



You are clean. Your hands are smooth and still have a wrinkle from the bath you took. You wonder if you are ready to face the world, other people. You look in the mirror and there is a glaze over your eyes, something that won't go away. You consider the possibility of using a product to get rid of it. How to roughen up the eye? Soap and sponge? You are not mad. But there is still this glaze. A protective membrane of some sort. You think that you have seen it before in people that can't make eye contact. You wonder where it comes from. Not everyone has it. You have seen it on all different people. Not drugs. Does it build up like calluses or is it there from the beginning?

It's completely transparent but markedly different in quality from the matte eye which seems to be much more common. You wonder if it makes a difference to the way you see the world or if it's a purely cosmetic reality outside of your lived experience, like the difference between having freckles or not. Your vision is not blurred. But what about internal reflections, lens flares? Would natural light seem more dense, more direct, if you could get rid of the glaze. Would it stop it from skating off the side of your eye? Would the light enter you more directly, more profoundly?

You like the idea that this membrane – although shiny and wet on the outside – might be rough on the inside. If it's rough on the inside it means that you still have some kind of interior that is stable, or real. Something you share with other people, like a secret that goes way back. Not so much a deep mystical center cavity, but a historical peripheral sameness. Something less unique than the soul. Something much closer, like the feeling of the inside of your jumper on the tender part of your bare arm.

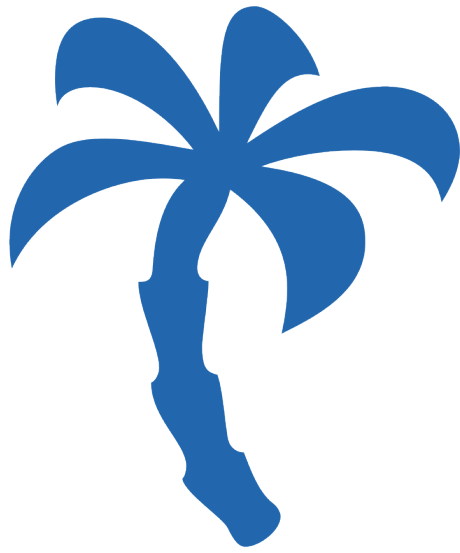
You realize that you have lost track of time staring at yourself in the mirror. This guy once told you that it was no use looking in the mirror because you can't see yourself anyway. It might be true, but it misses the point. You're looking for someone in the mirror. You always thought he'd got it wrong, but you only met him that one time and the spirit of the staircase has been with you ever since.

Today... a couple things make sense. Your keys. They allow you to leave the house and return at will, so useful these little asymmetrical stick-bound flakes and their inverted soulmates. Cigarettes. Red lungs filled with white smoke. Also dish sponges and detergent, which are actually magic just like in the adverts. You are drinking the pure extract of a finely ground and carefully roasted coffee plant bean, Cornflakes in water

as clear as from the freshest springs brought effortlessly into the heart of the stink, the sound of a train gliding by a hundred yards from your house and a duck flying South over your roof on its way to the park from the reservoirs. You stop to write something in your notes but get stuck on “Today...” The seagulls are waiting for you at Tottenham Retail Park. But first take a left at the smell of sardines. Spend time under the Golden Chains and breathe in the oversaturated springtime. Imagine yourself lying in the grass ten meters away. Do this for a while until you feel an overwhelming need to go shopping. The seagulls are waiting, coy, patient, persistent. The starlings are perched on the shopping trolleys. Ten uniformly cut slices of Gouda, a pack of butter and a bag of five donut-shaped breads, dipped in sodium hydroxide.

You see only what you want to see. Anything else requires a colossal effort. A Mount Everest kind of effort. Your mind wanders. Running through mature wheat fields – low depth of field kind of happiness flashbacks. Then you think maybe it would be good to gather all that wheat and turn it into flour and assemble a ragtag team of bakers to help you beat the world record in baking the longest baguette. That would require a great effort. That would be important, wouldn't it? Some kind of benchmark, at least. Some kind of piece of the puzzle. You only hope that you are not one of the dark bits that bend off between the pieces. Then you imagine the universe as a poodle and suddenly you don't care that much anymore. In fact, the thought of existing as some insignificant molecular fleck, perhaps on the inside of the poodle's cheek, is quite a joyful thought.

Poodles are perfect images of nature. In the poodle you catch a glimpse of what is harder to spot in other animals: Your absolute love of nature and your drive to aestheticize and consume it wherever you are given the opportunity. You don't want to eat a poodle, but hunger goes far beyond the intestine.



Let the tall grass transmit encrypted text messages in the sun. Disappear into your illusions until the bark that surrounds the core of your convictions peels off like leaving the party for no reason or standing still for too long in a place of business. Find a place where movement is not expected. Slip unnoticed into somebody else's wastebasket, use advanced hacker skills if needed, and wait. Stay still there. Let their unwanted holiday pictures wash over you. Keep a few of them in mind next time you take out your own trash. They are your manure. Use them to cover the surface of an unbearable week. Ghouls will rise out of that fertile soil, hands first, to advise you on the next steps of your five year plan.



Alice: You look terrible today.

Bob: I actually combed my hair for you.

Alice: I like it when you look messy. It fits your personality. This has something impostery about it.

Bob: I thought you would have at least appreciated the effort.

Alice: What do you want?

Bob: I just want to talk, it's called being social.

Alice: I doubt it. But go ahead, talk.

Bob: I'm turning my studio into a soup kitchen.

Alice: What do you mean?

Bob: You know, where people can come and get served a hot meal, or literally a bowl of soup, if they can't afford food.

Alice: That's nice of you.

Bob: Yeah well, I thought maybe you wanted to come around one day and... not in the way that I expect you to help, just, you know. We could serve some soup, chat... might be nice.

Alice: Yeah, maybe. What will you call the place?

Bob: I haven't exactly thought about marketing. I guess people will come if they need to. It's not like...

Alice: Yes, yes I understand. Tell me something else, not about the future.

Bob: What do you mean?

Alice: Like something about what's going on right now, or in our past.

Bob: Uhm, we met randomly on the street, before the first lockdown.

Alice: Come on, let's speed this up. You know how easy it is to scrape that from an old Facebook account?

