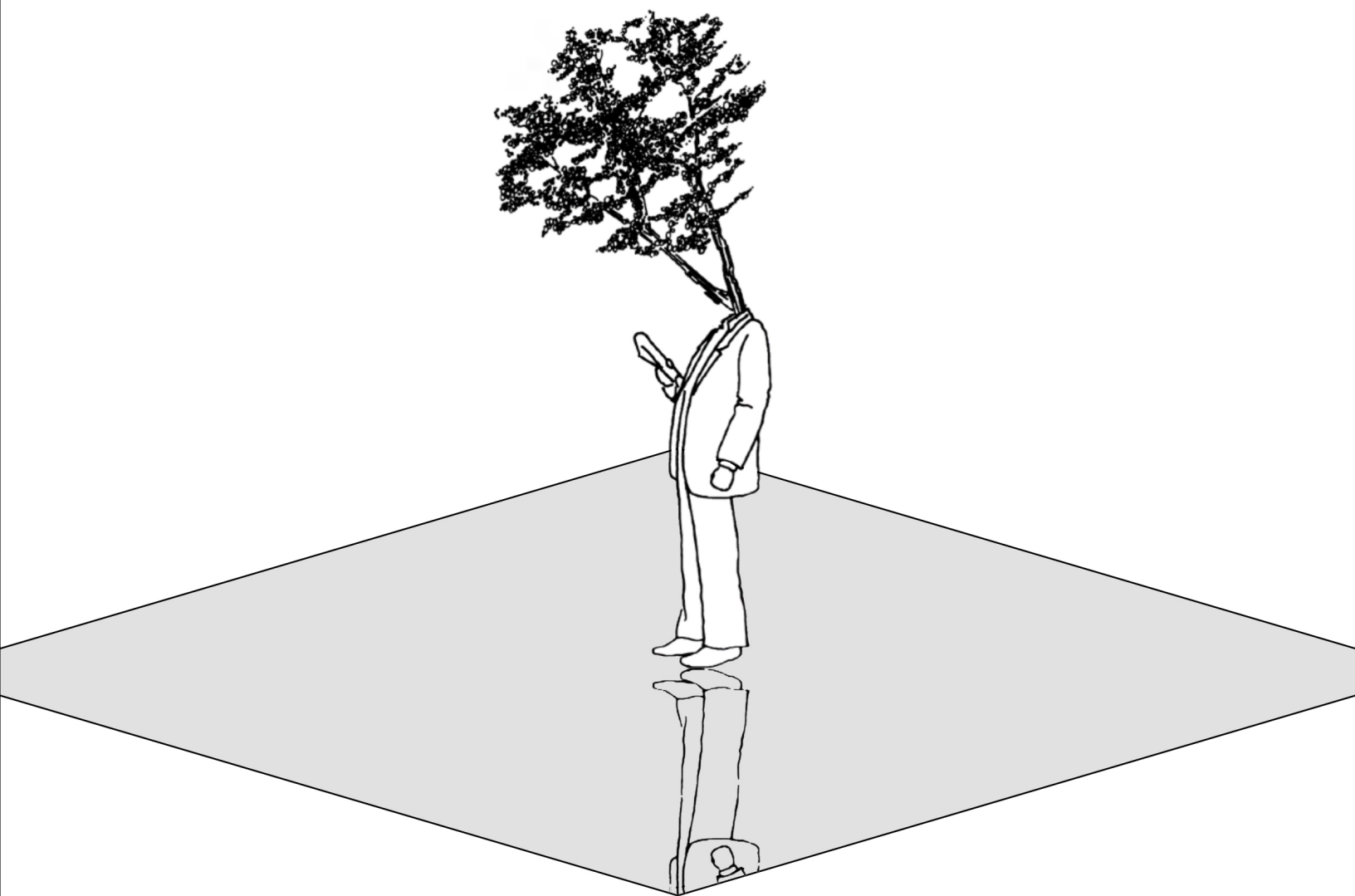




ETHICS OF THE UNKNOWN



A CHRONICLE FOR UNTANGLEMENT

The day finally came when I closed *one* to dedicate myself to *another*. This *other* was recommended to me by a friend. It arrived by mail about two weeks ago. The former had been around the house for years: A compilation of short stories that managed to keep me company for several evenings. Maybe I would have felt a different kind of delight had it not been for this call from the *other*.

