

Materia Medica

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To work from one's own history. To create it from the earth.

Their evolution was spurred by conflict with nature. Their Order, systematic protection of those who were of their Order, threw them into constant negotiation with the natural world. There was control, consumption, mimicry, integration, sometimes violent conflict. The question was cyclical: could humans bring nature into their community, fully grasp its agency, offer the respect that the world called for? In fleeting glimpses, their illusory authority became exposed.

To permit change to another body. To implicate oneself in the ability to exercise that change.

To record nature's subjugation to human needs.

To foretell the co-opting of all life in service to structures of power.

We watched them and witnessed their world before the change. They were infinitely adaptable, aggressive, versatile, prolific, and ready to travel. As they took over the planet completely we watched it split in two. While many went to war, some sought empathy, understanding, integration. We recorded them all as we waited for the inevitable.

To be targeted. To be venomous. To defend against invasion or attack.

To combat comfort and complacency. To inflame. To agitate because one can not settle or rest.

We met to determine whether they could be Seen. Ultimately our debates came down to two questions:

What does nature own?

What will be inherited when humans are gone?

To resist an illusion of stability by enveloping nature.

To infuse and ingest and in digestion, transformation.

To inspect, and flatten, and unite.

We saw pearls accumulated for human ornamentation, bound with plant matter. Land owned by the world, destroyed for civilization and electrified for entertainment. Latticed vines of glass alongside polished fleshy stone. Micro and macro. Spines, thorns, shells, and scales. From the eyes of a fruit fly we witnessed palm-sized aurora borealis. Gastropods and bacteria. The future in the stratified and fossilized past. We saw heaped material and watched it cohere into a body.

To balance veneration of figure and nature.

To become one with nature, to bind with it, to emote from within it.

To push a luminous object beyond knowing and into pure sensation.

To watch a thing change as it chronicles the change in you.

We witnessed offerings, *Materia Medica*. Each came with a proposition—for empathy, for defense, for action. Each like a knock on a door that we could not answer.