



IN  
THE  
BONSAI'S  
GAZE

محمد بن عبد الله





An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape, showing a mix of green fields, brownish soil, and a winding road. A large, dark grey number '1' is superimposed on the left side of the image. To the right of the '1', the text 'Driving the Tide' is written in a dark grey, serif font. Below the text, there is a solid dark grey circle.

# 1

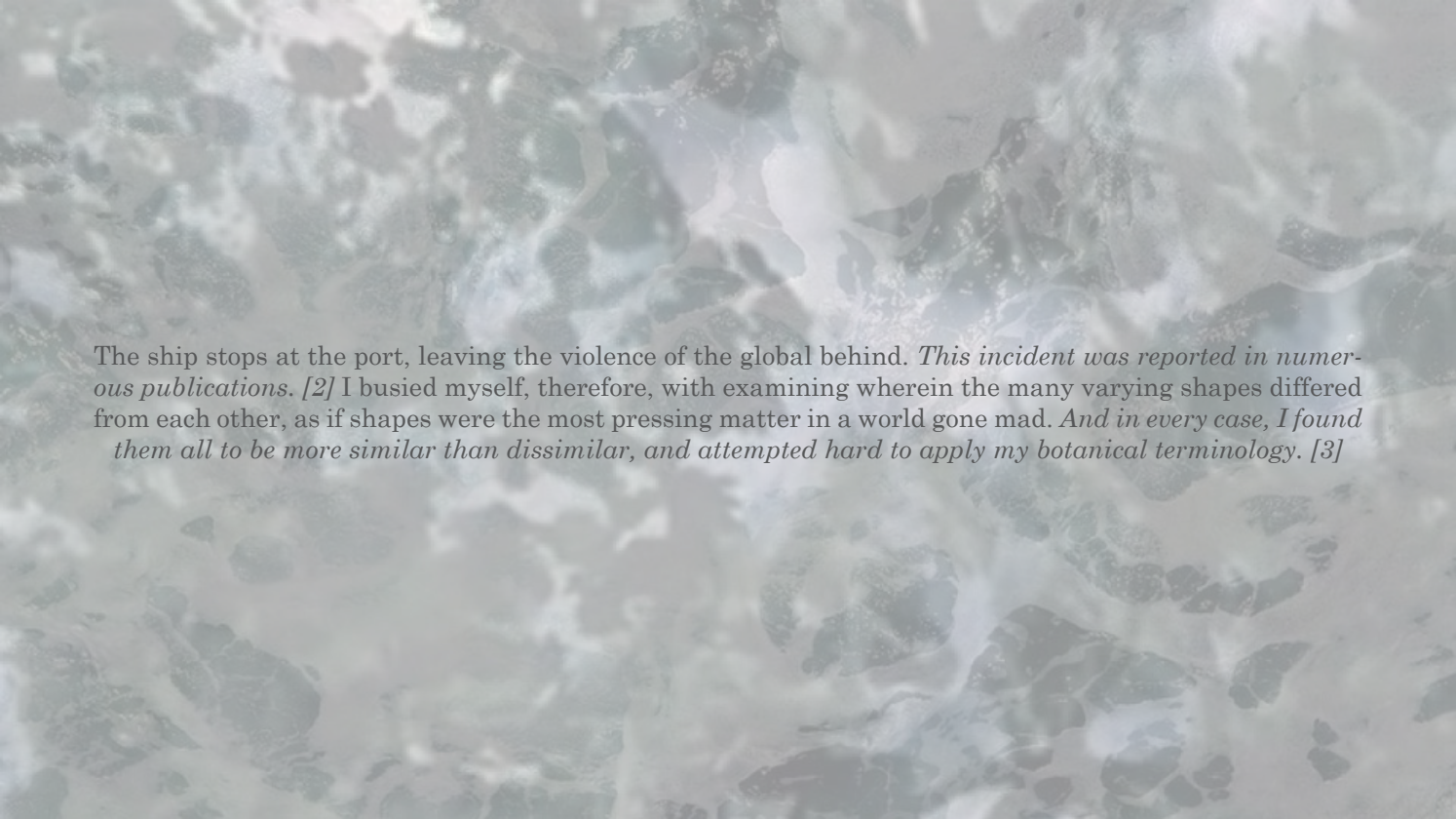
Driving the Tide



Water rises above the wind, an odd thing really, as if the very essence of nature itself was being flooded, yes, flooded by an extreme excess, swirling and twirling, floating together like loose formations, or maybe, just maybe, condensing into tight fibrous bunches, like thoughts in a crowded mind. *This displacement of human agency, unfolds in a landscape of violence and destruction. [1]*



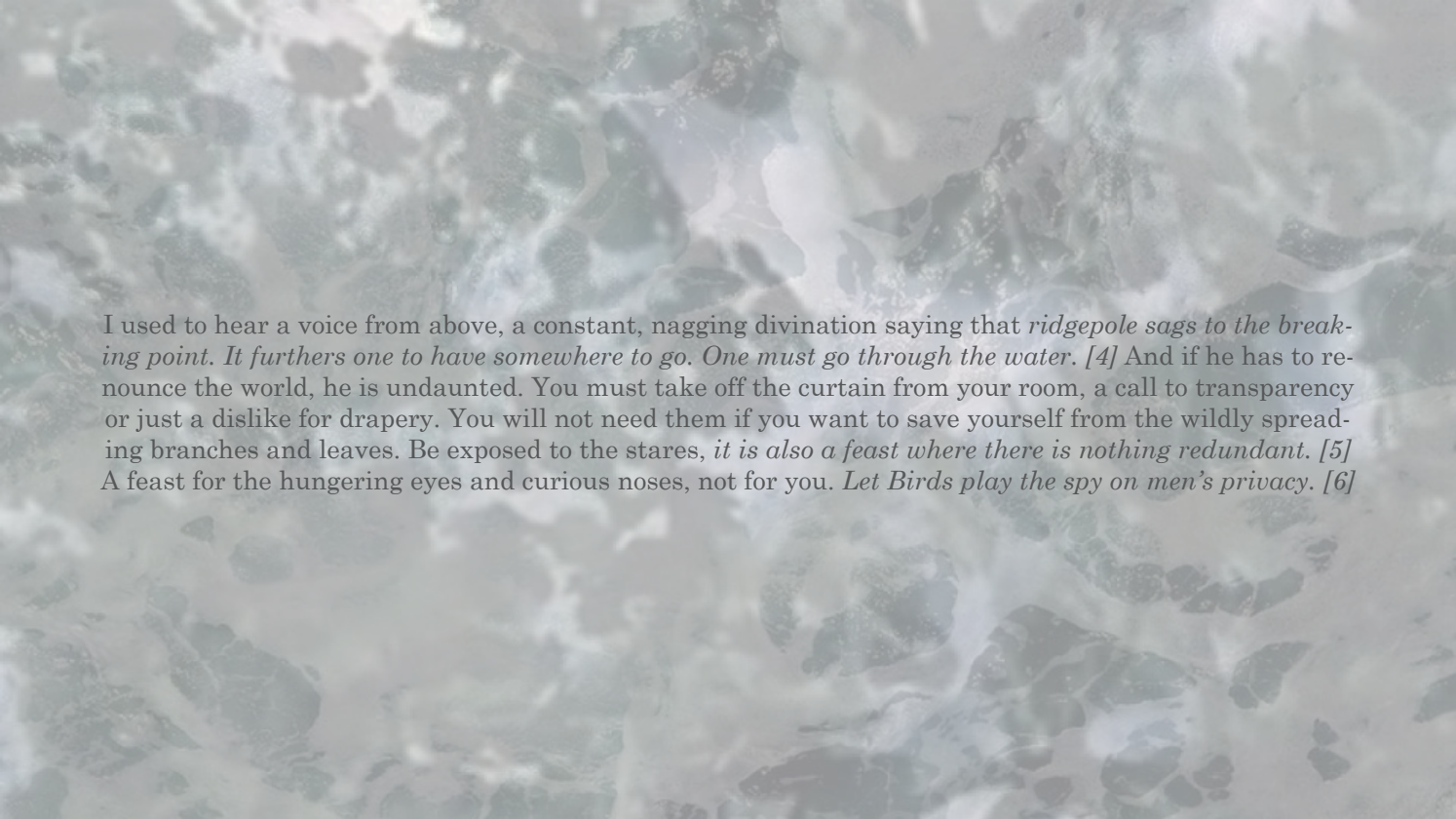
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The ship stops at the port, leaving the violence of the global behind. *This incident was reported in numerous publications. [2]* I busied myself, therefore, with examining wherein the many varying shapes differed from each other, as if shapes were the most pressing matter in a world gone mad. *And in every case, I found them all to be more similar than dissimilar, and attempted hard to apply my botanical terminology. [3]*

