THE MIND'S EYE

Joseph Roach

I want to thank you, Tom Duffy, for that generous introduction, and for the gift of this Intellectual Trajectory series. Let me also thank Gary Haller for being the Arts Maven of Yale disguised as a professor of chemical engineering. Very well disguised indeed; but knowing so much about the fine and performing arts, and making so much happen in that realm over my time at Yale, and just for welcoming me here to the Koerner Center. And of course my thanks to the incomparable Jenna-Claire Kemper and Sandy Preston, who make everything happen for us here. And thanks to all of you for coming out on Ash Wednesday after I was scheduled on Lundi Gras before the festivities. I had prepared a bright, peppy, and cheery talk full of the flesh. Now here we are on the first day of Lent, and so I've had to calibrate for sackcloth and the ashes just a bit.

When I set out to put this talk together, I was reminded of a mentor of mine, John O'Neal. John was the founder of the Free Southern Theater. If you haven't heard about it, it's a troupe that toured the South in the civil rights era – specifically, after Freedom Summer in Mississippi – doing a mixed-race set of performances against the grain of that moment. This was the summer when Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner were in the earthen dam and so much was dangerous for anyone doing the kind of thing that they were doing. John was also field secretary for the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and other offices in the civil rights era. John was also a great actor and raconteur, and he developed a character for his performances he named Junebug Jabbo Jones. I just found out that John passed away three days ago in New Orleans, so I want to mark that passing and dedicate this talk to John's memory, because John would tell me stories in the voice of Junebug, who was really a lot like John, a source for accessing African American diasporic lore and music and passion. Junebug's granddaddy, John told me, was a preacher man, and Junebug's granddaddy had some advice for Junebug on public speaking, and that is: "Junebug, when you talk

Joseph Roach, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Theater and Professor Emeritus of English at Yale University, retired after forty years of teaching, research, and administration in theater, performance studies, and English literature. After earning his B.A. at the University of Kansas, M.A. at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK), and Ph.D. at Cornell University, he went on to chair performing arts programs at Sweet Briar College, Washington University in St. Louis, Northwestern University, and NYU. He came to Yale in 1997 as chair of the Theater Studies program. Recognized by a Lifetime Scholarship Award from the American Society for Theatre Research, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Oscar Brockett Prize for Outstanding Teaching from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Warwick (UK), he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

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"Chloe" for the First Time

So, what am I going to tell you? I'm going to start by talking about "Chloe." Chloe is a name I'll use as metonymy for an idea. She's a Yale student, an alumna of Yale College. I won't use her real name, honoring the Buckley Amendment. She becomes — for this talk and for my thinking about this project, trying to explain my trajectory—just a summation of an idea that I want to try to get across. Let me put that idea as a question: Doesn't life, human life, meaningful human life, doesn't it exist in the expression of it? Further, isn't expression making what is invisible visible? In that sense, expression is *educing* from the world around us and from our own experiences the meaning and the beauty of it and the power of it. That's the message that's at the heart of this for me because *educere* is part of the Latin root for *education*, along with a word that's a little bit harder edged, *educare*, which is to shape or to sculpt; but to *educe* means to draw out, to draw out of, to discover, and to express. So, when I mention Chloe again, as I will three times, that thought will come back to me with her, and I hope it will come back to you as well.

In addition, after introducing Chloe, I am going to tell you about *seven* things:

- 1. my first professor (there have been many more);
- 2. my first arrest (and fortunately my last, at least until now);
- 3. my first love (but don't worry, it isn't about a girl or a boy);
- 4. my first achievement that had any lasting consequence in the world.

At this point, about halfway through, I am going talk about Chloe for the second time. Then I will talk about my research, and there are just three things I'm going to talk about:

- 5. bodies;
- 6. cities (I see Dolores Hayden is here, so I'm going to have to be careful);
- 7. stars (in the sense of the magical people who make theater and film so extraordinary).

Then I'll tell you about Chloe for the third and final time, and we'll be done.

