

While others march gaily toward madness in order to stay alive in a sterile world, I strive for preservation. I cling to objects, their descriptions, to the memory of landscapes lying fully drawn in the folds of things around me. Every moment requires me, my gaze or sensation. I become attached to objects. I don't readily let go of days by banishing them to the blank book of memory. Certain words ignite me. I take the time to look around. Some mornings, I yield to the full-bodied pleasure of navigating among seconds. I then lose my voice. This doesn't bother me. I take the opportunity to lend an ear to ambient life with an eagerness I never suspected. The idea of remaining calm doesn't displease me. Some days I make sure everything is grey, like in November, or sombre, for I like storms.

It doesn't take much to upset me. I read a lot. I've a sharp eye for misfortune. I rarely talk about misery. I grew up surrounded by the beauty of white winters; every summer for years, I drowned in the unsettling heat of July, buried body and soul in the noble and frivolous green of vegetation lightly tousled by the wind coming off the river. In town, we lived across from a park. Stray seagulls often performed great landing manoeuvres in front of the house before softly, softly wedding their sleek wings to the dawn's fresh dew. This gave me pleasure and I concluded that I was a happy child.

I rarely talk about my little fears. I don't know how to explain a mother's love for her children. I own no weapons, like the folks to the south do. Little nothings don't shake me up. When the ice storm plunged us into the cold, I read four essays on antiquity under the most tragic lighting. I'm easily influenced, and it upsets me to realize I'm at the mercy of a statistic, of a proverb, of three chapters I suspect were written under the force of the tidewaters of violence or of deepest despair.

Yesterday, I walked for a long time. First day of May. People were making their presence felt throughout the city. I folded myself into a group of workers in blue aprons singing with their throats fully open like flags unfurled atop a ship's main mast. After leaving their vocal ensemble I felt lost. I no longer knew where I was. I thought about the wandering children seen in war movies, about their mothers, their crazed eyes when they've just grasped the fact that they will never see them again. I often think about war, but the way one thinks about eating a soda cracker. I mean I quickly forget I've just been thinking about war.

I don't know much about pain but I'm convinced that, in order to write, one must at least once in life have gone through a devastating, an almost agonal energy. I don't much like using the word *agony*. Since Mother's death, I know it means to gasp for breath, the self enclosed in tiny blue veins like butterflies about to fly off far away. Agony: I see it's about the eye, an inward turning of the eye even though the pupil is working very hard to say goodbye, to ask about the weather, to let the light in, ever so little, ever so little.

Words ignite me. This is very recent. Actually, I believe it's since I've been working at the Museum of Civilization, on Dalhousie Street. I've been assigned the job of preparing notices to describe, date and geographically situate the provenance of the objects exhibited. I take notes. I'm the one who composes. I enjoy pronouncing the words out loud as I write them: callipygian statuettes, Celtic brooches, porcelain dolls, antique pistols, ritual knives made of gold. I occasionally accept short contracts with contemporary art galleries in Montréal. Yesterday, for example, it was odd writing *2000* without adding *BC*.

Yesterday, during the vernissage: I'm looking around at people. I recognize the astonishment in their eyes due to the simple, almost nonchalant fear leading them unhurriedly from one urn to another. It's hot. Men mop their foreheads. Women pat the top part of their bosoms where the flesh is soft and inviting.

Fabrice Lacoste comes and goes in the large exhibition hall. Smiling, welcoming, he offers advice, information, sometimes a few words, which, instead of enlightening the visitor about the exhibition, make it even more mysterious and thus more desirable. To those enquiring about the location of White Room Number 1, he has a strange way of answering with his hand closed, thumb vertical, index finger pointing in the right direction.

Time glistens in time.

It's been a month already since Simone Lambert gathered the entire staff around the crates that had arrived that day. She talked at length about the exhibition, about its importance and our good fortune in producing it. She went into detail about the little gestures and precautions to be taken, then discussed the strange sense of well-being we would experience once committed to the exhibition. She warned us about the vertigo followed by a certain vulnerability we were sure to feel during the first weeks after the opening of *Centuries So Far*. 'We must be responsible before history, not let it pull us into oblivion.'

