

**The square was wept
by heavy winds. I held
a paper sheet, on
which a plastic card
was glued.**

**It was
labeled
Amazon,
and bore
a QR
code.**

**Oh, you are
one of those...**

**We've been paying
researchers with gift
vouchers for a year
now.**

**I can help
you set up
an account
if you need.**

**The tone of her
voice was slowly
shifting from
polite**

**and gentle
to dry**

**and
patronizing.**

YEAH.

**You do
have**

**a PayPal
account,
right?**

Oh God,

**you're not
making this
easy...**

I guess,

**you don't want
to simply give
it up, right?**

not social,

I'm

if social means social networks.

Faceless



It wouldn't be fair to deprive

all the other kids

from group pictures

Faceless

Turns out

my daughters had been

the only kids carrying large emoji faces

all over the network.

Faceless

THE FIRST ONE
SAID:

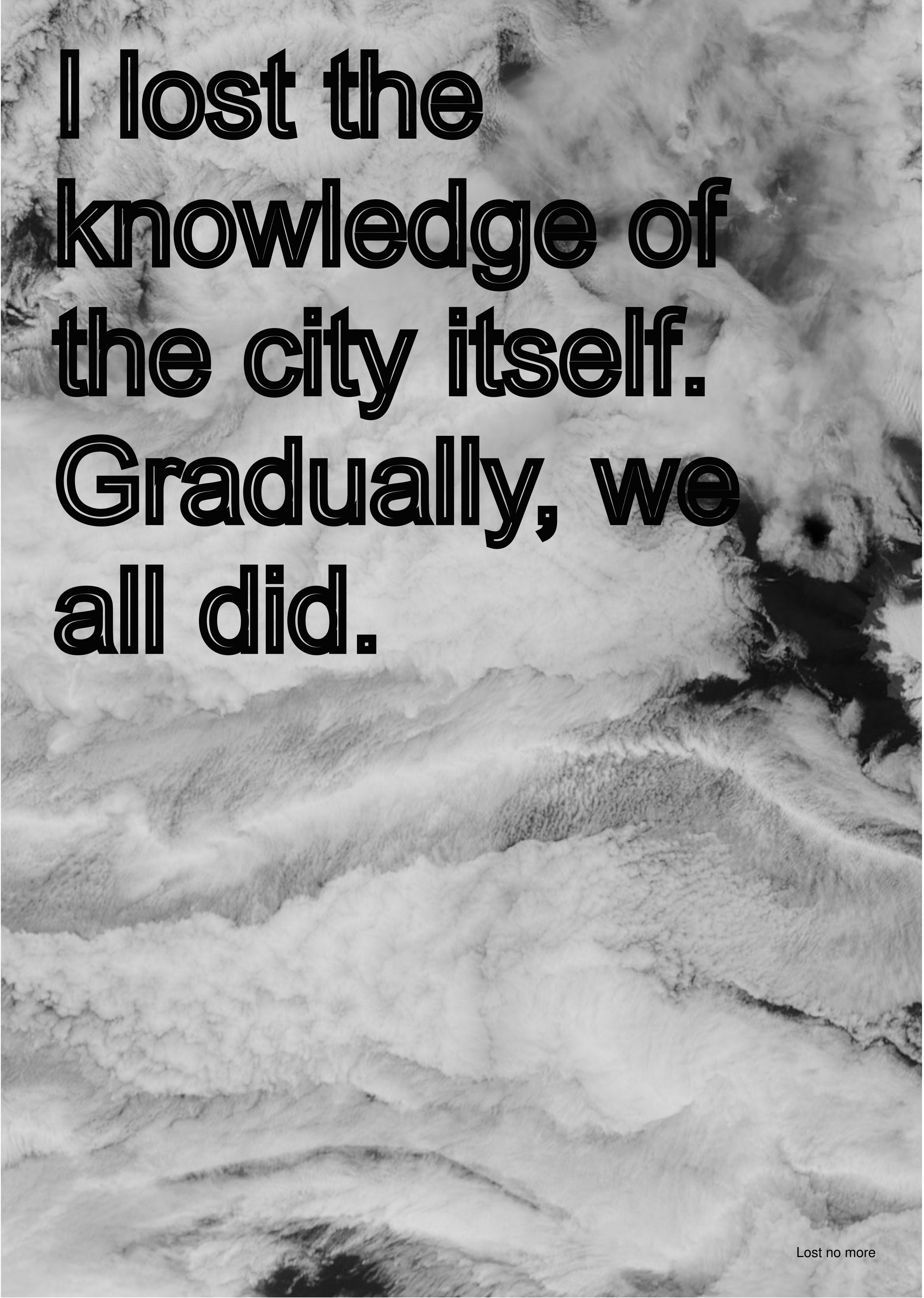
"I ONCE HEARD,
BUZZZZZZZZZZ I WROTE
A RAVING REVIEW
ABOUT PLASTIC
BOTTLES."

