



*Lost in the track of
time*

*A short novel by P. Raybaud
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Lost in the track of time.
Not sure if I am within the herd, or if I am just walking
along. In a way it might just be the same.
Lost my way. Path seems to have faded away.
I deviated back on the road again. It started raining, drops
surrounding my thoughts and the fog smudging my sight.
Again I don't know where I am.

Anger dripping on me. I'm fighting, why? What do I fight?
Against again.

I stopt at a tree, trying somehow to take out some stings
from my heart. Or to control them. I closed my eyes. Deep
breath. Leaned my head onto the warm wood. I can hear you,
inhaling through your curled branches, driving life through
your infinite veins, exhaling. Breath, with it, slowly. The
lungs of our world. This world..

In a fraction of time the sound of Nature desapered and
in my head bangs the screams of the road again.

So I am back on the road, like constantly pulled back.
Back back back. Its a repetition, all of this, and it has a
long, wailing sound.

Green, shape, shapes, a roar, rain. A roar?
The blur movement I was staring at changed to black and in
this confusion I remembered I was walking.
The road.

Suddently I realized the line, this surreal range of
metallic engins cutting the radiant green into fading tones. In
the middle of the empty landscape something somehow just
attracted an unpredictable number of cars.
I want to believe I was intrigued to see what was at the
beggining of the line. But deep down I know, I knew, what it
was, what it is.



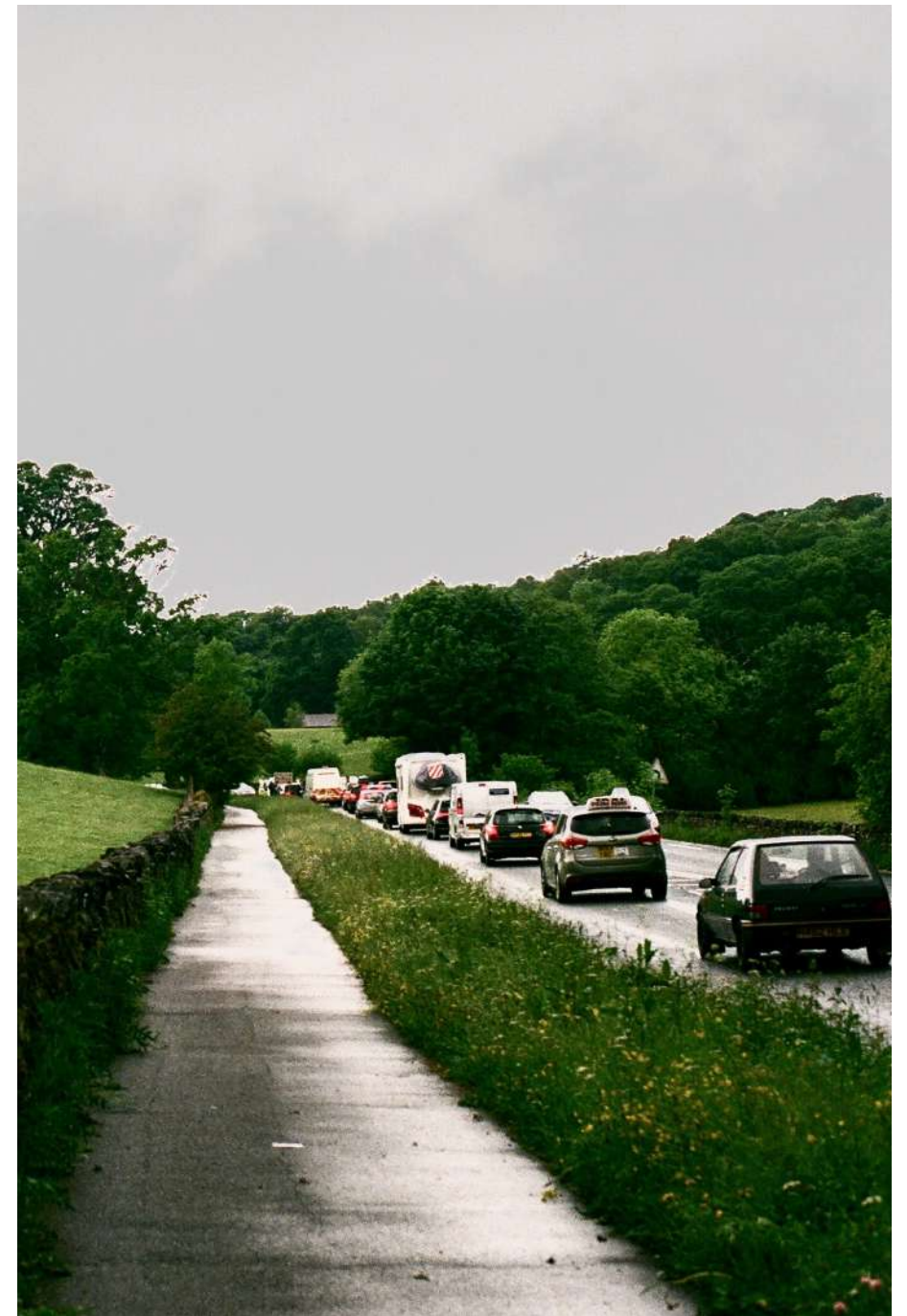
And as I was walking along, I could feel my steps become more and more frenetic, bouncing through my legs, introducing small shocks in my body everytime they would touch the floor. Through one leg, actually, for the other put herself in a hypotension, her foot was drawing in a puddle of blood and rain, half a shoe haning from what was left of her toes.

