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"Queer Fallout: Samuel R. Delany and the Ecology of Cruising"

Ensor, Sarah

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Taking as its provocation Leo Bersani's fleeting turn to questions of ecology at the end of his 2002 essay "Sociability and Cruising," this piece asks what it would mean to use the practice of cruising as an unexpected model for a new ecological ethic, one more deeply attuned to our impersonal intimacies with the human, nonhuman, and elemental strangers that constitute both our environment and ourselves. In order to develop such a model, the essay looks not only to Bersani's work but also (and primarily) to Samuel R. Delany's Times Square Red, Times Square Blue, whose attention to the positive fallout of spontaneous cross-class contact, I claim, complicates the proprietary, insular, and paranoid logics prevalent in much popular environmental discourse. Delany's text, which decenters both intention and identity in its definition of the social, limns the contours of a queer environmentalism predicated less on intentional, direct(ed) investment than on ambient affects, impersonal futures, and nonteleological practices of care. (Text from author's abstract)

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