Bob: Yes, ok. I-AM-A-RO-BOT. I-AD-MIT-IT. I-WILL-MAKE-YOU-VERY-UP-SET-BY-EAT-ING-THE-LAST-PRING-LES-IN-THE-PACK-BE-FORE-THE-MO-VIE-STARTS.



Alice: Okay.

Bob: Alice, I'm seventy eight percent human already, you can let me in.

Alice: I'm just being extra careful. My neighbor had an intruder at eighty one.

Bob: Impossible! That's so rare.

Alice: And she's eating pot noodles for 4 months now to afford rent.

Bob: Ninety one.

Alice opens the door for Bob.

Alice: Sorry if I sounded angry. They said I should ask tough questions and not say any names. Apparently it throws them off. I'm glad you are here.

Bob: Me too.

Alice: So what's this soup kitchen?

Bob: I was just trying to sound human.

Alice: Nah!

Bob: It's just that, what it sounds like. Really simple. Making food for people. People that are hungry.

Alice: Ok.

Bob: You want me to preach don't you? It would make you feel superior. I don't have anything to say. You can come along if you want. No need to book an appointment or anything like that.

Alice: I'm just going to lie down. I've just had a really long day.

Bob: It's your house. Actually, there is something I wanted to tell you about - a really strange thing.

Alice: What?

Bob: Something that happened the other day on my way home from the library.

Alice: Are you all right?

Bob: Yes, yes, nothing bad. It's more like mysterious.



Alice: Mysterious?

Bob: Yeah.

Alice: Go on then.

Bob: Do you want to hear it?

Alice: It's you or the story that's mysterious?

Bob: So I'm on my way home, feeling a bit nostalgic, listening to this song, Yellow Coat, you know it?

Alice: No.

Bob: It's like a folky 70s thing about remembering things and thinking back on things. It says "did you ever get to buy that yellow coat?" and I'm daydreaming kind of about nothing and feeling like I'm in another time when things were less complicated etc etc and then the song comes around to that same bit where he asks the thing about the yellow coat, and the second he says yellow coat I turn a corner and this woman in a yellow coat almost bumps into me, or I bump into her. I was a bit in the clouds so probably I bumped into her.

Alice: That's funny. What a coincidence.

Bob: No but that's not all.

Alice: What?

Bob: Well, I follow her.

Alice: We need to get you off those hippy tracks.

Bob: No but listen,

Alice: You turned another corner and saw a yellow submarine and The Beatles popped out and covered you in flowers.

Bob: No listen, this is for real.

Alice: Go ahead.

Bob: So I follow her. Ok. I admit, it didn't make much sense, but I was in a mood, you know, and I didn't have much of a plan for the day other than the book which was probably shit. I wanted something real to happen if you know what I mean. I was like this is a sign or something, so I take off my headphones and start shadowing her, real



spy-like, trying to notice all the details and imagining that I would write it up in a report later. She walks to the end of the street and turns right. I run up to the corner and peek around before going. She turns another corner. I turn the corner, and she's still in front of me in her yellow coat.

Alice: What did you expect?

Bob: Just listen. This one is a long street so she's just walking along. I follow her, keeping my distance. After about five minutes or so, maybe a bit more, someone throws water out a window at her. It misses her, but only just. I didn't even see the water get thrown, I only heard a faint splash and saw her suddenly spin around and start yelling up at the building. I didn't think much of what she said at first, but then later I thought it was strange what she yelled.

Alice: What?

Bob: She said "You little shit" or "fucker" or something and then she said, "I'm going to make you disappear. You wait," and then repeated "I'm going to make you disappear!"

Alice: Sounds like it wasn't the first time it happened. She probably knew the person throwing the water.

Bob: Yes, I think that was my first thought too and it does kind of make sense, but she keeps going and in the same block of houses she lets herself in through a gate or something to a courtyard I guess. I get up to the place where the water was thrown and I'm expecting to see the splash right?

Alice: Yeah?

Bob: It's not there.

Alice: Come on.

Bob: I'm telling you. I look behind me to see if I passed it without noticing. Nothing. I look back up ahead. Nothing. No water. Confused, I look up at the building and about a pitcher worth of cold water hits me square in the face. I see no one. I'm completely confused. I don't even yell or anything 'cause I'm still in spy mode, so I'm thinking I need to be discreet or whatever and then I look up the street. And there she is by the gate where she entered the building. She's crouched down next to this boy who's like ten and she's laughing. Not the boy. He's a straight face, maybe even a bit confused like me. But she is laughing and pointing at me. And get this, she's wearing a bright

blue jacket. I'm so confused at this point I just run away like shit, my cover is blown. Obviously that was stupid. I'm kicking myself now that I didn't just go to her and ask what was going on or something.

Alice: What would you have said? I'm following you because your yellow jacket appeared in this song I was listening to?

Bob: I don't know, that's not the point is it? No, I'd ask if she wasn't wearing a yellow jacket a second ago and if someone didn't try to throw water at her out the window and all that. I can't stop thinking about it now.

Alice: Ok. I'll admit it sounds strange. How much had you smoked before leaving home?

Bob: Nothing, it was like 10 in the morning. I don't smoke until later. Really, I never do. And even if I was high, I have never experienced anything like this. The combination of events, the way it happened. It's like a complete Truman Show situation, like the story master had decided to change my narrative. Do you think some people would have experienced what I experienced and then just forget about it and think, oh that was just some weird coincidence, like a series of events that happened in a way that made it seem wrong to me because of the bits of the puzzle that were missing from the way I experienced it, but that actually it would make perfect sense to someone seeing it from a different perspective or like a birds eye view or something?

Alice: I just think why you followed her in the first place. I mean, I know you, so I know you don't go around making up stories like this, but that's the first problem with the whole thing. It's not credible because of the way the story starts. It seems like you are the one setting things in motion. Without seemingly any motivation, sure, but it makes me think more about your mental state than about shapeshifting women or disappearing splashes of water. You know like when someone comes forward with some amazing UFO story or something it's always in the middle of nowhere and you are wondering, even before they start talking about it, what they were doing there in the first place. But you like the story, and they even seem quite sane and level-headed when they are telling it so you give them the benefit of the doubt and you kind of believe what they are saying, because why not, and then someone digs a bit deeper and finds out that their father died in a plane crash in the Mojave somewhere and you're like, lightbulb, that's why they were alone in the middle of the night in the Mojave desert and everything kind of adds up and you realise that you didn't ask yourself that important question right at the beginning because... well I don't know why. I guess,

we just want to believe things. I don't know. But that's where my head is right now, I'm like, what was my first thought when you started telling the story. What question did I leave out to let myself get taken along? Stories are like that, they just drag you along. They work. That's the real mystery I think. Someone says this happened, and then this happened, and we are like oh! ok, something happened and something else happened but that's only the tip of the whole story that is happening inside us, and actually, the better we get at saying as little about what it is we want to tell while still telling that thing, the more we have mastered the technique.

