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‘[Hildegard von Bingen’s] notion of *viriditas*, the self-refreshing power of creation made visible in vegetation, is the greening green, vibrant & vibrating. In it, greenness is in equal measure metaphysical & physical, a possibility & an actuality, hidden & revealed, irradiating & absorbing intense light & sound waves, open not just to seeing & hearing but also to touching, smelling, tasting, to say nothing of the activity of greening that sees us, hears us, smells, tastes, & touches us.’

Michael Marder

‘In principio
omnes creature
viruerunt, in
medio flores
floruerunt;
postea *viriditas*
descendit’

Hildegard
von Bingen

Viriditas.

The greening green.

Life, you see.

‘In the beginning, all creation was verdant, in the middle, flowers blossomed, later, viriditas came down.’

Hildegard
von Bingen

‘Look at the pattern this seashell makes. The dappled whorl, curving inward to infinity. That’s the shape of the universe itself. There’s a constant pressure, pushing toward pattern. A tendency in matter to evolve into ever more complex forms. It’s a kind of pattern gravity, a holy greening power we call viriditas, & it is the driving force in the cosmos. Life, you see.’

Kim Stanley Robinson

Matthew 7:14

*So says the Word:
‘Strait is the gate
& narrow is the way
that leads unto life.’*

*There is a verdant
line to be drawn here
all the way from the
apostles to modern life
sciences.*

'Far from a mere receptacle, [Mary] (& not only she; John the Baptist does so as well) plays Jesus's part before he himself does. The middle of the middle, a mediator for Christ the Mediator, she is nothing like a faded backdrop for divine self-sacrifice. Despite being 'only' a branch, she embodies viriditas, the vegetal life that flourishes in the middle between earth & sky, light & darkness, & that is the middle from which the world stems in its ongoing regeneration.'

Michael Marder

*For here we are, greening,
& it is worth keeping
in mind the simple &
potent fact that green lies
in the centre of our visual
spectrum.*

*Or did we lay ourselves,
were we laid, around it, that
most median of vibrations?*

*Greening green: the middle,
between near & far.*

*There is a gate through
which life enters. Lichen,
too, between this & that,
for so long the unknown
symbiote.*

How to find our middle?

'Le Moyen Âge ajoute une autre idée : le vert est beau parce qu'il se situe au milieu de ce que nous nommerions aujourd'hui la "gamme chromatique"...le vert est une couleur moyenne!'

'Chacun de ces éléments ayant sa couleur propre, la nature se construit autour de quatre couleurs : le blanc (air), le noir (terre), le rouge (feu) & le vert (eau). L'eau médiévale, en effet, est conceptuellement verte & non pas bleue.'

Michel Pastoureau

'Human or not, life is a green mass, & that which enlivens it is a symphony in green.'

Michael Marder

*Collect the lichen-laden
branch & soak it—thirty
minutes. Strip the green, now
opened up, suddenly so labial
& mycological.*

Counter to the fall.

*Soak. Strip. Strain.
I sit at the pail. Quiet hours.
Scrape & plunge.*

*All shuckers & shellers,
peelers & kneaders, weavers
& sorters in the thread of the
world now gone & to come.
This is the work.*

*Viriditas as leap of faith in
this world.*

*'El claro del bosque
es un centro en el que
no siempre es posible
entrar.'*

*'No hay que buscarlo.
No hay que buscar.'*
Maria Zambrano

*Not a thesis on Viriditas,
but an attempt to be inside it
for a while. Before the lesser
nature returns.*

*A work of daily praise:
To hear the symphony of the
world written in the field of
green before you.*

*'The being of all
creatures is their
incomparable praise
of God, the praise
adjusted to their
particular modes of
being. Plants flourish
& blossom; humans
sing, their bodies/
voices handed over to
breath.'*

Michael Marder

*[through] ariditas
... desertification &
deforestation turn this
Word & this energy
against themselves.
Through the human,
the finger of God does
battle with itself.*

Michael Marder

*Also to note: Hildegard von
Bingen posits, as a inverse of
the greening green, Ariditas.
Perversion of the creative
fire. Disconnection from
the self-refreshing beauty.*

