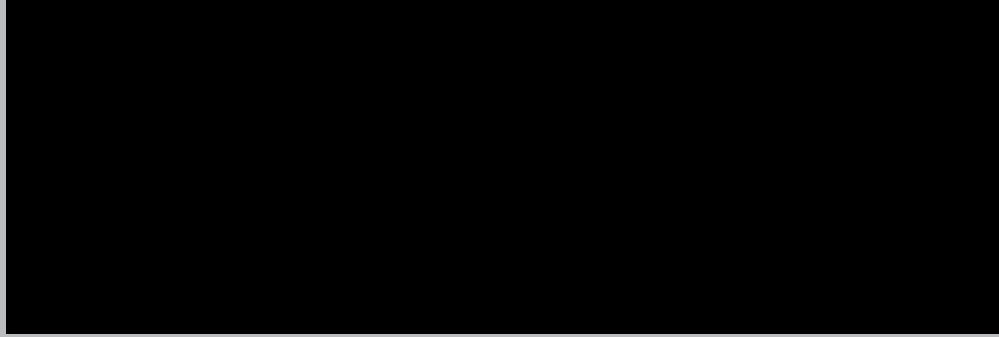
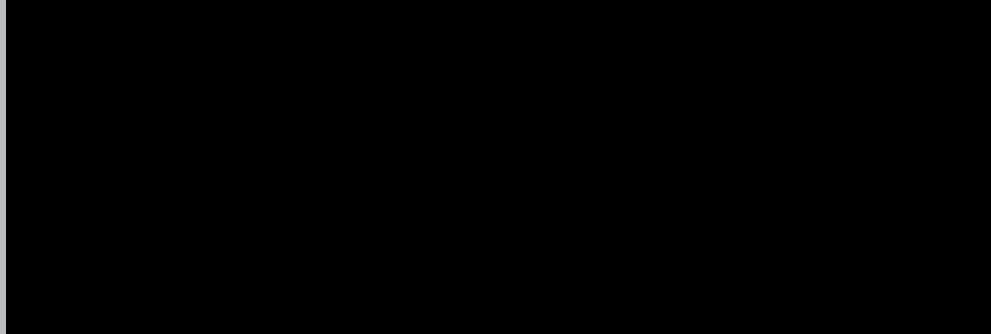


Bima, or בימה, or βήμα, or other words asking you to bring yourself forward and name the lines that hold you in place.



“In a synagogue, as in the house of worship of other cults, the rules of worship required that the prayers of the faithful be directed towards the East; hence, the Ark was invariably placed against the east wall. **The rules with regard to the place of the bima were less definite.** Certainly, it had to allow the speaker to dominate his audience. As a result, in the synagogues of Germany, Bohemia and Poland, the bima was placed in the center of the room.

“The necessity of focusing the attention of the congregation alternately on two separate points required a shifting of seats.”



Wooden Synagogues (1959)
Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka,
pp. 23-24

They looked forever at me, at you. His gaze broke through and I could feel that they were looking at us. She turned to me, and I told them that I cannot answer again. It is not that I am in the world, or with the world, or otherwise **of the world.** It is that I have held myself **to the world.** I asked you to hold yourself **in the world.** I begged that you stay and step towards the world. I hold you as I hold myself. I forgot, I forgave.

Held to the stage by the binds that create the conditions for ourselves. You are me, are her, are them, are him, are we, are us. Held up upon the stage and invited to speak—I heard you, and you stay with me. Here in the world, of the world, on the world, to the world. **I am given over.** Bima, or, or, or, or in other words: asked you to bring yourself forward and named the lines that held (hold) you in place.

I asked you, when we saw her again, what did you mean by *ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα ἀναβαίνω*, or what did you mean by entering the space of public life, or what did you mean to step forward and onto a raised tribune, a platform, a stage? Bima, or a step onto, or, or, or in other words: asked you to bring yourself forward and named the lines that held (hold) you in place.

