

The Bare Agony of the Wounded by Mani Mojaveri

The void confronted me. An empty, amorphous whiteness shrouding my view — darkness hung over the deep emptiness. Rays of pink and orange and purple reflected off the glimmering crust of life-giving water and the oaks slowly devoured what was left of the evening sun and the scent of pine intermingled in the cool mist of the Waterfall — my feet, embracing the damp ground, began to convulse; blue veins criss-crossing bulged forth, creating infinite roads of potential destinations. “No! That’s not right!” It can’t be. This canvas is not meant to be crystallized in vain! No, a divine in-spiration, theosis, is what I need; theosis, I write, but to become totally human is what I sought.

Mary’s face often comes to my mind at such times — thin ginger hair flowing as a waterfall down her clavicle and thence her breast and ending at her hips; I never painted her, for obvious reasons. But I did dream of her. The image of her rabbit teeth snuggled between her moist lips — I so often saw her in my dream with a skull... she folded her hands over it, leaned her head on it, as the skull gravely stood on an ancient tomb... she looked far into the void, thinking, thinking... thinking.

Night had commiserated his impounding of the sun and darkness fully clad the white cloth when I turned away from the shed and looked at the endless blackness of the firmament where light subsists and dithers the void with configurations of beings more or less extracted from the ocean above — beings only partially actualized. Our cabin stood amidst the trees girding the rocks that shaped the ceaseless surge of white droplets proceeding from the Waterfall — a mere triangular roof, a couple of slanted slabs, a rusty door and collapsing walls; we hadn’t

gotten used to the creaking yet, specially when it came at night, since we had no light. We had a cauldron by the door, a disintegrating bed with a meager red cover, a pastel copy of *The Scream* I painted as a teenager, Mary's riotous pile of fiction and poetry, and that's about it – the two of us, alone. We were light travelers.

Immanuel is a unique guy. That's why I fell in love with him. You can never tell what he'll do next. It wasn't long before our second year in college would come to a close when I met him. His eyes radiated under the spark of the campfire; I forever associate the aura of burning wood with his long hair. He liked to paint anywhere he went, but never portraits. I always asked him to paint himself; maybe then he could see his own eyes. I am certain he never looks in the mirror. His eyes... I don't know how to put it, but one of them haunted me, ever assertive and aggressive, ready to tear my gown in two with his teeth; the other blesses my soul, a warm fatherly spirit clasping my sides and enclosing me in unalloyed euphoria.

I was never religious – but rapture came to me. Rapture is what it took for me to take the leap of faith. Immanuel didn't ask it hesitantly, nor gradually — no, he asked it seriously, firmly. “Will you come?” ... “Will you come?”... “Will you come?” These words don't sound real. No, it wasn't words he was uttering. I'd spent my life in pursuit of poetic words and reveries, but always in silence, always crouched into myself, a timid consciousness in flight — but not anymore. No. I had found what I always looked for: the right words, uttered at the right time and in the right way. And in but a second the world inverted and I could see the light emerge from the dark: there it was, staring me in the eye, his hands enwrapping mine, his eyes, his eyes, penetrating every last crevice of my existence with a vivifying essence — ineffable.

“Did you start?” I asked.

He unbuttoned his shirt. “Not yet,” he said quietly, struggling with himself. His face contorted, he wasn’t there — he was talking to himself in his head. I could tell.

The vine and barks smoldered in the cauldron, turning into a crimson potion. Immanuel sat in the corner, uncomfortable in his own skin, his head buried in his arms. Mary, standing by the cauldron, tasted the primordial soup: “It’s ready.”

From the distance, through the dark woods, a faint hum began, one not natural, but manmade. The sound of an engine. The beam-lighters of a car shone in from afar as it wound its way through the dirt road to the cabin.

“Did you invite someone?” asked Immanuel.

He left the cabin, shaken out of his mind, and awaited the arriving car. *Why can't civilization leave me? Hasn't it cost me enough through the years? Even in the silence of the mountains it is man I fear the most. I know that car,* he thought. Mary sat by the cauldron, brooding over the reality of their situation. The car came to a stop. The lights were turned off and the murky aluminum body disappeared. From amidst the shadows emerged an emaciated old woman in rags that hung from her body, her face collapsing within itself and her eyes swelled with a dam of tears.