I ONCE HEARD,
SAID:

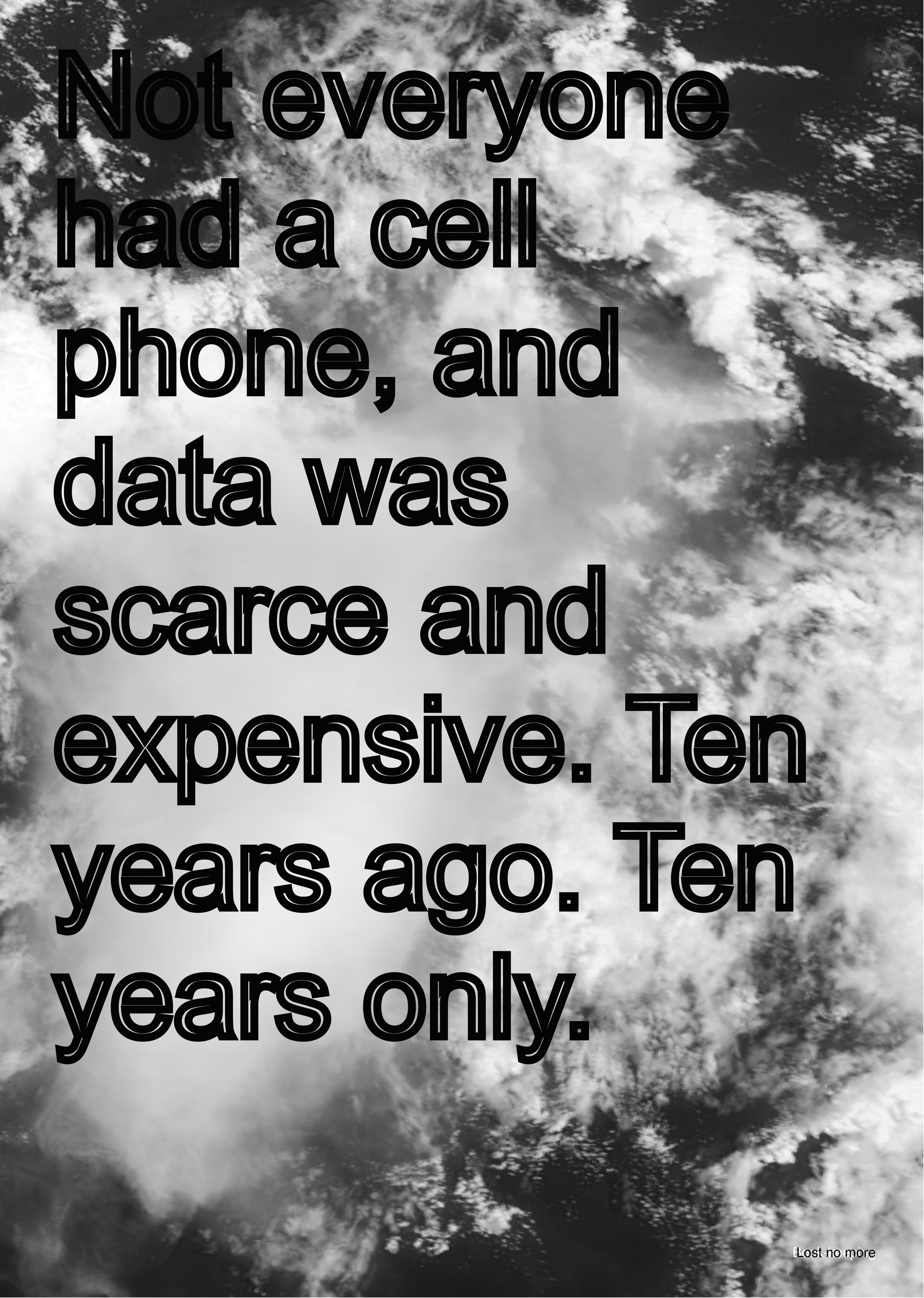
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"I ONCE HEARD
ABOUT PLASTIC
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WROTE A RAVING
REVIEW

