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Dream Of The Overlook

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DREAM OF THE OVERLOOK

*after Stanley Kubrick's The Shining*

Already the present starts plotting its recurrence somewhere in the future, weaving what happens in among our fabrics, launching its aroma, its music imbibing itself into floorboards, plaster, nothing can stop it, it can't stop itself. You will never have access to its entirety, and you have asked how to calculate what resists calculation, how to control what refuses to cooperate, but know full well a propensity to resist and to refuse is the source of its power. The winters can be fantastically cruel, as if the weather can see what happened here before and flares itself up as a way to remember, or else it intuits what evil is about to happen and does what it can to divert it, stands on haunches to frighten it off. On the other hand maybe what happens and the weather are working together, and one does what it can to push the other one up over mountains, across a carpet. All this calculating exactness of modern life, one result of our monetary economy, shares an ideal with the natural sciences—namely, to transform the world into a math problem. The air feels so different, one can smell the privilege emanating from a battery of pine—one must build a fortress of it, all the best people, one gold afternoon unraveling through sleep into another: some visitors
complain of nausea, vertigo, chills, feelings of dread, confusion, but it's so beautiful here... hard to believe a snowstorm could be that close. I want to go outside, stretch out in the sun. Yet to our north, to our west, it's snowing and cold, and it's moving as if conveyed down corridors into rooms whose many tribal motifs have amplified over decades into labyrinths invisible to the naked eye but solid nonetheless, so that to walk through a door means to face a number of possibilities greatly circumscribed by history: left, right, left, right to the immaculate bathroom from which much steam shall gallop; right, right, left, left to the improbably large bed where one lies sleeping; right, left, left, right to a window overlooking the hedge maze into which somewhere in the future, quieter and away from what habits have kept us from feeling what static has kept us going, unknowingly, we venture. Each of us a creature whose existence depends upon difference, our minds discovering themselves in the differences between present impressions and those that have preceded. I think it might be a good idea if you leave the radio on all the time now. The torrents keep building up against a barrier far too fatigued to withstand much more. As if at any minute. As if even the snow, falling, possessed a little consciousness, near-infinite voices boisterous with parenting advice, spiritual guidance, stock tips, ribaldry, and grievances from the long lost. No less as ghosts we consume ourselves in press. Let me explain something to you. Many years from now, on the verge of sleep, someone will be lying down
where I am lying now, and he or she will suffer, suddenly, what I am suffering now, and where I come from, we call that success. One must first become open, flung wide or pried apart, to an order of feeling foreign to most, a form of surrender to thought and occurrence through apparatus not your own, hours of rendezvous with the absent, the air, the demonic. Obviously some people can be put off by the idea of staying alone in a place where something like that actually happened once, much less one where it happens all the time, but when we reckon ourselves haunted, it is beyond mere house. Now hold your eyes still so that I can see.

Midnight: the construction draws attention to its secret passages; in intimate office, a wisdom is revealed in the periphrasis a finance counselor laps from a lap. The stars: and quiet, through evening’s hush, a stranger murmuring tranquility to those closed in the narrow cell arousing beyond or before more bourbon takes.

And you: that voice from afar, a flow of warm waves I drift off remembering, that radiance through clouds archaically measured in foot-candles: I think you hurt my head real bad. Admittedly you’re under binding contract to do so. On the flipside much of the damage has animated production of the interior as I know it, made me more myself making brute with me, kindling them old predatory embers never quite satisfactorily displaced into numbers, as off in the distance, almost picturesquely, the blizzard obliterates the humming topography of Colorado, the hard writing of the place: one sentence reconfigured page after page, no progress
but insistence, an entity meant in the plural, not single
wolves but a pack: in believing oneself to be just one
one made the first mistake. I think the next is to think
of the axe in our hands, blood everywhere, rather than
just pick it up, get on with it. One’s economic interests
don’t tell me to smother the beast in me, they tell us
to put it to work. I and the others have come to believe
somewhere in the future it will be just like nothing
ever happened, or like the sound of the horn at the heart
of nowhere. Notice the group photo in which I stand
apart from but attached to. I feel I should die if I let myself
be drawn into the center no less than if I just let go.