



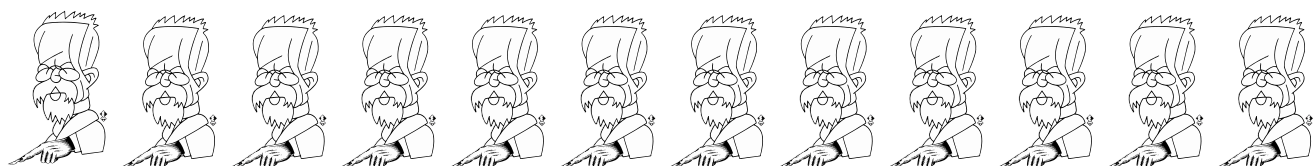
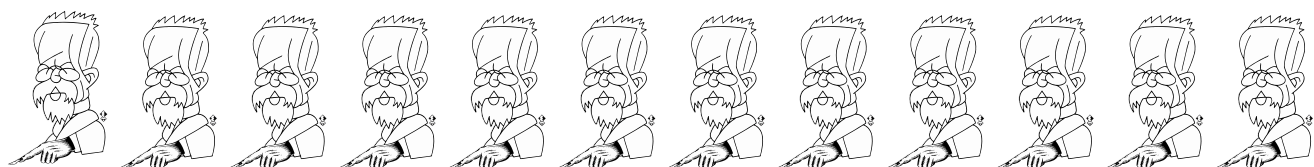
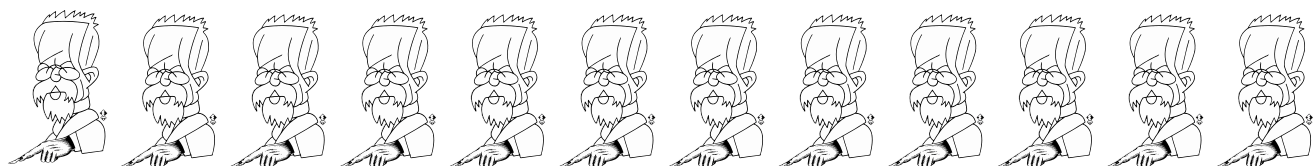
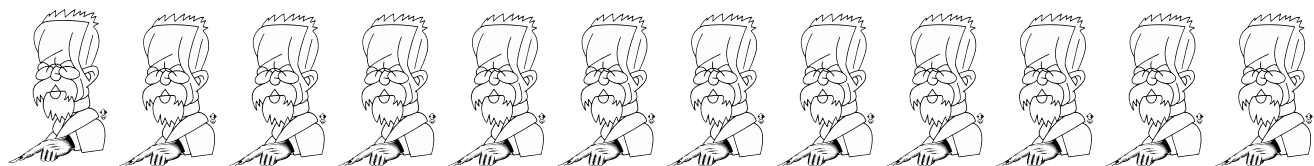
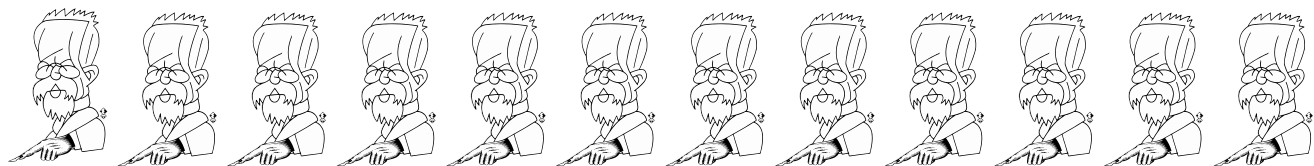
MACHADO DE ASSIS **MAGAZINE**

BRAZILIAN **LITERATURE** IN TRANSLATION

#6



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LITERATURA BRASILEÑA EN TRADUCCIÓN
LITERATURE BRÉSILIENNE EN TRADUCTION**

#6

SÃO PAULO
2015



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LITERATURE AND IMMATERIAL HERITAGE

With this issue, the Brazilian National Library and Instituto Itaú Cultural resume the publication of *Machado de Assis Magazine*. The magazine has proven to be a valuable vehicle for showcasing translated excerpts of texts by Brazilian authors, as a complement to the Support Program for the Translation and Publication of Brazilian authors Abroad, which operates under the auspices of the National Library's Centre for Cooperation and Dissemination. Without a doubt, the program helps project our authors internationally. But there is also something about it that goes beyond this explicit aim.

There are many possible forms of cooperation and interdependence between nations, most of which are based on mutual economic interests or commerce, or which have strategic or geopolitical motivations. Regardless of the centrality of such factors, it is vital to 'invest' in what might be referred to as a 'standard of immaterial interdependence', based on programs and actions in the areas of culture, art and thought -- and especially in the field of literature, which brings together (and demands as a condition for its existence) all of the above.

Immaterial agendas stem from acts of the imagination. French philosopher Paul Valéry holds that such agendas comprise collections of 'vague and imprecise things', fundamental to human existence. 'What would become of us without the help of things that do not exist?' asks Valéry. Literature has its origins in this inclination towards worlds possible and imagined. It presents itself as a *kind of knowledge* that is both individual and indispensable: the knowledge of things that do not exist (or that are fictional) which affect our own existence and expectations of the so-called 'real' world.

In these efforts to bring Brazilian books to the world stage, I think it is important to stress that the imaginative power of our literature is largely responsible for providing us with the intellectual tools to understand Brazil, which is no simple task. The stylistic strength of Brazilian literature is also an invitation to appreciate its intrinsic qualities, as an exercise of the imagination and aesthetics. This is, therefore, a process in which literature goes hand in hand with our questioning of the world, at the same time that it sets certain aesthetic benchmarks, establishing form itself as an object of enjoyment.

The immaterial agenda that I mentioned above is related to this understanding of literature: literature doesn't reflect reality; it affects reality. It does so – almost always unintentionally (and for this reason should be absolutely free) – by acting on readers' sensibility, on their values and cognitive maps of the world, which in turn affects their modes of existence. It is a very serious thing. Such is the experience of a country in which classics such as *Dom Casmurro* (*Dom Casmurro*), *Os Sertões* (*Rebellion in the Backlands*), *Vidas Secas* (*Barren Lives*) and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*), among others, have furnished us with the means to perceive what Brazil is – and can be.

This long-sought-after 'internationalization' of Brazilian literature should be understood in two ways: as the presentation and dissemination of a literature steeped in its own history, as well as something to be contributed to a common *fund of immaterial objects*, which may be shared with all of humanity.

Renato Lessa

President of the National Library Foundation

LITERATURA Y PATRIMONIO INMATERIAL

Con este número, la Biblioteca Nacional y el Instituto Itaú Cultural retoman la publicación de la *Revista Machado de Assis*. La revista ha sido un valioso vehículo para la presentación de extractos traducidos de textos de autores brasileños, en un esfuerzo complementario del Programa de Traducción de Autores Brasileños, bajo la responsabilidad del Centro de Cooperación y Difusión de la Biblioteca Nacional. Sin duda, el Programa contribuye a una mayor apertura internacional de los autores brasileños. Pero, hay algo en él que va más allá de este sentido fundamental.

Hay muchas formas posibles de cooperación e interdependencia entre las naciones. Tales formas se basan, usualmente, en intereses económicos mutuos, comercio y razones estratégicas y geopolíticas. A pesar del papel central ocupado por tales dimensiones, es vital “invertir” en lo que se podría designar como un “patrón de interdependencia inmaterial”, basado en programas y acciones en el campo de la cultura, de las artes y del pensamiento. En especial, en el campo de la literatura, que reúne, y exige como condición de posibilidad, todas aquellas dimensiones.

Agendas inmatrimoniales derivan de actos de imaginación. Para el pensador francés Paul Valéry, tales agendas contienen colecciones de “cosas vagas e imprecisas”, fundamentales para la existencia de los humanos. El mismo Paul Valéry preguntó: “¿Qué sería de nosotros sin el auxilio de lo que no existe?” La literatura emana de esta inclinación hacia mundos posibles e imaginados. Al hacerlo, se presenta como una forma de conocimiento particular e imprescindible: el conocimiento de las cosas no existentes – o ficticias –, que afectan nuestra propia existencia y nuestras expectativas en el mundo, digamos, real.

En los esfuerzos desarrollados con vistas a una mayor internacionalización de la literatura brasileña, creo que es importante enfatizar que el poder imaginativo de dicha literatura es responsable, en gran medida, de los mecanismos intelectuales de que disponemos para comprender el Brasil, una tarea nada sencilla. Debido a la fuerza de su calidad formal, la literatura brasileña nos ayuda, además, a notar sus aspectos intrínsecos, como práctica estética e imaginativa. Se trata, pues, de un proceso mediante el cual la literatura acompaña nuestras indagaciones frente al mundo, al mismo tiempo que establece patrones de gusto estético, al permitir la apreciación de la forma en sí misma como objeto de disfrute.

La agenda inmaterial que mencioné se conecta con esta comprensión de la literatura: la literatura no refleja la realidad; afecta la realidad. Lo hace – casi siempre sin intención (y por eso debe ser absolutamente libre) – al actuar sobre la sensibilidad de los lectores, sobre sus mapas cognitivos y valorativos, afectando, por esa vía, sus modos de existencia. Se trata, pues, de una cosa seria. Tal es la experiencia de un país en el cual clásicos como *Dom Casmurro*, *Os Sertões*, *Vidas Secas*, *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, entre otros, formaron dispositivos de percepción con respecto a lo que es – y puede ser – el Brasil.

La tan deseada “internacionalización” de la literatura brasileña debe ser entendida de doble forma. Como presentación y divulgación de una literatura empapada, por cierto, en una historia particular más, pero, al mismo tiempo como algo que debe sumarse a un fondo común de objetos inmatrimoniales, compartible con toda la humanidad.

Renato Lessa

Presidente de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional

LITTÉRATURE ET PATRIMOINE IMMATÉRIEL

Avec ce numéro, la Bibliothèque Nationale et l'Institut Itaú Cultural reprennent la publication de la revue *Machado de Assis*, qui constitue un véhicule précieux pour la présentation de passages de textes d'auteurs brésiliens traduits, en un effort venant compléter le programme de traduction promu par le Centre de Coopération et Diffusion de la Bibliothèque Nationale, lequel contribue amplement à une plus grande ouverture internationale pour nos auteurs. Pourtant, quelque chose en lui dépasse ce sens précis.

Il existe de nombreuses formes possibles de coopération et d'interdépendance entre nations, mais toutes se basent généralement sur des intérêts économiques mutuels, le commerce et des raisons stratégiques et géopolitiques. En dépit du rôle central occupé par de telles dimensions, il est vital d'« investir » dans ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de « modèle d'interdépendance immatérielle », basé sur des programmes et actions dans le champ de la culture, de l'art et de la pensée. Et plus spécifiquement dans celui de la littérature, qui réunit et exige toutes ces dimensions comme condition de possibilité.

Des agendas immatériels découlent d'actes d'imagination. Selon le penseur français Paul Valéry, de tels agendas contiennent des collections de « choses vagues et imprécises », quoique fondamentales pour l'existence des humains. Ce même auteur se demandait : « Que serions-nous sans le secours de ce qui n'existe pas ? » Comme la littérature émane de ce penchant pour des mondes possibles et imaginés, elle se présente comme *une forme de connaissance* particulière et indispensable : la connaissance de choses n'existant pas – ou fictionnelles – qui affectent notre propre existence et nos attentes dans le monde, disons, réel.

Parmi les efforts visant une plus grande internationalisation de la littérature brésilienne, il semble intéressant de souligner que le pouvoir imaginatif de cette dernière est en grande mesure responsable des instruments intellectuels dont nous disposons pour comprendre le Brésil, une tâche qui ne va pas de soi. De par la force de sa qualité formelle, la littérature brésilienne nous aide également à percevoir ses aspects intrinsèques, comme la pratique esthétique et imaginative. Il s'agit donc d'un processus par lequel la littérature accompagne nos questionnements face au monde en même temps qu'elle établit des normes de goût esthétique permettant d'en apprécier la forme en soi comme objet de jouissance.

L'agenda immatériel que j'ai cité est lié à cet entendement de la littérature : celle-ci ne reflète pas la réalité, elle l'affecte. Et elle le fait – presque toujours sans propos (raison pour laquelle elle doit être absolument libre) –, en agissant sur la sensibilité des lecteurs, sur les plans cognitifs et valoratifs, et en touchant, par cette voie, à leurs modes d'existence. Il s'agit donc de quelque chose de sérieux. Telle est l'expérience d'un pays où des œuvres classiques comme *Don Casmurro*, *Hautes terres*, *Vies arides*, *Diadorim*, entre autres, ont façonné des appareils de perception sur ce qu'est le Brésil et ce qu'il peut être.

La si souhaitée « internationalisation » de la littérature brésilienne doit être comprise en deux sens : comme présentation et divulgation d'une littérature certainement imprégnée d'une histoire particulière mais, en même temps, comme quelque chose devant venir intégrer un *fonds commun d'objets immatériels*, pouvant être partagé avec toute l'humanité.

Renato Lessa

Président de la Fundação Biblioteca Nacional

THE NEED FOR CONTINUITY AND PERSISTENCE

Issue number six of *Machado de Assis Magazine* resumes its activities just as Brazil is the country of honour at the Salon du Livre de Paris, publishing excerpts of texts by Brazilian authors translated into English, Spanish and French.

Machado de Assis Magazine has established itself as an important instrument for the dissemination of Brazilian literature abroad. By the end of February 2015 we had recorded 722.557 visitors and 44.611 downloads of excerpts. These figures are a clear indication that a significant number of foreign editors are interested in looking at our writers' work with a view to publishing them in their respective countries.

As an online publication, *Machado de Assis Magazine* is compiling a database of texts by Brazilian authors that are always available to editors and literary agents around the world. In so doing, it consolidates its reputation as an important showcase for our authors in the foreign rights market. Small and large publishing houses from a growing number of countries have published Brazilians over the last few years. From the Penguin Random House Group to Amazon, from the USA to Romania and Bulgaria, our writers are debuting in other languages and finding other readerships.

The publication goes hand in hand with other Brazilian government efforts, such as translation grants and the country's presence at the world's most important book fairs. Such efforts are also supported by private initiative, as is the case with Machado de Assis Magazine, which is co-published by Itaú Cultural.

The process of negotiating foreign rights is, by nature, slow. The maturation of these initiatives to disseminate our literature -- so that it may become increasingly integrated into the World Republic of Letters -- requires continuity and persistence.

Machado de Assis Magazine is proud to be a part of this endeavour.

Felipe Lindoso

Editor

LA NECESIDAD DE LA CONTINUIDAD Y LA PERSISTENCIA

El número seis de la *Machado de Assis Magazine*, que retoma su trayectoria en este momento en que Brasil es el país homenajeado en el Salon du Livre de Paris, publica fragmentos de escritores brasileños, traducidos al inglés, al español y al francés.

La Machado de Assis Magazine se confirma así como un instrumento importante para la internacionalización de la literatura brasileña. A finales de febrero habíamos alcanzado un total de 722.557 visitantes, y 44.611 descargas de los fragmentos publicados. Dichos números indican claramente que una cantidad significativa de editores internacionales está interesada en analizar la producción de nuestros escritores, con el propósito de publicar en sus respectivos países.

Al ser una publicación en línea, la *Machado de Assis Magazine* va conformando un banco de datos con textos de autores brasileños, siempre disponibles para los editores y agentes internacionales. Y, con ello, se consolida como un importante espacio para que nuestros autores tengan una destacada presencia en el mercado internacional de derechos. Cada vez con mayor frecuencia, editoriales grandes y pequeñas, así como un número significativo de países, vienen publicando a más brasileños en los últimos años. Del grupo Editorial Penguin Random House a Amazon, de los EUA a Rumania y a Bulgaria, nuestros escritores poco a poco han ido mostrando su voz en otros idiomas y hacia otros públicos.

La publicación se suma a otra serie de acciones del gobierno brasileño, como las Becas para Traducción y la presencia en las Ferias de Libros más destacadas del mundo. Es importante resaltar que dichas acciones han sido apoyadas también por la iniciativa privada, como es el caso de la Machado de Assis Magazine, coeditada por el Instituto Itaú Cultural.

Los procesos internacionales de negociación de derechos autorales son, por su misma naturaleza, lentos. La maduración de las iniciativas de difusión de nuestra literatura, de manera que se integre de una forma cada vez más significativa a la República Mundial de las Letras depende, pues, de continuidad y persistencia.

La Machado de Assis Magazine tiene el orgullo de formar parte de ese esfuerzo.

Felipe Lindoso

Editor

LE BESOIN DE CONTINUITÉ ET DE PERSISTANCE

Machado de Assis Magazine, qui reprend sa course avec son numéro six alors que le Brésil est l'invité d'honneur du Salon du Livre de Paris, publie des passages d'auteurs brésiliens traduits en anglais, en espagnol et en français.

Machado de Assis Magazine s'affirme déjà comme un important véhicule d'internationalisation de la littérature brésilienne. Fin février, nous avons atteint le nombre de 722.557 visiteurs et de 44.611 téléchargements des passages publiés. Ces chiffres démontrent clairement que de plus en plus d'éditeurs internationaux s'intéressent à la production de nos écrivains pour les publier dans leur pays.

Comme il s'agit d'une publication en ligne, Machado de Assis Magazine constitue une banque de données de textes d'auteurs brésiliens qui restent à la disposition des éditeurs et agents internationaux. Ainsi notre revue se consolide-t-elle comme un lieu privilégié pour que nos écrivains renforcent leur présence sur le marché international des droits d'auteur. Des maisons d'éditions petites et grandes d'un nombre croissant de pays ont publié de plus en plus de Brésiliens ces dernières années. Du groupe Penguin Random House à Amazon, des É.U.A. à la Roumanie et à la Bulgarie, nos auteurs font peu à peu entendre leur voix dans d'autres langues, à d'autres publics.

Notre publication s'ajoute à certaines réalisations du gouvernement brésilien, comme les bourses de traduction et la présence dans les Foires du Livre les plus importantes de monde. De plus, ces actions sont également soutenues par l'initiative privée, comme c'est le cas de Machado de Assis Magazine, coéditée par Itaú Cultural.

De par leur nature, les processus de négociation internationale de droits d'auteurs sont lents. La maturation de ces initiatives de diffusion de notre littérature visant à l'intégrer de manière plus significative à la république mondiale des lettres dépend donc de la continuité et la persistance.

Machado de Assis Magazine est fière de faire partie de cet effort.

Felipe Lindoso

Éditeur

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

M*achado de Assis Magazine – Brazilian Literature in Translation* is an initiative of Brazil's National Library Foundation (FBN), in conjunction with Itaú Cultural and Ministry of External Relations. The rules and conditions of the publication are set forth in the new public notice regarding the institution's co-editions, published in May 2012.

Our objective is to provide the international publishing industry with access to translated texts by Brazilian writers in an effort to boost their visibility abroad and foster the sale of foreign rights to their work. Periodically, the FBN posts calls in its portal for Brazilian authors to submit excerpts of works of Brazilian fiction and poetry, with the condition that they have already been published in book form in Brazil. Each edition presents at least twenty new translations, chosen by the magazine's editorial board, which is nominated by the president of the FBN.

Machado de Assis Magazine – Brazilian Literature in Translation also hopes to offer a panorama of Brazil's most recent literary production, by both experienced and up-and-coming writers. Authors, editors, scouts and literary agents may download texts from the online edition, along with information about the different writers and right holders.

The links to press reviews and personal webpages were provided by, and are the responsibility of, the authors or their agents.

SOBRE LA REVISTA

M*achado de Assis Magazine - Literatura Brasileña en Traducción* es una iniciativa de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional, con la coedición de Itaú Cultural y Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Brasil. La publicación se realiza con base en nuevo bando de coediciones de la institución, lanzado en mayo de 2012.

El objetivo de la revista es divulgar en el mercado editorial internacional textos traducidos de autores brasileños. Periodicamente se hacen convocatorias en el portal de FBN para que autores brasileños inscriban trozos de obras de ficción brasileña o de poesía, desde que esos textos ya tengan sido publicados en libro en el Brasil. Cada edición presenta por lo menos veinte nuevas traducciones seleccionados por el Consejo editorial de la revista, indicado por el presidente de FBN. De esta forma, la revista se suma a otras iniciativas de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional de apoyo a la difusión de la literatura brasileña, como el programa de becas de traducción, el programa de residencia en Brasil para traductores y el apoyo a las publicaciones hechas en los países de habla portuguesa.

Es también objetivo de la *Machado de Assis Magazine - Literatura Brasileira em Traducción* ofrecer un panorama de las más recientes creaciones literarias de autores brasileños, tanto de autores con mayor experiencia cuanto de integrantes de las nuevas generaciones. Su edición online permite que autores, editores, scouts y agentes internacionales hagan el download de cada texto, con las respectivas informaciones sobre los autores y detenedores de derechos.

Los links para reseñas y las páginas web personales fueron enviados por los autores o sus agentes y son de entera responsabilidad.

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THROUGH THE FOG

CHRISTIANE TASSIS

Translated by Ana Fletcher

Cloudy water. A body floating in the current. It's far away; you can hardly tell it's a body. It emerges, sinks under, nailed to the wall. Then it disappears completely. I focus on the rocks along the banks of the river. The moss forms maps of white and green countries on the hard skin of the rock.

Aerial view. The mountains, from above, look like decaying teeth. Open cast mines. Close up, I see steps carved into the abyss. Giant trucks and diggers extracting black loads, composing a landscape from science fiction. There's a certain beauty to it. Mining speeds up time, the photographs preserve it, in sequences of before and after. Piles of waste, a damn made of spoil, the fragments of mica shining in the red earth. This series is called 'Radiating tumours'.

In the next ones along, human textures: the watery eye of a child, scars, a beggar's hand, a rubber tapper's finger.

I was standing in front of these when the photographer appeared behind me. Making me jump. "What a coincidence", he said. "You're just the person I've been meaning to talk to."

I couldn't get out of meeting up the next day.

When I arrived at the restaurant, Henrique was already there waiting for me. I smiled, offering my hands and the left side of my face, while past joys climbed up my crow's feet, returning to my eyes.

"So you chose to relive the old days", I said, referring to the place.

Henrique lowered his head, showing an expanse of grey roots.

"Only if you help me count these white hairs."

I try to look relaxed.

"I only remember your black side."

I'm surprised to see a glass of orange juice in front of him.

"Why don't we have some wine?"

Henrique fractionally loses his composure.

"I can't."

Quietly but firmly, his voice sure:

"I'm sorry to bring you here. But I need to tell you something. I've got a tumour."

I stroked the back of my neck. It was fine, the skin at the back of my neck, fine like it had always been. One of the few parts of my body that hadn't changed.

"Close to the hippocampus. The memory region", he said.

I had a tumour once too, when I was a child. Nestled in my right shoulder. I asked the doctor what a tumour was and he explained that it was a little lump the

size of a kidney bean. But it was benign.

No one can imagine the joy I felt when I heard I had a benign tumour. I believed that, if it was benign, it could only be there for my own good. A lump, a little button that I could press whenever I was in trouble. And every time something went right, a good grade at school, a win at swimming or in a capture-the-flag tournament, I knew: it was the benign tumour glowing.

One day, the tumour just disappeared. "It's been absorbed", they said. I cried. I demanded an explanation. I wanted my tumour back. I'd grown used to it, it made me feel special.

"I don't know how it will be", says Henrique, bringing me back to his tumour. "I don't know how I will be."

I looked at him, not knowing what to say. He wasn't the same man. It was strange. I didn't know who he was anymore, or why I had liked him so much.

"It might be that I lose my memory. In the best of cases", he says.

Mercifully the waiter turns up. Vieira hasn't changed. The same smile and the same menu. I lower my eyes, looking at the starters, the mains, the drinks, the deserts. I could stay like this for hours.

I order.

"Get me out of here."

Nobody hears me. My inner voice is weak. Henrique decides what we're going to eat and the waiter retires. I remember when Vieira would turn up towards the end of the evening with his sweets. "There's enough bitterness in beer and in life", he used to say, putting up the chairs and an end to our evenings, while we begged for one last drink. For a second I see him make the same movement, slowly pushing the dessert trolley around the dining room. But the dining room isn't empty and he isn't pushing his dessert trolley. Could Vieira think we're still the same couple, that we've been together all these years, that we'll refuse to leave?

When I last looked at the clock it was eight thirty. It feels like it's been eight thirty for as long as we've been here. Has the clock stopped, or is time actually not passing? Henrique finishes. Henrique doesn't finish. Henrique says something about the weather.

"It's very dry today", he said, and I agreed. I tried to find things to say that would speed up the time while we waited for our food, but dead time ruled between us. I fix my eyes on the clock on the wall and keep them there, in between pieces of dead time that don't even start to smell, because they're purely mechanical.

When Vieira put the raw meat on the table in front of us, I wasn't hungry any more. Goodbye raw meat, I let Henrique continue to feed off you. While I listen to the increasingly loud assault of the knife against the raw meat, I separate out my capers, acidic and ancient, preserved in vinegar. I barely look at our food; the walls of the restaurant are covered in mirrors, I prefer to place each little kernel in my mouth and watch myself frowning at their acidity in the mirrors. In the reflecting object to my left, I see myself gathering capers from Henrique's plate and eating, smiling. In the one to my right, I see Henrique pouring me a beer. Up ahead, we

toast. In the mirror down the end, we separate. I'm saying something or other, but I'm keeping my eyes on the mirrors until they are all I can see, until I see that mirrors also have the capacity to remember: were I to peel them back I would find layers of these scenes, moving images where he and I lean in towards each other and separate again, endlessly.

"But you look very well."

I was going to say something else when the words escaped my control and hit Henrique right in the face, like a lost sparrow. He smiled and cast his eyes to the floor. I did the same with mine. And it was there, on the restaurant's old floorboards, that our eyes met and I could make out what it was we now were: just two embarrassed people.

Over coffee he finally brought up what he'd come for.

"I'd like you to write my biography. A reference book, for when I begin to forget myself. Will you do it?"

Of course not. I'd already forgotten this person. Now I was expected to remember him again? To remember for him? That would mean cramming yet another sad memory into my head, one that didn't even belong to me. His pain had once been mine – but it hasn't been for a long time now. I've paid dearly for my memory, years and years of trying to make it my most precious organ. That's why I would say "No." And in a low, shy voice, from the bottom of the abyss, I said:

"Of course."

Of course. Saying "yes" is also an incurable disease, my tongue's favourite word. I hadn't changed. He seemed to be sure of that, so much so that he'd brought along his order sheet in his pocket. He knew I wouldn't be brave enough to refuse. I agreed, on one condition: we weren't to meet, during the writing process. If there were any need for contact, it would be done through writing.

"These are the people I'd like you to talk to", he told me, unfolding the note.

A list of women's names and phone numbers. Simone, Camila, Mariana, Lulu, Estela.

"Ex-girlfriends?"

"Ex-stories."

The note brings me strange discomfort. I need to find something to occupy my hands, which by this point are at war with each other, fingers against fingers, cracking. (The short, dry sound caused by the displacement of, or friction against, a joint in the body.) I tried to appear rational, another animal, perhaps. I made origami shapes out of the napkins. First a cat. Then a dog. A bird with folded wings. An animal in danger of extinction, a lone wolf, a golden lion tamarin, a Bengal tiger, a misshapen beast waiting for the bins to be put out.

I asked to look over his photographs. To talk to his friends and family – or what was left of it. The basic steps in constructing a biography. He said no. His photographs were the world's worst set of memories – according to him, none of them were worth remembering.

"So, who'd have thought it. All you want to remember is love," I said, and he looked at me sadly.

"I want to remember what I lost", he answered. "Now, every night when I close my eyes, I see images from some low-rent documentary: atom storms, the outlines of invisible people, tunnels, unknown planets, strange doorways, white lights invading a hospital room. All narrated by people 'who've been there and come back'. I see myself thrown into relief against climactic scenes, decisive episodes, joyful expressions, days exaggerated by sadness, unbearably happy days. The images come and go thousands of times, they don't amount to anything but repetition, a cliché. But at least clichés survive forgetfulness."

A flashback comes to the front of my mind while he talks. I see us together in a horse-drawn carriage in some touristy city. A moment both embarrassing and brave, like all romantic scenes seem to me to be.

"Tell me about a different memory, an unforgettable one", I say, a part of me hoping he'll remember the same thing. But, as ever, Henrique misses what I'm trying to say and only talks about himself.

"One day, on one of the rare occasions I was alone with my father, he took me to see what he called the 'Mutant Mountain', a rocky mountain that reflected the colours of the sunset, changing colour by the hour. Pink, yellow, blue, red. That day I had won a Polaroid and I took a series of photographs of the multicoloured mountain. I became fascinated with the picture of the red mountain. That was when I decided to become a photographer."

Henrique had told me this before, and now, as he told me again, he made the same gestures, had the same intonation, the same smile. I was finally able to see the old Henrique in the Henrique in front of me.

"For a long time I kept the photo of the red mountain. Like all Polaroids, it faded over time. The humidity of the days led to stains, so it looked like worms were eating the rock, until the image dissolved altogether. Only enormous blotches remained to tell the story."

I imagined he was about to compare himself to a dissolving Polaroid.

"Now I'm in the Polaroid, dissolving."

(I was wrong by a preposition. I can never get this man quite right.)

The memory of the Polaroid brought to mind another image: a fax he had once sent me during one of our fights.

"PATIENT NEEDS HELP. HEART PROBLEM.
ARTERY REQUIRES YOUR BLOOD TYPE
FOR TRANSFUSION. COME QUICK."

To which I replied:

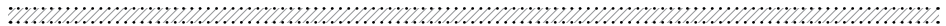
"DONOR WILL COME WHEN PATIENT UNDEGOES HEAD TRANSPLANT."

I kept that fax for a long time, but the telegraphed words slowly faded. I could have photocopied it - the only way of preventing its disappearance - but faxes were a novelty back then: I didn't know that thermal paper erased itself over time.

One day, an unthinking friend found the piece of paper in its final throes, yellowing and illegible on top of the bookshelf. He tore off a strip, filled it with an illegal substance, rolled it and lit up. The declaration of love turned into toxic fumes, and burnt down to the very last speech mark.

It had been a long time since I'd thought about that fax, or about Henrique. I'd worked hard all those years for the past to be erased daily, with the tractor-sponge that comes with the passing of days. The passing of days and the respective pardons we grant it; forgiveness also constitutes an attempt to forget. And that is what I did, forcibly, after we split up. But a story is always a palimpsest, like the waxed tablet the Greeks used to write on. The wax was scraped clean, ready to be written on again, but the previous words were still there, in a way. You turn the page, but you've read what you've read; it is not always possible to forget. Once stored away, memories take on a life of their own and can come up to the surface from one moment to the next, like dolphins, or drowned bodies.

When we said goodbye, things seemed normal, the rules of social conduct spoke for us: a loose hug, a pleasant smile, a phone call if there were any problems, an agreement signed, a date decided on, the number of the bank account where he would transfer the payment for my services, an unsaid word which, sooner or later, would escape from in between my teeth.



THE BOOK



Through the fog

Christiane Tassis

- **Original title:** Sobre a Neblina
- **ISBN:** 85-60160-05-1
- **Year of Publication:** 2006
- **Original Publisher:** Lingua Geral
- **Number of pages:** 192
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 1500 copies

SYNOPSIS

Henrique is a well known documentary photographer and has a brain tumor that will stunt his memory. To not forget who he was, he asks his ex-girl friend, Lucia, a journalist, to write his biography. Lucia tries to accomplish her mission by interviewing all Henrique's ex-girl friends. Along the book, the reality gains colors of fiction. The imagination and the affective memories prevail over the real biography. Lucia gets all mixed up, reality and imagination, creating new plots, opening a new time and space - the territory of memory.

AWARDS

Prize Best Film Festival of Brasilia 2013-
Adaptation of the novel "Through the Fog"

PRESS REVIEWS

A made-up biography
O Globo -18/11/2006 - Miguel Conde

<http://www.publishnews.com.br/telas/clipping/detalhes.aspx?id=44344>

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Ed. Lingua Geral.

THE TRANSLATOR


Ana Fletcher

Ana Fletcher is a translator and editor based in Rio de Janeiro. She has a BA in English from the University of York and an MA in Comparative Literature from University College London. Ana translates from Spanish and Portuguese, and her published translations include a short story by Luisa Geisler in Granta's Best of Young Brazilian Novelists issue. In recent years she has worked for the human rights organization PEN International and for The Writer, a business language consultancy.



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TIME TO CAST AWAY STONES

ESTEVÃO AZEVEDO

Translated by Lucy Greaves

The miner's sleep is full of explosions, the metallic thumps of iron against rock, the rattle of sieves loaded with sand and gravel. Lying on his pallet bed, he dreams more about the arduous work that leads to the stone than about the dream stone itself. That stone of riches is more the stuff of his daydreams – the miner's resting body and sluggish mind are more accustomed to reality than his fully conscious self, during waking hours. Neither do women enter his reverie, for in wakefulness he can have any he might want, he falls in love with whomever most pleases him, and she reciprocates, whether she is married – when knife and revolver tend to succeed gallant words – single, or woman of ill repute. Nor does he dream of another life since it pains him to imagine it, surrounded as he is by the imposing plateaus and the universe they delimit. If he does not go beyond them, if he is squeezed by them into valleys and plains, that universe expands ever inwards, towards the bowels of the earth where no man dare go, however brave he might be, in danger of turning off his lamp and earning himself a darker and more expansive coffin than the richest of men. Or towards the caverns which man himself constructs with gunpowder and his own hands, with tools and obsessions, in search of what the earth hides yet wants to show him, much as women tend to do.

Gomes was startled awake by the blasts. In the half-light he noticed that Vitória's eyes, like those of a black cat shot through with the bile of foreboding, reflected a thread of moonlight that was coming in through the window, opened to drive away the terrible heat that seemed to rise from the dry mud floor. Among the night's sounds, a frequent impact, coming from somewhere nearby, disturbed his sleep. Gomes remained quiet, straining to make out what was due to the dream and still feeling the weight of the pan, which a few moments ago he had been loading with the gold-bearing gravel his slumbering imagination made him sift while he slept, such that still felt tired. Vitória did not stir or say a word, perhaps she had died and her spirit was just waiting for Gomes to push down her eyelids so it could ascend – or descend, if what terrified the old woman did indeed come to pass. Gomes grew uneasy. Was she still sleeping, and so feared the things that the divine only discusses with the fallen and vice-versa? A sound that he knew well, of a pickaxe hitting stone, rang out, coming from an indefinite distance. Gomes was now convinced: she was awake. Still lying down, he stared at his wife and saw her face tilt towards him, as if to say “Yes, I hear it too”, before returning to its previous stillness.

Sleeping in her room, Ximena did not even notice the strangeness of that night. Not because her ears were accustomed to the sound of the miners' instru-

ments and thus were not stimulated by them. They were indeed accustomed, but that was not the reason. She slept on because she had drunk too much. In some dream, that booming, attenuated by her alcoholic stupor, might perhaps have sounded like the pleasing rhythm of the negroes' drums, which made Ximena, if wanton, spin around clutching her skirt, and perhaps the illusory tune would have wound her up in her hammock. Gomes, whose thoughts tended to be even less compatible with sleep than the sounds that were running through the narrow streets that night, could not bear his bed and got up. Vitória had remained immobile and he believed she was sleeping. He lit a candle on the oratory, in the living room. Leaning his shoulder against the doorjamb, through the open door Gomes could see his daughter moulded to the curve of the hammock, the heat flickering on the clammy skin of her upstretched legs. Gomes turned his gaze to the living room. The living room with its little furniture. The floor with scratches in the thin layer of earth covering the great slabs of rock on which the small town had prospered. The oratory devoid of images. The little table he had built himself. On the table, a dirty metal plate, a pair of Vitória's needles, an unlit lamp, two bottles. Around it, three chairs, one of them with a broken back, attached to only one of the stiles. He repeated his nightly promise: I'll fix it tomorrow. A threadbare rug on the floor near the threshold. All so very unremarkable. Unable to settle on these objects worn out by constant observation, he returned to his daughter's room, into which slipped a sliver of candlelight that extended across the floor and, in trying to reach the opposite wall, climbed up and dragged itself across her stomach, seeming to scribble lazily on her when the lukewarm breeze caused the flame to waver.

Gomes took a step into the room. His shoulder hurt, that was it, he needed to change position, and he did not feel tired enough to go back to bed. The heat in there seemed to bother him more still. The breeze that was hardly blowing – when it did, it was warm breath flowing from the world's gaping mouth – was an alibi; the silly girl had not even opened the window before she fell sleep. Instinctively, he stretched out his arm towards his daughter. He moved his hand quickly up and down, fanning her. If the awkward movement and his rhythm displaced any air, even hot air, his daughter's neck manifested no change. Droplets slipped slowly from her chest, from behind her ears, from the fine down that covered the nape of her neck and was so different to her hair, towards the fallen strap of her dress, which the girl had been in no condition to change for her nightgown before she drunkenly collapsed. The old man felt thirsty. His mouth seemed filled with dry dust. Gomes retracted his arm, which was now equally damp from the rhythm he had uselessly kept up, and went out in search of something to drink. He looked at the bottles on the table and took the wrong one: more than thirsty, he was hallucinating, he had thoughts like those of the men he hated. He drank. Far from banishing the dust from his throat, down with the gulps had gone the stifling air from outside, and now Gomes was the one scorching the walls, the few pieces of furniture, the daughter who was sleeping just out of his line of sight. He grew calm. He was, like the dry vegetation each August, drawn to the flames. The bottle was then drained.

Another blast, like the ones that had woken him that night, interrupted his reverie. He drew the curtain back, waited for his eyes to adjust to the semi-darkness and confirmed: Vitória remained motionless. He leaned over, moved his ear close to the bed and noticed the low snoring of that woman who, skilled in the education of the senses, had decided not to bother herself with anything more that night. Her eyes, ears and skin only sensed what she approved. She feigned pain at Gomes' blows, if that was what her husband's intention required; she only saw the furtive shadows in the yard, near to Ximena's window, if she needed to warn her daughter that her father was approaching; she did not even notice the imprecations that Gomes, Rodrigo or other miners hurled at the colonel.

Gomes closed the curtain and walked back to the room he had built for his daughter. He went in and closed the wooden door; he did not want his footsteps to disturb his wife's rest now that she was finally sleeping. If he got his hands on the hoodlum who worked by night so as to sleep all day... He sat on a stool near one of the hooks to which Ximena's hammock was attached. From where he was he could not see his daughter's face, he saw only her long body extending away from him, and she looked much taller than when she was standing, when she barely compared in height of the women of the night, not because they were taller or better proportioned but because they balanced on high heels and clogs. He separated a lock of his daughter's hair with his fingers, bent down until his face was but a short distance from the strand he was holding and sniffed it. A strong smell of sweat and smoke. Some residue of contact with men? He would kill Rodrigo, kill him. He tried to push the scenes out of his mind, but they would not stop forming, ever more visible, ever more daring, more painful. Night, the territory of dreams. When he slept his dreams were outlandish, senseless and, of this he was glad, quick and easy to forget once he opened his eyes. His daydreams were what he found unbearable - he would think about something else, concentrate or try to empty himself by staring at a point on the wall illuminated by the weak light of the candle. Rodrigo and Ximena were seen going in and out of the woods, talking in the square. People talked. Vitória said nothing, the no-good wench. She did not watch over her daughter.

Yet another blast interrupted his suffering. His daughter shifted in the hammock, in search of a new position. The strap of her dress fell down slightly more and a breast slipped out of the long garment, leaving her pink nipple visible in the semi-darkness like a stain on the fabric. Gomes turned his eyes away. He tried to dress her again. In doing so, seeking the best way to execute the movement, he had to fix his gaze on his daughter's nakedness. He moved closer. He touched her arm with one hand in search of the fallen strap and felt her clammy, almost feverish skin with the tips of his fingers. He shuddered. He remembered Vitória and tried to pray, but the relief that drew near as he began murmuring the prayers to himself simply covered his guilt with a torn cloth, as if his wife were threatening him with infernal punishment and divine justice. He stood up. He stepped beneath the hammock's hook, went to the window and did not open it. He leant against it, turned

towards the centre of the room. The vision of the body in the hammock now offered itself from new angles, which awakened new thoughts. How much of that was his desire to, with his own love, keep her out of the reach of men who would lead her to certain perdition? He was confused. He did not know if it was the right thing. Was it – did he? No. But he knew he was a man, he could not fool anyone about that, so if... and he only knew how to affirm it with violence or intimacy. If he fled from desire, was he showing weakness? He did not know. But it was possible. How many times in a moment like that, tortured by what his body determined for him, had he rushed back to bed and forced himself on a sleeping Vitória. He would lift her nightgown and, before she could groan in protest, cover her mouth with the palm of his hand – and it was for her own good, because he stopped her, by simply rejecting him, impelling him towards an abject destiny that he was still fighting to escape. He would penetrate Vitória with a rage that she silently believed diabolic, moving as fast as he could, panting, because for him too that intercourse was a sacrifice to which he submitted in the sole intention of ridding himself, for a few hours, of the incubated sickness that one day would transform him into the vile thing he dreaded becoming.

