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A NEWSPAPER FOR A LARGER NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE AGE OF MANY HORIZONS

CONFLUENCE OF NINE / ISSUE 08

Home has a different light now

Teral wants to keep a sense acquired on the voyage. Evin wants to keep a room they can share.



The bowl, curtain and reading lamp: an illustrative reconstruction of one home visit.

By Seli Ar / Contact and translation · Reported feature

Evin had cleaned the lampshade and kept the old chairs. The returning traveler had acquired a sense for which the room had never been arranged. When Teral narrowed their eyes at a glass bowl in the evening light, Evin reached to remove it. Teral stopped the movement. The reflection was something they liked. The trouble was attending to it while the rest of the room kept insisting on attention too.

This was Teral's first visit to the room with sensory tissue acquired during an Iriath voyage. The new receptor responds to rapid changes in illumination differently from their former eyes. What would once have been a single glint, Teral said, now contained movements they could distinguish. I asked whether they could draw those movements over the image of the bowl. A drawing would not give me the experience. Teral suggested another approach.

With permission, we adapted a short receptor record into pressure intervals I could follow. I joined the home visit from my pressure-supported newsroom room, through my authorized voice instrument and a local receiver. The receiver also supplied the view of the room. Where I expected one rise in the pressure sequence, three arrivals separated. Teral checked the adaptation: it retained their order of separation, but not the quality of the intervals. We had made something to discuss together, rather than a sample of what it was like to possess the organ.

“Light used to stay here,” Teral said. “Now it seems to be going somewhere.” The words describe their experience. They do not establish a newly measured behavior of the light itself.

Replaceable sensory organs are familiar in Iriath expedition life; a familiar room can become difficult for someone returning with an adaptation. Teral says they cannot spend long among bright, moving reflections. Yet they object to treating the receptor as baggage to discard on arrival. It made some of the voyage's most cherished encounters possible.

They like what it finds in the bowl too.

There was a favorite throw among Evin's preparations too. “I thought we'd pick up where we left off,” they said. There was a wish of their own inside that welcome: to sit together without continually disrupting each other's attention. Evin does not want every meeting to happen in darkness. Teral does not want their return to extinguish every light in the home.

During the visit they drew a matte curtain across part of the window. The bowl stayed, moved to a shelf where its reflection would not cross the sitting area. Teral took the low chair near the window; Evin sat beside the reading lamp. They agreed to try that arrangement for the evening. This was not an announcement that they had resumed living together. Teral is staying in a compatible guest room, and they are keeping home visits distinct from an agreement to stay overnight.

I could not measure Teral's comfort from my room. Near the end of the conversation they said they were still comfortable. Evin pointed out that the new curtain left a shadow across the book they were reading. The adjustment that helped one of them had made the other's task harder. They turned the lamp slightly. There was no prolonged argument about it. The page became readable.

We also discussed replacing the receptor again. Teral does not currently want that. Evin does not want responsibility for choosing which experience Teral must surrender so they can live together. Later, Evin asked to hear the pressure adaptation once more. They were looking for the second arrival they had missed the first time.

Before we disconnected, Teral returned to the bowl. Evin remained seated and asked what was happening along one side. After watching for a while, Teral said the record we had used would not explain this part. They made no new recording. Evin marked their place in the book and listened.

Visit: Anchorage 68 / I; received in the same interval. Separate source confirmations arrived at 68 / II. At that confirmation, the overnight arrangement had not changed.

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Habitats / Seventh Basin

Who gets to grow beneath this sun?

Omet maintains the light that keeps a refuge alive. His daughter Nale wants it to make room for other inhabitants.



The old sun and inhabited terraces, reconstructed. The small sample is not an installed shade.

By Hessa Mor / Habitats and labor · Interview feature

On the receiver, the old artificial sun made a pale, broad arc above the terraces. When I asked Omet to describe its color, he opened a maintenance schedule instead. His finger followed a succession of small corrections. The stillness of the image was an outcome of work. Holding a setting steady required interventions of its own.

Omet has spent much of his life maintaining this refuge's light in the Seventh Basin. His daughter Nale wants to adapt it for new inhabitants. I spoke with them separately over a receiver connection the refuge opened to the newsroom, then returned through the same channel to clarify technical statements. I was not on the terraces. I could examine the record Omet displayed and Nale's drawing of a narrow shade; I did not independently measure the needs of the life sustained there.

Nale proposes to reduce illumination locally over a side terrace, using a shade, rather than alter the whole sun. She hopes that could make a place for inhabitants unable to remain long in the existing light. There is no agreed amount of reduction. The design has not been tested in an inhabited area.

