

Cell

*The smallest
and simplest
generates pleasure
in regard
to the void
or all
encompassing
that which
it cannot be.*

The unitary quality of the cell is appealing until it consumes you. By which point, you are none the wiser – even as the very same thing is happening multipliciously down the corridor, and all the cells' occupants become one with their respective units. In such instances of autophagy, the cell eating itself free, the drive to death becomes the only conceivable means of survival. Whose survival, I don't ask. The conflation of body and building is just a metaphorical means to describe the problem of dwelling on and in. And the problem of dwelling is the inability to leave the problem behind.

Dialectical retreat (the necessary, inevitable and yet contradictory back-and-forth from interior to exterior as a means of finding emancipation or at least understanding the epistemological nature of one's own imprisonment within existing conditions) can only happen if all threat of absolute retention has been mitigated by the affirmative union of lock and key or the security of good plumbing. And becoming a waste product of the cell's ordinary functions, it is said to be better out than in.

The romance of the cell can be calibrated according to the inhabitant's self-esteemed liberty. Some cannot leave, others cannot leave either. Those who cannot leave *either* have at least a moment's pause to consider the possibility of leaving and their stuckness as shared – this is romance.

It is only in dialectical retreat that it might dawn upon some certain one that everything and everybody is cellular insofar as we all live in cells. This is what is meant by the suggestion that there may well be no sexual relation; a sad enough circumstance that is overlooked in the tautological identification of the *incel*. We are all involuntary celibates; only by splitting ourselves from our cells does the potential for sex become actualised, but in splitting ourselves from our cells we are forced to gaze into the deathly void.

The possibility of leaving, Eurydices opting for the Underworld, or: *I am just going out for a walk*. Romance is engendered by the walls of the cell you inhabit. I think often about landscape and realise I may never have seen one. Not that meadow, and certainly not that mountain. I have never heard the music that enlivens these hills. I just like to stay at home and read books, I tell myself. I tell my cell. And the voice at the other end of the line tries in vain to convince me otherwise.

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