

# Ashes, Light, Blood

Thirdspace, Ethics and Representation  
A journey through grief

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# What cannot be told...

An ethics of care - representation and audience response

Every story has many potential tellings - a life is not singular - and cannot (and should not?) be fully known - nor fully told

Dancing between silence and (mis/over) representation - what decisions are made?

Notions of integrity/'truth' are slippery  
At best a 'telling' honours both the lines and the spaces between those lines - creating an architecture by which symbolic representation and performance allows both storyteller and audience to glimpse multiple possibilities of 'truths'



# Haecceity - and Representation

- At your last breath, a blue moon rose - lighting my way down long hospital corridors
- Unbelievable - all that was *you* - all that constituted our shared lives for 33 years - gone in that breath...
- Your beauty, passion, brilliance, knowledge, wisdom, humour and frailties - a haecceity lost - your body empty...
- Where *are* you, Morgan?
- Why do I feel able to show *this* image of you at peace - yet not those last terrible images of your decline?



# Space and time - Architects of the soul

- Disruption of past, present and future - all are broken, re-cast, unfamiliar: bereavement opens a space for new imaginings
- Wild and visceral grief - an animal experience of rage, hunger, pain - a new primitivism: I want to cover my body with your ashes, to consume them, to revivify them with blood...
- I cannot eat or sleep - my body begins to change - lighter, burning faster, I feel light as a ghost in the world
- I drive to isolated spaces to howl at the sky - to call you home
- You 'speak back' - a huge hawk circles above me again and again, unknown in 11 years of our walks the local park
- I begin to paint - a new work by moonlight each month: the results are a revelation - woman as warrior, earth spirit, primitive, fierce



# Grief - Architect of Space

- The unadorned 'primitive' self speaks through the symbolic and elemental
- Ashes, blood, light - deconstructed and re-constituted
- Your body - so loved - and so damaged was not 'you'
- "All is changed, changed utterly: a terrible beauty is born" (Yeats, 1920)

# A new beginning

- As the weight of years falls away, and labour builds strength, I begin to dance again, to paint, to write...
- This shell is fragile and temporary “A little cruded milk, Fantastical puff-paste”  
(Webster, IV, ii. 124-5)
- All fear has gone - Freedom from fear removes all restraint on what can be - and what we can become



# References

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