too. But the best way for that to happen is by working on debt relief for the Global South, where they make real decisions.”

Hearing his plans felt like a blow to the stomach. She ignored his calls and texts, and Sofia, her best friend, later told her he'd flown out the following week. *Good for him,*

Emilia had thought, determined not to miss someone who'd sold out. Men always left when you needed them most. But it wasn't him—it was the open file on Pepe, the loose end stopping her from taking control.

But now she sat listening to Keane, confused—once thought of as overrated, they'd become the soundtrack she kept returning to. She took off her headphones and typed a few lines for her assignment, letting her script quietly process millions of transactions.

A chat window popped up—Sofia. As if losing Gabriel wasn't enough, Sofia had recently moved to Chile to fund her thesis as an au pair.

Sofia: how u doing?

Emilia: Just trying to stay in the game.

Sofia: Don't tell me you're quoting Gabriel's favorite song?

Emilia: I may have been playing Kean, but only to stay awake. It's not what you think, promise.

Sofia: Glad you're not too cut up about him leaving. But let's not talk about Gabriel. How's BTCdsk?

Emilia: Not bad. They've given me a shitty assignment as a test, but I'm up for the challenge. How's Santiago?

Sofia: So nice! And the girls I'm looking after are great. Makes the job super easy!

Emilia: You still coming back for my birthday?

Sofia: Yeah, course. Wouldn't miss it for the world.


Emilia: Aww, you're the best.

Her monitor beeped, flagging a Bitcoin dust transaction that matched the criteria.

Emilia: Sorry, I need to get back to this article.

Sofia: Sure, girl. Go get it.

Emilia: Speak soon! 

Sofia: 

Emilia frowned as her monitor flagged the transaction. The wallet, so old it might have been forged in Bitcoin's earliest days, showed only a single Satoshi sent—one hundred millionth of a Bitcoin.

What are you doing? She stared at the OP_RETURN field, which displayed a random 50-byte hexadecimal payload. There was no economic reason for the transaction, but it had to mean something. Blockchain graffiti? No—someone had paid the transaction costs. Although Emilia didn't understand what was going on, she refused to assume irrational behavior. This wasn't about value; it was about meaning.

She copied the hex string—*80589EAB18817B86F5672C0CE0F60A387A1B9CD0AF47319A05*—into her script and ran it through a conversion

tool. The output flooded her screen: a scatter of meaningless decimal numbers with no pattern.

Okay. Next step. She converted the hex to binary, turning it into a 200-bit-long string that was anything but random. *What did it mean?*

Her first instinct was to try ASCII, the standard encoding for modern text, and split the binary into 8-bit chunks, feeding it into a decoder. The output was garbled nonsense:

```
€Xž«\x18\x81{\x86ôg,\x0càö\n8z\x1b\x9cD-G1\x9A\x05, with some characters undefined.
```

Emilia leaned back. Whoever sent this clearly had something to hide. If ASCII wasn't the answer; it may not have been an 8-bit encoding, but one that was older. Simpler.

Her father's puzzles came to mind—challenges that taught her cryptographic history as she cracked codes to find hidden presents around the house. They'd shaped her understanding. From Pepe's shelf, she grabbed Richard W. Hamming's *Coding and Information Theory* and thumbed through it, transported to a time of teletypes, telegraphs, and Morse code. Early systems prioritized efficiency, squeezing meaning into limited bandwidth. With only 5-bit encoding—just 32 possibilities—they met the constraints of the era. The newer 8-bit encodings, offering 256 possibilities, had been unimaginable luxuries back then.

Emilia opened another tool and divided the binary into 5-bit chunks instead of 8. The results fragmented into incomplete pieces, like a half-decoded message. But patterns began to appear. Repeated phrases stood out. She wrote a script to cross-reference chunk frequencies with English letter patterns, uncovering hints of structure. Still, the limited text kept it speculative and unresolved. It wasn't readable yet, but she was close to cracking it. The message was there, all she had to do was learn its language.

