

LINDA NUNES

Lunar City (Makarios), 2017
Encaustic and mixed media
on cradled wood panel, 30 x 30 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

PETER HO DAVIES

Sightings

Setting aside conventions and concerts, red carpets and book signings. Those *expected* appearances. Two categories.

First: sightings of the famous in their natural habitats. Michael Stipe in a restaurant in Athens, Georgia.

Ted Kennedy *and* David McCullough on Martha's Vineyard.

Patrick Stewart in a pub in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Sightings that confirm our reality, conform so perfectly, as if staged.

And second: the anomalous glimpse, the startling encounter.

Terry Waite, one-time envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury, long-time hostage in Lebanon, dancing under the lasers at a Cambridge May Ball.

Michael Dukakis, years after his presidential run, at the arrivals gate at Logan, in a tux no less. (Welcoming a daughter home from college, we heard later.)

The sightings that don't vouchsafe reality, but stretch it, make it shiver slightly, tremble like a drum skin.

Still, we'd know them anywhere. Their reality more real than ours, bends it to their will.

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But how to categorize this? The encounter, early one morning in a friend's kitchen, with his unexpected twin. Mistaking one for the other. Beyond the momentary embarrassment, the jokes about "evil twins," the uncanny, unsettling *inside-out* sense of the known in the unknown, the unknown in the known.

Or finally this? Night now, another kitchen, my own, finding my father, but *not* my father, an old stranger, dentures removed, mouth slack, features caved in. My father, whom for a moment I shy from.

Like spying one's own face in the mirror with its eyes closed.

Something confounds, something has departed, but what?

Peter Ho Davies is the author most recently of *The Fortunes* (winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award). His work has appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, the *Atlantic*, *Granta*, and the *Paris Review* and has been selected for *The O. Henry Prize Stories* and the *Best American Short Stories*. Born in Britain, he now teaches at the University of Michigan.