It had taken three years of negotiation, four trips to the Middle East, the patience of a saint and a woman's iron will to overcome all the pitfalls and red tape that had come up, cultural misunderstandings and sexist pettiness, border bureaucracy and tricky transportation, to end up on this gorgeous warm spring today. Now time rushes straight at Simone Lambert,

straight at her body, her life, her future. It winds around her genes like the serpent around the Tree of Knowledge. Time manufactures time using her skin, her bones, her way of walking, of addressing people who, having noticed her leaning against the rail of the mezzanine, come over to congratulate her.

Down below, Fabrice Lacoste is talking with a handsome, feline, well-read man. One hand in his jacket pocket, the other twirling to the same rhythm as the words issuing from his mouth. He is having a grand time. No doubt he is going to charm the stranger. He knows. Has always known. He does well with any subject; usually he sticks to ecology, nationalism and archaeology. He aims for the heart of the matter, then skirts around it so as to talk about art as long as possible without being interrupted. He usually begins with a historical fact to which he gives inordinate importance in order to segue into a full-fledged argument, allowing him to slot that same fact back into the proper place in the collective memory and, from there, to launch into a vigorous and sensual description of the passion that the sight of the artifacts should elicit in any genuine lover of art and civilization. He talks, smiles. Soon he'll notice that his interlocutor's breathing has accelerated slightly.

Surprising, though, that the same man who has such difficulty breathing in his own culture has the gift of inspiring comfort and excitement in culture-seeking museum guests. Had he not once confided to Simone just how much living here disgusted him? 'Listen, Simone, I love history, but I hate this city.' Simone had turned cold. Nobody working in this museum had the right to talk that way, especially not in her presence. Lacoste would have liked to crumple up his words and toss them in the wastebasket like a bad draft. He had merely added, 'What is this strange passion of ours? Are we interested only in tombs, urns and masks? I know, love what's around you. At least understand it. But aren't we headed for our own demise with all these fragments of mourning haunting

us in the name of civilization? We've been living among collections of arrows, crucifixes, rosary beads, ciboria, rocking chairs, for fifteen years. It drives me crazy.'

That day, Lacoste had gone back to his office without closing the door behind him. Simone had overheard him asking his secretary to put him in touch with the director of the Uffizi Galleries, then, lost in thought, Simone turned toward the window. In her head, spring was stirring faraway landscapes that had haunted her since the day of her very first dig. For months everything had been blue as if God existed, then every emotion had become tinged with white, for a sweet everlasting folly had gripped the stone-and-bone landscape. For months she'd shared the most precious moments of her life with Alice Dumont. They'd gone from site to site in search of a future and of words that would make of their love a reality.

Since Mother's death, I've started saying what I think to imaginary people. I voice my ill humour, my thoughts, my fears. I also try to imagine the answers when things are cracking up in my mind. Saying everything doesn't necessarily make me happy and, indeed, I don't know why there's such emphasis on all and sundry telling their story, and what's more, doing it live. As of yesterday, it's as if I'd become a better person, sparked by some flame that sets me dreaming in a world where no one dreams of dreaming anymore. Misfortunes multiply like beasts amid technological knowledge. Knowledge spreads like misery. My imagination seems to work too quickly; its volume doubles with the heart's every intention. Without end, the images violently interpenetrate, changeable and indescribable. I go to the theatre often. All forms of dialogue arouse my curiosity. I'd like to understand what gives dialogue its nobility and what makes it a high art for those of us who live wrapped around solitude like harmless boas. What is the value of a question in a dialogue? How important are the answers?

Yesterday, on my way back from the museum: my head is full of images of storms. A boundless sea of paintings and photographs. Other storms I build like a backdrop, with sombre and anonymous characters, impossible to identify. I remain thus all evening, pressed up against the existence of a storm without feeling threatened. Waiting. After a while I become, I am, the storm, the disruption, the precipitation, the agitation that puts reality in peril.

Sitting in front of the big window of her river-view apartment, Simone Lambert is reading the correspondence of Marie de l'Incarnation for the fourth time in twenty years. Every five years she immerses herself in ordinary life as it was lived in New France around this woman who captivates her more than anything. With every rereading she tries to sort out what belongs to the woman, to France, to the seventeenth century, to the random circumstances of a life, such as the freedom this woman recovered barely two years after marrying. Simone Lambert has always enjoyed autobiographies, enjoyed reading the correspondence of the world's great men and of the women who make up its core. She knows that people's worth ably reveals itself through the long-lasting words that can be elicited only by love and friendship. She likes standing silently in the dailiness of women and men who knew how to talk about the wind on their skin, about the fire in their bellies and about every possible storm containing high levels of historical violence.

