



## *Mr. Wu's Terms of Endearment.*

The work of Judith Page

I once worked for a Japanese corporation who appointed an officer from the imperial navy as director. He'd always say that to polish an apple one inadvertently destroys its surface. Such was the qualifying sanctum for his leadership tactics and the collateral damage he'd produce amongst the staff.

There seems to be a rather mischievous sprite in the way Judith Page produces portraits of family members, acquaintances and others found in the album of her career. These are not particularly complementary portrayals that one can sometimes be painfully commissioned (obligated) as an artist to corroborate the vanity of a major benefactor. In fact most of the portraits come off as grotesque examples of burn victims from catastrophic events who somehow managed to get out alive at the expense of their face.

It's instinctual to rely on one's facade as the calling card and take for granted how we immediately use it as the marker for introduction and identification. One's facial features is a tool to gauge the well being of another, to determine how well they've aged or to pick up on their mood, not to mention the impact of a first impression. Should that be abruptly taken away, a more existential force of will to go on with such a handy cap arises and kicks into gear, more elemental faculties of endurance. It's been said that some of those who survive the most horrendous disfigurements to their person, particularly their head and or face, actually experience a phenomenon of transcendence. From narcissism and conceit to an elevated egoism assigned to the task of bare bones survival. This occurrence is not exclusive to the body victim but those who just can't match what they hear as familiar with what they see. The voice may be the same, the dental work intact and the eyes, though through slits, still contain the portals to the soul. Yet once the axis of recognition is forfeited, one's awareness and sensors are thrust into over drive from both sides of the gaze to search deeper into both sides of the mirror.

There's a threshold that buoys between fatality and incarnation and suspends the impulse of recognition. Fueled by the mania of the deviant, these are the terms of endearment Judith Page bestows upon her subjects.

A parallel exists with the uncompromised agenda that one sets out to produce art in extreme settings. Conditions that may be deplorable and rife with negativity are met with persistence and an abandonment of rationale in order to make abstraction and poetry from the discord and the serenity of one's relationships and surroundings. The creative process is not regulated to trite strategies of convenience. It may contain a sublime sense of meditative violence in order to reveal the under layers of a fraudulent foundation and produce something that at first may incite anxiety only to wind up the commodore of an elevated encounter.

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