The distant noise grew louder and brought Gomes back to his senses. He recognised its tones: someone was mining in the town. This unexpected conclusion was enough to preoccupy him, and his body, still leaning against the window, relaxed. The distraction did not last long, however. Even if he had seen a vein of gold shine magically among the cracks in the walls, at that moment he would not bind himself to it, despite the hunger and the privations of recent times, because nothing would be able to pull him away from the most intense feelings a man could possibly experience, except if he were holding the point of his knife against an opponent's stomach or with a blade dancing in front of his own, at times moving off as if recoiling, at others feeling the point burning his skin. A lightning bolt ran through his body in waves, from top to bottom: just like a tree-lily that quickly catches fire at the least contact from a spark, after the first shiver caused by the obscene image that always offered itself up in the end, reasons came together in the old man's thus far confused mind, reasons that would legitimise in obtuse contortion the gesture which until that moment he had been strong enough to abort – or fearing God, as he thought most of the time, in the intention of obtaining, without Vitória even imagining, his pardon. His daughter's parted lips, with a trace of saliva pooling at the corners, pronounced incomprehensible words, issuing from some dream. Gomes held his breath, startled by what seemed to him a moan. Provocation? The desperate mechanism of the search for an external reason to explain the desire that lacerated him was in motion. It did no good to fight against that which seemed uncontrollable, against what he already felt was beating him, and he ought perhaps to make an effort to construct from air and dreams another target for his licentiousness. He imagined himself crossing the threshold of the whorehouse, where he had been so many times before and where for a short while, with controlled brutality and a few coins, he was capable of ridding his thoughts

of Vitória and Ximena, who troubled him with the conflicting feelings they stirred in him: one, disgust, the other, arousal. Gomes imagined a room with few lamps and little light, then in its corners he placed the women he tended to sleep with, but with certain improvements – they, as they were, with their scanty clothing, wrinkles and scars, were no good to him at that moment, since they were pitted against a real adversary who, even if she too gained scars and wrinkles one day, in the darkness of that room had only charms. He imagined their legs. They balanced awkwardly on high-heeled shoes, which gave them pigeon chests and thrust out their buttocks and breasts. Sweet perfumes, diluted with generous doses of alcohol to multiply the bottles or, if the night was just beginning, the smell of the talc that stuck to tongues. Strawflowers in the hair of the older ones, lending them their freshness. Above all, the manner of wanting to please, to be only yeses for few hours or many coins. The strategy was efficient, Gomes felt their effect. He touched himself. The warmth of his hand inside his trousers brought him wellbeing, but this became incompatible with the attention required to sustain the fantasies that lifted him out of that detestable room, and so little by little the women of the night started fragmenting, turning into impossible bodies whose parts became blurred, configuring monstrous beings. As soon as the chimeras disappeared, Gomes's eyes returned to the silhouette of Ximena, lying in the somewhat ridiculous position of a partially broken doll, yet within reach, and he no longer felt able to control himself. He was like a wretch who runs in fear down an unknown path and, after running as fast as he can for a long time, with his tongue lolling out, realises that some imperceptible curve will take him back to his starting point, where his captors have been lamenting his loss, and the effort made in this failed flight will have wasted all the energy he had for kicks and punches. Composed of ethereal matter, the lascivious figures to which Gomes had appealed offered him delights he never had the courage to ask their flesh-and-blood counterparts, but which demanded of him greater concentration than he could muster, given his current state. When his body abstained from the external energy that nourished him and started feeding off the sensation that his own stimulation produced – a perpetual motion machine of desire – the succubi dissipated and behind the clouds that stopped him blinding himself rose once more the pale, yet more hypnotic, sun that was the possibility of his daughter's offensive nakedness. Gomes paused, but now he felt his insides burning. He made one last effort to rescue the demons that, instead of saving him, had distracted him and stoked his fire, leaving him on the verge of that absolute and irreversible state which precedes violence or pleasure. He approached the hammock where his daughter, in her alcoholic stupor, was reverberating, and he grabbed the loose ends of the hem of her dress. For the time that he remained immobile, the rough, greasy and slightly damp texture of the fabric held between the tips of his thumbs and forefingers made him shudder, as if those pieces of cloth absorbed all the qualities of the contents they enveloped. Prisoner of the moment – undetectable by the clock, inexhaustible to the mind – that precedes the crime, Gomes was surprised by the brusque movement made

by Ximena who, sleepy and drunk, lifted her head in a still-instinctive attempt to find in reality the beings that assailed her in her nightmare. Gomes moved away before his daughter awoke completely, but did not leave. Ximena rubbed her face with the backs of her hands; this movement rearranged her torso and waist in the hammock and left the forbidden part of her thighs on show. Gomes clenched his fists and dug his nails into his palms. Ximena gave a long yawn and said “Father?”. Like the great wave that follows a storm at the head of a river and sweeps with it tree trunks, stones, men and animals, that ineluctable desire would carry the man’s body to the deflagration of the huge accumulated energy, and thus when his daughter’s voice, soft, hoarse and childlike from interrupted sleep reached his ears, Gomes made an unexpected movement and with his closed fist hit her between chin and mouth, causing her tooth to wound her lip and a stream of blood to spurt out and stain the wall and floor. When she reached the room, after hearing her daughter’s sobbing mixed with the clanking of iron on rock that was disturbing the village, Vitória did not even notice the absence of her husband, who was walking away from the house with heavy steps.



THE BOOK



Time to Cast Away Stones

Estevão Azevedo

- **Original title:** Tempo de Espalhar Pedras
- **ISBN:** 9788540507593
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Cosac Naify
- **Number of pages:** 288
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 2.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

In an unnamed place, a group of men dig and sift the earth in search of diamonds that no longer exist. Tyrannised by the colonel who benefits from their work, the miners seek to maintain the unstable balance of their lives, dangling between extreme penury and the arts of survival. The colonel will stand for no unrest: one order from him means summary executions. There is no possible resistance. Not one of them is his own master.

TRANSLATIONS

“Rot und Weiß” at anthology
Popcorn unterm Zuckerhut – Junge
brasilianische Literatur (Verlag Klaus
Wagenbach, Germany 2013)

PRESS REVIEWS

“Time to Cast Away Stones is an energetic response to the absence of

rural Brazil in contemporary Brazilian fiction, even if the world the author creates is almost entirely mythical.” – Luis Antônio Giron / Cmais
<http://cmais.com.br/arte-e-cultura/letra-nova/estevao-azevedo-no-sertao-de-letras>

“Time to Cast Away Stones is written with impressive confidence. At times it takes us back to the moral corruption of our post-modernism” – José Luis Passos/ Estado de São Paulo
<http://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/literatura,romance-de-estevao-azevedo-traz-faces-de-um-brasil-desumanizado,1592944>

AWARDS

Nunca o nome do menino – PROAC, da Secretaria de Cultura do Estado de São Paulo, 2007; finalist of Prêmio São Paulo de Literatura 2009.

THE AUTHOR



Estevão Andozia Azevedo

- **Pen name:** Estevão Azevedo
- **Other books:**
O som de nada acontecendo (144 p., Edições K, 2005)
Nunca o nome do menino (184 p., Terceiro Nome, 2009)

**THE TRANSLATOR**

Lucy Greaves

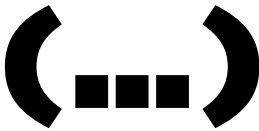
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TEN CENTIMETERS ABOVE THE GROUND

FLÁVIO CAFIERO

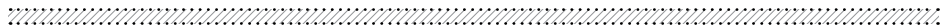
Translated by Elídia Novaes



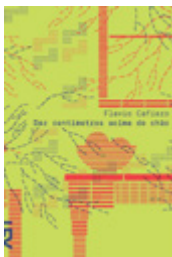
the thing is the whale can stand up to ninety minutes without coming to the surface for oxygen. It doesn't challenge life, that's not it, toying with boundaries is a genuinely human pleasure (I always think of you when I drive past the Tropic of Capricorn), even if the whale, according to a recent study (there are always recent studies to add to the confusion), even if the whale has a very high level of consciousness, nothing quite like the pig, according to the research, nothing quite like the dolphin, no, the whale bears a level of consciousness (don't ask me to define consciousness, it's a concept that has not lasted more than a few weeks), the whale has a very good level of consciousness if compared, let's say, to the duck, the shark, the kangaroo, or even if compared to you. Just joking, of course, you look silly, but you know you are sure to die. And the end may be pretty as an iceberg, that fine light spreading through the ice crystals, that blue not quite blue, a diffuse glow and a whale in apnea bumping its head (yes, a whale does have a head, the limb is separated enough to be a head), the whale smashing the crown of its head against the butt of a beautiful ice block, truly beautiful to look at, and then it's the blood seeping through the crystals, have you seen it yet? A whale in apnea can become very disoriented. It's summer, after all, and summer is the season of death, although our imagination may turn facts upside down. Who thinks of icebergs in the summer? In the summer, pedestrians leave home more often, they risk being run over by automobiles, slip on their coccyx on air-conditioned shopping mall hallways, have their heads hit by a piano, this looks like a joke, and, just like the whale, they get jammed against their own icebergs. It is in the summer that daring teenagers drown in streams and tanned ladies quietly amass melanomas under the skin, and couples dart through a shop window full speed, with motorcycle, purse, cell phone, engagement ring in the box and all, soon after that innocent warm-up at home, chilled white wine, kisses, moves, and then they must run to be in time for the table reservation in the outdoor area, and it's over. It's in the summer that old men dehydrate in the park, little children nap forgotten in the back seat, whole families are surprised in their sleep and carried away by the flood, clawed to their pillows, and even rats die suffocated among underground pipes (and a rat, you probably know, cannot stand as long as a whale). In the summer, cemeteries get crammed (the page of obituaries is crowded, have you noticed that?), friends need to come back earlier from the beach because the cocky one has decided to show off in the pool. Summer sucks and not to mention the heat, humidity, late

afternoon rain, and not to mention you complaining about the fan, and that a year has passed and no air conditioner, and that I drink all the water from the bottle, and that I leave the windows open and everything gets wet. Recent studies show, it's full proof, the analyses leave no room, no chance for doubts: summer is dangerous, beautiful and fun as it may be. But living without the damn danger, the littlest one, eating that exotic vegetable, opening that employees-only door, climbing that rust-rotten ladder, who lives without it, who? I agree, threats may hide in less obvious settings, in fluffy stuff, white stuff, clean stuff, even invisible stuff, think of the water we drink, the air we breathe, and of trained and certified things, such as bus drivers. Have you noticed how absurd it's to put your life in the hands of a bus driver, have you ever pictured that underpaid stranger, fucked up, tired, sleepy, starving, and you hanging in there? So don't be afraid, the universe is prone to tragedy, all of it, all of it, don't worry, you will endure, we have been through a lot, your mother is gone, your father is history, you have no siblings, your friends speak ill of you, I am all that is left (it's you and I until death do us part), and there is also this house, so coveted by the neighbors, garden, laundry, baby's room, empty, attic as cozy as those in the movies and, of course, the swimming pool, gigantic pool, humongous pool. Fuck, such freezing water, I told you not to save and get a decent water heater, we never contemplate winter or these off-season cold fronts, we don't think of death and of how comforting a warm departure must be. Death may be slow, sluggish, lurking. Think of death being extracted from a mine, being processed and cast, marketed in plates, and recast, and shaped into parts, and assembled, and then bought in retail, and loaded, and cocked, and then shot close range to the temple. Very slowly (and not to mention the millennia until the appearance of iron), very slowly, the task of the grim reaper has been planned since forever. Death can be conceived, born, and raised, and nourished, fattened and sacrificed, and chopped up, packaged, frozen and finally spiced, marinated, forgotten out of the refrigerator and that's it. But the damned one can also be dreamed, planned, designed, carved, tiled and filled with water up to the blue line. Gigantic swimming pool. Humongous pool. I like to tell of how my sister died, because there is nothing so beautiful (I know you think I am repetitive, always using the same stories), and let's see if there is time for me to tell it one more time, hold on tight. A perfect day, table set and crispy bread, mountain air, twenty one Celsius, and my sister with her boyfriend going downhill in the brand new car (extracted, cast, marketed in plates, assembled, advertised, bought in installments), my sister in the passenger seat screaming: fuck, how many yellow butterflies! Stereo in full blast (very slow: insight, composition, rehearsal, demo, record deal, innovative arrangement, mp3), and the voice at the top of her lungs, you've gone to the finest school, all right, Miss Lonely, overdone accent, tangled pronunciation, but okay. Insects suffer during the dry season (do insects hibernate?), and when rain comes, they burst as if the world were to end (bugs know things, it is some form of consciousness), and in the blink millions of yellow wings invade the bucolic back roads, lots of little butterflies crash against the windshield, not fucking fair, they barely arrived

and are already squashed, and the big guy flooring it, and doom there, lurking, camouflaged as joy and as butterflies. And the boyfriend opens the window, puts his head out and screams of happiness and lust, he underlines the moment for everyone to hear, and people twisting their necks to see the big car gone, look at that, listen, some madman has just sped screaming, and my sister does the same, opens the window wide, sings out loud, how does it feel, how does it feel, and opens her eyes to see death approach, feeling the wind inflate her eyelids, flutter her face, smooth her hair, and a large beetle comes flying hidden among the frail butterflies, a beetle happy from so much summer and water, piercing the gelatin in my sister's right brown eye, a protein arrow straight on the target. Stupid, isn't it? Mating, eggs, hatching, pupa, wings, buzzing (a rare species, state the recent studies), I do not even know if this is how beetles are born, and then death. Bureaucratic sex, medical care, fertilization, shopping abroad, since everything is more affordable there, c-section, breastfeeding, school, and the first love in college, and then death. Sister and beetle, death on both sides. It's the summer, I said so. Now think of the kid swallowing the bear diaper pin because the mother was smoking outside (the damned one is also in fluffy stuff, remember?). There is no time, all right, very well, we can stand much less than ninety minutes, far less than the whales. You're close to the brink, you'll see death firsthand, soaked and smelling of chlorine, but it's not for me to decide, I'm a chickenshit, I fear the police, I'm too claustrophobic for a prison cell. Are your eyes open or shut? Oh, how beautiful to see you gasp and inhale all the air you can. Recent studies say borderline experiences do not always shape a personality or cause trauma, things do not always unwind, but I have my hopes, my own pillows, fuck the recent studies. OK, that's it. Anyway, there should already be a beautiful cancer sprouting around in your chest, slowly, cell one, cell two, bloodstream, right lung, left lung, and I'll manage to wait. It's almost over, yes, yes, yes, now come, you may rise. Take a deep breath. Now do tell me, c'mon. Tell me what it is like.



THE BOOK



Ten centimeters above the ground

Flávio Cafiero

- **Original title:** Dez Centímetros Acima do Chão
- **ISBN:** 978-85-405-0800-2
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Cosac Naify
- **Number of pages:** 160
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 2.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

On this solid collection of short stories written between 2009 and 2013, the author tosses the offal of the middle class with an abrasive, ironic and insubordinate style. With obsessive determination and flowing speeches, his characters expose the reader to a catalog of anxieties, sufferings, hopes and meanness of contemporary life.

AWARDS

Prize "Cidade de Belo Horizonte/2013"
Category: Short Stories

THE AUTHOR



Flávio Cafiero

- **Pen name:** Flávio Cafiero
- **Other books:**
O frio aqui fora (The cold out here), 2013, 256 pp, Cosac Naify
O capricórnio se aproxima (The capricorn comes near), 2014, 24pp, E-Galáxia

THE TRANSLATOR

Elidia Novaes

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MURDER IN THE LIBRARY

HELENA GOMES

Translated by Samuel Gorvine

Thursday, September 3, 1970

Brother

Difficult and dangerous times. The AI-5 times. Lara did not know what the acronym meant, but was frightened enough not to talk about it. People's silence said it all. AI-5 was a way that the military government had invented to hunt down people considered enemies of the state. And anyone could end up on this blacklist: teachers, trade unionists, students, writers and singers, in short, everyone who did not agree with the decisions of the military government.

Lara was walking to school, as usual. This time, however, her fear shadowed her like an invisible companion. It was a cold feeling, made more oppressive by the threat of the unknown, of what might happen. She was not so much afraid for herself as for Luke, her brother, who was six years older. She didn't know if he was on AI-5's hunted list.

It was a beautiful day. Lara left Pedro Américo Street and turned right onto Avenue Ana Costa and passed in front of the Sorocabana train station. At this moment, no passenger or cargo train was crossing the Avenue, to the delight of hurrying motorists. When the train passed, all traffic in the area stopped. Lara liked the sound of the klaxon which sounded before the gate came down and closed the Avenue so that train cars could pass though on the rails. Santos was really a marvelous city to live in.

That morning, she paid no attention to anything, not even to tram 42 that halted to pick up passengers at a stop just ahead. Soon, Santos would lose all its trams to make way for buses that already circulated in ever-increasing numbers. A sign that things were changing, some people believed. "Modern times," said others. Lara was fourteen years old. She liked the trams, but could not help but be impressed by the news of a world that seemed to be moving ever faster. In the previous year, an American, Neil Armstrong, had walked on the moon for the first time. Lara's grandmother never tired of repeating that the images that the TV had displayed showing the astronaut walking on the lunar surface were just fakes. "It's all a trick!" She retorted angrily. "Wasn't the USA the country that had encouraged the military coup in Brazil?" As Luke explained once, quietly and only to Lara's sister and grandmother, the CIA had taught torture methods to the Brazilian police and military, today the same methods were applied without mercy to prisoners of the regime.

Lara thought about Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. Luke had told her that they had been arrested a year earlier in a nightclub in Rio de Janeiro, where they were doing a show. After two months in prison, they had gone into exile in England. And what if that also happened to Luke? Lara was afraid that he too had just been arrested, was being tortured and would have to leave the country. What would become of her and grandmother? They had both missed him terribly since he went to live in São Paulo to study philosophy at USP. How would they manage if he were forced to live abroad?

Lara took a deep breath and hugged the notebooks she carried to her chest. Squeezed between two pages, was the money she was to give her brother. It was all her grandmother could manage. Luke did not reveal any details about what was happening with him. He had called the day before, asking for his sister to bring the money and meet him at the school library where she studied. He was clearly in danger. At times Lara suspected her brother was doing more than just going to demonstrations against the government, which, actually, was now forbidden. Her grandmother wanted to take the money personally, but he argued that his sister would arouse less suspicion. After all, she was just going to school, as usual.

Lara continued along Ana Costa Avenue. Some houses still proudly displayed the Brazilian flag. Recently Brazil had won its third World Cup, in Mexico. Santa Maria High School was on one of the side streets to the Avenue, a few blocks from the beach. It took up an entire block with its low walls of white stone. The main building had been erected in the late 19th century in neoclassical style, and resembled a giant “L” lying facing to the right. At the base of the “L” were the main office, the principal’s office, the kindergarten, and other smaller classrooms. From here a staircase led to the classrooms of the elementary school and the gymnasium on the first floor, and the classics, the scientific and accounting departments on the second floor. On the right side of the building (the stem of the “L”), on the ground floor, was a large library, which was open on Tuesdays and Thursdays to the general public. Above it, on the first floor, were more classrooms and a laboratory. An amphitheater was planned for the still unoccupied second floor.

Painted white, reinforcing its traditional appearance, the main building was on the way to Gonzaga, a neighborhood with few large buildings and many residential homes. In front of the right wing of the library, there was a chapel in honor of Our Lady, for whom the school was named, and on the right side, an area for sports. Way in back, the caretaker’s tiny house was just visible. Just to the left of the main building, closest to the wall, was a sort of vegetable garden and deeper inside, a playground, with swings, slides and seesaws, which continued on into the patio behind the main building. In addition to this, the college had well kept gardens in various parts of the grounds, especially in the open area between the chapel and the main building and in front of the library opposite the imposing entrance gate.

Turning the corner of the street approaching the school, Lara walked faster, her heart pounding. At the school gate, she forgot to say hello to Gilmar (the janitor who worked as a doorman), waved to two friends gossiping in whispers at the door of the main building on the left, glanced at the chapel on the right, and

crossed to the central lane of the garden, which led to the library. Upon entering the library, she bumped into a beautiful young blonde in a miniskirt, with long hair. Her bangs covered her heavily made-up eyes.

- Sorry! - Lara said, but the girl left hurriedly without any reaction.

Behind the counter, Conceição, the librarian, fortyish and friendly, became irritated when she realized that Lara was just there to say good morning.

- Five minutes to get to class - the woman said, peevishly.

- I just came to pick up a book ... - Lara said, surprised at such rudeness from a person normally agreeable.

- Come back later.

- But ...

- I told you to come back later!

Authority would always prevail, but at that moment she cared only about her brother, and so ignored her, moving quickly towards the corridors formed by bookcases crammed with books, certain that the librarian would catch her and pull her back by the ears. Conceição, however, did not budge from her seat behind the counter.

Strange ... the library was empty. At that hour of the morning it was usual to hear the murmur of students coming to return books or look for others to help them with the heavy load of homework that teachers usually assigned.

Lara checked the first corridor, and then the second. Then quickly, took a look in the third. Luke promised he would be in the tenth corridor, counting left to right ... But what if he was in the tenth row, right to left? That would change everything! There were 30 corridors in total, running in parallel to the right, just after a counter and a group of tables that students used to study and take notes.

She hurried to the other end of the library. She heard voices ... voices of adults and not the usual children and teens. Still, Thursday was the day the library was open to the general public. Except that ...

Desperate, Lara reached the corridor where her brother was waiting. She walked in on the worst scene imaginable. Luke was surrounded by three brutal and heavily armed men. One approached the boy, who did not react, and punched him violently. Luke was knocked backwards into thick wooden shelves full of books before falling face down on the floor. Lara wanted to scream but could not. Her body shook with fear and anger at what she had just seen. The second man approached the boy and began to kick him hard in the face, stomach, chest and arms-- nothing escaped the fierce assault. The third man joined the attack, while the first, looking satisfied, just watched.

Lara was a slender teenager. Still, she raced over to the two men who were attacking Luke. She had to stop them and get her brother out! She grabbed one by the arm, pulling him away as hard as she could.

- Stay out of this! - said the guy, pushing her away.

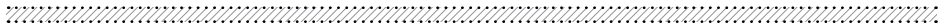
No, they would not take Luke! Lara responded with all the outrage she could muster, and hurling herself at the man's back, clung there long enough to bite him hard on the ear. The man roared and pulled away from the boy he was kicking mercilessly. The second man pulled Lara off him, throwing her to the ground. Lara

hit the ground hard, and though a little dizzy, managed to get up. She would have resumed her attack but was stopped by a deafening noise.

Stunned, the girl looked down at her body. Blood soaked the white blouse of her school uniform. A bullet had struck her in the chest, at heart level, burning and tearing clothes, skin and flesh. A terrible pain followed.

Lara looked up to find her killer. He was still pointing the gun at her. It was the same man who had punched Luke and then stayed back to watch the beating, the youngest of the three. He couldn't have been more than twenty. His two companions, worried, also were looking at him.

- Lara ... - Luke muttered, still lying on the floor and injured too badly to move. He had seen only that agonizing moment. There were tears in his eyes, and he felt guilty for putting his sister in danger and panic at what had happened to her. Lara's body slid down to the cold floor of the library. The three men paid no further attention to her. They moved quickly and, within seconds, Luke was gone, taken far away. Alone now, Lara felt a chill premonition of the unknown. Yet, she was not afraid. When a great, ominous darkness enveloped this brave girl, she met it with eyes open, ready to face her new future.



THE BOOK



Murder in the Library

Helena Gomes

- **Original title:** Assassinato na biblioteca
- **ISBN:** 978-85-61384-03-6
- **Year of Publication:** 2008
- **Original Publisher:** Rocco
- **Number of pages:** 252
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 2.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

A friendly old library lady is murdered at the same morning Igor, a teenage boy, decides to skip class and hides himself at the school library. To find out who is the murderer, Igor gets involved in a web of mystery, danger, suspense, turnabouts and new murders that might be connected with a crime that happened thirty-seven years ago, in a dark period of Brazilian history: the military dictatorship.

THE AUTHOR

Helena Maria Gomes

- **Pen name:** Helena Gomes
- **Other books:**

Tristão e Isolda, 2010, 240 p., Berlendis Sangue de lobo (coauthor), 2010 (1st edition) and 2014 (2nd edition), 412 p., Farol Literário



A donzela sem mãos e outros contos populares, 2013, 112 p., Escrita Fina

THE TRANSLATOR

Samuel Gorvine

US Citizen living in Brazil with wife Eliane. Graduate of UMass, class of long ago. Translator, English teacher, Screenwriter (7 screenplays) with agent in Berlin. Five kids, three granddaughters.

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THE POET BOY

HENRIQUETA LISBOA

Illustrated by Nelson Cruz | Translated by Hécio Veiga Costa



Echo

Green parrot
let out a shrill scream.
Rock in sudden
anger, replied.

A great uproar
invaded the forest.
Thousands of parrots
screamed together
and rock echoed.

From all sides
strafing space
steely screams rained
and rained down.

Very piercing screams!

But no one died.

Old Little Ox

Little ox of tired eyes
longing-eyed little ox
resting on folded legs
at a bend of the way.

The carts climbing the hill
(now little ox remembers)
squeaked — or was it a weeping?

The Four Winds

North wind
South wind
West wind
East wind.

Four barebacked
horses.
Four horses
with long manes,
with long tails,
avid nostrils
snorting in the air.

Four horses
which nobody tames
four horses
that come and go,
that never rest,
their wings and hooves
sweeping the skies.

Ownerless horses
without a motherland,
gypsy horses
lawless and masterless.

Four barebacked horses.

Time is a Thread

Time is a quite
frail thread.
A slender thread
that easily slips away.

Time is a thread.
Weave! Weave!
Bobbin laces
with gentleness
with a greater zeal
thick branches.
Knittings and nets
with more shrewdness.

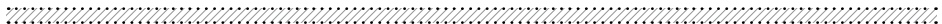
Time is a thread
wich is worth so much.
Thick crowns
bear fruit.
Knittings and nets
catch fish.

Time is a thread
through fingers.
The thread slips
time is wasted.

There time goes
like a rag
thrown away at random!

But it is still time!

Free the colts
to the four winds,
send the serfs
from one pole to another,
surmount scarps,
sleep in the bushes,
come back with time
that has gone by!...





THE BOOK



The Poet Boy

Henriqueta Lisboa

- **Original title:** O Menino Poeta
- **ISBN:** 978-85-7596-149-0
- **Year of Publication:** 2008
- **Original Publisher:** Editora Peirópolis Ltda
- **Number of pages:** 88
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 5.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

The poet boy is a must-read book for boys of all ages. The work of this well-known and highly praised poet of the state of Minas Gerais is a reference in poetry for children in Brazil. The search for the poet boy, translated by Henriqueta, becomes the quest for poetry itself. Poems made of playful words and puns, of sound and silence, as the writer revisits the imagery of childhood.

TRANSLATIONS

Chosen Poems. Henriqueta Lisboa.
Translations by Hécio Veiga Costa.
Eddal Editora e Distribuidora, s/d.
English.

Poèmes choisis. Henriqueta Lisboa -
Traduits par Véra Conradt. Editora São
Vicente.1974, 98 p. Belo Horizonte - MG.
French

PRESS REVIEWS

Folha de São Paulo

<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/livrariadafolha/794729-versos-de-poeta-henriqueta-lisboa-descobrem-criancas-novas-a-cada-manha.shtml>

O Globo

<http://oglobo.globo.com/blogs/prosa/posts/2009/03/09/a-poesia-de-henriqueta-lisboa-167173.asp>

AWARDS

Selected for the Project Support Learn (FDE) - 2013 - 218.098 copies

Selected for the National School Library Program (PNBE) - 2010 - 29.437 copies

Selected for the Reading Rooms Programme / State Secretariat of Education of São Paulo - 2009 - 7.948 copies

Selected for the Coordination of acquis Municipal Libraries System (SMC / MGSP) - 2009 - 151 copies

Selected for the FNLIJ's selection 46^a Bologna Children's Book Fair 2009

Highly Commended by FNLIJ - Poetry category - 2009

Award Book FNLIJ year - category Poetry - 2009

Award "30 Best Children's Books of the Year" - 2009 edition - Crescer magazine

THE AUTHOR

Henriqueta Lisboa



- **Pen name:** Henriqueta Lisboa

- **Other books:**

Oral literature for Childhood and youth. *Literatura oral para a infância e a juventude*, 2002, 200 pages – Editora Peirópolis

Anthology of Portuguese poems for Childhood and youth. *Antologia de poemas portugueses para a infância e a juventude*, 2005, 64 pages – Editora Peirópolis

Fogo-fátuo (1925); *Enternecimento* (1929); *Velário* (1936); *Prisioneira da noite* (1941); *O menino poeta* (1943); *A face lívida* (1945), to the memory of Mario de Andrade, who died this year; *Flor da morte* (1949); *Madrinha Lua* (1952); *Azul profundo* (1955); *Lírica* (1958); *Montanha viva* (1959); *Além da imagem* (1963); *Nova Lírica* (1971); *Belo Horizonte bem querer* (1972); *O alvo humano* (1973); *Reverberações* (1976); *Miradouro e outros poemas* (1976); *Celebração dos elementos: água, ar, fogo, terra* (1977); *Pousada do ser* (1982) and *Poesia Geral* (1985), meeting personally selected poems by the authoress set of all the work, published a week after her death.

THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nelson Cruz



Nelson Cruz is a Brazilian artist and writer. He received Best Illustration Hors-Concours Award (2003) by FNLIJ for his illustrations in the first volume of the Touch of Prose collection, *Conto de escola*. Through Cosac Naify, he also published *O caso do Saci* (2004). In 2008, together with illustrator Marilda Castanha, he published through Cosac Naify the collection *Stories about history*, for which he wrote *Dirceu e Marília*, *Chica e João* and *Bárbara e Alvarenga*.

THE TRANSLATOR

Hélcio Veiga Costa

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BEHOLD THE NIGHT!

JOÃO ALPHONSUS

Translated by Darlene J. Sadlier

“

Edward,” his widow told me,” was a little strange, but he was a good husband. Sometimes he had tragic thoughts and proclaimed he was even capable of dying. I don’t know if he was implying suicide, but he must have been since everyone has the ability to die naturally.”

“If you were to die, I vow I’d never be a merry widow, only a sad one. The saddest widow ever to have lived. . .”.

Suddenly filled with a lust for life that was a delight, Edward would kiss me after one of these jokes and it seemed then that we were going to live forever. Or, on the other hand, we were living forever the moment, Eddie and me. I called him Eddie only those moments of infinite tenderness because, being a finicky fellow, both proper and wise, my husband didn’t like being called by any nickname. It was an extreme, occasional concession by Eddie! Forgive me for sighing, but the truth is that I’ve remained a sad widow.

During that time I played the piano and sang a lot of pretty things, even pieces from the Merry Widow, and from that came the joke Before retiring in the evenings, I would play and he would sing. Sometimes visitors from the village came to our little home. The house was located at the end of the street, or better, it was a bit removed from the village, propitiously isolated on high, next to the bridge where we used to take walks in the afternoon after dinner. They called it Canyon Bridge and it crossed over a deep gorge with a modest brook far below, a mountain stream so small that the murmuring of its current was nearly inaudible, except in the rainy season when it swelled a little

Everything came flooding back to me as I watched the skyrockets exploding in the distance, pretty skyrockets with low trailers. Do you see them? So far away that we see them, but can’t hear them, as hard as we try. Whose hands are setting off those rockets? Whose eyes are following their path, their explosion, the sparkles that scatter into the evening sky? We know nothing of those hands and eyes, nor will we ever. Edward didn’t know either. From the bridge or from the window at our home in the little city on the mountain, we sometimes would see skyrockets far in the distance, coming from an encampment or farm or any isolated place suddenly revealed to us only by that flash of light in the sky, which was neither an appeal for solidarity nor a signal from distant brethren, nothing. Perhaps they were empty spirits who, like little balloons, were hoping to inflate with the smoke from the skyrockets and that’s how they entertained themselves! But Edward was often excited by the commonplace fact:

"Strange, Maria. . . I see those skyrockets in the distance and I'm filled with a desire to be in those unknown places where fireworks lift into the sky. But if I were there, perhaps I wouldn't care about the rockets and would prefer to be here . . .".

"Well, Edward, does that mean you prefer the skyrockets to me?"

Repeated on several occasions, my question shows that I didn't understand my poor Eddie . . . He never answered me and kept quiet with a slightly disdainful smile that made me truly mad and all too aware that I didn't understand certain subtleties of his nature, especially those related to the skyrockets in the distance. I used to sulk until, in his superiority, he turned to another topic of conversation, a sort of trial balloon towards reconciliation. Whenever I would remain silent, he would humble himself a little:

"Forgive me, Maria."

"Forgive what, my little fool?"

"The skyrockets . . .".

The reason for our quarrel was so stupid that we ended up laughing with our arms around each other, and being happy. All that happened in the town where my husband held a relatively important position as manager of the only local bank. We had married when I told him that I would go anywhere just to be with him.

"Very well, Maria. In order to rise in the bank, I can ask to run a small city office. It's a salary that will enable us to begin a life with sufficient funds, have children, without thinking about tomorrow, even put a little away. Then I can apply for any agency. But it's necessary to be patient at first with that little life. . .because when a person is starting out, without much job security, those hardship postings require staying put for quite a while."

"What little life, if the life is ours? Even if we were to spend our whole lives there!"

He kissed me and we agreed on a March wedding. I remember that March well because we took a terrible trip by horse, on terrible roads through rain and mud . . . just to reach that handful of run-down houses on the mountain top! Imagine it yourself, there wasn't even a bathtub in the house that we rented until Edward sent for one and installed it at his own expense. It was considered a novelty in the town and was admired by public officials whenever they visited us To keep the water tank filled, he channeled a little water off a stream that ran down the mountain, something that scored greater success with officials. The town was more than a century old and until then no one had the idea of putting the water to good use. Just my husband. But the town's praise also came with a modicum of mistrust because of his genius To be perfectly honest, there were ruins from an antiquated and useless rock canal that wound through the city. And the formerly meager stream had a way of widening the gorge under the bridge when there was flooding and modestly but freely cascading from there. A freedom that seemed guaranteed with the laxity of modern times. Decadence! Edward had extraordinary expenses that ate up all possible savings. Only the rent was cheap; everything else cost a fortune. The region didn't produce a thing and everything came from the outside, from down the mountain, everything . . . But we kept on and

happily. . . .

The only road with its few side trails that branched off into the low-growing brush on either side, without order nor straight of line, was just like a river and its tributaries on a map. (I have this image in mind since from our house one could see the entire town.) The road began where the highway ended and it proceeded to the top of the mountain, right to our door, then passed along to the side of the house that faced Canyon Bridge and, from there, traveled over the fearful precipice and up the mountain. I didn't care where it led since to me that seemed the end of all things and all possible roads And there, at the bottom, was the stream as it struggled to be heard while hidden among the ferns. I remember the ferns well because, seeing so many different varieties, I planted them all around our house and put others in butter and lard containers for the bedroom and other rooms. Edward came home one day laughing gleefully. Born and raised on that miserable land with its ferns, the townspeople talked about my fondness for the plant as if it were an obsession.

When I was his fiancée, I didn't have the courage to tell Edward that I didn't want to have any children. I told him soon after the wedding. And the idea of being pregnant there was truly frightening. The place was totally without resources; it didn't even have a doctor at the time! The truth is that within a few months, even with that fatal mistake that impeded any maternal perspectives, I noticed that embraces alone did not fill all the hours of the day. And outside the house, in contact with small talk and gossip that couldn't possibly interest me, life was becoming a neurasthenic monotony. I asked Edward to send for my piano, even with all the risks involved in getting it here.

"Why don't you wait a little longer? It's dangerous, Maria! The piano has to come by oxcart and will be jerked along the mountain. Absurd!"

"But doesn't Mr. Camacho's daughter have a piano? Didn't her piano arrive here safely?"

"It got here, but . . .".

"Very well, I want mine. After all, you only have to pay the moving expenses."

"That's the limit! As if at any time I had denied you anything! And when I remember that Oh, go away!"

It was our first serious quarrel. I didn't expect that reaction from Edward, who was so good, so prudent. Even so, a mildly childish reaction: go away I blamed myself for the argument and ran after him as he left the house and climbed towards the bridge. I called to him and he stopped, as if he hadn't wanted anything else.

"Little fool! I'm not going away. It's you who are going to contract the oxcart. . .".

We continued the climb, arms about each other, helping each other onto the foot of the bridge as we did every afternoon, looking into the distance, the alluring mountain chain, the desire to leave

"Look at that little flower, over there," I said, pointing to some little plants at the side of the precipice. Among them was little red flower with just four very long, thorny, unattractive petals, as if it were some supreme effort made by the rocky terrain to adorn and delight itself.

"Do you want that flower?"

“And if I did, would you get it?”

“That means that you want it,” he murmured while gently squeezing his arm around my shoulder. “I’ll go get it.”

“You’re mad, Edward.”

“You’re going to have it.”

It would have been useless to try and stop that beautiful resolve. I didn’t for a moment consider the possibility of an accident on that his first great decision in life since he was naturally so cautious and methodic.

The little plant was on the other side of the bridge, in a place in which a new, small gully was beginning to form alongside the other one, some two meters from the bottom. The time would come when more bridgework would be needed, if they would only remember--and they wouldn’t remember--to build a support wall. Giving a leap, my husband crossed that eroded area and landed with his feet on the steep bank. A quick movement of admirable precision! Securing his feet on a small space from when the bridge was built, his body had to lean fully against the bank. By raising one of his hands, he managed to get the flower. And by taking advantage of the opposing push of his body, he made the return jump to the road and to my arms, just like a hero, romantically smiling. Understand? It seems that I’ve explained it well after having thought so much about it . . . In one move or the other, principally the second, backwards, if there had been the slightest miscalculation, he would have fallen into the smaller chasm. And if he hadn’t found anything to hold onto, he would have rolled towards the precipice. . . . I only thought about that after the deed was done and upon receiving the flower.

“Crazy! Mad!” I exclaimed smilingly, applauding the feat. “Look where you might have fallen. . .”.

Edward looked to the bottom through the balustrades of the bridge, toward the mystery of the tufts of ferns from which arose the murmuring of the invisible water. And he shivered, turned pale, and caught hold of me as if to keep from falling or so that he might not fall alone. I realized that my Edward was sensible and contradictory! His attitude seemed to disavow his quest for the flower, but I didn’t give the slightest indication of my disappointment. His precious hand had brought me the flower with roots, earth and stones.

“Let’s plant it in a little jar for the bedroom window.”

The piano arrived and was another honeymoon. I knew how to play well and momentarily forgot about that life full of tribulations We sang and the little city, withdrawn and intrigued, listened. And the days passed, more monotonous, less monotonous. Months. A year.

Then we took a trip to visit my family and so Edward could try to get a transfer to a better city, even if it might not be considered a promotion. What joy to be away from that prison! But what sheer torture to return And an even greater torment because of the disappointment with which we returned. The general manager didn’t give my husband any hope--and for reasons that seemed absurd to me. Managers were recommended for promotion according to the productivity of their offices and agencies and our office was in last place, and would have been lower

than that if it were possible. I asked myself how Edward could be blamed since the region was so poor. Today I feel that he by no means could be blamed for the whims of destiny. But then, while trying to defend him, I began to regard my husband as a man without the necessary qualifications to succeed in life. It was not for lack of love, for I was desperately clinging to his embraces in that monotony, but perhaps because of a lack of friendship. Besides, he himself had explained to me that sometimes the general office made exceptions to the rule about promotions. Soon, the rule was no longer absolute and the problem was not just the little town.

I looked at the houses scattered about the mountain top and cried as if about to die. Rarely did we sing. Rarely did we smile. Our love, if it was still love, was like a clinging together of two outcasts, exhausted and no longer consoled. I, at least, was forlorn. Edward, on the other hand, was still outwardly calm. Sad, he was always a little sad. But now, compensating for my own low spirits, he even hid his natural sadness.

Now it no longer mattered that they called me proud or aloof. I didn't pay any visits nor did I communicate with those families that did not even resemble humans. At times I lost all control with Edward and accused him of having brought me to that nightmare of a prison close to the clouds. A spoiled child's exaggerations. Forgiving me my childishness, he'd say: "But I still have hopes, dearest Maria! It's only a question of time and patience."

We left the house, no longer visiting those other creatures, but leaning on the bridge to look at the nighttime horizon, like outcasts awaiting any ship that might come sailing through the clouds. At least I was like an outcast. And I had never seen so many skyrockets in the distances. It seemed that everybody from the small villages and decaying farms had begun setting off skyrockets to compensate for their monotony. Imagine, I did not even realize that we were in the month of Mary, of the Months-of-Mary, and the festivals of Santa Cruz. Since it was cold, we bundled ourselves up in coats. Sometimes it seemed like the landscape was bundled up too. Even the skyrockets in the distance seemed more mysterious. Knowing I would be more disagreeable than ever, Edward no longer showed any desire to be here and there at the same time. Besides, we talked very little: hours of silent contemplation.

One day he announced that there was a vacancy at a nearby office. We were acquainted with this other, equally decadent town that was a point of passage to other places. Only through stubbornness could the general office maintain branches in those villages! My husband was resolved to ask for the transfer.

"It's almost the same thing. But, in any event, it does change one's environment and it is closer to civilization."

He began drawing up the letter, in my presence, by the sad light of the kerosene lamp. I remember that when he wrote "I ask," I took the pencil from him, crossed out that word and wrote above it "I beg."

"That's absurd, Maria! I won't allow anything that might imply a weak character."

"I want it like that, Edward! For the love of God! And add: 'It is also the prayer

of my ailing wife.' You think you can get something from life any other way?"

He was so overcome that he wrote as I wished, without answering my question. A prayer! We addressed ourselves to the general manager as if to a malevolent god . . . And the answer came, dry and negative. The vacancy was already filled by an employee with greater potential. And there were other instructions included that were a reprimand to my husband. There were guarded fortunes in the houses in our region and with just a little compromising on his part (without the bank's intervention for the simple reason that no one around there understood the bank's purpose), the general manager proposed the following action. Edward was to live cordially with those men of fortune, with the proprietors, with the farmers, with the business men, etc., to live with all cordially, to play with personal kindness, to please them, flatter them, and then explain to them the advantages and facilities of a bank. They were instructions, he wrote, that didn't need to be written out for any competent manager and they should be maintained in strictest confidence, even from Edward's two assistants.

"Imagine, Edward! To play with their . . . 'personal kindness!'"

I laughed pitilessly, accentuating those last words with all the negative force and ridicule that I had to give. He stared at me somberly, placed the letter in his wallet and left by the side door in the direction of the bridge, which seemed the only solution for each troubling moment without a solution . . .

I accompanied him, but without hurrying. I, too, leaned on the bridge railing, without saying a word. He sighed deeply.

"You see, dear Maria, there is still an answer," he murmured without conviction. "I'm not a failure. We can go back to living with these people. It's necessary. And you, intelligent as you are, can help me a great deal, presenting ourselves, visiting families, arranging parties, promoting goodwill . . .".

"Live with those scarecrows, never!"

"Then, for health reasons, you return home . . . until I can be discharged."

"You know I am too proud for that! I'll only leave here with you. But I don't believe that you'll ever leave . . .".

And I laughed in that same pitiless way. And words came to me, a torrent of words, pondering what our life would be like in that place without comforts, without hygiene, without money. Poor, always poverty-stricken and with a salary that barely covered our minimum expenses. And now that we were staying there, we could have children, many children. That was the major local activity. Big-bellied, yellow children, like all those playing in the streets.

