

Material Turbulence: Stillness, Movement, and the Work of the Lumen

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and Fiona Murray

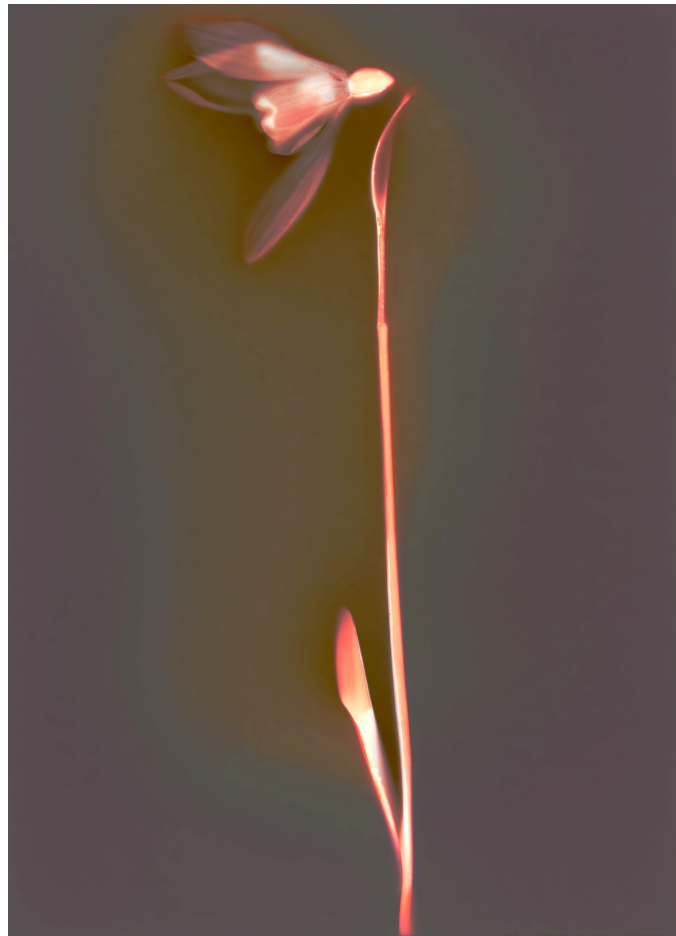


Fig. 1: Edinburgh wildflower, lumen (2019).
Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

Donna Haraway asks us to attend to how interference patterns “can make a difference in how meanings are made and lived” (1997, p. 14). This essay creates a series of “studios” in which material signposts call us to dwell in and on the environmental, the material, and the affective, along with how these signposts create interferences or diffraction patterns (Haraway, 1997) in our work

together. This writing is born in the material turbulence of lumen, “interference apparatus” (Iverson, 2013) through which traces, images, words, affects, and relations are collectively evoked, gathered, enfolded and dispersed.

Studios¹

I arrive in Edinburgh and to this collaboration with my imaginings and practices as a visual artist. Practices such as making lumens², imaginings about the light, flora, and land of Edinburgh that nudge me—at the very last minute—to tuck into my suitcase a box of photo paper, a pair of scissors, and a small printing apparatus loaned to me by a dear student who once travelled here and made lumens with the very same frame. Resonance abounds.

My arrival has everything to do with sharing a paper with Anne sometime in Spring 2018 and finding resonance with her creativity work and her journey with Stacy to Edinburgh to collaborate with Jonathan and Fiona through the *Centre for Creative-Relational Inquiry* (CCRI, ‘Sea Cry’).³ It was through Anne that I first encountered Sea Cry’s phrasing, “creative-relational inquiry.” It feels as if a generous conversational partner has offered me words I have been struggling to retrieve. Why? Perhaps because a thread that weaves through my multiple and varied work in qualitative inquiry is how I create-with invitations of relating-with. Invitations that are not bounded by the form

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¹ Brooke. (We footnote rather than headline our authorship—at times—in order to “soften” claims to individual authorship while gesturing, always, toward the collective. Hear the assemblage of/in the “I.”)

² To make a lumen is to engage with an alternative photographic process that involves placing objects on unexposed photographic paper and exposing to the sun, much like a photogram (Enfield, 2013). See Hofsess (forthcoming) as an example of lumens as creative, embodied, relational inquiry.

