

Elizabeth Ravn
Something New Every Day
20.01.2022 - 30.01.2022



We arrive at a towering white computer-drawing of a hotel, where we have a free room cuz of some TikTok marketing thing of Lou's. We watch a TV in the chrome elevator playing music videos; bulging tanned bodies climbing spiral staircases in heels.

Lou scopes out the suite saying "Wow, luxurious! This place is huuuge!"

"And what a view," I reply while looking out over the night sky of city lights, punctuated by well lit landmarks and colorful advertisements. Floor to ceiling windows like a cinema screen frame the neoclassical bank opposite, its sloping roof like a massive stage, the peak of the facade decorated by two polished bronze sculptures: a horse and beside it a medieval figure whose face is eclipsed by his sombrero-like hat.

Room-service delivers complimentary champagne, which we down, then negotiate ordering more or drinking from the not-so-mini bar, and how to pay for it, or not.

Lou yawns, texting a local love interest, and out of the corner of my eye I notice that the sombrero and horse sculptures are moving. I go out on the balcony to get a better look.

"I'm actually going to hit the hay," Lou shouts.

With a hammy imitation of Lou's English accent, I reply "I bid you sweet dreams."

I noticed their looming presence from the street, assuming they were real sculptures, but I guess they've been holograms all along, advertising or something. The sombrero guy roams the terrain of the terracotta shingles, forlorn, silent, stepping along the rain gutter, tracing the perimeter of his range of possible motion. For him to jump wouldn't be suicide so much as crossing existential barriers; outside the projection, or whatever is used to make a hologram, he would just cease to exist, just the idea of him might briefly dust the traffic below.

The night air is a bit chilly. I go back inside to a wool throw on the sofa. I pull out my copy of *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, turn to my boarding pass placeholder, no real intention of reading—but then something flashes on the bank rooftop. Sombrero guy jerks around, and the horse's ears stand alert—a bank with a suicidal Don Quixote does seem unlikely. Sombrero guy is looking to the far edge of the roof where a ghost-like figure with a gaunt mouth is calling out to him, tattered arms summoning him, and then it disappears out into the nothingness above the city. Captivated, the sombrero follows this ghost, and the horse follows the sombrero.

The rooftop stage turns into a whole landscape of bronze. A forest sprouts up, hindering the chase. The two weave around trees, dart between castle ruins, and jump over stones that emerge from the shingles. At last, the ghost figure comes into full view, its arms presenting a luminous fountain. Without hesitation, sombrero and horse bury their faces in the pool of holographic water. After taking in a long drink, he takes off his hat, nodding thanks to the ghost, and they gaze into each other's eyes, the ghost's shredded skin sparkling with copper and quivering with an animated breeze, sombrero guy's tunic pulsating with his excited exercise breath, silvery flecks of holographic water dripping down his neck. Thirst quenched, the horse gallops around the fountain, stirring up a glitter of metallic dirt, and sombrero starts to dance and spin like a top, ghost joins with weightless swirls, bobbing in and out of view, the three play hide-and-seek; hiding, looking, finding.

Just then, I'm startled by the AC fan switching off. Suddenly aware of the quiet I glance around behind me at the emptiness of the generic minimalist hotel room. Lou snores in one of the beds, and above the muffled car horns and sirens, the ghost has vanished from the roof scene again. Horse and sombrero backtrack, looking for the ghost behind every tree they passed, every ruin, every bronze stone, but no luck. Sombrero bows his face into his hands.

The next morning, walking for a coffee along the canal, I recount this little show for Lou who says “It’s just like me to snore thru all the action.”

“At long last, on the forest path, sombrero and horse meet this bronze hologram of a guy in like a Grecian robe, who at first shakes his head at them, unable or unwilling to help in their search, but after putting his finger up to his chin in thought, he beckons them to follow him. After walking for a while they arrive at the bronze gates of a bronze city, and from a market stall the robed guy gets them some bronze apples, and waves his bronze hand goodbye.

“They inhale the fruit, spit out the seeds, and search the streets for the ghost. They look high and low, till they come across a grand house built into the far edge of the city wall, which has its windows flung open. Sombrero holds his hand to his ear, as if hearing a familiar sound. They approach slowly, peeking in they see, singing and combing its weightless bronze blob of hair, none other than the ghost!”
The air around the canal fills with excited chatter as all the tourists notice, in the park just behind us, an albatross landing on a children’s play structure.

Lou, unbothered, nudges me to carry on.

“After the pair watch, transfixed, a man enters, whom the ghost lovingly embraces, and it turns out to be the Grecian robe guy who brought them to the city. Both he and the ghost are laughing with big smiles, in the pleasure of their own company or in some joint trick on sombrero and horse, I’m not sure. Seeing this, disappointed, heartbroken, sombrero turns away—”

Behind Lou and I, the loud gushing hum of a water jet pack approaches, whizzing along the surface of the canal. “Oh my god” Lou says flatly. The jet pack lands its beige safari clad driver into the children’s play area, dragging the yellow umbilical cord over the canal barrier as the jets spew canal water all over the rubber cement, then grabs at the big white bird, wrestling it into submission.

“Geeez, that’s a bit rough,” Lou says.

I ask “Is it her pet or is this an escape from the zoo perhaps?”

Lou jokes that “this person is clearly poaching,” and proceeds to tell me about a dream they had recently. They were looking out of the windows of their apartment, in the dream, but didn’t know where they were. Some town; London, New York, Berlin. They looked at the paving stones and the skyline but couldn’t work it out.

“Recently,” I tell Lou, “I’ve been having these flashes of a similar kind of disorientation but while I’m awake, where, for a split second I can’t remember basic things like who I am, where I am, what story I’m part of, and then like oh right I’m brushing my teeth.” We try to work out what mental disorder I might have, and restate the platitude of how unwise it is to watch movies before bed.

“Also don’t watch rooftop advertising holograms,” Lou adds. “But wait, what happens next, after the sombrero wearer is all sad and rejected?”

“Well, the thing loops,” I say “the sombrero guy and the horse wander out of the city, forlorn again, or rather forlorn still, and find themselves in the forest again, and ponder throwing themselves off of the empty bank roof again, etcetera.”

“Are you sure that’s a bank?” Lou says, “I think there’s a big art museum by the hotel.”

from left of the doorway

Regards, 2021

oil on canvas

The Opening, 2022

oil on canvas

TBC (to be cafe), 2021

oil on panel

Pink Spill, 2021

oil on panel

Blanket, 2021

oil on panel

Patent Office Eingang, 2021

oil on canvas

On a Limb, 2021

oil on panel