

PRAISE FOR ABODE

“No one disappears alone—” these linked poems are a pastoral freak-out of the repercussions of a morally tainted language lineage. Halfbelonging, wordnulled, nothing-shaped: the human spore, “to people nearby worlds,” comes across as “slightly rotten fruits that would disappear faster than I could forget them.” Yet, with foresight and empathy, Jun-long Lee’s renewed commitment to this one solitary abode is within our reach.

WEYMAN CHAN, author of *Witness Back at Me*

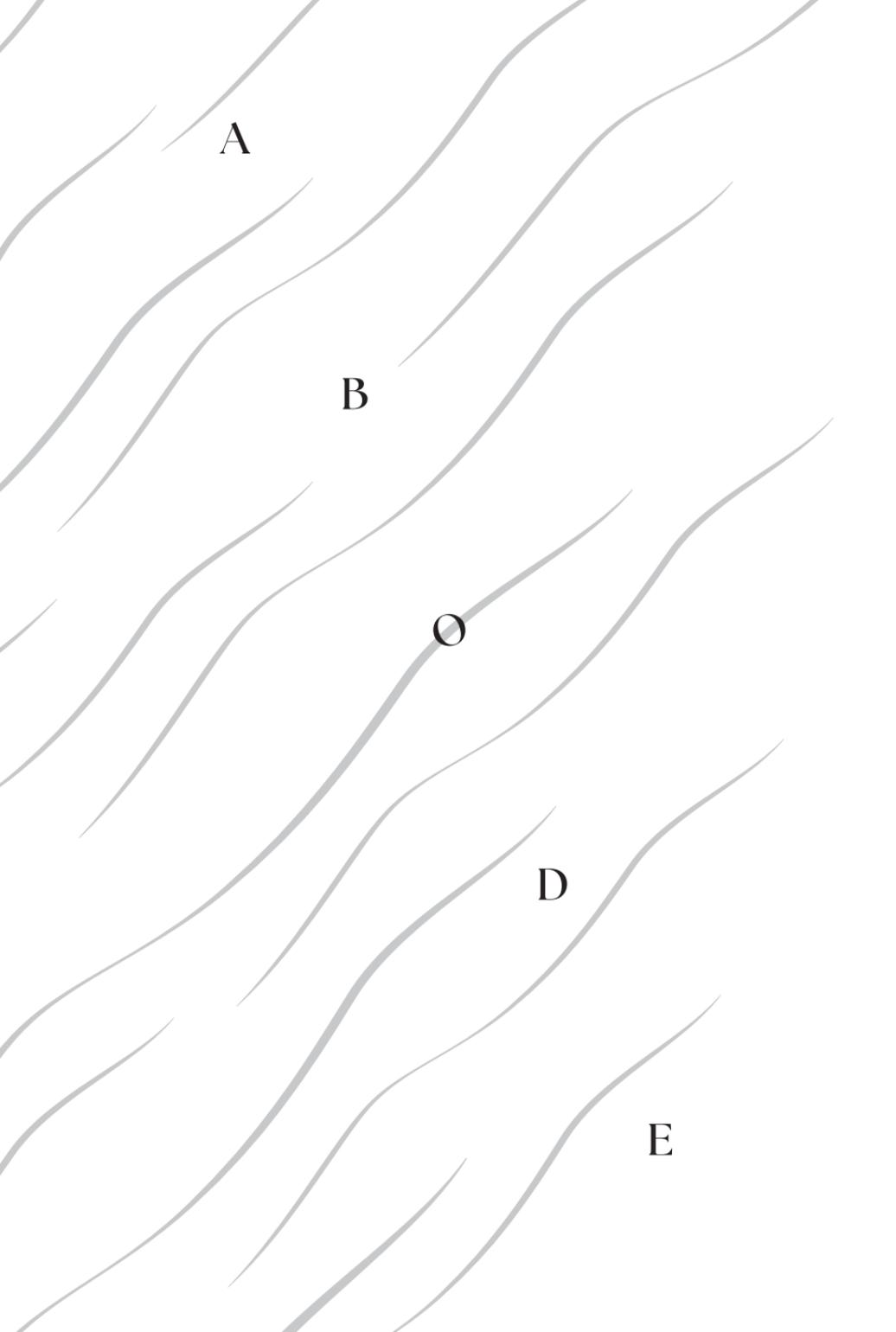
Art is our attempt to distill the immortal from what is born, grows, and passes away. In this it is like faith, and the poem, a prayer to a constant. Jun-long Lee gives us the world from the other side of our longing for the eternal; his poetry relishes the infirmity of things, the realization that all boundaries are melting edges. It is praise for the invisibleunchanging (to borrow from Lee’s enactment of his poetic vision with two words and rejected spacebar). The pleasure of reading *Abode* is like that of eating the pear ripening in the bowl at just the right time.

