

Regine Petersen

Find a Fallen Star

Stars Fell on Alabama

Source cited from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylacauga_\(meteorite\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylacauga_(meteorite))

Sylacauga (meteorite)

The Sylacauga meteorite fell on November 30, 1954, at 14:46 local time (18:46 UT)^[1] in Oak Grove, Alabama, near Sylacauga. It is commonly called the Hodges meteorite because a fragment of it struck Ann Elizabeth Hodges (1920-1972).^[2]

Importance

The Sylacauga meteorite is the first documented extraterrestrial object to have injured a human being in the USA. The grapefruit-sized fragment crashed through the roof of a frame house, bounced off a large wooden console radio, and hit Hodges while she napped on a couch. The 34-year-old woman was badly bruised on one side of her body but able to walk. The event received worldwide publicity. The Sylacauga meteorite is not the only extraterrestrial object to have struck

a human. A manuscript published at Tortona, Italy, in 1677 tells of a Milanese friar who was killed by a meteorite.^[3] In 1992 a small meteorite fragment (3 g) hit a young Ugandan boy in Mbale,^[4] but it had been slowed down by a tree and did not cause any injury.

Fireball

The meteor made a fireball visible from three states as it streaked through the atmosphere, even though it fell early in the afternoon.^[5] There were also indications of an air blast, as witnesses described hearing »explosions or loud booms«.^[6]

Following events

The United States Air Force sent a helicopter to take the meteorite. Eugene Hodges, the husband of the woman who was struck, hired a lawyer to get it back. The Hodges' landlord Bertie Guy*, also

claimed it, wanting to sell it to cover the damage to the house. There were offers of up to \$5,000 for the meteorite. By the time it was returned to the Hodgeses, over a year later, public attention had diminished, and they were unable to find a buyer willing to pay.^[citation needed] Ann Hodges was uncomfortable with the public attention and the stress of the dispute over ownership of the meteorite. She donated it to the Alabama Museum of Natural History in 1956. The day after the fall, local farmer Julius McKinney came upon the second-largest fragment from the same meteorite. An Indianapolis-based lawyer purchased it for the Smithsonian Institution. The McKinney family was able to use the money to purchase a car, new house, and land.^[7]

Fragments

Source cited from: <http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meteor/metbull.php?code=22386>

FALL OF THE METEORITE IN RAMSDORF, GFR

Name: RAMSDORF

The place of fall or discovery: Township of Ramsdorf, district of Borken, Munster, Westphalia, GFR; $\phi = 51^{\circ}31' N$; $\lambda = 6^{\circ}56' E$ of Greenwich.

Date of fall or discovery: FALL, July 26, 1958, 18 hr 30 min.

Class and type: STONY, chondrite.

The number of individual specimens: 1

Total weight: 4.682 kg.

The circumstances of fall or discovery: The mete-

orite fell from a clear sky and neither light nor percussion phenomena were observed. The fall was accompanied by a noise similar to that of propeller; it started and stopped suddenly. Shortly afterwards children and young people discovered steam rising from a tube-shaped depression in the ground. The following morning the depression was excavated and at a depth of 40 cm the meteorite was discovered. The depression had an eastward direction and an incline angle of about 30° to the vertical. The children broke the meteorite into

five parts which match each other, thus making it possible to reestablish the original shape of the meteorite; it is polyhedral with rounded ribs and regmaglypts visible in places.

SOURCE: R. Mosebach, *Der Gesteinsmeteorit von Ramsdorf*. Natur und Volk, 88, NO. 10 329-338, 1958 and a letter sent by Prof. C. Hoffmeister to E.L. Krinov on January 26, 1959, and by Prof. E. Preuss on Febr. 13, 1959.

The Indian Iron

Source cited from: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/meteorite-fall-in-rajasthan-village/article3071137.ece>

Special Correspondent

10th incident in the State since 1995

JAIPUR: A meteorite fell at Kanvarpura village near Rawatbhata, where the Rajasthan Atomic Power Plant is situated, on August 29. It weighs 6.8 kg and is of a rare type as it consists of 90 per cent iron.