³ The Centre for Creative-Relational Inquiry (CCRI). Anne Harris and Stacy Holman Jones were CCRI’s first ever visitors, in November 2017.

of call and response; but that instead provoke a multiplicity, a cacophony of call-response. Creative invitations spark creative processes and unfold movements—movements that bring me to Edinburgh to write, make, think, and do with. Contemporary artist Gabriel Orozco claims:

I don't have a studio—as in a proper studio. But I always have a space in the places I live where I can work, usually very close to the kitchen. It is often a small space, where my books are, and where I can do my drawings. It's somewhere between an office, a library, a studio, a kitchen, a bar... (as cited in Mirlesse, 2011)

Writing with each of you and with Edinburgh, I am drawn to play with the idea that the studio occurs where there is creative responsiveness: around a conference, a coffee shop, a shoreline, a table on a train, an apartment. Perhaps studio as gathering of touch, material, togetherness, possibility, listening—whatever the form of its physical space. How might thinking the studio, as a temporary and compositional site of creative responsiveness, invite or provoke what Jonathan Wyatt (2018) envisions as “creative-relational inquiry”? What might be the capacities, the constraints? How might thinking the studio in this manner attune us to finding a sense of *moving-still* among a “turbulence of materials” (Ingold, 2017, p.8)?

How this begins; Or, how we become away this has always already been happening

“How this begins” is suggestive of *chronos*—linear, sequential time: a beginning of something when there has been nothing. But this essay works with *aiôn*, “time as potentiality, the sense in which time cannot be grasped because it is always simultaneously moving into the past and the future” (Boldt and Leander, 2017, p. 418, drawing upon Deleuze, 1990). Instead of “how this begins,” we might say, “how we become aware this has always already been happening.”

This is an inquiry into letting go; into letting go of the insistence on, and myth of, (human) control; and letting go, instead, into slow-fast material turbulence. It's an inquiry into what light does: through glass on plant on paper. It's an inquiry into what writing does; and into what walking-talking-looking-sitting-drinking-eating-sleeping does. What bodies can do (and be done to) differently, when together. Into the magic that happens when our backs are turned. Into how ‘action’ may appear to be inaction and ‘inaction’ may be action. Where stillness is movement, and movement stillness. This is an inquiry into how, in still mo(ve)ments (Davies & Gannon, 2006) over 72 hours in late February 2019, the ocean, a beach, a train, a plant, an “interference apparatus,” a rock, a window, sunlight, four humans in Edinburgh (and one in Melbourne), and time—and, and, and (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004)—collaborated. An inquiry into what might happen when turning our backs on the neoliberal creative turn (Harris, 2014) of commodification and innovation. How natureculture (Haraway, 2003) calls us back to embodiment, beauty and en-

counter, and how making-with-nature might offer glimpses of the kind of relational stewardship of the planet and of each other, that feels so deeply needed.



Fig. 2: Lumen apparatus (2019). Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

Curry leaf

Anne, Brooke, Fiona and Jonathan meet at Edinburgh Waverley train station one Sunday in late February 2019 at the start of four days of reading, writing, talking, creating and relating. We have attended the 3rd European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Edinburgh the week before. Stacy has at the last minute been unable to attend both the conference and these four days and has remained home in Australia. Anne has travelled to the conference from Melbourne, Brooke from North Carolina. Fiona and Jonathan live in Edinburgh. We board a train that Sunday February morning for the short journey to North Berwick, a coastal town to the southeast of Edinburgh. We walk North

Berwick's beaches and get coffee at Steampunk Cafe, then sit outside in the surprising winter sun.

Later, as we walk the coast the shape of seaweed beckons: ribbons, tendrils, stalks, blades, and needles. There is one shape in particular—a wide fanning leaf—deep, glossy, salted green. I⁴ am walking, talking and my body moves beyond the shape. A passing whim of regret—I should have stopped to pick it up. A passing whim of hope—I am sure to see another one. Yet the day moves ahead and in fact I do not find the shape again. Nothing made, not yet... not yet with.

We find seats on wooden planks outside of Steampunk. Overhead the sky is dull, yet the sun filters down along the lines of our table. The warmth of the sun invites my body to move and stretch a bit. I notice a wild patch of curry just beyond the reach of my arm. The leaves are pliable and alive in the February air though the seed pods lingering stiffly above must surely dried up months ago. For just a moment I am distracted by the image of those seeds falling into the soil below or being snatched up and carried away by a seagull like the one that drifts and calls out from above. Finding a newly broken-off piece amongst the soil, I place it quickly in between photographic paper and glass: the making of a lumen. I rest the lumen printing frame against the grey exterior of the coffeehouse. While the paper, plant, and frame appear still, the sun writes the image, makes mark after mark with its own time and intensity. Wind gusts against my skin, but not with enough intensity to knock the frame down.