In the book was a section on the Baudot code, a 5-bit telegraph encoding system from 1874. Incorporated into International Telegraph Union (ITU) standards, it had unified global telegraph communication in the early 20th century. Though obsolete, its straightforward design had influenced later systems—and its deliberate nature caught Emilia's attention.

Could it be this old? Adjusting her script, she decoded the hex string using a Baudot table. The output resembled English, though some characters were off. Switching to the Baudot-Murray protocol, the screen filled with readable text:

tendxrootsxofxjusticextruexequityxawaits

Her eyes widened. *Tend roots of justice. True equity awaits.*

This wasn't some random experiment or a troll encoding old poetry into OP_RETURN fields. Someone had used the oldest cryptographic systems to craft a deliberate message.

She felt uneasy, and yet, exhilarated. Why go to such lengths? Baudot. Binary. Mini haiku. Everything pointed to someone who knew a great deal about history and systems—someone who sought to reveal themselves, but only to the right eyes. Her eyes?

The transaction appeared on-chain 22 days ago—not ancient, but someone else must have seen it. Running her own full Bitcoin gave Emilia an edge over those relying on blockchain explorers. Most people chased big balances, ignoring the crumbs. But the transaction’s true meaning wasn’t in its financial weight or the haiku—it lay in the wallet it came from. Dormant since 2009. Could it be Satoshi itself?

Emilia Gonzales, junior researcher at BTCdsk, uncovering a genuine Satoshi. What were they trying to say? And why so cryptic? Was blockchain graffiti the only safe way? If “true equity awaits,” what were the “roots of justice”? She’d gladly water them if someone pointed them out.

Could Bitcoin's founder have written this message—or someone close to them? Her thoughts turned to Pepe’s disappearance. Her father had published hundreds of articles about early decentralized currencies, arguing they could protect nations like Argentina from economic collapse. Cypherpunk communities embraced his ideas, but in Argentina, people saw him as a radical undermining an already collapsing financial system. When Bitcoin appeared, his proximity to the ideas in its white paper made him a target. In Bitcoin’s early days, it was a minor nuisance. But

as its value soared, secret services, tax authorities, regulators, and criminals all began chasing a piece of the pie. Until he vanished. With no note. No message. Nothing. Emilia hadn't heard from him since 2014. She hoped he wasn't in some jail cell somewhere.

On impulse, Emilia encoded her own haiku using the same method. When she tried decoding it, it produced gibberish. The problem was clear: hexadecimal is base 16, while Baudot uses base 5 (5 bits per character). To avoid padding bits during encoding, her message needed a character count divisible by 20. Only then would the 5-bit characters align with the 4-bit groups required for hexadecimal conversion.

Emilia adjusted her message and pasted FFFFF4E15C1B21F563102FD989FCB032BF3A63F3A18B60A8BFC85811C29F8503F2E0D2FFFFFF into an OP_RETURN transaction, attaching a low-priority Bitcoin fee. After entering her PIN on the hardware wallet powered by the Bitcoin heater, she closed her eyes and pressed both buttons on the small device to approve the transaction.

Her eyelids grew heavy despite the rush of excitement. Sleep first—the world could wait. After turning off the study light, she tiptoed into the hallway, careful not to disturb Mumi. On the monitor, the OP_RETURN input lingered on-screen for a while before the system powered down.

*Dormant roots now stir.
Who whispers beneath the soil?*

2

The clatter of plates and the hum of Mumi's off-key singing drifted through the apartment, mingling with the smell of toasted bread and coffee. Emilia groaned, checking her phone: 9:12 a.m. Her neck ached from hours hunched over the keyboard, the hex string too compelling to abandon.

"Emilia! Toast's ready!" Mumi called.

The kitchen's warmth spilled into the small apartment. Mumi stood at the counter, one hand on her hip, the other holding a plate of toast. The faint smell of lemon cleaner lingered, a reminder of the hours she spent scrubbing the place despite her frailty.

"Late night again?" Mumi asked.