ABOUT PLASTIC
BOTTLES"

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city, likely San Francisco, showing a winding river (the San Francisco Bay) and surrounding mountainous terrain. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

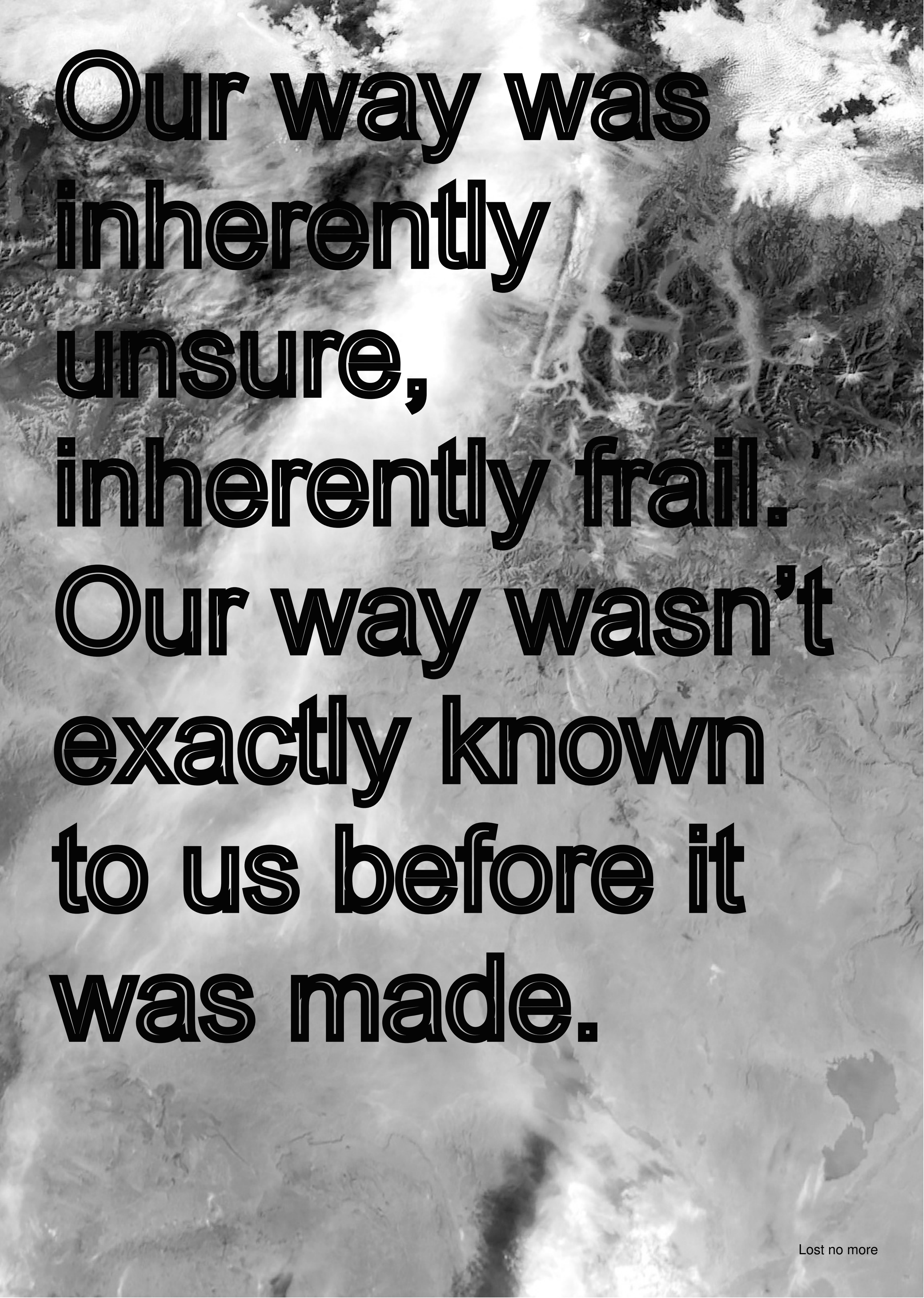
**I lost the
knowledge of
the city itself.
Gradually, we
all did.**

