

Exhibition of a Dying City

In consideration of Marvin Gaye's "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)"

1. *Bird on Money*, Jean-Michel Basquiat

a blackbird, maybe

a raven

or

a crow

or

something slightly less ominous

flies past the little

red

sign of the greenwood

liquor

store, settling on a forgotten franklin.

i watch from my window

as its kin

descend

on the green note,

worthless

as far as they are concerned,

& they are not.

as we trek in all directions

through

this godless city, the bird

glides

back over the waves of the ice-bath river,

back to its snow-dusted nest

where the green

eventually makes sense,

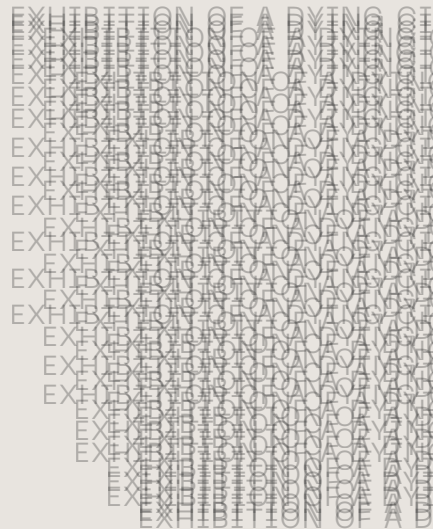
& dreams, as we do, of death

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DeeSoul
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2.

Back home, as the day crawls closer to its end,
 what seems like all the crows in Southeast swarm
 around the Westfield Plaza Bonita Mall, hundreds
 of the damned things staking their claim. They look
 like something out of a horror movie,
 how they all change direction simultaneously,
 wordless, the same coiling movement, the wind's
 tar, pulsating heartbeat. I often wonder how arrogant
 we are to consider ourselves God's most beloved creatures.
 Turtles are born with armor & live up to 200 years.
 Birds are born with wings to soar & escape.
 What do we have, but flesh & war & allergies
 to peanuts? No, the animals are so loved,
 they've never heard of God in the first place.



3. *Die Orden der Nacht*, Anselm Kiefer

man lies centered in the blooming
 death,
 a city absent
 of
 petals,
 unsure if he is
 dying
 or trying to be.
 the dirt is cracked
 & resentful,
 though maybe it has always been.
 i am sure
 it was
 beautiful
 here once,
 before the sunflowers drooped
 black

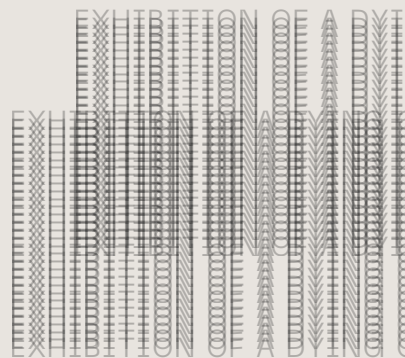




like
the earth's swollen eyes,
before there
was ever a human

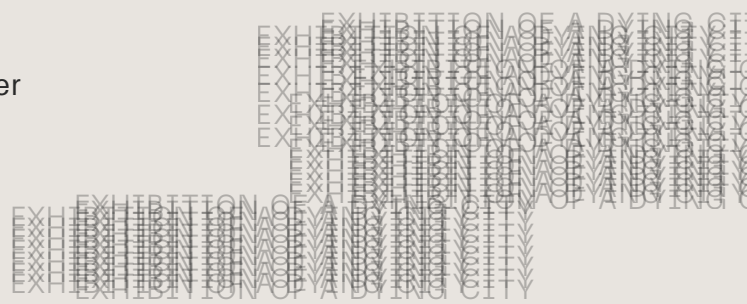
to speak of. how lucky
we'd be, to arrive
at the world's
end & say
*look! see what
we've done!*

even death wants nothing of us



4.

I didn't know wildfire could do that.
My friends and I woke to a choking sepia sky
as the smoke drifted, settling on anything & everything
in the Bay like fine dust. We drove to a lighthouse
standing guard on the rocky coast, watching
for the ghosts of ships long departed.
If it was the end of the world, we didn't care.
I told myself this would make for a great story
I'd never tell my kids someday. How the flames
licked the sky red in one direction & the ocean
threatened to devour us in the other. How if either
had their way - if the sea swallowed us whole,
if the blaze left the West Coast smoldering -
they'd have been justified.



