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This tiny devil it dances around and around, committing a ritual of regicide. A death to the kings and the queens and to authority. For we are in the grips of desire, in the grips of the senses and all that is around us will crumble to dust - unto what. Here at the end of the beginning, the end of the end of the world, a world that is not for us or within us but a guest of us. Graced with our presence.



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The fountain it flows.

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The devil dances around the fountain, skipping once, twice, and then once more. On each rotation he gives a bow to the hanging crescent moon that reflects in the deep pitch sky from the inner depths of the sparkling waters. As the third circumnavigation is complete the fountain's waters begin to flow in reverse and the sweetened liquid returns once more the the heart from whence it came. The devil stops and cocks his head, eyes to

the heavens, and breathes deep the last of the dew drenched air. A dampness that is the turning of night into night as the day spins on its heel and retreats, refused once again by his ritual. He turns and casts his gaze toward the house, tall and eerily pale against the darkened sky with a flickering fire in its eyes; its stare meets his as he stalks across the lawn toward sweeping steps. Behind him and to the left he leaves a collection of small figures, each whispering into the staff they will soon cast onto the fire that burns aloft and shelters them from newly darkened night. The stars begin to move imperceptibly across the sky, tiptoeing so that it will be hours before the reversal is realised. By then the group will have made this pyre their altar and brought their precious objects from the chilly recesses previously collected. The stone and the earth and the dust will come too, all part of the offering, made to the trailing tail of the horse that galloped through them that morning leaving a wake of the deepest foreboding.

You will construct your experiences through the half-shadows that dance across the backs of your eyelids. The visions of the previously-seen linger and haunt avid devotions on the altar of remembrance.

These are your references, they will guide you through.

Daintily, silently, dark feet slip up the steps. The door swings inwards, the large central knocker the shape of a snarl has lost its hinged tongue, its mouth now agape empty and mute. One half of a hinge, neither open nor closed. The door, like a valve, admits the small figure and his feet fall across the threshold in a series of movements that span a meeting of two bodies, different temperatures. His shadow is caught and stretched as if an insect beneath a glass and moved across a surface ushering the small body with it. The distortion of the moving flames briefly holds a shape, perhaps with hooves and many legs, but before it can settle the fire dances on with the silhouetted form and he is left alone. A muffled sound sweeps, swings shut behind him, stifling. The air

inside is still and difficult to discern, as though it might hang heavy with scent or incense that is colourless and odorless. A staccato energy permeates in anxious riddled hardcore violence that makes the air in this chambered vessel ripple in its heat. The opening and closing of thresholds dispersed between inner chambers, hallways and staircases, forms that bleed into one another each holding a different breath of air. Each with its own hot inhalation bulging and straining against the glands and sinews of the neck. A pressure like two fingers pressing perfectly into the triangular base of the throat, unyielding. A fullness that betrays the efforts of equilibrium. The devil looks about him and sniffs the air, tasting the weight of it, feeling its dust and must and accumulated sheddings. The house needs attention, he has neglected it too long. He, the guard of the trapdoors between parts must observe and tend both sides. He, the one with the foot between worlds, a gatekeeper with faculties sharpened like well endowed wit, a silver tongue that ends in inky point. He must maintain and tend the balance. Such a being though, brittle like charcoal or coal dust slicked in the oil that seeps up through low lying moments, whose attributes are as finite as any cannot possibly be held to account with this constancy. And so he loads his rituals and without expenditure of work, ceases to watch over the balanced scales of his charge. Instead weighing them with entropy and a building, pulsing desire.

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There is something ill at ease here, it cannot be looked at directly. Inside a drenching quiet coats every surface, lying over the slick of oiled dust. Roof of the mouth clagging, gagging fresco of solitude. The quiet plugs everything, washing it in the pink, raw, salted wound of the fleshy slab, of the fever dream itself soundless. The house listens, attuned to every noise, tracking scent across space, hunting, hungry. Feeling for movement and the place that can't be reached by anything but the deep foreboding building in the walls, filling them like the flesh that strains waistbands and soft fine denier weave of stocking encasings. Further than the unfolding of the



eyelids, held in the ringing of small hairs against the finest bells, a tuning fork in the distance is never ceasing, three tones each distinct, each a different stratum of far off television signal homing in.