The anger burning my throat slowly took a bitter taste, smelt like a warm, almost burnt, piece of metal. It sank into my stomach, from where an uncontrollable need for laughter started spreading. My smile was horribly opening itself, as and when my feet where rapturously magnetised by an accident yet to confirm. Now, as I am walking along, I can feel all those eyes on me, and I am laughing, I am laughing! I can't feel nothing else but those ticklish nails scratching to the blood the inside of my foot up to my bowel. A laughter now out of control, thicker, darker, involuntarily defying every single look upon me, batteling with all of them, fighting with myself, my exhausting walk, the thirteen hours of somnanbulism that drove me here, my gaunted stomach, my opened foot more and more hanging out of that piece of shoe, more and more dripping half in the water and in its own fluids.

And as I was walking along, laughing with my bulging brown eyes, I could finally see. And here was the start. In the infinite green appeared the devils print, a red stain, dropping a shade of lust in the monochrome landscape. Three drops. The smile didn't desappear.

I know, I knew, also by its distance from where I was previously rambling, that it happened simultaneously. But apparently I also want to believe in coincidences.

The smile, the eyes, the sounds, the taste. I turned left, plunging my body back into the woods.





There, weirdly angled and strangely detached from the surrounding landscape, a house appeared. The most pretty house to see in such a time. I keep one leg from stopping next to what's left of her sibling and manage to make myself go around up to the back of the house.

There the lac, the sun, the mounts and all the rest, singing and crawling onto the fow, the frost, the wind and the cold, all burying into the sky and my retina, now almost loose.

But the looks were cumbersome, if ever that word could qualify, and just the same way the shape of the sun can stick beneath your eyelids even in pitch darkness, those eyes were engraved into my sight, and the more I was staring at Nature, the more I couldn't see nothing else but blue retinas just like mine floating around sparks of dying sun. Slowly came a point where the dots all merged into this one pair of complex pupils staring at me once more.

A face, I saw a strident mother's face, half man half blur, laying on her back, offering to the view only her left hand side, sharp and elusive over and through the water. I think I was kneeling on the floor at that moment, totally submerged by her looks, when an old lady took pity of me, and tapped the back of my shoulder, close to my neck.

I thus ended up in a house that should have been built by Mr H*, dead before the start. It is his wife who launched the thing in 1981, with her daughter. Five years of assembling, and deciding, and reassembling, and funding, and counting, and crying, and mourning, and elevating and talking, and showing, to and off, and perhaps thinking.