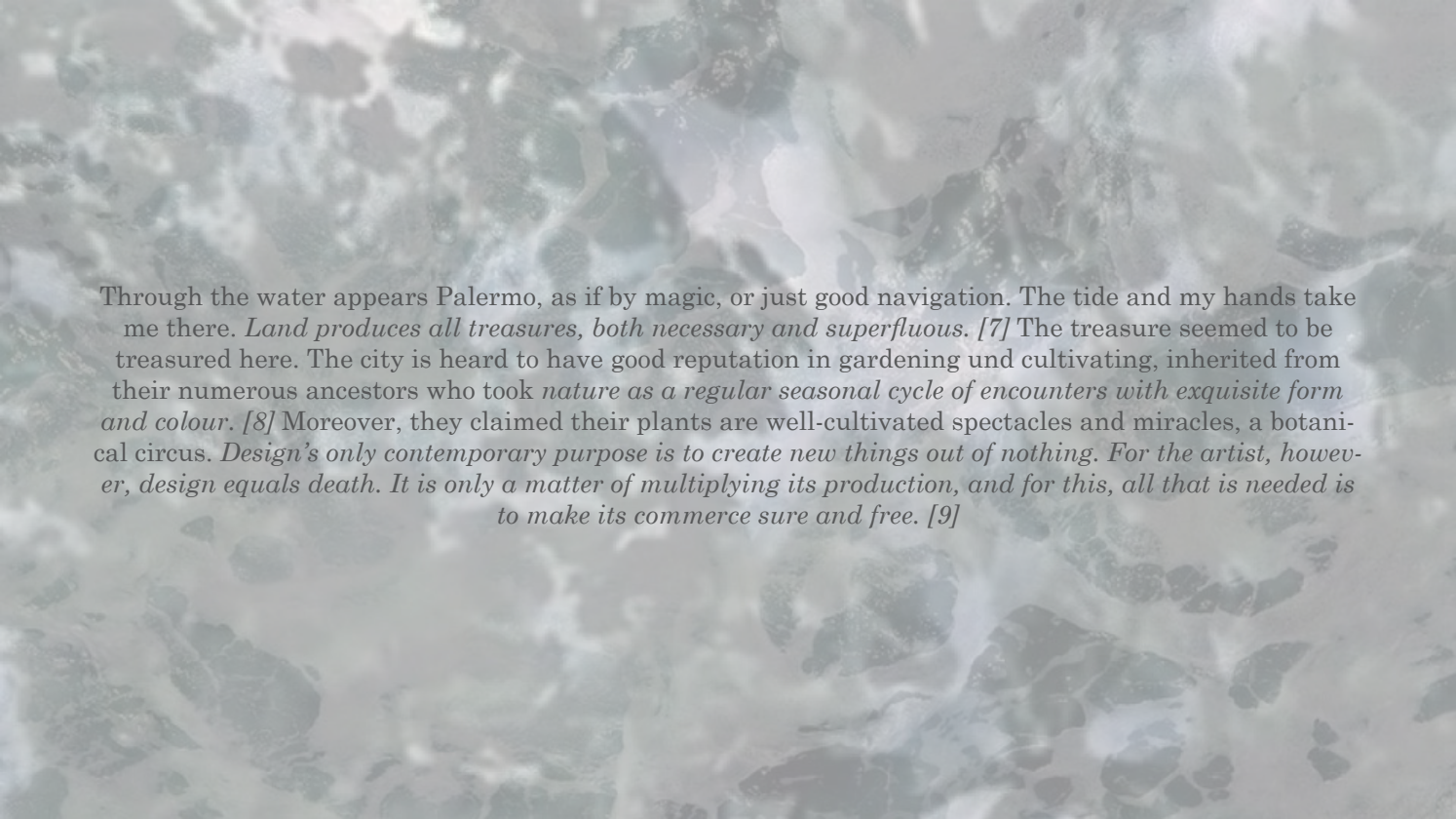






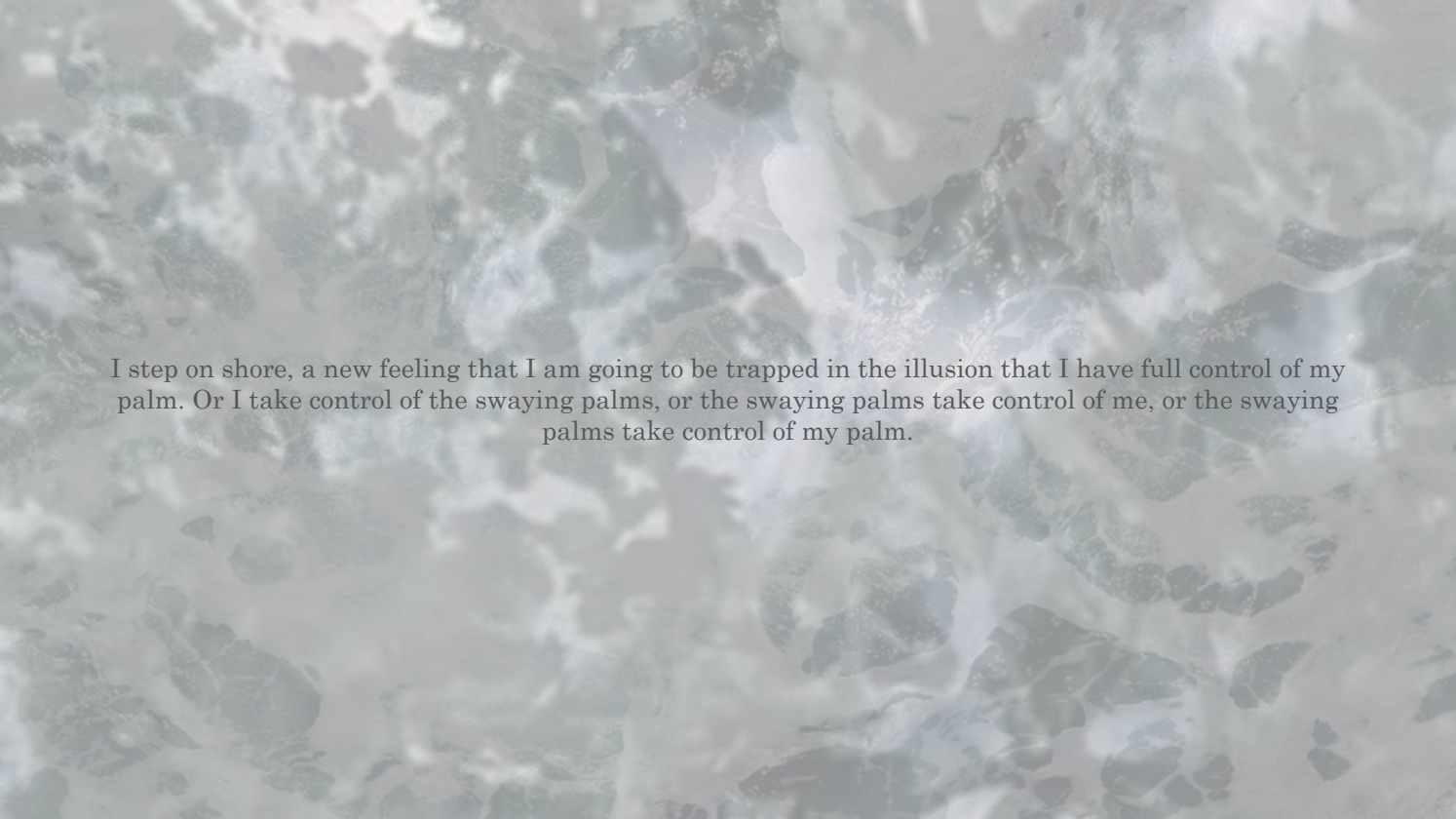
I used to hear a voice from above, a constant, nagging divination saying that *ridgepole sags to the breaking point. It furthers one to have somewhere to go. One must go through the water. [4]* And if he has to renounce the world, he is undaunted. You must take off the curtain from your room, a call to transparency or just a dislike for drapery. You will not need them if you want to save yourself from the wildly spreading branches and leaves. Be exposed to the stares, *it is also a feast where there is nothing redundant. [5]* A feast for the hungry eyes and curious noses, not for you. *Let Birds play the spy on men's privacy. [6]*



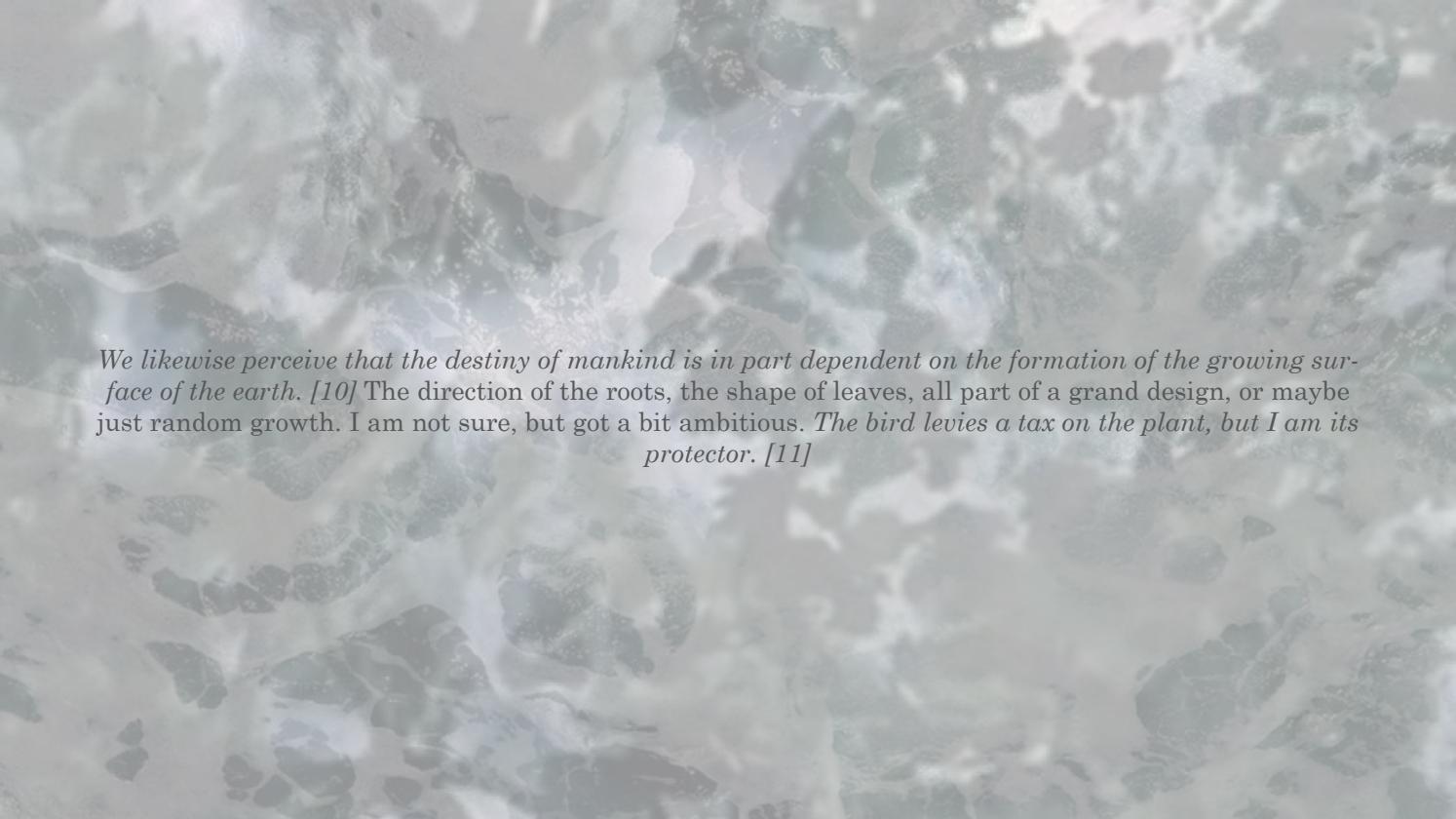


Through the water appears Palermo, as if by magic, or just good navigation. The tide and my hands take me there. *Land produces all treasures, both necessary and superfluous.* [7] The treasure seemed to be treasured here. The city is heard to have good reputation in gardening und cultivating, inherited from their numerous ancestors who took *nature as a regular seasonal cycle of encounters with exquisite form and colour.* [8] Moreover, they claimed their plants are well-cultivated spectacles and miracles, a botanical circus. *Design's only contemporary purpose is to create new things out of nothing. For the artist, however, design equals death. It is only a matter of multiplying its production, and for this, all that is needed is to make its commerce sure and free.* [9]





I step on shore, a new feeling that I am going to be trapped in the illusion that I have full control of my palm. Or I take control of the swaying palms, or the swaying palms take control of me, or the swaying palms take control of my palm.



*We likewise perceive that the destiny of mankind is in part dependent on the formation of the growing surface of the earth. [10] The direction of the roots, the shape of leaves, all part of a grand design, or maybe just random growth. I am not sure, but got a bit ambitious. The bird levies a tax on the plant, but I am its protector. [11]*