An aerial, black and white photograph of a dense forest. A narrow, light-colored path or stream bed winds through the trees, creating a zig-zag pattern across the frame. The trees are small and densely packed, creating a textured, mottled appearance. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows and highlighting the canopy.

**Not everyone
had a cell
phone, and
data was
scarce and
expensive. Ten
years ago. Ten
years only.**

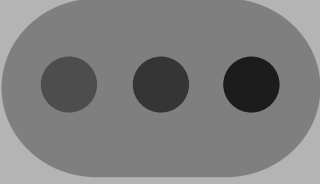


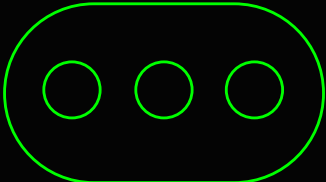
**Hearts beat
fast, lulled by
fear and
excitement,
encompassing
the one big risk:
getting lost.**

An aerial, black and white photograph of a rugged, mountainous landscape. A winding road or path is visible, cutting through the terrain. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, black font with a white outline.

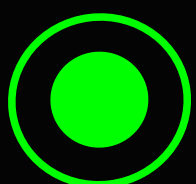
**Our way was
inherently
unsure,
inherently frail.
Our way wasn't
exactly known
to us before it
was made.**

Everyone knew
that. Even the
managers. And
everyone was
OK.

In the first meetings, even the head of the organization didn't have a face. 

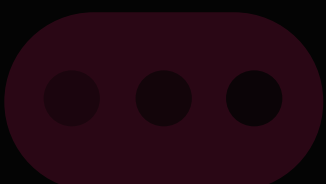
I mean I started to build like a beavers' den or a like a badgers' burrow near where my desk would be, at one point I just took the desk, broke it down, and burnt it outside. 

I mean I started to do my spreadsheets as if I was a beaver and before long I pretty much realized beavers don't care about spreadsheets.



In the first meetings, I was still working, but I gradually just slipped towards no camera too, airing the meetings from my bed, from my floor, from wherever

I FELT THE FUCK COMFORTABLE.

This started to change the work I was doing, and I started to dream of the abolition of work. 

Book-keeping

It happened after I gave a lecture, at a university. I went to their accounts department, to check if everything was in order with my fee, as I hadn't been asked for an invoice or anything yet. The accountant asked me for my eID card, and, after it connected successfully to some web application, took out a cardboard folder, from which she retrieved a paper-printed list of names. She eventually found mine and crossed it, using a fluorescent marker. Then, she handed me a paper envelope. "Here you are," she said "your plane tickets are in your electronic wallet, you have to get a Covid Passenger Form and fill it, and make sure your Vaccination Certificate is up-to-date or that you have a 48 hours negative test you can show at customs and at the airline's desk." I nodded, and took the envelope. I decided not to argue on the fact that I wouldn't travel by plane but by train, supposing that it was the accountant's usual polite speech, addressed to the long list of speakers she daily had to fill in.

I took my wheelie-case, adjusted my backpack, then walked out the doors of the university. Damned. I still held the envelope in my hand. So I stopped, put down my backpack, and then, for some reason, decided to take a look inside the envelope. I was tired, three days of talks and dinners and social networking had worn me out. I'm not a social person. I don't mean that I don't like people, it's just, well, I don't use online social networks exactly because of that. I don't want to keep long distance connections just for the sake of it, just because I can do it. That is to say, if I had been in a better shape, I would have checked inside the envelope before, in the office, and asked about it right away.

