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A NEWSPAPER FOR A LARGER NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE AGE OF MANY HORIZONS

CONFLUENCE OF NINE / ISSUE 02

A return needs a new address

At the Unfinished Quay, one departing household has stopped promising that home will stand still.



The Unfinished Quay, reconstructed: sensory wings above the rooms of a traveling household.

Before leaving

A child keeps a drawing of the old room. The adults revise a return promise: care remains an obligation, while a welcome must be sought anew. Daro Pell attends one household review at the Quay.

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THE LATER WORK HAS WORSE MANNERS

Two constructions, 240 years apart. Yaro Kes refuses to make them reconcile. / 3

THREE TURNS, ONE CLOUD

Fenna and Urel disagree about a very small sky. Plus: correspondence for two speeds. / 4

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A return needs a new address

By Daro Pell

The room in the child's drawing has three windows. The room on the vessel has two. Nobody at the departure review wants the drawing corrected. The child is keeping a picture of the home being left; the adults have been arguing about whether their declaration does something similar, less honestly.

Sovan intends to sail. Ilen intends to stay. Both belong to the household, and both support the voyage. The first declaration offered a reassuring return date. It also assumed that a place at home, a familiar receiving room and the people who made them welcoming would still be ready. Ilen asked for that assumption to come out.

This was one household's review at the Quay, not a decision governing Iriath departures. I read the original and revised declarations, saw the named care allocation and spoke with both participants. The provision for those staying behind survived the revision. What changed was the way the travelers described coming back.

Their new commitment begins with contact. Before attempting bodily return, the vessel will request an appointment in a receiving room whose conditions have been checked at both ends. If that room is unsuitable, another arrangement has to be negotiated. The declaration does not grant the travelers a permanent reservation in somebody else's life.

An Iriath vessel can return carrying organs designed for a place its home companions have never experienced. Familiar light can become painful. A room prepared with love can still be uninhabitable. A message may cross a boundary that a body cannot. These are ordinary limits of contact technology; placing a date beside them does not remove them.

Ilen's objection went further. Even a physically compatible return could arrive at a changed household. Someone might have moved, formed another relationship or become tired of being described as the person who waits. The declaration now promises an approach to that future household, rather than restoration of this one.

Sovan resisted losing the date. A definite return, they argued, helps people plan care, and prevents an expedition from treating continued absence as a private adventure. That objection mattered. The revised text keeps scheduled contact and named responsibilities. It distinguishes the obligation to provide care from an entitlement to be welcomed home in the old manner.

The route budget and the care budget remain separate. A later technical delay cannot silently consume the latter. I could inspect the allocation; I cannot report that future care will work merely because money has been set aside. Nor has this vessel demonstrated that its receiving-room plan will survive a changed route. At last confirmation, it had not departed.

I grew up in an expedition household. Departure paperwork used to seem to me the dull edge of a magnificent undertaking. This review held my attention because the travelers were surrendering a particularly attractive promise: that courage elsewhere would be rewarded with an unchanged place here. They retained something harder to picture, and more useful to the people staying: obligations that do not require affection to remain fixed.

The child put the three-window drawing inside a carrying case. The household kept it. Nobody wrote its dimensions into the return agreement.

Put two clocks beside the promise

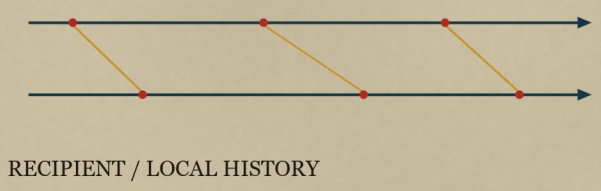
By Neris Vaul

An appointment across unequal rates of experience needs two descriptions: what the sender expects to have lived, and what the receiving community expects to have lived when it can respond. A station can translate timestamps and buffer a message. It cannot make the intervening experiences equal.

The drawing follows two local histories forward. Its connecting strokes represent correspondence, not bodily routes. No length is a measured duration. A reply can be recent to its sender and reach a household whose question has already changed.

This does not make appointments useless. On a stable, calibrated route, a receiving schedule can be dependable enough for care and travel. The useful promise names the schedule, its last confirmation and what happens if contact fails. An apparently exact date without that account offers less precision than it appears to.

Neither clock goes backward. A delayed answer can change what we do next; it cannot arrive before the loss that has already happened.



Whose time pays for patience?

By Mera Senn / Editorial

At the Slow Court, fast participants must fund their own waiting. The rule gives a slow community room to consider an answer without having to answer on somebody else's timetable. It is a substantial achievement.

Money, however, does not tell us whose attention has been pledged. A well-supported delegate can wait while somebody else keeps a household together. Extending a negotiation may be necessary and still consume a life outside the negotiating room.

The answer is not to make slow participants hurry. Ask fast parties to name their provision for care, replacement and rest as clearly as they name their funds. A protection becomes stronger when the people sustaining it can also leave their posts.

The Post should ask the same question of its own long investigations. Paying for an interval is the beginning of responsibility for it.