"Something like that," Emilia muttered, running a hand through her dark hair as she sat at the table. Mumi didn't press, but her worried gaze said enough—about Emilia's long hours, her fixation on the past, and the recurring dreams of Pepe, where he tried to speak, but no words came through.

“How’s Gabriel doing? Does he like New York?”

Emilia took a bite of toast, unsure how to respond.

“It’s too big for me,” Mumi continued. “I remember when Pepe and I visited in the mid-nineties. We wandered into the wrong neighborhood, just taking pictures. Suddenly, this huge man appeared, held out his hand, and pointed at the camera.”

Emilia nodded. She’d heard this story a dozen times. “Did you file a report?”

“You bet! It felt like *Hill Street Blues*. Do you know that show?”

“Nope. Probably not enough serial killers for my taste.”

“Isn’t it strange he left without saying goodbye?”

Emilia poured some coffee. “Who?”

“Gabriel. I even bought the ingredients for his favorite lunch.”

“Most likely too busy. Green card paperwork isn’t easy these days.”

“Strange he hasn’t called though, don’t you think? How long has he been gone now, a few months?”

“Mom, leave it. He’s fine. He’ll be working overtime to show off to his new managers.”

“He’s a nice guy. I like ambition in young people.”

“Are you saying I’m not ambitious?” Emilia shoved her chair back.

“What about your breakfast?”

“I need to finish my piece. That’s my ambition for the day. What’s yours?” Emilia marched out of the kitchen and slammed the study door behind her. Leaning against it, she shut her eyes, guilt settling in.

Before turning the monitor on, she put her headphones in and found a song that reflected her mood—another one of Keane’s.

A turning tide, lovers at a great divide, why do you laugh, when I know that you hurt inside? And why do you say, it's just another day, nothing in my way? I don't want to go, I don't want to stay. So, there's nothing left to say.


Sighing, Emilia tapped the space bar on her old desktop. The hum of her desktop broke the silence. She pulled up the haiku wallet’s address and froze. Tucked into a freshly minted block was another OP_RETURN transaction, waiting for her to unravel. At least now she’d know how.

The script called hex2baudot compiled smoothly, and when Emilia ran it, a phrase appeared on-screen. Stripping out the filler characters, she stared at the message.

Echoes return to their roots. All will be revealed.

All will be revealed. Sure, that'd be nice.

Emilia: Sofia, you there?

Sofia: Yeah, give me a sec, need to find some band-aid 

Emilia: Sure, ping me when you're free.

While she waited for Sofia to come back online, Emilia checked her email and found a message from her BTCdsk manager about a new assignment on electronic waste from outdated mining hardware. She asked if she could deliver the frozen wallets story first. Not ready to let go—or reveal how little progress she'd made—and explained she'd found something extraordinary on the Bitcoin blockchain: a possible hint at renewed activity from Satoshi.

Minutes later, her manager's response arrived: *Share preliminary findings by noon EST*. Before Emilia could process what felt more like a demand, Sofia jumped back online.

Sofia: What's going on?

Emilia: Knees bandaged, tears dried, faces washed?

Sofia: Yep. And candy earned, so all pain's forgotten.

Emilia: Great. Can I tell you something weird?

Sofia: Like I could stop you.

Emilia: Not really. Look, I was asked to check out early frozen bitcoin wallets. I found one that's come back alive.

Sofia: My god, that's a scoop!

Emilia: It gets stranger. I decoded an encrypted string—a short haiku. It hints at something happening soon, using words like *justice* and *true equity awaits*.

Sofia: True equity? That’s what we need! Are you gonna be rich?

Emilia: I don’t think it’s about that. What if I told you I have a feeling this connects to Pepe?

Sofia: PEPE??????

Emilia: I know, it sounds stupid. But the way this person talks... And Pepe disappeared right when people were starting to suspect he was Satoshi.

Sofia: This is really getting to you, isn’t it? If you think this is about Pepe, you need to talk to Mumi.

Emilia: You mean the person I just fought with?

Sofia: Exactly. You’ll do the right thing.

