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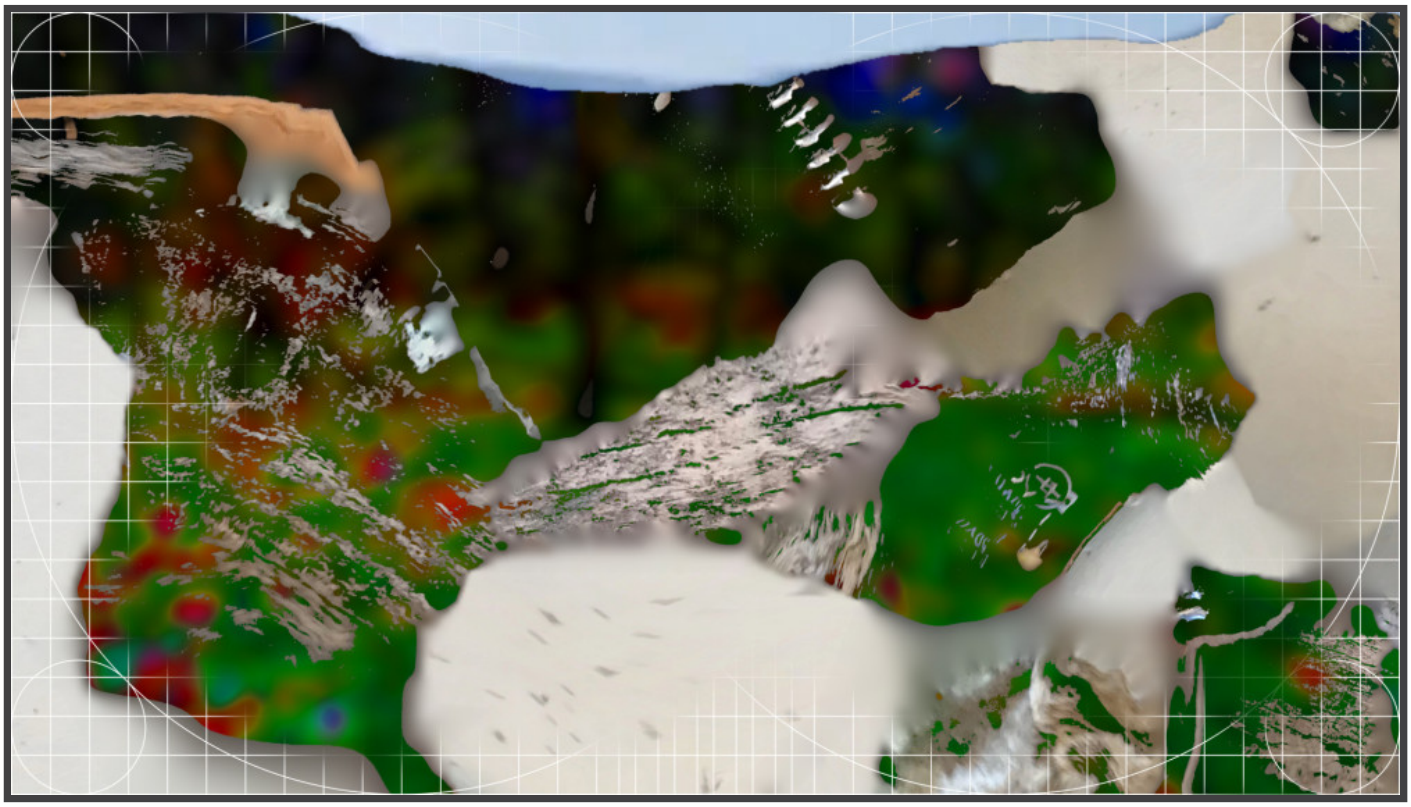
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Closed Surveillance Circuit

Writing in a Life Shattered by Work

Mayte Gómez Molina

Scientific research and its communication are usually forced into a mold to be considered rigorous. How can poetry serve as a healer, to mediate between the cryptic language of academia and the rest of the world? «Closed Surveillance Circuit» merges poetry with an essayistic approach, exploring themes such as hardware, software, image theory, the obsolete natural-artificial binary, and the experience of life mediated by contemporary technological devices. The poems were originally published by the Barcelona-based publishing house Cielo Santo in 2024.



