

After months of moving back and forth and around the city, I finally signed the contract. I'd always thought I'd celebrate, throw an I-just-signed-my-contract-party. Instead, I'd taken myself out to JalouCity on Schönhauser Allee where I'd ordered two sets of beautiful blinds worth half a month's rent. This must've been August or September when the nights as bright as days would creep in through every open crack to penetrate my lids. I'd spent some time mulling over the nature of a potential JalouCity investment – my guy offered blinds or curtains and rollers in any texture or color I desired. Whenever I'd close my eyes, I'd see heavy velvet curtains staging my bed as the center piece of a mundane play of which waking or sleeping would mark either end. If ever I'd draw the heavy curtains dressed in my night gown for dramatic effect, I'd live out my Lynchian dream until collapse, where just my humming breath along with certain fantasies would persist.

Like many children, I used to be afraid of the night. I'd fear there might be something or someone – lurking, peering, itching to jump out at me and do whatever people jumping out from behind curtains would do. And I'd get frustrated because what good would curtains do if, despite the protection promised, I'd still feel the same intrusive gaze pinching every one of my cells. I'd hastily draw the drapes, but the fact that I'd never unveil any lurker wouldn't exactly calm me down. The dark corners retained their ominous appeal to show me what I'd fear to see – of which the only escape would be to hurry back to bed and try to quickly drift off into dreamscapes less dimly lit:

In a world where the sky folds in on itself you stand before several doors. What you thought would be the lobby of a high-rise building

is a perfect replica of your neighbor's garden house

is a brutalist saltwater fish tank

is the subway station from down the road

is your lover's burning living room

is the holistic image of your dreams

is their yawning face

is a vastly empty stage

where in bold black letters you read:

"It's the truth not yet spoken. It's love. In all its messiness. I want all of us to soak in the communal bath of it. Because we're all in the same water after all." (Caden Cotard)

Caden Cotard is the hopeless protagonist in Charlie Kaufman's *Synecdoche, New York* (2008) whose attempts to stage a perfect representation of life traps him, along with his audience, in an infinite regress of meaning of what might be "something real, and big, and true." The content of truth of a near-to-exact replica of the graveyard where the actor who was cast to play Caden was buried, now embodied by an actor who was cast to play the actor who was cast to play Caden, remains up for debate. Either way, in a world where the sky folds in on itself we might not care too much about the distinction between truth and falsehood as the self is always already bound up with representations and representations are always already bound up with the self. If Caden would've built a replica of a garden house, it's façade would've held the tension between what is seen and what is veiled – the projected, the desired and the promise of an image, "the wholeness of being, but they can only gesture toward what exceeds representation." (Kaja Silverman, *World Spectators*, 2000) Sometimes, the presence of a garden house entails its absence, and, sometimes, if we're lucky, a garden house is a Finnish sauna. What happens, then, when we surrender to the opacity of things?

— — — When spaces fold in on themselves, collapsing distinctions between inside and outside, skin and sweat, yours and mine, the curator's, the artist's and all the other protagonists who invite us to dwell in the in-between – the veils where meaning shimmers but does not settle.

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