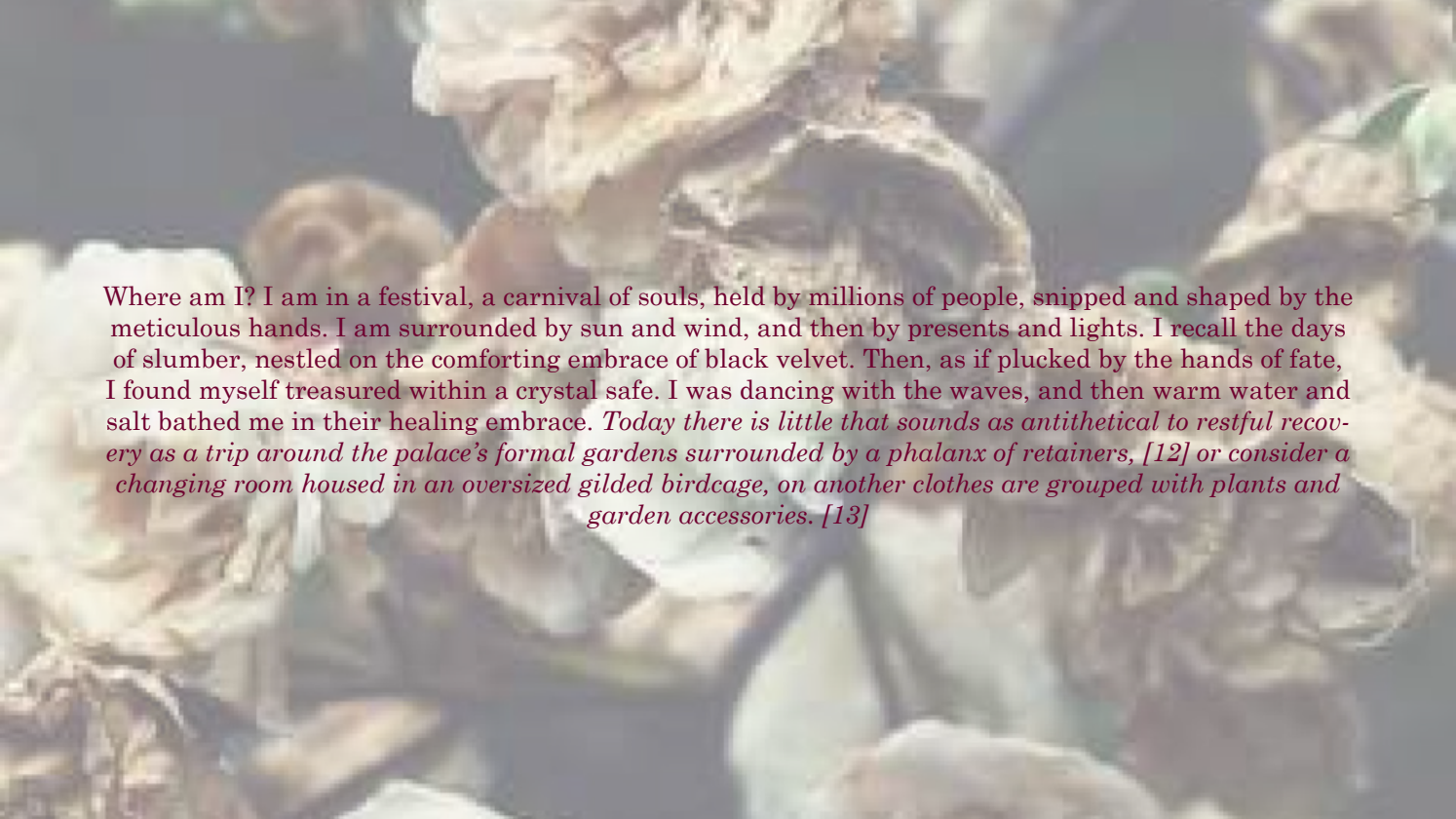






Discarding Banquet



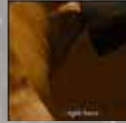


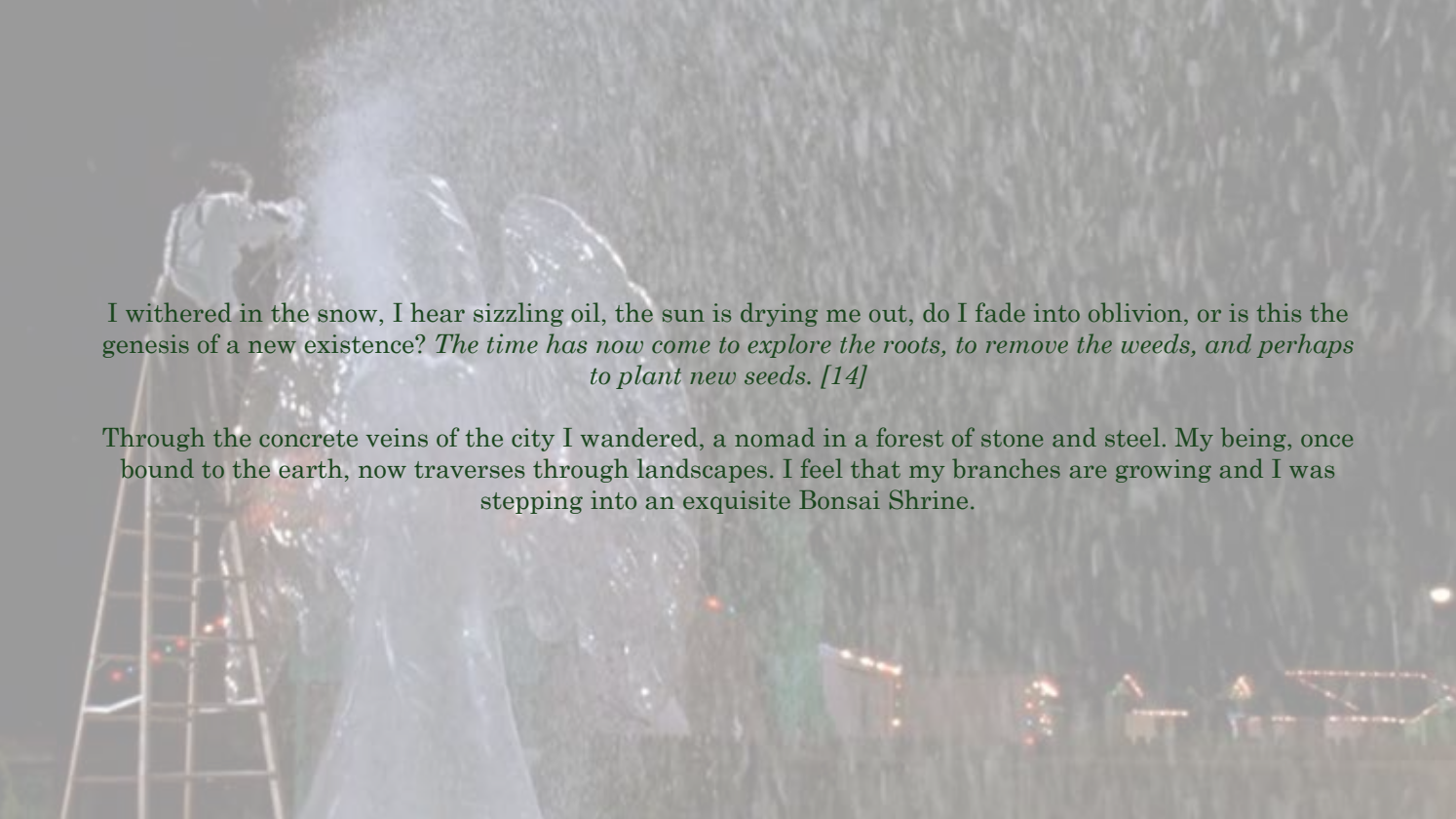
Where am I? I am in a festival, a carnival of souls, held by millions of people, snipped and shaped by the meticulous hands. I am surrounded by sun and wind, and then by presents and lights. I recall the days of slumber, nestled on the comforting embrace of black velvet. Then, as if plucked by the hands of fate, I found myself treasured within a crystal safe. I was dancing with the waves, and then warm water and salt bathed me in their healing embrace. *Today there is little that sounds as antithetical to restful recovery as a trip around the palace's formal gardens surrounded by a phalanx of retainers, [12] or consider a changing room housed in an oversized gilded birdcage, on another clothes are grouped with plants and garden accessories. [13]*



A person is seen on a tall ladder, working on a large, illuminated Christmas tree at night. The tree is covered in lights and ornaments, and the scene is set against a dark background with some distant lights visible. The overall atmosphere is festive and celebratory.

# Fashioning Bonsai



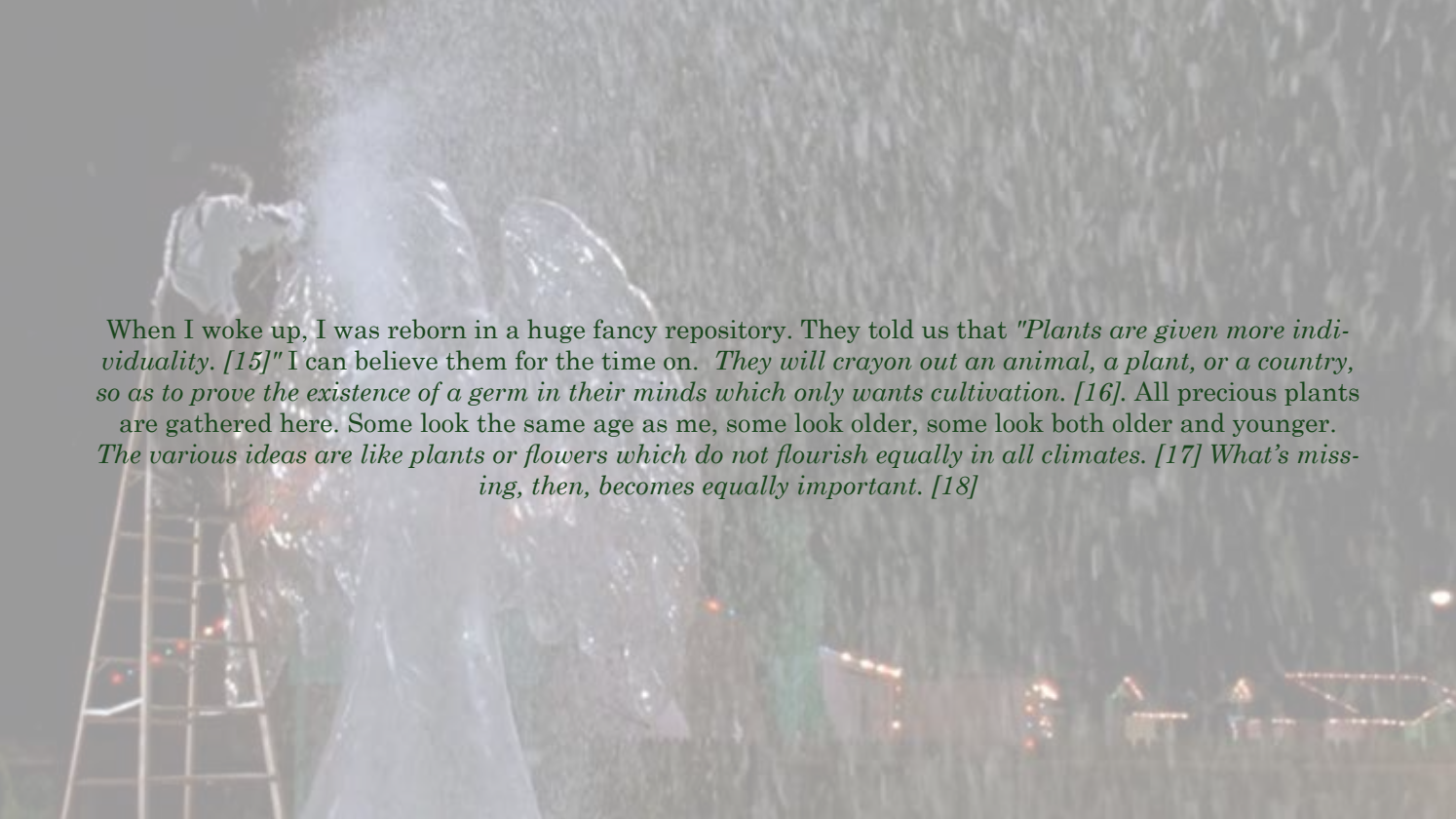


I withered in the snow, I hear sizzling oil, the sun is drying me out, do I fade into oblivion, or is this the genesis of a new existence? *The time has now come to explore the roots, to remove the weeds, and perhaps to plant new seeds. [14]*

Through the concrete veins of the city I wandered, a nomad in a forest of stone and steel. My being, once bound to the earth, now traverses through landscapes. I feel that my branches are growing and I was stepping into an exquisite Bonsai Shrine.





A person wearing a white protective suit and mask is working on a large, clear plastic structure, possibly a greenhouse or a large-scale experiment. The person is standing on a ladder. The background is dark, suggesting an indoor or nighttime setting, with some lights visible in the distance.

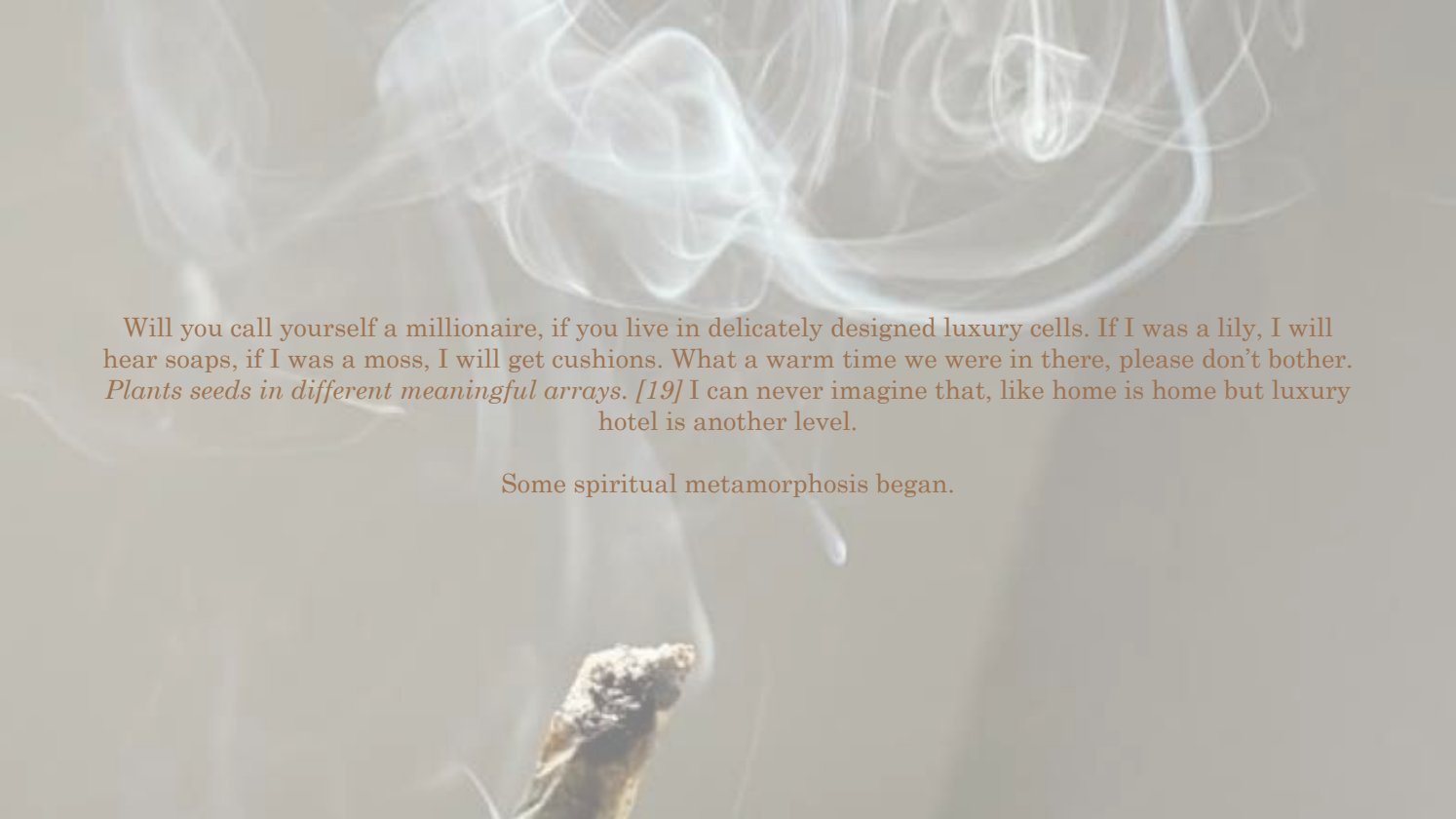
When I woke up, I was reborn in a huge fancy repository. They told us that *"Plants are given more individuality. [15]"* I can believe them for the time on. *They will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. [16].* All precious plants are gathered here. Some look the same age as me, some look older, some look both older and younger. *The various ideas are like plants or flowers which do not flourish equally in all climates. [17] What's missing, then, becomes equally important. [18]*



A lit candle is shown at the bottom center, with a thick plume of white smoke rising from it. The smoke is wispy and fills the upper two-thirds of the frame. A large, semi-transparent, light brown number '2' is overlaid on the image, centered vertically and horizontally. The background is a soft, light beige color.

*Ascend into Butterfly*

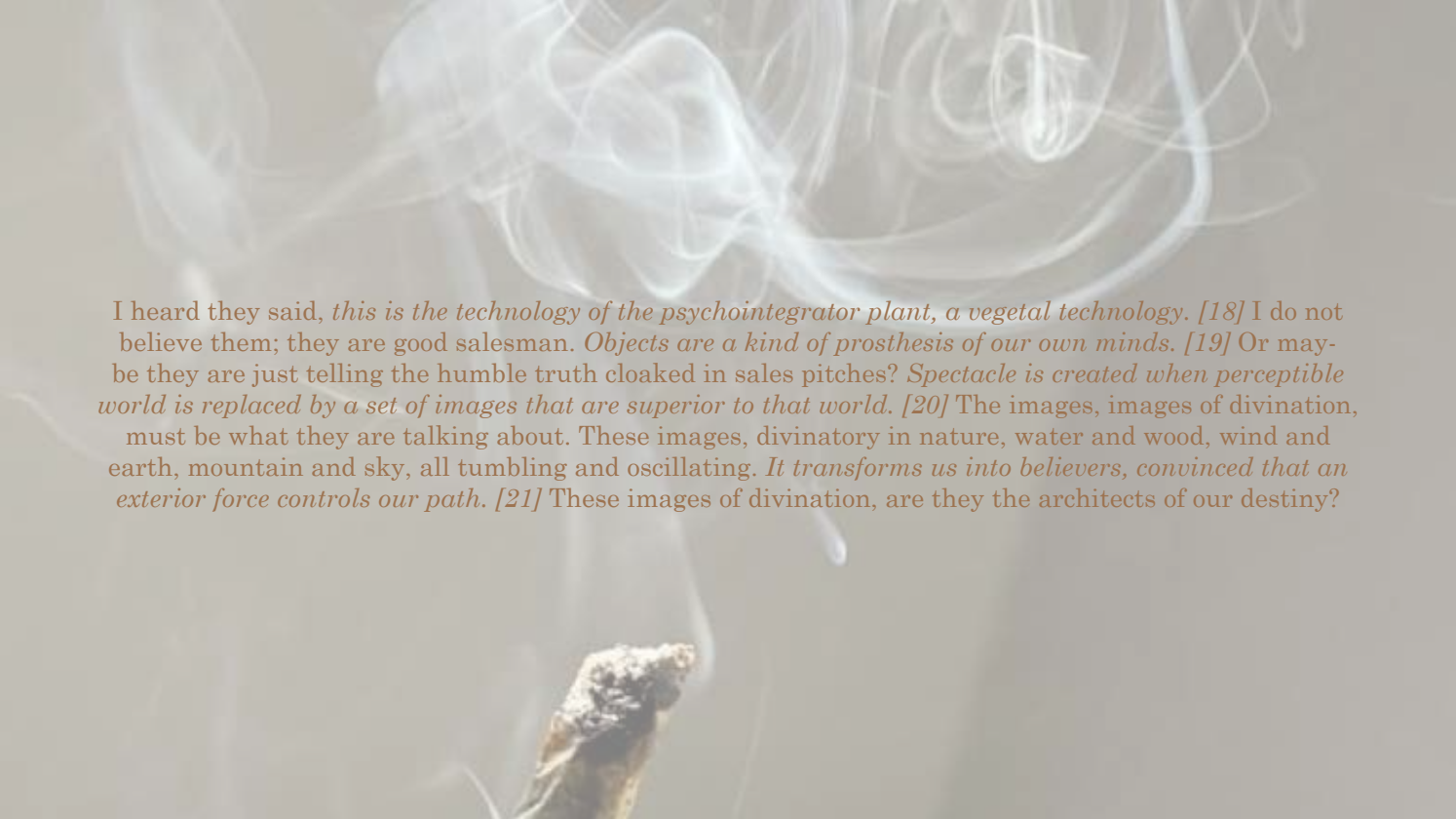




Will you call yourself a millionaire, if you live in delicately designed luxury cells. If I was a lily, I will hear soaps, if I was a moss, I will get cushions. What a warm time we were in there, please don't bother. *Plants seeds in different meaningful arrays.* [19] I can never imagine that, like home is home but luxury hotel is another level.

