

In Self

I had been walking for days, I collapse in a patch of clipped grass and rest on my back. I turn inwards, my mind calms and I feel the beating of my heart against the cage that confines, yet protects it. I close my eyes, place my hands on my stomach, I feel the six inch scar that sits vertically at the centre, the scar tissue raised, existing as my greatest work, my state of being, physical. It is a continual 'edge' and though saving my life, it became itself, always in between. Lying perfectly still I turn the attention of my mind downwards, focusing on the feeling of my toes, then my feet and gradually moving up my body; my legs, back, stomach, arms, elbows, hands, neck and head. I feel my dense skeletal structure resting within the soft matter of my muscles. The days aches and pains emerging, rising to the surface, gasping for air and respite. I am heavy. I sink into the surface below which is pushing up as my body is being pushed down. There is no difference between myself and the world around. I travel to the spaces trapped inside this soft shell, the tunnels inside my veins, the pit in my stomach, the tiny lacunas within my bones. Together. Connected. The world and I. We are propelled through time and space as a connected body of atoms, all vibrating at different frequencies, constantly at the beginning and at the end. Glued to the surface of this vast rock I am hurtling forwards, spinning constantly at 600mph at 51° N, 0° W. As this sphere spins continuously, I can feel the invisible transmittance of light on my skin. There is only 8.3 minutes of travel for the photons that hit my epidermis from the surface of the sun. This body exists far beyond the confines of its physical self, somehow reaching the far depths of the universe. I am here and also there.

One connected system, atoms of carbon at different states of dormancy.¹

I open my eyes, light floods in for the first time.

*Forever I shall be a stranger to myself.*²

¹ 'At the final stage you teach me that this wondrous and multi-coloured universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom itself can be reduced to the electron. At this is good and I wait for you to continue. But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain this world to me with an image.' Albert Camus, *The Myth Of Sisyphus*.

² 'The writer never knows whether the work is done. What he has finished in one book, he starts over or destroys in another.' Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*.