»Unspectacular event«

At a press conference here on Monday, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) said the Kanvarpura incident was an »unspectacular event« com-

pared to the meteorite shower in Gujarat recently. GSI Deputy Director-General (western region) R.S. Goyal said no fireworks were seen as the meteorite fell around 1:37 p.m. »The bright sunlight masked any glow in the sky, and the event would have probably gone unreported but for two shepherds who reported the matter at a police station.«

Frightens shepherds

Dr. Goyal said the shepherds got frightened after the meteorite fell with a loud sound. They beat the

meteorite with lathis and dragged it some distance, before immersing it in water. GSI scientists, who rushed to the village, recovered the meteorite with the help of the local administration. He said the meteorite could have caused devastation on an »unimaginable scale« if it had fallen on the Rawatbhata Atomic Power Plant. At least 10 cosmic bodies have fallen in the State, especially in its western parts, since 1995. The previous incident was reported at Bhuka village in Barmer district in June 2005.

*landlady Birdie Guy (author's note)

Find a Fallen Star

Essay by Natasha Christia

Regine Petersen employs meteorite falls to venture into her multilayered narratives. Her practice is based on a seemingly straightforward investigation that employs occurrence as a pretext for further research. Petersen visits places where meteorite incidents have been recorded, interviews witnesses and gathers all relevant forensic evidence – archive press cuttings, testimony transcripts, religious and literary fragments, genealogy records and found images. In the resulting final narrative, this extensive bulk of visual and textual information is reworked in tandem with her own fieldwork and innate sensibilities into a fascinating whole.

Though the background of the three stories in *Find a Fallen Star* is different, though their action takes place in three geographically and culturally disparate areas of the world, they all form consecutive chapters of the same multifold approach. They are tied into a powerful and dense semantic threshold, whose main quest is reinforcing an insightful exploration of the potential abilities of the image to both sustain and challenge its proper core foundation; myth. What follows are the ingredients omnipresent in any melodrama: proximity and distance, the lapses and decays of memory, the mundane and the sublime, and

of course, as it is to be expected in any occurrence of cosmic character, the universe with its infinite intergalactic and interstellar constellations.

The meteorite in itself, always the meteorite, this ancient pearl of the universe, condenses on its surface billions of kilometres, billions of years ... The meteorite, a heavenly sign of awe-inspiring divine dimensions and an artefact of ruthless scientific observation, triggers spiritual amazement but can also instigate fear, destruction and flames. From time to time it becomes an intruder to human history; it just streaks through the atmosphere and falls on the earth, interrupting everyday life, dismantling individual and collective fate and unraveling a handful of monetary transactions, museum donations and small private dramas.

1954: In Sylacauga, Ann Elizabeth Hodges, a thirty-four-year-old woman is struck by an unidentified grapefruit-sized object while napping on the couch of her living room. She is regarded the first recorded human subject ever to have been injured by a meteorite. Her being featured on the CBS panel game show *I've Got a Secret* in the aftermath of this absurd event encompasses the

rise and fall of a fading star. Manifested as a huge bruise on her hip, the abrupt collision of the universe's forces onto her body takes only four minutes to be consumed by media frenzy. The day after the fall, Julius McKinney, an Afro-American farmer, finds a second smaller fragment of the same meteorite that hit Ann Hodges but in contrast to her, keeps his discovery secret for some time, probably out of fear that it will be confiscated. Later on he sells the stone for profit. 1958: A meteorite falls in Ramsdorf, a small town in German Westphalia, unearthing a torment of hidden tensions and authority issues in the local community, putting to the test its seemingly peaceful coexistence and human relationships. A group of children discovers it and breaks it in five pieces. Then the village doctor intervenes, the extraterrestrial object's fragments are reunited and a contract is signed, according to which they come into his possession for 10 DM each. 2006: A much less spectacular encounter of a meteorite with humans happens in India. A meteorite falls at Kanwarpura village near Rawatbhata, where the Rajasthan Atomic Power Plant is situated. The two shepherds who come across the stone are nomads, who, just like it, stand outside the realm of History. They appear on the stage for as long as it takes them to discover it, drag it for some distance, immerse it in water, report it to local authorities, and then leave. What is left behind are politics, speculation and a huge piece of iron junk.

On Personal Memory, Myth and Language

»This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above, see everything at once, and still we do not know how it was.«

W.G. Sebald: *The Rings of Saturn*¹

The irruption of meteorites into the flow of History triggers an infinite number of accounts that confront the finite nature of human perception with the infinity of the universe. *Find a Fallen Star* reverberates through its aesthetics the collision of meteorites with the earth. It performs it in all its absurdity by means of a collision of images and words and the semantic pitfalls the latter causes. The three episodes featured here are packed with a continuum of factual evidence of various kinds: reports facilitated by police authorities, lawsuit documents over property, contracts, a newspaper article on Petersen her-

self, Internet forum-posts of meteorite enthusiasts and, last but not least, press images and found photographs. All machine-typed in a bureaucratic way, all approved by investigation committees and experts, their mission is to shed light on facts, yet obstruct them instead. Fitting chaos into the human scale is not an easy business.

