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### *appetite*

Some time yesterday I took a short trip with Jae on the northbound M1, a few stops up Madison Avenue until we got near the park. The afternoon was too nippy for us to sit at the bus shelter so we stood in the window of a juicery until we saw our bus approaching. The constricting blood vessels in our extremities and our lightheadedness meant we said goofy things to each other until we got on board. Once seated, we rummaged through our bodega snacks and pointed at tourists, laughed at the traffic cops, and complained about what was troubling our city-lives. But we were doing more than teasing; we were undisciplined passersby who love to look.

With unfilled eyes, we scanned, sensed, plucked, and then gobbled at whatever would whet our appetites. Matter, which some have theorized as an aggregate of images or a stacked assembly of encounters, one on top of another, was just feed, nothing more. Like a menu du jour of knobbly lumps, matter became slow, gelatinous knots each imbued with its own hiccup. Being the casual image-fetishists that we were, like gluttons who consume too quickly, we piled snapshots into our throats before they were processed.

There's a strange pleasure in absorbing the city with its compressed layers of glass monoliths, towering stones, and narrow vantages. A portion of the grid was unraveling, loosening what locals were regularly wedged against: a continuum of lines, volumes, absences and the eccentric city-life that animates. Modulated lights glinting off the liquid crystal monitors and digital billboards with harangues and innuendos incited a flurry of chemical messages signaling reward until exhaustion. Though overwhelming at first, these glaring and competing projections were still digestible. The patchwork of sensory input fed our insatiable hunger even when our stomachs buckled into a tight elastic bind.

It wasn't long until my muscles had thawed and I regained function in my fingers. Just enough to partially unbutton the chin of my jacket but by then it was time to deboard. We shot out our seats and rushed onto the pavement. We were lightheaded again but this time too woozy to voice mindless observations because our lips were chapped by the cold. Words do little for us this time of the year anyway, so we silently surveyed the sidewalks, facades, and other passersby. Every now and then, we acknowledge each other by letting off light sighs of satisfaction.

– S.H.