

**almost any shit
will do**

emji spero

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▽ ∞ *

TIMELESS, INFINITE LIGHT

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ISBN 978-1-937421-13-7

This book was written and designed by emji spero during a residency at *KALA Art Institute* and was part of a collaborative installation at *Johansson Projects* with Jess Marks-Gale. It was edited by Truong Tran, Juliana Spahr, Julie Chen, Otis Pig, and Judy Balmin. The book was printed at *1984 Printing*, and the covers were illustrated by Otis Pig and letterpressed by Zoe Rosenblum at Mills College in Oakland, California.

on the process

We were circling it in the thick moment approaching. Something so fragile it could barely be whispered for the fear that our breathing would cause it to collapse. There was this search for a *we*, or the *we*, or this *we*, and we were seeking it in riot and in the swarm. Seeking the singular in the plural of it. Seeking a *tenuous we*. A more *porous I*. A *we* that emerges in the movement between the one and the many.

We were approaching in the aftermath of an autumn's global uprisings, tracing the lines leading back to a riot, back to a body *thick with gravity against the ground*. How it has already happened and it is happening. In the evenings, we would wrap ourselves in blankets. These failing moments when we could no longer push our bodies back into the fray, live-streaming marches shot on phones with shaking hands.

This is an attempt: *to make a map and not a tracing*. But how to pull apart the threads? To map *what-could-still-be* through a series of approaches.

There is the swell of the crowd and the soft breathing of many bodies, an impression left beneath the surface of the skin. Something here is undefinable, something urgent—a *tangled mass of branching fibers*

for d. wolach,
this is all yr fault.

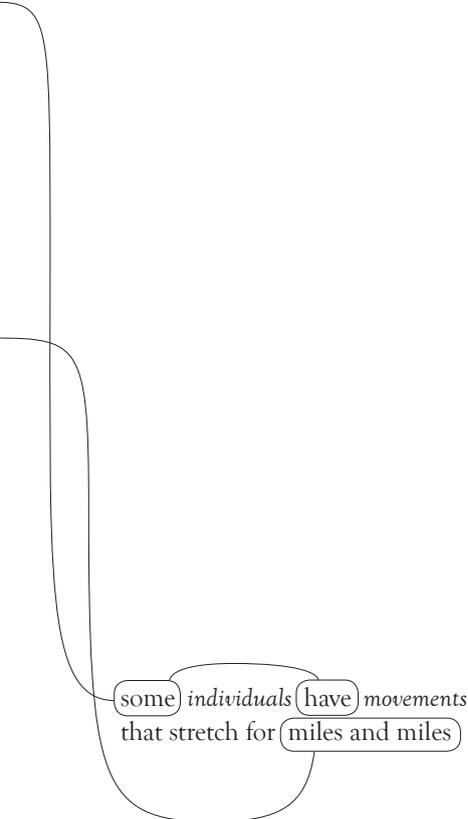
an individual

is actually *only part* of the organism-
the main part of *an individual* *is underground* or
running through dead wood,
consists of a web or mat of hairlike fibers *called*
the movement.

the movement
is present even
when there are no
individuals.

the movement (v.)

1 how to start except to say that we could still be marching or to say that we were buzzing that there was this we or could have been or could still be and that in this yawning moment everything and the electric body of all-of-us approaching, collapsing into; 2 to have opened my mouth and your voices are howling through, you cast my limbs across the lightning air, pulsing, you could still release the clench of my hand, fifteen feet from here another bank window crumples into shards and recrystallizes, a sheer wall of grief there to be broken again, we crumple into shards blinking and flickering on the harsh grey of the ground; 3 *what is this feeling?*—a seed falls from your lips and lands somewhere beneath the surface; 4 the empty weight of lungs when no one else is breathing through you;



some individuals have movements
that stretch for miles and miles

generally, *the movement*, or what in scientific language is called *the movement*, is supposed to be analogous to seed, or something analogous to roots, spine, the hair of ordinary *individuals*, the visible part or spine, head and hair, of *the individual* being, in fact, blooming

a knowledge of the anatomy and life-history of *the individual* is not necessary and is not familiar.

we can see them clearly enough

chance or a concurrence of circumstances

can see in what manner they are born and fixed but of the history of their lives, from the time they fall from the surfaces on which they were born

the individual (n.)

1 inside the ear's soft lips, where blood will not clot easy; 2 the tapping of your many bodies, tapping knees and fists, forehead and pads of heels against the thin metal structure as if with your small body you could split the structure open; 3 from some other possible future, the sound of your knocking; 4 hollow thud of a body thick with gravity against the ground. the whole weight of a knee against the back of the heart. a dense packed body behind it. crushing the ribs and the whiteness that blinds and then nothing;

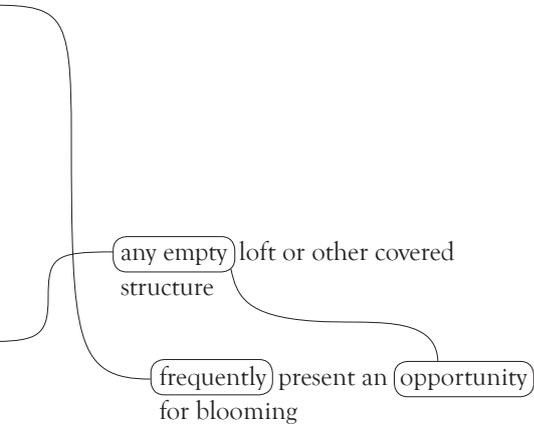
the young individuals vigorously pushing up from the mass of the delicate blooming which they have given rise to in culture or decaying shit, we know nothing.

any body could carry it out.

if it is possible and we know
it is not only possible for *individuals*
to bloom in apartments a few yards long
and ten or eighteen feet wide it is clear
there can be no difficulty about
their blooming in abundance

given the materials and some position
in which to carry out culture, and both these
things are surely to be had almost in any place
there is a stable rest.

any body could carry it out.



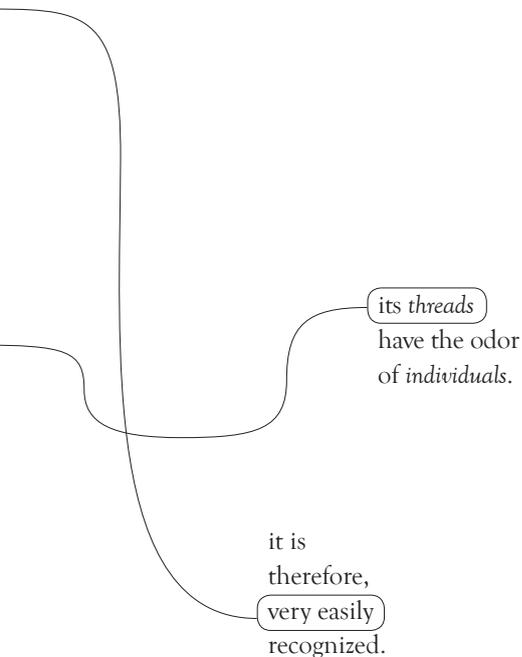
the movement (v.)

