

Meniscus  
Madeleine Stack

The thing was that, not for the first time, I was away from someone I wanted to be with. The difference this time was that my feeling was not always that I wanted to be with this person. Some days I wanted to be with them very much, and ached a little at their absence, whereas other days I barely thought of them at all. In between those days were days where I tried to interrogate my feelings to see which side they really lay on, but it functioned like a scale, and as soon as I sat down on one side and emptied the other of feeling my side plummeted to the ground, knocking me off violently.

The thing was that I wanted to be with the someone I was away from, because I wasn't with anyone, but could it be anyone I wanted to be with or were they the someone it had to be? The thing was that I wanted to be with them but I didn't want to be in the place where they were, and they were tethered to the place that I didn't want to be, and therefore our being together seemed untenable, in that place or in any other. The thing was that all this time we were writing each other letters.

And the letters they wrote me were more weight on the side of desire, because the images within were so strange and wild, and the letters I wrote them were still more weight on the side of desire, because they as audience compelled me to produce stranger and wilder images, in order that they would respond in kind. So the letters weighed heavy on the side of desire, but also on its opposite, because the letters would reach their conclusion when we were reunited, in fact were geared toward that very conclusion, at which time the weight of delayed desire could in all possibility have knocked us off the scale violently and sunk us to the bottom of the sea.

What follows is an attempt to exhaust a place that does not exist. There is a method to how you move through it. *I apologise in advance for the wedge-ness of this mail:*

*I want stupidly to slip the bounds of whatever I have tied myself with, a gesture I repeat: tying myself up and then eliding the knots like a party trick*

The available world is marked by desires for ends; for perimeters. For the enclosure of what is precious and the exclusion of all else. These excluded parts are on the other side of screens, filtered. On the feeds everyone shares the world with one another relentlessly multiplying the scene outside a window, full moon, apocalyptic red sun, first snow, lightning. Want it to reflect back and forth dizzying, surfaces that catch: catch light, catch bugs, meshes through which light and wind are filtered. Fogged glass wiped with a hand to see out. Straining at the limits of screens, pushing against mesh, craving further vision.

*it's hard to see something permanent punctuating something that from the outside looks like passing fluid on the surface,  
not totally sunk in, or like choppy waters trying to gain the quality of elastic*

With all that said I get you wanting to show me something, I want to show you something too, a doubled depth –

*three days since I received your letter from the sky*

The sensation of a nose dive, followed by a tipping back, I want the fissures of the missives. I want to lick the fissures of the missives and get their full-throated taste.

Some objects telling about time: A lapsed bell, elapsed. The churchbell created the surface which encased the town: the limit of the town was the point at which the hourly peal became inaudible. Bell hung above the newly buried to safeguard the still-living. Also arriving, on time: peat grows at a rate of one millimetre per year. It is burned at a state somewhere between earth and coal. Here is a lifetime of dirt in a brick. Burned for the currently living. Not on time: shoes left behind in the underworld, caught in

snare. The hero is pathologically curious, desirous of the unknown, wanting to tell the time to those who exist outside of it. On the way home from the infraworld it is common to catch one's shoes in escaping. In going from one state to another, passing forward and back. The heel is the last to exit the world of the dead. A city's body record, sealed in a vitrine: 'Children will come to peer at it through the glass as it oozes and sweats.'

*I also want some grain through the glass. for tiny cracks to appear in the vitrine and for the voice to sneak through*

What is it that lands on a surface and how that surface is protected or penetrated: for each action, an unknown reaction. Some things catch, some cling, some suck, some animals learn by osmosis. The surface that flips inwards, hand-touching-surface becomes surface inside, slippery, rubbing. *But back to voyeurs and brazenness and showing and being shown.* An image that unfolds in one way and then another, switching through temporal and spatial structures. What is superficial sings across skin. Iridescence is an effect of surface. Chlorine and artificial tears, gelatine, silicone, crickets, seawater, barnacles, bacteria, aquariums, pipes, mould, sand, nets, meshes. Surfaces that skim and clog, screened for content, screened from the world, screened from prying eyes. Vessels that decay from the inside out, inbuilt obsolescence. In the early mornings in Rio, Clarice drank cupped handfuls of seawater while wading by the shore. An internal baptism. Internalise what flotsam is caught in the tide. Lubricating the surface across which communication travels.

*I think you know I also like to mark time by bodies of water. or, maybe it's because I'm so visible on the surface...*

It is the act of someone who doesn't fear the future - who trusts that there will be a glut of beauty, and that some can be let to overflow and run down the drain. It allows a stretching of time that I find spacious.

*it is not to call to catch. but that your two moments might commingle in their difference*

Thinking about when someone tells you their fantasies and you borrow them. Thought about rubbing. Thought about a repertoire of rubbing, surfaces seeking. *The oscillations between yes and no do not have so much to do with actual pain and pleasure, as nietzsche would say, but more with thinking.* A breath in time, intime. Opened like a coral-cut, penetrating and infecting in one fell swoop, owning the interior. *I'm catching you like a virus, paying attention, getting inside by osmosis.* It's the impulse to make the environment and the time that you inhabit particularly itself. You make the space. And by making it you unmake the scenario that is forced upon you by the world. You own time.

*what else. in your poem you say hot death*

*(after it happened we found most of our friends on a street corner. it was so fun to see everyone that we started singing otra! otra! that was before we knew about the concept of aftershock.)*

I didn't respond, her call was misplaced. It is not that our loves are lived online, it is that this is where words catch. What I can't say to your face I transmit to the otherface of the screen, where you face it. They aren't the only missives, but they are the ones that stick in the screen, stick to the skin, cracked or otherwise, the surface is where marks are made, the skin of a thing is where effects show, the surface is imprinted by the encounter. To be embodied is to be penetrable. What is encased is what is made precious. Atop the dune the world tilts vertiginously, as though it could be folded by hand. Gravity slips wrong, lapses in this upside-down light. What reflects what. What image reflects time. When those two things move simultaneously, one is living in the world of what is possible.

*the premium of the last touch, last person, last kiss = what is that?*

*it's too much isn't it? but, maybe that's what we both want*