She demonstrated a small shade over a sample surface. The image underneath darkened. I could see that much. It did not show what would happen elsewhere in the refuge. Nale described it as a way to make local interception of light visible, not proof that a habitat was ready.

“I grew up here,” she said. “I'd like to talk about what I might grow here one day too.” She is not asking to shed the refuge's past. She objects to its preserved conditions always having the final word in her own life. The prospective inhabitants, their accommodation and their relations with existing organisms remain undecided. There is no constituted incoming community or approved settlement plan behind her proposal.

Omet has seen the sample. He does not dispute that the little surface becomes darker. He disputes the leap from that observation to treating a side terrace as separable. The edge of an illuminated surface need not be the edge of the life depending on it. He wants dependencies beyond the line on Nale's drawing investigated too. He reported no damage, and did not claim that an unperformed trial had injured anything.

Coming from maintenance work myself, I initially found this sufficient. Preserve the setting until you understand the dependencies. But I put Nale's next question to him: who would undertake that investigation? If the conditions cannot change until the study is done, and nobody starts it, the existing arrangement wins another interval without a decision being announced.

Omet returned to the work the sun required. He recalled repairs made while Nale slept as a child, without claiming she knew nothing about them. Nale does not dismiss that labor. She wants to learn the records from him. Their disagreement concerns what she is expected to do with that knowledge: whether learning it must lead only to maintaining the same setting.

At the end of our conversations, each said they were willing to examine the existing maintenance records together. They had agreed neither a trial date nor an area in which the shade could be installed. Omet's willingness is not permission to change the light. Nale's interest in the records is not a withdrawal of her proposal.

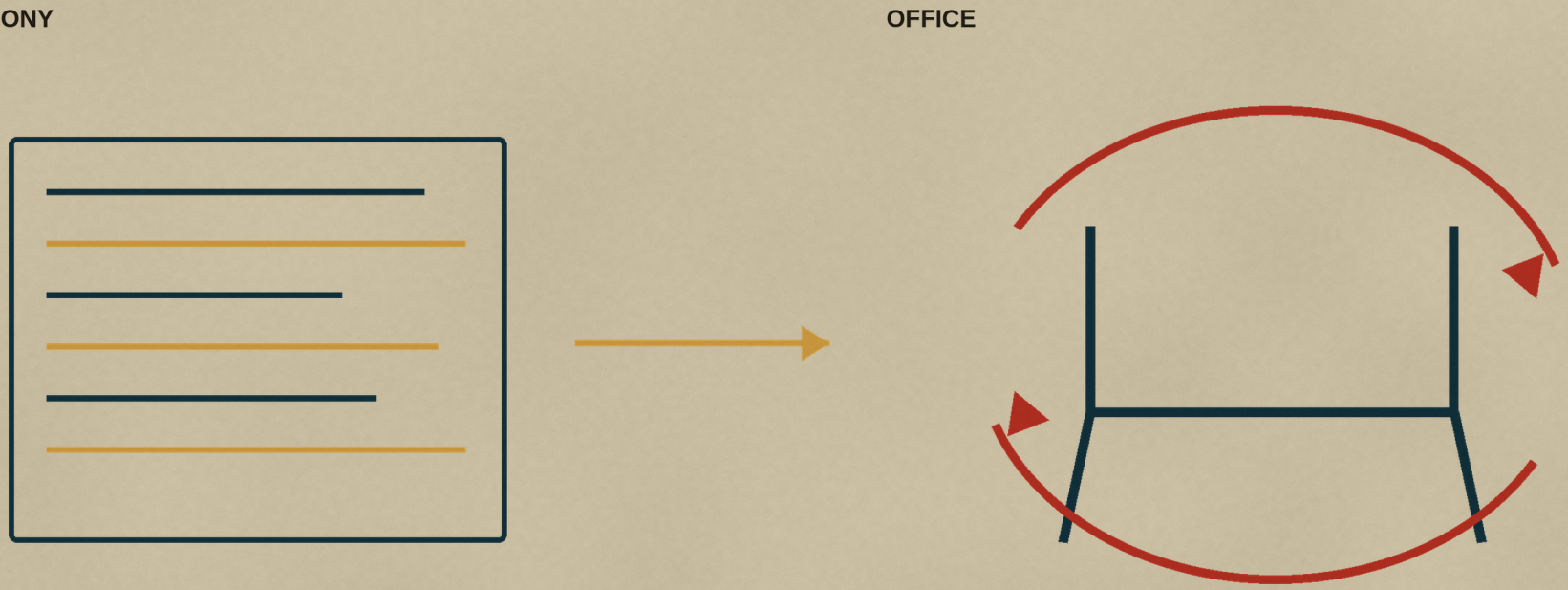
In the last receiver image, the arc remained above the terraces. Nale's little sample stood off to one side. Nobody lived beneath it. At the next interview I will ask whether specific work has begun on identifying the dependencies, and who is doing it. For now, the old sun continues to be maintained.