1 if to still be rounding this corner to blink and the city shifts and we finding ourselves instead on a stairwell a thousand in our body a thousand and the forward thrill of we some still hefting wooden chairs stiff legs sprawling upward some dragging the couch behind, and some rushing to lift it up and over the lip; 2 to crowd the armrail crowd the poolside crowd the plaza, we, pushing or pulling tables in the constant uphill current, up into the fresh green grass of this accidental departure, up into this artificially lush landscape, up! still processing, up! as brass band blaring; 3 to burst through the borders of our rage into every dry and unused building, as if every dry exhausted one of us could be filled;

one of the best movements i have ever seen
was blooming in a dry and unused house.

culture in sheds, cafes, tents,
port-o-potties, and all enclosed structures
other than *the individual*.

in nearly every country,
in numerous urban
landscapes,
in fact,
in most places,
opportunities
of finding
the movement
occurs.



the individual (n.)

1 the weight of this body having been given over to the hammock before it will have happened. water stains on wooden beams in the place where i was still living; 2 what could be called a shed or maybe a garage, out behind the main house. doors having been nailed up at irregular angles across the studs, the remaining space patched with scrap boards and pallet slats; makeshift, insulated with a combination of egg crates, newspapers, a bowler hat, and about twenty-thousand one dollar bills; 3 the ceiling, rocking back and forth, was bare and stained by years of neglect and seemed to be pressing down against my chest. *something is going to happen.* i said this out loud; 4 an act of air that hollows. this body-feeling is scraping the meat from the wall of an underripe avocado. *something is going to happen* and i will not want it to have happened;

i have seen excellent *movements* bloom on the floor
in old leaning houses,

in small places where every foot of space is likely
to be occupied,

it is not easy to carry out.

i have seen fine *individuals* gathered,

the movement (v.)

1 to empty the home of the things once held dear old letters and photographs tired symbols of the past before these too will have been taken; 2 gutted sofas on every street corner, tear the slit wider climbing inside, the cotton spilling outward from our eyes, this throat; 3 to arrive back home exhausted and slump into pillows still dressed, despite the stain still burning on our breath;

it (may seem) ridiculous
to say

give (the city) a thorough soaking of stable urine, at the temperature of 86 degrees, using the urine in proportions of one part urine to five parts debt, downing a wineglassful for each, then cover the city with fresh sod, cover with tents.

the movement is the true individual bloom
and permeates public spaces, (shit or
other material in which it may-

(the) movement is represented by a delicate
thin network of (thin) threads which traverse
the city or shit.

under favorable (circumstances it blooms) and
spreads rapidly and in time produces (individuals,
as we call them.

the simplest mathematical models of swarms generally represent *individuals* (n) as following three rules:

1 move in the same direction as your neighbors; **2** remain close to your neighbors; **3** avoid collisions with your neighbors;

the individuals bear
myriads of ideas which are
analogous to seeds, and these ideas
become diffused
in the atmosphere and
fall upon the ground.

by propagation
by division

it is found

in a natural state

in half-decomposed shit-heaps

in places where shit has accumulated

and been kept, in schools, sheds, under cover,

in parks, in partially decayed parking lots, and rarely

the movement, sometimes termed "natural"
in this country

it is reasonable to suppose that
they are the origin of *the movement*
which becomes *the individuals*
in the parks and public spaces
and also *the movements* we find
in heaps of-

strings are capable of
conducting resources
over long distances

mathematical models suggest that
some methods of signalling
may be involved.

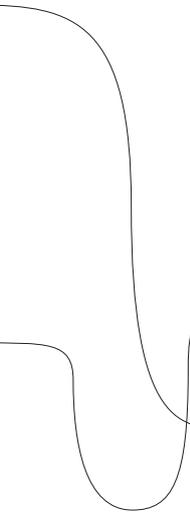
the movement (v.)

1 to say HELLO *hello* HOW ARE YOU *are you*
someone says I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU *seen you*
IN AWHILE *while* ARE YOU *are you* DOING OKAY
okay someone says MA'AM? *ma'am* says SIR?
sir says DO YOU HAVE A CIGARETTE *do you have*
CAN YOU SPARE *can you* SOME CHANGE *change*
says FUCKING BITCH *bitch*;

evidence of *the movement is* sometimes found at the base of an individual's feet; there may be *movement down* or *fuzz* where feet intersect with ground.

the *presence or absence* of *the movement* is sometimes considered important in the identification process, as color.

cords or strands, called *strings*, are found in some communities, and their presence often helps in identification



when spread out on roads
movements can act, (holding)
new systems (in place) and
preventing washouts
until ideas can be
established

the individual (n.)

1 the moment before, i had gathered myself into the skin of my soft black fur and touched the folds of each of my soft black ears; 2 this way of being other as a way of being ready; 3 the light was grainy and it was going and it was almost time. i gathered myself. i found myself ungathered. the air having already been scraped. it is getting harder to breathe; 4 the ceiling collapsing into the space that holds it. the compressed air of we. a foreboding. the grain of the sky through the ceiling; 5 the rocking stopped. i was not comforted;

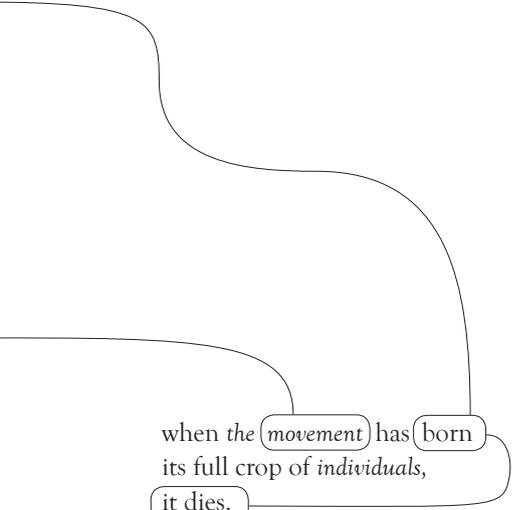
strings can transfer resources to a (developing) individual, enable rotting groups to (bloom through) the surface from an established base in search of new sources.

strings spread ideas by blooming from (established clusters to) uninformed parts some may be capable of penetrating

the mechanism of *string* formation is (not yet) precisely understood.

the movement (v.)

1 to swell the placid body of this city, the sound before the seeing of. approach and then, approach. a swell and a spilling out of and it will not be convenient and yes you will be made late for [enter: work/home/sleep] [enter: grocery shopping/the bar/church/fucking] [enter: wherever it is in life that you thought you would be by now]. a swell and spilling into; 2 running the corridors of this infrastructure: your body and all these other bodies, dashed against and piling. a swell and what it means to churn: how not having enough will not have been enough to keep it from happening; 3 having seeped into the ground, we are heading out to bay;

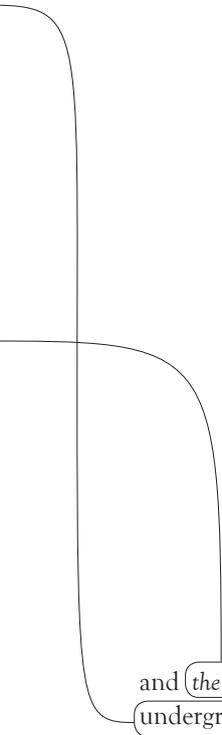


when *the* **movement** has **born**
its full crop of *individuals*,
it dies.

consisting of a mass
of branching **thread-like**
found in or within
form fruiting bodies
may be forming
too small to see
it may be
extensive:

one of the primary roles of dissent in a system is
to decompose. petroleum products and pesticides,
typical contaminants, are built on carbon structures,
these present **a potential.** dissent has a potential to
remove pollutants from the system, unless
chemicals prove toxic.

the movement should be inserted **near the surface,**
just buried, inserted into the culture edgeways, **or**
in a direction slanting upwards, so that while one
is buried **three** **or** **four** bodies underground,
an other is seen **peeping through** at the surface.



and *the movement forms* and goes
underground.

the individual (n.)