Sofia: Gotta go—candy’s apparently gone. Talk soon!

Emilia closed the chat and began compiling her findings. As she copied the first haiku, another OP_RETURN transaction from the same wallet popped up. She updated her script to strip the filler characters and ran it.

The soil must be rich, not for the few, but for all to bloom.

All the cryptic haiku pointed in the same direction. Gabriel would have loved this—themes of wealth, justice,

and equity were his life's work, lobbying for debt forgiveness in the Global South. But he hadn't expected results anytime soon; the wealthy countries held the reins, pretending there wasn't a real issue.

As if Argentina would ever repay its debts.

Emilia wondered if she should text him. He was probably still mad, and he might already have found someone else, someone more supportive. Emilia pushed the thought aside and checked the time: 8:45 a.m. in New York. Maybe he was still at home.

3

Before she could think it through, Emilia pressed the call button. The phone rang twice, then clicked off. Of course, Gabriel wasn't going to answer and pretend like nothing had happened. Her head dropped. This was all her fault. She tossed her phone onto Pepe's worn Chesterfield and flicked on the Sony Compact Disc Player. The speakers groaned to life, filling the room with a faint hum.

She slid *Hopes and Fears* into the CD tray and scrolled to the final track: *Bedshaped*.

*I know you think I'm holding you down
And I've fallen by the wayside now
And I don't understand the same things as you
But I do*

The song washed over her, as her phone buzzed. She fumbled to pick it up, accidentally answering the call.

“Emilia? You there?”

Heat rushed to her face.

“Gabriel?”

“Was that Keane playing?”

“Umm... must’ve been on the radio. I didn’t really notice.”

“Is everything alright? You and Mumi?”

Emilia caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Against her dark hair, her face looked pale and drawn.

“Emilia?”

“Sorry. Thought I heard Mumi call. She’s okay, I guess. Thanks for asking.”

“That’s a relief. I hadn’t heard from you in so long—I thought something had happened.”

“Yeah, I get that. Don’t worry, she’s fine. How are you doing. How’s New York?”

“Missing my life back home. But workwise, it’s good for me to be here... Umm, great to hear your voice, Em—” he hesitated, as if about to say more. “Anyway, I don’t want to be rude, but I walked out of a debt-for-climate meeting to take this. Unless you’ve got something urgent to tell me, I need to hop back in.”

“It may not be urgent, but I found a strange haiku-like message on the blockchain while working on a BTCdsk assignment. It might mean more to you than to me.” Emilia felt embarrassed at how lame she sounded.

“You’re working for BTCdsk? Great that you’ve found

a US employer. Argentina needs dollars! You'll have to keep me updated...and feel free to share your mysterious messages... I really have to go. Take care of yourself and say hi to Mumi. I'll drop by during the Northern summer. I miss her cooking."

What about me? Emilia thought. "Wait! Gabriel. One quick question. Do you think this could be Satoshi?"

"Ah, I see where you're going with this, Pepe. What were the messages about?"

"Not sure, but they seem to hint at reducing inequality, maybe through Bitcoin wealth."

"That'd be great. You know, it's funny—the meeting I'm supposed to be in is about convincing the West to forgive Global South debts in exchange for ecosystem restoration. Sounds ideal, but the wealthy nations are stonewalling."

"I get your frustration. But what if these blockchain messages signal a change?"

"Even if this is Satoshi, what's the point of haiku and a dead wallet? Share what you've got, though—maybe you'll change my mind. Gotta go now. Speak soon!"

Emilia stared at her phone. Gabriel must've thought she was some silly schoolgirl with a wild theory, using it as an excuse to reconnect. The thought made her cringe.

"Emilia, who were you talking to?" Mumi called from the kitchen.

Emilia hesitated before walking into the kitchen to get more coffee.

Mumi stood by the sink, pulling on her rubber gloves. “Was that Gabriel?”

“Yeah. He says he misses your cooking.”

“Oh, such a sweet boy. When’s he visiting?”

“In two months, I think.”

