

Blindness at the Helm

Adam Tugwell | 25 September 2026



They stand at the helm of a ship built on yesterday, figures carved in the half-light, hands resting on levers worn smooth by the slow erosion of decades. They move like statues taught to mimic life, steady in form, uncertain in purpose, their confidence a ritual performed against the gathering dark.

The sea beneath them is ancient. It remembers storms they have forgotten. It remembers truths they have never learned. It remembers the weight of choices made by those who believed they could command the tide.

Every storm meets the same old charts, the same old compass, the same old faith in a model that no longer knows the waters it claims to rule. Their voices drift outward, thin as smoke, as if certainty were a charm that could bind the wind or quiet the rising swell.

But the wind does not listen. And the swell does not sleep.

Paradigm-blind, they search the horizon for answers in the direction that birthed the wreckage. Tax becomes their hammer, markets their scripture, growth their prayer - even as welfare holds up lives their own design has worn thin.

And beneath it all, a minimum wage that does not meet the minimum to live - a promise that breaks before it reaches the hands it was meant to help. People surviving on numbers that fall like ash, on wages that vanish before they touch the ground, on hope stretched thinner than the line between hunger and endurance.

They call it leadership, this tightening of bolts on a failing machine, but it is only management - management of decline, management of illusion, management of a moment they cannot imagine beyond. Leadership would require vision, and vision would require courage, and courage would require standing bare before the storm and admitting the storm is real.

But the world has slipped its alignment. Trust runs backwards now - institutions louder, the public quieter, each convinced the other has stepped off the map. Reality fractures into personalised shards, and the performance of stability echoes like a hollow drum in a valley that no longer answers.

We have reached a place called stop - the limit of extraction, the edge of efficiency, the point where dependency turns back on itself. A country hollowed by borrowing into oblivion, its foundations stretched thin by a worldview that mistook consumption for progress, and obedience for order.

Still they cling to the creed of the establishment - not a class, but a lens, a way of seeing the world that traps even those who wish to escape it. A model that raises numbers while lowering lives, that values profit over people, and measures prosperity in everything except the human cost of keeping it alive.

And we - we who feel the tremors before they're named - watch them rearrange furniture in a house whose foundations have already cracked. We watch them blame the scaffolding for the collapse of the structure. We watch them search for salvation in the very logic that led us here.

Yet beneath the noise, beneath the managed narratives and the confident briefings, a truth hums like a wire under strain: the operating system is ending.

And the rise begins - not loud, not sudden, but elemental. A tide gathering itself far from shore. A wind shifting before the storm arrives. A tremor moving through the bones of the earth.

A change that feels mythic because it is.

Because the future isn't waiting for them to see it. It's waiting for us - for the moment we step forward, for the courage to build the world they cannot imagine but we can already hear in the rumble beneath our feet.

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