



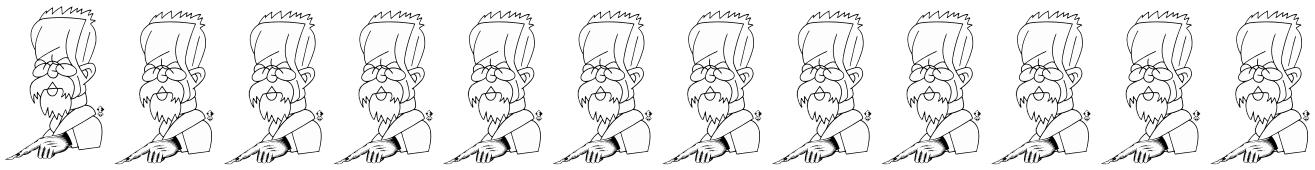
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BRAZILIAN **LITERATURE** IN TRANSLATION

#7



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**BRAZILIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION
LITERATURA BRASILEÑA EN TRADUCCIÓN**

#7

SÃO PAULO
2015



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THE SPACE OF BRAZILIAN LITERATURE IN THE WORLD

Machado de Assis Magazine, the fruit of a productive collaboration between the Brazilian National Library and the Instituto Itaú Cultural, is a strategic complement to Brazil's policy to support the promotion of Brazilian literature abroad. Central to this policy is the Translation Support Program, a respected initiative, under the auspices of the National Library's Centre for Cooperation and Dissemination, whose aim is make Brazil's literary output known internationally.

Indeed, many consider the Program to be an effective propagator of Brazilian literary creation overseas. The solidification of the policy behind it is essential: it is not something occasional, associated with this or that opportunity to present our authors and books abroad. We are increasingly convinced that this policy must be permanent, a view shared by both the National Library and, decisively, the Ministry of Culture.

More than promoting specific works and literary careers, contributing to their insertion in the international market, the main objective of the Program is to showcase Brazil's literary imagination as an important part of the country's cultural production. Brazilian modernist writer Mario de Andrade believed that one of the challenges faced by Brazilian literature was its need to combine the local and the universal. Although often built around local and regional references, there is no reason why this literary tradition shouldn't aspire to the world stage.

There is no reason why, in principle, literary expression should be relegated to the cocoon of localism. Who could have imagined that a fictional account of a day in the life of a Dubliner would go on to become one of the most important literary works of the 20th century? It would be almost unthinkable nowadays for someone to cite James Joyce's *Ulysses* as an exponent of Dublin literature. It would be just as implausible for one to make such a claim about Hans Castorp and his cousin Joachim, drowning in the abyss of human drama in a Swiss sanatorium, in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.

To a large extent, all literature is local. It originates somewhere and speaks a specific language. However, one of literature's greatest feats is that it can make the local universal, something that can be shared. How else to explain our enchantment when we read, for example, the story of Ítalo Svevo's unhappy streetcar passengers, subject to incalculable setbacks, personal and local dramas, made universal by the author's literary genius? Nothing could be more local than Riobaldo and Diadorim, in Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, or the existential tension of Dalcídio Jurandir's characters on Marajó Island in the brilliant *Chove nos Campos de Cachoeira*. All of these works, however, breathe the universe; that is, in them, language is a seductive force that not only connects the local to the universal, but fuses these two dimensions. It is what ensures the readability of all the works mentioned here, regardless of the cultural or linguistic circumstances of their readers.

One of the things that make it possible for literary work to travel is the skill of its authors. Another is its multiplication in other languages, not by means of a miracle, but through the fundamental, civilizing work of a legion of translators. The aim of the Translation Support Program is to enable Brazilian literature to become part of an intangible heritage that belongs to all readers everywhere.

The exploration of new markets, the promotion of authors abroad: these are, most definitely, worthwhile aims. But there is more: this is about helping a significant number of creators of written culture, profoundly Brazilian and local, to become "denationalized." It is the same as saying, "go on other languages, reach faraway readers and belong to them too."

Renato Lessa

President of the Brazilian National Library Foundation

EL ESPACIO DE LA LITERATURA BRASILEÑA EN EL MUNDO

La Revista Machado de Assis, producto de provechosa colaboración establecida entre la Biblioteca Nacional y el Instituto Itaú Cultural, es complemento estratégico de la política brasileña de apoyo a la internacionalización de la literatura brasileña. Tal política tiene como eje central el Programa de Apoyo a la Traducción, reconocida iniciativa de proyección internacional de la literatura hecha en el país y conducido por el Centro de Cooperación y Difusión de la Biblioteca Nacional.

De hecho, ha sido frecuente la referencia positiva al Programa, como vector de la inserción de la creación literaria brasileña en el exterior. La consolidación de la política que la sostiene es esencial: no se trata de algo eventual, asociado a esta o aquella oportunidad de exposición de autores y textos en el ámbito internacional. De modo creciente, acabamos por consolidar la convicción de que se trata de una política permanente, y así ha sido percibido tanto por la Biblioteca Nacional como, en clave decisiva, por el Ministerio de Cultura.

Más que contemplar obras y carreras literarias específicas, contribuyendo para sus inserciones en el mercado internacional, el Programa tiene por foco la proyección de la imaginación literaria brasileña, como conjunto expresivo de la cultura producida en el país. Uno de los desafíos puestos por Mario de Andrade a la literatura brasileña consistió en la afirmación de la necesidad de combinar lo local con lo universal. Aunque, por muchas veces, plasmada en referentes locales y regionales, nada impide que esa tradición literaria tenga como ambición una inscripción universal.