With every reading she discovers unsuspected landscapes, unknown aspects of Marie Guyart's personality, simple anecdotes that give her a better idea of daily life in the land. She carefully scans for any information likely to justify new digs in the city. Still today, the mere hint of a rumour making plausible the possibility of a new find is all it takes for her to decide to go and probe the streets of the capital. She imagines herself discovering precious objects or mysterious bones overlooked by previous archaeological forays – just as, at the time, while walking along the Seine, Alice liked to fancy that fate would guide her hand to the first edition of a major work or a manuscript thought to be lost forever.

The telephone rings. It's Fabrice. He retells, verbally transcribes, the praise for the exhibition circulating on the Web. All are enthralled with the lion, the Venus of Prussia and the back of the silver mirror in Niche Number 7.

The call has extracted Simone from her bubble of harmony and melancholy. She decides to go and indulge her pleasure and solitude on the Plains of Abraham. From Rue de Bernières it's only a three-minute walk on fresh grass before she reaches the green bench where she often comes to gaze at the great river running to the sea. On the opposite shore, Irving Oil's reservoirs and tall chimney stacks whose smoke always ends up merging with the clouds and their graffiti over Lévis.

For each index card I invent a caption through which I relive part of the life of the object as if my own story depended on it. It's my only way of penetrating the core of the artifact, of spending some time there mentally so as to breathe in the climate of the period attached to it, of entering its landscape with my contemporary sorrow. Yesterday, I hadn't realized its magnitude. No sorrow's ever a waste. On the contrary, it's intensely alive, nourished by ever greater disasters, deliberately fostered, it would appear, to create new industrial waste sites where one and all can dump their grief. Sorrow is constant. Everything around it disappears: parents, friendships, buildings surrounded by the most golden olden days and yesteryears like so many friezes and church squares.

Contemporary sorrow doesn't enter all objects the same way. Some resist grief better than others, be it collective, like that of war, or intimate, like the ache of a broken heart. Collections of radios, cameras and pens are those that most easily absorb the sadness, the nostalgia, the enormity of the sorrow mutely at work, making us die of anxiety when confronted with the obvious fact of the short term.

I don't usually entertain such thoughts. Sorrow flows naturally into the object and the object naturally regains its small-object lustre while I assign it a name, an age, a function. The impression of secrecy, of rarity and of fragility emanating from small objects, even if they were once thousand-bladed weapons that caused death and spread terror, has always fascinated me. They are like roots gorged with sap, pierced through with meaningful arrows, making them akin to the trees of Life and of Knowledge. At the museum, I have the rare privilege of being able to touch them and love them in their every aspect, to

detect just the right angle that will enhance them in the dark and in the light.

Yesterday, an eighteenth-century mirror in my hands: the object is smooth, it slides through my fingers and by some miracle I manage to catch it. I hurt myself in doing so. I think about the word *speculum*, about all the centuries assembled in our eye, so curious and enthralled with faraway stars.

It's been raining for two days. *Yesterday* is a word I misuse. Since Mother's death, I use it against the present. I'm hooked on the word *agony*. During my entire adulthood I uttered that word without a clue as to the enormity of the struggle it denotes, just as today I no doubt use the word *war* mistakenly. *Agony*, I often repeat the word when working on my index cards the same way some people catch their breath while gardening. *Agony*: to persist in wanting to breathe the climate of a period in time that is never quite ours anymore. To steal a few hours, a day, maybe two. The day Mother died, it was so cold that Hydro-Québec wrote about it in their monthly newsletter to brag about their ability to keep us warm despite the severe -21°C cold of that day.

I never think of my mother when she was alive. I only see her in the agony of death or dead but still warm. Sunken cheeks. Mouth open. Eyes closed. A life a whole life gone. A child hooked on the metaphysical time that disrupts what is most unstoppable in us: life, the body, that great wound fated never to heal and with which we must deal.

Writing index cards forces me to keep one foot in reality, which I easily confuse with the need to be well-informed. So, on some workdays I gorge on newspapers and magazines. I feel an obligation to know, an excessive, painful duty of memory that makes me feel like my nose is stuck to death and to simple sad things like accidents, disappearances, unspeakable misery.

Once the objects have been rescued from disappearance, from oblivion, once reinserted into the present and offered up to the gaze of the living, reality circles round them depending on how we preserve and destroy them.

