

Lisa Figge: *Go-Go Traveler Elite Four-Wheel Mobility Scooter*

Moving from place to place has lost its second nature, its common sense, its ordinariness. A new world faces me as I learn a new mobility. My mobility is other, stained with immobility, insisting I sit in the contours of an unreliable, incoherent, third-nature, always bent-over fecund with contingency. It is a deeply personal, uncomfortable, self-conscious, re-learning of the world. In other words this is not a story of the history of the mobility scooter, traveling around the globe, as a cultural product or innovative technology. I insist, rather, on marking the phenomenological waves that my mobility scooter and I make as we roll around the edges of an ambulatory world.

What I have learned is that our lives are imbued with the pulses of walking. Culture is riddled through with the beat of our ambulating selves. Its tempos accompany inner dialogues, loosen imagination and prefigure the rhythms of language. Narrative and dialogue hurry forward, leggy, surefooted, confident, always carrying the traces of walking bodies. Together my scooter and I look in on this performance. Rolling around outside the rhythms of life, I am stilled, and it is the world that floats by.

The *Island Star* re-signifies my bewilderment with a floating, undulating, world that I can no longer enter. As I board, two shipmates leverage the front of the sloped ramp, lifting us, scooter and me, in order to lower the, too steep, angle of the squat bridge. Atop I rise seesawing up and over.

On the boat, all of us stand; the familiar feeling of floating overcomes me as our workshop slips its mooring. We voyeurs watch as outside nature carries us off. We, all of us, stand still. The world floats by flashing at us a first nature we think panoramic, picturesque, beautiful in the sunshine. It is! But also, there, unsettling, I notice my environmental consciousness staring back at me through a miasma of impossible responsibilities.

After we dock I leave the way I arrived. My two smiling shipmates anticipate our disembarkment, flanking the stunted gangway, barely three feet long. I ride, up and over, rejoining the land. I nod and smile my wordless appreciation at their necessary gesture. Rolling away, down, and forward, too fast, accompanied by another beat. Ka-thunk ka-thunk, ka thunk ka-thunk, my posture stiffens as I mark the new time my wheels count out; jarring my spine-twice-for each sidewalk crack.