Victorian age, thus, from a woman's hands and mind. Everything gathers so fluently.
Died in 1914.

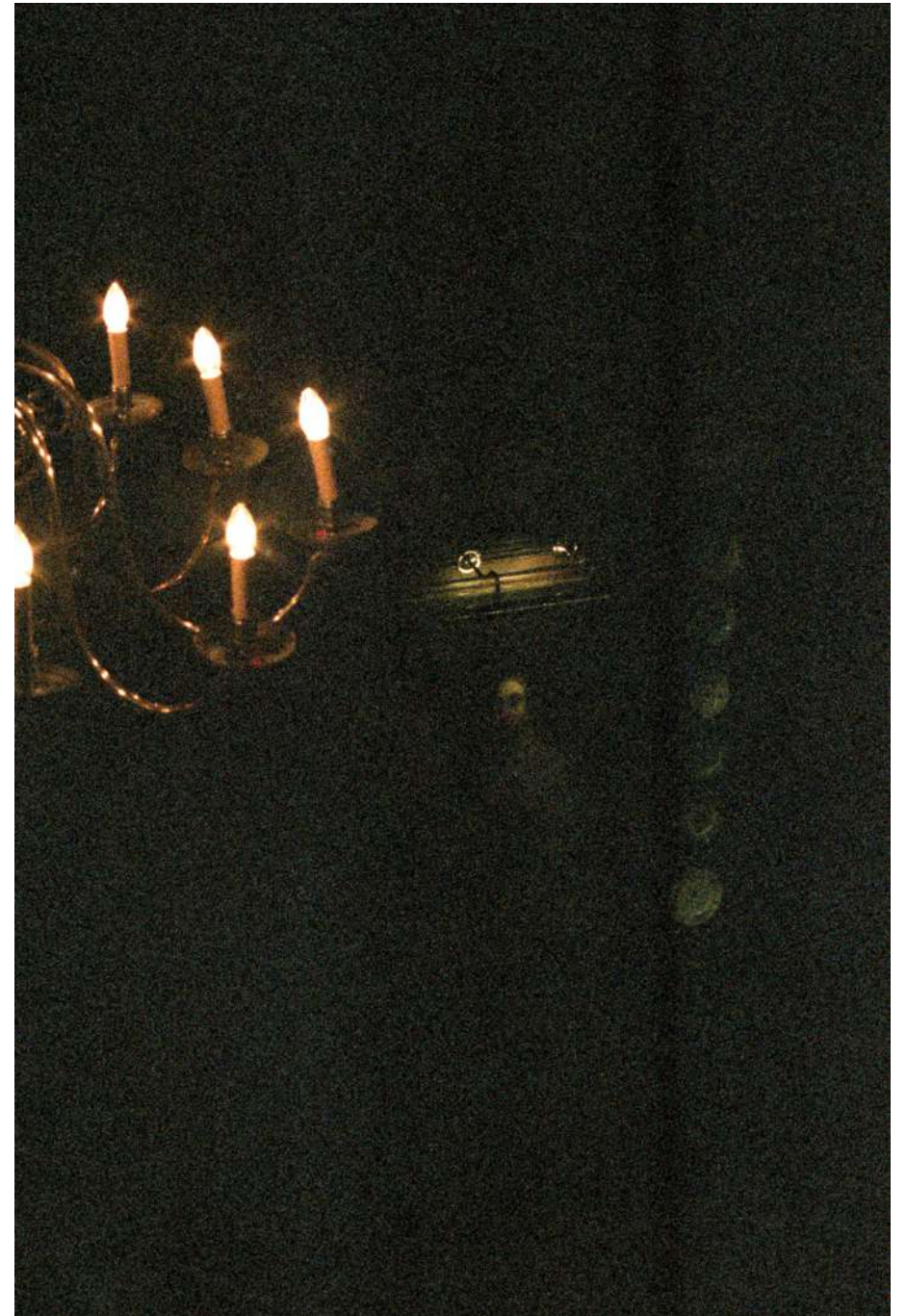
Taken over by Mrs W*, and her husband, who didn't make it to the start neither.