Seaweed

Walking back to the train, my⁵ eyes catch hold of a shell—small and rimmed with a vibrant cobalt blue. This particular shell bears a hole worn right through the center. It calls to me: How have you been worn through? What have you harbored? This shell offers something about living, tells something about time, offers something about this place, invites something to happen next. As Ingold (2017) contemplated:

Matter is the mother of us all: we are wrought from it, over generations, as living beings endowed with certain powers of perception and action. But if life is forged in the turbulence of materials, so too are ideas conceived. Perhaps thought is weighed down by the histories that have shaped us, just as rocks are weighed down by histories of sedimentation and trees by histories of growth. We have our stories, as do the rocks and trees, as indeed do other animals mountains, mud and water. (p. 8)

⁴ Brooke

⁵ Brooke

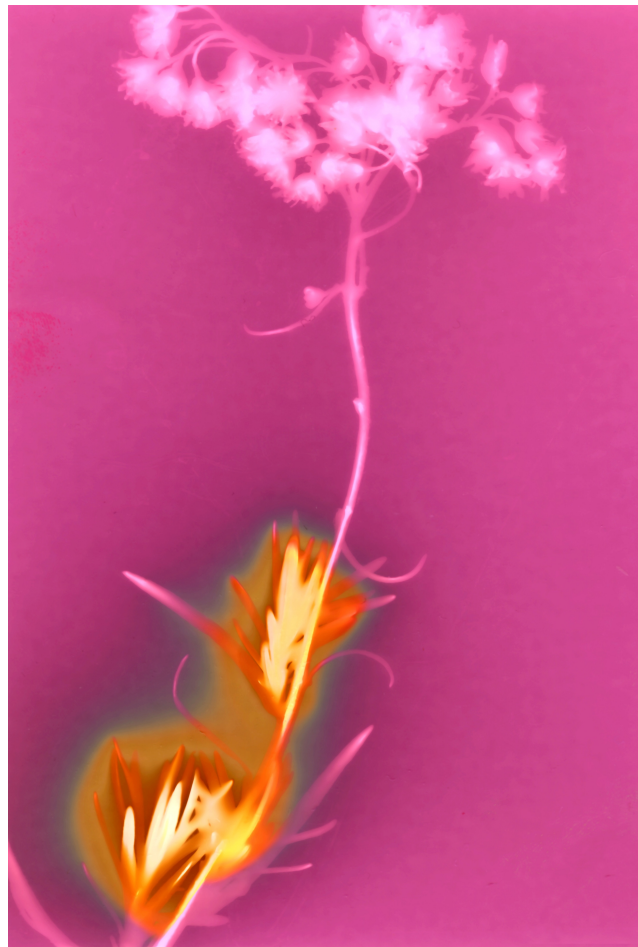


Fig. 3: North Berwick curry (lumen) 2019.
Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

What happens in writing, and in making lumens, seems something like a “turbulence of materials.” Sun, flora, and of course, my desire to make a lumen print all play across the emulsion—a light-sensitive coating of silver salts that rests atop the paper. The movement of this play hidden underneath the stalk of curry.

I am walking alongside Jonathan. I say to him, “Forgive me, but I must circle back for a moment.” I pick up the shell and in doing so, it becomes part of a story I might write about this place, this time. Will my story coalesce as making with words, or making with lumens, or both? I am not yet sure. Before arriving in Edinburgh, I am prodded by a friend: what will you do there? I don’t know, I reply. My friend laughs: Well, you know it won’t be what you thought.

The studio beckons me into those words, into the not yet known. However, the storying occurs, it will require attending, noticing—finding the

movement in the stillness. As Haraway (2016) tells us, “Storying cannot any longer be put into the box of human exceptionalism” (p. 39). Thin slices of ocean cut across the sand, guiding our movement. I pick up a frond of seaweed and squeeze the algae within the lumen printing frame. Cream paper becomes slightly blue, slightly purple as we walk on. Raising the frame above my head, offering the paper and the plant to the sun—the mauve deepens and a few pools of browns and turquoise emerge. My body bathes with the paper and the plant and the sand in this local light.

This lumen, on this day, in this place: I⁶ am a piece of photographic paper that has turned slowly purple through exposure to the sun, and in so doing the ghostly feathery-fiery outline of the curry branch begins to move (emerge; deepen; appear). The objects show no need to document us (as we do them), but they are happy to co-exist: Blue-white beach glass, the worn edges. The softening of time, repetition, tempest-tossed. Conversely, the plants dry, crumble, harden. The shadow burns through. All moving-still. Relational movement, as Erin Manning (2009) calls it. Multiple bodies are always already in relation with one another, movement without end, fluidly moving between internal and external, all circuits fluid and eternal. “We move not to populate space, not to extend it or to embody it, but to create it” (Manning, 2009, p. 13). The sunlight, the glass, the paper and we move together to create space. We walk, the air changes. The glow spreads around the seaweed like a deepening sky.

Dandelion, hair, fur, soil

This scene of dandelion, hair, fur and soil is perhaps not so much about a process of framing but rather a framing of process. In the Steampunk studio, a studio that frames us-in the framing of process, Brooke sits the curry leaf out in the sun. Watching the curry leaf, for a moment, I⁷ drift off to another studio, another frame, not geographically a million miles away.