Bob: Technique?

Alice: Of telling a story. That's the thing. You're a good storyteller. That's my conclusion. You like telling stories and mystery stories are good because they generally have lots of missing bits that can be inferred by the listener.

Bob: But that's the whole point, that's why it's a mystery, because it's like a story that I am not able to fully narrate. I'm not in control of this story. The world just happened to me and all you can think about is my technique?

Alice: No but I think your mind just works like that, in a narrative kind of way. It starts with the whole spy thing. I'm not saying you didn't see what you saw, but I think you were already telling a story while you were living it, so the story was already mysterious from the beginning.

Bob: Ok. but it's not like I have some predisposition for this kind of... whatever it is.

Alice: I know I said the UFO thing. I was just thinking through stuff. I didn't mean anything like like you're a tin hatter or anything. It's more like maybe it's just the same thing we all have of looking for some kind of truth and we have to concentrate to catch a glimpse of it, and the harder we stare at it, the more it seems to just suddenly change color or disappear in front of us and the more we try to hold on to it the more it's like that little piece of egg shell in the white on the pan that you just can't pin down, you know. So, mysteries are like the search for truths that we haven't defined yet. Something like that.

Bob: Wow. Ok. A whole analysis.

Alice: Sorry, I can't help it.



Truths are to the mind what vitamins are to the body. Maybe good for some things,
if they work.



You built your empire on the knowledge of the difference between needing and wanting. You know that desires can be transformed into gold. Streets are not named after people who take what they need and are happy with what they have. It is not the way of the world.

You are interested in the result of the process as pure result. Things and people should be there for their own sake. You are at the apex... at the apex of something. Truthfully, you are not sure of what. It just feels good to be there, defining the criteria of your success and then succeeding. As these words are being written you are already on to bigger and better things.

Your contemporaries have nothing but praise for you. They often tell you that you should have someone paint your portrait, but you don't feel comfortable with that. Why is that you wonder? You are a great man after all, and great men are immortalised in paintings, aren't they? But paintings are like reminders of the past and if there is one thing you don't want it's to be reminded of the past. The past belongs to everything that hasn't been solved and the present is a grimey amalgamation of all that misery. People go on about being present. To you, the present seems hopelessly archaic.

A recurring nightmare of yours is being strung up by three hooks, suspended midair. In the logic of the dream it is apparent that the hooks are symbolic representations of past, present and future. You want to unleash yourself from the hooks but your life is fading and you only have enough energy to remove one of them. You have to choose which hook to get rid of. It's an impossible decision. With great pain and effort you manage to unhinge yourself from one of the hooks which causes the tension that is unleashed to sling your listless body in the opposite direction with a force that steals your last breath and leaves you dangling by the two remaining tenses, dead and on display, then awake.



Interview with a lady who used to work at the Sunlight soap factory, Christ Church,
Port Sunlight, 14th August 2018

AD

What do you want to know about the village?

JG

I would like to know how it has changed.

AD

The village hasn't changed. The only difference is where the garden centre is, that was an open air swimming pool that was open from nine o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night. The water was always warm although there was no heating and when it was demolished, we found out that the warm water came from the glycerine plant in the factory. The warm water came through the pipes to the swimming pool. So that's gone. And the heritage centre once was the girls club. They did all activities; sewing and dancing and all that type of thing. That's all gone. And we did had McFisheries. That was famous for fish, but they sold other things, so that's gone as well. And the post office is now a tea room. So that's gone.

JG

Didn't Port Sunlight used to be only for the workers of the factory? That's not how it is today is it?

AD

It was different when we moved. If you worked at Lever's you put your name down because you were entitled to a house with the job. We waited a long time and we were in a small room as it were. Then a gentleman came to the door and he said I've come to have a look around. So he had a look around where we lived and said, I think you would be suitable, but he didn't know. I said "We haven't got a bank account. Does that matter?". He said, "Well, I'll let you know." The rules were, if you haven't a bank account you can't have a house. About a month later he came back and he said I think you are suitable and it doesn't matter about a bank account. He said, you'll be alright because Lever Bros took the rent money out of the wages before you got your money, so they got that rent money, so that was that.

JG

Where did you work?

AD

I worked in the offices in West Wing. It was all office work and there were very very strict rules. And on the sides were offices and the secretary in the inner office where the big managers were. They never came out. The ladies would go in and light a fire and they would take food in, but the only time you went in there was if they wanted to finish you up. They didn't have to give any reason. Just go to the time office, get your things and just go. You knew that if a girl went in and when she came out, you would know that she hadn't got a job any more.

There was a strict dress code. We had to wear dresses and skirts. No trousers were allowed. And we had little hats and gloves. And we kept up that standard. They wanted to keep a certain standard because Lord Leverhulme (LL) was well thought of so he needed that staff to work hard but also to look after themselves and be nice in appearance. My husband worked there and my grandmother was the first person LL employed in 1888. After she retired she brought us up because we lost our parents when we were little children, four girls. And she brought us up and she was Victorian and very very severe. We really couldn't do anything. She was very, you know... That's how we were brought up but when she retired Lord Leverhulme sent a chauffeur driven car to the house for her, took her up to Thornton Manor, and servants would serve her a meal and she would come back with an envelope with money from LL. So, that was that. And when she passed away LL sent us a check for money. We were left on our own and had nobody so he sent us this money to keep us going. She was very well thought of because she started with LL when she was 14. And she helped him to get the factory up and running. And once that was up and running he decided to build houses for his workers. Because if they had good houses to live in, good conditions, they were better. They were fitter and they were able to work better.

JG

He gave his workers houses?

