

Prison of Dreams / Vicente Guijosa

Vida Yovanovich, with life or with death, one never knows, because in her manner of seeing and feeling she reveals a tremendous duality: that of constant doubt and that of stone cold certainty. At first we are attracted by the images themselves, and as usual, due to of our thirst for knowledge, we suddenly find ourselves inside of them. Vida takes us by the hand and leads us to “inhabited” spaces where she confronts us with “people.” All at once, these are transformed into our mother, our grandmother, our old age, our path toward death, life having died a short time before, in some measure brought on by ourselves.

Prison of Dreams is the future, inevitable prison which all of us stubbornly clinging to life will occupy, because we hang on to life without considering how we will live it in the future. And for this reason it is terrible to imagine the word “future”—which we always use to speak of prosperity—without stopping to think that this is our future, not the one presented in ads that bombard us with images of young people enjoying life, plenitude, progress. What is reality? What is the future? What is the present?

We try to come close Yovanovich’s photographs, but after the second image we unconsciously withdraw from them, rejecting the idea of ourselves, of our own family becoming what we see, like the image of war that seems distant from us, as if it were not our own war. I wonder what happens once our innate survival instinct rejects these images of being forgotten in loneliness. Will the spectator ever be able to appreciate the purely photographic art involved? The images spur us to reflect on end-of-life conditions in “old age” homes.

There will be no social change in terms of how old age is addressed, only personal, private changes, and only in those of us lucky enough to have had someone tell us about the interior prison that awaits those of us who do not wish to find a different way of life to live our future of today.

One does not enter this prison as punishment for any crime—one enters as a consequence of not being able to live with the aged, nor with its current representatives. Vida Yovanovich confronts us today with all possible tomorrows.

Translated by Michelle Suderman.