Telling You

Chloe majored in ethics, politics, and economics, not theater, drama, American studies, or African American studies. She was really magical and special. I say that very carefully because at Yale, as in Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days*, all the children are above average. Chloe took a seminar of mine, we hit it off, and so I advised her for the rest of her time at Yale. She always had her schedule well prepared by the time she came to me except for once when she wanted to get into a course, an art history course, that dealt largely with Michelangelo, and the instructor wasn't sure that she could be in it. There was no prerequisite but the instructor was doubtful about the permission, and the DUS confirmed that she couldn't be in it. So, as her adviser, I wanted to make a defense of the rightness of Chloe in that class; and that's the key to my trajectory, the argument that education, along with just about everything else that matters, is about making invisible things visible.

My First Professor

I met my first professor at my great-aunt's studio. She was a weaver. It was really a cottage where my great-aunt and grandmother lived (in Door County, Wisconsin), and I was there in the summers. My great-aunt would weave and my grandmother would read to me. The professor visited with his wife to look at these beautiful textiles that my aunt was weaving. (He'll just be "the professor" for the moment, sort of like on Gilligan's Island. I didn't know his name at the time.) He might have seen something otherwise invisible in me, because while his wife was looking at the woven goods he was engaging me in a conversation. He asked me what I was reading, and I showed him the comic books that I was reading at that time. He asked me to tell him the stories from them. He didn't seem to make a disparaging judgment (children pick up on that sort of thing). Then he asked me if I would like for him to tell me a story, and I said, "Sure." So, he picked up an eggcup (the breakfast things were on the table), and it was one of those eggcups that come with two sides, the little side and the big side. "Well," he said, "let me tell you a story about the Big Endians and the Little Endians," about two peoples who are so opposed to each other that they have fights over which end you open the soft-boiled egg, the big end or the little end. I was enchanted by this. And sure enough in a few days, out of somewhere, a copy of Gulliver's Travels (1726) by Jonathan Swift appeared – which many of you remember, as I can see by your smiles of recognition, contains this passage in Book I (among other wonderful stories) about sectarians among the Lilliputians fighting over which end you open the egg. So, I thank the professor (and my grandmother, who read to me) for my lifelong love of eighteenth-century literature. When I took the lectern to address the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies as its president (flashing forward here for a moment), I had a mental note to thank the professor by name. As I later learned, he was Ronald S. Crane, distinguished professor of English literature at the University of Chicago and editor of the works of Jonathan Swift. Obviously, he was also a gifted teacher – at least in the classroom of that impromptu college with me.

My First Arrest

Not long after this, I became obsessed (as some boys do) with explosives, and at that point on the black or gray market you could buy what's called an M-80. I don't know if anyone else remembers those. I see nodding - yeah, Gary does, of course. We can compare notes. It's really three grams of powder, pyrotechnic powder, producing a very satisfying BOOM and even a pressure wave from the explosion. They were banned by the Child Protection Act of 1966, a good policy move, I see now in retrospect. But I had them, and I fashioned a pipe that was in our basement into a cannon. I took off the cap on the end of the pipe, drilled holes for a wick that the M-80 could go in, and put the cap back on. Then I discovered that a tennis ball rolled neatly down it, and when you set off the M-80, the tennis ball flew for a remarkable distance, either up in the air, where it would stay for a long time, or more directly some distance when you fired it straight out. In my obsession I became fascinated by an idea called Time on Target (TOT), which the United States military developed in the World Wars. With TOT you can hit the same target at the same time with two projectiles from the same gun. If you shoot the first one way up into the air, it inscribes a parabolic arc. It actually takes so much time that you can reload, bore site, and fire again at the same target; and both projectiles arrive at the same time. How cool is that? So, I tried out my new weapon on sailboats that were departing from the harbor on the shores of Lake Michigan, and I actually scored a double hit on one of the initial targets. But I wasn't reckoning on ship-to-shore radio and the fact that there was a United States Coast Guard station right behind me. The Coast Guard called the police, and the police overran my position very quickly and confiscated my cannon and all my ammunition. I was sternly admonished and released into the recognizance of my appalled parents.

