



RIGHT  
TO  
THE SUN

MAIA WACHOWSKA

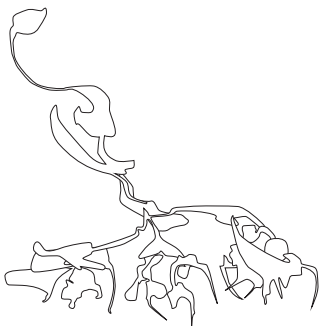


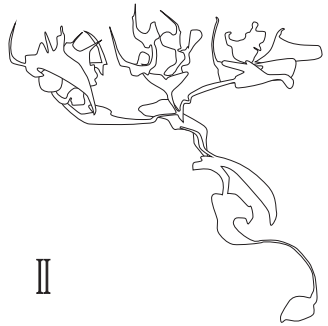


ACT

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Pre-pre-pre  
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Butt Call aka Call to Adventure  
Playing Tag with a Shadow  
Took-it-all  
Double Crossing





ACT

II

Roll of Trials

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Interlude



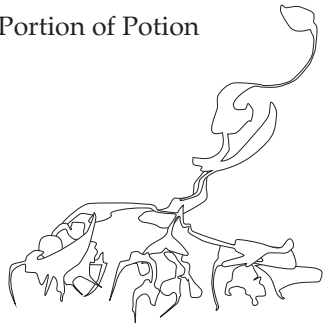
ACT

III

Not an Amber, Neither Glass

Parting with a Portion of Potion

Epilogue





ACT

I





re - pre - pre



The sun is shining brightly through the clouds, just enough not to make one's eyes squint. A fresh breeze squeezes between the blades of grass making them dance slightly on the wind. Beyond the horizon are the hills. The planet is like a fossilised sea stuck in time. You can imagine yourself moving around it by floating with the wave up and down, yet the wave has already vanished. In the past, the water would hit the beach and bubbled foam would form. That foam is what lies beneath us now. *Fossil fuels can be found in underground,*

*The where the organic material from ancient seas ground is filled with has transformed under pressure liquid that forms in round and high temperature. bubbles. Sometimes it takes the porous-shape of the pumice that your mother so roughly scraped her heels with and the*





other time it can be a vast lake wobbling itself holding onto the last memory of its **movement**. In plain sight, one can see oil

*Oil reservoirs* pumps that fuel this planet **by putting it into**  
*beneath the ground are* rotation through  
*kept in a form of pores inside* rhythmic move-  
*rocks. Sometimes they bubble to the* **ments.** Just like the  
*surface and create a tar pit.* **Just like the**  
waves and just like you, they move slowly  
up and slowly down, as if they were affected  
by a tide and the sun was about to begin its  
play.














orld of Narrow Burrow

Rounded corners, dusty smell and somehow a feeling of a rockhard vest. That's what I remember from the first time I... well, the first time in general. A vest, that seemed fragile and slightly too small at first glance, in reality was impossible to be torn apart. As harsh as it was, it wasn't woven with a rough and itchy wool, but with a stiff substance holding me in place. And therefore I laid there waiting for it to loosen up. As the days passed the vest didn't soften, nor did I gain more muscle to rip it off. One day a slight difference occurred, when as it seemed, something clutched my leg, resulting in an unbearable itch. Long were the moments of intricate search for an unsuspected visitor, fruitless even more so. Just as I began to forget how many sheep jumped over the fence and began to lose



whatever muscle tissue I gained with my disproportionate body, the moment came. At first, I thought that the small drop of water dripping down my neck was just the sweat I have gotten familiar with by now through my intensive backward-forward moves and slightly-to-the-left-frontal-leg manoeuvres. The first drop landed on my forehead, simply as if it tried to tease me with its proximity to my fairly short limbs. To my surprise, as the sweat-like substance reached my mandible, I realised insects do not sweat. As the second drop sneaked through, and I finally managed to grasp it in my claws, the vest broke open and rapidly got me rolling down a **tunnel**.  One could

*Beetles stay in the 'dung cocoon'*

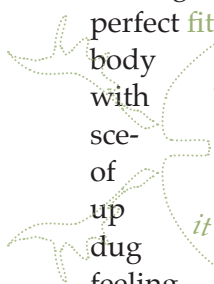
*until the first rain breaks it open.*

hear my cylindrical body rushing through the tight corridors. Round movement, face smearing the soil, spinning world of dirt, raising gushing headache, butt hitting the ground, cramping jaw, and I crashed into the





wall. My vest laid there, a cage broken apart, no longer so dreadful. It appeared to be a perfect fit, almost as if my body with grew into it. A new scene- time. A new of very opened in front my eyes. Tunnels running and down, dug with a rushed feeling, timidly curling in each direction, beyond horizon- darkness. My initial excitement blended with another feeling, this one hard for me to understand. It was something like the feeling of a never ending burrow, voice echoing perpetually, almost like a missing sixth leg. I counted them rapidly: 'One, two, three ... there were six of them indeed'.



*The size of a beetle is indeed based on a breeding ball it has been laid into*

Rumour has it that in the past there was a hedge. As unimpressive as it sounds, its presence was very much appreciated. Just





as the wind would cross the mountains and find its path in the narrow corridor of a valley, gather all its vigour and rush down the slope with verve, the hedge would simply stand there and take the hit. It stood there, reliable. The bush was like a guardian holding the stick at the back of your two-wheeled bike, when you were taking the first ride. It created a feeling of comfort and shelter for all various organisms to thrive. Birds would eat its sweet and juicy berries, a hedgehog would find shelter in its broken branches, mites would feast on its lush leaves, and then the ladybugs would devour the mites. Its warm and humid arms created a stage of polyphonic assemblage. Birds chirping, water splashing, insects buzzing, algae slowly rocking on the waves, trees cracking. One day the hedge disappeared and the whiff immediately flew into each corner of the valley. Cacophony at its pinnacle, the hiss of the wind, all different beings vanished into thin air.







And just like that after a brave few metres biking, you turned around and recognized no one was holding the stick any longer. You instantly lost your balance and hit the ground. Once you raised your head, all you could see was a barren land, asphalt fright.







Having roamed up and down, along and through the corridors, I began to feel like I knew my burrow inside out. That's when it hit me. A stone fell down, and as a matter of fact, I knew the place inside but not out yet. The whole ground started shaking and trembling under the weight of thousands of galloping hooves. A feeling of a warm swarm passing by. At that very instant I found myself outside the burrow. The sun had only just come up, yet the earth was surprisingly hot, with no dew left after the chilly night. I looked around and not only was the dew missing, but it seemed as if everything was missing. With dread in my thorax, I searched for the warmth and rowdy mess that had just penetrated the ground, but all I could grasp with my eyes were merely some shiny butts



