

*Caballerango* feels like it was painted onto me.

It begins with a story, long and winding, a multi-minute exercise in waiting for the other shoe to drop. When it does, finally, it's more of an afterthought. The shoe's been on the ground for a while now. You just didn't see that it had been laid down.

The camera does not move. The one time we do start moving, it's a surprise. We're on a truck, suddenly, supposedly. It wasn't moving; now it is. Have we been here the whole time?

Each shot entrenches the viewer into it; we spend minutes at a time in the same place, staring at the same things, and listening to the same tired voices. Each slow brushstroke further thickens the cement holding the viewer in place. We are too tired to do anything but sit. Watch.

This patience allows the eye to wander. Interviews, people, movement; all take a backseat to the environment. A storefront tells a fuller story about its owner than she does. The people within the shots are painted into the background, made still by the camera's stillness. The eyes explore every crevasse.

A man has dinner with his wife. A woman speaks about her ailing friend. Children run through the streets.

We linger. We see this ebb and flow of humanity from a stagnant position, and the environment slowly creeps into the forefront. The space left by the few people wandering through the shot becomes very, very empty. Cobblestones ring deep and shaled roofs twist our eyes towards them. We wait for three, five, six minutes as the quietude of daily life swirls, precessionally, before us.

The children exit the streets as a funeral procession begins to move through. We do not cut to it. We do not move faster, more efficiently, through the moment. We wait, just where we are, where we always have been. They begin small, obscured, mysterious, but as they begin to flood the shot, obscuring the painted cobblestones and roofs, flooding the empty space until there is nothing but the funeral, things become more obvious.

Grief is a giant waking up from a long slumber. It reshapes the landscape of the mind; what were mountains become craters as it gets up and begins to walk. It has been there since the crust of the Earth coalesced; in fact, it shaped the topography of it. But these things must go, someday.

Of course, being tired, they go slowly. Creaking and whistling so low that it is felt more than heard. Each movement of the giant – its yawn, its stretch, its slow climb to bipedal stagnance – sends rivers and shale cascading down mountainsides, a collision course with our homes. A giant waking up can take months, or years; each small shift fractural and cataclysmic.

A cross lit aflame on the mountain is the best we can do. An offering, maybe. Hopefully this mountain is just a mountain. Hopefully it is not an elbow, or a finger, propped up by old bone.

If it is, we hope it wakes up long after we're gone. This is selfish, maybe, but, God, I've had enough.

Like the giant, we move infrequently. Not so much waiting as we are simply in the moment, not looking forwards or backwards. The shot stays still; the present is overwhelming enough.

A cow must be butchered. The horse which he rode on the day of his death must still be cared for. Death remains ever-present; it takes a very long time for the Earth to stop trembling after a giant's step, and in *Caballerango*, giants abound.

Like the cow shepherded into death by humans, like the uncomprehending horse set on a track, circling, circling, circling, we must live in relation to the giants. They have some incomprehensible reason for their actions, some need for sending avalanches towards us, ruining our mountain ranges. At least, we can hope this is the case.

This panoramic grief cannot be bottled up, labeled, shipped off. But the shots are panoramic anyway. Somehow, grief is wrangled, tied up and brought in, bucking and snorting. We move on. Through. Paint dried on our skin, muted greens and golds providing some narrow beauty, we go slowly.