I repent my thoughtlessness in retrospect, but there's something in that story about the relationship of time and space and about the relationship between two things happening at once, really in different time signatures but occupying space, that has a lot to do with how the theater operates. When you're operating in real time (in clock time in a linear way) and then in this other time, it's more suspenseful, where you're also up there flying through the air, and time can be in a way retarded, slowed down while it is happening in another dimension. Flashing forward again (from literal trajectories to a figurative one), I want to make note of the importance to my thinking of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Laocoon; or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting, originally published in German in 1766. Horace had said, "as is painting so is poetry," meaning that the arts are all the same in the end. Lessing is saying, "No – the arts are not the same." The arts in time (music, poetry) and the arts in space (painting, sculpture) have very different aesthetic principles operating behind them, and you simply can't mix them up. Later Lessing was writing the Hamburg Dramaturgy (1767-69), a criticism of the theater, and he had in mind a great master essay on how the theater and the performance would be the meeting place of time and space, where both operate at full potential and power together in the same performance. Unfortunately, he was so

inconsiderate as to die before he finished writing this essay. It is the most important work in my field never to have been written, but I think about it a lot as a governing aesthetic idea for the work that happens in performance.

My First Love

My first love was languages. I say languages because it seemed like one thing, but it was really multiple things. It was forensics, and it was poetics, and it was kinesics (expressive movement or gesture), and I was really lucky to be educated in a really good public school system. This is the school system of Evanston and then Wilmette on the North Shore of Chicago. Evanston had drama K–12, and all the schools had creative dramatics and really took the arts seriously as part of the curriculum along with everything else. I was very fortunate. So, my encounter with language was in this language-rich environment and different modalities and different styles of presentation, different usages of languages. For the moment, I'll just divide them into forensics, poetics, and kinesics.

Forensics. In forensics I learned classical rhetoric – the rhetoric of Aristotle and Cicero and Quintilian. I learned that there were three great principles and five parts of an oration. The three principles are Ethos, Pathos, and Logos: persuasion by character (Ethos), persuasion by emotion (Pathos), and persuasion by reason (Logos) – sort of. This is persuasive rhetoric, and it isn't the precision of the rhetoric of syllogistic reasoning in its most logically disciplined form. Because syllogizing in the rhetoric that we were taught offers a shortcut. Many of you will be able to sing along with me when I give the most familiar example of a classical syllogism:

All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Socrates is mortal.

It's in three parts, two premises and a conclusion. What we were taught is that one of the premises is removed. This creates what Aristotle called an "enthymeme"; when you remove one of the premises, and even in some cases the conclusion, the thought is completed in the mind of your auditors. This is a very powerful element in communication, where you can collaborate with the people who are listening to you so that you don't have to draw every part of the picture. They complete the gestalt, as it were. Just to take the example of Socrates' syllogism, I think it's really more eloquent to say, "Socrates is a man. Socrates is mortal," because the listener makes the connection. This would be arcana of ancient rhetoric were not for the fact that it underlies so much of modern advertising, as you've probably discerned, where the message is incomplete intentionally, and the completion of the thought belongs to you. When the Ad Council was hired to join the war on drugs, they created an ad that you probably remember. "This is your brain" [shot of an egg]. This is your brain on drugs [shot of the egg sizzling in a frying pan]. Any questions?" You complete the thought. Many of you will be familiar

with Smucker's jams and jellies. Their master slogan is, "With a name like Smucker's it has to be good." You can hear the premise that has been withdrawn and completed in your mind. Or "Coty" perfume: "Want him to be more of a man? Try being more of a woman." And as you can see, there's some sinister potential to this way of manipulating the thoughts of the auditors, and politicians are very skilled at this. I remember George W. Bush's speech on the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* when he was claiming "Mission Accomplished." He said: "The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September 11, 2001, and still goes on.... With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States. And war is what they got." That's an enthymeme, and it leaves out the connection that the Iraqis weren't the ones who attacked on 9/11 while insinuating that they did. But enthymemes, like any technique, can also work for the good. "When they go low, we go high." "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." "When in doubt [at New Orleans Jazz Fest, with multiple venues], the Gospel tent."

