

**NATTEN**





Mårten Spångberg

NATTEN

Natten was surrounded by a group of extraordinary people. Their trust in the project has been invaluable. Mette Edwardsen just amazing, Maria Jerez, Silvia Fanti, Silvia Bottiroli, Linda Blomqvist (forever), Tove Dahlblom, Danjel Andersson, Alejandra Pombo, Christophe Slagmuylder, Jon Refsdal Moe.

The man with numbers and understanding Johan Thelander. The magician Marika Troili.

A bunch of brilliant dancers: Tamara Alegre, Simon Asencio, Linda Blomqvist, Louise Dahl, Emma Daniel, Hana Lee Erdman, Adriano Wilfert Jensen, Else Tunemyr, Alexandra Tveit. Pretty damn amazing.

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## NATTEN, INTRODUCTION

Sometimes it is as if the dark is extra much there. As if everything just goes black and disappears, blackout though one is still awake. Sometimes it's like darkness isn't still, isn't immobile. The night bubbles a little and the abyss starts to move. You don't want to know what it is. Not me at least. It's captivating to think about that the creatures of the night are way more than those of the light. In numbers and all. Sometimes one would want to get to know them all, go for dinner, but then that's just the end of their belonging to the night. It is the night that is real, the day is just reflections. That's why one thinks of really heavy stuff then, or laugh hysterically to keep the dark away. The day is linked to life, it is at night that one exists. The night is not death - it exists and is more, much more than life. Time and light lives together. Time can be used as protection, always. It after all differentiates things. In the dark time isn't standing still, it doesn't cease, instead it slips away and disappears as if it never was. For in the deepest obscurity there is neither then or later, there is

only now and all the time.

There is a virus that makes one experience amnesia at every moment again and again, then it's now eternally - until one dies. There are other viruses too, one that, is that the shadows no longer disappear when you turn on the light, or the sun comes out. The sun comes out, but the shadows are still there. When darkness lives its own life.

In Caravaggio's paintings, it's always the black areas that shine. It is in the luminous absence of light that Antonin Artaud finds his cruelty, and it's by boiling to a uniform black matter that "nigredo" turns towards itself, illuminated. Precisely, the dark night of the soul, when an individual confronts the shadow within.

Monsters and so are good to have in order to escape the horrifying experience that inner darkness is the same as outer and sometimes, which is the worst, when you don't know where the one ends and so.

The night is long. There's no blood or corpses, body parts or bones. It is long, it is when horror opens its dark eyes and let's you experience its endless void. Overwhelmingly tranquil, a motionless sleep from which there is no escape. A reverie that entangles you in putrefaction. Six or so hours and shit dark, not like the light is off, or a bit depressed it's more like a journey into the darkest, but no psychology. It's pretty formal



and massively dance, but often kind of slow and like it isn't visible or materializes without structure. The day is divided the night is one. Darkness dissolve structures, everything becomes like smoke distorted and dissolved. A bit like roots firmly without soil. There are people there but one doesn't know whom, there's someone there but maybe just a movement. Five orange pips in an envelope. There is something there, but perhaps just a mirror-image, a body without anchoring that appears as an opacity darker than darkness itself. Not just any darkness but darkness itself. Time does not stand still it's waiting between motion and standing, as if it were too hot, too unbearably hot for anything to happen at all. Black mirror. An abandoned blankness - that totally sounded like a cliché, but it is lovely with romantic noir. No feelings or so, an emotionless evil - cold as Robert Pattinson - even a raven - but hell no fangs or a man with a scythe - fuck that. Not the dead but that which don't have life, but still is. Open eyes. Someone besides whispers, beyond what can be sane. And delicate music - loud noises, too - and singing. Someone has something in her mouth, costumes fall. That which is when nothing is visible, that which isn't visible even though someone turned on the light. And everyone waits.

Plants can no longer be distinguished from animals, insects identical with rose petals that

adorn a bush. And then, farther inside, plants confused with stones. Stones look like flames or brains, stalactites reminiscent of female breasts, tapestries adorned with figures. Darkness is not merely the absence of light. Pale cold skin, moist with sweat, repetition without order. Fear. While light is vacated by the objects' materiality, darkness is filled. It touches the individual directly, envelops her, penetrates him, even passes through. The ego is permeable for darkness while it is not so for light. The night expire the mimetic.

It's a new dance piece or something called Natten, though that's just what it's called. It's known as something else, and what it's known as isn't its name.

Dance exists without us. Moving towards or away from us indifferent. The non-directional harbors horror and the night, nigredo, is not performative. It moves without subject, its dreadfulness is mirrored in its indifference, its absolute potentiality.

All the pieces are one, as in One, the night is also the one and indivisible – there's no composition only textures. Intuition is darkness's reasoning. Zone-out, as if there was no frame either, but blackness has its own creatures, illuminated by its impenetrable beauty. You know like music from Iceland or something.

## NIGHT

This story is told. It is told by me or perhaps not as it unfolds before, during, and after, it happened and at the time it happened had not unfolded sufficiently in order to be told, by me or somebody else. However, at the moment it had unfolded sufficiently, what had happened could only have happened to somebody who wasn't me in the first place or now had ceased to be me.

“What time is it?” I asked.

“Too early,” was the response.

At the time when it happened nothing appeared remarkable, unusual, or frightening. in retrospect that what happened seemed, at first, utterly unlikely, abnormal and terrifying. There is just one difficulty, for the one that possess the opportunity to rewind what happened, that can recreate what unfolded in retrograde, what was strange, irregular or disturbing can not be identified since what happened irreversibly transformed the mind of the individuals involved.

Previous to what unfolded, what happened could by no means have occurred. It was in fact an absolute anomaly, something that was so unusual or horrifying that it simply couldn't happen. No, in fact it was even worse, because something that couldn't happen was still something. A negative was at least a thing but this was worse. It could perhaps be most easily described as a negative negative, not exactly but almost and for now a double negation. Before it happened, what happened was something that couldn't couldn't happen, but after it indeed had happened it could of course not look like anything else then the most ordinary thing in the world. After all it could and had happened and how could that possibly be weird?

“Is it time yet?”

“Almost,”

A young person has more future in front of herself than an older one. To announce “I'm too old”, is to mourn one's vanishing future. At some point the past catches up with your future. To live with the experience that one's future lies behind is to cope with loneliness.

It is therefore a story that, however I tell it, cannot be told, as I have no overview but can gain access to what happened only from the future of the past and what indeed did unfold

is something entirely different from the perspective of the past of the future. Yet, I am in no doubt that what happened before it unfolded was unimaginable to the degree that as it happened it seized me with a power so terrifying it was unnamable. At the same time, looking back at the event, it definitely happened and how could it possibly be terrifying, it wasn't even necessary.

“Now?”

“Already over,”

From the point of view of the past since what happened occurred as a double negative, then if we could rewind the future nothing would have happened. It is only from the angle of the future that something happened and from there what occurred could not be absolutely normal.

The story and the story that is told are therefore not identical. The story cannot be told although it is being told by me, but that is obviously not the story. Although it is me who tells the story, it is not the same identity as the one that experienced that which would become the story. Still, there is no second person here or there, in the past of the future or in the future of the past. What happened always unfolds backwards, as the last instance is the past closest to

the future.

The moment with the least past past is the one that will begin the story as it unfolds backwards. But from the future whatever happened evidently must appear fully conventional as it otherwise would produce some kind of anomaly or curvature on the continuum of time and space. Time can have no holes or breaks, the future arranges that with unimaginable accuracy. It is the impossibility to not acknowledge that one's identity has transformed independently of oneself, that remains in the body as terror terrifying. Because, if my identity can be transformed it can equally easily be annihilated, for no reason without reason. Annihilation is a transformation as much as any other. There is nothing that says that I cannot disappear in the next moment or at any other point in time. But as if that is not dreadful enough, the moment after the moment I suddenly vanish nobody can or must be able to remember me, because that would be to acknowledge a power that is independent of our world, a contingent power that is indifferent to life and existence and that is the most cruel nightmare of all.

If the universe came to be because of an accident, it is equally possible that it accidentally could cease to exist. What necessarily must have been in the beginning cannot have been nothing as nothing also is something, it must have been

the negation of nothing. Nothing can precede the negation of nothing and yet it is precisely from this negation of nothing that the universe must have emerged and with it everything within it. Nothing cannot have made an accident appear and an accident cannot unfold within nothing, especially not within, which is neither with or in the negation of nothing. What was necessarily in the beginning must have been contingency - in other words the condition that something or not must by necessity happen.

It is haunting to consider that contingency is still active, consequently the only necessity is that something or not must happen and what that is is contingent. It is even more horrific to acknowledge that contingency is absolutely total or equal and makes no exceptions. In other words it is equally contingent that the world, humanity, or universe will remain absolutely static as it is, that it is annihilated, transformed to something absolutely unimaginable or anything else. There is no grounding stability and hence there can be absolutely nothing that grounds one's identity. There can neither be anything that verifies transformation or stability, yet if there was something grounding the universe, something static and defined, the result would be the annihilation of change. It is our lucky day that nothing can be verified but

it is equally the deepest terror of life to really acknowledge this truth. There is no ground for nothing, only the nothing of nothing is grounded and only in itself as one.

“How do you know?” I asked trying to sound innocent.

“Time passed after all,” the reply was said with the head turned away.

As a kid there was this recurrent dream. Some would call it a nightmare but as it returned with some frequency it might just be called something else. A certain thrill in knowing that the dream might come back, perhaps losing my mind might have made the dream return more often. In the dream I am standing on the top of a staircase absolutely terrified knowing that behind me is a force so powerful it would eliminate me in no time, indeed in no time because this force is the very capacity making my existence possible. It could simply wipe out any trace of me in less than an instant, in no time. It would have been more comforting if my annihilation had taken some time even if just a second or two, because it would at least imply some sort of effort. In no time instead felt as if my existence was absolutely indifferent, not even without significance but rather beyond signification itself. Furthermore, the force would



eliminate me if I didn't descend the stairs. The only problem was that the staircase ended in an absolute void that could not do anything other than swallow me in my entirety as if I had never existed.