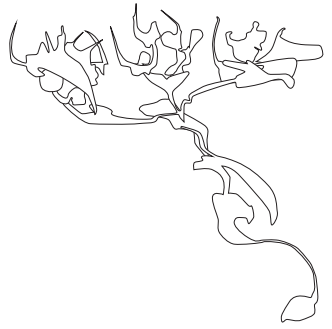


jumping up and down, bouncing away with an almost rigorous discipline. For a brief moment I could feel my abdomen imitating the bouncy motion, running amok after the herd. I crossed a crippled tree, an agave that once had sprouted, now rotten away and its seedlings laying bare with no soil to germinate on and a bold metal pole shooting high into the sky. Mountains of sand walked side by side to me- as it seemed, the only matter in sight that had been moving besides my abdomen. As this rampage continued, I lost track of how many dunes I passed by, or how many dunes had passed by me. I put my left leg down and felt direct heat, which instantly sobered me up. All my claws were burning up and only now did I recognize how bizarre and unavailing my attempt was. A wave of repugnance flooded my body. The monotony of the scenery had not changed slightly, the butts had already vanished in the horizon long ago and I was there exposed, brittle and frail.











laying Tag with a Shadow





I counted my legs again, six indeed, for a brief second they seemed alien, foreign to me. Fiercely burning up from the heat of the ground, a thrill went up my spiracle and I lost touch with the surroundings. I peeked at my own shadow, long and bold. It seemed as if it was mocking me with its cold arms and chilly features- only if it didn't run away each time I tried to catch it. A feeling of despair filled my body and I began to reminisce about the swirling tunnels of my burrow. The initial strangling web of curling tubes, dark alleys and dead ends now appeared more like a dear friend tucking you in their antennae after a long time apart. I could almost feel the humidity of the soft earth snuggling me in. Rapidly having made up my mind, I started jumping and following the new desire of returning





home, at peace with my mind. With each jump, my thoughts became calmer, quieter, and somehow emptier. "The warmth of a burrow!" I kept on repeating, each time with more force. Even though my mandible created the more grunting and profound sounds, my jumps reached lower and lower with time. At some point, I realised that not only were my claws barely lifting from the ground, but my, what used to be enthusiastic trot, transformed into a mere meander. At last, a mumble left my mandible: "Back home it is".

Once it was heard through the grapevine, or rather one once got the wind of, or it might have been whispered in the wind in fact. As a matter of fact, to tell the truth it might not have not happened at all. Yet, on a Sunday morning, it reached breaking news, or actually a local journal. Despite the rumours, a bubble was formed, a couple





of them indeed, or many one would say. Out of the flock of bubbles, someone said one more that was initially blown, one happened to fly away. All eyes laid on it while it reached its height, gazed into the temporary being, awaiting the pop. Not to burst your bubble, the pop never came to happen. It flew high, it flew far, the eyes laid on it loyally as it disappeared in the horizon. One has screamed "It popped, because what other possibility could be pouncing onto the horizon besides a pop!" As much of a pop as it might have been, it had not been a pop. It might have been a bang, crack, boom or a snap, but it wasn't that either. Many have said, some have whispered and even more have tittle-tattled, that truth be told it has risen up above the chimneys fuming from the morning kettles filled with coffee to their brim. It has gone above the tallest of the tallest tallgrasses and highest of the highest of stork nests, even above its inhabitants' outspread wings up in the sky. As it reached






the limits of the sky and quivered a little, almost at the brink of exhaustion, ready to shatter, it froze. Its vibrant colours, so brightly shimmering in the sun, have now faded into a foggy dome that dozed off on the thin layer of a cloud. A cloud, one has claimed to be of a structure of the thinnest white feather. A long, yet gracious, feather. The bubble settled in it seemingly as a key that found its door, a perfect fit. They drifted off together, someone remarked, similarly to an eye in a peacock's feather. The rumour says that now, from time to time, if you look at a cloud hovering high in the sky and cover one of your eyes, you can spot the bubble once more. It appears there for a brief second, splinters into small pieces to reveal the colours of one too many blown bubbles.

*There is a specific optical phenomenon, called cloud iridescence*





 *that appears as a gloom  
of rainbow colors in the  
sky.*

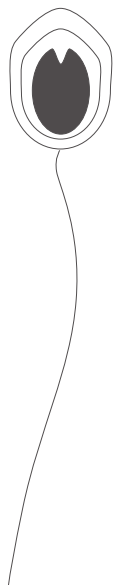














ook-it-all



My left middle leg was dragging behind my back left leg, right after my front right leg hauled in front of my middle right leg. What felt like years of voyage, at least a couple rotations of a planet, was actually a meagre trip, as my shadow was spying on me with its unaffected length. It crept over me, constantly poking fun at my struggles with the heat. Although cold blooded, the temperature became unbearable. I looked around with hope of a familiar mandible, yet all I could see was a desolated environment with no shelter. All of a sudden, I've entered a space filled with hubbub. Although I was deserted, surrounded by no-one but loose grains of

*The shadow is the longest early morning and early evening.*





sand, the noise was increasing. Disoriented I looked at my shadow, but now for a change it remained **silent**. My head filled with the

*Not many beetles can hear, yet if they do its the low frequencies like background noise. Such as aircraft, cars or wind turbines.*

noise of a buzzing fly on repeat, a whirr of a forever agitated dog, ground breaking open and a hail marching on the barren land. "I must be going mad!", I counted my legs, six indeed, and fell on the floor.

At first my claws started tingling, then my receptors got a whiff of something hard to forget, an odour in fine form that woke me up shortly after. I opened my eyes and there it was. I immediately connected the pile of hope to the many butts that have faded away a long time ago. Faeces themselves, awaited in front of me. Oddly enough, all of it was already pre-formed in perfect bubbled





shaped dung. In the spark of a moment, I did a full rotation of my abdomen, trying to find the ones who abandoned it there. The beetles- I suppose- who have formed them seemed to have dispersed already. I never thought of myself much of a dung bandit. "Got a little beetle, their name is Bandit, give a little bit, they took it *all*."

All mixed feelings, *Beetles do steal each others dung. Those are actually called dung bandits.* yet the opportunity was too tempting to miss! I crawled to the

nearest bubble with the remaining energy. The nearer I got to it, the more clumsy and lopsided it seemed. A perfect bubble shape? Rather an odd puffball, or even an oversized egg. I reached out with my claws, delicately, still unsure of my immoral act of stealing. We stroked each other smoothly and a feeling of immediate connection filled my body. A new wave of energy flooded me, straight away it appeared as if we were never apart. A fair companion, may it be! And so be it, I

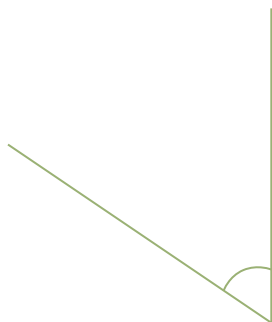




picked my six legs, actually I only counted till five, because I couldn't contain my excitement and contentedly jumped on the ball. Without notice, the ball started turning and rolling into unknown territory with an utter calmness. I raised my eyes to the sun, its burning rays changed into a warm bliss and for a second I felt it snuggling me just as a guardian **would**. All of a sudden,

I knew my **way**.