The five parts of any oration are Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory, and Delivery. Demosthenes was asked which are the most important three of those five his students said, "give us the top three, give us the gist" - and Demosthenes said, "First, delivery; second, delivery; third, delivery." But he was really taken out of context because what he was saying is, "If the speech isn't delivered well, all of the work you put into the others is for naught." But the work that you put into the others is fundamental. Invention is finding the topic for the audience, matching the themes that you use and the ideas that you impart to the listeners to whom you are speaking. Rhetoric is really the first practical psychology, because the rhetoricians ask, "Who are the people to be persuaded? What do they want? What do they hope? What do they fear?" The speaker has to know as much about that as possible. *Style*, of course, is bound up in a lot of Latin words for different tropes and schemes, and I won't belabor this but you know them all either by their Latin names or just because you've heard them so often, at least the most famous ones. For instance, I will not use "paralipsis." You will not hear the word "paralipsis" pass my lips. Paralipsis won't be a part of this presentation. Paralipsis, of course, is handy when the speaker wants to get a point across, and he draws attention to it by saying he won't speak of it at all. Like Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, who rivets the attention of the mob on Caesar's will by saying that he will not share it with them. He makes the invisible highly visible by highlighting its invisibility. That's the kind of rhetorical trope that one learns in order to enrich one's language, when one has had teachers who care about how words are chosen and about how they are understood. Memory seems to speak for itself, but we were taught to imagine "memory theaters" to create an array of space around the room in which we are speaking so that we can access the different parts of the speech as we look around the room, as I am doing here in this room today. Arrangement to someone in drama is really the most important part because arrangement is a series of impacts in time on the spectators or on an audience in a play or in a speech. To take an example of this that

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is familiar to you even if you may not know the terminology but because you've heard it used so often, there's a special arrangement that American rhetoricians developed in the 1930s called the Monroe Motivated Sequence. Has anyone heard about that? Yeah, the Monroe Motivated Sequence consists of five parts: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action. You've got to go through those five phases with your audience, and it sounds mechanical and sort of cheesy, and it is. But Ronald Reagan had it nailed. If you look at his speeches, particularly the speech when he supported Barry Goldwater in 1964 – titled "A Time for Choosing" but known to Conservatives simply as "The Speech" – you can just line it up in the Monroe Motivated Sequence. Even his most beautiful speech, which is one of the greatest speeches ever given by an American president, the eulogy for the astronauts when the space shuttle Challenger exploded, uses the Monroe Motivated Sequence. The action that you're asked to take at the end of it is to remember, and you may recall that after establishing the facts of this disaster and addressing the children who had been watching their teacher, Christa McAuliffe, representing all the experiments in the classrooms around the country, seeing this disaster, at the end Reagan, speaking as the president of the United States to the whole United States, speaking to all of us e pluribus unum, not as Republicans or Democrats, charged us "never [to] forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of earth' to 'touch the face of God."

Poetics. Poetic language was what spoke to me the most compellingly. The examples from my youth are callow but I was callow, valuing only what I could easily memorize for oral-interpretive performance, early in the long arc of study that bends toward discernment. For me poetry was something that is a special arrangement of words that you learn by heart. Close reading meant knowing when to breathe. So, in my competition as a young declaimer of poetry, I had chosen e. e. cummings and memorized a program of his poems. They are still with me [with approximate stage directions supplied here]: [title] "Buffalo Bill's" [staccato, spoken in one breath, tapping the consonants] "Buffalo Bill's defunct [mini-pause] who used to ride a watersmooth-silver [micro-mini pause] stallion [draw the invisible pistols] and break [rapid acceleration, two-handed shooting gestures in an arc from left to right] onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat [pause, then loud, an expletive] Jesus [mini-pause] he was a handsome man [pause, then build to the finish] and what i want to know is how do you like your blue-eyed boy Mister Death" [gasp for air]. There is no question mark at the end because it is not a question.

In dramatic declamation, we were taught to memorize full scenes and to do all the parts in different voices. This is a real fantasy for an actor, to be able to do all the parts. You will remember Bottom in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* who wants to be the lion as well as the two lovers. So, I chose *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt. I wanted to bring that back today as it's on again in New York. You remember that there

is a contention: Sir Thomas More is a man of conscience and a man of faith in an age when the political forces are trying to let King Henry VIII divorce barren Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn to get an heir to the throne. More has a dialogue with Cardinal Wolsey. So, this seventeen-year-old actor tried to create the voice of Cardinal Wolsey, a corrupt, aging cleric who is in the tank for the divorce, and contrast it to that of Thomas More, the man of conscience, the man of faith, a scholar whose devotion to principle made him a candidate for election as pope. (You don't have to be a priest to be the pope, but it's not likely.) More is trying to hold the line against this policy, and Wolsey is going to write Cardinal Campeggio in Rome and set it motion, so he says to More:

Wolsey: [in the raspy voice of impacted bureaucratic cynicism and senile guile] I am going to write to Cardinal Campeggio.