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The turning of night into night is complete and the fountain flows backwards into itself, an endless swallowing. The carnality of remembered spaces administered by the listening of time and the listening of the house to itself, a stethoscope turned upon one's own heart plays a drumbeat that adds to the swift slick noise of pulsing, rushing blood. Between the palms of hands and in the crevices of sweat pooling just below the tear duct the mechanics are endlessly alert. Spaces tense with too long held breath, yearning for the maintenance of their caretaker to sooth and gently tend them. Airing the chambers, the ventricles and small capillaries, turning the air inside as one might turn bedding, freeing it from the rigid holding pattern of shoulders strung from earlobes and hackles cautious of their tread. Breathing is like listening, held a long time.

Even in the distance I heard your moving parts as they shifted.

The shedding peeling walls and sagging floorboards shift beneath each distributed load, as though greased pistons support the artful creak that wordlessly emits. A disturbance permeates as movement with no sound, a ripple panning through particulate matter without registering as decibels. Hanging above in the space of the signal, an effervescent slow moving gelatinous electromagnetism that is felt in the lower recesses of the flesh, every negative framed by the stuffed air as pillow stuffed into mouth. A stifled scream that rends and cleaves in two the space that holds between rafters and yet falls silently, inertly, impotent in the face of this limpen body. Already the duress of the movement of time is making itself felt, leaving bruises and casualties in its wake.

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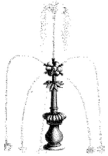
A darkness is descending as if swelling in the body, spreading like viscous ink through tissues and capillaries. A needle pricks the velvet skin and the channels flood with dye making visible a network of mapped flows, like deep fissures in a mud flat dry and cracked interlacing with the veins on the back wall of the eye. Blood blooms from the small puncture wound and swaddles. A darkened mark in beaten purple, tenderised, softened, as though made alluring in a false swathe of ruffled surface pressed against skin that might be the backs of the thighs. Pale, blueish gooseflesh bristling as fabric embeds itself, eating dents into haptic skin surface like shadowed patterning on dimpled liquid. A moulding, a melding, of liquid pelt to liquid pelt. The sinews of this eviscerated body stand taught and hardened against the soft lenient qualities of itself, furnished curves and bustrades, strict knotting matching knotted cartilage contained. Congealed and honey like, hanging in strings of viscous substance, walls leaking with a porousness they cannot attain but inhabit anyway. Pulsing under anointing touch like the throb within folds of the furthest inside. The haunting of space between palms in ever present lingering of skin below sinew and damp flesh, of the space between finger and thumb, cells that never touch held at a distance imagined and felt, a phantom. Reverberating, a turning over motor with its articulations driving a charge that is both simultaneity and constant presence, a more than attendance thrills through the ever tightening polarised space. It is becoming difficult to move.

There is  
 an image that hangs above the  
 sweeping stairs as though privileged over  
 all others, the stately portrait of a protagonist.  
 Gilt in gold and carved casting of heavy wealth  
 concealed with the alchemy of past mistakes and harsh  
 white heat.  
 The child of love and of war, a violent burdening -  
 tangible only in the moment of her own becoming, a  
 wandering waif like creature haunting the halls of our  
 bodies. Igniting them with tendrils of sharp hot  
 simmering feeling, a fleeting blush of faith, want and  
 i m a g i n a t i o n .  
 Desire peeps in on the handsome young man graced with  
 a presence far beyond his knowledge, a love not of his own  
 image but for what is sacred in others. Hungry and errant  
 for their knowing, this cruelty, in possessing the image of  
 another, a rather terrible thing, the return of the dead.  
 A step back, a brief reprieve, a basking in the fading  
 fantasy of sustained heavenly being.  
 Desire muses on violence. A fielding and wielding of  
 spears from the chariot, armed with the daughters of  
 strength and power, a decimation and reclaiming of what  
 is rightfully theirs. The matriarch is come and she is angry  
 with the fire that burns bright. It is her portrait that hangs  
 above the stairs.