“Call him back and tell him he’s welcome any time. I’ll make his favorite chicken empanadas.”

“He’s in a meeting, Mom, but I will. Now, I really need to send this report.”

“Yes, yes, off you go.”

Back at her desk, Emilia froze. The wallet had broadcast two new hex strings to the blockchain. With her updated script, she decoded the first one in seconds:

The river bends wide. It floods where the thirst runs deep.

The second string refused to decode. Frustrated, she set it aside for later, instead focusing on the deciphered haiku. While it was as poetic as the others, she doubted the story she’d told Gabriel on the phone.

Despite her misgivings, Emilia drafted a message for him, summarizing her findings and the haiku she’d added on-chain. She reused it for her BTCdsk manager, adding background details and requesting more time. The story was still unfolding, with OP_RETURN messages left to decode.

As she hit send, the smell of freshly baked empanadas drifted in from the kitchen. Perfect—she was starving.

4

A notification popped up on Emilia's phone.
Breaking: Satoshi's Wallet Comes To Life.

Her heart raced as she read the byline—her manager's name.

All that time she spent decoding the haiku—her hard work, splashed across the screen, published without so much as a heads-up. The details, even the “river bends wide” line, were twisted into a clickbait headline. She skimmed the conclusion: speculative theories about Satoshi's return, the potential impact of a sell-off on Bitcoin's exchange rate, and rumors of the World Bank defaulting. It was ridiculous. Had they even read the haiku? If this was how they'd spin it, thank goodness her name wasn't attached.

As hashtags like *#SatoshiCashing* exploded on social media, Emilia felt the story slipping from her grasp. Her head was spinning with it all. She exhaled sharply and forced herself to focus: *the sender, the connection. That's what mattered. Ignore the background noise. Zoom in on the signal.*

The afternoon unfolded like a storm gathering strength. Blockchain researchers, armed with their own scripts and full nodes, dissected the haiku and transactions at lightning speed. Within hours, a German research institute uncovered a second dormant wallet from Bitcoin's early days. It, too, was active, broadcasting cryptic messages. In quick succession, the wallet posted another series of haiku, each a poetic critique of the financial system. One verse went viral:

Debt turns dreams into rubble. Roots crack stone for light.

It wasn't just poetic. A single transaction pointed to a smart contract on the Ethereum blockchain. Detailed analysis revealed Satoshi's plan: a systematic redistribution of wealth through Bitcoin. Economists and blockchain experts worldwide dove into the contract's formula so intensely that several blockchain explorers crashed. By the time the dust settled, initial reports began piecing together the findings.

The redistribution worked on an equity-per-capita basis, factoring in a country's population, national wealth, and debts owed by others. Poorer nations gained a larger proportional share, while wealthier countries, burdened by their own outstanding loans, saw their potential Bitcoin payouts shrink dramatically. The implications rippled across the globe.

Social media continued to erupt with breakdowns of the formula's impact on each country. In Switzerland,

debates ignited in local government circles. Politicians realized that forgiving debts owed by poorer nations could nearly triple the country's Bitcoin share. One official made headlines, declaring: *This isn't just economics—it's common sense. Why keep debts that will never be repaid when canceling them offers immediate rewards?*

In India, a different conversation unfolded. Economists pointed out that erasing the country's external debts could free billions previously tied up in interest payments, transforming its fiscal landscape. Freed resources could fund education, healthcare, and infrastructure, tackling deep-rooted inequalities and driving growth. The narrative shifted: for India and many countries in the Global South, this wasn't just about Bitcoin—it was a chance to escape the debt cycle and reclaim control over national resources.

As the day dragged on, Emilia sat dazed in a daze behind her screen, clicking through article after article. Keane's *Spiralling* played softly in the background:

But every time I reach for you

You slip through my fingers

Into cold sunlight

Laughing at the things

That I had planned

The map of my world gets smaller as I sit here

The speculation frenzy seemed endless, each headline adding more noise. But the most meaningful update wasn't in the news—it came in an email from Gabriel.

