

Medium of disappearance: an essay about self-portraiture and absence in 21 letters

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When Claire Peckham began taking photographs, she took only self-portraits. At some point between then and now, she shifted from being a self-portrait photographer to a photographer who was almost never photographed. This cross-genre essay blends autobiography, literary and visual arts criticism to follow that journey, contextualized by three narrative threads that interweave throughout: the life and works of Francesca Woodman, the staging history and language of *Macbeth*, and the gendered politics of letter writing.

Dear ¹

Enclosed is a series of self-portraits.
I wrote most of them.

¹ Francesca Woodman was born in Colorado and took her first self-portrait (that we know of) at age 13.
She went on to take
over 800—
almost all of them stubbornly unconventional
5x5", black and white images
of her naked body disappearing
into crumbling interiors.

A blurb summarizing her photographic career
summarizes her as "interested in how people
relate to space
...[she] played complex games
of hide-and-seek
with her camera."ⁱ

*

Dear ²

The relationship between performance
and absence
is an unusual one.

Unlike loss, which implies an act of removal,
absence is unbound by specifics of time
and human interaction.
Rather, it is bound by what it isn't.

The OED definition of "absence" is: "the state of being absent... away from
a place... or person."

"Absent" is further defined as "not present."ⁱⁱ

"Absence" and "absent" come from the same Proto Indo-European word
root *es
which means "to be."ⁱⁱⁱ

Among the derivatives of *es are:

yes,
sin,
eulogy,
is,
present,
and absent.^{iv,v}

The definition of "performance" is: "a presentation."^{vi}

Every performance: a presence;
every presence: an absence.
The connection between them is
a glass where every statement is also
a question.

² Francesca Woodman went on to live and work in New York
and Italy, photographing herself
in the act of disappearing.
She called them

"ghost pictures."^{vii}

"Woodman had to invent an iconography of the invisible,"
says one of her critics. "How does one depict something,
a body,
that cannot be seen?"^{viii}

*

Dear ³

I took a course on Shakespeare's tragedies when I was in university.
Macbeth was my professor's favorite play.
He taught it in a shiny amphitheater
with tech-money lighting.

Macbeth is a play consumed in darkness,
both internal and external.
Over half the play occurs at night.
And yet

in a letter written in 1594
Shakespeare's company is reported to
"now begin at two and have done between fower and five."^{ix}

Even accounting for the sliding grayscale of English weather
this leaves *Macbeth*
in natural light.

When I first studied *Macbeth*
it was a blindingly sunny spring day.
My professor apologized for the weather,
saying it was horrendously inappropriate.

He pulled the blinds down,
but the Globe couldn't do that.

Famously built without a ceiling,
the amphitheater relied on natural light
to make the players on the platform visible.

The platform, as Andrew Gurr points out in *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*,
 was completely surrounded
 by the audience.^x
 Lit, surrounded
 and relentlessly visible,
Macbeth must perform
 something that isn't there:
 it must perform darkness in daylight.

Paradoxically, darkness is created
 through the addition of light.
 Light is one of the most prominent props in the play:
 torches, lightning, and candles appear in 7 stage directions out of 5 acts:

- 1.1.1. [Thunder and *lightning*. Enter three witches]
- 1.6.431 [Hautboys and *torches*] (Before Macbeth's castle)
- 1.7.472 [Hautboys and *torches*] (Inside Macbeth's castle)
- 2.1.568 [Enter Banquo and Fleance bearing a *torch*]
- 2.1.579 [Enter Macbeth and a servant with a *torch*]
- 3.3.1254 [Enter Banquo and Fleance with a *torch*]
- 5.1.2144 [Enter Lady Macbeth with a *taper*]

The presence of a light on stage
 shows that the person holding it, would be unable to see without it.
 Thus, players carrying torches across a daylit stage
 ignite both light
 and darkness
 at once.

One scholar writes, "the need for light
 is also part of the theme of darkness."^{xi}
Macbeth needs light;
 it needs darkness.
 And it has it.
 And it has it.

³ An epistolary
 (a story told through letters)
 is a form made of two coasts:

"Given the letter's function as a connector
between two distant points...
the author can choose
to emphasize either the distance
or the bridge."^{xii}

*

Dear ⁴

I used to take self-portraits.
I used to take only self-portraits,

and I started taking them after exiting
a state of anorexia.

