

Glass Eye

In order to write the essay his friend requested for a catalogue of the friend's first solo exhibit of glass objects fashioned by an ancient exacting tradition , *pâte de verre*, passed down in his friend's case from, grand-father to grand-daughter, he asked his friend to lend him one of her recent sculptures. For three weeks the glass cube has been sitting on his desk where the friend placed it just before the friend flew to Venice for a show that included a few of her *pièces*. He'd moved the cube only once since the news of his friend's death, lifting it and setting it back quickly, as exactly as he could within the dust print on the desktop. He'd been impressed by the 8 by 8 inches cube weight- was it water frozen to ice frozen to glass frozen at absolute zero perhaps to some super heavy, hyper-dense alloy of transparent iron. The freakish substantiality contrasting with a fragile chaos of grains, bleeding colors, twisting lines of force when he peered inside the cube. Sunken letters, numbers, words float and drift there, exchanging places, a helter-skelter illusion of clashing perspectives inhabiting the silence of a convulsive, claustrophobic space.

On Martinique in a tiny museum dedicated to Surrealism he'd been quieted by a collection of everyday items- a spoon, cup, eyeglasses etc- bizarrely, nearly unrecognizably transformed by the pyroclastic blast of Mount Pele's eruption. The terror of sudden mutation, a howling, screaming transition seemed sealed in the glass display case with the spontaneously created artifacts. The cube's severe geometry enclosed a similarly stricken world. Time's moment to moment flow violently sundered, time collapsed, simultaneously released and imprisoned by a distorting lens, a glass eye's unwavering gaze, a false window, trapdoor into which he plummets endlessly, helpless as something torn away from itself, something lost yearning to be what it isn't... a fake something... as if... as if... he's desperate now for a sentence... to jump-start the stalled essay... as if corrupted flesh could return as bread and wine... as if a glass eye hiding blindness could at last be seen as real, at last see itself.