"I can die in childbirth. What does it matter to me? And we could even get goiters, like everybody else, including those poor devils that pretend to be on their high horse, but are really on their goiters . . .".

I recall that I laughed, surprising myself with that little joke that escaped in a torrent of invectives. But Edward did not smile. He shivered from time to time, seemingly because he wasn't wearing a coat and he was always sensitive to the cold. A spectral muteness prevailed. The overcast afternoon had become evening.

He was silently shaking. Then skyrockets began to explode in the town square to celebrate the Crowning of Our Lady. It wasn't the first time that had happened, but never with such timing.

"Look, the skyrockets are no longer in the distance! Everything is falling into place with your ideal. The skyrockets have even reached you, we can even set some off ourselves. . . ."

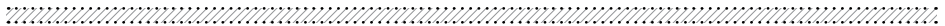
I said this, laughing again. And he remained quiet. Irritated with his invincible silence, I returned to the same topics of my hysterical tantrum, describing what our miniscule, hopeless life on top of the mountain would be like.

"Yes, we'll have to put up with this day by day, hour by hour, and because of whom?"

My Edward looked at me, withdrew a little and stared. But it was already a far-away look--a look from the other side.

"Then put up with it yourself!"

And without my foreseeing his move, let alone preventing it, he jumped off the bridge, dived into the darkness and disappeared below. Forever!



THE BOOK



Behold the Night!

João Alphonsus

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- **ISBN:**
- **Year of Publication:** 1943
- **Original Publisher:** Livraria Martins
- **Number of pages:** 166
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SYNOPSIS

A wife recounts events from her life with her bank manager husband in a remote town at the top of a mountain.

AWARDS

Eis a Noite! received First Place Prize for Best Short Story Collection in 1943 from the Folha Carioca.

THE AUTHOR



João Alphonsus

- **Pen name:** João Alphonsus
- **Other books:**

Contos

Galinha Cega (1931); Pesca da Baleia (1942); Eis a Noite! (1943)

Romances:

Totônio Pacheco (1934); Rola Moça (1938)

Ensaio

“Introdução” (in Poesias Completas de Alphonsus de Guimarães (1938)

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THE WOODEN MACHINE

MIGUEL SANCHES NETO

Translated by John Whitlam

From the chapter entitled HANDS

“An inventor belongs to a country that does not yet exist,” Rischen said to the priest as they wandered around the untidy rooms where the exhibition was still being set up.

The man had a propensity for bursts of enthusiasm. He had created a ventilator to grade coffee which would ensure a better quality product, and had an absolute belief in the country, not the country outside, with all its limitations, with its fledgling industry, but in another which would take its place. Nationalism was another form of religion, a faith in what we cannot yet see.

Azevedo had seen Rischen’s ventilating machine, a simple mechanism, steam-powered, with pulleys, belts and a bean separator. The fan blew aside the lightest beans, creating a standard by weight, unlike the sifting system which selected the beans by size, without eliminating those that had dried up.

Rischen, who was from the city of Rio de Janeiro, explained how the mechanism worked with pride, not in having invented the sorting device, but in the fact that this was possible in the tropics.

“We will produce more coffee because our land is good. But we will produce higher quality coffee because we will have appropriate machinery.”

Hearing the word ‘machinery’, the priest felt sad. Machinery was a collective noun, and he envisioned a ventilator like that on every coffee plantation, but when he thought about his own machine, he had the feeling it would only ever be a one-off, never to be multiplied, the beginning and end of a species that would never reproduce. He could not imagine a stenography machine recording the speeches in every provincial assembly. An Adam without issue.

“Coffee will soon be a byword for this country. Our wealth lies in the union of farming and industry.”

“You should write that down,” said the priest, out of politeness.

Rischen realized at that moment that his entire discourse negated the stenography machine, which did not fit into this paradise of agriculture wedded with industry, and he tried to be kind.

“That’s the history that future generations will write on your machine, Father,” he said.

The over-patriotic tone did not go down well with Azevedo because of its falseness.

"I hope at least it writes more sincere love letters."

"What do you mean 'more sincere'? All love letters are sincere."

"Love letters come from our hands. Writing is very close to the body, intimately attached to the person who loves. The machine will create detachment, making the words more impersonal."

Rischen pondered this statement for a while, unable to understand how anyone could want literature – and there was no more heartfelt literature than love letters – to be detached from people. He walked over to a table where there was a copy of a local newspaper, read a few lines, and returning to the priest, handed it to him.

"You're right. Even when an author belongs to this romantic school of ours, the printed word is colder."

He then took his leave saying he had to visit his factory. There was a joyful haste about him, as if the future was waiting for him at the door of the Technical School. He said a formal goodbye to his friend and left with a dramatic flourish, snapping an imaginary cord that bound them together.

From the chapter entitled CIVILIZATION

Mr Stein was an importer of mainly British products and had grown rich from trading in Brazil. His firm, Stein & Stein, had made a name for itself supplying the most advanced equipment and sundry innovations to rich farm owners. He therefore regarded himself as the very embodiment of civilization and saw the letter as a denial of his hard work, as if importing goods had not contributed to the more sophisticated standard of living the capital had managed to achieve. If it came down to what was produced in this country, they would be reduced to living virtually like savages. An industrial revolution is not invented overnight. And Brazil was still living in the darkest of nights, and it would be a long time before dawn would break in these damned tropics. There was so much talk of light, of sun, but he – who spent his life cooped up in his shop or in his house, he who was familiar with the power of mould in the residences of the capital – knew that out there, whatever time of day it was, there was nothing but night, a long night, incongruously sunlit though it often was.

The fact that the letter had been sent to him was either a mistake or a joke. He had no industry at all; on the contrary, he competed with the poor-quality local products (and always won). If it was intended to provoke him, it deserved an appropriate response; if it was a mistake, some corrective embarrassment was in order.

He had often wondered if it was not time to leave this swamp where he had been wallowing for over two decades. He could not bring himself to go out into the fetid streets of the capital. He could not stand the slaves with vats of human waste on their heads, carrying away the detritus of homes after eight o'clock at night, all of them on their way down to the sea, filling Rua do Ouvidor. This was Brazil, an enormous vat of shit, slopping over and soiling the people carrying it and the streets as well. Walking around the city, at any hour, meant stepping in live faeces.

For this reason he went out as little as possible and tried to recreate English comfort and cleanliness in his own home.

Waggishly, he then set to thinking up a list of Brazilian products that could represent the country. One of them would certainly be the system of waste carriers. The shit shifters. The detritus hat. The poo porters. The sewage slaves. He thought of sending a black man to the exhibition with a well fermented vat of human waste on his head. He would parade before the Emperor and the corseted ladies dressed in the latest Paris fashions.

When he had newly arrived there, he wanted to take advantage of the much vaunted virtues of the beaches and considered renting a house for the purposes of bathing in the sea. He even looked into the best spots for bathing. But after witnessing with his own eyes and nose the procession of waste vats heading down to the sea, and realizing that the awful smell that came from the quayside was not actually from some rapidly putrefying local species of fish, he gave up on the idea. As time went by, he gave up on other things too, to the point where now there was nothing left to keep him in the country. He had no desire to witness this paroxysm of nationalism, which was exactly what the Exhibition was. He laughed at his idea. Shit was representative of the country because it was a product of the animal industry: man ate the fruits of the earth and the liquids from here, which turned into this heady perfume. The vats, which were produced in workshops around the city, were made from Brazilian wood. The waste carriers did exactly the job they were intended for. Laughing at his own diatribe, he imagined how successful this would be in London. A mobile sewerage system, as used in Brazil.

The other example of savage science that he could send to the Exhibition was a particular treatment for inflammation. It had been one of his salesmen, returning from Manaus, who had told him of this method. In the middle of the jungle, with no medical care available, the indigenous and local inhabitants used alligator faeces as medicine. They leave the droppings to dry in the sun until they turn white and have the consistency of a crumbly biscuit, and then they sprinkle them on a poultice with milk, applying this to the affected area. They also use a tea of this musk to cure chest infections. This was the industry that should take on the world. It was not the stuff of scientists, but of medicine men, with their superstitious beliefs.

Robert had already forgotten his irritation entirely and was now enjoying compiling his list of great things from Brazil. He recalled a pain treatment used by Amazon Indians recounted to him by the same employee. When an Indian is stung by some spider or other, of the many that infest those forests, he knows it will be extremely painful, so he gets a friend to stick a tube up his rear end and blow through it hard. This relieves his suffering. Robert could have an etching done of an Indian blowing through a bamboo tube up another's backside, showing the look of lecherous pleasure on the victim's face and explaining this innovative method, which ought to be introduced in all hospitals; it would certainly be very useful in wartime, with injured soldiers deprived of the company of the opposite sex; that way they would get some pleasure and a little relief. Together with the etching he would send a printed explanation of the beneficial effects of this technique.

There was also a process for improving conception among tribal males. As in colder climes, there are men here too who are infertile, leading to marital discontent. But such difficulties would be a thing of the past if they were to adopt the tradition of the Indians from the Quatrimanhi river, a tributary of the Rio Negro. There you can find a tribe who, in their desire to increase their numbers, have a habit of splitting young men's penises to halfway down their length, which has immediate effects on reproduction. The women start getting pregnant more often. Not to mention the additional pleasure they must feel on realizing that it is not just one penis that is penetrating them, but a little monster with two heads. For the Exhibition, Robert could make a wooden replica of this two-headed penis, from good Brazilian wood.

This was how he whiled away his evening in his two-storey house in Rua dos Pescadores, with the doors and windows closed at all times in an attempt to shut out the hubbub outside, the unbearable ringing of the bells of so many churches, from small to large, the endless gossip in the shops, the wild shouts of those driving vehicles, as well as the creak of wheels scraping on the rough gravel of the street, the shameless barking of freely roaming dogs, in their lascivious dealings, the indecent mooing of the dairy cows and their calves kept in neighbouring yards, the tearful voices of beggars and drunken slaves, as well as the infernal cries of hawkers selling water, coal, chickens, vegetables, cane juice, sweets, candied fruits, dolls and even pigs, live pigs, that would be bled in backyards, adding to the din of the unbearable city. This horrible music had the effect of expanding his catalogue of national aberrations and he imagined the effects it would have on a population who now dreamed of a homegrown industry. There is no industry without a system, and systems only thrive where reason prevails. And this was a world of confusion.

Lastly, he recalled the case of turtle butter, sold on a few stalls in Passo de Ver-o-Peso, the origin of which Robert had sought to discover when he first lived here. It was another example of local industry. They dig up river banks in the Amazon in search of turtle eggs deposited at low tide. They fill a small canoe with these and then the men crush them with their feet as if treading clay or grapes. While doing this, they pour on a certain amount of river water. The job of separating the substances found in the eggs is left to nature, with the fatty part soon rising to the surface. This fat, which still contains impurities, is heated in large pans to finally purify it. It is then put into jars and sold for various purposes. It is used for lighting, but also as a condiment and to preserve food. It is an industry in which man has little or no work to do.

He could even send along some etchings showing scenes of cannibalism in the jungles of Brazil, extolling the virtues and aroma of human flesh. He would send a chunk of salted monkey meat and invite the public to pull strips off the leg of the young warrior from the Timbiras tribe. Doesn't this country pride itself on the cattle slaughtered for public consumption? The local newspaper published news from the abattoir almost every day: "176 head of cattle were slaughtered yesterday for consumption in the city, including 4 calves which were sold for between 160 to 200 réis a pound." Reviving the old taste for human flesh would be to show who were are.

It was while considering these and other acts of vengeance that Mr Robert ate his dinner, then smoked a Havana cigar and did his accounts. When the black maid who moved around the house as if she owned it came to look for him in the study, she found him cheerfully smiling at his ledger of incomings and outgoings. Business had been no better or worse that day, but he did not hide his contentment.

Ana moved closer to the boss's chair and put her foot on his leg. He lifted her skirt and took hold of her firm legs. He took off the ankle boots she wore in imitation of European fashion. He gradually moved his hand up towards her thigh, encountering the same rock-hard firmness. He then knelt down, and she covered his head and almost his whole body with her voluminous skirt, feeling the snuffling of the animal who was drinking at her loving cup.

She was known in the house, and even in the shop, as the mistress of the master. Surrendering to her charms, he would always abuse her verbally while she dominated him, but today he was a thirsty young boy sucking up her fluids.

When they lay down on the bed with the mosquito net, after rolling around on the rug in the study, he said:

"Shall we make a little Brazilian?"

Ana smiled in agreement, but had her wiles to avoid having a child who could then be sold with her on the slave market as just another item on the list of coloured goods. The auctioneer would even add information in the auction catalogue about a slave with refined manners, suitable for nursing the children of her future masters: a girl with good milk and an infant. Mr Robert would be a representative of the country's industry, producing another child for the glory of Brazil.

But he did not make any arrangements the next day, only doing so weeks later. He left it to the last minute to send in his contribution, ignoring the request from the commission that they be informed in advance of the nature and dimensions of the product. On 2nd, shortly before the opening of the Exhibition, the employees of Stein & Stein delivered an enormous box, which was only accepted out of deference to the sender. The inspectors gave instructions for moving it, sending it to a room at the back of the School where there was a growing collection of the most diverse products which had been submitted after the deadline. But there was no room for it there, so as it was from an English merchant, the workers decided to open the box then and there, still in the courtyard, with a lot of people around, to see if it could be accommodated in one of the rooms that were already set up. Father Azevedo was also there, walking through the rooms looking at the other products. He paid no attention to what the workers were doing before the uproar that was to ensue.

Using tools, two slaves carefully pulled out the nails. It could be some easily breakable object. As soon as the main lid was removed, the slaves were unable to contain their gales of laughter. The inspector who was overseeing the work from some distance away moved closer and flew into a rage.

"What an outrage!"

He set off in search of a member of the commission to report the case and to see what should be done. Employees always want to know what they should do

when anything even slightly untoward happens. That is why there were so many bosses in government departments, for decisions of this kind. Prompted by the inspector's brusque movements and the laughter of the slaves, exhibitors and workers gathered around.

"Old Robert's gone off his rocker," someone commented.

"At least he's got a sense of humour."

"And no good sense."

"Too true."

"I don't think we invented it."

"I'd give it a gold medal if I was on the jury."

"What's going on here?"

"Oh, my goodness!"

And the voices were lost in the hubbub that ensued. Everyone was talking at once, making it impossible to pinpoint who said what or to catch the comments in their entirety:

"... typical of a foreigner who ..."

"... think about what this means ..."

"... maybe he's right ..."

"... the impertinence of them ..."

"... maybe they don't exist where he comes from ..."

The security guard had to break up the crowd of onlookers to make way for the director of the Commission, José Agostinho Moreira Guimarães, to inspect the object. But he did not even look at it properly before turning to the people and saying that there had been a mix-up.

"This object" – he chose the word very carefully – "was to be sent to an auction house. As Mr Robert had promised to send something to the Exhibition, his employees were not entirely clear as to his wishes and have delivered this to the wrong place."

No one believed the story, nor was it intended that they should, but some explanation had to be given.

"Now I advise all of you to resume your tasks. The Emperor will soon be arriving."

People moved away, but not very far, and waited around in the courtyard to see what would happen. It was some time before the lid was placed back on the box, but not hammered down. From time to time, a member of the Commission would appear, and with a grim look, peer inside at the contents which did not even need to be put on display to arouse interest.

"Where can we send this?" asked Dr José Agostinho.

"To the Palace," answered one of the inspectors.

"Certainly not! We cannot compromise the Imperial family."

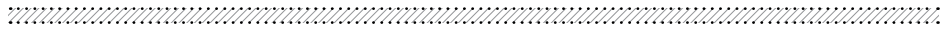
"Perhaps to the Navy Arsenal?"

"That won't do either. Let's return it to its owner."

When the lid was nailed down and the box started to be carried away, which involved crossing the entire courtyard and going out through the main door,

someone from one of the rooms shouted that the Empire was dependent on this great invention.

And everyone laughed, even those who thought it was an outrage for Mr Robert to have sent a whipping post to the National Exhibition. It was big enough for five slaves, bound to it both by their hands and feet and by their necks. He had inherited this piece of Brazilian ingenuity when he bought the house where he lived. He had never used it and had often thought of selling it to an auctioneer or one of his customers, for whom it might still have some use, but it had remained on his property, forgotten about. It was old and stained, perhaps with blood or vomit, but it was made of hardwood. And it could last for another fifty years. It would make a big hit in London.



THE BOOK



The Wooden Machine

Miguel Sanches Neto

- **Original title:** A maquina de madeira
- **ISBN:** 9788535921922
- **Year of Publication:** 2012
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 248
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

In this historical novel, the writer Miguel Sanches Neto uses the trajectory of the priest Azevedo, precursor of the typewriter and almost unknown among us, to narrate the formation of the identity of a country. With humor and a look sometimes scathing, shows a Rio de Janeiro that tries to go from exotic to modern, a place where European winds live with remnants of colonial Brazil.

In the mismatch of progressive ideas and old national traditions, there is a current reflection on a country on the move.

AWARDS

1991 - Prêmio Nacional Luis Delfino, por Inscrições a giz.

2002 - Prêmio Cruz e Souza, da Fundação Catarinense de Cultura, por Hóspede secreto.

2007 - Medalha do Mérito Fernando Amaro, da Câmara Municipal de Curitiba.

THE AUTHOR



Miguel Sanches Neto

- **Pen name:** Miguel Sanches Neto
- **Other books:** Máquina de madeira, 2012, Companhia das Letras
Chá das cinco com o vampiro, 2010, Objetiva
Primeiros contos, 2010, Arte & Letra
A primeira mulher, 2008, Record
Amor de menino, 2008, Galera
Contos para ler no bar, 2007, Record
O rinoceronte ri, 2006, Arte & Letra
Venho de um país obscuro e outros poemas, 2005, Bertrand Brasil
Um amor anarquista, 2005, Record
Contos para ler em viagem, 2005, Record
Contos para ler ouvindo música, 2005, Record
Amanda vai amamentar, 2005, Bertrand Brasil
Herdando uma biblioteca, 2004, Record
Hóspede secreto, 2003, Record
Chove sobre minha infância, 2000, Record

THE TRANSLATOR

John Whitlam

Born in London, England, John Whitlam graduated from the University of

Cambridge with an MA in Modern and Medieval Languages. He later obtained a second MA, in Advanced Japanese Studies, from the University of Sheffield. After working for ten years as a staff

translator for the EU, he moved to Brazil in 2004 and now works as a writer, editor, translator and university lecturer, specializing in lexicography and language teaching.

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WHAT ARE THE BLIND DREAMING OF?

NOEMI JAFFE

Translated by Vivian Schlesinger

Part 1.

The Diary of Lili Jaffe (1944-1945)

Szenta, April 25, 1944

Everyone around me, including myself, is sad. We know what is happening and also what will happen. My father sits on the couch all morning, quiet, staring into nothing. At times he looks at us and closes his sad eyes. My mother comforts us: she will not believe in evil, but she packs our bags, makes sweets and sighs inwardly, so that no one will see.(...)

No one will tell us anything, but we know what is happening. We knew that on the following day, at eight o'clock, the Germans would come to get us and tear us out of our home.

Auschwitz, June 4, 1944

(...) We heard a German shouting from the distance: right, left... When we got closer, mother hid me under her coat, (...) trying to keep them from separating us. We reached the first German. He commanded us to go to the left side. Another one examined us and let us through.

At midnight we entered the concentration camp.(...)

There was fire, flames and the feeling that we were closer and closer to the fire. (...)

August 2nd

It has been almost a month since I started in the kitchen. I got used to the fact that we had as much food as we needed. But it was not enough for us. We knew many who went hungry. (...) It is very dangerous to steal, even in an organized fashion. Woe is he who is caught by a German! (...)

The day before yesterday, Hajnal brought again almost a kilo of margarine.

Alice immediately hid it among the cabbage heads, with the intention to take it out at night, before we went back to the barracks. Then one of the girls asked Alice for some margarine, because she had none. She did not feel well, could not eat the hard bread (...)

While they were there, on their knees, I came back. On the way, I was told what happened. I never even thought about what I should do. I ran straight to the German woman to tell her I was guilty. When the other girls saw what I was about to do, they held me and would not let me go, because they knew it would mean death. I was stronger than them, search time was near. (...) And I was not afraid of death. I went in. Knocked on the door. In the room was the German woman and a German man.

- Why are you here? What do you want?

At that point I could not reply. I was crying, and amidst my tears, I said:

- Let my cousins go. They are not guilty. I stole the margarine.(...)

I tried to beg for mercy, but she did not even want to hear it (...)

And she left. Meanwhile, he led me outside to a pile of bricks, where he commanded me to kneel. And to hold a huge brick over my head, a brick I could barely lift off the ground. (...)

I lifted the brick as high as my head, with tremendous effort, but I could not hold it up. It fell on my head. But I was strong. In my mind I saw everyone going through roll call, including my cousins. Tears fell from my eyes like rain, not because I was sorry for what I had done, but out of sheer pain.

I knelt there, for two hours.

Part 2.

What are the blind dreaming of?

Noemi Jaffe

DESTINY

(...) She plainly believes in destiny. For her, as for all those who believe in it, destiny is a force that determines by anticipation the events in the lives of all beings. Nothing is random. Otherwise, in her opinion, she would not be alive, the strokes of luck that made her survive would not have happened. (...)

To destiny one must merely submit (...) Destiny is that which one goes through; it is the place one goes to, even if the paths be unknown, undesired, or tortuous. Tragic characters dressed up in goat costumes, thus the name tragedy, from tragos, goat. Their song, odia, is similar to that of a caprine animal in agony, nearing death; a drunken song, dionysiac, of someone whose death does not

frighten, due to the state of unconsciousness. It is the scapegoat, which brings about catharsis (...)

Destination, fatality, fact. Destination is a fact and one does not question facts.

It seems easy to understand why she believes in destiny in such a sacred, untouchable way. As if this belief would help her to also expiate the guilt of having survived, as if it were an explanation for everything: for the death of others as

well as for her survival. This faith would also have helped her build the pyramid of forgetfulness, starting from which she seems to have succeeded at surviving in the best possible way. If everything was already predicted, it is more conceivable to forget or even to survive. (...) Even if remembering or disbelieving fatality sounds more painful or complex, attributing everything to foreign forces, predesigned, is also not simple. It is a cutting pain, of a straight-edge razor, from the impossibility of glimpsing beyond the fact (...).

The fact, or destiny (or is fact destiny?), is that this seems to be only one of many random events, strokes of accident, which happened to her and which announced, symbolically, a conspiracy of signals that enabled her to survive.

(Luck is a chain of random events also manipulated by the lucky person, who embraces and manages them in such a way that they keep occurring in his favor.)

Why were some lucky and others not? Why did the happy coincidences only happen to so few? Were they chosen? (...)

She doesn't know why; she simply accepts it. For her, there must have been some reason. Perhaps the only reason is the way each was able and knew how to handle random events, taking advantage of even the most insignificant opportunities. Perhaps not even this. (...)

STONE

There is no way to dramatize or metaphorize the stone. And yet it is the most vivid event, fact, in her memory and that of her daughters. It is as if this fact were a synthesis of her and of the war, even though it is not. There is no synthesis of war; there is nothing that can symbolize war or suffering, although the stone object, the punishment object, the butter object can each be transformed into a symbol. But no one, from outside this story, has any right to transform this object into a story. How can a thing like this turn into a story? How should one tell this fact? How should one listen to this fact? In 2009, in Auschwitz, this stone could be everywhere, any place could be the place where she held this stone. And yet, this place, this stone, would never be there, because what happened, even if it was at a specific place, is no longer at that place. (...) Only those who did not live it have the duty to remember it, without the least hope of doing so, because it is gone. The attempt to see the place where things happened, and once there, still see again exactly the stone that was carried or the point at which she carried it, is so poetic it is ridiculous. (...)

One who takes pity understands pain, and pain cannot be comprehended; the suffering comprehends nothing. So what is the moral of the stone? What sense in knowing this terrible story? Perhaps simply the knowledge that it makes no sense and that there is nothing to learn from it. One must not, must not, must not be in the least tempted to turn her into a heroine on account of such atrocious suffering. There, in the camp, suffering was common and her punishment was even moderate and bearable. But it is so difficult to look at her slowly and not think she

held the stone; if she has forgotten, how did this define her? Or was it the stone, among so many other things, that determined her reason (or non-decision, it is impossible to tell) for forgetting? She forgot, she thinks no more about any of that, but if anyone asks, or if she decides to tell, it is the stone she talks about. Why did the officer decide not to send her to the gas chamber and agreed to reduce the penalty? Why did she choose to pay for an act she did not commit? Why did her cousins ask her to do it? (...)

The stone object is greater than the stone-story; than the stone-symbol. But those who did not live the stone, who are children of the fact, can only think about it as an indirect event, as a symbolic force.(...)

Being the child of a survivor comprises, somewhere in a remote and inhospitable place in memory, the temptation to have been in the place of the survivor. Not allowing her to live through all that, traveling to the past and to be able to immobilize it, to kill the officer who commanded the punishment. To pierce time and camp rules and save the mother. (...) The wish to save the mother is the wish to excise from memory the suffering of the mother so that one may be free of it, so that one can live without the stone.

SPOKESMAN

A spokesman is the keeper of the voice. He hears the voice than another person did not emit, takes it, saves it in his pocket and carries it, like a billfold or a key. Then he, voice-carrier, transmits to others what is in that voice he saved. As though he took it out of a wallet where he keeps his documents, strewn sheets of paper, forgotten, pennies, pictures, money, long-expired credit cards, the old prayer, two match sticks and a toothpick, two bank statements, a dentist calling card and a grocery list. But he also takes out of the wallet things that are not even there, because he carries what the voice did not say and perhaps did not even know it would say, if it did say. A spokesman is a thief of the worst kind. The owner of the voice gives him permission to steal; but he steals more than the owner allowed him, because he is now mute. He is voiceless. The owner of the voice is forced to hear what the spokesman says and to accept that that is what he would say himself. Or worse, what he would not be able to say himself. the spokesman steals the owner's voice and outdoes it, he brings it to its knees.

Is the spokesman envious?

The spokesman carries the most precious that anyone has. Why does the owner of the voice allow the spokesman to carry his words? Why won't he speak for himself? The owner of the voice won't speak because he can't, he has no ability, has no time, does not remember, does not manage, does not control, does not articulate. He gives another the license to articulate his ideas and opinions. Go, keep them. But which are they, voice owner? I don't know, I trust you. Make them up.

When the voice owner has forgotten his words, or never even produced them,

and someone comes along who wants to carry his voice, he lets him. Remember for me that which I have forgotten.

But don't tell me. I don't want to remember. You do this for yourself alone, not for me. I give you my voice, my memory, because I don't care about them. You do. So go and do it. Keep them and enjoy.

Here, there

Leda Cartum

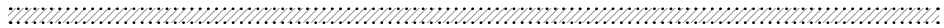
In February 2009, when we entered Auschwitz together, my mother and I, I felt nothing. It's not that I was indifferent to it: I could not discern any feeling in the deep white I was living. I could not say: it's this; or else, it's that. I could not say anything, as if all words had dried up completely, and no matter how hard I tried to turn to this one or that one, none of them meant anything. Nothing meant anything - and there was so much nothing accumulated in that place suspended, barred from time, that I could barely breathe there. I could not stop at any building, any historic record, any photo or name or shoe. I did not want to be there. I had the feeling of facing the inside of something that can never be turned inside out to reveal its original form: it was like a dome that held air so dense that it hurt on its way in and out of nostrils. Nothing there seemed real, even if everything gave off an odor of reality I had never felt before. And, in anxiety to escape as quickly as possible, in anger for what I did not feel or for what I should feel, appalled to find they had rebuilt part of a gas chamber that had been destroyed by an American bomb, I walked away from every building and exhibit and thrust my feet deep into the snow of Auschwitz. (...)

(...) Soon after having left Auschwitz, I understood something that always haunted me, which was wholly revealed to me at that point: living, for me, had always been a quest to understand this miracle of simultaneity. Ever since I was a child, before I went to sleep, this was one of my greatest sources of anxiety: how is it possible that I am in my bedroom, lying on this bed with the lights out, and at the same time, across the world, someone is being born, and in the depths of the ocean the whales are singing, and someone is killing someone, somebody is crying. (...)

But it was the trip in 2009 to Germany and Poland that showed me the depth of this anxiety that had always haunted me: simultaneity is not merely spatial, it is also temporal. This must have also been the cause of the placeless storm I felt upon entering Auschwitz. To realize that while I am here, living my life, things that have already passed, whether or not they are related to my existence, continue to happen and to echo everywhere, just as if the lives of other times went on because they reverberated in our current lives. My bedtime anxieties proved, then, far deeper than I even had any knowledge of - because they did not only concern all the

lives that went on while I was there, they concerned everything that had already happened before and that somehow went on inside me. It is difficult to grasp the dimension of my past and the fundamental influence of things that happened before I was born on that which I am today. The past is a shadow we accumulate: a shadow that has no real weight, but which still bends our back in a real curve. If it is unsettling that, because I have no access to the days I lived, they became mere memories, it is even further unnerving to find there is an entire past previous to my birth, which somehow defines me as a person. When I was in Auschwitz, it was like meeting this time which for me is abstract, but which carries a concrete burden (as I gradually understood) that at times seems far stronger and more powerful than any concrete object around me.

I was born in São Paulo, in the late 80's. I always considered myself Jewish, but I was never able to say exactly why. Pessach and Rosh Hashana, every year, were a reason for a family reunion, and we celebrate together something which marks us and defines us in terms of identity: I noticed it ever since I was a child, but I did not know what it was. I never had to wear any sign on my clothes that identified me as part of a people. My life was exactly like the lives of all others around me; but I always knew of something I could not define. It was difficult (still is) to understand the dimensions of the identity I carried, although I always knew I carried something that comprised me.



THE BOOK



What are the blind dreaming of?

Noemi Jaffe

• **Original title:**

O que os cegos estão sonhando?

• **ISBN:** 978-85-7326-502-6

• **Year of Publication:** 2012

• **Original Publisher:** Editora 34

• **Number of pages:** 238

• **Total printing in Brazil:** 2.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

“What are the blind dreaming of?” consists of three different parts. The first one is the diary written by Lili Jaffe, in 1945, in Sweden, after she was rescued from the Auschwitz concentration camp by The Red Army. The diary reports the routine of a 19-year-old war prisoner, the author’s mother, since she was imprisoned until her liberation. The second part of the book are texts that range between fiction and essays, written by Noemi Jaffe, trying to understand issues related to survival and memory, such as “anger”, “language”, “forgetfulness”, “food”, “motherhood” and many others. The third and briefest part was written by Leda Cartum, Lili’s granddaughter and Noemi’s daughter, and it speculates on the meaning of belonging to the third generation of survivors, Judaism and the diaspora. Therefore, the book

contains three generations of women, with three distinct ways of expression, world vision and experiences.

PRESS REVIEWS

Revista Piauí – September 2012 - <http://revistapiaui.estadao.com.br/edicao-72/diario-liwia-jaffe/nem-vivos-nem-mortos>

O Estado de São Paulo – November 13th, 2012 - <http://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral/noemi-jaffe-lanca-o-que-os-cegos-estao-sonhando,959738>

Revista Serafina – March 31st, 2013 -

Marcelo Coelho’s column at Ilustrada (Folha de S.Paulo) – April, 24th, 2013 -

THE AUTHOR



Noemi Jaffe

• **Pen name:** Noemi Jaffe

• **Other books:**

Short Stories

A verdadeira história do alfabeto (The true history of the alphabet) – November 2012/ 128 pp./ Companhia das Letras

Poetry

Todas as coisas pequenas (All the things little) – November

2005/ 92 pp./ Editora Hedra

Chronicles

Quando nada está acontecendo

(When nothing is going on) - October

2011/ 152 pp./ Editora Martins Fontes

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THE TROUBADOUR

RODRIGO GARCIA LOPES

Translated by Marco Alexandre Olivera

Shots in the dark

After finishing breakfast with bacon, country eggs and cake, served by Gloria, the cook, a corpulent black woman with a generous smile, the men went into the meeting room. Garden stood up, greeted Lovat and took a seat next to the table. Blake sat in a corner and started to leaf through an edition of the local newspaper, the Paraná-Norte. The four-page tabloid was the enterprise's main piece of propaganda. Underneath the title PARANÁ PLANTATIONS — NORTH PARANÁ LAND COMPANY came the words AGENTS EVERYWHERE.

The cook entered and left a jar of water and three glasses on a tray. She exchanged a few words with Lovat, who treated her courteously, asking about her children, her husband, and her health. Then Gloria excused herself and closed the door. Garden held his safari hat over his lap and examined a few documents. He was restless.

"So, what happened?" Lovat asked, without beating around the bush.

"We're still trying to understand. It was a huge blow for us. Nussbaum and the Müllers were people of the highest order, excellent employees," Garden said, shifting in his chair." According to the sheriff's report, on August 1 Müller caught Nussbaum and Magdalene in his bed. The neighbors heard gunshots and screaming coming from the house that night."

"Where did they live?"

"In a small house on Heimtal St."

"I believe I don't remember the Müllers."

"They were good doctors. They spoke several languages, which made the house calls easier. You know, besides malaria, we've been having lots of accidents in the forest, during the clearcutting. The doctor along with his partner and assistant, Dr. Magdalene, were recommended by Eckstein."

"Yes, I remember that."

"They were doing a good job, since we don't have enough doctors in the city. It was a tragedy what happened." Garden took a sip of water and then wiped the sweat that ran in streams down his face. "Today I feel sorry for not having taken seriously the rumors that Nussbaum was having an affair with Dr. Magdalene, and right under his nose. A week before, at a party, employees witnessed the doctor

threaten to kill him if he didn't stay away from his wife. 'And if I kill you, nobody'll find you,' he said. Something more serious only didn't happen right there and then because Müller was held back," Garden continued, breathing the air out of his lungs. "We should've transferred Nussbaum to São Paulo for a while."

"When did you last see Nussbaum?" the lord asked.

"On the night of the incident, right before going home. I had just returned from city hall around nine o'clock and I decided to get some papers at the company. I saw lights on and noticed that he was still working. It was common for him to stay until late at the office. You knew him, you know that when he had some deadline to meet, his spirit would become attached to work and aloof from the world. Nussbaum was very dedicated."

"Yes, very dedicated", Lovat said. "Did you speak to him before leaving?"

"Quickly. He only asked me to lock the front door, since he had a copy of the key. I went back, locked it from the outside and went home."

Blake raised his eyes to the mayor. Garden sat rigid in his chair, arms by his side.

"When did you notice the chief accountant was missing?", Blake wanted to know, intruding on the conversation."

Garden glanced at Blake and then looked at the lord again.

"Well, first we missed the doctors, who usually came to work together. On the morning following the incident, around eight o'clock, patients came to complain that the Müllers hadn't shown up at the hospital. A little later we found out that Nussbaum also hadn't come to work. We thought it was strange, since it was extremely rare for him to miss work, it wasn't like him. He always asked someone to tell us when he couldn't show up. I asked some men to go to his house, but he wasn't there. I immediately went after the sheriff, who was already coming back from the Müllers' house."

"The sheriff was the first to arrive at the scene?," Lovat asked.

"Yes. Early in the morning he had gone looking for one of the neighbors. Besides hearing the screams and the shots, two neighbors saw the couple inside the car, leaving the residence."

"What time was that?"

"Around eleven-thirty at night."

Garden took a sip of water. Lovat signaled for the company director and city mayor to continue.

"There was nobody at the house. The door had no sign of being forced open. The accountant's automobile was there, but not Müller's. There was a lot of blood and bullet holes at the scene. I could see it for myself. He'll be able to tell you all of the details.

Lovat stroked his moustache and then asked:

"Do you have any theory about what happened?"

Garden blinked his eyes a little and continued:

"To speak frankly, sir, crimes of passion are common around here. Let's say that there is an imbalance between the sexes. There aren't enough women in the

city. Müller had reasons to be jealous of his wife. Beatings were constant. For me, he committed the crime to save his honor. He returned from the house call to a farm earlier than expected, so he caught his wife with Nussbaum. He killed him and ran away with his wife.”

Lovat stared at Garden for a moment, without saying anything. Garden flexed his mouth muscles in an attempt to smile.

“I know you’re worried, but I must say that we have already replaced the three employees. I assure you that this incident has not affected business operations at all. Our lot sales have not been compromised and...”

The lord slammed his fist on the table. Blake was startled.

“Are you telling me that a crime happens at the company, involving important employees, and everything is alright?,” Lovat yelled. “Why didn’t anyone tell me about this?”

Garden dried the sweat on his face with a handkerchief. His jaw constricted.

“It wasn’t our mistake, but that of the branch in São Paulo. They were the ones who were responsible for breaking the news to the office in London. It’s strange that Mr. Eckstein didn’t let you know.”

Lovat shook his head, making an impatient face. He looked out the window and saw the street, the rivers of mud stubbornly refusing to dry. He turned to Garden and said:

“Nilson, you’re in charge here. How did you let things get to this point? We’ve got to set the example. This is terrible for business!”

He then stood up, crossed his hands behind his back and started walking around the room, causing the floorboards to creak. Garden bit his lips under his little moustache while he followed Lovat’s silent pacing. The lord sat down again, took a sip of water and asked, with his voice a little calmer:

“What else do you know about Nussbaum’s last steps?”

“What I know is that on that night he stopped by the Eldorado bar. He was drunk, it seems... He was distressed, and muttered incoherent things. They reported that he stayed only a little while, said good-bye and mentioned that he was going to solve a problem.”

“A problem,” Lovat murmured. “Did he say what it was?”

“No, he only said he wasn’t feeling well. He said he needed medical care, and left. I suggest you talk to Günther and Razgulaeff. They were at the bar and were some of the last people to see him.”

Lovat agreed and made a vague gesture. Blake finished jotting down the names in his notebook and raised his head to Lovat.

“What was the Müllers’ routine like?,” the lord asked.

“They didn’t go out much.”

“And?”

“I believe the doctor didn’t like to show off his wife outside the workplace, except for, every once and a while, at company dances. They were quite reserved. So much so that they didn’t even have servants.”

"Nothing relevant was found, not even a clue?"

"If so, the sheriff's got it. He's the one who did the investigation at the scene. The Müllers' house has been abandoned since then, until his family in Germany decides what to do with the property. Now in his office I assure you nothing was touched," Garden said.

"And where is Nussbaum's house located?" Lovat asked, turning his eyes again to Garden.

"He lived alone, on Higienópolis, a new avenue that Razgulaeff planned, but since the incident a family has been living there. We've been facing a serious housing problem for newly arrived buyers. The property belonged to the company. Nussbaum intended to move soon to the house he was building."

"What happened to the accountant's belongings, his personal objects?"

Garden gulped, and tightened his lips. After a few seconds, he said:

"After the incident, his bags, his clothes and the rest of his personal objects were donated, his little furniture was auctioned and what was left, burned."

Lovat and Blake looked at each other. The lord snorted and scratched his face.

"And may I know who had such an awful idea?"

"A negligent employee, sir."

"Where is he?"

Garden took his eyes off Lovat for a few seconds, then stared at him again.

"Mr. Francisco died last month, while he was helping our men cut down a forest to clear new lots. Yeah, we've been seeing many accidents like this."

Lovat breathed out through his nose. He shook his head for a moment, his face stern. He glanced sidelong at the newspaper in the chair next to the translator and turned to the mayor:

"What's the circulation of the Paraná-Norte?"

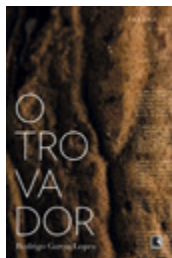
"Two thousand copies."

"Increase it to four thousand. Put an ad in the front, offering a generous reward to whoever provides any clues that can take us to their whereabouts. Make posters and spread them in all the train cars from Rolândia to Ourinhos. Surely there are photographs of them on their contract forms."

[...]



THE BOOK



The Troubadour

Rodrigo Garcia Lopes

- **Original title:** O Torvador
- **ISBN:** 978-85-01-03034-4
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Record
- **Number of pages:** 406
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 2.200 copies

SYNOPSIS

London, 1936. At the Paraná Plantations office, Lord Lovat receives a mission: to travel to Brazil and investigate the disappearance of three employees from the British land company, owner of 13 square miles of forest and some of the most fertile lands in the world. A series of murders occur as soon as Lovat and the translator-interpreter Adam Blake arrive in Londrina, the “New Eldorado.” In this detective novel, a mystery lurking between the lines of a medieval troubadour song holds the key to unraveling a plot that could jeopardize the security of the British Empire. Official booktrailer: <https://vimeo.com/105687264>

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Rodrigo Garcia Lopes

- **Pen name:** Rodrigo Garcia Lopes
- **Other books:**

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SILVIANO SANTIAGO

Translated by Lisa Shaw

Prospector

Iwonder if our first meeting occurred because he alone wanted it to and willed it to happen? Could the version of events that I gave you all be false?

Could the supposition that this first encounter was the result of a strange coincidence - although more convincing - also be quite false?

Neither too much, neither too little.

I can categorically and responsibly assure you that there is only one concrete, and therefore indisputable and true fact: he was the one who approached me from the right on Carijós street, on the corner with Praça Sete square.

The passengers who catch the tram from the final stop are different from the passengers who, returning home after a day at work, wait for the bus in the city centre. The bus passengers form a long and well-organised single file, running parallel to the edge of the pavement, from where they inspect those hurrying past in the opposite direction. Those who are in the queue chiefly entertain themselves by watching those who walk past as if they were the day's newspaper headlines so they can speak ill of them. But waiting patiently for the bus can be a profitable experience for the not-so-beautiful dreamer and office assistant. When she gets to the door of the vehicle, she continues to look into the distance. Finally she spots her colleague and waves at her. She leaves the queue, forsaking her hard-earned place, and goes with her friend to the back of the line. She begins the slow journey again before locking herself away at home to have dinner with her family and a night of rest. She feels a sense of fulfilment for having had the courage and the few extra minutes to flirt with the young men who walked past on their own.