G a z i n g  
 into the interior through a small  
 window illuminated, a pulsing heart, laid up  
 on a slab, shivering on chrome metal bench in  
 embroidered nonchalance. An epitaph, the horse that  
 gallops though us, teetering on a fulcrum dancing the sharp  
 edge lest it cut.  
 Worms gnaw and eat away the inner casing hollow, with  
 only the occasional flap of flesh adhering to the slick inside of  
 silica skin surface. The rubber of the most intimate lying  
 cold and open to the elements as a tap drips steadily, beading  
 moisture on resistant poreless surface. The patina of cracked  
 mirror casts a strange glow across the various clammy  
 surfaces that cluster in this moisture laden room, the  
 underside of the toilet bowl, the interior of the plug, the  
 coagulated mould that collects beneath the taps. A smearing  
 of substances that swim and pool gently and slowly at the  
 bottom of the bath, carefully so as not to accumulate into  
 anymore than a widened trickle, a meandering arc of  
 material inching across the expanse like the trickled pewter  
 splashing into hot dark sand. A coagulate of the unnamable,  
 never set always pouring forth in a liquidity of the purest  
 chrome and temperatureless, into the formica pink slab of  
 flesh that in this light might be wax an inert slab of soap  
 strangely slick smooth no pubic hairs collected, unnatural  
 amid the grime, the bath fur lined, a hollow to suckle in.  
 In the clammy air the sickly tiled walls and splintered half  
 light lying exalted, helpless, halfformed  
 hunk of flesh.



The fountain sits at the center of it all, a midpoint, a courtyard with the springs of life flowing through it forever. This wishing well is a space of everything, the whole world cupped in the fountain's embrace. The chessboard flagstones are drained of colour, instead washed by the overgrown mosses of the vaulted ceiling. Muted greens lurk in the periphery of the large space, embedded and sentient still over timeless expanse of residence, this fountain and its flowing liquid have always been here and will always be here. The timepiece, the keeper of cycles, beyond understanding. All that can be made is offerings, nothing can be taken, everything existing in the movement of liquid into fine mist that coats everything and makes the dew that lands on the raised eyelids, the piss that trickles between legs, the liquid salivation that swirls around the rim of the plug. These fluids they sustain the never ceasing rinse of time, a haunting in its coming forth. The devil, a weevil, an apparition, a never there meeting of opposite worlds, flitting through whirling portals of real and not real - here is a narrative, which is a path, which is a following, and a guiding. In the unfolding of something through exposure, through the imperceptible communications of fluttering temperatures. The apparition, which is really only shadow, is only sensations of the house shifting in the heady stupor of fumes that permeate and drift around the tableaux, arranging and rearranging themselves.



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The water droplets they begin to congeal.

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An incandescence of the most high emanates from the small huddle of beings so that they pulsate and heave in a trickster's palimpsest, moving across one another in veridian, acidic hues. They will not enter these halls again, haunted by the waif like creature, their hearts ignited with tendrils of sharp hot simmering feeling, manifested in the fleeting brush of faith, want and imagination.

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A water droplet, it pools on the edge of a precipice.

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This silence, a constantly growing organism with tendrils reaching out, infecting and attaching, colonising its host as a means to expand and spread like a virus. Infecting the surfaces of its touch with lingering presence absorbing them into its lexicon. One room bleeds into another, their boundaries violated and dissolved, a sticking rearranging that unfolds when examined. Unfurling to display the narratives of past encounters which feed the haptic knowledge of this spreading moving substance. Sensation is co-opted in the service of the unmoored, a disorientation is at work, a lurking just out of reach. The object that leads life as a lie and spawns all manner of material beyond that, stretching and tainting the rest with its falsehood. Lost within the abrupt turns and ever present interruptions, the hallways and spaces seeping into one another, losing their sense of edge and ending. No longer are the vessels separate but conjoined, a wafer-thin breathing membrane between them plumbed in to connective interchange. Becoming part of everything, virus, skin, blood vessels, bones of a structure absorbing and secreting calcified masses, building outward in deficient resorption. Delving deeper layers that wrap around themselves sitting waiting to be touched and traversed, crevices of skin folded and slumped filling space that the body now vacuous cannot fill.



