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"Spent Earth"

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This essay considers the multiscalar manifestations of loss and the destruction of loss through the material-semiotic figure of "spent earth," a toxic waste by-product generated by the industrial bleaching of crude oils into edible oils. Drawing on two distinct encounters with spent earth in the Indonesian palm oil sector, the essay reflects on the substance's unevenly distributed effects across peoples, places, and generations; its association with visions of purity and realities of complicity; and the importance of attending to loss through both its situated, localized manifestations and its partial connections across sites, scales, and subjects. (Abstract)

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