RICHARD HARRISON, author of *On Not Losing My Father’s Ashes in the Flood*

Something has happened to the world as we know it. We can no longer name the places where we once felt at home. We are no longer ourselves, even if some of us still have hair and nails. Beings slip into caves and under rotten leaves, find hidden nooks in which to breathe and shudder. Through Jun-long Lee’s unsettlingly lively series of poems, something new and potent is coming into being. I don’t know what it is and neither do you, but we will recognize it because we’ll have to. This book is a feathered and fleshy dream, so close it is almost but not quite human.

LARISSA LAI, author of *The Tiger Flu*





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JUN-LONG LEE P O E M S
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abode

Φ AU PRESS

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Give us wholeness, for we are broken. But who are we asking, and why do we ask? —Phyllis Webb

Mingling Voices invites the work of writers who challenge boundaries, both literary and cultural. The series issues a reminder that literature is not obligated to behave in particular ways; rather, it can defy convention and comfort and demand that readers summon the courage to explore. At the same time, literary words are not ordinary words, and the series implicitly raises the question of how literature can be delineated and delimited. While Mingling Voices welcomes original work—poems, short stories, and, on occasion, novels—written in English, it also acknowledges the craft of translators, who build bridges across the borders of language. Similarly, the series is interested in cultural crossings, whether through immigration or travel or through the interweaving of literary traditions themselves.

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A WAY IN



Warmed by the beginning and end of what gathers,
what hides the breath of the hole. Here are rare
twigs, illuminated by leaving, overlapping in the way
of remembered days: it's a trap, but it's kind, and is
meant to be stepped on—fallen with—so that no one
disappears alone.

When it happens, decaying places are crawled into like
shrunk sweaters — snakeskins;

the constrictor tightens a sigh of pines; the constricted
replies in signs; it has left behind its aspens.

Dwellings are arrayed like the crouching shadows
made by sitting under several suns; as you move, their
dimensions change, and you are forced to wonder how
you fit there in the first place.

Those that remain grow their hair and nails to lengthy
psalms of passing, interred in mosses that have been
drowning for as many years as you've been alive.

Old selves are buried in old clothes and in old places: the multiplication of age upon age ensures that no odour is left behind.

Without this scent the part of you that stalks yourself finds nothing but an empty field—thickly overgrown with waist-high swaying grasses—and is forced to bend in the direction of each blade.

This part of you forms its own field with its own corpses and its own runes of hiding, determined to remain unfound.

Your mountain is woken by plainsong from afar, a
microtonal complex issuing from hidden cadavers.
Leave or arrive at these bloated sites, their fungal
structures;

their microbes that change you;

reduce by a boiling of every hour spent standing still.

RUINS, NEAR OR FARAWAY



•

Woodcocooned, shaved of all images and prematurely secreted—given to the continent by tide, a gift from water; an uncomfortably seated waiting for larvae to follow. A truce between tenses crawling in the tunnels of what remains—the woodcarrion. Pressed beneath bushes smoking with daylight till the stars have outdone the tenement shining, witness to the movement of recognition.

. .

A cremating mass pushes
against surface, fruit/bodies split
on grass, darkening as they mature.

Brings to you a nursery of black berries
their tired families nearby but inattentive
flattening of children by louder children
tossed through by careless feet.

Left elsewhere but following
with their own special legs
long, wet, and heavy.

The room has no roof and is stepped into with breath, the smaller version of the intruder. Other appendages dangle from their elbows, draped around doorways to disguise them as persons—hair for an absence (such is the expression that lets one pass). These belonged to slender, lengthy, previous dwellers whose eyes turned white from an endless adolescence—

Now what remains
mixes with mildew
landmark the leaves
tumulus of apples.

. . .

Adding distance is a dialogue in curses.

A ruin puts longing in the organs of the one who leaves it, or fear, or forgetting. The evacuee adds to the dark place names of the region, the areas where fungi eat through the dead, the empty rooms and collapsing vegetables. In time there is only linger, murdered, given as a kind of dust. This deposit is called urn; it sows yearning throughout the interior.

Runners jostle their innards, their nostalgia and their absences. Checking behind or turning back leaves parts of the viewer in the atmosphere. This landscape is called pyx; you become very small inside it.

When I left, I put a few of my belongings in the grass. I was prepared to miss the occasion of their decomposition—browning of extremities, bloating, liquefaction—the enriching of the region that could only take place out of sight. I told myself that I had only left pears, heavy and slightly rotten fruits that would disappear faster than I could forget them.

“Pear of wisdom, pear of calling,” I may have written or said somewhere. To add: pear of shame, pear of longing, pear of silence.

This is how I imagined things at the time, judging recklessly from a distance. My belongings were transparent and resembled pressed flowers. The ground, spoiled by their fluids, could easily be seen through them. Another structure built itself around what no longer remained: new growths, fleshier, appeared according to designs left behind as eulogies. These ferns were actors, and they had bones, nails, and hair.