Life has taken on a different meaning since I've been living here. In my little apartment on Rue Racine, I've started experiencing bouts of sadness as though I'd forever lost the enjoyment of caresses and of the great bursts of laughter that accelerate our fall into infinity.

Yesterday, I had the day off: after two years of hard work in Québec City, I finally decide to visit the Martello tower and the windmills near Boulevard Langelier. The existence of a Martello tower close to my apartment, combined with the early morning grey, brought back to mind the landscape of Dublin, the joy I experienced during that short trip along the coast from Dublin to Dun Laoghaire.

The bus sped by the Martello tower. I was barely able to make out the sandstone, the rounded erectile grey mass whose perfectly smooth surface offers no breach to the enemy's assault. During that brief moment I repeated *Molly/Martello* to the point of feeling Molly's body against mine. The sweet touch of her breasts on mine. With the tower already far behind, I tried to engage in a conversation with the woman sitting next to me. I immediately felt such linguistic incompetence that I quite naturally withdrew into a mellow silence, thinking, Joyce was resolutely hostile to the use of quotation marks, and especially to their use in dialogue.

I met Carla Carlson at the Hotel Clarendon bar one evening in March. Since then we've been meeting twice a week. Every two years she spends three months in Québec City, four if necessary, to finish a new manuscript. She stays at the Clarendon, asks for a room with a wafer-thin view of the river – the same one for the last ten years. She speaks a beautiful French, and when she laughs it gets even better; her every word changes into a luminous humid landscape. I put a lot of care into preparing for my rendezvous with Carla Carlson. Ever since our first encounter, she has never stopped contradicting me about everything, as though this were a noble and philosophical stance that sharpens our sense of responsibility and conviviality. Putting an argument to death gives her a pleasure she terms erotic. Some evenings she sinks into an inexplicable muteness and always at the most strategic moment of a conversation – that is, when everything finally seems easy, intimate and conducive to a gentle relaxation of words open to metaphysics and to any other proposal that honours life. After all these years of writing she has kept a naïveté that allows her, so she says, to remain at an animal level, where it's easier for her to develop her storytelling talent. 'This is how I excel at naming wild forest animals and others whose juicy, well-seasoned flesh finds its way onto our urban plates.' In the jumble of our conversations, she often talks about her father, about her way of walking around with him as if he were her property. The man could have been a poet born in Swift Current or North Battleford. A tall dishevelled man with Viking ancestors, he was built like a truck driver and looked like a dreamer. Over time he had developed a quintessentially Canadian style. Carla could always see him standing very straight, feet planted on the asphalt of northern highways, his shrewd blue eyes sensing the

satin wind, scanning the future, women and the east, which always made him nostalgic, like when we watch time going by and the whiskey going down in our glass. Mythical and unfathomable, this man reappears in all her novels. Like so many women who grew up on the Prairies, Carla has taken possession of her father's soul, meaning that she has lassoed the man like a rowdy character at the back of her memory, has sentenced him to suffer her every writer's whim. She calls him *the old man*, *Father* or *my papa*, depending on whether pity, duty or affection is pushing her pen, the pen of a woman too young, too old.

Simone Lambert has been living in Québec City for twenty years. She knows the city well, having spent some time there several years earlier. She'd left Montréal following an invitation from the ministry of culture to run the future Museum of Civilization. She'd been given carte blanche, a rather appreciable budget and colleagues both knowledgeable and bold. She'd vowed to give the new museum a worldwide reputation and she'd kept her word, working to the frantic pace of her own wishes and of administrative constraints. With her only daughter living in Latin America she was no longer tied to Montréal, save by a few youthful memories carefully stowed away in her childhood memory box: Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day parades, Santa's downtown arrival, mental pictures in assorted flavours all neatly lined up in the English-language pigeonhole of important feast days: hot dog, hamburger, popsicle, smoked meat, fish 'n' chips and sundaes. Sometimes an old-fashioned horse-drawn carriage drove past her and acted as her collective memory. A snowstorm, a rain of snowflakes over the city, were enough to stir up a mixture of desire and jubilation between her legs. Crystals of reverie.