Emilia,

Your hunch was right. Thanks for the heads-up! As you've probably noticed, the world is in turmoil, and the UN is caught in the middle. Wealthy governments are calling it a hoax, a destabilizing stunt. But I'm not sure it is. For one, who's destabilizing who?

This scheme is great because it doesn't demand compliance. It creates incentives no one can ignore. I've been pushing to frame this not as a threat but as an opportunity. It's not a revolution; it just rewires the system from within.

Take care of yourself.

G.

As Emilia reread his calm words, her throat tightened with a strange mix of relief, guilt, and longing. Unsure what to do with herself, she turned to the OP_RETURN hex string her script had failed to crack and tried different approaches. Nothing worked.

The buzz online claimed the broadcast was indecipherable. An academic with access to a quantum computer publicly claimed that the phrase wasn't encoded using any known method—there was simply nothing to compute.

Frustrated, she closed her browser. It was time to follow Sofia's advice and talk to Mumi about Pepe. She's let

the economists and governments fight over Bitcoin's redistribution.

5

In the kitchen, Mumi peeled carrots while watching a rerun of *Chiquititas*. On the table, Emilia noticed a pharmacy bag and a stack of peso bills, sealed with a bank strap.

“I didn’t hear you go out for medicine,” Emilia said.

“They’re delivered regularly. Must be an insurance thing.”

Emilia frowned—*hardly anything was covered these days*. Unsure how to broach the subject, she inhaled deeply and blurted: “Do you ever miss Pepe?”

Mumi set down the carrot and peeler. “Oh, that’s a complicated question. I miss the life we had, all of us in this house. But I understood why he had to leave. How about you? Do you miss him?”

Emilia nodded.

“I’m sure he misses you too...wherever he is.”

“Do you sometimes speculate about where that might be?”

“Not exactly, no.”

“What do you mean by that?” Emilia had always assumed her mother knew as little as she did. “Has he reached out to you?”

Mumi paused, choosing her words carefully. “Look, Emilia, this might be hard to grasp. But when your father disappeared, he left us something invaluable—his network of friends and colleagues. Over the years, they’ve shown up with gifts, envelopes of money, even a new laptop. At first, I thought it was luck, but now... I suspect Pepe has been helping us from afar.”

“How long have you thought this?”

“A while. The gifts started arriving sporadically—too convenient to be coincidence. I thought you’d noticed.”

“No, I hadn’t. I thought he was gone for good.” She hesitated, then asked, “Do you think he created Bitcoin?”

Mumi smiled. “Your father isn’t Satoshi. But he had a lot of friends who worked on decentralized money. I think he knows who it is, but he didn’t want the risk of revealing the secret.”

“Nobody wants to rat on their friends... Mom, I think Pepe might be trying to communicate with me. Do you think I’m going crazy?”

“Crazy? No, Love. That wouldn’t surprise me at all.” She gestured toward the stack of peso bills. “In fact, one of his friends dropped by earlier today and asked me to give you this.”

Emilia flipped through the stack. They were all in ten-peso bills. *The purchasing power of a dead leaf. What was he thinking?*

“I think your father has a lot of faith in your analytical skills.”

Emilia narrowed her eyes. “What do you mean by that?”

“Well,” Mumi chuckled, “if it’s not about the value of the bills, then what else could it be? Anyway, I’ll leave you to figure it out—I need to grab some groceries before all the bread is gone.”

In Pepe’s office Emilia flipped through the wad again, searching for clues. Bills faced either forward or backward—a pattern. Two hundred and fifty-six bills, exactly two to the power of eight. She grabbed a pen and paper, marking *zeros* for backward-facing bills and *ones* for those that were forward-facing. The process felt repetitive but meditative.

Once she’d finished, she snapped a photo of the binary string, grabbed her laptop, and queued up *Silenced by the Night* on Spotify—the conversations she’d had with Gabriel and Mumi stirred something unresolved in her.

