

LUBOV

Lorenzo Bueno

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There is a place in my body that stores all I have felt and seen, a sumptuous palace of memories built on sensation and images I can access as desired. The palace is also a castle and fortress designed for protection and living, with strategically placed towers, fortified gatehouses, and a bailey that encloses the courtyard with dwelling structures, from the great hall to the dungeon. I metabolize rooms in slow succession, front to back and back again, retracing my steps.

The castle is not always welcoming; sometimes painted jet black, shit brown, and gold, dragging me along the edges, scraping my knees on toothed paper and rock. At times I'm seduced by the rooms of royal purple flecked magenta, brilliant and studded with rhinestones that sparkle at high noon.

The castle is the cerebral container, an opulent brain enclosed by walls of skin, fluid, flesh, and bone. At the core is the keep, a central tower and stronghold fortified by memory, the tallest structure, the last line of defense, an intricate gilded center, the cerebellum.

The brain is an opulent repository, a landscape of the self, abject and sacred. It is aspirational, referential like a city, intimate up close, and antagonistic from afar. My castle and I negotiate meaning over time while my hands trace the crenels and merlons: gaps and solid blocks on top of walls. The wind echoes through the corridors, and I lap up the velvet air like a dog in heat, indexing its every part.

The castle is both fantasy and defense, akin to how I feel about sex, laid about boiling over, an abundant and embodied translation of material collected along the way. It is a capital and relic, a destination where humility drums through pleasure. With sweaty palms and mouth ajar, I file away each encounter, an ordering of saturated memories, shored up like rocks, wet from the tumble, bright and unbridled until dry.

—Claire Sammut, March 2024.

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