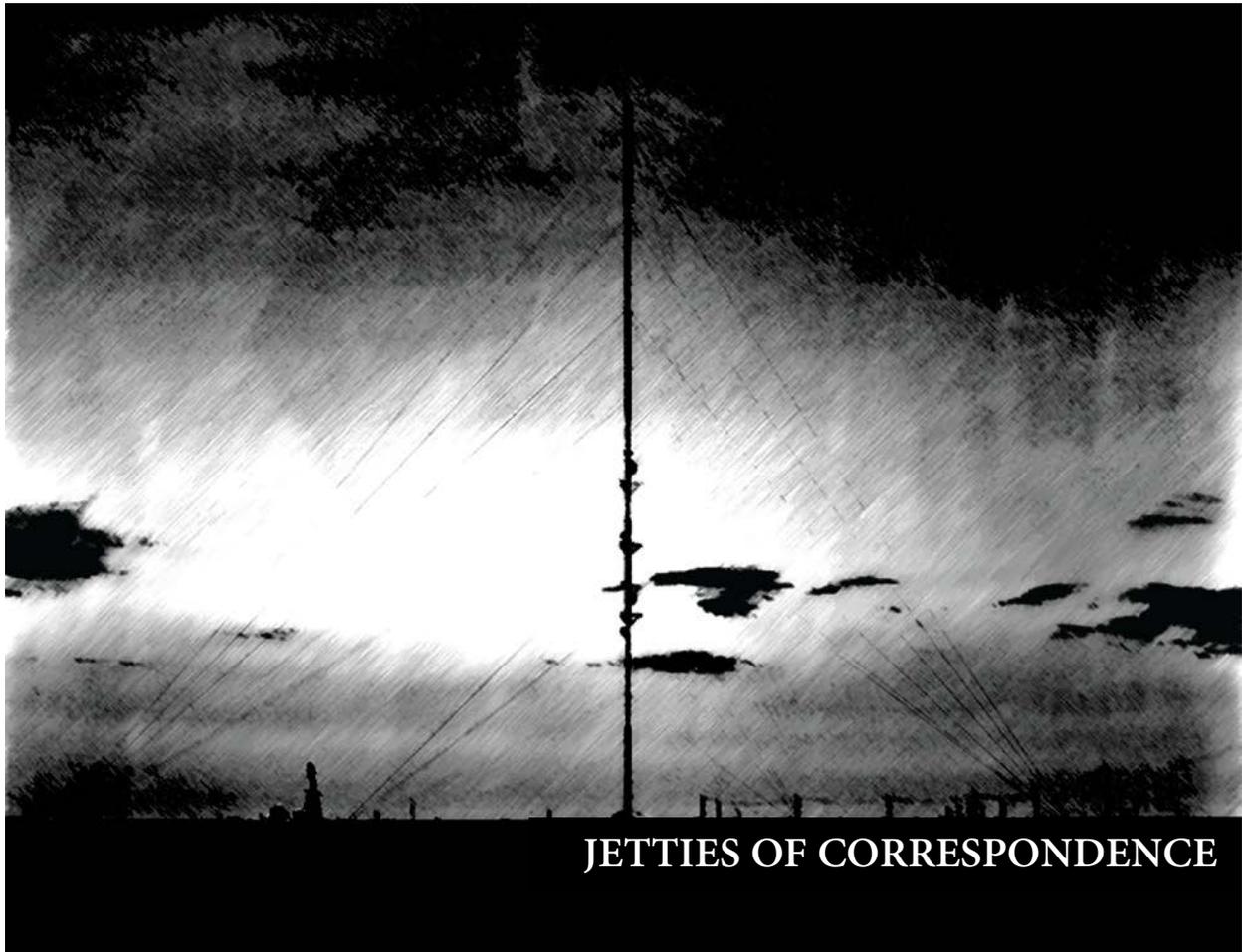


Jetties of Correspondence + Lopez's *Apologia*

By Aaron Fisher



I examine through squinted eyes instances of the tower on the Llano Estacado, in its juxtaposed strength of utility and fragility of form. The same synthetic energy with which this slender pike has been lodged into the tree-clad horizon is now emitted from its core. What is the role of the tower? What is this monument that affords both the communication with and rejection of its surrounding life and lifeless landscape. To make digestible the totality of this monumental circumstance I look to the lens of Barry Lopez's *Apologia*. The expressive wood carved prints by Robert Eschner and Lopez's lens of inquiry show reverence to the solemn and untimely collateral damage of man's selfish expansion while finding a profoundly picturesque beauty in the sinewy nuance and detail of the roadside carnage. These en route

depictions document the forlorn and frequently overlooked natural impacts of our constructed need for speed. Through this lens the physical, aesthetic, social, and energetic tension between the vertical tower and the horizontal plane is distilled. The positioning is defined, the monument is measured, and a new nomenclature surfaces: A Jetty of Correspondence. For seemingly innumerable miles on the Llano



Estacado, the tower is unmatched in height. All the while it stands nearly transparent against the expansive horizon and the gray and brown instances that populate its outermost tangent. Though they share a form they do not share a purpose. Barren metal tree trunks thrust out into the blue oasis to reject their leafy rivals. The visual fragility

amidst inherent power is only matched by the nearly undetectable thread that tethers them to earth. It is unclear whether the threads are the vines of the earth extending up from their roots to restrain the tower from launching off earth's surface, or the web-like appendages of the steel stalk injecting itself into the crust. Frayed threads of shadow move across the dust and rock underfoot, chasing the last of the orange light off the edge of the horizon. There, where the oasis of shadow cascades in a vibrant orange crest against the dusty shore, the lone tower jetties out into the deep. It is simultaneously fragile against the expansive ocean of tumultuous hues, and yet powerfully solid in its unflinching anchor tensioned to the horizon. The tower, stretching out two and three hundred feet from the surrounding infrastructure, commands attention in its broadcast of information. Beyond the sandy horizon, there is a deep blue oasis occupied only



by the jettying tower and shared only with the next, just a mile down the shoreline. In the same manner through which Lopez maps the incidental ravage of synthetic travel as it penetrates through natural habitat, so I distill a mapping of the tension between the tower and the landscape—a jetty that penetrates the shoreline of the Llano Estacado.

All photos courtesy of the author.