This piece, included in the *drift* special issue of *continent*, was created as one step in a thread of inquiry. While each of the contributions to *drift* stand on their own, the project was an attempt to follow a line of theoretical inquiry as it passed through time and the postal service(s) from October 2012 until May 2013.

This issue hosts two threads: *between space & place* and *between intention & attention*. The editors recommend that to experience the drifting thought that attention is paid to the contributions as they entered into conversation one after another. This particular piece is from the *BETWEEN INTENTION & ATTENTION* thread:

*Jeremy Fernando, Sitting in the dock of the bay, watching...* *R.H. Jackson, Reading Eyes* *Gina Rae Foster, Nyctoleptic Nomadism: The Drift/Swerve of Knowing* *Bronwyn Lay, Driftwood* *Patricia Reed, Sentences on Drifting* *David Prater, drift: a way*
“… to sleep perchance to dream” (Hamlet 3:1)

To dream: to be not quite asleep, yet not particularly awake. 
Or, rather: to be awake but not quite know it. For, it is only when we dream, when we are dreaming, that we know that we are not in that final sleep. But we can only know that we are dreaming, that we have dreamt, when we are awake, when we have awoken; after it is too late. When all we know is that the sleep beyond finitude, the sleep that is the step beyond, is not yet upon us, is only to come.

To die to sleep ...

To dream: a sleep that refuses sleep. 
Perchance to dream: to drift—between sleep and sleep.

Aye there’s the rub

For, can we even know if we have been sleeping? Or, if death has claimed us?—even if a little death.

To drift: but from, to, what? For, to drift implies a certain direction that one was headed from, heading to, headed for; without these indications, markers, points in relation with each other, one would just be moving. Can one know—intend—one’s drift? Certainly a stunt driver would say so. But even as (s)he is starting her slide, all that (s)he can know is that she is setting the car, herself, the car with herself in it, in motion: after which the drift itself takes over. After which, all (s)he can do is attend to it.

At the point of the drift: both (s)he and the car are drifting—here, one might not even be able to separate the movement from those involved in it. Without either of them, there would not be a drift; there is no drifting without the drifter.

Both the drifter and the drifting are in a relationality; in which, all that they can know is that they are in relation with each other. 
Hence, the drift itself is a relationality.

A non-essence.
But, it is not as if we cannot speak of it. Perhaps though: we can only speak of it as if we can speak of it. Always already an imaginary gesture; where what is being imagined is the relationality between the drift and the ones drifting.

Thus, we have a situation where the drifter and drifting are in a relationality; where relationality itself is what is being imagined.

Perhaps then, what are we drifting from, to?, is a moot question. As is, what is drifting?
Perhaps then, all we can say is drift?

To speak of drift is an attempt to speak of the unspeakable. Not that what is speakable and what is unspeakable are antonyms: if that were so, speaking the unspeakable would make no sense, be a contradiction. But that in every act of speaking, something unspeakable is potentially said: something that opens, ruptures, wounds even. And not just that—at the point where it punctures, speaking itself moves out of the way for the unspeakable; speaking itself disappears.

“… the whole art is to know how to disappear before dying, and instead of dying.”
(Jean Baudrillard, Why hasn’t everything already disappeared?, 25)

To disappear; or, to drift out of sight.

Where the words themselves slip away.
After all: “in the Beginning was the Word. It was only afterwards that Silence came.”
Perhaps the wish, the hope, is that “the end itself has disappeared …” (Baudrillard, 70)

Remaining hidden from us.
Perhaps only glimpsed when we dream.
Secret.

“Bury all your secrets in my skin” (Corey Taylor)

Which is the problem: words cling. And they remain. Perhaps not ontologically; but they certainly remain to haunt us. And here, we should not forget Lucretius’ lesson that communication occurs in the skin between the parties in communion with each other. Which is not to say that the encounter is determined by atoms—and more precisely atoms that move in straight lines until they collide with each other—that communication is pre-
determined. For, one must not forget that will is found, discovered, enacted even, at the moment the atoms swerve.

_Clinamen._

Drift.

But even in their movement—drifting—they trace themselves into the skin between; a tangential touching. Perhaps only briefly. But even then, enough …

“… there’s always texture that betrays the place.” (May Ee Wong)

Here though, one must not forget that betrayal cannot happen in the absence of love.

In fact, betrayal is the very excess of love: where one loves the other so much that one can no longer bear to see the other drift from what (s)he could have been. Whether that idealised other exists or is only in one’s head is another question altogether. Perhaps, a fetishised other: keeping in mind that “fetishes are hinged around simulation.” After all, “when one is supposed to show up as an oil rig diver no one is expecting actual crude oil” (Amanda Sordes); in fact, actualisation is the perfect way to destroy the fantasy. Perhaps then, the only way to maintain love for another is to maintain a proper distance, as it were, from love: allow the love to constantly alter, change. And here, one must not forget that if love is a relationality between one and another who remains wholly other (otherwise just a mere manifestation of the self), love is a relationality that knows nothing except for the fact that it is in a relation. For, to love one has to attend to—without subsuming another, some other, under oneself. Which means that to love, one has to be willing to risk, to open oneself, to allow oneself to be wounded, torn apart. In new ways, ways that we have yet to understand, come across, ways we do not yet have a name for.

Thus, this movement in love is one that occurs in utter blindness; to not only the other, but to what love is.

This is love as pure drifting.

Perhaps always searching for love itself, without ever knowing what it is that it is looking for.

Love: only at the very moment when the word _love_ itself disappears.

Perhaps all we can do is sit, and attend: watching the tides flowing away—as if they were having their “last swim of the summer.” (Hendrik Speck)

Like a butterfly.
Isn’t it quite amazing how the appearance of a butterfly can inject a stutter or pause into any conversation? Words and words pour out of the animals in assembly, before they are all of a sudden arrested by the passing flight. Heads turn to trace a lilting poetics, attempting to close the distance with this seemingly awkward beauty. There are no straight lines here, only a relative arrival and departure to bracket a brilliant and bewildering trajectory, surging and lurching in a vibrating and nomadic line avant la lettre.

(Sean Smith, ‘I Seek You: Countdown to Stereoscopic Tear’)

Before the letter. Before the possibility of naming. Before being sayable. Quite possibly also before language. And yet, a “surging and lurching,” a movement with an effect—“vibrating and nomadic”—tracing itself before there is even anything to trace. Leaving something, even if that thing remains unknowable, for us to attend to.

Drifting into us.

“I had some dreams they were clouds in my coffee, clouds in my coffee …”

(Carly Simon)