





NOBODY KNOWS





THE FULL STORY

ABOUT THESE THINGS

Photographs: Christiana Solomou

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Παναγιώτης Λυσιώτης
Peter Lyssiotis

On the road Don Quixote and Sancho Panza find an object. Don Quixote says, "This is the helmet of a great knight." Sancho Panza says, "No, no. This is a barber's bowl!" Then Cervantes, through Don Quixote says, "You may think it is a barber's bowl, but for me it is the helmet of a great knight. Let each person have his own idea."

(from a memory of Don Quixote)

(SACRED PLACES)

THE WOMB— DARK SOIL PASSES THROU

UGH MY FINGERS. THIS IS A SCARED PLACE.

This is the place. And this is its recording. These are the words: repeated over and over until they're embedded in the soil— year after year, for thousands of years. Listen to the words and the way they ripple out, the way they leave behind their echoes. Sometimes they are barely audible— and at other times they shriek. All we can do is listen. Listen; over and over again for the next thousand years because that's all we will know how to do by then.

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The dry hills. The Byzantine monastery. The umber mine.
(A triangle can get bigger, but not more perfect.)

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This triangle is a sacred place. What does a sacred place do? It gives us that space when the curtain parts between this world and the invisible one and provides us with the stage where something sacred takes place. It's here that Time passes quickly and all sense of place is (paradoxically) lost and you can cast yourself and your accompanying ideas adrift with confidence. It is the place where fables, gossip, parables, rumours— the whole web of storytelling exists— and on which the whole web of this work is founded.

•

If the things we make don't clearly pronounce the name of the place where we stand and if they don't spell out our own name; then the things we've made are wrong.

1 GREEN LINE.

2 COUNTRIES.

3 LIES.

In this place, so near the line that divides.
Next to the bare hills which sprout young men with guns,
beneath the flight path of the white helicopters with blue markings

In this dry valley where the Void spills out of mine shafts
and where the voices of five monks chant 14th Century hymns.

•

We are stuffed full, like sacks, with stars, with stories, with earth - and
always with a truth we try to resist.

•

Here I am. Surrounded by the stone orchards of memory.

•

This is the time the Ancients come for your heart; down the long shaft carved
into the hill, past one gallery then another; a last dark turn, then a light! A
star perhaps.

•

There's the hill, hunched over like an old woman- feeling for the thickness of the ploughed earth. This hill which wraps its brown promise around a dizzy world.

•

... and for tonight these stars hide inside me.

•

Here at the entrance, in the shade – I bury my left hand up to the wrist in soil and wait for it to flower.

**(SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO BE UNLIKE THE
SIMPLE IT IS TO SLIP BACK INTO OLD,**

•

Over the entrance of the disused mine the Void spills out and settles like the darkness on the lip of an old well - each day, the Void grows more articulate.

•

I brush my hand against the brown rock - rock so old it understands immediately the path I will take: the history that I've had.

•

In each sky, it's as if an entire forest is growing.

•

At each end of this hill there is a cruel hand.

**SNAKES THAT LIVE HERE; SEE HOW
USED SKIN.)**

Maybe the night sky isn't all darkness after all, but so much light wrapping itself around us, soft as a feather. Maybe we should close our eyes and let ourselves be carried away in amazement to a place in time where there are no shadows and the light is so intense that it washes us clean off our bones. I look up, I look down.

•

I scramble in this umber earth, because I know that hereabouts there's a way of seeing old things in another way.

•

Such are the stories I've moored myself to.

**THE IDEA OF A HOMELAND IS A CRUEL
IDEA OF PARADISE.**

•

The earth itself is the prayer: the Alpha and the Omega.

JOKE— CRUELLER EVEN THAN THE

**HERE THE PAST WALKS AHEAD OF
ACROSS EACH EXIT.**

Here and now: caught between the shadows of the barren hills and the Byzantine shadow of the monastery at Mavrovouri doubt becomes a religious act.

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There are such never-ending cries embedded in this soil.

Listen:

in defeat— malice

in victory— revenge

that hard pleasure which the hammer feels as it strikes the nail. Let the blood which is spilt point the way! To where? Freedom?

When Beauty climbs in through a rear window and says, “Here I am”, no one knows what to do with it.

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This is the well into which the sins of Cyprus are cast. And each time we wait for them to disappear without a trace, for not even an echo to be left behind. The same sins reappear the next day, muscled up and ready for the struggle. Are we casting out these sins or are we baptising them?

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What is most noticeable about the past is there is so much more of it now; some things happened longer ago than seems possible.

But there are a thousand pasts here for both the present and the future to get lost in.

EVERYONE AND ROLLS A HUGE STONE

We keep listening to these guides, until the path between where we have come from and where we belong is so well worn that maps become unnecessary.

•

In this place the historian is superfluous because he is lost among so many eyewitnesses. The evil committed here sinks into these old, abandoned wells.

•

2 countries. 3 lies

Memories surrounded by water. Cyprus surrounded by the Mediterranean.

(MEMORY)

**LAST NIGHT, I HEARD A WOMAN CRY.
SHE REALLY CRY?**

You can just about recall your memory of the circumstances. But you have to admit, when that happens there's a second-hand quality about the remembering. Could this memory be a rumour, even, a fable about a world in which there may have been a past, somewhere, that said some thing about you? In that past people stored images and words in their heads. Back then, people could choose to summon their memories, play them, rewind them or fast forward them—and all in their heads. Heads in those days, were like hardware; it was remembering that kept them functioning; it was this process which made a clearing for them in a difficult landscape. The signage read Alpha, Omega, Back Then or was it In The Beginning or Back Then or did it simply read Ancient Times? By remembering the twists and turns, the dead ends, the laneways, the one-way streets, the town squares—the highways— what was planted in that field, where the wells were, how the seasons changed the landscape and the differing qualities of light which fell on the monastery they knew. And getting to know meant keeping track of everything; every thing.