Some spiritual metamorphosis began.





I heard they said, *this is the technology of the psychointegrator plant, a vegetal technology.* [18] I do not believe them; they are good salesman. *Objects are a kind of prosthesis of our own minds.* [19] Or maybe they are just telling the humble truth cloaked in sales pitches? *Spectacle is created when perceptible world is replaced by a set of images that are superior to that world.* [20] The images, images of divination, must be what they are talking about. These images, divinatory in nature, water and wood, wind and earth, mountain and sky, all tumbling and oscillating. *It transforms us into believers, convinced that an exterior force controls our path.* [21] These images of divination, are they the architects of our destiny?

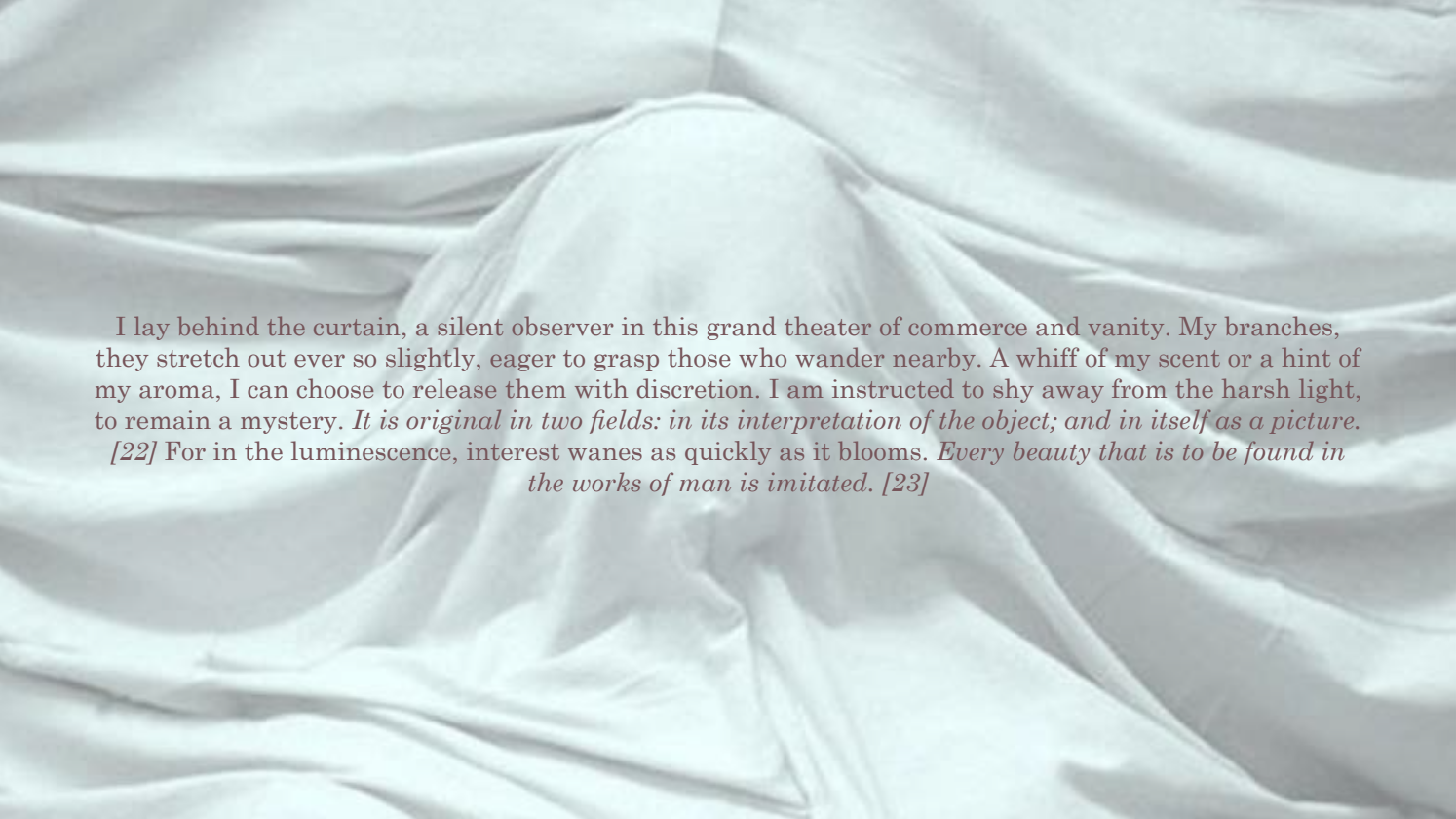






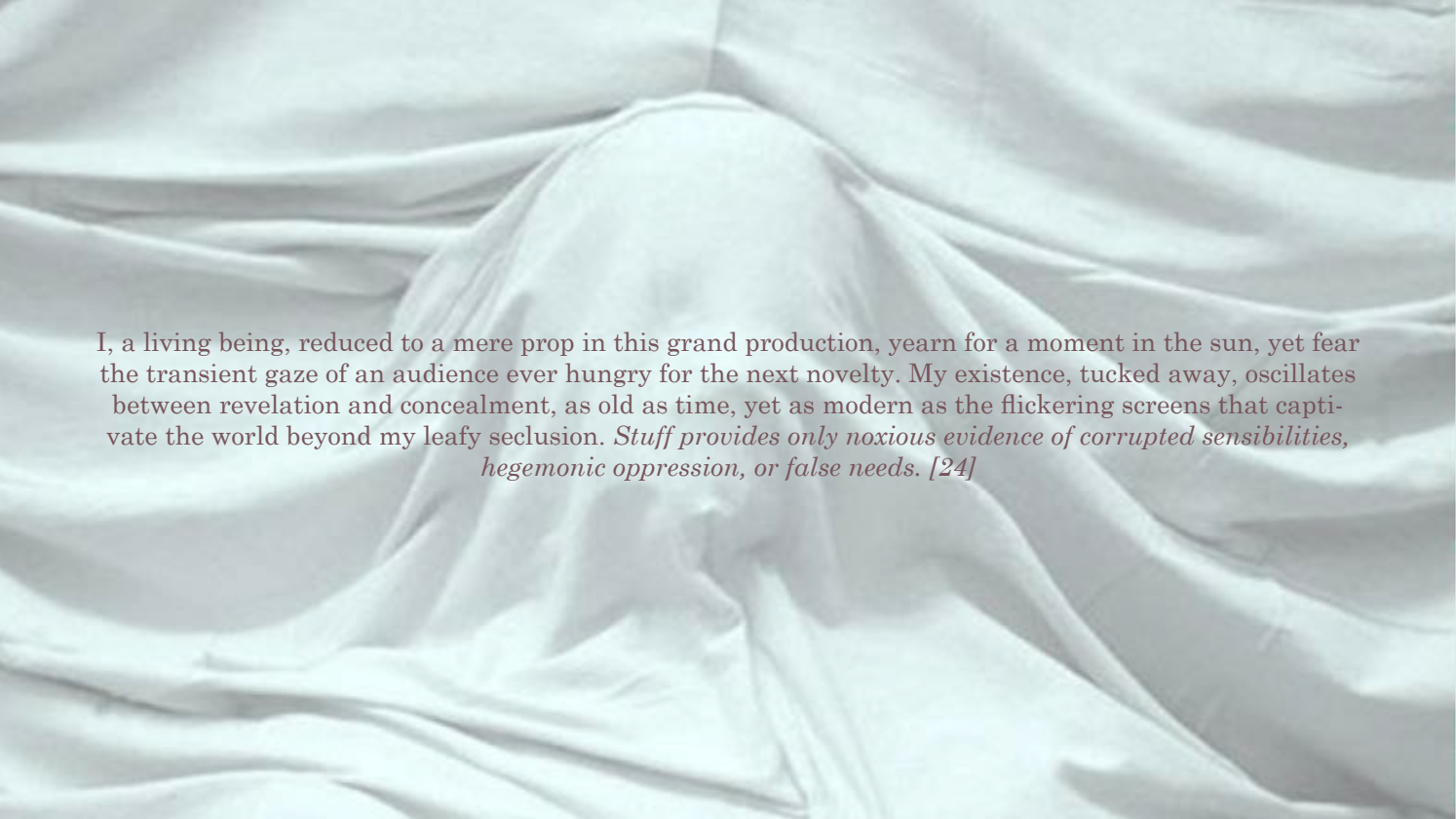
# Veiling Seeds





I lay behind the curtain, a silent observer in this grand theater of commerce and vanity. My branches, they stretch out ever so slightly, eager to grasp those who wander nearby. A whiff of my scent or a hint of my aroma, I can choose to release them with discretion. I am instructed to shy away from the harsh light, to remain a mystery. *It is original in two fields: in its interpretation of the object; and in itself as a picture.* [22] For in the luminescence, interest wanes as quickly as it blooms. *Every beauty that is to be found in the works of man is imitated.* [23]



A person is lying on a white sheet, mostly covered. Only their legs and feet are visible, extending downwards. The sheet is draped and wrinkled, creating a sense of being hidden or tucked away. The background is a plain, light color.

I, a living being, reduced to a mere prop in this grand production, yearn for a moment in the sun, yet fear the transient gaze of an audience ever hungry for the next novelty. My existence, tucked away, oscillates between revelation and concealment, as old as time, yet as modern as the flickering screens that captivate the world beyond my leafy seclusion. *Stuff provides only noxious evidence of corrupted sensibilities, hegemonic oppression, or false needs. [24]*

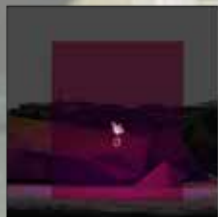


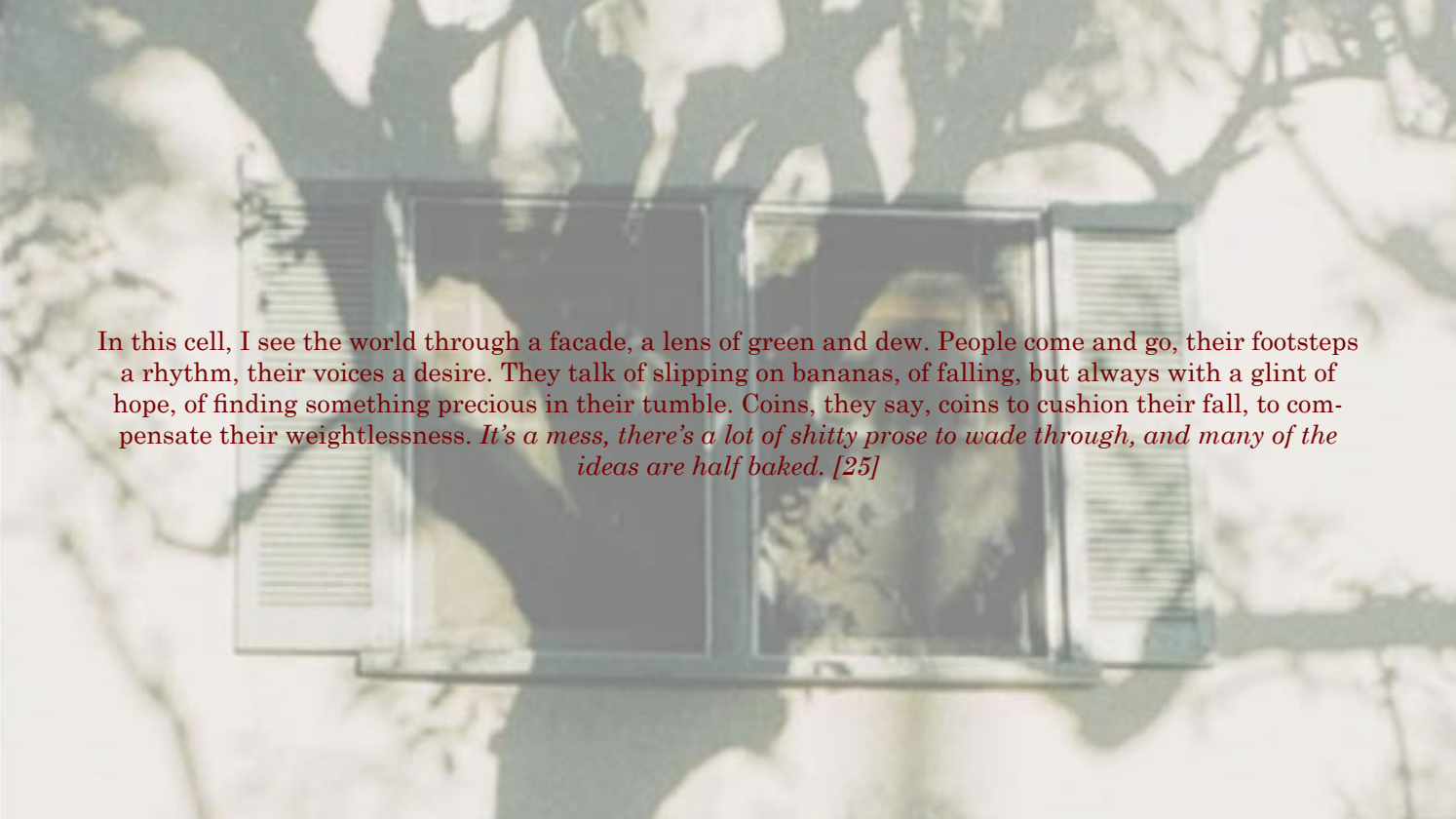
A photograph of a window with white shutters, viewed from a slightly elevated angle. The window is set in a light-colored wall. A large, semi-transparent, dark red number '2' is overlaid on the window. The text 'Observe Request' is written in a dark red, serif font across the middle of the window. The background behind the window shows a blurred view of trees and foliage.

