

## Does the Ground Speak?

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Growth is vertical, but we're taller lying down. I spend most of the day on my feet. I shrink as the day wears on, they say by between one and two centimetres. When night comes, I lie down and close my eyes. I fall and my body begins to stretch, expanding and lengthening on the bed. I sink into slumber parallel with the horizon line. The horizon is where night starts to happen. My horizontal body is also a boundary line. When I'm lying down, I am a line that divides my bedroom into two planes. There are things above me and things below me. I am a line that fills a sandwich of ceiling and floor. Thoughts come and go, rise and fall. Images of the day flash before me in an incoherent jumble. I sleep. I dream. My fears and my desires appear when I'm horizontal. To be horizontal is to grow in a different way. The hours pass, a new day dawns, and I open my eyes. I awake, my body rises, my head distances itself from the ground, I plant my feet firmly, start moving and change position. I am no longer horizontal, no longer in the place where I spent the last eight hours, no longer in the state where bodies open and grow. I am standing upright. Water on my face. Food in my stomach. I cover my body. I look at my reflection. I cross the threshold of my house. I'm outside, in the street. I have everything I need. I present myself to the world vertically. I want to be horizontal.

I walk to the studio. I stumble a bit. Stumbling is one of the consequences of walking. When you stumble, you can fall to the ground. If you fall, your body is horizontal, in the same position as when you sleep. The body is also made to touch the ground. Falling isn't always a bad thing. I continue on my way. After walking one kilometre, I find a one-euro coin on the pavement in the Vía Carpetana. Since Hera entered my life, I've become more aware of everything that happens on the ground. I bend down to pick up the coin and keep it in my right hand. My fingers toy with the euro. I wonder how it would land if I tossed it up in the air. Persi Diaconis claimed that, in perfect flipping conditions, a coin will land on its edge about 1 in 6,000 tosses. They say that if a coin lands upright, it means luck is on your side. I prefer to think that fortune lies in the other 5,999 times, when it lands horizontally with one face flat against the ground. I like to imagine that the ground suddenly speaks and the coin is eager to listen to what's happening below. The ground is what lies beneath us. The ground is everything that happens below the horizon line.

I arrive at the studio. I look for a horizon inside. I wonder if being vertical is difficult. Being horizontal is something else. I hardly ever put my head to the ground to hear what's

beneath us. The closest my head comes to the ground is during the eight hours I spend sleeping. I rarely remember my dreams. Suddenly my face longs to be the face of that found coin; I want to lie down and press my ear to the floor, to hear what's happening underneath me. The ground cuts the world in two, drawing the boundary between above and below, like the two-tone walls I'll see in September. The day has barely begun. I take down the collage of images stuck to the studio walls. I place some of those images on the floor. Others return to the sketchbook. I take several unfinished pieces and lay them flat. I retrieve traces of the past, my daily ghosts. I spend hours changing their position and shape, just like the water cycle does. They can be different while remaining the same. A single gesture changes everything. I let the pieces lean over, lie down, shatter, mutate. I need to see them in a horizontal position, to see them differently, as I want to see myself. White appears. White covers everything. It invades everything. Suddenly my eyes are perpendicular to the floor and my body is recumbent. I am like my works. My works are me. I get up.

I return home, walking the same route in reverse. The coin is in my pocket, telling the others what it heard on the ground. I arrive 40 minutes later. I open the door. I enter. I uncover my body. I eat. In a little while I'll be horizontal again, close my eyes again, start to grow again and recover the centimetres I've lost. The desires and fears will return. I know it. That's what the night is: being that way. Once again, I will divide the space of my bedroom with my body. According to several religions, something similar will happen to me: one day I'll split, and one part will go up while the other remains below. Maybe that's what the coin hears when it puts its ear to the ground.