

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESPONSE

[IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION]

The Rendlesham Forest Incident. Woodbridge, Bentwaters and Watton. The Forest. The military, the civilians. Memories and words, the memory of words. Time and place. Things that choose or are chosen to happen.

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What can you say about things you saw? What can you say about things another saw? If you see lights and report them, what follows is on another course entirely. If they are seen

close to military bases, particular responses are generated. A little too little is about right for a mystery, too much leaves everyone in overload and no publisher about to pass it by.

What if one or two people witness a little, but many endure a glut of sensory data? If sightings come over two, some say three nights, and there's no coherent explanation for them,

then guess who's in trouble. Which is how things become 'explosive', it's how they fall apart. Something not just amiss, but rotten. You can't help but be sorry for those involved.

Any ending, if not forthcoming, is like a jam pot, sticky with zealously unreadable facts. Like wasps without a queen, going crazy. Giving interviews, then signing reports and

affidavits, hoping, if this is the last hell of a lost tour of duty, there's a plane back home, with skies uneventful, big and blue.

Let the world get on. Write about what it knows.

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What people saw, what the radar saw. The lights over and within the forest. The object on the ground or hovering. Other objects. How things manoeuvred. Radioactivity, normal and above. The norms of apprehension. Shifts in the real and unreal. The way back and how to be what you are. Words on a page and changes on the page. A mind to understand darkness, to condone what is or may well be. Something happened. No question. Things can unhappen.

for the shaking of a spotless dice

A LOT OF GETTING USED TO (FOLK MEMORY)

Taking a line with the impossible may leave you

no place to go it's happened enough for me
to shut out commentary take a deep breath and wail
it was there it was not there likely as not

and such was the truth of it

the multiples of what when where
even now sky-coloured seems like yesterday
too much detail after all the thing starts

losing its outline who's guessing what is gone

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT

Forest trails when not on the *qui vive*

are too liable to go cold on a good day or night they're looking amongst other things for the congenial (even the instructive) fright and such places

to go! isn't that what we're about or are our instincts nowadays pedantically out of true there's more to distance – and here I'm speaking both within and

without – than ever we thought (don't let me have to explain) for every impression there's a second signal (a sign for every frontier crossed) and

another that's lost making of mystery and its opposite an apposite order to attend to or if it comes to it deny but nights there are have something

every night should have do you find?

HAZARD LIGHTS AND PARALLEL INGRESSIONS

1.

We could easily be forgiven: the facts of the night in question speak highly of institutional involvement. And none of the customary grinding. We talked about it and how they ranked over cups of Colombian, as if I were the primary source, which, of course, I wasn't. My casebook status being declared and regrettably o.p. With no guard duty operating, nobody was about to rush in where angels or whatever. Bullets being that cheap. Multiple entities all testify to it, given the chance. Our page-turners blessed and shining forth in a far out beam.

2.

Watch your retinas. It's because they say so and not before time. I'm not disturbed for myself, but I know of others over the moon with their postings. On a clear night you can have your narrative and read it. Whatever it was, undoubtedly happened. A veritable vengeance, as every shift reminds me: of other stations, their duty commanders, their umpteen in-betweens and factotums. But that's how I am. At every underground facility and in every quiet quarter, listen. This could be it. The dogs are out there, barking at the sky.

3.

As postscript, take a right at the eastern gate. Finding you can change a world speaks volumes. What to do with it, though, and whereabouts lies the ultimate debrief? Of which nothing in its right mind speaks. The truck, headlong into the forest, knew only the vicarious encounter, quirky words in the ear. For the most part, meticulously preserved. Look, my values were ever underfunded – I was ripe for the tour. Who signed my Non-fulfilment of Non-literal Duties agreement? Advocates, some of them devilish, meet in authentic disguise.

4.

Which of the airmen, what of the ordnance? Stuff goes off, if you don't get it out. I publish like a record interval, my solid state receiver catching signals another tower's putting out. Who knew 'the visit' in advance and might, if he so liked, have exploded it? Print before reading; I make for the loneliest ill-lit extract, but, there, in their layered departments, they don't take questions. Effects like radiation worry everything, and for what? For reasons of embellishment or high dudgeon? Maybe. As the man in braid put it, it's time I took a break.

5.

Cold lies the trail. Time modifies the first inquiry, nearly the last. When sceptics and *apparatchiks* paper us over, I revert to nights – to Officialdom Wood and its shadowy branches. Did you say, they came closer? Were checkpoints honoured and advances paid? If nothing else, I was sharing the data, but they always closed their eyes. Craft, in their oblique, if not unfriendly manner, pick their moment. There was little enough to go on. Starscope, light-alls & radio. A shiver in the air, feelings of helplessness. Time out. Before the fact.