

“I’m Affraid Of Time”
to Andréa Sparta
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11.40am.

I'm usually afraid of time, of the grand time. The time of passing seasons, rainless summers, and soon-to-be white hairs under my fringe. Right now, I'm afraid of time, the little time that slips away, gets lost, and escapes with each blink of an eye. I'm afraid of letting it slip away and disappointing the people I want to give time to. I'm not afraid for them, but I'm afraid of reading the disappointment in their eyes towards me. I'm afraid of losing value, like the stock market crashing, statistics plummeting, and me along with them. Andréa wants us to crash together. He wants us to fall and see together if the fall hurts or if one can help the other up. I accept this unspoken contract of disillusioned trust. In exchange for my time, Andréa gives me the right and space to do something that may be worthless, that may not work, but that's what he expects from me. While it's generally what we desperately seek to avoid, to convince ourselves that it will be a success and that we're not taking a risk, not wasting time. But what are we risking here? Not much, to be honest. Except for self-disappointment by attaching too much importance to others' indifference or disdain toward us. Andréa is already interested in what doesn't interest us, in what has lost its value, in what lingers, in what serves no purpose (anymore).

My friend Raphaël is fascinated by all these flashy and noisy trinkets that street vendors offer us as soon as we have a drink on a terrace. He often buys them - as soon as he's a bit tipsy - and gives them to his girlfriend. I've always been curious about this collection of stuff as annoying as it is attractive, which certainly no longer works. I wonder, what's the benefit of this plastic fish that beeps, blinks, and wiggles, of this micro-sizzling mini disco ball without wires and without purpose, of these thousand mini Eiffel Towers hanging on a string, or these bouquets of soon-to-wilt roses? I wonder, who are these vile people who woke up one morning and said to themselves, "I'm going to start a shady business selling little things that inflate, jump, fly, light up the squares of our capitals, deceive mass tourism, and exploit undocumented workers," pulling the strings of these peddlers of entertainment that we reject with disdainful "no, thank you," sometimes without even a glance, fueling the deceptive mating display of capitalism going in circles.

Recently, I cried in a karaoke. This attempt at flawless entertainment made me sad. My feelings oscillated between the pressure of an injunction to be happy and an unspoken inner discomfort. My tears were trapped under my cheekbones, and my smile tried to reach my ears so that they wouldn't overflow. Not here. Not now. Not when I have to sing and laugh while my vision blurs from one tear to the next. The grand spectacle of sadness in a public place. Crying under the strobe lights, I wondered how fish see us from behind the translucent barrier of their chlorinated aquarium water, entertaining us in this Thai restaurant. They certainly perceive the blurry outlines of our faces watching them. But was their vision blurred by the water, like mine when I cry in a karaoke or when I

watch birds flutter, eyes open from the bottom of a pool?
I've always hated that feeling of having to contain sadness within oneself to protect oneself from unexpected external energies. Like when an escalator stops working, and those big metal serrated steps that usually carry us between two thresholds freeze. They become foreign to my body's memory, which stammers in this new situation between them and me and plunges me into the vertigo of immobility.

I left the karaoke.

I managed to climb the escalator steps.

Without crying.

I arrived at the train station, got on the train, took the right seat number in the right car, on the right train number. Behind me, an African Grey parrot is confined in its metal cage. It's the first time in thirty-two years that I've come across a parrot on a train. I wonder what would happen if the bird escaped; I think Andréa would probably steal the wanted poster. I tell myself that serendipity works in mysterious ways. The bird says "hello," it laughs and coos. Its sounds resemble the ringtones of our phones. As soon as it coos, I feel the people around me reacting as they check if they've received a new notification. The woman next to me is overly excited, saying she wants one too (the train hasn't even started yet). But what fascinates this woman about the fact that a bird can mimic humanity and the sounds of its technology? I try to look at the bird between the seats, like children trying to catch your smile to offer you one and pass the time. I feel like I'm looking into a blind spot. I try to close one eye, then squint to get a better look between the seats. But it's no use; I only have the perception of its presence between my two eyes. Andréa's work is to be viewed like looking into a blind spot. It suggests what we don't see, what we didn't see coming. But which is there now. Andréa orchestrates situations from the field of the trivial to bring forth presences that we had never missed before. Like a love story we didn't even have time to imagine. His actions are the missing links between our inattention and the unmistakable. His intentions are as silent as a shared gaze, as the wordless eyes of a stranger, through which we hear fear, compassion, joy, or silent complicity./