

# SYNCHRONIZED CHAOS

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## Essay from Susan Hodara

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### Itches

There are harmless ones, tingles that dislodge your hand so you can run your nails into your hair and along your scalp, up and down, once, twice, and that's all it takes.

There are elusive ones, beckoning from somewhere on your back that you can't reach and you can't find, so you contort your elbow and slide your thumbnail across the vicinity, over and over, leaving angry red lines that you won't notice until later, when a hot shower ignites them and you crane your neck to see what you've done.

There are flirtatious ones, a tickle here and then there, along your ribcage, on the side of your knee, behind your ear. Fickle ones that vanish moments after they emerged, not committed enough to stay.

There are latent ones, absent until you caress the area, tease out the ghost. Then you can scratch or press or rub, as you would with any other itch, all the while knowing that the need wasn't truly there.

There are urgent ones. Sirens that lure your fingertips, masochists that want the pain your nails offer. You slip them over the bumpy surface. You dig their edges into the core of the call, and you know you shouldn't, but you can't stop, and you lose yourself in the scraping, the grating, the ecstasy of what feels like relief but is really the plea for more.

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