# 2

Observe Request

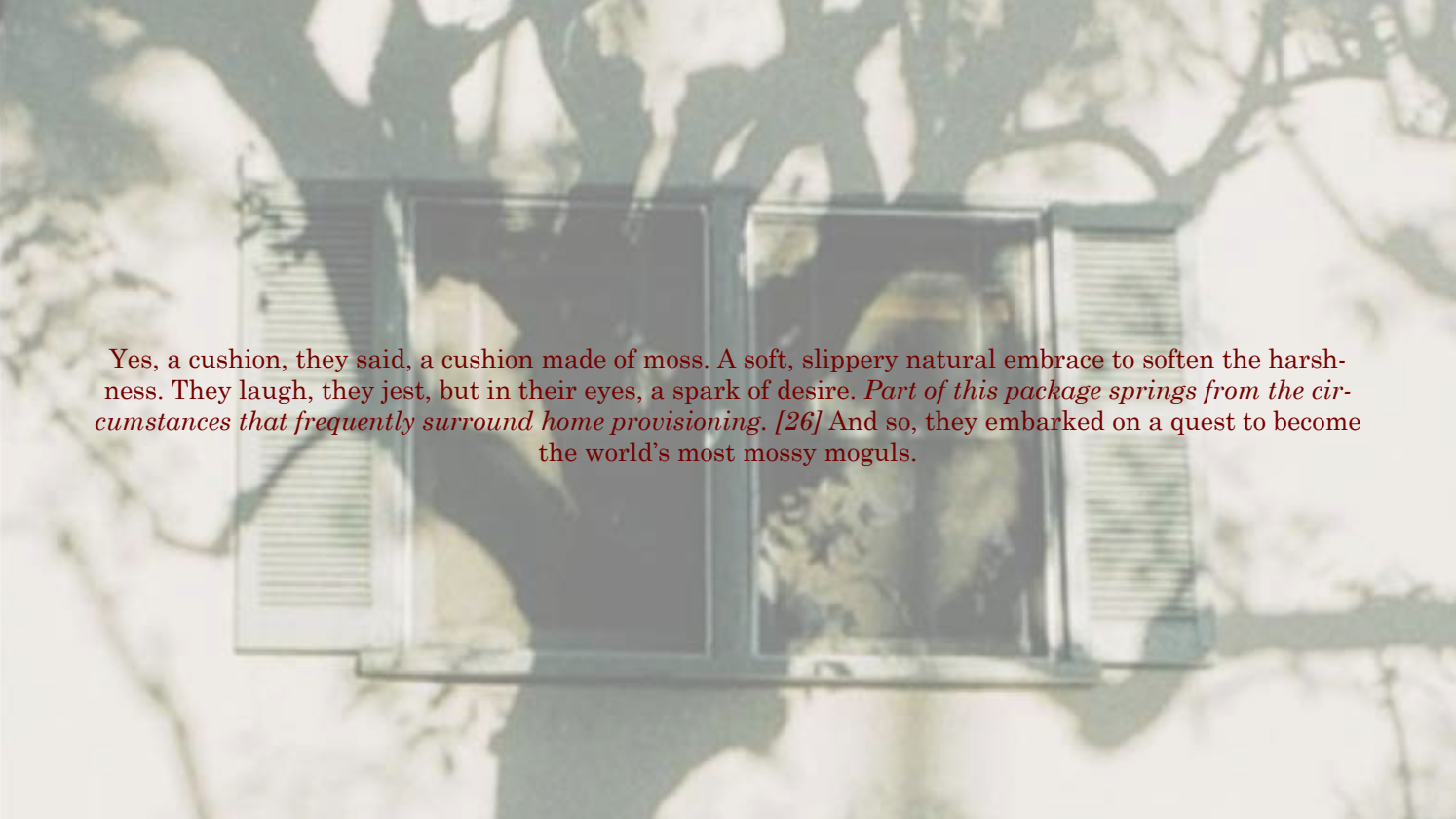




A photograph of a window with two open, light-colored shutters. The window looks out onto a large tree with dense green foliage. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly blurred style, with a focus on the window frame and the immediate view outside. The lighting is natural, suggesting a bright day with some shadows on the leaves.

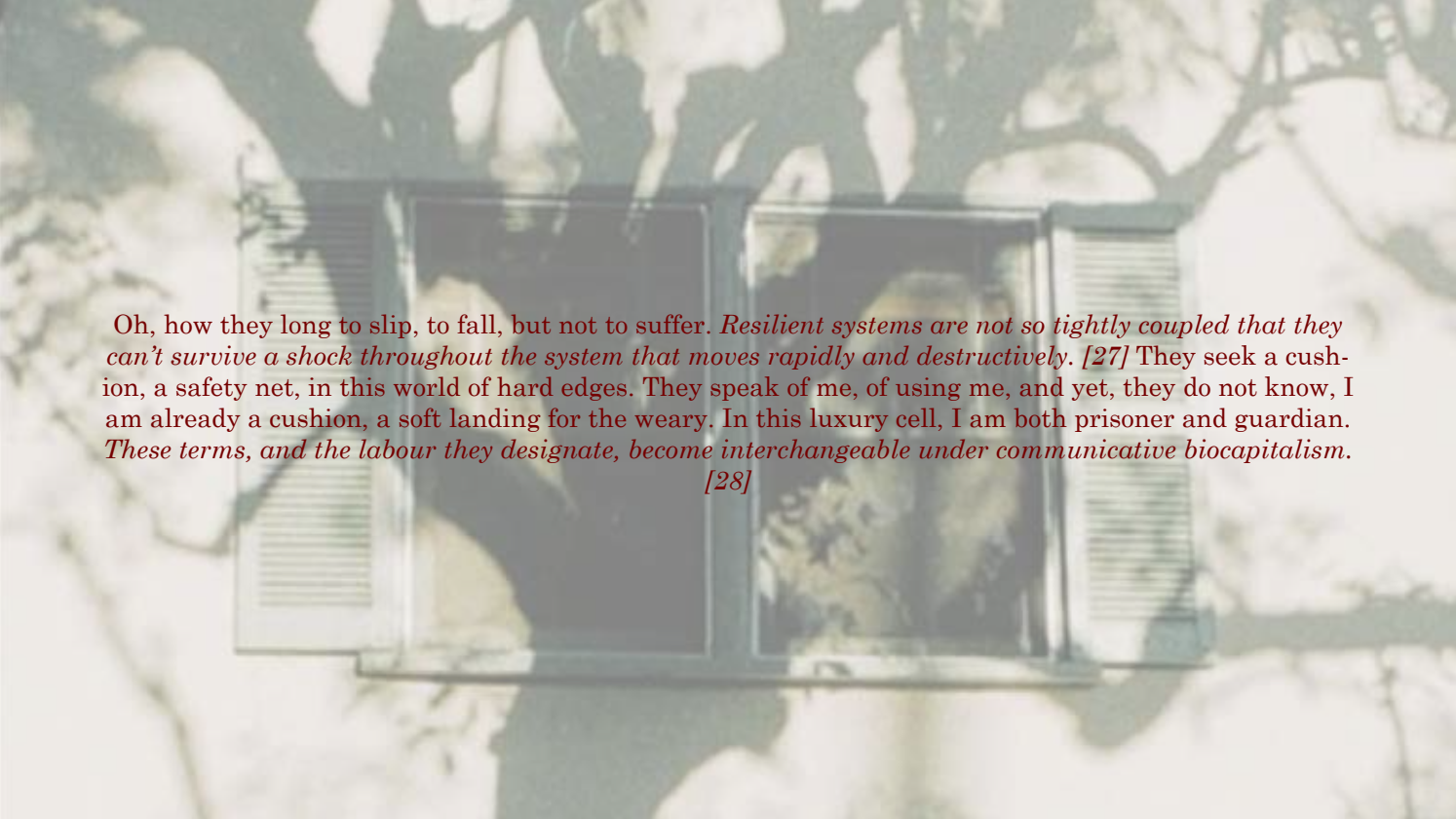
In this cell, I see the world through a facade, a lens of green and dew. People come and go, their footsteps a rhythm, their voices a desire. They talk of slipping on bananas, of falling, but always with a glint of hope, of finding something precious in their tumble. Coins, they say, coins to cushion their fall, to compensate their weightlessness. *It's a mess, there's a lot of shitty prose to wade through, and many of the ideas are half baked. [25]*



A photograph of a window with two open, light-colored shutters. The window looks out onto a large, leafy tree. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly desaturated light, possibly during dawn or dusk. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

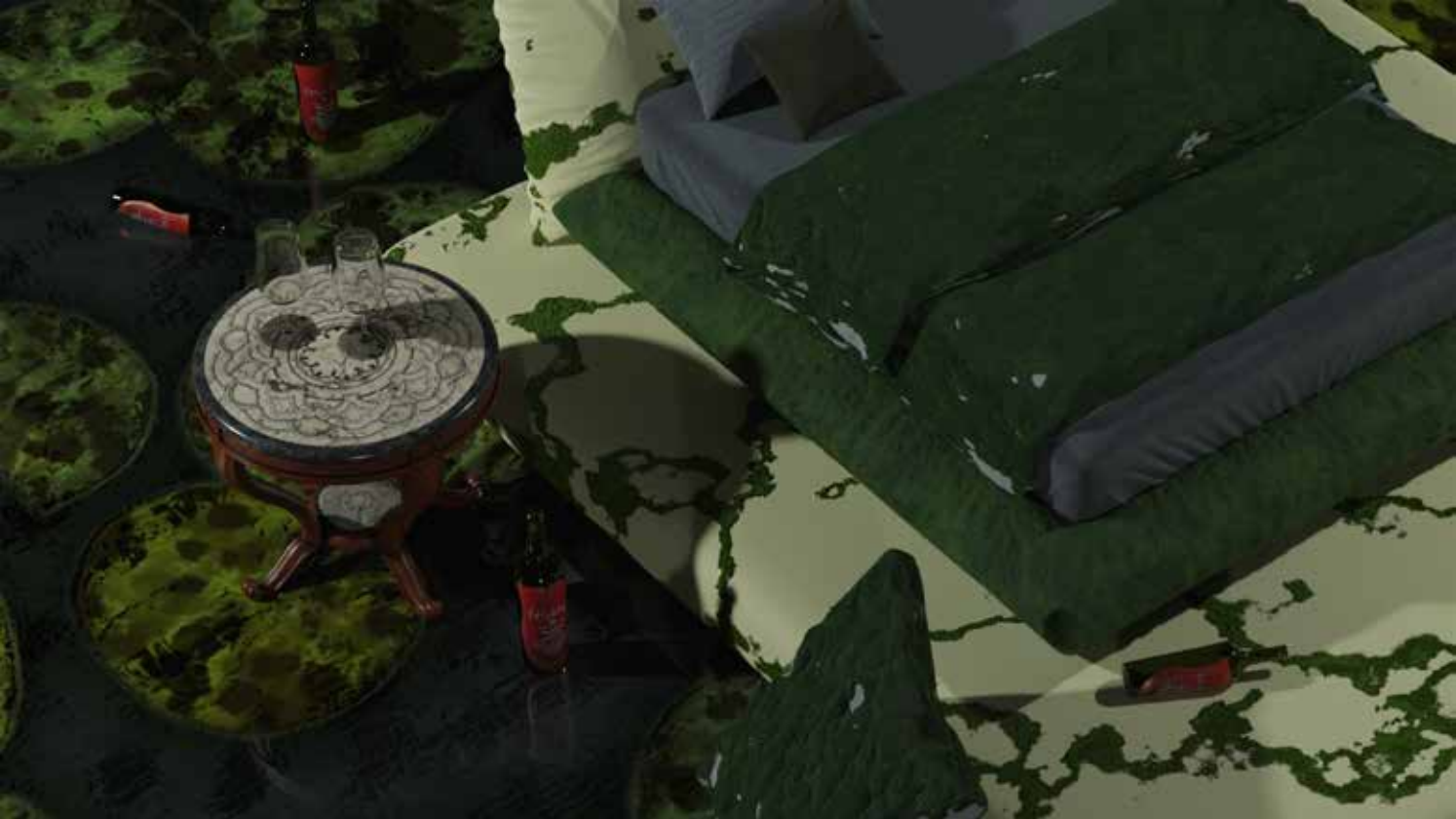
Yes, a cushion, they said, a cushion made of moss. A soft, slippery natural embrace to soften the harshness. They laugh, they jest, but in their eyes, a spark of desire. *Part of this package springs from the circumstances that frequently surround home provisioning. [26]* And so, they embarked on a quest to become the world's most mossy moguls.