A  
*dung ball  
is being used  
as a cooling system, as  
its temperature is lower  
than the ground.*



*Beetles  
use the position  
of the Sun  
to navigate in a specific direction.*













ouble Crossing



Once upon a time, call it cliché, but upon a time it was. Well in bygone days if you'd rather, there was a peacock with a lush tail like no other. Its feathers reached over the hills and far away. Each time its beak would split open, one could feel the sweet melody resonating through and with the dancing grasses. The sound penetrated the ground almost like a thrill of an adventure that manifests itself in goosebumps and electrically standing hairs. Squeezed from the ground, the melody would push itself up to eventually curl up and lay down calmly in the form of dew. And so, each break of day, the peacock would carry out its play by opening its tail wide and chanting delicately to the sun. It

*Normally peacocks are known for their utterly ugly voice.*

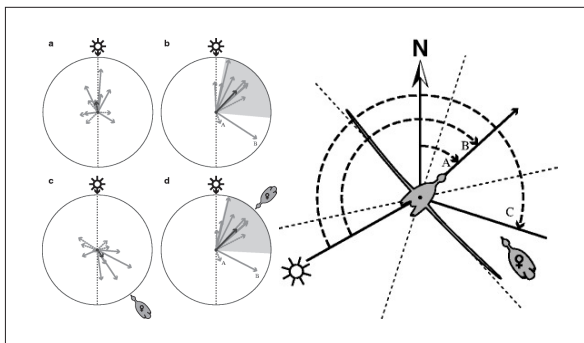




would fight ineffectively for the celestial's body's attention. As days passed, in spite of its profound attempts and bodily twists, the sun remained silent. As it happened to be, although the peacock carried itself with utmost allure, it wore a definitely charming cape and a surely elegant crown, it bore no colours besides white. Therefore each dawn, yet with new vigour, believing to display its vibrant hues, it would position its tail to the sun. Slightly to the right, so the colours are reflected at their utmost *intensity*. Its effort- aimless, the shine- lacking. Each day, the peacock remained unanswered. Aiming to catch the rays, it kept on turning and turning. Persistently spreaded its tail. Swivelled impulsively, similar to a dog lost running after its tail. With time, the spins became more and more turbulent, its play more bitter and fierce. Its tail- lingering far

*Peacocks position themselves right to the Sun's Azimuth when mating. It allows them to display theirs colors best.*





*Roslyn Dakin, Peacocks orient their courtship displays towards the sun, 2009*

ahead. About to collapse, whilst swirling in madness, at the last of its endurance, just as the sun was about to set, a white feather flew away. Tuned in a breeze crossing by, the feather did a couple of last pivots and slowly roamed to the ground. The sky turned dark, grasses appeared to have stood still, dew had long ago vanished into thin air, and silence walked through the scenery. Whilst the moon rose, a stream of light pierced through the dense darkness. Seemingly enough to cause it to stir, it once again moved firmly





with grace and consolation. In the place where the feather had rested, a lighthouse arose. Ever since, people have claimed that once lost at sea, one can catch a glimpse of a peacock's eye within the steadily turning beam of light. A lighthouse luminescence of a thousand sun rays, guiding those astray.











Me and my dung spent a long moment rolling around, it seemed each time I would push slightly, it would push me back with even more force. Clumsily, yet together, we smirked at the landscape, bouncing against each other like two fat salmons going upstream. What appeared like competing, was simply for the both of us a shared need. Instinct leading our way to what I believed at that point, felt like home. Occasionally, I would jump on the dung again, get slightly closer to the sun and *dance*. The sun would immediately *A dance allows beetles to position themselves in relation* tuck us in, and lead us forward.



*to the*

of the ball, I got to know my dung a tiny bit better. "Ten





turns ahead, a new bump, cutting a few corners- a modest curve, spinning downhill- a small imperfection." It was cheery, warm and soft, almost like spreading your claws amongst a mushy moss. Forest bedding, making you feel safe. We wandered long, just as my shadow had cramped underneath the weight of the dung, a mighty cloud covered the skies. Instinctively, I clung to my dung, finding consolation in its muck. Yet, my bubble seemed to have another idea. The moment I clutched my claws into its surface, it started to rapidly roll, almost into the gloom of the sky. Surrounded by murk, turning round and round, I lost control over what was up and down. What seemed like a betrayal at its finest, the dung seemed to enjoy tremendously. We were rapidly rolling together, as a ferocious fog besieged us. A grey void, trembling inside, I tried to look around, a lengthy shadow seemed to be running after us, taking a swing with its long jaws. It took a vast circular turn

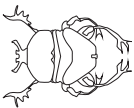


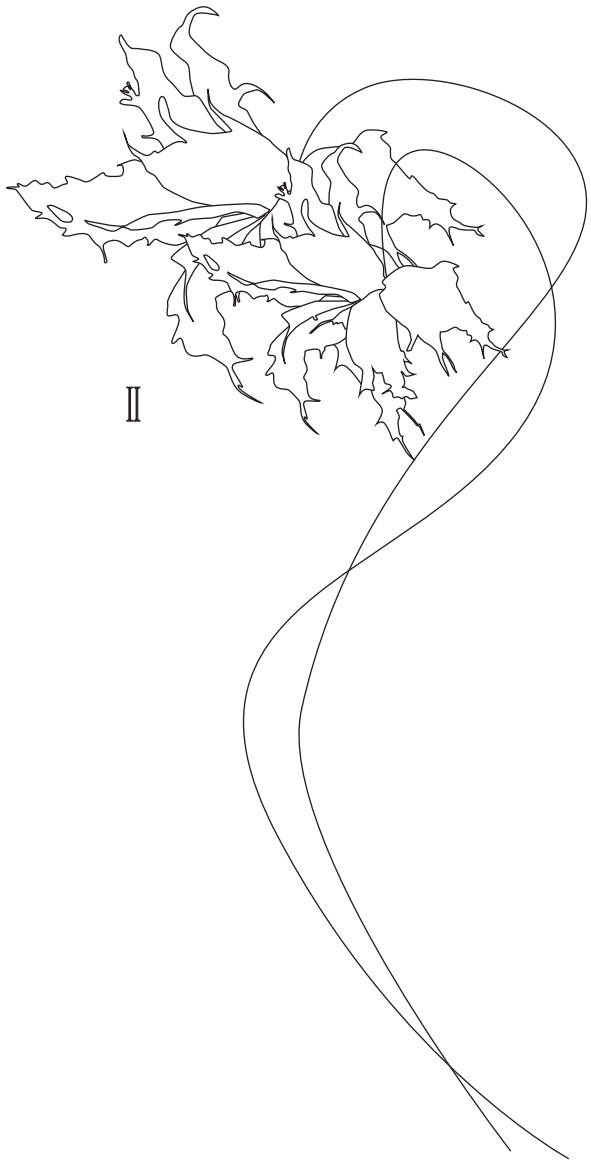


almost as if it was gathering its momentum to pummell us from the back. If the shadow had managed to chase us, it would have most likely knocked me off the dung, instead we rolled together into an abyss. I looked up, for one last time, and only now I recognized that all this time the shadow had been repeatedly rotating around a vast pole of light. The silhouette, never chasing us in the first place it seemed, only created from itself. I closed my eyes, prepared for the hit. Thick air hit my **palps**, tasting for what I imagined the end to be like. I counted my legs once again “Six, five, four ...” .

