

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.

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