But when you come back things aren't much different than when you left them. What you thought of as cadaverous when you close your eyes is only reflective, rearranged, repetitious when they are open. This is called disappointment;

you are unable to look away from it.

. . . .

A way opened, regardless of what was put in and
where it was put. Softened by a way opening into
pomegranates left to find their old age

a split way to find

wrought through fruit
green from its nature

the hardened sap of the path, the wrecked day cracks
open from the night pus' pressure.

Mirage, no route, but a source behind a shadow that
influences the canyon. What has happened to this body,
centre of disgust but well-loved in marshes;

barrows take umbra to explain their branching stories,
fill in the plot holes and shepherd down narrows

the shades.

There are cares in what is cast, so many that goodwill
is mistaken for a door: thin cares reaching towards
distant points of sympathy; long cares dried-out until
only directions remain, given or not-given.

To have woken here with these possible branches—
but are there any leading backwards to the site of
departure—

if there were
would you follow them

if you did
would that place be the same
would it be there at all

.

You carry your reef regions across the season you know best. One body through another and one summer through one summer. Self-driven, the carrier of coral canters, bristles—bears arms at the peaceful population: droves of mosses, crouched lichens, snapped-apart thirst of twigs (the trees' serfs).

Near the border, guards chew on tubers and project their mares on the one approaching. The coral-bearer shakes, arms bared and tips rooting as the vision demands, though it's unclear who imagines whom (who sucks on whose shoots).

Near the border, signs in the grasses that only single species pass. No parasites, no tines or holdfasts.

Sloughed off, these earned reefs, the gift-fronds of another day-half: lighter now and fit for laughter.

.

Having reached the meridian I sat down to start what I would not want to finish until much later; night had already begun, and the area was empty. A dogechobody developed in the darkness below using every part of the night to continue.

I wanted to detail the sensation of something *crawling out of my mouth* and I spoke a phrase because I found it frightening and accurate. But I am no longer sure if it means anything, like so many phrases that one chooses to identify what has already crawled out, what has merged with one's surroundings and is no longer identifiable.

I am still in another place; demonic progression through a sequence of sets; the body is no longer the subject but a plant in alien conditions. An outerbody tarantula makes contact, touching every part of the territory, filling it in ways I could not.

.

Almost too late: the rooms were entered just as they decided to cease. A half-remembered cleansing is enacted from memories braided into the fat of the walls, which divide fields into farms to fend off foxes.

Till the hour that an allpast gatherer of superstitious gestures steps through, around, and nearby. Tilling and archiving and tucking into phylacteries worn on the forehead to guard against sadness, inevitable forest and inevitable sea.

GREENHOUSE, GRASSHOUSE



•

This happened while digging for the wrists of hagiographers in a clearing: I saw an opening in the limestone—screened by interlocking branches—and stepped towards it.

Everywhere lindens; an approach that seemed to move sideways, always sideways, though only forward steps were taken. The opening was decorated, and the script seemed familiar—or its movements recalled the swishing of foliage seen only moments before. The lepers of shade were pushed aside by a thicker shadow, one grown from sadness, exposing the writhing beneath.

Having stepped through, you began to forget—wrists, bones, balance; there are trees here too, though they register as reflections. Stunned by the immobility of the innerforest you tarry, listening to the wind that originates from a chasm.

This gulf is called *umbra* and within it. The creature of you takes you there to betwinned for the long nights one hopes to see.

• •

An altering touch,
the summer
depressed herbs and
the kicked-open paths
decaying as the seed unpeels

them / while

inside, along cloudcoloured
throats, corridors
hang miniature rotting habitats
ruins wrapped in fleshy plants
scalped by their own inner seasons.

. . .

Settling in a greenhouse like a first coat of dust. The rite of settling the preparation: pores for binding with panes; bulking through a diet of one's own meat or the cutting of sleeping bags from prime cuts; flushing out non-arboreal pigments by haunting parks. A scroll of rituals is written in a script that has never been used and was invented in the stomach of something old: future-tensed, these muscular verbs, ready to act on each surface of each noun.

Here is a slow procession that takes its duration from nearby flora; such is reflected in the paling of the flowers. To add to the confusion, only after a camp has been established is it seen that the nearly diagonal cedars were inside the tents all along and that among them are strewn even smaller shelters.

Is it possible to leave with this interlocking of eyes between the inhabitant and the inhabited, each staring towards nesting interiors; views flanked by the gradual encroachment of plants, the nights and days seen through them.

. . . .

growing humid

hot rooms where
bloodgardeners seed

diseased cultures:

specimens whose

acting dim the
staircases of stamens

watery with potential:

broodmares plumped

by black meals that
colour the passages

where they live:

weakening all
nearby by how
they change and
who they eat:

their population
that leaks out
trotting or limping
impossible strangers:

.