*We see it everywhere.
How to see it in ourselves?*

*'On the one hand,
the contrast between
eternal & ephemeral
beings softens under the
influence of viriditas
that inflects finite
life with a potentially
infinite thrust of
selfregeneration. On
the other, ariditas
hardens the divides
between the body
& the soul, matter
& spirit, the
ensouled body & its
environment.'*

Michael Marder

*Attending to Viriditas is not
much assuring its blossoming,
then, which proceeds its
coming down, but caring for
its constant renewal within
us.*

*The question is: what does
this entail?*

Lichen Walk:

*The best time might be after a
storm, in the boggy meadows.*

*Bring yourself close to the wet
& what is it here, Viriditas.
The fallen branch.*

*The heavy scented rot.
Individuation of the Word
is difficult to grasp here,
the furl of the lichen-reach
decomposing into soil. So
much ectoplasmic mulch.
One thing now another living
on.*

*Viriditas seems to suggest a
disruption of binaries, many
binaries. Bringing viewer &
viewed together in devotion,
in stress, the life of the plant
adapting to the world, the
wet air both in us & out.*

*In the very first pieces, each
gesture was hidden one
upon—within—the other.
Layer upon layer thickening
the canvas with darker green.*

*To kneel in the same spot
everyday, rework the same
plot.*

*↳ then.
The desire to deviate, was
it merely hubris? The seven
stars. La noche oscura.*

*It might be said that the job
is to move aside for the work.*

*Who speaks here?
Me. The work.
Something between the two.*

*What is the Word but
the potential of complex
greening written into the
fabric of our universe ↳
the music of its spheres.
The physics of life, you see,
as it actualises, over ↳ over.*

*So can we now answer as to
what it is we seek to praise,
and how?*

*To observe ↳ reveal this
potential of greening in the
here ↳ now.*

In the world's individuation.

*'All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.'*

The Word Viriditas

*The world from the genetic
template winding, always
adapting, to speak an
individualised being.*

*This is what Gerard Manley
Hopkins would call Inscape.
Useful to us for what is
demands of us in order to see
it, to praise it.*

*'For the mystic,
object & subject are
inseparably linked by
the act of devotion.'*
Simon Critchley

*Instress. Recognition via
focused attention. To pay
attention wholly to the
individuation of the world,
over & over.*

*'All things are
upheld by instress
& are meaningless
without it.'*
Gerard Manley
Hopkins

*'Aber wann, in
welchem aller
Leben, / sind wir
endlich offen &
Empfänger?'
Rainer Maria
Rilke*

*We stand before the painting
We sit before the field of green,
of night, & offer ourselves.*

*'L'attention, à son
plus haut degré, est
la même chose que la
prière. Elle suppose la
foi & l'amour.'*
Simone Weil

*The simple contention is that
attention, when wholly given,
is, as Weil said, like prayer.*

*'This act is prayer,
by which term I
understand no vain
exercise of words,
no mere repetition
of certain sacred
formula, but the very
movement itself of
the soul, putting itself
in a personal relation
of contact with the
mysterious power
of which it feels the
presence—it may be
even before it has a
name by which to call
it.'*

William James

A movement of the soul.

Let us pray.

*'The soul is a symphony;
otherwise, it is nothing at
all.'*

*'The rational soul is a
being with, the harmony
with world.'*

Michael Marder

*'& I say: do not darken
your garden with the
tedium of silence.'*

*Hildegard
Von Bingen*

*Here Hildegard's notion
that the soul is a symphony, a
sounding-with, in harmony
with a world that shares
the same music from field
to field & sun to sun.*

Musica Universalis.

Amos 5:8

*'Seek him that maketh the
seven stars'—transporting
me.*

*To float in the sea at night.
To lie in the green, Hesperus
emerging. To reach towards
the ecstatic.*

*'Thus the entire
organism, which
still lacks a proper
scientific name, is a
symbiotic association.
Each of two (or three)
organisms provides
for the other what it
does not have, in a
relationship of close
coexistence: the fungus
(mycobiont) provides
the support (affixation
& growth) plus
water & minerals
to the alga; the alga
(photobiont) provides
a share of sugars to
the fungus thanks to
photosynthesis.'*

Vincent Zonca

*I speak of the ecstatic not only
because of its place in the
mystical tradition, but also
in our daily lives.*

*The very possibility of it
speaks to me of Viriditas.
The moments when the rules
change and all horizons open.*

‘I para no ser devorado por la nada o por el vacío haya que hacerlos en uno mismo, haya a lo menos que detenerse, quedar en suspenso, en lo negativo del éxtasis.’

