



Time misses you.
So, the clocks turn back to recuperate something of what has been lost and we should thank them for one measly hour gifted to slumber? Now the day starts crepuscular in a spirit of anticipation. Of what? And what happened to the morning? I was sleeping, you'll have to tell me. Were you lying, or lying in your bed, when you said the time would suffice? I haven't the faintest, but still, the light. Still. Do you ever let a device speak for you? I was just thinking about sibilance, which you could call a literary device, one of maybe a million, and how sometimes I just like to hiss and hush my way to an idea, without really thinking about what it is I ought to be saying. So, you'll forgive me if this is a serpentine and circuitous amble on the way to where you are and where I won't be, but there's no easy way to reach you. For the past week I've been buried in books, and when I say

“books”, I don’t mean the kinds made of paper and ink and thread and glue and card but the kind that shows up on a backlit screen with pages that turn at the touch of a button. And when I say “buried”, I mean it. Not that it makes much of a difference, since it’s become terribly dark outside all of a sudden. When I finally shake off the screens and get up to make a cup of tea, there’s so little light with which to orientate my activity, I’m lucky if the bag, the water and the milk all end up in the same place and it’s a very good day indeed if that place happens to be my mouth. Because the sun barely rises but spends the supposedly civilised hours coquetting behind a curtain of cloud and by the time the day has ended it becomes drearily evident that she, and here I mean the sun, slinked off hours ago without even a polite word of farewell. It can get lonely in the dark. You come to light by other means. Backlit books, for instance, are not so much for reading but a way of illuminating the darker crevices of a body, a room or any of the usual voids that make up your surroundings. A more incendiary device would light a whole apartment for days. Like a video. Introduced here as a

simile, as though I were suggesting that yours isn’t a video but only something like a video. I was just thinking about the way a video populates a room better than a human does, such that the neighbour’s flatscreen across the way will set my dog off barking, anticipating the invasion of some beaming burglar, shouting, Veni, video, vici! Is that too stupid? It helps to specify one’s devices, to take sibilance over alliteration and not just any old consonant banging against the window. But in just the same way that all sibilance is alliteration, are all movies, all films, all kinetic images, all visions not also videos? The last time I saw you, you were moving through a crowd and I was standing in one place trying to catch your attention. You moved through that crowd all the way to Switzerland, which sounds like a metaphor or even an analogy but it isn’t meant to be either. And when we talked on the phone, I was standing outside an art supplies store and it was cold, and I was looking at a CCTV camera while I talked into my device, as though I were looking at you, and addressing you directly. An eerie feeling about me, which can’t have looked good on the screen. Do you feel a sense

of possibility, of potential, in those kinds of stores? If I do ever cross the threshold and walk down their aisles, I don't dare to touch any of the paper, the paintbrushes, the inscrutable bottles, the utensils or tools. Too eerie, everything. The day I tried to set up a studio, in which I might have one day made something, though I never knew what exactly, I thought it might make sense to start by laying a nice parquet floor to stand and maybe even move around on. But when I called the man selling floorboards, he asked me how many banana boxes I would need for the room in question, and the question, well, it floored me before I could floor the studio. I told him I'd take two banana boxes of floorboards and he delivered them to me that very afternoon, but when he peered through the door into what was supposed to become my studio, he cursed my calculations and said that two banana boxes would never be enough. I decided to take the two boxes anyway, and leave the floor as it was or wasn't. So, you'll perhaps understand my reticence with regard to all things arts supplies, since I could not even get the basics, the literal base, covered before I set to thinking about

what sorts of things I might make in a studio at all. It's just me and my screens and two banana boxes of wood here, and that's why I'm asking you if you're able to muster a little more *je ne sais quoi* mais en fait, *je sais très bien* when you step into an art supplies store. I suppose you're wondering why I'd even consider laying a nice parquet floor in what was supposed to be a studio, and I suppose you'd be right to wonder. Perhaps it says an awful lot more about the kinds of things I'd have liked to make in that studio, that I began with floorboards, boards I would have tread in the studio, and do you know this phrase, "to tread the boards"? I suppose it's a metonymic reference to theatre, by way of the stage, and perhaps it says an awful lot more about the kinds of things I'd have liked to do in that studio, that I'd already imagined it as a kind of theatrical space before I could even put pen to paper, brush to canvas, torch to wall. Do you think much about Baroque theatre and its weather machines when you're making an installation? What about when you're making prints? I guess not. Not until the light flashes and you think you might have seen something at last. That's because

you deal in simulacra; Baroque theatre in simulations. The overlap only becomes visible during those sporadic flashes of light, of lightning. And even then, you have to be primed to see them. Don't contradict me now, it's too late and the distinction works for my purposes. It's not even three in the afternoon and the room is basically dark. Perhaps because the curtains are closed, perhaps because the clouds have been stripped of their contours. A diffuse light has settled on the square in front of my building like a fat marshmallow, solid but porous. It makes it hard to see what the people out there are up to. I've tried to use the camera on my device like a telescope, as I sit here atop two banana boxes of floorboards, but all it shows me are grids, trapping those inscrutable figures behind bars so ineffectual that my clueless inmates stroll casually out of the field of vision without a moment's concern for their visual incarceration. When you left, and I mean the one time you came to visit and didn't even try to outstay your welcome, you were gracious enough to acknowledge my surveillance with a wave as you crossed the square in front of my building. The fact that it

was raining seemed not to bother you, coatless as you were, running around as you always would, in the flagrant presumption that what you were doing was hardly of interest to anyone anyway. It was the fact that you were moving, though, that caught my attention. And as long as everything else was still, I could see precisely what you were up to and, I suppose you could say that it moved me. You told me, before you left, that the time would suffice and you said the same when we talked on the phone, and I believed you. I let the device speak for me, and you, you're telling me: Shh, shh. It's slightly less than sufficient, says the sun. And when I say "the sun", I mean you.

– Miriam Stoney

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into booklet form.*

hold my coat
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