“My son! My son! Please come back to me, my everything!” she cried, and threw herself at Immanuel. Her nails punctured his back as she clutched her creation. *What of this, now? After all this time, now, now she comes to me? This insane lady? Not my mother, of course; she is a bitch! Fuck you! Fuck you, you senile witch — you mad termagant! After abandoning me to that totalitarian despot, after leaving me shivering in the coldness of the night, now, now you dare*

come to me? And cry? Crocodile tears! Crocodile tears these are — you haven't a heart, you haven't a heart! No, you are a demon on Earth, the cardinal cause of suffering — better if you never were!

His brutal eye had taken over. I saw through the window, for but a moment, that terrible scene — the crone hanging from Immanuel's shoulders, her legs in abeyance, screaming with whatever little power left in her as her eyes turned from misty pink to blood red as veins popped left and right... and, then, then, the horrible act! Immanuel, frozen for a moment, erupted — throwing the little lady on the ground. He was crying. "Done with you! Done with you!" he repeated, as the little thing on the wet ground crawled in a painful retreat into a fetus as Immanuel kicked her stomach. "Done with you! Get out of here and never come back!" He kicked and kicked, his foot rhythmically impinging upon her stomach — and her sobbing slowly transformed into a haunting, grating laughter. "He's kicking! He's kicking!" she yelled to the sky. "My baby's kicking! Look, Papa, my baby's kicking again!" Immanuel's incisors exposed themselves, shining in the dark, his ears engulfed in her scathing laughter. It clanged his bones, as a hammer coming down upon him; it ripped his nerves, as a rat wriggling within his veins and sinews gnawing everlastingly at his flesh. He grabbed her, light as cheese, and pushed her onto a tree, holding her by the shoulder, their faces coming into close contact. His heavy breath showered her weakened cheeks, as she remained laughing in his face. Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale — his rounded eyes and exposed incisors, his arms tensed, his mind filled. Then, with one exhale, he deflated. He weakened, every part of his body softened, and, like a punctured balloon, he let go of her and retreated. Her stomach red, blood spewed forth from several places, and she, laughing, left toward the darkness of the forest, abandoning the car by the road.

Immanuel didn't come inside that night. He fell asleep right there by the woods.

The canvas is still empty, though it has been a few weeks. Not a brush of paint. The sublime beauty of nature wasn't enough; I had been imprisoned by beauty, imprisoned by the majestic scenery. No brutality visible; this was unreal, not authentic, reality. It would be dishonest of me to paint the trees, flaccid and futile, or the mountain, or the water – in putting paint onto them I had committed the final sin. No, my subject needed honesty, fecundity. Something deep, eternal, human – something to impregnate the universe with light. Somewhere in the chasms of bottomless unconsciousness lies the perfect painting, every detail harmonious with every other and with the whole, every brush of paint, every color, evoking emotions bodily that create meaning, human meaning – this painting articulates the axioms of human condition in water clear propositions; it tells a story, but not in time, rather a story that comes in whole, untainted by the sensible forms of intuition – a story in itself. It lies there waiting to be excavated. Alas, I am feeble minded, and the journey to the unconscious is perilous. But art is the justification of being, the attorney rectifying my debt; I owe to existence this painting. I owe consciousness this painting. I owe myself this painting.

He left yesterday. It marked the fifth week we've been here. After the incident with his mother, he grew aloof. He slept outside every night, by his canvas – if he slept, that is. I never saw him asleep. He dug a trench by the shed, and began defecating there. He stopped wearing clothes. I pleaded with him to come inside, but his eyes were fixated on the canvas and the canvas only. His nude body in front of the canvas terrified me. It was as if he wasn't there anymore; just a body. His lanky back silhouetted the white canvas covered under the shed: first his hair flowed to his shoulder, then his lats stretched his skin, often chickened in the cold winds of night; they gave way to his shoulders and arms, always tightened into a fist at the bottom, his forearm veins yearning to be freed from the suffering – his buttocks strained onto themselves,

and his hamstrings convulsed in agony. He never turned around. I had nightmares, often in those days, of this scene. In my nightmares, he would turn around, but his eyes were rivers of blood, as he turned to smile at me. His hands and feet were wounded with nails in my dream, and his chest was pounded in. I never told him of these dreams. I didn't talk to him much. I spent those days writing poetry. A phrase came to me often, the meaning of which I have not discovered. *The Bare Agony of the Wounded*. The poem, of which this phrase was to be the title, never came to me. As a matter of fact, all I have written recently has been rubbish. Maybe it's Immanuel's face, maybe the image of his pierced hands, feet, and chest.

