

Apoptosis in White

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On the future of aesthetics



A butoh-fu in memory of Hijikata Tatsumi

APOPTOSIS IN WHITE

by **Fulya Peker**

Year 1945... Japan... White death... Bodies were ruptured by political turmoil, scattered into neutrons... It was easier to consume the flesh, that way... Limbs were surrendered unconditionally while the small hands of toddlers were devouring the void in the rice fields of Tohoku... The continuity of the human life *spin* was disjointed a while ago... Blood was frozen in the cracking dry veins of an endless fall... There was no past, no future, but the stains of memories were spread on a crumpled present... It was all quiet, deadly still... Except the sound of the fog... That was dissolving towards the mountains... An urge named Butoh was born under the grounds of Japan to die over and over again, as a profound example for surviving off balanced and incomplete, embracing the transience of nature, striving not to hold onto a long since constructed next decade, but a lost yesterday's unborn tomorrow. Butoh as a poetic performing art was not foreign to transgressive aesthetics of discontinuity—a barren phallus can still be erected in nature and give birth to the memories of a silent Acephale. A dead body, naked and boneless, standing desperately upright gently held its own mask in its hands and looked behind it. In search of his death, in search of all that has died, he exited the world through a torn embryo and began to rediscover his neutral form in nature. His membrane was a transparent atmosphere retained by his own inner gravity. Who knows how many times the womb of nature was en-graved, how many times he has been aborted ... Every memory that shaped his body from within made visible marks on his skin. His body became time and space. He took a step forward, always dancing in, on, at, with, from, of the earth... While carrying death within his body, in every vein, in every gesture, gently and fluently, he laughed. The sublime was not where he was comfortable, but where he was con-front-able. When the will to perfect, to power, to complete the uncompleted nature of existence hidden in the dry marrow of our narrow paths and in the fading bones of our bodies is digested as the will to create, the sublime finds a form to stimulate itself. Grown under a culture that embraces the beauty of imperfection, he was confronted with the impermanent, unsatisfactory, uncompleted existence. He trembled with a sense of longing. This moment of longing reminded him of the void within, i.e., the body without organs. *It is not you that moves your body; it is your body that moves you.* Body was his “self,” not a mere vehicle that carried the gas form of his existence, i.e., his soul. The

skeleton of his subjective history was attached to the axis of the world; he was resisting against but revolving with that decomposer. Starvation of his white flesh revived gradually the façade of his architecture... He took a small step forward, sliding his feet above the shattered earth—he stopped... Another step forward... He was in the abyss... The nausea of his off balanced nature caused by the void between his legs made him confront the fragility of his holy erection... Apocalypse is nothing more than an orgasm... With every gesture he re-shaped his landscape. The stillness of his bones was cutting off the wind, and the mud that he was supposed to be sculpted with was producing a smacking sound in silence. His body learned to respond to things; his body *became* things; his body transformed *into* things and no-things. The subtlest movement in his fingertips could have deafened his eyes. He was knotting each joint to one another, one by one, patiently... The precision of catastrophe came alive in his body: he was a silenced animal, growling within... To become something, he had to learn to become nothing... The skin of his palms was anchored to his bones... All his fingers were moving towards his solar plexus... With the archeological dance of his dead body, or his body yet to born, he reached out, all white, and death was glowing in the stillness of his memories... A man named Tatsumi Hijikata died under the grounds of Japan to be born over and over again...

He has no strength to endure nothingness, yet still he has to stay alive.

Suddenly the sky shatters above his head.

Clouds are wrapped around his body.

Every time he blinks the mountains melt down.

He is a mountain melting down.

It is dusty.

He is thirsty.

A serpent approaches towards his belly.

To smash the serpent's head,

He grabs his heart.

His heart is a **stone**.

Stone is a burning coal.

Some of the cells in his right hand begin to die.

But his left hand is a flower blossoming.

He gets nauseous.
He throws up mud.
He is drowning in the **mud**.
His hand is not burning anymore.
It gets colder and colder.
Mud is frozen.
It is dark, and it is cold.
It is cold.
The mud cracks.
His cast is lying there shaping the **earth**.
He plants seeds on it.
He rains on it.
He waits.
His cast grows into a tree.
He cuts his own bark.
He collapses.
Yet he is still engraving his story in white.
Can you see it?
It is all white now.
He is white.
Moon like white...
Glowing quietly...
He is reflected and transmitted,
He contains life and death,
He is all and none at once.
Yet, he is still visible to some eyes...
He finds an embryo next to the broken branches.
"Be patient" he says.

His voice echoes in the womb.
He is the embryo.
Is there an exit?
He begins to peel his membrane off of the sacrificial identities he owned.
He begins from his finger tips.
There is a door opening in his forehead.
He removes his skull from his body.
His face becomes transparent.
He looks into his brain, his own geography.
He walks through the door.
He is in his brain.
He climbs at the curves.
He walks down his own spine.
He tastes his organs.
His breath smells like the cold air of existence.
He exhales the rotten nothingness.
Suddenly his spine crumbles.
He stands up from his ashes.
He drags his flesh into darkness.
A butterfly flew towards his stomach.
He holds it.
He bites its wings.
His wings defoliate...
The blood is oozing out of the bulging veins of his naked body.
He is wet.
He is **red...**
His redness affirms that he was once alive.
He is the blood.

How long can red last?

He is in search of his own gaze.

His raw memories hang upside down behind his left retina.

He is behind his retina.

He is in his own darkness.

Rain stops.

He is evaporating.

He is in the air.

You inhale...

You are in his white darkness...