The words on the first page affected me deeply. They had already been appropriated and been shared before. Containing a promise in them, they were also responsible for this call.

Today, I was glad to dedicate myself to this discovery, having gone through the twenty pages of the first chapter. It starts with the idea of a border. Instead of "a gate, it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary". A wall with two faces, the inside and the outside,

depending on where you are. It also refers to a quarantine. Another, different from ours, but nevertheless, complacent to associations. This wall, I realized after the following two paragraphs, was the only built border in that world. "Nowhere else could they see a sign that said NO TRESPASSING".

I was eager to understand the story, but the author restrained herself from immediate revelation. I figured that she was speaking of two worlds, two planets, of foreigners treated as "bastards" by other people. I can already discern a hierarchy of value assignment - physiological differences, non-human scales.

And I allow myself to pause on phrases laden with poetry:

"for he no longer understood what an answer is"

"To die is to lose the self and rejoin the rest"

"All the little things made sense; only the whole thing did not"

There was this person (the main character, I suppose), a man, who was to be transported to another environment. They moved him with care following a strict protocol to prevent any possibility of contagion. He had an escort and he questioned his own will. He was in the hands of others, he had handed himself over to them, he had waived his right of decision. He recalled his world, the world of Promise, the barren stone.

A void was what existed in him for hours: "a dry and wretched void without past or future". Time did not pass. "He was time: he only". He became at ease when, after encountering the ship's strange objects and devices, he understood that time was being counted after all - the ship had its own clocks. "Figuring all this out heartened him immensely".

Two civilizations, two portraits. In one there was gender equality, in the other there were still models of male supremacy.

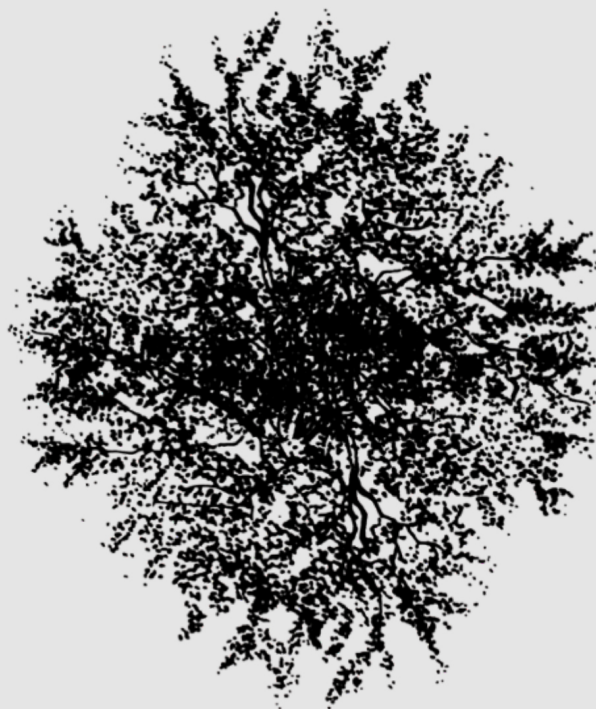
The encounter and perception of the other. "There were walls around all his thoughts, and he seemed utterly unaware of them, though he was perpetually hiding behind them."

As a reader, I also had to try not to limit my personal projections, not letting my own walls obscure new possibilities of understanding or imagining.

"The softness of the bed". The feeling (for most of us taken for granted) of letting the weight and volume of our bodies be embraced and relieved like a caress by the mattress and sheets.

"In that gap between the beginning of a step and its completion". I stopped to reflect on what was allowed to occur in the scale of this description. Such a simple gesture, so full of space for things to happen, if we pay attention.

I turn off the light and let myself fall into all of this.



