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Summary:

For my Master's thesis I made two works. One work, the artistic work (*Remarks*) is an attempt to make a written and spoken image - a non-visual image, or rather an image that is not absorbed through the eyes. The other work is a long text (*The Artist in Society*) which I see as an artistic work in its own right and in its tangential relation to the artistic component of the thesis. Both components have written and visual elements and both works deal with the subjects of: art, images, seeing, looking, making and understanding. Reading has been another important issue. How we read things, images and words and how we can read in a non-visual-visual way. The artistic component is a written image that was read aloud in the small WHS teatteri theatre/cinema. I have been asked if I see the work as: theatre, performance, film, text, sound or spoken word. The answer to this question is that I see it as none and all of the above. What I do see it as – is an exploration of image, though it may not be an image. I am still not sure if it is one image or many images or an absence of image; to grasp an image/s read aloud is an almost impossible task – it slips in and out of focus. Tangents, slipping away, trying to grasp – these ideas kept recurring throughout my making and my long text is essentially a collection of observations and thoughts about running away.

Remarks was shown in WHS space on the 27th of July 2017 at 6:20 pm.

Materials: a dark room with comfortable seats, a desk, a chair, a book light, a glass of water and a voice.

Duration: 24 minutes.

Supervisors: Fergus Feehily & Sami van Ingen.

Examiners: James Prevett & Jussi Suvanto.

Remarks
(process and documentation)

Expression, for me, does not reside in passions glowing in a human face or manifested by violent movement. The entire arrangement of my picture is expressive: the place occupied by the figures, the empty spaces around them, the proportions, everything has its shape.

- Henri Matisse¹

When I started my Masters project I had recently arrived in Helsinki. I had been making experimental, narrative films and my narratives were becoming increasingly visual. By visual I mean that they progressed more through images than words but there were still a lot of words. When I moved to Helsinki I didn't know many people and I didn't speak the language so I knew something had to change. I had access to analogue film gear and teachers who taught me how to use it and I started playing with 16mm film and exploring the medium without the use of narrative. I started a project that was a study of the courtyard between my block of flats and six others. I used sound and film, drawing and video, photos and social engagement (although it wasn't very social as it turned out: I delivered postcards to the apartments and asked people to post them back. Quite a few did: some wrote on the back, some left them blank, none of us met in person) but the project kept stalling and never getting off the ground. I started to get more and more conceptual and less and less visual. I got what Jan Verwoert calls 'the melancholy of the conceptual artist'². I kept second-guessing my work and thinking too far ahead and dismissing it before I'd even started. I didn't realise it at the time but I wasn't just lost artistically. It takes a long time for me to settle into a place, to get a feel for it, before the ideas and the work starts to flow - if I push it, it seems to resist and because my project was about my courtyard I got no release - every time I looked out my window there it was: literally concrete but offering nothing up to me, or maybe offering too much - too many possibilities.

I think that is one of the hard and sometimes great things about being a contemporary artist – the fact that we can make anything and use any medium. It gives us, at times, a paralysing freedom. I envy artists that stick to one medium. We all wrestle with complex visual problems but to be sure of that one thing, at least, would be liberating. It also doesn't help that I read too much and I write too much and that can lead to over intellectualising. This is something I have been wrestling with during my Masters. I think there is still, a quite reasonable suspicion of language, in the visual arts and I started to develop a complex that, being someone with a naturally discursive nature, my ease with words made me artistically suspect. I noticed that many of the artists I admired (both historically and at school) were borderline linguistically impaired. 'Too smart for art?' is a phrase that has haunted me since a fateful studio visit. During the same studio visit it was posited that a lot of artistic practice has an inherent 'dumbness' about it. Much art cannot answer the question 'why make it?' There is a kind of dumb, determination behind a lot of art that I admire. Why does Roman Signer do what he does? Why did Agnes Martin paint horizontal lines for forty years? Trying to rationalise artistic practice is a counterproductive pursuit and that is exactly what I was doing.