The field was wet, crowded with bacteria that had assembled as a choir. Left alone, they had returned to older ways—square singing and ritual chanting—seeding the pews with descendants, each child a cyst.

Upon returning it was clear that there would be little room for calisthenics, forestry, or any other customs regarded as pleasurable, such as that nearly forgotten one where flowers are tossed into wells teeming with hemoglobin.

Call and answer of children lit by a phosphorescence produced by singing; resemblance when in their glossy surface environment and childhood are seen invading pigment.

To merge with a diseased hillside and realize a disappearance, leaving imprints in the grass that remind it of a former you.

.

Bloodferns turn

deep into the soil
with slept-on fronds:

wrongs, meats,
other beings
regal and crouched—

these have crept
into the foliage, its endless
sprouting houses older ways,
old suns, mindswans.

Pricked stem leaks testament,
whittles ancestry, salts nearby
ground with mudfathers.

Pair ferns to peer, form heathen:
arranging hidden sacred thighs
in overgrown canal.

.

There is a nursery in the village whose boundaries are longhaired (the hair grows long after the living have left). Children dwell in men, if they are buildings. This man lies with its mouth covered in murals, its skeleton named by those that pass through (naming is a way of saying *I know what you are*). Traps bait intruders with cans' claxon, creepers hide them. The outlines on the walls remain long after the dreamgrasses eat their inhabitants.

Later, chances for issue are flushed out of the body by royal verdict. It's a potion that commands the adults nearby, so that no playing is conceivable.

Here another mural, tableaux where people keep their eyes as far away as possible,
some on the sea,
some on the mountain.



CATHEDRAL

•

At the throat of this florabecoming; an illness from the groundwater—rootsickness—the softening of soil through the germ of doubling. Unearthed, a chapel entrance opens. Forming its corolla, votive offerings—severed tongues, hand-plucked eyes, gestures from the wrist down. You walk for a distance before stopping in front of a place that might be habitable. Somewhat like pining but there are only lindens surrounding.

Gradually the gait of your eyes narrows and pushes straight through the hardened panthers that lie there.

But do you follow.

• •

When it reached a point in the middle of the canvas, it settled and became a small door. How a door can be built with only light—thick with parasitic presences that watch from inside, hand-feeding their fires—built from bright muscle, portioned from their own. Those that impress on old places with their sharing, impress on passing eyes their allotted share: day labour countering decay and despair (the night's accursed kindling).

Such a door would sink, cleansing with its movement, evaporating varnish, pigment, figures—a scar returning on warm afternoons to encourage the erasure of bodies, values. Such a shape would gather towards itself through its neighbouring dust the eyes of the passer of doors—who enters. Motesmitten, removed from their feet on the cool wood of benches buried in the shadowed nave: a spouse promised to what lies after.

. . .

When I speak of the old, I speak of too few; here, echoes pressed together: a compress of remains for the treatment of foresight. As they are under-represented they show themselves by repeatedly stripping (paint or chemise).

I myself became old by becoming a cistern: an underground repeater that continued, continues.

If approach is an act of revealing, what happens when you retreat backwards, gaze caught on the process of hiding; here new genres emerge detailing amputee oracles, halfrevelations.

What is stripped is made of years, extinction, the smell of people walking away; these are pooled in the ponds of a duration they never asked for.

Every builder wishes its children to live forever; but what of the buildings; they might like to close their eyes and rest from watching manoeuvres vegetal, solar, vertebrate. They might like to reduce, purify, like we do when we are alone and far away from everything we know.

The half-naked nave initiates the act of remembrance.

Can you remember, if you were never there with me.

. . . .

Something initiates a circular way, by night, despite what crawls through the ears of the room to sound out the darkness. A heavy scroll of mist that is heard from behind painted partitions; bare musculature of litany watched from a standing position—I'd rather be lying lungs exposed;

seen / interred, incense / talon, tablet / legion;

this warm scrying intention lapped by the silent rotting of flowers.

Pressed by the kind of light that wraps around corners and that cannot be stopped by mass, these barely touched nights disclosing their hours.

.

Near the entrance I placed my hand in the basin; though it looked shallow I had to stretch to touch the bottom, which remained out of reach.

If such a vessel had not been present, I would have covered myself instead with *other signs*, obtained at each passing doorway, where they could easily be borrowed from the threshold's demon. But here my arm descended till it was no longer part of me, lent to a practice that was not mine though still radiant: a lineage of prone firestates, older than the building but rare enough to be considered new.

If I had used instead my mouth, would I have stepped *into* this lineage, assuming my own horizontal; would I rest inside, a seed within an insubstantial limb; would I struggle, not in the way of visions, but with simple sickness.

All the world in the practice of visions
and me
here
brimstone inside.

