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Omnicide

MANIA, FATALITY,
AND THE FUTURE-IN-DELIRIUM



URBANOMIC

sequence

*a city on the shore of that roaring river
with chaotic palms and nights full of light
...which for years
has opened its arms to him and me.*

FORUGH FARROKHZAD¹⁰

We encounter our fifth augomaniac on fertile ground, amid the lushness of rich climates where people gather at night to avoid the sweltering texture of the environment. Here, then, light refers to an emancipatory instant of exemption, the chance to dwell outside again, moving in open air and along the cooler waters, though it also welcomes another, more devious potentiality: lights that guide one into the folds of infraction, lapse, and disobedience.

Since we are dealing with a dissenting poetic figure who once wrote that her ‘body exudes green shoots of light’,¹¹ we must start from the ministered connection between sensuality, wildness, and an especially disruptive kind of luminescence. Thus she tells us of the ‘roaring river’ (soundscape of naturalistic defiance), and mentions that the city itself borders ‘the shore’ (right on the verge

10 F. Farrokhzad, *A Lonely Woman: Forugh Farrokhzad and Her Poetry*, tr. M. Hillmann (New York: Three Continents Press, 1987), 13.

11 *Ibid.*, 128.

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of radical openness). Specifically, what we find here is a movement against the pictographic theological light of halos and heavenly beings; instead she returns to an adopted dream of savage liberation, of the body restored to its jungle-properties, and to an accompanying discourse of ripeness in which light is equated (if anything) with impurity over purity. For the vines of the rough country are those of interloping and entangling forms, losing themselves in the vegetal lattice of a certain unruliness, ‘chaotic palms’ that showcase the vivid turmoil of living and growing energies. They drape, wrap, and clasp themselves together in a kind of all-contaminating mess, forming the model by which human desire might then be encouraged to its most wilful and seditious plans. Hence the sly transition by means of which this same tropical outpost then ‘opened its arms to him and me’, a looser form of being-held that hangs wholly in the balance of these sliding evening states, permitting her to exit the concrete grip of the city for the caressing modalities of trees, leaves, and lovers. And again it is light that makes this seasonal-spatial-experiential shift viable, a light that invites anti-authoritarian escape and plant-like embrace, for it alone can construct a smooth conceptual bridge between disloyalty and devotion: to favor one possibility, she must betray the other (must become uncontrolled). Call this an ancient rule of the strife between being and becoming, stasis and flow, cement and fire, between the

AUGOMANIA

tyranny of daylight (harrowing order of everydayness)
and the insubordinate shafts of the nightlights that traf-
fic one's (un)earthly wants beneath the curtained state
of exception.

Light and the city; the shore; the river; chaos; night; fullness; opening