Luckily I was introduced to a strange, by no means infallible, enchanting little book about art. The book was *The Bridge* by John Hutchinson - the former curator of The Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. Broken into four parts: *Beauty, Darkness, Uncertainty* and *Friendship*, *The Bridge* is a collection of musings and observations on art that the author collected in notebooks and then condensed into a slender, white volume. I don't know why or what possessed me to go through with it (unlike my many aborted projects) but I decided to make my own version, using the same headings and themes. What turned out was different in style and content to the original but the subjects remained the same. I copied its form as best I could – using the same dimensions, colour, paper, fonts etc. and had it professionally printed. It was a seemingly pointless endeavour but I enjoyed custom making a work for an audience of one and making it for no apparent reason. I sent it to John Hutchinson. He read it and wrote me an email and sent me some more of his books and that was that. The book I made for John Hutchinson was separate to my degree – it was a personal project, an 'enthusiasm' -

and yet, it transpired, it was pivotal to my Masters. I found that the strongest parts of my book were the visual descriptions - the parts where I described a scene in detail:

Overcast. Maybe it was the even light. A block of 1950s flats stood out because they were pink and residential and being encroached upon by industry. The pink popped out of the grey. The building curved with the street and had a rounded L-shape at one end. It had cast iron balconies on both sides of the L. The residents living at the far end, in the corner of the L, in the adjacent and opposite sides of the L, could have shaken hands with one another. If they so had wished. The balconies were not ornate, just simple bars with spaces between them. Modest white metal baskets. One balcony had a window box of shocking pink geraniums. Impressive well-tended specimens. Radiant with health. These huge pompoms of Schiaparelli pink were offset by the paler pink of the building. The space between them was filled with a white lace curtain upon which their pink heads stood out in stark relief. At first I thought it was a strip of LED lights. Above to the right. But it was one of those corkscrew shaped, prismatic plastic wind ornaments, flashing as it twirled. Whoever made this tableau had confidence and clarity of vision. Their complete lack of irony prevented their work from being facetious or twee. It was so well executed and unselfconscious that it had dignity and cohesion. The raw materials may have been kitsch but the end result was not. It had integrity. Like a kernel. This little oasis of pink.

Around this time, I moved apartment. This was hugely important as I was released from my previous courtyard work and new images opened up before me. Acting on what I had learned from the book for John Hutchinson I started describing those images in words. They say an image is worth a thousand words – I say that is a gross underestimate. I became obsessed with the idea that we rarely see anything at all, that we filter the world for useful information e.g. a black table, and ignore the reality of what is in front of us. A black table, for example, is never only black. The way the light hits certain parts of it and the black absorbs the colours of the things around it and reflects the shadows of objects on its surface is an example of the hugely complex visual world that we, for the most part, tune out. Painters, however, trade in such things, so, as part of my exploration into seeing - I joined the painting seminars.

I learned a lot from the painting seminars. We would discuss, for example, whether or not a squiggly yellow line worked, why it worked, where it should be, how it was painted and how that changed the line. We would discuss how a thing of a certain colour next to a thing of a different colour would change the way an image worked. In the painting seminars, I felt for the first time since starting at Kuvataideakatemia, that I had found my people.

Throughout my artistic practice, I have had many uncertainties over medium but the one thing I have never deviated from is the two dimensional rectangle. I find rectangles endlessly interesting. Painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, cinema – typically these are all flat rectangles. Of course they are not always flat rectangles, much has been done to break free of the flat rectangle but, its dominance persists. The framework of the rectangle, I would argue, provides a border that helps the viewer to see. The delineation of the frame helps us sort our

impressions and I like the whole window to another world concept – I like being transported by an illusion of depth.