*A body part  
of a beetle used for  
taste and inspection of a prey.*







ACT

II



**oll of Trials**



*from Campbell*





At first I heard a massive splash, but was not sure whether it was my internal organs having a charade or on the contrary whether it was simply me that became a part of the whale's internal organs. I found myself amongst the weirdest of creatures. Long-tongued, soft-skinned, warp-shaped swimming anomalies. Thick necked, slimy structured, oval freaks. They bore not a single leg to count. Suddenly, my dung appeared in sight, floating carelessly. Well rather, what used to be my dung, before the whole jumping off the cliff stuff. It fitted perfectly amongst all the other freaks. A trickster in a perfect shape and form, approached me from the bottom. We brawled underwater, awkwardly rebounding against each other. Gasping in anger, I took a whiff of air- my last resort as it **occured**.

*Some beetles are natural scuba divers. They take a bubble of air with them when*





Bubble-shaped brutally hit once again, flying me above the water. Fish fins flashing in front of my eyes, I found myself afloat. My body began to move against my will, repeatedly raising up and down. Once again among walking mountains, yet now made of water. They grasped me almost as the wind would grasp a grain of sand, dragging me along. What seemed to be a broken landscape, was in fact one broad curling wave. I looked over my antennae and saw the dung-freak drifting in the distance. With each climb of the water, it swam further and further. Bubble-bodied bully, egg-shaped harasser, buoyant-carved weirdo! Another break of the wave, and eventually my dung vanished in the horizon. My head was filled with anger. Yet my claws were stuck in an empty position, almost as if something just fell out of them. Still clutching, grasping. The memory of caressing it has now floated away. Even though separated, our bodies shared the same mountains of water.







A warping landscape, alive surface, light briskly flaring and jumping with each wave. When looking at the sea's horizon often one can see a flying broad ship, a line of rolling windmills or a puzzling light. At the first squinted glance a monster with a stout tail, in fact transforms into a simple pole standing upright, an enormous shoal of fish appears as a bare reflection of a cloud. The imaginations jump in front of your eyes, almost like a childhood memory of swinging up and down. You could swear you touched the biggest of the biggest leaves, a young gentleman with a tilted hat was awaiting his turn, and an enormous dog in the distance wagging its tail joyfully (how huge it was!). Nothing mattered as long as the next swing was higher than the previous one. In fact, it also didn't matter whether the dog was humongous, or if the gentleman had a hat or a tiara, whether the leaves were simply





ungraspable. No matter what, you would tell the story of what you saw beyond the horizon.

Blurred vision, scenes reaching skyline— or a simple Fata Morgana? What if those images were not mere illusions? Not your inner young mythomaniac coming alive each time a mirage pops up at sea?

It happens to be, far beyond land, in the middle of the water, there lies a giant ruin of many scaffoldings. In the past it was built of rough cylinders and high cranes, now it stands empty with forgotten memories of its blinding flares. Once a construction emerged from the ground, a never sleeping monstrosity, home to many, whose lives were intertwined with its cogs and gears. It used to bear strong winds, resiliently stood still against tough weathers. Sturdy and rugged from the outside, like its inhabitants, one time the gigantic building let a fizz of vapour inside. The smoke roamed through and





across, ignited itself, and just like that with a spark- the colossus burst apart. Its flare took over the giant as it ignited from the **inside**. A dark liquid flew across the waters, like blood

*The Piper Alpha oil rig exploded in 2017 due to ignition of a gas leakage.* gushing out after pulling out a parasite. The titan flamed and smoked for days, letting out its last breaths. Just as it exhaled a last spark, dead and silent waters surrounded it. A dark cape of nothing else than oil fell on the shoulders of the ocean, blocking the light within the water. The scarce rays of the sun, which managed to squeeze through it, lined up vertically, with no spare room to **shine**,

all that remained was total darkness. After a long time, all of a sudden, a glimmer popped up, and a twinkle somewhere else. An invisible mass stirred the waters, moved across it in a dreamy manner. Just as a first flicker would shiver, another one followed, and all of a sudden the pitch black space

*Light becomes vertical after a hundred meters in the water.*





began to foam, whirl and roll over with a glimmer of hundreds of mirrors. A live flock of fish with common sense filled the space, mirror. It serves them or what seemed is vertical works as a to be the giant scales, where the light with gears and cogs iridescence on fish of its own-working together as a whole. With swirls and time the black oil spill faded away. Until one day one could barely notice its presence. Only distinguishable by the translucent oily substance resembling a rainbow that spread over the water. The dark sea welcomed the light in again, and eventually the fish vanished. Nevertheless, from time to time the shoal comes to the surface of the water once again. With no barrier to hide behind and absorb its shine, the fish mirror the most uncanny shapes and forms. Their reflection delicately floats above the horizon, a mirage depicting a giant of many scaffoldings, a lost ship at the sea, or even a dog wagging its tail joyfully beyond the horizon.









Floating around, the waters quietly pushed me forwards, into the flat asleep landscape. I was not sure whether I was freely roaming in the middle of nowhere, lost at sea, nothing to lay my eyes on. Underwater, something kept on nibbling at my claws. Eventually, I took a deep breath and dove down to look for the nibbler, yet the scenery remained empty. On guard, with each peck, I became more and more agitated and kept making immediate inspections. But I saw nothing besides the usual shades of green, ultraviolet and blue. As the nibbling became unbearable, *Beetles see only in blue*, I began punching *green and ultraviolet* ether, disturbing the still waters. I thought of a long rosehip stick that would perfectly work as my leg at the moment. A body extension of a nettle leaf, briar and a sharp thistle! How aggravating it was! All of a





sudden a rose petal crossed my way. Raising my eyes, shocked, I gazed into the horizon. A rose arose from the landscape, showing off its thorns. I felt a peck once again. This time promising myself to be merciless against the invisible nibbler, I clutched my claws ruthlessly around my limb. As piercing pain penetrated my claw, I fearfully looked underwater. The most rational assessment of the situation would be that I had completely lost my mind, as a thistle had spiked right through it. I counted my legs again, six indeed, one of them with an addition of an extra spike. At the brink of a breakdown, I tried to bring my mind to a space of comfort and consolation. At first an image of a steady starry night crossed my head, just for a stronger image to give in right after. A round shape emerged from the horizon, a reflection of the sun? Burning inside, a thrill went through my body. A mirage of a roundy dung levitated in the distance. Haven't even noticed that the nibbling had stopped, or







the thistle had disappeared, I swam after the Fata Morgana.

An unusual vibration reached my antennae, a previous frequent roaring tone shifted dramatically into a shush. A tall wave lifted me up and I noticed more waves seemed to be breaking apart in the distance. Was it another mirage that crossed my wicked mind? Suddenly, with no time to assess the situation, a big gush of water swallowed me with its foaming mass just to spit my cylindrical abdomen out on the shore a moment later. The Sun peaked, I found myself in a short, yet soft and cosy shadow of a monstrous creature. I awaited a groan, but the monster stood still and bland like a pile of gravel. After a moment it broke wind, releasing a feisty creak sound. As I came closer I noticed a slight movement, a mature cockroach was sitting on its lap, numbingly staring into the distance with a blank grin on its head. It was performing a





bizarre routine, almost enchanted, carefully cleaning its antennae, licking each leg, dusting off its wings, to eventually come back to polish its antennae again. It repeated the process endlessly, I once got wind of the invincible immortal insect, but what I saw was far from the rumours I had heard. I took a step further, and mumbled carefully: "Do you happen to know what the monstrosity you sit on is?" Almost piercing me right through with its gaze, it spit out an answer, without breaking its ritual of cleaning: "Once at sea, with its pride and men of plenty. Now it deteriorates, with each wave taking the memory of its days." Baffled a bit, I followed: "But why is it, old wise beetle, that you are resident to such a decay?" "Leader on land, lifting the left, long gone into a living, I lustrate." "... " humbly, I tried asking another question, yet its face came back to its hollow and dull glare into the distance. With an unusual ecstasy, his act of cleaning continued. Another insect with a gleam of





an emerald appeared from the abyss of the wreckage. Dragging the cockroach's body,

*Emerald wasp is known for injecting venom into cockroaches that changes them into zombies.*

*High on the poison and dopamine, probably in ecstasy, they perform act of cleaning awaiting their death.*

*The wasp uses their corpse to lay eggs and for a future offspring to devour the body of the cockroach.*

indifferent to my presence, it peeked at me briefly.

