



SNOW FALLING: ON ROPE AND THE GAZE

I've been thinking about gaze lately. The way an image addresses whoever is looking, and what it assumes they want. So many pictures carry a "male" gaze. Is it that the male gaze earns more likes, so the algorithm teaches us to make it?

Have we looked through it so long that we no longer register it as a gaze but as "just how rope photographs"? Or are we mirroring something larger, a sense that a female (identifying) rigger is only read as strong, only read as cool, as sexy, when they take up a masculine way of looking and a masculine shape of desire?



— What I'm circling isn't female rope. It's yin-resonant rope and the fact that we so rarely see it. Some female riggers I've modelled for have an energy I've simply never met in a male rigger, and I want to say clearly that I love both. It's the quiet of snow falling, of blossom petals coming down. Soft, with an edge of ephemerality to it, because petals fall by dying, and there is nothing easy or merely romantic about that, it's strong, it's beauty held inside its own passing. What if the model is the tree the petals can fall from? What if the model is the ground into which the snow can yield? What if the model is the calm, strong current from which the rigger is allowed to become fragile?

Did we inherit the appetite for fragile souls inside rope, for exposure of bums and spreading of legs, for tears and shivering of the men who taught us, and mistake it for desire? Is it ours? What if we have the polarity reversed, or rather, what if it was never that simple? Do we actually want to expose the body as much, or in the same way? Maybe what some of us want is to discover their fragility in the mirror of the model they tie. Someone who can in tying explore their own ephemerality, their own falling, because the person they tie makes that safe. But I rarely see this energy being portrayed in pictures. I think many of us would tie in not only different energies but also in different shapes if we stopped asking what reads as strong, sexy, accomplished from the outside, and started asking what feels true from the inside.

Anna