After all, this essay works with aîôn, “time as potentiality, the sense in which time cannot be grasped because it is always simultaneously moving into the past and the future” (Bolt and Leander, 2017, p. 418, drawing upon Deleuze, 1990).

Mark and I are in a room with skylights and the sun, drifting off with me from Steampunk, melts through the glass. A repetition of sun, glass and of developing images. Mark and I are curry leaf and dandelion. We are filming a short scene for another project (Murray, 2017). The scene we are filming is meant to be a dark interrogation scene. But the sun beats through the glass window frame and destroys our interrogative atmosphere. We use black fabric to try to defend ourselves from the light, a black bag to maintain our image. But the sun filters through the edges of the fabric, through the unmediated spaces or the spaces of immediation (Manning, 2019).

⁶ Anne

⁷ Fiona



Fig. 4: North Berwick seaweed, lumen (2019).
Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

After all, this is an inquiry into letting go; into letting go of the insistence on, and myth of, (human) control; and letting go, instead, into slow-fast material turbulence. It's an inquiry into what light does: through glass on plant on paper.

We could continue to try to fight against the sun. Manning (2019) writes that a “politics of immediation” invites us to not fight but to begin somewhere else, and that thinking with composition necessitates improvisation. Mark and I had thought about the structure of the day but we hadn’t thought of how it may be composed; we hadn’t thought about the sun (we think more about clouds in Scotland). But the sun loudly refuses our structure. Neither of us can come back tomorrow and the image won’t develop alone on the window-sill.

We go for coffee, a pause and then a return. Our actor takes his seat in the middle of the floor. The sun immediately finds him and highlights a mole

on his cheek. The mole has a blonde hair—maybe it is white. It catches the sun's eye. It shimmers through the microdots of dust that float past his face on a sunbeam. Mark picks up the camera and zooms in on the single hair and the mole. Closer. Until he loses human form. The camera interrogates the hair, mole, flesh. The interrogation constricts space and holds back light and, in the process, loses human form. And the frame is so much better for it.

This is an inquiry into what bodies can do (and be done to) differently when together; into the magic that happens when our backs are turned; into how "action" may appear to be inaction and "inaction" may be action.

I⁸ wake this morning thinking of Emma Marris' (2014) challenge that:

Yes, nature is carefully managed national parks and vast boreal forest and uninhabited arctic. Nature is also the birds in your backyard; the bees whizzing down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan; the pines in rows in forest plantations; the blackberries and butterfly bushes that grow alongside the urban river; the Chinese tree-of-heaven or "ghetto palm" growing behind the corner store; the quail strutting through the farmer's field; the old field overgrown with weeds and shrubs and snakes and burrowing mammals; the jungle thick with plants labeled "invasive" pests; the carefully designed landscape garden; the green roof; the highway median; the five-hundred-year-old orchard folded into the heart of the Amazon; the avocado tree that sprouts in your compost pile. (p. 2)

How we have not only hidden nature from ourselves, but how we have incorrectly assumed nature as apart from us? Just outside the flat, dandelions take root in iron fences guarding the stone facades. I pull up one, and laugh. There is a clump of soil around the root. The soil is threaded through with human hair, maybe the fur of cats or dogs too. My thoughts return to Ingold (2017) and his writing on correspondence-thinking, which:

... necessarily entails a focus on ontogenesis – on the generation of being – and how this, in turn, allows us to imagine a world in which openness, rather than closure, is a fundamental condition of existence ... human histories have always been interwoven with the history of the earth. This interweaving is nothing new. (p. 8)

Making with curry, with seaweed, with dandelion.

Making with writing.

Making with lumens.

I walk back, content to muse about finding the moving-still/still-moving in a "turbulence of materials." I lay the dandelion to rest on the photo paper, contemplating how:

... things carry on together, and answer to one another, they do not so much interact as correspond. Interaction is the dynamic of the assemblage, where things are joined up. But correspondence is a joining with it is not additive

⁸ Brooke

but contrapuntal, not “and... and... and” but “with... with... with”. (Ingold, 2017, p. 12)

A day later I return to this studio, this temporary and compositional site of creative responsiveness to lay the dandelion to rest, to compost, to evaporate, but never alone (Manning, 2013): the dandelion composts with the sun, with the echoes of passersby, with accumulation of hair and other debris, with the rainfall, with the air, breathing, becoming-other.

Making with sun.

Making with time.

Making with the creative-relational.

It⁹ is an inquiry into what light does, as it goes through glass on plant on paper.

As light goes through time—from too-sunny windows in Edinburgh where I am not, to the swirling of dust particles in the swath of late afternoon sun in the lounge room in Melbourne where I am sitting. Still. Where I am sitting still with the spacetime collision of place and movement, temporality and corporeality, writing together without being together, except, perhaps, in objects.