“I would not trust a word this nut case has told you, as there is as much wisdom left in this piece of corpse, as there is in the ruin we are aboard.”











I took a last glimpse at the sea behind me, but this time for once I had no hard feelings. The sun brushed me slightly, almost as if it was whispering the way I should follow. I tried understanding the words of the cockroach, but none made sense to me. So much vitality in a broken scene. It was hard for me to understand why one would intend to stay within the dead this way. Or was it me that perceived it as lifeless? In front of me, the forest spread its roots in a mysterious, yet inviting act. A thrilling swarm of steam rose above it. The humidity coming from within made me reminisce about the comfortable surface of my dung. The deeper within the woods, the more vivid smells reached my antennae, the sweet moist mushrooms coming underneath a thick layer of huge leaves. A popping





*Some trees  
give away  
minerals and  
water even to  
dead trunks,  
keeping it  
'alive'.*

lush green moss here and there and most importantly: the delightful and pungent aroma of faeces. None of which, just to be clear, were anywhere near the fragrance of my own dung. Swiftly, the scents appeared to have faded away. The pleasant dimness of the trees as well. I stumbled over a root, which consequently ripped out from the loose ground. Looking up, sun rays hit my eyes. I was under an open sky. For a second, I believed I found myself in a forest glade, but the longer I judged the circumstances, the less believable that idea was. The ground was entirely covered in recently dead branches, with no lichen revitalising the forest bed. Trees seemed to have collapsed on themselves. Only hardy trunks stood still and firm in the arid ground, with hope of a new **sapling**.







Amongst this havoc, on top of one of the broken trunks, another beetle seemed to be sunning as if everything was intact. Excited to find a relative, I screamed: "Someone sting me, if it isn't another beetle!" It slowly lowered its sight at me, but omitted crossing my eyes. I repeated: "Hey you! Down here!", but failed to get his attention once again. As a last attempt, I yelled furiously: "YOU! Blase-O-Belittle- body of a beetle!"

"I hear you", said a low, hoarse and rusted, but relaxed voice. Awkward silence fell. I climbed up the bark, to see it lay wide open, with a weird satisfaction, spreading its wings.

Violent  
greens,  
shady  
brights

*Rose Chafers are known for flying very fast. They are also said to fuel themselves with the energy of the sun.*

and sparky hues were nowhere similar to its drowsy body language. "Did you ignore me all this time?" "Well as it happens, I did not. I had noticed you.", it declared. "I





just simply did not put extra energy into responding.”

“You see, I woke up today with the Sun, went across four, well, maybe three rosehip blooms. And since the Sun is at its warmest, I am taking a rest here.”

“Already since then?! You have been unwinding here since then?!”

“Well, why would I not? The weather is lovely and this trunk fits me very well.”

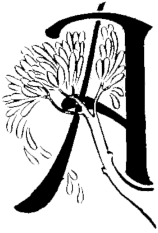
“Why don't you, my friend, go across a couple of more bushes to collect more pollen or join me on my travels? I promise you, you would come across not only roses, but all kinds of others like sweet poppies, daisies and elderflowers. All the pollen in the world could be yours. Once you collect enough, you won't need to worry anymore about daily gathering struggles!” - I screamed enthusiastically. “Well, and what would I do with myself then?” - it grumped back. “You could relax all you want!” In response it snorted with laughter.





“Oh silly, and what am I doing right now?  
Besides that, for all I know, behind this  
leftover of a forest, one will find no sweet  
flower, but whining grass.”





pproach the Inmost City







The longer I walked, the more prominent was the feeling of desolation. Every now and then, I would naturally count my legs to simply distract myself. Somehow each time I barely managed to count until five I could not spit out the last number. Hence, there I was, me and my one unspoken leg. I heard what seemed to be a dog growl, but a moment later changed diametrically into a sonorous whirr. Immediately connecting it with the once heard sound of a fly buzzing on repeat, I close my body shut, prepared for the blazing hail. I waited a moment, still clutching to myself, but the sky remained silent. This time still standing, I raised my eyes to the Sun with hope of guidance, just to find a dense and foul-smelling fog above me. Having completely lost direction, still





with a screech in my antennae, I found myself once again amongst burning dry, blazing terrain.

This one was solid ground, full of slender stones and timid dim light. Although halted in time,

*Some species adapt to the cities temperature and become dependable on their micro climate.*

it seemed somehow

fearfully alive. The sturdy blocks peered over me with their vast fronts. From a gulf beneath one of them a bitter rat jumped out. It spotted me in an instant and it opened its

*Rodents are one of beetles predators.*

jaw wide, marching at me with immense claws. Already having forgotten about the unspoken sixth leg, I picked up all of my limbs at once and ran for my life. I could swear that at each corner the rat was multiplying. In fact, after a couple of jumps and spurts, there was not only one furious rodent chasing me, rather a massive well-organised herd. Each of them had an even







longer two legged shadow. I swear, one had the tail of a dog, wagging it joyfully, it pushed me into a wide-open space. I looked around for a leaf to hide under, but all I could grasp were spire colossal slabs reaching the skies in the far distance. Each time I took a turn, inspecting the landscape in search of shelter, a new rat occurred. Hastily I rotated on my legs, after a moment all I could see were rats and rats. Slimy fur, sharp claws and deep eyes within each one I could foresee my end. Surrounded, I began to shrink. A strong bright light came from behind their backs, projecting their shadows that have already stroked me. For a moment I could hear their little greedy voices all over me. The shadows bounced on top of my body, laughed tremendously, judged every little imperfection. "No wonder the beetle counts its legs so squarely. If I had no mind to count on, I would also wish for an extra leg!" I tried escaping the charade, but each time I would take a step, another heinous





voice would catch me. "Yes, yes! Move those legs! Those little steps of yours are just adorable!" I froze, with no will of moving, as any manoeuvre seemed to be pointless. My limbs - useless, I closed my eyes. Thought of the one time I looked at the sky in the middle of the night. I have never before seen the sky so bright and clear. All stars shone with their utmost intensity. Truth be told, I'm lying. To be honest, I have never seen the sky at night at all. I have no idea what a star should look like, they say a beetle can tell the way from a glance at one. Somehow, I was always afraid that once I would spot one, I could get as far as the nearest dull pile of shit. I would encounter it, shining bright and clear, yet it would show that there is not much of a beetle in my cylindrical body. My leg counting- off point, is no proof of me representing the insect community. I opened my eyes again, ready to see a jaw steadily demolishing my abdomen. To my surprise, a rather contrary image was unveiled in





