

Somewhere back of the eyes is the little box that puts all this together, all the accumulations of things one's seen in a lifetime of looking, all the echoes and edges of the apparently real so that, in dreams, one comes to a landscape which is both familiar and unexpected. *You know it but you hadn't thought to – that's it but how did it get here...* Denny Moers and I must have met back in the 70s when he was then resident in Rochester and I was living in a little apartment on Fargo Street at Rhode Island, over an old time grocery store. He was reading William Carlos Williams and he would come weekly, driving over in a great long hooded old car, to talk about that week's assignment. He was getting a degree at Empire State College and I was his quondam teacher.

But what really then fascinated me, as I got a sense of what he was doing, was his work as a photographer, what attracted him as so-called “subject,” how he went about it all. Certainly there are people who use the technical possibilities of photography in every respect with great sophistication, making the whole activity a ground for their own subjective brilliance. But that has never seemed to me Denny's interest, although early on he began to use the effects possible in developing and printing the image, just from the chemicals used, to permit a curious and emphatic “coloring,” a good deal more than highlighting, say, or cooking the image might effect. There was something a bit uncanny, as though he were drawing out an information the image itself had within it, something not verbal or descriptive but altogether physical and insistent.

Perhaps it is Denny Moers himself who is the crucial ingredient, and who else, after all, would or could it be? He is not a magician, or someone trying to trick us. I feel always his images are evocations, sometimes playful, glancing, fact of something found in a moment, but then others are often quite spectral, primary – as though a long-held feeling or some recurrent intimation were resurfacing, again lifting to sight out of the otherwise hidden flotsam of a usual day.

I remember that Denny then was interested in photographing in the community of Lilydale, that surviving late 19th century community of spiritual mediums just south of Buffalo. I

don't think he hoped to find some peculiar after image in the negative, a ghostly face peering forth, etc. But he knew, and continues to know, what immanence means, what the latent presence in a compact of place and time can come to be. It was not so much the possibility of kindred souls he was after, or so I felt, but rather the fact of his being drawn to any physical place – and he has traveled far and wide – where the echoes survive, where things speak, recur, sound -- even in the silence.

Looking now at these always extraordinary images, what is it one thinks to say? That that primordial, frozen “miner” will never arrive at the completion of his task, the trundle cart always before him, hooded concentration pushing still? Or that the seemingly collapsed barn, curiously comfortable in its situation, like a cow gone down in a field, is still to be salvaged, a kind of hope that long since has settled into what it adamantly is.

Somewhere in time and mind there must be a land of these realities, which are so very real at times that they mesmerize, calling us into them, almost forcing us to leave “that other world” we would think to live in, and do. Again and again the landscape recurs, foaming sky, ash-white tree, or the frieze of two figures, old? Or young in whatever age encompasses them – where they are dancing, heavily, tentatively, but moving in a communal, timeless moment.

“In dreams,” writes the poet William Butler Yeats, “begin responsibilities.” Or should one say as is said in *The Wizard of Oz* to Dorothy, “You're not in Kansas anymore.” One will mount those stairs, up that formal passage, over and over. That measuring of rock-solid circumstance will always be an impartial, determining means. Just so the ladder, if it exists, will be there, if one exists to climb it, onto that indefinite body, mass, up there where it will stay far longer than anything else that will ever be.

Just so heaven, just so hell – and in between all this -- against the sides, as it were, like the plate glass windows of a bank -- are the reflective walls of the seen. There the dog sits waiting – “amid the encircling gloom.” *Lead, kindly light...* Lead, oh seer, oh generous voyager of this phantom world! Your eyes are bright with looking both ways and always. You see the heart of the matter. You imagine it, and it is there!

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