
Downloaded from
https://kar.kent.ac.uk/52911/ The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from
https://www.antennebooks.com/books/transmission-annual-hospitality

This document version
Author’s Accepted Manuscript

DOI for this version

Licence for this version
UNSPECIFIED

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record
If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher’s web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts
If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) ‘Title of article’. To be published in Title of Journal, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries
If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party’s rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies).
I remember the coming revolution a bit differently. The beasts I knew when I was young, the ones I hope to see again, were not savage but ‘wild,’ and the squirrel – she was always naturally an aristocrat, red ribbon or no. It’s not about social class, ideology, not even the superego, but an older, Greeker notion of the good, opened up to name a set whose contents are not determined in advance. Whose shade would you like to have lived in? What, in yourself, would you prefer to have been haunted by? The word ‘aristocrat’ was born in 1789 and hasn’t gone out of date yet. Only it’s not about genealogy. It’s about who we want to follow. Stoat in a red hat tries to loom over, take up a dominant position. His shadow bounces harmlessly off the wall.

Skiagraphia. Shadow-writing or shadow-painting. Stoots don’t like words, unless they can use them like sawn-off branches to stand on and make themselves look big. They don’t care to go sniffing after signifiers as if they were fellow living creatures, nor do they cultivate grace in flight. They don’t read. Not even Marx. They don’t avail themselves of those ‘circumstances transmitted from the past’ that pertain to texts. They aren’t that into writing, preferring to make a mark in other ways. Squirrel sits in the shadow of ... not the guillotine ... not the stoat ... she lives in the shadow of nothing but her own tail. Her name was once skiouros, ‘shadow-tailed,’ from skia, ‘shadow’ (though it also means ‘spectre,’ as in the dual meaning of modern English ‘shade’) and oura ‘tail,’ from an Indo-European root *ors, meaning ‘buttocks, or backside’ (the same root gives us Anglo-Saxon ‘arse.’) So the squirrel is capable of skiagraphia. It’s true that her nut-shaped head and her sharply bright little eye are involved, but she writes thanks to that pretty but undeniably backside tail. People sit down to write; she does the same thing differently. She has a nut - just one: no more than she can carry in one paw. Not everyone can crack a nutshell. She will secrete this one. Bury it and immediately forget where she left it. Hardly the great accumulator. So many trees owe their flourishing to her anonymous squirrelling and preserving!

When she climbs and plays up in the branches, up at the top, down on the ground, tree to tree like a free runner (best done where squirrels are not stuffed and mounted and where branches are left uncut): her movements are like writing in the air, like Picasso making his signature with a sparkler but far more extensive. Her movements, or is there another one – they follow each other so closely, so quickly sometimes – are improbably fast. She is absolutely, entirely committed to the curves, loops and leaps of an appearing-disappearing movement that has only the barest relation to gravity. At rest, if you can call it that, her eyes look off to the side. Stoat has a red hat, showy accessory for a season, not too far from a crown, a city bowler, a judge’s wig. Squirrel has a red coat. She can text with her little hands. She can climb ‘up and down horizontally’ like Derrida in his attic full of books. She will not be parted from her body until death: but where is she? Is she really where we see her?

Sarah Wood is a journal editor, academic writer, university teacher and is doing a psychoanalytic training. Her most recent book is Without Mastery: Reading and Other Forces (EUP, 2014).