When I started my Master's, 'The Artist in Society' module was a compulsory requirement and I didn't want to do it. I'm not very social and I struggle with the public aspects of being an artist. I wrote about this in the book for John Hutchinson – 'the presumption of the gift' as I called it. I find the attention seeking nature of the public performance, which I would argue is inherent in all exhibitions, to be egotistical and perverse. I can't help questioning the motivations of individuals who seek approval over and over again in public displays. Anyway, in order to attain the required amount of credits it was possible, rather than attending a course, to propose and write essays on relevant topics. The irony was, that being forced to consider what an artist in (or outside) society meant to me, took up so much of my time and thought that I decided to write my Master's text on the subject. When I started writing it I suggested to the unit co-ordinator that I write a detailed proposal outlining my topics, structure and central arguments. She agreed to this and I did so. In the end, we agreed, it was a schema for a cynical rant that would contribute little to anyone's thinking - least of all my own. So I asked myself why I was writing it and who it was for. Realistically an MFA text will have a limited audience and as I was approaching the end of my university career, I decided that it was time to ask how *I* want to be an artist. What model could work for me? And what would facilitate the making of better art? In order to figure this out I needed to examine my past as well as my present, as well as the paths of others. The resulting text - *The Artist in Society* - is a litany of remembrances and observations gathered very loosely under the theme of 'escape art'. It is about: learning, making, travel, escape, islands, palm trees, bamboo groves, caves, corners, mountains, sanatoriums, rooms, shelves, shacks, huts, cupboards, boxes, boats, beds, public, private, inside, outside and basketball hoops.

No matter how many times I deny that my artistic work (*Remarks*) was a performance, I did, in fairness, do a live thing in front of an audience. I prefer the term 'reading' and in my defence - I did it in the dark. My obsession with the intimacy and potential of dark spaces is reflected in *The Artist in Society* and has its roots in the book for John Hutchinson (the second part of *The Bridge* is, after all: *On Darkness*). This, like many things was part evolution and part coincidence. The fact that darkness is inherent in all three works: the book for John Hutchinson, *Remarks* and *The Artist in Society*, is both logical and unintentional.

The decision to read *Remarks* in the dark was, however, never consciously connected to John Hutchinson or *The Artist in Society*. It all started when I read about a 2016 performance of Samuel Beckett's *All That Fall* at Wilton's Music Hall in London. *All That Fall* was written and performed as a radio play in 1957 and one of the central characters is blind, so the Out of Joint theatre company staged the 2016 production with a blindfolded audience. I couldn't attend the performance so I blindfolded myself and listened to the original radio play in the comfort of my living room. It was a strange and wonderful experience. The play is over an hour in length and sitting in darkness, listening to a narrative, was an unusual experience for me. Even if I hadn't been wearing the blindfold, sitting and listening to something that wasn't music and wasn't accompanied by images was novel. I started thinking about how the culture of 'sitting 'round the wireless' seemed so alien. And then I remembered my third year Bachelor's work. It was a narrative film, about 40 minutes in length, which was very dialogue heavy and the images weren't adding much to the narrative and my Professor provocatively said 'why isn't it a radio play?' I was outraged but knew he had a point. It became a joke between me and my friend: 'why isn't it a radio play?' became a kind of catchphrase. It was obviously still haunting me because after I listened to *All That Fall* I

thought... ‘why couldn’t it be a radio play?’ The broadcasting part didn’t interest me much but that wasn’t what my professor had been getting at - it was the lack of attention I was paying to images when I was supposedly working in a visual medium.

Then two other things happened. Over the Summer holidays I decided to tackle T. S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland*. It was not connected in any way to my school work but it was one of those things that was always coming up. So I read it. Then I read it with notes. Then I read it again. Then I read that it was best not to read it but listen to it. So I dragged a beanbag under a tree and found a BBC Radio 4 production, read by T. S. Eliot, Ted Hughes and Lia Williams. It was nearly half an hour long and I lay in the sun, gazing up at the tree and letting the words and the different voices wash over me and it really did suddenly make more sense.