You'll know about anorexia, I imagine,
and its ties to control,
and helplessness.

You may not know it
from someone who's lived there;
forgive me,
here's a map:

anorexia is a state
of disappearance.

Withdraw the body its building blocks
(food, ease, a sense of belonging)
and your cells will burn your remaining glucose
into air.

If the withdrawal is continued
the body will burn through fat,
it will burn through muscle,
it will burn through bone,

and all that burning
keeps you cold.

When I was anorexic
I wore long sleeves in August
and ate greens dressed in acid.

This is not uncommon,
and neither is disassociation
with the body.

In a place where disappearing
is synonymous with surviving
you do not belong within your body,
and your body belongs
nowhere.

During this period and after I couldn't recognize myself in photographs
unless I took them.

This is how I started inhabiting two roles:
photographer and photographed,
seen and seer.

⁴ "Even when wholly present in the picture...
Woodman is never quite
with us,
never quite herself."^{xiii}

"At the core of a body of work that...
promises knowledge of the self (self-portrait)
there is a resistant enigma of vision,
a non-entity describing itself as an entity."^{xiv}

*

Dear ⁵

Preceding the writing of *Macbeth*
there is a history of coasts
and storms.

In 1589 King James is betrothed
to 14-year-old Anne of Denmark.
Anne sets sail for Scotland, only
to be caught by a storm

and landlocked
in Norway.

Undaunted, King James sails across the North Sea
to get her
and is forced to stay the winter
due to another storm.

On their final voyage
again
they are hit
by a storm.

When they reach land
witch hunts commence
on both coasts.^{xv}

This is not a coincidence.
King James's superstition about witchcraft
is well documented,
and he was in large part
the intended audience of *Macbeth*.

It is also not a coincidence
that *Macbeth's* roots are in a balancing act
that comes up even and is not treated as such.

James sails to get Anne;
Anne sails back with James.
And yet,
it ends in hunting.

At the end of *Macbeth*
every villain has been slain,
the one man standing will carry on the good blood line;
he will tell the story and set the future straight.
All is well; the balance is restored.
But no audience member will ever
leave this play feeling at ease.

Macbeth continues to hunt

beyond its ending

with an army of murky undertows:
fires, floods, accidents, near deaths, deaths
and murders.
Even speaking the name aloud threatens
to curse the speaker.

The strategies actors use to ward off the curse
often involve thresholds:
walk out of the room,
spit,
and beg to be readmitted, or

quote the witches,
"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!" (4.1.1594-1597).^{xvi}

⁵ Epistolaries began as a male form,
used since Ovid in Rome.

They were reclassified as female
in the 1600s as women entered
the educational system. Women were instructed
to exercise their newfound knowledge
by writing letters.
By the 18th century letter writing
became synonymous
with female voice.^{xvii}

*

Dear ⁶

In community college
I took my first series of self-portraits.
In the photographs

my body is a shape in the center
of various landscapes.
Big trees in city parks,
concrete,
a line of gray water, a boat near an edge.

I photographed the second series
on a beach in November.
In one image
my body is reflected
in a pool of water.
In every other image, it's fragmented
and I am looking at something
outside the frame.

⁶ When Francesca Woodman was 17
she enrolled in the Rhode Island School of Design's (RISD)
newly created photography program.
Many of her photographs, now displayed all over the world,
are still preserved in the format in which
they were originally presented for critique at RISD.

While she studied she created a space
in an unused dry goods building.
It didn't have heat,
a shower or a proper kitchen,
and it was not intended for living in.
But she did live and work there.

"With Woodman's art the medium that is most concerned with showing us
what is undisputedly there (photography)
becomes preoccupied with hesitation,
with uncertainty,
with a displacement of forms."^{xviii}

*

Dear ⁷

I continued to take self-portraits
when I started university.

In one series I photographed
my body, centered
and facing away.
The spaces around it
are flat rectangles
of white sky, blue earth.
My body is lumpy,
stuccoed in restoration fat.
It sticks in the images
like punctuation.

