

## The Money Game

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They tell us  
there is enough  
if we learn how to share.

They scatter money  
like seed  
and call it opportunity,  
then stand back  
and watch us run.

They say *collaboration*  
with one breath,  
and *innovation* with the next,  
while quietly measuring  
who learned to sharpen their elbows  
and who kept their hands open.

It feels like Monopoly played in real time—  
some start with property,  
others circle the board  
collecting promises instead of rent.

The rules are explained  
after the dice are thrown.  
The board keeps changing.  
Passing *Go* does not mean relief.  
Sometimes it means another review cycle.

Small organizations learn early  
how to smile while starving,  
how to translate care into bullet points,  
how to turn survival into outcomes,  
how to make grief legible  
to someone who has never had to ask.

We are told to partner,  
but not too closely.  
To share credit,  
but not dilute ownership.  
To uplift one another,  
but still prove  
we are the best version of good.

Some of us are trampled  
not because the work is weak,  
but because the board was never built  
for everyone to stay in the game.

Denial letters arrive  
polite, efficient,  
full of belief in our mission—  
just not enough belief  
to keep the lights on.

Still, we show up.  
Not because the system rewards us,  
but because the work is real  
and people are already here,  
waiting.

This is not a failure of collaboration.  
It is a design that mistakes competition  
for excellence,  
and calls scarcity a lesson.

We know another way is possible.  
We live it off the board—  
in kitchens,  
in borrowed spaces,  
in shared rides and shared credit,  
in work that survives  
without permission.

We keep building anyway.  
Not to win the game,  
but to stop playing by rules  
that require someone else to lose.