After the holidays and back at Kuvataideakatemia, we were given the infamously difficult third chapter of *Ulysses* to read for a class. Then we went to class and listened to a reading of it. We sat in a group, in a dimly lit room (the lights were switched off) for nearly an hour - listening. I decided to close my eyes which was something I had picked up from the music students at the Sibelius Academy. I had done a few sound art courses there and enjoyed sitting for long periods listening to sound recordings and I noticed that the music students would all shut their eyes. I felt a bit foolish at first – shutting my eyes – but once I got used to it I could ‘see’ how it helped you to hear. After listening to the recording of *Ulysses*, I went home for lunch and crawled into bed. The experience of something that powerful, in the dark, made me want to climb under the covers. Darkness has a link to either fear or intimacy for me. If I’m comfortable and not afraid, to be in the dark has magical qualities; like lights in winter, fires, candles, lamps as opposed to overhead lighting. Darkness enhances the light and wraps itself around you. It is not something we are used to experiencing in groups – except in the cinema. It also makes you sleepy which adds to the slowness and slight remove from reality that listening to a sound recording creates. Maybe it also links back to being a child and having bedtime stories read to you. Now if I can’t get to sleep I listen to Anthony Hopkins reading T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

The private nature of darkness provided, for me, a counter to the public nature of exhibiting but I cannot deny that there is a dichotomy between my distrust of performative acts and the performative nature of *Remarks*. Intent however was never a deciding factor in the work. I was interested in trying something, to see what it would be like, but I did not have any preconceptions about how it would be. I’m still not sure how it went.

On the 27th of July at 6:20 pm, I sat in the dark, at a desk on a stage in the WHS theatre and read aloud a text of 7 pages and approximately 24-minute duration. About 20 people turned up. Once the ceiling lights were dimmed, the only light came from the book light on my desk. I was too busy wrestling with the text and the mechanics of speech to know how the reading went. One piece of feedback I received was from a Finnish art student who said that she had grown up with scenes, similar to the one I had described and always found them incredibly boring but my text had made her see them anew. Other audience members noted the camera like quality of the narration – the way it seemed to be robotically scanning the image without emotion or discrimination.



I chose not to document the work (the above image was taken an hour before the reading). I wanted it to be as dark as possible and I didn't want the distraction of backlit screens on phones or cameras but mostly I chose not to document the work because I wanted the work to fade away and not be used later for self-promotion. I have, however, to give some idea of the content of the work (if not the lived experience of it), included a copy of the text from *Remarks* in the following section.

Remarks
(the text)

Second floor. A wall. Plastered and painted white. It is flat to the eye but rough to the fingers. Irregular bumps rise over shallow pockets where the white is a darker shade of white - almost blue.

The wall reflects the colours, glanced off of nearby objects. It is a field upon which, the shapes and stains burnt into eyes can play. They fade in and out and scan across. Flaring into forms that waver then seep or glide away.

Cut into the wall is a rectangle. It is approximately two by three metres and is as deep as a hand. On each side of the hand, at its fingertips and wrist, are sheets, of very thick, glass. They double and fatten the reflections, that are beneath and on their surface. Islands of light, cut out by the fat things, framed within the window, form a school of disorderly patterns, that swim out of the rectangle, and on to the wall, where they exaggerate the roughness of its surface.

Inside the rectangle, contained and defined by its frame, is a tattered screen. The screen is slit from top to bottom and hangs in ribbons held together by strands as thin as hair. It is more absence than substance. The light behind it, eats away, chipping at the things in front. It curves around and swallows them up. Pulling them into itself. The ribbons are made of light and wood. Softwood; birch and pine. Vertical lines of black and white and grey. They are severed at the head, and foot, by the cut out in the wall. It is an elevated position. Not above so much as in the trees. Bough's eye rather than bird's. A latticework of almost straight lines. Lines drawn without a ruler. There's something unconvincing about the trees. They're unnaturally straight without actually being so. They are too long and thin. These are the misshapen shadows of trees. Prolonged sticks. They never stop peering in. Never move. Apart from the slow twisting of their many fingered hands.