So I opened it.

The square was wept by heavy winds. I held a paper sheet, on which a plastic card was glued. It was labeled Amazon, and bore a QR code. The letter went: "Thank you for contributing to these three days of conferences. Infrastructural Interactions is rewarding you by offering you the enclosed Amazon voucher."

I was so dismayed that the envelope slipped away from my hand, to be soon blown away by the wind. There was no way to get it back.

Holding tightly my voucher letter, I went back to the accounts department.

"Is there something I can do for you?" the accountant said.

"Yes, I was there a couple minutes ago and I have a question about my fee..."

"Oh, did I give you the wrong envelope?"

"No, I don't know, my name is..."

"Can you hand me the envelope over?"

"No, it was carried away by the wind..."

"That would be a problem, because I need the envelope in order to check."

"The thing is, inside, there was an Amazon voucher..."

The accountant paused, and stared at me.

"Yes"

"Is that..."

"Oh, you are one of those... We've been paying researchers with gift vouchers for a year now. I can help you set up an account if you need. I know a lot of scholars don't have one."

"But, it's..."

"Or, if you really are reluctant to online-shopping, we do provide, for such rare cases, vouchers to Mark & Spencer retail stores instead. But then, you'll also need to set up an account on their online store, in order for us to transfer the money on the vouchers. What would you prefer?"

"Honestly, a transfer, a check, cash..."

"That I cannot do."

The tone of her voice was slowly shifting from polite and gentle to dry and patronizing. I tried:

"I can invoice you, I mean, usually..."

"Could you give me your eID again?"

Time was ticking. I had an hour and half left before my train left, and the station was rather far.

"I can see you're affiliated with our university. So you're not an independent researcher right? Let me see what I can do. We sometimes transfer money to PayPal accounts, in case of independent researchers, although I haven't done it in a while."

"PayPal?"

"Yeah. You do have a PayPal account, right?"

"..."

"Oh God... Anything we can use? Your Google account maybe?"

"I don't have one of those."

"Well, we need to find something I can buy for you, I can... I don't know. A Netflix voucher? An Apple voucher?"

"No I don't..."

"Oh God, you're not making this easy... I guess, you don't want to simply give it up, right?"

(The voucher was of 400€.)

"Well, it's very simple to get an account at one of these places you know. Really. I mean, I don't get you guys. There's always one or two people like you at lectures... Are you all stuck in year 2000 or something?"

At that point, I realized I would miss my train in addition to losing my money if this kept going on. When she said:

"Oh, I know! What about we get you books? That I could do. Here, I give you my email. Send me a list. You scholars like books right?"

Lost no more

I suck at finding my way. This has not always been the case though. I used to be pretty good, actually. Possibly one of the best delivery boy of the small Pizza Hut restaurant I was working in around 2010, in the city of Lyon, France. At this time, all the digital mapping apps we now daily use weren't as widely spread. Not everyone had a cell phone, and data was scarce and expensive. Ten years ago. Ten years only. In fact, the main shift happened over nothing more than about two years. The delivery world I left wasn't the same as the one I came in.

August 2011. Hot as hell. Four guys chilling in front of a Pizza Hut, swimming in their grease-stained stinking work clothes, smoking cigarettes, waiting for orders. "It's gonna rain," one of them says, "you should pass by the tunnel, then take the little René Leynaud street. It's so narrow the rain hardly pours in." At this time, we were talking non-stop about the city, sharing tips and secrets. The city... A kind of deep riddle we all tried to solve, gathering as much knowledge as possible about it. A dark book full of freaky things, and freaky people. It scared the new ones, naturally. The city seemed to enjoy losing them in its guts. The old ones bragged. They deserved to

be proud, and we respected them. They did help the new ones a lot. At this time, a course was close to a small urban adventure. Hearts beat fast, filled by fear and excitement, encompassing the one big risk: getting lost. We got lost every week, everyday for the new ones. Our way was inherently unsure, inherently frail. Our way wasn't exactly known to us before it was made. At any time, the city could change it, scramble it, make it a maze.