In another series I returned to the beach,
this time wrapped in a sheet
the same shade
as the sand.

⁷ As part of the honors program at RISD
Francesca lived and worked in Rome.

She loved it. Indeed, her father said,
“she was more comfortable in Italian,
than in English.”^{xix}

While in Rome, she made a series of self-portraits
titled ‘being an angel.’ Of this series, a critic notes,
“Woodman’s camouflaging of the body
in relation to objects that surround it
...has most often been read as a sign
of disappearance.”^{xx}

*

Dear ⁸

The first line of *Macbeth* is:
[All (three witches)] “Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air." (1.1.11-12).

This introduction is accompanied by a storm: thunder, lightning; a magical, circular tetrameter. It's a balancing act: "fair" and "foul" are connected by the verb "is." Linguistically, in the witches' first line, "fair" and "foul" are paralleled in the act of becoming each other, and below them fog and filthy air (a storm).

Macbeth's first line mirrors the witches' nearly identically: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen." (1.3.38).

Now look,
where the witches have balanced
fair and foul on a storm,
Macbeth's fair and foul
is balanced on

absence:
on his inability
to see.

⁸ When men did write letters
they wrote in a female voice, believing
"women possessed superior emotional expressiveness."^{xxi}

One article states "...epistolary fiction arose from the male understanding of the 'female voice.'"
These epistolaries, written by male authors, cemented what was already outlined by the educational system. Namely, that femininity was equivalent to emotionality, and that letter writing, a form inherently dependent on a desire for connection, was its form.^{xxii}

*

Dear ⁹

Every photography class I had
was in the same room.

There's a version of this classroom
in every art school. This one
was cold. A whole wall was windowed,
and throughout the term
autumn turned dark across the walls
we covered
and cut.

The 25 students grouped around heavy tables;
2 teaching assistants sat on a bench
that lined the windows.

I folded into the corner,
and leaned into the glass.

⁹ "In addition to being something else,
Woodman is also perhaps trying to be
somewhere else.
there is always a sense in which... she is reaching
towards another form....
What is meant to be at the center of attention is...
liminal; it is always haunting
the boundaries."^{xxiii}

*

Dear ¹⁰

When the witches prophesize Macbeth as the future king
he doesn't openly convey his excitement,
but speaks aside, to no one:

"Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see" (1.4.333-336).

In the following scene the character of Lady Macbeth is introduced by means of a letter:

[Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter] (1.5.344).
Her first lines are not her own,
but her husband's read aloud.

She tells the story of the witches' prophesy,
and goes on to claim it: "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
what thou are promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
it is too full o' the milk of human kindness..." (1.5.359-361).

Lady Macbeth's first lines voice
what her husband couldn't:
the "black and deep desires,"
the power hunger.
In doing so she is linked at once
to Macbeth's interiority; in fact
she is the voice of it.

It is no coincidence
that a letter is the vehicle for establishing this relationship.
A letter is itself half an equation:
a person writes,
the words travel,
a person reads.

The act of writing a letter
anticipates the act of reading.
Letters are addressed to someone
signed by someone. And it is *someone*
not *anyone*. You write to a person in particular:
your own personal
other half of the equation,
your other coast.
This is a duality that involves
intimacy, interiority

and absence.

To write a letter you have to see
what is absent,
and speak to it.

¹⁰ "If first-person narrative lends itself to the writer's reflexive portrayal of the difficulties and mysteries surrounding the act of writing, the epistolary form is unique among first-person forms in its aptitude for portraying the experience of reading."^{xxiv}

*

Dear ¹¹

Macbeth was written to be performed
on a bare stage:

"Of all Shakespeare's scenes written for the Globe, 80% could have been performed on a completely bare stage platform."^{xxv}

Scenery and props were sparse,
if existent at all.

In the face of nothing
Shakespearean plays relied on language
to perform the scenery.

However, that set is two-sided.
Every description spoken by a character on stage
captures as much what they're seeing
as how they're seeing it.^{xxvi}

In *Macbeth*, this combination of physical and spoken props intersect
and tangle.

The physical props: lights, are there to represent
something that isn't:
darkness.

The spoken props: the dagger, the blood of those they've murdered,

are not visible
but perform some of the most crucial actions in the plot
(the murder of Duncan).