Interviews work as a substantial tool to this frenetic enquiry for facts. The Alabama chapter includes a later interview recording that finds Eugene Hodges, Ann's husband, some five decades after the events. A key figure but also a very conflictive agent in the story, Eugene is supposed to have been ill-tempered in the past, but now is mellow and less resolute when recollecting the events of the fall and when defending his version about the dispute over possession and his divorce. In his early nineties, he has partially lost the capacity of remembering and/or disremembering, putting at stake the interviewers' attempt to extract from their encounter a vivacious account of what *really* happened in Sylacauga. As his version of the story unfolds through his old fragile southern accent, Ann Elizabeth Hodges gets more and more blurry. Her figure is gradually disappearing; we cannot tell who she is and whether her fate was tragic or not.

Recollections of this sort, plethoric and abundant in style, albeit unable to clear the path to information, are even more present in *Fragments*, the Ramsdorf chapter. Some sixty years later, conversation still makes itself omnipresent here through the disparate testimonies of some of the children (now adults) who were supposed to have been made privy to the incident. Ferdinand, Luise, Willi, Horst, Ludger, Hildegard, Gisela, Oswald, Reinhard ... Each one of them provides the artist with their own version of the facts. All of them safeguard a valuable part of the truth – theirs. They took it with them when breaking the meteorite in five pieces. This is the way life stories are constructed; people learn them by heart, they employ them as shields in order to sustain their identities, they become *them*. Putting together the fragments that perfectly match each other makes it possible to re-establish the original shape of the meteorite, but this does not happen with the scattered bits of memory. As always, there is a voice missing: Franz, one of the main incident witnesses, is not alive to recount his version. As in the conjured fields of Alabama, here too people who are no longer present take their words with them.

In *The Indian Iron*, language throws an opaque veil on testimonies, blurring the horizon. The interview with the villagers of Kanwarpura is purposely left in its original version – Hadoti dialect mixed with Petersen’s original questions in English. In contrast with the almost repressive language of *Fragments*, translation does not seem to work properly here. Lines and lines of the Rajasthani conversation are resumed in short answer phrases that do not address the original questions. Many essential pieces of information seem to escape, at least to non-Hadoti speakers. Petersen deliberately reproduces her experience while conducting research in India – the experience of being marginalised from the dissemination of meaning. And yet, these leftovers of meaning – whole blocks of Devanagari letters occupying the sequence – suddenly allow a novel space for the standpoint of the »Other«. They conduct an enquiry through the perception of other people and cultures, thus releasing the monolithic westernised condition of the previous two chapters. History can be written in many ways by many hands, suggests Petersen. Sometimes truth seems to lie in the gaps and lapses of language, somewhere in between words and on the other side of representation; it can be even found outside myth and also outside the semantic trappings of the image, as we are about to see ...

On a Dialectical Image

»The essence, properly speaking of the image, and very particularly of the photo, is to be found in that power of appearance that cannot be explained by the representational content«.

François Laruelle: *The Concept Non-Photography* ²

Petersen treats text as a surface, as a meta-form that expands into space and is perceived in terms of its property of representation rather than of writing. It is not words and arguments per se that matter to her but the experience of proximity and/or distance with facts they convey as interchangeable variables of fantasy. As a mental constellation of this physically sensed condition of aloofness, language also suggests a way to delve into her still contemplative images. *Find a Fallen Star* is replete with visual equations of proximity and farness. The camera constantly re-enacts on many levels the experience of micro- and macro-scale in the natural world. It records creatures barely perceptible to the eye. Besides the imprint they leave on the environment, a frog, a chameleon, a snake on

the path, a donkey, or merely an egg on the ground are minor cosmic components, epiphanies of fragility and humble reminders of the limitation of perception. Other kinds of images, as the Google view of a crater in India, aerial views, or amateur astronomer takes of a moon eclipse appear as minimising the dramatic effect of human presence amidst the vast cosmos, while performing the earthly necessity to catalogue and possess the world; to literally fit it within science and the confined limits of myth. As a whole, these visual haikus can be seen as symbolising the material distances meteorites cross, the miles the artist herself had to cover in order to gain access to geographically remote areas of India or the American South. But, ultimately, they also seem to imply how troublesome the path to meaning and interpretation is.