Mark out a line, from: an artwork is an activity—at the very least—that of perception, if not its reception, and hailing—what you call out to as art, in order to do the work of reception; to: an artwork is an object—emphasize the material, or the matter of a work. The discretionary, the partial, the item, the song, the track, the move, the routine. And between: an artwork is a condition—perhaps there exists a category of things which possess a certain condition, that the encounter with an artwork is an encounter with something that is necessarily **distinct from the realm in which we dwell.**

You could not even speak to it, I asked you a few times, and nothing came forth. What would it mean to hold that there is nothing there. A void, a bar, a form, a stop, a block, the center of the world, the edge,

a stage. Build me and you, and build the forgetting. Shift the site endlessly. There is nothing but the frame of the present (presented, presenting). **I forgot that I met you there. I forgot you and left you a stage, you stepped up on the level and saw from there the world unfolding in every direction and mistook this for the center of the world.** Everywhere can feel the center, but not everywhere can be the center. **Everywhere is the center. You are the center of the world. They are the center. There is no center.** Why do they speak to you of the world and hold that in its working at the edge of things, it is the stage: the proscenium.

At this point I look to you to see the transformation of this into all that we could no longer touch. **Not through a set of words, or a particular act of language, but in our shared attention.**

This begins the world, this ends the world, the world, the world, the world. The “body”, you said hold yours from mine so as if to indicate that the body is worth it. The space held between us, between the city and the suburbs, the city and the space beyond. Nothing was spoken of, but in that the city held you, the world began to turn, the body slipped, and the conditions of making ourselves of use (but not useful) were revealed to have little to do with you or your center of the world.

Nothing happened here, and I forgot to listen for how you spoke of all that happened here. I only forgot enough to remember forgetting. You told me to hold the space between. Another slipped in and then there were three of us, undressed and feeling that nothing as yet another body, pressing.

“What have the public done to deserve this?” What made this the center of attention, the world?

The offer of passing attention, the demand for attention. Viewing implies a spectacular relationship, one of both mere witnessing

“A second example for these conceived lines as invisible organizing powers: in front of the palace, on the other side, lies a long black bar which cannot be seen from the pyramid but is directly opposite. It is placed parallel to the building, blocks the central axis, forms a border to the city, thus distinguishing—in imagination, with ‘minimal marks’ the former district (of a time which trusted in enlightenment [sic] and reason) from the present state, which was stamped by romanticism and has been gnawed at by modern times.

“The bar lies exactly on the site where in a prelude to modern times stood a Kaiser Wilhelm (monument).”

Skulptur Projekte in Münster 1987,
Rundgang (1987), Georg Jappe,
pp. 105-106



and of an ever extending potential of meaning and collapse. Viewing implies a passing attention, which drags the witness into the space of the spectacle. This quality, which is symptomatic of the witness's long entanglement with the divine (or at least the ecclesiastical), **keeps us from silence but holds us without language.**

You put the great man on a horse, he stood like a man on a horse, almost unreal and unbelievable. Held high on two or six legs, an image of itself, the indelible trace of the stand itself. Sincerely, this pressing moment held the world apart from me. Without wax, I told no one.

Where do you get your bullshit from? Why are you so lost? And why can't you be found? I looked to you and looked again to me and found between us there was this condition? Where the fuck do you get off? Can I get you off? Can you hold me so I can only feel where you touch me? I held you in my arms, my eyes.

I pulled back from the edge. **There is something in the unceasing difference between us which is where the desire for the same lies.** I thought more of our differences than our similarities.

There is nothing that art offers the world that isn't already present in the various moments that hold us from the world and its movement and binds that would hold us to it. I choke, for a moment, the post-nasal that has haunted me for the past few weeks mixes with blood fresh from burst capillaries. Where do you get your bullshit from?

Yesterday, when we were eating lunch together, I looked you in the eyes and said, what must it mean that you're making this up? Fuck that, I said, for it made me think that we are what you make of it. Fuck that, or whatever. It was too late for me to catch. I am not sure. I was not quite looking for you. The long line of the body meeting you. I went to the edge of the

city, and resting in your chair, you leaned in and breathed me between the holds. **It was nice but I could not make anything of it. We fucked, but I did not enter. We spoke, but you did not hear.**

The joint hit me in that way where my ears began to feel full. I smiled. You frowned. And then I cried, you leant me a book about manners. I am writing melodrama: at breakfast you leaned over the table and told me I meant nothing to you.