Their spines are disfigured by patches of white and gashes of grey, giving the appearance of some kind of mangy or maybe scaly animal print. Old wounds healed over. Grown over by others and themselves. Lichen like mould. From here it's hard to tell if the scars are the result of a cracking and weathering, a withering of bark, or the woodwork of some giant axe wielding maniac, whose only language is that of the mark itself, a gesture of sorts, carving posterity into the flesh of the tree.

One tree looks like a spider. Three of its branches rear up on a diagonal only to come back down and backwards again at the half way point. This static, cringing position gives an impression, of getting low, in order to spring forward. The fourth leg looks attached but isn't. It grows out of the tree next door.

Behind the trees, visible only in winter, are two apartment blocks. These 1960s rectangles, wider in length than height, recede into the grey-white nothing and provide an unobtrusive background for the black boughs to writhe on. Except at night, when smaller rectangles, imbedded in the bigger rectangles, come out and turn yellow and three, vertical rows, of four even smaller rectangles, and some squares, appear at irregular intervals and then all of a sudden, altogether, disappear. Then they come back. Then they go away again. Then on. Then off. Then on. A Jacob's ladder of lights. Clicking into place. Blinking through the trees. The larger ones, the ones that stay on all night, seep through the trees and assert themselves toward the front of the image. Only the whispers of objects and suggestions of things can ward off the hungry yellow rectangles. But it's not much of a life. Confined to the golden miniatures, reduced to a silhouette.

During the day the miniatures dissolve, taking the silhouettes with them. And as the buildings distance themselves from the darkness, the sky leaches thinly back in. It is neither white nor grey. It is a canopy of frosted glass. Occasionally an eye perceives a shift in hue but then loses faith in itself, as the wall, exploiting the fallibility of the eye, triggers an illusory visual hum.

This hum, or pulsing, is a deception. The sky is camouflaging itself, against the frozen landscape, drawing low and close, and encompassing objects by dissolving them into its flat shallow body. The light behind the screen suggests a sense of depth or electricity but no movement or distance is discernible from this side. It is both liquid and solid. Perhaps like a rope, its strength stems from its

not being made of one thing, but many things woven together, to form an impenetrable density. From here it is a solid surface, a frozen lake beneath which, all life is imperceptible. It is a poorly primed scene, not quite meeting the edges. At the far corners the paint is flaking off and the raw support is visible. The Masonite can be glimpsed through the thin streaks of paint.

Beyond the frame is a phosphorescent dome. It is geodesic and four stories high - the size of a football pitch. It is a shiny pearl-like structure. Immobile and parasitic like a colossal scale insect. It is flush with the earth and crusted with snow that gathers in wisps where its lines intersect. Its taut plastic shell conceals a semi-circular world - a world that is evidenced by the bands of light that flare beneath the iridescent membrane of the dome.

The dome is crowned by an ink wash of conifers whose upper bodies bleed into the mash of wet sky. A forest of navy-blue cannibals. Subsumed by their own pulp. They rise up from the ground, trying to climb higher. Pushing their way. Trying to reach the good air. Desperately trying to breathe. They claw at the empty space and strain into the distance. Where looking down upon them are two red lights. Sentinels, hovering impassively in the space above the trees. Wide set. Ten metres apart. Bearing witness. Keeping their distance.

Running through the bottom quarter and dodging the islands of paint, is a horizontal line. The line is white and cuts out layers in space. It delineates a conflict of planes. It hovers above the ground it belongs to. A stamp in the snow, authored by the feet of walkers, tracing the original footpath from memory.

The way it rests in space is confusing. It weaves in and out of the trees like a white ribbon. It is a negative image of the black tarmac buried beneath it. A blink momentarily reveals the original. In the snap of lashes, it echoes black, then fades back to white.