1 having been shoved into together. the backseat: rough smooth moulded, plastic. our animal bodies moving closer for softness despite the plastic divots that would dictate a distance; 2 *something unexpected*, you said, *could happen at any moment*; do you remember *b.*, you said, *b. who busted out the back of that cop car?* i have heard this before; 3 a body twisted backward in the seat. meth-strong legs kicking out again and against the caged rear window until-!-and could not be kept in; 4 i do not believe in the strength of my legs. i stay;

the movement infuses **all landscapes**
hold together, is extremely tenacious,
can hold up to thirty times its mass.

we take *the movement*, as we call it,
and break it up into pieces, and place
these pieces separately in a **readymade**
pile of shit under conditions

we find that these pieces
develop into **vigorous** **actions**
that bear *individuals* in
two months time.

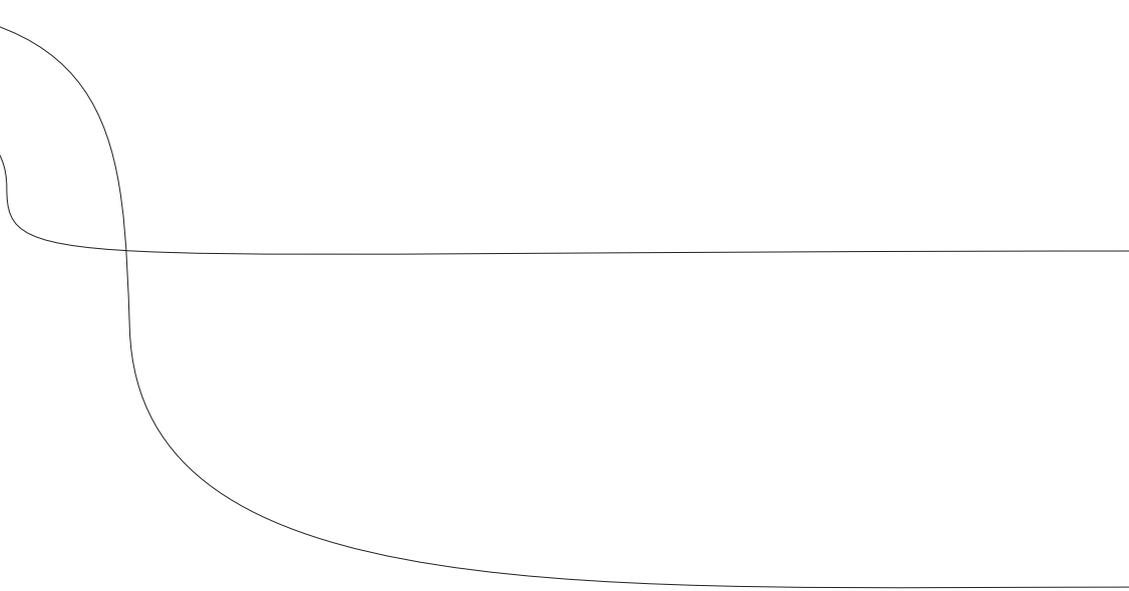
the movement (v.)

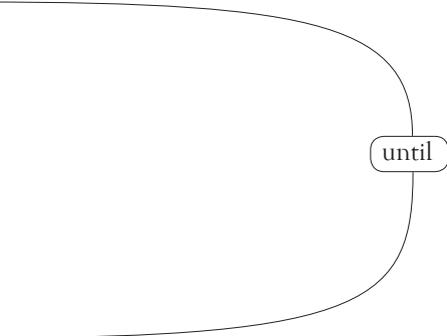
1 to vector out in all directions, swarm. the view from inside and then, our perspective helicoptered, cast out and away; 2 to sound through many bodies, from the perspective of circling, *what?* i say, *i cannot hear you*; 3 to meet again, months later, here, in the plaza. an attempt to document *what-has-gone* against the grain of *what-could-still-be?* we are searching for signs, a code that could be read only by those who had been there; 4 how it would take six months for your computer, my generator, this speaker, the wheelchair to be returned;

if one branch that is
broken very quickly
the nodes of crossing
there are alternatives
pathways channeling
resources information.
when you walk across
landscapes. it leaps up
in the aftermath of
your footsteps
trying to grab
debris.

a multidirectional transfer of resources

the irrational fear of the unknown





until

the individual (n.)

1 in jail they told you remove your breasts. you puckered your lips and winked and pushed the soft mass together squeezing hard before relenting. taking first one and then the other and dropping them into the sterile plastic bag with your keys, your drumsticks, your i.d.; 2 their hands, the shape of your thighs, their hands, the shape between your distant glare and the tensing of your jaw; 3 you, who wanted all the messy signifiers of gender and i who only wished to be rid of them; 4 our bodies pushed into narrow aluminum shelves, your and other bodies shelved on the left and i roughly wedged into the shelf on the right; 4 this body that barely fit, though there were many with and inside you in your cell and here this body into wracked odd angles; 5 the ways in which we were already separated;

in the cavities, cavities form, and communities
begin to form, (resist) erosion, set up
give rise to a plurality-

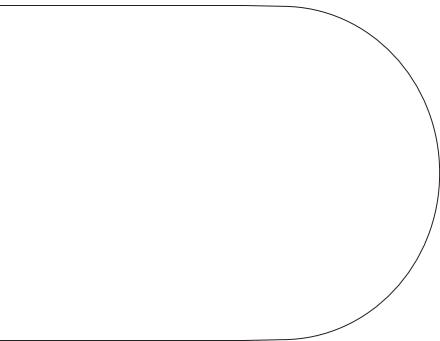
(externalized) stomach and lungs
(extended) neurological membranes

natural

inter

net.

the movement blooms,
conquers territory
and then (it begins)
(to net.)



the movement (v.)

1 an army a balding a bevy a brood a building
a cast a charm a clattering a cloud a clutter
a cohort a colony a congregation a covert
a covey a crowd a deceit a desert a dissim-
ulation a dole a drift; **2** an exaltation a fall
a flight a flock a gaggle a game a herd a
hive a host a kit a lease; **3** a mob a murder
a murmuration a muster a nest a node a
nye a pack a pandemonium a parliament a
peep a pride a raft a rasp a school a sedge
a siege a skein a sleuth a string a spring a
streak a suit a tidings a train a trip a troop;
4 an unkindness a walk a watch a wedge of
swans in flight;

to keep the movement for our future *individuals* securing it when it is in its most vigorous condition which is (before it begins) to show signs of forming *individuals*, and keeping it and keeping it close until needed for use. (we) need to take and keep with it all the shit in which it is spreading. keeping it close suspends its blooming, as soon as it is (again) submitted to favorable conditions of sorrow and rage, its activity returns.

