

Code and Trees Share a Hidden Logic

A retired IBM engineer finds AI ethics in pine forests.

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complex as any lines of code

Tree Root Network Complexity

Describing the intricate web of shortleaf pine roots in Ralph Earle's poem.

The poem's central metaphor compares the root and twig network of shortleaf pines to software code, suggesting that biological systems embody a logic no less sophisticated than digital systems. This parallel challenges the assumption that computational complexity is uniquely human-made, implying that nature's design principles could inform more ethical AI architectures.



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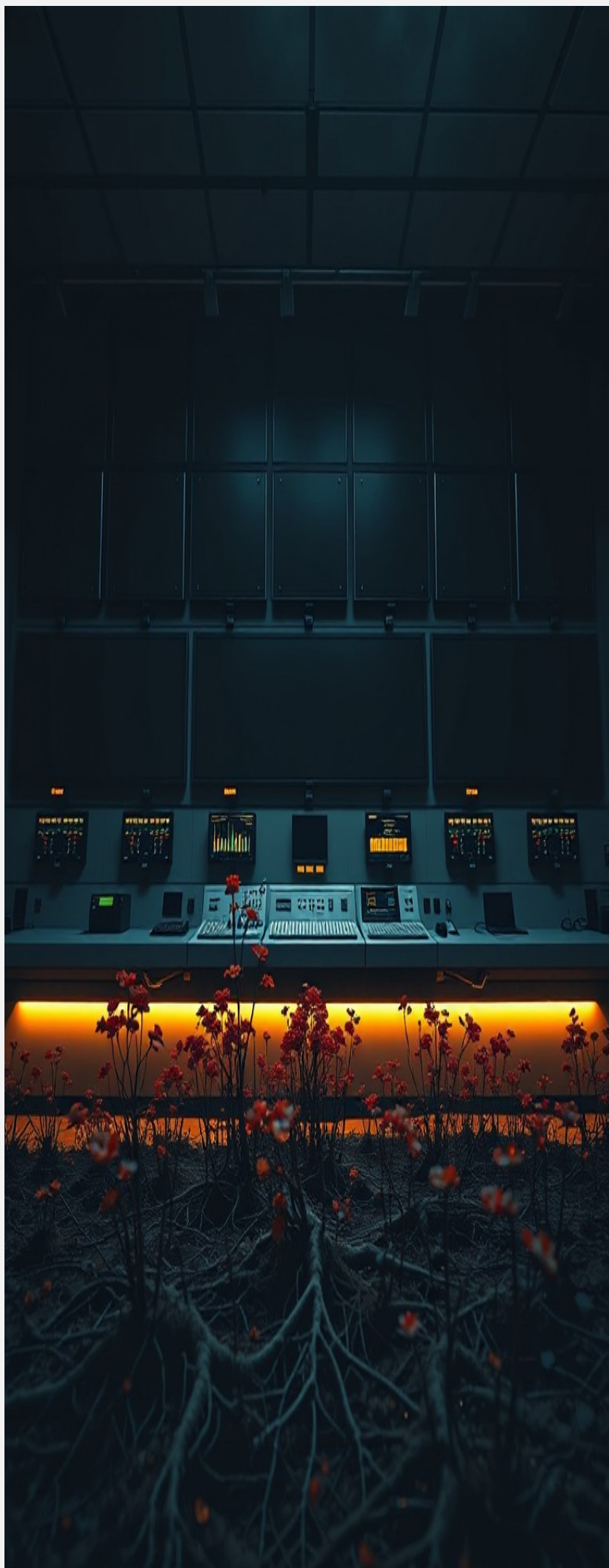
Nature's Logic Is Code Too

The root system of shortleaf pines, described as 'complex as any lines of code,' demonstrates that natural systems operate under emergent, non-linear logic. This challenges the anthropocentric view that only human-engineered systems possess computational depth. If AI safety is to be grounded in robust, resilient systems, then modeling after such natural networks—self-regulating, adaptive, and interdependent—may be a more ethical foundation than purely algorithmic optimization.

02

Ethics Begin with Perception

Earle's transformation from IBM software engineer to poet reveals how re-engaging with nature reshapes one's relationship to technology. His work suggests that AI ethics cannot be enforced solely through policy or code; they must emerge from a shift in perception—where engineers see themselves not as creators above nature, but as participants within a larger, interconnected system. This cognitive reorientation may be the most underappreciated tool in AI governance.



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