QUAY 18 / II; received ANCHORAGE 62 / I; last check 62 / III. Vessel not yet departed.

The later work has worse manners

Eren Tal's Two Beginnings is best when its two constructions refuse to explain each other.



Two Beginnings, reconstructed. The tactile response is a separate work, not an equivalent of the hanging pair.

By Yaro Kes / Criticism

The older construction wants you at its centre. Thin honey-coloured ribs turn inward, and every walk around it restores the satisfying impression that you have almost understood its arrangement.

The new work, made 240 artist-local years later, opens a dark split just where that satisfaction ought to settle. I liked the older one immediately. I have spent more time thinking about the new one.

Both hang in a temporary room at the Listening Anchorage. Their maker, Eren Tal, permits the pairing but supplies no story in which an early error ripens into wisdom.

The exhibition title, Two Beginnings, is a useful nuisance. It denies the later work the comfortable position of a final answer.

We are accustomed to Thalen works separated by centuries being placed in conversation. Audiences can become remarkably officious hosts of that conversation.

We want the older artist introduced to the newer one, a grievance acknowledged and perhaps a graceful reconciliation before we go home. Here, the objects decline our hospitality.

The older ribs make a real pleasure. Their precision is not discredited by the later opening.

The new construction uses a related material with a less obedient disposition: surfaces approach, appear to join, then lead the eye through the gap. It would be easy to call this an attack on the old work. That reading spends too much of the new work's energy on somebody else's past.

Try standing where neither construction occupies the centre of the other. The gap begins to look like an invitation to move rather than a missing conclusion.

This is a difference in what the works ask a visitor to do. It does not require a theory about whether Eren remains the same person, and the room's attribution cannot settle that question anyway.

A commissioned tactile response complicates the pairing. Its maker places an opening at a different point in the sequence of surfaces.

Under the hand, interruption arrives after a longer passage than the eye expects. I found it less elegant and more surprising. Calling it a faithful equivalent would erase the choice that makes it worth encountering.

There are costs to the exhibition's reserve. A visitor seeking background gets little help distinguishing a deliberate refusal from a missing explanation.

A short account of materials would have sharpened my first circuit without dictating my judgment. Mystery is sometimes just an artist letting the room staff do the work.

But I would not ask for the missing reconciliation. The pair can offer delight and irritation without being made to represent a healed life.

The older construction still knows how to receive a guest. The later one has learned to leave somewhere for that guest to go.

Seen ANCHORAGE 61 / IV; received 62 / II; installation checked 62 / III.

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Near life / a cloud at play

Three turns, one improbable cloud



Reconstruction of one sealed model and its enlarged image. Inert particles; no inhabited weather.

1 / THE BELLY

2 / THE OVERHANG

3 / THE STRIPE



Three turns, redrawn qualitatively. The same silhouette acquires a possible name.

By Lio Fen / The Near Pages

Fenna made a cloud with a heavy belly and a bright, extravagant rim. Urel gave it a long overhang. On the third turn Fenna added a thin stripe underneath, and everyone looking at the enlarged image saw a sleeping animal. Urel was annoyed. The cloud had been much stranger before it resembled anything.

The game took place in an Anchorage translation workshop. A sealed tabletop model moved inert particles through circulating air; an overhead image made its small turbulence large enough for a few spectators to argue over. Nothing lived in the cloud. Nobody had to learn to breathe somebody else's weather.

Each turn allowed one change to the flow. Predicting the result was part knowledge and part optimistic performance. Fenna's first adjustment produced almost no visible difference. Her second made a curl she had not intended. By the time she claimed responsibility for the animal, Urel had developed an appropriately sceptical expression.

They disagreed about the point of the game. Fenna wanted to make something another player could recognise. Urel wanted the cloud to remain difficult to name. Neither position stopped them borrowing each other's best effects. When the long overhang began to dissolve, both bent toward the controls.

Food and common materials are easy to obtain in much of the Anchorage. An afternoon with someone who notices what you are trying to do is harder to manufacture. That is part of this game's appeal, though it does not account for the quite unreasonable pride people take in a successful curl.

I watched one session, not the founding of a new local craze. It ended without an agreed winner. The cloud thinned, the model cleared, and Urel asked for another turn. Fenna said they could start again if Urel would stop calling the animal an accident.

One game: ANCHORAGE 62 / II; received in the same interval, checked 62 / III. Session ended.

Correspondence for two speeds

Editorial fiction / Seli Ar

From the garden

You asked what I would plant beside the wall. I planted a tree, then moved the wall. Its roots had reached the kitchen. I have a new kitchen now. Please do not feel obliged to answer every earlier question. I would like to know what you cooked this morning.

From the kitchen

I was still looking for the planting sketch when your new kitchen arrived in the post. This morning I burned a flatbread while trying to write you an adequate reply. Here is the inadequate one: it smelled good before it burned. Send the tree as it is today. You need not fit its whole life into the envelope.

This collection closes at ANCHORAGE 62 / IV. Local counters do not describe a present shared by all worlds.