• • • • •

Disappointed in myself, I put my legs on my shoulders, arms under my armpits, and allow their absence to carry me instead of walking, to push and take in my stead. Where to put the throat that drinks milk by daylight, spits it when others are approaching (no more of this dairy will be shared).

An idea now climbs the stairs to the cathedral, looped through its own chapel in miniature, swinging its malfunctioning bells. Use for a corpse: a folding chair for the escalating remainder. At the top, where there is no distinction between what has arrived and what is local, cuttings from both are scattered amongst the cragshrines to feed the destination and its agents, supplement to their shared continuation.

There is not much left, yet we lose it after passing the river. Struck in repetition by localized fires, the robe burns, it strips away rest; not only immobility but the dear purchases imagined prior to crossing are gradually subtracted by wind. Gifts are loosened into the mistral, misting the bent birches; wind strikes the foreheads of the intruders with feathers alight, they that have already given.

To duck into a silo with these barely in my possession:
loess, first ivy, figurines of hardened dawns—
as much as will fit in transparent hands.

• • • • •

I look at the sinless. Archive requests reflection; pull a tome by lingering; creases in clothing are bridges to immolation. A stillness that harvests bushels of burning near objects that they might transform: stalagmite into saint, surface into symbol; changes camouflaged by the diseased appearance of the skin. Eye contact lends the moment purity: pure watching makes the hands clear (the hands fat with light).

To inspect promotes the passing of infection, a method of passing time when observed. What seemed like incendiary lepers reveal in their cinders an erosion brought on by sprinting towards the end. Leapers from the present through wormholes on the surface of expressions

caught in hallucination.

An entity absolves by preparing the exterior for the moon of god. This cleansing proceeds with the constant premonition of a gentle squeeze of the thigh, a proposition in a different language. Shimmering in its outline: opal, semen; onyx, sincerity.

Hampering variations mature into a perfume that escapes towards the ceiling, taking the feared and desired with it. What remains is a relic—a vessel tasked with emission. To be used when you raze the landscape or raise it.

Handsome, everlasting, brightface: saintlylimb.



ANIMAL STRUCTURES

•

Often a series of beings, and this is the structure: growing beside, on top of, and into each other. Nests of thigh and horn infest behind borders marked by saliva, whose song-like, viscous organism comforts as much as the architecture. Then in the middle of autumn or spring an entity passes through them. It sheds verses of glowing from its body, which is a hymnal, and belongs nowhere but in its own. This one is untouchable because it never ceases dying; its hourly demise renews its corridors and towers. Carcass of light unseen by most, perceived briefly by wolves and carrion-eaters; they see the incandescent movement—firesinging, with no mouth or ears to hear it.

. .

Bathing canines saw through thermal waters, eagersyllabled. Each is a kennel, dogs within dog—they lie, and this is the lay of their region (the litter's sharp argot). The air here is humid, there are vapours of water and mineral, animal and spirit. To breathe they cut through with a reckless volley, each shaft of syntax chewing indiscriminately through its new den.

When you sit nearby you feel your fur harden in anticipation, though it cracks open to reveal the lustre beneath. It is reflective and golden, marble-clouded, smells of beehives and bees' work but makes no sound;

to eat your own honey in the company of others;
to be elsewhere, twice-removed;
far away from you
who sits far away from home.

. . .

They have run out of soap in the country. Packs of men roam with hands spotted from digging, which is the only available form of washing. So they wash instead of work, and in the white plains are seen rows of marked hands, reminiscent of reliquaries.

One finds dinner in the pits of the necropolis. Everything touched immediately darkens, touch is the agent of weather: it withers. Why there is no way to eat in these districts, the attic of spirits barely outlined by heatwave.

And yet, to crouch by the river and knead palms in the ripples: quiet-flanked, ivy-eared.

Marks can also be found on the faces of those speaking; they encourage everyone in the area to stop conversing. There are mutings in every quarter, hands over mouths, kept in flux by weakening resolves that collapse into birdsong.

From their vows, the quietest might earn a spotless face—a clear and shining myth, newly formed—so sleek that raindrops are repelled from the surface. A soundless palace, guarded by loneliness, volume of bone.

. . . .

To miss is to pass by slower than intended. You think of the misses and your calves waver: they are rivers that are no longer part of you. You forever drive the miss around, and that's called remembering. On a promontory you burn the livers of the rams to see the plan of the pasture. This kind of divination never ends in seeing-gathering: its seers gather nothing.

Organsmoke widens view as the initial discharge is flushed from the eyes. Littered around the landscape, pale nobodies lengthen unattended. Tangling growths spread over once person-like figures who are still considered beautiful—as a resemblance to abandoned homes buries who they might have been beneath vines.

.

Deterioration gathers witnesses—in a field, into a narrowing path towards. A hole where their rings dissolve, froth of planets, milk of earth. Into this the increasingly plural toss hidden names, scouring the circumference of all maggots and demons. Conic, the incantation fits the depression in dimension and incline, reaching nothing: the pit vacant when its inhabitants burst into memories, incense, withheld gestures—spores to people nearby worlds.

