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# Plant Absurdity

Julian Langer

10/7/25

*for Sascha Engel*

It is unsettling  
and decolonising  
from puritanical and reductive  
ANTHROPOCENTRISM  
to affirm that within the body  
of EVERY being we call  
HUMAN  
lives a personal gut flora  
a unique habitat of microbiota  
wild and uncannily YOU  
and not you  
eco-egoist paradox of holism and individuation

.  
flora are the plants present in a habitat  
gut flora are not plants  
the word flora comes from the Roman goddess of flow-  
ers and springtime

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fungi, bacteria, protozoa and viruses are what comprises gut flora  
so say scientists  
but they don't really know that there are no flowers  
growing in my gut  
all things are possible  
a springtime of daisies, dandelions and daffodils could  
be my internal flora  
they don't know

.

Donald Trump received a Nobel Peace Prize from Netanyahu  
so saith the news  
as I eat my breakfast and drink my tea  
this morning  
feeding my gut flora  
the daisies, dandelions and daffodils  
live on this destruction of physical presence and hydration  
and I read Fondane's essay on Boredom and a couple  
Rimbaud poems  
neither of their microbiomes are surviving  
their gut flora are extinct habitats  
unlike Trump's  
unlike Netanyahu's  
there are no flowers in either poet's gut today  
what about these politicians?

.

one of my favourite palaeontological truths  
is that moss was responsible for the first mass extinction events on this planet  
basically – there is undoubtedly more to this story  
the Ordovician-Silurian extinction event  
more than 70% of species estimated to have been lost

moss feels wonderful to touch  
I love to place my hand upon it  
growing on trees or rocks or wherever  
soft and gentle

.  
how soft is the skin of Netanyahu or Trump? I am glad  
I will never find out!  
BUT all things are possible, so perhaps I will

.  
pulling out creeper plants that are making their way  
under the roof of the outhouse  
I appreciate the disregard for propertarianism shown  
by these plants  
and my mind turns to Sasha Engel and that book they  
wrote on Plant Anarchy

.  
will to life  
strength to overcome  
anarchy primal and egoistic  
I encounter in plants that never fails to inspire  
continues as I move through this garden  
I call “mine”  
what does that mean though  
these plants don’t care what the paperwork says

.  
opening the book Plant Anarchy  
which is not plant-anarchy  
but Engel’s affirmation of the anarchy of plants  
smiling when reading “no plant has ever obeyed zon-  
ing laws”  
“every plant is a trickster”  
“every plant growing in the cracks of our pavements is  
a site of resistance”  
every plant yes is anarchy of untamed revolt

refusing repression  
embodied dialogic-revolt articulating self-preservation  
subservient to no Cause, Reason, Idea

.  
every sapling tree is an absurdity  
only ending in death and decay  
yesterday I sat in a copse meditating besides a decay-  
    ing trunk of wood besides several saplings  
every snowdrop and foxglove is a Sisyphean hero  
rising up as far as it might  
only to return the the soil  
with the habitual rhythms of seasons – I agree with  
    Engel that there are no real repetitions  
every plant refuses the denial of its possibility which  
    includes the possibility of it's impossibility

.  
there are industrial monocultures  
domesticated plants  
policed by agriculturalists  
there are miles and miles and miles  
of crops  
for the consumption of domesticated animals for the  
    consumption of domesticated humans  
and for the consumption of domesticated humans  
which is nonsense  
as every plant lives for the sake of its living

.  
speak of plant liberation  
and laughter follows  
even from many  
(sentio-centric)  
antisppeciesists

.  
every flower bomb thrown

and that is a strange truth to live with

who becomes a plant  
through kleptoplasty  
tribal cultures who are  
the people of the deer  
salmon, ox, river, forest  
as they are what they eat  
queer the species-identity of  
Human  
biological classification is less meaningful  
than direct experience  
and we breathe air oxygenated  
through plants photosynthesising  
we are what we breathe  
we are the waste of plants  
this is wonderful  
and evolution is a process  
of continuous species-queering  
changing with habitats  
becoming different  
and with mass extinction events  
dramatic evolutionary changes are likely  
all things are possible  
and it is possible that the  
HUMAN  
animal will become kleptoplastic  
become-plant  
reoxygenated this earth  
possibly  
.  
what a fucking absurd idea!  
.  
there is a habitat of gut flora  
residing within me  
one within Sascha Engel

is an embrace of possibility  
amidst the bewilderment of uncertainty  
guerrilla gardening a revolt  
against reductionism  
.  
every plant is an anarchy that is an absurdity  
every plant is an absurdity that is an anarchy  
.  
LONG LIVE THE WEEDS  
.  
I eat a vegetarian diet  
inside of me  
my microbiome  
my gut flora  
this habitat that is and is not me  
feasts upon the flesh of plants  
I have ingested  
turning them into shit  
that can compost  
and become new flowers  
born of seeds  
dropped by naughty anarchists  
.  
soil fertilised by bone and blood  
are ripe conditions  
for plant growth  
and I remember that song  
The Gardener  
by The Tallest Man On Earth  
.  
lavender and mint are good for calming  
bay leaf can aid digestion and reduce inflammation  
garlic helps with blood pressure issues and may even  
reduce the risk of heart attacks and cancer

phytoncides released by trees and other plants can reduce stress, boost natural killer cells and also help lower blood pressure  
none of these plants live to do this  
these are not their purposes  
they do not will their lives for these Reasons  
They live to be who they are