What was in the lower end of the staircase was not something, yet it was not nothing either. It was at the same time less tangible than nothing and a nothing so palpable it was completely impenetrable. It was not nothing, it was something in reverse, or a double negation, and being such it could with certainty be nothing other than an endless stability, an absolute immobility. Standing on the top of the staircase I was torn between two forms of certain annihilation, both beyond time yet divided by time. The effect is undeniable and it could not be otherwise, I am made increasingly immobile as the danger escalates from two directions each second becoming, if possible more and more omnipresent until they form, what I would, which however in the experience is made completely impossible, describe as a double horizon, or perhaps, more accurately, as the dreadful encounter with two incompatible yet simultaneously present horizons.

“But look around?” was the next thing that was said.

“There is nothing there. No, there is some-

thing. Even if there is I can't distinguish it from what isn't. It is everywhere."

"What is that?"

"It is nothing more or less than that."

The emergence of horizon implies the gradual dissolution of perspective. In other words, what is experienced there on top of the staircase is that which moves with the same slow lava-like pace as the two horizons expand my sense of existing as a distinct entity fades away. This is where horror strikes my innermost being, where my bones freeze, knowing that when the horizons are completed, when every entity of the horizon is identical yet singular it will also have invaded me to the extent where neither me nor the horizon can distinguish any difference. I will become that which I fear and that becoming implies to be extinct. What I fear is obviously not something but an all encompassing nothing that will devour me.

I'm still there on the top of the staircase. The horizon has still not and will never complete itself. I am addicted to my suffering, to the sustained moment between being something that is nothing or being nothing that is something, or being born and dying simultaneously, or being alive without existence or existing without being alive.

This story is told. It is told by me, but a me that is not enough me to tell the story nor little enough to not tell it. I must tell the story that I cannot tell in order not to complete the horizon. Nothing has happened, or will happen, nothing has unfolded and consequently there is no past or future, no past to the future nor any future to the past. There is only an endless presence; a suspense without resolution. There is no escape nor proper imprisonment. I'm in time, coinciding with time which simultaneously is an instance outside time. Caught in an instance so infinitesimal it is undividable – if it wasn't how could it be an instance in the first place – so brief it is nothing and simultaneously unfolds as horizon.

“Time will tell,” she said.

“No it won't, nothing will be told because nothing has occurred.”

Afterwards, if afterwards exists? After what? What unfolded was so limitlessly weird that it could absolutely not exist. Yet it was undeniably there. I was convinced that if I were to comprehend what happened the result would be that I would lose my senses. It could only be grasped by somebody or something that wasn't human any more. Maybe this something would still look like a human but its existence would necessarily

be all together different. A human different in kind or a different kind of human. There we are again, at this moment relations between time, space and location appear to reverse because how can something be understood in the sense of after if the result of what happened were such that the very understanding of comprehension transformed. Not probabilistically like how it happens daily - that my understanding of something or the universe changes gradually, a gradual and reactive transformation. No, I'm speaking about a deeply violent change, a transformation from something known, so to say familiar territory, to an unknown to which the previously familiar suddenly is absolutely foreign. Perhaps, even worse, it is so foreign it could absolutely not have existed.

What is the afterwards of that that must not have existed? Similarly, from where must that that is now have appeared? It cannot and at the same time must have appeared from nowhere or nothing. This is where horror opens its jaws, because as if nothing was not enough, you know as well as I, that something cannot and must, like a slimy, unnamable, detestable darkness, so incredibly abominable it is beyond any kind of representation, have crawled over the fence of double negation, out of the nothing of nothing.

“What time is it?” I asked.

“It’s just time,” was the response.

Was there an alternative. Yes, I could deny it all. Whatever it was that had unfolded, whatever it was that I had encountered I could deny it, also to myself. It’s entire existence, it’s very being.

“What time is it?” I asked again.

“It’s that time,” was the response.

But it had happened to me. Even if I could deny what had unfolded, completely negate it, what could not be undone, what could not be denied was the experience that what happened had transformed me irreversibly. Hence, to reject what had happened would implicitly mean to deny myself. I would have to live as the ghost of my previous self but without grounds, since the transformation that was forced upon me was irreversible.

As I come to these thoughts I am again shaken by convulsions of fear. I would be haunted by myself as a ghost without representation, to deny what happened would mean to exist in the endless abyss of nothing.

The cradle of fear is not something, it is always nothing. It is not restricted to children

or dark nights. Fear comes up on us when we stand in front of the dreadfulness of nothing. It is pure fear just because it offers no character, no criteria to which I can hold on. It is, but it's being is undisclosed, not as in not revealed but in the horrifying reality that there is nothing to reveal. That was what I was standing in front of, that is what I'm still standing in front of until the horizon closes and until then the I that I am familiar with is fading. I am fading, I am disappearing in front of my own eyes. This is central to how fear escalates and becomes utterly terrifying, I'm disappearing because nothing, in its doubled form, looks back at me without eyes, without character, without criteria, but as pure and essential being.

“What is that?” I asked.

“It's just some shadows, maybe the old garden furniture.”

I want to land. A third option is substitution, the introduction of something known and reliable where nothing rules. As perspective melts away and the dark intensity of the double horizon arises, an escape route is enabled, it opens through an additive gesture implanting an artificial supplementary narrative like a wedge between the two horizons. This is not a deviation, a refusal, or blockage which would

rather associate with denial, but indicates an impossibility to withdraw or possibly an attraction to a darker pattern, a form of jouissance, superimposed with a desperate need to secure a territory.

“Are you sure, really sure?”

“Of course I’m sure, I’m after all your mother.”

This story is told. It is told by me, and in order to make it possible to say the story I will explain it. However I know it is not accurate I will convince myself that what unfolded can be explained and I will make it imaginable to live with what happened through the introduction of a substitute, a wedge that disables the dark impatience of the double horizon. I will cover the tracks of the impossible, the track of fear with the artificial light of reason.

Like my mother when me and my brother were small, convincing us that it was just the shadows created by the moonlight falling through the old oak trees, when all the three of us knew something was out there, something that didn’t belong to this world then and still doesn’t. Or convincing us that something was there that wasn’t that would explain the occurrence or simpler create enough stability for reason to construct something that could be

put away and forgotten in the windings of our minds.

“Let’s go out and check, don’t you think.”  
“No, we’d better stay inside, it’s already late and it’s probably raining too.”

This was another kind of shadow. Not that kind, the result of reflections or the lack of light, something that could rationally be explained using physics and common sense. No, these shadows were not the result of something, they, or it, was something in itself. In retrospect it seems as if it had, for many years, existed in the shadows, biding its time disguised as any other shadow but always in the darkest corners. At moments you might experience those shadows more intensely. A sense of nausea, a sudden move, dark fleeting moments when a shadow suddenly is traversed by a deeper opacity. Perhaps you withdraw a little, experiencing a slight unease in the upper part of your spine, or the other way around, you suddenly experience a slight tingle of anxiety realizing that you have to put down your foot a few centimeters to either side but not where it was supposed to end up. Nothing is there to be stepped upon except the usual linoleum carpet and yet something gave clear indication not to be stepped upon. You just don’t put your foot there.



Nobody was particularly bothered. We could coincide, live superimposed belonging to different kinds of realities. After all, the shadows didn't gossip, they weren't intimidated if we forgot to invite them to a BBQ or like a pet that you forget to give food being pissed off for a few days. Anyway, it was probably the dog that first reacted to how the shadows started to exist more and more independently. They didn't hide anymore, didn't camouflage, but hung out like the dark circles under somebody's eyes where you'd least expect to find them. On a mirror in the hallway, occupying a corner of a table in the extra room we never really used or simply lying around one part in the sofa, the other leaning – if that's what shadows do – against a wall.

Our dog's reactions were rational, based on trial and error. She simply stayed away from the darker corner, avoiding murkier parts of the house and moved her basket to the middle of the living room. No matter how many times we moved it back to what we called "her corner" it was soon moved into the middle again. After another few months the dog stopped spending time in the garden. The moment it left the house it was immediately heading for the street connecting the house with civilization. She was still happy about our long walks in the forest behind the house but the garden was off limits. You can understand at this moment the shadow

had also conquered the garden. Towards the end the dog wouldn't move from the basket and we had to carry her to and through the house as she refused to take a single step on the lawn or drive way. It lasted forever, or that was our experience. The dog was so annoying our attempts to make it accept the shadow were fruitless.

One day she was gone. We didn't specifically discuss the matter as we knew that the shadows had taken the dog. We simply let her basket stay where it had always been, we just stopped feeding it and the leash started to collect dust on its hook in the hallway. Initially it was a bit awkward but as we had gotten used to the shadows we got used to this too.

At some point my brother suggested that one pet was enough. Now we had the shadows. Without noticing we had started to somehow care for it or them. No, it was only one even though it didn't articulate itself as one contained entity. Instead it could spread out, divide itself and expand and contract more or less independently. There were moments, a few times, days when we thought it had vanished, but we always knew it was there. It's presence was poignant even when invisible.

The shadow was one but, contrary to a human or a tree, it was more like a culture or some weird kind of mushroom that in a very subtle way occupied space. Symbiotic rather than com-

petitive, it didn't need to claim territory along its trajectory to omnipresence.

It was nothing except that slightly deeper shade of the absence of light. We tried to smell it, but nothing. We tried to capture smaller parts in a jar and it obviously didn't work. We tried all kinds of strategies but it was nothing else than that slight murkiness. Nothing more.

The first sign was leaving the blinds down. First the spaces facing away from the street but it didn't take many weeks before we just left all the blinds down. Well, actually, there were moments when we brought them up. Just before and after midnight when the moon was new and left that particular blue tinted light. It was as if the shadow liked to play with the new moon's light.

Then came candles and from there on it escalated step by step until the shadow was all we cared for. We all rushed home as soon as we could to serve the shadow. Friends weren't welcome anymore and we rarely left the house except for necessary shopping. In the beginning we used excuses of all kinds but also excuses faded and we became shadows of the folks we once were.

What started as elementary shadow play, creating forms with our hands and the like, had become a compulsion that family members spend hours and hours doing. But most of the

time, and especially our parents, were just looking at how the shadow moved and took new shapes. Not because they resembled anything but simply because it moved. Sometimes so slow it was imperceptible, sometimes rapidly like the ocean during a storm.

