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La Pensée Férale
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A compost of ideas
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The wisdom of the balanced branches, of the balanced rock: *symbols of presence, symbols of balance, but also symbols of life's danger, of vulnerability that cut close to the bone. [VP]* The delicacy of the twig, balanced-bone-matter; its becoming-stick insect, visible only to those who lose themselves in it or catch it alive by surprise, maybe sideways. A walking stick, a piece of wood that is also an animal. Visitors have just ventured into a world of ever-shifting metamorphoses. *To move within the sensible, to make and unmake it without interruption. [EC]* It's a realm of constant differentiation, where everything has the potential to become something else – a place where one must gaze with care – and where the instability of categories dances in contrast with formal precision. Matter, materia, hylé, woods. Venus Genetrix, Venus Physica, Venus Libertina. Material girl, meaning-maker. *Activate your own capacity for cosmic mattering. [NM]*

Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something. [DJH] There's a novel in which the main character, a woman, sees a rope that weaves living things. Many things are bound by the same rope, and the tension exerted upon the entities must be carefully modulated. *While we may all ultimately be connected to one another, the specificity and*

proximity of connections matter—who we are bound up with and in what ways. Life and death happen inside these relationships. [TVD] If the rope loosens, those bound by it become lost. If it is too tightly tensioned, there is danger. If the rope breaks, life shatters, an entire arrangement painstakingly woven.

He feels like he's already wasted enough time. He doesn't stop in town. He doesn't look back. He doesn't see the soy fields, the streams that crisscross the dry plots of land, the miles of open fields empty of livestock, the tenements and the factories as he reaches the city. He doesn't notice that the return trip has grown slower and slower. That there are too many cars, cars and more cars covering every asphalt nerve. Or that the transit is stalled, paralyzed for hours, smoking and effervescent. He doesn't see the important thing: the rope finally slack, like a lit fuse, somewhere; the motionless scourge about to erupt. [SS]

Periodically, bend down and smell the earth. Can you notice different soil types, different histories? [S] Can we summon the name, any name, be it scientific, common, or affectionate, of this matter madeira wood here entwined by ropes? Do we have the necessary senses, can we cultivate or activate the senses needed to access, through these fragments, the personality of the tree itself? [AB] Are we haunted by the ghosts of great trees that stood here? [S] Right now. Is it chilly? Is the forest full of eyes that encircles the room closing in upon us or is it offering a passage, guarding with zeal those who step into it?

Here all the Forest lived and breathed in safety, secure from mutilation. No terror of the axe could haunt the peace of its vast subconscious life, no terror of devastating Man afflict it with the dread of premature death. It knew itself supreme; it spread and preened itself without concealment. It set no spires to carry warnings, for no wind brought messages of alarm as it bulged outwards to the sun and stars. [AB]

“Rain dogs” are the ones who are lost because the rain has washed away all their familiar markers. [DBR] These markers are constantly being erased, whether in spaces created solely for humans (using others and means to ends) or in times produced solely by humans (where means and ends no longer hold). In this world we witness the emergence of an

increasing number of rain dogs of many species – wanderers who only sniff out dead-ends, crowds washed away. Bearing witness expresses one's commitment to ensure that those under attack shall not be left stranded, abandoned, disregarded. [DBR] Here, we see hybrids of trees and dogs and we are seen by them. The mystery of their kinship lies deep in the woods, in the painful creative resilience of all the unloved ones. Our form is never something we are given once and for all at birth. [EC]

She [the dog] is howling with grief over the deaths and the torture, and the relentlessness of it all, and she is calling out in search, trying to pull us and others back into connectivity. “Come back,” she calls, “come back to the world of the living.” [DBR] Are we ready to accept dog as our lord and savior? Are we ready to enter into communion with the forest and its inhabitants, including itself? Into the boundless interconnectedness of life, allowing the rope to weave its threads through our mindful bodies? Are we poised to shed our domesticity, like those dogs did one day, perhaps in a peace(ful) camp, perhaps with rage bursting through their teeth, becoming forest themselves? Once feral, what will we be capable of becoming? Untamed, what will we accomplish? What will we have to leave behind? Do we measure up to the dog's howl, beseeching us to return to the world of the living? Because it is true that all creatures talk to one another, if only one listens. [UKLG]