front of me. Amongst all wicked gloom, one odd shape seemed to be reaching out to me. Comforting claw, seemingly safe and solid, in a welcoming gesture opened its paws. An initial feeling of bliss and relief mingled with fear and doubt. Why should I simply fall for that again? One step forward, emotional input, settling down was never for me. Luring beast, tempting parasite, seducing traitor! For a brief second, in a matter of a blink, the shadow turned into a familiar round shape. I heard my hollow body resonate almost like a stone hit against a frozen lake on a freezing day. Ice cracking, I reached out with my claw and grabbed onto the shapeshifter. In one smooth motion, all shadows vanished into thin air. I looked upon my body and recognized all this time it was no other shadow than my own, that was dancing all over me mockingly. A row of lights shone at me from each direction. Rapid run, brisk glow, something vast and rowdy stomped right next to my right front





antennae. Herds of luminescence were marching at a high pace, in straight paths it burrowed tunnels of gleam within the dark of the turmoil. Screech and squeal, whirl and hum, round and loud, on repeat, a crowd hitting the road. A dance of mice at night, secretly conquering food at the moment of invigilance. A rapid storm breaking the skies apart! A swish and swoosh! A humongous rhinoceros pacing with no effort! Dumbfounded, I stood paralyzed. My shadow kept on crawling and twisting all over me, with each light igniting its malicious dance. I stood frozen... I stood frozen! As a matter of fact I stood solid, I stood stable and untouched! Only now have I recognized that the glowing evils can not hurt me. In fact, they could have never hurt me, as it was only me that depicted them as vicious, yet their nature was nothing but good. Giggling, I curled up my six legs and started rocking my cylindrical body against the hard terrain. I paid more





attention to the glowing beasts, and for a brief second I could almost admit that there was something beautiful about them. Their flickering reminded me of a once spotted blue-butterfly-group. It always seemed as if among so many, there is a rumour being passed. Just as the first one blinks, a charade of blinks follows in an unfamiliar form of **understanding**. Before you know it, the flutter flies away in one direction,



*Butterflies can communicate by flickering their wings, as they see ultraviolet.*

yet with carefully set directions. How? A in-between butterfly-chit-chat I assume. I took a glimpse at the lights again. Similarly, they were following a set of rules unknown to me. A well organised matter of communication. I tried aligning my frequency to theirs, ineffectively. Although not alike, somewhere I found peace with us being side-by-side. My shadow kept on jumping steps forwards and backwards, but this time there was





something cheerful about it. I picked up on shadows' tune, hopped two legs to the side, two legs back, and two legs ahead. Straight on, in the direction of home.













**INTERLUDE (get those chips)**



Amid high rise buildings, curling streets, blinding blinking of the cars and rats crawling, there stood a house. An old building was said to once be surrounded by nothing but a plain field, now at the heart of the city's chaos. A deteriorating home within which one could find a story of a similarly ageing man, and his peculiar CD. Among the compact discs you might have come across in your life, you will surely remember one from your childhood. The one where you, together with not a very skilled group of peers, attempted to make a cover of a pop song. What at the time seemed like the best birthday present ever, has now long ago collected a thick layer of dust in the depths of one of the cupboards. This story is not about one of those. Another one you might know regards





another disc containing your favourite album as a teen. Used one too many times, scratched almost till a point of no recognition. When played, there is not much melody left, besides a glitch of its original sound. The tale is neither about this one. Lastly, there is a story of the one pristine compact disc, or rather the idea of it. It was a disc consisting of a bundle of, generically speaking, classical music, how come you might ask? Well, not many people had ever seen it, or ever listened to it, besides the sporadic whistle or a hum coming from the old man. One time the CD perfectly round, unsealed from the box, it immediately found its perfect-fit place within a portable disc player, which the man had never let go of. Fiercely clutching onto the personal stereo, they became one: old-man-o-stereo. As the days passed, one could believe that the man would change the disc, to spice up his repertoire. Yet, the tale said that the CD, once it was tightly fixed within the stereo, had never seen the





daylight for long after. The man adored it so benevolently, and so affectionately, that after a period of time, he forgot about its existence in the first place. In fact, not only had he forgotten about the disc, but it seemed he had forgotten about everything. A green tree turned into a vast orange cloud; a shabby crow into an exquisite beauty; and batteries within his disc player, into the melody itself. The thinking seemed to be straightforward, insightful and on point. Once the batteries were in the player, the old man began his hum and whistle. However, when they were empty- so seemed to be the music. Therefore the old man's love shifted dramatically from the long forgotten CD, towards the batteries themselves. What joy he had, once every year, under a christmas tree, when he found a 20 pack of the longest lasting batteries. "So much music! Oh thank you, thank you!", he would shout, with an innocent and honest smile. He cared for them with utmost diligence. One day, gifted with a





rechargeable battery station, he believed to charge the melody itself. Carefully took each one by one out, blew the dust off, polished it and left overnight. Just to put them back first thing in the morning and began to hum. His wife would brawl with him endlessly, carefully and sharply explaining the borders and meanings of each object and matter in sight. However, it was a fight against her own windmills, as nothing could stop the old man from enjoying himself in his reality. Although they were both stuck within it, one was fighting against it, the other was simply being. As days passed, the hum and whistle that came from the old man became more and more disconnected from the original tune. Until one day the whistle stopped altogether. Rumour has it that after all these years, the CD was eventually released from the stereo. Perfectly sealed in time, without a single scratch, round and gleam, it played the music for one last time. Nevertheless, its melody, sweet and graceful, was nowhere





near the one coming from the old man's  
hum.



END OF INTERLUDE (CRUMBLES OFF)

