SHOOTING I (SEAGULL)

A slight hangover after a failed attempt to enjoy social life by going out the night before, and a strong desire to be on my own. Mild, milky sunlight outside; I go for a walk and a coffee in the afternoon. All things seem to be a bit further apart from each other than usual and leave space to let the thoughts go wherever they want to. I feel fine. Disconnected.

On the way home i find the seagull.

It is laying on the pure asphalt of an empty parking lot. Meters further there is nothing around. Gray, stone. Its pose is one of a saint, wings spread, head and beak a bit tilted, as if they were glued to the ground. Some yellowish, semi liquid matter is dripping out from its beak. It seems the ABSOLUTE IMAGE of its suffering and pain. Almost better than Jesus on his cross. Its feather coat -white as snow and black as ebony, just like snowwhite- gets gently tangled by the wind.
I realize that it isn't quite dead yet. As i walk closer i see how it chokes, its evil, red eyes are squinted and filled with panic and anger.

This is how the act of dying looks like, i think and try to etch the image deep into my brain to never ever be able to forget it again. All my way home i keep asking myself what would be the appropriate reaction. What is the right thing to do after seeing, after finding the perfect, ab-solute image in REALITY.
I do not know the answer. It seems perfectly fine to try to construct an absolute image; but to find it, like this? Is it allowed to transform the signified into a signifier? And what would hap-pen by doing so?

Is exactly this already an act of violence?
(despite my confusion i will go back there and take a photograph)

And where do my ethical objections come from? Are they related to this potential cruelty of im-ages, the power of symbols to kill their content matter?
And in this specific case -of all things- an image of dying.

The seagull's death is a totally meaningless one. No one needs to care, needs to be touched, seagulls die as well, no tragic, or remarkable cruelty besides dying itself. And this seagull's dying, its suffering, has been merely its own, disconnected and standing aside of the rest of the world, no empathy nor pity.
By making it an image, i give a meaning. But at the same time I am stealing the seagull's dying, which was a personal, a REAL one. I neglect its actual, painful experience.
I put a certain value to the incident, but it's my value and not the seagull's. I transform something that has been to something else, something that is mine.

(but isn't that happening all the time, also by merely LOOKING?)

SHOOTING I - 2008 - Dagmar Weiss