

THE TALE OF A METHOD

[by Angela Melito]

Destruction

The hands release, forget the tension, remain motionless, as if to postpone the consequences of letting go. Matter cuts the air, breaks. The fall has its own time, the bond created between the hands and the object remains, as if the energy released in the gesture of abandonment wanted to accompany the form in the last step before destruction. The hands collect the fragments, order in a pile what remains of what was once their work of art and on the floor the trace. The trace left by the fragments in breaking and the trace of the hands that have drawn trails of dust. The fragments refuse each other, they are distant, take refuge in solitude, inhabiting it. The guilt makes its way into the pile and when even the last echo of the destruction has freed the space, the tired fragments, in silence, welcome the resignation. The tide raised the water level, flooded the shore to reach the road. on that trace of resigned beauty, the hands grasp the jug, pour the water, the drops bounce, the air remains to watch and slowly the rubble rejoins. Matter is silent, the left hand balances the body, the right hand dives, the fingers become tentacles. The air blows away the doubts, it knows the proportions and delicately defines the necessary. The fog questions the objects, the outlines, the differences, everything is confused into something else. The eyes seek the invisible in search of existence, they strive. The house trembles, the wind moves all things, unsettles certainties, disturbs the order. The children ran, the wind raised a cloud of specks, we closed our eyes.

Recollection

A cloud of dust rose from the fragments, as a shadow slowly moved in the space of the room, soon that shadow turned into a ghost, taking control of my hands, my mind, my eyes. The reproduction of the forms became obligatory, directed, possessed as by a demon whose only purpose was to finish, produce, create surplus. This is the ghost I speak of, the monster that hides everywhere, imperceptible, forces me to act in a certain way, directs my choices in the background, behind the scenes of what I believe to be my freedom of choice, my free will. The clay regenerated in the bucket had all the energy of infinite possibilities, the shadow/ghost rose from the fragments on the floor, conditioned my action, directed the possibilities, led them to one and only one. The eyes stop just before focusing, they remain suspended at that subtle distance from the piece of clay, like attentive but distracted supervisors. Breathing becomes short and deep, the gesture is fast. The hands, left alone to replicate the clay shapes, repeated the movements automatically. The eyes watch the minutes go by, ask the clock hands to quantify the value of those shapes. The repeated action cancels itself, time stands still, the gesture has bent to an ultimate goal that seems a fragile justification unable to support the weight of existence. The forms have conquered the space and yet remain invisible. When I open the kiln's door, some shapes will be solid, others might explode. Fire does not give corporeality to those ceramic ghosts, they wander around the workshop like lost spirits. The hands join the forms, color appears, some colors call others to life, hands mix. Sometimes the imagined color gets trapped in the

contemplated image, other times it comes out in all its expression. The eyes move nervously, the hands follow the confused thoughts in a whirlwind of aimless actions. I try in vain to give physicality to those zombies, I observe them, they are soulless bodies, they collapse, they cannot support themselves, giant monsters, like golems, born from inconsistent, conditioned, anxious gestures. I destroyed everything, this time with a hammer. In the yellow room I collect the fragments.

Regeneration

The entirety is destroyed, the specter had finally freed the space, I am alone among a pile of ceramic fragments. My hand sank in the sand, playing with the specks. Those specks, so light, so infinitely small, united together, animated by water, compacted by humidity and air, transported by the wind, heated by the sun, microscopic and necessary parts of a solid and consistent soil. I walked on the long coast, time had a different consistency, it seemed made of tiny grains that were significant and insignificant at the same time. I spent hours destroying the fragments, their cumbersome identity, canceling stability, letting the bravest dust fly away, in the wind, and gathering in a pile the one ready for a new life. The right arm beats on the solid ceramic. The stone becomes the workshop. The sound of the hammer beating is lost in the air. Individuality, specificity, uniqueness are questioned. Each fragment seems to claim its place in the play of artistic representation. Each fragment claims to exist for itself, self-sufficient, independent, now the thread that united the pieces is only a memory. The arm gives firm hammering, the more

the fragments disintegrate, the more the action loses strength. Uniqueness is lost in the dust, each speck looks alike, individuality no longer finds consistency or stability. The right hand holds the hammer, the left hand contains and protects the dust from the most difficult fragments to disintegrate, those who let themselves jump disproportionately, so far that the sight finally loses them. The hand squeezes the wooden handle, the hammering follows the same rhythm, the wrist tries to keep control of the movement. The specks are collected in a pile of dust, resemblance eliminates rejection. The hands pour the water, mix the material, the fingers are tentacles again, they place the regenerated material on a flat surface, in a frame. The material remains to rest, slowly the water flows from the silk weave and when ready it is turned upside down and left to dry on a cotton cloth. Two-dimensionality has brought the fragments back into a whole.