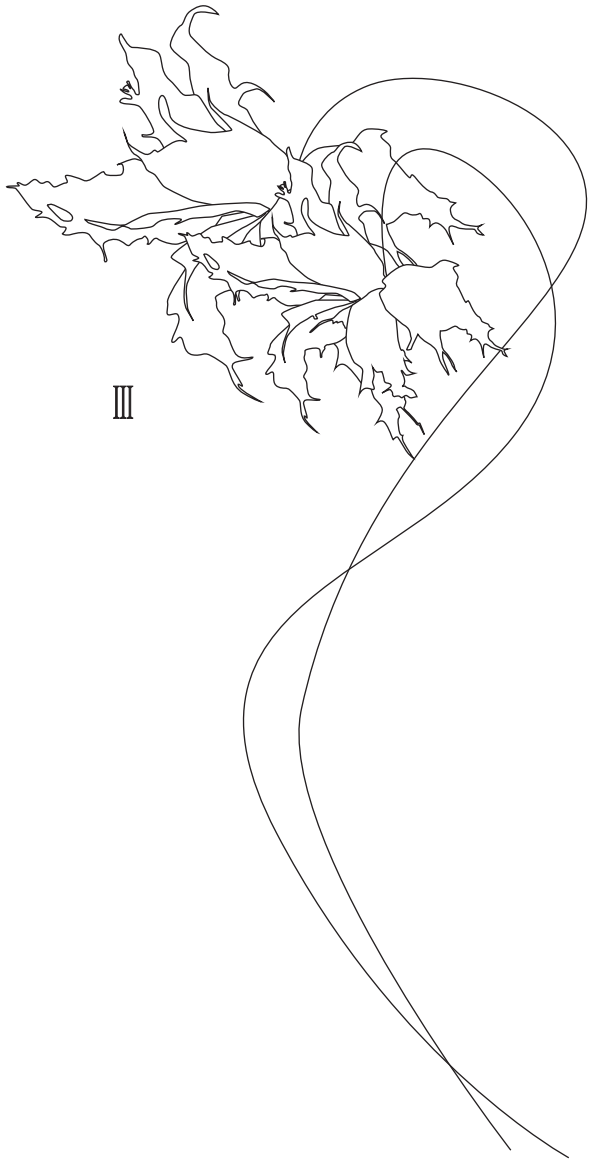






ACT

III





ot an Amber, Nor Glass



The sun seemed to have already slowly been setting, as on my way back the tree stump stood empty, with no sunbathing beetle in sight, the wreckage stood empty at the shore. For a little while it all had seemed like a fever dream, as if all of it was a luring rainbow and whilst lost in a race after it, once almost graspable, it vanished. Yet deep inside - or actually not so deep, as I'm well aware of my bodily dimensions- I knew if truth be told, it was what it was. I took a glimpse of the horizon, to see the sea unhurriedly welcoming the sun. The water was pulling the planet down leisurely, just like the dew pushed out of the earth, awakening early in the morning. Looking down, I could see my head, my antennae and mandible reflecting in the waters of upcoming and fleeing waves. It





seemed as if my head became a bit slimmer, in fact not so cylindrical, as much as simply oval now. My antennae seemed to be fairly ok lengthwise and my eyes at an even distance. For a second, I recalled a memory, I always used to weep once I spotted trees at an even distance. Massive trunks, old and mighty as they are, potent and fruitful, fearful on their own, they didn't scare me. Yet, somehow their being - trivial once only they were paired at a uniform pace. Trees with no voice of their own, close enough simply not to rip the earth between them, yet too far to not be able to take rest under each other's shadow. Torn of all their glory, they clutched into the soil, awaiting. My eyes even indeed, were nowhere near half of their glory, they would mourn no more. My vision got blurry, as the waves began to foam distorting my body into a fish's-roe-like-bundle . "Bubble-bodied-bully, aren't I?", a thought came across my mind. "I had no clue my wings could be so appealing."





It took me a moment to recognize that among the vision within the bubbles of the foam another subject popped up. Alluring indeed, in fact none other than my own dung. Carried effortlessly by the water, it took rest at the shore, lied there, almost as if it was a dandelion fluff, flown away with the first puff of summer. Ecstatic, my abdomen filled with utmost joy, it began to rapidly jump up and down. Yet, unsure about our current relationship, I had to quickly control myself. Awkwardly not knowing how to act, I greeted the longed for friend with a cheery butt bounce. It responded alike. At that very moment I craved to roll it until no bump would stay on its surface, pinpoint a new imperfection of my own abdomen or simply dance endlessly on top of it. Yet, nothing could have expressed it as well as silence. Butt-bouncing silence. "Let's go home, my fat salmon." I rolled my dung into the water in one smooth motion. Climbed on top of it once more and pushed away the shore. The





wreckage at the beach emitted a last, deep, long creak, as it disappeared in the distance. I groaned back, or rather attempted to do so, as a way to say goodbye. Only after this nostalgic pause did I notice freezing water reaching my back legs. To my surprise, the dung barely stayed afloat, swallowing more vast amounts of water. Chokingly, slowly, we were sinking. It seemed our ways needed to be parted away again. This time I knew what I should do, so be it. My round body weighed too much for my bubble to take us both home safely. I stroked my dung sincerely, just as the sea creeped in between my wings, assured, I took a jump into the abyss of wobbling water mountains. Again I became lost amongst water droplets, like a loose grain, plainly following the course of the tide. This time, no wave separated us in sight, rather a slow flow easily pushed us away. A horizon gently inhaled the dung. Or maybe was it matter-of-factly only the Sun hiding behind its crest? All of a sudden, an





unbearable itching came from just below my spiracle. An untactful insect has just hopped off my back, giving my back leg a strong feeling of relief. "Pardon! Oh mites-rides! My apologies! I must have briefly dropped off and completely, unforgivingly and utterly missed my drop-off! What a day, what a day!" As rapidly as the tiny, yet lusty mite

*Commonly called beetle lice, these mites use beetles for hitchhiking.*

occurred, just as fast it then swam away towards its destination.

I began to giggle. As my calculations were truly and absolutely doomed from the start! I have always had not six, but fourteen legs to begin with! Farewell to my just acquainted fellow, I immediately felt its weight off my thorax. Gazed into the horizon in the search of my dung with now hope of a slimmed down body weighing less. Dung no more, it became a round and grim moon, bright and clear as ever, reflecting thousands of sun





rays and more, it floated slightly above the skyline . It had appeared to blind the skies themselves, almost to a point of complete darkness. I took a glimpse up at the clouds, they looked like mountains that turned upside down. Merrily, their peaks hung above in a teasing and tremulous matter. Almost as if any second one could break off and hulkingly fall on my head, afloat, mountains not of sand, nor sea. Amongst its valleys and basins, a star showed up, here and there another. Grains amidst the sky. I took a glance at them, countless (well, certainly far more beyond fourteen). They shone bright and clear, just like I thought they would. And there it was. Maybe I got the wits. Maybe I was a beetle in the end.









arting with a Portion of Potion



Last but not least, a hearsay was passed around about a beetle. Beetle-o-bubble in theory, or rather that's what it believed to be. Depending on perspectives, it was perfectly round, generally speaking, most of the time. Quite talented at dancing, sadly unaware of its swivelling gift. Let's say that if it could be a stone, it would be one of those flat ones that bounces effortlessly over the surface of water. Straight to the other edge of a lake. Not only was it a gifted dancer, but also a gem of its own. Its chitin layer shone with all possible shades of forget-me-nots. At the brightest of the days, it would climb on its dung and twist meticulously, reflecting thousands of rays. Almost like a lighthouse spreading gloom at night. However, amongst its best features was its strong concern for its dung. It cared





for its friends with an utmost delicacy, rolling it besides itself, everywhere they went. Gently kept it at the top of its claws only, as if it was a bubble about to pop any minute. Blissful and calm were the days they spent together. Nevertheless, over time, the longer they were together, the more anxious and alert the beetle became. All of life's threats, dung bandits and the earth itself! All too unbearable! With its best intention, yet in full agony, one sundown the beetle decided to bury its bubble. It dug deep burrows and burrows, tunnels over steeps and shallows. Roaring labyrinths, far shelters, turning maze, and a tangled knot far away from dangers and threats. Perfectly sealed in time, it abandoned its dung in the depths of its own warren. It weeped long and sweet over their parting. Seemingly the beetle lost its mind, forgot how to take steps, or in fact overlooked the existence of its legs in the first place. Substitutely, it began to roll as if it was a ball. Until one day, amongst all the





barren and arid land, a seedling arose. Dung no longer bore long grass-like branches that grew high and **brave**, its roots thick and