When he left his spot yesterday morning, I grew worried. I looked around the cabin, but found only the car, which had now a broken windshield – a trunk fell over it. Then I felt released. The image had left me. I could breathe. But not for long. For some reason I dreamt of him again. This time it was he who was repeating the phrase. He was atop a rock, in Romanesque robes, repeating relentlessly, “The Bare Agony of the Wounded, the Bare Agony of the Wounded, the Bare Agony of the Wounded!” The skeleton of his mom laid at his feet, pleading with him. But his gaze didn't let down. His gaze was fixated on the sky. As if he knew I was dreaming of him, and in spiteful snobbery he decided to let go of me and ascend to the heavens above. He looked divine. He didn't belong to this realm – as if his longing to return to his true abode in the heavens was tormenting him. I awoke in fright, panting. But no one was here. Only his pastel painting of *The Scream* stared at me... I am getting lonely. I hope he comes back.

When I first entered the depths of the forest, I expected to be lost and confused. But an instinct, an intuition, came to be as soon as I left my spot by the shed. It led me to a river, downstream from the Waterfall. I followed the curvy water through the dark forest, day and night. I had grown weary of travel – the many oaks and pines, the eyes lurking beneath the

shadows, the ponds of water, the boulders popping out of the depth – these all had become monotonous after all the walking. How long had I been walking? At last I came to a glade, and sat under a lonely, weeping willow. The branchlets draped over my head, and as the sun was going down once again, their wavering in the breeze intensified. I can't remember if I was naked. I had reached that peculiar state between wakefulness and sleep, the purgatory of unthought pictures – that was when I heard a voice.

“That's all?” it asked.

“What?”

“Is that all your baggage?” a fat man in a box jacket said – he'd just emerged from the dark. He had in his hands two leather suitcases tarnished with time. He didn't wait for my reply and scurried to the dark. I followed him out of curiosity; was this a dream? When I reached the other side, I saw a Victorian carriage with two cremello horses tranquil in the silence.

“Come up, you lad!” the coachman said. Immanuel hopped on. He lashed the horses. They began at full speed. These were not ordinary horses — they managed to dribble the foliage in expert maneuvers left and right; the vegetation grew weaker, the woods gradually gave way to barren steppes. “I have no money to give you for this,” Immanuel said. The coachman laughed. A haunting, soul-grating laughter. “Never you mind dear fellow,” he said. Immanuel then looked at the remote, the strange lands that were coming into view. Cubes and square houses populated that far land, triangles and wedges scattered here and there. In the moonlight, they were tesseracts against the empty navy blue of the illimitable background. Jutting here and there a figure would pop, but only a silhouette, not human per se, but humanoid, geometrified into the essential properties of the human form. There was a hypnotizing effect to these images; a trance

soon befell me. A bodiless trance, as the rhythmic bums of the spokes hitting the rocks below, tuned to the visual motion of wavering up and down small hills in the endless emptiness, washed everything away, and the floor gave way. I soon began free falling — I couldn't tell what became of the carriage, of the fat coachman, of the suitcases.

I was only four or five, in my mother's hold. Her transparent veil had fallen over my soft face, her arms grasping my sides, one hand over my head, the other wiping a tear off her eye. I remember the choir, the closed casket, the priest sprinkling holy water over my father's corpse enclosed in an eternal container. I hear the choir... *Lacrimosa dies illa*. I remember my mother's face, it was full — full of tears though it was — but also full of meat, of substance. There were paintings anywhere I looked; paintings of serious men, men demanding respect. Orderly old men, wise and with long gray beards — some of them were enthroned. Each of them mocked my smallness. I was so insignificant, they said; subordinate to them, never to supersede them. I was only to imitate them in vain. I was weak — a slave to God.