Research technology and its communication are usually forced into a mold to be considered rigorous. This results in a huge abyss between the language used in academic texts and the world it directs its efforts toward, which guides the hurricane of language through their vocal cords to try and give it a direction, a purpose, using words in a different way. Most of the time, the very subjects of research, turned into objects of study through a grammatical metamorphosis, are unable to access and understand the language that describes phenomena of which they are protagonists, and which could be important to them. I believe poetry can serve as a translator, using its tools to mediate between the cryptic language of academic writing and the rest of the world, building a bridge over the defiles of contrasting uses of language.

«Circuito Cerrado de Vigilancia» (in English: «Closed Surveillance Circuit»), published by Cielo Santo in 2024, is my latest poetry book, which emerged from the difficulty of writing an essay about technology due to time constraints—on a 40 plus hour job, Monday to Saturday, who could rigorously write about technology? Who could write? I had notes on talks and articles written by Yuk Hui, Wendy Chun, Vilém Flusser, Jonathan Crary, Mark Hansen, Brian Massumi, Katherine N. Hayles, Ann Münster, Annet Dekker, and Remedios Zafra, among others. However, they were disconnected and insufficient, with the result that I could not plot a climbing route for others to find their way up these giants of thought—I did not even find it for myself. I had ideas to write about image theory in a world narrated through images that move at speed and sizes unthinkable for human beings—sometimes even turning themselves into text, while remaining images. I wanted to write about repetition, about the fiction in images and in the stories we currently tell ourselves, where we are always irresponsible toward the technological tools we design. Faced with the impossibility of remaining rigorous and linear, as an essay would have demanded of me (and even a novel), poetryoffered me fragmented precision to weave in and out of a project like this—in a life shattered by work. These poems, proof of my failure to write anessay, are nevertheless a triumph over an accelerated life that makes it very difficult to write at all.

In the foreword to her book «Late in the Day: Poems, 2010–2014» (Oakland: PM Press, 2016), beautifully titled «Deep in Admiration» Ursula K. Le Guin writes: «Science describes accurately from outside; poetry describes accurately from inside. Science explicates; poetry implicates. Both celebrate what they describe. We need the languages of both science and poetry to save us from merely stockpiling endless ‹information› that fails to inform our ignorance or our irresponsibility.» I feel very close to Le Guin’s thought, given my approach writing these poems, which is no different from the one I would have adopted had I written an essay. I use language to collect and communicate ideas hidden in multiple books that people might not have access to read, like a parser of a body of code. Poetry acts here as a translator from one form of language to another, without simplifying argumentations—just arranging words differently.

Moreover, poetry can claim the right to deal with objective data and do so with the meticulousness of a method. When we think of the work of Muriel Rukeyser, who uses poetry in «U.S. 1» (1938) to create a chronicle of the Hawk’s «Nest Tunnel»—a work that could serve as a legal document, as evidence to present to a jury of the irreversible damage to miners exposed to silica powder during the tunnel’s excavation. Or when we think of the work of Louise Glück, Agustín Fernández-Mallo, or Ursula K. Le Guin, who explored natural sciences and used poetry to try to tame the abstract—the poem becomes the record of an observational experiment of the world as matter. We also have the case of Walt Whitman’s poem «When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer,» where he respectfully presents his doubts about the capacity of science to describe absolutely everything, even the gaps that cannot be grasped by human knowledge. In «The Planets: A Cosmic Pastoral,» Diane Ackerman creates a treatise on astronomy, exploring the limits of science to describe everything, including the

gaps that cannot be fully grasped. Poetry throws a curtain over the gaps in knowledge that cannot be further explored, or that could be further explored but remain incomprehensible to us. It is not opaque about the unknown but serves as a translucent lens that makes it more bearable. We see this approach in the work of Adrienne Rich and Louise Glück, who use the concrete modes of scientific expression to describe the body or the surrounding nature—a route that poet Rachel Carson takes in the opposite direction: based on her concrete knowledge as a marine biologist, she attempts to disentangle science through the potential of poetic language.