Birubi [the wombat] was a ‘wild familiar’ who established his own terms for contact and friendship. It was an enormous thrill to explore forms of contact that transgressed the nature/culture boundary, so constitutive of our civilisation. It was enchanting, the enchantment of childhood imagination and story, to walk side by side with Birubi along a forest track, to look up from my desk to find a forest-dwelling wombat sitting in my armchair by the fire. You had the courage and freedom to cross the boundary, Birubi. But do we? [VP]

Cosmophobia is humanity's biggest disease [ABS] because he has been cursed to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow or has reached enlightenment until he ceased to see himself as a living being and ceased to see the earth as living being, Man fears – hates – that which is sacred, polymorphic, inhabited by many gods, celebrated by many symbiogenetic and symanimagenic [DJH] ones. Drill, devour, damage.



“Why did they come here?” “To take oil from the land.” [LR] The forest and its hallowed penumbra violated through the exhumation of the ores glimmering shimmering poisoning in the sun – and beyond. We who live in the forest know these things. We witness the days that never dawn and the dawns filled with smoke. [DKY]

The city of the three p’s: putas, plata, and petróleo, that is, whores, money, and oil. Petróleo, plata, and putas. Four p’s really, if we remember that it was a paradise in the middle of a land besieged by hunger. [LR] Over here is where I used to live, and there were many critters about 50, 60 meters from the river. Up there, it was all full of indigenous people, all the way to the Piquiri River. Where the city is now, there were only indigenous people. [CBV]

Those who are not watched by the spirits cannot dream afar. [DKY] A vision: 100,000 souls (a swarm? Let’s keep the bees out of this nasty buzzness) mine around 40 tons of gold in two fleeting agonizing decades, bequeathing a lake 200 meters deep. Its once scintillating allure has waned. Today in the clandestine, criminal mining that takes over the Amazon rivers, mercury is used to meld with gold in a deadly embrace, thus facilitating the extraction process. This is the metal smoke, the xawara epidemic that threatens the Yanomami and all of us because the forest is full of ropes. When exposure reaches significant levels, it leads to renal failure and mental distress. At a certain threshold, it inflicts mental harm. [VGB] Later, through heat, they part ways, as gold embarks on paths to opulent realms, reaching luxury markets, while its transient mate, in whispers of smoke, remains in the Amazon and poisons all, human and more-than-human people alike.

The first recorded mention of mercury was by Aristotle in the fourth century B.C., when it was used in religious ceremonies. In the first century, Kioscorides Pedanius and Pliny used mercury as a medicinal ointment. From the sixth century on, the Egyptians frequently mentioned mercury, its uses and preparations as well as tin and copper amalgams. [Industrial Safety Review apud VGB]

It is possible to learn all of this from a leaf. To tune into the histories and stories it holds, etched on its skin. Once you have a plant as an ally, it will tell you what you need to know about it. [S] We should not veer away from

leaves, especially when they reveal themselves as faces marked by time or ownership. No. None of that. Perhaps as cyborgs, animated ansibles straight out of a botanical science fiction, plants that, along with bacteria and fungi, are also animals’ lifelines to communication with the abiotic world. [DJH] It is also possible to experience the fascination (fascino?) in the thousand coruscations of gold. Are we drawn to the ore like moths to the light? One of the oldest symbols of the unio mystica, the moth that is burned by the flame which attracts it and yet obstinately remains unknown to the end. [GA]

But to which deity would the adept aspire to unite in the face of the brilliance of gold? Perhaps Agamben’s vision finds no kin in the covetousness of mineral sorcery. I would give an entire multinational company for a firefly. [PPP] If the metal smoke clouds sight and stifles respiration, by chance or design, there are breathing lines, resembling spirits’ trails, threads of spiders shining like the moonlight. [DKY] Indeed, this stands as one of the most widely accepted hypotheses regarding why insect are drawn to light: the belief they chances upon a path toward the sky. Another hypothesis concerns infrared radiation and ultraviolet light – invisible to human eyes – guiding moths to the light, as if they were females or flowers. Their lumin is a wave of love... [JGR]

