

A project by **ITS KIND OF HARD TO EXPLAIN**
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BLUE SKY THINKING
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DEEP DIVE #1

Her fingernail scrapes silently across the glossy surface of the wireless mouse. Jackie slowly inspects her emails one by one. Nothing interesting. The names of her colleagues roll like credits at the end of a film, sandwiched nonsensically between promotional gym memberships and junk mail. One of them reads...

'Bread gloves - As seen online - Genuine product - £8.55 - Make anything into a sandwich'

She considers it. Pointless, or a great gift for Dave's birthday?

Jackie flicks her gaze past the edge of her computer screen, surveying the boxy landscape. It is 9:17am and the office is already in routine overdrive. Mouse clicks snap at her ears, while greasy fingers drum frantically on a keyboard.

Jackie inhales gently and reaches for her bottle of Kombucha. She convinces herself it will help. The live cultures, good bacteria, helpful enzymes and friendly antioxidants will surely fix her right up.

The office itself is high on the seventh floor, flirting with the foggy splendour of the east London skyline. Inside is a jungle of Ethernet cables, they erupt out of the floor and run up and down the loadbearing pillars like great veins, data pulsing through at 50Mbps. Jackie cautiously lifts her foot away from the faded blue carpet, thinking of all the crumbs, chad and spilled beverages. The floor mirrors the grid of the ceiling tiles, square by square, like a Lego sea reflecting a Lego sky.

As she pulls the bottle away from her lips, a droplet escapes onto her new Vesper pencil dress, delivered promptly to her that very morning. She doesn't notice. The green liquid soaks menacingly into the cheap polyester.

Jackie minimises her emails. The rectangular window contracts and drains out of the bottom of the screen, revealing the shadowy saturated mountaintop that greets her every morning. She stares at it blankly. The image is crisp and glowing, a plane of stiff colours that make everything outside of it seem grey and formless.

She knows she has work to do. There is always work to do, but the screen is inspiring nausea, the mountain ripples and refracts into nondescript colour. Jackie moves casually from her desk, walking alongside the back wall of the office towards a photocopier in the corner. A blue felt notice board looms beside her, decorated with urgent deadlines, illegible notes and various symbols. It appears to stretch across the entire wall, a sublime wave about to wash her away.

Jackie closes her eyes, her stomach sloshes with *friendly antioxidants*. Unused stacks of A4 paper build a wall around her. Jackie places each of her hands on the photocopier, almost religiously. It is warm like a body. Nothing is printing, but it hums.

A text for 'Blue Sky Thinking' by Charlie Billingham