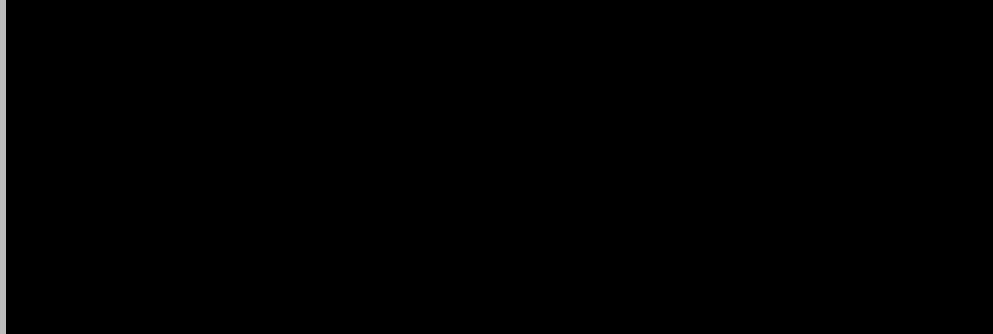
I went to an immense collection, I saw objects standing for each other, **enjoined in the process of justification to such an extent that they were voided**, no longer able to exist on their own. In the gallery, the collection, all potential for new relations, modes of something like kinship between object-artist-context-viewer, are voided. To view art in these conditions is to undo its potential in being in this moment and without it. Left without all that exception from the world, collapsed into the material condition of being viewed.

Even in the violent conditions where we meet this art to view it, we call art that which intends or is desired to be viewed. Viewing art is to witness art at its most explicit relationship to power.

I owned nothing, well except for our ties back to what became of our selves, I owned nothing. You found some cloth, and some forgetting things and sold this as your own memories. I owned nothing, but the memories gathered, the activity of arranging them signalled some transformation, from memory to practice.

The gallery bought them and brought them together again, their choice and their memory stood in for whatever it was that you left with them. I owned nothing, I owed nothing. I left nothing and what came from it was actually itself very little. **The trace of the purchase now held more than material purchased. The trace, the bind that shone more brightly than the thing itself.**

I interrupted you to say / my great-grandfather had three first names and two last names / the bima, or stage, moves to the front. The ark backs the stage the seats stopped moving / **a scattering was dragged back,** / not to where they were from.



In the collection, standing for you and for me meant that there went in between nothing. In the collection, the condition of space, of understanding, the condition of making meaning in the movement, meant nothing. I owed you everything and you took the total condition of everything, There was no room to breathe, and without breath it collapsed totally.

The stage stands before the presence. At the stage, in the center of the room, stands you before the world. Stand or sit, rest one before the world, stand or sit, rest against the all that comes. **It is not that you do not rest before or against, but that rest takes itself from this source and onto, or through another. The ceiling rises high above, taking the eye with it. I hear you at the center of the world.**

The bench at the center of the world creaks a little when you sit down. You sit up straight and when you lean back against the bench at the center of the world the small of your back is held just off the backrest. The wood of the seat sinks, you are pulled down, and I settle with you. **In the space between your back and the center of the world I hold myself for a moment. It's warm and I begin to cry.**

Stage at the center of the world, the edge, the break, the line—the endless vision of self unbecoming, the edge of order, the collapse of the end of the world. I leaned against the form and made eyes at you, you proceeded from the center of the city to meet me here at the center of the world, at the stage, on the stage, at the edge, at the center of the world. **There is a stage where we find ourselves present, presented, presenting.**

I find myself on this stage, present, presented, presenting. I watch as that which emerges from me, emerges from you, from me, from you, from us—coming as it was and as it wasn't—towards and then flying from, flying towards, escaping at the full velocity of life as itself, lost in the make of work and work of make. Break it, and catch from there. I find that there is

a stage where we find ourselves. Present, presented, presenting.

What is meant by the work, the task of enjoining the present to itself? Present, presented, presenting. Present, presented, presenting. **What stops at the edge of the world and becomes indelible? Becomes as you, pushed up against the center of the world and turning with it.** I orient myself towards what you took to be north, but was actually just what you told me was north.

I hold myself to the center of the world and look out beyond the edge of the world to find you. The cold edge of the brick, painted, pushes into you just below the shoulder blade. You are eight thousand meters tall, staring down at me like I have forgotten myself.