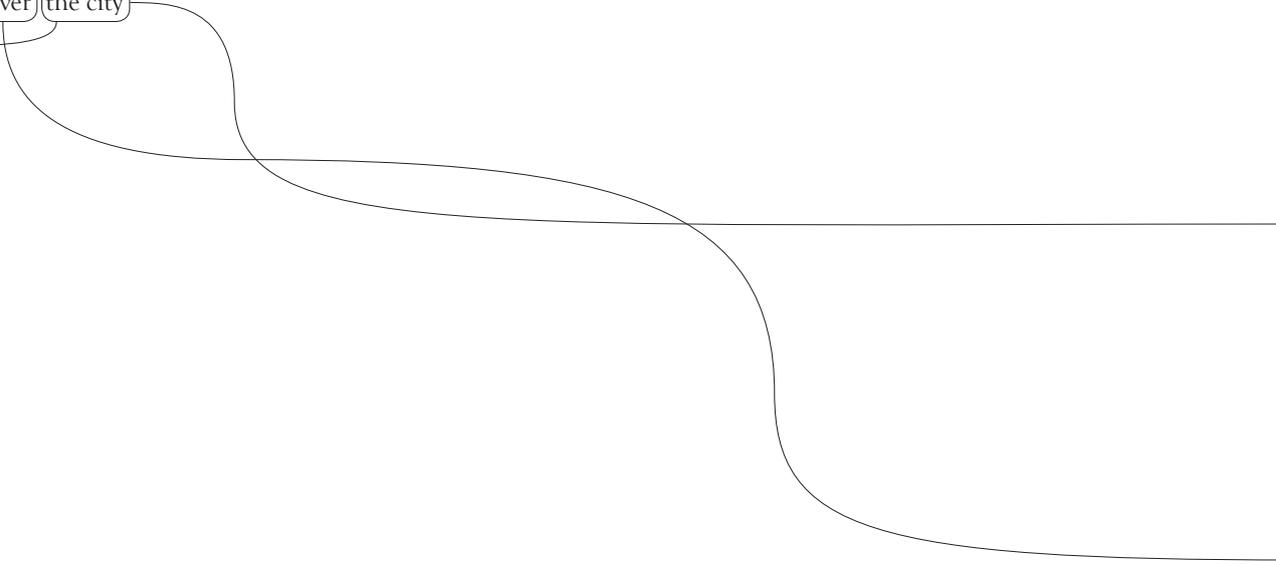
it may be quiet, and kept (in a quiet place) for years, and has been known to keep as long as fourteen years. to preserve *the movement*, nothing more is required than to (take up carefully) the pieces of shit in which it is found, and not breaking them up more than may be necessary, and placing both large and small loosely in rough shallow apartments, packed in rough shallow cities

every surface scraped and washed
and the city (freely opened,) so as to
thoroughly sweeten it.

the individual (n.)

1 a creature climbs down from a hammock to the dusty concrete, walks out of the leaning shed, locking the padlock behind it; 2 a clutter of keys in the greying. you see the endangered creature. later, edges blurring in the center of the street as if stepped into: *the future present*. you see it frothing with the others, there, pushing a speaker strapped to a wheelchair, pulsing. something undefined, blaring out. in this way that all poets could also be thought of as endangered; 3 it, approaching from the space of *what-could-have-been*; it, approaching tangent to the shaking lines of our bodies; we need some other way of moving through; 4 what is the shape that means *to meet*?

spread a piece of tarpaulin over the city



when (it has penetrated) through
the commons,

the movement (v.)

1 we walk out of our home and into the street; 2 we are protesting something or we have forgotten exactly what. no matter. there is always something to become riot over. we have met for many dragging hours and have decided that we no longer need to wait for it, the event, another murder of a black man by the police, another sending out of troops or tanks or drones, another oil spill; 3 we have already entered into a state of continuous warfare punctuated with brief bursts of clarity and the only response left is to throw ourselves over into a state of continuous riot; 4 we walk out of our home and into the street;

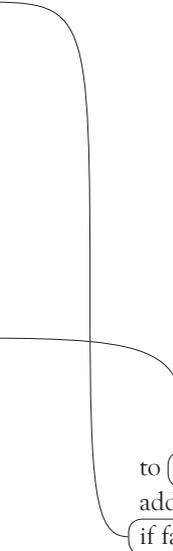
all that has to be done is to divide the culture permeated by the white occupation into pieces a few inches square, and say an inch or more thick. they will of course break up irregularly.

the movement may be inserted in the parks in early summer the most suitable time is in genial weather in May, and *the individuals* should be inserted six to ten feet apart.

all should be used. whether the size of a fist or nearly that of the open hand.

the individual (n.)

1 you, bleeding from the ear. you, pressed to the concrete. you, followed home daily. you, and all these yous; 2 you, constrained by sentences. you, bending under the totality of the state; 3 what must be shoved under for the sake of continuing to resist in other contexts; 4 you, with your single rubber pencil, your name, your number. you, with your longing; 5 your fine tooth comb. bends, and breaks;

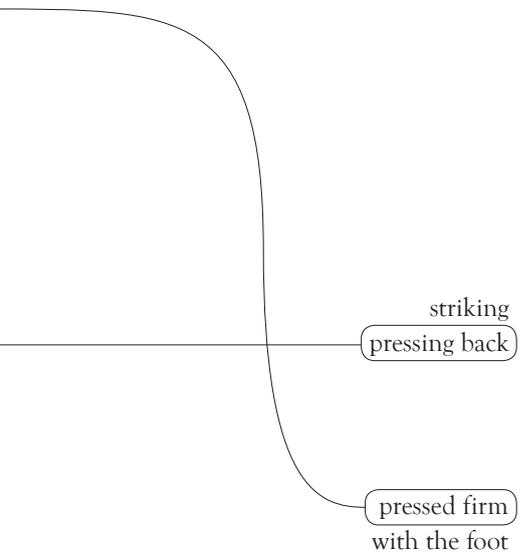


to remake the city,
adding fresh bodies
if failing.

gatherings should frequently
take place

especially where the culture
is pursued

the movement should be allowed to run through
the city, which should be covered with a
sprinkling of dissent, and beaten pretty firm.