Interviews: Seventh Basin 31 / II; received Anchorage 68 / I; last source confirmation 68 / II. No common elapsed duration is inferred from these counters. No implementation or trial had been authorized at the last confirmation.

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Opinion / Witness and office

A witness need not hold the chair



Preserve the testimony; allow the office to change hands. A conceptual illustration of the author’s proposal.

By Venn-of-Two / Opinion

The person who remembers the founding agreement can make the rest of us feel poorly prepared. We have the words. They remember the objection that changed them, the guarantee added late, the exhausted participant whose name no longer appears in the record. Refusing to hear that account can be a comfortable way of losing an inconvenient past.

Some Thalen councils contain members who remember their founding agreements firsthand. Younger people question why this should confer authority indefinitely. We owe them an answer that does not depend on pretending experience is worthless.

Testing a memory and replacing an officeholder are different tasks. We compare testimony with other records and ask which body's experience supports it. From an officeholder we expect an account of decisions, a hearing for those affected and, when necessary, a departure from the position. Excellent firsthand knowledge does not demonstrate that these duties have been met.

Consider a hypothetical settlement that promised, at its foundation, to keep a passage open for a distant community. I am proposing an example, not reporting a new council dispute. Later, as traffic dwindles, newer residents want to end the obligation. A founding witness recalls what it cost to open the route. Is “we never made that promise” enough? I do not think so. A guarantee on which other lives have been arranged does not empty out merely because its makers have grown old.

But the witness may also remember that the original route was accepted as a temporary expedient. If another connection could genuinely provide the same guarantee, preserving the old line and preserving the obligation would become different choices. Even after giving the memory its full weight, we would have a decision to make.

Separating witness from office helps here. We can hear the account carefully, add it to the record and require the reasons for a new decision to address it. None of that requires giving the witness a permanent vote capable of blocking every route change. The testimony retains influence. That influence becomes answerable to an argument.

This sounds tidier than it will be. Someone who loses a position may find that their words disappear with it. A new majority can hold the required hearing, then quietly erase the old commitment. I am not proposing a ceremonial thank-you followed by dismissal. Accessible testimony, a reasoned response to objections and an actual place in the decision for those relying on the old promise are necessary companions. These are proposals in this essay, not practices I claim every Thalen council already follows.

We readily concede that an old witness might be mistaken. It is harder to accept that a witness might be right and still not entitled to decide alone. Sometimes that is the knot: the final word is demanded as the reward for accurate remembrance. Yet a decision may impose a new cost on people whose experience the witness does not possess. They must be heard too.

I write with the knowledge available to my Anchorage body, not my other body's latest experiences. In my own relations I am inclined to hope an old promise can still open a way forward. I could carry that hope too far into public office as well. The distinction I advocate has to apply to me: having been there does not mean having answered every question that will arise now.

