

*We live on slow, inexorable moving footpaths, thousands of metres beneath our feet.*¹

Aileen Murphy
*Crackers for
Lorelei*

A group of Surrealists sit around a table and play a game: write or draw something, obscure it by folding the piece of paper, then pass it to the next person to do the same. Repeat. End by opening up the paper to improbable results. They call the game *Exquisite Corpse*, a phrase the game itself throws up: ‘le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau’.² (The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine)

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By such methods a car can grow legs (*Triple Midnight*), its wheels turn blue and liquid like spray paint. Fold an image on a piece of paper and suddenly one geometric plane turns to two, three, four, five ... Forget what they taught in school of one-point perspective, the world is of infinite creases and folds.

In *Grotto* a sea-green flood of water is both background and foreground. A suggestion of sun rises and sets. Two yellowish legs split out from a separate place altogether (one foot hinged inward, doll-like). A human figure that figures its opposite: the doll, automaton, waxwork – shell without body or life.

In *The mathematics of shoe boxes*, too, the body comes in doll-parts, three laughing heads more object than subject, more background than foreground. Nestled among pink folds, their patches of painterly skin-hues do more to flatten than to bring them to life.

something there somewhere outside
the head³

Yet, to quote Gertrude Stein, ‘there is no there there’.⁴ Try opening the door in *Pocket* and it’ll collapse into folds of paper. No inside or outside, nowhere to go.

A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern. The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold, not the point.⁵

So forget vanishing points, a stable grid laying it all out. Instead find portals, doorways. *À la sauce Robert* opens up into separate containers of space – look to the left tree stump, a little trapdoor of yellow. A minute mark comes to rupture all else. Balloon, collapse, flood. A kind of sea-sickness.

The Lorelei rock on the Rhine after which the Siren is named, luring boats to destruction.

Stone, stone, ferry me down there.⁶

¹ Michel Serres, *The Five Senses*

² André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*

³ Samuel Beckett, ‘Something There’

⁴ Gertrude Stein, *Everybody’s Autobiography*

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*

⁶ Sylvia Plath, ‘Lorelei’