Eyes closed, fingers on keys, fingers brushing over pale blue, fingers missing the bloom of a black sprig of seaweed. You forget where you are, the sensation of train travel rocking you back into the movement of that first coming together, writing Jonathan-Stacy-Anne. Fingers pressing the glass of the phone against the glass of the window to catch the light shooting past. Fragments of landscape. Words timed to the sudden appearance of trees, clouds, bridges flitting across the frame. You forget that:

... objects have a life, that they create space. And how the space moves you is synonymous with the eventness of its objects. . . perhaps you begin to pay more attention to how the objects create space, not simply how they configure the pattern of an already existing spacetime of experience. Objects are not stable: They forecast the time of the event (Manning 2013, pp. 91-92).

You forget that the life and liveliness of objects moves you into the paying attention of the creative and the relational; into the inquiry into what light does; into how things look through glass.

It’s how things come together. It’s how things “just” happen. The writing retreat as a chance operation: the instruction (to write, let’s write, what shall we write) as an invitation to “a controlled experiment which in turn opens up the work to the unpredictable effects of forces, objects, experiences . . . while at the same time limiting authorial control (Iverson, 2010, p. 13). Introducing a gap in the practice, an “interference apparatus” (Iverson, p. 24) that separates the desire to “do something” with the desire to “see what will happen” (Benn Michaels, 1987, p 223). Inserting train travel, time, sun, seaweed,

⁹ Stacy

words between two panes of glass. *The chance operation: Marcel Duchamp's Large Glass, or The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* (1915-1923). Margaret Iverson (2010) says the chance procedures employed to make this work are so well known that they don't need to be repeated, but perhaps we've forgotten (p. 13). What you remember: paint scattershot pattern made by "launching paint-tipped matchsticks with a toy cannon" (p. 13). The rusted color fixed between two panes of glass delivered by the accumulation of varnish dust when the panes lay horizontally in the studio over several months (p. 13). The "(un)finishing touch": the glass shatters in transit (p. 13). Introducing a gap and paying attention to the eventness of objects.

Words¹⁰

On the train back to Edinburgh we each write and read aloud our writings to each other, while small children call and chase between and around nearby seats.

What shall we write, Anne asks? As the train heads west back to Edinburgh after our day in North Berwick the late afternoon light cast across the fields shimmers; the trees passing make staccato flickers.

What shall we write? The stretches of sand we walked, the outgoing tide leaving stretches that glisten. The cold that numbed bare feet in winter water. Brooke pausing to collect objects that call her.

What shall we write? Let's write of shared food—the garlic and peppers, the oil and cheese, the plates we passed between us, solicitous and attentive, though I kept watch for what might be left at the end.

What shall we write? How about the boy in our carriage who calls "so long, suckers," or the puppy Anne held outside Steampunk, its paws and head lolling on her, sinking into her, becoming-Anne.

What shall we write. The traces of injury in our bodies, the beginning-viruses, and the echoes of the week just gone that have lifted us.

What shall we write. The possibilities that seemed to open as we talked, the hopes, the spark we made as we traced our connections and histories, as we put concepts into motion, as we found ourselves caught up in imaginings.

When we write, like now, here in this travelling train carriage, I wonder if we are we not also still. As we talk, are we not also still? When I pause to notice the next word, the next letter, emerge onto the page, like now, is there not a moment of stillness? A stillness before the out-breath, a stillness before the in-breath, heart beating, blood circulating; movement di-stilled to a moment when "the world sheds its categories, the insistence of its future, and is suspended solely in the lilt of its desire" (Lopez, 2014, 85).

¹⁰ Jonathan.

Diffractions of pale blue

It's the last day.

Our whole experiment is, to some extent, about time as it expresses in movement and stillness. Everything is time and not-time.

What appears to be last may not be. My¹¹ catholic upbringing told me:

“The first shall be last, and the last shall be first” (Matthew 20:16).

Just another binary.

“Just another painful repetition of sacred sameness” (Haraway, 1997).

The blue glass sits quietly next to the mauve paper and its fading outline of the plant, the dried sprig, and the lumen frame (the star of the show) somewhere nearby. The frame is agentic, certainly, in its mechanical abilities and its relationship with the human collaborator's hands, eyes. The photographic paper is visibly 'alive' in its movement from white to mauve, and in its intimacies with human and nonhuman collaborators.

Even the sprig of curry plant is visibly alive in its pliability, its evaporation.

Only the pale blue glass sits quietly.

It waits.

Yet its smooth edges remind that it has been buffeted by the sea, by life, by environment.

It may seem inert next to these show-offs, but the blue glass resists in its quieter way:

It refuses to fit under the glass.

It holds ground.