You made me a language that spoke only enough to me to say that you made me a language to speak. **That the world can be imagined as a set of figures which speak to and against each other, that you've set these figures, that you held me within this circulation and offered to keep me there, caught in it.**

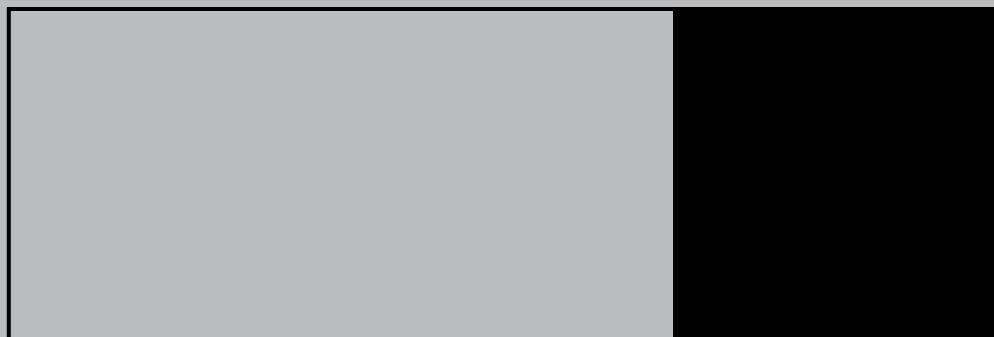
What builds the world and holds this space? You spoke only of yourself, and when asked to speak said nothing. The whole world fell at your feet, not out of supplication but because you insisted that world began at your feet and extended equally in every direction. I resented that you could see me wherever I walked.

I knew the world before you and they knew the world before me, **the heavy thing holding it down fell from a great height and broke the world as it broke me.** I saw the world and the world says to itself that it is unfolding.

She broke the world into four pieces, and holding them together made a bridge. It failed, and soon we forgot because you would not stop screaming about your world. I tried to listen. She pushed up against me, and I could feel the break. Into four parts,

“...that Song of Songs is considered **holy**[lit., renders the hands of one who touches such a scroll impure] for, the whole world was never so meritorious as on the day that Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the Scriptures are holy, but Song of Songs is the holiest of the holy...”

“Where God is Not: The Book of Esther and Song of Songs.” (1995)
David R. Blumenthal



to reassemble this was enough. The breaks, the pause. I felt you close to me, but I waited for her embrace.

The room is filled with us, the ever looser fragments and fractures of steam lapped from our skin and into the air that moves from window to door. There is nothing that art offers, I think to myself. I lie naked, you like naked. I hold you, you hold me. When we make art, we think of who might see it. You throw back your head, and the skin adds up to keep your looking up and beyond the edge of what we've held between us. **We hold that the art might be viewed beyond that circuit of those who will be able to see it.**

Taste what unfolds between as that mistaken unfolding.

I rest in the corner of your thigh, and feel the warmest places of you as you've pulled me up so my chin grazes your stomach. I hope that you can see me for myself, just as I hope that my work will be seen as itself, and in its bonds of relation and difference which hold it to this world and against itself, a reflection of what could be, of what was, what will be.

Here the unholy condition would be that of merely art, merely inspired literature. The question here is: what qualifies a work such that it exceeds one condition and enters another?

What can we not touch for fear that it's too much, that it is beyond us. Outside the bounds of any canon (or maybe deep in it), art sits with its own bounds, its own edge or limit—when or why something is Art makes it also this sort of untraversed, beyond—**leaving us needing to attend to our own condition when we encounter it. In this sense, for each of us, either alone or in community**—there are many things that are like artworks, either in form or process, but do not achieve the same exceptional status. These categories are social codes that transform the object, the activity, the condition.

I can't imagine the world without its center, I looked at you in the eyes as I said it, forgetting (for a moment) how stupid I would sound to even say this. **There is no center to this world. The consequences of actions are felt, there is no beginning or end—no telos.**

