

Eleanor Morrissey

The Swamps and Sinkholes

27 March - 3 April 2019

I'm on holidays, visiting family near a beach. One day I wake up early which is quite an unnatural and difficult thing to do, only achieved through the setting of two alarms and the writing of a note to myself the previous night which utilized a very high ratio of capital letters. I get dressed and go out to walk by the water. It seems like a pointless thing to have done and the unpleasantness of being outside and awake at this time is all that I notice as I walk. When I reach the water this continues. Maybe it's nice, who cares. I look at my feet. The sand is dry but has recently been wet by heavy rain. The rain drops have left prints in the sand, in some places covered by bits of seaweed. Things continue, same same same, more seaweed, more printed sand. Then I notice something, not exactly in my path, but slightly over there, maybe it's a large unusually shaped shell. I go to look at it and it is not a shell. It is some kind of a being, about the size of a foot. It has a long round body, wide and fat in the middle and tapering off towards the ends. Its skin is yellowish white, smooth with big fat grotesque-seeming wrinkles in the middle and smaller, finer grotesque-seeming wrinkles towards the ends. It has a purple white flat, smooth strip of skin running from one end to the other where the wrinkles don't occur. While I am observing this it writhes. Of course, I immediately get out my phone to video this so I can send it to the people who stayed in bed. I video from different angles, almost unable to believe this is a being which really exists in the world, which goes about its days looking like that. I wait for further movement but it remains still. It's impossible to know if it's alive or dying or has just died. What reaction should I have in such cases? It has no eyes, no face, no mouth, no limbs, no visible orifices that I can see. There is nothing that I can use to understand this creature or feel empathy for it. This, and its current stillness makes me feel that it is now perhaps more of an object, a thing like a muscle or a penis out in the world on its own, experiencing the world independent from its owner. Where did it come from? Why did it come here? Was it a choice? Is it perhaps observing me in some way? I don't particularly feel that want to help it, so I upload the video to the group chat and continue with my unpleasant walk.

- Words by Charlie Oppenheim

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