**i n " F R E E W I L L A N D T E S T A M E N T " ,
from the album "SHLEEP", ROBERT WYATT sings:**

**GIVEN FREE WILL BUT WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITATIONS,
I CANNOT WILL MYSELF TO LIMITLESS MUTATIONS,
I CANNOT KNOW WHAT I WOULD BE IF I WERE NOT ME,
I C A N O N L Y G U E S S M E .
SO WHEN I SAY THAT I KNOW ME, HOW CAN I KNOW THAT?
WHAT KIND OF SPIDER UNDERSTANDS ARACHNOPHOBIA?
I HAVE MY SENSES AND MY SENSE OF HAVING SENSES.
DO I GUIDE THEM? OR THEY ME?
THE WEIGHT OF DUST EXCEEDS THE WEIGHT OF SETTLED OBJECTS.
WHAT CAN IT MEAN, SUCH GRAVITY WITHOUT A CENTRE?
I S T H E R E F R E E D O M T O U N - B E ?
IS THERE FREEDOM FROM WILL-TO-BE?**

A round in the anatomy of time

I read the newspaper:

Winston Churchill painted “Tower of the Koutoubia Mosque” in Marrakesh, 1943, after attending the Casablanca Conference where he met with Franklin D. Roosevelt and representatives of the French Free Forces. Together they agreed that the only acceptable outcome to the war would be an unconditional German surrender. The painting was later offered to the american president on his birthday. This gesture was seen as an example of a more *personal* and *intense* diplomatic strategy.

According to CNN, after having several owners, it was offered as a gift from Brad Pitt to Angelina Jolie. More recently, “Tower of the Koutoubia Mosque” was sold by Christie's [who else?!] for the unexpected price of 9,86 million pounds.

Same newspaper. Next page:

Rome. 2021. First roman emperor Augustus’s mausoleum opens to the public after expensive and extensive restoration.

The project started when the emperor was still alive (27 b.C. - 14 a.C.) and was built in 28 a.C. to receive not only Augustus’s remains but also those of his wife, Livia, and sister, Octavia. Later also the ashes of the emperors Tiberius, Claudio and Nerva were laid to rest there.

When the Visigoths invaded Rome in 410, the mausoleum was looted and the remains vandalized.

By the X century the ruins were mostly underground and for a long time several rich families would use this place as a private garden. At the end of the XVIII century the circular structure was adapted as a bull fight arena. Already in the XIX century it was made into a concert hall.

During the last 80 years it has remained closed to the public. Now, with its original architecture recovered, visits are fully booked until next June.

Meanwhile,

Kath Bloom’s voice comes out of the speakers.

In “Pass through here” (2015), she sings:

**You were at your place - Then it all came down
- Never gonna pass through here again -
But who’s that calling? - Who’s that calling?**



1.

Slowly,
I wake up with
the precise pain
of the feeding
tube self-
-disconnecting
from my belly.

It's like

being born

again

everyday,

my mother used
to tell me.
I don't exactly
know what she
meant by that
but it feels
good to
remember.
I still think
about her often
but
I keep these
thoughts to
myself.

2.

Opening my eyes, still lying down, I see my
own image reflected on the glass above. As the
bed starts to bend, slowly turning into a
chair position, my head gets close to the
glass and my body's reflection distorts
proportionally to angle, light and speed. I
can only picture this metamorphosis in my mind
because looking straight up hurts my neck and
I am not allowed to do it. Anyway, I'm up now,
facing the screen.

3.

Nighttime is coming.

The glass dome
becomes more transparent.

Indirect sunlight
doesn't hurt my skin
and I need vitamin D
to live longer.

***You are very lucky
to be alive.***

***It is your duty
to live as long as you can,***
she used to say.

Actually,
living or dying
is not up to me
- I'm not the one in control -
but still,
I feel responsible.

4.

I work two hours a day.
Analyzing data. Like everyone
else, I suppose.
I must be very careful and
check everything thoroughly.
When you are dealing with such
colossal numbers, one slight
miscalculation will
undoubtedly have devastating
consequences.
Long-distance geological and
mineral forecasting is a
tricky subject.
The only subject that matters.
Everyone knows *our survival as
a species depends on it.*

5.

