

MOUTH/MOUTH

To set the scene: everyone is sick, as usual, but most likely do not have the plague, as usual. It was the winter we sneezed so much we stopped blessing each other because either we were essentially fine, or had slipped into purgatory without noticing, in which case it was too late anyway. You have a psychosomatic toothache you are ascribing too much history to.

'I'm not doing it, it's disgusting.'

'Listen, I've realised something - mouths are the huge gaping original sin hole at the start of it all. Especially the tongue part. Think about it - the reproduction of labour power, I mean. Fuck genitals, irrelevant! It's all in that first spit exchange, saliva moving between mouths is basically the fluidity of capital, the first pheromones of gendered oppre-'

'You've been reading too much Semiotexte-'

'No, think about it, there's that perfect first summer kiss under the stars by the lake and then before you know it you're stuck at home with kids around your ankles, sitting at the kitchen table with a plate of toothpaste and a copy of Das Kapital, downing a bottle of Listerine and wondering where it all went wrong. Look!'

[You tuck your tongue into my incisor as if it proves your point and my eyes roll into the back of my head where they are safe and solid. The thread tightens around your tooth, slurring your future words.]

'ALSO the mouth is the border of two countries we've been taught to see as discrete, separate, inside and outside, dark and light - pure Cartesian battleground! It's fucked up, we don't really believe our guts exist in the same world as our words. We think they speak different languages but they don't. I hate it. Just fucking pull the door already. No borders, no nations.' So I do, and it works (as a tooth extraction, if not a metaphor). I watch your shitty narcissistic attempt at embodied politics drip scarlet down your chin.

'I'm going to plant it in the garden, next to the geraniums, to prove it can thrive outside!'

You hold up a single proud magnolia molar.

'If your mouth-'

'ALL our mouths.'

'Okay, but if specifically YOUR mouth is a border, to root this in a subject position, who is the border control? Don't say teeth. See? This whole analogy is offensive.'

'You're the border control, obviously.'

[You lean in for another rusty kiss and my tongue runs away from the newly excavated gap.]

[Shouted from the next room:] 'I just want to say that everyone in this house has fucking awful politics, and should stop pulling teeth out to try and prove their points. A mouth is a mouth, not a fucking metaphor! And if it is a metaphor, the idea the only way to overcome the inside/outside divide is to take something from inside and put it outside clearly reproduces the object of its critique.'

[Shouted from the next next room:] 'You can't just make people say things because you don't want to be accountable for what's being said!!'

'See, that's your mouth talking again.'

'At least if you pull all your teeth out and have to switch to a liquid diet there'll be less fucking dirty plates for the rest of us to wash up.'