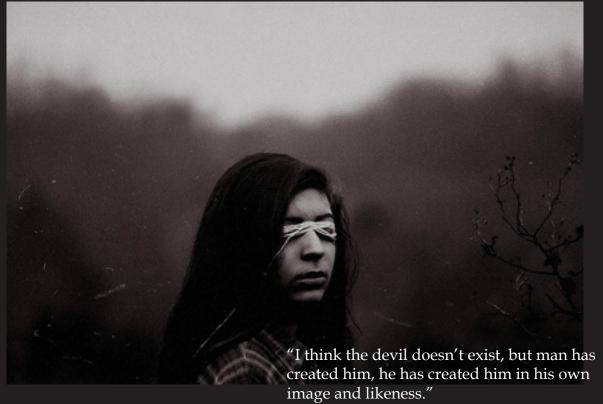
## An etymology of desire: de sidere, from the stars



Fodor Dostoevsky

EMILY LYNN COOK

We rage for more, more, more, like tigers against the dawn:

we don't want stripes, we want to hang in the sky

like lanterns for thousands, and we want to be dawn forever.

These are our dreams.

smooth.

these are our fences – these are the summer days

so fleeting, fluid with colour in the moment, frozen crystalline in the memory, stiff and dull if we rush the dawn to fade to day, to evening, to dusk.

I let those summer days and tiger-dreams steal me away, once —
I let them in too close —
they tottered in like small children, with little damp hands
still cold from sleep and rain,
with promises fierce like roars,
and I let them pull me, step by step,
so I almost thought I was leading them
into a soft world, soft and eternal as the dawn,

Such are the seductions of promise-dreams; they purr into the last moments of the night.

with throaty promises rounding the edges

The world grew louder, and their hands with eager and childish passion turned the green to heady smells and the coolness to rain that rolls a smooth lake into pummeled, hot aluminium all the sweet and distanced promise turned into balmy, weighted dreams, dreams that while full in their beauty rub too heavy against my wrists or wall me in, stormfront before me, cloudless heat behind, bordering out dreamless longing. The dreams become fences never crossed, and the dreams that come after the fences are forever in the burnt-over land, unusable and rusting and roaring in the heat, casting their ripeness to the sky always for sweet-smelling, never for eating.

And there is no frontier, no Great Wide Open, no overgrown Somewhere, no Let's Hit The Road Baby or melodic, careless haze, only Here and There.
Gone are the stars of yesternight, of colourless blue-white,

of cold winter – long dead is the spring. Summer heat rolls between the fences; it drags me with it.

And yet, still — who lets a heavy lull preclude an aimless wandering? Who halts the wandering before it roots your very desires out of reach, in the wind? Dogs are happy to chase their tails, but not we:

we chase the dawn, the wind, we roar like tigers forever clawing at our stripes:

little do we know they're our only stars.

## Author's Note

In this poem, I wanted to explore how desire influences perception on a very fundamental level, and from there observe how desire and perception create dreams of the future. These dreams of the future can sometimes be positive and at other times negative; sometimes pushing us on towards better things, sometimes blinding us to all the complexities around us. Often, we would see these complexities if we took a small step away from our own desires and a larger step towards desire itself: the urge to embrace something, even if that something is unexpected.

I believe that this relates to anthropology in that an anthropologist has to be able to distance him or herself from self-oriented desires in order to see the structures and perceptions and motivations of another clearly. This would then, ironically, teach the anthropologist more about how desire and longing work in everyone, including his- or herself. Also, every society has its own hierarchy of desire, which in turn impacts the kinds of dreams and limitations its members are encouraged to pursue.

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