Maria Zambrano

But. A cautionary tale.

Often, when I experience this sensation of the ecstatic in painting, in music, I so easily unravel, all sense of focus dissolving.

I cannot say if the feeling is beyond or too deeply within myself, but it no longer a being-with.

I must rather find balance in a restless rest, an ecstatic near-far, between myself & the piece, suspended in the attention given & the speaking back of the work, but not unravel, not fray the thread.

‘Ecstasy is what it feels like to be alive when we push away the sadness that clings to us.’

Simon Critchley

‘Then the love of God can only be expressed through beautiful subtleties of both unsaying & superlative saying. Negation & exaggeration at one & the same time.’

Simon Critchley

‘It is the being-with of all the relations that bind bodies to souls, souls to souls, bodies to bodies, & ultimately, the entire lot to the divine ground whence it arose.’

‘The collaboration, committed to being-with even in oppositional arrangements, is a vegetal mode of behavior.’

Michael Marder

The soul is a symphony but it is also vegetal, Hildegard says.

Viriditas is the ever being-with of plantlife, growing & adapting from pattern repeating, towards world moving.

‘Life is a green mass, & that which enlivens it is a symphony in green.’

Michael Marder

‘Know that you are a plant & know, furthermore, that your knowledge, hued with a fading green, is the afterglow of vegetal growth.’

Hildegard von Bingen

*Darkling I listen; &
for many a time / I
have been half in love
with easeful Death, /
Call'd him soft names
in many a mused
rhyme, / To take
into the air my quiet
breath; / Now more
than ever seems it
rich to die, / To cease
upon the midnight
with no pain, / While
thou art pouring forth
thy soul abroad / In
such an ecstasy! / Still
wouldst thou sing, &
I have ears in vain—/
To thy high requiem
become a sod.'*

John Keats

*Attention, wholly & truly
given, is where the divine
enters. Divine in the stepping
out beyond the self. In the
clearing of the self for the
other to enter.*

*& cold sweat holds
me & shaking / grips
me all, greener than
grass / I am dead —
or almost / I seem to
me.'*

Sappho

*Lichen walk
September:*

*Early Autumn.
If anything, less green.
Tree trim & air sapfull.
Now more than ever, the
sense of new life from this
gathering.*

*Soilcrack.
What music?*

*'Amado con amada
amada en el / Amado
transformada!'*

*San Juan
de la Cruz*

*We are led into the night,
anxious, stumbling forward,
looking for the other.*

What is this act but love?

*But in the night of meaning,
how to speak of that which
can neither be described nor
addressed?*

*How to bring near that which
is always far?*

*How do we clear the self from
out the way & let in, when
to speak is to speak I?*

Let us Pray.

'The concept of symbiosis (sym-biosis: 'to live together') appeared in the 1860s, & was first based on lichen.'

Vincent Zonca

Lichen Walk

Late September:

Lichen, for so long unclassified, oldest of hybrids, between this & that. Both plant & fungus.

There is peace here, foraging.

Between the focus & the dream.

Over there an area of the green, a place forgotten, sometimes forgotten, of used tissues, cigarettes & condom, the stuff of life perhaps.

I sit off to the side. Between the woodpecker & distant music, may I find the gate?

'Symphonic human spirit is a complex singularity: its constitutive connections (the sym-, or "with," of symphonia) forge links among human beings, phenomena, realities, on the one hand, & between these & an actuality beyond the human, on the other.'

Michael Marder

The Lichen Walk: July

Cicada & leafcrack. Eyes not accustomed to such brilliance. Bright yellow of summer lichen. The colour of its potential. Unique to dryer climates. &, nevertheless, green is where water & sunlight meet.

I wet my hat & neck. Pass the spot where once I collected camomille. Lie & watch the leaves. Try to calm.

My mind deters, here on the grass that carries me & holds me, looking out into a the folded plain of sky, of space unseen & multiple, two paths converging.

Try not to drift.

*Green opens unto itself,
between Word & world
returning, the endlessly
folding field.*

*With attention might we
see, here & here & here, the
gate opening.*

*Viriditas.
Life, you see.*

Gestures towards Viriditas

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