I no longer remember how I look. I do see my reflection in the pond, but my reflection has no head. I can't remember exactly when this began to happen, but it wasn't long after Immanuel left me here. It's over two weeks he's gone, or thereabouts (I honestly don't remember). I sometimes look at the canvas he left. Still empty. Its emptiness now haunts me. There is something about this canvas, lonely under the shed that's collapsing. It has a strange aura, a magnetic field that grasps your heart when you near it and torments it — it torments me. It torments me to struggle with the thousands of potentialities engaged in a galactic battle to come to existence; they fight for the chance to be, the chance to become. *The Bare Agony of the Wounded*. These words still impinge upon my mind. And no, no poem has come of it yet. But I think Immanuel knows how to write this poem. I think he has the answer. No, I *know* he has the

answer. My dreams of him tell me so. He's growing larger and larger by night, when I see him. His ferociousness satiates my thirst; his cruel slap across his mother's face, the mercilessness with which he kicked her to death... his heartless face, his murderous look, the blood flowing from his eyes... Ah, I need that vicious beast! To hold me by the neck, pierce my nape with his whetted fangs — Oh, dear, squeeze my flesh with your big hands, hold my meat in between your fingers... I tried masturbating for the first time since he left. In vain. I would crescendo, but then, right as my vision became blurred, and the release was imminent, a sharp electric shock would reverberate across my body — it paralyzed me. It was telling me that I am not to be satisfied until he comes. And how I have been trapped on edge, forever walking this thin knife but never across. I know how my poem ends — It ends when he comes.

The metropolitan neon light had intruded from the staircase leading to the fifth floor. I was sat on an austere wooden chair by the entrance, given a small booklet of prayers. It was a rusty leatherback with the image of the holy chalice inscribed on it. My feet couldn't reach the floor — I must've been a pubescent. I remember a threatening cadence, a noise sending shivers down my spine, coming from inside the house — a man's voice. His heavy breathing could be heard from the outside. It was accompanied by a throbbing song — a haunting, grating song of songs, a symphony of bed squeaks and faint moans. The sound encircled my mind as it ascended the pitch scale a step at a time. The notes were mocking me, reminding me of my smallness, of my powerlessness — they festively danced around my head, each note a different color, all skipping in extravagant choreographs exacted to drill into my head my insignificance. Hung on the chestnut door was a crucifix: on a wooden cross was pierced a haggardly man, a tormented man. I had, of course, seen this man. Many times. But it was then, engulfed the tortuous tunes of manifest fragility, that I truly saw him, that I truly looked into his eyes: his right eye was

contorted into a penetrating, dreadful stare — it was, in short, the totality of guilt and sin, the terrible judge posed to slay me, the dictator; his left eye was soothing, an oasis amidst the desert of suffering, an escape from evil towards the constant, the unchanging, the eternal. As I was mesmerized by this figure, the door opened — I hadn't noticed that the noise had stopped. A large figure, dressed in a stately suit with notched lapels and a hand watch snugged in his pocket, emerged: with him a complete destruction of reality — as a broken mirror my visual field fractured in fractals of manifold shapes and sundry proportions, a screeching clamor struck like the sound of nails scratching gas chambers, the soreness of torn eyelids and eyes wide open and slowly decimating — I only remember his pig head, limping and awful to look at. He had a wry, satisfied smile on his face. He ran his hands through my hair. “Will see you again next week, boy.”

The darkness enveloped me. A void of infinite emptiness. I was floating weightlessly at first, but then I began to take on speed — I was accelerating through a tunnel, faster and faster, the air thrashing my face and stretching back my ears — then a sharp pain as my face chafed across the damp dirt. My face was frayed in spaghetti skin drenched with blood. I came to myself, and looked back and saw the carriage broken behind me. The horses were gone, so was the coachman; I saw only the carriage crashed on a sturdy oak. The pieces dismantled lay idly here and there. That oak was quite strange: a lonely oak in an empty land, no other tree or foliage accompanying it. The remote geometric lands were also gone, now only the undifferentiated blue navy background remained — no stars in the night, no light, only darkness. There I saw, on the other side, a leviathan structure: I saw pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, spires clawing the dark void — the thing scratched God's abode, it seemed. The intimidating height was unfathomable — the whole thing was clearly not man made. For anywhere I looked I saw

faces carved — the flying buttresses teemed with eyes, all looking at me, waiting for my confession. There were two towers on each side, and a central façade snuggled between them. In the darkness, I know not how I saw this, but it had a luminosity, not of the bright lightness ordinarily needed for human vision, but a sort of unworldly luminosity, visibility without light. I treaded towards it, and it slowly filled my view: its height dwarfed me, and as I was by the entrance, I could see only the masonry and the carved figures.