Texts and images turn into integral elements of the selection and spatial organisation of information in *Find a Fallen Star*. They engage in cross-temporal conversations, exposing the unbearable lightness of understanding in a fragmented world. By doing so, they involuntarily twist documentary photography’s traditional exclamations of the sort »If you aren’t good enough, you are not close enough« (Robert Capa). It goes without saying that in a media and communication era Petersen feels that she cannot nor has to be close. Concerned with the aftermath, her photography maps the world in its chaotic incompleteness. Petersen goes to the impact sites after events have happened and sees what is left. Her practice is not premeditated. She recollects photographs from the surface, allowing margin for chance. Her pictures, despite their registering character, are not mere images of material remains. Motivated by an intuitive and curious approach to the world and by a desire to make connections, they are articulated as independent visual unities leading to insightful metaphoric associations. They turn into liquid images that, depending on their context, meld the signifier and the signified into a third object, too subtle to openly spell its connections.

Take meteorites, for example. Meteorites work here both as real tangible rocks and as mental images binding form, language and content in an array of rich dialectic associations. Like photographs, they are presentations and representations, triggering a series of metaphors in relation to memory, tangibility and materiality. They simultaneously show and conceal. Meteorites may contain unbiased

records of ancient memory in their interior, but we cannot obtain real access to this cosmic information; we can only imagine and project it. Then unexpectedly, these dream-like apparitions of the sky reach our hand as artefacts in museum captivity. Petersen takes time to photograph them as isolated still lifes against a black background. Realised in large-format and with long exposures, their photographs transmit a feeling that is by turns sensational and unsensational. On the one hand, they advocate the miracle of bearing witness to an object with evident religious and sacral connotations, or, alternatively, a luxury item. On the other hand, one cannot let go that each of these images is nothing but the record of a banal rock. Here is before us, a single piece of stone unleashing a handful of absurd stories.

Likewise, chimps – a recurrent motif in *Find a Fallen Star* – are activated on a second-order speech level that abandons the field of literacy for the sake of some magical thinking. Monkeys are a part of the natural wonder. They live in a world of their own that we cannot access, but at the same time their genealogy is related with our past. Monkeys also carry mythical connotations; they are parts of a colourful ritual that contrasts with German small-town Catholicism as implied in *Fragments*. They are the »Gods of the Old World«, worshipped as non-figurative rectangular objects embellished with rice and coconut. In the recent past, they formed part of the International Space Hall of Fame. They were sent to space, and the empty space suits of those who made it back are exhibited as emblems of human ambition and journey exploration. But Petersen’s eloquent visual narrative undermines such an iconic reading, pinpointing what these animals really are: namely, involuntarily launched bodies to an extra-terrestrial orbit of perils. As if thinking could be performed in their portraits, history and reality find their expression in the experience of absolute terror and fear these poor chimps must have experienced during their historic missions.

On Melodrama and, finally, on Facts

Although *Find a Fallen Star* unfolds as a threefold narrative, the leitmotif behind it is one and the same. It is all about a melodrama palpitating with passion, counter-memory and exhaustion – a melodrama that sardonically cuts through religion, politics and collective fantasy. Its

three acts are orchestrated as cyclical narratives of beguiling and tantalising polarities that can be read in one way or the other. As unpredictable outsiders, meteorites invade the stage and become masterfully interwoven with the extremities of life. Experiences and history become cognisable and visible through them. In a transformative sense, they confront us with multiple perspectives and entombed secrets. At the outset of each chapter there is a mystical, supernatural hint, as if the answer to everything were to be found in allusions to the Lord and in Judgment Day. But, paradoxically, what ultimately prevails are the subterranean forces of human relations taking over, and raw facts.