More: [dryly] And not to our Ambassador?

Wolsey: Our Ambassador is a ninny.

More: [deadpan] Your Grace appointed him.

Wolsey: [annoyed by More's refusal to play along] I need a ninny in Rome so that I can write to Cardinal Campeggio!

[More is silent. Wolsey looks out the window and sees Anne Boleyn passing through the courtyard on her way to visit the king.]

Wolsey: At least that thing out there is fertile, Thomas.

More: [amiably, conceding the point] Yes. [Then, implacably] But she's not his wife.

Wolsey: Oh, Thomas, you're a plodder! [*Then, darkly – they both know the disasters of civil war*] How do you expect we'll get an heir?

More: I pray for it daily.

Wolsey: Then you'll be praying for a miracle.

More: [in the patient voice of a lawyer and Saint] There are precedents.

Kinesics. The third language I learned was in a moment of epiphany, and it was the language of dance. It was language without words. That was on my first trip to New York, and I got to see the New York City Ballet and they were doing Balanchine's "Movements for Piano and Orchestra" with Suzanne Farrell. I didn't know anything about ballet except the local storefront ballet class, little girls with leotards bagging at the knees reflected in double mirrors — a *mise en abyme* of mediocrity — that's what I thought a ballet studio was. Then I saw Suzanne Farrell, and I watched the piece, which runs about maybe ten minutes, and that time was flat, but the time that I spent

with Suzanne Farrell was in the air, and when the curtain came down I was in shock. My jaw was slack and I was drooling. I won't disavow the erotic connection that I was making, but that can't be very interesting—to a sixteen-year-old boy, what is not erotic? That's not the bird I'm trying to catch in my net because what I saw in that performance was an idea. It wasn't her, it wasn't an idea of her even, it was her idea, and this idea was a certain line. None could be more rigorous. She created this line with her body, partnered and then turned without moving. Then she took the line and put it into the air back and forth across the stage with the line never breaking: a wave, a flame, a stream. Flash forward, when I came to Yale in 1997 I was stunned that there was no curricular dance, and I resolved that that was something I was going to do, if I couldn't do anything else, was get that established. There are so many good reasons for it. It really is an extraordinarily intellectual project in choreography. It involves the body, of course, as the instrument, but it's full of the mind and it makes the invisible visible by Suzanne Farrell's line and many more besides.

My First Achievement with Lasting Consequences in the World

So, the event that became a lasting achievement was founding a theater when I was nineteen with my college roommate and eleven others. We came from a speech and theater program that was really very ambitious, and it turned out to be very fortunate because after our first year we went out and started a theater in a mining town, Creede, Colorado, with a population of 510. The most unpromising place you can imagine to start a repertory theater, but it was at the moment when the American theater was decentralizing, the Yale Repertory Theatre was just being formed in that year, and others were being started (such as Long Wharf Theatre). We wanted to create our own, and the miners whose silver was running out in the mountains and the ranchers who were the Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce) of the town wanted to create a theater because they knew it would be good for tourism. Well, it was. The Creede Repertory Theatre is now in its fifty-fourth season. My roommate and I couldn't sign a contract, these two nineteen-year-olds, because we weren't at majority, so any contract was unenforceable. So we shook hands with these guys, their hard leathery hands from all that work, and said we'd be back in six weeks with twelve people and the repertoire of five plays and put them on. And I mention this because a repertoire – making these plays happen, where they were nearly invisible and almost impossible to see, but making them happen in that small town – is what explains the rest of what I'm going to say, and I'm going to say it very quickly.

Chloe for the Second Time

But I just want to mention Chloe again. This is now the midpoint of my talk, but I'm really pushing it closer to the end because I went a little longer earlier on than I meant to go. You'll remember that Chloe couldn't get into that art history class that she wanted to take on Michelangelo. That's because she was blind from birth. And so that's what made the challenge to make the case for her.