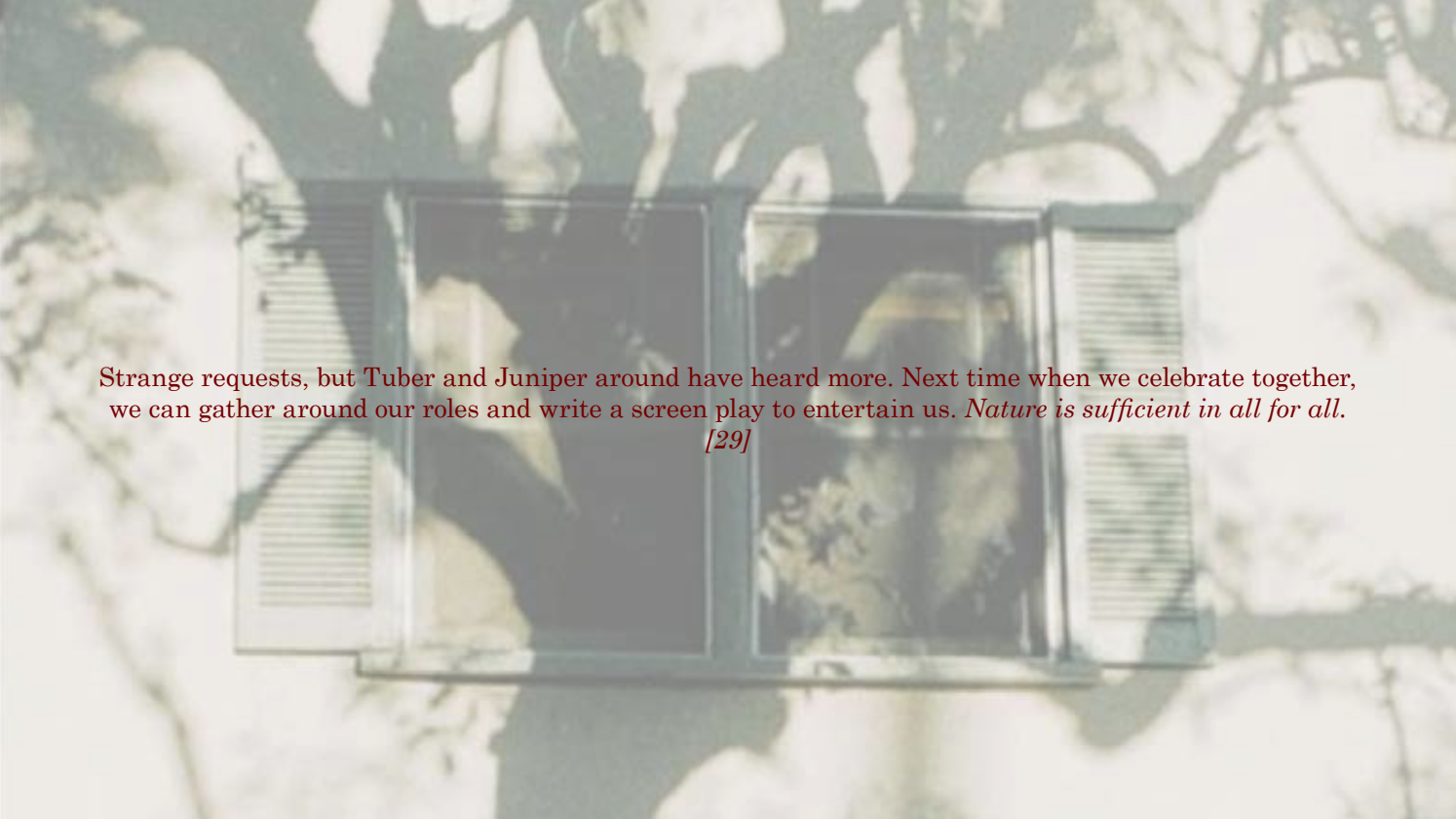


A photograph of a window with white shutters, looking out onto a tree. The image is slightly blurred and has a soft, ethereal quality. The window is the central focus, with the shutters open on both sides. The view outside shows the dark, intricate branches of a tree against a lighter, hazy background. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat melancholic.

Oh, how they long to slip, to fall, but not to suffer. *Resilient systems are not so tightly coupled that they can't survive a shock throughout the system that moves rapidly and destructively.* [27] They seek a cushion, a safety net, in this world of hard edges. They speak of me, of using me, and yet, they do not know, I am already a cushion, a soft landing for the weary. In this luxury cell, I am both prisoner and guardian. *These terms, and the labour they designate, become interchangeable under communicative biocapitalism.*

[28]



A photograph of a window with dark shutters, set against a background of a forest. A rainbow is visible in the distance through the window. The scene is bathed in a soft, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Strange requests, but Tuber and Juniper around have heard more. Next time when we celebrate together, we can gather around our roles and write a screen play to entertain us. *Nature is sufficient in all for all.*

[29]




A photograph of a window with dark shutters, set against a background of a wall with a pattern of large, dark, irregular shapes. The window looks out onto a bright, natural scene. Overlaid on the center of the image is a line of text in a dark red, serif font.

Now I am not sure anymore, am I just a fragment of nature, a piece of the earth, or am I more?



Feast on Time

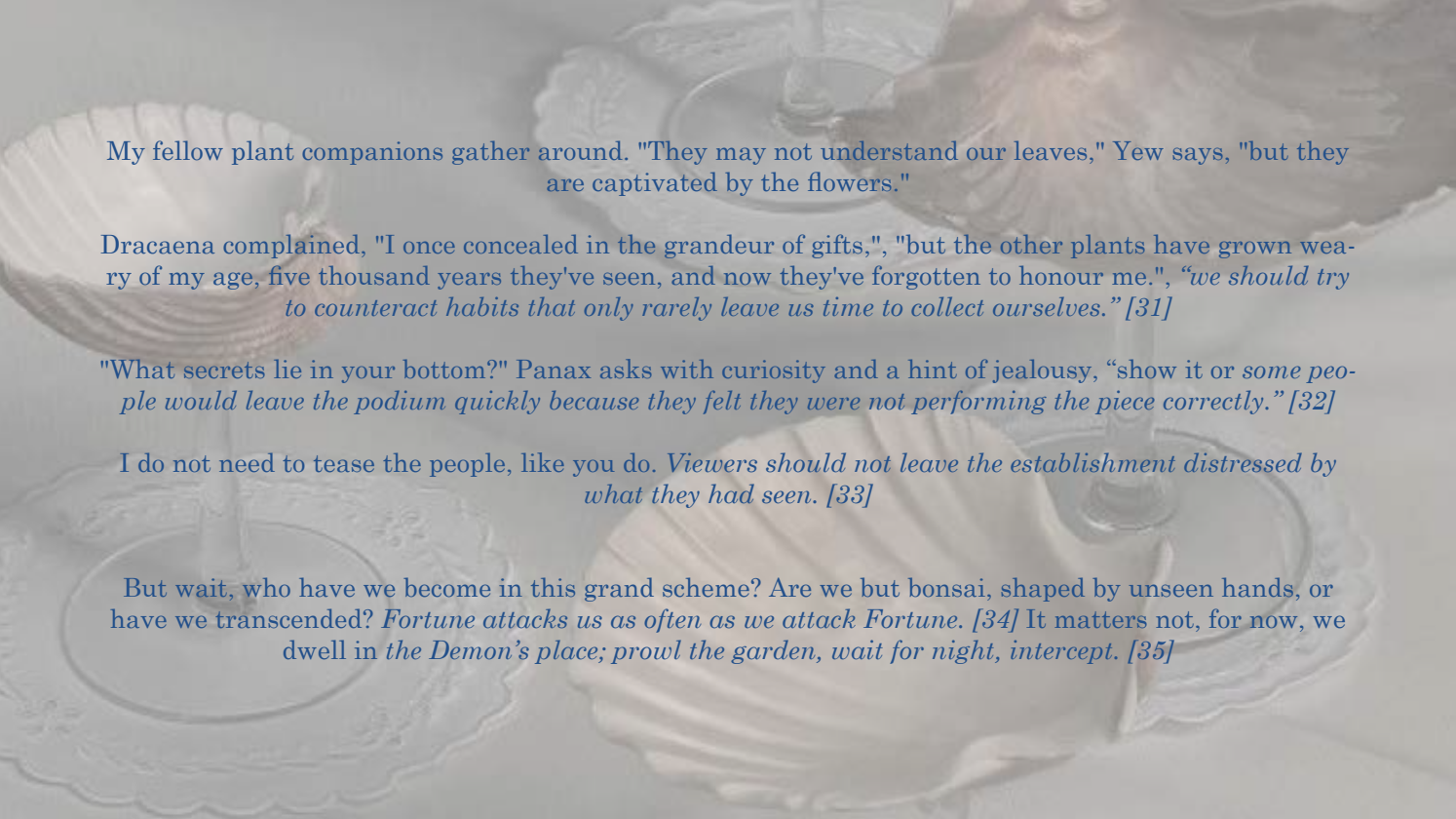




I sway and shiver far from the city's relentless march. My time approaches, the hour of draws near, and the world outside, the world of men, is oblivious.

My heart flutters like a butterfly. The clock's hands inch toward twenty o'clock. It's a coincidence that my time oscillates with the human's time. I do not intend to, but having something synchronized is maybe a good thing. *When one brings all dimensions together there is a perception of transformation. [30]*





My fellow plant companions gather around. "They may not understand our leaves," Yew says, "but they are captivated by the flowers."

Dracaena complained, "I once concealed in the grandeur of gifts," "but the other plants have grown weary of my age, five thousand years they've seen, and now they've forgotten to honour me.", "*we should try to counteract habits that only rarely leave us time to collect ourselves.*" [31]

"What secrets lie in your bottom?" Panax asks with curiosity and a hint of jealousy, "show it or *some people would leave the podium quickly because they felt they were not performing the piece correctly.*" [32]

I do not need to tease the people, like you do. *Viewers should not leave the establishment distressed by what they had seen.* [33]

But wait, who have we become in this grand scheme? Are we but bonsai, shaped by unseen hands, or have we transcended? *Fortune attacks us as often as we attack Fortune.* [34] It matters not, for now, we dwell in *the Demon's place; prowl the garden, wait for night, intercept.* [35]





*Speculating Prophecy*



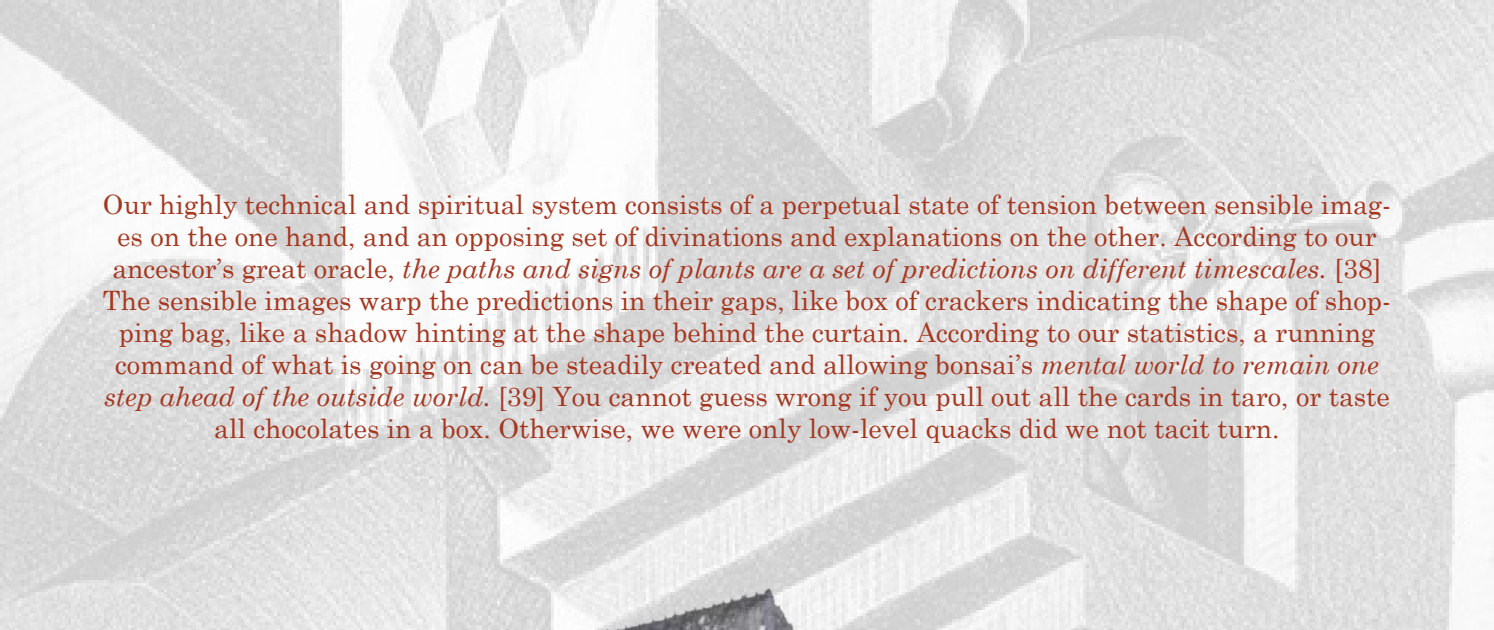


Welcome to our company, the world's grandest fortune service centre, we have been providing customized services to your fortune ever since plants were invented.