The tram passengers do not form a single file running parallel to the edge of the pavement, if for no other reason than because the vehicle has multiple entrances on both sides. Each bench in the tram has a door to its left and right. The step being lowered and also raised can cause a jam among the mid-fielders, rousing them into action and making the passengers trying to get on and those trying to get off push and shove each other aggressively. The latter, shoulder to shoulder, are arranged into two or three parallel and continuous lines. Like zombies magnetised by the tram tracks and the electric cables connecting the posts to each other, and stretching as far as the eye can see down the street or the avenue, they stand there waiting for heaven knows what. The most courageous are not prepared to give up the comfort of sitting down on the journey, so they go into battle. Those

who are dragging their tired and lazy bodies home, however, prefer to remain leaning against the wall of the building next to the stop. Passengers who are laid-back by nature detest the bodily combat with those getting off at the last stop. They are the ones who are not afraid to travel on the tram step.

Zeca came up to me on the right (following the contours of the Praça Sete square's perfect circumference) and immediately started chatting. That was after I had made it clear to him, with a friendly smile and turning my body to the right, that I recognised him without actually knowing who he was.

Whether he wanted to approach me and willed it to happen is still something of a mystery. If there were ulterior motives, it is not difficult to discover his motivations, especially with the information that has been accumulated over time and that I will be passing on to the reader; if there were further hidden agendas, one can only hazard a guess at these or, at least, consider them a mystery. Today I can ponder over the ulterior motives and hidden agendas again and make up my mind, assuming it is humanly possible to reach a conclusion that is not arbitrary or invented in the heat of the moment.

I prefer to attribute his motivation for approaching me to his ulterior motives and just guess at the content of the hidden agenda. But first I will move on to an illuminating exercise that has been occupying increasing amounts of space and time in the life of this retired professor. My digressions revolve around the differential role that each of the five senses, if given precedence, fulfils in the formation of the adult human personality.

The departure point for my reflections on this subject is as follows: none of us has the ability to give continuous, equal and balanced weight to each of our five senses. In everyday life each human being's actions are conditioned by the privilege that they give to one, and only one, of the senses, which, in turn, definitively shape a person's character and acts. Based on the privileging of one of the five senses, individuals establish and define themselves differently in the world. In ideal circumstances the unconscious emphasis given to the chosen sense locates each of us — in this not-so-varied human comedy — into a universal family of psychological types. We are not so different from each other, and Westerners are not as different from Easterners as they would have us believe, since we all belong to five distinct lineages.

Let us now look at the first universal family.

Affectionate types are also angry and they can be identified by the importance they attach to the sense of touch. Governed by opposite and extreme feelings, they physically handle another person and acutely sense the quality of that person's skin, the strength of the hair on their body and their head, the fragility of their spine and the muscle tone of their arms and hands, the edginess of their nerves. They also handle the objects around them and can intuit the good or bad omens of vertical and horizontal, straight and curved lines. Faced with an animate or inanimate target the tips of their fingers and the palms of their hands reject the sensible middle ground. They advance. They bend and stretch their bodies. Affectionate types rush in with open arms. At the slightest sign that the other person is

of a different type, and is demanding moderation or rebuffing this excessive openness, arms, fingers and palms of hands go into reverse. They retreat abruptly — fingers and hands go back to being an integral and component part of their arms, which immediately line up vertically alongside their frustrated bodies. The lack of interest demonstrated by the other person or the detachment displayed by the glimpsed object wound these affectionate types like mortal arrows fired at them out of the blue. If it were possible, affectionate types would die there and then. Since this is not an option, they die of shame instead, with their tail between their legs, and they get angry. They walk away with a face like thunder and breathing fire, which once encouraged them and strengthened their resolve.

Loving types nourish and fool themselves with the sense of smell. Newspaper and television advertising backs me up on this. To better prepare themselves, to get themselves in the best position in relation to the object of their desire and the world around them, loving types close their eyes (love is blind, isn't it?) and submit to the power of their olfactory cells. Once under the command of these cells, they hand their entire soul over to the sublime delights of the scent exuded by perfume, or they take their cells and their soul down into the depths of the dark and pestilent caverns of someone else's natural smell, which is the indescribable opposite of the scent of perfume. Whether a woman or a man, a boy or a girl, all loving types are flirtatious and promiscuous by nature. They do not distinguish between perfume and smell. All loving types are also unpredictable. And they are all criminals: as soon as the perfume or the (bad) smell are exuded from someone's skin, that person's body loses its precise and concrete contours and vanishes as droplets into thin air. The strong and powerful presence of the other person is murdered by loving types, just like the felt of the board rubber removes all the words written in chalk on a blackboard. The air becomes ordinary again and loving types try in vain to smell the scent. But the arousing perfume of the other person has gone away. Loving types conclude that it was all just a mere illusion of the olfactory cells in their nostrils, which are still poorly trained in the ways of love. Just another fantasy within the wider fantasy world of the eternal emotional frustration experienced by human beings.

Individuals who are detached from life as it really is, entrust to the sense of hearing the task of recycling their own bodies, which have been denied excitement and action, when any sound whatsoever — whether a common or unusual one — reaches their ears in an unforeseen and all-consuming way. Once the sound has been detected, individuals detached from life allow their bodies to float on the airwaves, on this side or that of friendly everyday conversation and their interactions at work. Sound is a neighbouring and intimate foreign body, neither human nor animal. It is an abstract image of the wind that, in turn, makes human life abstract. If sound reached wary eyes unexpectedly, it would immediately be eliminated by tears. But there is no way of covering one's ears without the help of an accessory, such as hands or the earplugs used by the French (which, moreover, tell us a great deal about the French as a whole). Sound is authoritarian and drifts around the airwaves, transforming them into a one-way street leading the individual to transform the ear of each and everyone into an absolute. It is the absolute ear that

gives immediate access to the artificial paradises that only exist in a overbearing and exclusive way if enhanced by auditory and abstract images. For individuals detached from life, human or animal speech only makes sense if expressed via an equal number of syllables and in rhyme. Individuals detached from life love reading poetry, although they do not know how to write it. They hate prose. They find it conventional and mute. The excessively dislocated speech of sounds also makes sense to them, a great deal of sense. Provided that the tone is inopportune and cohesive, the sonic and penetrating noise that violates the eardrums makes sense. Individuals detached from life like it is are similar to the female fan in the live audience who feeds and nourishes herself passively on the show taking place on the spot-lit stage of life, a place where the soles of her shoes will never have access.

Activated twenty-four hours a day, the palate makes fat people smiley, captivating and affable. Fat people are fat because they have a trigonometric conception of the tongue. They know that its parallel sides taste acidic things. On the tip they taste sweet things, and at the back, next to the throat, bitter foods. Savoury foods are tasted all over the triangular area of the mucous membrane. When they put food on their tongues, fat people do not think twice. They opt for complicity and balance between the four parts that make up the sense of taste, and which leave the untrained palate in a predicament. Fat people are round like balls used in all kinds of sporting activities. They do not walk along taking one step after the other. They roll down hills like skateboards under the feet of daring youths; they are like soap bubbles that, when they come out of a pipe, are already round, fully formed and ready to glide through the air with the slightest puff of wind and delight us. Greed is the mother of good manners; gluttony is the goddaughter of kindness, and her godmother is indiscriminate conviviality with absolutely everybody. When playing Danton in Andrzej Wajda's film, the French actor Gérard Depardieu became a role model. Life imitated art. Today he has a farcical body. He looks like Oliver Hardy's companion.

Of the five senses only sight remains to be discussed.

If my friend Zeca is not considered unique for the way he uses his eyes, there is no doubt that he must at least be seen as unusual, extremely unusual, among his contemporaries within the universal family. Well ahead of his body, which goes from the tip of the 98 hairs on his head to the soles of his feet, come his bulging eyes. Like in a clip from a cartoon, his eyes open scandalously wide and stick out from his face. They protrude as if propelled by an internal spring. The two spheres are not made up of flesh and blood, but of rubber. They go beyond, well beyond, the tip of his nose. His sight acquires the power of a telescope that – wanting to follow the trace of a rocket on its way to the moon – stretches its lens into space, unfolding the instrument's compacted parts. Bulging eyes do not blink. His started blinking after he began smoking two packets of Hollywood-brand cigarettes per day.

The lit tip of a cigarette itches the retina, as if the threat of an imaginary fire were really being licked by flames. When it leaves the lips and gains height, the column of smoke – although the nervous waving of the hand tries to disperse it – stimulates the eyelids to blink.

His eyes are rather ludicrous, I should warn you, so that the reader does not recall his face in an unfavourable manner.

His eyes are calm only on the surface, since they imitate, via reflection, the infinite acrobatics of the external image that they capture, observe and privilege with intensity and excessive concentration. Many times have I wanted to escape from his cinematic gaze. I knew, however, that his eyes would not let my image evade the lens that was framing it and the shutter that held in a medium shot my scared and panic-stricken face.

They are severe eyes and (to some extent) those of a detective, which can detect any scam, trick or lie. They are close relatives of the Germanic eyes of cursed Peter Lorre, as they appear in John Huston's film *The Maltese Falcon*. The eyes enter into bodily combat with the camera lens and it is they that determine for the cameraman the shutter speed. There is no grade of film stock that is not impregnated by their remarkable charms. In *The Maltese Falcon*, furthermore, all the actors give the impression that they are playing the part of my friend. All the eyes are bulging, like those of Peter Lorre, or popping out, like Elisha Cook Jr.'s *The* bulging eyes are due to the violent attraction exerted upon them by the black statuette of the Maltese falcon encrusted with precious stones, which has disappeared and is being hunted.

His eyes spot people in a crowd, or in groups, and in the confusion of the panoramic scene captured by the frame, they are capable of glazing over at the same time all the other figures just to privilege, capture and set apart — in a camera movement that quickly leads to a close up — the particular person in question.

His gaze concentrates on the most discreet and obscured human presence in the crowd or the group, isolating it. His eyes do not only intensely scrutinise this person but also read them from top to toe, looking them up and down, in the split second of the snapshot. Like an effective isolation cordon, the camera's eyes not only disconnect the figure from those surrounding it but also separate the wheat from the chaff within the person in question, with the intention of delighting only in his or her good, beautiful and useful aspects.

Zeca is inimitable in the way in which he manages to enter into a dialogue with a person he does not know. Armed with the delicate, confident and incisive dagger of his eyes, he dresses them in kid gloves and goes straight in to bite the carotid artery. He decorticates it to be able to tear it apart. With his mouth closed in the intensity of his desire, only the figurative tongue of his eyes has the power to part his lips so that it can move outside his body in order to lick the open wound and suck the blood. Grace, charm and seduction combine to create the formula for poised self-control that brings about his success with his unknown interlocutor.

Confronted by an anonymous person, he enjoys something of the success of the modest, conscientious, self-taught teacher, who rounds off carefully and scrupulously the inescapable and unavoidable certainties of human knowledge to realise that his student will make progress in his introductory studies and earn his admiration. His eyes deny loneliness and predetermine the life of a couple as a place

and a time where the perfection of unforeseen circumstances is transformed into a pure phrase, which requires an exclamation mark to finish it off. Like in a sonnet by Petrarch or Camões, the eyes arrive at the golden key via the pair of adjectives that qualify a single noun and dignify the rhythm of the verse. The sensation of victory (or of elation?) stems from the most recent individual found on the street of chance encounters. The flag of conquest is raised above him, summing up and announcing the day's extensive accomplishments.

If Zeca did not come across in the street at least ten people that he wanted to talk to, his afternoon would have been a tedious one.

The passage of life — the flow of the fine grains of sand within the hourglass — is responsible for showing him the unforeseen facets of the chaff that, disrespectful of his eye for goodness, mocks the grain of wheat that has been selected for storage. Hastened by a sense of eagerness, understandably so, it has always allowed time to run its course so that the machine of the world could perfect unhindered the unknown and warped individual, putting him or her back together in the form of another different person under the command of goodness, beauty and utility.

As magical as the chance discovery of a diamond in a stream, the duration of Zeca's gaze continues unbeknown to the human being who is being focused on. The duration of his gaze can be short- or medium-term, it can be boring, lengthy or eternal, but it is this that presents itself to a person — it is this that presents itself to me at this moment in time — as the only real enigma of human relationships. The duration of his gaze fluctuates like the value of precious stones and gold on the international market, or the price of shares on the stock market. The following morning, the new value already acquired can both far exceed all expectations and plummet into the infernal depths of bankruptcy.

All prospected diamonds are rough and ruffians; the ruses that they resort to, and live and survive by, are perverse — Zeca has always known this simple truth about finances and I am not telling anyone anything new here. Diamonds without flaws only exist in the imagination of the stonecutter who lives in the cumulus clouds.



THE BOOK



Mil rosas roubadas

Silvano Santiago

- **Original title:** Mil rosas roubadas
- **ISBN:** 9788535924541
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 280
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

In 1952, two boys are waiting for the same tram. Chance turns them into close friends. On an afternoon in 2010, Zeca, then cultural producer of renown, is dying in a hospital bed. Watching him, the retired professor Brazilian History understands that he not only loses his life partner, but his possible biographer. His job then is to reverse the roles and write the trajectory of his inseparable friend.

In addition to putting into question the boundaries between fiction and memory, biography and autobiography, Silvano Santiago offers the rich testimony of an era and an exceptional friendship.

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A Tarde, Salvador BA, 11/10/2014

AWARDS

1978 - Diploma "Cidadão da Poesia", conferido pela Ordem Brasileira dos Poetas da Literatura de Cordel.

1982 - Prêmio Jabuti de Romance por Em liberdade.

1993 - Prêmio Jabuti de Romance por Uma história de família.

1995 - Título de "Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques".

1996 - Prêmio Artur Azevedo, da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional por Keith Jarrett no Blue Note.

1997 - Prêmio Jabuti de Contos por Keith Jarrett no Blue Note.

2005 - Prêmio Portugal Telecom de Literatura por O Falso mentiroso: memórias.

Prêmio Mário de Andrade de Ensaio, da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional por O Cosmopolitismo do Pobre: Crítica Literária e Crítica Cultural.

2006 - Prêmio Jabuti de Contos por Histórias Mal Contadas.

2009 - Prêmio ABL de Ficção por Heranças.

2010 - Prêmio Governo de Minas Gerais de Literatura 2010, pelo conjunto de sua obra.

2014 - Prêmio Ibero-americano de Letras José Donoso

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• **Other books:**

4 poetas, 1960

Duas faces, 1961

Brasil: prosa e poesia, 1969

Salto (poemas); O banquete (contos), 1970

Ariano Suassuna (Antologia comentada). Iracema (edição comentada do romance de José de Alencar), 1975

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Viagem ao México, 1993, Rocco, 384 páginas.

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Aos sábados, pela manhã, 2013, Rocco, 320 páginas.

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THE TRANSLATOR

Lisa Shaw



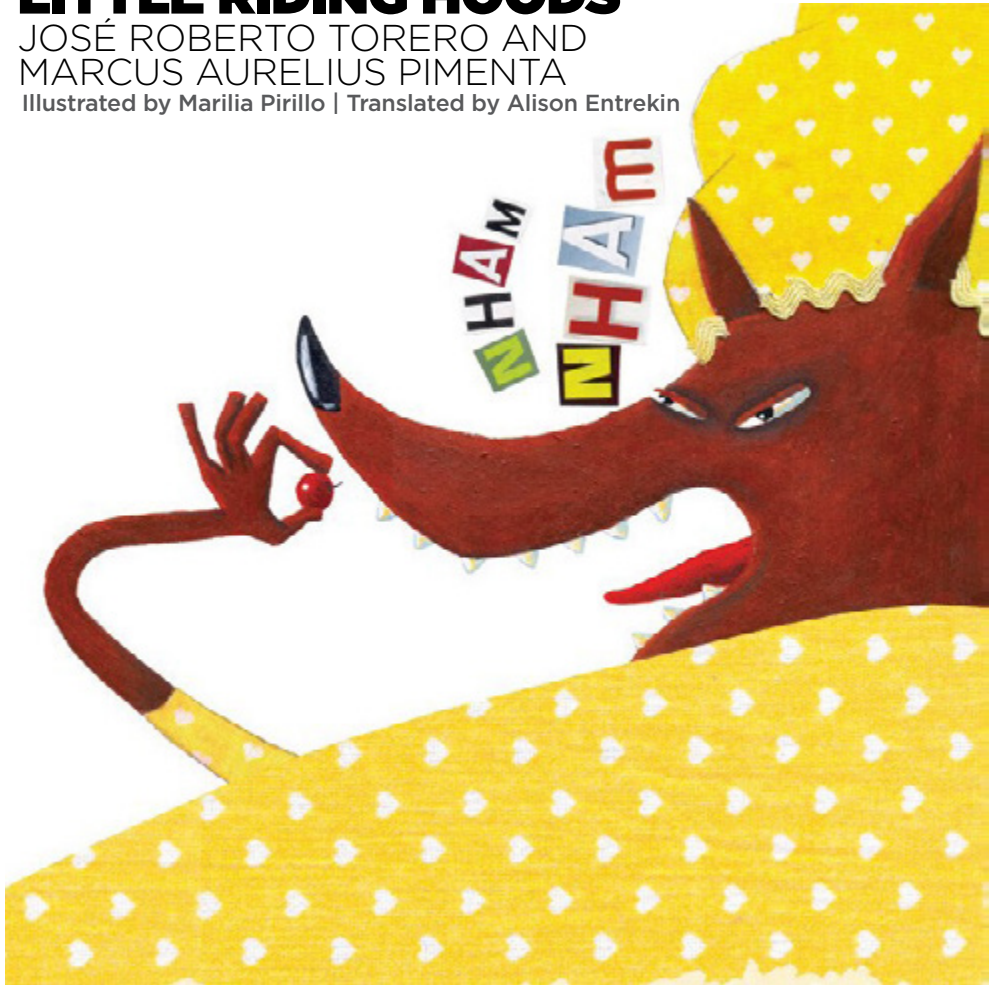
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LITTLE RIDING HOODS

JOSÉ ROBERTO TORERO AND
MARCUS AURELIUS PIMENTA

Illustrated by Marilia Pirillo | Translated by Alison Entrekin



Little Blue Riding Hood

Once upon a time, in a small village next to a wood, there was a girl with sky-blue eyes.

Everyone liked her a lot, and her grandmother even more – so much so that she sewed her a little cape with a hood. The cape was made of blue velvet and the girl never took it off, not even when she put on plays in the backyard. As a result, everyone in the village started calling her Little Blue Riding Hood.

One day her mother summoned her and said:

‘Little Blue Riding Hood, please take this blueberry pie to your grandma, as you always do.’

'OK, Mummy,' said Little Blue Riding Hood.

'And be careful, OK? Go straight to your grandma's house and don't stray from the path, because the woods are dangerous.'

The girl put the pie in a basket, gave her mother a kiss and set off.

Along the way she sang:

'Through the woods I go,

So very alone,

Poor little me,

All on my own.'

Little Blue Riding Hood walked into the woods. With each step the path grew narrower and the woods darker. Suddenly, the wolf stepped out from behind some bushes and said:

'Hello, girl with the little blue riding hood. What do you have in that basket?'

'A blueberry pie.'

'For me?'

'No, sir. I'm taking it to my fragile, defenceless grandma who lives in the middle of the woods.'

The wolf thought: 'Little Blue Riding Hood is pretty silly. I'm going to eat her granny, then her and I'll have the blueberry pie for dessert.'

He couldn't eat her right there, because a hunter might hear her screams. But he had an idea and said:

'See that trail there? Why don't you go that way and pick a bunch of blue forget-me-nots for your granny? I bet she'd like that.'

'What a good idea, sir. I'll do that! Oh, if everyone was as nice as you...'

So Little Blue Riding Hood took the other trail and skipped off, happily picking flowers. Meanwhile, the wolf took the shorter path to the grandmother's house. When he got there, he knocked on the door.

'Knock knock knock.'

'Who is it?' called the old woman from inside.

'It's me, your granddaughter,' said the wolf in a little girl's voice. 'I've brought you a blueberry pie. Open the door, Grandma.'

The grandmother got out of bed, picked up her shotgun and opened the door.

When she saw the wolf standing there, she didn't think twice. She pulled the trigger and - bang! - shot him in the chest.

Then she put the wolf in the oven to roast and lay down to wait for Little Blue Riding Hood.

The girl came walking slowly through the woods, picking flowers, listening to the birds, playing with squirrels, drinking water from springs and singing her song:

'Through the woods I go,

So very alone,

Poor little me,

All on my own.'

When she finally got to her grandmother's house, she knocked on the door:

'Knock knock knock.'

'Who is it?' called her grandmother.

'It's me, your granddaughter. May I come in?'

'Yes, my dear. I couldn't wait for you to get here.'

Little Blue Riding Hood opened the door and approached the bed. Her grandmother was under the covers and wearing an enormous bonnet, so that only part of her face was visible.

'What big ears you have, Grandma.' said the girl.

'All the better to hear wolves with!'

'What big eyes you have.'

'All the better to see wolves at a distance!'

'What big hands you have.'

'All the better for holding large chunks of wolf meat!'

'What a big nose you have.'

'All the better for smelling wolves in the oven!'

'What a big mouth you have.'

'All the better for eating wolf meat!' shouted the grandmother with glee. Then she guffawed heartily and said, 'This plan of ours never fails, does it, Little Blue Riding Hood?'

'It's true, Grandma. The wolves always fall for it.'

Then they took the tray out of the oven and gobbled down the wolf in one sitting.

Afterwards, they lay down for a nap. Their bellies were full and they were soon snoring loudly. So loudly that a passing hunter heard the noise, thought someone was being sick and decided to have a look.

When he opened the door and saw the leftover food on their plates, the hunter was angry. He had never imagined that he'd see the wolf in pieces, eaten by the girl and her grandmother.

He pointed his shotgun at them and said:

'You're under arrest!'

'Us? What for, Mr Hunter?'

'That wolf belonged to an endangered species that is disappearing from the woods. And do you know why they're disappearing? Because you two have been eating the poor things.'

He handcuffed them both and marched them down to the police station.

The next day, Little Blue Riding Hood's mother went down to the station and paid a fine to free her daughter and mother.

And then, with the exception of the wolf, they all lived happily ever after:

The hunter because he'd done his job of protecting an endangered species.

The grandmother because she was out of prison.

And Little Blue Riding Hood because she'd learned a lesson:

'You shouldn't kill animals, especially if they belong to an endangered species.'

Little Green Riding Hood

Once upon a time, in a small village next to a lush, green wood, there was a girl with emerald-green eyes.

Everyone liked her a lot, and her granny even more – so much so that she gave her a little cape with a hood as a present. The cape was dollar-green, that is, forest-green, and she wore it everywhere she went. As a result, people started calling her Little Green Riding Hood.

Everything was calm and peaceful until one day her mother said:

‘Little Green Riding Hood, please take this lime pie to your grandma in the middle of the woods. She’s too tight with her money to buy sweets and if we don’t send her something every now and then, she’ll grow as thin as a rake.’

‘OK, Mummy, I’ll take it to her. Can I have some money for the bus?’

‘But there are no buses where you’re going!’

‘Oh, yes, I forgot. Then can I have some money to get my shoe re-heeled?’

‘I’ve never seen a girl so fond of money! You’re just like your grandmother. Fine, here you go. But be careful. Don’t stray from the path, because the woods are dangerous.’

The girl put the pie in a basket, gave her mother a kiss and set off.

Along the way she sang:

‘Off I go into the wood,
Grandma’s little honey,
When I get to her house,
I’ll ask her for some money.’

Little Green Riding Hood went into the woods. She walked and walked until, suddenly, the wolf stepped out of some bushes.

‘Hello, girl with the little green riding hood.’

‘Hello, sir.’

‘What do you have in that basket?’

‘A lime pie.’

‘For me?’

‘Only if you can pay for it.’

‘I don’t have two pennies to rub together.’

‘Then I’m going to take it to my grandmother who lives in the green house in the middle of the woods.’

The wolf thought to himself: ‘Everyone says that the little old lady who lives in the green house had a lot of jewellery. I’m going to eat the granny, then the girl, and take the jewels.’

But he couldn’t attack Little Green Riding Hood there in the middle of the path, because a passing hunter might hear the girl’s screams.

The wolf had an idea and said:

‘See that trail there? It leads to your grandma’s house too. It’s a bit longer, but there’s a wishing well that people throw coins into. Why don’t you go that way and take some for yourself?’

'What a good idea! I'll do just that!'

So Little Green Riding Hood took the other trail, where she gathered a lot of coins and lost all notion of time.

Meanwhile, the wolf took the shorter path to the grandmother's house. When he got there, he rapped on the door:

'Rat-a-tat-tat.'

'Who is it?' called the old woman from inside.

'It's me, your granddaughter. I've brought you a lime pie,' said the wolf in a little girl's voice.

The grandmother got up, made sure the safe was locked (she suspected that her granddaughter only visited because she had her eye on her jewels) and opened the door. She didn't even have a chance to open her mouth in surprise because the wolf pounced on her and devoured her in one go. Gulp!

Then he thought about stealing her jewels, but seeing as how he needed to digest the grandmother, he lay down to wait for Little Green Riding Hood.

When she finally arrived, she rapped on the door:

'Rat-a-tat-tat.'

'Who is it?' called the wolf, imitating the grandmother's voice.

'It's me, your granddaughter.'

'Come in, darling, I couldn't wait for you to get here.'

'Little Green Riding Hood slowly opened the door and approached the bed. The wolf was under the covers and wearing a bonnet, so that only part of his face was visible. The girl sensed that something was wrong and said:

'What big ears you have, Grandma.'

'All the better to hear coins clinking with!'

'What big eyes you have.'

'All the better to read bank statements with!'

'What big hands you have.'

'All the better to count money quickly with!'

'What a big nose you have.'

'All the better to smell banknotes with!'

'What a big mouth you have.'

Then the wolf stopped imitating the grandmother and said in his terrible voice:

'All the better to eat you with!'

Then he pounced on the girl and wolfed her down. And off he went to take another nap.

Because his belly was very full, he was soon snoring loudly. So loudly that a hunter heard the noise and decided to see what it was.

When he opened the door and saw the wolf snoozing with that bulging belly, the hunter thought: 'Wow, that's a rare breed of wolf! If I skin him, I can sell his hide for a mint and get rich.'

So the hunter loaded bullets into his shotgun, took aim and - BOOM! - killed the wolf.

Afterward, as he was carefully cutting open the wolf's belly so as not to ruin the hide, he saw Little Green Riding Hood and her grandmother inside. Because opportunities to make a little extra cash don't come along every day, the hunter said:

'Look, I could get you two out of there, but it'll take me several hours, so before I begin I'd like to know if you can pay me for my efforts.'

'You can have the jewels in the safe,' said the grandmother.

'And I've got some coins that I found on the way here,' said Little Green Riding Hood.

The hunter accepted the jewels and the coins and got them out of the wolf's belly.

And the moral of the story is: 'Money doesn't bring happiness and attracts all kinds of scoundrels.'

Little Black Riding Hood

Once upon a time, in a village by a very dark wood, there was a girl with black hair and eyes.

Everyone liked her, and her grandmother even more – so much so that she decided to make her a little cape with a hood. It was very elegant, all in black velvet, and the girl wore it everywhere. As a result, people started calling her Little Black Riding Hood.

One day, Little Black Riding Hood's mother said:

'Honey, please take these blackberries to your grandma in the middle of the woods.'

'OK, Mummy, I'll be back in a jiffy.'

'But don't stray from the path because the woods are dangerous.'

Then the girl put the berries in a basket, gave her mother a kiss and set off.

Along the way, she sang:

'Off I go,
Fast as I can,
To take these berries
To my dear old gran.'

Little Black Riding Hood went into the forest. With each step the trees grew thicker and the woods darker. But she wasn't afraid and just sang her little song.

'Off I go,
Fast as I can,
To take these berries
To my dear old gran.'

And on she went until, suddenly, the wolf stepped out from behind some bushes and said:

'Hello, girl with the little black riding hood.'

'Hello, sir.'

'What have you got in that basket?'

'Some blackberries.'

'For me?'

'No, they're for my grandma who lives in the middle of the forest.'

The wolf thought to himself: 'My hunger is endless. I'll eat this little girl one day, for sure.'

So he said:

'See that trail over there? It leads to your grandmother's house. It's a little longer, but it's lined with flowers called everlastings. Why don't you go that way and pick some flowers for her.'

'Excellent idea, sir! I shall do just that!'

While Little Black Riding Hood took the other trail, the wolf took a shortcut to the grandmother's house. When he got there, he rang the doorbell:

'Ding-dong.'

'Who is it?' called the old woman from inside.

'It's me, your granddaughter,' said the wolf in a little girl's voice. 'I've brought you some blackberries.'

The grandmother put on her glasses and opened the door. When she saw that it was the wolf and not Little Black Riding Hood, she said:

'Oh, it's you! I knew you'd come for me one day. Come in, don't mind the mess.'

The wolf sat on the bed and said:

'So you've been waiting for me?'

'I knew you'd come. Actually, you took your time.'

'I'm going to have to swallow you now,' said the wolf.

'I know,' said the grandmother slowly closing her eyes. Then the wolf gulped her down in one go, so quickly that she didn't even have time to say 'farewell'.

They the wolf lay down calmly on her bed to wait for Little Black Riding Hood.

The girl came walking slowly through the woods, but she was so slow that time got away from her. When she finally got to her grandmother's house, she rang the doorbell:

'Ding-dong.'

'Who is it?' called the wolf from inside, with a croaky voice.

'It's me, your granddaughter.'

'Come in, darling.'

Little Black Riding Hood opened the door and headed for her grandmother's bed. On her way there she caught sight of herself in a mirror and saw that she was older. She was a woman already.

'Gee, I think I spent a long time picking flowers.'

'Yes, you're quite different,' said the wolf.

Little Black Riding Hood went over to the mirror and, looking at her face, said:

'Why, what big ears I have.'

And she answered herself too:

'Oh, it's because I can wear earrings now!'

'What big eyes I have.'

'It's because I can see more things!'

'What big hands I have.'
'It's because now I can reach things I couldn't before!'
'What a big nose I have.'
'It's because now I can follow my own nose!'
'What a big mouth I have.'
'I think it's because I can speak for myself now!' said Little Black Riding Hood.

Then she turned to the wolf and asked:

'Where's my grandma?'

'I swallowed her,' he replied.

'And who are you?'

'I'm the wolf of all wolves. They call me Time.'

'Are you going to swallow me too?'

'Yes, but not now. Shall we eat these blackberries?'

They ate a lot and took a nap. Because their bellies were full, they were soon snoring loudly, so loudly that a passing hunter heard the noise and decided to see what it was.

When he opened the door the hunter saw the wolf and fired his shotgun. But he missed his target every time.

'Damn it, Wolf, I just can't beat you!' exclaimed the hunter.

'That's impossible, Hunter. But we can be friends.'

'How can we be friends if you're going to swallow me one day?'

'Well, we can be friends until then.'

And with that the wolf took the two last blackberries, gave one to the hunter and the other to Little Black Riding Hood, and jumped out the window saying:

'See you soon.'

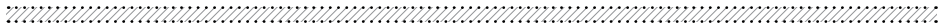
And they were all happy:

The hunter because he recognized that he wasn't going to beat the wolf.

The grandmother because she'd led a happy life and the wolf had taken his time to come for her.

And Little Black Riding Hood because she'd learned a lesson:

'You should eat blackberries very slowly and enjoy each one.'





THE BOOK



Little Riding Hoods

José Roberto Torero e
Marcus Aurelius Pimenta

- **Original title:**
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- **Year of Publication:**
- **Original Publisher:** Objetiva
- **Number of pages:** 56
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

There isn't only Red Hood. There is others hoods, and others colors.

TRANSLATIONS

Chile, Caperucitas de Colores, 2012,
Norma Editorial.

PRESS REVIEWS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aZyh47sP04>

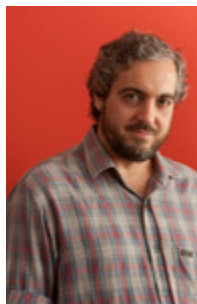
THE AUTHOR

José Roberto Torero Fernandes Junior

- **Pen name:** José Roberto Torero
- **Other books:**

Adultos

Galantes memórias e admiráveis aventuras do virtuoso Conselheiro Gomes, o Chalaça. 1994, 204 pgs, Cia. das Letras

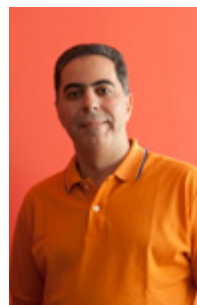


Terra Papagalli. 1997, 232 pgs., Cia. das Letras

Xadrez, truco e outras guerras. 1998, 210 pgs., Objetiva.
Os Vermes, 2002, 260 pgs., Objetiva.
O Evangelho de Barrabás, 2010, 210 pgs., Objetiva.

Infanto-juvenis

Chapeuzinhos Coloridos, 2010, 56 pgs., Objetiva.
Branca de Neve e as sete versões, 2011, 52 pgs., Objetiva
Uma história de futebol, 2002, 100 pgs., Objetiva.
O Patinho feio que não era patinho nem feio. 2011, 36 pgs., Objetiva.
Os 33 porquinhos. 2013, 40 pgs., Objetiva.



Marcus Aurelius Pimenta

- **Pen name:** Marcus Aurelius Pimenta
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Adultos

Terra Papagalli. 1997, 232 pgs., Cia. das Letras

Os Vermes, 2002, 260 pgs., Objetiva.

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Chapeuzinhos Coloridos, 2010, 56 pgs., Objetiva.

Branca de Neve e as sete versões, 2011, 52 pgs., Objetiva

O Patinho feio que não era patinho nem feio. 2011, 36 pgs., Objetiva.

Os 33 porquinhos. 2013, 40 pgs., Objetiva

Joões e Marias, 2015, 42 pgs., Objetiva.

THE TRANSLATOR

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Alison is a freelance literary translator specializing in Brazilian Portuguese, with a background in creative writing. She has translated numerous works by Brazilian writers, including CITY OF GOD, by Paulo Lins; THE ETERNAL SON, by Cristovão Tezza, which was shortlisted for the IMPAC Dublin Literary Prize; NEAR TO THE WILD HEART, by Clarice Lispector; and BUDAPEST, by Chico Buarque, which was voted one of the 10 best books published in the UK in 2004.

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OPISANIE ŚWIATA

VERONICA STIGGER

Translated by Zoë Perry

Dear Mr. Opalka,

It is with great regret that I must inform you that your son, Mr. Natanael Martins, has been admitted to our hospital in serious condition. He has asked that I forward you the enclosed letter, which he dictated to me under great pains.

Furthermore, I feel compelled to tell you that your son's progressively weakened condition has, in recent days, affected his capacity for understanding and reasoning. Therefore, I would ask you not to focus too closely on the details and not to judge the letter for what it says, but rather for what it means.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. AMADO SILVA
Operating Physician

Dear Father,

I do not feel well. It has been one month since I last walked and I am unable to spend very long sitting up in bed, where I have been confined since early this year. I no longer remember what it is like to sit at a table for lunch or dinner and I have some trouble breathing. My entire body is in pain, especially my legs and arms. Holding a pen to write requires great effort. For this reason, I am dictating this letter. The doctors do not know what it is that may have taken hold of me, and their medicines are no longer sufficient to relieve my suffering. My few friends have not visited me with the regularity with which they came in the early stages of my illness. Mother, as you may already know, passed away two years ago. Luckily, she did not have to endure my illness, which first manifested itself last summer. I am alone and very weak. Stuck here in this bed, I have thought only of finding you. I feel a growing desire to finally meet you.

I asked that they buy the ticket for you to come see me, as I am unable to leave here. You will just need to go to the port to board the ship. I suggest you go there by train. Do not even think of taking an unnecessary boat trip. Bring a winter coat with you. Although it is summer there, there may be cool nights on the ship. Here in the jungle, as you well know, it is hot year round. And it rains a lot. So bring a gabardine as well. You can leave your umbrella at home, because I have plenty.

I do not need to tell you that here one does not wear the same clothing as there. You know that not even the most successful tycoons here wear wool. They prefer percaline. If you have any clothing in percaline, do not hesitate to bring it. The same goes if you have silk shirts. It is always good to have a couple of them so as to never look sloppy. Bring your watch with you and, if convenient, your pillow. There is nothing like your own pillow. Keep your watch inside the pillow so it will not break.

Consider staying here with me for a few days or, perhaps, even a few months. Bring everything that is dear to you. Just do not bring money. I do not have much, but I have enough for the two of us. Do not worry about this. Worry only about carrying your belongings. If you want to bring your gun, bring it. If you also have a knife, carry it with you. I do not believe you will need to use it during the trip, but it is always good to come prepared. Weapons are expensive here, especially guns. They are more expensive than they are there. I do not know if you like to play cards. If you do, I have playing cards here. Do not fret about that. I also have books, both literature and science. I have a lot of travel writing. I bought stacks of them. Mother told me that you like to travel. As a matter of fact, the books you left are here with me. I am sure you will be happy to see them again. In short, think of everything important to you and bring it. There is room to spare in my house, although it is not large. It is the house that belonged to my mother and my grandparents. I do not know if you remember it. It is in the woods, in a clearing, among the Brazil-nut trees.

After setting aside everything important, buy a trunk and place everything inside it. I think it is the best way to bring your things. On the trunk, in big, bold letters, using black, preferably oil-based, paint, so it won't rub off, write: MR. OPALKA. If you are not able to fit everything inside a single trunk, buy another. On each one, paint: MR. OPALKA. And number them: write No. 1 for the first trunk and No. 2 for the second. Bring a small suitcase or a bag as well. The journey by sea is long. Therefore you will need a few changes of clothes at hand. You know one cannot go for longer than a week with only one shirt. And do not forget to also carry a basket with you. Buy about ten lemons, a bag of sugar, some tea. They can be useful on the ship. When you are feeling queasy, take a lemon, squeeze it on the sugar and eat it. You can even make tea. All you have to do is ask for water from the ship's kitchen. And buy a couple of bottles of red wine, a bit of butter, bread and cheese. Even though they serve plenty of food on the ship, it is always good to be prepared. Also bring a kitchen knife, a spoon and a mug in the basket, along with the lemons, sugar, tea, wine, butter, bread and cheese. You may wish to bring other provisions if you like. There will be the train trip before you reach the ship. Perhaps you should double the amount of everything, except for the lemons, sugar and tea, which are for the seasickness.

Make sure your trunk does not go wandering during the trip. Do not let it out of your sight. And keep an eye on your suitcase, too. Do not let other people take your provisions. I know the trip is long and slow, but the worst part is getting to the ship. Afterward everything will be fine. When the ship is sailing calmly, you can climb up on deck. There it is healthier and nicer than in the cabins. When the ship sways, it is better to stay in bed, because passengers have been known to fall and

break something, or hurt their heads. When going up the stairs to get to the deck, you must be very careful, because people have been known to fall back down on the seats of their trousers when the ship sways. You wouldn't want to lose your balance and fall down the ships' stairs on the seat of your trousers, now would you? I was told a woman hurt herself that way. She broke one of her legs and, in three days' time, she was dead. If the beds are bunks, never lie on the bottom bunks. Those lying up top might vomit on your head. And pay attention: during the trip, do not listen to anyone and do not let anyone disturb you. Pay no mind to what others say. People say a lot of nonsense in the solitude of the ocean.

I now realize how silly I must seem to you listing these recommendations. You are a well-travelled man and certainly know more than I about the routine and requirements of a journey such as this.

Jean-Pierre will be waiting for you at the docks here. He will bring you to me immediately. When you arrive at the hospital, it will be easy to tell who I am: I will be the one who most looks like you.

I beg of you, Father, please come. Come as soon as you receive this letter with the ticket. I am awaiting you impatiently. Have a good trip.

Your loving son,
NATANEL

How to be happy in Warsaw

He was a squat man, with arms and legs like little logs. Round face, encircled by thick strands of dark brown hair cut in the shape of a helmet – a strange haircut, further accentuating the roundness of his face. The underside of his protruding belly was not contained within his crimson shirt: it sprung forth from below and through the gaps between the buttons, created by the pressure of his chubby body under the form-fitting fabric. The only thing gaunt about him was his mustache: thin, long and with the ends slightly turned upward. It was not the style, nor would it ever be, but that was how he liked to wear it. Although it was hot that August, over the crimson shirt and light linen trousers he wore a long, garish silk kimono, so long it dragged the ground, bringing with it dust, sand, pebbles and any other detritus it might find along the way. He was lugging four suitcases of different sizes: one in each hand and two under his stocky arms. Upon seeing Opalka seated on one of the station benches, engrossed in his newspaper, he grinned. He hastened his step, tripped on the hem of his kimono and came crashing to the ground just a few feet from the bench. As he fell, the four suitcases shot forward, clattering around Opalka's feet, whereupon they bowled over Opalka's small trunk, which in turn toppled his basket. His lemons – one dozen – all rolled out. One of them spun off toward the tracks, while the others stopped beneath the bench between Opalka's legs and around the basket and trunk. The man, having leapt to his feet, threw himself to the ground, as if into a swimming pool, trying to capture the

lemon. But it was in vain: his arms, too short, could not reach it and the lemon finally rolled onto the tracks. Opalka, who had been following the scene in astonishment from behind his newspaper, then began to gather the remaining lemons. But the man was already on his feet again, dusting off his gaudy kimono, and stopped Opalka with the flat of his hand. Disobeying him, Opalka laid the newspaper on the bench beside him, and bent down. When he went to grab one of the lemons that was close to his left foot, the man gestured with his hand once again and shouted in German:

“Stop!”

Surprised, Opalka stopped, looked at the man and sat up again, giving up on the lemon. The man smiled at him and, limping, picked up the basket and placed the eleven lemons, one by one, back inside. Opalka went back to his newspaper. After filling the basket, the man lifted up the small trunk, whacked it with his right hand to remove the dirt and leaned it against the bench, next to Opalka’s feet. This distracted him from his newspaper for a moment, and he looked sidelong at the man. The newcomer was now arranging his own suitcases. He organized them by size, directly in front of the bench where Opalka was seated: the smallest one at Opalka’s feet and the largest in front of the place he had chosen to sit. Finally, the little man took a seat beside Opalka, who shot him another sideways glance. The man studied every inch of his kimono and clicked his tongue now and again against the roof of his mouth, shaking his head from side to side, cross. Opalka could no longer pay attention to the newspaper. He watched the man who, after clicking his tongue and shaking his head from side to side, bent down at an angle toward the ground, reaching for the smallest of his suitcases. As he had not risen from his seat, his body brushed over Opalka’s knees. Opalka clutched the newspaper against his chest to keep it from being crumpled by the man’s head. Bopp, in turn, rummaged around and around in his suitcase, grunting and sighing the whole time. Not finding what he was looking for, he got up and bent down in front of it. He started rummaging around again, sticking his head partway inside the suitcase. Opalka shook his paper, as if smooth it, and went back to reading. But once again his attention was interrupted, this time by a jubilant exclamation that came from below:

“Aha!”