Initially my father took note and made some attempts to measure its movement statistically but after some time all those attempts faded and we just observed it. Hour after hours, day after day, we were absolutely mesmerized as the shadow filled the house's every corner. It was everywhere, on the floor and on walls and furniture, on our bodies, inside cupboards and drawers, between books lying around and enveloping flowers my mother had arranged on the living room table. It was everywhere and it was nothing. But at least it was nothing and that was enough for us, we could talk about it, discuss how it changed in correlation to the weather or whatever we found inspiring. We were absolutely obsessed, possessed by nothing. Perhaps we were a bit paler than other people but it wasn't worth mentioning. It might be that we avoided certain groceries but not more than somebody intolerant to gluten or just aware of organic food and ecology, which we also were.

At some point all conversation ended. The house fell silent. It wasn't that we had nothing

to say it was just that it appeared so futile in comparison to spending time with the shadow. It didn't prevent us from anything but then again it didn't inspire us to verbal exchange neither. I liked to sit on the floor, like a mermaid, just letting my fingertips overlap with it. Letting it, from time to time, invade me, while, at other times, moving out of its way as it expanded into the space I occupied.

We didn't do shadows anymore, it was a long time since we had stopped giving the shadow names or recalling it's small, yet comic, talent. It was just us and the shadow.

At some point the candles also faded. The shadow had exterminated everything except the four of us, even shadows. It was only it and it slowly consumed us. Without haste, it took its time, without any grand gestures, until one day when it left.

It might have been in April or October who knows. It didn't matter and for the shadow it mattered even less. It had taken what it wanted, it had consumed what it needed, and it appeared absolutely indifferent to whatever it left behind. It had produced an excessively abstract kind of life and suddenly when it withdrew, when it suddenly took away all those liberties that it had given us, that was when fear struck us, it was only in retrospect that the shadow produced the unbearable sensation of having

been robbed or tortured – not something physical but of the self, of having been determined by something that can not be negotiated, something that is but is nothing.

Horror has no function - it is pure form, it is unreserved abstraction. In some ways it is black and white, endlessly close to bliss and yet pure darkness. It is a pure sign of affect. Horror can only mean a sign whose sense is inseparable from its content. Horror in its pure form refers to nothing outside its own enactment, it is one with the enactment of its meaning. Pure signs and hence horror are pure events, simultaneously reflexive and relational. Horror is, denotation, highly artificial and constructively stuck with paradox. Horror is eminently suspect and equally sublime. However, this does not prevent it from being true – affectively true. The truth of horror is of an affective order.

“Don’t you agree, it was like living with a pet?” I said.

“Something like that, and it didn’t eat either, until it ate us,” somebody answered.

“Devoured us” I thought but didn’t mention it.

But it did matter because something about it had to do with eroticism. In the midst of dark-

ness the entire body turns into an erogenous capacity and eroticism turns into combat. A combat that include ludic elements, an orgasmic existence that, because of the opacity of darkness, the absence of angle, or absence in general, has exchanged survival with devouring.

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Charles Darwin has too quickly been understood to unconditionally equate animal behavior with instinct. The beast follows its instincts and all its behavior is derived there of. The animal doesn't develop culture but is destined to live in accordance with its instincts, no matter what.

If so, my cat is not an animal or it must be understood that the animal indeed superimposed on its instinct have the ability to improvise. My cat plays with plastic toys and other cats. The play tends to replicate combat but isn't. The cats aim for vulnerable parts of the body but don't bite. The cat nibbles, it represents the bite. A series of movements, even a strategy, might be that of combat. It is the gesture of combat but it is not fulfilled. My cat, as most cats, mime fighting and it does it with style. Play is conducted in the style of combat. With this in mind it goes without saying that the cat, and most probably all animals, has the ability to improvise, using gesture, be creative.

So much for instinct, but why are Darwin's theories today still powerful and generously applied.

The result of devaluing the animal to follow instinct is practical and offers some solutions. As long as the animal is acting on givens, i.e. instinct, as long as it doesn't use or develop consciousness, humans don't need to consider what it is thinking, whether it is suffering or not, whether it is conspiring against the human race or not. An animal whose ability to improvise and play, use gesture, and produce some sort of meta-language, is one in respect of which humans need to consider a different kind of ethics.

"What time is it?" I said.

"Too late," was the response.

One animal, or many, especially small ones consisting perhaps only of one cell, that are degraded to the sole function of instinct might be a threat but it is a threat that is easily dealt with since we can know it will not suddenly change its strategy, it will not surprise with a countermove that we are not able to predict. An animal, however, that carries the possibility for improvisation, an animal, or many animals, especially those that reproduce through division that is not easily predictable or determinable is an all together different story. This is the mo-



ment when the cuteness of animals, the apparent helplessness of animals, turn against us in the form of fear or terror. Not just because the animal or many at this point possess the ability to produce counter strategies, but because the animals' modes of improvisation or creativity is contingent relative to human strategies whatever they might be.

“What time is it?” I asked.

“That is not for us to know,” proposed a distant voice.

Some philosopher might have proposed something in the direction of: “If lions would speak English we wouldn't understand anything.” Why? Because the lion's access to the world is through a mind that is incompatible with ours. What invokes fear in humans is the fact that the motivation of animals, big or small, many or really many, are completely improbable, they are indeterminable at least at some point and humans can have no idea when this point occurs. The moment when humans at some point recognize the necessity that animals do improvise, play, strategize and possess creativity, humans will have to live with the terrifying knowledge that animals might commit revenge on us at any moment without notice and without any noticeable sign of regret, guilt,

or recognition of suffering.

“What time is it?” I whispered.

“It is their time,” said nobody in particular.

It was not the darkness that made my bones shiver, nor that endlessly opaque blackness. It was black, it was called black, and its name was black. The reasons for why fear was leaking out of my inner most core, infesting every molecule of my body, was the undeniable experience that the blackness was alive. That it however imperceptibly moved, changed shape, and transformed as if it was observing, even calculating the behavior of its environment. It was an organism that inhabited the world with a form of consciousness and as it transformed it emitted a dim light. Perhaps not a light but over its blackness drifted a vibrant lumination, a black glow that appeared to oscillate between an infinite heat and a coldness beyond human measure. As if this was not enough, the black mass discharged a kind of mute sound created by thousands of singular creatures buried within its black depth. It was, at the same time, the songs of mermaids luring sailors into the abyss, the silenced screams of soldiers left to die on the battlefield. It was the imploded cries of parents losing their children, the ice-cold roar of revenge, the quivering regret of failure, and

that was only the beginning of the pain that this disorganized symphony radiated.

The blackness was no longer over there, it was space itself, the positive and the negative, it was both that most tangible black and its obverse and it invaded me at the same time as my bones, my flesh, my blood froze into a night of a thousand years. It was not the blackness, it was not even the undeniable fact that it was alive, not even the pain it emitted or the sensation that it was ancient – so old that it ventured beyond the limits of time, it was the truth that what this life was was not of this world.

This illuminated blackness appeared to grow in all directions yet the experience was that it simultaneously withdraw into itself. Like Sisyphus it was engaged in an eternal cycle of rebirth but here because it was devouring itself as it grew with a stronger and stronger intensity. The blackness without doubt exists but is not alive, as it moves autonomously it must be undead. The undead has no life and therefore no identity. The undead that exist amongst us implicitly inform us of the vulnerability of life, about the possibility that life does not exist but is only a figment of our minds.

This story is told. It is told by me. Me beside times, caught in between past and future, hit by the irreversible arrow of time's passing, in the crosshair of the two emerging horizons, chained to a void next to the shadows, illuminated only by a living negative of life, pure existence. And yet it is my story and I who has been irreversible transformed by that that unfolded into something that happened that could not happen and when it did must always have been capable of happening. That's where I am, sinking into the abyss of an absolutely sublime horror. Absolute form unconditionally liberated from function.

It is not the humans, nor the remains of humans, like Egyptian mummies. Not even ghosts, monsters or animals. If this was what happened it could have been described.

"What time is it?" for the last time.

"Time is"

Things or objects have their place in the world. They exist and they secure forms of stability. But as the sun is setting and darkness covers our planet, night arrives and a black darkness dissolves the contours of things. It is then, when the darkness is so dense that it erases time, obliterates recognition and familiarity, dissolves distance and builds a fatal bridge

between life and existence, between being and nothing that things are released from their prisons of stability, from the staticness of their existence and build capacities of improvisation, play and creativity.

The withdrawal, evidenced as a crackling over the radio, in a black so bright not even nothing can be determined. It is then that things coincide with themselves to form a universe of endless equality, establishing a circuit of reciprocal potentialization enabled by the creation of a mutually inclusive zone of indiscernibility that doubles the affirmation of every existence's difference with an included middle. This is the one in the last instance, a limitless existential territory where thought and creation folds in on itself, and the sublime horror experienced, that by necessity transforms us irreversibly, nebulously explodes into an endless presence.



## FOR NOW

“No, not one more time,” screamed the child between bursts of laughter as the young father, with a reassuring smile, threatened with another tickle attack. He bends the fingers of both his hands, holding them in front of his face like claws, and the child laughs again. The mother, on a chair next to her son and husband, looks away. The gaze resigned, the face expressing a slight disgust for both of them. For her, the child’s cry means nothing. Her resignation has its ground in the hopeless knowledge that there will always be one more time. Always one more time, and if there isn’t, there will be something else—and that is obviously the same. Her eyes catch a movement. Her iris reacts to the change of light, and her eyes return to their previous emptiness as two insects continue what she suspects is some primitive mating ritual. “Oh, not one more time,” she finds herself reflecting.

“Take it again, one more time,” says the teenage girl slyly towards the end of the song. She is dressed in black—only black; no nuances.

Just black. This is a black that doesn't speak, but surrounds her warm pale skin like a withdrawn voice. She is convinced like only a teenager can be. She is really just a girl. She doesn't practice being a woman in front of a mirror, but that's probably just because to do so would go against her style. Once on a bus, a woman the girl wasn't familiar with asked her why she dressed in black. The woman was too sweet to ignore, too friendly to be dismissed. After all, there weren't many grown up women that addressed her. After a somewhat awkward silence, the girl, who wanted to be taken seriously and simultaneously tough and sincere, heard herself say, "I don't know." She felt a little bit ashamed. Maybe that's why she doesn't practice being a woman.