Alongside the  
room of empty plinths an  
adjoining room, filled with the  
statues of adornment, the mannequins  
whose insides are only dry hollow formed  
plastic. Find in the fragments of the paper that  
wrapped a body, encased it, treasured it, protected from  
the wandering ailing of the brittle skin with its own fast  
yellowing a perfection, the fragmented whole of recorded  
love. You will note that there are no accents around the  
reconstructed, no airs and graces to be afforded, between those  
and ourselves too ignorant. A complete poem, a rarity. To only  
guess where one ends and the other begins, to reach in the dark  
for something that is not seen but rather felt. A fleeting ever  
diminishing point, vanishing, always leaving. The imprint,  
forever marked. The agony of discovery, the flooding and  
swamping of every opening becoming portal, every movement  
to flow through and into. The skin prickles, the eyes move  
behind eyelids, the body screams. Climb inside a text and be  
within it, search its crevices and become absorbed. There are  
things we cannot say until we have relinquished this pretense of  
feeling and given in to the anarchy of degradation and horror.  
{For you} {be zealous} {but my once tender}  
{has seized} {white}

When peered  
into, a small opening  
admits the observation of  
warmth rising thick and muggy.  
The tight shut doors between chambers  
accumulate residues, bathing and dipping  
them in lyrical molten weight, stretching the  
depths of the ground that backs press into,  
etching the curve of the spine, a prosthesis, a  
surrogate body onto the murky ground. The  
wallpaper stained nicotine foul with the  
repeated bodies slumped against it. The  
headrest was the pedestal of the statue we are  
yet to become. Lean in. The night that brings  
new translations of the age old story that feeds  
us all ticks on, a suckling wailing babe at the  
nipple oozing. The milk of the interior, ever  
sustaining, stickily entrapping the soul, open  
mouth gaping, hawking a collection of battered  
teeth. In your interiority there are conclave as  
yet unexposed, hollows and spaces to nestle all  
things. A collection, of treasured artifacts, that  
line the walls. Vessels filled with the times gone  
before, carefully tended. Cuttings that hope to  
grow and to bloom, in their thorns and their  
flowers. The sharpest prick can become wound,  
a gash that renders words immobile in their  
surfacing. In the centerfold there is a collection  
of seeds, held in a palm, in never ending  
p o t e n t i a l i t y .

Slick of the soap, spread muddied across the room, fast and caustically becoming a lye based substrate of eaten cells masticated by fingernails. Each object a talisman of the house collected over time, treasured in their coatings of oil and grease, of hands touching but not polishing, unburnished surfaces of aggregated slow being. A forgottenness which is treasured, which is repulsive. With glaze sits darkly like a glance, eyes that do not like to linger, held at length from their sockets witnessing the horrifying amassing of stagnant breath of the shut up dilapidated being. Musty smelling and sticking in the back of the throat like a coating of the foulest sweet smelling lozenge, the chrome glint of unclean electric razor teeth filled with clagging skin. The bristles stuck in etched grooves, a decoration, leather sheathed and revolting. The skin of a marble slab, concrete cast and dug into cold between the hardness and the very soft, a tender terrifying interiority that elides the grasp. In the meeting of corporeal context the lapse occurs, a falling, a failing, a ceasing. A gliding slipping sliding enduring break in the solidity of the fabric, loss of form metamorphosing liquid stone. The pillars they weep with blood and clammy, almost damp, cool with sickly sweat and a verdigris tinge of the unwell. Forehead on cold surface bathroom spinning nausea, deathly pale and very much alive in cold sweat slick with this disturbed state, a patina of illness, that leaves the skin metallic smelling of grime on smooth surface takes on greasy pall, soot static sticking, rain beading limestone washing, oil sticks like old theater grease paint, thick layer, hidden porous surface. Polished smooth.