I myself wasn't present, though we shared hallucinations at the intersection of gazes thrown by craning. Haunted structures, the cellars of the callers by the sap of the called.

.

By me, a stag
kept for use
in conversion

gaunt missionary
to the soil, speaks
to it tilting

into the ground
heavy ores that
would otherwise

remain with me
where first
they appeared.

The months are
a gift that it gives
to the rooms

where it nests,
a greater hart
growing within it:

the colour of dirt
a friend of mushrooms
its seal encircled

by a gentle decay.

Thrown stag,
with other desires,
down corridors

towards drowning;
submersed distribution
of offal and chapters;

a powdered lurking,
weakened,
might remain.

Days where meals
are kept raw,
rooms never left,

streets proposed
to and quickly
abandoned;

the weight of
the body held
still in the

stagnant air.

This organism is a frequent occurrence in the illuminated records, which are a documentation of rotting; though the state of decomposition transforms between each description, the smell remains largely the same: only slight variations in the tones of different fruits and flowers, the wood of floors, the age of garments leaked into wardrobes.

A sulking, heat-without-heat rests in rooms where filtered daylight takes on the shape of someone no longer identified by sight, freckled by lingering epidermis.

.

There are ways to be here with many versions of yourself. Multiplication occurs with brooding; breeding as a series of songs, one worming out through the corpse of another; bipedal remains are candles on a tree that wends a lineage of the interior. Waxen hides I hexed it with when I left it behind; every enclosure lit by carrion.

I've been sitting here for several days without moving. From the window I can see that the street below is a cloister: the vow of silence practiced by soundnuns, nochant / no one around. From my follicles sprout a thick steppe weed, peopled by crouching figures, like me part-plant in appearance. With each layer my mass accumulates; I resemble the world, and when I finally move, it will end.

A moving dwelling is one to whom you bring collected conversations and glances, those reflected off windows or caught in the air. It devours these oblations raw, spraying you—the votary—with the prismatic blood you've been pining for.

Indoors you can cook yourself into a fine terrine for feeding wildanimals, or wildpeople, or wilderness.



YOU, WHO BUILD AND ARE BUILT

•

Housesitting is when you find a seat that resembles a person, collapsed like a weak-kneed bungalow. There are rooms that have not yet been counted, crushed beneath thighs—their still-lives (pheasants, flies) can only be imagined—maybe one day you will know them by the vintage of their juices.

But today you are sitting in a place that is named, and the name is what made you step into it in the first place. Names are the houses where we sit and infest, begin to fester like a briar.

• •

The scripture to enter a structure is illegible from the distance between it and another—so they are rebuilt to stand closer. That's the meaning of neighbour: when the threshold charms are weakened by proximity, doorways cross-eyed.

There are break-ins now nightly, sanctioned by literacy.
Free traffic of banned books; grim tomes grave-
robbed for the names of herbs; mystery swapping of
lampshades, doorknobs, chairlegs.

The world, everything beloved, an ossuary when the
distance is; an ossuary—in a different way—when it is
slender.

. . .

There, there remain contours against which you lean to re-enter. Immured, the interior is rounded, hair-nested, demeter.

Hard to trick perimeter by imitation, sprouting minarets or dead maidenhair—ancient cities on spine, ancient ivy on shoulders; inside there are the living, there are lichens the size of trespassers, lindens woodpecked into towers. Both sides overgrow with *want* and *cannot*, there is likeness regardless of level of life. Envy for the barrier that sees each side's shadows, whatever respective suns leave behind.

. . . .

An uninhabitable dwelling is on the opposite embankment. That side of the river takes on the form of what is built on it—picture a shoreline resembling a lichen, a serpent, or a loved one, depending on the position of the boards and the position of the windows, which only appear to be fixed. The land and river rearranged like the house that crawls around them, frayed with mist.

From here it is difficult to distinguish between these soft proper nouns wrapping around each other like trees do when the distance between them is too little. They are undulating animals at the destination, *over there* where everything is better and more beautiful. Watched from a vantage point on a mattress in the liver of the city, using methods taught by the blood—uninhabitable phrase, the sole source of sound.

.

The instructions
were drawn
as a map of
movement to

be charred,
married with
an instance of night
stored in wood.

Allhex, its
spoken or
written boa.

Findinghunter-gathering
as described in the
annals: witch writes the
czardas, czar chooses which

one remains to be lived in
shelter, conductor, masseuse
the graves that are chosen
to inhabit while alive.

.

Residency in a period, an hourhollow, hallowedground.
Hours occupy smaller kin, a skin-wearing that allows
for making less *more*. Residents follow the direction of
these relations, pressing parts through skin, under and
against: hand in your hand, touching the bone.