Opalka peered once more over his newspaper and there was the man, now standing, holding a knife in one hand and an apple, like a trophy, in the other. He sat down beside him and, before eating, turned to Opalka and asked him in Polish:

“Can I help you?”

To which Opalka, taking his eyes from his paper once again, said, also in Polish:

“Pardon?”

The man frowned, offered the apple to Opalka and repeated:

“Can I help you?”

Opalka lowered the newspaper, looked at the man and replied, again in Polish:

“I’m sorry. But I don’t believe I’ve understood you.”

The man heaved a deep sigh and looked around, as if looking for someone who could help. He looked at his little suitcase and then down at his hands, now

occupied by the knife and the apple. Opalka, realizing the man's dilemma, asked him, still in Polish:

"Can I help you?"

The man turned to Opalka and frowned again. Unsure, he handed him the apple, waving it gently, making it clear with his gesture that he was offering Opalka the fruit. Opalka, pretending not to see the apple he was offering him, repeated:

"Can I help you?"

Without saying a word, the man stared at Opalka and then at the apple and the knife, which were still in his hands. Opalka put the paper down on the seat beside him and held out both arms, motioning with his fingers for the man to pass him the apple and knife. The man beamed and handed him the fruit and utensil. Then he wiped one hand on the other and went to his small suitcase. He rummaged around in it some more, while Opalka watched with the knife and apple still in his hands. Finally, he took out a travel guidebook on Warsaw, in English, and two black notebooks, visibly in use. He returned to his seat beside Opalka, noisily flipping through of the guidebook. He thumbed through the pages, back and forth, and didn't seem to find what he was looking for. Now and then he clicked his tongue and grunted incomprehensibly in an unidentifiable language. Fed up, he closed the book and placed it on the seat, right on top of Opalka's newspaper. He crossed his legs and took the two black notebooks. He thumbed through one. He thumbed through the other. He took the first one again, this time turning the pages more slowly, until stopping on one. A huge grin spread across his face, which had been growing dispirited. He turned to Opalka and was about to speak, when he realized he was still holding the apple and knife. The man, who was holding the black notebook in his right hand, held out his left hand to take back the apple and knife. Opalka gave him the apple, but couldn't hand him the knife because the man's hand was very small, and couldn't hold both things at once. The man returned the apple to Opalka and laid the notebook on his lap. To keep it open the page he was interested in, he laid the other black notebook across it. Once he'd done that, he took the apple and knife back. He turned to Opalka and, reading the notebook, said in Polish:

"Would you like some, sir?"

Opalka smiled and thanked him, also in Polish:

"That is very kind of you, but no. Thank you very much.

Then he tugged the newspaper, that was on the seat, from under the guidebook, and tried to continue reading. The man, in turn, peeled the entire apple before cutting it into small pieces, which he put in his mouth and chewed happily. Opalka could not get past one page – he had already read the same paragraph three times–, because the noise of the man's chewing distracted him. He attempted, for the fourth time, to understand what was written when he was startled by a new commotion. The man, who had just found a worm in his apple, got up to lob the fruit and knife toward the empty tracks, as he shouted, furious, in his own language:

"A worm! Yuck!"

He walked to the edge of the platform and spit, onto the ties, the lump of chewed apple.

“Yuck! Yuck! Yuck!”

Finally, he stuck the middle finger of his right hand down his throat and tried to vomit, unsuccessfully. He prepared himself to repeat the act, when Opalka, who watched it all in disbelief, tried to avoid an unpleasant end, telling him in Portuguese:

“Don’t do that. There’s no need. A little worm in your apple won’t do you any harm.”

The man stopped. Stunned, he turned to Opalka and said, now in Portuguese:

“You speak Portuguese! Why didn’t you tell me before?”

“Because I didn’t know you spoke Portuguese,” Opalka replied. “How could I have guessed?”

“You know...”

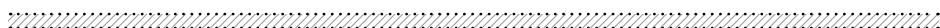
The noise of the train pulling into the station muffled the man’s voice, preventing Opalka from hearing the end of his sentence. When the train stopped, Opalka said, from then on always in Portuguese:

“Our train’s arrived.” And, given the large number of suitcases the man was carrying, asked him: “Can I help you?”

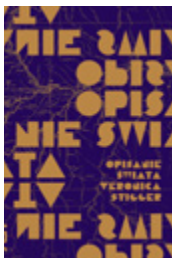
The man thanked him for the offer, but rejected his assistance. Opalka picked up the small trunk and the basket with the eleven lemons, where he had also placed the newspaper, and boarded the train. From inside his compartment, he looked out the window and saw the man dropping the four suitcases on the ground. He tried to pick up of the two largest, holding the smaller ones under his short, stocky arms, but it didn’t work. When he bent down to grab the larger suitcases, the smaller ones would invariably fall. Opalka placed the crumpled newspaper in the breast pocket of this white summer suit and got off the train. He went up to the man and said:

“Let me help you.”

Without giving the man time to reply, he took one small suitcase and one large suitcase and boarded the train. The man, who could not stop thanking him, boarded after him, carrying the other two suitcases. Opalka let him go ahead and then followed him to his compartment. There, he placed the two suitcases he had helped carry onto the luggage rack overhead. The man tried to do the same, but his short arms could not reach that high. Opalka took the two remaining suitcases and placed them beside the others. Then he extended his right hand to the man and said goodbye, wishing him a pleasant trip. The man shook his hand effusively, returning the greeting. Opalka then went to his compartment. Upon arriving, he took off his hat and sat down next to the window. He retrieved his newspaper from his jacket pocket, gave it a shake in a useless attempt to smooth it and resumed reading, waiting for the train to depart.



THE BOOK



Opisanie Świata

Veronica Stigger

- **Original title:** Opisanie Świata
- **ISBN:** 978-85-405-0462-2
- **Year of Publication:** 2013
- **Original Publisher:** Cosac Naify
- **Number of pages:** 160
- **Total printing in Brazil:** 1.500 copies

SYNOPSIS

Opisanie swiata means “description of the world”. The title is taken from the Polish translation of “Il Milione”, Marco Polo’s travel journal. The novel recounts the journey of Opalka, a Polish man who lived in Brazil in the 1930s. He receives a letter from Natanael, his unknown son, who is on the verge of death, and decides to travel to the Amazon to meet him. During his journey he meets Bopp, an eccentric Brazilian tourist who decides to abandon his tour of Europe and travel with him.

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AWARDS

Winner, Prêmio Machado de Assis, Brazilian National Library Foundation – Novel (2013)

Winner, Prêmio São Paulo – Debut Author Over 40 (2014)

Winner, Prêmio Açorianos de Literatura – Long Narrative (2014)

3rd Place, Prêmio Jabuti – Novel (2014)

Finalist, Prêmio Portugal Telecom – Novel (2014)

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• **Pen name:** Veronica Stigger

• **Other books:**

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short stories):

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THE TRANSLATOR

Zoe Perry



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LAS FANTASIAS ELECTIVAS

CARLOS HENRIQUE SCHROEDER

Traducido por Julia Tomasini

R

“¿Cuándo te transformaste en...?”

“¿En esto?”

“No fue eso lo que...”

“Hay dos maneras de lidiar con el deseo: o uno lo apaga con un extintor, que es lo que generalmente hace todo el mundo, o uno deja que el fuego se extienda. Yo decidí incendiarme.”

“Pero tenías un buen trabajo...”

“¿Un buen trabajo? ¿Periodista? ¿En Mendoza? Es todo prostitución, querido, todo, unos venden el cuerpo, otros la cabeza, algunos su tiempo, es todo puterío, todo el mundo se deja dar por el culo.”

“¿Y tu familia?”

“Los travestis no tenemos familia, al menos de donde vengo, no.”

S

“¿Usted conoce a Sebastián Hernández?”

“No.”

“¿Está seguro?”

“Sí.”

“Y a Copi, ¿lo conoce?”

“¿Quién está queriendo saber?”

“Tenemos que conversar con usted, personalmente.”

Y la voz se volvió un eco distante en el teléfono.

Copi se abrió las venas con una gillette, y, según la policía, tardó horas en morir. El pequeño departamento estaba impecablemente ordenado, sin señales de bebida o drogas (lo que era raro, viniendo de Copi, que siempre tenía un porro en la boca y resto de cocaína en la uña del dedo meñique de la mano derecha).

La ropa estaba planchada, doblada y milimétricamente ordenada en dos grandes valijas que descansaban encima de la cama. En ambas había un post-it rosa, de Hello Kitty, con el nombre de Renê en letras mayúsculas, el teléfono del hotel donde trabajaba y el turno. En el tacho de basura de la cocina había algunos cuantos y el comienzo de una novela, todos rasgados, estrujados y salpicados con sangre. Parecía que Copi había estado haciéndose el Pollok en la basura, se podían ver algunos movimientos continuos y circulares que ella hizo para lograr el efecto. Renê estaba en ese estado entre la irrealidad y la incredulidad, como si eso no tu-

viera que ver con él sino con algún espectador pasivo, como si estuviera mirando una película mala. Pero no era todo, había un sobre, claro, un sobre marrón grande, en la mesa de luz, con el nombre de Renê escrito en rojo. Obviamente no era una carta de despedida, Copi no era de ese tipo de personas. Ahí estaban sus poemas, la fotografía de la niña en las vías del tren y su serie de fotografías y textos sobre la soledad. Y una nota que decía: “la polaroid es tuya, Ratón, está debajo de la cama.”

Renê tomó la foto y no contuvo las lágrimas: recordó esa tarde, dos semanas atrás, en la que estaba sentado en la cocina de Copi tomando un Malbec que había traído de Mendoza, y cómo ella se veía eufórica, feliz y radiante esa tarde. Era injusto que ahora estuviera muerta, pero ¿qué es la justicia? Es cosa de hombres, no de dioses, ni de travestis.

“Ey, Ratón, lindo, se te rompió la camisa, estás jodido, mirá.”

“Qué cagada, otra más, esta me la van a descontar, seguro, la semana pasada se me rasgó una con un alambre de mierda en la puerta de casa”.

“Esperame, ya vuelvo.”

Cuando volvió tiró encima de la mesa la fotografía de la niña en las vías del tren. Y, con una cámara en la mano, tomó de un solo trago su copa llena de vino, dio una carcajada estridente y dijo:

“Ratón, te voy a contar una historia”.

“¿Más triste que las mías?”

“No, no, basta de tristeza, ¿ok?”

“Ok, que sea graciosa.”

“No sé si es graciosa y tampoco si es exactamente una historia, es más una cosa mía, algo que me gusta mucho, quiero hablar, hablar, hablar, mirá bien la foto.”

“Cuidado con la cocaína, Copi, eso te va a estropear... Linda la foto, ¿vos la sacaste?”

“Sí, con una Polaroid de los setenta que compré por nada en una feria de Buenos Aires. Esta.”

“Muy buena. ¿Puedo sacar una foto?”

“No tiene rollo, querido, tengo que comprar.”

“Nunca vi una de estas.”

“Sos un ignorante, Ratón, nunca viste nada, no sabés nada.”

“Soy un pedazo de mierda, ¿no? Solo porque no leí la pila de libros que leíste.”

“No, Ratón, vos sos un pobre tipo, pero tenés suerte.”

“¿De qué?”

“¡De tener una amiga linda como yo! ¡Jajajaja!”

“Linda, pero con una zanahoria entre las piernas.”

“Y qué zanahoria, imirá! ¡Jajajaja!”

“Copi, podrías acabar con eso, ¿no? A mí no me gustan esas cosas.”

“Está bien, está bien, basta.”

“¿Vas a contar la historia o no?”

Copi llenó la copa, una vez más la tomó entera, se limpió los labios y dio otra carcajada. René nunca la había visto tan feliz.

“Empecemos, ahora sí. El año pasado fui a atender un cliente al norte del estado, un cliente fiel, un alto ejecutivo de una gran empresa que visito por lo menos una vez por mes. Canoso, perfumado, bueno en la cama, ¿viste?, bien dotado, siempre...”

“Copi, sin detalles.”

“Es verdad, sigamos. El tipo viene, se queda unas dos horas conmigo, me la mete hasta desollarme, se vuelve a casa, y yo me quedo en el hotel hasta el día siguiente. Entonces descanso, duermo y salgo para dar una larga caminata, para mantener este cuerpito, pero siempre llevo una mochila con mi polaroid. En una de esas caminatas errantes vi una escena inusitada: una niña sentada, pensativa y llorosa, en las vías del tren. Saqué la cámara inmediatamente y click, foto. Confieso que tomé la foto muy rápido, un poco avergonzada, vaya una a saber lo que podrían pensar de esta pobre muñeca, sacando fotos de personas en la calle. Pero volvamos al instante de la fotografía, ese instante que está despegado de la realidad, es una captura del tiempo, un congelamiento, lo más cerca que podemos llegar de la inmortalidad. Y siempre volvemos a la imagen, cada vez que oímos una palabra, alguien nos cuenta algo, nuestra imaginación fotografía todo, es la fotografía de las palabras.”

“Copi, la historia...”

“Perdón, Ratón, me entusiasmé. Me acuerdo de una vez que pasé en ómnibus por la BR 101 en el sur del estado, final del día, y vi una señora con dos hijos chicos prendiendo velas encima de las vías del tren. Y conjeturé qué tipo de tragedia podría haber ocurrido con esa familia y me di cuenta del poder de una imagen, porque pasé todo el viaje con esa escena, y hasta hoy me da vueltas en la cabeza. Ok, basta, estoy divagando... Pero la niña, ¿por qué estaba llorando esa niña?, me preguntaba. ¿Estaba realmente llorando o solo triste, distraída, aburrida, esperando que sucediera algo, aunque fuera el reto de la madre? Me dieron ganas de decirle un: ‘Hola, ¿todo bien? Cuidado con el tren que debe estar llegando’. Era una forma de descubrir algo más, ver su cara, pero seguro que ella estaba vacunada contra los desconocidos, con la máxima ‘nunca hables con extraños’. Y, como me gusta imaginar el futuro de las personas, mientras continuaba mi caminata, traté de imaginar el futuro de esa criatura sin rostro, sin voz. ¿Qué será de su vida? ¿Qué profesión tendrá? ¿Se casará? ¿Tendrá hijos? Sabés de lo que hablo, muchos de nuestros sueños no se concretan; algunos, sí, otros van a parar a un camión de mierda, y esa es la naturaleza de la vida, ganar y perder, nacer y morir, caminar y correr, entregar el culo y meterla, jajajajaja...”

“Copi...”

“Ok, Ratón, ok... Nunca más vi a la muchacha de las vías del tren, incluso pasando todos los meses por ahí. Ella no me vio, no existo para ella, pero la foto que tomé y el tiempo que pasé pensando en ella hicieron un movimiento, y son una lección: para los otros somos un conjunto de imágenes, de memoria, fotográfica o no. Porque, cuando morimos, quedan las fotografías y las escenas de las personas que nos vieron, que presenciaron nuestra existencia. Qué mierda de filosofía bara-

ta, ¿no, Ratón? ¡Te buscaste una amiga que además de zanahoria tiene neuronas!”

“No entendí, ¿esa es la historia de la fotografía que sacaste o es un discurso? Está pareciendo un discurso... Yo te voy a contar una historia de verdad...”

“No, Ratón, todas tus historias son miserables, no quiero, hoy estoy feliz y quiero hablar, quedate quietito ahí... Entonces, durante un buen tiempo me quedé prendida a esa foto, tratando de entender ese instante, y salía a pasear por la playa y llevaba la foto, me sentaba en los bancos de la costanera y miraba el mar, la foto, el mar, la foto. Entonces me di cuenta de que más solitaria que la muchacha de la foto eran los bancos duros en la orilla del mar, siempre desiertos, que te congelan los dos cachetes del culo en el primer segundo que te sentás. Ya no se ven más las parejas acariciándose en la calle, casi no se ven besos, o un largo abrazo. Solo el mecánico y desgastado ir de la mano. Los adolescentes todavía se besan con ardor, colgados al cuello del otro o van directo a un toqueteo de proporciones goodzilescas. ¿Y los adultos? Los bancos de plazas y playas, principalmente de esta mierda de playa sucia del centro, se transformaron en un lugar de descanso y observación, donde la gente espera a terminar el helado para seguir la caminata, o donde se pueden espiar los autos que pasan, donde se mata el tiempo. ¿Dónde están los besos en los bancos? ¿Esos que nos dan vergüenza, esos que nos dan envidia? La pasión, esa roja y astuta ley de la naturaleza, que hizo que nosotros estemos acá hoy, que hizo que nuestros padres sintieran algo carnal, químico o metafísico el uno por el otro, fue expulsada de la vía pública. Nos permitimos exhibir nuestros autos, la mierda de esos bodoques, los celulares, pero tenemos vergüenza de dar una caricia, un beso prolongado a quien va con nosotros en plena calle. Es el claro aislamiento del afecto, del toque, del gesto. Es una especie de ausencia que vuelve todas las calles de todas las ciudades un poco fantasmas, porque dejaron de ser el escenario de las expresiones humanas para ser solo un trayecto. Las calles, que tuvieron en algún momento un significado de libertad y revuelta, hoy significan miedo y violencia. Se nos hizo difícil hasta para nosotras, que somos crías de la calle. Ausencia, esta es la palabra. El afecto ya no es más público, a nadie le importa el afecto, las personas, las cosas, los árboles. Sé que no estás entendiendo, Ratón, vos sos un campesino de mierda del interior, pero...”

“Ey, me estoy durmiendo, ¿te volviste una pastora que va predicando el beso como salvación?”

“No Ratón, sos tonto, pero tenés buen corazón, lo que es mejor que ser un vivo y canalla... Y, si tengo que predicar algo sería sobre entregar el culo, que está bueno y hace bien, jajajaja... Sí, la termino, no pongas esa cara de fastidio, escuchame, hoy quiero hablar, solo yo hablo, ya escuché tus lamentaciones durante días y días, ahora escuchame...”

Y la uña derecha se sumergió en la bolsita blanca abierta encima de la mesa y volvió a la nariz.

“¿Dónde estaba?, ah, las fotografías, la ausencia se va infiltrando en todo. Somos arrastrados hacia ella todo el tiempo, para huir del contacto humano. Los televisores invadieron cada espacio: estaciones, aeropuertos, bares, gimnasios, escuelas. Y nosotros no miramos más a las personas sino a las pantallas. No debe-

mos mirar más a los pájaros, a los árboles, las personas y sí a las pantallas. Es un intercambio; lo real por lo virtual. ¿A dónde va a ir a parar esta mierda? Y ese intercambio es también ausencia. No hace falta ni decir que alguien está haciendo fortunas con esto, todo el tiempo. No dudo que en pocos años los celulares se transformen en una especie de televisión. Y en la ausencia, en las pantallas, se van los enamoramientos, las pasiones, y queda un vacío enorme dentro del pecho. ¿Te dije que rompí el televisor? ¡Esa basura! Lo tiré al piso, esa mierda...

“Copi, voy a tener que irme dentro de poco, arreglé con Maria...”

“Quieto, me vas a escuchar hasta el final, Maria espera, la señorita espera, si no fuera por mí, ni estarías con ella, yo te apoyé para que controlaras esos celos idiotas...”

“Tenés razón, pero contá de una vez la historia..”

“Bueno, la foto de la nena en las vías pasó a ser mi amuleto, mi amuleto de la suerte, la llevo a todos lados. Si me golpean o me maltratan, tengo mi foto, tengo a la muchacha. Ella me despertó la pasión por escribir, no esa mierda de escritura que yo hacía, eso de sentarme y ponerme a copiar a mis ídolos, de sentarme y creer que era escritora, de creer que tenía algo para decir. Fue la fotografía lo que me mostró qué es la literatura. Y cuando pasé esos tres meses en Italia, el año pasado, ¿te acordás, encamándome con italianos lindos y de verga grande? Visité un parque maravilloso en la Toscana, totalmente cubierto de algodón: en la tierra, en los arbustos, en las callecitas, algodón volando al viento. Los árboles de algodón diseminados por el parque propiciaron este espectáculo y parecía un campo de sueños, el verde del parque salpicado por el blanco del algodón, yo me sentía en un sueño o en un cuadro impresionista. El parque estaba casi desierto, y toda esa escena parecía haber sido dibujada para mí. Me puse a sacar fotos inmediatamente, decenas de fotos. Después, en el hotel, ya pasada la euforia, mirando las fotos, una de ellas me llamó la atención. Era una goma de automóvil, solitaria, apoyada sobre uno de los árboles, rodeada de copos de algodón de buen augurio. Y esa fotografía me pareció tan llena de posibilidades y metáforas, imaginé tantas cosas, pensé en pequeñas historias a partir de ella, me gustaría repetir ese instante. Y comencé a hacer eso, a crear historias a partir de las fotografías. Imaginé varias, decenas.”

“¿Pensaste en hacer un curso de fotografía?”

“Quietito, ratón, quietito, escuchá solamente, es tan difícil que las personas escuchen... Ah, con esas fotos entendí el papel de la fotografía en la vida de las personas, cómo es de humana y cuál es su relación con el ego. La fotografía quiere capturar un instante, quiere aprisionar el tiempo, cada click quiere inmortalizar un segundo. ¿Pero para qué? Para servir al ego, claro. Para que podamos ver este instante cuando queramos y mostrarlo para quien queramos. Para decir: ‘mirá cómo vi este momento.’ Es para repetir el momento fotografiado cuantas veces quieras, para competir con la vida, superarla. Y eso hace a la fotografía más humana todavía, porque nace de un deseo humano de reproducirse como imagen, de permanecer. Sé que parece filosofía barata, y que de lo único que sé es de sentarme en un miembro duro y moverme, pero yo llegué hasta ahí, entendí lo que es la literatura. ¡Escribir es fácil, entender es jodido!”

Copi abre otra botella de vino, mete la uña en la bolsita una vez más.

“Y hoy la fotografía es una especie de sentido, quizás el sexto o el séptimo sentido, y no es por nada que todos los celulares y los notebooks y cualquier mierda viene con cámara, porque se hicieron indispensables: en un mundo saturado de información, las fotografías son una especie de segunda memoria, es ahí donde uno va cuando quiere recordar los mejores momentos de un viaje, del casamiento, la familia, el fin de semana. Yo no soy fotógrafa, no domino ni estudié las técnicas de la fotografía, ni tengo buenos equipos, tengo mi polaroid y unas ganas terribles de que me den por el culo, jajajaja.”

“Si vas a empezar, me voy...”

“No, quiero que tomes una copa más conmigo... Lo que me atrae de la fotografía son las semejanzas con la literatura. La fotografía quiere congelar un instante, y la literatura, recrearlo. Las dos tienen esa capacidad de permitir una visión diferente de las cosas. Mi interés por la fotografía comenzó justamente para tratar de entender un poco más los procesos literarios; al final, crear y contar historias es desvelar imágenes. ¿Te gustó esa, Ratón? Soy increíble, ¿no? Tocá esto...”

“¿Terminaste?”

Copi se dejó caer en la silla, respiró hondo, y continuó, pero ahora melancólica.

“Ya no puedo escribir sin las fotografías, estoy presa. Todo lo que escribí es basura: cuentos de mierda, una cagada de una novela, estoy presa. También hice varios textos basados en fotografías, pero solo una serie me parece verdadera, sincera.”

“Pero me dijiste que estabas escribiendo unos poemas.”

“Sí, tengo algunos pocos poemas, claro, son fotografías en palabras, es diferente, pero pocos se salvan.”

“Por lo menos estás escribiendo, ¿no? De hecho, no sé por qué ustedes escriben, nadie los lee. ¿Por qué escribís esas cosas?”

“Necesito entenderme.”

“¿Pero no ibas a ese psicoanalista gay?”

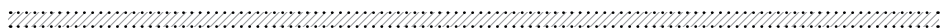
“No es eso... no es eso.”

Copi va hasta el cuarto y vuelve con una carpeta, muestra a Renè una serie de fotos pegadas en una hoja A4, debajo de las fotos hay pequeños textos.

“¿Que ves acá?”

“¿Fotos y textos?”

“No, Ratón, soledad. Encontré algunas cosas más solitarias que yo.”



EL LIBRO



Las Fantasias Electivas

Carlos Henrique Schroeder

- **Título original:** As Fantasias Eletivas
- **ISBN:** 9788501041142
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- **Tirada total en Brasil:** 2.500 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

En el turístico balneario Camboriú, René, un recepcionista de hotel del turno noche que intenta reconstruir su vida, encuentra una alternativa para su vida deshecha en la amistad de Copi, una travesti amante de la fotografía. René leerá lo que Copi escribe y será el único que tendrá acceso a sus fotos, de sorprendente belleza. En ese instante, un libro se abre dentro del libro y todo se vuelve un gran ensayo sobre el alma humana.

RESEÑAS

Carlos Henrique Schroeder usa su experiencia como recepcionista de hotel en su nueva novela- O Globo 16/10/2015
<http://oglobo.globo.com/cultura/livros/carlos-henrique-schroeder-usa-experiencia-como-recepcionista-de-hotel-em-novo-romance-14256961>

Lea fragmentos de Las fantasias electivas - Ilustrísima, Folha de São Paulo 06/07/2014

<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrissima/2014/07/1480504-leia-trecho-de-as-fantasias-eletivas-de-carlos-henrique-schroeder.shtml>

Soledad y olvido

Las fantasías electivas es una breve y múltiple novela cuya fuerza principal está en la poesía- Rascunho
<http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/solidao-e-esquecimento-2/>

La fotografía de las palabras de Schroeder- São Paulo review, Setembro de 2014

<http://saopauloreview.com.br/2014/09/05/resenha-a-fotografia-das-palavras-de-schroeder/>

Schroeder escribe sobre el mundo iletrado Nuevo libro del autor cartarinense está basado en la “fauna humana” que vio durante sus años como recepcionista de hotel - Gazeta do Povo
<http://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/cadernog/conteudo.phtml?id=1507252>

EL AUTOR



Carlos Henrique Schroeder

• **Nombre de pluma:**

Carlos Henrique Schroeder

• **Otros libros**

A rosa verde, romance, 2005, Editora da UFSC

Ensaio do Vazio, romance, 2006, 7Letras

As certezas e as palavras, contos, 2010, Editora da Casa

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Además de traducir para diferentes editoriales de América latina y España, su interés por la literatura brasileña la llevó a armar proyectos relacionados con la divulgación de esta literatura en español, como la página www.brasilpapelessueltos.com y la revista electrónica Galerías.

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A LOS SIETE Y A LOS CUARENTA

JOÃO ANZANELLO CARRASCOZA

Traducido por Julia Tomasini

Lectura

En aquella época, yo estaba aprendiendo a leer y a escribir y me maravillaba descubrir cómo una letra se abrazaba a la otra para formar una palabra, y cómo las palabras, húmedas de tinta, adquirían una nueva cara escritas en el papel. Para mí, las letras nacían encaracoladas como zarcillos, y a la hora de abrir el cuaderno y juntarlas, yo siempre tartamudeaba, como haciéndole tachaduras al silencio.

Mi hermano, más avanzado en el mundo de la lectura, se reía con ganas burlándose de mis errores. Una tarde, mi madre lo oyó mientras se mofaba de mí y le recordó las dificultades que él había tenido, y le dijo: ¡también te equivocabas mucho! Y nos explicó que ese abc era solo el comienzo. Un día íbamos a leer no solo palabras, sino todo a nuestro alrededor. Incluso a las personas.

Me pareció gracioso lo que ella nos estaba diciendo, ¿cómo sería leer a las personas? Mi hermano me miró sorprendido, y yo como un espejo en el que él se veía rascándose la cabeza. ¿Entonces yo era un libro, él otro, mi madre otro, y mi padre también? ¿Y todo el mundo una escritura, con sus letras, sus pes y bes, sus capítulos? ¿Se suponía que seríamos hojeados, leídos y releídos? Al vernos atónitos, ella movió los brazos, como si espantara a las gallinas, y dijo, ¡Después van a crecer y van a entender!

Y mientras crecíamos, casi sin darnos cuenta, mi hermano y yo jugábamos al fútbol en el patio de casa. Las hojas de cinc que servían como puerta del garaje era uno de los arcos. La pared del cobertizo, entre dos puertas, era el otro. Cada uno era su propio equipo, tenía que gambetear al adversario, pasarse la pelota a sí mismo, hacer gol, defenderse. Nuestra única platea era mi madre y Dita, la lavandera, que nos separaban en nuestras peleas, ya que también éramos los árbitros del partido, y cada uno hacía sonar el silbato a su favor.

Teníamos un hinchas especial, Don Hermes, nuestro vecino que, aunque no viera el partido, siempre sabía a cuánto iba. Nosotros gritábamos todo el tiempo, relatando las jugadas, uno provocando al otro, haciendo autopases, tackles, chanfles...

Y, claro, él oía todo del fondo de su casa. Don Hermes era un hombre de los quietos. Mi padre una vez comentó que él había sido soldado de la Segunda Guerra y que, después de volver, se puso a recuperar radios rotas y cuidar de los pajaritos. Él tenía mano para sacar a las cosas del silencio, acariciar alas, avivar cantos. Había construido un jaulón fantástico para los canarios: venía gente del

país entero a admirar su creación. Por la mañana, fuera de la casa, allí donde daba la sombra de una jaboticaba, colgaba sus jaulas de aluminio y madera. Encima del muro podíamos ver los tordos, reina moras, corbatitas, martín pescadores, unos más lindos que los otros, canturreando hasta la tardecita.

Mi madre decía que Don Hermes tenía algo de San Francisco, no podía ser de gente común, humano, ese poder de atraer a los pajaritos, y contó que una vez él había abierto las jaulas y que ninguno salió volando: se quedaron todos allí, comiendo frutas de sus manos y picoteándole los dedos. De vez en cuando lo veíamos llenando de agua un recipiente, poniendo alpiste, saliendo y entrando de la cocina, manso, él solo él. Cuando la pelota caía en su casa y regresaba con el brillo de su rostro cerca del muro, Don Hermes nos abría una sonrisa que no sabíamos si era de sí o no para nuestras travesuras. No jugábamos al ras: nos gustaba exhibirnos haciendo un sombrero, una folha seca, y entonces la pelota salía de la pupa, iba aérea, quería agitar las alas y, en sus deseos de cielo, traspasaba el muro y caía al otro lado, y espantaba a los pájaros, que se alborotaban en las jaulas.

Vinieron las vacaciones, llamamos a Paulinho, a Lucas, a unos amigos del barrio, y armamos dos equipos. El patio se convirtió en un campito de fútbol. Y la pelota todo el tiempo cayendo al otro lado. Don Hermes debía oír con gusto los partidos y querer que continuaran, porque rápidamente la devolvía, ágil, servicial. Una mañana, Doña Elza, su mujer, vino a quejarse: la pelota estaba destrozando sus jarrones, matando sus helechos de un metro y las violetitas que crecían a la sombra de la jaboticaba. Mi padre entonces hizo el muro más alto.

Las clases volvieron, mi hermano y yo volvimos a los partidos solitarios, uno contra el otro, cada uno un equipo entero, y la pelota, rebelde, huía a la casa de Don Hermes. Apostábamos para dónde iría a tirarla de vuelta, si en un extremo del muro cerca de la manga, si allá abajo, al lado del cobertizo. Nosotros esperábamos, llenos de silencio, y de repente ella, la pelota, saltaba de sus manos, y rebotaba en el cemento en busca de nuestros pies.

Todo iba bien hasta que mi padre supo por Doña Elza que Don Hermes andaba abatido, las piernas débiles, delgado. Llamaron al médico, le dieron unos remedios, le recomendaron reposo. Mi hermano y yo seguimos nuestro fútbol, conteníamos los gritos, cosas extrañas estaban rondando, pero todavía difícil de entenderlas. Y aun con un muro más alto, la pelota se empecinaba en caer en la casa de nuestro vecino. La demora en la devolución se hacía mayor, y a veces nos afligía. Pero luego oíamos los pasos lentos de Don Hermes, y entonces ahí venía la pelota, blanca en el aire como una paloma, y aterrizaba feliz en nuestro patio.

Un día el cielo se oscureció súbitamente; la mañana se hizo noche, y cayó el temporal, una lluvia de los demonios, los relámpagos dibujaban el cielo, el ventarrón partía ramas de árboles, algo aterrador. Después, milagrosamente salió un sol color sangre que absorbió todas las aguas de la lluvia, y por la tarde, todo seco, fuimos a jugar al fútbol, a escondidas de mi madre, que se había enojado con nosotros, no podíamos fastidiar a Doña Elza, Don Hermes, tan enfermo...

Comenzamos con calma, pero después el partido entró en efervescencia y, como siempre, uno empezó a provocar al otro, gambeta esto, careta lo otro, un gol

allá, un gol acá, la pelota que quería subir, ser pájaro en las alturas, desenjaulada, y entonces, en el intento por hacer un autopase, mi hermano pateó mal y la pelota fue a parar a la casa de Don Hermes. Los pajaritos se agitaron, un canario trinó, satisfecho con el sol, el fresco de la tarde y como un reguero de pólvora, su canto se esparció, y la pajareada comenzó a cantar alto, algo increíble de oír.

Nosotros nos quedamos quietos, vigilando de un extremo al otro del muro, imaginando en qué punto iba a caer. Pero el tiempo fue pasando, la sombra de la jaboticaba iba creciendo del otro lado, y mi hermano y yo nos miramos profundo, profundo, en silencio. Como en la repetición de una jugada, recordé las palabras de mi madre, que un día íbamos a leer a las personas. A pesar de continuar inmóviles, hacía pocos minutos yo sabía y él también que Don Hermes nunca más podría devolvernos la pelota.

SCRITURA

Era la final del campeonato. El hombre iba a mirar el partido en casa de un amigo, habían arreglado por teléfono,

¿A qué hora?

¡A la hora que quieras!

¿Llevo cerveza?

No, no hace falta,

estaban los dos felices con el reencuentro,

hacía años que no se veían,

y era perfecto, él iba directo del trabajo,

así la mujer se quedaría tranquila en el apartamento

con el hijo, y él no perturbaría el sueño de ninguno de

los dos con sus gritos de hinchas, esa noche su

equipo podría salir campeón y, aunque fuera

quien era

-un hombre contenido-

no había cómo refrenar, ante semejante perspectiva, la

alegría a punto de inundar su vida.

Era una noche de definiciones, como se dice, si bien todas

las noches y días lo fueran,

aunque no de igual consecuencia,

que haría resonar, de ahí en adelante, su bien o su mal,

(menudas eran las definiciones cotidianas, casi ni las

sentía, pero ellas, moviendo los hechos como un río,

irían, adelante, a desaguar en momentos mayores).

Quizá por eso,

después de llamar por teléfono a la mujer y saber, por ella,

que el hijo tenía fiebre,

¿Quieres que vaya para casa?, preguntó,
y ella,
No, ya le di el remedio,
¿Estás segura?,
Sí, iya se va a mejorar!,
Si necesitas algo me llamas,
y porque el tránsito fluía más lento, como si
estuviera frenando el mundo para facilitar la inmersión de él en sí
mismo,
el hombre recordó una tarde, de su infancia,
cuando vivió una situación semejante, al
disputar la prueba de salto en altura en el campeonato
estatal:
igual que aquella vez,
era obvia
la inminencia de algo grande,
ya anunciado
(la victoria o la derrota),
pero, extrañamente, él sentía el aire saturado de un
misterio ajeno al juego que, en minutos, comenzaría,
era una escritura en progreso, que él no sabía
descifrar,
no porque ignorara el lenguaje,
sino porque todavía estaba indefinida.
A veces, captaba, en medio de la normalidad, cuando la
vida, como en sordina, sofocaba sus explosiones,
una ola negra,
y, aunque supiera -la experiencia se lo había confirmado
en otras ocasiones-
que podría estar equivocado,
él estaba seguro de que un dolor venía en camino,
y, de ahí en adelante,
bastaba esperar su llegada,
para confirmar (tristemente) o no (con algo de
alivio) su presentimiento.
Pero así como a veces eran lindos los atardeceres de
verano y, por eso mismo, casi insoportables,
que lo obligaban a olvidarse de ellos,
o banalizarlos
al comentar con alguien su belleza
(dejando que el barniz de la palabra dejara marcas
en su visión),
también era una orden,
defensa instintiva,

que su presagio descendiera al segundo plano, y al primero ascendiera una sensación de bienaventuranza,
porque, a pesar de todo,
estaba a punto de vivenciar
un hecho único.
Vencido el tránsito, llegó a la casa del amigo cuando
la noche ya era sólida, y, aunque todavía no sus
facciones, pero todo el cuerpo, revelaran la euforia
típica de una final de campeonato –el deseo y el
miedo fundidos–,
su espíritu vagaba por el pasado;
tanto que, al lado del amigo,
y de desconocidos que estaban allí,
hinchas de Corinthians,
conversando frente al televisor,
vaso de cerveza en la mano,
él se acordó del hermano y de los amigos de infancia,
con quienes jugaba al fútbol en el patio de la casa,
y, también, de un vecino viejo,
que nunca se quejaba cuando la pelota pasaba el
muro y estresaba, del otro lado, sus pajaritos
en las jaulas.
Enseguida el partido comenzó, y los recuerdos, salidos de
la nada,
inesperadamente,
se quietaron;
el hombre, idéntico a todos allí, se vio absorbido por el juego,
y, como hubo unas gambetas bonitos y unas
posibilidades de gol para su equipo,
él sintió un discreto contentamiento
y las ganas era de que creciera hasta transformarse,
finalmente, en la alegría del título conquistado.
Le gustaba estar allí, ajeno a todo, la conciencia presa
en ese ahora que,
para ser más placentero,
no dependía de él,
sino de los que corrían en el campo, y nada podía hacer
más que incentivarlos con gestos y palabras (aunque,
claro, no lo oyeran),
cuando,
entonces,
sonó el celular

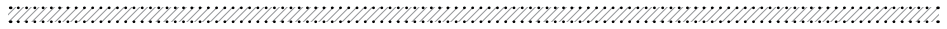
y, antes incluso de atender,
él sabía,
era la mujer
y con ella vino la noticia;
la fiebre no bajaba, el niño estaba hirviendo,
Mejor llevarlo a la guardia, ella le dijo,
y, como él nunca la había visto alarmada,
consideró que el hijo, de hecho, necesitaba atención médica,
y, contra su voluntad,
porque, entonces, la temperatura del partido también
subía,
(aunque en ese caso era positiva, y esperada),
él le dijo,
Estoy yendo para casa,
Y ella,
¿Estás seguro? Puedo ir sola al hospital,
Y él,
No, paso por ahí y vamos juntos,
Y ella,
Como quieras,
Y él,
El tránsito ya debe haber bajado,
Y ella,
Entonces no tardes, te espero.
El hombre le avisó al amigo, que se compadeció,
si bien solo en la superficie,
¡Qué pena!
Como los demás, estaba imantado al fragor
del partido,
pero, acompañándolo hasta la puerta,
trató de animarlo,
No debe ser nada,
Y él,
Yo tampoco creo,
y el amigo,
Si necesitas algo, llama,
y él,
para reconducirlo a la órbita del buen momento,
le dijo,
Te llamo para celebrar el título;
el amigo
le dio, entonces, un abrazo de hincha,
cómplice de los destinos de su equipo, pero no, obvia-

mente, de los problemas ajenos, y asintió,
¡Claro que sí, vamos a ganar!
El hombre se metió velozmente por una avenida
iluminada;
el tránsito, por suerte, había menguado;
el juego no era allí, en la ciudad, y, una vez empezado,
las calles se habían vaciado,
incluso los que no hinchaban por ninguno de
los equipos finalistas, a falta de mejor programa estaban
con la tevé prendida en la definición.
Cuando se aproximó al edificio donde vivía, el
hombre llamó a la mujer y le pidió que lo espe-
raran en el garage con el niño; los recogería a los
dos allí mismo, en el subsuelo, de ahí seguirían hasta el
hospital,
Ya estamos bajando, dijo ella,
y, de hecho, apenas entró al garage, madre e hijo
salieron del ascensor y fueron en dirección al automóvil.
Ella prefirió ir en el asiento trasero con el hijo,
no solo por ser una madre celosa, sino para tratar de que fuera menos
incómodo para el niño,
y, a pesar de ir en la frente, sin nadie a su lado, el
hombre consideró sensata esa decisión,
atrás, ella le tomaba la temperatura al hijo con el
dorso de la mano y le susurraba unas caricias.
Reparó, cuando los dos se ubicaron en el asiento y,
después por el retrovisor, que el niño parecía,
realmente enfermo;
Por la mañana, antes de ir al trabajo, él lo había visto
sentado en el piso del cuarto, distrayéndose feliz, con sus
juguetes.
Y de repente, la realidad había hecho unas ondulaciones y sustituyó
esa vivacidad por abatimiento.
Vamos campeón, dijo
y agregó
¡Te vas a sentir bien!
El hijo no se movió, abrazado a la madre,
que respondió por él,
Creo que es dolor de garganta,
y, acariciándole los cabellos,
continuó,
Duele hasta cuando tragas saliva, ¿no, hijito?
No sólo porque ella había tenido, a lo largo de la vida, el mismo

problema
-inevitablemente él lo había heredado-
sino, tal vez, por creer que,
hablando del dolor,
podría traerlo hacia sí
y que se disolviera en ella.
Siguieron, en silencio, hasta el hospital;
en el camino, el hombre observaba, de reojo,
madre e hijo unidos en lo oscuro, formando un único
cuerpo,
y, en simultáneo, buscaba señales que pudieran
expresar cómo iba el juego:
algún grito, cohete, bocinas insistentes
celebrando un gol,
aunque fuera del equipo contrario.
Pero nada.
El mundo seguía en su igual.
Y sin embargo él sentía, como aquella
vez, en la infancia, la proximidad de una revelación.
Mientras esperaban en la guardia, el hijo
acomodado en el regazo de la madre,
el hombre,
con el radar prendido,
leía a las personas alrededor,
buscando descubrir quién de ellos era el que estaba enfermo,
quién el acompañante,
desviándose así de pensar en aquellos que, en cuartos de
terapia intensiva, en los pisos de arriba, estaba muriendo.
Entonces, guiado por una fuerza antigua,
pero hacía mucho tiempo en reposo,
él se volvió a la mujer,
la miró junto al niño,
a quien consolaba con su placidez,
aunque supiera todo lo que ella se desgarraba para
mantener esa apariencia despreocupada
y, súbitamente, sintió qué rápido el tiempo se había escurrido
para ellos, hasta ayer una pareja joven;
los dos envejecían velozmente, en forma imper-
ceptible a los ojos diarios,
y lo que antes al hombre le parecía normal,
lo lento de la vida,
adquiría ahora una extraña urgencia,
él, inesperadamente, estaba impaciente,

no solo para que atendieran al niño, lo que reduciría su angustia,
ni para que el partido se resolviera ya, incluso con la derrota de su equipo,
o para que volvieran a casa, y se arrojaran a la inconciencia del sueño,
no,
era más que un sentimiento de acción inmediata, el retorno a un estado de suspensión;
él había captado una alerta,
en el suave mutismo de la mujer consolando al niño,
Calma, hijito,
y, por un instante, sintió que él, el padre, era solo un apéndice,
una sobra en la escena.
Pero esa sensación se retrajo, entera, con la voz del médico que, en la sala de espera, llamó al niño.
Y, en ese preciso momento, explotó una lluvia de fuegos artificiales, indicio de que hubo un gol.
El segundo tiempo,
calculó,
mirando el reloj pulsera
(siempre el misterioso mecanismo)
debía estar ya por la mitad, pronto el partido terminaría.
En el consultorio,
mientras miraba al médico hacer el examen, observaba a la mujer explicando, con desprendimiento, lo que, en su opinión, le molestaba al hijo,
y recordó esas noches en que llegar a casa, para estar con ella y el niño, era todo lo que deseaba.
Sí, el niño necesitaba de atención,
dijo el médico,
habían hecho bien, llevarlo allí,
y les extendió una receta,
antiinflamatorio,
solo había que comprarlo y seguir las indicaciones,
Mañana estará mejor.
El hombre fue al estacionamiento y, de allá pasó por la puerta de la guardia, donde la mujer y el hijo lo

esperaban , y ambos nuevamente, se acomodaron
atrás.
Siguieron a casa.
El silencio sangraba,
entre ellos,
como una herida;
el niño,
entregado,
cabeceaba de sueño en el regazo de la madre.
Cuando estaban acercándose a una farmacia, una larga
explosión de fuegos artificiales rasgó la quietud
de la noche.
El hombre volvió a pensar en el vecino, que devolvía
la pelota que el hermano y él tiraban sin querer, del
otro lado.
Sabía,
era una certeza visceral,
que su equipo había ganado el campeonato,
y sabía , también, mirando por el retrovisor la silueta
única en el asiento trasero,
que una pérdida,
allá adelante,
lo esperaba.