As I entered the cathedral, the high ceiling, the sudden emergence of light from everywhere, and eyes piercing my conscience, formed in my head a firmament of hypnosis: a lack of thoughts, a destruction of language and culture, a forgetting of conventions and an emptying of my conceptual repository. I was descending onto the world of unconscious images and unprocessed beings, of Freudian slips and uncomfortable jokes, the realm of the shadow. Confronting me high on the altar, in front of the stained window depicting the whole history of man's search for meaning, was a statue of the virgin Mary and the man in her lap. The man's collapsed body laid lifeless on her, her arms grasping his sides, one hand over his head, the other wiping a tear off her eye — her transparent veil had fallen on his face. Her face was entreating the heavens in agony: it was the bare agony of the wounded man that she lamented, the bare agony of the wounded soul that let go of humanity in search of the divine — the bare agony of the wounded man who dare reject the blemished nature of humanity — the man who cleansed the infection off the face of this biped ape. Mary's face, tormented though it was, was serene, as if the lamentation was at the same time a realization: she is the mother of God, and God it was who came down and became human. She worshiped the man, just as she mourned his death. God is dead, I thought. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to

death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? As I brooded over this death, I realized in the man's face something familiar, an unusual odd feeling between angst and fright: the man's face was empty, only a mirror rested there. I saw myself... I saw myself... I saw myself.

I finally figured out the meaning of that phrase. I was dreaming about Immanuel, again, when I figured it out. The dream wasn't exactly about Immanuel, though. I don't know how to explain it. I was in a small hamlet somewhere in a desert, clad in a white cloak covering my body from hair to toe. I had a light blue headscarf on. There was a bright ray of light emerging from the navy blue sky that entered the shed and illuminated it: a few baby sheep were asleep, a few halcyoned idly about. A manger filled with hay sat by my feet: and there he lay, Immanuel, the source of light. His face was softened, he was released of the torment I saw in his face when he left. The shining star ray flowed right on his forehead, where I felt a burning heat warming my body in the coldness of the night. I was buried in pure bliss, a feeling simply divine, as I looked upon him, upon his body. I began scanning his body, flowing my hands through and feeling his skin. But then, like a bucket of cold water, I saw his chest, pounded with wounds, saw his hands, pierced, his feet, bleeding fresh. Tears began flowing off my eyes. I tried waking him up. I shook his body. But he didn't move. He was blissfully asleep. I was asphyxiating in sobs closing my throat, when breath fully left my body: a heavy object was placed on my chest. I tried moving, but I couldn't: I was fully transfixed, earthfast, paralyzed: Immanuel's face began to convulse, his body began to violently shake, blood showing from every wound: and his mouth gaped, he put his hands by his ears, his skin stretched open: his eyes opened wide all of a sudden, filled with torment, an unusual, odd feeling between angst and fright: he was there, screaming onto my

soul, screaming for help, screaming a gullet-tearing scream, a scream shredding his vocal cords into ribbons of flesh. I awoke in fright, panting. I was alone. Only his pastel painting of *The Scream* stared at me. Now I knew who Immanuel was. Now I know who my son is.

I can't tell how long I was there, staring at the statue of Mary and the man, when it began to fall apart. Her face cracked, followed by the man's, and the stones turned into pebbles and I realized that the cathedral was collapsing from within. I looked around and saw ancient boulders blocking the entry and the stained glasses that were fracturing into spiderwebs, contorting the depictions into meaningless gibberish. Only a stairway remained open, below the statue of Mary, descending down to Earth. I ran towards it. It was a circular helix, endless it seemed, erected in the middle of a null space: nothing was visible there, nothing tangible, only a flying, lonely helix staircase. As I ran farther and farther down I saw a flat floor, and the end of this infernal staircase, and so I ran on the floor. A mere grayness around me, the staircase dissipated into thin air as soon as I left it. After running in this black horizon, I realized I had reached the singularity: there was no directionality anymore, no notion of space or time. Yet I saw a pond of water, in the distance. When I reached the murky pond, I saw in it the lifeless body of my mother, ossified into a terrorstruck being, not quite human. A worm crawled through her eye socket — her humerus ashed as soon as I picked her up. Her skull befall on my feet. The ash stained my feet: only now I realized I was barefoot. Not only that, I was naked. I looked in the pond and saw myself: a naked, hairless ape, confused and deranged — an orphan. The shivers that are apt to befall man in such recognitions were absent: I saw in my humanity a spark, a spark of divinity. And this spark conflagrated the sinful forest of pollution and muck and sully: it burnt away the foul parts of me. And I was purified. And so I entered the pond, naked though I was.

