

**These infinite shifts are
lost in the mesmery of
all they get up to when
they think we aren't looking.**

I swear I saw it move.

Blink and you've missed the sci-fi moment that slipped
into the room.

Blink again, and the cube of cheese goes still. Or: the
plant has doubled in size, its leaves burst into a fan
of green flames. It is a collection of infinite shifts—
mesmerised, you think you tripped, or sneezed, and
missed it all, and I wouldn't describe it as eerie, not
like the feel of having your skin crawl: rather, it's like
you got tasered, and when the smoke cleared you got
up to stand into a scene that had cartwheeled, then
righted itself. Everything was almost the same except
that there were echoes: her skin now flushed, her braid
tipped to the other side.

I call this new space Vanta (within which: a tomato, a
miniature flying saucer, palm spears and a zebra suit
grapple against a black grid, or is it actually the portal
into an intense gravitational field?) because: how
can you claim rights on the immensity on the Earth's
equivalent of a black hole?

**Claim all the ownership you like
on black holes, but we: object, plant, human, claim
solidarity on all the new ways we commune there.**

Now, from dreams:

The city is sinking.

Whatever happened to all those houses that got
submerged during the surge that broke the levees after
the hurricane? The objects inside lifted a few feet off

the table and stayed suspended in watery space, the
bed of dust they'd lived in floating up around them
like smoke rings. Picture your room with all the floor
objects in it rising to eye-level, except that you can't
breathe there long so you watch this frozen world
merge with the underworld of the swamp. Your fern
gently waves you goodbye as you drift upwards to the
surface of a land-levelled disaster.

Days later the floodwaters subside. When the waters
die down your house seems to have been swept away
but some of the objects, a lot worn out, stayed behind.
What is it they remember of the flood?

And other things like: the gator you got used to being
around your neighbourhood swallowed the dog whole.
And is now poker-faced. The gator slumped in his
swamp habitat is often mistaken for a log and it knows
this.

How about Ancestry:

**In the 19th-century, museum types tried to place
constructed ecosystems, like a swamp, under glass
to observe interactive habits of flora and fauna.
The variable they forgot to watch was the glass and
their own reflection in it.**

They watched lizards. They wanted to observe the
subtle shifts, to catch the lizard move. What it led
to was a quality of staring paired with the tricks of
camouflage, an ever-shifting set of living relationships
that were impossible to pin down. The scientists fell
asleep but couldn't say so and wrote their lab reports
anyhow.

A swamp has a kind of slowness that blows your mind
over time. The sludge digesting the sludge is too
invisible and vital for the human eye to calculate.

q & a

A: Can an object make you feel the shiver of having been caressed?

K: I've felt nostalgia rise up through the hard flesh of a relic, haven't you?

A: So if I were to qualify this phenomenon in human-terms, I'd say its because the colloquial inevitably interrupts the formal. Billy the Kid walks into the wood-worn saloon and shoots everyone dead and no one sees it happen. Or: you wake up in Istanbul and the neighbouring apartment block has dipped to the level of the second floor; it's now no more than a hill of rubble. Ecology mixed with metal and the mind is the silent bomb.

K: (Silent. Busy feeling it).

- Alisha Piercy

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