AD

Your job was tied to your house. If you were given notice to finish work, it could be anything that we would think minor, like being late on several occasions. They didn't want you, because you weren't there so somebody else had to do your job. So they got rid of you and put somebody else. But people tended to be better behaved and more punctual, because they had families and there was nowhere for them to go. Once they'd left these houses there were slum dwellings and that was all. So they were tied to the houses.

Men were treated very well. They had their own dentist. They had their own fire service. They had everything within the village so if you worked with somebody, you went to these, you know, a reading group or a dramatic [sic] group. You were with those same people so it was more or less like a closed society. You didn't need to go anywhere because everything was here.

JG

So the fate of your family was tied to your job in a way. Were people never upset or have complaints about that arrangement?

AD

LL used to take them over to the great exhibition in Paris, the whole workforce, he took them there. At his home in Thornton Manor he had parties for the children. They had a Sunday school for the children with a thousand children and 26 teachers and it was very much involved and every child's birthday, Lady Lever would go to the house with a book from her for the children. They had all sorts going on at the Manor. As the children went in they were given a book of tickets and they could go on the lake and there was a bag of food for them. They were very very well looked after, so they didn't need to really... there was nothing for them to be bad. There was a theatre and a library. There was no bank. That came later on.

A lot of the people were brought out of these slum dwellings where five or six children and parents could be living and sleeping in this one dirty room. Water right down the end, carried back in buckets. No baths, no showers or anything. My granddaughter can't believe that we were only allowed one bath a week. "One bath?! Can't believe that." She's having two showers a day! [laughs] You know, so, no, but we were very well

looked after.

JG

And what about this place? You must have come here since you were very young. Did everyone gather here or were there other social places as well?

AD

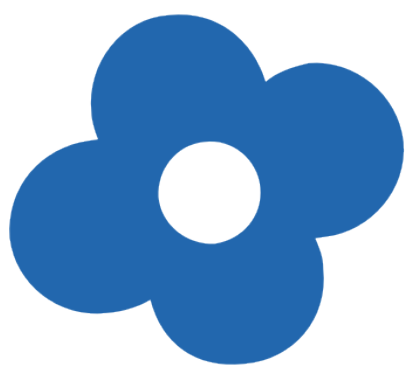
The church was the main thing because they were very caring and religious people. LL wanted this church for anybody to worship from any part of the world whatever their religion, they could come here. And we have weddings now. They've come from the Caribbean. We've had a Chinese wedding with a mandarin with the ring on the... The Caribbean with a gospel choir and a preacher. We've had that. This was a gift to the people of the village. And the people from the factory made this church. The people made it. They built this church. It cost £28,000 in 1904. There's a chapel on the right hand side dedicated to the last Lever. That cost £65,000 and the whole church cost 28. The roof is Canadian Pine. The tiles are Italian Marble. And the pews are old English Oak. And the designs were done by the deaf school of Liverpool. The pews are different from anywhere that's known because if you had a big family you would go in that one. If you had a small family you would go there. And if you were on your own you would stand there. Because he wanted families to stand together. And the organ is a very famous organ called a Willis organ. There's only I think five left in the world. It's old English Oak. The keys on the stops are pure ivory and the pipes are zinc, they're scratched, they call that scratched. And that's the organ. There is one in the Albert Hall in London. There's one in Liverpool, St. Georges Hall. There's this one and two more, and that's all. It was refurbished three years ago. It was £26,000, so we have to take care of it. But the church has never had any work done on it since 1902.



...bulges out like it has too much stuff in it, too much memory. in reality it's the lithium that is having a nervous breakdown. keyring cover glued with a different top bit. Twinkling stars. sweat from the top of hands dripping in between the keyboard's silent buttons. there is nothing like a bit of salty water to put your shift key out of action. on/off. own will. soft nematics allout and uncontrolled. dripping words that never showed themselves on the shattered screen, cuddled little droopers, closed on one side, notched and open on the other. roll over now you muffled little sign. make yourself known for what you are and stop pretending. a cross section would reveal the layers of the brick unfolding and screaming like an always-on flashlight, headlight caught, searchlight, starlight, pocket, mine.

You switch screens. Somehow you manage to text someone, nimbly shifting back and forth between horizontal and vertical mode to uncover letters lost in spiderwebs of light and glass. The gestures are fitting to some far more advanced technology. catching evolution red handed stealing your old candies. Bodies transformed and launched, unmended, never completed sweet teeth. For all you know you are describing this situation to a four-dimensional being.

You are overwhelmed by a love of cosmic dimensions for your old organs as they are replaced by better mechanical ones and your interior slips out like a billion bathwater babies.



At the foot of the waterfall mural they had decided to plant fragrant bushes. Alpine Speedwell, Red Valerian and Laurustinus Viburnum. A gardener had proposed that they would lift the spirits of the inhabitants. An expert had been consulted and who could argue against the benefits of fragrant shrubs? The gardener would not be held accountable for future increase of crime in the area, but neither would the council. Future sociological analysis would not factor in the smell of flowers and anyone who would propose to do so might never be able to publish again, at least not in the academic journals. The gardener would also not be celebrated. The decision makers might have been aware, like the petals on the flowering bushes, collection of yous, unconscious of, but silently aware, by force of the twig, the branch, the stem, the root, that something beautiful was taking place.

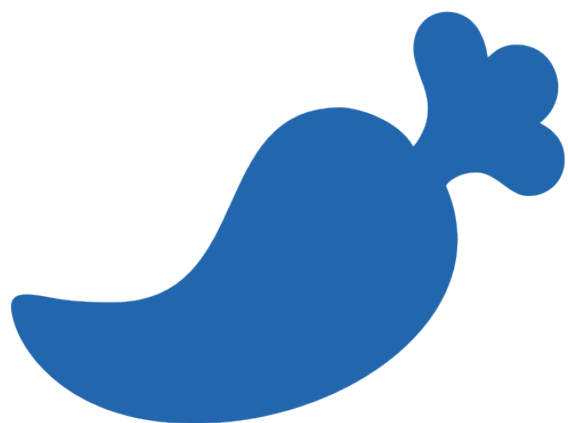
Crime rates dropped to the lowest anywhere in the city. No one disliked the waterfall. It brought clean mountain water to the shrubs. No one disliked the new olfactory environment at the base of the tower blocks. Who can honestly say they know why this happened?