She too, dies, in 1929, exactly where I stand, hens the little frame with a face and the dried rose. The house is to let again.

Three weeks later, Miss Dorothy D*, her mother and her aunt, decided to take it over. In the family since, her family, meaning her, and her daughter, and granddaughter, who is sick, it's been two weeks, it gives a lot of worries.

On a stone next to the frame, the face and the rose, an engraving signed by the Countess Elizabeth of T* reads: "Ales volat propriis. Honor virtius praemium". Which shall mean "A bird flies by its own wings.

Honour flies by the reward of valour".





The diner kept tinting the porcelain with the sound of the past, the heritage of the place bouncing from this old lady's mouth to the yellow walls back to the acid black hole of my eye pretending to be an active investigator of this monologue.

Her daughter's wedding thus happened to be celebrated in this enchanting dwelling, it should have been beautiful, all white and grey like the clouds, all of them wearing, on strict demand, a lovely touch of bright red, to go with -or against- the very well maintained green healthy grass.

Unfortunately, the father, the husband, died just a week prior, seven weeks after the irreversible sentence known as cancer announced that the final word was to be pronounced in at least one year.

I don't know if it is just me, or just paranoia, but this place really seems not to enjoy the company of men.

The mountain especially, ironically overhanging the skyline with her dead yet alert body posture, offering shapes of tensed neck and breath arch as last contours to see for the dying men.

Persian designs, Byzantine and Tudor decors.

Room with numbers, mine is three, half the clocks running and every hour or so the sound of a cuckoo.

Back on the road again.

Same as yesterday.

And once more I had to mark a pause, another branch.

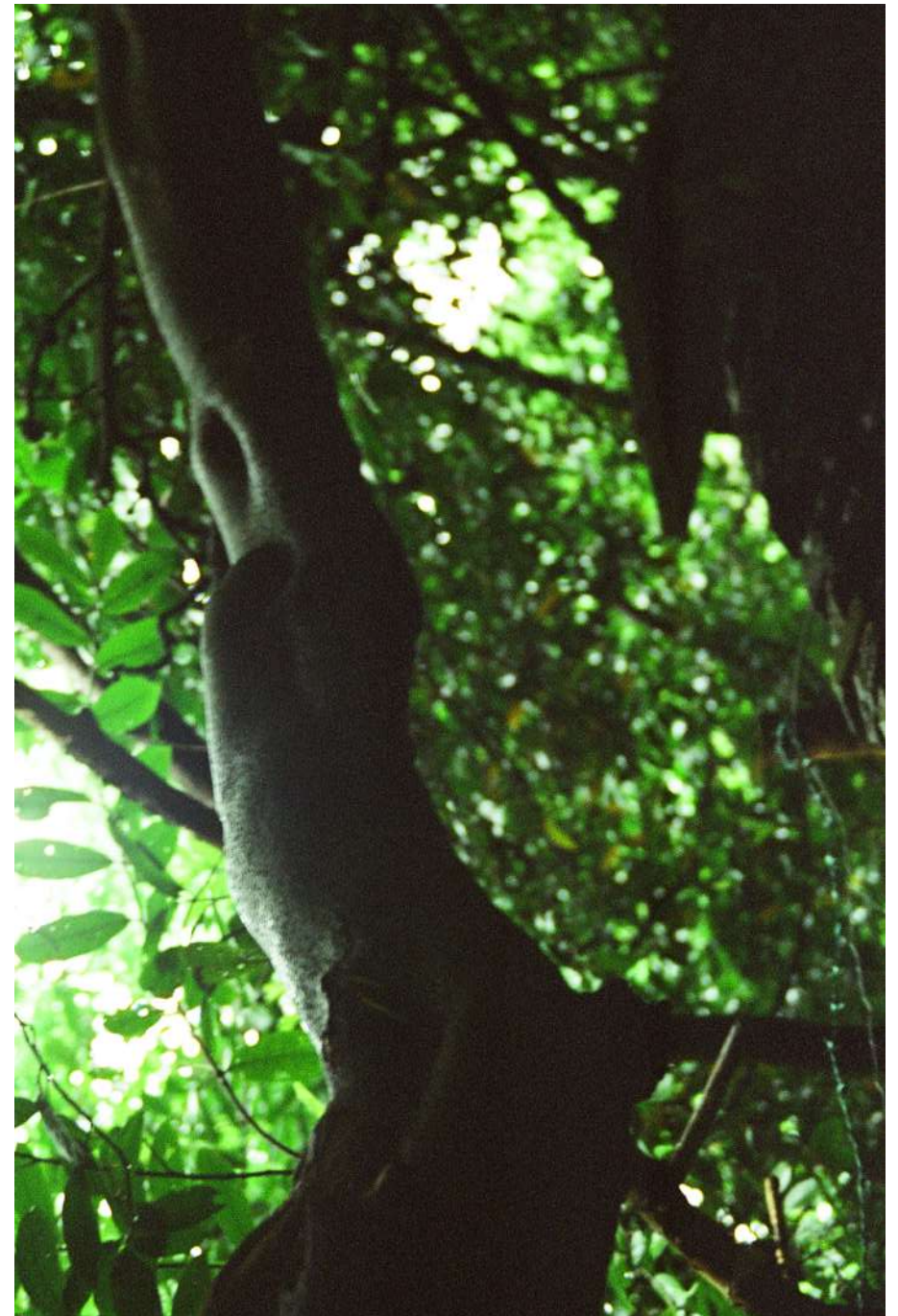
I don't know if it's because of the pain, sometimes it overpowers the whole, but I saw it as a leg, and couldn't stop staring at it, thus had to stop.