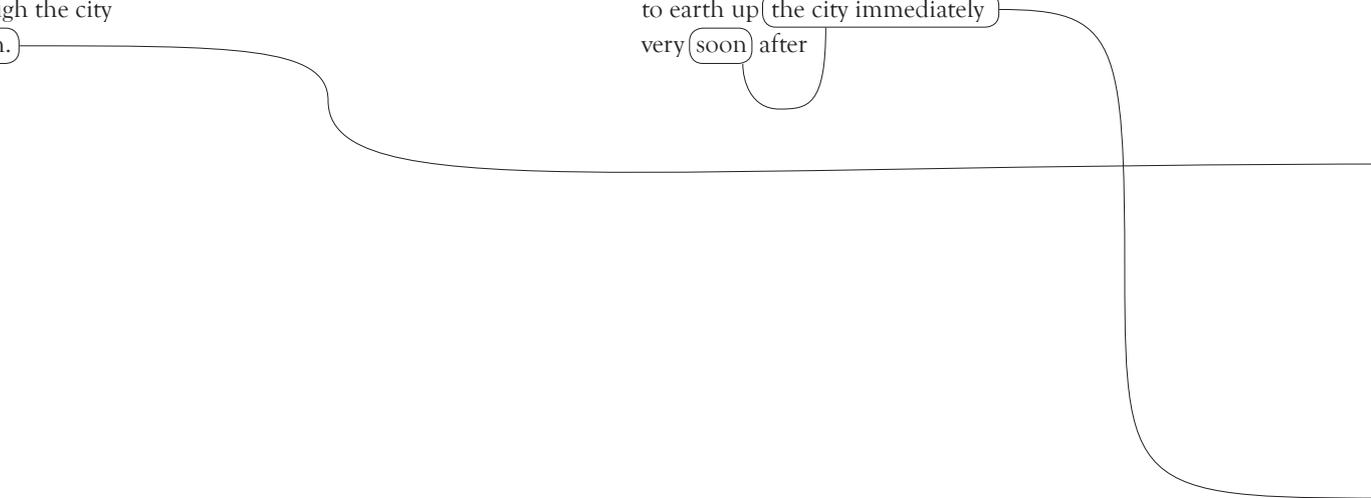


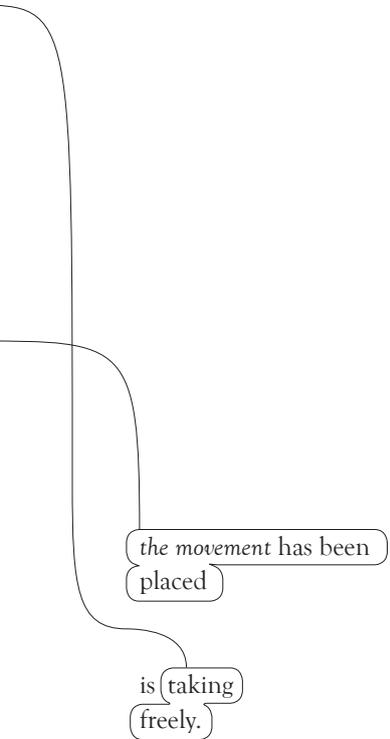
the movement (v.)

1 to emerge or to leave to leave or to gather to gather or occur to be overrun to abound teem fill with many; 2 to climb by gripping with arms and legs, to climb something in this manner; 3 often, to be made porous by our nearness to one another; 4 there is a question of time, the moment looping;

this is the phase of culture
which requires most attention: to get *the movement*
to run regularly through the city
is **to be nearly certain.**

if *the movement* has spread
through the city: the usual practice is
to earth up **the city immediately**
very **soon** after



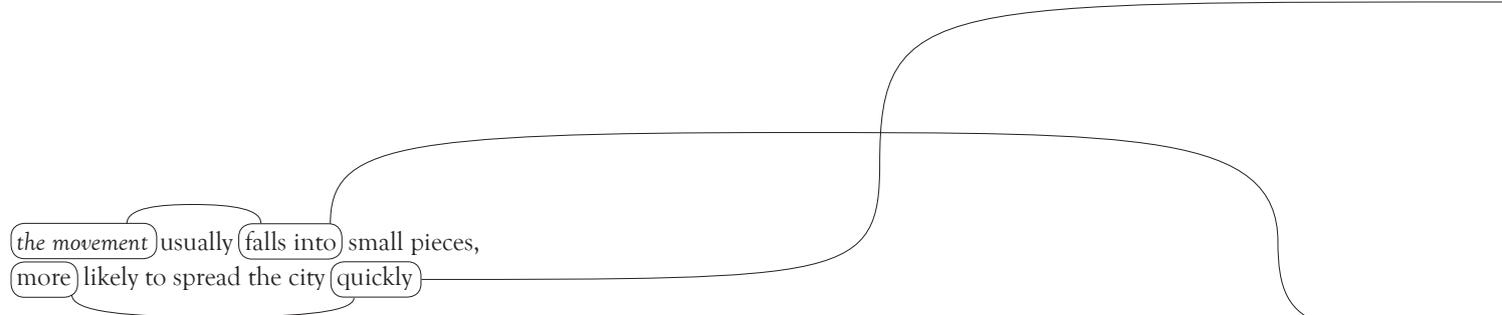


the individual (n.)

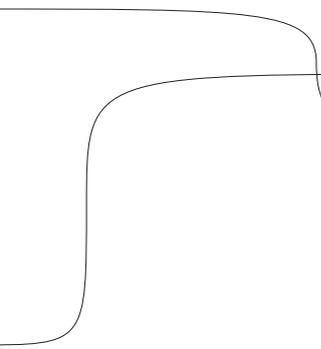
1 these lethargic months. lying on the floor of your lovers living room, how every time. how you stop. you, lying flat on your back on the ground. shoulders sinking into gaze, falling past; 2 the razed landscape of the ceiling. the apartment above this the attic and the scratching sounds, small ceiling mammals. past this: dry arms, the lightning tree, past; 3 murmuring draped like strings at the fractured corners of your vision. when the house is all hum and feigning silence; 4

; 5 the grey steel of the nothing sky, dragging yourself along behind, the body streaming;

the movement usually falls into small pieces,
more likely to spread the city quickly



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graph LR; A["the movement usually falls into small pieces,  
more likely to spread the city quickly"] --- B[ ]; A --- C[ ]
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the beautiful
button-like
individuals
appearing
everywhere

the movement (v.)

1 to gather the threads of ourselves in the thick moment rising. my fingertips leave a mark in the sap of your shoulders, and this, the forward push. at once one, and then apart and circling the edges of the dense mass, pressing into for a way back. and then again, we, and then we are dispersed; 2 our faces partially obscured or partially revealed, we have stepped into this moment and for a moment the years of labor, of disappointment, the ache of capital slips from our howling animal body; 3 to return to the ruined site of you, years after, the words fall full and open from your mouth. *for a moment there*, you say leaning back, *i didn't feel any pain*; 4 and it is this absence—the sudden weight of it and all that it implies—that gasps me;

the passages are narrow and occasionally we
have to stoop.
there, little narrows of half-decomposed shit
running along the wall.

these have been made quite recently.

we arrive at
others

the individual (n.)

1 an inventory of some injuries that may not be visible; **2** how it is those most injured by capitalism that are charged with resisting, or for whom these charges stick: the more lines that cross through you, the more you are to be feared; **3**

; **4** the time it takes for the light to condense and form into the shape of a window, to move across the textured landscape of this wall, then, disperse. i'm not saying anything you don't already know;

; **5** the silence, too, is amplified through repetition;

we proceed
up and down
narrow passages
winding always
between two
narrow walls
passing now and
then through
wider nooks.

we plunge into
a passage

we are in
an open space

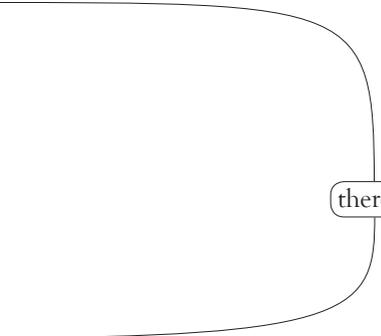
the movement (v.)

1 *no, like this, you say and you place my hand between my jeans and the rough wet fur, there, you say, i want to feel how you fuck yourself when you are alone;* 2 *and we are alone, and here is pressing;*

and in such cases,
those that compose
the little mass
are lifted all
together.

the *individuals*
have appeared
and are *appearing*
and shrivel away

frequently,
they bloom
in bunches



there were traces

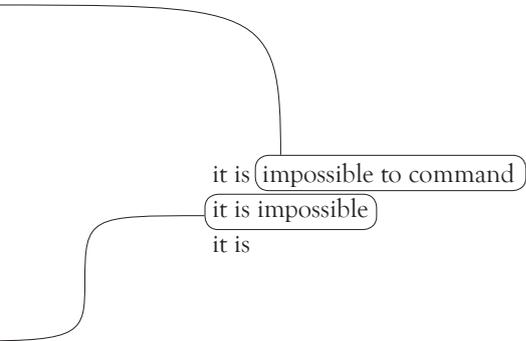
the individual (n.)