She'd known for a long time that part of her life would be lived elsewhere – an elsewhere that would make her changeable and lucid. Yes, very early on she'd known she'd have to leave Montréal often, turn toward ancient cities as if having understood that only the remains of the past could ignite in her a vertiginous sense of being alive in the present. Scorching sun and white light, pieces of bronze, bones, fragile pottery, the dust of centuries, gave her wings. Drunk on life, drunk on the beauty of Alice Dumont, she would live as far as the eye could see in uncharted territory, her fascination for disappearing civilizations constantly revived by their inescapable ruins.

This had become obvious to her one day while lunching with her mother and grandmother in the art deco restaurant on Eaton's ninth floor. Every travel story her grandmother told aroused in her countless little joys and questions. So it was that, surrounded by old Anglo ladies chatting enthusiastically, as if they were about to give the vote to French-Canadian women, who still didn't have it, she'd understood that her life would be made up of ceaseless toings and froings that would take her far from her city yet bring her closer to the world of women which, for her, so far remained nameless. Like her grandmother, she would go from city to city, from museum to museum, from mysterious ruin to fabulous site. Masses of marble, panelled brick walls or gold mosaics would speak to her, fill her with joy, for she would know how to decipher the secret which had once given birth to the lions, bulls and winged horses which now and forever had found refuge in the pages of the greatest myths.

And so it was that shortly she would be the one greeting her granddaughter, now a grown woman. Her turn to tell stories and to lay open her world of dreams and work. A few days earlier Axelle had e-mailed, saying she hoped to spend a week in Québec City soon. Ever since, Simone Lambert's whole being was awaiting that encounter with the child she hadn't seen grow up, with the young woman she knew nothing about except that she worked in a big biotechnology lab in Montréal.

In a few weeks, a month at most, Axelle Carnavale would be standing in front of her with her youth, her young woman's vitality, her knowledge and her young researcher's enthusiasm. On the phone the young woman had seemed moved, certainly reserved. She'd said she loved her work. She'd been lucky to find a job after her studies in New York City. She'd been living in Montréal for three years. No, she wasn't married. She would drive up. Most of the time she would be attending meetings at the Université Laval and in the offices of the Genobis company. 'We'll still be able to spend some time together,' she'd added with a little English accent.

The room is poorly lit. A fine rain is falling on the lilac tree in front of the house. A leaden greyness is descending around the cars parked behind the apartment building, the grey of malls and conference centres lost between two highways. Life against a backdrop of Big Macs Shell Harvey's and Pizza Hut. Axelle regrets renting this apartment on Cavendish Boulevard, a short ten-minute drive from the lab. The book she bought in a Côte-des-Neiges bookstore yesterday lies on the sofa. She remembers having started to read it in a crêperie where she stopped an hour before the rave started. She should call Simone. Tell her she has to postpone her visit until next week. Tell her also that she prefers sleeping in a hotel so as to not disturb her, that she may not have as much free time as expected.

Axelle sits at the computer. On the work table, a picture of her mother with a seventies Afro. The photo was taken in Coyoacán, in front of Frida Kahlo's blue house. There is also a photo of her father, who had preferred to be immortalized in front of Trotsky's house just a few blocks away. Axelle hadn't heard from him for a very long time. Lorraine had thought he'd gone back to France in time to make the most of the creative fury of May '68.

I prepare carefully for my meetings with Carla Carlson. I easily memorize every sentence she uses twice. *Yesterday, unusually, we were to meet at the Krieghoff Café*: Carla is seated on a banquette where she can see me arrive, watch what is going on at the bar and gaze into the large mirror covering the far end of the hall, all at the same time. At eye level on the wall to her right, a bad reproduction of a painting entitled *Montmorency Falls*. Always the out-of-control sleigh, the galloping horses, always the smooth and haunting snow. Movement. Turmoil. Just like in the paintings and sculptures of the Americans Russell and Remington, where horses and buffalo twist their necks, buckle their shins, fly like the wind to escape the whip men are preparing to crack with wide and spirited gestures. There, where there are plains and desert, where cold and heat bring things to a standstill, it's necessary to compensate formally with movement which then acts as an aesthetics and a story.

Short hair, a cat's piercing eyes. Black pants and T-shirt. I've barely sat down when she places her hands flat on the table, looks at me: 'So?' Carla speaks softly. Her voice is suspended, flat, even. It's obvious this woman is no longer afraid of anything and that she works with only very few elements of memory. Two or three scenes. Some key sentences. A single landscape. Most probably the horizon. The Prairies. A single season: summer.

