
ingress

Kate Morgan

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abstract

Ingress is a series of essays about relation. Different conceptions of ingress are explored to facilitate a text that at its core is self reflective.

The period of time the writing covers and the site of writing are both emphasised as important. As the work progresses the focus is increasingly held by (and moves further into) the interior domestic space where it was written — a phenomenology of the close at hand.

Ingress presents an oblique narrator, with positionality, perspective and personal pronouns shifting flagrantly, sometimes within the space of a sentence. This instability exemplifies the pivoting nature of the piece, as well as its preoccupation with gender and non-binary identity, and how this relates to the bodied experience. Embodiment in the work is often oblique – the narrator is concerned with finding proofs for their self via inference: via nature, contact, objects, materials, light.

Ingress approaches its subject by prioritising the lived experience as primary (re)source. This close attention to the everyday, however, is drawn through with research, which functions to accompany and enrich the quotidien, much as culture interacts as supplement to daily life. This citational practice freely appropriates quotations within the space of the text, while also demonstrating intimacy with those cited, especially in the two middle essays, which write actively *via* practitioners.

Ingress uses this framework to consider themes of relationality: of the self, intimacy, the emotional, gender, material, queerness, attention.

ingress

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A bee backed out of a lily trumpet.
A turtle walked resolutely across the path,
shifting attitudes of attention.

– Robert Glück, *Margery Kempe*

I suspect that the body...might not be
co-equivalent with materiality, that my body
might be deeply connected to, if not be,
language.

– Kathy Acker, *Bodies of Work*

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it's all always about water ingress anyway

You've said it before, in a kind of dramatic plumbing-related aphorism: that it all always comes down to water ingress anyway, and here, too, that was the case. It's been raining a lot, you know. To add to this, the sprinklers, whose tall stems rise up from down there, spit across in a rotary, compete with the straight down of the rain. Water is pooling where it shouldn't, out in the library courtyard. Something, not-water, is causing a blockage somewhere.

They've had four people out to look at it. The first used his bare hands, then left and returned with a short blue plunger. Already they'd brought out two wooden brooms, one: the kind that's wide set and has the handle-brush joint stabilised by metal braces, the kind you can put weight into, the other: short, light, just good enough for dust, its soft bristles a soft fringe by use. He lows to stroke the broom against the drain, as though it moves water. Which, it does...to a degree. The broom, despite taking a form full of gaps, does manage to put some pressure on the mass. It causes a kind of discontented wave then settles quickly back to its original

shape. He urges the water and grit across the gutter, pressing hard down, guiding it where it knows to go already. It knows the way, but there is something in the way.

Later, a new person comes out with a different plunger, a sort of turbo one. This extra strength plunger, *The Rothenberger*, works. The person with the small broom still runs it across the pavingstones, moving the water away only for it to drain, draw, back, down, through. Those who are left watch the water flow down together. This passage of them watching is calm. Their actions, now, become less haphazard, settling, each, into distinct tasks. One person demonstrates the successful method for someone else who didn't witness it, holding the turbo plunger against the tiles of the courtyard. Then, they are both brushing the space, the narrow broom skirts the edge of the building, outlines it. The wood knocks against the wall beneath the window from out of which you are watching. It knocks and goes straight through — the sound. They are brushing leaves around the courtyard, up and out of the gutter, and into a tall close arrangement, edging up to a loose stack of cement floor tiles. Someone comes back and has fashioned a grid to go over the drain itself. He secures it in place and steps back. They are working together — you could call them 'team' — they bear the same emblems on their black polo shirts. They are wearing fresh new denim, it seems

incongruous (!) but it is true. The denim looks supple, is still an assertive blue, just yet to be dulled. Instead of picking up the leaf pile, they shift one of the cement tiles down from the stack to cover it, so it rests on a diagonal against the pile. A little habitat, maybe. *That's not going anywhere.*

Now, the next day, a different man is out there, has a bin bag with a good filling of something already, so that it's standing up of its own stead. He's got gloves on and is pulling up grit and clumps of the plane trees' leaves, crudding it out first with a flat painter's scraper, the kind with a side notch. He runs this, angled, along the tiles. You can hear the scrape, but not so loud as if he were over here nearer your side of the yard. He hasn't yet cleared, or even registered, that hidden pile of leaves — maybe he doesn't know. You eat lunch out front, thinking all the time that you're missing a view on the action of that contained courtyard, but, in the end, — don't.

You are there eating with S, talking, you watch someone, their head a head of dyed tight curls, with a lilac wheeled cart, enter the building. They exit a minute later loaded up with some tiles from the courtyard stack. You recognise them, fondly? They tip these into a new pile outside. This repeats. You see they've gone and bought a pressure washer, too. It is brand new. They wheel it in, up the ramp and through the entranceway. Then, you pass it on its trolley as it

waits for the lift to get up a floor. You walk. Now, up, outside again, someone lifts it out of the box, '*Titan*', and prods their finger through the thin clear plastic. They inspect the gun part, and the tubes to which the gun might attach, coiled there near the top. Something is stiff: it doesn't readily uncoil. The person unpacking finds a cable tie that's binding it in place, and you watch as he thinks on it, pulls a chain of keys from his pocket...then reconsiders, leaves the cable tie unsnapped. Tries again with the force of a hand. Then again gets out his keys. He holds a square tag, a keychain, you can't quite make out what, palmed, as though it's the handle of a blade, and the key shoots out from beneath his thumb and a finger. He abrades this, in a sawing motion, across the cable tie. It doesn't break. He sits, then, and tries from this new angle, from this position where he needn't expend other energies, can commit more to the motion. He manages. Still with the keys in his left palm, he unspools the tube from its runners: it is a juddery thing. Now, the man who'd used his bare hands yesterday is approaching with his lunch, a filled half baguette. You look him directly in the eye. He sits, he watches, too, as the wand gets attached to the tube...