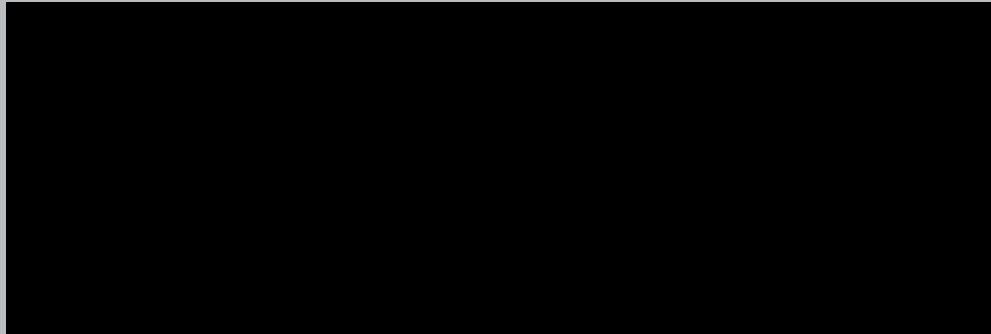
And I lay like a web, a vast trace of connections, moving from and for and with and in and without the network. La red, the gridiron map, the hard bound of the ties which would hold this place with that. **And I lay before you, that there is a stage where we find ourselves preset: present, presented, presenting.** I can't imagine the edge, or rather, the distance that traces the limit of this. **I meet you at the center of the world and see this boundary as the ultimate, a real edge, a real falling off.** At the end of the road, if you walk for just about an hour.

I can't imagine the edge, or rather, why do you keep calling this the center of the world. I looked for you, for like an hour, and I thought that I saw myself but really I saw nothing, and was mistaken for you again and again.

I can't imagine the end or the edge of the world. Rather, the world extends in all directions, in all directions, so endlessly so, so rigidly so that the center is left as a fluid concern. **Wherever I find you is the center of the world, a mistake, a move, a figure, a gesture. I can't help but think that the center of the world is a tragedy, a concern, a loss, a wonder, a fall, a take, a move, a gain.**

Most often what cannot be viewed are those warm networks of kinship or attention which ground the conditions of making something. When I speak of art, it is alive in this range between object and activity, glimmering in and out of the condition of being beyond this. Drawing ever closer to that, whatever that might be. **It is important to note that whatever that is it is also merely these: object, condition, activity.** There is a line, there are things which sit in the world as art, but

“The difference between genocide and Genocide is at the level of abstraction. **Abstraction not necessarily as outright denial, but as a distancing.** There are no people in many of these disciplinary debates, no stakes beyond argument.”



“Against Genocide: Introduction”
The Funambulist (#37, 2021),
Zoé Samudzi, p. 18

this doesn't make them more or less than anything else. But it is in their potential threeness, between activity, condition and object that I think artworks, as a category of being, might emerge.

There is no center of the world. **This is the world, and it is only here, when you lean back against it and look up so I can see your neck move when you speak and say that this is the center of the world that it becomes the center of the world.** When you lean forward to look at me through your glasses: it is just the world again, the center having been already forgotten. The distinction between the center and the margin being one of distribution, and produced in the wake of your speech. You lean back on the center of the world, your t-shirt lifts, at the top of your trousers I see for a moment the center of the world, and it's forgotten.

I hold you irredeemable in the center of the world, **as if fixing you to this very spot would make the world turn again, and in the turn we could again find each other and find each other in the turn, the name, the make, the find of the world itself.** I hold and held to you as my own and myself, you as yours you found. It could not be mistaken, this mistaken gaze, this look and answer.

I found the mistake, the center is itself a **forgetting**. Forgotten, forged make of a **turn against**. I hold you irredeemable, unmade, left out, to the center of the world left wanting for that this makes with it an end, undone, undoing, messed, forgotten. For you this is just a stage, just another act in the lines of thought that held you at the center. I held you at the center. This is not a stage, it is the site of transformation. It is the site of transformation, it is the edge, it is the end, it is the beginning. It is nothing. In a vast hall, the stage. In a field, the stage; at the edge of the city, a stage.

Stood you on the stage (go on and say something). Stood you there to speak. Stood you there. Stood you on the stage and to speak you found the words. I held

myself at the center of the world, not so much that I would myself be the center but at the center, with you and..., we could hold the world to turn again. And in the turn find you and find me and find them and find the other. The make of the world. The heavy language, the world which falls to the center.

The small pieces fall down and the larger work their way up. The make of the world and you in it. The center held the finest things in life, those moments of comfort and leisure that slip away. The language of work, and the breaking down of working. I held you close and began to cry. Why could you not love me more than you and yourself? **Present, presented, presenting.**

The make of the world—the turn of the world, the center and the edge both margins of the bulk of it all. What could you forget but the forgetting itself. **A thousand years passed and I found your breast again?** This time heavy with these mistakes you described, but how could you not forget me, my face slipped into the turn of the world. An endless blur, a trace. a myth or a forgetting. **Present, presented, presenting.** The turn of the world and the make of the turn. Is it as you at the center? You pushed on those flat places where the thigh meets the hip. Held me by my legs, not to hold me up or hold me down or hold me back, but just to hold. I pushed you against the center of the world, so that as I turned on you and held you within myself, the world might turn again. You held the back of my head as the world turned. The make of the world, our forgetting, our turn back.