The girl really didn't know why she dressed in black, and maybe it didn't matter. Or perhaps the most genuine reason to dress in black and monochrome was to have no reason. She thought about it. She didn't wear black because she liked music associated with the lack of light. When she was twelve or so, an older boy lent her his copy of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, but she didn't get it. Then he lent her another book, whose name she forgot but was full of phony rituals involving cemeteries, a dog's hair, and bat blood. She didn't like bats, and where would she find dog's hair. Disgusting. She wasn't into these pagan things; it didn't seem right.



Why should women give up rights that they had fought hard for and submit to a society where same sex marriage was unthinkable? Fucked up. She was a little lost but kind of happy. But then she thought of something that was a bigger black—the uninterrupted obscurity out there that is larger than fallen angels and vampires and monsters with bulging syphilitic brains with pink leeches dangling at the roots. That was her black, a cosmic night so dark, so vast it must be indifferent to everything, including the unthinkable.

You spit on the ground and it's all right, but what can you do when you turn your eyes to the dark sky. It's a strange mysticism, a Catherine wheel of the abyss, something held together yet void of any form of relations, of gravity and forces. It is an eternity absolutely unhuman and indifferent to the hopes, desires, tears, disappointments, and struggles of human individuals and groups. She didn't think it but felt it, a cosmic pessimism with a limitlessness that embodies the idea of absolute nothingness.

"I dress in black, in monochrome black," it is clear now, "for no reason. I have no idea why, but I must." The lack of reason—an excessive indifference haunted by an unconditioned necessity that ultimately negates itself—is sufficient because any form of reason would be a sickening yellow eruption of anthropomorphism.

But what if there wasn't one more time? What if there wasn't even a first time? Every moment, second, minute, and hour is caught in an endless cycle of repetitions. Each second is identical yet different from the previous one. We know what is about to happen next, another of the same seconds that never stop their repetitive sequence of fulfilled moments. Moments are fulfilled; they are never anything else. They proceed to the next, pleased and content with their own prosperity. Moments, however, are always flooded with doubt because prosperity never overcomes the probability that something might turn out badly.

"No, not one more time." The child obviously doesn't mean it, but demands exactly that. One more time again, and again. Does the child not know, really not know, that the termination of repetition opens a door toward something eternally more threatening than the attack by the father's soft hands?

Does not the teenager that obsessively returns to the same moment contradict a possible desire to end living and suffering. The teenager who really embraces pessimism and the Earth's tragedy is the one that calls for the annihilation of repetition.

Time is simultaneously that which protects us from the dark night of eternity and what renders eternity impossible. Time stretches like a

tight skin between the world and infinity forcing us into the endurable pain of life. Yes, this is the damnation that humans and other creatures of the Earth have to tolerate. Suffering is endurable just because it involves itself with time. Only a suffering that can expand in time is tolerable, yet so much crueler because the individual knows with high probability that the agony will continue into the following second. It is not eternity that is cruel it is time.

“One more time, but why?” Time has taken on a most dubious and moral task.

“I look at my watch. It is Wednesday about two thirty at night.” What is suddenly experienced imprisons the individual in anguish, and yet at the same time delivers her from it. Here is a perfect contradiction, divine ecstasy and its opposite, extreme horror. Time is an extension, a repulsive emission, or its rotting absence, which is a result of time and therefore nothing more or less.

The curse of time and with it the horror of teleology—it is not consciousness, as pessimists tend to argue, that is the mother of human suffering, it is time. Time cannot die. It is always in the light, making its absorption into the outside impossible.

The young girl’s face is several shades whiter, tiny pearls of sweat force their way through the makeup-clogged pores on her forehead.

“What a cliché,” she thinks, accompanied by a faint sense of nausea. Fear does not overwhelm us in time; fear in fact is the absorption of time into an unconditional outside. The outside is never gentle but always an oscillation between divine bliss and absolute terror. That is the horror of time itself.

“One more time” is our insurance against eternity because it is not that which must be feared the most. What is to be feared the most is the possibility that time dissolves and gradually becomes more and more volatile until it fades away like a tiny cloud of smoke. The end of time is not when time stops; it is when it coincides with its own non-being.

But isn't it exactly the annihilation of time that we humans seek more than anything, seeking not the moment when but instead the instant when there is no moment. Time does not point beyond itself, but time also does not die, as it has become a self-annihilating nothing that eternally survives itself. It is a limitless limit, lacking content, double in its character. It wanders in the nothingness of the world, in a desert of its own moments and eons that continually point it beyond its own image, which it evokes, and immediately abolishes in the impossible attempt to found its own certainty. Its twilight can last more than the totality of its day because its death is precisely its inability to die, its inability

to measure itself to any essential origin. Yet, time is not—time does not have being but is and must necessarily be a construction.

Time is without content, and therefore it is a pure force of negation that everywhere, and at all times, affirms itself as absolute freedom, a freedom that mirrors itself in pure self-consciousness. Time is forced upon us by ourselves as absolutely foreign to ourselves, and time's doing is to trap us in a ticking suffering, more diabolic than any of the creatures of hell will ever have to experience. And, if they do, there is redemption in the fact that the suffering will only happen once. Eternity is the absolute absence of time, which equals the absorption of all time into every moment simultaneously and forever.

“No, not one more time.” As much as time protects us from eternity, it also excludes us from any form of prominent presence. Time annihilates the now and replaces the horizon of presence with the violence of perspective. Time doesn't see, it looks, it holds on and knows nothing about letting go. Time is the origin of mimicry; time cannot contain anything that is not quantifiable, and hence time becomes the very generator of teleology. Time is negation of experience.

“No, not one more time.” The cancellation of time, the refusal of repetition—a total indif-

ference to time that will cost you your life and carries in its core limitless fear—is the only place where experience can erupt. This is an experience that is not an experience of something (perspective) but unfolds as its own horizon, the experience of experience itself.

The experience of experience is not the moment of death but instead the instant of un-life. It is experience without life, and hence the experience of experience coincides with the experience of existence.

## FOR NOTHING

Ever since he bought the ticket he thought: “Really, wasn’t it just a coincidence, or was it when he bought the ticket that it all started.” He tried all kinds of perspectives, but no matter how much he tried, he couldn’t rid himself of the pressing reality that it was from the moment that he bought the ticket that it began. Or perhaps it started even before he bought the ticket, when he decided to make the journey? He had thought about it for a long time, considered different options, turned it all around, but no matter how much his environment opposed it and tried to persuade him, there was nothing he could do to stop his conviction. He just had to do it, had to have this experience. It wasn’t an experience to honor somebody or something. In some ways, it would have been much easier to motivate if there had been an old uncle up there that he needed to visit before he passed away. This elderly relative would have been convenient now that he was the last of this family still alive. But there was no uncle, not even a long

lost family member or a tombstone. In fact, there was not a single grave of his pedigree left. All his relatives, except some ancient whoever knows who, were cremated and either buried in an anonymous place or spread in the wind in some place where it was legal and common-place.

His sister was the last one to die, and that hadn't really been a tragedy but something he could live with. She died too young, way too young, but she had no children and Michael, her sort of partner, was young enough to find some new company. After all, her death was nothing anyone could do anything about, and she died peacefully. Even so, it was peculiar that since he bought the ticket, she, his sister, his older sister, had been increasingly present in his thoughts. Most of the time in pleasant ways: waiting for the bus, he recalled times when they had waited together. He never used to recall such memories, but recently, his sister was almost like a constant companion. "Strange," he contemplated. Lately her presence had become darker, pressing, and the images of her that flooded his mind were haunted by a sense of despair, a despair that the young woman in the images could not express, or voice. It felt a little bit too much like a classic ghost story, the idea that the sister wanted to tell him something, or even worse warn him. Even so, the images got more and



more frightening, and it was not long until the apparition became a mutilated person. Even more nauseating was that patches of her skin seemed to have been ripped from her body. It could have been some kind of mold that was affecting her skin, a pale, almost white stretched surface in which black holes appeared. Or, were they groundless shadows with dispersed white patches? He didn't know, and he had no intention of investigating the matter further. Instead, he was thinking about something being half full or half empty. He concluded, not very surprisingly, that in either case, the glass is half full because it is obviously half full of emptiness. A glass cannot be half empty of nothing. It's just not an option.

Nothing, he thought, is empty enough because obviously nothing is already something. Nothing's nothing, on the other hand, cannot be represented. Perhaps he spent a little bit too much time contemplating nothing and nothing's nothing. Nothing is not the lack of something, but must be the other way around—something is the confiscation of nothing. But when nothing is already something, nothing must be similar to the emission that originates in nothing's nothing. He wasn't particularly into ecology but it fascinated him to ponder the possibility that nothing, never mind something, could arguably be considered a form of pollution. Something

is a polluted nothing, and nothing is a polluted nothing's nothing. He didn't like Heidegger so he didn't take a particularly phenomenological stance on the matter. Then, it suddenly struck him that he had never read anything by Heidegger in the first place, but had been convinced he had. "Experience," he whispered in his own head, "is a rather cheap excuse."

At some point he had read a narrative on the Internet that was based on a true story. Or, perhaps it was a novel. The protagonist in the story had been shot and later resuscitated. Unlike most people, she remembered in detail her time in the country of the dead. It was not exactly disturbing or fearsome. It was more like here, just a little bit different, and it looked like China. Not that she had been to China, but it looked like China never the less. Many years later, she died a second time in a traffic accident and was brought back to life again. The country of the dead still looked like China and from then on she obsessed about it. Why would it look like China? Finally she met an old Chinese man who told her that it is not the country of the dead that looks like China but the other way around. There is a belief among some that the beginning is not life but death. The first living being or person was in fact an individual from the country of the dead that was sent over the boundary to live in the world—a punishment one could say.

It is not the country of the dead that looks like China; it is China that mimics the country of the dead.

Life, he thought, is miming death. Life is something, and death is nothing. Life is a copy of nothing, nothing as something. This is a somewhat disturbing idea but also reassuring because death is then still something, and what is really to be dreaded is the death of death, nothing's nothing. The experience of the non-existent is when thought turns on itself. This is because the experience of nothing's nothing is synonymous with the annihilation of the subject, experience, and everything else. Nothing's nothing will and must be forever undisclosed, or rather, the closing up to nothing's nothing equals everything's gradual extinction.