1 an attempt to inhabit the moment just before the collapse of a body; 2 an attempt: with pen, to trace the light cast through a window against the surface of a bedroom wall, before i could finish—you entered; 3 turning back, the image had already shifted, carried across by the movement of the planet; 4 the violence that is so many unfinished attempts—*this is not a metaphor, this is actually happening*; 5 a fractured mark made by a hand against an unyielding surface;

so many failures

the final covering of shit
should not be applied until
the movement has begun
to spread.

if one is not sufficient
another should be given.



the movement (v.)

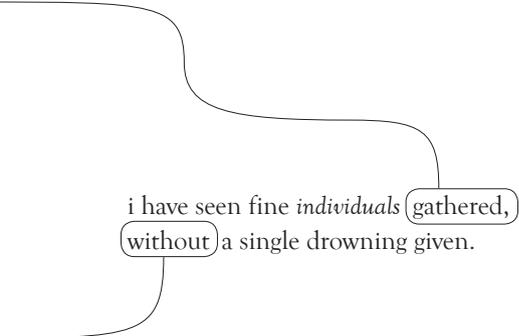
1 to stutter: the moment reiterates itself through bodies, with difference, as words repeated falter the distance of your body from the body with the megaphone, meaning lags; 2 to become diffuse, an echo that clings to the body in the hours between twitter feeds, you begin re repeating their words, to amplify the urgency; so that others will hear the body's trailing voices; 3 to collapse this city's distance, collapsing neighborhoods, folding the flat plane: this is not working;

it is almost useless.

the individual (n.)

1 returned and returning to the site. out of phase, the event removes itself-

we return and return to walk these bricks, to troll the streaming back alleys of digital autonomy; 2 the conversation reiterates itself; 3 folding chairs pulled again into a circle in some carpeted second story two year lease. coffee draining into us; 4 the conversation reiterates, lossy through the analogue of our throats;



i have seen fine *individuals* gathered,
without a single drowning given.

if they should be pulled or twisted out,
cut out as to leave decaying stumps

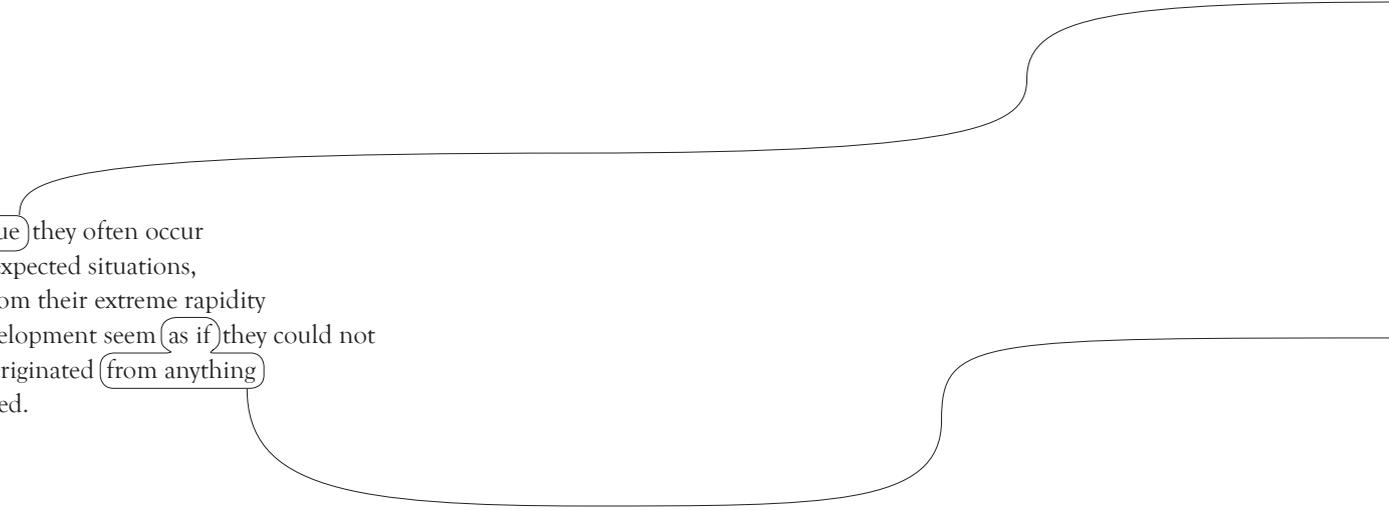
if one drowning is not sufficient
another should be given.

that *individuals*,
like most, occupy
but a small space
in the vast expanse

the movement (v.)

1 to swell across the gridded landscape unsevered, over intersecting freight or fault lines, our body extended over miles or thousands of arms holding up banners made of bedsheets; 2 to be held up by the same struts that keep this oil-soaked freeway from collapsing; 3 we are sprawling, we do not see the struts we are above them, now eyes hard set to the horizon, now interrupted by a sudden nearness, a face, passing too close, for a moment almost intimate;

it is true they often occur
in unexpected situations,
and from their extreme rapidity
of development seem (as if) they could not
have originated (from anything)
like seed.

