

HELEN FROSI // Response to Temporary Commons by Freya Dooley

A water-drenched body
is itself perfumed by the politics of matter and energy.

To begin, for there is always a beginning: an almost-void, a space that is virtually absent of light. A place that absurdly, or perversely is welcoming despite the fear of unknown unknowns, unobjects, unsubjects... This darkness, an architecture that envelops, revealing itself, its watery marblings, its illusive edges, its tympanic language of communion in triangulation: between one porous membrane, that is to say, a perceived body (the listener); another architecture, here in a predominantly aural configuration (the work); and a mesh, network or tangle (the milieu, ecosystem).

I offer my body-space and body-ear over to immersion, a condition that involves a leap of faith, a heart-leap of trust, stroking the hairs on the arms to say, "do not worry, your corporality will be taken care of." In this offering I am vulnerable to influence, to novel navigations, to the undoing of understanding (knowledge with its weight and pressure acts as a fixative), to the unravelling of structures I know so well that I do not remember to acknowledge. I am knotted and undone, so much so that of my parts that I thought separate and distinct, they presently vibrate in multitudes, synchronously with the atmosphere. I as one - and now, always, as many - am submerged.

What to expect?! What am I hearing, and what am I hearing with?
What to listen to in all this? Ha! To listen at all?!

I find my position, a void within a void: a potential (or what's known in this situation as a seat). Drenched in sounds from above. In distinction, I perceive a narrator shadowed by exasperation, anxiety and tragedy. Plots spiral into the humour of situation and irony; minor irritants (also known as neighbours) pick unwittingly at surface tensions, deflating and confusing the more-than-human world as they live the miniscule significance of their everyday in the magnified glory of teleporting TV theme tunes. Pernicious forces (i.e. the landlord) are characterised, often ventriloquised or appropriated, by the narrator. It's her chance to possess, a little of his power, and to boast incredulity at his lassitude to anything other than an overstuffed pocket.

I let my body do the listening. And in this listening I evaporate into the space of the room.
I become the room and the room becomes me.

I am attending to the overarching form, structure and systems that patrol, organise and process here. For one, to reappropriate the term from Lisa Robertson, what I'll call a soft architecture: an orchestration of supposed and colliding bodies of water in various fundamental states. In it, human corporeality is figuratively condensed, tormented and confined into being (something is not quite as it was before), alongside other vessels, bodies, traditionally categorised as inanimate. These are contorted, bloated, weathered into being (something is not quite as it was before).

Simultaneity brings destruction and its antonym. It also breathes life into non-biological matter. Although, not necessarily in a form we yet appreciate.

Weather as a character, its gestures, constitutes atmosphere, and create it, metaphorically speaking. As a current, a pressure, a stress, this meteorological phenomena casts itself as pathetic fallacy and prognostication tool! In its watery logics that seep to the inevitable sea – water knows how to get home; it does not respect human-made boundaries or barriers (after a fashion), nor the power structures that constitute human politics, and this is where we might learn something important.

In weather, its utter and complete banality reveals it to be an invisible stealth, hidden in the plain sight of everyday small talk. It might be raining in your own home, but would you recognise it? Over time, weathering reveals the layers that have been purposefully hidden, weakens the divides that ultimately separate and disempower us. In a collective state where a distinct irritant is now a mirroring of self and the self is dispersed afar from one's broadest notion of the holobiont, beyond the dichotomies of Western thought, a water-drenched body is itself perfumed by the politics of matter and energy.

Like aqua I digress, from the other structures and systems that covet and cajole company into austerity and singularity (drainage doesn't just come in steel, copper and plastic. A landlord does a good job too – syphoning off your independence, offering misery and precarity with every rental agreement.) Instead, I linger on the elements that describe another narrative: a sonics that is/are called music. That is, of course, a contrary term and subject to argument, especially so when your neighbour plays too loud and too late into the evening. Here however, distortion, visceral rumbles, recurrences and leitmotifs are to be considered a nuanced lexicon.

Goethe once stated that 'music is liquid architecture', and with that logic, it can be said this particular musical narrative reveals a saline topology that is, can I say this: non-orienting? Let's say, it's outsides are its insides are its outsides before you are even aware of it. You are perturbed, disturbed in places, broken by earworms and reconstituted in lush tonal shifts. Always brought back to the extended-self, multiplied and gorgeous.

All of these things next to each other.

All of these things next to each other

All of these things next to each other

Perhaps then, the soft architecture of the weather in its aqueous constellations is a creature always in the making. A relationality of becoming between between.

As a substance insubstantial, evanescent; and the fabric of everything, this is where we begin.