Like this gutted umber mine.

At its edges it has become overgrown. You can't tell what monsters once prowled around its entrails. There is no telling. No telling if these monsters ever existed or whether they were invented phantoms which have been carried weightlessly through memory. But when facts lose their hard edges and veer between memory and imagination, confusion gets to show its teeth. On some days that confusion can be terrifying, still.

But this place— this dry place set between Byzantium and razor wire is living; it is alive... no doubt. Here, memory is the shadow of facts that will never lift.

TODAY, NOBODY WROTE ABOUT IT. DID

In remembering we create that secret and idiosyncratic order within the chaos— link those singular currents running like the seams through this tumultuous earth. We remember the events that can be linked along those seams and the rest falls away. This then is history. Those other events are side-lined, forgotten, cleansed. We can deny they even happened.

Memory resists explication, even when accompanied either by a description of its beginnings or its endings. The artist's preoccupation is to make things worthy of lying down with those shadows whose task it is to stir memory.

Is hell a place where memory is dead? Or where memory becomes reality again?

(ONE WAY OF SAYING)

**THE FABLE, THE PARABLE, THE
TAPES THAT MEMORY SUBMITS TO.**

Who was it that said arguments convince nobody? Well, they were right. It is stories— that is fables which best convince us. This is the burden Art must labour under. It must resuscitate and keep alive those parables and stories which are the bearers of the core of a Truth.

ALLEGORY ARE THE ONLY MEASURING

A woman in black follows on echo as it curves through the galleries of an umber mine. The galleries creak like a rusted key turning in the wrong lock. The woman in black is guided by this sound and the currents of a voice she once felt move beneath her skin. It was the voice of all those who have been buried here— victims of a rusted history. The woman in black sees their eyes emerge from the sleep of ravens and ready to bear witness!

The idea of never arriving makes the woman in black very thirsty.

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(MAKING ART)

**WE SHOULD BE LIKE THE MAGICIAN
WORLD NEEDS TO BE REASSURED**

The best artist, like the best comedian, will pick at ancient wounds to keep open the soreness that feeds laughter (and which perhaps demonstrates their ascendancy over the past). Or is it Art's duty to weep over our wounds?

•

History is full of mistakes. In the soil these mistakes become monsters. Running my right hand along the seams inside this umber mine I get to know the monsters which inhabit this soil and in turn, re-acquaint myself with Goya's monsters and I see that the monsters here are, indeed like Goya's, because neither the monsters here or in Goya's paintings know they're monsters. I have to ask again is doubt our only hope?

•

Sometimes we imagine that the things we make should exist, entitled to be called epic, be significant, swaggering— but there's no need— it may be enough to just have a right hand run along the seams of this mine, or have a pair of eyes adjust to the darkness or a body becoming apprehensive about going too far, or to get to that point where a mind is prepared to re-ignite the gloom that began some 400 years ago. I see these things; and I regret what I see.

WHO NEVER EXPLAINS A TRICK; THE THAT THERE IS STILL MAGIC.

The Irish writer Patrick Kavanagh wrote a sonnet in which Homer's ghost appears so he can declare that The Iliad was a work which grew from nothing, from a local row. In the sonnet Kavanagh reminds us that grandness need not begin large— the trick is not in the scale of the work but in the skill of its telling, in the things that recount it.

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Let me say I deal with facts... but there has never been a fact that couldn't be improved on by a small lie— a tiny exaggeration.

(THE BOOK)

(THE BOOK)

WHAT IS THIS BOOK

Making a book is conversation with a guardian angel who shows you and tells you things you didn't expect to hear.

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Some guile is necessary when introducing words to images, because they need to be convinced, little by little to interest themselves in becoming something else, perhaps a book.

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A book separates the world we see from the world we search in.

•

The book continues the world's life- it is that smile, that acknowledgment with a nod of the head, when comrades meet.

USING US FOR?

So in some small way the book can model the world.

•

The Word carries the Book within itself, just as our yearnings hold us within themselves.

•

The cunning of the artist is measured by how they can bring words and images little by little, to interest themselves in their books.

•

People gather together in bars over food and drink, as words and images gather around the blank pages of books.

•

Language and pictures are a two sided knife whose sheath is the book.

(ART WORLD)

**A NEW ERA IS ABOUT TO BEGIN IN
HIGH ART: IT IS THE ERA OF**

Another Biennale. Another chance for people with faces as thin and plastic as their credit cards to gather in one spot.

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Sam Beckett once put forward a theory of chess: you always play black. And you always copy what your opponent does. When you can't do that any more you resign. If you are forced to play white and therefore play first, you resign immediately. This is a perfect metaphor for nearly every successful career in the Arts (spot a trend, ride it, spot another, ride that too, run out of trends to spot, quit, do drugs or pilates).

THE WORLD OF THE SAME OLD ERA.

It doesn't matter for some that most artists can't really make art, because most artists can do much more than make art: they can put on a good show (- a mile wide and an inch deep.)





————— (I THINK I HEAR HER SAY ...) —————

ANYTHING- BUT

There is no more powerful an angel than self-interest and that angel is on patrol here: now.

Ah, the faith dealers! They're everywhere. They think by dating the Archbishop they will get to God. Spare me from that!

This is what I see: not what I want to see.

Feeling safe is a kind of paralysis, just as being completely satisfied is a kind of death.

I'm not up there in the crow's nest every day trying to spot the next trend.

The only words that interest me are those which have never left this ground.

DECORATION.

I want to make only those things which when they are struck by stones burst into flame.

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