



ALMOST NATURE

Gerco de Ruijter



ALMOST

Is the wilderness wild?

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These images show the earth

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During that instant of disorientation

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After they have caused space to implode

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The Dutch, in their crowded, swampy river delta

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Two types of terrain meet

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Outside, outdoors

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The uncertainty, the changeable, the unknown

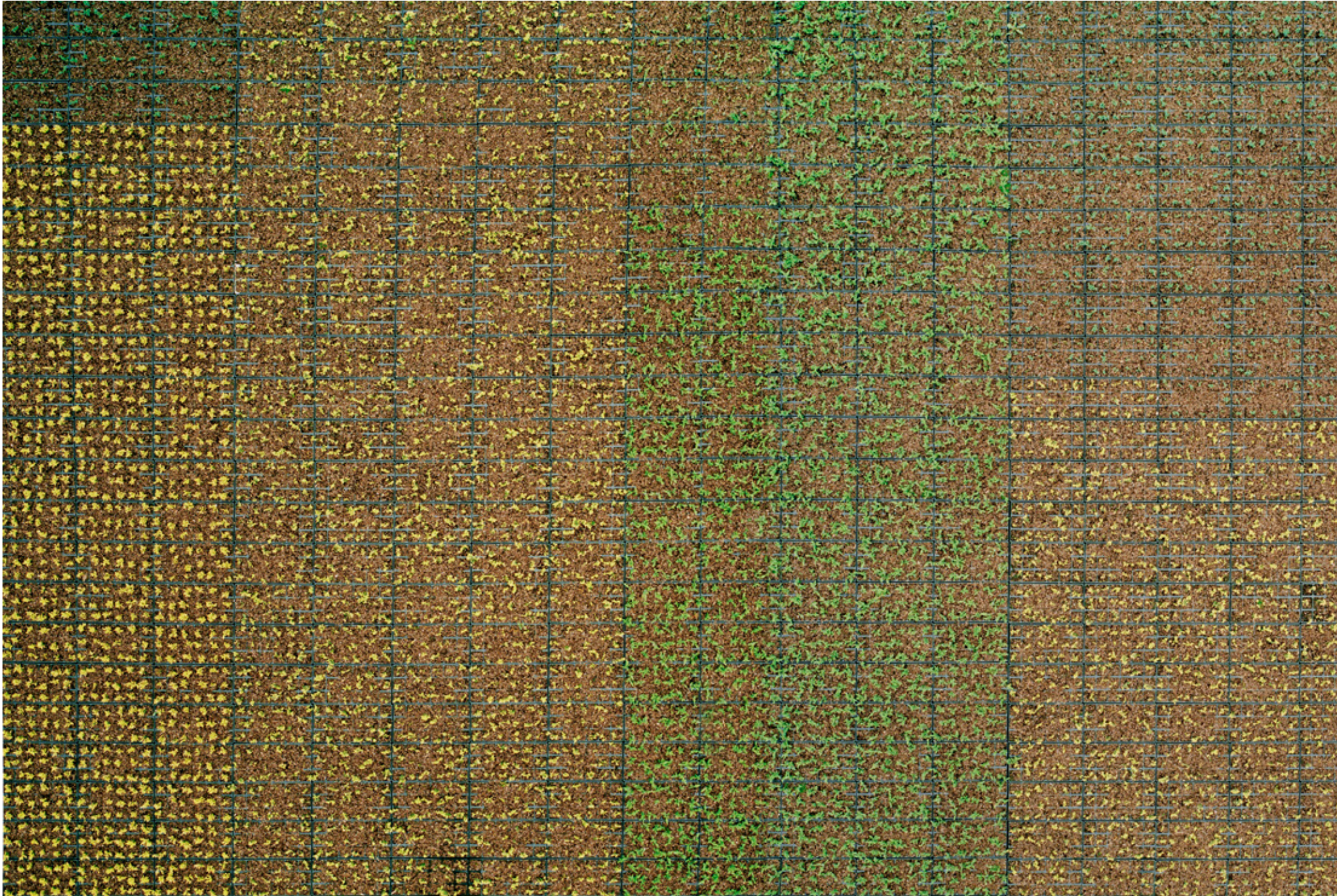
NATURE

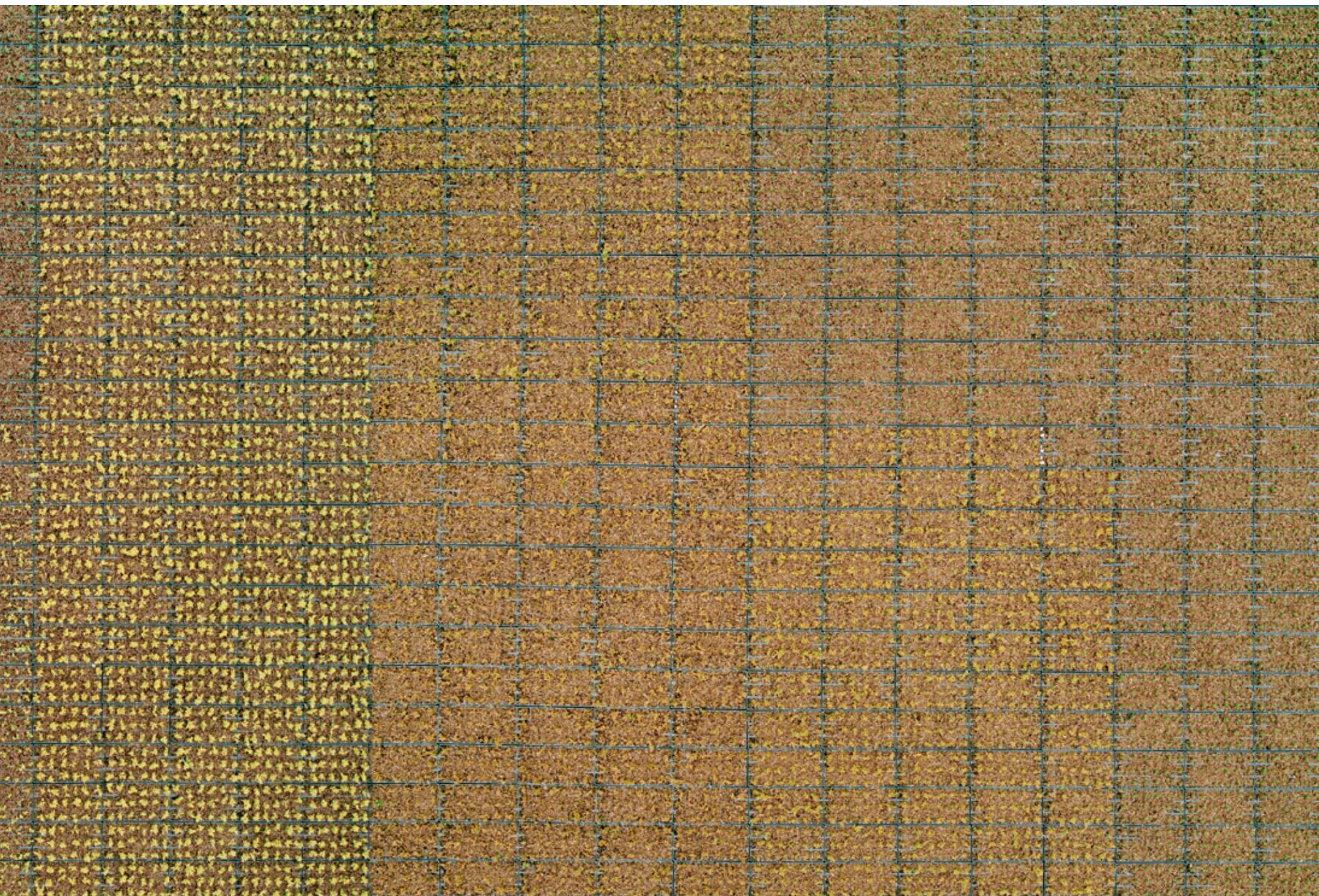
Texts by Dirk van Weelden

Text *From on High* (page 165)
by Kelly Gordon



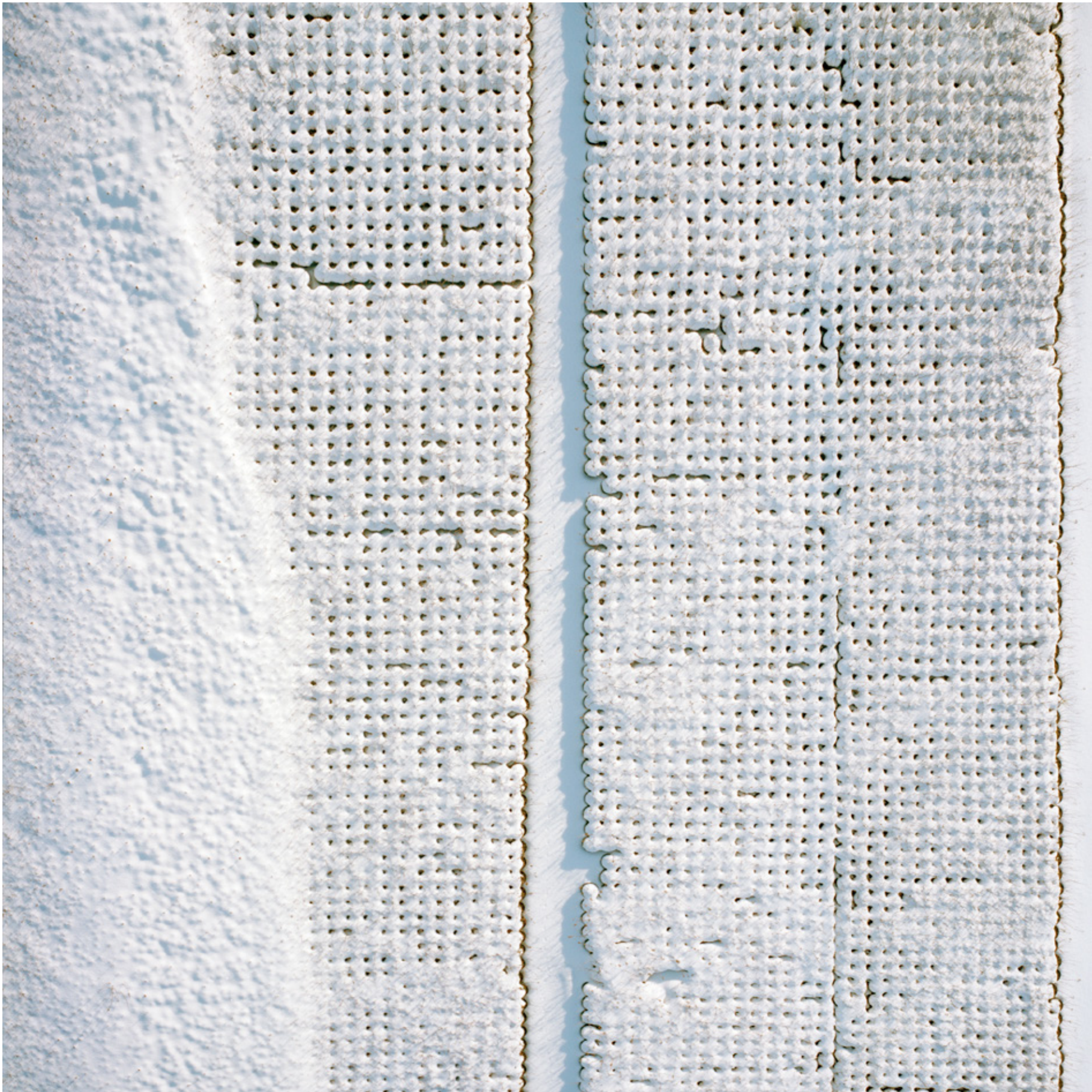












During that instant of disorientation