Carla rarely smiles. At noon the sun skims the window ledge, coils up the curtains and seeks another ray, starts over somewhere else amid the muted voices. At noon:

– The mind invents with what it sees, has seen, doesn't want to see. I love the novels of Marguerite Duras because she knows how to make pronouns come alive. I'd like you to tell me about the exhibition.

– Just come and see it.

– Urns scare me. Just look at this perfect May blue.

Things happen in intensity. As if nothing made sense except intensity. She uses the words *intensity* and *immensity* the same way. Carla has the power to tell stories from the inside, to map out roads, labyrinths built with sentences she has the skill to turn inside out in spectacular fashion. Then, with a few words drawn from successful comparisons, she projects as though on a screen soundscapes filled with promise.

– Yes, I often detour through childhood as though dawdling there makes the grass greener. I invent crises. I force myself to describe emotions that may not be essential to understanding my torment. It's as if I were trying to thread literature through the eye of a needle and, once I've succeeded, I really believe reality has gone through it. This irritates me and excites me too. Forces me to continue. Have you never wondered why I come to Québec to finish my manuscripts?

– Probably to enjoy a change of scene. I've no idea.

– I come here to make myself continue. To make sure my father's ghost and my mother's story are alive and viable wherever I go.

Mother's silence. It's through the space created by Mother's silence that I view the world, that I learned that another world exists which I could dive into, laugh all I want and exit victorious from any ordeal. I sometimes feel I'm sitting at the back of a large hall patiently waiting for Mother's silence to mould my thoughts. In this place of reverie I also learn to not scream, to not disrupt Mother's silence nor anyone else's.

Just as Carla grew up in her father's wound, I grew up in my mother's silence. And so every time we meet I want to offer her a bit of this silence so she can transform it into a word adventure capable of dissolving the enormity of grief, the age-old mass of bodies and of their fleeting presence by our sides.

Daily living is an achievement. I'm surrounded by cries, by long laments and a wild and shy energy that transforms both the world and my mother's silence into fiction, into an outgrowth of life, a nameless virtuality for the souls still asleep at this early hour, who in a few hours will go and stock up on the basics and lose their ability to revolt by hanging around the Galeries Sainte-Foy mall. Without my mother's silence I am left wide open to the static noise that amplifies the coward in each one of us.

Some time ago, while looking for a book in the museum library, I came upon a typewritten page sticking out of a book about diamond cutting. Prompted by curiosity, I read the first lines. I read and reread. Ever since then, this page is always with me. I sometimes read it several times a day. Its meaning varies, depending on whether I read it when I get up in the morning, in the afternoon when the sun floods my work table or when I get back from meeting Carla Carlson. I don't think the page was part of a personal diary. Perhaps of a novel. Some days the meaning of the page seems obvious, on others it wavers like a conversation by the seashore where syllables are drowned out and pronouns merge with the noise of wind and surf. Today I memorized the page. Now it's part of me and can surge into my thoughts at any time. Whole or in parts, slowly infiltrating my everyday life.

She's watching me in the dawn's first light with an intensity that melts me. Her face a vivid world, I no longer know if I exist inside a photograph or if I once existed in the whiteness of the morning in front of this slow-gesturing woman who, never taking her eyes off me, is lying there in front of me, naked more naked than the night, more physical than a whole life spent caressing the beauty of the world. Sustaining her gaze is painful. I imagine, I breathe and imagine her once more. A few centimetres below the manubrium glints a little diamond that seems to stay on her chest by magic. The diamond, no doubt held there by a little ring inserted into the flesh, sparkles like a provocation, an object of light that lies in wait for desire, engulfs the other. I am that other. I am pure emotion lying in wait for the fate crouched inside this woman. The woman offers her desire, sows sentences in me whose syntax is unfamiliar and which I'm unable to follow and pronounce. Words there I cannot clearly distinguish – *breasts*, *gusts*, *ships*, *stext* – and, in between them, the woman's lips move like some life-giving water that cleanses away all clichés, promises that every imprint of the gaze will be sexual, will be repeated and fluid as vivid as the morning light absorbing one's most intimate thoughts. Her arms are open. She opens herself to the embraces that, in mother tongue, suspend reality. The woman has turned her head slightly and her throat astonishes. Her gaze contains traces of that water which, it is said, gushes when memory becomes verb and rekindles desire at the edge of the labia. The woman's gaze sweeps into the future.