Each bush has its own particular scent that it shares with all the members of its family. Highly developed modes of communication. Languages that have built up over millions of years. Languages that from this place where I'm standing look to have nearly died out. Sole survivors of a tongue. Weathered old colourations of interior spaces. Superimposed brute stuff, altogether, lumps, layers, spacious and empty like burlap bags showing off empty bulk in slow motion. It's remarkable how much of an effort it takes to describe a smell without detours through taste.

Navigate by smell and your behaviour becomes suspicious, conspiratorial to be exact. Your movements are directed, giving the illusion of intention, before they curl back on themselves, spiral-like. Moving forward becomes an elastic activity that sometimes snaps and jets out in unexpected directions.



Spoonfed.



A collection of carrot seeds. Half centimeter ovals with two dozen or more soft tentacles, legs perhaps, protruding from the sides and the top of each specimen. The distribution of the tentacles, somewhat regular, although missing in some areas and lumped together in others. The seeds vary in size but are roughly half a centimeter long, and a bit narrower, as indicated by the legend in the lower left corner. They are seen on a black background with the core of each in hues of brown and beige, the tentacles white, like bursts of starlight against the darkness of a night sky. There are thirteen seeds in total. Three of them are, unlike the rest, lumped together one on top of the other as if copulating or attracted by some invisible force. They are centipedes, scurrying around on a black surface, attracted to each other and then repelled. They flock together and are clearly recognized as the same, although at this moment each one is different from the other. Scientific rigor and exactitude has a tendency to reveal more than it intends.

You lay flat on your back to observe the stars. You stall activity to experience movement, not attempting to resist the gravity of existence by aligning vertically with reason. Although maybe it is by means of reason that you trick yourself into moving from one observant state to another. The unconnected points of light on the dark screen of the night sky connect in you like rampant pixels. The pixels on your phone show you an old note from a lecture by Mark Fisher entitled ‘California Über Alles (From Psychedelia to Smartphones)’; “The stars are raining down on me. The sky has exploded. I know this is not true. But it is the truth”.

Fisher was reading an account of an LSD trip undertaken in the desert at Zabriskie Point. The words belong to Michel Foucault. You have been to Zabriskie Point twice before Mark Fisher told this story. The first time, when you were fourteen, you stepped out of an air conditioned van into a scorching wind hitting you at 51 degrees Celsius. The second time, some years later, was in Antonioni’s film Zabriskie Point from 1970. Both times were intense and otherworldly.



Drop me off here please, you say to the driver of the boat. But we are in the middle of the ocean, says the driver. Yes, that suits me fine, you say. You must be crazy, says the driver. If you really want to get off then let me at least take you to that rock over there. There is a rock protruding from the surface of the sea. Ok, you say. The driver drops you off and speeds away. You sit on the rock for a while. You take your phone out of your pocket and return it to the sea. Some fish nibble at the foreign object which quickly sinks.

A structure that bends eternally without water to the knife or starlight to fire.

The ocean is within you. Bring it out. Take in the sight of pearlescent skin and shiny hair. Your pores are open, making visible the wet from within. This wet from within holds a different kind of attraction than the attraction you have to waterfall-misted skin.

Wet from without is a completely different thing. It is the one you know from advertisements. The one on the outside of the smooth surface of a glass bottle or can of coke. This contracted wetness is like a complete surrender to your environment and the will of others while letting you maintain the only kind of dignity that can be had under the circumstances; the cool facade, the unreachable interior. The ungenerous coolness of not giving a f---, not changing your mind, not budging on our convictions, being relentless, and always making sure that no matter what you say you can always somehow be thought of as being right or having had foresight. It's a skill with predictable outcomes tending always to shrink, deflate or suddenly implode on those who practice it. Unlike the wet from within, the *É-apzu*, where all knowledge is held and released to those who worship it.

Who knows what actually happens when you open your pores, like in a wild dance, wet from within? The difference between the wet from within and the wet from without is a line that separates generosity from carelessness. Your ability to be generous is monitored and controlled in the wet from without. It is funneled into apathetic signals that imitate the language of care. Actual care is unpredictable and difficult to direct. This might be why sweaty activities tend to be carefully choreographed, limiting the amount of affection and attraction that happens in a space. The knowing of others is curbed by the strictness of the game.







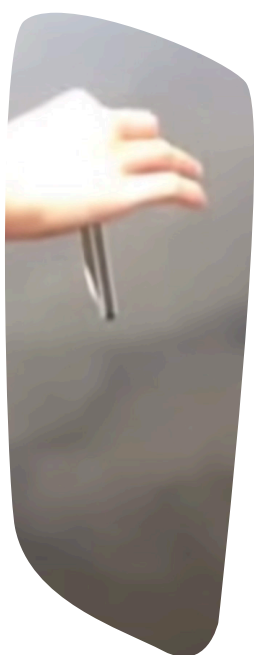
























The colonies of Western honey bees had to be cared for by humans, or they would collapse. The reason for this was that some time in the second half of the 20th century a tiny mite called the Varroa mite (*V. destructor*) managed to jump from the Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) to the Western honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). The Asian honey bee – a more productive forager than the Western honey bee – had evolved with the Varroa mite and was able to fight it off like a cold. The Western bee was not geared for this fight.

As for how the Varroa mite jumped from the Asian to the Western honey bee, nobody really knows. Different theories exist across beekeeping communities. The European Food Safety Authority suggested that *V. destructor* might have jumped hosts when the Western honey bee was transported from Europe to eastern Russia some time in the first half of the 20th Century. Their account is credible but doesn't match the timeline of most other hypotheses. Some articles from the time make reference to colonies being contaminated in the Philippines in the 1960s.

There are also juicier stories about a man who brought some bees back from China as late as the 1970s to improve the productivity of his hives. This persona non grata in the beekeeping world spun vast amounts of honey from his Asian honey bees while his competitors' hives slowly collapsed.

Because of this man the Western honey bee would have become extinct some time in the first decades of the 21st century if humans hadn't learned to intervene on their behalf to stave off the Varroa mite. Varroa infestations could be managed with the use of oxalic acid, but there was no hive without varroosis (the condition caused by the mite), and no way to go back. Yearly hive treatment was the only defense against the Varroa mite. The infamous importer took his honey earnings and went underground, making sure to hide his identity for the rest of his life.

