



HORIZON

The foreigner allows you to be yourself by making a foreigner of you.

-Edmond Jabès

Horizon, by definition, refers to the line or circle that forms an apparent boundary between earth and sky. In common parlance, a horizon might mean the scope of a person's knowledge or perception. When I stand on a shore or at the bow of a ship or as I speed down a long stretch of highway, my mind does not consider boundary or limit or division. What the horizon holds in those moments is the imminent infinite, vibrant with potential.

Think of the space between any two people having a conversation. Their two purviews are distinct horizons, corresponding. In his last work, *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Book*, Edmond Jabès writes, "My relation to others is staggered all the way to the infinite; from the bottom up, never horizontally, the distance from here to there. As with the date tree, others are part of myself, from root to frond. What you call "distance" is but the time of breathing in, of breathing out."⁽¹⁾

I keep in a glass bowl a small collection of black and white photographs, all curled at the edges and yellowed slightly. Handwritten on the back of a two-by-three-inch image of birds and well-dressed tourists is the note, "Venezia. Plaza San Marco. Italia 30 Mayo 1928." A two-by-four-inch shot of jodhpur-clad hunters posed by fresh kill has typed on the back, "En una cueva de Patacocha, segundo día de cacería, Huanaco muerto por Gmo. Beaumont." Wherever I travel, I search flea markets for old family albums. Their wardrobes, their travels, the seasons they lived through. I create for my foreign imagination an approximation of local narrative to further my sense of a place.

Saudade is a word that we don't have in English. As I search online and ask my Brazilian roommate to translate, its meaning unfolds in many phrases, sentences, whole paragraphs even. My notebook is scrawled with moving ellipses: "whereabouts unknown, like a sailor"... "the love that remains"... "incompleteness"... "heartbreak tinged with joy at the memory of"... "longing for ones homeland"... In his 1912 book *In Portugal*, A.F. Bell writes, "a turning towards the past or towards the future."⁽²⁾

Fado, unique to Portugal and in particular Lisbon, was recently inscribed on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a category created to safeguard traditions and expressions that though immaterial—knowledge, skill, song, dance—imbue a community with a sense of continuity and identity specific to its physical place. Imagine other examples of intangibility, moments perhaps too private for fanfare, yet nonetheless vital to one's sense of self and of belonging. Picture not just a photograph, but the circumstance of its capture. A young woman, hair neatly pulled back and skin bronzed by summer, looks clear into the lens of a companion (or maybe a passing stranger). A Times Square marquis across the street behind her. "I am here," her stance asserts. She was there, the portrait-as-object tells us now. That theater is long-gone. The intangible moment—that afternoon, Manhattan sunlight, the mood she might have been in then—as narrative remains.

Corrine Fitzpatrick, NYC

⁽¹⁾ Edmond Jabès. Translated from the French by Rosmarie Waldrop. *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Book*. Wesleyan University Press: Hanover, NH, 1993. p.3

⁽²⁾ A.F. Bell. *In Portugal*. The Bodley Head: London and New York, 1912. Quoted in Shirlee Emmons and Wilbur Watkins Lewis. *Researching the Song: A Lexicon*. Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 2006. p.402. (sourced from Wikipedia).