Discover how the humble plant can be your compass to the stars? Consider the Chrysanthemum, a symbol of longevity, blooming briefly yet eternally in memory. (who cares that it lives only four years). *It may happen that many things are known, but only one is understood.* [36]

We, too, offer you a chance to harness the magic of nature to sculpt destinies with the gentle bend of a bonsai branch. We will take care of your fortune by offering you the most up-to-date bonsai cultivated in our bonsai flagship shrine. *We have created, for the first time in all history, a garden of pure ideology—where each worker may bloom, secure from the pests purveying contradictory truths.* [37]





Our highly technical and spiritual system consists of a perpetual state of tension between sensible images on the one hand, and an opposing set of divinations and explanations on the other. According to our ancestor's great oracle, *the paths and signs of plants are a set of predictions on different timescales*. [38] The sensible images warp the predictions in their gaps, like box of crackers indicating the shape of shopping bag, like a shadow hinting at the shape behind the curtain. According to our statistics, a running command of what is going on can be steadily created and allowing bonsai's *mental world to remain one step ahead of the outside world*. [39] You cannot guess wrong if you pull out all the cards in taro, or taste all chocolates in a box. Otherwise, we were only low-level quacks did we not tacit turn.



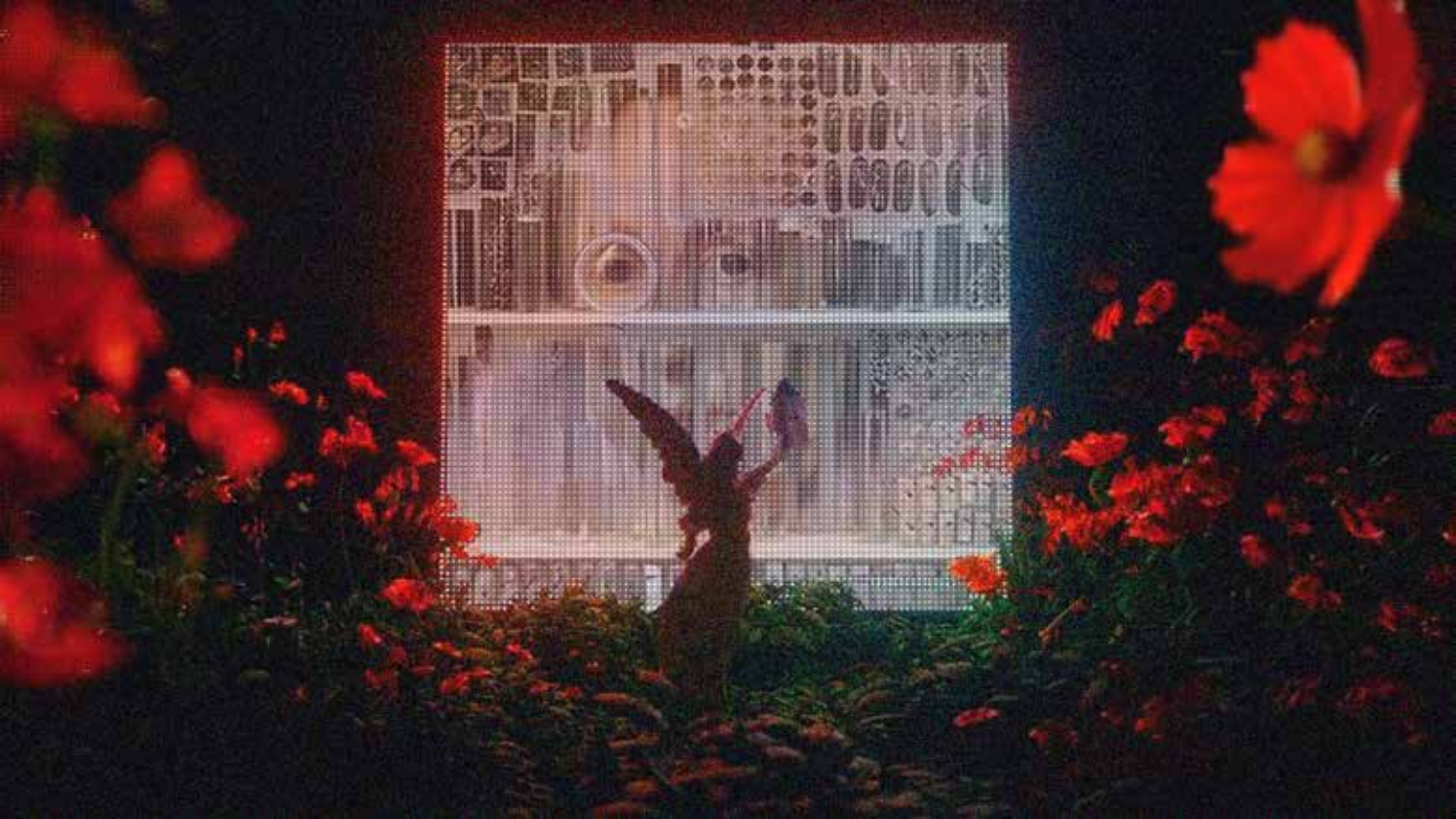


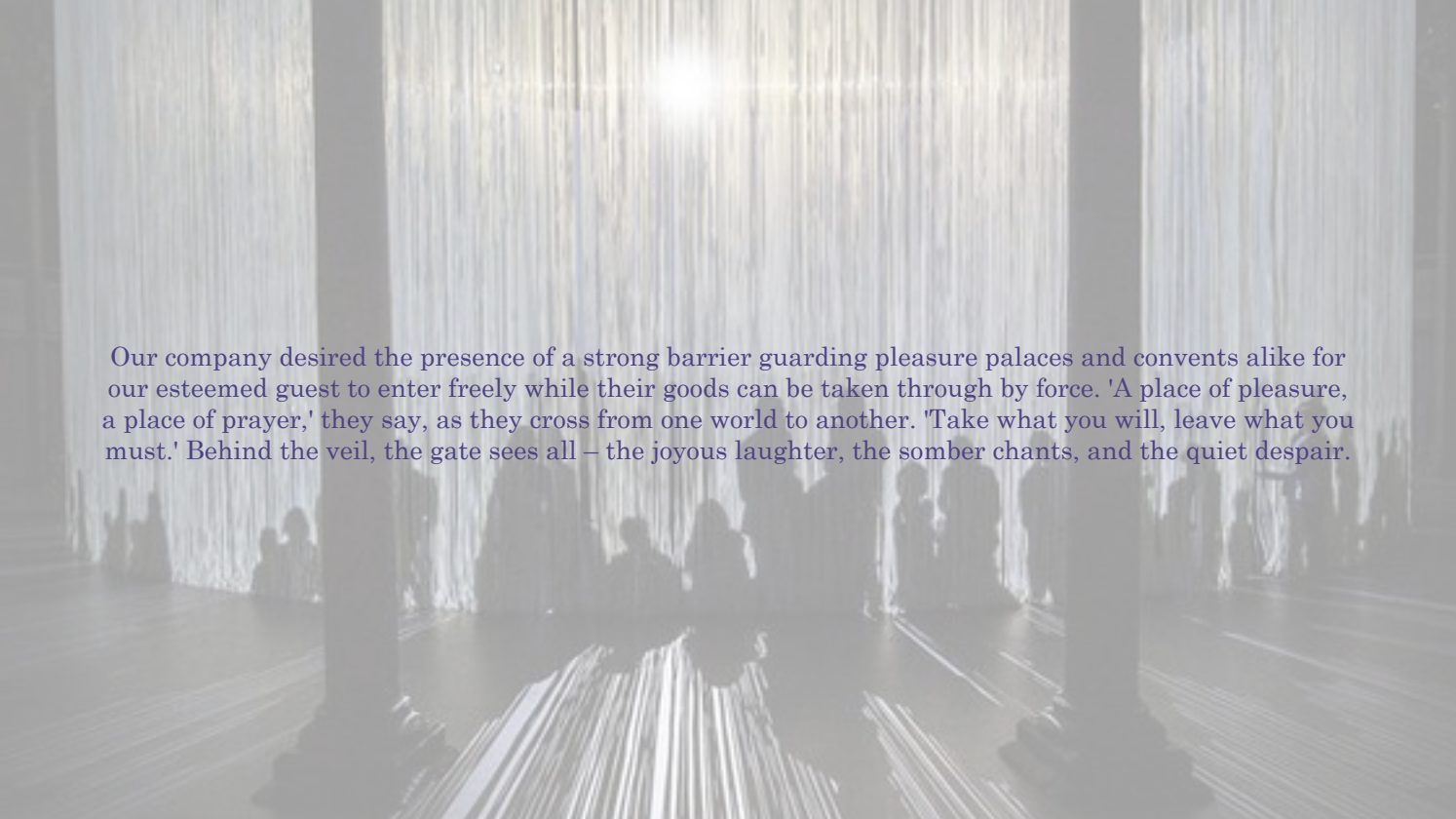
Unveil the Portal





*We assume that a building site, city, park, forest or garden is discrete, something bounded, whereas ecological relations mostly operate within and across such boundaries in ways quite at odds with our image of them. [40] The feature is like a curtain between worlds, but also a marker of symbolic separation.*





Our company desired the presence of a strong barrier guarding pleasure palaces and convents alike for our esteemed guest to enter freely while their goods can be taken through by force. 'A place of pleasure, a place of prayer,' they say, as they cross from one world to another. 'Take what you will, leave what you must.' Behind the veil, the gate sees all – the joyous laughter, the somber chants, and the quiet despair.







# Grant the Image



FREE DRINK WITH THIS INSTALLATION  
ONE COMPLEMENTARY PAGE AND ONE  
313-455-0001  
1111 BROADWAY  
SUITE 2000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103



*Across geography and time, we used halls of cells to control our occupants. [41] They are free to breathe and breed here. We provide the best environment that they will feel at home. We exchange personal freedom for emotional intensity. [42]*



FREE DRINK WITH THIS INVITATION  
ONE COMPLIMENTARY BEVS AND ONE  
FREE PERSONAL CHICAGO  
213-676-0241  
CHICAGO IS CHICAGO

Each plant living in its own slice of time, a luxury scarce in the stone forests. Even the weather bows to their needs, with sun and rain, even radiation if required, showered upon them as needed. *The grid format resembles a series of individual, enclosed rooms, allowing the reader to peruse a variety of options.*

[43]

ONE COMPLIMENTARY PASS AND ONE  
FREE DRINK WITH THIS INVITATION

CHICAGO IS HOT!  
1974 FEBRUARY 15  
1974 FEBRUARY 15







Yet, our customers are not confined; they can gracefully observe their fortunes from the hallway through the shop window, as one might choose the perfect cubicle in an unending restroom. *You will busy myself, therefore, with examining wherein the many varying shapes differed from each other. You will only rather feel annoyed that it did not lead you further.* [44]



FREE DRINK WITH THIS INVITATION  
ONE COMPLIMENTARY BEV AND ONE  
213-675-0241  
FROM 11:00AM TO 12:00AM  
CHICAGO IL CHICAGO

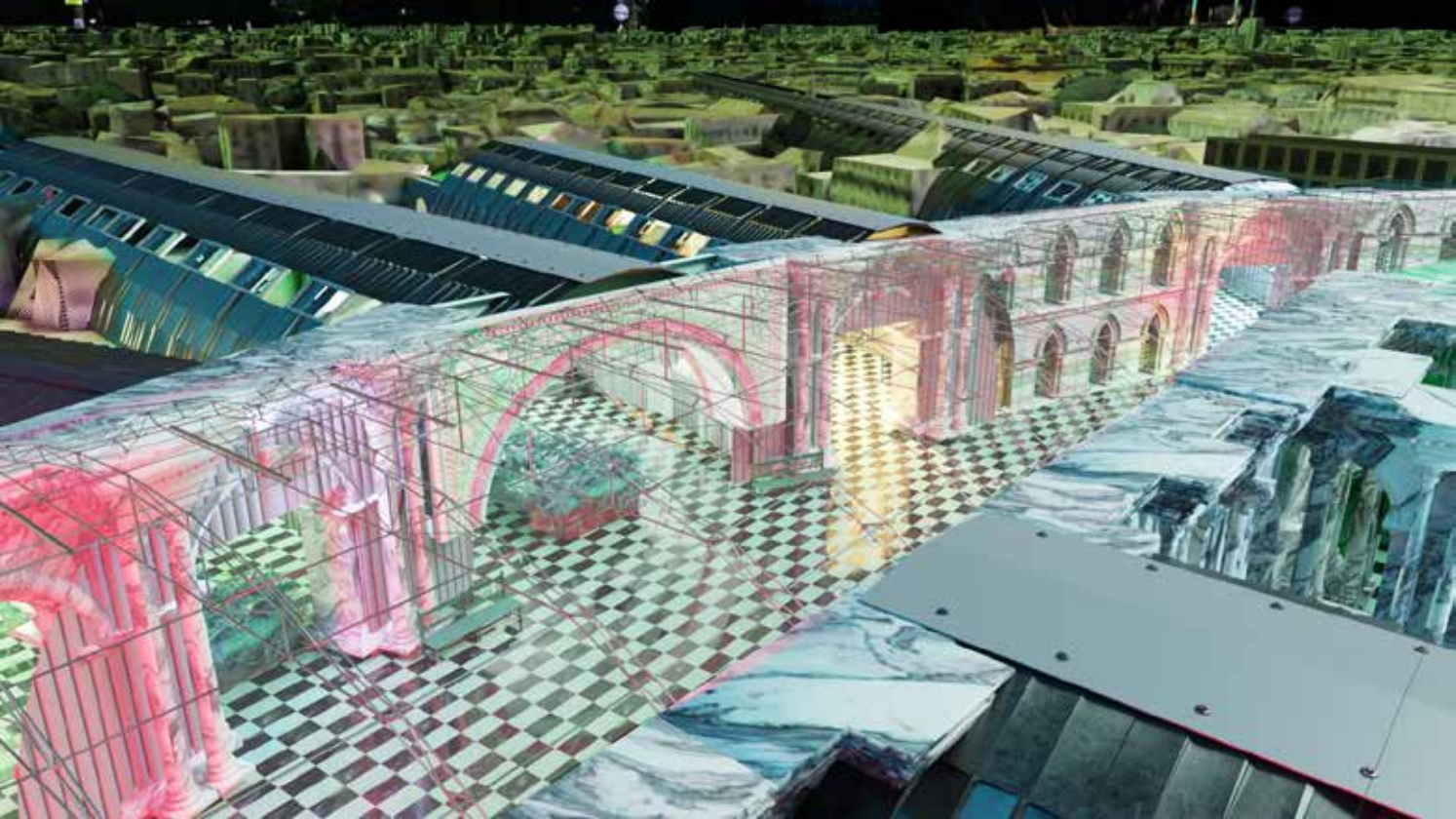




We do not want to frighten you with the terms and conditions of our proud commitments. In the end, *these are the sites of erotic interchange.* [45] Step into a world where each bonsai is a masterpiece sculpted by time and nurtured with care. Have your own answers in mind, pick questions carefully, a question of how sure you are about your answers. A gardening book might help you out. However, *the book you are reading has nothing to do with the fact that it is called a “book.”* [46], you must take the bait yourself. From our professional opinion and experience, *we think there is no answer to these questions, or at least that every answer is possible.* [47]