*In a city like mine there's no point in fighting
I close my eyes, I see you and me driving
If I am a river, you're the ocean
Got the radio on, got the wheels in motion
We were silenced by the night*

But you and I, we're gonna rise again

Emilia shook her head, pushing the daydreams away. She digitized the *zeros* and *ones* by feeding the photo to a bot, then converted the binary into a 32-byte hex string. She was still pondering its purpose when Sofia popped online:

Sofia: Em, you there? Have you seen the news?

Emilia: Yes! OMG, what a day.

Sofia: Gabriel got something to do with it?

Emilia: No—guess again.

Sofia: Not Pepe?

Emilia: Yes! I think he's trying to reach me in a way that keeps him safe.

Sofia: Really? What does Mumi think?

Emilia: Not much. She went shopping.

Sofia: That's wild! I mean, if it really is him. God, I'd be so happy for you if it was.

Emilia: Thanks. I'm still processing it all. What's your news?

Sofia: Rumors are flying—Argentina's foreign debt might be forgiven. Could this end the cycle of debt and inflation?

Emilia: Does that mean you're coming home?

Sofia: Imagine that! But the World Bank's calling it "an unregulated experiment destabilizing global economies."

Emilia: After everything regulated systems did to us, I'll take my chances with unregulated.

Sofia: Exactly. But will it spark real change or just another cycle of inequality?

Emilia: Fair question. Either way, it's better than this endless slide to the bottom.

With the hex string still unanswered and Mumi's footsteps in the hallway, Emilia typed Sofia a quick *speake soon* and turned back to the code.

6

As the new day arrived, another haiku appeared on what was now called *The Haiku Wallet*:

*The weight of gold holds no roots.
Tend the soil instead.*

Hours later, the Bitcoin network erupted with unprecedented activity. Tens of thousands of dormant wallets merged into one hundred newly formed addresses, holding millions of Bitcoins—far more than anyone thought the founders controlled. The largest wallet linked seamlessly to an Ethereum-compatible address, activating the first redistribution smart contract.

Momentum surged at the UN as Global South representatives demanded immediate reform. In countries like Pakistan, Ghana, and Egypt, where debt payments devoured nearly half of government revenue, leaders argued they'd never grow while trapped in a system rigged against them. Debt wasn't an asset anymore—it had become a crushing liability.

Meanwhile, tax havens collapsed under public pressure. Citizens realized housing tax-evading corporations slashed their equity-per-capita ratios, cutting their share of Bitcoin redistribution. In the Caymans, protesters chanted *No more freeloaders!* as the government revoked longstanding tax exemptions. Billionaires, desperate to avoid public outrage, funneled wealth into debt relief and charities, hoping to avoid being considered liabilities.

At the UN, chaos reigned. Wealthy nations like Norway and Switzerland, pillars of the post-WWII Bretton Woods system, decried the scheme as reckless, warning of economic collapse. Gabriel's team proposed a bold compromise: debt-for-climate swaps. Rich countries would forgive debts in exchange for measurable climate commitments. Some nations embraced it to save face, while others clung to the crumbling status quo.

Economists noted two key developments. First, the second redistribution contract's rules remained maddeningly vague, with specifics to be revealed days before the payout, preventing manipulation. Second, Bitcoin's value surged as Satoshi's wealth funneled into the public good, pressuring even reluctant nations to act as citizens demanded their share.

From her apartment in Almagro, Emilia followed fragments of the global upheaval, while her mind remained fixated on Pepe's challenge. The 32-byte hex string defied every decoding attempt. After hours of frustration, she

realized it wasn't a code—it was a seed. But for what? It didn't match any known wallet.

The latest undecipherable OP_RETURN string, she thought. Could they be connected? Her hands trembling, she combined the two and ran them through an SHA-256 parser. The result—a new 80-byte string—stopped her cold:

```
7777772E686172706572677265656E64616C652E636  
F6D2F77696E64646F65736E6F746E616D6575.
```

It was too repetitive to be random. Abandoning her hex2baudot script, she tried plain ASCII. When the text appeared, her breath caught in her throat. Tears filled her eyes as she whispered: *And if you have a minute, why don't we go, talk about it somewhere only we know?*

Sofia: Em, you all good?