Why aren't these movements — resisting and holding — intelligible to us? Perhaps the mauve paper, having itself been at the mercy of time and hierarchies of dynamism, identifies. And perhaps identification is performed proximately, in the diffractive production of “difference patterns” (Haraway, 1997, p. 268) between “paper” and “rock.”

The human world is biased toward the dynamic; perhaps because we like to think we are closer to dynamic than inert, but are we? Certainly not any less buffeted by environment and circumstance.

Periwinkle blue is in the violet family.

That is, it's in the same general family as the mauve photographic paper.

Do they feel like kin, as they sit in proximity?

The quiet blue glass can also be called *celeste blue*, or *ciel*, a variation of sky blue.

Our quiet blue glass sits on the table making sky, next to the earthen weight of the mauve-brown paper, the plants and the lumen glass. This little

¹¹ Anne

piece of resilient celeste blue glass vibrates in me, whispers. It is a gentle object, it is patient.

What I¹² remember: art prints made by placing bluebells, their contours traced in diffractions of pale blue. Paper set out in sunspacetime, forecasting the coming together of events. What I cannot forget: the week at Camp Sacajawea in year 6, the culmination of chain-saved bottle tops, currency, somehow, traded for school-bus travel and girl scout accommodation. We'd trained all year to recognize the flora and fauna we'd encounter on 400 acres near Boone, Iowa. The camp is named after a native woman who led an expedition, Lewis and Clarke in tow, across what was for them, unknown territory. Terra incognita. Perhaps the territory and the trip were bodyknowledge to Sacajawea, like the non-consensual marriage to a trapper made from a purchase or a bet. Bodyknowledge "surrounded by oceans of the unknown," a matter of survival (Solnit, 163). Perhaps she was weighed down by the history that shaped her; perhaps she was beginning to pay attention to how objects—the map, the territory, the expedition—create, rather than fix space. The objects of Sacajawea's story are a "living tracing" that speak "between words" and map "time's spiral" on sun sensitive paper (Manning, 2013, p. 196). They are "living bodies of thought" with the power to materialize change (Holman Jones, 2016, p. 235) by writing diffractive, heterogenous histories that do more than "displace the same elsewhere" (Haraway, 2007). The bride and her bachelors are white wisps slipping into blue, even.

Manning (2019) urges me¹³ to see how "these subjects are born of the occasion, affected and affecting with the matrix of its singular conditions of existence." If these lumen-subjects are born of this occasion, aren't we also? In what ways are we made by proximity and collaboration with the lumens, differently or similarly to our relations with each other? Certainly, this has been some of the focus of our intimacy with the lumen at this gathering. Alfred North Whitehead says that "any account of simple location misses the push and pull of relation" (qtd. in Manning, 2019), a fallacy of "misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead, 1925). The studio is the gathering, not the place. The work is the gathering together to make, not the object. All of the other humans have acted upon/within me differently, as have the objects in relation to the lumen, including this shy piece of celeste blue glass.

In¹⁴ a quiet windowsill, just outside of the circle drawn from our conversations and our writing, an image also becomes written. As Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin (2015) illuminate:

Attuning ourselves, through poetry, art, and description, to pay attention to other times; developing techniques to begin to think through the limits of our temporal frameworks, and then thinking beyond them – these are crucial practices; in fact, they are matters of survival. (pp. 12-13)

¹² Stacy

¹³ Anne

¹⁴ Brooke-with-Anne

How does the lumen move beyond the limits of my thinking? It moves me with slow time, sun time, shell time, flora time, ocean time, *this* time. And still, in a quiet windowsill of the Torphichen Street flat, just beyond the circle drawn from our conversations and our writing, a piece of pale blue beach glass rests atop a piece of photographic paper knowing that it might be taken across the ocean to another home by way of a pocket, or it might be tossed back into the sea that turned and turned and curved its piercing edges into an irresistible smoothness, or back to sand like we all must eventually. An ethics of making (Hofsess, 2019) that turns on the bottom of the sea, one with the underneath of waves.

I¹⁵ could say it's the lure of collaborative writing. Of keeping my addiction, that habit, alive.

Of grasping at the opportunity of another intimacy, or of another *intimating*—the intimacy as process, as doing, as making-with, that Ken Gale proposes (Gale, forthcoming). I am, I know, always eager for such opportunities, always alert for where and when they might offer themselves, for “the touch of entangled beings (be)coming together-apart.” (Barad, 2012, p 208)

But not just any touch; *this* one. There is the specificity of this.

I could say it's how we arrive together, the mechanics and the sequence of that: an email from Anne, as we were in the process of the beginning-writing-with of Stacy, Anne and me (Harris, Holman Jones & Wyatt, 2019); the trust in Anne's knowing that Brooke and Brooke's work has a rhythm I would feel and that, moreover, would find its/her heart beating with Sea Cry's; how somehow, easily, almost without saying, and before she knew, as if she has a say in it, Fiona and Fiona's work are here too.

