

Linda Stupart

*Notes towards a performance*

When they bathed, they said, black specks and white crystals emerged from their skin.

In the beginning, it was just a persistent itch that wouldn't go away, but soon it felt as if thousands of creatures were crawling under their skin. And so they named them with the others: 'fiber', 'crystal', 'lesion' 'nano wires', 'nematode', 'worm'.

Next, the crystal proteins, which are attached to nano wires, emerged out of the body as they watched on in horror. They started to spend long evenings with a home microscope examining the objects exiting through suddenly porous skin. The microscope turned each fiber into a giant sea creature, or a snake. The microscope also turns each crystal into an image, so that they looked, for the first time, at themselves from the outside.

I had crystals with and without black...though they may have broken off as I scraped the crystals out of the wounds.

It took at least 2 weeks to clean a wound out by scraping and picking.

First the amber crystal...then the clear granular pieces migrating to wound. then the sand like white powder, through the skin pores with the protein gel, when skin rubbed...then the black root/sliver...profuse bleeding until fully removed and instantaneous stopping of blood flow when sliver out....very difficult to get out.

After a few weeks they can't sleep because they're too busy watching their skin for signs of life under its surface. They're scared to eat in case the bugs are being planted into their food. Weeping sores start appearing all over their body where they've used long fingernails to gouge out the fibres and crystals inside, each one recorded in a specimen slide in a drawer. On the first day that they wake themselves vomiting, they take the images from the slides under the microscope to their father, who is also an accomplished medical doctor. I am sick, they said. I have brought you proof in these fibres and crystals and pieces of tech and animal and string. Here, look in this microscope, where the images become clear.

Proof, He said.

This is only proof, He said, of your loneliness

Of your madness.

Of your inability to properly produce your own boundary integrity.

That your systemic fucking of animals is messing with your head.

Who are you to bring an *image* of creatures emerging from your skin, when I am the maker of images (their father is also an accomplished male artist, a master) and the builder of flesh?