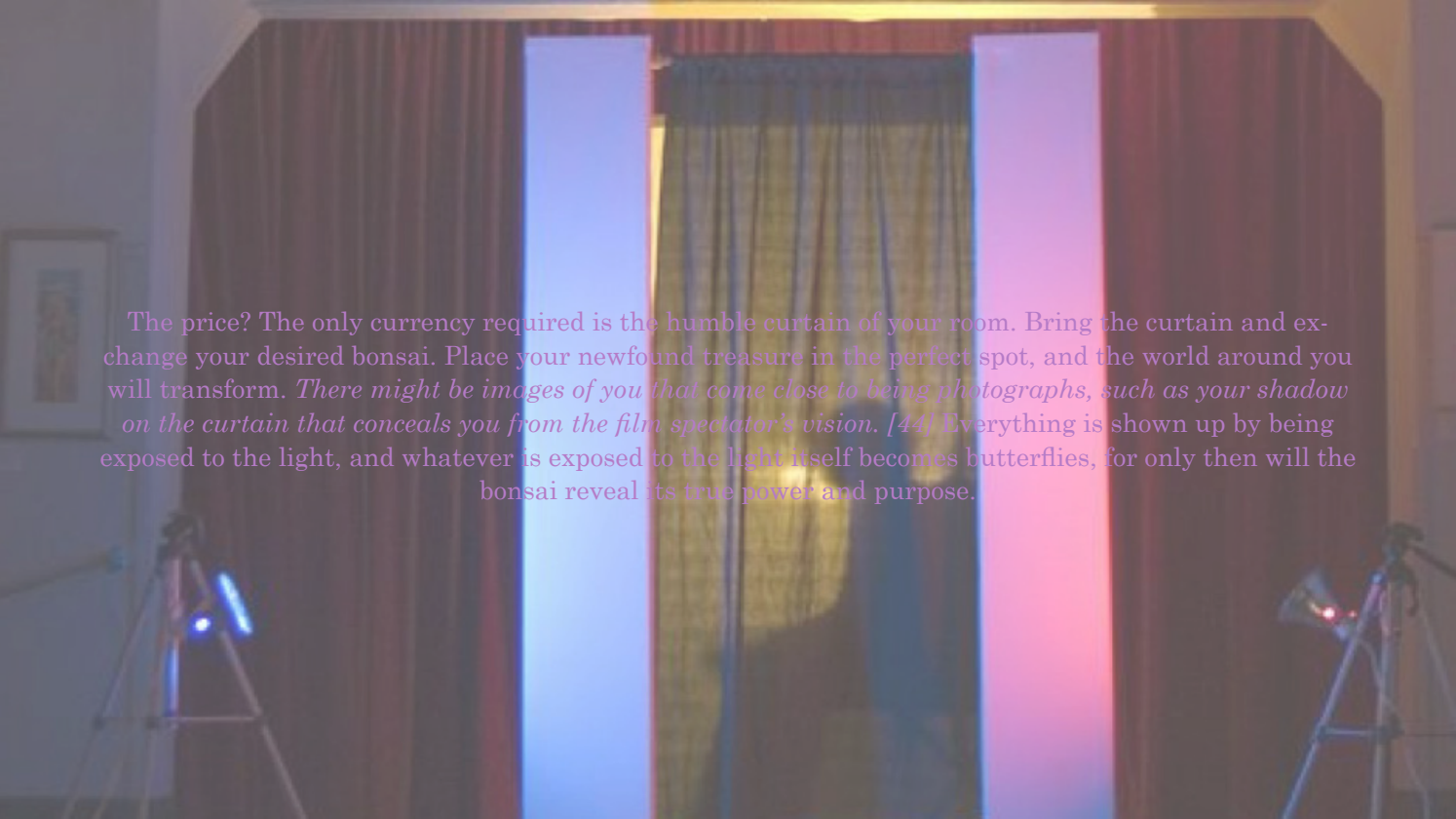
LET'S THINK WITH THE IMAGINATION  
CONVENTION CENTER  
312-467-0200  
215 WEST WASHINGTON  
CHICAGO, IL 60604



A stage setting with two spotlights on tripods, one emitting blue light and the other pink light. A large, stylized purple number '3' is overlaid on the scene. The background consists of dark curtains and a window with sheer curtains.

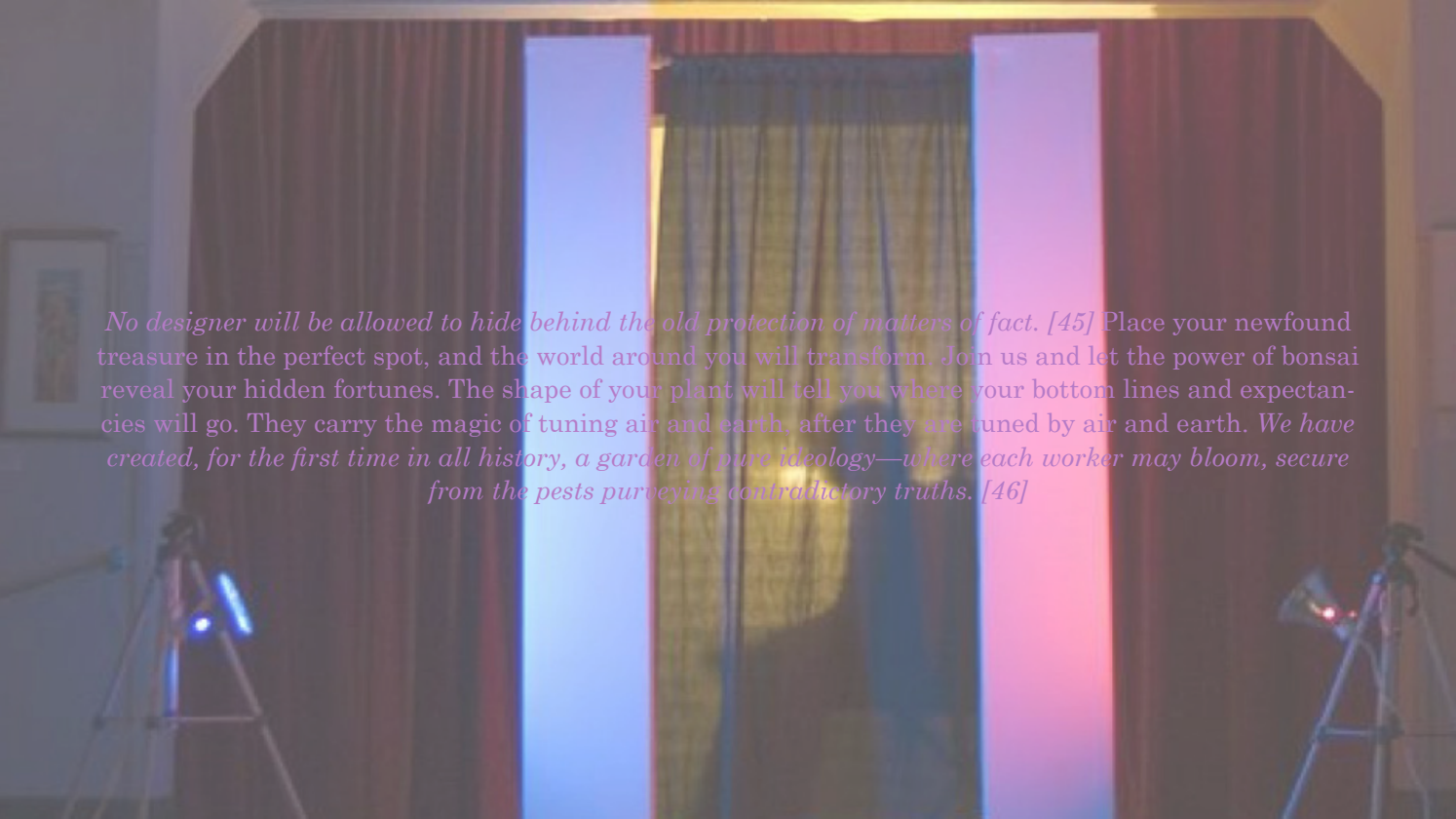
Relieve the Indeterminate



A photograph of a film set. In the center, a dark curtain hangs from a rod. Two vertical light panels, one blue on the left and one pink on the right, are positioned on either side of the curtain. In the foreground, two light stands on tripods are visible, each holding a light fixture. The background is a plain wall with a framed picture on the left.

The price? The only currency required is the humble curtain of your room. Bring the curtain and exchange your desired bonsai. Place your newfound treasure in the perfect spot, and the world around you will transform. *There might be images of you that come close to being photographs, such as your shadow on the curtain that conceals you from the film spectator's vision.* [44] Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes butterflies, for only then will the bonsai reveal its true power and purpose.







*No designer will be allowed to hide behind the old protection of matters of fact. [45] Place your newfound treasure in the perfect spot, and the world around you will transform. Join us and let the power of bonsai reveal your hidden fortunes. The shape of your plant will tell you where your bottom lines and expectancies will go. They carry the magic of tuning air and earth, after they are tuned by air and earth. We have created, for the first time in all history, a garden of pure ideology—where each worker may bloom, secure from the pests purveying contradictory truths. [46]*





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- [1] Doherty, *Is Landscape Essays on the Identity of Landscape*  
[2] Twemlow, *Sifting the Trash A History of Design Criticism*  
[3] von Humboldt, *Cosmos Vol 1*  
[4] Stefan Stenudd, *IChing Online*  
[5] Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*  
[6] Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology The Complete Work*  
[7] Diderot Alembert, *Political Articles in the Dictionary*  
[8] Doherty, *Is Landscape Essays on the Identity of Landscape*  
[9] Clarke, *Design Anthropology Object Culture in the 21st Century*  
[10] von Humboldt, *Cosmos Vol 1*  
[11] Michelet, *The Bird*  
[12] Guffey, *Designing Disability Symbols Space and Society*  
[13] Arnold, *Fashion A Very Short Introduction*  
[14] Komjathy, *Introducing Contemplative Studies*  
[15] Gothein, *A History of Garden Art*  
[16] Jefferson, *Political Writings*  
[17] Harrison Wood Gaiger, *Art in Theory 1648 1815*  
[18] Peters, *Digital Keywords*  
[19] Ascott, *Engineering Nature*  
[20] Mazurek, *A Sense of Apocalypse Technology Textuality Ide*  
[21] Siemens, *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*  
[22] Sassoon, *The Designer: Half a Century of Change in Image, Training, and Techniques*  
[23] Rousseau, *Collected Works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*  
[24] Clarke, *Design Anthropology Object Culture in the 21st Century*

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- [25] Twemlow, *Sifting the Trash A History of Design Criticism*  
[26] Clarke, *Design Anthropology Object Culture in the 21st Century*  
[27] Doherty, *Is Landscape Essays on the Identity of Landscape*  
[28] Banner, *Communicative Biocapitalism*  
[29] Hippocrates of Kos, *Complete Works*  
[30] Ascott, *Art Technology Consciousness Mindlarge*  
[31] Albers, *On Weaving*  
[32] Ascott, *Art Technology Consciousness Mindlarge*  
[33] Gaudreault, *A Companion to Early Cinema*  
[34] Seneca, *Complete Works*  
[35] Herzogenrath, *Travels in Intermediality*  
[36] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*  
[37] Cooley, *Finding Augusta Habits of Mobility and Governance*  
[38] Ascott, *Engineering Nature*  
[39] Ascott, *Engineering Nature*  
[40] Fry, *Steel A Design Cultural and Ecological History*  
[41] Noa Rui-Piin Weiss, *Monasteries and Brothels: Architectures of Control*  
[42] Ascott, *Engineering Nature*  
[43] Noa Rui-Piin Weiss, *Monasteries and Brothels: Architectures of Control*  
[44] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey*  
[45] Bureaud, *MetaLife Biotechnologies Synthetic Biology A Life and the Arts*  
[46] Herrington, *Landscape Theory in Design*  
[47] Gaudreault, *A Companion to Early Cinema* [44] Herzogenrath, *Travels in Intermediality*  
[45] Herrington, *Landscape Theory in Design*  
[46] Cooley, *Finding Augusta Habits of Mobility and Governance*



Meteora 09  
Yiwen Wang & Sining Xu  
HS23 ETH







JOKER