I could say it's about the draw of concept-creating, of concept-making-with, of theorizing-in-practice, of doing-making-thinking, of writing-creating-relating. I could say that it/we were here, there, at the right time, all of us wanting these without having said so, knowing/feeling we did, somewhere in and between us, a desire that compels us to make this happen, driving us into each other. I could say, it's the lure, the force of the creative-relational and its compelling, irresistible curiosity.

I could say it's about the time we're in, the global political and environmental time we're in, where we need each other, and we need each other to do work that does something. We don't know what this will do but we do it because we believe it could become a *something*, not for us alone, but the cause of this work. Change. Not just any change, not change that is the relentless pursuit of the new and the different, but change that takes the time it needs, in its necessary slowness, its necessary urgency: moving-still, still-moving, creative-relating. Moving-still, still-moving relational-creativity.

¹⁵ Jonathan

Lumening

Eyes closed, in writing time. Eyes closed, in sleep time. Illness time. Mind-blind. But fingers find their path, exploring objects in their spacetime making, “bodying-in-movement” (Manning, 2013, p. 137). I¹⁶ miss the walks and the train—I am absent yet impacting things, an interference pattern in their making. I long for their return, or their coming again. I press the memory of walking and rocking into the gap of this work. Lumening the residue of some thing coming together between panes of glass.

What shall we write?¹⁷ Let’s write of the lumen, the process of sunlight on flowers, glass and seaweed onto paper, becoming-images that change colour and shape and fade. They cannot last—cannot last in human terms—unless they remain unseen, wrapped in black plastic. All the while, all day, all these days, as we have been talking-writing-walking-eating-drinking-and-more, there has been another moving-stillness.

The lumen has been on a wall, on the chair. Lumening. Doing lumen things. Creating magic and mystery—though not to it, surely, only to us. To it, it’s just been doing what it does. (Note to “self”: you’re creating a binary, an artificial ontological separation, between the lumen and the humans. (Hey, “self,” see what I did there? Lumen, humans. Dig that rhyme. You didn’t see that coming, did you?) As if the lumen was not part of the assemblage of the day with the humans. As if both lumen and humans were not being created through the intra-active processes taking place. Watch that. Binaries are seductive, but I can see it serves your purposes for now. Note that you are merely making an agential cut (Barad, 2007).

Can we talk of “a lumen,” I ask Brooke? Is the lumen the image we’re left with or the apparatus? But where does the apparatus begin and end, Barad would prompt us to ask. Does it include the object—the curry or the beach glass, for example—and the paper? The object and the paper and the glass and the casing? The object, paper, glass, casing, and the chair it’s been resting on? Object, paper, glass, casing, chair, window? Object, paper, glass, casing, chair, window, Brooke’s hands that placed it there, her insight and knowledge, her imagination, her moment of choosing to pick up that object? The light? My body as I look at “it,” whatever it may be.

I ask Brooke what it would be like for her if we brought the image, the lumen, onto the table, if we could see it? Would that be a loss? She considers. She considers this for perhaps thirty seconds. She says it would be alright. The image rests on the table. Anne sees it as fire. I like that. From here, at this table, looking now, it’s like the distant clouds, or a soft feathering of snow, perhaps, of the outline of a small dog running past a ghostly tree.

It’s passing, this lumen. It rests on the table, still. It seems still, but, in its own time, time I am unable to sense, it is fading. Becoming-other. “[A] stillness comes, and the new, which no one knows, stands in the midst of it and is

¹⁶ Stacy

¹⁷ Jonathan

silent" (Rilke, 2004, p. 48). It will fade to mauve, its white wisps slipping into color.

Writing and reading aloud¹⁸ become a rhythm over the three days as we gather at the apartment on Torphichen Street in the West End of the city, where Anne and Brooke are staying. Stacy joins on FaceTime when she can. The stories we have told so far of these few days in Edinburgh—going to North Berwick, our days at the Torphichen Street apartment, meeting, doing, writing, and so on—omits much, obscures much. It suggests ‘we’ (the humans) “did” (i.e. were the ones with agency) in “places” (i.e. that were mute, brute, backdrops). Not so. Those assemblages of time and matter were, rather, *haecceities*: moments of “this-ness” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Agency was dispersed: the lumen arrived, the curry plant took us, the blue rock caught us, the sunlight on a wall and through windows made things happen. “Studios” occurred.



Fig. 5: Lumening (2019). Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

¹⁸ See Davies and Gannon (2006) and Speedy and Wyatt (2014) for/as examples of and arguments for, reading aloud as a collaborative writing practice.

