



Autoretrato/Self Portrait

To look at yourself
Truthfully
In the mind's eye
Is no mean feat

In the barber shop
Cutting chair
I have little choice
But to look at myself
In the mirror,
Forty four years old (young)
Cara cara, face to face
Eye to eye (for an eye)
Tooth for a tooth

The stark light
Offers few favours

The barber,
Unspeaking,
Busies himself abstractedly
In a snipping frenzy,
Clumps of hair
Raining,
Dark and grey,
Into the (sleepy) hollow
Of the cape
On my lap
Where my fingers
Cannot resist
But to play
With that greying
Grieving hair,
The hair that once
Was attached to
Me

Back to the mirror
I wonder how,
If I were to,
I would draw myself?
Paint myself?

In my imagination.....
I would see the face
Of my younger self
Wearing a mask
Of a face marked by time
A traveller
A wanderer
A wonderer
And a ponderer
The (fat) face of a foreigner
At home
In a foreign land

In the mirror
I'm older
Than I imagine myself to be
Paler
Almost pallid
(or perhaps that's the effect of artificial strip lighting?
Maybe in the natural light of the sun.....?)
Or under the silvered umbrella
In the diffused lighting
Of a photographer's studio.....?)
Justmaybe.....?)

Tiredness
Is all around the eyes
A dead giveaway

As a portrait artist
I would need
To add some strong harsh
Charcoal lines
To capture that tired effect
Some subtle grey shading
For the bulging swollen sacks
Below the eyes
(Perhaps I need to cry a little?)

But the eyes are bright
Blue clear
Electric
Adventurous

With hope

Then I would chisel
Some wisened character
Into the furrows of the forehead
Where it looks like a tractor
Has ploughed across those rolling hills

And I would need to add that awful vertical line
Where the hills are split into two
Evenly
Right down the centre
Of the forehead
Like an axe blow
Thwhack!

I don't like the line
But it won't go away
It's from too much frowning
(A friend once told me)
Too much squinting
From the sun in my eyes
Too much.....

Then I notice the awful double chin
Seemingly larger
Than ever before
All pushed forward and up
Elizabethan
Gathered
By the strangling gown
And the white strip
Of paper
Folded over at the neck
Like origami

It makes me look like a fat priest
God forbid

I'm too hard on myself,
By far
If I laughed out loud
Laugh really heartily
A roaring chuckling guffaw
Perhaps the lines would disappear
(though the barber would
Methinks
Think me
Quite mad)

I smile wryly instead
At an amusing remark
That the barber makes
In his sweet, soft, furry
Melocoton peach
Argentinean accent
And I laugh
On the inside
Making a mental note
To try the outside laugh
Later on
In private

David Waring
The Barber's Shop, Nerja
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Inspired by Olga