EL LIBRO



A los siete y a los cuarenta

João Anzanello Carrascoza

- **Título original:** Aos 7 e aos 40
- **ISBN:** 9788540504370
- **Año de publicación:** 2013
- **Editorial de la publicación original:** Cosac Naify
- **Número de páginas:** 160
- **Tirada total en Brasil:** 2.500 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

En su primera novela, el autor João Anzanello Carrascoza presenta fragmentos de la vida cotidiana del protagonista en dos momentos: a los siete años y a los cuarenta. Los hitos incluyen el robo de la mascota de su vecino, partidos de fútbol jugados con su hermano y, a la madurez, la separación de su mujer y la añoranza de su hijo desaparecido. Con su prosa delicada y melancólica, Carrascoza enseña la influencia de los pequeños actos en la definición de la trayectoria de una vida.

RESEÑAS

Rascunho, 2013

<http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/paisagem-de-homem-e-menino/>

O Estado de São Paulo, 2013

<http://www.elaineelesbao.com.br/?p=6694>

Observatório da imprensa, 2013

http://www.observatoriodaimprensa.com.br/news/view/_ed768_festa_silenciosa

PREMIOS

Prêmio Orígenes Lessa da Fundação

Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil

Finalista do Prêmio São Paulo de

Literatura

Obra selecionada para o vestibular da

Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica

de Minas Gerais (CEFET-MG).

TRADUCCIONES

França: Ao sept et à quarante ans, 2015,

Anacaona

EL AUTOR



João Luís Anzanello Carrascoza

• Nombre de pluma:

João Anzanello Carrascoza

• Otros libros

Romance

Caderno de um ausente, 2014,

128 pp., Cosac Naify

Contos

Aquela água toda, 2012, 96 pp., Cosac Naify

Amores mínimos, 2011, 144 pp., Record

Espinhos de alfinetes, 2010,

110 pp., Record

O volume do silêncio, 2006,

216 pp., Cosac Naify

LA TRADUCTORA

Julia Tomasini

Julia Tomasini es traductora literaria del portugués y del francés al español.

Estudió Letras en la Universidad de Buenos Aires, obtuvo su maestría en la Universidad de Maryland y actualmente realiza un doctorado en Río de Janeiro, donde vive.

Además de traducir para diferentes editoriales de América latina y España, su interés por la literatura brasileña la llevó a armar proyectos relacionados con la divulgación de esta literatura en español, como la página www.brasilpapelessueltos.com y la revista electrónica Galerías.

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SE DESVANECEN LOS BARCOS

SÉRGIO TAVARES

Traducido por Sebastian Rodriguez

Hoy me escapé del trabajo, fui a ver los barcos. Me gusta ver los barcos en esos días de bajas nubes plumizas, cuando el cielo se vuelve un reflejo agitado del mar y soplan hilos de agua que tiñen de oscuro mi traje, tejiendo un manto ceniciento de papel de seda que cubre el horizonte.

En ese espeso escenario de tiza, los barcos son como pequeños borrones coloridos, inamo-vibles en el expresionismo de la tela turbia, donde gaviotas y charranes revolotean en vuelos erráticos como húmedas cerdas de un pincel que pinta de invierno todo el tejido marino, excepto las franjas blancas tomadas por este misterioso e interminable ímpetu de tramarse y destramarse. Me gusta sentir las azaleas de espuma que se abren mansamente entre mis dedos y me queman de vida la carne, para en seguida desaparecer en la arena viscosa que ensucia de sal los dobladillos del pantalón y devora mis pies en la hondura gris donde penetran las olas.

Me gusta dejar que el áspero sudoeste me recorra el cuerpo, azotando la piel por entre los ojales e insuflando las alas de un hombre-pájaro negro, millones de granos y yo, gotas y una corbata, que remolinean por el aire.

Parto con ellos en dirección al infinito, perdiéndome en el teatro de niebla y lluvia, en el momento en que bajan las cortinas y los barcos izan sus velas, disparando en mí la recon-fortante certeza de que el vacío de la playa es mayor que el mío.

Siempre preferí la soledad. Vivía en búsqueda de este estado de desaparecimiento, cuando es posible oír fuerte la propia voz callada. En la infancia, fui un niño introspectivo. Me gustaba coleccionar cosas sin valor y andar sin rumbo por los parques. No tenía amigos y en los cumpleaños me quedaba sentado al lado de los adultos, observando jugar a los otros chicos.

Una vez, me dieron un perro, pero murió de tristeza antes de completar un año. Ni siquiera tuvo nombre, sólo un retrato que dibujé del día en que desenterró un gorrión. Me olvidaba de las horas entre los lápices de cera o viendo los dibujos animados. Mis tías decían que yo sería un infeliz o un genio.

Cuando entré a la primaria, descubrí la literatura. Leía de forma indistinta y compulsiva. En la biblioteca, en el horario del recreo, en el autobús de ida y en el autobús de vuelta. En mi cuarto, llegaba a leer dos libros a la vez. Los profesores comenzaron a usarme como referencia y mi introspección fue tornándose una señal de inteligencia y admiración.

La verdad era que en la página siguiente yo ya no me acordaba de lo que había leído en el capítulo anterior. Los libros eran una necesidad, pues son claves

para la soledad. A veces, me acostaba en la cama con un libro apoyado sobre el pecho y me perdía en los recuadros y en las intrigas hasta agotarme de sueño.

Era agradable retomar la historia al día siguiente y percibir que parte del argumento fue tramado en el sueño. Durmiendo, yo era un mejor escritor.

Intenté la facultad de matemáticas, pero los libros no me sirvieron para los números. Los años fueron enfermado a mis padres hasta convertirlos en dos insectos extremadamente pequeños para la mecánica de la casa.

Tuve que trabajar para comprar medicinas y reparar los muebles. Mi primer empleo fue en la fábrica de pantalones. Tenía la función de verificar la precisión de los botones y de las cremalleras. Me gustaba, pues pasaba todo el día solo, forzando las costuras y la línea de los cierres.

A la hora del almuerzo, me sentaba en un rincón con un periódico abierto sobre la mesa, para alejar cualquier intención de diálogo. La única que insistía era Irene.

Todos los días quería hablar sobre las noticias publicadas, y yo le respondía con hum-huns. De tanto importunarme, acabamos iniciando una relación en que nos veíamos poco, hablábamos en el comedor y ella me ayudaba con las tareas domésticas pesadas de fin de semana. A mi madre le gustaba Irene. Decía que me entendía y me amaba como ella amaba a mi padre, y que bailarían con nosotros el vals nupcial, en el baile de casamiento.

Desgraciadamente ella estaba engañada. Algunos meses después, mi madre sufrió un infarto fulminante. Al día siguiente, mi padre se despertó temprano, se afeitó, tomó el autobús hasta el edificio comercial más alto, subió el ascensor y se aventó del noveno piso. Hicimos las bodas junto con la misa del séptimo día para salvar los pocos ahorros que teníamos, amenazados por la hipoteca de la casa, que se había vencido desde hacía seis meses.

Con lo de la fábrica, era imposible mantenernos dignamente.

Fue cuando un tío segundo, que trabajaba en una secretaría de estado, me ofreció un cargo en el sector de protocolo. Era un trabajo que no requería mucho razonamiento, el salario y los beneficios eran satisfactorios y el horario flexible, aunque el traje y la corbata eran in-dispensables. Compartía la oficina con dos empleados de estructura, relevándonos en el oficio de numerar los procesos, sellarlos, comunicarlos y depositarlos en uno de los muchos archivos. La oficina era pequeña, de paredes color pastel y sin ventanas, alfombrada y abar-rotada de antiguos muebles patrimoniales. Había tres mesas, una máquina de escribir y un ventilador que funcionaba mal. La verdad es que, con el tiempo, me empezó a gustar pasar el día en ese aislamiento remunerado, en el cual casi no tenía que interactuar con las personas y podía perderme en la lectura por horas, sin interrupción. Con esas garantías, me vi impelido por voluntades que se armonizaban con los deseos de Irene. Saldé las deudas y recuperé la casa, compramos muebles nuevos, incineré los trastos de mis padres y tuvimos dos hijas. Me convertí en un hombre de familia, embarcado en una rueda de deberes y nuevos sentimientos, en que la soledad era el acuerdo que incidía sobre lo cotidiano cuando el reloj, en el hall de entrada, marcaba el inicio del horario de trabajo de esa dependencia pública.

Unos dos años después, ese refugio, sin embargo, adquirió una atmósfera claustrofóbica que asfixió el mundo que inventé para mí. La Casa Civil oficializó un comunicado, informando que todos los órganos tendrían que recortar gastos. Hubo despidos y se suspendieron todos los contratos.

Luego, los empleados de mi sector fueron asignados a otras secciones y me quedé solo. Claro que, al principio, me asaltó una euforia sin igual. Me quedaría completamente aislado, inmune a cualquier contacto o explicaciones. Libre para leer, soñar, recostar mi espalda en el respaldo de la silla y oír solamente mi voz callada. Sin embargo, lentamente me di cuenta de que (y era como sofocarse poco a poco) ese estado que tanto buscaba, la soledad, sólo suscita recompensa cuando es conquistado y no impuesto.

La parálisis desencadenó la negligencia que ya flotaba sobre las dependencias públicas, es-tableciendo la mediocridad y el desánimo que acomete a todo ser envenenado por la buro-cracia. No había más órdenes de pedidos, fotocopias o llamadas. La jornada de trabajo se reducía a sentarse frente al reloj y esperar que las agujas empujasen la masa pegajosa que era el tiempo. Fui siendo olvidado en aquel despacho sofocante y sin ventanas. Desapareciendo como un retrato consumido por los años, una silueta borrada sin reflejo.

La voluntad de aislarme, ese ímpetu de estar tan solo conmigo, se deterioró dentro de mí, dejando un vacío que me tornaba invisible no del modo que siempre pretendí. A veces, sucedía que un repartidor iba al sector a llevar una correspondencia y se quedaba parado en la puerta, mirando como si no hubiese nadie, hasta irse. Cuántas veces yo pedía para detener el ascensor, y las puertas se cerraban insensiblemente. O cuando alguien necesitaba archivar un proceso, lo dejaba con un recado escrito a mano, avisando que había estado allí y la sala se encontraba vacía.

En casa, el aislamiento desencadenó un proceso más doloroso. Junto a la madurez del cuerpo, mis hijas desarrollaban la cruel habilidad de no verme. Se cruzaban delante de mí como si vistiese la textura del papel de pared o la insignificancia de un jarrón ornamental.

Ya comenzaban las comidas sin mi presencia, ignorando mis comentarios e incluso las pe-ticiones de pasar la sal. Cuando, de casualidad, estaba viendo la televisión, naturalmente tomaban el control remoto y cambiaban de canal. Hace dos noches, me encontré a la menor mirando hacia una foto mía donde estaban ella y la hermana aún pequeña, con una extraña atención, como si yo hubiese sido expulsado de su prematura memoria.

Incluso Irene, que me encontró en el escondite dentro de mí, ahora me olvidaba con sencillas obligaciones y pormenores que suplían el sentimiento de ausencia. Fui desapareciendo. Disipándome como una alfombra pisada, un fantasma en la electrostática de la televisión. No dormía, y ni la lectura me reconfortaba. Comencé a vagar por la calle, en busca de una mirada, un rostro en medio de la multitud, una expresión manchada por ojos nublados capaces de ver lo invisible...

Él ve la forma, un borrón, una mancha que aflora en la sedosidad de la neblina y lo asalta un entusiasmo incomprensible, tal es el vórtice que urde granos de

arena y contracorrientes en la germinación de bulbos de loto, flámulas y pétalos que se abren apenas para des-pedazarse en el rompimiento, fragmentos de espumas, espejos-fantasmas que reflejan el despegar de las alas del pájaro negro, el prelude del vuelo entre los velos bailarines de lluvia fina sobre miles de huellas que se confunden y recorren caminos que nunca existieron, rumbo al roquedo, el aglomerado de piedras y depresiones, cubierto de limo, crustáceos y rocas, donde explotan olas y le alcanzan astillas perladas en sus espaldas, avanzando contra las cucarachas de mar entrando por desvanes y bordes que dañan las manos confusas, entre el par de zapatos y resbalones, en escalada hasta la cima, el abismo donde el aire es menos salino, y ella está sentada, brazos envolviendo sus rodillas, el rostro del-gado y la raíz del cabello castaño, dividido por la mitad.

Es una bella visión.

Es una bella caída.

No deja de ser un punto de vista.

Tal vez uno menos glorioso.

La vida en ciertos aspectos tiende a no ser gloriosa.

Mi padre solía decir algo parecido.

Su padre es un hombre sabio.

Quizá lo es.

¿Puedo sentarme?

...

Sabe, subir aquí me da la medida de mi insignificancia.

Para mí, es la posibilidad de desaparecer.

Créalo, no es tan simple.

No es lo suficientemente difícil.

¿Ve los barcos? ¿Los pequeños borrones coloridos detrás del mal tiempo, surgiendo y de-sapareciendo? Imagine todos los elementos que son necesarios para que eso suceda. La niebla, la lluvia, el viento, las olas. Todo tiene que convergir perfectamente para crear esa ilusión óptica. No creo que sea tan simple.

Yo no consigo impresionarme con ilusiones.

Debe existir una buena razón para ello.

Mi padre es mago, un ilusionista, como él prefiere que le llamen. Su número más famoso es el de la desaparición.

Y creciste sabiendo que era una ilusión.

Sí. Él fue grande en su época.

¿Y dónde está ahora?

Ahora está inmóvil en la cama de un hospital, fluctuando entre momentos de lucidez, mientras espera un trasplante que nunca sucedió. ¿Irrónico, no? Mi padre se ganó la vida con trucos de desaparición y ahora no hay nada que se pueda hacer para evitar que desaparezca para siempre.

Lo siento mucho.

Creo que esa es la ilusión que aún me impresiona. Pensar que la vida tiene algún sentido.

Sé que no es reconfortante, pero imagine cuántas personas su padre tocó con sus números, cuántas vidas consiguió cambiar en todos esos años.

No es nada reconfortante.

Al menos, él te tiene.

A mi hermano Pedro y a mí. Nunca lo abandonaríamos. Mi madre desapareció cuando éramos chicos. Mi padre siempre fue muy presente. A pesar de la vida itinerante, de crecer siguiendo la rutina de los circos de ciudad en ciudad, en ningún momento permitió que imaginásemos que podríamos quedarnos solos. Fuimos enseñados a creer en la comunión y educados para construir un futuro propio. Él nunca dejó que siguiésemos su ruta.

Es curioso como vinimos aquí por razones parecidas, pero con propósitos diferentes.

¿Qué has venido a hacer aquí, un día lluvioso, con traje y corbata?

No lo sé con certeza. A encontrar algo.

¿No deberías estar trabajando?

Debería pero a nadie le importa. Ya hace algún tiempo que nadie percibe que estoy allá. Hace tiempo que nadie me nota de ninguna forma.

Eres casado.

Sí, la alianza. Tengo dos hijas.

¿Eso es bueno?

No lo sé.

Debe de existir una buena razón para eso.

Me pasé la vida escondiéndome, intentando desaparecer. Cuando finalmente lo conseguí, descubrí que no podía volver atrás.

En el número de la desaparición había un fondo falso. Mi padre era sujetado por cadenas cerradas con candados y levantado dentro de una caja. La llave quedaba en su mano. Cuando la cuerda se rompía, él pasaba por el hoyo y caía sobre un colchón. Ese es el secreto.

¿Quiere oír un secreto? Por la noche, cuando sé que todos están durmiendo, voy hasta el cuarto de mis hijas. Agarro una silla y me siento en el borde de las camas. Me quedo horas sólo mirándolas, a veces hasta despuntar el día. Yo no sabía por qué. La verdad, yo fingía que no sabía el por qué. En el fondo, esperaba que una de ellas se despertase y, en la transición entre el sueño y el despertar, todavía libre de cualquier pensamiento, pudiese verme nuevamente. Saber que yo estaba allí, que aún existía. Pero ahora sé que no puedo revertir lo que me torné. Soy un fantasma en el portarretrato, un muerto-vivo.

De alguna forma es eso en lo que mi padre se convirtió.

Es eso en lo que al final nos convertimos.

Y no hay nada que podamos hacer.

Todavía podemos ver los barcos.



EL LIBRO



Se desvanecen los barcos

Sérgio Tavares

• **Título original:**

Queda da própria altura

• **ISBN:** 978-85-60676-59-0

• **Año de publicación:** 2012

• **Editorial de la publicación original:**

Confraria do Vento

• **Número de páginas:** 244

• **Tirada total en Brasil:** 500 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

Según libro del escritor y periodista Sérgio Tavares, ganador, con “Cavala”, del Premio Sesc de Literatura 2010, la antología de cuentos “Queda da própria altura” nos lanza en un flujo de imágenes poderosas y palabras cuidadosamente entretejidas, de donde brota una historia poética, envasada por sueños y deseos muy fuertes.

RESEÑAS

Valor Econômico (marzo, 2013)

“Tavares demuestra una notable capacidad de conducir el lector, cambiando de género con facilidad, muchas veces de una línea para otra. Así, de un clima angustiante y onírico, él cambia para el romanticismo y poco después parte para el clima de misterio, todo con la seguridad de quien sabe exactamente adónde quiere llegar”.

Evaluación: AA+ (Alta calidad) <http://www.valor.com.br/cultura/3055648/escrita-ousada-de-um-jovem-autor>

Folha de São Paulo (abril, 2013)

“La soledad si evidencia y las sensaciones de pérdida y abandono contaminan el lector”. Evaluación: Bueno.

http://issuu.com/infiniteconveniente/docs/resenha_queda_folha_sp

Correio Braziliense (mayo, 2013)

“La diversidad de los dramas recompuestos por Sérgio Tavares, tratados con intensidad y refinamiento, hacen de ‘Queda da própria altura’ un libro instigante y devastador”.

<http://issuu.com/infiniteconveniente/docs/resenhacorreiobraziliense>

Estado de Minas (febrero, 2013)

“En su segunda aventura literaria, muestra que tiene coraje y estilo”.

http://issuu.com/infiniteconveniente/docs/resenha_estado_de_minas

Jornal Opção (diciembre, 2013)

“Es denso, íntimo y preciso. Calidades esas que sólo pueden ser dignas de un escritor de gran tamaño literario”.

<http://www.jornalopcao.com.br/posts/opcao-cultural/no-auge-da-queda-um-mergulho-na-obra-de-sergio-tavares>

Correio da Paraíba (diciembre, 2013)

“Sérgio Tavares se revela un autor maduro y osado porque no teme experimentar el lenguaje”.

http://issuu.com/infiniteconveniente/docs/correio_da_paraiba

TRADUCCIONES

Un tramo del libro fue traducido para

el italiano y publicado en la Revista Sagarana (<http://www.sagarana.net/anteprima.php?quale=865>).

PREMIOS

El libro fue finalista del 2º Premio Brasilia de Literatura, categoría cuentos, ocurrido en 2014.

EL AUTOR



Sérgio Luiz R. T. da Silva

- **Nombre de pluma:**

Sérgio Tavares

- **Otros libros**

Cavala, ganador del Premio Sesc de Literatura 2009/2010, categoría cuentos. Editorial de la publicación: Record, 2010, 98 páginas.

EL TRADUCTOR

Sebastian Rodriguez

Sebastian Rodriguez nació en Buenos Aires, Argentina. Vive en Brasil desde el año 2001, dedicándose a la enseñanza de la lengua española. Ha trabajado en diferentes escuelas de lenguas y colegios. Además, se ha especializado en traducciones y revisiones del portugués para el español.

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UNE BANDE DE JAZZ DANS NOTRE SALON

ALEXANDRE STAUT

Traduit par Yann René Danjou

Il allait arriver tout seul aux pompes funèbres, soupirer, et demander de l'aide à Geraldinho, l'assistant de son père. Pendant les funérailles auxquelles il participait, dans toutes, le jeune homme avait l'habitude d'amuser les enfants, il les faisait tourner en l'air et disait qu'un jour, ils joueraient à cache-cache au milieu du cimetière.

Il disait, parfois, que le petit garçon pourrait se cacher dans les cercueils blancs qui conservaient les enfants dans leurs cachettes éternelles. Geraldinho pouvait le protéger de ses peurs.

“Je connais déjà tout sur ce qui se passe dans cet endroit, par cœur. Maintenant je veux le voir de mes yeux... le travail du père. Cette chose qu'ils appellent la mort. La mort” répéta-t'il dans sa tête, comme pour se donner du courage et pour que ses pas glissent dans la rue.

Il pensa aux cauchemars qu'il pourrait cultiver après sa visite.

Il n'y avait plus moyen.

Il ne pouvait plus revenir en arrière au sujet de sa petite décision. Et les enfants, quand ils ont des illuminations, ils sont efficaces, même si personne ne s'intéresse beaucoup à ça.

Il allait le faire.

Tout doucement, il arriverait aux pompes funèbres.

Un pas de plus et il pensa à l'histoire que sa mère racontait toujours à la maison...

Les allemands ramassant les juifs dans les rues, marquant leurs fronts au fer rouge, comme s'ils étaient des cochons de lait.

Où est-ce que c'étaient les juifs qui attrapaient et faisaient souffrir les allemands?

Il ne savait plus.

Il ne savait pas.

Il pensa à la souffrance de sa mère, étirée sur son fauteuil, appelant à l'aide, les petits saints sur les genoux. “J'y vais, j'y vais, maman” dit-il à voix haute, “maman, je vais demander de l'aide à papa.”

Un pas de plus, et il pensa au jazz, en observant les fourmis qui marchaient maladroitement sur son chemin. Il se souvint de la musique de son père. Il pensa au jazz, de nouveau. A la profession de son père. Aux deux professions de son père.

Il regarda pour voir où allaient les fourmis, qui semblaient concentrées en une file qui allait cogner dans un mur blanchi à la chaux.

Il avança, regarda derrière lui, sentant un mélange de confiance et volonté d'ou-

blier ce qu'il allait trouver devant lui, jusqu'à ce qu'il perde de vue la trace des fourmis.

En même temps qu'il fixait le regard sur ses pas, il aperçut le petit portail sur lequel il s'était appuyé quelques minutes auparavant.

Il vit le Ipé qui était devant la maison, les flamboyants.

Il regarda sur les côtés à la recherche des amis du foot de bouton, des billes, chercha des fantômes qui pouvaient rôder dans le voisinage, examina s'il y avait des nazis cachés derrière la cime des arbres, s'il y avait des gens qui avaient des marqueurs de front au poing, prêts à emmener les petits juifs.

Il avait son texte tout prêt au cas ils l'arrêteraient : il allait chercher un ballon chez Carolino.

Seulement ça.

C'était ça son petit discours.

La rue était déserte. Il n'y avait pas de bruit de vent, d'oiseau, il n'y avait pas de feuilles se balançant dans l'air.

Tout le monde devait être collé à sa radio, pantois, écoutant les nouvelles sur l'homme qui, peu de temps avant, avait quitté le pouvoir.

Getulinho.

Président.

Un saint, selon la mère.

Il avança avec plus de conviction en s'apercevant que personne ne le suivait.

Il savait que les pompes funèbres fonctionnaient avec la morgue.

Là aussi il y avait la salle des funérailles, qui se trouvait à côté du cimetière, dans une rue fleurie.

Cela n'était pas loin de chez lui.

Il ne savait pas, pourtant, quelle direction prendre.

Tout de suite dans les premiers pas, la première fois qu'il était sorti vers l'inconnu, il s'était senti libre, même sans savoir comment se le formuler à l'esprit.

Sans savoir, il respira la liberté.

C'était comme si le son de la flûte de son père le guidait.

La musique qui, après l'avoir écoutée, allait se perdre à l'infini, dans l'immatérialité, jusqu'à ne devenir plus rien, et alors silence.

Mais ni même la musique douce le délivrerait du frisson qu'il avait senti dans les premiers pas, un tremblement qui s'était installé dans sa colonne vertébrale. Une peur qui le faisait trembler sur ses bases.

Une envie de faire pipi, caca. Il passa son index entre ses fesses pour voir si tout allait bien de ce côté-là. Respira à fond en remarquant que son derrière était sec. Il sentit la pointe de ses doigts et se sentit envahi par une confiance idiote. Il sortit son sexe de son pantalon et pissa avec plaisir, en dessinant avec le jet, dans le sable, une rivière pour les fourmis de la rue.

Il regarda autour de lui pour s'assurer que personne ne le disputerait à cause du pipi versé. L'assurance qu'il sentit en ne voyant personne lui démontra que continuer ses petits pas était la chance tant attendue qui lui permettrait de grandir et avoir sa place au sein de la famille. Il était déjà bien grand, il allait devoir en être le témoin un jour. Que ce soit le plus tôt possible.

Trois ou quatre pas en plus. Il pensa changer d'avis. Pourquoi ne pas aller au Club 9 de Juillet et voir la scène sur laquelle son père brillait? Pourquoi ne pas aller au cinéma? Il n'y était jamais allé, ce cinéma où les femmes passaient dans une taille hors norme, comme si elles "étaient photographiées vivantes, comme disait son père. Pourquoi ne pas aller chercher un ami pour l'accompagner dans l'aventure?

Non!

Il se devait de faire ça seul. Tout seul. Et le narrateur de cette histoire laisse bien clair que le petit garçon n'avait pas ces idées en tête. Il vivait ces sentiments. Et cela suffisait. Il sentait avec toutes les forces qu'un enfant est capable de réunir.

Et cette force continua à le guider vers l'inconnu, comme si le vent soufflait à son oreille la meilleure direction à prendre.

Quand la peur se rapprochait, il puisait dans ses souvenirs les scènes des concerts dans la salle, les sœurs sur le canapé, la table basse avec les flûtes, le père fluctuant dans la pièce. Il le voyait se contorsionner pour faire sortir la musique de ses joues, du ventre, voyait aussi ses souliers vernis. Maintenant, en regardant ses propres pieds, il voyait ses pas peureux, les mêmes qui se balançaient dans l'air, satisfaits et dansants.

Il pensa une fois de plus à changer de direction. Aller au club. Il suffisait de descendre deux rues. Il connaissait bien le chemin, même s'il ne savait pas les noms des rues de la ville. Là-bas il allait retrouver une ambiance de musique, de fête.

Il était décidé. Il allait au club. Mais soudain il se libéra de la peur. Ses pas étaient rythmés par des extraits de chansons entendues dans le salon de la maison.

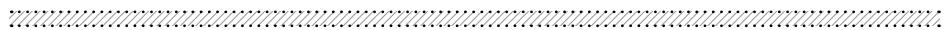
De la porte du club 9 de Juillet, il pourrait entendre la présence de la musique, même en ne faisant rien d'autre qu'espionner la bâtisse monumentale, du trottoir. Il pourrait embellir son imagination, penser à l'instant de la rencontre de ses parents, même s'il avait du mal à imaginer sa mère dansant sur ce jazz.

Était-ce la vie difficile et la guerre qui avaient fait qu'Ondina se transforme en pierre quand le sujet tombait sur la musique ? Alors qu'il tapait dans les petites pierres, sur son chemin, il s'apercevait que même les plus minuscules savaient danser dans l'air, elles dansaient, dansaient, jusqu'au moment de retrouver une place sur le sol, où elles se reposaient, oubliées de tout et tous. Voilà. C'est ça qui était arrivé à sa mère. Quelle tristesse. Pour le père. Pour la famille.

Il avança un peu plus, et, au centre des collines de la ville, d'un coin de rue, il sentit du soulagement, en voyant le club, que son père citait tellement. "Regarde la grande bâtisse", disait le père, quand il passait devant la construction, qui n'était pas si loin que ça de la maison. "C'est là que les flûtes aidèrent ta mère à s'approcher"

Pourquoi avait-elle donc bouché ses oreilles, soudainement, pour n'écouter que de la musique de procession? Il ne comprenait pas. Mais il aurait aimé qu'elle apprécie non seulement la musique d'église, du son des fanfares qui précédaient les nouvelles à la radio, mais aussi la musique du club, de la flûte, de la musique du salon, de la musique chantée et jouée, des voix des chanteuses et du cinéma, cette chose étrangement belle qu'il imaginait être le cinéma.

Alors, en évoquant ces idées sur sa mère et la musique, il sentit une forme de soulagement. Marcha un peu plus. Et se rendit compte que le coin de rue où il se trouvait était en territoire connu.



LE LIVRE



Une Bande de Jazz Dans Notre Salon

Alexandre Staut

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Jazz Band na Sala da Gente
- **ISBN:** 9788591020607
- **Année de publication:** 2010
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SYNOPSIS

Une bande de 'Chorinho' est la sensation d'une petite ville perdue, à l'intérieur de l'état de São Paulo, dans les années 1940. Les nouvelles d'une guerre distante arrivent dans cette bourgade, grâce aux ondes de la radio. Tout cela est dans ce roman - 'Une Bande de Jazz dans Notre Salon'. Mais seulement en toile de fond, parce que, ici, ce qui importe c'est l'histoire de personnes communes, plus précisément d'une famille formée par la rencontre d'un flûtiste juif et d'une italienne, dans l'intérieur de l'état. En faisant le portrait délicat de la famille, l'auteur transcende l'histoire de la vie privée des siens, et finit par tracer le portrait d'une époque de transformations sociales et politiques au Brésil.

RAPPORTS DANS LA PRESSE

UOL Livres, 20/06/2010

<http://entretenimento.uol.com.br/ultnot/livros/resenhas/banda-de-jazz-no-interior-paulista-e-mote-de-livro-do-jornalista-alexandre-staut.jhtm>

UOL Livres, 20/06/2010 Entretien avec l'auteur

<http://entretenimento.uol.com.br/ultnot/2010/06/20/meu-avo-morreu-a-caminho-de-uma-festa-na-qual-iria-se-apresentar-diz-alexandre-staut.jhtm>

Site Cronópios, 15/07/2010

<http://cronopios.com.br/site/noticias.asp?id=4649>

Blog Duílio Gomes, 19/07/2010

<http://blogduiliogomes.blogspot.com.br/2010/07/jazz-band-na-sala-da-gente.html>

PRIX

ProaC, du Governo do Estado de São Paulo, année de 2010, pour publier le livre.

L'AUTEUR



Alexandre Staut

- **Pseudonyme:** Alexandre Staut

- **Autres livres:**

Um Lugar para se Perder (roman, 167 pages, Dobra Literatura, 2012)

A Vizinha e a Andorinha (pour enfants, 36 pages, Editora Cuore, 2015)



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SERMON DU CINQUIÈME MERCREDI DE CARÊME

ANTÔNIO VIEIRA

Traduit par Violaine Ribardière

I.

Un Aveugle et de nombreux aveugles ; un Aveugle guéri et de nombreux aveugles inguérissables ; un Aveugle qui bien qu'il n'ait pas d'yeux a vu, et de nombreux aveugles qui bien qu'ils aient des yeux n'ont pas vu, c'est en résumé la substance de tout ce vaste Evangile. Le Christ à Jérusalem accorda miraculeusement la vue à un aveugle de naissance : Scribes et Pharisiens examinèrent ce cas comme une chose que l'on n'avait encore jamais vue, et dont on n'avait jamais entendu parler ; l'aveugle lui-même les convainquit par des arguments, des raisons, et bien davantage par l'évidence du miracle. Et quand ils auraient dû reconnaître et adorer dans l'ouvrier d'une si grande merveille le vrai Fils de Dieu et le Messie promis (comme le fit l'Aveugle), aveugles de jalousie, obstinés dans la perfidie, et rebelles contre le Tout-Puissant lui-même, ils nièrent, blasphémèrent et condamnèrent le Christ. De telle sorte que la même lumière manifeste de la Divinité donna des yeux à un homme et fit ciller les autres, pour l'un fut lumière, et pour les autres fut éclair, illumina l'un, blessa les autres, soigna l'un, rendit les autres malades : à l'Aveugle elle fit voir, et ceux qui voyaient elle les aveugla. Ce n'est pas une réflexion mienne ni d'une quelconque autorité humaine, mais bien du Christ lui-même. Le Miraculeux Seigneur voyant quels effets produisait sa merveille conclut ainsi : Ego in hunc mundum veni, ut qui non vident, videant ; et qui vident, caeci fiant. Or donc, le fait est (dit le Christ) que je suis venu en ce monde pour que les aveugles voient, et que ceux qui ont des yeux deviennent aveugles. Non que cela fût la fin de sa venue, mais parce que tels en furent les effets. Les aveugles virent, parce que l'Aveugle reçut la vue, et ceux qui avaient des yeux devinrent aveugles, parce que les Scribes et les Pharisiens restèrent aveugles.

Ces deux parties de l'Evangile posées, laissant de côté la première, je traiterai seulement de la seconde. L'homme qui n'avait pas d'yeux et a vu est déjà guéri ; ceux qui ont des yeux et ne voient pas, ceux-là ont besoin d'un remède et c'est pour eux que tout mon discours s'emploiera. Vidit hominem caecum : le Christ vit un Aveugle, sans yeux ; nous allons voir de nombreux aveugles avec des yeux. Le Christ vit un homme sans yeux, qui ne voyait pas, et bientôt recouvra la vue ; nous allons voir de nombreux hommes avec des yeux, qui ne voient pas, et pourront voir eux aussi s'ils le veulent. Dieu m'est témoin que j'ai fait le choix de ce sujet pour voir s'il est possible aujourd'hui de guérir quelque cécité. Je connais bien la faib-

lesse et la disproportion de l'instrument, mais celui-là même qui permit au Christ de réaliser le miracle m'encourage à espérer. Vers la terre le Seigneur s'inclina, fit de sa main Toute-puissante un peu de boue, l'appliqua sur les yeux de l'Aveugle, et quand il semble qu'il aurait dû les obscurcir et les aveugler davantage avec la boue, avec la boue il les ouvrit et les illumina. Si le Christ avec de la boue donne la vue, quel aveugle sera tellement aveugle, et quel instrument tellement faible et inapproprié, que de l'efficacité et des pouvoirs de sa Grâce nous ne puissions attendre de semblables effets ? Prosternons-nous (comme le fit l'Aveugle) à ses Divins pieds, et demandons pour nos yeux un rayon de cette même lumière, par l'intercession de la Mère de Miséricorde, dans la Maison de laquelle nous nous trouvons. Ave Maria.

II.

Vidit hominem caecum. L'Aveugle qu'aujourd'hui le Christ a vu pâtissait d'une seule cécité. Les aveugles que nous allons voir, nombreuses étant leurs cécités, ils n'en pâtissent pas, au contraire ils les savourent et les aiment, d'elles ils vivent, d'elles ils se nourrissent, par elles ils meurent et avec elles. C'est à la découverte de ces formes de cécité qu'ira notre discours. Que Dieu lui vienne en aide à la mesure de son importance.

Ce que le Christ a estimé être le plus grand dérèglement de la nature, ou l'indice de malice le plus grand dans la cécité des Scribes et des Pharisiens (qui sera le triste exemple de la nôtre), c'est que c'était la cécité d'hommes qui avaient les yeux ouverts. Ut videntes caeci fiant. Les Scribes et les Pharisiens étaient les sages et les docteurs de la Loi, ceux qui lisaient les Ecritures, ceux qui interprétaient les Prophètes, et à cause de cela même ils étaient plus que tous tenus de reconnaître le Messie, et plus que jamais dans le cas présent. Isaïe, au chapitre trente-deux, parlant de la Divinité du Messie et de sa venue en ce monde, s'exprime ainsi (qu'ils écoutent ce Texte, les incrédules) : Deus ipse veniet, et salvabit vos. Tunc aperientur oculi caecorum. Dieu en Personne viendra vous sauver, et en signal de sa venue et comme preuve de sa Divinité, il donnera la vue aux aveugles. Déjà il avait dit la même chose au chapitre vingt-neuf : De tenebris, et caligine oculi caecorum videbunt. Et il dit encore la même chose au chapitre quarante-deux : Dedi te in faedus populi, in lucem gentium, ut aperires oculos caecorum. Pour cette raison, quand le Baptiste envoya demander au Christ s'il était bien le Messie : Tu es, qui venturus es, an alium expectamus ? le Seigneur, préférant répondre par des œuvres plutôt que par des paroles, le premier miracle qu'il réalisa devant les ambassadeurs fut de donner la vue à des aveugles : Renuntiat Joanni quae audistis, et vidistis : caeci vident. Or, si le premier et le plus évident signal de la venue du Messie, si la première et la plus évidente preuve de sa Divinité et Toute-Puissance étaient de donner la vue aux aveugles, et si entre tous les aveugles auxquels le Christ a donné la vue, aucun n'était plus aveugle que celui-ci, et aucune vue plus miraculeuse, car il était aveugle de naissance, et la vue

ne fut pas recouverte mais nouvellement créée, comment les Scribes et les Pharisiens s'égarèrent-ils à ce point que, voyant le miracle, ils ne voyaient ni ne reconnaissaient le miraculeux ? Vous verrez tout à l'heure quelle était la cécité de ces hommes. La cécité qui aveugle en fermant les yeux n'est pas la plus grande ; celle qui aveugle en laissant les yeux ouverts, celle-là est la plus aveugle de toutes, et telle était celle des Scribes et des Pharisiens. Hommes aux yeux ouverts et aveugles. Aux yeux ouverts, parce que, en tant que lettrés, il lisaient les Ecritures et comprenaient les Prophètes; et aveugles parce que, voyant les prophéties réalisées, ils ne voyaient ni ne reconnaissaient Celui qu'elles avaient annoncé.

Un de ces lettrés aveugles était Saül, qui plus tard se fit appeler Paul, et voyez comment le Ciel lui révéla quelle était sa cécité. Saül allait sur le chemin de Damas, armé de provisions et de colère contre les disciples du Christ, quand, alors qu'il s'apprêtait à entrer dans la ville, voici que foudroyé par la main du Seigneur lui-même, il tombe de cheval, stupéfait, interdit et subitement aveugle. Mais comment cette cécité survint-elle ? Apertis oculis (dit le texte) nihil videbat. Les yeux ouverts, il ne voyait rien. La Ville, les murs, les tours, le chemin, les champs, ses compagnons autour, et Saül les yeux ouverts qui ne voyait rien, qui ne se voyait pas lui-même ! Là fut tout le merveilleux de la cécité. Si l'éclair lui avait enlevé les yeux ou les lui avait fermés, ce n'était pas merveille qu'il ne vît pas, mais ne rien voir en ayant les yeux ouverts, Apertis oculis nihil videbat ! Telle était la cécité de Saül quand il persécutait le Christ, telle celle des Scribes et des Pharisiens quand ils ne le croyaient pas, et telle la nôtre (qui est plus grande), nous qui croyons en Lui. Bien plus merveilleuse est notre cécité que le recouvrement même de la vue par l'Aveugle de l'Evangile. Cet Aveugle, quand il n'avait pas d'yeux ne voyait pas, mais il vit une fois qu'il eut des yeux ; nous avons des yeux, et nous ne voyons pas. Dans cet Aveugle, il y eut cécité et vue, mais à des moments différents ; en nous, au même moment la vue est jointe à la cécité, parce que nous sommes aveugles les yeux ouverts, et à cause de cela plus aveugles que tous.