During that instant of disorientation you are floating between wonder and unease. You are looking at an image while not yet knowing what it is you see. It may take a while, perhaps more than a minute, before your eyes and brain manage to recognize anything. The image is undeniably beautiful, stunningly so, but it doesn't look like an abstract painting or watercolor. It presents itself as a photograph, as a mediated but truthful representation of reality. And that makes your lack of understanding even more awkward or interesting, depending on your temperament. The first problem is scale. You might be looking at decaying horseflesh as seen through a microscope, or at a macro shot of a patch of arctic algae, but you cannot be sure. The other possibility is the opposite of the disorienting close up: a telescopic image from a balloon, airplane or satellite. You hunt around for recognizable details like bridges, buildings, roads, trees; anything to help get to grips with scale and distance.

In this moment of seeing without reference, prejudices, knowledge, and concepts are not much help. Those are usually the instruments we use to process what we see, making sure we quickly arrive at what the image means and come up with words to describe why we find it beautiful or ugly, interesting or banal. Our defenses are down, we are under the spell of the pure power of the image: its beauty, its alien reality, the lines, the light and above all the colors. When, after a while, our confusion dissolves and we have figured out what we are looking at, the memory of having been outside our regular frame of perception remains, forever enhancing the hypnotic power of these images. It resembles the feeling of someone's hand touching you, and you pick up a perfume, hear the sound of feet, but there is nobody to be seen – in broad daylight, with your eyes wide open. These images depict our world, our own interventions and activities in it, but seem to come from outside.