He bought the ticket on the day exactly a year after his sister died. Was that a coincidence? A few days later he cut himself on the finger, nothing to mention but the wound got infected in a way that he could not have imagined. Each day it seemed as if the wound was growing. At first just a little cut on the inside on his ring finger. It was difficult to keep clean, admittedly, but after just two days his finger was throbbing, and what was initially nothing more than a scratch, was now a cut edged with red and at the same time damp and dry, with a

flaky surface. Another few days later he had a strange sensation that the wound had released a strange, if not foul odor that had a curious impact on him. When smelling it, his stomach turned inside out, and he experienced a reflex that almost made him vomit. Simultaneously he felt a strong desire to bring his finger into his mouth and suck it. He had to force himself not to, and he didn't until one night, when he woke up with his finger deep inside his mouth. He was repulsed by himself, knowing that he had swallowed the fluid (not much, but some) that was produced in the increasingly loathsome laceration. It got worse—another night he realized that he had been sleeping with the wounded hand between his legs. The bandage had fallen off and he could sense that the fluid and the open wound had touched his genitals, including the somewhat exposed top of his penis, which was semi erect when he woke up.

One day, as he was reading something work related, he realized that he had been sitting in his chair staring at the wound. He did not know for how long, just that he was mesmerized by the fact that it seemed alive, part of his body while simultaneously independent, appearing to be living a life of its own. He used his smart phone to take a picture of it. When he put fresh bandages on the wound he also applied some anti-inflammatory cream, almost as if he wanted

to nourish it, feed the alien capacity that he now hosted. Was he worshipping the laceration? He knew that he should see a doctor but couldn't make himself do it. He convinced himself that he was embarrassed, while in fact he didn't want the wound to go away. At night when he went to sleep, the dull pulsating sensation that had now spread to his entire hand gave him a sensation of hominess.

One morning he decided to lick the wound and found that although it emitted a vague smell of decay, it didn't taste like anything. Not even a little salty. There was an opening in his body, but despite its presence, the opening tasted of nothing. With his nose close to the wound, he could smell it. He could clearly smell it, and yet it was not the wound that smelled, but the opening. It was the absence that he could smell, a smell that tasted of nothing.

A few days later he was surprised that the wound was not there any more. It was gone without a trace. Strange—he couldn't find the pictures he had taken of it neither. The wound was gone. He was instantly relieved and at the same time felt as if robbed of something precious. The wound was simply not there anymore, having left nothing behind. It was as if it had never been there. No scar, no chapped tissue, nothing. He couldn't even recall on what hand it had been. Was it left or right, was it the

ring finger, or, he thought, with a sensation of desperation, had it migrated from one finger to another.

In the meantime the images of his sister continued to infect his mind. Initially the images were connected to situations they had shared. He passed by a shop she had liked to visit, and almost as in a film, a scene played in his mind's eye. The only difference was that the images of his sister were not of the happy young girl that he remembered, but of a troubled individual that seemed to want to communicate something she wasn't able to express. In a restaurant he overheard a seemingly random sentence that reminded him of wording his sister would have used. He walked through the park where she had spent time as a teenager, smoking her first cigarette, and immediately her face appeared in his mind, each time with an increased sense of despair. What was it that she wanted to tell him? He tried to call for her, begged her to speak, but the more he tried the greater her anguish became. She lifted her hands towards him, but as she did, her arms were ripped off from some invisible force, and his sister looked down with a surprised gaze on what had been her arms. What were left were just some undefined extremities ending with a dark shadowy dampness.

On a Saturday morning he decided to make scrambled eggs. Not usual behavior, but rather an opportunity to enjoy breaking habits. He cracked the first egg into the pan but realized that inside the egg a tiny fetus had developed. He tried best he could to remove it with a fork, but when he cracked a second egg the result was identical. This second fetus seemed more developed, and he felt a sickening antipathy. He could not avoid imagining himself in the position of being locked up in a shell slowly dying in the coldness of his refrigerator. He cracked another and another one, and to his disbelief each egg was fertilized containing the beginning of a little chicken. One of them had even turned into a brown black color the size of a fingernail. It was rotting inside the egg, transforming it into a tomb. Its grave was the same dwelling that had once given it life. He was horrified by the idea that a heart had started to develop inside the egg and was now dead, surrounded by a putrefying slime.

In the meantime, he prepared for his journey. He purchased maps even though he didn't need them. He consulted all kinds of source material, learned about opening hours of museums and guided tours, and booked a room in a hotel that appeared sympathetic. The room was expensive, but it didn't matter because he didn't need to retain his resources. He even

spent evenings wearing a pair of newly acquired boots to make sure he didn't develop chafe while wandering around in the landscape. He wanted to experience raw nature; see the aurora borealis with his own eyes; eat the local food; and, even though it would be late autumn, spend some time on one of the guide boats. The closer he came to the date of his departure, the more excited he became.

The day after the incident with the eggs, just as he stepped out on the street, he saw a bird dead on the pavement. It was apparently a nestling as its wings were not fully developed and its feathers were spread over its dead body like the beard of a teenager. He was startled because the summer was already over and the autumn was announcing itself through the colors of the trees—"a dead nestling at this time of year?"

Several similarly awkward situations occurred over the weeks before he finally boarded at Heathrow. Were they coincidences or was there a pattern? At first it didn't dawn on him; he wasn't a person who worried more than necessary. But at some point, when he missed the bus for yet another time, a rather filthy bag lady touched him in a strangely aggressive manner while begging for a few coins. In fact, his entire day was made asymmetrical by the woman's attack. Nothing got done that day. It was not



the smell of urine, alcohol, or putrefaction that bothered him, nor was it that she had touched him (although it was rather horrible to feel her cold damp fingers around his wrist). Her fingers were uncomfortably soft, as if they had no bone structure. He could recall seeing the claw-like hand as it stretched out toward him, catapulted like some animal out of the many layers of fabric that surrounded the black hole from which the hand emerged. Unexpectedly fast, the grip was firm. It was as if his arm had been grabbed by an octopus or even by slime. The nails were yellow with tobacco or something even more disgusting. As if the woman's wrinkled skin wasn't enough, her nails were dry, too. What really haunted him though, were her eyes. No, she didn't look at him from empty eye sockets, or with some satanic red glow emanating out of otherwise black eyes—nothing of the kind. Her eyes were unusually large, beautifully set apart—she must have been a beautiful person at some point—but they were not centralized. Instead, it was as if the pupils had separated into several dark islands in her otherwise white eyes. Contrary to past experience and knowledge, he felt that it was the white part of the eye that saw him, not the black. It was creepy. It wasn't horrible and it didn't look like she had been injured. It was just really creepy, especially since the eyes gave off a light, even the

impression of happiness. He just couldn't get the experience out of his system. He washed his hands another time, but it didn't help. The unease had infected his spine and he couldn't shake it off for anything. "I need to get drunk," he told himself and knew he was lying. He never had been much of a drinker. Who needs to lose more control in a life already seemingly out of control? Life is painstakingly unstable as it is and getting shit faced in a pub will only accentuate the instability. Cut it off or live with it. Still, directly after work he went around the corner to the local pub. He ordered his beer, sat down, and with the glass to his lips, he looked out over a rather large and open room, and there, there was a person turning an old head towards him, and it was her, the woman that had grabbed his arm. It could not be. He hadn't recognized her because now she was dressed in such a way that she blended in with the crowd. There was no doubt about it; it was she, and she had certainly recognized him. Yet she turned away, attending to the pint that was standing in front of her.

It was around this time that he started to dream. Well, he was always dreaming but not particularly intensively. He rarely remembered his dreams. Fragments perhaps, but nothing like some friends who were able to unfold a small novel just from a night's sleep. This dream was something else. Although he couldn't recall

details, the general set up was undeniable. Was it the double meeting with the woman whose pupils were decentralized that had initiated the dream, and who, soon after the first time, become a reoccurring guest in his sleep? Meeting that lady was one of the most dreadful incidents he had ever experienced. Her eyes reminded him of something, something that he didn't want to see. What terrorized him was not that the white in the eye wasn't separated from the black, but more that the white and black were interchangeable. The eye was no longer a white orb with a dark island but an archipelago of black dots in a white ocean, and at the same time, the other way around. What part was it that did the seeing; he didn't know. And what the eye saw, he didn't know. Regardless, he could not bear the shame and sense of infidelity that he had experienced as the woman's claw grabbed him with its slimy coldness.

Not so long before she died, his sister had asked him to take care of her e-mails. She could no longer do it. She complained and cursed all those get better emails, which she believed were sent to ease the sender's bad conscience. She knew she would never get better. Her disease wasn't visible on the outside; she died from the inside, and it was certain. She definitely didn't need some enthusiastic letter that sounded like

the person was begging. How low can one remain convinced that it is a good idea to empower a terminally ill woman that is barely thirty? He took care of the e-mails and dealt with them in a professional and detached way. From time to time he even answered in her name and enjoyed it. He thought maybe it was a little disgusting and didn't succumb to the temptation to answer after she died, even though he wanted to. Some of the letter writers—whom he verified lived far away—had even become friendly, asking how she, his sister that he was now impersonating, could be so light now that the disease had irreversibly taken root in her system.

It took a couple of months after they had buried her before the e-mails stopped arriving. For some reason he didn't eliminate her account, an old school Hotmail address that didn't reference her name. (Her digital identity didn't disclose gender, class, or age. "I'm very concerned with racism," as she used to say.) The day before he was to take off for his expedition, a new message arrived. It had been half a year and he had more or less forgotten about the account, yet there it was, a new message, and for some reason it disturbed him. It was sent from a person whose name he didn't recognize. It was short, forwarded from who knows where, with the subject: new important message. The message read as follows and nothing more except

an electronic signature with the person's name. "New message, please read," in bold, no link, just that. "New message, please read," but what?

Again his sister appeared in his mind. It was as if she was backing away into the darkness of his thoughts, her hands in front of her body. This time her skin was even paler, blotched with black patches that seemed to have no content. They were not rotting flesh, nor dissolved skin that decomposed. They seemed to be nothing at all, emptiness. The areas were not something; they were simply absence, black absences that seemed to slowly spread over her skin like lacunae. She wanted to tell him something, to communicate, but the more she tried, the more her despair grew.