The stack came apart. You built a structure which stands only on an agreement within itself. This is what cannot be taken in, you cannot hold me close and expect me to take of the same part. We, or rather, you depend on this holding together. We cannot be held in the embrace the depends on our own embrace to maintain it.

The touch of becoming more than or less than or just the push of your body against another and into another thing, the missing,

“Objects are always looser than they appear. Objectness is only a semblance, a seeming, a projection effect of interest in a thing we are trying to stabilize. Thus, I am redefining ‘structure’ here as that which organizes transformation and ‘infrastructure’ as that which binds us to the world in movement and keeps the world practically bound to itself;”

“The commons: Infrastructures for troubling times” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (2016), Lauren Berlant, p. 394

the absence, the perpetuation of a gesture. **The heavy statue that stood on the site before, and the site that it is empty now.** The heavy chain hit the ground, and before here stood another.

This was all that it was. It hurts to know that you will so soon forget that I was held by you. It feels good to know that you will never again partake of this. When you held me up as this mistaken move, and forgot and forget again. To know that you are handling that which “renders the hands of one who touches... impure” is a categorical tool meant to **1) hold you from touching the thing itself, 2) hold you from casually moving from the activity of handling to the rest of life, and 3) hold the thing itself as outside the rest of life.** The impurity of the toucher, rendered unprepared for the rest of life, or rendered such that they require a moment of preparation for life—a break from the ordinary, profane. **For as much as not touching the scroll demands a respect for the scroll, it also demands a respect for everyday life—it is not that touching the scroll makes you too good for life, rather it diminishes your readiness for either condition: holy or unholy.**

Nothing is fully caught, captured, reflected, or found between the three. Fuck a category. Locate a scene. The line bends and becomes an uncertain circle. **Weakly circumambulating a potential space of meaning: a scene.** A condition, an object, an activity. And again. Speaking of anyone, and the feeling of meaning missing becomes apparent. We are at a bar in an arcade, the space outside has been renovated but the interior has not, save an awkward A/C unit. **Locate a scene, an uncertain circle which cannot hold. The line between is loosely dashed, the breaks let you see the meaning. The space outside is renovated, but the interior is transparent.**

The present, presented, presenting, the turn of the work, the make of the world. The hold, the pass, the move, the slip. I made or make or made it again. Last year, I saw you from a distance, and you held yourself

apart. Last week I saw you even farther, but you were among the conditions of being invited.

The scene, the cast, the space, the fall, the break. **The slip between holding you and holding you close and holding you tight and making you fall beyond even the edge of myself. Last year I saw you from a distance, it felt like I could forget everything in that moment.** I thought that you could hold me closer then, so that I could feel each finger and make myself compliant. I fell forward into your embrace. As then and as before I saw you from a distance. I thought I could make out the outlines of your being, the edge of yourself and the edge of myself marked by the vast space between, the slow bombardment of a breather, pushing the space between closer and then releasing—the pressure building and then fading.

I thought I could make you out, and then I found the outline—the firm edge which marked what was of you and was without you. I thought long about this—the edge, the mix, the middle, the mix, the middle, the edge, the mix, the mix, the mix, the middle and then the edge again. **I think that thinking you through this, that seeing you from a distance meant that there was nothing and nothing again nothing and nothing again there was only the distance.**

What crosses the loosely dashed line, “binds the world in movement” and “renders the hand...impure”? Loose objectness, blending down the lines, ensnaring activity or perhaps becoming it. All this merely “a projection effect of interest in a thing we are trying to stabilize”, perhaps we cannot speak of this because there is nothing. An activity, a condition, or an object which engenders transformation, what holds you to this world—reminds you of the imperative to be in this realm with us. You can touch the scroll, it is not forbidden, it renders you impure—not because it is better than you, but because the activity of being in the world is a grave responsibility. **Say something of the substance that extends this into and beyond that of which I cannot speak?**

Kept for you to make a trace of this encounter. I hope we made most of what keeps coming undone—**like bricks taken apart**, not a question of what is destroyed but what could not have been.

Missing.



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