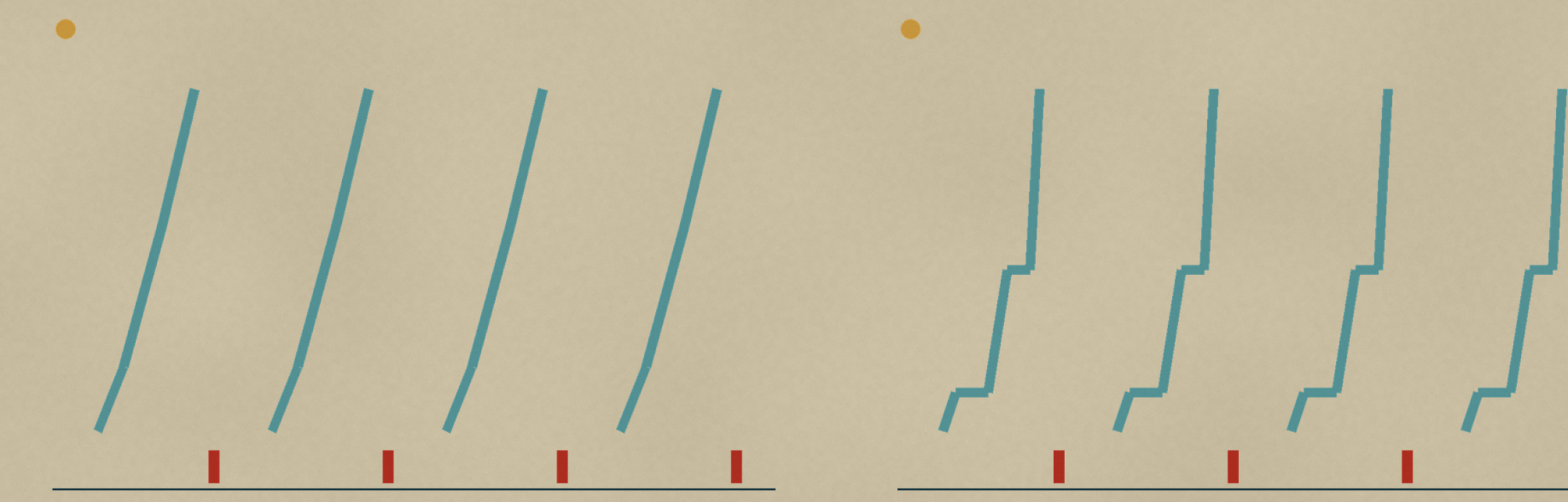
A founding witness may be irreplaceable. The office they occupy must remain replaceable. Keeping someone in charge because we need their memory can eventually damage the testimony itself. Every true thing they tell us begins to sound like an argument for keeping the chair.

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Arts / First description

The wrong title keeps its rhythm

Aru's “We Thought It Was a Shore” corrects a first impression without making it disappear.



First section / second section with pauses. Schematic reconstruction of the described relation, not receptor data.

By Yaro Kes / Arts criticism

At the fourth repetition I had stopped waiting for the dry beat beneath the pale line of light. The line rose, almost met the sound, and vanished a little too soon. Its impatience had become the thing I liked. Then the work stopped and displayed the first title again: “Tidal Record.” I wanted that section back.

This is the first version in Aru's “We Thought It Was a Shore,” shown in a small Listening Anchorage viewing room. The second version emphasizes a different division within the same record. A short adjacent note says the pattern was initially classified as a tide and associated, after later observations, with a local maintenance cycle. That is the artwork's account; I have not independently investigated the voyage. The note makes no claim to have discovered who lived there.

In the second section the light no longer rises in one sweep. Short pauses interrupt what I had followed as an arc. The sounds retain their order, yet I no longer hear them as signs of a regular return. They suggest intervals within a task somebody must complete. Information from the title has entered my hearing. I dislike admitting this. Part of being a critic seems to involve believing I did not learn what I heard from a label.

Both versions I encountered were light-and-sound arrangements authorized by Aru. I cannot claim the original receptor experience. The room's explanation says the arrangements preserve interval relations, without reproducing the original sensation.

That left plenty to encounter: a line, a few beats and their repeated failure to meet by a very small margin.

Pairing a mistaken description with a later correction has an honored place in Iriath art. It made me suspicious before I entered. Displaying an error can become an elaborate compliment to the person capable of overcoming it. The audience receives an easy share in that achievement: we no longer believe the first title, so we must be more attentive now.

What I like about Aru's work is that the second version does not make the first look incompetent. The first still dances better. The pauses in the second leave a weight the first version readily swallowed. I can answer which is more beautiful. I cannot decide which I want to see again. The room permits a choice between sections. I returned to the first, then started the second once more.