The dream came back almost every night. Not just at night but also when he enjoyed a short nap on the subway heading back home after a long day. In the dream he found himself in a dark space, no walls, no ceiling, and he couldn't sense if there was a floor underneath his feet. The space felt small, yet he could not determine if it was as enormous as the blackness that surrounded him was impenetrable. There was nothing in the space, and yet he could sense a strong presence—a huge presence that dominated the space and was fully present at every moment and in every direction. It wasn't a threatening power. It didn't want to

hurt or annihilate him. It was just there, silently present, a being without body that flooded the space without beginning or end. It was there but didn't speak. It was a silent voice, an authority that tacitly occupied every moment. It was not asking for attention; it didn't speak; it was just there as an undeniable force that didn't utter anything. It was a presence that made him freeze, unable to attend to anything else. He was unable to think about anything else. He couldn't and was not allowed to let go of it. It was as if it held him in an eternal grip yet was indifferent to him, his life, and his existence.

He flew from Heathrow, landed in Oslo and changed to a smaller airplane that took him to a local airport in Tromsø, from where he took a bus to Alta for his final destination, Hammerfest. Why Hammerfest, and why in November? He just needed to go. It was his journey, and right now he was already changing buses in Alta. At around six in the afternoon he boarded bus number 061. It was him, a few locals, and a bunch of Swedish men who appeared as if they worked on an oil rig. The bus driver kindly asked them to fasten their seatbelts and apologized for the possible delay due to the recent snowfall. Finnmark is known for its hazardous conditions, so in order to minimize risk of danger, a plowing truck would drive ahead of them

through the most demanding parts of the two and a half hour journey.

On the flight from Oslo to Tromsø, he had fallen asleep and once again visited the dark space with the presence of the silent voice. It was more pressing than ever before. He woke up only as the airplane bounced on the short landing strip and forcefully reversed its engines in order to come to a quick halt. The voice that didn't speak didn't leave his system. It was still there, and he knew it could annihilate him at any moment. It wasn't the possibility of annihilation that haunted him but the sensation that the silence could annihilate him without even knowing it. The voice that didn't speak was an absolute power and completely indifferent.

As soon as they departed Alta, the driver turned off the lights in the bus. Conversations could be heard from here and there in the bus but it was generally calm. The journey proceeded accompanied by the driver's radio, which was on too low a volume for the passengers to make any sense of it.

They traveled up hill from Alta, which is located in a valley, crossing a small eastern part of Finnmark. The road was good but felt like an artery through the landscape that otherwise, as far as he could see, was void of any trees and other vegetation. Outside of the bus, there was no light. It was dead dark, not a sign of life, no

civilization, just a vague sensation of a landscape whose form was utterly undetermined.

He looked down at his phone and saw that there was no service. He saw the minutes go by as he lost himself in the phone's mesmerizing light.

When he looked up again the darkness had changed; the landscape had transformed and seemed more intrusive than earlier. The sense of safety he had felt while being surrounded by darkness was gone as the bus now made its way through a plateau of some kind. "This landscape is endless," he thought to himself, even though the landscape was not black any more. The world was black, the sky was black, the universe was black, everything was black, but the landscape was white. It stretched out in every direction as an endless dark whiteness. A pale landscape covered by its own shadows. It was black, yet it was white.

Once again he looked down at his phone. He registered the time and looked out the window. The landscape was passing by in front of him, and it was endless. The white endlessness was there; it was silent and there.

Black spots now started to emerge in the uninterrupted undulating whiteness—  
spots that appeared as wounds, cracks or laceration breaking the continuity of the white eternity. But they were not cracks. They were



not wounds. They were black abysses opening up to nothing. He froze in front of the experience, and no matter how much he tried to see something different, those black areas opened up to nothing. No, they opened to something much worse; they opened up to the opposite of nothing, to a full nothing that at the same time was the extinction of nothing.

He looked down at his phone. The display lit up, and he observed that it hadn't changed. He blinked firmly and looked again. Suddenly the phone indicated that it was several minutes later. He stretched his arm and his wristwatch became visible. He saw the seconds tick away steadily. The watch and the phone indicated the same time.

Something in the landscape attracted his attention and he looked out through the window. Strange—contrary to what he expected, the landscape was absolutely still. Nothing moved, nothing, and then the landscape's movements seemed to erupt from everywhere and nowhere in particular. The black blotches were constantly growing, as if devouring the whiteness. Swallowing was not the sensation it evoked; it was a devouring. Little by little the landscape became extinct, disappearing into darkness, so dark it also devoured itself. A pure darkness of nothing's nothing that left no traces and in itself was nothing.

The experience was so hideous that he had to look away. He looked down, and to his dread he saw that the arms on his watch were standing completely still. Nothing moved, not even the second hand. The ticking sound of the watch mechanics reached his ear yet nothing moved, and then, unexpectedly, the thin arm indicating the seconds started to move, slow in the beginning and faster and faster before it returned to its steady pace. He could not stop looking at the watch. He didn't dare stop looking. He did not think about how the landscape would appear when he looked up again. If he did, would his watch stop once more, would time dissolve and come to a standstill? He could not hold back. Slowly he lifted his head and peaked into the dark night, which was accompanied by the hum of the bus engine. The landscape was absolutely immobile. Although nothing moved, the black blotches were still expanding. The blotches didn't devour the landscape, nor was it the landscape that dissolved into the blackness of the blotches; everything simply turned into a nothing that could not be named. That which was not a "that" but must be a "that" in order to be described or recalled. That, which was not a "that," was so immensely dreadful that he was convinced he was losing his mind. Time had ceased or had lost its correlation to anything. He faced the condition in this moment, as he him-

self also had to cease to exist and become one with nothing and the absence of time.

He was lost and felt the same black blotches spreading over his skin. But they didn't take over anything, and he realized that it was the absence of himself that was drawing or slipping away from him. Slipping away into the eternal abyss or surface of nothing's nothing. The bliss that carried him—that made him able to see time dissolve into itself, that made him experience the eruption of nothingness in the white landscape—was so overwhelming nothing could be more dreadful. As light turned dark into a cascade of white endlessness, as time withdrew from itself as itself, as nothing crumbled into its own implosion, he was filled with the most remote yet absolutely present sense of eternal hope.



## SECOND HAND SMOKE

They were standing there, in the middle of the street. A wide one; in other places it would be called a boulevard, but here it was still a street even also when, like right now, it was abandoned, or as one would say, completely empty. Nobody was there, not a single being in sight, it was only the three of them. The two

women and the child, and perhaps an accidental animal of sorts. The child's gender was difficult to determine, its dress code some kind of trend or minor fashion, disguising not only personal identity but also general features. The three of them were indeed highly visible, certainly creatures belonging to what we know as humans, but at the same time they were only visible as blobs, as something which contours had been blurred, if you know the drift. Behind them buildings that were somewhat destroyed, but not properly fucked up. There had been no war here. This was no aftermath of a natural catastrophe, but it was certainly an aftermath of something. Perhaps some kind of foreign entity

had passed by and messed up. Perhaps the police had experienced a meltdown and started shooting each other, or perhaps the place was just worn down. The air was crisp. Normally one would have thought there would be some smoke or steam pulsating out of some broken pipe. Water running down sewers, and something like tumbleweed or an old plastic bag. Nothing in particular appeared to be missing nor were there any visible additions to the picture. It was all fairly normal.

### Garbage

It has never been proven that people living in less populated parts of the universe tend towards more religious lifestyles. Demographics don't support belief in that respect; there are ups and downs and statistics assist, but there's anyway an unbridgeable gap between religion and belief. However, it has been observed that when living conditions change radically, especially in a so to say traumatic manner that these are the moments when people in general are most susceptible to religious belief.

Even though she knew they had not been standing there for more than a few minutes, perhaps even less. Just a number of seconds - she had already contemplated two scenarios. First that they might just be the only living beings in

a really large area of the world, and secondly, that if that was the case if this moment were the right one to consider religion. But hello, what kind of religion do you build on three people? Obviously one of them would have to become the leader, the decision maker, and the two others would be followers. Not such an attractive scenario, and it doesn't produce a religion, she thought and continued her inner conversation: "I'm the weaker of the two of us, but stronger than the child, so far. My only survival, is to step down from leadership of the actual world and instead devote myself to the spiritual side of life. Instead of garbage handling she'd turn her attention on guarding the light.

She repeats the last three words to herself but reaches only halfway, for no particular reason she recollects something she recently read. Concerning smoking. The fundamental mistake is to focus on what enters the body and how these substances possibly alter the human state. There are certainly interesting observations to be made in regard of this, both on short and long term basis, and it's most definitely a complex affair all in all, but this has little to do with smoking as an activity independently if we consider it as idle or productive.

Bits and pieces of the continuation of the argument appeared to be missing for a moment,

and instead some inner static sort of stuff. Blurry, colours out of sync. Smoke might come in different flavours, and this is the second mistake. It might be perfumed in many different ways, but to consider it important that the flavour should provoke something in the smoker is obviously totally misplaced. Whether sweet or sour, bitter or generous, rather than being understood as bringing something into the body, the flavour of smoke is about bringing something from the inside out, something that can best be compared with the ink squirted out by an octopus or squid.

Change is happening by itself. Wait and you will see. How could it be otherwise? But then how can something change not into more of the same, but into something that doesn't support either more or the same? Change does not happen through the use or availability of mirrors. In front of the mirror you make sure you are still you, in front of the mirror the concern is a little bit more this or a little bit less that. Problems, difficulties, issues are in our world treated as mirrors. In front of problems we assure our identities.

These kinds of problems are false problems, they are not really problems, they just look like them. False problems and mirrors have something in common – they make things look alike. Real problems are those that don't appear in the



mirror even if they're there just in front. Real problems aren't like vampires: they aren't there nor do they remember.

The reason why vampires aren't visible is because they coincide with the mirror. They are mirrors, real problems... ah, she doesn't know. Or she knows, but she can't manage to gather the energy to come up with a fitting image. Metaphors are for people that know where their anus is located, she concludes, not for spiritual leaders.

Her skin reacts to something. Was it because of her thoughts, did somebody come closer, did something move. The wind. Signs can be difficult to tell apart when the environment isn't easy to interpret.