He is coming! He is emerging now from the depth of the primordial forest. I can see him descending the rocks by the Waterfall. At last, God has come to me: at last, God has forgiven my transgressions. Here he was, Immanuel, naked and pure, descending onto me, his virgin mother, to forgive. Forgive me for the sin of giving birth to him. He was floating now, as if held up by a holy spirit, and the mirthless darkness of the dusk turned into the bright white sunshine of rebirth. I left the collapsing shed, where laid the haunting void of an empty canvas, and fell to my knees, looking up at him, looking up at his body coming down to me. O, Son of Man, O, Good Shepherd, come to me! O Lord have mercy upon my soul, O Lord and Master of my life, embrace my body and delight in my flesh. O Lord, hold me by the neck, pierce my nape with your whetted fangs — Oh, Lord, O Master of All, squeeze my flesh with your big hands, hold my meat in between your fingers. And he reached me, his body drenched in blood: the bare agony of his wounded body smeared on me, blood flowing from his pounded chest, his pierced hands and feet — he embraced me tight, and in rapture I smelled the aura of burning wood intermingled in his hair — exactly as when I first met him, only now more raw, more human, more divine. The fragrance of blood smeared on him, interflowing mine, as our skins rubbed against each other, mesmerized my being, and soon I realized I was picked up. He threw me by the Waterfall, tore down my gown with his eyes — his eyes rapturous, ferocious, an animal in the vest of God. His firm arms held down mine, and as the surge of white water washed my hair, the world whirled widely and I realized we were in a whirlpool or hurricane, descending a helix staircase in the middle of nowhere. His incisors shone in the dusk as he penetrated my body — I realized I couldn't breathe! *I can't breathe!* The water is everywhere. The water is in my throat. Salty, briny, it's filling my womb. The liquid is in my womb, warm and vivifying, mixed with the cold seawater stuffing my throat: I am asphyxiating! Paralyzed! Rocks are hitting my body

left and right, and I am seeing blood! The Waterfall is a pond of human blood: of my blood. His arms let go of me, and slowly I realize the image of reality is deteriorating — the symphony of being is quieting down, and the inseminated egg inside me will be a son of the sea. The last image slowly fades: Immanuel's eyes, wide open, his fangs showing, his face stained with my blood — he is divine now. He is the son of God. He *is* God.

Death is the precedence of life. And so, as I let go of the lifeless body of Mary, as the Waterfall showered her bloody corpse down towards the life-giving earth, I realized I have given up my agency: I was now only a vessel, a vessel through which divine powers beyond the comprehension of mankind could transmit the divine message. And I had it, fully formed and actualized — no longer a mere potentiality, abstract and conceptual. I had the exact image extracted from my unconscious mind, from the depth of the ocean of self-subsisting below the ego: there it was, the perfect painting — every detail harmonious with every other and with the whole, every brush of paint, every color, evoking emotions bodily that create meaning, human meaning. I didn't paint it: I only transmitted it onto the empty canvas. And there it lay — in front of the background of a red Waterfall, virgin Mary's body returned to Earth, rays of pink and orange and purple reflecting off the glimmering crust of the life-giving water and the oaks slowly devouring what was left of the evening sun and the scent of pine intermingled in the cool mist of the Waterfall and the aura of human life — the image of Jesus Christ, crucified on a cube floating atop an infinite chessboard, with four cubes in abeyance transfixing his naked body onto the cubic symbol of life: and I stood there, looking at the man — I write looking at the man, but I was really admiring the bare agony of wounded humanity.