John Silano

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A woman walks.

-Is it morning, is it night?

But there is a flower...

-What color, what kind?

Red, but maybe it is a scarf. She is thinking…

-does she look like me, is she me?

No, and always. I look for you in every face…

“A woman walks apart.”

John Silano

5/24/2022

Golden Star from Star Anise,

Gramma working her forge,

With heated Irons.

I help only a little.

The metal makes snowflakes,

Flowers,

Baked geometry.

My grandmother’s hands sure, and precise; no recipe needed.

Sugar snows on a landscape of cast iron, wax paper, and bitter-sweet future memories.

*Buon Natale*

“Pizzelles”

John Silano

“Distance in Night-Years”

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Distance in Night-Years

Blindfolded in half,

Has something been careless with us?

The strange and stars accompany,

Sifting and sorting us into heavy and light.

The parts become greater than only the half of it.

Who is the light again?

Are we the whole, not the half?

Aren’t we the surprise, not what surprises us?

We all number now lighter, but in light of all this, all the more precious.

John Silano

“Old Salinas, 2008”

Garlic. Celery. Peppers. And me driving on purpose across Salinas Valley with Sarah at late, lettuce, lots of lettuce. Windows down and AROMATIC now, our hair has joined the midnight crops. We cross that little bridge with the little stream that cool stream and we are opening that fridge Gramma and Poppo had in their basement when it was so hot out and the fridge was filled with stuff from their garden; garlic, celery, peppers, and cucumbers. Poppo picks a bunch, then picks two from that picked bunch and we eat those fresh cucumbers with just a little bit of salt and a few specks of black pepper. He on the old avocado armchair and I on his knee… The whole valley was just like that. And we fly the valley quick because a dead man was born there in the town Salinas, Salinas, late Salinas – Sarah and I don’t mind quiet empty Salinas at night, because it our night and we haven’t slept yet so it is still our night. And somewhere there is the house of a writer who wrote stories, a man I was forced to read and so didn’t think much of until it was my choice to read. This man who died nine months before I was born. Who put me on his knee and fed me stories with easy beginnings and difficult endings. We can sense the unlit vastness, the midnight crops have joined the sky and now the twinkling stars and tractor lights mingle without horizon. We get to his childhood home after driving from dark town Carmel on my birthday. Another Dark Town, California. Today’s ending is Salinas, but the start was in Monterey. T-shirt shops and fried foods. Cannery Row. A magnet for the fridge place, but I wanted to see things from the books anyway. I made Sarah go to all the spots, to where Ed Ricketts died on the tracks but where Doc waved goodbye in the book on his way to an easier ending. So many places in one day, Big Sur to Salinas to see the disowned Big Son of Salinas renowned so re-owned with statues and guided tours. There are people there that feed us, all of us. Unthanked, unappreciated, disrespected, resented. The nation bites the hand that feeds. - and we move again, driving out dark and fast. Windows up.

John Silano

“FAULKNER’S CHANDLER”

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Faulkner: Chandler? Tell me who killed him, killed him in the story?

Chandler: Chandler does not know.

Faulkner: A bear, the bear?

Chandler: Chandler cannot remember.

Faulkner: An incongruous coffin?

Chandler: Faulkner read my notes, Faulkner read the drafts,

Faulkner read the book

(and it takes him quite a while).

[Faulkner must now use the question marks again with Chandler]

Faulkner: Faulkner must now use the question marks with Chandler!

Faulkner: Chandler? Faulkner!

Chandler: Fallenkargh?

Faulkner: Faulkner! I must use the question marks!

[We see Chandler in his room, drinkin]

Chandler: Who? I am not feeling well. I forget everything you will ask.

Faulkner: The question marks!

Chandler: I have been sleeping now for ten minutes.

Faulkner: Chandler does not know!

The Studio: Faulkner? Faulkner tell me who killed him, killed him in the story?

Faulkner: An incongruous bottle symbol upon Chandler!

[We see an incongruous bottle symbol upon Chandler]

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