

No Nows Now

by strannikov

“Now” and “today” may yet fail to arrive on time one fine day: did you notice yesterday afternoon how for an entire quarter hour five o'clock itself looked for a few minutes as if it would never arrive? Not just that it would be late showing up, but that it just would never arrive at all?

If a quarter of an hour or an hour or an entire day should fail to arrive on time or at all, just think what trouble that could mean! “Today” itself could arrive late one morning, too late to be of any practical use for the rest of the day, could simply fail to show up at all—and then where would we be! Would that be so bad? I wonder: I think we can't dare predict, in fact: after all, it could preserve us all from being trapped in the amber of the future.

See this spider? Trapped in amber for millions of years, they say: if this spider had only hesitated, it might have died long ago anyway, but would it have been trapped in amber for millions of years, long enough for us to find it to gawk at it, to smash it to bits? Isn't it dead anyway?

At the counter next door:

“No, we're all out of nows.”

“None at all? Not even a couple?”

“No, sorry, all out.”

“Well, how about a yesterday or two?”

“No, sold out last week.”

“No nexts?”

“None, not before the end of this week, probably the week after, at the earliest.”

“Well, look, what're we supposed to do until then? Wander around in this hour for the next week or two, waiting for a shipment to arrive? What's happened to the present, what's happened to all of our nows?”

"They stopped showing up this morning, the night shift unpacked the last batch at six a. m., they were all gone just after we opened at eight."

"So we're stuck standing in an hour already hours old, and nothing's happening, and what's been happening for hours, which is nothing, only continues to occur. —But nothing's happening!"

"That's about it, yep."

"But this is so—so . . . but nothing's happening!"

"Well, be patient, even time takes time."

"But without nows, we can't even listen to music!"

"Well, but can you hear music even without the past?"

"Even the air's getting thick now, I see things floating in the air, hovering, hanging in one place, even when you swat them!"

"They are standing still . . ."

"Something just has to happen!"

"No, sorry, we're all out of nows."

"I can't even light a cigarette!"

"Do you think you'll live longer?"

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