*WITHOUT THE CERTAINTY OF A
POSSIBLE FUTURE THERE IS ONLY
ROOM FOR DESPAIR,*
is the first thing I read on the
screen, everyday.

This is something the past has
painfully shown us, many times.

6.

The mirrors confirm my skin is
grey all over. No red spots
whatsoever. Good. **One less thing
to worry about.**

7.

Everybody wants to know how I deal with my condition. Your
abilities can save us all, they say. Being able to willingly
disconnect is a major advantage in the capsule. That's why **I am
allowed to have extra time off to write my diary.**

8.

Whenever I feel capable I write a little bit. It is not
easy. I want to be useful but I fear I have a very
limited number of words available. When I disconnect I
cannot fully control what stays and what becomes
irreversibly lost. Luckily for me, *she* always
remains there.

9.

I know
I am the same person
I was yesterday.

I can be
a part of society.

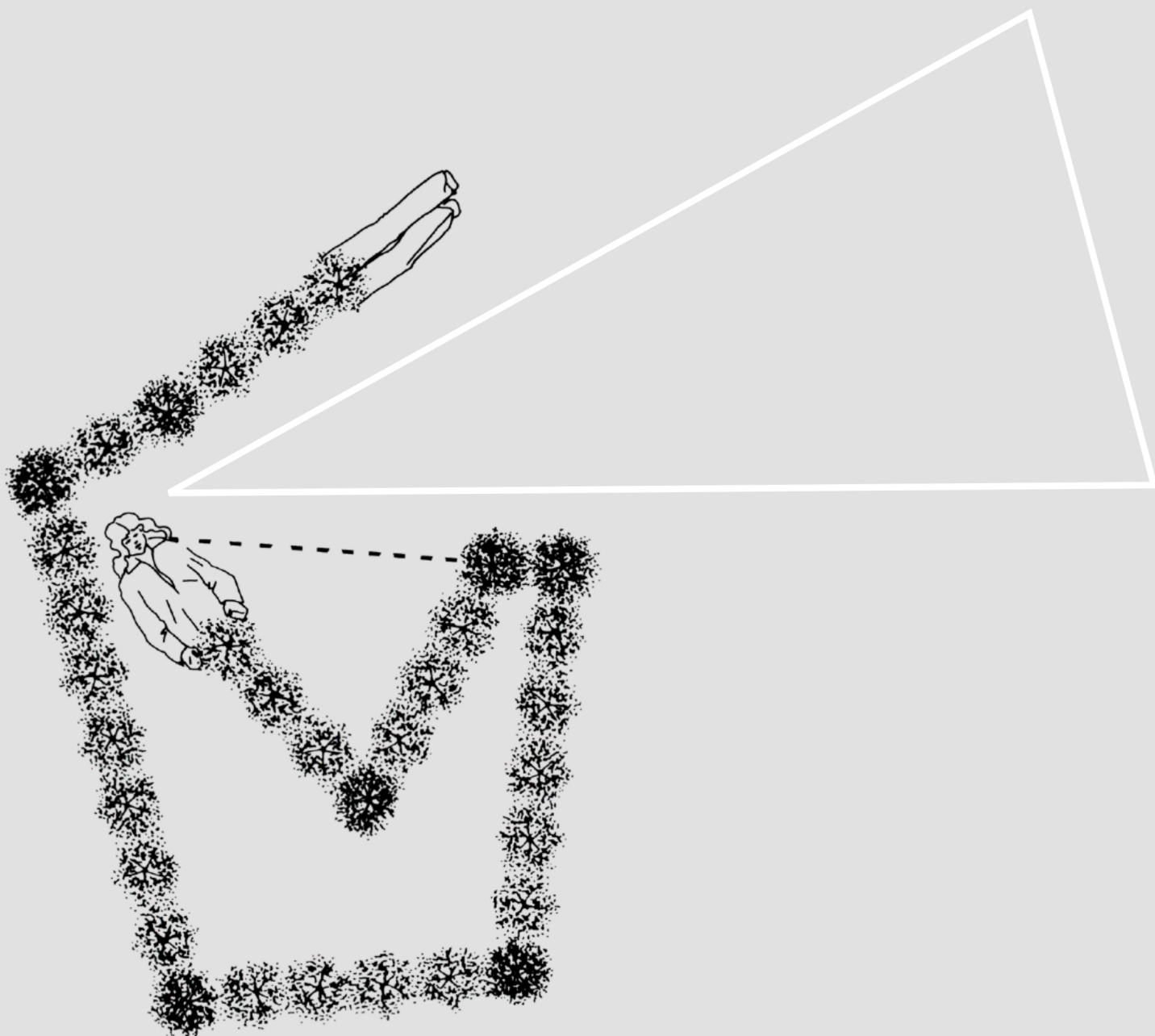
I can *perform*.