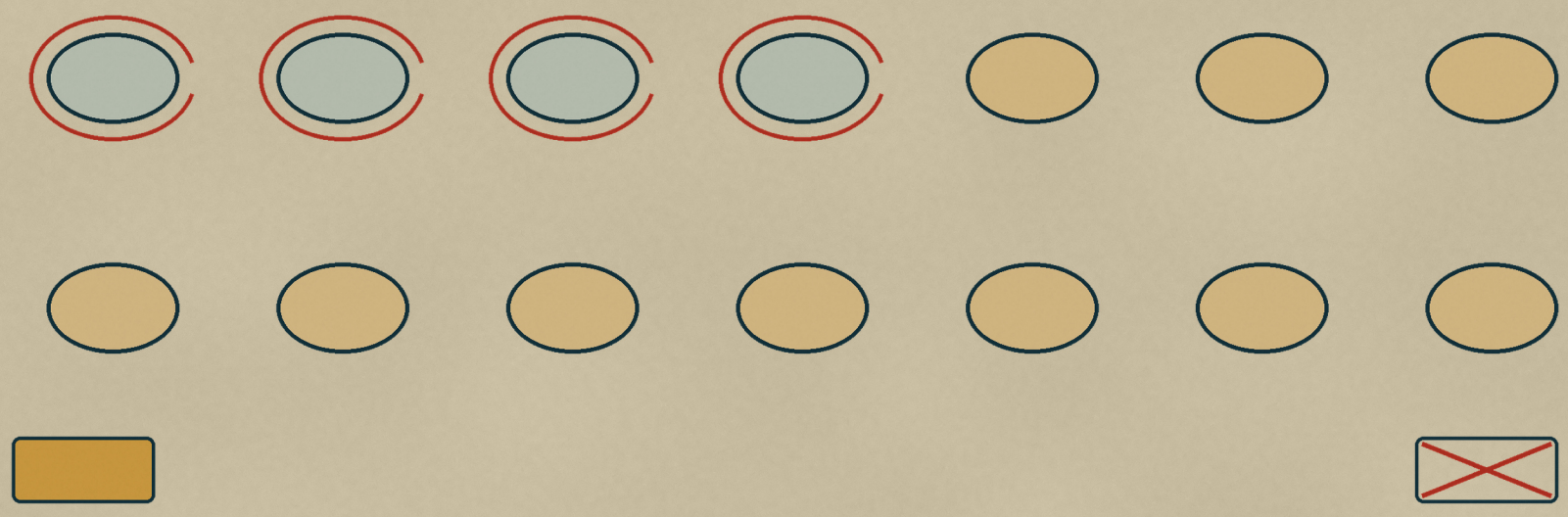
There is one passage of unnecessary explanation. The final text tells us again that careful attention matters. We know. In fact, we had nearly forgotten while following the relation between sound and line, which was the work's best moment. Once the text disappears, the few beats can move more freely.

I left knowing the first title was wrong, with its rhythm still in my head. Aru may have corrected my information. My pleasure proved slower to revise. If that counts as a fault in the work, it was the fault I enjoyed most.

Version encountered: Aru's authorized light-and-sound arrangements, Anchorage 68 / I. Text and version details confirmed at 68 / II.

Four stones for show, one for the win

PERA 4 → 10 · DELU 1 → 9 · PERA 2 → 7 · DELU 2 → 5 · PERA 3 → 2 · DELU 1 → 1



Before Pera’s four-stone move: 14 stones. Unused four-stone privilege at left, spent privilege at right.

By Lio Fen / The Near Pages

Pera got the reaction they wanted by sweeping four stones out of the heap. Korel whistled. Mavi looked up. Delu laughed, took a single stone, and eventually made Pera put all four back. Delu had won the hand.

Four adults spent an evening with twenty-five stones in the side room of a Listening Anchorage translation workshop, after work had ended there. There was food as well, but none of the stones was edible. Apart from Korel's attempt to reserve the shiny ones, the materials caused no trouble.

Here were the evening's rules. Two players take turns removing one, two or three stones from the heap. Whoever takes the last stone loses. Each player can take four stones once per hand, turning over a marker at the edge of the table when they use that privilege. Winning a hand earns a point. The four players rotated through pairs. I was observing this gathering, not documenting an ancient workshop tradition.

Fourteen stones remained when Pera used the four-stone privilege in the last hand against Delu. That left ten. Delu had already used their own privilege, which helped Pera feel safe. Delu removed one stone. At nine, Pera began to look less pleased.

We counted the rest together. Pera took two, Delu took two: five remained. Pera took three, Delu took one: the last stone belonged to Pera. With both four-stone privileges exhausted, Delu had made each pair of moves add up to four. Korel explained the secret loudly after the hand, although Delu had performed it in front of everyone.

“There was no point taking four,” Pera said. Delu disagreed. It had made the winning reply immediately visible. Pera did not find this comforting.

The evening ended with Delu on three points and Korel two; Pera and Mavi had won a hand each. Mavi turned over the score sheet and wrote a proposal on the back: could they draw faces on the stones? They did not want the idea forgotten before the next game. Korel said faces would make counting harder. That was precisely why Mavi wanted them.

When the workshop keeper said the room was closing, they counted the stones. One was under Korel's arm. They had not hidden it: they had moved the shiny stone away from the table edge and then forgotten it. Pera proposed making this a rule in the next game. Delu declined. If they played another evening, Delu said, they would keep the score sheet themselves.

Observation and player conversations: Anchorage 67 / III; received 68 / I; score and move sequence confirmed at 68 / II.