

**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

Alisha Piercy is a writer and visual artist in Montréal. Her work includes drawing exhibitions, publishing, and conservation projects in Iceland, Spain and Malaysia. She has a BA in Literature from McGill University, an MA in Fine Art from Concordia University, and an MA in Art Conservation from Queen's University. Her second book, *You have hair like flags* (Your Lips to Mine Press) won the bp Nichol Chapbook Award in 2010. Her first novel, *Bunny and Shark*, was published by Bookthug in 2014. She is currently writing a novel set in the swamps of Louisiana.