

In the forgetting of shadow

I didn't know until today that 'God's Mountain' is a street in Naples. I saw it written down in Italian (*Montedidio*) in an address book. A friend of Aldo's still lives there. Aldo lived in the next street when he was a child. I knew 'God's Mountain' as the title of a book by Erri De Luca (*Montedidio*). It's about a hunchback with wings. Since reading the book I've learned about the hunchbacks of Naples and their role in luck and good fortune, about their life as significant shadows. The book is about a boomerang too (a flying weapon, that the boy practices how to throw, but doesn't throw: "My hand grips the last half inch of the wood and pulls it behind me. I keep doing this, back and forth. My back loosens up. I work up a sweat. I keep a tight grip. All it takes is a flick of the wrist for it to slip from your fingers."¹) The wings are in the hump, the angel says. "They're in a case inside your hump." He's happy "... about the hump he's carrying on his back, like a sack of potatoes and bones that he could never put down. They're wings, wings, he tells me ..."²; the hunchback is a cobbler, his name is Don Raffaniello. "People are always putting their hands on Rafaniello's hump without asking permission. He lets them ..."³; the touch of hands has awakened his wings. Don Raffaniello is waiting to fly home (to Jerusalem).

Like the hump/wings the artworks are felt; or rather, I, not being the hump or the artworks (*being* another type of composite), feel them only

in seeing (I feel them in my (mind's) eye); they look right back (as I am an image to them), they stare just as they are, despite who I am, and remain, still, staring, no matter what (and no matter where they are – in the studio, in the house, in the gallery). That is, what-ever is in the artwork, either tangible or intangible, emerges (or not) in-time; intime with the time one brings to the actual there-upon-ness of the 'thing' – times meet times, side by side, face to face – ghosts, spectres, dreams (in an instance, or during many instances, amounting to years).

Thereupon it came, a memory, a geometry, a burning sensation, a vase in a window, a novel, a tree. Thereupon, its voice then slowly comes to me; oh, there I see you, once-upon-remembrance it lands (again and again, perhaps, as it persists); in time, patiently, a spark glows in the dark, and spreads; that little drawing is completely full, like an animal is filled with what it is (and only that), and like a chair is always ready to be a chair. There is a drawing where once there was not; there there was nothing to write a word about, nothing to keep faith with, nothing to be attentive of; instead, *there* is something – thereupon it arrives, and by my own volition I can see it (with gratitude). I, the animal, can see a star, see the glow of *something* from another being, another 'cosmos'. And, in the end, no matter what is said or written, one/I must take the plunge, go the distance, make the effort, and emerge too from my sleep and figure out the taps and pipes and vessels, the whole device that lies 'upon' the floor, or sits alone above the floor, isolated; that is

not a hump or wings, *that* has sprouted from the ground beneath the floor; the ground of having been-alive for some time, of having time (a flash, a speck, though, in the myriad conjunctions, symmetries and rhythms of systems, orders, and events – and their dissolutions; here today gone tomorrow).

There are many winged-creatures – birds, moths, bats, foxes, butterflies, each specific in colour, size, strength, weight, each undergoing/taking their life, each seeing, touching, thinking, hearing, following; where do we fold our wings for their safe-keeping, where is our hump that sets us apart (that others wish to know), and from/with which we can set our sights on another place, another beginning. Our gossamer touchstone stored away from view, hidden, harbouring ancient cells that could-have-been-a-hump; our makings as our visible-wounds, our sacred signs/symbols, in the realm of 'things' (breathing, not-breathing) – our manner of flying, our passions looking back at us (without reserve). The man in the story surrenders to his wound, and it's an ongoing surrender(ing), never completed or ignored (instead, his destiny), a shadow over his shoulders during the simple difficulty and generosity of his day-to-day life.

As such, one tries to recall yesterday; its sky, its temperature, its sounds, its smells, its worries and labours and anxieties, as well as its pleasures and surprises. A moment looks like *something* (*as such*) – leaves shimmering in the wind, the exact gold of

summer grass, the purple of a nylon cord, the green car across the road, the pink bougainvillea, and so on. A line, or a smudge of smoke, initiates the 'as such' as image, and the image conceals what the 'as such' was at the time of its 'as it was'; then, as once it was, 'it is'.

These are some of the thoughts that have arisen in the process of 'curating' this exhibition. Curating has been a combination of watching, talking, eating, and reading. Curating has not been choosing; instead it's been a matter, or circumstance (circumstantial), of being amongst the work as it's been made, and being, as a result, part of a web of considerations relating to connections, continuations, chances, stories, methods, mediums, material – an accumulation of details; and being part of the sober sense of Master Errico's sign above his workshop (in *God's Mountain*), that "the day is a morsel" (... one bite and it's gone, so let's get busy ...) ⁴; a sense that pervades the body of work: *In The Shadow Of Forgetting*. And, body-of-work could be body-at-work, or body-in-work, or body-for-work, or body-to-work, or body-and-work, or just 'body-work'. The work of the specific body, Aldo Iacobelli, makes itself known – its particulars, its experiences, its sensitivities and aggravations, its empathies and disgusts, its soft-heartedness.

Art comes from faraway, like dust and pollen, in and on the air currents and settles at the very moment of an idea, noise, tremor, mark, or at the moment it rubs against the eyes (in the gallery, say). In effect, the substance of curating is, in this instance, like

a moonbeam. It barely exists, and is always at the point of vanishing; that point being its pleasure, its task – to fall away, to fade, to be replaced by clouds or daybreak.

The curation, thereupon (as such), is residual (a wing in a hump). Thereupon the work's body is its 'feel' in the space, its gathering overall; each instant, like a word or a thread, is a 'scene' or 'scenario', and with an ear to the darkness of forgetting, as if carried by swirling (aligning and re-aligning) atmospheres and vibrations – misunderstanding, wrong-doing, turbulence, abandonment. Nevertheless, how art forms itself as comment, response, action, and what it contributes to the social and political agenda (either of a single person or a company of several), is intimate, vulnerable, and a condition, a wearing, of the soul; an affirmation of emotion, and of a vague and useful place in the universe.

Linda Marie Walker

1. Erri De Luca (2002) *God's Mountain*, trans. Michael Moore, Riverhead Books, NY, p. 6.
2. *ibid.*, p. 22/23.
3. *ibid.*, p. 134/135.
4. *ibid.*, p. 1.



Studio 2013 (detail), photographer, Toby Richardson