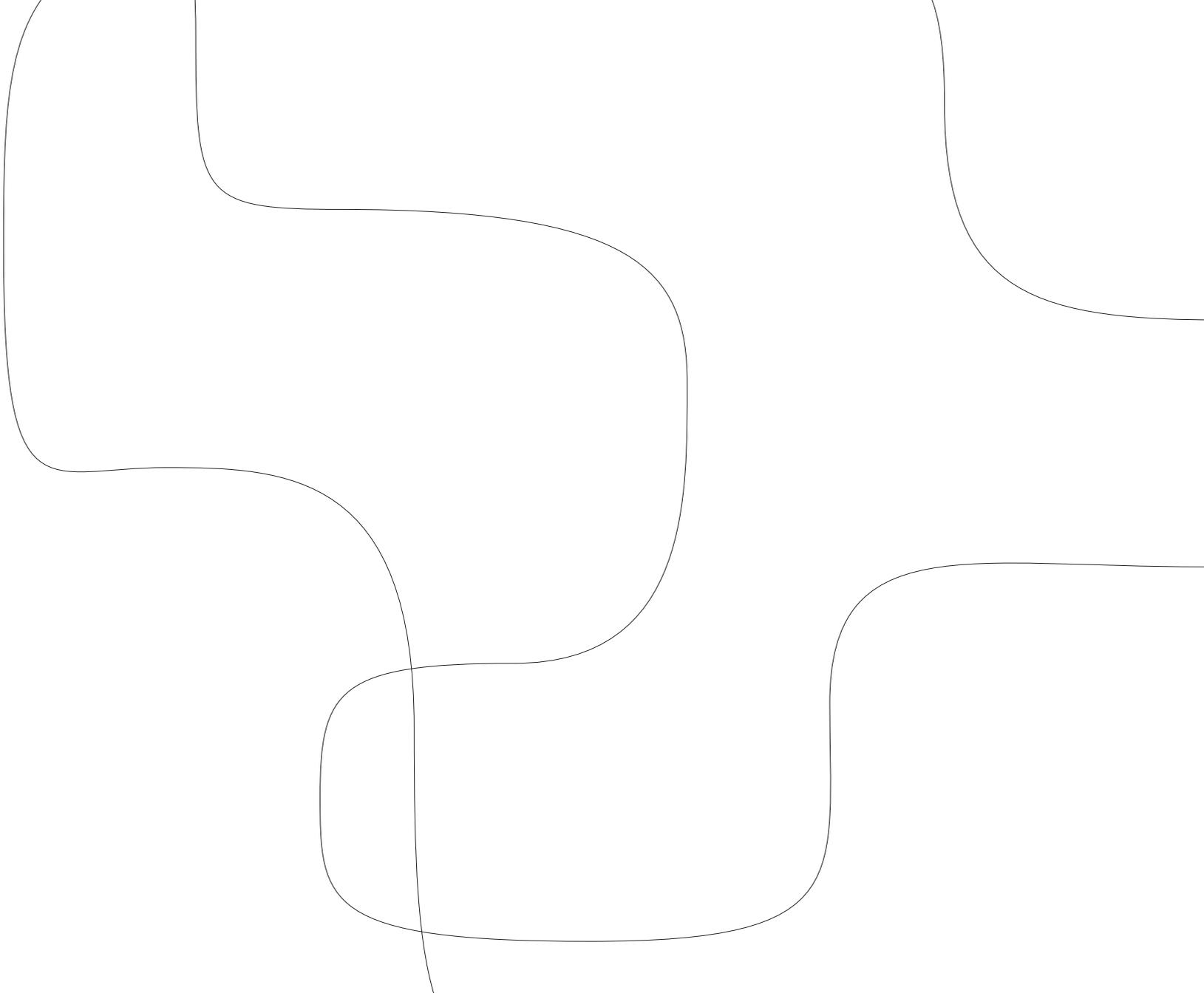


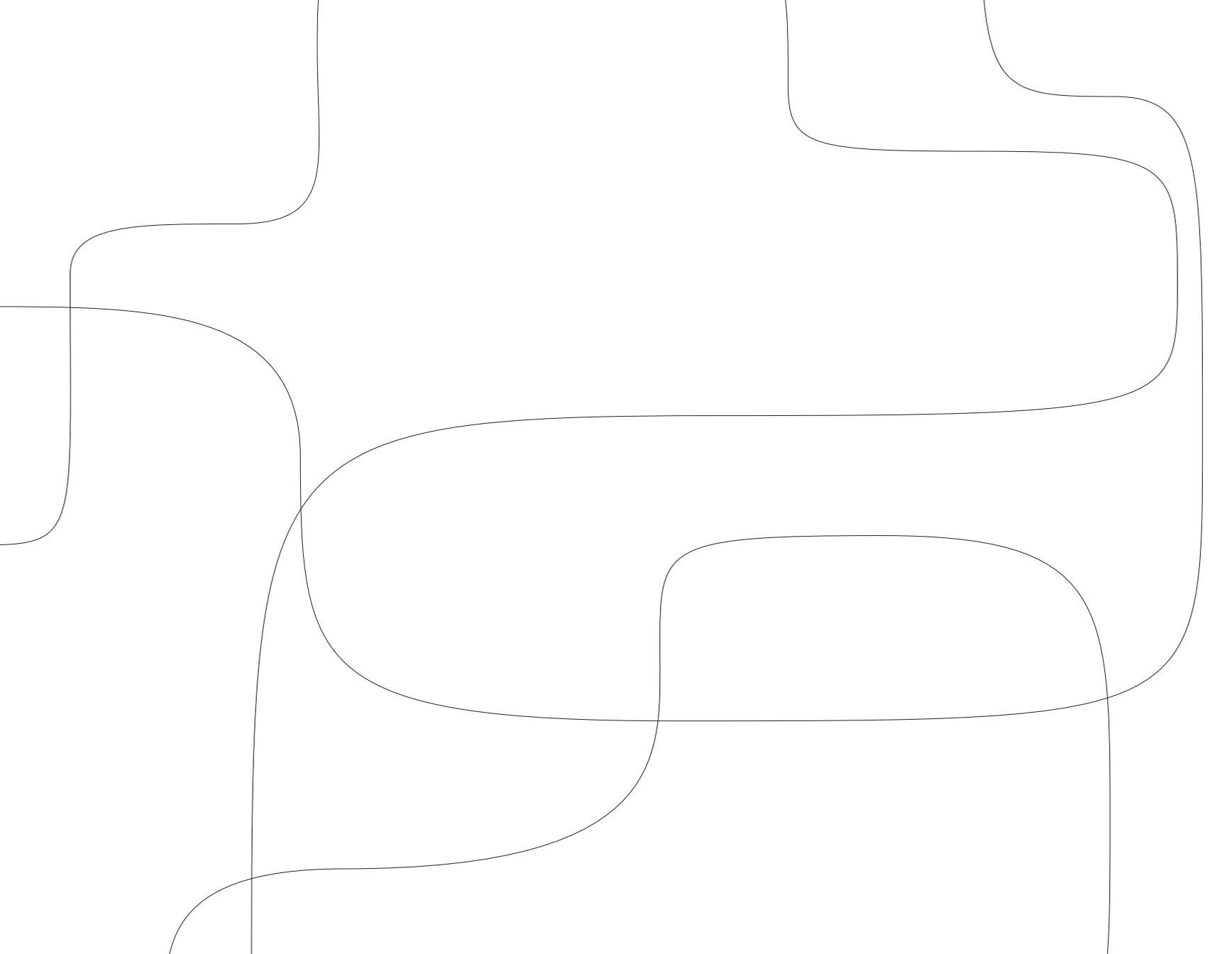
the individual (n.)

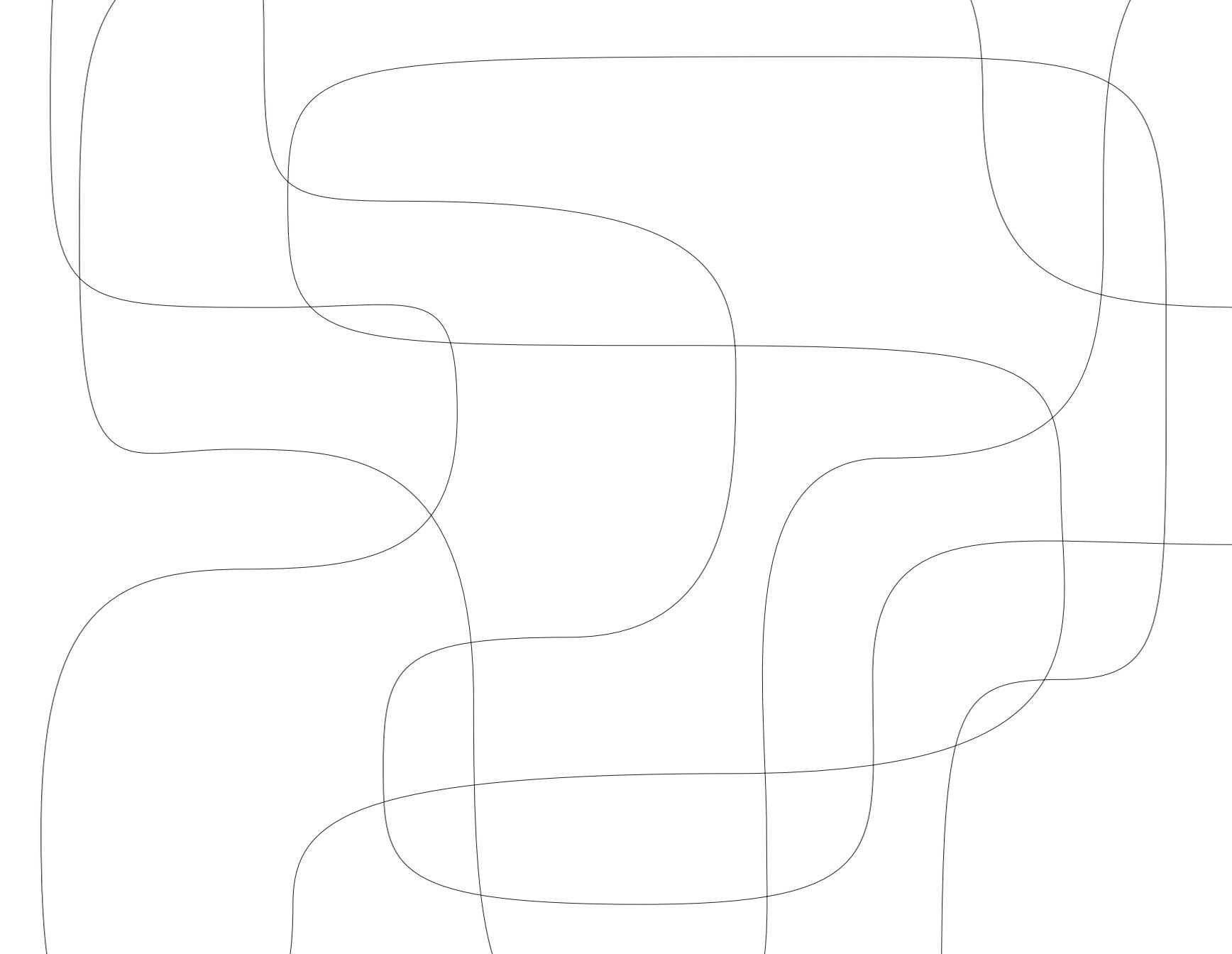
1 this tenuous connection between a body and the words falling from it; 2 we are rooting, finding only debris: receipts, fliers, cigarette butts, cans, roaches, uncapped needles, left, overlooked, brushed under; 3 a code that could only be read while faltering; 4 leave me here in the failure of my language;