Our supply included giant maps, crumpled and dirty, roughly stuffed in our pockets. The city sometimes helped us, with its signs, with its landmarks. And with its own maps, the bus stop maps. God bless the bus stop maps back in 2011. To be mastered, the right way required all of our strengths, plus a solid background. We gave each other advice. Not only about the fastest way, but also about the nicest, the safest, the chilliest. Or the most beautiful. We were always in search for the perfect, ideal way. I finally got to know the city. Not entirely, for sure, it shall remain deep and endless. But well enough. So I finally got to helping the other delivery boys, and to sharing my urban secrets with them.

Getting lost was the fundamental risk that structured our organization. Managers were aware of it, accepted it, respected it. Whenever it happened, we would call them for help, and they would become partners, co-pilots. Although we, the delivery boys, also happened to take advantage of it. Sometimes, we would fake it to pick up something from our homes, or to meet with a friend, or just to take our time, to have a stop at some beautiful spot in the city. Everyone knew that. Even the managers. And everyone was OK.

Change came in a form of a little machine, full of the promises. It was a car GPS, called Tom-Tom. I bought it to avoid the fear, the fear of not finding the way, the fear of getting lost. I bought it to avoid planing the way, memorizing the way, staying focused on the way. I bought it not to work anymore, not to feel anymore.

And unfortunately, it, not me, worked perfectly. No need to speak with each others, no need to collect frail pieces of our collective experience. No need to think. No need to fear. Nothing to do, except comply to the metallic voice of the machine, the Tom-Tom voice, and soon, the Google voice. Along with the necessity to think and to feel, I lost the knowledge of the city itself. Gradually, we all did. And with mapping apps in our pockets, how could getting lost remain an option?

"Lost? Aha. Stop cheating me, that's not possible!" managers said.

The work naturally, or rather logically, started to accelerate. Time, like us, was no longer authorized to get lost. The knowledge of space, the thickness of time, the taste of the way, basically all what made our constant uncertainty exciting and challenging, disappeared. And so did a right we didn't know we have: to get lost.

E-life

Person 1: Starts the call.

Person 2: Sound doesn't work, can only write in the chat.

Person 3: Bad microphone.

Person 4: Not focused, doing something home related in the background like cooking.

Person 5: Godot: In the wrong room at first, then finds the right one. Keeps knocking on the door, but never makes it inside.

Faceless

I always resisted the Facebook account. For various reasons. Among other, political. I'm not social, if social means social networks. Not interested. Not willing to stay in touch for the sake of staying in touch. After over 10 years of existence, Facebook was still a mystery to me. I found it almost exciting to sneak over people's shoulder, trying to figure out what kind of interaction they would have there.

Then my daughters started to go to school. One day, they came back home with a small piece of paper, asking for parental permission to publish pictures of the class. On the school's Facebook account. I immediately refused, and this answer, as I quickly found out, was actually not an option. "It wouldn't be fair to deprive all the other kids from group pictures," they said, "just because of your daughters. What we could do," they continued, "is to replace their faces with emojis. So they wouldn't be recognized." What difference would it make in the end? "Well, OK" I said. "As long as their faces remain covered."

The next year, I gave in. Turns out my daughters had been the only kids carrying large emoji faces all over the network.

But still. Me, their faces I cannot see.

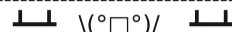
Because I have no Facebook account.

The Lion, the Bridge and the Beekeepers' Choice

The beekeeperz and their bee were going to a convention on an island. It was their annual gathering, and they were all very much looking forward to the meeting and enjoying their yearly Zpelling Bee, where competition waz fierce and there waz preztige to bee won. There were also French zpeaking beekeeperz, who preferred to partake in the dictation competition spoken by bee, an opportunity for keeperz to boast their refined skillz in distinguishing bzzzzs from buzzssss. The convention took place on an island in the middle of a foggy zwamp. Normally, the bee would fly and the keeperz would walk but heavy rainz the night beefore meant the island was zeparated by a rushing creek. The beekeeperz were relieved to discover two bridges that crossed the water, one made of wood, one of plastic. The wooden bridge appeared to be handmade and well-used, zo much that holez had worn in zeveral planks. This bridge was made by locals, and they always kept extra-planks at both sides of it, because they know that it needed maintenance. The plastic bridge, white and shiny, was installed by the Corporate Lion who came from far away. He was called Leopold the Customer Service Lion, who required an authentic carezz on the head to perform his role to optimal zatisfaction. However, zometimes Leopold's hunger would emerge and a gentle carezz could become a genuine risk to those who bravely touched him. On the other hand, one could feed Leopold and avoid this scary experience altogether.