A strong shaped leg, full of life, dark and robust, the smell of warm petrichor, wet just a little, sweating from being so nicely stretched, so harmoniously elongated from her trunk, reaching with the top of its branched toes the pieces of air and dust and sky and all microcosmic particles vital for her to crack and grow and quarter more and more glamorously.

And I thanked her, for being so well put together, so finely carved, so arrogantly erected.

And I felt like becoming wet myself, not only from the rain reverbing the muscles' glow, the rain now draping my head and shoulders, overlaying my body with this thin percussion of drops.

Not only the rain, thus, not only my own sick perspiration running like it was a matter of life and death to be the first to leave this shattered body, not only the tears from my eyes coping with the other internal fluids in this frenetic outer-body fugue, but also liquid coming out of every single orifice that one female body can have, glanders, slobbers, gore, wax, wet, pieces of dungs and spleen.





And once again, the traffic stopped. This time, I sensed it within my heart, so strongly I could feel something stopped, just now, something had to stop, something had to not move not float not stretch not feel not come. And to stop like that there could be only cars, only these cold monotonic squares on wheels costing and killing people and time.

So I ran, same rage as yesterday, a bit stronger this time, the pace more confident. I knew even better than last time. Same vision tho from the other side of the road, walking up north I guess. But the line was longer, the hill sharper. And bends above all! No way I could see the end.

13:01

A grave.

I am walking in front of St Mary's Church.

No, don't stop, keep walking.

I walk a little more, I still can't see anything. A driver oddly waves at me. This is going to take me a long, long time before my eyes can reach the starting point of the crash, just to be sure. Hm, but I don't mind not needing a proof to be sure. I am sure, I know it, but I wanted to show the people that I was sure! Which people? I turn around.

13:09

I thought it was important to mention it.

I enter the church. I take out all my artefacts and pieces of identity, my shoes too, of course, and I sit down.

That felt nice.

I look up to Jesus in a box.

I do something like thanking him, and I forgot the rest.