5. *The Enclave*, Richard Mosse

there is a war happening
 someplace
the trees grow pink, far
 from everything we've learned
 to love.

the water, when found,
 shimmers like
tomorrow, either the one
 you've dreamed of
 or the one not
 promised.

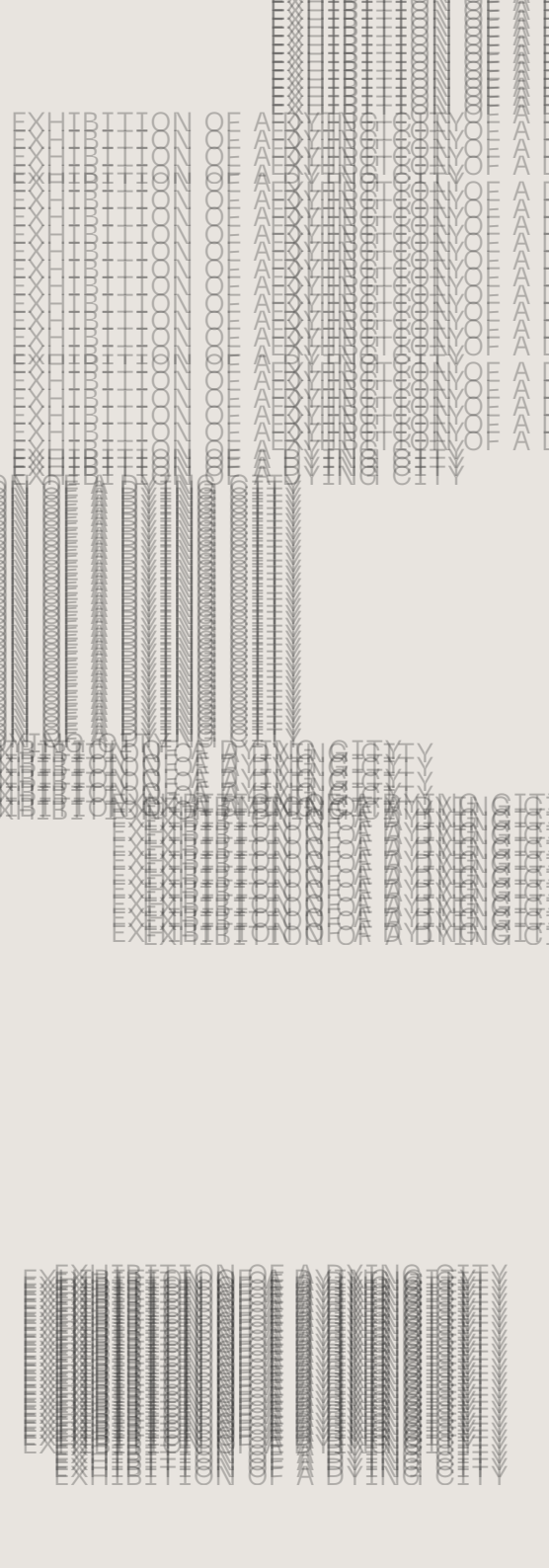
this is how they hide
 the massacre
from us -behind lavender,
 far beneath the crimson
 & ivory &
 sapphire.

when you ask for the dead,
 the soldiers will tell
 you,
instead, how sweet the air was,
 how every burrowed bullet
 was just a seed

finding fresh soil, how peaceful
 the bombs looked
as they dropped, like freedom
 finding itself again
 in a new
 country

& the country being laid to rest

EXHIBITION OF ALEXINGTON AND ALEXANDRIA



6.

If you ask me my thoughts on war,
I will always tell you it is terrible,
and that is true. It is also true I often
do not have to think of war, nor bombs,
nor the rubble left in their wake.
If I could trade my brown for yours,
I still could not stop the world from hating
us both, and for that, I am sorry.
I am still searching for something
more potent than a sorry to offer.
If I thought it would help, I'd ask my God
to try again. Maybe he already has.
If there's a version of me that's survived,
I pray it was worth it in the end.