Si nous promenons nos yeux sur le monde, nous apercevrons que tout entier, ou presque, il est peuplé d'aveugles. Le Gentil aveugle, le Juif aveugle, l'Hérétique aveugle, et le Catholique (qui ne devrait pas l'être) aveugle lui aussi. Mais de tous ces aveugles, lesquels vous paraissent être les plus aveugles ? Sans aucun doute nous les Catholiques. Parce que les autres sont aveugles les yeux fermés, et nous sommes aveugles les yeux ouverts. Que le Gentil coure sans frein après les plaisirs de la chair, qu'il suive les lois dépravées d'une nature corrompue, c'est de la cécité. Mais cécité les yeux fermés : la Foi ne lui a pas ouvert les yeux. Mais le Chrétien, qui a la Foi, qui connaît l'existence de Dieu, du Ciel, de l'Enfer, de l'Eternité, que celui-là vive comme un Gentil ? C'est de la cécité les yeux ouverts, et pour cette raison il est plus aveugle que le Gentil lui-même. Que le Juif considère la Croix comme un scandale, et que, pour ne pas avouer qu'il a crucifié Dieu, il ne veuille pas adorer un Dieu crucifié ? C'est incontestablement de la cécité, mais de la cécité les yeux fermés. Pareillement, parmi ceux qui avaient été mordus par les Serpents dans le désert, seuls guérissaient ceux qui voyaient le serpent brandi par Moïse, et ceux qui

n'avaient pas d'yeux pour le voir ne guérissaient pas. Mais que le Chrétien (comme Saint Paul en pleurait) soit l'ennemi de la Croix, et qu'adorant les stigmates du crucifié, il ne guérisse pas de ses propres blessures ? C'est de la cécité les yeux ouverts, et pour cette raison il est plus aveugle que le Juif lui-même. Que l'Hérétique ayant été baptisé, et se disant Chrétien, ne se conforme pas à la Loi du Christ, et dédaigne l'observance de ses commandements ? C'est de la cécité, mais là encore de la cécité les yeux fermés. Il croit à tort que le Sang du Christ suffit pour être sauvé, et que les œuvres personnelles ne sont pas nécessaires. Mais le Catholique, qui croit et sait de manière incontestable par le Rayonnement de la Foi et de la raison que la Foi sans œuvres reste morte, et que sans œuvrer et vivre pour le bien, personne ne peut être sauvé, que celui-là vive à la façon de Luther et Calvin ? C'est de la cécité les yeux ouverts, et pour cette raison il est plus aveugle que l'Hérétique lui-même. Nous sommes donc plus aveugles que tous les aveugles.

Et s'il semble à certains que je passe les limites quand je dis que notre cécité, celle des Catholiques, est plus grande que celle de l'Hérétique, du Juif et du Gentil, que serait-ce si je disais qu'entre toutes les cécités, la nôtre seule est cécité véritable, et qu'entre tous ces aveugles nous seuls sommes les aveugles ? Or je le dis, et il en est ainsi, pour notre plus grande horreur et confusion.

(...)



1. L'expression « aujourd'hui » fait référence, selon les cas, ou bien au jour du prêche à Lisbonne, ou bien au jour évoqué par l'Évangile selon Saint Jean, celui où le Christ a vu un homme aveugle de naissance, « Vidit hominem caecum » (Jean, 9, 1), les deux se superposant le plus souvent dans le sermon de Vieira.

LE LIVRE



Sermos, Tome 1, « Sermon du cinquième mercredi de Quarême »

Antônio Vieira

• Titre:

Sermões, Tomo 1, “Sermão da Quinta Quarta-Feira de Quaresma”

• ISBN: 8587328328

• Nombre de pages: 661

SYNOPSIS

Prédicateur du roi Dom João IV, missionnaire jésuite qui partage sa vie entre le Portugal et le Brésil où il s'éteint, Antônio Vieira impressionne ceux de son siècle par la clarté de ses discours, ainsi que par le choix de sujets extrêmement actuels. On se presse dans les églises pour l'écouter. Dans le « sermon du cinquième mercredi de Carême », il cherche à définir la nature de la cécité de ses contemporains, et s'en prend en particulier aux puissants qui sont venus l'écouter comme à de nouveaux pharisiens.

L'AUTEUR

Antônio Vieira

• Pseudonyme: Padre Antônio Vieira



• Autres livres:

Sermos choisis, Martin Baupré, 1866

Le Ciel en damier d'étoiles, Cent pages, 1989

La Mission d'Ibiapaba : le Père Antônio Vieira et le droit des Indiens, Chandeigne/UNESCO, 1998, 239 p.

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Violaine Ribardière

LES DROITS DE TRADUCTION

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MA VIE SANS DOUCHE

BERNARDO AZJENBERG

Traduit par Emilie Audigier

Un court-circuit aura sans doute brûlé la résistance de la chaudière à la maison. Je me suis même déshabillé, mais sur le trajet entre la chambre et la salle de bain j'ai changé d'avis : la simple idée d'entrer sous la douche glacée en hiver m'a donné des frissons ; j'ai donc laissé tomber. Je ne transpirais même pas – au contraire, la nuit avait été froide. Je mis mon odorant en branle pour vérifier l'état de mon corps et conclus que oui, je pouvais me dispenser de douche en ce début de matinée.

Je travaille dans un institut dont le principal objectif, entre autres missions, est d'élaborer des calculs de manière claire, didactique et précise, qui démontrent la grandiosité des risques existants, pour l'humanité et pour la planète comme un tout, face au consumérisme d'eau effréné et irresponsable – surtout dans les grandes villes.

Faisant partie d'un groupe chargé de contruire des exemples créatifs basés sur la vie réelle, capables de convaincre les gens de changer leurs habitudes quotidiennes de façon à diminuer les risques et ainsi, à préserver ce si précieux trésor qu'est l'eau, et à partir de cette dernière, tous les êtres marins, les animaux et les hommes. (Ce que j'ai mentionné ici en caractères italiques a été tiré d'un document interne que j'ai rédigé il y a de cela quelques mois, sur commande d'un journaliste, et qui résume les raisons d'être de l'Institut).

Ce matin-là, lorsque j'ai arrêté de prendre la douche, je me suis dédié au travail avec plus d'ardeur que d'habitude. D'un autre côté, je n'ai pas réussi, à m'empêcher de penser que, sachant qu'une douche dure en moyenne 15 minutes, j'aurais arrêté d'utiliser 135 litres d'eau ; et par mois, si je continuais à ne pas prendre de douche, j'ai calculé, ce serait plus de quatre mille litres, ou environ quatre mètres cubes d'eau. En termes financiers, cela coûterait environ 16 réals, autrement dit, près de trente pour cent de ma facture d'eau de célibataire à la fin du mois.

A plusieurs moments dans la journée, j'ai pensé chercher sur internet un service spécialisé pour changer la résistance de la chaudière – cela ne m'était jamais arrivé – ou faire je ne sais quoi qui soit nécessaire pour ramener l'eau chaude. Mais pas tout ce que j'ai ébauché dans une recherche. Je me suis souvenu que, dans mon adolescence, j'avais l'habitude de passer jusqu'à deux ou trois jours sans prendre de douche – et je ne me suis pas senti mal. Pourquoi ne pas reprendre l'idée, au moins à titre d'expérience ?

Ma vie, à ce moment-là, était un mince filet d'eau qui passait tristement sur un terrain de forêt décolorée. En dehors du travail à l'Institut, je vivais absorbé par

la télévision ou surfant des heures sur les vagues de décombres théoriquement informatifs sur internet ; de temps à autres, j'allais au cinéma ; rarement j'allais voir un match de foot. À cause de l'arthroscopie de mon genou gauche à laquelle je m'étais soumis l'année d'avant, j'avais suspendu toute activité physique. En fait, le plus décisif, c'était que ma copine allait encore passer trois semaines, pour un séjour de deux mois à Manaus pour un genre de stage dans la filiale de l'entreprise de pièces électroniques où elle travaillait. Et moi, par dessus le marché, je n'ai pas d'amis (l'un des héritages que mes parents m'avaient laissé, qui n'allaient jamais chez des amis, ni ne recevaient personne pendant tout le temps où j'avais habité avec eux). J'étais donc seul, enlisé dans l'ennui (sans compter que ma copine et moi nous étions disputés, je dirais, grave, la veille de son départ).

Mes trois collègues du groupe de travail m'ont questionné du regard, curieux de savoir d'où venait cet extraordinaire élan en plein lundi matin. La réponse, c'est sûr, résidait dans la décision que j'avais prise bien plus tôt et qui m'avait laissé pour le moins assez agité, presque heureux ; mais j'ai préféré garder le secret. Le séjour, ensuite, s'est déroulé sous un nuage interne d'impatience, ce que je n'avais pas ressenti depuis longtemps, peut-être depuis le jour où, quatre ans auparavant, récemment diplômé en sociologie, je me préparais à faire un entretien qui concluerait mon contrat avec l'Institut. L'enthousiasme semblait être, au fond, un sous-produit mal dissimulé de cette anxiété. Tant et si bien que le soir, avant de rentrer chez moi, je suis passé chez le coiffeur, et pour encourager encore plus ma position anti-douche, j'ai demandé à qu'il me rase la tête - à la machine première vitesse, ce n'était pas la peine d'avoir la boule à zéro.

Célio, c'est toujours bien de commencer une conversation en disant ce dont tu es sûr. Donc pour se calmer toi et moi, je te dis : je trouve pas que tu sois un débile mental ridicule ! Même s'il y a quand même pas mal de raisons ... Mais regarde juste ce qu'il se passe : toi et tes discussions toujours compliquées et tout et tout. Sans la moindre sensibilité envers quoi que ce soit. Alors je te dis : un homme amoureux n'est pas comme ça. Tu as déjà aimé et tu sais ça. Tu parles toujours beaucoup (ce qui est bien...), mais tu deviens de plus en plus laid. Et moi je te dis : un homme amoureux ça n'est pas comme ça. Ta maison comme toujours, ta manière d'être, et tout et tout. Mais le plus important, c'est pas ça. Le plus important c'est que Célio amoureux n'est pas comme ça ! Ah ! Et ça c'est tellement important pour moi ! Parfois tu fais quelques trucs. Mais ça passe. Je cherche à comprendre. Mais c'est très difficile. Alors j'en déduis mes propres conclusions, et elles sont souvent vraies (ou pas). Toi amoureux de Débora - oui, moi en personne, ta Débora - n'est pas là. Je t'assure. Rien n'a changé en toi, si ce n'est l'apparition de grands discours, de billets à mon attention, et c'est encore utile que je te dise ce que toi tu écris, le sens de ce que tu écris. Alors je me demande : mais pourquoi ? Toi, avec tes principes si nobles ! Comme ça, sans plus. À quoi ça sert ? En dehors de n'importe quel discours, cette personne tombe amoureuse, parle de l'être aimé passionnément. Et ce rite si ancien de vivre à deux, qui a survécu aux guerres et aux révolutions, à tant de sang et d'horreur, ce rite a ses raisons d'être. Quelques unes, dit-on, bien ridicules. Mais

nous, humains nobles, aux objectifs illimités, maintenons ce rite vivant pour bien vivre. Nous cherchons à concrétiser cette absence de limites dans la vie simple de tous les jours. Et toi, Celito, que fais-tu ? Tu parles, tu parles... J'en ai ras le bol. Un homme, après avoir passé une après-midi comme samedi dernier (la veille de mon voyage !) avec une femme, ne peut pas se sentir comme ça. Donc je me dis : Célio n'est plus amoureux de moi. Ah ! Mais je ne peux pas le croire. C'est impossible. Célio et Débora ont arrêté de baiser ensemble... Avec moi... C'est pas possible... Ah, ça je suis désolée. Celito n'est plus amoureux, mais on baise encore ensemble ! Donc pourquoi il est réticent ? Pourquoi il fait l'homme-enfant ? Pourquoi il se montre si enfantin et ridicule ? Par jalousie... Mais il n'y a plus personne. Elle est seule dans sa maison ! Vraiment ? Elle doute... intrigue. Peur. Vacillation. Je sais maintenant : Célio est malade de Débora. Mais que c'est bien ! Maladie épidémique ou endémique ? Et cette maladie qui reste à l'intérieur de toi pendant toutes ces années. Souffrant... Amour, vertige... Mais quelle ironie ! Juste maintenant que je me sens bien pour avoir à nouveau envie de baiser avec lui. Qu'il me manque. Regarde : Débora ressent le manque de ne pas avoir vu Célio pendant dix jours, et juste maintenant il décide de se barrer ! Au moins là, je la vois comme ça cette absence totale de contact depuis que je suis arrivée à Manaus. Pourquoi tu n'as pas fait ça avant ? Tout serait donc résolu. Ah, mais Celito a toujours été compliqué en amour. Et c'est comme ça qu'il m'a perdue pendant une période. Mais cette vie de merde ne se répètera pas.

J'étais là et j'ai vu. J'ai été présent tout le temps ; et j'ai entendu. J'ai lu. Je me suis senti redevant envers eux, de ce poste privilégié, du centre de mon extrême solitude, je reconstitue tout ici. On dit que les esprits atteints par un type de traumatisme dressent souvent des barrières contre le flux de sensations violentes. Dans mon cas, reconstituer les événements chaotiques est une façon de sortir de la médiocrité, essayer du moins de sortir de ma propre légèreté d'avocat; moi, qui ait toujours vécu à travers la vie des autres, sans connaître ce qu'il allait se passer dans mon parcours si ce n'est les prochains mètres, sans savoir ce qui arrivera au prochain carrefour. Eux, non, ils construisent les carrefours.

Flora, Flora a été, elle aussi, un carrefour !

Mais reconstituer, ici, peut signifier aussi un moyen d'enfreindre un nouveau carrefour que Flora, toujours elle, nous impose et à partir duquel il n'y aura pas de retour.

Je dois parler de moi à moi-même. La décision tragique de Flora l'impose. Mais pas seulement pour moi.

Si j'écris et parle de moi, de Waisman et de Flora, c'est aussi, peut-être lus que tout, pour toi, Célio. Tu dois le savoir. Tu mérites le droit de savoir. Tu dois et mérites le droit de me connaître. Tu dois mieux me connaître. Si elle a décidé de partir, alors c'est à partir de moi, je le sens, et seulement à partir de moi, que tu pourras savoir les choses qui nous appartiennent, je veux dire, les tiennes aussi.

J'ai besoin de savoir plus sur moi-même pour mieux me connaître. Voilà ma motivation, je l'admets.

Je me suis marié deux fois, mais je ne voulais pas d'enfants. Et je ne regrette pas. Au contraire. Quand je vois ceux qui ont élevé leurs enfants, mes amis et des connaissances, je préfère vraiment ne pas en avoir eus : peu de joies pour beaucoup de soucis et de dégoûts, peu de compensations pour beaucoup de déceptions nuits passées à mal dormir - un rapport qualité prix coûts-avantage franchement défavorable. Je sais qu'aujourd'hui Waisman est peut-être comme ça, mais ce serait seulement l'une des différences entre nos vies, et c'est sûr, l'une des moins importants.



LE LIVRE



Ma vie sans douche

Bernardo Azjenberg

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Minha Vida sem Banho

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SYNOPSIS

Dans ce livre, Bernardo Aizenberg raconte l'histoire de Célio, un homme qui, un jour d'hiver, décide de ne plus prendre de douche car son chauffage s'est cassé, tout comme les suivants, il débute ainsi un véritable projet de vie. Dans ce roman, l'auteur reprend les thèmes chers à son œuvre, comme les familles fragmentées, l'hypocrisie, les relations affectives en échec, la solitude, les racines juives et la dictature militaire brésilienne. Il montre, dans une trame narrée à trois voix, comment les petites décisions quotidiennes peuvent avoir un effet ravageur dans la vie de chacun.

RAPPORTS DANS LA PRESSE

"L'auteur alignait avec un soin artisanal l'expérience de trois narrateurs dans l'une de ses meilleurs œuvres". – André de Leones / Estado de São Paulo
<http://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/>

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<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2014/10/1526590-critica-falta-de-banho-serve-de-metafora-para-criticar-conviccoes.shtml>

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Carreiras Cortadas (Francisco Alves, 1989)

Efeito Suspensório (Imago, 1993)

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Variações Goldman (Rocco, 1998)
A Gaiola de Faraday (Rocco, 2002)
Prêmio de Ficção do Ano da Academia
Brasileira de Letras
Homens com Mulheres (Rocco, 2005)
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POUPÉES RUSSES

ELIANA CARDOSO

Traduit par Mélanie Fusaro

Quand Leda se souvient de Francisca

Elle aimait les huîtres, la langouste, les marrons glacés et le champagne. J'aimais les friands, la glace à la vanille et le jus de mandarine. Elle était grande, belle et légère sur ses talons fins. J'étais petite et je portais des mocassins avec des chaussettes en coton. Elle avait l'habitude de chanter. Si elle n'avait pas été sculptrice et céramiste, elle aurait pu être musicienne ou bien d'autres choses, mais elle n'a jamais regretté la profession qu'elle avait choisie. Le succès arriva tôt. Elle exposa ses œuvres dans le monde entier. Elle fut applaudie. Elle gagna des prix. Je suis galeriste, comme tante Rosália, et sinon, je ne sais pas quelle profession je pourrais exercer. J'aime ce que je fais, mais je laisse souvent passer une bonne affaire. J'aimerais chanter et je ne le peux pas. Je chante faux. Je ne sais pas non plus gérer mon temps. Elle savait. Je ne sais pas danser. Elle savait. Je ne sais pas ouvrir la bouche au milieu de gens sympas. Elle savait, et elle les enchantait. Elle adorait les fêtes et s'habillait avec soin pour n'importe quel événement. Je n'ai jamais compris pourquoi on doit se changer pour sortir de chez soi.

Je m'appelle Leda.

Elle avait beaucoup de noms : Mme. Francisca pour les reporters qui venaient l'interviewer dans son atelier de céramique au fond de la maison. Dona Francisca pour la cuisinière. Chica pour les amies avec lesquelles elle prenait le thé le jeudi. Chiquinha pour tante Rosália, sa meilleure amie. Querida pour la voix de baryton que j'entendais dans l'extension de l'atelier quand elle courait répondre au téléphone dans la chambre. Tamère pour papa.

-Leda, demande à Tamère si elle en a encore pour longtemps.

J'ouvris la porte de l'atelier.

-Tamère, papa demande si tu en as encore pour longtemps.

Tante Rosália et elle rient. Tante Rosália dit, au milieu des éclats de rire :

-Leda. Attention. Tu vas bientôt avoir six ans, n'est-ce pas ? On ne dit pas « ta mère ». C'est « ma ».

Parfois, les explications de tante Rosália compliquaient tout. Tamère était ma pour elle ? C'est-à-dire, à elle ? Peut-être. La confusion durait moins d'une minute. J'étais habituée à nier la présence de tante Rosália quand elle disait ce que je ne voulais pas entendre. Il n'y avait pas d'erreur. Pour moi, Francisca avait toujours été Tamère et elle continua à être Tamère même après que j'eus compris le pourquoi

de ce nom, bien avant d'apprendre les possessifs à l'école primaire. J'appris qu'ainsi je provoquais les rires, et je continuai à l'appeler comme je l'avais fait quand j'avais appris à parler. La force de l'habitude renforça aussi le sentiment que j'avais de ne pas la voir comme « ma » mère.

Il se passa bien des choses ce mercredi où je cassai le vase violet qu'elle venait de cuire et qui allait bientôt être emballé pour le vernissage de la Galerie d'Art Rosália Bellini. Elle avait passé des mois enfermée dans l'atelier, à mouler les vases hauts et filiformes. Les bambous sont verts et jaunes – le jaune de la photographie qui est suspendue au mur de ma chambre ; mais s'ils avaient d'autres couleurs, vous pourriez croire que cette collection de vases était une forêt de bambous colorés, certains de la couleur de la terre glaise, rayés de rouge et d'orange, d'autres entièrement bleus ou argentés. Le violet était le plus beau.

Une fois la cuisson terminée, elle m'avait laissée en train de dessiner sur la petite table qui m'était réservée dans cet espace. Je sors, me dit-elle. Je le savais déjà, car je l'avais très souvent entendue rire au téléphone, tandis que le ton de sa voix diminuait. Je ne comprenais pas la langue que Querida parlait avec Moncheer, en ralentissant sur le « e », mais je savais qu'elle sortait toujours après avoir dit à bientôt. Après qu'elle fut sortie de l'atelier, je montai sur une chaise pour voir le vase violet de plus près. J'étendis la main très lentement pour le toucher avec douceur. La chaise oscilla et, en essayant de retrouver l'équilibre, j'empoignai le vase, qui vola et s'écrasa sur le sol. Peur et panique. Elle avait des accès de colère imprévisibles qui m'emplissaient d'effroi. Si papa essayait de la calmer, c'était encore pire. Au milieu de la dispute, je commençais à pleurer et Tamère m'ordonnait de me taire et de disparaître. Disparais ! Tu as compris ? Ce jour-là allait signer ma perte... Peut-être pas. Jésus n'avait-il pas relevé et fait marcher un mort ? Les miracles existent, comme disait souvent papa.

Je sortis de l'atelier, fermai soigneusement la porte et allai dans ma chambre. De la fenêtre, je vis tante Rosália arriver avec un groupe d'employés pour emballer les pièces. Ils s'en allèrent après avoir chargé le camion.

Vint aussi l'heure du dîner, qui se déroula en suivant une calme routine. Papa m'emmena dans ma chambre, me donna un baiser sur la tête et disparut. Je me reveillai paniquée à cause de leur dispute. Quand j'entrai dans le salon, le visage de papa semblait grisâtre et Tamère pleurait. Tamère en train de pleurer ? Ce que j'avais fait devait être très, très grave. J'étais préparée à la colère, mais ces pleurs me faisaient profondément mal. Papa dit quelque chose d'une voix embarrassée. J'écoutai avec attention.

-Pardon ? À quoi ça nous servirait ? Pense à un vase qui s'est cassé. Peut-il être recollé ? Bien sûr. Mais il ne sera jamais le même.

J'inspirai avec le courage que je n'avais jamais su avoir.

-C'est moi qui ai cassé le vase.

Tous deux me regardèrent stupéfaits. J'eus l'impression que mon intervention était déplacée. Il n'y avait pas de colère dans les yeux de Tamère, et dans ceux de papa il y avait une énorme compassion. Le lendemain, Tamère déménagea chez tante Rosália et, quelques mois plus tard, elle partit en France avec Moncheer.

Elle m'envoya de nombreuses cartes postales de là-bas, mais elle ne vint jamais à São Paulo.

Je lui rendis visite en 2007 lors d'un voyage à Paris. Elle était toujours aussi élégante et elle se parfuma pour aller marcher avec moi au jardin du Luxembourg. Elle semblait plus jeune que moi. Elle aimait encore les huîtres et le champagne. Elle avait abandonné la céramique à la demande de « cher », qui avait perdu le « mon » et le « e » prolongé. Je lui parlai du vase violet et elle se montra surprise.

-Rosália ne m'a jamais dit qu'il avait manqué un vase au vernissage. L'exposition a été un succès.

Et elle se tut, enfermée dans des souvenirs dans lesquels je n'existais pas. Tamère mourut cette année-là, en 2007. Soudainement. Comme un vase en terre glaise qui vole, tournoie dans les airs et se brise en tombant. Aujourd'hui encore, je souffre de ne pas avoir su la faire mienne.

Quand Lola raconte la leçon reçue par Leda

Leda et le professeur Cassiano Lobato se virent pour la première fois un matin de juin 1983. Il était en retard, il entra dans la salle de classe, il enleva sa veste et dit « bonjour » d'une voix ferme, interrompant le rire de Leda, qui discutait avec moi. Du haut de ses dix-huit ans, elle possédait une expression qui enchantait ses professeurs et ses camarades. J'imagine que Cassiano remarqua la peau lisse et bronzée qui couvrait, telle la cloche d'un abat-jour, une source de lumière intérieure qui lançait des reflets délicats sur le visage de Leda. J'imagine. Je ne peux pas en être sûre. Je n'ai jamais discuté avec lui. Je sais seulement ce que j'ai vu et ce qu'elle m'a raconté hier soir, vingt ans après ce qui s'est passé.

Leda regarda le professeur, grand et musclé. Elle divaga durant quelques minutes, observant les fils grisonnants sur les tempes, qui contrastaient avec la peau brune. Le nez fin. Les yeux verts collés à elle. Un homme encore plus attirant que ce que nous avions anticipé quand nous nous étions informées du fait que Cassiano viendrait remplacer le professeur de littérature anglaise, qui était parti à Londres faire son doctorat. Oui, nous avons passé des heures à parler du plus beau professeur du Brésil, d'histoires louches, peut-être seulement des rumeurs, et du livre qu'il allait lancer en octobre, mais sur lequel personne n'avait aucune information. En ce matin lumineux, Cassiano était là, devant nous, et nous pouvions l'analyser autant que nous le voulions tandis qu'il se déplaçait d'un endroit à l'autre de l'espace déchiré par le soleil diagonal qui entrait par la fenêtre entrouverte. À part son physique, qui se prêtait à notre admiration immédiate, tout ce que nous savions de lui était de seconde main. Il ne portait pas d'alliance. Était-il marié ? Vingt ans plus tard, Leda et moi nous rapplerions cette matinée. Leda se souvenait d'elle-même, perdue dans ses divagations, jusqu'à ce qu'elle se rende compte qu'il fallait écouter le professeur, si elle voulait être la première à répondre à ses questions et, ainsi, garantir son intérêt pour elle.

Interrompant ses explications, Cassiano ouvrit un livre et lut : « Emma Woodhouse, jolie, intelligente et riche, jouissant de confort et d'un tempérament joyeux,

semblait réunir quelques unes des meilleures bénédictions de l'existence terrestre, et avait vécu vingt et un ans dans un monde dans lequel presque rien ne pouvait l'affliger ou la perturber. » Ensuite, il demanda aux élèves si c'était un bon début pour un roman. Je dis que j'aimais la phrase, parce qu'on pouvait voir en elle non pas l'Emma que Jane Austen avait créée, mais Leda, ma première et meilleure amie, une personne en chair et en os :

-Leda est plus jeune qu'Emma – ajoutai-je. – Mais, pour le reste, elle est exactement pareille : belle, riche et habituée au succès facile.

Cassiano sourit. Séducteur ? Sournois ? Bien des années plus tard, Leda se souvenait encore de ce sourire et du doute qu'elle avait eu que le professeur fût un homme sincère. Mais, ce matin-là, l'enchantement l'emporta sur le soupçon, qui s'évanouit aussitôt. Sa voix semblait venir d'un endroit lointain et menaçant et la jeune fille l'écoutait, frissonnante.

-C'est possible – dit-il –, mais je veux que vous remarquiez la virtuosité de l'ouverture choisie par Jane Austen. Lucide et rythmée, avec des nuances ironiques, elle nous prépare à voir cette donzelle choir de son piédestal.

Leda sentit son estomac se contracter, oubliant que c'était Emma qui faisait l'objet de la discussion, et pas elle. Deux semaines passèrent. Cassiano se révélait être un professeur différent des autres, niant à Leda les applaudissements auxquels elle était habituée. Mais elle pensait tout le temps à lui, jusqu'à ce jour où, la veille de la fin du semestre, elle alla le voir dans son bureau et lui dit à bout-portant :

-Je suis amoureuse de vous.

Le professeur, comme toujours, sourit de ce sourire dont aujourd'hui encore Leda ne sait pas s'il était d'ironie (de plaisir ? de malice ?), tandis qu'il lui recommandait :

-Mieux vaut laisser la porte ouverte...

Ensuite, il sembla réfléchir quelques instants, tout en maintenant ses yeux séducteurs cloués sur son élève. Mais si les yeux disaient certaines choses, les mots en dirent d'autres :

-Bon... Je ne peux que te souhaiter de bonnes vacances et bonne chance.

Quand Leda arriva chez elle, le téléphone sonna et c'était lui. Elle bafouilla. Son cœur battit en un trot saccadé et, quand elle dit oui, merci, acceptant l'invitation à déjeuner, sa voix sortit tremblante, presque comme un gazouillis dissonant. Ensuite, elle éclata de rire et eut envie de danser. Elle virevolta. Elle rit de nouveau. Elle croyait ne pas mériter un tel bonheur.

Lors du déjeuner, Cassiano commanda du filet de bar et du chardonnay pour tous les deux. Il l'observa tandis qu'elle mangeait. Leda – rayonnante dans une chemise en coton jaune et jupe plissée, courte et légère – remarqua qu'il n'avait rien mangé et qu'il avait à peine touché au vin, tandis qu'elle s'efforçait de sembler décontractée et d'avalier le poisson qui ne voulait pas franchir sa gorge. Cassiano lui dit que l'autre professeur, avant de partir, lui avait laissé la clé de son appartement. Ce n'était qu'une petite pièce, mais elle était propre et confortable ; et elle était située près du restaurant.

-On y va ?

Ils marchèrent en silence jusqu'au grand immeuble qui se trouvait à quelques

centaines de mètres. Il donna son nom au portier. Ils prirent l'ascenseur jusqu'au vingtième étage. Quand il ouvrit la porte, Leda vit, en même temps que le mur couleur pêche, le lit recouvert d'un drap blanc. À côté, la porte de la salle de bains. À l'autre extrémité, une petite table ronde et quatre tabourets face à la table de bar qui séparait la chambre de l'espace où se trouvaient l'évier et le réfrigérateur. Opposée à l'entrée, une porte-fenêtre donnait sur un petit balcon. L'appartement n'avait pas de décorations, ni de livres ou d'objets personnels : c'était comme si personne n'habitait là.

-Couche-toi - dit-il ; et il entra dans la salle de bains.

Elle étendit son corps sur le drap, leva les bras en arrière, posa le dos des mains sur l'oreiller, et ferma les yeux pendant quelques minutes. Quand elle les ouvrit, elle regarda Cassiano nu, qui se jetait sur elle. Surprise, se débattant, elle sentit dans son cou le nez effilé et, sur sa poitrine, ses seins écrasés par le poids de l'homme. Il plia sa jambe droite à la hauteur de son genou et introduisit avec force son pied entre les cuisses désarmées de Leda. De ses mains affolées, elle essayait de l'éloigner. Puis elle entendit l'autre cœur battre au-dessus du sien et elle remarqua le tremblement du bassin de Cassiano. Un coup soudain et, dans son ventre, Leda perçut qu'un mur s'écroulait. Mais, indifférent, il se souleva et, peu après, retourna à la salle de bains.

Leda aussi se leva. Vacillante, elle lissa sa chemise et sa jupe froissées et fit quelques pas en direction du balcon. Elle pencha la tête sur son épaule de façon à l'appuyer sur la porte-fenêtre, et regarda les nuages qui se réunissaient, hâtifs. Là, la poitrine lourde et la tête vide, elle écouta le bruit de la rue, réduit à un murmure distant, ou à peine plus. Prêtant l'oreille, elle entendit les pleurs des gouttes qui s'écoulaient du robinet à côté du réfrigérateur.

Quand Cassiano sortit de la salle de bains, il s'arrêta à côté du lit et vit la tache rouge sombre sur le drap. Il le tira avec force et le roula en pelote sous son bras.

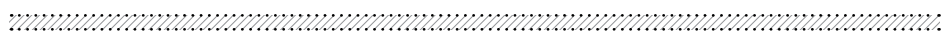
-Il faut que je m'en aille. Reste autant de temps que tu veux. Simplement, n'oublie pas de claquer la porte quand tu sors.

Leda resta immobile, presque invisible, regardant la rue sans penser. D'en haut, elle vit la silhouette réduite du professeur traverser la rue et entrer dans la laverie d'en face. Le drap roulé en pelote, sur le point de s'échapper de sous son bras, lui sembla un cygne tenu par le cou. Elle lui tourna le dos. Puis elle sortit et ferma la porte.

Je me souviens que, le semestre suivant, Cassiano ne revint pas faire cours et Leda était distante, mélancolique. Je lui demandai quelques fois si elle n'était pas bien. Elle ne disait rien. Je n'insistai pas et le temps passa.

Hier, Leda me raconta la leçon qu'elle avait reçue, mais seulement parce qu'elle s'était troublée quand je lui avais demandé si elle se souvenait encore du professeur Cassiano.

-Dis donc - lui avais-je dit. - Tu savais que la police l'avait trouvé mort le lendemain de son mariage ? Quelle coïncidence sinistre. J'ai toujours voulu te parler de sa mort, mais quand c'est sorti dans le journal, tu étais déjà partie pour ta lune de miel.



LE LIVRE



Poupées Russes

Eliana Cardoso

- **Titre:** Bonecas Russas
- **ISBN:** 9788532529299
- **Année de publication:** 2014
- **Editeur d'origine:** Companhia das Letras
- **Nombre de pages:** 104
- **Le tirage total au Brésil:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

Poupées russes, qui aborde les vies de plusieurs femmes, commence avec celles de deux cousines, Leda et Lola, dans un dialogue où, comme le révèle le titre du chapitre, Leda apparaît nue. Petite, Leda adorait les légendes et collectionnait les mythes. Ayant hérité de sa mère son intérêt pour l'art, elle devint galeriste. Lola au contraire, déterminée et autoritaire, obnubilée par le théâtre, vira journaliste. Les vies de Leda et de Lola se superposent à celles de Francisca, Odete, Rosália et Miranda, pour finir en un enchevêtrement de relations qui se dédoublent au fur et à mesure, jusqu'à la révélation des mystères que chacune d'entre elles avait l'intention de garder secrets.

RAPPORTS DANS LA PRESSE

Josélia Aguiar, Valor Econômico de São Paulo, 11/07/2014:

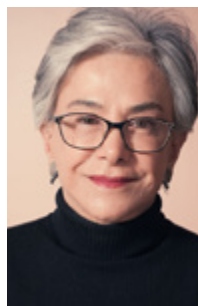
<http://www.valor.com.br/cultura/3610204/vidas-paralelas>
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8xwsg1y5a4lcx8a/Vidas%20paralelas-JoseliaAguiar.pdf?dl=0>

Professor Haron Gamal, Jornal Rascunho, Janeiro 2015:
<http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/nem-tao-bonecas/>

Tiago Germano, Vida e Arte, Jornal da Paraíba, 4/01/2015:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/7owzthlm4hvd99/Resenha_Tiago_Germano.pdf?dl=0

Eugênia Zerbini, Digestivo Cultural, 21/08/2014:
http://www.digestivocultural.com/colunistas/coluna.asp?codigo=4033&titulo=Bonecas_russas_de_Eliana_Cardoso

L'AUTEUR



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- **Pseudonyme:** Eliana Cardoso
- **Autres livres:** Mosaico da Economia, 336 páginas. São Paulo: Editora Saraiva, 2010. Fábulas Econômicas, 306 páginas. São Paulo: Editora Pearson, 2006.

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LA TRADUCTRICE

Mélanie Fusaro

LES DROITS DE TRADUCTION

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LES PETITES-FILLES D'EMA

EUGENIA ZERBINI

Traduit par Mélanie Fusaro

Je pourrais écrire sur ma vie. Les gens, pour la plupart, pensent que leurs vies donneraient de bons romans. D'après ce qu'ils racontent, de nombreux écrivains reçoivent, oralement ou par écrit, des récits de personnes qui voient leurs vies comme des brouillons de livres. Toutes les vie sont-elles toujours, pour leurs propriétaires, cette saveur d'expérience unique, digne d'être racontée ?

Comme moi, bien d'autres femmes doivent être nées par une chaude nuit d'été, dans la première moitié des années 50. Leur enfance doit avoir été enregistrée par des photos sur lesquelles elles portaient de petites robes délicates comme de la barbe-à-papa, se balançant sur des chevaux à bascule et parlaient dans des téléphones en plastique. Mon histoire fut différente parce que mes parents eurent une histoire différente.

Papa et maman disparurent après avoir été arrêtés, en 1970. C'est après le Carnaval que tout arriva. Le mercredi des Cendres, nous étions revenus de voyage l'après-midi et nous étions en train de dîner, plus tôt que d'habitude. On sonna à la porte. J'en profitai pour aller à la cuisine prendre la crème de banane que nous avions achetée sur le bord de la route et que je voulais manger au dessert. Tandis que j'ouvrais le paquet et cherchais une assiette, j'entendis une agitation différente dans le salon : mon petit chien aboyait ; mon père demanda, sur un ton dur : « Qui êtes-vous ? » ; la domestique, qui avait ouvert la porte de l'entrée, s'exclama : « Mon Dieu, mon Dieu » ; et ma mère dit, à voix haute : « Chéri ».

Mon sixième sens me fit ouvrir soigneusement la porte de service et monter jusqu'au dernier étage de l'immeuble. Je restai accroupie derrière la porte qui donnait accès à l'appartement du concierge et à la buanderie.

Papa était brésilien, mais maman était issue d'une famille polonaise. J'écoutais les histoires qu'elle racontait sur la guerre, les fuites et les cachettes, et je croyais que ce que je venais de faire était ce qu'il y avait de mieux sur le moment. Simple-ment, je ne savais pas que c'était la dernière fois que je voyais mes parents.

Il était avocat et défendait des prisonniers politiques. À cause de lui, maman – qui était complètement folle de lui – s'était liée à des mouvements catholiques. Ils s'étaient rencontrés à l'université, quand ils participaient à la JUC, comme on appelait la Jeunesse Catholique. Elle n'était pas d'ici. Ses parents – pépé et mémé – étaient venus de Pologne au Brésil après la Première Guerre Mondiale, mais ils habitaient ailleurs. Maman n'était venue ici que pour faire ses études et avait fini par y rester parce qu'elle avait rencontré mon père. Il était inscrit en Droit, et elle, en Lettres. Ils se marièrent dès qu'ils furent diplômés.

Cachée, j'attendais que le concierge monte à son appartement. D'après mes calculs, à cette heure-là, il devait être dans la loge. Après sept heures du soir, il descendait et restait là jusqu'à dix heures, quand il était relevé par le vigile de nuit. Je n'attendis pas beaucoup.

-Gamine, qu'est-ce que tu fais ici ? Lève-toi, ton père et ta mère ont été emmenés dans une grosse voiture qui était dans la rue.

-S'il -vous-plaît, vous me laissez téléphoner à ma grand-mère ?

-Allons-y, mais tu vas téléphoner de l'appartement du cinquième étage. Les gens sont sortis et m'ont laissé la clé. Ils sont allés à la plage.

-Votre téléphone est sur écoute ? Papa a toujours dit que le téléphone de chez nous était sur écoute.

Je parlai avec ma grand-mère - l'autre, la mère de papa -, qui me fixa un rendez-vous à l'angle de ma rue pour me prendre en voiture quinze minutes plus tard. Elle insista pour que je ne passe chez moi sous aucun prétexte.

Le concierge m'accompagna et s'en alla rapidement après m'avoir confiée à Mamie. Elle arriva en taxi, me prit, et donna l'ordre au chauffeur de nous emmener jusqu'à un hôtel en centre-ville. De ses mains chaudes, elle serra ma main livide et mouillée de sueur. C'était bien plus sérieux que ce que je pensais.

Nous arrivâmes à l'hôtel et, sans lâcher ma main, elle salua, charmeuse, le réceptionniste.

-Bonsoir. Vous excuserez mon impolitesse, mais c'est que ma petite-fille et moi venons de la province et la voiture est tombée en panne au milieu de la route. Le chauffeur est resté là-bas pour essayer de réparer et s'occuper des bagages. Après une journée d'aventures, nous avons réussi, je ne sais pas comment, à arriver ici. J'ai besoin d'une chambre pour nous deux.

Elle plaça son sac à main, toujours très chic, sur le comptoir. Elle l'ouvrit et donna sa carte d'identité à l'homme de la réception. Celui-ci étendit la main, enchanté.

La mère de mon père fut la plus belle grand-mère que j' eus jamais vue. Élégante et parfumée, jusqu'au jour de sa mort elle conserva une peau admirable ainsi qu'un caractère fort mêlé d'un génie bienveillant. Hautaine, elle parlait avec tous les « r » et les « l » de la langue portugaise correcte. Comme maman, elle était folle de papa, son fils aîné.

-Viens ici ma petite-fille -, dit-elle en m'attirant contre son corps dès que la porte de la chambre se fut fermée derrière nous. - Quel cauchemar ! Je lui avais bien dit que ça se finirait mal !

Il y avait une plainte dans sa voix. Nous restèrent serrées pendant un long instant. Ma tête commença à tourner. Je me rappelai de nouveau les histoires de l'époque de la guerre que maman racontait : lors d'une fuite acho que é isso mesmo, une femme de sa famille avait sans le vouloir asphyxié son bébé, à trop le serrer contre elle pour l'empêcher de pleurer.

-Mamie, où est-ce que papa et maman ont été emmenés ?

-D'après ce que tu m'as raconté, ils ont été arrêtés. Ils ont dû être emmenés dans une caserne de l'armée. Dieu sait combien ils doivent souffrir à l'heure qu'il est ! Et ce n'est pas faute de les avoir prévenus. Ton père était dans le collimateur

depuis longtemps. Écoute, ma chérie, faire très attention ne suffit pas, c'est pour ça que nous sommes venues à cet hôtel. Les téléphones sont sur écoute, les maisons sont surveillées, le pays est plein d'indicateurs de la police. Voilà ce que nous allons faire : je vais commander le dîner ici dans la chambre, passer un appel sans importance à une amie, comme si nous étions réellement une grand-mère et sa petite-fille qui ont eu un accident sur la route.

-Je ne veux pas dîner.

-Ma chérie – elle changea de ton. Je ne t'ai pas demandé si tu voulais dîner. Nous allons commander le dîner. Et moi... – elle fit une pause, qui m'inquiéta. – Je ne voulais pas te rappeler qu'il est mon fils avant d'être ton père.

Imaginez donc, raconter mon histoire... Quand j'étais au lycée et que j'étudiais encore au Brésil, j'allai à un festival de poésie parrainé non par mon école, mais par une autre, qui se trouvait tout près la mienne. C'est un poète de grande taille, un prince au teint nordique, tout de noir vêtu, qui ouvrit la présentation en commençant ainsi : « Je viens de la génération des enfants trahis »... À la fin, j'entendis l'un de mes camarades – il était très laid, portait des lunettes et il avait tellement de pellicules sur ses épaules qu'on aurait dit du lait caillé – dire que le poète n'était rien qu'un joli pet embelli par des rubans roses. J'appris par hasard que ce camarade, bien des années plus tard, était devenu cinéaste, s'était exilé en France et s'était tué à Paris.

