

M NIFEST

An aerial photograph of a city and surrounding landscape, viewed from a high vantage point. A large, white, semi-transparent triangle is overlaid on the image, pointing downwards. The city is visible in the middle ground, surrounded by green hills and a river. The sky is filled with clouds, and the overall tone is warm and dramatic.

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BIGGER
THAN BIG

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THE NEW COUNTRY

BY MARSHALL BROWN

On the South Side of Chicago in 2033,
My father, Daniel Freeman,
Was an architect.
A flood destroyed the city
When he was sixty years old.

For most Chicagoans, their worst fears of
Environmental apocalypse came true.
The ongoing shocks of
Climate mutation provoked an Exodus
To the outskirts of the metropolis.
Two centuries of urban planning,
Engineering, and management
Had failed, disastrously.

Freeman saw changes coming
On the horizon,
And he was prepared.
He and my mother
Stayed on their land.
They lived there
In a house—
A house of Freeman's design.
The house was not large,
But it spread outward
Into the landscape.

They survived
Among a collective.
Citizen settlers.
Back then,
Their neighborhood
Was called Washington Park,
A patch of Chicago

First cultivated
In the nineteenth century,
The vision
Of a Garden City.
Together, Freeman and his people
Finally realized this dream.

Their journey forward
Was also a return;
A Renewal.

The American frontier.
Space,
Time,
Territory.
Unpredictable,
Undetermined,
Unlimited.

So-called *nature*
Neither conquered,
Nor destroyed.
Freeman's insurgent movement,
Filled the vacuum.
A new way—
Smooth Growth.

Citizen settlers
Bundled their resources.
Abandoned spaces were gathered,
And secured through social ownership.
Lawns merged into commons.
Yards burst into broad acres.
They learned to value
Quality over quantity,
Inevitable uncertainty,
And constant change.

Mobility and energy revolutions
Transformed space and time.
Soft infrastructure responded
To emergent flows,
No longer burdened
With false divisions
Between suburbs, and downtowns.

Having survived
The fear of shrinking cities,
Freeman's generation found their way
To a new place.
They imagined.
They lived.
They organized
Within principles
Of collective stewardship.

In 2055,
Two years after
Daniel Freeman Passed away.
The Smooth Growth Codes
Were adopted by Cook County, Illinois
As a new civic charter.

Mine, contributed to ours.
Each, joined the many.
I, surrendered to us.
A truly independent
Society was formed
Through spatial solidarity.

A superorganism,
Its expansions and contractions
Shape and define
A boundless, and
Radically American civilization.

This Artificial Eden,
This Middle landscape,
This post-industrial frontier,
Will always be my home.

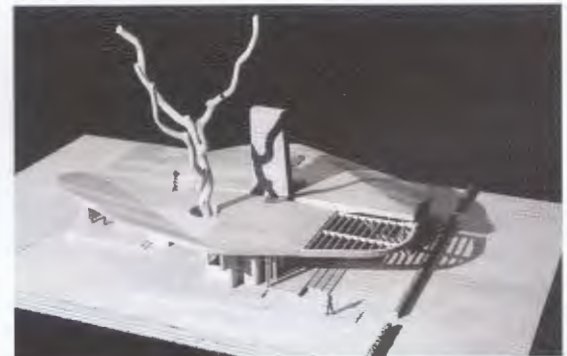
We call it Territory.
We call it Land.
We call it—
The New Country.



"Smooth Growth Model" detail, mixed media.



"Smooth Growth Plan for Washington Park, Chicago", digital graphic.



"Smooth Growth House", wood and plastic,
11h x 42w x 25d in., collection of the Art Institute
of Chicago.