Kaieteur Falls (Potaro River, Guyana)

Out of curiosity, our physician on location...wanted to see the mysterious nesting place of the swifts. From the bottom of the falls, the gigantic cave is inaccessible...We lowered a camera to him... Later, we decided not to show his footage. [due to the wishes of the local people]

*The White Diamond* (2004), Werner Herzog

In that scene, there were swifts that live in a cave behind a waterfall. At daybreak, they would fly out through the water, murmur into the shape of a monstrous grackle, feathers flickering black iridescence. The dark shape spins and explodes to a blurred pixilation in our mind's frame.

Again and again they coalesce and split into waves, unroll as giant arabesques that curve against the screen of the sky. We are made to hover over the paper white of the mist. It shimmers in the sunlight, forms a rainbow at its belly. The water pours from a point so high, we never question its power, never look up, and we cannot see what ends below. In the distance, mountains fluoresce, clouds pump their heartbeat colours while through all this, the water continues its endless spitting. There is nothing else to bear while that moisture clings to our skin. Sometimes we can glimpse the cave when the wind gusts and billows the fall. The sheet lifts, folds, shows us the open mouth. The sky begins to darken, and they return. Now their sound becomes a mass that wraps into a point:

watch how they unravel to form a snake of coal dust that plunges through the fine spray, into the hollows, until the tail whips across to snap the curtain shut, smooths white noise of water over the silence of sleeping birds.

_Fawzia Muradali Kane_