In act 2, scene 1, we see Macbeth just before he murders Duncan.
He sends his servant to Lady Macbeth,
who will sound a bell when the coast is clear
for him to enter the bed chamber.^{xxvii}

As he waits he holds out empty hands
and describes the dagger they aren't holding:
"Is this a dagger which I see before me?" he says.
"The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch
thee. I have thee not, and yet I see thee still."

As Macbeth looks on
the absent dagger stays stubbornly
present:
"or art thou but a dagger of the
mind, A false creation... I see thee
still.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses." (2.1.616-623).

As he continues to see the dagger that isn't
there it begins to bleed.
It sends Macbeth swirling
through a series of images
like a fear-fueled fever dream:
nature dead; witchcraft
the dark product of the underworld;
wolves hunting; Tarquin,
the last son of the king of Rome,
moving like a ghost, sword
drawn, into Lucretia's
bedchamber.

The bell rings:
"...Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven to hell." (2.1.643-644).
Macbeth leaves the bare stage,

all at the signal
of Lady Macbeth, still invisible,
just like the dagger Macbeth wasn't holding.

¹¹ The narratives in epistolary fiction (and letter writing at large) are seemingly inherently bound to stories of love. Janet Altman, author of *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, writes that the situation in which one writes an epistolary is when one is writing to something that is desired for and absent.

An absent lover.

Also, that the letter itself as a physical object, functions as a substitute for the lover in question, as it touches and passes between the two who are separated.^{xxviii}

In an epistolary a love story
is also a loss story.

Even in the earliest examples of epistolary, Ovid's *Heroides*, the fictional letters are from abandoned heroines who write about the distance between them and their beloved. "Even lovers on good terms, when they are obliged to communicate by letter, lament the instrument's inadequacy."^{xxix}

*

Dear ¹²

I completed my first university course
with a series of self-portraits:
black and white images
of fragments of my body
aligned with the battered architecture
of the art building.
My waist as the wall between two windows,
my arm the straight edge of an easel.

During critique I said that this series

was about me fitting into the art program.

One of the TAs compared me to Francesca Woodman.

Before presenting in critique
I had presented my work to the 2 TAs
and told them the rest of the truth:
that I felt isolated in this program,
(in general, really). That I feared
I would never fit in, never
belong anywhere.

"If you say that
the images will never escape that story,"
they said.

So I hid it.

¹² Francesca Woodman returned from Rome
to a series of frustrating spaces.
In a letter to a friend, she wrote
"I kept trying to change my direction
and photograph other things
I mean I am as tired as the rest of you of looking at me.
But as you can see most of them are in this back section
of less successful work.
I think that I tried too hard to see
why I do what I do
there are a lot of things which if I look at them too hard
grow shy and stiff."^{xxx}

*

Dear ¹³

"Fear" is spoken 45 times
in *Macbeth*:
the most of any tragedy,
even though it's the shortest

in the canon.^{xxx}

¹³ "An entire plot tradition, the novel of seduction through letters, is built around the letter's power to suggest both presence and absence, to decrease and increase distance."^{xxxii}

*

Dear ¹⁴

After Macbeth has murdered Duncan he returns to the stage hearing phantom voices. "Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep,'" he tells Lady Macbeth, "'Sleep no more!...Macbeth shall sleep no more.'" (2.2.694-704).

"Give me the daggers," says Lady Macbeth, and as she exits the stage the stage direction [Knocking within] enters the script. (2.2.715).

"Whence is that knocking?" says Macbeth, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand?" (2.2.721-725).

The knocking follows them off stage, and begins the next act, as the porter, the door-keeper, enters.

The knocking is repeated 6 times. "Knock, knock, knock!" says the porter after every knock, and then refuses to open the door. (2.3.751-752, 758-759, 766-767, 771-772).

After each strike the porter speaks to the door:
he likens it to a hell-gate,
and describes a farmer who hung himself;
an equivocator who can "wear in both the scales against the other scale,"
and a tailor caught cheating his craft.
"This place is too cold for hell" he says, and finally,
"I pray you, remember the porter."
He opens the gate. (2.3.749-780).