In the same foreword to her book of poetry, Le Guin says about poetry that it is «the human language that can try to say what a tree or a rock or a river is, that is, to speak humanly for it, in both senses of the word ‹for.› A poem can do so by relating the quality of an individual human relationship to a thing—a rock or river or tree—or simply by describing the thing as truthfully as possible.» Poetry can become a method for the untamed: a site to negotiate with the uncertain. I regard poetry as a scientific description of a nonscientific event—precise words to capture something as fleeting as an animal that meanders through language and escapes any grammatical formulation.

Accept Terms and Conditions

They know everything about me

because I've told them

As exchange: a continuous, colorful flow I was granted

Fireworks leave behind

a poisonous syrup when they cease

people wait a long time for the next explosion

Large crowds are groups of orphans who,

after the pyrotechnics, take a moment to understand

that it's all over:

nothing else will happen

They then leave slowly,

imagining the darkness waiting at home for their return

TIt only takes a little light

to turn us into miserable insects,

to draw us where we don't want to go

and make us think that yes, we wanted to

All the great machines of the world

are just not enough to hide

how easily we are moved—

that tiny are we

The childhood we were

is lost in vast and empty industrial complexes.

The steel returns to us, echoed

the names of our parents

Closed Surveillance Circuit

Were really necessary

the hundred eyes of the peacock?

The answer:
yes,

each and every any

Nature is unaware of the ornamental

That is a human invention

to try and domesticate things,

to believe that

the jungle can fit into a rug, or that

you can understand an entire country

by admiring only the blue and white of its porcelain

Metallic jade, industrial lapis lazuli,

in April they fan out their tails,

a surveillance system commanded by desire

A thousand eyes look from the feathers

at the trembling other

trying to calculate the intentions

of the outermost bird that's coming

Cities mimicked the worst parts of animals:

we loaded our corners with cameras,

that don't love or desire of who walks by

and triggers the motion sensors

that of the body only know it moves,

never why, nor where

Control is not understanding; control is

destroying any possibility of it

Control does not offer the gift of understanding

it only annihilates the possibility of it

by putting things in a display and thinking

that means to love them

«I'm doing this because I love you

and I want to understand»

said the biologist to the frog

while slicing its belly open

How foolish we are if, at the sight of a forest,

we could only imagine a gated garden

UX UI design

Everything humans design

is the blueprint of their desires

An iconographic shortage

is technology

an attempt at a flawless us,

a not as us no

I know that in some offices they dream

of creating something all smooth,

without seams no openings

A blind object,

like a reliquary that in the dark shelters

new objects of worship

Bless everything that keeps the wires,

because that allows us to remember it was made

by the hand that uses it,

by the body it helps

I dream of objects that, like me, are found at fault

Objects that show me their points of suture,

get confused and fail.

