

SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE

By Michael Ventura

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The artist of the year didn't apply for a government grant because being dependent upon the authorities to do her art is not what she's about. The artist of the year didn't get reviewed in the *New York Times* or the *Village Voice* because what he wrote was way off their maps. (They'll catch up with him in a few years or decades.) The artist of the year isn't waiting for anybody to recognize her because she recognizes herself – and waiting takes too much energy. The artist of the year doesn't care who *Rolling Stone* or *Spin* or the local alternative newspaper just named artist of the year. The artist of the year is respectful of his ancestors and responsible to his descendants (artistic and otherwise), and he gives his contemporaries rough but real respect. The artist of the year is not afraid of Newt Gingrich. The artist of the year can't be classified by designations like “60s” or “X,” “classical” or “postmodern,” no matter how hard others try to wedge her between labels, because she is engaged in a dialogue with inner and outer voices that can't be named. Those voices, those impulses, those intuitions, are the true substance of his art, no matter what its form. The artist of the year recognizes that some spectrums of art come only when young, some only when middle-aged, some only in the later years, and she doesn't believe that one is better or more timely than the other. He gives his life to his work, and pays the price that devotion must pay. In the end, whether or not she's ever touted as “artist of the year,” her life stands with her creations, side by side, without apology or compromise, judged only in the light of what the Greek poet George Seferis once expressed: “We do not speak anymore of who is a great or minor artist, but of who keeps art alive.”

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