





There is this bright strip of green lights, an LED strip light, probably no longer than two metres in length. It only lines one of the long sides of the rectangle on the floor, the side closest to the front, closest to the large glass pane through which I am looking at it. I'm not really right in front, because I'm sat on the top deck of the bus, and the bus is at a standstill at the bus stop, so I can see it a little more from above if anything. In any case, it isn't really clear from this point of view why the green lights are there in the

first place, they don't seem to draw attention to anything in particular, except to themselves, or to the rectangle I suppose, which isn't really much more than a slight indent in the floor, like a grate for ventilation or something. So then, as it seems the placement of the green lights isn't very intentional, and they line that edge of the rectangle quite conveniently, perhaps by chance someone found they fitted there, and put them there for convenience, or for good measure, in both senses. I try looking for longer,



but I've noticed them quite late,  
as the bus pulls away I twist  
my neck to look for as long as  
possible.

This morning I have been  
thinking about the green lights,  
and so now I am on the bus I  
have made sure I am sat on the  
same side of the bus as before,  
in anticipation of seeing them.  
I decide to put my distance  
glasses on to be sure to get a  
good look; the lights are only  
really a pavement's width away  
but I think that's far enough

to make a difference. As we  
pull into the bus stop there  
are already another two buses  
there, so we have to stop much  
further back from the strip of  
green lights. Eventually, our  
bus pulls out around the two  
buses in front, at which point  
I see the lights - but this time  
I notice that they actually line  
the long edge of the rectangle  
that is *furthest* away, and above  
the lights I notice a tall standing  
sign. I twist my neck to look for  
as long as possible, but I can't  
quite see any more of it, and it  
disappears from view.

I am sitting on the bus, and I have forgotten all about the green lights. Of course, I only realise I have forgotten about them when I remember them - as we cross the bridge they suddenly come to mind. I'm not prepared; my glasses are in their case, and I am sat on the side of the bus which is the opposite side to where I can see the lights. I look across to the other seats closest to the lights; they are all occupied. As we pull into the bus stop I consider asking someone to swap, but it's all a little too late because not

many people are getting off or on, and so we are away again.

I make sure I am sitting on the best side when we pull into the bus stop, to be able to see the lights. The bus is very busy, and every seat is occupied. The morning outside is quite cold, and so the windows of the bus are completely steamed up and it's really hard to see out. I put my glasses on and clear the condensation with my fingers to be able to look out. The window steams up again



so quickly that I can't quite see the lights properly, so I am clearing the glass incessantly to the point that it squeaks loudly. I notice that there's actually a bit of rain water on the outside of the window, which will be impossible to clear with the time that I have. That is why everything looks a bit streaky. Luckily there are lots of people getting off and on, and the bus stays still just long enough for me to discover that there is no grate for ventilation, there is in fact a very purposeful glass vitrine embedded in the floor.

Inside there is something beige,  
with some darker patches, that  
are perhaps objects placed on  
top - still below the glass - but  
on top of the something beige.  
They look a lot like leaves  
on top of sand, but I can't  
be sure. Along the front - on  
the floor itself in front of the  
floor vitrine, but behind the  
glass pane that is in front of  
the whole thing - there is a  
series of scallop shells, neatly  
and decoratively lined up, like  
how they tend to be used in  
bathrooms as decoration, as  
if the tenuous link of water in

the bathroom had enough to  
do with molluscs to become a  
theme to decorate the whole  
bathroom with. As the bus pulls  
away I read the words on the  
standing sign.

I am falling asleep and I am thinking about the vitrine in the floor. Could you access it to put a new arrangement of leaves inside? The green lights I think are inside too.

I awoke this morning and I'm on the bus very early to see the green lights, I'm hoping to get to the bottom of this once and for all. As we pull into the bus stop I try knocking on the window to ask someone at the bus stop what it looks like the lights are for from down there. They hear me knock but it's no use because they can't hear me speak from behind the glass, so I mouth my words by opening my mouth more than necessary, exaggerating the pronunciation of each letter, but in fact at this point I have stopped making