*Cape Restio is a plant that produce large hard nuts that look and smell like antelope droppings. It tricks the beetles into planting them.*



solid. With its lush bush, no whiff of wind could enter their sheltered idyll. The tale says that having spotted the grass swiftly dancing with the wind, a remorse of their own twisting and joyful bouncing awoke the beetle from the madness. It looked at its legs for one last time, miscounted them rigorously. It climbed in a frenzy to the top of the tallest of the plant's sprouts. With effort, it continuously and repeatedly added up its limbs, almost as if it was terrified of turning back into the ball halfway through. With each step, the beetles' body became more weighty and the stalk would bend more fiercely. Nearly at the top, already





envisioning themselves together swinging in an uncontrolled routine, the next wind blows about to break the grass. Just as one could hear the fibres breaking, the plant barely lifting beetles heft, the Sun came up. With the morning rays delicately stroking the beetle's abdomen, helpless, it eventually changed its silhouette. Shapeshifter itself, yet no ball, but a light water droplet. Seemingly as if it was a leisurely accumulated dew at dawn. Together with the stalk they took a last pivot.

*Beetles iridescence allows them to look like water droplets on leaves - as a form of camouflage.*

Similarly to a tear, it slowly roamed down alongside the grass's skin. It found rest at its roots, deep into its own warren. The asleep land no longer, one could hear a cacophony once more.

Or as they say, maybe it was the wicked mind's Fata morgana, lost amongst the walking dunes.











End of story,  
*thank you and farewell!*





pilogue



This thesis takes its inspiration from the need to find consolation and beauty within decay. It came from a grandfather figure, who happened to have dementia. Slowly fading away himself, his reality became more and more detached from our reality. Although very sturdily rooted in the factual, it grew into a fantasy of everyday life. After a long fight against his evils, becoming a part of his world proved to be the easiest way to adapt. This thesis is an exploration of what that reality felt like, if one romanticised the way he did.

The basis for the romanticising lies within iridescence, a natural phenomenon that appears in vibrant, often rainbow colours. As a result of reflecting light, not pigment, it can be spotted in such things as bubbles, oil





spills or minerals. This form of coloration, quite mythical of its own, is often used for communication by various insects and animals, as a defence mechanism or as a way to camouflage. In this thesis it serves as a connection between myth and the real world. Each of the stories within this thesis encompasses an iridescent element. The iridescence is seen as an embodiment of the goddess Iris (gr. rainbow; halo of the Moon), from who the name of the phenomenon takes its origin. Her personification was broadened to all occurring forms of a rainbow in nature. The goddess therefore serves as an unbiased connection between such things as the beauty of peacocks' feathers, and threat within an oil spill. Similarly to the symbolism of the rainbow itself, as the connecting path between the mortals and gods.

Iris, often depicted as a young woman with wings that carries a caduceus and a





pitcher, does not have much mythology of her own. The very few remaining monuments are proof of little or no cult of her own. This piece of text was formulated as a form of hijacking the history and filling in the unknown gaps, connecting the occurring iridescence in nature with a myth. To make sure the structure is responding to those of myths, the thesis is solely based on *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers*, written by Christopher Vogler. The titles of the chapters are inspired directly from the book. It tries to include all archetypes of characters and follows each of the stages within three acts, besides the climax.

Personal speculation claims that there is indeed not much evidence of a cult of Iris within the anthropocentric world, as it took place outside of our perception. By involving the figure of Iris, it gives space for narratives and worldviews that reach





beyond the anthropocentric focus on humans as sole narrators, subjects and the ones that determine world-making. In shifting our perception towards centering planetary understanding to include the more-than-human as active agents we begin to form new understandings of how we share our ecosystem and space amongst each other.

Specifically, this narrative takes the perspective of a beetle- an iridescent insect, that devotedly rolls a piece of dung. The round ball of faeces is a representation of a bubble, one of the embodiments of Iris. Hence the rolling is a form of a cultivation of the goddess herself, its vibrant colours- the reminiscence of Iris. To envision what a myth to an insect would be, it takes its fundamentals from the school of thought of Joseph Campbell, who argued that myths regardless their origin, all have similar structure and motives. Therefore it speculates that in an insect's myth the





structure would remain similar, yet its content would be based on natural science. The thesis presents a romanticised version of scientific facts, each story is based on the real world. To reflect upon the concept of time from a beetles' angle, the whole story takes place during the duration of a day. Nevertheless, it is not more than a mere suggestion as it's written based on human knowledge.

The beetle, already a sacred insect in many beliefs- a symbol of the Sun, rebirth and resurrection to the ancient Egyptians, in this text takes its symbolism from its role within the ecosystem. It represents the decomposition and nutrient cycle, as it plays a huge role in bringing the animal droppings full of nitrogen into the ground, therefore rejuvenating the soil. Throughout the thesis one can notice how the beetle slowly with time begins to interact with the mythical world, until it becomes a myth itself. This





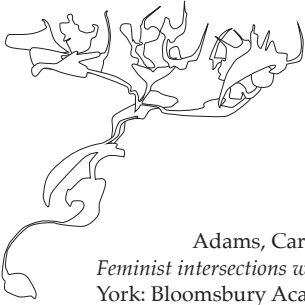
happens only when it understands its role within the environment and buries the dung. It becomes a symbol of decay and revitalization.

The reflection upon decay takes its shape also within the structure of the thesis, as it lacks the ordeal. As Marguerite Humeau says in *Conversations: Marguerite Humeau and Charlotte Burns*, "There will be no such thing as a post-apocalyptic world, as there was no and there will be no one specific apocalypse. It happens slowly, in a form of decay and decomposition, day after day." Therefore the structure of the thesis is lacking its culmination point - its 'apocalypse'. The content depicts a slowly rotting reality within which the organisms are detached from their place of origin. As a whole, it depicts a world within which one can find consolation in deterioration.









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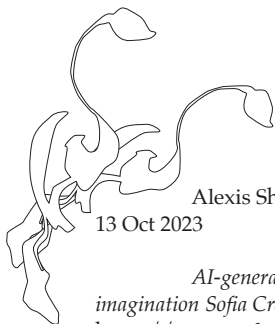
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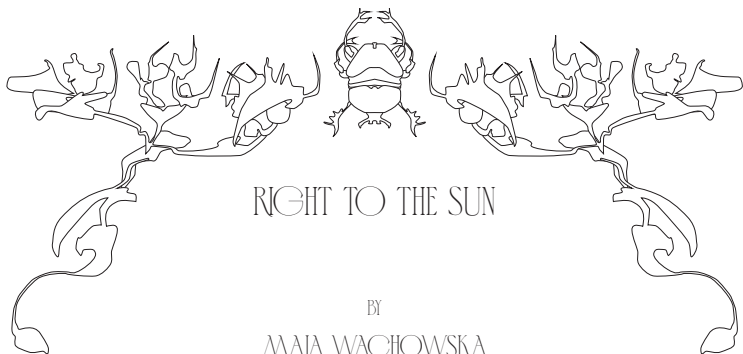
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RIGHT TO THE SUN

BY

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