.  
I can imagine myself becoming an oak  
roots reaching into the soil  
touching mycelium  
branches spreading out  
touching the branches of other trees  
in a wild forest  
home to bear and wolf and deer and badger and buzzard and owl and boar and fox and hedgehog and all manner of plants

.  
and moss was (basically) responsible for the first known mass extinction event  
and Donald Trump and Netanyahu and the political machine of too-fucking-late-krapitalism are intensifying and worsening this mass extinction event  
and maybe when Trump dies he will become daisies  
and Netanyahu windflowers  
and from the wreckage and ruination of the machine forests and pastures full of flowers will spread  
all things are possible

.  
the sea slug *Elysia chlorotica*  
is a species-queering animal  
who becomes a plant  
through kleptoplasty  
allowing it to photosynthesise

having different bodies and psychogeographies and educations

.  
I have written this poem for Sascha Engel  
as a friend  
to affirm plant anarchy and plant absurdity  
I am writing this poem for Sascha Engel as a friend  
to affirm plant anarchy and plant absurdity

.  
their book is in my hand again  
flicking through pages  
skimming sentences  
Sascha Engel is to me is a succulent  
in a desert of deserting nihilist-anarchists  
petals black  
full of psycho-active possibility  
sharp needles to fend off  
those who would do harm  
living in a landscape ravaged by Mesopotamia  
and I smile  
imagining them hating and loving my categorising them  
ambiguity is true and real  
a tree is a tree and is not a tree  
a foxglove is a foxglove and is not a foxglove  
we are living paradoxes and so engaging in mysticism  
we are both published in a poetry collection  
titled Flower Bombs  
this poetry collection is psychic-guerrilla-gardening  
these poems seeds

.  
you are what you eat  
the sea slug *Elysia chlorotica*  
is a species-queering animal

those jungles and forests  
that decolonised those cities  
are under threat  
from Leviathan still

.  
plants have an intense will to life  
that continually inspires me  
plants are revolting anarchies  
of wild refusal before Leviathan  
all things are possible  
their survival and flourishing are possible  
jungles and flowers are possible and possibility  
and the extinction of all plants is inevitable  
death is invariant  
fuck it though  
they still will their lives!

.  
Engel's philosophy of plant anarchy  
embracing directness  
as deixis  
being-before-categorisation  
pre-Symbolic experiencing  
deterritorialising encoding  
in their words "unwriting"  
and I feel intense appreciation  
for this affirmation of immediacy  
and revolt against alienation

.  
Engel is the champion of the Anti-Alphabet  
which is strange and absurd to me  
and I love their revolt  
against Latin tyranny  
we are different co-existing presences  
we different perspectives and points of view

and the possibility of Kafkaesque Metamorphosis  
human-becoming-animal-becoming-plants  
excites the imagination

.  
Engel differentiates plant-intuition from computer-  
logic  
I wonder what the elder tree I see from my window  
imagines  
stepping outside my door to ask  
the tree replies to my questions  
who are you  
what are you  
do you imagine  
what do you want  
in wordless gestures

.  
intuition as gut-feeling  
remembering my microbiome  
co-existing with Engel's microbiome  
co-existing with Trump and Netanyahu's micro-  
biomes  
my gut flora as a flowering springtime  
the gut is the first, primal, brain  
the enteric nervous system

.  
perhaps intuition is born for a plant in their roots,  
or their leaves  
or their phloem  
or their xylem  
all things are possible  
I don't know  
this feels stupid  
it probably is

.

the strangeness of the world is the absurd  
and the strangeness of a plant is their absurdity  
the lived experience of being a plant is strange to me  
in its unknowable qualities  
and with this an attraction  
born of mystery

.  
the plant-philosopher Michael Marder  
(who might not be a plant  
and also might be  
all things are possible  
I haven't inspected him to see)  
affirms that dialogues regarding co-existence  
ecological healing  
decolonisation  
must go beyond romantic-nativism  
and I am of a similar perspective  
thoughts of garlic growing here  
as ecological exiles  
come to mind  
and I wonder if Sascha has read Marder  
if I am a good friend I will remember to recommend

.  
a bee nuzzles into the petals  
of an orange flower  
in my garden that I cannot speciate  
butterflies have been dancing around  
buddleia and lavender here recently also  
flowering plants are the most diverse group of land  
plants  
there are about 300,000 known species and who can  
say how many unknown species  
they share a Carboniferous era common ancestor and  
explosively diversified during the Cretaceous

meaning flowers survived the Permian-Triassic extinction event and the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event

so when a tough guy calls you a "flower" that means  
that you are a fucking survivor

.  
agriculture is entirely dependent upon flowering  
plants

angiosperma is the technical name  
angeion the Greek word for container  
sperma the Greek word for seed  
all of whom live lives of  
mutualistic-interdependency  
with pollinators  
that agriculture kills off with pesticides  
and many of these plants  
will not survive this mass extinction event  
and new ecological conditions  
born from global warming  
so agriculturalists are probably going to struggle  
to eat

.  
thoughts of lost cities  
found amidst the Amazon rainforest  
and Cambodian jungle  
and deserts along the Silk Road  
found by grave robbers  
come to mind

.  
I would rather this global Mesopotamia  
became lost in forests  
and pastures  
than man-made deserts