Only errors bring us closer to the machine

Superavit

The human eye can see

ten million colors

The RGB system used by screens offers

more than sixteen million

16,777,216

- 10,000,000

_____

6,777,216

million colors

I cannot see

We always produce for something

better than what we are

and will never be able to become

not with this body

alone

Red Green Blue

The future is written in English

though it's made in China

mined in Africa

legislated in Europe

and thought of, long ago, in South America

by ancient wisdom

A drop of water has fallen on my phone screen

Looks like an ephemeral round diamond

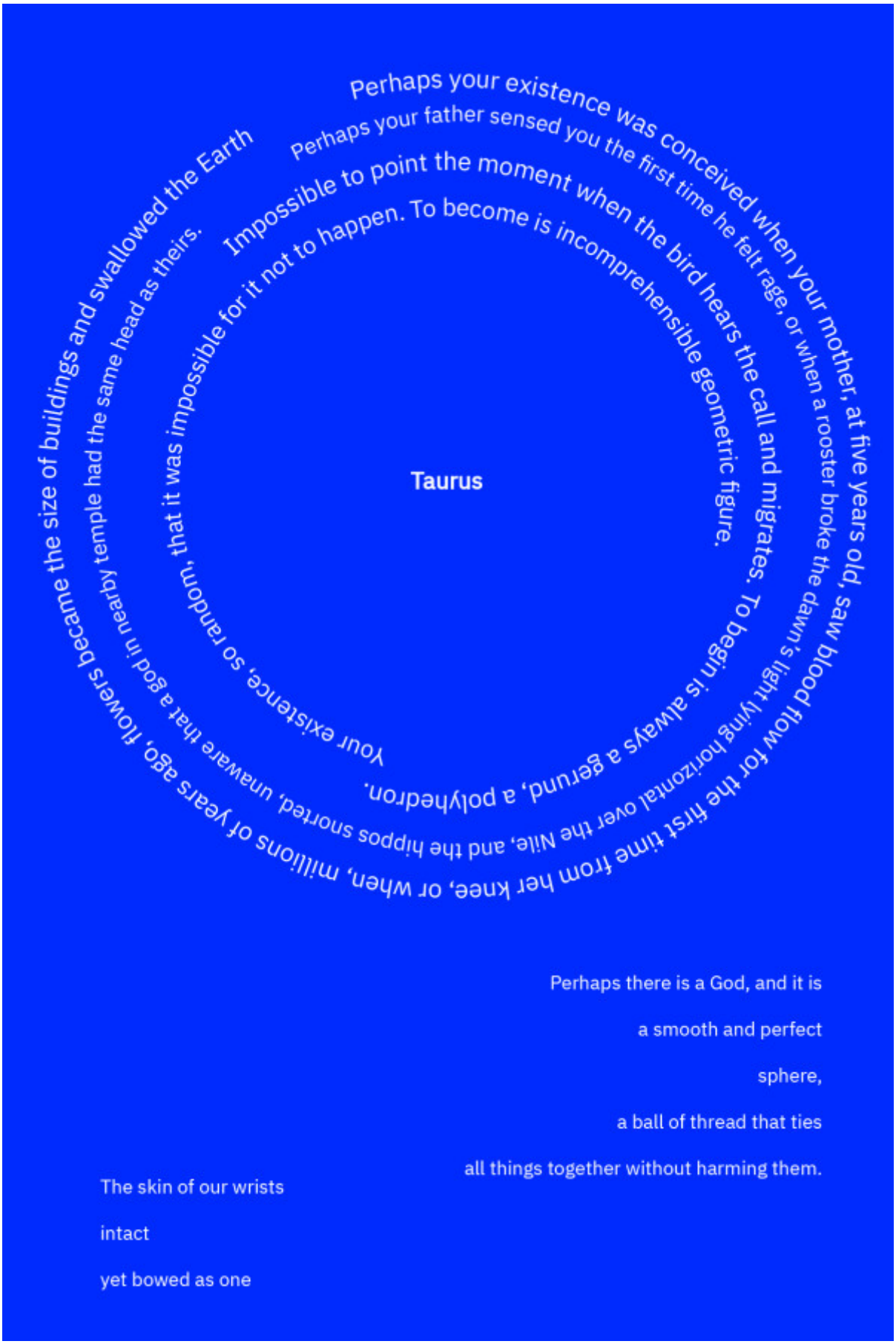
It refracts all the screen's colors

condensed in three tiny points:

255, 0, 0 blood

0, 255, 0 forest

0, 0, 255 sky



Perhaps there is a God, and it is

a smooth and perfect

sphere,

a ball of thread that ties

all things together without harming them.

The skin of our wrists

intact

yet bowed as one

Gen esis

The bird feeds in its nest

springtime copies of itself

It fosters the possibility of a forever song,

promising itself towards the future, remixed

Genetic decisions instruct its offerings.

I imagine it, as the first flowers bloom,

possessed by very ancient software

```
C:\Users\Bird\brain>\Program Files start mate.exe
```

The eyes of the newborn animal

are exactly those of its parents,

Ours

those of all the animals before it

change color and shape, but

what was once seen lives within them

Floating fire forms remain

in my retina,

appearing in my closed eyes, when I rubbed them the fire

the trace of the first astonishment when we saw it, perhaps

Vision is the grammar of the possible but

not all images come from the eyes

Some come from elsewhere

cavely

Sleeping in zoos

animals dream of the jungle

without having seen it

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Mayte Gómez Molina is a writer, researcher and new media artist who uses writing as the backbone of a practice based on the digitally produced image. Winner of the Miguel Hernández' *National Youth Poetry Prize of Spain* in 2023, she is currently a PhD student of the MAKE/SENSE Program at Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW.

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