

drift: a way

David Prater

This piece, included in the *drift* special issue of *continent.*, was created as one step in a thread of inquiry. While each of the contributions to *drift* stand on their own, the project was an attempt to follow a line of theoretical inquiry as it passed through time and the postal service(s) from October 2012 until May 2013.

This issue hosts two threads: *between space & place* and *between intention & attention*. The editors recommend that to experience the drifting thought that attention is paid to the contributions as they entered into conversation one after another. This particular piece is from the *BETWEEN INTENTION & ATTENTION* thread:

Jeremy Fernando, *Sitting in the dock of the bay, watching...* * R.H. Jackson, *Reading Eyes* * Gina Rae Foster, *Nyctoleptic Nomadism: The Drift/Swerve of Knowing* * Bronwyn Lay, *Driftwood* * Patricia Reed, *Sentences on Drifting* * **David Prater, *drift: a way***

Attention! You are not dreaming, you are drifting
into sleep. You are feeling veeeerrry sleepy now.

The curvature of the earth is causing you to shift
away from the pinpoint that you circled yesterday

on a map, your eyes hazed. That was also a today,
in a novel fashion—the today of days long gone,

of clouds long transformed into rain, or else snow
drifts. That's okay, you know this: in cathedrals

of bone we find arcs that keep us warm. In drift-
wood we find the puzzles that madden us all

night, Tetris dreaming. In from our past, deriving
steam, straight lines, axes, branches, kindling.

Attention! Does anyone here speak Spanish? *Si?*
Bueno! Dream with me. Cry out in your sleep.

Step fearfully out onto the ice and drift awhile,
inside a massive Perspex speech-bubble dream.

A massive bubble longing to become detergent.
The louvres of a ribcage snapping shut. Awe.

Curvature of the earth is a con job: ask a dervish.
Hail an imaginary cab in a hail-struck avenue

and wait for the popcorn to drop. Stop, drifter!
In the pharmacies and in the alleys, popping

rocks while money men drift by in stockings,
purling and unfurling their ways, their means.

Attention, people! Abstraction hurts. Reading
too much into things I know nothing about,

the niceness of the void or else a philosopher's
mouth sewn shut. I know about that, at least:

the madness of seeking asylum in antipodean
dreams, drifting for weeks at a time on a boat

more abstract than surreal. Oh, fuck *Life of Pi!*
Heaven basks like a warm, square meal but

I can't get there from here. There is no shark
travelling at speed X while I zoom at speed

Y in the opposite direction. I can't use a lasso.
I no longer have fits. I am no, mad. Too bad.

Attention! Ambient doom slash moon. Over!
The curvature of a yawn, a dream sewn shut.

This skin, that knows my dreams, forgets me.
Fruit tingles, wet on the tongue: get me some

analogue hits, expressways to frozen, lakeside
moon-dream voiceovers. The narrator's cues

infuse the afternoon, the canoes, with nostalgia.
Somewhere, out there, we become driftories.

We lie down in atoms and the clinamina bore.
We fight against our own handwritten lies,

type marching letters into files and save. Awe.
Fidelity is a kind of surveillance. Current A.

Attention! It was never my intention to score
cheap points at the expense of polar bears,

of driftwood, shores. The cockatoos roar. Their
explosive chatter could strip a pine tree raw.

Implant in me some destructive grace, to drift.
Planetoid lamps all along the turnpike's busy

arcs. Extreme emissions of things. Drift-rings.
The target of my gaze, sewn shut. Your eyes

rising slower than a star from what you read,
condensed into steam, here, *north of all music.*

Driftories, signal fires, smoke: disappear. Go
back to sleep now. No, we were never here.