

the gate would not let me in. I stood in the road for a quarter of an hour, looking at what I could see over the fence. Not since looking at El Greco in Toledo, Goya in Madrid, Cézanne in Philadelphia, had I had the peculiar feeling I recognised as happening when I looked at great art, a feeling of being distended in the invisible part of my being, a feeling almost physical. It was happening to me again, in Te Kaha. This feeling I had totally lacked in the Casa El Greco, in Toledo, the day I went there to look at him because Goya couldn't spare me in Madrid. How did I find out that the El Grecos in the Casa were fake? Firstly, by the absence of this sensation of being made bigger than I had been before I looked. Then by several material circumstances that, taken together, confirmed it. They were all the same size, small-medium. They were hung at eye level, easy to see. They were not varnished or glazed, and so reflected no light. Nowhere yet, especially elsewhere in Toledo that day, had I found great paintings that were so easily accessible. 'The Burial of Count Orgaz' in the Church of St. Thomas was about fifteen feet high, varnished to a pitch of high reflection, and beamed on by floodlights. From the best position I could find, I could see about two-thirds of the picture. The rest was reflection. As I sat quietly looking at it for about three-quarters of an hour, I became aware how much it goes wrong in reproductions in books, because they are too small. In them the rhythms of the painting suggest a writhing knot of worms. In the painting they are like heavenly theatre, dance on a grand scale.

Two young American friends I had picked up on the bus that morning sat with me. They were students and the boy could speak Spanish. We felt like rocks washed by waves, as guided tour after guided tour came in and sat round us listening to their guides and went away. And a beautiful and funny thing happened; two Mexican boys I had met at Escorial the Sunday before, because they could speak English and came with the English-speaking guide, sat in the pew in front of us. At Escorial we had agreed that guided tours were things to avoid. And yet here they were, in another. We greeted each other with pleasure and surprise. 'I thought you weren't going on any more guided tours,' I said to them. 'Never again, never again!' they answered.

At the Casa El Greco, the guides were stricter with their charges than here, where the painting was a genuine one. There, indulgence was brief, each guide telling her tour: first, that 'This picture was painted in fifteen hundred and ninety-five' after which a brief wait would produce an ecstatic sigh, 'How old!'; and secondly, 'This is the picture he was working on when he died.' Before the thrill this produced had time to die down, words like a run of machine-gun fire sent the flock scurrying for shelter from any feelings of unreality