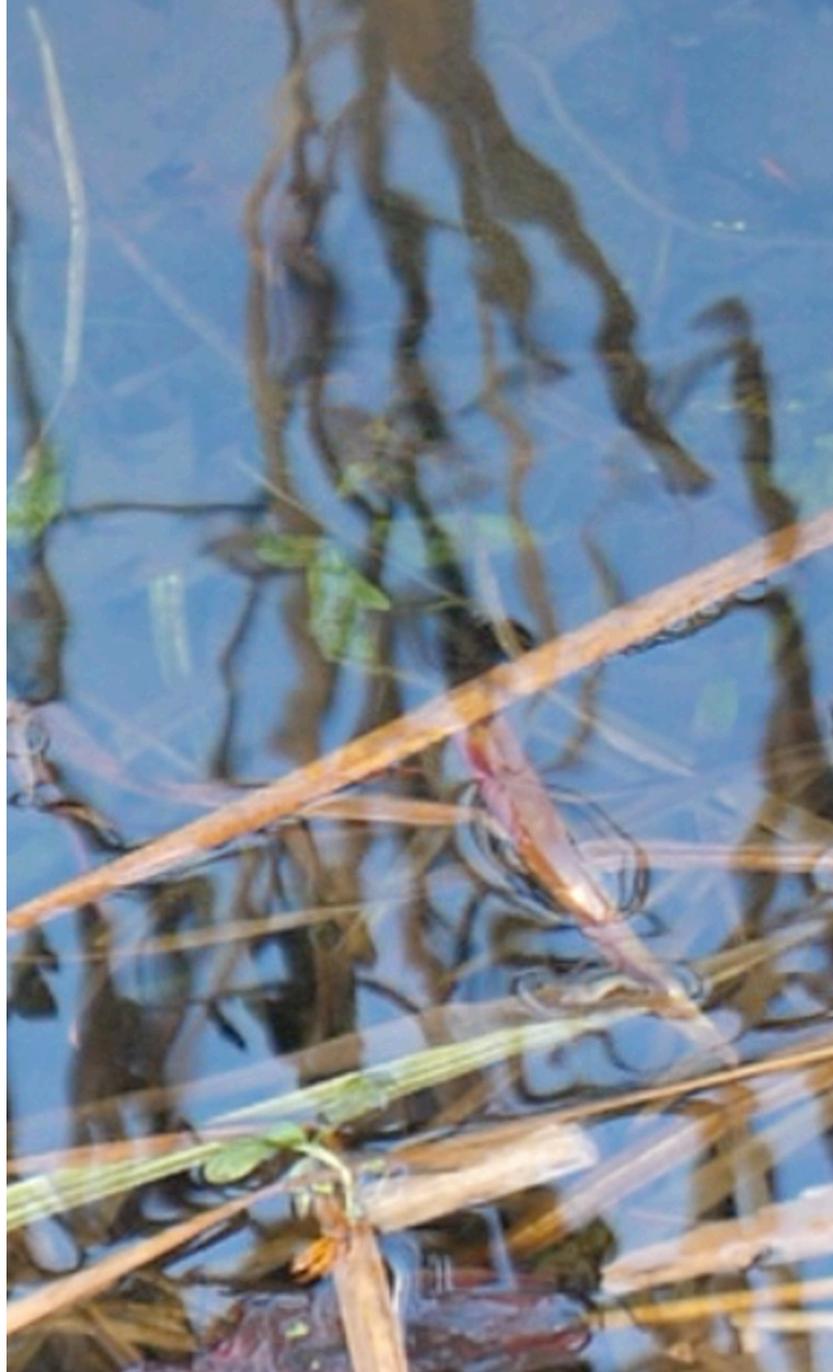
any sounds because they are redundant. The bus is pulling away from the bus stop and we are both twisting our necks to look at each other for as long as possible, and the green lights stretch out of view.

I am standing at the bus stop waiting for the bus to come, as it pulls in I am about to get on, but something catches my eye just over my right-hand shoulder. As I turn I see a bold green light, but I'm shortly interrupted by some loud

knocking on the window of the top deck of the bus. Someone is mouthing words at me through the glass, but I can't hear anything you're saying and of course I can't lip read if you move your lips in such an unnatural way, I thought, why don't you just wait until I get on the bus?

We sit together on the bus quite silently. You are speaking but for whatever reason you're not making any sounds from your mouth, just mouthing words.

Your mouth looks like that of a ventriloquist's doll, just opening and closing with no particular shape. Perhaps you want me to make the sounds and you to mouth the words? I can't be sure. As you are sat in the window seat, my eyes wander out of the window. I see your mouth opening and closing in my periphery. I'm anticipating the bus stop and ideally I'd like to swap seats with you so I can be closer to the window. As we cross over the bridge I am looking at the water when I realise it is only your moving



mouth that I can see of you in  
my periphery, a disembodied  
mouth, opening and closing like  
a scallop swimming through  
the water. Then, very slowly,  
your arm sinks upwards, like a  
diver making a signal, and you  
proceed to clear the window  
with your fingers, although the  
glass is very clear already, and I  
only realise that in fact you are  
waving when from around your  
dancing hand the green lights  
flicker through your fingers.  
The person stood by the lights  
at the bus stop waves back.

I thought about the scallops,  
and their calcium carbonate  
shells.

The trouble with having a scallop shell for a mouth is that the scallop has its own agenda and so the scallop's adductor muscle, much like your tongue, runs away with the mouth. Just as I had predicted, and without any notice whatsoever, your scallop mouth leaves the bus and jumps through the front glass pane like a fourth wall. We try asking the scallop what it looks like the green lights are for from down there, it tries speaking from behind the glass but it's no use because we can't make out what it is mouthing,

and in fact at this point you have stopped mouthing words because they are redundant, instead, sounds come from you like from a ventriloquist.

The bus is pulling away from the bus stop and we are both twisting our necks to look at each other for as long as possible.



Lydia Davies 2020



