

Maze of Sound

by stephen hastings-king

A is far away. Beneath the crosshatch gazes of the satellites and above the maze of sound, seahorse clouds exhale a glaucoma haze before they are absorbed into surveillance footage. The haze rolls along the curvature of the yellow-green plane on which he is standing.

At the horizon the sky is in piles.

A thinks: It's like my skin. I am getting older.

A is far away. He stands on a yellow-green plane among strange muffin-shaped plants. They are concentric rings that seem to issue from an apex. The rings leak slowly downward, expanding as they travel. He imagines that the circles continue moving underground, growing smaller by degrees until they are absorbed into a second apex and sent back up through the system. They are objects and modalities. They are their own diagrams.

A is looking around.

He thinks: The fragmentation of imperial power seems very far from here. The picture world does not recede behind imperfections that impose themselves between me and the elements in the space that I organize.

From where I am, I still project space and position. I divide the world into here and not-here.

I am a mobile present. I divide time into past and future. I map this onto space: the future is in front of me: the past is behind.

Maybe the fragmentation of power is a net that disappears as it falls.

Maybe it is a parameter that is invisible simply because parameters do not appear within the systems they shape.

Or maybe it is a pressure, imperceptible but continuous, that accelerates the movements of everyday life and reveals itself through distortions. But distortions relative to what? I move with them.

A's attention wanders back into the maze of sound. Trajectories made from rattle and buzz and birdsong tumble and dissipate, some near, some far.

He is the mobile center of a silence. The maze is everywhere he is not. It is real but he cannot see it.