Someone's got it working now and is adding water back into the situation. The pressure washer's been hooked up to a tap somewhere and shoots the stuff out. Your body braces for the shudder of it on the lower part of the glass wall (you

know that sound travels through it like anything, like yesterday).

He has the best job, the one with the wand, the triggered wand that power-cleans — cleans so well that you can see where you've been, you can watch as the water works to lighten the floor, as the grit goes. You can draw lines of clean. Now he has his right hand (the less dominant, the one on which he wears his paper wristband, same as yours), out flat, a straight arm, against the sculpture (a Paolozzi, all dull grey and calm, lateral and not) and uses his left to hold the wand. He is cleaning just the base, which is a kind of cast cement, but I worry he will move on to the sculpture — get ahead of himself. He does, and as it happens (!) the metal gives over its own pleasing hollow frequency. He gives it a wide stroke. He's moved to the other hand, now, perhaps the trigger grip was getting too much? Switches back, steadies the barrel again. I'm sure there's a locking feature on there, but his hand is pent up in the grip. There is an upright line between his brows.

You think about how they've set to cleaning the courtyard, how their energies have been focused here for one reason, but have now broadened to find new areas to which to commit some time, but are more concerned with the knowledge of what *he's* not realised. He had started with cleaning the floor tiles, and began with a line of three, singly

each. Then crossed up, did the three alongside those first three. He's not realised, though, since doing that set of six so well, how desirable the effect of the combination of close range and a direct perpendicular angle is. He has lost that stillness that was in his face on those firsts, is using his wrist more, being flippant with it, nonchalant — he has forgotten he has the best job of all of them.

to be watertight

Ingress is actions of pulling in, of soaking up and release, saturate and unsaturate, entrance and exit, ingress, egress. All egressions are also ingressions; all ingress is egress from somewhere else. To be watertight is a fallacy. This text is often at once in both places, is both in places. It is all ingression, is a sponge, is green wood. Is changeable, flippant, and cultivates (does not prune) such changes of mood and mind.

This text is aware of the bodies that write it and the bodies that read it, and of how its body is different, wets differently. Voices are: the text, you, and they, sometimes *I*, infrequently *we*. *They* is often singular, though sometimes it's plural, and sometimes this distinction is not clear.

Eileen Myles says you need to say something more than once to feel it.¹ They say that that is how you build muscle. The writing and the thinking here is got to by repetition, by serial acts. By holding something warm over months, you speak to and of it differently with time: it shines, but also slims, by handling, by dwelling. To restate slightly differently tells us something about language, too, which the text cares about.

In Roni Horn's series *You Are The Weather*, a woman is photographed in Iceland, in different locations, lightings, weathers, in different pools of liquid. Often there's water on her face. You are close in to her, she looks at you. Her face is different always, like the weather is. The text reads that a character in Proust says they have become 'an animated barometer myself.'² The text thinks maybe its role is to be a barometer to other things: the liquid, the emotional, time. My nana Hazel said that one only had to look at me to know what sort of day it was going to be. And that your face, mood always evident on it, determined, in a way more active than a bright sunny day, if everyone would have a good day. That I was like the weather, or the sun.

Here in Glasgow, where the text is from, the weather is very present, though it does not bother the text. In fact there's often an inverse relationship between the warmth of a day and the text's expansion, lengthening, sharpening, muddying. In this city the weather is both an interior and an exterior force. It effects enclosed spaces, it affects your mood, it ingresses, as liquid, as coolness. It reveals difference, makes clear the temperature divide: here and out there through the window. Moisture in the air beads and sags across the inside of the window panes on cold mornings. This condensation makes the

text uneasy, is not ingress or egress, but a *coming forward*, an *unveiling*, a pushing through to the visible. This text thinks condensation is a deviant form of ingress, and pursues that.

Quotidian serial activities link to liquid changing hands. Mark time, colour it. Site us, body us. The text has spangled arms like you do. It *comes through* a body, it *lives in* a body.

The text needs water to survive. Feels keenly the way water is coerced towards it. How it comes in indirect ways, not a straight line in from Loch Katrine. The text feels the rate of decreasing altitude, ten inches a mile, of water getting to it from the loch, and how this is linear, narrative, even though that's only six and a half metres of a drop in total from there to here. The text knows that water knows it must flow downstream, as it knows that its end will be after its beginning.

This text knows that ingress is often uncoerced. Uninvited, in fact. That these buildings, all infrastructure, that support the forming of the text, are also sponges, take in (water) without scrutiny. That the sandstone drinks up the acute rain. I am bristling all the time. In this, the text bristles for ingress all the time. This text is an attempt to satisfy and interpret both of these states.