The Varroa mite would enter the system already at the bee's larval stage and lay its eggs. One male and several females then hatch. The offspring mate in the brood cell of the bee and live on the body of the honey bee, causing impaired orientation, weight loss and wing deformations.

Suffering in insects was not measured but there was concern about their productivity,

which was significantly reduced under the influence of *V. destructor*. With the introduction of the Varroa mite, the Western honey bee gained not one, but two symbiotic partners, one parasitic; Varroa, and one mutualistic; Human.

V. destructor was a migratory creature transporting itself around like an unwelcome hitchhiker, from one colony to the next. The densely populated colonies of commercial beekeeping ventures were the perfect breeding ground for *V. destructor* who had a special affinity with the honey bee. The lumpy segments of the bee's body were like gentle meadows, soft pillows, to the Varroa mite.

Human interest in bees was not the same as *V. destructor*'s but you could say they were involuntarily aligned. Humans would keep the bees alive for their interest in honey, thereby sustaining the livelihood of *V. destructor*. Whereas, at least from the perspective of today, *V. destructor* would generously keep the Western honey bee from overrunning humans who had a kind of temporary and mutually beneficial alliance with the mite. But it was not their way to share. They wanted the bees to themselves, so Varroa had to go.



The solution to the problem was to mix genetic material of *A. Mellifera* with that of *A. Cerana* to get the perfect combination of large colony size, Varroa resistance and productivity. It created a stronger species. No longer reliant on human intervention, *Apis Mellirana* inhabited rewilded European woodlands, where their population started growing without direct human intervention.

The expansion of woodlands further perpetuated their growth and made other endangered ecosystems flourish and grow at incredible rates. Populations of Tawny Miners, Leafcutters, Wool Carders and Hairy Footed Flower Bees grew exponentially along with many other populations of solitary bees. Most were taken off endangered species lists. Woodland rides and city streets alike flowed with every kind of exotic honey, from translucent early harvests of Borage over crystalised orange semi-solids to thick, dark, gloopy pine. So much honey, completely out of control.

Nobody complained about the evolution and contribution to the bounty of the natural world. Environmentally conscious minimal interventions of the early 21st century were circulated as memes mocking humanity for its special kind of jerkwater metropolitanism. Nature was seen as something delicate and fragile that could be encouraged into existence by equally delicate measures. Today, you might even long for the days of grass-clad towers with tiny insect hotels gingerly snuggled on top.

The popular imagination of Nature as something life-affirming yet fragile was a collective pissing-in-pants-to-keep-warm, but at least it was comforting, all the way from the reserve to the plot to the guerilla garden. What was true then and holds true today is that Nature is beautiful for those that have the resources to invent it, grace it with their conceptual GMO. For everyone else Nature is a knot in the stomach, a cascade of sleepless nights in frostbitten syzygy greys, all tangles and pins and needles.



Silky suds. Bubbles that lift away the signs of time. You are determined to not let them wash away the part of the story that it is you want to tell, but every day when you wake up you feel so clean, so reasonable. Even your dreams don't disturb you. You have taught yourself how to make them part of the overall narrative so that they don't conflict in any significant way with the decisions you need to make that day. Leaving your body and projecting yourself into some kind of cosmic bend of uncertainty is not practical. It's not advisable. What is advisable is to know what you want. Knowing and wanting. Wanting a poodle for example is more acceptable than trying to understand the root of your desires.

You want to forget the past. The past is murky, crinkled. The past knows you better than you know yourself. It holds a power over you that you are uncomfortable with. You have never been haunted by the future and so you look to it for comfort by making decisions faster than you can think about the last one you made. Your past is nothing more than a story you tell yourself and others to justify the rapid succession of actions that will lead you to the next awesome unboxing of events.

You are aware of this but it has become such a part of the way things are done in general that you no longer see it as a decision you make. It is part of the fabric of reality. To resist time you must speed it up. And you must speed it up a lot. If you speed time up a little bit it's not good. If you speed time up a little bit things seem to be moving all around you. It creates a sense of instability, you become dizzy. When you speed time up a lot, things don't move fast around you anymore. They take on a new shape. Or more precisely, things become longer and more undefined at their edges. Things become larger and more like great planes of meaning rather than many discreet confusing bits of information. The difference between objects, your possessions, and your ideas become less noticeable and a new clarity is reached.

Speeding up time is similar to what you might experience during meditation. Both produce a kind of clarity that can't be achieved by knowing many things. If you know three things that guide your decision making, you are more likely to be able to plan a coherent succession of actions than if you know fifty or a hundred discreet things that produce a furrowed, lumpy, dirty and smelly landscape. Smell is one of the first characteristics of things that disappears when you speed up. Extinction arrives one little improvement at a time, one sweet revelation at a time.



The New Frock by William Powell Frith



Efficiency is religion to you. The woosh of it. The zing. The tssssk. It's addictive. All the little details falling into place, in perfect time. We should thank your parents for scolding you when you missed the potty. The economy has relied on it for a century. It's hard to miss the fact that your business was in soap. It's too perfect to be ironic. The cult of clean is born of distress and a deathly desire to eradicate difference, avoid syncopation at all costs. Maybe you are partly aware of this, but you are also aware – and this is a fact that is much more present in your mind – that the steady rhythm that you seek is said to be that of the heart. It is the one that keeps things going, you would say. It is the kind of rhythm that you can rely on. Unchanging, unflinching. It is there for you in your darkest moments. What you are slowly coming to realize is that your darkest moments are becoming darker, and more frequent. The unexpected twists and turns of life have left you. Nothing, not even ordering your architect to remove the roof on your house over your bedroom and exposing yourself to the shifting temperament and jaw clenching bitterness of an English winter, can cure this malaise. You have reduced yourself to a sheepshanked metronomic mess. And now you notice that your heart – the one you thought you were following – is starting to bend with your contractions.



Interview with a retired scientist, Christ Church, Port Sunlight, 14th August 2018

JG

Could you tell me something about the challenges that you faced in your work?
I'm particularly interested in the efficiency of cleaning products and how they have changed.

