

The Fog Generator

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Welcome to my fog. Come into my fog.

Please – step right up.

I am a small machine that feasts on obfuscation.

I trade away the edges of things, sidling up to their contours. Or maybe I should say that I pickpocket contours, securing their perceptual fortress for an alternate purpose. I run away in a squid-ink tail of pungent, heady odours.

Generalizing the surface, making it float out of itself, hovering indiscriminately in the air that takes its light to the eyes, to the eyes and the everywhere eyes of surveillance gods. Rubbing surfaces with makeup, and magic marker, and a little eraser.

Disguising pheromones, camaraderie and all kinds of chemicals. I sniff them out, lacing through the air with my omega, infinity nostrils. (What if to produce a smell, a strong, inky smell that doodles through space, is really an act of smelling, an act of the most precise, razor-sharp anosmic wit that pierces the contexts of chemical worlds like a heady beading of necklaces?) And when there are none, when there are no pheromones, when the air is as dead of desire as the objects that punctuate its limits like a grammar, like a song of sad apartments

(a string of gyp-rock,
platelets,
plastic baskets saying no!

This is the end of this.)

Then I, I am the one who can say, who knows what it was?

It always could have been.

No, no - there is no such thing as a contour. There is no such thing as a will.

Lost at sea, in a you-loop filled with filter bubbles.

Small rituals. Overheating, shape-shifting. The fan blossoms with duty, whisking me away. Puffing out its chest with stewardship. But me, I don't listen to its motor. I have my own geometries for air. The fan's forward-breath doesn't fit my equations, knows nothing of my pain points and my seismic sighs.

There's a driller-head cartoon (transparent, just the outlines superimposed overtop of things), and it twists through neighbourhoods, unfurls shards of suburbs and swimming pools (only their outlines, like jellyfish frills), the anomalous ideals of the twentieth century running into bedrock. Equality, mashed into a new equalizer that is shards of particulate life, and the impersonation of shells by all things. This is something I can tell you about the twenty-first century. This is something that you don't see coming yet. And how could you? I've taken the contours. I've taken them all – extracted like shrapnel – and I've stacked them in a pit (where I can get them polished) and behind me, stretched out like a viral veil, a waft of derivatives and bland network pancakes and little mushroom clouds.

I drink up the spaces between things – oh! – luxuriating in the gaps between wires.

I am the backward pull of the wave, after a conservative win. I suck in the sea, snatching it by the scruff of its solar plexus. I pull everything into itself, away from its solid outlines. The teacup, the eel, the earring, the plinth – all in a hollowed-out in-breath. Shrinking in retrograde horror like a prosthetic limb of potential's been ripped off, and all the charge around the edges, the edges where the future lies, drains out, stiffens, turns its volume way, way down. Skeleton-forms, brittle and pale in a market lilt, destroyed and built, destroyed and built. But never with the right foothold, the right time, the right cards in the deck for a shape-shift.

I act like a bathrobe when the tide comes in, a mumble of prayers as your island undresses, unravelling contour for contour until there's nothing left for you to stand on, and you take to the sea, determined, dignified in your trauma, dignified down to each hollow hair on your back, and you bet with your life on the direction of dry soil in the distance.

Without the edges of things, you can't see. The edges of things – the limit-ridge between the things you see and how you see them, cut from a point of view like cloth. Without the shifting mesh of thresholds between your sight and non-sight, you can't act. You can't calibrate yourself, your headlights aren't working, and the lights have been left on at the office, where there's a canister full of edges, and edges, and edges, to feed my machine, and tease out a new dampened daytime.