

She Would Be the First Sentence of My Next Novel

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Translated by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood

She would be the first sentence of my next novel. This thought crossed her mind as she started writing her paper for her lecture.

She had been thinking about her next novel for over a year now. The novel would take shape around that which, now enigmatic inside her, would unfold in a few months, majestically like a long metaphor for life or cruelly, following the rhythm of consciousness which would leave nothing to chance. She loved this state of being, signalling new dimensions, this state that made her vulnerable but always asserted itself like a sign of hope. A sure sign that everything she had lived, thought or read would find continuation and that, in the unspoken space of the next novel, she might succeed in piercing some secret of the human condition which so far had remained indecipherable. For the moment, there was euphoria without story, a myriad images worth a thousand stories, veiling the story. Whenever a story element was about to take shape, she would let the form be for a moment, and then, if this form changed into a subject, she would make note not of the subject but of the way in which the form had transformed itself.

And so the subject of her next novel could escape for months, haunting and inaccessible. A subject that always seemed close and faraway like the visual imprint of an elusive world, buried in the breathtaking number of semantic permutations, lost in the immensity of space and of the species, an infinitely precious world which consciousness would attempt to reinsert into language or to imagine it, in its so far, unspoken version.