The word "equivocate" appears
both before and after the porter has opened the gate.

It derives from "equivocal" which means "equal in name
but not in reality."^{xxxiii}

The porter is the equivocator
mimicking the sound on the other
side of the door, but not the action.

He's just one side of the equation.

¹⁴ "Epistolary novels are a contradiction.
They are considered the female genre.
...It should, therefore, be a genre in which
females can question the domination of males
and assert their own independence.

Many literary experts, however,
believe that the epistolary novel is better qualified as
'a history of restrictions
or failed interactions.'^{xxxiv}

*

Dear ¹⁵

The last self-portrait I remember taking
was a video. It was another autumn,
and I was in a park.

In the video
the back of my head is flat against a boardwalk.
Above me, sheets of paper float by
on a silent current.

There's ink on the paper.
I reach into the water;
I touch it,
and black blooms
into storm clouds above my head.

¹⁵ In July of 1980
Francesca spent a residency
in New Hampshire.

She struggled
with exteriors:
"Nature?" she wrote
in a letter to a friend,
"what am I supposed to do with nature?"^{xxxv}

She couldn't wait
to get back indoors.

*

Dear ¹⁶

I took a photo in Italy,
down an alleyway in Florence.

The photo is divided.
The top half is a window
displaying two chairs suspended in mid-air
and reflecting the wall opposite.

The bottom half is a Florence-yellow wall,
with two women standing

next to one another.
One is slightly blurred,
caught moving from the side.
The other
has her hand on her hip,
her one visible eye
looking straight into the camera.

The woman in motion
is wearing white;
the woman staring
is wearing black.

Between them,
the glass of a motorcycle windshield
hovers at a diagonal.

There is a rounded mirror
attached to the motorcycle.
It faces the camera
and reflects
an empty street.

¹⁶ After her residency in New Hampshire
Francesca performed a series of attempts.
She attempted to find work.
She hoped to find it with fashion photographer Deborah Turbeville.^{xxxvi}

Perhaps in preparation,
this period of Francesca's work
began to include photographs of models.
In one photograph
a woman holds a mannequin hand
over her face.

Apart from providing contextual information
these images are rarely discussed in contemporary criticism of her work.
I have always felt that there's an emptiness to them,
like someone trying to fit the square piece

into the circle hole.

*

Dear ¹⁷

When I returned from Italy
my photograph was selected to be exhibited in a gallery downtown.
I wrote a statement for it, it said,
"I took this photo the day I was supposed to be in Paris.
I spent the day trying to remember how to say 'where am I?' in French."

The woman writing the press release
described it as "a composite image
about her study abroad experience."

But it wasn't a composite.
It was whole.

Throughout the rest of the year
something silently and resolutely shifted.

I removed my body from my photographs
and started showing photographs of empty streets.

At the end of the year
I left for London.

¹⁷ Francesca Woodman created her application to Turbeville
in the form of a book:
an Italian notebook
into which she inserted 7 photographs
printed on acetate.
Inside the notebook she wrote,
"call me as soon as/you can. I am/anxiously awaiting/your reply/call
collect 401-2744284/I'm hoping."^{xxxvii}

She never sent it.^{xxxviii}

*

Dear ¹⁸

In act 5, scene 1,
Lady Macbeth becomes both the physical
and invisible props
through an act of
sleepwalking.

Sleep itself is a type of threshold,
a glassy state between day and night,
light and dark.

As the play careens towards its
brutal lack-of-an-ending,
Lady Macbeth enters the stage,
holding a light.

"How came she by that light?" asks the doctor (5.1.2147).
"...She has light by her continually," says a gentlewoman,
"'tis her command" (5.1.2148-9).

"Eyes open" and "senses shut", Lady Macbeth walks through sleep
into the invisible blood Macbeth once feared:
"Here's the smell of the blood still: all the
perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (5.1.2173-75).

Her motionless audience watches on.
"Well, well, well—" knocks the doctor (5.1.2179).

"Wash your hands, put on your nightgown...
To bed, to bed! There's knocking at the gate," says Lady Macbeth,
"come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's
done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!" (5.1.2187-90).

