

Angel on Sale



I found her in the most unlikely of places - Novato, a few miles north of San Rafael. Novato isn't exactly Lourdes, or Mecca, or Sedona - not your typical "Thin place" or "Caol Áit". And if the opposite of "The Holy of Holies" is "The Unlikeliest of Unlikelies", then that is where I found her - in Ross's, a kind of a mom-and-pop Wal-Mart, whose motto is, "Dress for less."

But there she was, abandoned in a corner, covered in grime, peering out from behind empty, soon-to-be-recycled cardboard boxes. The top of her left index finger was missing. I pointed this out to the manager, who briefly examined it and gave me 5% off. I wrapped her in tissue paper and took her home. Gratefully, she survived the bumpy ride up the last five miles of dirt road without the loss of further digits.

I placed her carefully on the countertop in my kitchen and gave her a thorough inspection. She is a ten-inches-tall figurine of a girl-child angel, with a mop of unkempt hair, two magnificent wings and an impish, impudent don't-mess-with-me look on her face. She is sitting bare-footed in a semi-lotus position, her head turned so that she is looking over her right shoulder. Her name is Lauren.

I knew immediately where she needed to perch; and so she has for the last three years. She sits on a corner of the eight-inches wide railing that forms part of the western wall of my meditation room. And she looks down into the sitting room, fifteen feet below, apparently evincing little interest in what goes on in the meditation room itself.

I've been admiring her all this time, but yesterday, when the slanting sun was sinking in the west, it projected her image onto the faux-painted eastern wall of the meditation room. She took my breath away. By a creative concatenation of circumstances, and by a magical solar surgery, she was transformed from a chubby, cheeky cherub into a tall, elegant lady-angel. The post that supports the railing directly beneath her, in shadowy silhouette, now appeared to be part of her body. Instead of a squatting child, there stood a gracefully erect goddess. Moreover, the wings jutting out of her back and stretching above her, now appeared as a great halo about her head.

I always imagined that shadow meant the absence of light; now, I know better: sometimes shadow simply means that the divine artist is turning down the luminosity in order to turn up the mystery.

Every shade of light creates its own level of reality. Thank you, Lauren.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Tír na nÓg

November 2013