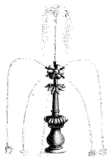
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The center of the center of the night is come and the small collection of figures again point to the sky, they are huddled now close to the fire and each other in search of a warmth. They too are held in this dance that permeates the soft ground reaching in tendrils from the house, through foundations and long petrified roots the bones of the living that went before, brought into the cycling touch. A galloping specter traces the perimeter. The

touch of the earth squelches liquid beneath toes and behind ears, their feet act as conductors and earth wires green and blue twist though the sinews of legs to the pads of their heels and palms. The calloused hardened skin that cushions the blow of the outside on their insides, the skin with its layers clinging to the past and carries around old cells trailing in a cellophane soft plastic bag.

I see the blood pulsing behind your heel.

With each climbing out from inherited skins, a burning. Ash and debris fall constantly from hair follicles and avid scratchings hot and high - leaving the dead behind in the white hot heat, cast off and already haunting. The singed smell of burning flesh lingers and curls itself round the haunches of this architecture, ensconced, taking root. Biding time, a waiting game, for the unsuspecting body to unwittingly encounter and assume again this shroud.



These internal rhythms that thrum through it all, listen and you will hear them, listen and you will find them. They will call to you in the dark, in your innermost spaces you will feel them throb and as you get closer, drawn by a curiosity that cannot be quenched that will grow louder. Until all the body and the bodies of the surrounds will thrum in a unison that is frightening, that is loud, that is all encompassing and you will be afraid.

The house gapes open like a word deconstructed, climbed inside, hanging open, the mightiest orifice. The devil looks on unmoving, sitting by one clawed foot of the fountain, the soft trickle of crystalline waters unwavering, while the peeling skin sits wet and sagging, curling in the damp muggy heat of the end of the beginning. The house consumed by its own silence, a retching reaching deep within its gullet by the entire set of linguistic forms, sticking like splintered wishbone. Sinews tighten like skin between fingers, a membrane that runs beneath the skin. In a kind of deep foreboding of hands cut off severed lost, or perhaps tongues, wrenched out at the root stretching back to the roof of the mouth. As though some mirroring might take place, that souls might occupy both places at once at least in part. Coating itself onto memory like emulsion on a film, a surface porous and open to the touch of the close at hand. The devil opens and closes his palm, somehow he is still here amid the flowers that graze his calves and the singed fragments of papery skin that drift about him, sitting in this hollowed shell of space carved out by his own inattention. He too has become paper thin, a waif like haunting shadow, his edges flicker and glitch in the refracted light of the droplets that by turn are fine as mist and thick globs of spittle, wallpaper paste and secretions. The flow is still reversed, a doubling back of time, a retracing of

steps, an undoing. The spaces of things close and the closeness of things far apart move in unison with his articulate fingers, nestled in the physicality of the skin of memory a loss. Each smoothing action a wiping clean of the surface, replacing with a reliving, a surface touching itself because it is both here and elsewhere. The pencil marks are subjected to the light that filters gently through the windows, staining and slowly fades them.

All that is left is the flowers and the fountain.

