

So I'm painting a picture of your scar and I wanted you to know.

*And what do I care? There is no problem.
What did you do that for?
Of my face?*

*Not of your face, of your belly, of your scar on your belly.
It changed your life and everybody's life too.
Before the operation you didn't take any medication, did you?*

*No no, now I take 7 per day.
But I tell you, I have no major problems with death.*

No.

Last December, while I was visiting Buenos Aires, things got clearer. I can understand him better now, after some time, how things are and how his body has changed, how his way of thinking changed, how the house also changed. Sometimes things take time to show themselves and their meaning. Even when all the elements are there from the beginning. It takes a kind of returning.

The figurative black and white paintings were drawn from pictures that I took two or three years ago of my father's kitchen. At that time I didn't know why I was taking them. I didn't know what kind of documentation I was doing, but I knew that it was important. When I took a look at the photographs again after a while, there appeared among the daily objects these pill boxes and different medicaments. It was as if the medicines were reproducing themselves, taking over more and more space at a speed that was too fast to be noticed. Like an invasion. It reminds me of when you find rubbish on the seashore: it's a sign that something else is going on, something bigger, something that's probably very difficult to control and get rid of. There is certain information that isn't shown directly to you, but it hits you sideways. "Lateral" relates to the side of a body, it evokes movement, a direction.

An unstoppable movement enters the reality of everyday life: the tumor had grown to the point that it was quite urgent to operate. Tumors are hidden as dormant information, but they are there; and their discovery produces a big revelation of a truth that shifts your attention and therefore shifts your priorities. There is an uncovering of topics that were taboo before. Death needs to be confronted, there is no choice, it is everywhere, as if it affects the density of the air, as if everything had death's name on it. Maybe that is illness, just the apparition, the visibility of death. It is also the beginning of grief, in a way. It's a preparation, like a sort of announcement, an annunciation.

During this last trip to Argentina, I took a video while walking on a pier that leads to the very center of the Iguazu Falls. My niece is looking at this intense landscape with these many tons of water pouring over it, and she says, "When is this going to stop?" Talking about the water. And then, "Can the camera tell that I'm dying?" This question really caught my attention. It was as if she felt more vulnerable at that moment, as if seeing this enormous amount of water lost in its own speed—moving so fast it looks like a statue, like no movement at all, which will actually likely continue in this never-ending flow of water for much longer than the duration of her own life—had exposed her existence in time. And it

was as if the camera, this magical apparatus that captures instants in time—could tell that she is mortal.

Text by Laura Langer, edited by Rosa Aiello,
from an unpublished conversation between Martin Germann and Laura Langer