It all became firefly. “Look at how many glowhinds spreading in the air, their sorcerwinkle resembles a party!” [JGR] The ore’s image was not good. Moths yearn for sky, love and beauty within the light. Look around. It flew, however, the greenish twinkle, from the same woods, the first firefly. Yes, the firefly, yes, it was enchanting! – so tiny, in the air, a brief moment, high up, distant, going its way. It was, from time to spell, Joy. [JGR]

We should not say that modern secularists have eradicated contact zones with squids, bacteria or angry women, rather that they have distrusted them as dangerous or unreliable. Or reduced them to some unofficial, black market, where exchanges happen which only poets or naïve romantics will value. [IS]

We arrive as inhabitants in any environment and gradually become partakers. [ABS] Moths, like the forest, like us, also seek the night embrace. Slumber, dream, mystery, enigma. Do insects dream? We know that caterpillars, after liquefying and transforming entirely into another

critters, retain memories of their previous life. Do their souls take flight in dreams? *Being an image means being outside of oneself, being a stranger to one's own body and soul.* [EC] At times, in fleeting glance, one may ensnare a shard of dream, of vision, of metamorphosis. The encounter unfolds in myriad forms and shifts all who partake. The slightest gesture alters the entire arrangement. An ecosystem in vibrant flow, the closer one draws in this study in red, the more they're spun into a realm where transformation begins. One has to let the cord embrace them in order to form a coven with *impermanence and imperfection*, to nurture *a patience with uncertainty and makeshift, a friendship with water, darkness and the earth.* [UKLG]

There are many worlds in the World. We have a lot to learn from these minor peoples who resist in an impoverished world which is not even their own any more. [DD & EVC] Peoples of many species, alliances, ecosystems, symbioses, spiritual and material alliances, all of them peoples, all minor and still, even in the sparsest enclaves of existence, very much alive. *Might there be danced territories (the power of dance to bring together)? Loved territories (territories bound by love? The power of love)? How many verbs might there be and which verbs constitute a territory? And what practices will enable these verbs to proliferate?* [VD]

We all have forests in our minds. Forests unexplored, unending. Each of us gets lost in the forest, every night, alone. [UKLG] *A memory or dream, tearing us away from our seeming isolation and submerging us once again in the sea of the sensible.* [EC] *When the critter messengers returned to my heart, strength came back to me as well. All the messengers arrived, not a single one missing, not the critters of the night, enemies of the sun. They all entered again into my heart, they entered through my mouth, others entered through my chest.* [SG] *The spirits move ceaselessly through the forest. It belongs to them and they are happy about it.* [DKY]

She heard the roaring of the Forest further out. [AB]

*Messages collected from seedbags of:

- [AB] Algernon Blackwood, *The Man Whom the Trees Loved*
- [ABS] Antonio Bispo dos Santos, *A Terra Dá, a Terra Quer*
- [DKY] Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, *O Espírito da Floresta*
- [DBR] Deborah Bird Rose, *Shimmer, Wild Dog Dreaming*
- [DD & EVC] Deborah Danowski & Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Há mundo por vir? Ensaio sobre os medos e os fins*
- [DJH] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*
- [CBV] Claudio Barras Vargas, *Avá-Guarani: A Construção de Itaipu e os Direitos Territoriais*
- [EC] Emanuele Coccia, *La Vie Sensible, Metamorphoses*
- [GA] Giorgio Agamben, *L'aperto*
- [IS] Isabelle Stengers, *Staying with Troubling Words*
- [JGR] João Guimarães Rosa, *Primeiras Estórias, Campo Geral*
- [LR] Laura Restrepo, *La Novia Oscura*
- [NM] Natasha Myers, *Ten Not-So-Easy Steps For Life in the Planthroposcene*
- [PPP] Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Il Vuoto del Potere in Italia*
- [SS] Samanta Schweblin, *Distancia de Rescate*
- [SG] Sara Gallardo, *Eisejuaz*
- [S] Starhawk, *The Earth Path*
- [TVD] Thom van Dooren, *Flight Ways*
- [UKLG] Ursula K. Le Guin, *No Time to Spare*
- [VP] Val Plumwood, *The Eye of the Crocodile*
- [VGB] Verónica Gerber Bicecci, *La Compañía*
- [VD] Vinciane Despret, *Habiter en Oiseau*

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