

**DAVID HERNANDEZ**  
**Where Is Ana Mendieta?**

and cross the threshold to continue

doing what was loved

while alive, signing every second  
the contract made by breathing.

Over and again returning to the natural world

for materials, turning it to canvas, its shores  
and riverbanks,

its creeks, the cracked  
mosaic of parched earth,

grassy fields shuddering from gusts

from Iowa to Mexico.

What a mysterious and bountiful canvas  
to breathe in,

to work in, the way it lingered  
following a day's work,

its lush scent

rising from that content and weary body.

■

Here, the person known as Ana Mendieta  
is nameless. Here, shapeless

and pronoun-less, without a self.

Here, dreaming of terrain and given one,

dreaming of body and given one  
so hands can excavate into the landscape

the abstract shape of a woman.

In death, see, dream and given are one.

Do you understand? If there is distance  
between the two, that is want, and want is

DAVID HERNANDEZ

for the human heart. Want is why  
the sweet juice from ripe fruit

seeps down the back of your fingers and  
around your wrist bone

and rivers along the slow curve of your arm.  
And want is why you weep.

■

Here, there is no here

where the making continues.

Hands shape a woman-body

and she becomes the absence

in wet sand. She fills

with ocean and reflection,

mirrors the sky as clouds

glide across her torso,

across each limb, the keyhole

of her face. When she releases

the ocean to the ocean, the clouds

dissolve, and dreaming brings

tempera powder, shower of red

to make her shape luminous as

lava and stars and blood and want.

■



DAVID HERNANDEZ

*Camouflage*, it is called. How the body disappears  
and is seen

only if you look  
carefully, as if to say the body is

one with the tree. It is. It is also one

with the mountains,  
burning or green.

And one with the undulating ocean.

And one with the gauzy clouds.

It is one with the leaves shifting above you  
and one with the unpinned ones  
that land in your path  
like open, brittle hands.

■

The answer is simple, real as the cells  
whorled at your fingertip: Ana Mendieta

is everywhere.