Stars fell on Alabama takes off as a white woman’s tale. It transports us to the mid-fifties’ American South, while eloquently describing the way Ann Hodges’ quotidian life becomes afflicted from the media attention and legal disputes over possession that accompany her encounter with the extraterrestrial. Then, when less expected, the narrative suddenly becomes engaged with the ventures of Julius McKinney, a sixty-year-old black farmer who happens to discover another piece of the rock from outer space in the middle of a dirt road. First we see him in a contemporary newspaper photograph surrounded by his family, his hands holding the »black colored pearl«. Then, looking back, the original negative is restored, demonstrating that part of the frame of the reproduced image had been painted over to hide the extreme poverty of the McKinney family. Narrative is moved from the context of American nostalgia to the dark fringes of old plantation days. We find ourselves before a second invisible and less idealised level of reading that addresses altogether the issue of racial segregation while showcasing a whole draft of contradictions and anomalies in the construction of the photographic image. The flow of images takes us even further, into a realm where polarities melt into one. During her research, Petersen discovers in the genealogical tree of the McKinneys the complex African-Scottish origins of their ancestors: Julius McKinney’s father was the fruit of a relation between a white slave owner and a slave, following a series of biracial relationships. She thus deciphers the story of a white man within a black man the same way a careful viewer will spot a little Americana statue in the desolating opening portrait of Ann Hodges, on top of her radio. In the end, things are not what they appear at first sight. We can never fully know the grim undercurrents of history that lie in store or its unexpected and surprising twists that bring

the opposites closer. And so the story unfolds, unexpected, ambiguous and random. Its two narrative threads are masterfully tied together as one through the religious texts that open and close the chapter respectively. The comments of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith about the stellar shower of 1833 in Alabama are paired with the recollections of Amanda Young, a slave, on Judgment Day, punishment and redemption. Beyond specific statements on contemporary racial injustices and minorities, the »black pearl« ends up performing altogether the inherent dynamics of the place it falls on, even if this is by chance.

As Petersen wistfully states, »Places do not change much. Only life on top of them does«. Beneath the surface of her imagery lies tension. In *Stars fall on Alabama*, everything feels just different. There is a poetic connection with the muddy earth, the blood-coloured moon and the pine trees in these pictures – a so-to-speak dramatic, cinematic-like feeling transcribing the savage magical spell of Carl Carmer's Alabama into a universe of stillness³. In *Fragments*, the presence of this ambiguous world brooding under the surface is further reinforced. Ramsdorf seems like a fragmented world of powerful father figures (the doctor) and the surrogates for them (the male children). All of them carry an impending need to impose their proper views, to become comprehended and appreciated. Regardless of their flaws and possible fallibility of memory, they are human beings thwarted by individual limitations and the circumstantial historical stances of society. And yet, beyond them, there is always a broader historical context to bear in mind. If in the Sylacauga tale the hidden agenda is racial segregation, here it is post-war Germany in the shadow of its recent past. In their sculpture-like quality, images such as *Mole Hills* draw allegorically this two-fold hidden past wounding under the earth, whereas the Wehrmacht steel helmet at the village church made into a picking bag shows the very same past palpating in actuality. There is a sort of autobiographical element in this chapter, a feeling of estrangement Petersen feels at times, when investigating her own country, an inability to fully recognise herself in the repressive language of German sermon post-war articles. This feeling of alienation is perpetuated in the other series; it serves as a reminder of what-has-been by locating the remaining traces of what is past in the contemporary world. Take, for example, the portrait of Wernher von Braun, an ex-Nazi technician who led a new life as member of the NASA crew, in the Alabama chapter.

As soon as the curtain of history unfolds, we are made privy to a Cold-War-era feeling that dictates the underlying historical context and mood of Petersen's stories. In *Fragments*, the anonymous photograph of the boy building his Sputnik out of a milk can is a direct allusion to the same space dream with that of the NASA chimpanzees in Alabama. As far as *The Indian Iron* is concerned, it commences as a 19th century tale with religious and colonial nuances. Like the previous chapters, it is gradually arising from amidst a legend to 2006. It somehow ends up being part of the same culture of globalisation, politics and war. The initial association of the meteorite with a Pakistani bombing or its quick dismissal by American meteorite collectors as a piece of junk from the neighbouring power plant brings to our attention the current political patterns of the zone. For once more, Petersen's narrative tells us something crucial about prejudice, localisms and the narrow focus of Westerners failing to see the broader scheme.

