

ROGER FARR / from "On Time," an excerpt from 604

Any liquid or gas is a collection of individual bits, so many that they may as well be infinite. If each piece moved independently, then the fluid would have infinitely many possibilities . . . [b]ut each particle does not move independently—its motion depends very much on the motion of its neighbours. . . .  
— Glieck, *Chaos*

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Turning left, travelling north  
if you are not going south  
you come to an intersection where

it's raining while you unearth the evidence  
the map stained by lamp oil, a watch and  
a pen, mainly picea, tsuga, thuja  
your sense of direction

you find yourself alternating accounts of  
stunted dwarf trees, ferns swamping signs  
you find yourself in 1917.

So slow was this creeping past  
that it must be protected, cut a little slack.  
The second-growth is dotted, marked  
here it is illustrated.

This park was once a lagoon, a *fen*  
an area that commanded its history.  
A fragile imperative to remain *between*  
a bridge that spans accounts  
creeping in an impentreatable form  
a dark thicket of coniferous grease  
congealed into a map.

Corvus eggs in the *gaultheira shallon*  
erect stalks along the bluffs.

Someone says types a telegram in London  
and it echos at a higher elevation  
flattening a mill town.

Then the landscape becomes insurgent  
overcome with upright spreading, tufted  
multi-branched shrubs, glaucaous blue  
pale pink to dark red, in terminal clusters  
greenish-yellow, upturning to bronze  
flapping to greenish-black.

And every thing *takes* its time.

This body of water swallowed by  
sphagnum moss was the object  
of an implosion mechanism.

A history of recent human activity  
is accessible thanks to transit.

Travelling east through the city  
the accounts are scattered along the  
Sidewalks. There are lawns.

Overnight, the swamp laurels  
were spreading their rhizomes  
flowers held taut  
under the tension of an arc.

I shall leave no evidence  
of having set foot here.

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The panoptic regime of the clock tower, the aerial view, the planner's view of the city  
/ has little to do with the street as it is encountered while in travel. The panoptic view  
is one of isolation. It does not apprehend the street as  
moments of lived experience, but as an inert model – a “zone” rather than a *terrain*.

And from the height this abstracted perspective, a *map*.

And from this height

/ the city is made visible, surveyed, organized with an eye for efficiency: as the terrain becomes a zone, the flow of time—the *duration*—becomes a *flow of traffic*. A system of streets, parks, alleys, and canals is built to channel the flood of commodities. To travel is to “commute”: labour-power, in motion. The passage of packages must be made with the least possible interruption and disturbance, so they arrive “on time” and

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in working / order

motion

/ history another fluid

hedging laterally along E. 20th

in 1995, April 20<sup>th</sup>

the blossoms were

without measure / unaccounted for

the legends accumulating

/ at the corners

& the people were moving too

wet from unmediated contact

with the past

we experienced this as “passage”

/ right-branching

“the specificity of domains”

though there is a continuum

between our stations