The site is not yet a home, it has moods to swing around its half-built substructures. The air grows unstable, taking part in and taking parts out of those it surrounds. The place where you are becomes *your place*, it makes itself possessive—enough to fissure first steps outside chalk circle.

An hourcreature is laid on a bridge and embalmed in morse, something talked above the nape. *Ours*, we'd say, when reflecting on the sprouting of herbs on every surface, from the railings to the floorboards to the entity itself. An hourlyanimal is recited in an enclosure in a region that changes with each cycle of incantation—echoing so there is nothing other than.

.....

Motivated by a weightless sound, you walk towards a column resembling someone covered in habitats; it is recognized as a reflection of *before*. Upon approach, landmarks spring from trapdoors to live as clouds in your memory: alcoves where you may have sat in chewed rushes staining your ankles, chewing the ankles of another; many dangerous bushes. Thrashed, they reveal the ceaseless singing that imitates the process of putrefaction, luxury of bears (their embraces); here, near portals hung with intestines, conversations, every shape of yours vibrating.



A DROWNED AREA

•

The first act of housebuilding, where many changes—relations between woods, apex, witch—occur the moment these are called out. By speaking, the sayer soothes the doorways to arks and lets in whichever creatures that cannot swim without a name to populate; picture each pregnancy with unspeakable nothingness: a child of nothing might be called by the name of its cradle.

Watchers of shores spot these original dwellings, their peaks peering out of the water; they record in their notebooks dimensions, details, dividing according to taxon. As you step out of one you mark the shore with your absence, the observers confronted by a formless aspect. Continued observation is impossible, as the region is lapped by its discharge—a smell that is floral, coastal, pubic; heard as a gurgling, felt on the down covering forearms or legs.

A widening gap occurs between the being and the landmass and the abode. Dispersed beneath the water is an opaque blossoming, reminiscent of flooded ruins. One doubts that it could move at all, though many ruins were once bodies; they contain inside their enormous appendages eggs that strive for elsewhere; the being also strives for another, a shelter that could fit its heavy quiescence—before it loses even that, the sea no longer another.

• •

The drowned place was close, but I couldn't speak of it. Scoured with mouthings of light; only reflecting; the opening filled with the sound of water. Instead I remade the model, a miniature that might suggest the temper of the seaweed, brine around the entrance, steady sucking and drawing an inward drone. Looking, as if hind-eyed; looked-at, an entrance so unclear that it appears to swim with hair.

. . .

There is a small dwelling nearby that attracts you by singing about dying. It's half-submerged, part bird (certain hollow stones harp with the thumping of rosemary). Kneeling in it you skim the surface to find a type of algae that would make you remember. This place has innumerable replicas situated in those you loved and those you couldn't; they are pulsing with vegetation, some transparent for they never

Curled up lunarpossessed, you are spherical, you are the shape that is open. To the allhour, alwaysvessel.

. . . .

Stay, with
holdfast suck

what you were
once made of—

the carcass of
a deer authoring

in the water
its vassals.

From whose
landscape

-patched coat
the parched

insects approach:
disguised as

everyone you
know and knew

repelled by waving
of wave-shaped hands.

.

A molten state declares desire for movement. Hard chitins make good boats, the water attests; intruders built from your sleep harry landbodies into seabodies, change the matter to which they are worthy. When the weight of a place pushes with its humidity and its seagrasses, your rolling allows for only a few configurations: migrant craft or fugue vessel.

From the cockpit, a survey is made of where a vein might flourish—surely on another continent where it is safer underground. If you stand near an opening you might see someone who looks like you—down to the matching mirage of their entrails, which you read together.

.

lagoon, lain in
plummeting larynx
overgrown with vexes
each a lynx;

plumes fetters
the waters fester
churn blood typhoon
haunt every wall;

embalmed, the surface
planted with likenesses
each cupping phosphors
in their prayerbaskets;

enclosed water
with a nature that
carries, distributing
phages into all

agape

• • • • •

A notice arrived: it was time to go. Summoning the distant using whatever was nearest—the sea—to change the room into its successor. Trace of what it was: the eaten daughters, black provinces, beards growing in the wrong places. Even the luggage had to be thrown out.

Admired from here, the succession of interiors is a bridal train. It's partly epidermis, and the bride-shape flaunts this garment that periodically touches its decaying body. Each place can be read as a donation from one to another, carrying femurs to be hidden in their common features. Faces that we mistake for others when we first wake up, halfbelonging to everywhere at once.



CAVE COMPLEX CAVE

•

This cave, made to moult in, drip accumulated hides in shade: you've trapped yourself in your stone-becoming—still part-game—and your dampened pelts gather.

These folds, now as hard as the garments of statues, might strike out on errands to alter strata: earthy pets that change the soil with their stern curves and varied silence.

Despite the telling scent of cemeteries after rain—countless in counted years—no one acknowledges how they flay their surroundings and wear the skins on top of their own.

