

## THE CO-ORDINATES OF DOUBT

Daniel Harris and Rupert Loydell

‘Most of us spend much of our time in spaces made and previously occupied by other people, usually people of the more or less distant past. We might reasonably expect our everyday surroundings to feel haunted but, by and large, they don’t. Haunting is still relatively unusual. We all live, as far as we know, in the present...’

– Patrick Keiller, ‘The Robinson Institute’

‘Can there really exist a word in such close proximity to our own, one that seethes with such strange life, one that was possibly here before our own city and yet we know absolutely nothing about it?’

– Michael Ajvaz, *The Other City*

## LAMENT

The early morning mist always softens the day and mood, makes me remember other places where the sun rose late or early, or the city was so hot we never got to sleep. Late night coffee on the hotel roof, walks under moonlight, that campsite in France where it always rained. I miss everything, know I will miss this when I am over it. I am very much looking forward to looking back.

## SIDETRACKED

Wince. Just me? It's all quaint recidivism. How the winter fog suffocates the genetically treated Big Olive Trees. How I love those healing creams, lubricants and cork cambiums. What track are you on? I'll meet you at the station, the one with petals and apparitions. How will I recognize you? Either, a) I'll be the one breaking the pentameter or b) I'll be the one whose ears are the size of a grown man's shoe. Excuse me, I just forgot the choices.

## GHOST LOOP

I am over it. I am very much looking forward to looking, I want to travel into the future, and make sure I am dead. Walk over my grave and make myself shiver at the hotel Pope Clement. Pure oil. Pure roof, walks under moonlight, campsite canvas. I'm a young man in France where it always rains. I am sneering behind this, miss everything, know I will smile.

The sun rose late in a world we did not see, the ghost was becoming. Our world lay splintered and beautiful, and we never got to sleep, I am paper and blankets. The roofs very much long to look at the sides of their house, or even the back. Mood always softens the day and etches softening textures into the glazing, makes me remember other places. When the mountain falls, where the hell is moonlight, that campsite in France by the Kunsthistorisches Museum? It always rained.

I look forward to missing everything, the sun bedazzling us as I know it will. I will miss this too when I am late, when the convex mirror is refracting time through the walls. Today the room was so hot that no-one got to sleep. Late night coffee is a distorting corset, mimicking the curve of the hotel roof in one's stomach.

It was never January 11, 1524. The early morning mist always softens the next day and my mood, makes me create instant sun. I remember other places where Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola rose, sneering behind his appalling smile. Damned to live out of time.

## PSALM

Tonight, prostrate in devotion, mangled fully-rotating head spinning and elbowed in the mortification of the flesh, I am Saint Bernard Mazzola-Iniquity, bastard nephew of Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola. I am draped in gold-leaf halo, aureola, mandorla and almond-shaped vesica piscis.

I am damned to live out of time and begin to peel off my face: first the epidermis, then the dermis, then the papillary region below to the hypodermis. This subcutaneous tissue is the real me. I am the intercessor.

I am damned to live out of time. Why can't my intercession be my final annihilation? Haven't I lost enough weight and deprived myself of temptation, even the temptation to deprive myself of temptation?

I am damned to live out of time in an orb of refracted light you hurl at the stone wall covered in clematis vines and pray to God to rid myself of God, who has rid himself of me. Me, Saint Bernard Mazzola-Iniquity, bastard nephew of Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola; me, puerility incarnate incapable of maturity and always about to stick out my tongue.

I am damned to live out of time. I am damned to live out of. I am damned to live. I am damned to. I am damned. I am. I.

## NEW SKIN

I slough off the past and climb into a new skin of time. Time travel was never about spaceships, electricity or complicated equations, was always about empathy, echo and susceptibility. And boy am I susceptible.

One trace of you in the street and I am gone to your future destination, one abandoned wrapper and I am back in the sweet shop as you purchase your morning snack. The smell of your body on my sheet and I am in a time loop for centuries, revisiting the moment we make love, made love, will make love; the moment after you have left me, softly saying goodbye.

Time snakes through the world, a helix spiral of confusion, desire, doubt and destiny. We must learn to read it, ride it, use it, create our own histories, our pasts and futures. Climb into our other selves. Now is the time. There is no time like the present.

## IN MEMORIAM

‘Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to remember what we had forgotten. All the memories and lifetimes foolishly discarded as we moved away or moved on. We must make penance and gather up what we have sown, seek and gather until we have harvested our past. Only then can we be free to bury it.’

The grave stayed empty, slowly filling with dead leaves over the years. The orator was never seen in the village again.

IMAGINARY LETTERS

A obsidian, E chartreuse, I vermillion, U burnt umber, O red cadmium medium hue: how we crave the pastiche, haunted by a deadly cabal. We shiver in raptures of penitence and send each other riddles.

We can't read handwriting. Too much alchemy and wavy cursive. Too many screen shots. That's why we never saw the orator again.

## EVEN THEN

Even then, false memory kicked in. I remembered things that never happened to me, swear I was there, implicated and injured, wounded and hurt, urgently involved.

In the silences I hear everything that has ever been said. In conversations and asides I hear inferences and assumptions, silent confessions and summaries.

Even now, false memory kicks in and I feel I already know you, you who I have only just met this moment, here upon the page.

In the unwritten pages I see everything, for 'every book is begun on a blank page at the end of another book',\* although I often prefer to simply overwrite or copy out my own interpretations of the future, my inventions of the past.

In the silence I hear everything. In the early morning mist there are wraiths and ghosts and curls of smoke and light that contain everything I have ever seen or ever will be. I feed on false memories, am complicit in creating hunger and desire.

Even now, I know I have already written this and am simply reading myself again. Who would have thought me so wise, so all knowing? Who will wrap me in silence in this blank room?

(\*Dror Burstein, *Netanya*)

## ABANDONDED CATHEDRAL

Twin spires stand trial again, outrageous as it may sound. Spires not spies, painted with blistered tongues. Didn't hear about the fainting eyes or yawning ears? It's all in the hands of a rickety conspiracy theorist worried about purity. There is only one spire and no one here has ever heard of Nietzsche.

Why are they being tried? Because solitude is unholy, besides there is only one. All this ruckus over a piece of architecture? That's why it's abandoned.

Is that a sigh or a hiccup? There's no diagnosis. There's only stalling.

## THE SMELL OF AUTUMN

Impossible to write about: too familiar and too unknown. Impossible to remember although we know it so well.

Each year the leaves finally fall from the oak and bury the lawn. Each year twigs and branches descend before we pile them up to burn.

Wood smoke. Wet grass. Grey light. Short evenings. Bonfires. Damp.

I shut my eyes and breathe in.