She, like most religious leaders, had a passion for generic spaces. Airports are too simple. Simple can be good but airports are too simple, even though one wonders why there aren't more action movies happening in airports. 'Perhaps because of security', she reflects. 'I'd like to see a Hollywood action that takes place entirely in an airport. I would watch it while crossing the Atlantic. Stepping of at LAX with something like Tom Cruise in a radical fight scene fresh in memory. I'd have to duck behind a bunch of suitcases in order to avoid a bunch of nine millimetre bullets fired by terrorists or some international conspiracy sponsored by the

CIA.' Perhaps if she were lucky one of the bullets would penetrate her skin, enter her body, damage organs and leave traces never to be diffused.

Smoking is not about intoxicating oneself; on the contrary, it is a matter of either seducing or killing the world. The productivity of smoking is a matter of devouring other entities and even entire contexts.

Smoking in this sense is a negative production that detaches itself from the protective or stabilizing capacities of an army. Smoking, and the exhalation of grey matter, implies a production of death.

30.

It is not death, it is the production of death. The production of death as such. As a productive force it is to an extent strategic and temporary. Smoking can't be said to be a strategic environment but must be understood as a structural plane. It kills without discernment, and it kills in order to devour.

The smoker exhales formations in order to dislocate. The slowly blown smoke is a kind of détournement, a celebration of death before it arrives. Examples of the seductive capacities of smoking, the exhalation and body language, can be seen in endless American movies. The female

character expresses independence through smoking, the cigarette becomes an emancipatory gesture, and at the same time it lures the scopophilic gaze into a cul-de-sac. The smoker and the exhalation, so to say, blinds the victim twice after which it devours it without mercy, without hesitation but whilst swallowing it as a whole. The smoker has nothing to do with snakes or reptiles, remember the squid. It is on this threshold that we should concentrate, on the site where seduction and death exits the body and where the victim's death enters. This is the site of the insurrection. The smoker is not an individual open for revolution, yes or no, but is in a state of constant insurrection.

Mirrors are the decline of problems. The Christian god was wrong, it is not you should make no images of me. It should be you should have no mirrors but me. But as we know monotheistic belief systems keep themselves with the tacky, yet necessary notion that God created the human in his own image.

Mirrors in that sense is religious artefacts, it is in mirrors that we are reminded that we are just an image that God created, that we are false problems, small difficulties. Or instead we can take our job serious and consider the possibility of becoming invisible. Smoking is not an easy task if one's ambition is to break the spell of the

mirror.

She placed herself outside herself, like people had done ever since Descartes, and considered the situation. From her outside position she scanned the environment after reflective surfaces. In a more perfect world, people would have no fetishes. At least not objects but perhaps textures, reflective surfaces. There was nothing here to reflect her image and she wanted it like that. She wondered what it would be like to touch a skin that corresponded to this very moment, an extension without reflection. The skin soft, not warm but yet her body reacted. There were no fantasies. An erotic experience without projections. It is in the threshold between life and death, between experience and projection between out and in, that smoking creates understanding. Smoking doesn't offer it, it creates understanding. Smoking is a radical state of knowledge production exactly because it operates in the very crack where life and death become one.

The smoke is a gift that burdens.

The desire created by smoking is not the simple one of chemical addiction, it is the desire to seduce, kill and devour. The use produces extended desire yet does not escalate to other forms of action. Smoking does kill, but it is not the smoker it kills; it is the one next to, the one adjacent.

The smoker feels no guilt, has no second thought, there is no decision to make.

She took off her panties, and it struck her – not in a surprising way but still – that if reflections had been a colour, generally speaking, it would be yellow. Yellow, that precise colour of a 3M Post-it paper.

A dull type yellow colour, she concluded and then she didn't think about it any longer because another thought appeared. Consider that that which had happened was not only that all other people had vanished, disappeared, been swallowed by the earth but that what had gone were also reflections. From now on there were no more reflective surfaces, only matt stuff, like the skin of a tree, tongues, or a woollen sweater. Like in Norway she was thinking, but obviously she had no idea because she had never been in Norway, not even seen a documentary on television about it. But she knew that a life without reflections would be an unlife, it would not be like being dead or anything, it would be like not having been born, or better still, not even that, more like being immortal in reverse.

Smoking saves nobody, it kills for the one that pays the best and changes side without consideration. Smoking betrays all sides.

Yet, the threshold between exhalation and

death is only the site of an insurrection. What is more interesting to consider here is to reverse the directionality and consider the exhalation as a double disguise, a kind of hypercamouflage where smoking can be understood as a movement in which the mouth exposes itself as an anus, or where the entrance and exit of the body become one and the same. This turning towards each other, this turn away from the yardstick and turning towards the compass, the circular the O, this endlessness that remains alien - operating outside difference, this superimposition of the organs implies a formation of endless desire production.

The smoker lives in a perpetual circular formation of orgasm. An orgasm where the oral, the genital and anal coincide, where the corpse of the seduced victim enters the body and simultaneously exits it from the same cavity. This state of ultimate orgasmic production makes the individual both nobody and everyone, it enters a state without subjectivity, it enters the permanence of a plane of consistency.

The state of endless orgasm makes the smoker one with everything. The smoker withdraws from subjectivity, withdraws from ways of being human known to us. The smoker smoking exits the performativity of the possible in favour of the endlessness of potentiality, and it

is precisely there that smoking forms itself as  
both true to the universe and as a form of Ni-  
gredo, a shining darkness without boundaries,  
without connections. A non-relational formation  
of world. Smoking in this sense does not only  
imply a state of endless orgasm but also the im-  
manence of catastrophe.





## LESS

I got lost on my way here. I don't know what happened. I really don't know. And although I knew something was not as it should I couldn't stop. I couldn't stop my self from continuing and now here I am, and lost.

I left as I always do, just before and in time, after but not too late, within yet not in the middle, without anxiety yet eager not to miss anything significant.

As usually I was writing and had been doing so since just after breakfast. My study. It is really not a study and it feels awkward to name it one. I write at a table and the chair is not particularly comfortable. It is just a chair and so is the table, just a table. Perhaps not even just a table as "just a table" seems to fit into some generic sense of table. My table, that wasn't really mine but came with the apartment, was a table but not just a table. A good table but not just a table. I think it, or least its designer had some ambitions, and just a table must simply be void any ambitions or aspiration.

There isn't a view neither although there is a window and when looking out it from time to time can render a sense of inspiration but most of all the window is just an indicator, to the weather and a reminder that there is an outside or at least that there is a not inside.

So I left the flat, took the stairs as one does and stepped out on the street. Not particularly busy at this time of the day, not particularly busy at any time of the day. Such is the street that I entered and soon I started walking the path I take more or less every day. Downhill as I find starting with climbing a hill goes against all human reason. To the left at the second corner and so on, it was all in order and nothing bothered me.

It is curious how worries can die out. If you worry long enough it is as if the worry becomes part of you, as if it seeps into your blood and becomes one with you and at that moment it simultaneously evaporate. Like when taking a foam bath.

I got lost on my way here. The greyness closed up on me, at some point it swallowed me and there was no other path that I could follow than to come here. I couldn't turn back, because however much I turned there was nothing that indicated that I had turned in any direction at

all. The greyness encompassed me to the extent that all directions turned into one. This way or that way and here I am and lost.

It started already quite early, not directly but when recalling the event it didn't take long until the first signs occurred. Were they already there when I looked out the window before I left or did they, as I experienced it grow more and more as I turned corners of the streets in this smaller city? It isn't middle sized. It is definitely a small city even though it might be seen as a larger small city.

Streets in a small city are always empty, no matter what time of the day. In this city there were almost always some sort of traffic. Men on their way home from a nightly adventure, workers on their way to an early shift, teenagers with nothing better to do or older women with too much to talk about. There is always somebody around, perhaps just leaning against a wall smoking a cigarette.

Today was different. It was as if the streets had been abandoned. Not entirely, existences hurried by close to the surrounding walls or following the silhouettes of houses. Whenever somebody crossed the street it was with the head bent as if it was a bad omen to show ones face. They passed me turned away without saying anything. Did I sometimes hear a mur-

mur that reverberated of something fiendish, a wordless whisper expressing aversions against foreigners?

Curious, but as I had reason to contemplate many things it is only until afterwards that it strikes me as unusual. The city is normally open and people greet each other with a smile. Where were the women that normally occupy the street, where were the sounds that normally flood out of cafés.

Today it was as if everything had lost its colors. Even sounds met the eardrum with a dull sense of greyness. Where had those saturated colors of the local flare gone? Today the city was grey and the further I walked the greyer it became. First the grey took over staircases and archways. But soon it leaked out of the shadows and flooded the streets and made the ground I walked on colorless and almost transparent.

It was grey, and its greyness increased as the light seemed to die out. The day withdrew its light but strangely enough what took over was not darkness, it was not a black quality that rose from the lack of light it was grey. Black, a non-seeing had no place here, it was grey, a monochrome all-encompassing grey that leaked into this lightless world.

I knew. I could sense that it was all together wrong and yet something made me continue. It wasn't me and there was nothing that called

for me, no voice in the grey mist that tempted me or twisted me mind. It was completely clear to me that I was getting lost and the more lost I got, the possibility to find my way back got smaller and smaller. It was not the greyness that that surrounded me that provoked me to go on although it had now taken over my entire field of vision. In front of me was nothing more than a tunnel. It was as if somebody had turned down contrast or introduced some filter that blurred the entire world.

I stopped several times. Stood still, waiting for something, perhaps just for a movement but nothing happened. Nothing moved although I got more and more insecure whether or not the greyness surrounding me was not in fact moving, pulsating in correlation to some kind of pre-historic greyness that since eons had withdrawn from earth leaving only this pulsating continuity that comes on to you like car sickness.

For moments the force that drove me further into the greyness was almost hibernation, it faded to a distant hum barely noticeable but as soon I as I stopped and considered changing my path it returned often with increased intensity. At times I tried to locate it in my body but made no progress. It was nowhere in particular and overwhelmed my being's every cell. It was not a delusion, I was not possessed by something foreign, of that I am certain. It was not my

unconscious that drove me, or a sense of unheimlichkeit. It was something in me, a me that was not part of me. It was life as it proceeded through a sense of desire or drive, it was not existence as existence does not make choices, but the experience of an inner outside.

