Poetry and Images from
Ekphrazein: The Map Archetype
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Labyrinth (Neo-Babylonian Empire)

Naming
By Caroline Contillo

ladies, gentlemen,
non-binary, sentient beings of both an incarnate and disincarnate nature,

welcome to babylon 2063

we, as a decentralized network of consciousness, have built a body of language
and concepts that far surpasses our conventional mortal envelopes
as such we hope you will join us in celebrating the release of a new emergent property.

Agora (Patent Permanently Pending) is a product of our Liminality and Anti-Structure division, hovering at the edge of the known universe, at once everywhere and nowhere. Morphogenetic in nature, Agora promises to surpass the limits of materialist ideology, with possible side effects including the mind perceiving itself as other, culminating in an experience of complete transcendence of space, time, and matter.

Please enjoy the snacks and Agora samples provided and keep your viscera peeled for sensory stimuli indicating the presence of the Undulating Rhizome of Synaptic Connection, the nonlocal sands of time, and the four seas of potential nowness, some of the most breathtaking and nonconceptual wonders of the 7 gates.

Thank you for joining us, we will now begin our descent into the underworld.

WANTING, WISHING, WORRYING, HOPING, FEARING, DREADING, DESIRING, ENVYING, COMPARING, STRATEGIZING, JUDGING, COMPLAINING, SELF-PITYING, STRIVING, ANTICIPATING, EXPECTING, CONTRIVING, HEDGING, RATIONALIZING, CLINGING AND DOUBTING, Slowing, Resting, Allowing, Allowing Allowing Allowing

Upon passing the threshold, a deafening cacophony ensues, the sound of a hundred thousand honeybees grinding electric gears as consciousness comes into being and fades away in waves. Passing through the spheres, the array of possible futures lays spread out in all directions, emerging from heart center of the luminous body and landing smack dab at the zenith, the axis mundi, a kiss that ignites an explosion in your emotional core, summoning sensations of a bliss enmeshed with both joy and sorrow. all opposites pan out and ride the labyrinthine course of potentiality, ultimately uniting and swallowing each other whole. I get it now, you think. But the perspective unhinges from any such sense of 'I' and permeates the environment. For a moment you feel as if you can touch everything that has ever or will ever exist. And then an itch, calling as if from within a deep fog.

Resisting, Hastening CLINGING AND DOUBTING, RATIONALIZING, HEDGING, CONTRIVING, EXPECTING, ANTICIPATING, STRIVING, SELF-PITYING, COMPLAINING, JUDGING, STRATEGIZING, COMPARING, ENVYING, DESIRING, DREADING, FEARING, HOPING, WORRYING, WISHING, WANTING

Thank you for joining us at this atemporal juncture in space/time. We do hope you enjoyed being reincorporated into the undifferentiated void by the archaic mother. Goodnight.
I was sleeping on the mountain top
and spent by the years my body was lovely.
Deep in the Hellenic night, the centaur
paused in his quadruple race
to spy on my sleep. It was a pleasure
to sleep in order to dream, and to seek the other
lustral sleep that eludes memory
and cleanses us of the burden of being who we are on earth.
Diana, the goddess who is also the moon,
saw me sleeping on the mountain
and slowly descended into my arms.
Gold and love in a night ablaze.
I pressed fingers to my mortal eyelids
I wanted not to see the lovely face
my lips of clay were profaning.
I breathed in the fragrance of them moon
and her infinite voice spoke my name.
Oh, the pure, sought after cheeks.
Oh rivers of love and of night.
Oh the human kiss and tensed bow.
I don’t know how long the bliss lasted.
There are things not measured by grape
or flower or delicate snow
People flee from me, afraid
of the man who was loved by the moon.
The years have passed. An inner anguish
brings horror to my sleeplessness. I ask myself
if that tumult of gold on the mountain
was true, or only a dream.
Useless to tell myself that a dream
and the memory of yesterday are the same thing.
My solitude wanders the ordinary
roads of earth, but I always search
the ancient night of the spirits
for the daughter of Zeus, the indifferent moon.

"Process of the Lunation" by Kircher (1646)

What Sharpness is
By Robert Whitehead

Dear blind prophets, dear halos
drawn around Byzantine saints,
dear apologies, dear methods,
dear sacrifices on bed frame, on
dining table, on the wall the light
touches last, dear shallowest parts of the river, dear wanderers of bright complicit dangers, dear sable nights, dear atoms of us, dear foals bearing their first lung in the old wood, dear parents, dear brother and sister dear to the broken parents, dear what-got-us-here, dear what-makes-us-remain, dear— I had to sit up for this— dear leaving, I had to waste every future where we were still a family in the fire with which I love, dear phones ringing around the smoke-cleared room, dear sighs at the ends of messages meaning I don’t know what I did, dear deeper, dear instinct somewhere, dear sick willow dropping each yellow leaf to the same wind, dear caller, you have what I want, dear islands in anchor-blue water, dear lion at the resurrection, dear not-giving-up, though we are so far away from each other, though what we had wasn’t a love but a trick the eye plays on strangers. Though we danced we found the music hard. What I cannot say is how before the sighs come I can tell they will come, like the one errant hoof the horse makes a show of when shaking off the flies. Dear flies in every version of hell, dear rope around my waist holding me to the mast, dear fly-dark storm I can tell you approach, dear approach, be done with it— I shouted along the deck for all the sails to be drawn, I took down the laundry of me from where you might hit first, and now I am waiting. Now I wait axed as ever.