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What counts as research in my trajectory is atypical, because I have an unusual career in terms of publication. I did not really seriously publish until after I got tenure – not here, somewhere else – but my work was in the theater, directing and running theaters and making them work, and I got tenure on that basis. Then I got very serious about scholarship later. A lot of my research was done here, a lot of it with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and of Yale; it's been so great to be here. The first project, before my time at Yale, was on how a theater historian decides what is natural in a performance, because many kinds of performances have been described as "natural." So, I figured you had to figure out what nature was in the age when the person described the performances as natural. I found that nature was very different in Shakespeare's England. The body was not the body that we know. For example (this should be kind of fun because of the physicians here), the "natural spirits" are exhaled from the gut into the right ventricle, where they magically pass through the septum into the left ventricle, where they are aerated by the pneuma and transformed into "vital spirits" as the lung breathes in the pneuma and infuses it. From there they rise magically into the brain to create the "animal spirits," which are the basis of nervous action and actually can communicate across distance. This is the basis of "love at first sight" and the basis of actors looking out into an audience and actually being able to galvanize them. They believed that there was a kind of chemical connection between performer and spectator. So that was a project in the history of physiology and psychology that took me outside of the usual realm of theater.

Cities

Then when I ended up at Tulane and living in New Orleans for seven years, I became fascinated by the performances that weren't in the theater, performances that were in the streets such as Mardi Gras. That's when I became really devoted to performance studies, which asks larger questions of theatrical and dramatic action, when you see it in life. Basically, in a nutshell, performance studies scholars say, "'all the world's a stage'—we're not kidding!" The field of performance studies finds the drama in daily life. In New Orleans, this is not hard. The drama, the theater, is in the streets, and those cities I call "invisible cities" (after Italo Calvino) because cities like that are the ones you don't see until you know how to look for them. Even when you see the excesses of carnival, you're still missing something that is hidden behind the masks, and that is the reciprocal ties of culture that bind those performances together, particularly in the African American /Afro-diasporic community. This is where I met John O'Neal, and he was my guide, sort of a Virgil to my Dante in the world of New Orleans, and a lot of my publications came out of that research. Then finally:

Stars

I became interested because of working over the years with students, some of whom have really exceptional talent, and then very few beyond that have not only talent but

something else that you can't quite put your finger on but you also can't take your eyes off. This is "It," which is the one-word title of my book that Annabel Patterson was kind enough to quote in her Trajectories talk. "It" is this magical property. It goes back to the doubleness of the two things happening at once – the arc in the air and the other trajectory flat at the same time – because to me you can see "It" when you see a personality that can hold together two completely contradictory qualities at the same time and still function, and still make you see them both together at the same time. Take, for example, strength and vulnerability in the same person at the same time. Strength without vulnerability is boring. Vulnerability without strength is just disgusting. Those people are "stars" who can have both together, oscillating from one to the other like it's a gestalt switch, where you see the vase, or the two faces juxtaposed, or the vase in the middle. Once you've seen them in the actor who has "It," you see them both alternating back and forth too fast to tell apart. That's what is at the heart of "It." And it goes back to the fact that, as Walter Shandy says to Uncle Toby in Laurence Sterne's' Tristram Shandy (1759-67), "Everything in this world, my dear brother Toby, has two handles."

What I Told You

Chloe for the Third (and Final) Time

So I was on the phone with the DUS of art history, and I had to think fast and make the case for a blind student to be admitted to a seminar on Michelangelo. Using an enthymeme, I said, "This is Yale College. We see with our minds." I didn't have to say "Chloe sees with her mind"; that thought can be completed by the DUS, and without being rude, I could say to the DUS, without saying the words, "You're at Yale too. You need to see with your mind." I did suggest giving Chloe a small statue of the *David*, and have her walk seventeen feet, and then in her mind she will elevate and enlarge that figure she is holding in her hands into the scale of the *David*, and she'll see it.

What did I tell you? I told you about my first professor. I told you about my first arrest. I told you about my first love and my first success and about bodies and cities and stars. Now I get to tell you that Chloe did get into the class, but she wrote not on Michelangelo's sculptures, but on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. We know what God looks like to Michelangelo. What does God look like to Chloe? You'll just have to see that with your mind.