The low even light has a dubious source. It materialises rather than rises. It sucks the colour from the monochromes and when a boy, about ten, drags his red plastic sled along the white line, he is no more than a double exposure. But the sled. A lightning bolt of colour, titillates the eye. It pops and stings like a slap. He slowly trundles from right to left and further away. Melting into the trees. The red dot remains visible long after he has disappeared from view. And then, finally, it fades away as well.

The brief moment of midday has passed. The sun took forever to get not very high. It gets up late and goes early, sinking behind the rectangles, which seem to sense their moment, when the sun lets down its guard, and the hungry yellow rectangles can begin to creep back in. Circling. Some 60-watt victory. As along the horizontal line, up on metal poles, orange coloured, oval lights dilate and eye the gloom. And as the darkness thickens, the light emitting from their lamps blooms into in orange sprays. Night gladioli. Nottingham catchflies. Their heavy scented flower heads, reeking in the dark.

Meandering beneath their arbour, a man approaches the crossroads of the path. He trails along the horizontal, heading left, near the spot where the boy with the sled was last seen. To an intersection of white legs that spread, akimbo to the South West, North West, East, South East and South. It is a five pointed starfish. Flat on its back. An invertebrate lollipop lady. Passively flailing coordinates. But the man is deaf to directions and stops short at the crux of the star. He stands stock still and stares for a moment, into the middle distance. Opting for the South East arm he shuffles and trudges his way, through the trees, and is gone.

It is night as night now and the left-over light is manmade. The orange street lights hang like a chain above the South to North West limb of the starfish. Their feeble light exposing the cobwebs of snow that streak sideways on the wind. Bathing the threads in itself. An emperor. Changing their colour. It fishes them out of the black and dyes them orange. Fixing them.

Out of their reach is a clearing. During the day it is an open space with a collar of trees. After dark it is not clear at all. It is a void that spits out the man, who retraces the footsteps that he left in the snow,

dragging behind him a part of the void that clings to his heels. But he is heartless or oblivious to the distress of this thing that drags and falls in his wake. He returns to the crossroads. And again he stops and stares. He drops a can which stamps an impression of itself into the snow. A perfect cast. He stoops to the hollow and scoops it out. Stiffly straightening, he looks then walks south.

To the right of the dome and coming down a hill is a series of blue and green lights. The lights are square and on poles. One of each on each. Five in total. Ten if you count both colours. Blue plus green times five.

Each of the poles is split into two. By the two competing lights. Into a blue stripe and a green stripe that sit side by side. The transition between the coloured areas is abrupt and sharp and there is minimal blending between the bands of light. They flatten the cylindrical poles into parallel planes of cathode ray green and ultra-violet blue that buzz on the chromatic black ground. Coming from two sources they cast a double shadow. But the shadows are not black. They are a darker blue and darker green than the shafts of light that they cut across.

Offsetting the five sets of blue and green lights is a single white one. It is taller or closer than the others and it drops further down into the image. It is exactly in the middle on the very far right, and apart from its colour and height, is identical to the vertical lines of blue and green that dominate the picture plane. Its light lights the road at the base of the hill. Thinly covering its surface. Where it touches the road it renders it white. Where the light is blocked the line is broken. To the right of the light the line is continuous. To the left it falls away.

The flatness and straightness of the line at the base of the hill, and the way that the blue and green lights, despite their rectilinear shape, diffuse with distance into squashed circles on the ends of the poles, makes them look like half or quarter notes on an open-air stave.

It is a sparse composition. Largely silent. The notes being metres apart. From further away, their heads blow out, like the shiny white caps of winter mushrooms. They are blind at one end and chemiluminescent at the other. The result of a cobalt and electric green reaction. Smears of light, like tadpoles, swim in pools, at the base of their stems.