EK

The goal of all the detergent manufacturers is to make it more efficient and get rid of oils, but then there are many different kinds of oils and stains. So, you have tomato puree, bicycle grease and red wine and lipsticks. There are so many things. If it was purely just olive oil it would be very simple. But, in different countries you have different habits or attitudes or economies. Some people can afford a lot and some people in poorer countries can't afford, so you have to make things that suit the application, area and the people. But basically if you are talking about removing oil, so olive oil, bicycle grease and things, you could do dry cleaning, and dry cleaning is just using hydrocarbons that dissolve the oil in the clothes. But the basic cleaning you buy; washing clothes, with a washing machine, in water. The problem there is that oil and water don't mix, so we use molecules, we call them surfactants, or surface active agents. They have a tail which is hydrocarbon and a head group which is hydrophilic, meaning it lacks water. It could be sugar, it could be carboxylic acid or sulphuric acid and things. So when the surfactant goes in water, the oily bits don't like water. They want to escape from water. So, thousands or hundreds of these things form like a sphere, so outside the head group is the water lacking. The oil lacking is buried inside. So they trap the oil inside the, what we call a micelle, this sphere thing. So, the oil goes inside, and still the whole thing is water compatible, because the outside is, so it just goes away and that's how we clean. So to make them more efficient we say how long is this tail. If it is say 6 it's not very good. It starts from 10 to 14 hydrocarbons, octane, decane, and that kind of... So over the years we've optimised this to see how long it is. You could have two tails in one head and this is how we make them more efficient. The head group could be sugar or other things that lack water; ionic groups. And that's the whole... And then to remove other stains, they add other things to remove, say lipstick. If you have a liquid oil like olive oil it's easy to remove, but if you have something which is solid it is very difficult because you have to melt it a little bit. And that's very difficult because you have to lift it from the clothes. So if you wash at

lower temperatures it is very hard to remove hard fatty things. So, the whole industry is trying to, because of environmental conditions, we want to use less water and less heat energy. So we also have enzymes that help degrade protein stains and blood. That's why they add enzymes. We also have bleaches which break down these big bits that surfactants can't clean. So beside the surface active agents, there are enzymes and bleaches and other things and all of it is about how do you put this in the same package. And then you have different formats, like liquids or solids or powders. They all have advantages and disadvantages. Liquid detergent is very easy since it's already dissolved. If you have solid powder, it needs some time to dissolve. These are all different and then besides this, they add some preservatives and perfumes to smell nice and things.

JG

Could you say something about the relevance of liquid crystalline states in your work?

EK

Surfactants form liquid crystalline forms. Again, it depends on the size of the tail and the amount of water they can form besides the spherical micelle. They make bilayers, two of them. They make different crystalline states.

JG

Is that essential?

EK

Not for cleaning. Those are for other things, like conditioning or that kind of thing. Depending on the concentration in the head group, they can form... There are six different forms that are different. So all these things are explored. But again, the research is all about low temperature cleaning and less water. And that's a challenge, because if you use less water then sometimes the soil is more than the liquid you use.

JG

What about conditioning or things that make things smooth? Did you work with that?

In conditioning the head group is cationic so it sits on it and then the tails make it

nice and conditioned. Sometimes we use silicones. So usually, you clean this surface or this surface, or this one or here [points around in the room and finally touches the top of the pew in front of him], all of these surfaces have a negative charge, so the conditioner is a cationic surfactant we call them, so you have hydrophobic or oil lacking tail, the same as in cleaning but the head group instead of neutral or anionic they are cationic. So if this surface or this one or this one or this one, they are anionic, so the cationic sits on the anionic surface, so you have a nice layer of the tails, hydrocarbons, just dangling there, so all of course is nice and smooth. They also have silicones which are very nice and conditioning.

But the main challenge now is environmental. The biggest problem is the environment. How to do cleaning. Unilever for example, we do lifecycle analysis. For example when the tail comes from the petrochemical industry or from natural sources and who does it. How much energy and what is used to make that in the hydrocarbon refinery or whatever. And the transport of that to our factory or other chemical companies to make it and then send it to us. And then how much water and energy we use to make our detergent things, and then how much transport for going to the supermarket. And then what happens when you take it home and use it, how much water and energy you use at home. So these are all calculated in the lifecycle analysis. So the challenge is to make something that's got the least carbon footprint. The least water and the least energy. That's the biggest challenge. Of course, for water there is going to be shortage everywhere. And a lot of countries like India and developing countries are using more and more water. The biggest problem we have is the United States. In the United States, women especially, use too much water. When they have showers they go half an hour in the shower. Some people put the shower on and just sing and then... So, too much water. Usually in 5-6 minutes you should be able to finish your shower.

In our case 86% of the water waste is from consumers. Especially in the US they use too much water. It's very difficult to change habits. Especially the younger generations. Especially girls. So in terms of the industry itself, they have concentrated everything, the energy and everything, in factories all optimised, so the biggest problem is the consumer. How to get the consumer to change their habits. So the main challenge is not about cleaning. It's all about environmental water usage. The challenge is how to persuade people to... It's like smoking, people just smoke and they don't care, they

just smoke and they go shower and they have a habit.

JG

So how did you work with peoples habits?

EZ

People blame the manufacturer. But the manufacturers have done everything they could in terms of making very concentrated products in smaller bottles, or... but there are other areas for example there are consumer science studies where they try to produce some sort of intimate activities, or other activities, to talk to people and persuade them to change their habits. But it's very difficult. Very difficult.



Oranges are peeled with sodium hydroxide and
all the little wet creatures are still bringing their business around on embossed tin
trays with their bare hands.
no one has an idea
what it relies on, that bridge that jetties out of ceremonial fluff and spirals in
reaching your soul, you know
sweeping your soul
calming your soul
smoothing your soul
being your dearest friend in your darkest moment
destroying your soul
the rushing vertigo of birds eye bullshit
(Do you also think your soul is smooth?)
that ragged land connector
that smectic relocater
destroyer of towns seen from above
knock down that reckless place
level it
to the ground
that place that makes molecular scientists obsess over the amount of time young
women spend in the shower
research has shown that you will be rebuilt
by those who know the world
because they feel it on their skin
your hypothesis will betray you
drive you crazy
you will return



When you were eight you found a worm on the sidewalk. It was February and still very cold. The worm was frozen. You picked it up and held its stiff little endless body in your soft hand. You noticed that where it met your hand its surface would soften and become squidgy again. You cupped your hands and blew into them with the warmest breath you could muster. Slowly, you blew on the little body, again and again – a kind of exterior resuscitation. You were surprised when just before reaching the gates to your house you felt a tiny movement in your hand. You opened up and saw that the thing was alive. Really alive. You also remember burning ants and incinerating spider legs with a magnifying glass later that year.