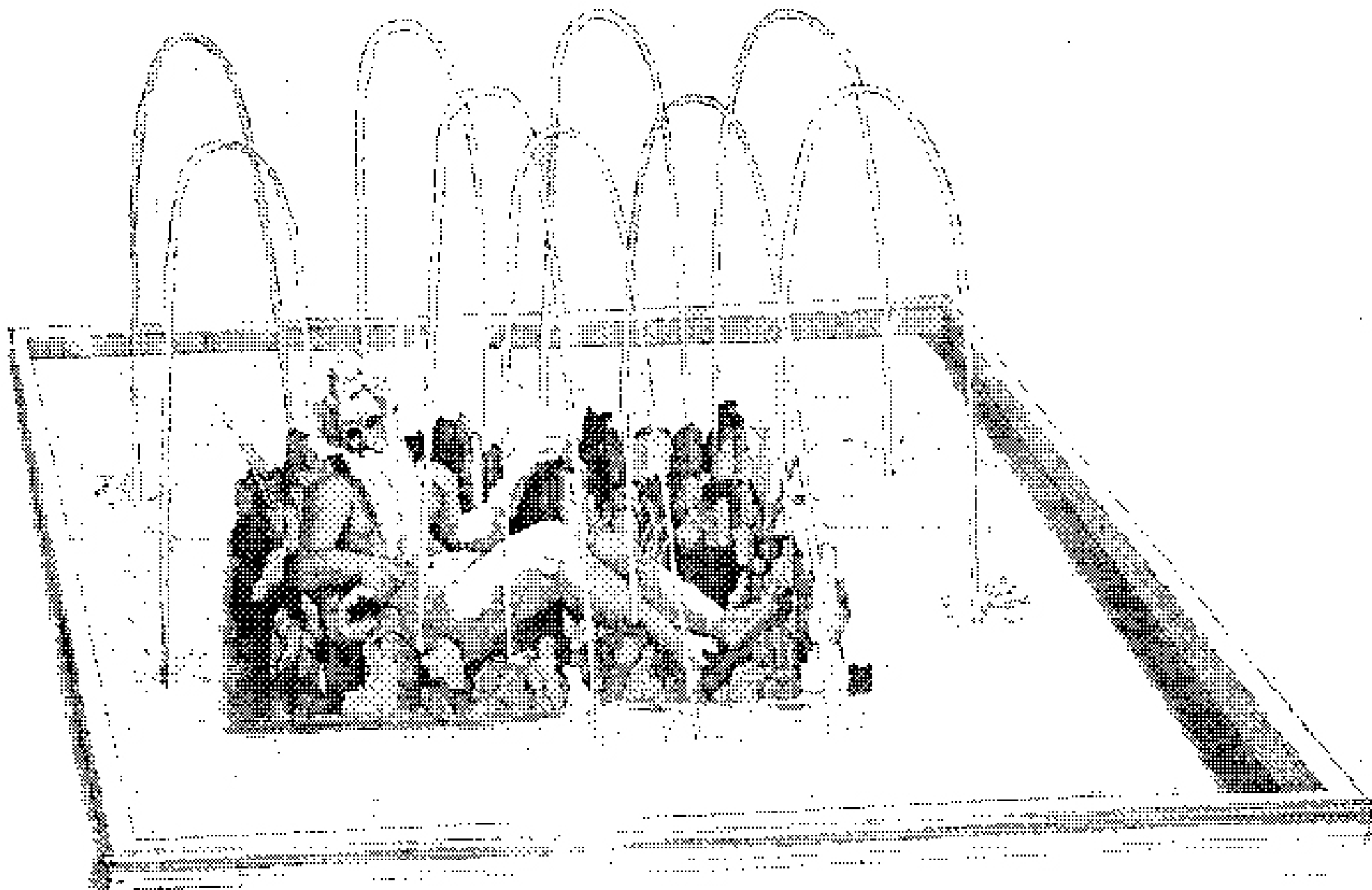




Repeated direct impression of an inked, raised surface against individual sheets of paper in continuous motion. A printer bends low over the press, locking individual diecast type into the bed. Soon he inks it and presses paper against it. The metal glyphs catch the light as the surface pulls away, a swift glint, a sheen on sharp edged serifs. Eidolon caught within the machine, insubstantial image. The printer tends the garden of his flowers, heder vines and aldus leaves, palmyrene and manichaeian cuttings, the sorts and horticultural dingbats that grace his borders and neat beds. Each cultivated, nurtured and reproduced in a descendancy of pure ornamentation. The printer builds his border in a repeating pattern of fleurons.









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Marguerite Carson

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Dark Mofo June 2023*

made on the unceded lands of nīpaluna, lutruwita