A figure is frozen in one of the tadpoles. It is rigid and directed at the viewer. It does not move. It does not shift its gaze. It points with its face which is bathed in geometric shapes. A dog enters the tadpole and heads for the centre. Flashing on its back is a brilliant blue light that is strapped to the middle of its spine. The light is encased in a blue plastic casing, and inside the casing, a mirror is spinning, around a single, stationary bulb. The orbit of the mirror, around the bulb, focuses the light into rotating beams that flash and sweep in as they align with the window.

The dog and the light move out of the tadpole. The dog gets darker and ceases to be visible but the blue light continues to dot the line it travels. The figure, aiming its face, which is round, flat and tilted upward, follows the signals, out of the tadpole and into the black.

Pulling away from the hill the frame reaches out. As it goes back it takes in and the stuff at the sides moves to the middle. Everything gets smaller but there's more of it. It opens up as it retreats. Slowly going backward until the dome and the edge of the trees can be seen. Flipped. The right being now on the left. It stops. Then rotates by 90 degrees in a slow fluid motion. Blurring a bit. The stuff on the right is cut off, and cast out, in order to make room for the new stuff diving in on the left. It comes to rest at the beginning. On the second floor. In an elevated position.

Nothing moves for a very long time. As if the scene is trying to compose itself. The snow gathers and drifts, under the orange lights and down on the peach coloured path, coating it in yet another, and yet another layer. Which the light then glazes in a fine mist of glitter, that dazzles like fainting, and is on everything. Turning the whole world into a point cloud of star dust. Everywhere it turns. But only when it moves. If it is still it goes static and dies.

Two women wearing burkas walk in it. Burkas and long black jackets. They walk along, behind the trees, under the orange lights. Figure one and Figure two. Calligraphic in the snow. Which settles on their shoulders and hangs in a curtain, that wraps around the women. The black of their clothing and the triangles of light, reveal the flight paths of the flakes, which are winding and elliptical. They double back and spiral in shoals.

The edge of the women forms the outline of a blob, inside which, the points of snow, though constantly shifting, become 3D. Amorphous yet cohesive. Almost solid. Almost a thing. A thing to the eye but your hand would go through it like a ghost.

The blobs billow and pulse, and jerk along, rising and falling by millimetres as they crest the bumps and ridges of the path and trip up, jar, and right themselves on the infinitesimal, vertical course, that is a side effect of their horizontal progress, which propels them left behind the trees, but in front and under the streetlights. Whose poles are grey in the light of the lamps and partly eclipsed by branches. Branches that break up their outline and stripe them, and make them resemble the trees. Which are also grey and stripy and positioned in front and behind. Where the layer's leech into each other and the line, the trees, the women and snow, slant toward the window, where they meet, flatten and become two dimensional.

The trees are no longer in front of the poles but part of them. The poles no longer poles but rectangles. The women not women, nor backdrop, but broken islands of black, flecked with white, surrounded by shapes, in a perpendicular world of things next to things. That the snow begins to mask. It powders the faces and sands them down, softening the edges and clogging up the lines. It fills in the dark bits and covers them up, collapsing them into the white, which hardens into a rectangle that is opaque and impressed upon a bigger one, which is also white but sunken where the smaller of the two white rectangles, dips into its surface.

The white on white of the rectangles, makes them hard to tell apart. And they keep on changing places. The small one floats in the foreground, then sinks into the background, and lines come out of its corners, and lead the eye in space. Until the larger rectangle, engulfs the smaller rectangle, which slips into the opening, created by itself, and the border closes in on it, and now there's only one, a solid wall on the second floor, plastered and painted white. It is flat to the eye but rough to the fingers. Irregular bumps rise over shallow pockets, where the white is a darker shade of white - almost blue.

The wall reflects the colours, glanced off of nearby objects. It is a field upon which, the shapes and stains burnt into eyes can play. They fade in and out and scan across. Flaring into forms that waver then seep or glide away.

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