

The Field
by Bella Convertino

Where to begin?

The beginning is surely too far away. It takes place in different worlds, under separate skies and sundry weather. The middle is elusive, entirely dependent on the end. And seeing how the end is always least expected, there is nowhere to begin but some place in between.

The between place is a field. The field is not heaven or hell; it is just as awful and regular as any weekday. But there is an abnormal quantity of light, and pictures are encouraged. They are understood as an expression of need. We heard about this between place, and thought it sounded nice. We thought we ought to find it. We arrived one by one, and the field grew to accommodate all our looking. It became a field of vision. Where one looked, another looked, too, and in these patches of shared sight, the field was made supple and infinite. With a camera in our hand, we find ourselves unable to stop.

It's not that we have to stay here. It's not that one less picture means the tomb. But to leave the field is to concede desire itself; it is far better to stay than to stop wanting. The world seems to understand this. By some good will, its days and details regenerate, sharing in our medium of endurance. Again, the photographer approaches their subject: *I love you. Thank you. I'm sorry. Can I see what it looks like if you—?*

This is a tender appeal, and it surely wears over time. It may appear formless, a collection of apologetic tones, selected for some reason long ago when the photographer began to perceive the consequences of their wanting. To want is an exquisite and heavy thing, but to want through images is an even more sensitive ballast. The very reason for it all can thin in the sustained exertion of making, of making until time stops. We've heard of this threat of artistic entropy in Macbeth's soliloquy, *Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow*. In its third repetition, 'tomorrow' collapses into total abstraction, existing as nothing but sound. How terrifying. How beautiful. Quick, the camera.

On the periphery of the field, there is a small and secreted hope for a quaint conclusion: the purchase of a home, the growing of a garden, the last debt paid. These are common dreams of resolution, of the edge. But as we have learned, the field is a variation on infinity. At its perceived rim, another expanse unfolds. How beautiful. How terrifying. Hurry, before the light fades.

Us ten photographers, at the end of our second year, at the cusp of the third thing. Are we at risk of formlessness? Of a pale and furious future? No, I do not think so. Even in its collapse, 'tomorrow' is conserved as sound; sound is a unit of time; time is a current in the infinite field. If anything—if anything at all—we are at the edge of the possibility space.

My friends, good things come in threes.

First Breath
Second Sight
Third Beginning