Artificial Life (2018) from Square of Will in Square of Love Alina Popa

1.

She dreamt of a woman planting small logs in the naked ground. She was puzzled as to how someone could think that mutilated lifeless wood becomes tree or anything of the sort. But the woman in a reassuring tone as if it were the most natural thing in the world, said that all logs are able to grow their own roots. She understood but couldn't express. Understanding was a knowledge that made its event the most placid banality.

"My healing is not personal", a grave incorporeal voice murmured through the airless space of dream. Her thought opened itself to reason. She wanted to repair the ailing roots that made her be. To grow the teenager, the child, the newborn, to grow the event of her own coming into being. And become human again.

She woke up when the operation was over. The session was done, the hospital people dressed in white walked on the dusty village streets devoid of sun and asphalt. Others were left sitting in the garden, outside the therapy cupola, under mango trees, on wooden benches donated by the healed species. All the doctors were taking a break, some on chairs, some in the air. And she was part of this masterpiece.

She walked feeling proud and hidden in the swarm of people. She was thankful to be there, given a chance at world-trimming. After the five hours spent in the meditation room of the clinic, she reached her posada, emptied out of thoughts. She poured a glass of water. For a moment her mind unfocused all the plots methodically woven, all her life, into her sense of self. She sat down on the big brown couch indifferent to desire, even to the one that brought her here.

She opened her tablet and scrolled through the notes she had written before coming here. She read but thoughts didn't want to bend in the angle of past mental forms. She was stubborn, ignorant, blank. She drank the water. Her gestures were empty, saturated with the mental monochrome of the now. She closed her eyes and browsed randomly through her mind. To think, she now thought, the first impulse must be null.

She decided not to fight back. She abandoned herself to not-knowing, reason humbled by the rule of something that cannot be word. In the vast expanses of in articulation shivers of joy made her insides tremble. She opened her eyes and the tablet and a new note and typed: I am in the

desert, waiting for the first sign of a new language of living. Her thoughts dissipated and she was now contemplating the middle of the dark room, her gaze glued to where nothing could be discerned.

[...]

2.

I am wondering if you can make yourself signify something other than yourself. I am a sign of what is sleeping unconsciously and dreaming of me, I thought, as I waved my hand upon seeing an old friend biking on the other side of the road. I was going deeper into the image, into the depths of a surface that says no to seeing. I refocused, went to the left, passed by a big parrot painted on the wall of a small posada, trying to ignore that a pink Christ in a strange fairy dress, or was it an optical glitch, waved me hollow from the painted house on the opposite side of the street.

I went home, sat on the brown couch. I closed my eyes and I saw... in fact I began to stop thinking through seeing. I felt myself seeing myself as something invisible. My head was a two-dimensional ovoid shape with blurry borders and all the characteristics of an illusion. The deformed invisibility that I sensed myself to be scared me tremendously, I wanted to restore this monster to my common physical form. But all I could become was human-shaped fog missing some anatomical components. My inner form took flight from the rational structure of the body.

I remained knots and nodes and highways of energy flowing, shivering, stumbling, stagnating, and flowing through again. In my hologrammic version there was no hardness to life. I weighed less than the ray that pierced through your hair yesterday when you explained to me that hermits have practiced a modernism of the soul. Like them, I want to methodically cut structure into my invisible self, into the chaos of life, make my existence readable, translatable into something else. I wanted my share at world-trim, be part of the twice-born, induce leaks in my consciousness, work from the ultra-margin of my egoistic field. Transcend.

I fell asleep on the couch as this purely mental will necessitated too much metabolic life force.

I fell asleep dreaming the sleep.

There was such transparency between reality and dream that no quality could give away where I really was. I dreamed not of something but precisely the perspective from which I could potentially dream anything. The doubling of reality through the dream was a result of a random awareness enhancement. It is only from the copy of reality that I could

put an intention as to what this chunk of sleeping life must serve. I directed my intention toward the restoration of damaged DNA and soul glitches. I operated on myself through a meta-procedure that I will never forget. When I woke up I wondered about the transparency of real life and the inaccessibility of the body or thing that is lying out there and dreaming me.

[...]

7.

There is a simple motion that you have to do to be present. Withdraw your gaze. We have two gazes: one looks into the world and the other searches, like a lantern turned on in full daylight, scrutinises, beyond the seen. Withdraw second gaze. And bring it as a light, calming memory, when you look through the first.

I stared at the white hemisphere for longer than I can remember. Contemplation was a tool against the vivid impression that everything around took flight. Viewed form above, a huge bird - the city. And I - flea frozen in the landscape, ready to let it take me on wing. I let sight slide on smooth margins. Like me, on the edge.

Formless light descended from between unclear clouds to halo the urge to walk. Too aesthetic, I thought. But I couldn't help the immersion. I knew how to hang myself in suspense. Thought had taken a nuance close to the backdrop of mind. That second gaze is the eye of thinking, I thought, blinking long enough to feel a little too theatrical. I walked.

I was behind the building that, with the dissipation of shadows, became like the sky. A sky enclosed, a dome, draw the child contouring her way through the trauma of symbols. You have to know your limits. I was never good at it. But I am willing to build them, from scratch.

I took a guided tour of the parliament. What a scam. It is the geometry of seats that, once inhabited, guide the mind of the elected in to the childish belief that society is representable. I knew that natural numbers are inappropriate to describe us. At least the God forgotten Marxism - because this was its will - should have brought the irrationals in, if not the imaginaries.

I once pictured a football game with players wearing fractions, irrational numbers, arithmetics like "stuff". I was annoyed at order. I used to draw 1/2 on the back of my sports T-shirts.I always felt half absent anyway. But I also wanted to look smarter than I thought I was, though I always confused intelligence with something else.

I was annoyed at order but when I saw it, the regularities, this lines, the square, the spheres, anything parallel, I had to submit. I loved this ri-

diculous city. It gave you the impression of things having a future. Looking at the rows of geometrical buildings induced inner horizons. Like in the Clinic - I knew that the wooden benches were oriented toward the open to give us lines of flight.

Future is fictional forward movement, I mind-wrote.

The tour was over. What seemed alien on the outside, looked primitive inside. Modernist ships built by invertebrates. I waited until everyone disappeared in the vastness of the drawn city and lay myself on the warm flat cement. How inappropriate to feel one's biology against the perfect flatness, like samples of bacteria caught between microscope slides.

If I had a paper to draw how I felt, I would just stare at it for hours in a row.