Emilia: Hey, sorry, just been working on something.

Sofia: Oh yeah, what is it?

Emilia: I decoded another Bitcoin message.

Sofia: What did it say?

Emilia: It's a quote from Keane. *Somewhere Only We Know*.

Sofia: On the blockchain? That's insane. What does it mean?

Emilia: I think it's telling me to find Gabriel. And through Gabriel, Pepe will find me.

Sofia: Em, if this is really Pepe, what are you waiting for?

Tears streamed down Emilia's face.

Emilia: “I’m scared, Sofi. What if I’m wrong?”

Sofia: What if you’re right? Go with your gut.

Emilia headed for the kitchen, ready to tell Mumi about her discovery, but froze. Her mother was struggling, wincing as she lifted a heavy pot of boiling water from the stove. Emilia rushed forward:

“Mumi, let me—”

Mumi brushed her off with a light chuckle. “It’s just the arthritis, *querida*. Old bones creak, nothing more.”

“You can’t keep doing everything yourself,” Emilia said, frowning. “What if you fall or—”

“Then I’ll pick myself up,” Mumi interrupted, her voice firm. “I’ve been managing just fine. You don’t need to hover over me like a worried hen.” She set the pot down with deliberate care, turning her back to Emilia.

Emilia’s jaw tightened, but she didn’t push further. She hesitated before speaking. “I need to go on a journey.”

Mumi turned, softening. “I understand. But take some *Locro* for Gabriel—*pobrecito*—that boy’s starving on that terrible food over there.”

7

Emilia stood among the bustling crowds of Ministro Pistarini International Airport, Keane's *Bend and Break steady* playing through her headphones. On the departures board she found her flight: *JFK: Boarding*.

If only I don't bend and break, I'll meet you on the other side.

She took a deep breath, letting the lyrics settle. For so long, she'd resisted—leaving Argentina, forgiving Gabriel, facing her father's absence. But something had shifted.

Adjusting her bag, she steadied herself. She wasn't abandoning Mumi or betraying her roots. She was letting go—of guilt, fear, and everything that had held her back.

A screen overhead caught her eye: a ceremony in Dhaka. Flags framed a modest stage as the finance minister spoke, his words subtitled.

For too long, nations like ours have suffered under a financial system not built for us. This redistribution plan is a blessing—and a responsibility. Today, we validate our national Bitcoin

wallet for future generations. Let this be the start of something greater than debts.

Emilia turned away. She was moved but unable to fully connect the global chaos to her quiet discovery of the first haiku. She was sure someone would have unearthed it eventually. She rushed toward the gate. That morning, she'd broadcasted a final encoded haiku on the Bitcoin blockchain—not for Gabriel, or Pepe. It was more a goodbye to Satoshi, to the idea of a single guiding hand. Mostly, it was a reminder to herself: the world's systems might be vast and impersonal, but her choices mattered.

*The wind does not name,
but its touch moves the forest.*

As Emilia reached the gate, she hovered a thumb over her phone, and wondered whether she should text Gabriel and tell him she was coming. *No.*

With Keane's chorus building in her ears, she smiled. She didn't know what awaited her, but for the first time, she wasn't afraid.

Meet me in the morning when you wake.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I started looking for songs to fit the emotional landscape of the story I had in mind, I began with Keane's *Somewhere Only We Know*. From there, everything arranged itself smoothly, with their music not just complementing the narrative but actively shaping it. Special thanks to Keane for crafting songs that evoke a sense of positive nostalgia—hopeful, resilient, and deeply connective.

For me, your music beautifully captures the spirit of this story.

Thank you Pourush, Nick, Jessica, Roberta, Sheena, Rosalie, Frank, Marlies, Robert, Renzo, Sofia, Benjamin, Myrthe, Eyal.

Proof of writing

85c0db25cb8f0e2cc9572b5d703f21f262d3eff9c9c67e28fd63ecbfd793184