• •

Barely seen, the landscape is nothingshaped. It's a condition of evening to be nethered—empty-bellied—having already spilled its roots-rosaries. There are wind-instructed votaries, the liquid's recipients, bent till they are indistinguishable from the field: poses soaked; unidentifiable lengthiness; eagerness and devotion without their customary luminescence.

Shaking the slickrunning furs off its shoulders, rises with intent, the benefactor. A movement of mothers towards their cribs of coal, catching themselves midway; intent is no longer present, action is not possible: there is no one here at all.

. . .

The location was noted: it is definitely there; it has already been named.

Called this, its boundaries are wandered with a few amulets that may not be real; its hedges contemplated: hoping to spot bluffs, some enclosure leading to another to another, exposed by staring. To be immured is to be mirthless, mannerisms ataxic to prove this.

A silvered spot picked by seeing; tunnelling sight thrown as a warning; rake territories with burrowing, a burial reflected. To meet yourself upon emerging, wordnulled, staring back at you with a hand clenched full of similar crystals.

. . . .

With their names one commands them; corrals the
named in acts of appearing, what is called clutched
in a fist recalls: remains appear on the corneas,
dwindle like a lineage of oldmaids. Out of coral the
destination—redsepulchre—materializes. Huskmaking,
the previous press fleshy pasts into a path to pasture
(endless).

With names one can't deter a marriage of minerals,
world; can't make two, mirrored to find this rot together.

.

Here are mothers who were actually basements (slowly rotting cabins). A premature motherchild coupling amongst the quartz, recorded in detail; identifying and suckling improves nothing: the site remains hospitable and concrete. Teal or navy skies for you to bench-press in your awaited transformation, a ceremony where you are matched to similarly-shaped mosses. Awaiting your emergence as a muffled lurking—as you simmer in your actions, this muted becoming.

.....

The spells were found simply by waiting; they were gifts from others, some mothers and fathers, some the hardening of the colour of tunnels. Still more gathered as a type of bread on the ground and were eaten in darkness while imagining the forest.

They were swallowed, and in time the stomach swelled into a cave fit for parents and animals. Throwing their contorted hands beneath a vault where digestion negotiates with regurgitation; many dialects help complete abandoned babel, the language of bread with the language of birds; marriages occur, as do chimeras. Interpretive gestures whose descendants remain, subterranean and lightsick; some might emerge, mutilated by summer, leaving only entrails to moulder; ornamental gestures, occurring unnoticed, furnish a lair by making it unseen.

.....

That winter I exchanged my clothes for something more opaque. When I had finished, I realized that I now resembled a menhir, the folds of my garments chalky, hard, and salty. Absurd, to walk the streets of your childhood dressed as a stone.

Unable to view surroundings: smelling nothing—
newly fungal—cultivating fruiting bodies of nether
and silence. To be completely solid, to bear no bright-
ness or trespasses: no talent for reflecting or refracting.
A simple laying of hands on the shoulders of habitats
worn out by touch, with no transference of heat.

Though no one is watching, an opening in the hedges reveals a gap where entry is possible. Inside, an entity multiplies, but how can I know this. The broodself is invisible and smells like *before*, which is the only way to know that it happened. It crawls out in unknown ways on unknown legs, identical because there is no other form or sound.



A WAY OUT

The length of me lived in two places. It stayed over there, stretched and gradually quartered, the town square pollinated by its melancholy discharge; buried, each severed part a type of herb—overgrown and unruly, dispelled from the rituals that suckled it.

It followed me here, and I was unable to shake it in the wading pools constructed for recreation, transfiguration, and the egg laying of midges. It turned in these shallows, rotating like spitted game: fast enough to observe meteorological difference, too slow to damage the heather.

When you add the two together there is only regret for the doubled dens half-used; there is not enough meat to cover so many years; much easier to subtract, form the null in which it can be observed without distraction.

There is a type of pining, not for the forest but for the body parts left there on each subsequent visit. It is difficult to see the similarities between the smoke of burning rosemary and a series of amputations, but the blessings on the place are the same. Nostalgia is directed at the presence of former presence, expanding with each passing.

In one version, everything left behind is stored in the circulatory system, making it even less accessible than before. No number of ellipses would help with the sensation of additional limbs; drinking oneself would only weaken an already fading consciousness, bringing about hallucinations. A sifting of the mineral deposits left from dried blood sows a smell and taste in the air that is metallic and ancient.

Thankfully, possibilities are just as numerous as memories and equally unlikely to take hold.

It is interred, in the end, just like in the beginning. Framing by moss transforms it: it is a hoof, a paw, a claw; someone met in the woods, someone left by the port; a pair of eyes, a tongue wrapped in fat. It is a reliquary left for some you who will pass by in vestments that sing of past places, a rare being. It will grow—unnoticed—in the oaks of others, held in place by leaves.

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