Everything around starts fainting, the lines turn into circles and the doom light gets whiter and wider, surrounding the space in a high pick of blur, strident and vibrant, the sound of light piercing as if the whole centrifuge vitally had to reassembles into a note of grace

before collapsing apart of itself and of the entire vault, chapel, road, forest, lakes, houses, old ladies and crippled foot.

I'm asking: "why me!"

But this time with a smile, a smile of acknowledgment. And I promised him I would do it all, use it all, make it all, transform it all, give it all of me, of it, of her, and all and I stood up and
No,

First, I had visions,

Of her face laying on the neck, arrogant, confidant, defying the sky with her mineral craved nose.

Than of his face bending on the left, falling in a praised nonchalance, passively looking at the ground as if no pain or word or noise or anything related to injuries and condition could ever affect him, a little smile in the corner of his lips telling us that we are cute naïve fools not really worth considering if we really attach ourselves to such things and not to his noetic glee.

His head then turned to the right, before passively looking straight into my eyes.

Everything around was moving, whitish and opaque.

The head then turned to angle itself in a sky looking position, and at that very moment I could see that woman's face with a now nonchalant look upon a crackling gem corps. Then it was my face.

And at last the body of a child.

I left the church without really
No! not yet!

Then I closed my eyes.

I saw from the window a circle of people dressed in white standing side by side.
My hands landed on my eyes still shot and the window turned red.

There,
I stood up and left the church, walking straight towards the
same grave that caught my eye when I was passing by.

"Mary R*. Dead on 08.01.1877. Aged 67"

Déjà-vu.

Feet burning

I had to sit down again.

Face leaning on the cold grave.

And I told her "Sorry, I am not stepping on you, I
am stepping by you." And I touched her engraved name.

Now I realized I was sitting in the middle of
graves whose names I ignored, for I could see only the last
vision of my face upon this child's body.

Vision of the driver's hand gesture.





And there! The cloche rang three times.
It actually rang three times already.

Once when I first looked at the grave

13:15

Once when I wrote down the word "acknowledgment".

Time?

And just now, longer, just after I sat down to write for the first time that the bell rang three times, it rang again at the very second I leaned onto the cold church's wall to rise up. And stopped at the very second I took my hand out of the wall.

It is 13:45

I still don't know if accident there has been, but I just saw an ambulance passing by, potentially coming back from the beginning of the line, knowing it's the only car going backwards. And I stood there, incapable of making any decision, left, right turn around or keep aiming for the start, the body totally rooting in a shaking convulse of immobility and I was asking them please! Give me a number, a direction, a time, a day, a no, anything! But they looked even more distraught than me, stuck them too in this distorted apathetic figure and half surprised eyes staring at me, at the emptiness of me screaming. Maybe we are all lost, condemned to immobility, facing illogicality with a shield of words, tenses, figures, digits, semiotics, sociolinguistics, ideologies, fantasies, representations, subjects, unities and ourselves, like little pikes of useless security trying to prick the enormous why of condition

From there I turned right and roamed straight for a bit until
the little town of W*

My steps, indecisions, aims for the perfect stop then took me
along another hamlet L* then to B*. Or was it B*?

Sat down table 10.

There, the miracle happened.

Waiting for my last train I saw a man. I first saw
his cane.

An eagle.

I find it beautiful, I tell him.

He smiles at me, a mild grey smile, shy from
knowledge, wrinkled and humble like a young bachelor.

He tells about his wife, I look like her, on several
points apparently.

There she happens, limpid and silk in her walk, her
arms balancing in a deconstructed harmony, making justice to
the whole out of tune breeze of her body, looking like an
underwater algae dancing with the air her head drastically
vertical eyes of cotton deeply looking into the furthers of
horizons as if there, the most delicate sunrise was shadowing
itself onto the most sensuous camber of a woman's back
dimples.

Its true, I look like her.

Déjà-vu.

Her glance

I hardly dare

Straight in her eyes

While heavily avoiding seeing



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