The moving still¹⁹

During a shoreworld, where stone, shell, pebbles, splinters of rock and black scores of seaweed are dreaming in slow, enduring colored and textured togetherness, a tiny singularity, a little black sprig of seaweed calls out. A soundless scream, a budding into becoming percept. Attuning fingers, opening to the sprig that tumbleweeds to palm. The question, the problem felt, is in the whispers of the little sprig, but it cannot be known yet, not until the sun as surgeon speaks, creating the unrecognizable act of resistance (Manning, 2019) in response to the unknowable problem.

An unpredicted moment of feeling, that I am not sure what to do with, arises in the writing. It makes me suddenly conscious of the self, of the “I” who writes. The humanistic tendency to know the feeling, to ‘work it out or thou shall be devoured’ (Souriau, 2015, p. 229) frustrates at my edges but more than this, here it is again, a sadness that halts process, moving me into a sensing of a (non) response-ability.

An involuntary memory intrudes:

One of us asks Brooke, maybe Anne, “Is it ok if we ‘use’ one of the images Brooke? Would you be ok with that?” Long pause. Longer pause before Brooke responds, “Yes, yes, I think that would be ok.”

Anne comments on the long pause and Jonathan asks if everyone else is ok with that. I am slightly amused at the moment of indecision, just as I was when Brooke said earlier when we walked and talked that she’s so slow she’s basically a turtle. Her speed, her slow response, stretches out the present (Berlant, 2011, p. 5), perhaps her moment of (non) response-ability makes felt in this thickening of the moment, the opinion that today, I’m not sure, I mean I don’t think we shouldn’t have or anything, but I’m just saying, that today I feel a little sad about it. About us letting the image fade, the flower fade and yield into obscurity.

The pause that is felt today more than yesterday leads to a sensing my way into sense-itivity, maybe sense-activity or what Stacy Alaimo (2016) writes to be an “insurgent vulnerability or a politics of exposure that leads to a recognition of our material interconnection with the wider environment that impels ethical and political responses” (p. 94). I have a sense of this now, today, an environmental relationality. Perhaps it is a sense of the stewardship that Anne speaks of (Craft, 2013). It is an ethical sensing that rests somewhere between stillness and movement.

This thought rests as Anne types, tapping fingers on keyboard, head back, eyes closed, fingers drumming, the drumming of clashing sprigs of seaweed left unsettled on the shore is palpable yet unheard, as they appear still, less alive, waiting, not their turn. Manning writes how things come to be is always determined by the conditions that opened the way for their singular mode of existence (2019, p. 9). Mindblindness (Manning, 2013) prohibits

¹⁹ Fiona

their abstraction, they didn't make the cut, not today yet their being uninvolved is always already impacting on what Brooke refers to as the ethics of making. Like Stacy, in Melbourne time, who sleeps; like Jonathan, in illness time, who sleeps.

Not all sprigs announced their presence, unheard silent pleas, leave me stilling, here, under the sun without glass screen, basking in unframed territory, shying away, not-yet, not yet ready to be penned into existence. It waits, time bends, elongates, its matter is a matter of survival.

How this ends; Or, leaving no trace

The box sits still on the table and its paper-movement is not even discernable to the eye. To my²⁰ eye. Perhaps it is discernable to the seaweed in its making-with.

What is different about the curry plant lumen, from a photograph? The means of production. It is mechanical, as Walter Benjamin (2019/1955) would define it, but it is not digital. The technology of the lumen can be returned to the earth and this is our measure. We agree that any ethics of making for this group should be anti-anthropocentric enough to make small movements toward leaving no trace. Nothing is irremediable. Change is possible. It is never too late.

Let's²¹ write about what's absent, but not. The sprigs still waiting but impacting. The pauses that fill us; the pauses between us, since February, as our written words have lain silent—at least to us—until now. We are absent from each other, scattered around the planet, as I find words fitting for an end. "*How this ends*," might have been the heading for this section. Or, perhaps, it would have been: "How we all, reader and writer alike, become aware this has always already been happening and will continue happening without us." What is absent and what ends is only a point of view.

Let's write about how the "turbulence of materials" of those few days in February continues to affect us; their slow, quiet, unseen, unheard, disturbing force. How they continue to make-with us. How they continue to make-love-with us. Let's write about how the lumen works with the sun's time, with materials that return to the earth, with the ecology of creativity and relationality. How the lumen finds the movement—interference patterns within what appears to be still, doing no harm. How it leaves no trace. Let's write, as this paper, this inquiry into letting go, let's go. Let's write as it fades like the lumen. Let's just write. Not "about." Just write, leaving no trace.

²⁰ Anne

²¹ Jonathan-with-Brooke, May 2019.



Fig. 6: Fading lumen, drying curry, still beach glass (2019). Photograph courtesy of Brooke Anne Hofsess.

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