This is clear in my mind
and they have told me so.

*We have supervised your work,
it is flawless.*

10.

So I carry on.
Everyday,
**a kind of a new
beginning.**





The Green Blister



I had the strangest dream.
I dreamt about a revolution of plants.
I woke up drowned in sweat, bewildered and
with labored breath. I forced myself to sit upright on the bed,
settle down and concentrate on *leveling my breathing*.....

Suddenly, an image from my dream invaded my
consciousness. Vegetable barriers, walls of
intertwined branches and foliage, colossal
rhizomatic structures, extensive surfaces of thorns.
Circulation was impossible, we had
become *prisoners in forced enclosure*.....

Massive growth of plant species that penetrate
and cover our infrastructures, operating systems,
hospitals, schools, political offices. We once bragged
about our superb intelligence... In this dream of
mine, I saw the overthrow of this frivolous
authoritarianism. A beautiful and colorful
apocalyptic scenery. ***A more than just ruin***.....

I then remembered an article I read recently.....

A team of scientists had decided to do the math for the
worldwide damage caused by invasive species. The bill had
tripled decade after decade.....

The often despised biological invasions that represent the second biggest cause of species extinction had already cost nearly 870 trillion pounds in the (almost) 50 years between 1970 and 2017. Only in 2017, it reached 123 billion pounds, that is (for the same period), *20 times the combined budgets for WHO and the UN Secretariat*.....

We have seen nature's prestige increase in periods of political disaster, when the hope for a revolutionary transformation of society is dwindling. Nature becomes an area in which the *alienated self finds relief*.....

During the first confinement, one of the earliest impacts I felt was the urgency to start planting my own food. And yes, I felt such relief and calm in my daily relationship with those beings that I provided ground and growth, hoping that my dedication *would bear fruit*.....

Plants are community beings by nature, their identity is deeply pluralistic, from roots with decentralized intelligence to symbiotic relationships that bond them to other organisms. We admire their adaptability, resilience and *communication skills*.....

Can we go beyond the instrumentalization of nature based on our disenchantment of reality? Is it possible to mirror plants emancipatory potential leading to social transformation? Can they become sources of *inspiration for political activity?*.....

Three years ago, I watched a screening
of the film “Conversation with a Cactus” (2017)
by Élise Florenty and Marcel Türkowsky.....

This documentary delves into an experiment of
“**conversing with plant matter**”, and
asking the question whether a cactus could have
given crucial evidence in the suspicious death of
a reporter investigating the Fukushima
meltdown”.....

This film comes to my mind from time to time
as well as Ursula Le Guin’s quote: “one way to
stop seeing trees, or rivers, or hills, only as
natural resources is to class them as
fellow beings”.....

How can one caress a cactus?.....



The difference between reality and perception
The difference between reality and perception
The difference between reality and perception

Leaves us living a double life.
Leaves us living a double life.
Leaves us living a double life.