History intrudes with its weight and, much more significantly than the meteorites, exercises a repressive force onto people and their fates. Petersen seems to acknowledge this fact. However quiet, restrained and understated her photographs may seem, they are neither programmatic in tone nor rigid, for she cares passionately for her subjects. Hodges is the woman who never fully recovered from the consequences of the contact with the extraterrestrial. »She never again was the same person«. Her voice remains unheard in a male-dominated narrative the same way many other voices remain unheard or inaccessible in the rest of the other stories. Ed, whose mother, the Hodges' landlady, was involved in a lawsuit with them over the stone from space, and Ferdinand in the German story appear peaceful and unattached; Franz and Eugene, Julius and the two nomads are absent protagonists ... all of them have involuntarily become actors in this theatre of the absurd. Petersen is concerned with a sort of right distance, seeking to remain un-judgmental in her approach. What are the limits of investigation? What are the limits of intrusion? What does it mean remembering things properly? When photographing her witnesses, she records them with simplicity and directness, allowing time and space for the personal, tangible, subjective element to surface in the portraits. First and foremost, she wants things to matter. The corollary of her visual approach is sadness and affection about people passing away and about estranged friends. Some people get the limelight, while others are not even mentioned ...

Petersen's ultimate personal meditation is existential. Beneath the visual sequence and conceptual layout of her elliptical, contingent and open-ended narratives lie the trappings of our little world. *Find a Fallen Star* unveils how both the banal and the profound in the universe are interrelated in a whole of sense or non-sense. Everything about the work oscillates between different aspects and things. A lot cannot be explained. Nature appears as a key in this whimsy envisioning of History. It consists of a world of its own that we cannot access. With its perennial circles, it provides pauses for contemplation within the narrative question, but at the same time it is much more than a modest backwater context. Nature energises a shift from the realm of the historic to the flaccid and silent confines of the ahistoric. The last images in the Indian chapter *Old World (Crater Rim)* and *Sky* mark this approach. In *Old World*, a universe deprived of humans appears floating in time; there are just a few little houses in the background and the natural world. *Sky* is a kind of hopeful view albeit resigned at heart. Obtained not from a shooting star but from a plane, it formulates itself as a reminder of the fundamental shift in perspective that space research brought about in the sixties, just one decade after the events of Sylacauga and Ramsdorf. After men set foot on the moon, the image of the rising Earth seen from a distance united people, revolutionised our ideas about the environment and the planet, and condemned any extreme aphorisms to fallacy. Amidst a vast universe everything got relative, both for better and for worse. This is what lies behind the bittersweet whimsy effect of these concluding stills. Looking from a distance at History and at its anarchic and raw happenings brings somehow hopefulness and resignation about things. This is the way things go. Men are born, live, pass away ... A whole world gets lost when a person disappears. But the universe somehow keeps on being here in its utterly compelling essence – at times sad and insightful, at times funny and unpredictable.

And then, silence comes. The silence of ending marks the end of History. After all, photography is a deeply melancholic medium. Gradually we are distancing ourselves; gradually everything is diminished. In distance and in time, everything – images and words – get lost in translation. What is only left is the echo of a song⁴ resonating in our ears:

*We lived our little drama
We kissed in a field of white
And stars fell on Alabama
Last night*

*I can't forget the glamour
Your eyes held a tender light
While stars fell on Alabama
Last night*

*I never planned in my imagination
A situation so heavenly
A fairy land where no one else could enter
And in the center just you and me*

From the distance, we can hear Doris Day's voice. Or is it Billie Holiday? Here too, there is the black and white version. We can buy into the version we prefer. We can buy into the myth. As in all representation, as in all historic fictions, we are the speculators who profit from the traffic between the realm of things and the realms of allegory and phantasmagoria. In the meantime, the image of Hodges surrounded by police officers in the aftermath of her encounter with the extraterrestrial keeps ringing into our mind. Eyes lowered, under the gaping hole of the ceiling, Hodges is fading within the old photograph. As Benjamin once rightly remarked, »History decays into images, not into stories«⁵.

Natasha Christia, 2015

Notes

1. SEBALD, W. G.: *The Rings of Saturn*. Random House, 2013, p. 125.
2. LARUELLE, François: *The Concept Non-Photography*. Urbanomic/Sequence Press, 2011, p. 110.
3. CARMER, Carl: *Stars Fell on Alabama*. New York, Doubleday, 1934. Reissued various times.
4. *Stars Fell On Alabama* is the title of a 1934 jazz song composed by Frank Perish with lyrics by Mitchell Parish. The origin of the song is an earlier cosmic event in Alabama, the Great Leonid Meteor Shower that was visible in the skies of the southeastern United States on Nov. 12, 1833. Curiously, the two versions of the song by Doris Day and Billie Holiday cited in the text were released in the same year, 1957.
5. BENJAMIN, Walter: *The Arcades Project*. Ed. Rolf Tiedmann. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 476 [N10a, 3].