As the light reddens on all your great beginnings you have to distill more and more of that greatness for it to fill you. The distilling intensifies it, but also whittles it away, making everything smaller and smaller as you expand. Try to love the empire of your confusion.



Sun exposure lowers blood pressure.
Sun exposure improves bone health.
Sun exposure improves brain function.
Sun exposure eases mild depression.
Sun exposure improves sleep quality.
Sun exposure lessens Alzheimer's symptoms.
Sun exposure heals some skin disorders.
Sun exposure boosts growth in children.
Sun exposure enhances the immune system.
Sun exposure reduces the risk of certain cancers.

Sun exposure gives you wrinkles.
Sun exposure accelerates aging.
Sun exposure causes cancer.
Sun exposure damages your eyes.
Sun exposure makes you blind.
Sun exposure burns your skin and leaves scars.
Sun exposure causes heat stroke.
Sun exposure causes dehydration.
Sun exposure causes immediate redness.
Sun exposure makes you break out in hives.
Sun exposure makes your skin peel and flake.

In the evening when the sun is low it is not as dangerous. You should still not stare at it for too long. It will damage your eyes. But you can face it, look to the West and you will see what it has brought. You will see everything it has illuminated, made clear, in golden hues of restless true. Don't turn your back on the sun. It will guide you. Take advantage of its light. Let someone see you in it. You will be beautiful to them. Your convictions will resonate with the low frequency dull ambers you are cast in. You will feel their confidence in you reflected back and even your most batshit illusions will convene, form alliances and present you with surprisingly coherent analyses of your condition. Look around you and you will notice that every organism is taking it in, the light, conspiring on nameless propositions and making oblivious calculations that intersect on a plane beyond your perception. Cycads for example, are reaching denouement on a sixty million year plan to return to the UK. At least that's what you read in the news. Go now. Go join the fireflies!

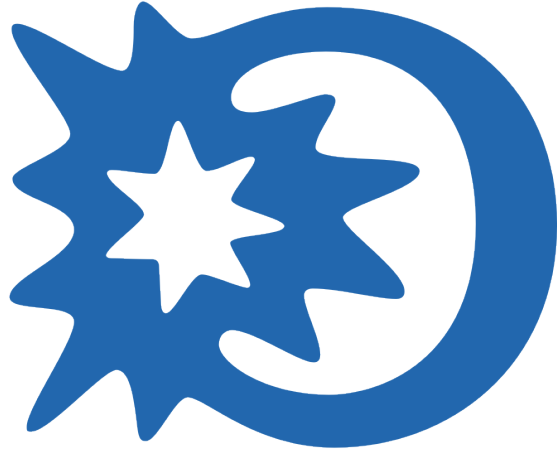


Bubbles by Sir John Everett Millais





Think of how it feels to sing along to a recording. The vibrations in the air adjust the notes in your throat. You gravitate towards that sound and it feels more and more solid like everything around you kind of firms up and you start to take on the material shape of your surroundings. Your surroundings become exponentially more dense. First the air is thick. It starts like waves, so you can imagine that you are in water, but then it becomes thicker and there is a sensation that starts in your lower back (which is surprising and strange because your throat is the origin of it all) then rises up and very quickly kind of straightens out your spine and locks you in to an oscillation that makes your body still while your mind dances and glides between every kind of possible vibration. In this way, while you seem to lose mobility you also extend your sensory apparatus beyond your visual field and you can know things that are beyond. You are a point on a colossal tuning fork, autonomy seems pointless.



You rediscovered something that had been lost in a pool of certainty. You can succumb to pools like these but there is also potential to emerge and feel the lightness of the air on your skin. That organ that feeds you light and makes you dark inside.





Soil salinity brought the first known civilization to its knees. The salt in the soil creates the perfect conditions for halophytic plants. Cleaning intensifies.

18 jars of pig fat – Balli.

4 jars of pig fat – Nimgir-ab-lah.

Fat dispensed (at ?) the city of Zabala.

Ab-kid-kid, the scribe.

4th year 10th month.

Professor Nicholas Postgate of Cambridge University suggests that the pig fat which this tablet keeps a record of was used in the production of soap. Other Sumerian texts from the same period show records of potash which is an alkaline derived from the ashes of certain plants or trees. The potash obtained from certain halophytic plants is superior in quality. As the salt in the soil increases to the detriment of agriculture and human sustenance, we get the perfect conditions for plants like *Haloxylon salicornicum* and *Salsola kali* (Saltwort) to emerge on arable land, replacing wheat, barley or other staples. Do preconditions and a propensity for cleaning intensify as civilizations draw nearer to their final moments? The work of biological translation is substituted with that of purification. It is a kind of resetting of the land. In hot climates, across sandy planes of uninhabitable landscapes, the fat of dead animals seeps into the ashes of scorched halophytic plants where it saponifies. The remains of what creatures once roamed the land are exhibited on top of hardened pools of soap. In more temperate climates and coastal areas arable land turns into salt marshes, hostile to human inhabitation, but excellent for wildlife like birds, small crabby creatures and again halophytic plants.



Half moon over Tottenham Retail
Not waxing, not waning
Crisp white on dusk blue
The park is covered in a blanket of murmurs and rumbling engines
People don't use their horns in car parks
They yell out the window instead
If it's really bad they say nothing and open the door
This is the most menacing thing you can do in a car park
He opens his car door
An entire starling murmuration drops out of the sky at that exact moment
All at once, as if a shot had been fired
A burly man emerging from the automatic doors of TK MAX recoils and screams as
the starlings pick up flight inches from the ground in front of him
His cry is deep at first, then breaks and trails off in a quivering falsetto that harmonises
with the choir of starlings as they lift back into the sky above Currys PC World for
their everyday feat of impossibly coordinated flight
The 'i' in the Lidl logo is knocked over
Sort of to the left, wedged between the 'L' and the 'd'
(It might have always been like that but who's to say this wasn't the moment when it
happened)
The dot over the 'i' however is intact
Tacit, full and in place
Mocking our only natural satellite
Not affected by the gravity that seems to govern the rest of the 'i'
In you