

ALTERITY

THREE

JARED LINDAHL

WET | LAND

























































Roads and trails circumvent wetlands; they lie in the blank spaces of the map. Their terrain has been deemed impenetrable, inhospitable, without value. A wasteland. Perhaps it is their ambiguous nature—being neither strictly land nor water, but both simultaneously—that led to wetlands becoming sites of ritual praxis. Liminal places for the sacrificial interment of bodies, or the burial of weapons in rites of sympathetic magic. These traditions have died out, but their legacy is preserved, encased in peat. Many wetlands have since been dredged and filled in an attempt to render them ‘useful’. In the process bog bodies have been discovered and vast stores of carbon have been unleashed into the atmosphere.

A botany both curious and rare flourishes in those wetlands still unscathed by the Anthropocene. Hydrophilic turions float without soil in the lagg surrounding the fen. Carnivorous Droseraceae and Sarraceniaceae cling to a carpet of sphagnum atop ombrotrophic bogs. Each annual cycle of growth transformed through slow anoxic decay into layers of peat, a progression from wet into land that commenced in the north as glaciers from the last ice age retreated. First fluid, then quaking underfoot, then stable, becoming a support for trees and fauna. Still, for human beings who venture within, there remains a risk of becoming ‘bogged-down with’, ‘swamped by’ or ‘mired in’ these landscapes. The colloquial usage of these terms to express a frustrated attempt at pursuing our desired goals forever gestures back to the real risks and challenges human beings have faced when traversing wetland topographies.

Wetlands documented:

Crandall Swamp, Crane Brook Cranberry Bog, Crane Swamp, Dark Swamp, Diamond Fen, Fox Bottom Quaking Bog, Great Swamp, Harvard Pond Bog, Hawley Bog, Heywood’s Meadow at Walden Pond, La Tourbière de Johnville, Lily Pond Bog, Mario’s Quaking Bog, Mossaträsk-Stormyran, Peppercorn Fen, Phantom Bog, Ponkapoag Bog, Sentinel Mountain Bog, Western Brook Pond Bog

Rhode Island, Massachusetts, & New York, United States; Newfoundland & Quebec, Canada; Västernorrland, Sweden



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