

## The Bearing of His Body

On Douglas Rosenberg's *Lift/Carry/Hold*, 2016

There is only the man, if a man can ever be 'only.' He grasps the woman's hand, bends & hoists her whole body up onto his own. His arms a cradle. She holds him in order to be held. I watch: he holds her a long time. There is not the sound of breath or the sounds of words. He only quietly holds her; they hold, & he sets her body down. He turns to grasp another body, lifts, carries & holds. Once, the body is a child's body. Then it is a large man's body, then a smaller man's. Then it is a woman's body, old. I know bodies bear bodies. It is romance or it is rescue. Sometimes, violation. Is this a baby's body? Is it a lover's body? Is it a frail body, taken by infection & wound? In holy pictures, the body is a beautiful man laid across the lap of his grieving mother-god. Now, watching this body hold, mouth opening black to expel air, face darkening to fill with blood, shuddering under the heft held to, my mind eclipses all stories other than bearing. Outside of carriage, is there any other thing? I have never wanted something more than to keep seeing this small heroism, persistence of matter under matter, its possibility. I won't look away, since I bear now too, the view. I do my part. It's not sentimentality but my own solidity that cannot witness without want  
the bearer:  
who endures, who labors to lift  
& the burden  
working quietly to be held, lifted, to be born.

--Dana Maya