

POSTSCRIPT

He said...

Elizabeth Presa

He said a language is a form of touching – an intimate and tactful touch, and that language can find its place in all the work of shaping and moulding, of folding, binding, threading and knotting. He said a language could be formed from the smallest thing; a mark, a gesture and permission, a form that gathers in patterns of light. He wrote that the origins of my language lay in empathy and love (a father shaping in clay the face traced on the wall by his daughter, of her sleeping lover); and that Socrates was the son of a sculptor; and that what is proper to the eye, more than sight, is an imploration – *to address prayer, love, joy, or sadness*. He said, the new work of philosophy to come will be feminine, *you feminize my work*. And he spoke of his little grand daughter.

In January 2004, Jacques Derrida arranged an exhibition of my work at his publishers, Éditions Galilée, in the Rue Linné, Paris. The exhibition entitled *Peel* included plaster, gauze and saltwater mouldings peeled from the surfaces of things that I came across from day to day: a daughter's dress, bits of the sea shore, marks on my skin. These mouldings were folded and arranged, then tied into loose bundles and placed on the floor. The exhibition also included the thin plaster, gauze and saltwater mouldings of the many pages of *Chaque Fois Unique, la fin du Monde*, the Galilée publication of his work of mourning. These I pinned to the walls from floor to ceiling. As is the custom at Éditions Galilée, when a new work is launched the writer sits at a desk and during the day receives guests. I was invited to do the same.

That day, though tired from the effects of chemotherapy, Jacques drove to Paris to spend the afternoon at Galilée. Together, we took photos of each other, laughing as we tried to get a recalcitrant and disobedient digital camera to work. The photos I managed to take show Jacques' hair – more a thick white plume, dissolving into the white plaster pages pinned to the walls. *We will meet in the text*, he once said in New York. That made me smile. And I am smiling now at him, wherever he may be.