Lady Macbeth's addressee is absent,
her sleepless husband. In his wake,
Lady Macbeth becomes an equivocator,
voicing the knocking, knocking, knocking,
at the invisible gate, and eventually

walking back
to sleep.

This is the last time we see her.
She dies offstage,
in her sleep.

¹⁸ On January 19, 1981
Francesca Woodman jumped
out a window.

*

Dear ¹⁹

I returned from London
with photographs of a fractured city.

In my graduating catalog
I wrote that the series
was about seeing
two cities at once.

This is true. My parents both studied architecture
in London; I inherited their mental maps,
and so saw two cities, old and new.

This is also true: before leaving for London
I had fallen in love
with a man who didn't fall in love with me.
I had never been in love before;
for me it was like drowning in bright water.

Afterwards my body refused food
for weeks at a time.
There was always the taste of acid in my mouth.
My body was dehydrated and pale.
I used to fade in and out of consciousness
under the stage lights

of a weekly lecture series we attended
that year.

That is how I left for London,
and that is also what I photographed.

I graduated with a series of 8:
a ceiling reflected
on a floor, cut
with a heavy iron trench.

A rusting lid, suspended,
seems to push into
and out of
a depthless beige wall.

The heads of three women
fit in the line of a handrail,
a brutalist grid.

A dirty white
building with blue borders,
off kilter.
Inside a window
the shape of a
boy
looks towards the camera.

The shadow of a
house on a white wall,
aligned with the
crooked line
of a wood plank, wrapped
in white thread.

A man is caught
in a window frame,
leaning out
between stone balusters.

A black pole in front

of a brick wall. Light only
hits the pole.

A woman in black
sitting in a white
room.

The shapes of cars and buildings
reflected onto every wall,
the light catching a street pole
obscures her eye line.

¹⁹ “The brevity of Woodman’s career
and the specter of her suicide
have inevitably haunted all subsequent discussions about her work.
History is by necessity
written backward; its narrative takes shape
with an ending already firmly in place”^{xxxix}
writes one critic, who is not alone

in seeing the relationship between Francesca’s work
and her death
as a straight line.

I have never thought so.

I prefer this quote:

“What we are really confronted with in her pictures
is neither a nihilistic disappearance
nor its converse—an arrested coming-into-being;
it is rather
an indeterminate trace.”^{xi}

*

Dear ²⁰

In response to Lady Macbeth’s death,
Macbeth delivers perhaps the most famous lines in the play.
You know them,
but they are worth

seeing again:

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
creeps in this petty pace from day to day
to the last syllable of recorded time,
and all our yesterdays have lighted fools
the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing” (5.5.2376-2385).

One scholar says of this speech:

“Macbeth places his own performance
within a medium of disappearance.”^{xli}

It’s full of light
and ends in nothing.

On stage at the Globe,
Macbeth was performed without act breaks,
just a series of entrances and exits
in broad daylight.

There is little evidence to suggest
that staging of *Macbeth* changed
when it moved to a proscenium theater.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
ignite darkness in daylight
and always, always,
disappear
offstage.

²⁰ The first man I fell in love with
was born 14 days before Francesca Woodman died.
He graduated from RISD’s photography program
30 years later.

*

Dear ²¹

Taking self-portraits wasn't a cure
that empowered me,
or allowed me to reclaim my body back
from the brink of disintegration.

Self-portraiture was a performance,
an embodied act of questioning
'where is the rest of it?'

I photograph mostly indoors now.
I shoot in color, but still
almost all my images
are black and white.

I photograph light
on empty walls.

²¹ In one of Francesca's early photographs
there is a tombstone
with a photo-bearing plate,
in which
there is no photograph.
"The original intention of these photo-bearing surfaces
was that they acted
as 'mirrors,'
allowing spectators to reflect
upon their own morality, and their relation to the deceased.
With the removal of the lower plate –
and it is not impossible that Woodman,
fully aware of her artistic strategy here,
removed it herself
—what was once a mirror on death
has become a window,
something we look through...

a reflective surface that denies depth
in its capacity to represent
the self—
and as a window,
a way of looking
into space.”^{xlii}

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Claire's photograph from Florence, and her series from London (along with her other work), can be seen on her website: www.clairepeckham.com

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Notes

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