

Excerpt from work in progress
Short story, 10 pages

And so he was — motionless in the dark room resembling imperially one-third microsecond from-to original refraction plus ten centiseconds hence retinal annihilation — in the virtuality of the not-yet (the flickering monitored projection) representing a colossal marble representation of Velázquez's Argus Panoptes, the watchman in the ossuary of the columbarium within the canvased catacomb of *Las Meninas* standing watch over the dead going to die, the real standing in desertion. By him this precession proceeded and in his own standing-reserve looking into the dark set upon the beings gathered there by being, what radiance remained, or perhaps radiance as such, enframed him in the vertigo of its drawing withdrawal. The dark light shimmered. Perhaps it was the windswept curtain. Perhaps a fictitious force — not gravity though its fiction constitutes the solar midnight of man, at once zenith and nadir — emerged from the inertia of a real noctilucous cloud eclipsing the real waxing crescent as the terrestrial frame rate held fast with-at his latitude with-at three hundred fifty-two and nine twenty-fifths meters per second.

And so he was, the table lost in all that remained. What veil availed itself in alterity? Animating his monotony through the philanthropic resuscitation of his culinarily rendered cultural corpse? Somersaulting himself into the table's jaws? Devouring his vestigial frame as they copulated like two redback spiders instinctually intoxicated in the real, in the (sexual-cannabilistic) reproduction of evolutionary production (through murder)? Instead he recalled his kin (the strangler Althusser) and regressed to his earlier human state, muttering. As Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year.

And so he was, drowning in quicksand aware and unaware of the scientific (escape) procedure — wriggling legs in a slow and progressive manner — and the measured hippocratic irony, respectively and *vice versa*: pulling his foot with-at one centimeter per second required ten thousand newtons. So he sat. Where? In the quicksand? In the chair? Perhaps reminiscing libidinal spirals of succulating sand, pulsating folds of labia unfolding along the *intermundia* of the reel's not-yet whirring frequencies succumbing to dermal rapture, no longer in its own standing, his posture comported with resistance. He projected the digital projection to the table, withdrawing at the last possible instant. He mumbled silently. That which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal.

And so he was, noticing he was not noticing, not not-seriating himself into notices, into frames, into unread signs. Bile rushed from the duodenum into the esophagus. He tasted burning wire. Adenylyl cyclase catalyzed the conversion of ATP into cyclic AMP. Ion channels opened. Calcium and sodium rushed forth. The olfactory receptor depolarized; an action potential rippled to the brain. Voltage spiked in the amygdala, the hippocampus lit up, the sky opened — the most sublime panegyric ever heard, the last sound he would ever hear. And then he remembered: there is no beginning in the beginning, no ending of the end always already passing the past. Indeed it had always passed. So the table is a table, the memorial accumulation quicksand. He flipped the switch, the motor hummed, the lambent light came to pass.

And so he was, little by little, frame by frame, fascinated — fascinated by the funereal reel bathing in the spectral beam of the projector, fascinated in the gestalt captation of the evanescent. The flickering decapitations were unfolding into each other frame by frame by dehiscence in the phantasms of the *fort-da*: a disappearing appearance appearing in disappearance. He was witnessing the disappearance of everything completely, in the after-images of screen memories. Yet the instantiation of the instant insisted. He did not vanish; his wish was not consecrated. Overcome by ablutionary electricity, his laryngeal susurrations hissed in capitulation to its possession without a word. At last. Blinking without blinking, falling forth into the unceasing whirlwind of light, it was a momentous occasion. The concrete walls were gyrating. He now knew whom he was and it was precisely that, that (outstripped) hinge, what dentists deem a linking verb. He whispered so softly he could not hear himself. So softly his aspirated aspiration aspirated, in the absence of the they, in the we of speech no longer. Time had disjoined. All the lights were out. I died therefore I will, the hallucination myself I am.