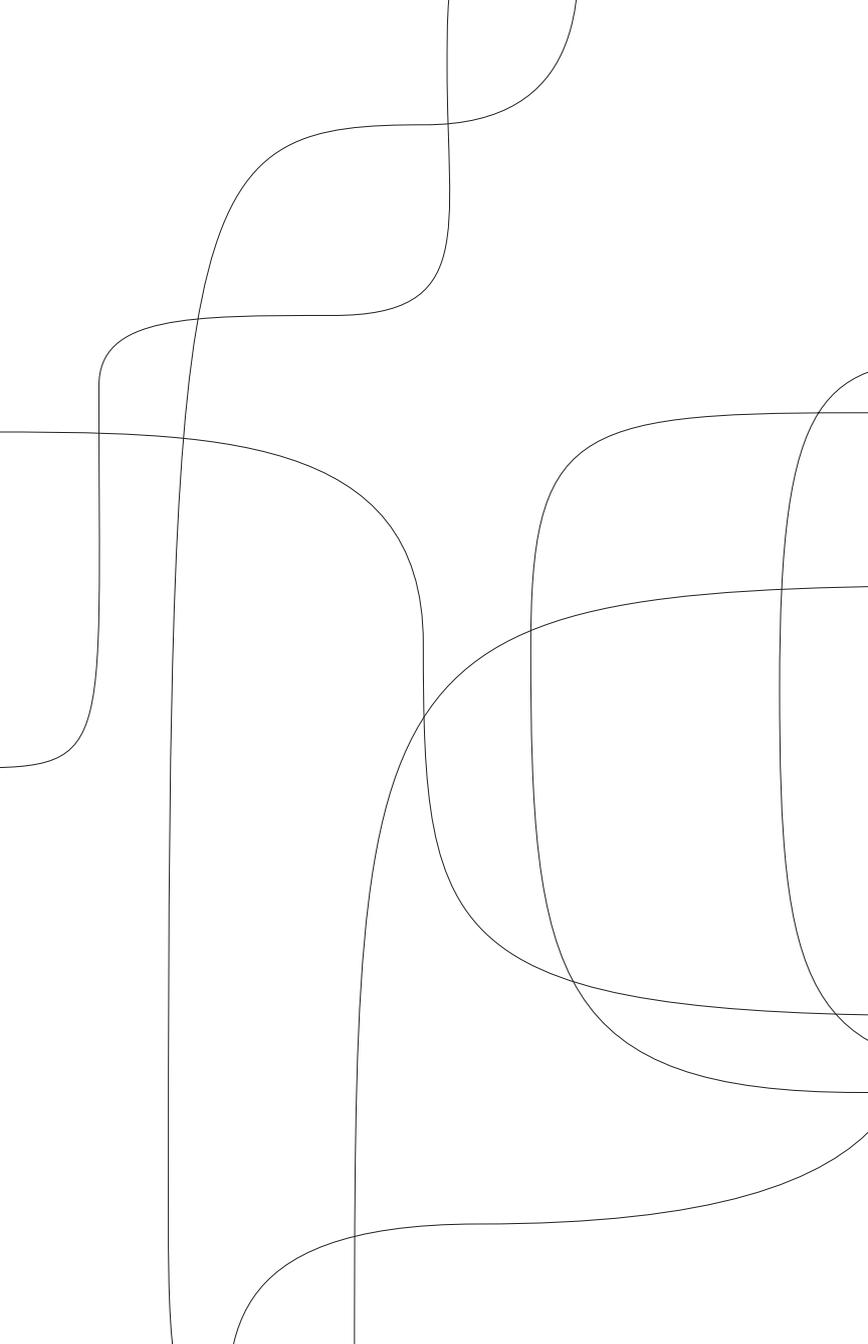


any (absence of human) smell
in the movement indicates its
worthlessness and that
the movement
is dead.









source texts

A Thousand Plateaus (Deleuze and Guattari), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault), *Violence, Mourning, Politics* (Butler), a wikipedia article on swarm behavior, TED Talk: “Paul Stamets on 6 Ways Mushrooms Can Save the World,” *Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms* (Stamets), as well as free open-source books available online from Project Gutenberg, including *Mushroom Culture: Its Extension and Improvement* (Robinson), *Mushrooms, How to Grow Them, a Practical Treatise on Mushroom Culture for Profit and Pleasure* (Falconer), and *Studies of American Fungi: Mushrooms, Edible, Poisonous, etc.* (Atkinson).

▽ ∞ *



This is the space of the underground, where intersection evidences the site of violence as a weight that pulls our attention via contours in the grid. Here, the lines bend around the individual and extend that body into the multitude: the movement. almost any shit will do is a statement of rage, where, when pushed to the edge, we might learn the most from a silent source—the ultimate Other. —JH Phrydas

Mycelium is the largest organism on the planet. It is the collective root structure from which all mushrooms emerge. It lives three inches under the ground and can span for thousands of acres. Any of its threads can connect to the collective body at any point. *almost any shit will do* pulls language from mycelium studies to investigate the underground of political unrest, from its emergence as riots to the single moment of impact: a body in protest thrown to the ground by a cop. How can we mark the shifting boundary between the individual and the movement in the midst of a riot? It is in the continuous attempt to define these terms that we begin to articulate the utopia that is always already happening, three inches below the surface.

In other words, *almost any shit will do* is also just me, twenty-two years old, laying on the floor of my lover's bedroom, flattened by painkillers, attempting to trace the lines back toward one moment in 2009 when an officer of the law damaged a part of my body forever.

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ISBN 978-1-937421-13-7