But if every action
But if every action
But if every action

Has multiple connections to the world
Has multiple connections to the world
Has multiple connections to the world

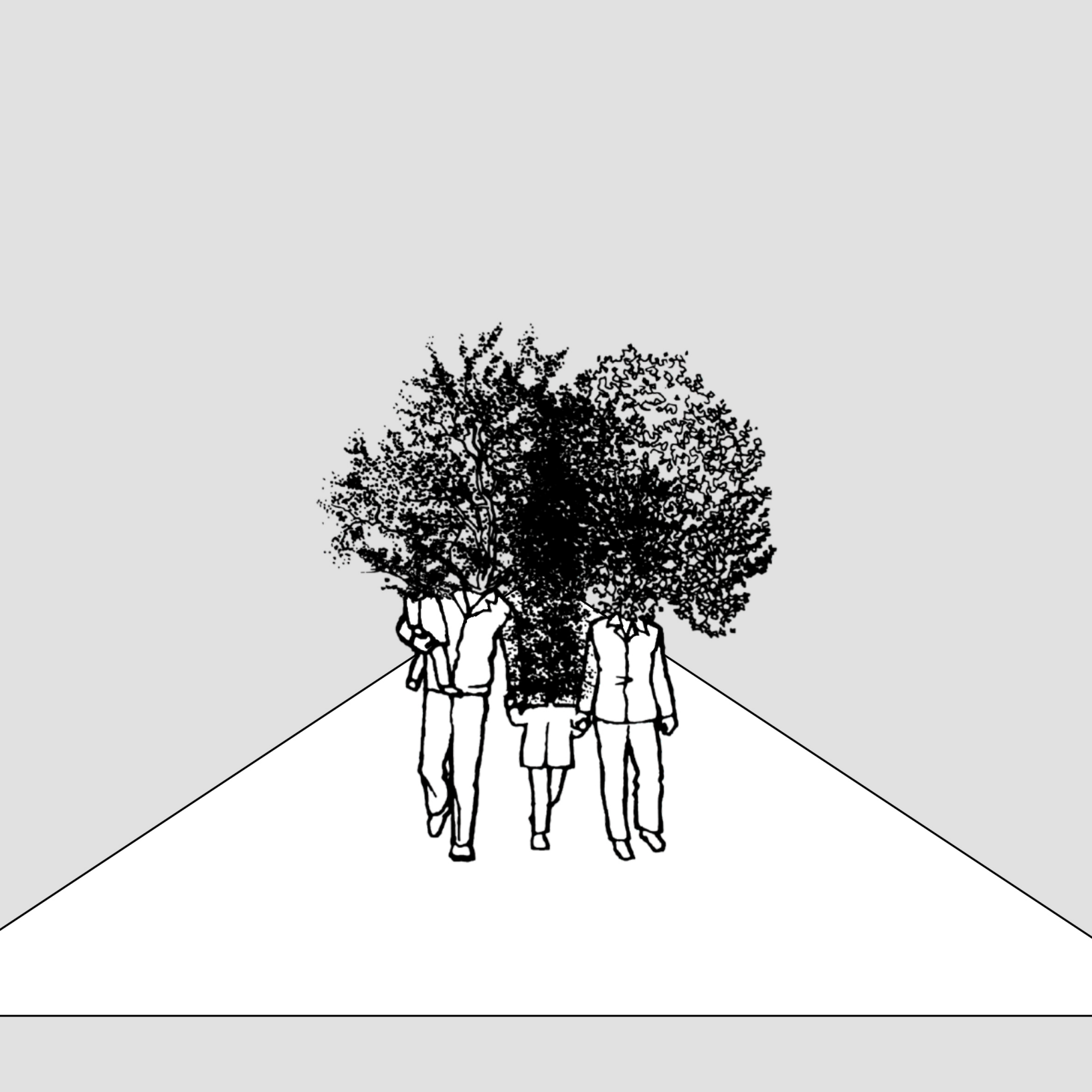
In any given moment,

Then the *image* inside your head
Then the *image* inside your head
Then the *image* inside your head

Is not validation
Is not validation
Is not validation

But a request for engagement.
But a request for engagement.

But a request for engagement.



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Ethics of the Unknown is part of
Riffing the Archive: Building a Relation,
a project by MARIE ANTOINETTE with the Barn