Four beekeeperz stood in front of the two bridges and had to choose the best way to crozz. The first one said: "I once heard, Buzzzzzfeed wrote a raving review about plastic bridges." They stepped onto the spotless plastic and kindly petted Leopold. After a few confident steps towards the island, their foot slipped on the wet surface and they fell into the creek. "How would you rate this bridge?", the Lion said. The second beekeeper said "Plastic bridges have modern design! They are the bees knees!" They gave a hand-full

of mince to Leopold who let them pass. But then after two steps, a black swan swam by, bumping the plastic bridge which, being very light, twisted easily and sent the beekeeper falling into the stream. The Lion announced "We apologize for the inconvenience but we are doing all we can to support our customers in this extraordinary situation." A third beekeeper approached the bridge, and zaid "Well, that wooden bridge obviously has bad usability and I just don't have the time to learn how to fix it." Halfway across the plastic bridge, a gust of wind picked up and the beekeeper slipped off to fall into the water, too. The last beekeeper had nothing valuable to offer the Lion, and stood in front of the wooden bridge in desperate need of patching. She picked up zome branches and fixed a few wobbly plankz while crossing, and arrived at the island, dry and zatisfied with her good work. She helped her colleagzz out of the water. Dripping and exhausted from the swim upstream towards the island, the beekeeperzz and the bees were finally joined for their annual gathering. And, there were heaps of croissantz, hugz and a big relief. Bzzzzzz



In the work that I do, the organization uses Microsoft Teams and Zoom, no it was Teams I think, what's the difference? In the first meetings we had, I didn't want to install the app or program on my laptop, and so in first meetings, I joined straight from browser, the Teams, or Zoom, house party, Jitsi or was I on TikTok? I dunno... In the first meetings, I was just staring at icons, wondering why everyone was refusing the camera. In the first meetings, even the head of the organization didn't have a face. In the first meetings, I was still working, but I gradually just slipped towards no camera too, airing the meetings from my bed, from my floor, from wherever I felt the fuck comfortable. This started to change the work I was doing, and I started to dream of the abolition of work, I mean before when we all had to sit in those team meetings and see each others' faces, all encouraging each other to work. I mean I started to build like a beavers' den or a like a badgers' burrow near where my desk would be, at one point I just took the desk, broke it down, and burnt it outside. I mean I started to do my spreadsheets as if I was a beaver and before long I pretty much realized beavers don't care about spreadsheets. It took me some meetings to realize that was the reason why I couldn't see my colleague's faces, because the software, that-I think it was Zoom, or Jitsi, or was it that time I got invited to queer haus on Mastadon no sorry it was Team I guess- allows you to see other people's faces only if you install the program. I had only Facetimed with my mom once a week until that day and she could see my burnt desk. You know when your mum answers the video-call and you still cannot see her face because the phone is so close to her face. What if I hadn't seen their straight faces for the last 12 months? I think I rather not have seen my colleagues' faces all semester, sleepy or full on make up on and showing of pajamas and eye bags, but mostly my own nap face was there. During the months of not seeing my colleagues faces, their faces slowly changed. After the install, trading space on my device for faces, their motion changed. What ever happened to phone calls?! No file to save after, no records, tracks... I'm so paranoid this days, it really freaks me out. I never got the invite for fucking Clubhouse.👁👁

These infrastructural anecdotes were made at workshops, meetings and other moments organised by Varia, Tangle Cloud and TITIPI. They are on purpose not credited because of their collective, nebulous, blurry authorship. Thank you to anyone who contributed, and to the organisers of the various situations that brought people together. These infriables are here to be reworked and retold.

The infriable exercises were developed by TITIPI and Varia (Julia Bande, Manetta Berends, Cristina Cochior, Lidia Pereira).