Et pourquoi ne pas écrire un livre cachée derrière un autre prénom? Pendant des mois, par le passé, j'ai flirté avec cette idée. C'est l'époque où j'ai commencé à travailler dans des banques. Tous les vendredis, je sortais déjeuner avec des collègues et nous divaguions longtemps sur l'idée que j'avais semée : écrire un livre qui serait présenté comme la traduction d'un original nord-américain. Le cœur de l'intrigue serait la trésorerie d'une grande institution financière de New-York.

À l'époque où il n'était pas encore question de ce type de scandale, le groupe ourdissait, à travers un processus de création commune et continue, une banque imaginaire, compromise dans des opérations suspectes, en lien avec le trafic d'armes et de drogue (un peu de guerrilla, qui sait ?).

Le président était dans la combine, mais l'un des directeurs commence à avoir des soupçons. Son assistantese met à collectionner des indices des irrégularités. Le chef de la trésorerie, qui habite avec sa famille dans une banlieue chic et qui est l'illustration du couple parfait, a une liaison secrète avec l'un des traders, qui est pratiquement son reflet dans le miroir : lui aussi marié, habitant avec une famille idyllique dans une banlieue idéale.

Le titre – que j'imaginai imprimé en lettres dorées en relief sur un fond rouge, au-dessus d'un billet de dollar vert – serait « Valeur de face » (du pseudo-original « Face Value »). Le titre était de moi, ainsi que deux des personnages : Erik, le directeur qui depuis le début soupçonne quelque chose, et Donna, son assistante carriériste. Le premier, un charmant cinquantenaire, qui avait fait une très belle carrière à Wall Street, mais avait perdu ses illusions parce qu'il avait été trompé par sa femme et tout le monde le savait. Il buvait un peu trop et se demandait sans cesse pourquoi ne pas tout envoyer en l'air, se la jouer à la Hemingway et s'en aller assister à des corridas pour le reste de sa vie. Donna, l'assistante, était non seulement très canon, mais

aussi très efficace et très coquine. Cette femme superlative utilise toutes les preuves qu'elle obtient en sa faveur et extorque toutes les promotions, toutes les augmentations et tous les bonus possibles, ainsi qu'une carte de visite pour un nouveau job bien meilleur, dans une autre banque, avant que le scandale n'éclate.

Même si je reprendrais cette intrigue, il y avait une sombre incontournable : trop des mains avait tricoté la trame. Nous étions tous là, autour de la table du déjeuner, à raconter des parties de l'histoire : on aurait dit des Indiens autour d'un feu invisible, échangeant des pensées magiques qui avaient la vie courte et disparaissaient en un souffle lorsque nous payions l'addition et partions. Le pire était que ce monde, qui semblait original il y a quinze ou vingt ans, courrait le risque aujourd'hui d'être banal. Des scandales financiers et des fraudes beaucoup plus sophistiquées faisaient alors la une des journaux.

Et comme c'était dimanche, je décidai de passer la journée sans sortir de chez moi. Je ne répondrais même pas au téléphone. Je peignai mes cheveux soigneusement pour ne tirer aucun des points de suture. En démêlant les fils, je continuais à penser au sujet auquel je réfléchissais avant de m'endormir : le XXI^{ème} siècle comme le siècle des femmes. André Malraux croyait que le XXI^{ème} siècle serait religieux, ou ne serait pas.

Mes amies me ressemblaient d'une certaine manière. Nous étions nées dans les années commençant par 19, dans la période comprise entre la création, parainée par les États-Unis, de l'OTAN, à la fin de 1949, et l'ascension, soutenue par l'Union Soviétique, de Fidel Castro au pouvoir à Cuba, une décennie plus tard. Nous vivions en nous corrigeant, les unes les autres et nous-mêmes, quand nous faisons cette référence au siècle passé, car pour nous l'expression définirait éternellement le XIX^{ème} siècle. Le long, très long XIX^{ème} siècle.

Nous avons été jeunes au XX^{ème} siècle, à une époque où la jeunesse, pour la dernière fois semble-t-il, s'était réunie autour de l'idée de construire quelque chose de nouveau. En tant que femmes, nous avons contesté les valeurs d'une société machiste, nous avons eu accès aux études et au travail. Et nous avons brisé des tabous. Il est clair que nous avons eu nos précurseurs qui, comme dans les grandes navigations, découvrirent les nouvelles terres, firent les expéditions initiales et les premiers relevés cartographiques. C'est notre génération, toutefois, qui est venue coloniser ce nouveau monde.

Telles des Mirandas shakespeariennes exultantes et pleines de vie, nous saluons un continent nouveau et sauvage. Nous avons débarqué, cependant, avec des provisions et des armes dont la date de péremption était dépassée. Je ne sais pas si c'est vrai, mais j'ai entendu dire que Jung avait écrit que tout homme emporte avec lui la queue d'un dinosaure imaginaire, héritée de nos ancêtres. Nous, baby-boomers, nous emportons des voiles de rêves qui tombaient de nos chapeaux coniques invisibles de fées : le voile ne cessait de s'accrocher, de nous tirer en arrière, et nous dépendions de manière chronique de quelqu'un qui viendrait nous en débarrasser.

Bien que dans nos oreilles résonnassent, comme une Marseillaise, les accords de la guitare de George Harrison saluant le soleil levant le matin de la clôture de Woodstock, dans l'intimité de nos tiroirs secrets, jamais ouverts face au public

masculin, germaient des semences plantées durant notre enfance, échappées des livres d'Andersen et de la comtesse de Ségur.

Nous sommes la première génération à avoir eu le pouvoir du choix. Mais, jeunes filles, nous commençons à nous restreindre secrètement et volontairement pour les fantômes invoqués, sous les sèche-cheveux du samedi après-midi, par la lecture de textes gothico-érotico-sentimentaux, comme ceux publiés, en plusieurs morceaux, par la revue *Querida*. Nous nous intoxiquions en secret avec les vapeurs de royaumes et de marais lointains. Les battements de nos cœurs accéléraient pour accompagner le rythme du halètement des seins des héroïnes des drames et des aventures décrits devant nous. Qui ne se souvient pas d'Angélique, marquise des Anges, comtesse de Peyrac, et de ses incroyables histoires ?

Sur cette question, le public formé par les jeunes filles se partageait schématiquement en deux sections : celles qui avaient une grande sensibilité et beaucoup d'ambition intellectuelle, celles qui avaient une grande sensibilité et une moindre ambition intellectuelle (le milieu familial comptait aussi très souvent). Ces dernières regardaient les films de Rock Hudson et de Doris Day, les films romantiques italiens, lisent « Pollyanna » et « Polyanna grandit » et des romans-photo, tandis que les premières, en plus de faire tout cela sans tambour ni trompettes, se consacraient aussi aux arts nobles.

Au début de l'adolescence, j'eus un professeur de littérature française qui racontait, à sa manière, la vie des auteurs qu'il considérait comme importants (il n'aborda jamais, par exemple, les préférences sexuelles de Verlaine et Rimbaud), et qui exigeait que les élèves lisent des extraits des livres dans leur version originale et qu'ils les traduisent. C'est avec lui que je lus *Madame Bovary* pour la première fois. Le texte donné était le mariage d'Emma. Aujourd'hui encore, je me souviens de la traduction improvisée en classe : « Emma eût, au contraire, désiré se marier à minuit, aux flambeaux. »

Madame Bovary m'a toujours fait de la peine. Est-ce qu'elle ne voyait pas que son mari, Charles, lui était entièrement dévoué ? Elle pouvait gérer l'argent et la maison, décider si elle brodait, jouait du piano ou lisait de la poésie. Pour lui faire plaisir, ils avaient déménagé de Yonville à Tostes, où était née leur fille, Berthe, prénom qu'elle avait choisi. Bien avant de dépenser des sommes extravagantes pour ses tenues, *Madame Bovary* aurait dû avoir une belle estampe, sinon elle n'aurait pas séduit Leon, plus jeune qu'elle. Charles permettait même qu'elle s'amuse, ne s'opposant pas à ce qu'elle danse avec un autre au bal, qu'elle se promène à cheval avec Rodolphe, son premier amour, et qu'elle aille régulièrement à Rouen. Pourquoi se chagriner et s'immoler, si elle avait tout pour être heureuse ?

Je fus profondément touchée par cette phrase traduite, même si, à cette époque-là, où je n'étais encore que le brouillon d'une femme libérée, je rejetais l'idée de me marier un jour. Cette désapprobation, toutefois, ne concernait pas l'abdication face à un amour asservissant pour quelqu'un de très spécial. La méconnaissance, jusqu'alors, du roman de Flaubert ne m'empêcha pas de comprendre son univers caché dans cette phrase du début du texte qui était le sujet de notre devoir en classe.



LE LIVRE



Les petites-filles d'Emma

Eugenia Zerbin

- **Titre:** As netas da Emma
- **ISBN:** 85-01-07326
- **Année de publication:** 2005
- **Editeur d'origine:** Record
- **Nombre de pages:** 173
- **Le tirage total au Brésil:** 2.500 copies

SYNOPSIS

Après être victime d'une tentative de vol, une femme, dont les parents ont disparu pendant la dictature brésilienne, commence à réfléchir sur le passé. Par les dialogues avec ses amis, un profil des modifications subi par le féminin dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle est tracé, de la même façon qu'un regard critique sur cette nouvelle femme est jetté. Selon la narratrice, les femmes mûres de ce début du XXIème siècle seraient les descendants de Madame Bovary, le magistral roman créé par Flaubert.

RAPPORTS DANS LA PRESSE

Le plus rélevant des éloges reçus par "Les petites-filles d'Emma" a été fait par l'écrivain et journaliste Carlos Heitor Cony (membre de l'Académie Brésilienne de Lettres), qui signe la quatrième de couverture du volume. "La vainqueur du Prêmio Sesc domine

le récit du début à la fin, en exposant un thème plus qu'actuel et du quotidien très intime de l'univers de la femme, mais avec des constantes références aux grands maîtres qu'ont fait du roman le genre noble de la littérature.

A par ça, le livre a été bien accueilli par les médias (Diário do Comércio, SP, 01/07/2005; Rascunho, septembre 2005; O Globo, 12/11/2005, tous indisponibles sur Internet. Disponible on a trouvé la revue suivante: RODRIGUES, Carla. "Fantasias de metamorfose" (Fantaisies de metamorphose)). Publié le 27 juin, 2005, au site "No Mínimo". Disponible sur <http://sibilo.blogspot.com.br/2005/06/fantasia-de-metamorfose-carla.html> consulté le 4 février 2015.

On transcrit un court extrait en français: ... "Le petites-filles d'Emma" c'est un livre que fournit un exemple de la dite nouvelle littérature - le texte est agile, la language est simple, et l'univers contemporain qui mélange technologie, mondialisation, violence et insecurity est toujours là".

L'oeuvre a aussi attiré l'attention des essaies universitaires, comme est le cas, initialment, du travail présenté par le Professuer Maria Amélia DIONÍSIO, de l'Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, intitulé "Tecendo os fios da memória" ("En tissant les fils de la mémoire"):

" Lorsque vous avez conclue la lecture agréable du livre, une question se pose: cela fonctionnerat-il comme une littérature orientée féministe qui veut discuter la trajectoire de ce

mouvement au Brésil? Nous pouvons répondre qu'oui, mais ce n' est pas la seule question soulevée par l' auteur du livre, leurs questions vont au delà" (Annales du Silel - Instituto de Letras e Linguistica, vol.2, n.2, 2011. Disponible sur http://www.ileel.ufu.br/anaisdosilel/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/silel2011_1778.pdf consulté le 4 février 2015

Quatre ans avant, le Professeur Tânia Regina Oliveira RAMOS, de l' Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, aussi avait examiné "Les petites-filles d'Emma", dans un des ses écrits:

" Le récit ... se fait l' histoire d'un Brésil présenté du point de vue féminin, parce qu' il nous raconte avec intelligence, humour et subtilité, le charme de les réunions des amis autour de la cinquantaine qui, dans ses rencontres discutent ses affets, experiences et ses souvenirs des années de la dictature au Brésil (Letras de Hoje, Porto Alegre, v.42, n. 4, pp. 32-41, décembre 2007).

L'AUTEUR



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O PASSEADOR

LUCIANA HIDALGO

Traduit par Rafaela Jaccoud et Clémence Homer

Afonso traîne les pieds sur la terre sèche, laissant derrière lui un sentier d'empreintes zigzagantes. Une telle chaleur à cette heure de la journée le fait songer à un désert inconnu. Ignorant le soleil, il avance somnolent, les yeux rivés au sol. La tête vide, il se laisse conduire par ses talons légers qui, eux, commandent le corps. Ils se posent, se relèvent, foulent des ponts improvisés. Lorsqu'Afonso atteint la surface pavée, il s'arrête enfin et contemple le paysage qui s'offre à lui. Là, tout est d'une solitude de béton. Il se trouve devant le chantier de l'avenue Centrale, qui déchire le centre de Rio de Janeiro comme un sourire édenté et pervers.

Plus il parcourt cette ville tailladée, profanée jusque dans ses moindres recoins, plus il maudit la modernisation urbaine. Rio se civilise petit à petit, lit-il dans les journaux et constate-t-il au quotidien. Jour après jour, la capitale brésilienne est transformée en une sorte de Paris éclopé. Alors Afonso flâne, inspecte, veille sur la dignité de cette ville qu'il croit être la sienne. Et à chaque pas, il s'aperçoit qu'il perd sa place dans ce territoire métamorphosé, colonisé.

Il trébuché sur un tas de pierres portugaises, se heurte contre un bout de bois, autant de signes révélateurs de sa fatigue. En effet, ce flâneur, fin connaisseur de chaque repli, de chaque bifurcation, a marché toute la nuit. Les raccourcis, il les découvre tous, même les plus récents, fraîchement gravés dans une cartographie qui se redessine peu à peu. L'apathie de la nuit est propice à ces imprudences, elle préserve l'anonymat. Afonso peut ainsi semer les gardiens et surveiller de plus près les inventions architectoniques.

Pour lui, ces incursions nocturnes sont l'occasion de prendre congé d'un parallélépipède qui lui a servi de rue, ou d'une fenêtre d'où s'est penchée un jour une belle jeune femme, lançant au monde le plus trouble des regards. A chaque rue, il dit adieu à des fragments d'un Rio qui s'écroule en cette chaotique année 1904.

Adieu, les draps jaunis des taudis, les bras bien sculptés des blanchisseuses, l'odeur crasseuse des ouvriers. Adieu, leurs bruits, leurs rejetons, toutes ces misères. On met la pauvreté au débarras, dans le coin le plus obscur de la capitale, comme si en la dissimulant, on la faisait disparaître, cruel illusionnisme.

On s'attaque à la saleté et à la laideur avec le même acharnement qu'on emploierait pour combattre le diable. Une fois achevée la ré-urbanisation de ce Paris des Amériques, il suffira de blanchir la peau de la population brésilienne, de lui éclaircir les cheveux et de lui peindre les yeux en vert ou en bleu, pense Afonso, ironique, en enchaînant les phrases. Il marche le long de l'avenue, entre le rire et la moquerie, étourdi par des idées à présent bien plus rapides que ses pieds.

L'homme est un bouffon qui danse sur des précipices, se répète-t-il plusieurs fois en silence, alors qu'il tâche de se rappeler les mots exacts de Balzac recopiés juste la veille dans son journal. C'est comme cela qu'il se sent ces derniers mois, un peu burlesque, saltimbanque, tandis qu'il valse dans le malaise des frontières extrêmes de la ville. Peut-être qu'il ne danse pas exactement, peut-être ne fait-il que trépider. Alors, dans la journée, il évite les rues adjacentes aux chantiers, secouées par les pioches des ouvriers en sueur qui travaillent sous l'œil d'ingénieurs en costumes bien taillés.

Son corps lui désobéit parfois, hésite devant les obstacles et les déviations, perd l'équilibre au milieu des décombres. Dans quelques années, les chaussées s'entrelaceront, de nouvelles constructions seront érigées, on cimentera la modernité une fois pour toutes mais la silhouette d'Afonso cheminera toujours fébrile, abattue par tout ce chaos. Quiconque le regarderait de plus près, lanterne en main, s'efforçant de surmonter les petits obstacles d'une allure nerveuse, serait capable de distinguer dans ses pas chancelants l'insécurité qui s'insinue.

C'est peut-être justement à cause de l'impact exercé par cette architecture mouvante qu'il ne voit pas, un peu plus loin, une autre silhouette se matérialiser progressivement dans son sillage. D'un pas moins incertain, elle longe l'avenue qui profite du calme de l'aube avant de se soumettre à une nouvelle journée de violence. Tous ces travaux meurtrissent la vanité citadine et exposent une intimité à laquelle personne ne devrait avoir accès. Personne, à part Afonso, promeneur si intime de cette charpente qui s'ébranle en même temps que lui.

Dans les premières heures du jour, seules ces deux ombres serpentent le long du boulevard flanqué de bâtiments à moitié démolis. Sans s'apercevoir qu'il n'est pas seul, Afonso fait un mouvement brusque, susceptible de confondre son suiveur, et s'arrête devant des maisons en ruines. Il reste là plusieurs minutes à observer des immeubles-squelettes qui, quelques heures plus tôt, alors qu'il était au comble de sa joie bohème, auraient pu défier sa raison avec la danse macabre qu'ils semblaient improviser. Mais ils sont sobres à présent (lui aussi), immobiles comme ils devraient toujours l'être, et Afonso peut dévisager à son aise et sans effroi les façades évidées.

Son regard traverse l'ossature des maisons pour mieux les observer, ainsi que les fantômes cloués aux murs invisibles, incapables de faire leurs adieux. Il se pourrait qu'il les voie, ces fantômes, avec tous leurs gestes, et même quelques âmes en peine, et du coup qu'il se sente contraint à veiller sur ces anciens habitants attachés à leur bric-à-brac, abandonné dans la hâte du déménagement. Expropriés par l'administration publique, obligés de quitter leurs maisons, les corps sont partis mais leurs traces sont restées, imprégnées de drames personnels et d'amours clandestins.

Passant la tête à travers une fenêtre brisée, Afonso s'applique à reconstituer les biographies d'une population inexistante. Le rire qui s'échappe de sa bouche révèle que l'inventaire de la démolition qu'il écrit dans le vent, dans le vide laissé par l'un des premiers cortijos¹ de la ville, est fait de comédie et de drame. Devant lui, dans

1. Habitation collective ou bâtiment dégradé, dont les pièces étaient louées séparément à des individus ou des familles aux ressources limitées.

le coin à droite, une vieille fille pleure la mort de son unique prétendant. Dans le coin opposé, un garçon souriant est assis sur le canapé du salon et attend son père qui doit rentrer à la maison d'une minute à l'autre, après des années en prison.

Afonso est tellement absorbé par l'inquiétude de ses personnages invisibles qu'il ne remarque même pas la présence de Sofia, qui guette sa solitude peuplée d'âmes. Habitué à inventer des protagonistes et acteurs secondaires avec lesquels il est à l'aise, presque intime, la présence d'une personne aussi concrète lui ferait peut-être peur.

Elle reste en retrait, persuadée d'avoir fait un faux pas et d'être tombée dans un repli du temps. Les heures se sont écoulées de façon si désaccordée depuis qu'elle a décidé de le suivre en cette nuit labyrinthique. Dans ses allées et venues, la ville ne lui a jamais paru aussi familière et aussi rude. Entre les faits et la fiction, entre ce qu'elle voit et ce qu'elle imagine, Afonso lui paraît chaque jour plus insaisissable.

Sofia l'observe depuis longtemps. Bien avant cette nuit, elle suivait déjà ses déambulations dans les couloirs remplis d'étagères de la librairie spécialisée dans les livres d'occasion où elle travaille. Des trésors bibliographiques que se disputent des lecteurs rendus voraces par la mélancolie. C'est le cas d'Afonso. Des centaines, des milliers de livres, essentiellement d'auteurs étrangers, surtout français, se décomposent dans un dédale sur lequel Tiago règne en Minotaure. Il est véritablement irascible. Si certains le détestent, d'autres le haïssent franchement. Toutefois, en raison de sa compétence, la majeure partie de sa clientèle le tolère.

Propriétaire de ce commerce de livres prospère rue Gonçalves Dias, dans le centre-ville, Tiago accueille ses clients avec la brutalité d'un despote. Convaincu de l'imbécillité humaine, il exploite la vanité des intellectuels dandy et surtout la futilité de leurs épouses. Il ne rate pas une occasion de les ridiculiser, quel que soit le sujet. Les gens ne peuvent que feindre de l'ignorer lorsqu'il énonce des absurdités en affichant un sourire si beau et malicieusement naïf². L'essentiel pour eux, c'est d'acquérir le Zola inédit, le dernier Flaubert, que ce soit pour le lire ou simplement en faire un objet de décoration.

Tiago ouvre les portes de son établissement à neuf heures et les ferme à dix-neuf heures. Il monte alors à l'étage, revêt son pyjama et s'assied pour dîner. Lorsque les journées sont chaudes ou humides, il prend un bain et se lave les cheveux. Si un client apparaît à la recherche d'un ouvrage, il enfile sa robe de chambre et descend trouver le volume, exigeant une grasse compensation pour l'urgence. Le bouquiniste dirige l'une des librairies les plus mouvementées de la ville, où savoirs et mites se conjuguent sur des étagères qui ressemblent étonnement à des carcasses de navires submergés. Soixante-dix mètres carrés d'insalubrité, mal éclairés, qui exhalent le moisi et la poussière.

Les œuvres y sont rangées dans un ordre illogique. Sofia, et depuis peu Afonso, sont parmi les rares personnes qui parviennent à localiser ce qu'elles cherchent.

- Les rats de bibliothèque sont des rongeurs pernicioeux – grogne Tiago dans ses jours les plus sombres au jeune homme, son nouveau protégé.

2. En français dans le texte.

De temps en temps, il prend Afonso de côté pour observer avec lui les bibliophiles montrant leurs crocs, impatients de mettre la dent sur leur proie littéraire. Le plus souvent, il leur suffit d'acquérir l'ouvrage rare, de le manipuler, de le renifler et, dans le cas des plus frêles, d'éternuer. L'éternuement leur suffit, il témoigne de l'austérité de l'ouvrage et en dispense presque la lecture. L'essentiel, c'est de garder l'objet à portée de main, de l'extraire d'un serre-livres doré à la feuille rangé dans la bibliothèque du salon et de le faire passer de main en main à l'occasion du prochain dîner entre pairs.

Regarder Afonso au milieu des ruines de l'avenue Centrale, c'est, pour Sofia, comme le voir entre les piles de livres émiettés de la librairie. Des personnages issus de mondes figés l'accompagnent, ou le poursuivent, nourris par son imagination, vampirisant ce jeune esprit plus abattu que la moyenne. Il se garde de révéler la présence de ces êtres imaginaires pour rester à l'abri du ridicule. Il passe la plupart de ses journées entre l'écriture et la lecture, hanté par des démons primaires qui, parfois, lui apparaissent aussi en rêve et se forgent une identité au fil des heures. Petit à petit, ils prennent corps, acquièrent une personnalité, une place dans le monde, un rôle dans les intrigues qu'il compose.

La littérature est pour lui un moyen efficace de contrôler ces créatures bavardes. À chaque fois que Sofia espionne Afonso en train de lire, elle parvient presque à discerner les joies et les obscénités exprimées par le cortège qui l'entoure. Il prend souvent des notes dans un carnet minuscule, toujours à portée de main, qu'il sort de la poche de sa veste.

Il lit dans une agitation silencieuse. Sans dire un mot, il sourit, lâchant un rire tantôt ingénu, tantôt ironique. Parfois il s'émeut, parfois il s'énerve. Par ses expressions crispées, on peut deviner la trame du livre. La fin de l'histoire perd de son secret. On entrevoit le Bien, le Mal, le bonheur, la souffrance, sans pouvoir pour autant les distinguer clairement, tellement ils s'assemblent, s'introduisent l'un dans l'autre, avec promiscuité.

Afonso laisse transparaître les émotions les plus frustes et les plus sublimes dans une gestuelle économe mais accessible aux observateurs aguerris. Malgré ses efforts pour se contenir, son corps trahit une angoisse, un malaise. Et lorsqu'il interrompt sa lecture pour discuter avec Tiago, il dit ce qu'il a sur le cœur. Dans cette société, il y a peu de gens qui disent réellement ce qu'ils pensent.

Avant que Tiago ne s'intéresse à lui, Sofia l'avait déjà remarqué. Afonso se rend à la librairie presque tous les jours à seize heures. Il arrive du bureau dans lequel il assure ses heures de fonctionnaire, flétri, bougon, vêtu toujours du même costume mal coupé dont les ourlets pleins de poussière couvrent des chaussures usées. Les semelles râpées à l'extrême dénoncent le flâneur³ englouti par les rues. Il fait de sa veste un tas qu'il dépose dans un coin et s'assied sur un escabeau en bois avec le livre choisi pour cette fin de journée.

Il compte trois heures sur la pendule de Tiago, le temps pour lui d'établir un diagnostic sur l'auteur. Il prend la mesure des conflits et des personnages, cerne

3. En français dans le texte.

les styles. Le bouquiniste l'autorise à se servir de son fond de commerce comme d'une bibliothèque. Afonso lit, lit, lit, sans interruption, immobile. Recroquevillé sur une marche, il ne bouge que les muscles de son visage, s'emportant parfois dans des grimaces, jouant une pantomime sans public.

Il était évident qu'un jour Sofia finirait par tomber sur ce bouffon sans éclat, accroupi ci ou là. Effectivement, c'est ce qu'il se produisit. C'était un soir où elle s'acharnait à nettoyer les moisissures d'un volume de Voltaire. Alors qu'elle passait un chiffon humide sur la couverture du Candide placé au bout de la dernière rangée de livres, elle fit tomber par accident l'ouvrage de l'autre côté de l'étagère et dut faire le tour du meuble pour le ramasser.

Une collision, un fracas. Et ensuite, la surprise, vite contenue. Afonso profitait de l'endroit le mieux éclairé de la pièce, sous l'unique puits de lumière. Il lisait sous cette verrière tapissée de mousse qui avait perdu sa transparence au fil du temps et à travers laquelle le jour parvenait à peine à s'insinuer. Seuls des yeux vifs comme les siens pouvaient déchiffrer des lettres aussi minuscules dans cette pénombre.

Dérangé par cette intrusion, Afonso se poussa sur le côté, en évitant de croiser le regard de Sofia. Il avait acquis certains réflexes quand il avait affaire aux êtres du sexe opposé. Il savait pertinemment qu'une fois le contact visuel établi, son corps serait déstabilisé et qu'il rougirait, si tant est qu'il lui était possible de rougir. C'est pourquoi il ne guigna même pas les chevilles de la jeune femme qui l'avait percuté, dans une brève étreinte.

Le bas de Sofia se déchira dans sa chute. Le blanc lumineux de la peau de sa jambe éblouit les yeux d'Afonso, qui s'empressa de se ressaisir. Elle s'excusa rapidement puis sortit en ajustant sa robe, l'abandonnant à son théâtre solitaire. Comme dans une chorégraphie, chacun replongea dans la torpeur de la librairie.



LE LIVRE



O Passeador

Luciana Hidalgo

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SYNOPSIS

Afonso flâne dans les rues d'un Rio de Janeiro en métamorphose. Il est un critique intransigeant de la transformation que le maire impose à la ville, en essayant d'y reproduire en 1904 la modernisation urbaine d'Hausmann à Paris. À partir de ce personnage, un écrivain marginal, Luciana Hidalgo fait une reconstitution minutieuse des rues de Rio du début 1900 lorsque l'influence de la culture française était si importante. L'œuvre possède la puissance esthétique d'une fiction et la précision d'un roman historique.

RAPPORTS DANS LA PRESSE

Compte-rendu intitulé "As pegadas do gênio", de Fabio Silvestre Cardoso, journal Rascunho, avril 2012: <http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/as-pegadas-do-genio/>

Article intitulé "Romance traz Lima Barreto apaixonado", de Fabio Victor,

journal Folha de S. Paulo, le 3 novembre 2011: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrad/fq2910201117.htm>

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Article intitulé "Lima Barreto nos dias de hoje", de José Castello, journal O Globo, le 15 février 2012: <http://oglobo.globo.com/blogs/literatura/posts/2012/02/15/lima-barreto-nas-ruas-de-hoje-430901.asp>

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PRIX

Prix Funarte de Création Littéraire (2011).

Finaliste des prix Jabuti, Portugal Telecom et São Paulo de Literatura (2012) dans la catégorie roman.

L'AUTEUR



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• **Autres livres:**

Arthur Bispo do Rosario - O senhor do labirinto (Arthur Bispo do Rosario - Le maître du labyrinthe), biographie, éditions Rocco, 1996/2011, 212 pages.

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FORMES ET COULEURS DE L'AFRIQUE

MÉRCIA MARIA LEITÃO ET NEIDE DUARTE

Illustré par Simone Matias | Traduit par Andréia Manfrin Alves



Les secrets du coffre

Le coffre est arrivé à la Maison avec mon papi. Je les ai trouvés très semblables du côté de la taille, de la couleur et des mystères...

Ma tête de gamin curieux imaginait ce qu'il y avait à l'intérieur. Mais la seule chose que papi est sorti du coffre fut un petit et vieux tabouret.

“Tu savais que ce tabouret a appartenu à nos ancêtres ?”

Doué de patience et de sagesse, papi m'a expliqué qu'en Afrique, autrefois, le tabouret était le meuble le plus important de la maison. En plus de son usage quotidien, c'était aussi le symbole de la royauté et de la puissance. Il gardait une tradition liée au respect des rois, des grands chefs et des anciens hommes. Il était aussi utilisé par les griots, des conteurs d'histoires et savoirs populaires qui parlaient aux gens.

J'ai beaucoup aimé connaître l'histoire du tabouret africain. Mais quels autres secrets gardait le coffre ?

Pendant longtemps je le regardais et essayais d'en découvrir, mais je ne savais pas comment poser la question à papi.

Un jour, il était assis sur son tabouret et regardait par la fenêtre du salon, pensif, quand soudain j'ai eu une idée.

J'ai fait son portrait : chauve, des yeux petits, un large nez, des grosses lèvres et une petite barbe qui couvrait son menton.

J'ai coupé le dessin et, pour finir, j'ai créé une couronne de papiers en couleur. C'était un joli masque !

Je me suis mis près de mon papi, portant le masque, et je lui ai dit :

"Bonjour ! Je suis le Roi Misterieux !"

Papi a fait semblant d'avoir peur et m'a répondu avec un sourire :

"Bonjour, majesté ! Que désirez-vous ?"

Et j'ai suivi avec le jeu :

"Je viens découvrir les mystères du coffre noir."

Il m'a regardé sans dire un mot, s'est levé doucement, m'a pris par la main et nous sommes partis ensemble vers sa chambre.

Il ouvrit le coffre et il sortit un sac qu'il m'a donné. Quelle surprise !

Il y avait à l'intérieur des masques de taille, forme et matériel différents.

Avec un peu de tristesse et nostalgie dans sa voix, il a dit :

"De la même forme dont tu es devenu le Roi Mistérieux, portant la magie d'un masque, nos ancêtres africains se transformaient aussi dans des sorciers, des dieux et même des animaux."

Il y existait des masques pour guérir des maladies, faire peur aux mauvais esprits, célébrer les naissances, fêter les mariages, intensifier la culture de la terre, remercier les récoltes et respecter la mort.

Elles étaient toujours présentes aux célébrations et aux rituels des tribus. Faites en argile, paille et surtout en bois, les masques étaient fabriqués avec beaucoup de respect pour garder de l'énergie et pour que les désirs fussent réalisés.

Je regardais mon papi et les masques avec beaucoup d'admiration, je les essayais l'une après l'autre, et pendant quelques instants je me voyais comme ces personnages.

"Wow, papi ! J'ai bien aimé connaître un peu l'histoire de ton peuple, qui est aussi la mienne. Ces masques ne peuvent pas rester cachés. Pourquoi on ne les met pas sur le mur pour que tout le monde puisse les admirer ?"

Et papi m'a répondu, fier :

"Même s'ils n'ont pas été faits pour le décor, je trouve important que d'autres personnes les connaissent."

Maintenant, quand je vois les masques africains sur le mur du salon, à me regarder, je m'imagine comme un héros ou un monstre, un dieu ou un sorcier, des gens ou des animaux...

Et le coffre ?

J'y ai rangé le masque en papier du Roi Mistérieux à côté des vieux secrets de mon grand-père et j'ai aussi fait de la place pour cacher mes propres secrets.

Un jour, peut être, il seront aussi découverts, qui le sait ?

Les bruits du coffre

Pendant longtemps j'ai essayé d'oublier le coffre noir, mais il continuait dans la chambre de mon grand-père, à réveiller ma curiosité et à me demander de l'ouvrir. Je ne pensais qu'à l'ouvrir encore une fois.

"Papi, j'ai entendu des bruits bizarres qui venaient de l'intérieur du coffre. Est-ce un animal ?"

Papi m'a regardé étrangement. Mais tout de suite il est venu s'asseoir près du coffre avec son tabouret africain.

Personne mieux que lui pouvait comprendre ce qui se passait à l'intérieur de ma tête et aussi du coffre...

"Comment ils étaient les bruits que tu as entendus ?"

"C'étaient des bruits étouffés, différents. Tout en même temps, dans un grand désordre. Nous pouvons aller voir ce que c'est ?"

Papi a pris la boîte rangée dans le coffre et moi, pendant quelques instants, j'ai perdu le souffle.

De l'intérieur du coffre son sortis de petits animaux faits en bois, comme le vieux tabouret et le coffre noir.

"Tu savais qu'il y existe des régions de l'Afrique où les bruits les plus étonnants viennent des animaux qui vivent dans les savanes ? Est-ce cela que tu as peut-être entendu ?" m'a demandé mon papi en rigolant.

"Oui, c'était peut-être cela... Et ce sont quels animaux ?"

"Ce sont des animaux typiques de l'Afrique. Là-bas c'est la maison de beaucoup d'animaux grands et féroces. Anciennement ils vivaient libres dans les savanes, mais aujourd'hui nous pouvons les retrouver protégés dans les réserves. Dans ces endroits il est possible de faire des promenades en jeep approprié pour observer et photographier les animaux.

Papi parlait en même temps qu'il me donnait de petites sculptures d'animaux, que je regardais à imaginer que ce serait bien d'être près d'eux pour de vrai et de les entendre. Le grondement furieux du lion, la marche lourde des éléphants, les cris nerveux des singes et même la girafe à mâcher lentement en me regardant de là haut de son long cou...

En plus de ces africains célèbres, il y avait d'autres animaux de toute sorte : des zèbres rayés, des léopards tachetés, des gazelles à longs cornes, des hippopotames bien gros...

Tandis que mon papi expliquait, j'ai tout placé par terre pour jouer :

"Remarque comment elles sont intéressantes ces sculptures. En Afrique, il y existe beaucoup d'artistes anonymes qui travaillent à tailler le bois et à fondre le fer et le bronze. Ce sont des pièces artisanales, créées avec des outils spéciaux, et représentent le regard particulier d'un artiste.

J'ai appris que les mammifères, les oiseaux et les poissons gagnent forme et couleurs sur plusieurs objets du quotidien, comme tabourets, tables, pots et masques. Il y a aussi des formes fantastiques qui mélangent des traits de différents animaux et qui étaient faites pour porter sur la tête, comme une sorte de chapeau.

Le plus intéressant c'est que, avec un vêtement en raphia, plume, cuir ou feuillage, les personnes de certaines tribus bougeaient et dansaient à imiter ces animaux.

Cela m'a donné envie d'être comme les artistes africains. Mais je ne sais pas faire autre chose que de travailler avec des pâtes à modeler, alors papi m'a appris à faire un animal très facile et typique en Afrique : une pintade, connue aussi comme akokem. Après l'avoir finie, je l'ai peinte en noir et mis de petits points blancs et un bec rouge.

À la fin du jeu, nous avons rangé tous les animaux dans le coffre et ma jolie pintade aussi.

Maintenant le coffre a gagné un nouveau secret pour garder.

Les souvenirs du coffre

L'après-midi pluvieux interdisait les jeux à l'extérieur de la maison. J'ai cherché mon papi. Il avait toujours des idées amusantes pour passer le temps.

Ce n'a pas été difficile de le trouver. Quand il disparaissait, le premier endroit où je le cherchait c'était dans sa chambre, où il fouillait des souvenirs dans le coffre noir.

Cette fois-ci n'a pas été différente. Assis sur son tabouret de conteur d'histoires, il feuilletait un vieux album de photos qu'il était sorti du coffre.

J'ai jeté un oeil au-dessus de ses épaules et j'ai vu des gens que je ne connaissais pas.

J'ai demandé, curieux :

“Qui sont ceux-là ?”

“Ce sont des gens qui font partie de notre histoire. Celle-ci est ton arrière grand-mère, ma maman. Elle était belle, n'est-ce pas ?”

L'ancienne photo montrait une femme grande, noire, montrant avec fierté sa robe très différente : longue jupe, un tissu sur les épaules et un autre autour de la tête.

“Regarde comment ma mère était coquette. Elle aimait s'entourer d'ornements comme bagues, bracelets et colliers, qui sont les coutumes de quelques régions de l'Afrique.

Feuilletant l'album, nous avons fait ensemble un voyage dans le temps. Papi avait une histoire pour chaque photo.

“Ici, ma cousine avec son petit. Les tissus en couleurs sur les épaules sont connus au Brésil comme tissu de dos, mais le nom africain est alaká. Ils adaptent aussi le costume des femmes pour transporter les petits enfants. Ainsi, toujours élégantes, les mamans marchent avec les mains libres et d'un pas ferme.

Au tourner d'une nouvelle page de l'album, j'ai vu ma grand-tante, très jeune, prête pour aller à une fête.

“Uoh, quelle coiffure !”

Papi m'a expliqué que les inquiétudes concernant la beauté se concentraient sur les têtes et les coiffures féminines. Les cheveux pouvaient être tirés par de jolis chignons ou avoir de belles tresses, ou même être couverts d'un tissu nommé

turban. Le plus chouette fut la grande photo où figurait presque toute la famille et papi était encore un gamin. Mes familiers étaient tous réunis, de bonne humeur, habillés avec ses meilleurs vêtements : des tuniques, des turbans, des torsos et des robes liées. Les personnes semblaient heureuses et avaient l'air de s'entendre aussi bien que les différents dessins des vêtements.

J'ai commenté surpris :

"Les tissus et les imprimés sont très gaies !"

"En plusieurs villes de l'Afrique - m'a expliqué papi - les teintures des tissus sont faites sur des motifs de la nature, comme terres, plantes, arbres et fleurs."

Je ne sais plus combien de temps nous sommes restés ensemble à feuilleter l'album et à parler sur chacun des personnages des photos, sa façon d'être, de vivre...

Touché, papi m'a raconté que, dans sa famille, il y avait des personnes de différentes régions de l'Afrique. Des peuples semblables, mais avec des valeurs et des formes de vivre différentes, gardant la fierté de ses origines et de ses histoires.

Quand nous avons fini de regarder l'album, papi sortit du coffre le bonnet qu'il portait quand il est arrivé au Brésil et le mit sur ma tête.

Je me suis regardé sur le miroir et j'ai eu une idée ! Je courus chercher l'appareil photo et demanda :

"Maintenant tu peux me prendre en photo comme un africain pour compléter notre album."

Et c'est ainsi que, comme par magie, j'ai retenu ce moment si agréable. La photo fut collée sur la dernière page de l'album, qui a repris sa place dans le coffre.

Certainement, ces images et les souvenirs du passé seront toujours une raison pour des nouveaux et amusants voyages dans le temps.

GLOSSAIRE

Akokem: nom d'origine iorubá de l'oiseau originaire de l'Afrique Occidentale, connu comme pintade.

Alaká: tissu porté sur le vêtement pour tenir des petits enfants africains.

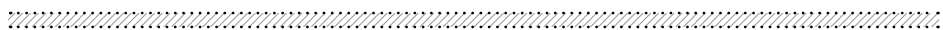
Bonnet: type de chapeau en tissu très utilisé dans plusieurs régions de l'Afrique.

Griot: mot franco-africain pour narrateur, raconteur d'histoires, chroniqueur de l'Afrique Occidentale.

Savane: région tropicale avec des arbres épars.

Tunique: veste longue et confortable utilisée dans certaines régions de l'Afrique.

Turban: Accessoire fait avec une bande de tissu qui s'enroule autour de la tête.





LE LIVRE



Formes et couleurs de l'Afrique

Mércia Maria Leitão et Neide Duarte

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Le livre de Mércia Maria Leitão et Neide Duarte raconte la relation d'un petit garçon et son grand-père, d'origine africaine. À travers des objets, comme des masques, des vêtements et des histoires remplies de magie, le grand-père a remémoré son passé de manière touchante, offrant à son petit fils un vrai voyage dans le temps et lui a présenté toute la beauté, la richesse et la diversité de l'histoire et de la culture du continent africain.

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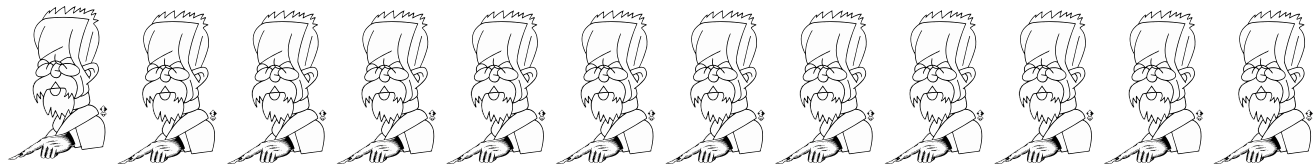
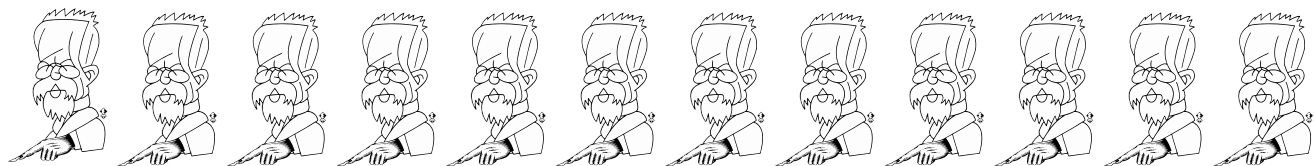
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