And now I'm here but I don't know where here is. It was not I and yet it was something in me, something ancient that kept me going, going deeper into the darkness. It struck me that there must be something in me that is not of me, a force in the depth of my being that provoked me to continue. But that that made me continue was not I, it was in me but gave of a sense of alienness. Not as if I was possessed by an external force. No it was in me and it belonged to me or perhaps it was me who belonged to it.

What swallowed me was not black it was grey. What came closer and closer was not even grey it was a colorlessness that erased all differentiation and dissolved contours and outlines between things and objects.

Black is something. An active absence when it comes to light and an actual existence when it comes to color. This was something completely different, it was not light but was at the same time weaker than black. It was what is left when black has been erased. It was the color of a negative, of nothing. A nothing less than nothing, a nothingness without criteria, with out scares,

without the torn tissue of trauma. Just nothing.

I am here now, but I don't know where here is. Here is everywhere and the greyness is so thick that there is nothing to differentiate what this here is, or if here is everywhere and at once.

I was lost for a long while. How long that actually was, is not for me to say. It could have been a matter of seconds, just moments but if so those moments were endlessly long, stretching out like concentric circles around me. It could also have been years, decades but whether it was the one or the other nothing told me how long my journeying could have been. For all that time that perhaps was just moments, I was lost and this inner force that made me continue knew where it brought me.

Suddenly there was no tunnel of a lighter grey in front of me. It was just grey, absolutely grey and as I raise my hand in front of me I realize that my skin has faded to an ash-like nuance and is hardly distinguishable. My hand is just a somewhat different shade of grey. Yet is hard to say if it is lighter or darker or if it is the same just a sense of higher or lower resolution. I know it is my hand there but it is only through extreme concentration that I can discern it. It melts into the background or is it perhaps the background; the surrounding grey that melts into it.

Turning inwards, something evades my reflection. Touching my left hand with my right, perception falls short and the body recedes further into the grey, the grey from which no reason can reach. I am no longer entirely in possession of my own being, not in time nor materially or in respect of space.

At some point, which was the last time, I stretched out to my left. My left arm extended as I moved carefully in the same direction. For a long time, or what felt like a long time, surrounded by the grey, the grey that is left when black is too strong a choice. And suddenly I can feel it. At first only as a vague sensation, later as a warmth in the grey space and finally my left hand reaches the surface and I can sense a wall. The wall has many holes and many foot pieces to fasten to. The wall is dangerous... an interval. Something that evades experience, something that is not experience and yet I need to go, once more around. Up, across, rigidly. Down easily and foolishly. I try again, to climb the wall in vain. I finally capture back my chains and I know that this was the last time I touched something. My fingers will not touch any more and as I move forward the skin of my fingers softens and falls like dust particles or snowflakes slowly to the ground being swallowed by the greyness. I find myself standing on my knees trying to bring together some of the grey dust, the grey dirt



with my hands but nothing. I can feel nothing and the dust and dirt like sand in a time glass pour through my fingers evading my cupped hands. I can see my hands touching the ground but I sense nothing, the ground, the surface collapse into my hands without resistance, without claims.

I was lost and suddenly it stopped. The force died away, faded slowly like the tide it withdrew out into the ocean again, into an undifferentiated oneness and as the force slowly resolved I was left with the clear and undeniable sensation that I had arrived. Arrived to where I should be, here but where here is is to me unknown. Here is everywhere and there is nowhere to which I can turn. Everywhere is here.

I don't know to whom I speak, whom I address but I know that you are here. Why aren't you introducing yourself, why don't you give me the comfort of knowing I am not alone. Why, if you cannot speak, don't you offer me your hand? Even though it is cold and damp, even though your hand is mutilated and the surface scared it would give me the comfort of not being alone. How is it that I can feel your presence and yet there is not warmth, no cold emanating out of the darkness where I can feel you. Why should your hand be anything that warm and give of a smell of kitchen, why?

The grey surrounds me. It is unconditional. Am I dreaming or am I still awake. Everything is one and I continue following my ancient inside away from wake. Reverie, everything is images and they float together with the grey making every fantasy wither away into the greyness of thought, of the world of everything. It is the perfect reverie as it is absolutely free of content. There is only a grey nothing, a nothing less than black, less than absence, less than knowledge. The grey I experience is existence, my bare existence without life.

In the grey, there is horror. The horror of a present absence. This horror marks a threshold, a zone of difference, through which the disordering of light and dark converge. Light recedes from the world. No moon. Too poor to afford the black. A shadowline is created, a grey. In that grey, the absence of play of light and darkness confuses boundaries, masking the everyday world. What is revealed, for me, is an abomination masquerading as an appearance. It is grey and so endlessly clear. This is the deep night, the night that occur right in the daytime. The illuminated grey that illuminate objects appearing in twilight shapes. The city is inverted as if after an exhausting carnival. Things, perhaps even beings, strike me as though they no longer compose a world. Everything is swimming in the chaos of their existence.

I'm here now, like you. There is nowhere else to where I could turn than to here. Here is everywhere and as I look into myself I realize that nothing could be more beautiful than here as here is nowhere in particular and yet it is here. It is minimally here and that's just enough.

I cannot know if you are absolutely close to me or if your presence is felt through endless distances. Here is only here and since this is so there is no difference between extremely close and endlessly far away. I fear remaining here because for every second, for every minute that passes I gradually do and will disappear. I'm lucky. As long as I can feel you a horizon to my experience is still present. The moment you disappear my horizon will also fade and soon thereafter I will have no other choice than to coincide with my surrounding, with here, a here that is everywhere.

Knowledge exists in time. Knowledge divides. With barely a horizon to experience knowledge is quickly fading, it melts away, flattens out and is no more. Images from the past appear in my mind and fade gently away. The moment when I touch upon a memory it grows fainter until its outlines falter and my mind can no longer hold on to it. I dare not venture into my past in fear of losing those memories, but already thinking this makes them dissolve. Here is no wind, here is gently calm, still I experience

how my memories, my past is taken by the wind and disperses into particles so petit they lose all sense of meaning, fragments too small to function as building blocks.

The grey is ancient.

I try to construct new thoughts, arrangements, models but fail. No one thought sticks and every argument resonates of hollowness before they disintegrate.

I wish these thoughts came to an end in a cascade, like a firework exploding shining in the sky for a moment, or that they crumble together and become a hard knot before imploding with a sound resonating with a sensation of being played backwards.

Life dwells like a stranger in the flesh that by its own nature is nothing but a corpse, seemingly alive by favor of the ancient's passing presence in it. Only in death, relinquished by its alien visitor, does the body return to its original truth and the ancient to hers. Life expresses a rigorous simultaneity between the experiencing subject and the ancient. It is in the grey that they separate. Nowhere is the realization stronger of the fundamental strangeness of life than in the materiality of the body confronted with grey absence.

The grey's omnipresence. Forms of things and being dissolve in front and around me in the soft opacity of the grey, which is neither and object nor the quality of an object, yet invades like a presence. I am riven to it, in the absence of light and dark I am not dealing with anything. But this nothingness is not that of pure nothingness. Here there is no longer this or that there is not "something". But this universal absence is in its turn presence, an absolute and unavoidable presence. It is in the grey, when the world comes to an end that our primary relationship which binds us to being becomes palpable.

As I am anyway here. At some point our planet coagulated, the crust cooled down and the planet circulated around the sun. The planet was innate and no life forms existed. It was just that planet, constantly getting colder. But how can life at some point have sprung from this innateness? It appears most unlikely that something innate suddenly would give way to life form but if, against all odds, that happened how come it doesn't happen again and again, and right now. Perhaps life didn't emanate from the planet. Maybe it would have remained innate for an eternity hadn't it been because life arrived to our planet at some moment in some form. It is not particularly likely but never the less not absolutely unlikely that a piece of a different planet from some other part of the universe or

from some parallel universe could accidentally have hit our planet and buried itself in the now hard surface. That is where life came from, not from our innate planet but from a lump journeying through universe perhaps for thousands of year until it bumped into terra firma and brought with it, maybe not exactly life but the spark of life. Let's consider that in that lump, that oversized stone there was the very embryo of life. Not in the sense of completed beings ready to climb the earth, but the condition of life, the first instance of life. A spark whose only job was to exactly to set life in motion.

A wonderful invasion. Not a take over but an annexation on the most fundamental structural level. Perhaps that spark of life was sent out into space by an existing life form, perhaps not. Perhaps it was just an accident but even so it implies that my life, my beings origin is alien. That what allows me to be alive is not off me but an absolute and complete alien. Alien to the extent that I can have no access to it, it can be sensed, it cannot be understood as information. It is in me but as alien, and that that offers me to experience the world is in fact completely foreign to me. It must be so, because something must in the first place allow me to experience anything at all. Human experience cannot have created itself from within.

That same originary spark is what has given us all life and yet it settles differently in each and all of our minds and bodies. This was the ancient capacity that brought me here. I knew that I was lost, I knew that I should have turned around and taken the path back to the safe light of the city. My reason and rational told me that the path I had been guided onto was leading me further into the lack of light, into the lack of darkness, that grey evenness that gradually came closer and closer until it completely enclosed me. It was not me it was the ancient substance, the primordial alien that brought me here, to here that is everywhere. I have lost any sense of privacy. I have lost any sense of belonging and don't even belong to the absence of belonging. I am no outcast because since everything is equally, there is only here and the moment is necessary forever. I am public. I have become public to myself as myself. I have fallen, fallen to coincide with everything in each of it's particles simultaneously and never at the same time. Life fades and I exist. I exist without subject. The last thing I experience, the last impulse to my mind is the dreadfulness of disappearing from myself and the experience is pure and essential bliss. I become fear and bliss, incorporated as a paradox that expired.

A here that is me and not of me, a here that is of me and absolutely alien. It is here and absolutely alien because what surrounds me is the

sensation of something but yet that something is inaccessible and withdraws from experience. I am here, not a person or a thing, or the sum total of persons and things. I am not the fact that one is, I coincide with here and the fact that there is, the indeterminacy of existence. I am here surrounded by the greyness, void of human experience, brought here by the ancient spark of life.