No hay nada, en principio, que condene la expresión literaria al capullo del localismo. Quien podría imaginar que la narrativa ficcional a respecto de un día en la vida de un ciudadano en Dublín se transformara en materia de una de las piezas literarias más fundamentales del siglo XX. En verdad, hoy difícilmente se le ocurriría a alguien presentar el *Ulises* de James Joyce como exponente de la literatura dublinense. Tampoco sería plausible que ocurriera algo semejante con la historia de Hans Castorp y de su primo Joachim, ingresados en un sanatorio suizo y ahogados en el abismo del drama humano, tal como puesto en *La Montaña Mágica*, de Thomas Mann.

En gran medida, toda literatura es local. Parte de algún lugar y habla a través de algún lenguaje específico. Entretanto, uno de los efectos de la literatura es hacer de lo local algo universal y pasible de compartir. De que otro modo podríamos caracterizar nuestro encantamiento, delante, por ejemplo, de la narrativa del trayecto de los infelices pasajeros del tranvía de Svevo, sometidos a retrasos incalculables, drama particular y local, hecho universal por el genio literario de Italo Svevo? Nada más local de que Riobaldo y Diadorim, en *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, o de lo que la tensión existencial de los personajes de Dalcídio Jurandir, en el interior de la isla de Marajó, en el genial *Chove nos Campos de Cachoeira*. Entretanto, todas esas obras aspiran el universal; o mejor, hacen del lenguaje una potencia de encantamiento que no apenas liga lo local al universal, sino más bien funde esas dos dimensiones. Es lo que permite a legibilidad de todas esas piezas acá mencionadas, independientemente de la circunstancia cultural o lingüística de los lectores.

Parte decisiva de la potencia de universalización de una obra literaria depende de destreza de sus autores. Otra sobreviene de la multiplicación de las lenguas, ya no a través de milagro, sino por el trabajo civilizador y fundamental de una legión de traductores. Lo que se quiere con el apoyo a la traducción de obras brasileñas es acceder a un patrimonio inmaterial común a toda la humanidad letrada.

Apertura de mercado, proyección internacional de autores: por cierto, todo eso vale la pena. Pero, hay más que eso: se trata de propiciar que un conjunto expresivo de creadores de la cultura escrita, aunque siendo profundamente brasileños y locales, se “desnacionalicen”. Lo mismo es decir, sea disuelto en otras lenguas, alcance lectores remotos y pase a pertenecerles.

Renato Lessa

Presidente de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

M*achado de Assis Magazine* – co-produced by the Brazilian National Library Foundation and the Itaú Cultural – is three years old. We have good reason to celebrate, though we also know that the task of promoting Brazilian literature abroad is ongoing and connected to other public policy initiatives – in particular the National Library’s translation grants and other parallel programs, such as the one to ensure Brazil’s presence at international book fairs and the exchange program for authors and translators.

Since 2012, when the translation program was revamped, over 600 translation grants have been awarded to foreign publishers to help them publish Brazilian authors. The better known Western European languages – English, Spanish, French and Italian – have received a higher number of grants, as is to be expected.

The surprise, however, has been the wide range of languages into which our writers have been translated. Amharic, Ethiopia’s official language, already has translations of Machado de Assis, Milton Hatoum and Alberto Mussa. And there are translations in Urdu, Albanian, Vietnamese and Catalan, to cite just a few.

With the twenty-one samples published in this issue, we now have a total of 143 excerpts by Brazilian authors translated into English, Spanish, German and French. Many of these have already been published abroad, in several countries, and Machado de Assis Magazine’s online issues are progressively growing into a database where agents and editors can source samples of the quality and diversity of our authors.

This shows how far we have come (still not far enough, but increasingly significant), and points to the road yet to be traveled in order for Brazilian literature to effectively exercise its voice in the World Republic of Letters.

Felipe Lindoso

Editor

EDITORIAL

La *Machado de Assis Magazine* – coedición de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional y de Itaú Cultural - completa tres años de vida. Tenemos razones para conmemorar, aunque al mismo tiempo sepamos que la tarea de difundir la literatura brasileña en el exterior es continua y está vinculada a otras iniciativas de políticas públicas. En el caso, en particular, al programa de Becas de Traducción de la Fundación Biblioteca Nacional y otros programas paralelos, como la presencia en Ferias Internacionales de libros y el intercambio de autores y traductores.

Desde 2012, cuando el programa de traducciones fue revitalizado, más de 600 becas de traducción fueron concedidas para que editoras en el exterior publicaran autores brasileños. Los idiomas de Europa Occidental más conocidos – inglés, español, francés e italiano – recibieron una mayor cantidad de becas, como ya era de suponer.

La sorpresa, entretanto, vino de la dispersión de idiomas para los cuales nuestros escritores fueron vertidos. El amárico, idioma oficial da Etiopía, ya tiene traducciones de Machado de Assis, Milton Hatoum y Alberto Mussa. Existen también traducciones para el urdu, albanés, vietnamita y catalán, para citar otros idiomas.

Con los veintiún textos que publicamos en este número, ya suman 143 los extractos traducidos de autores brasileños, en inglés, español, alemán y francés. Muchos de ellos ya fueron publicados en varios países, y los números online de Machado de Assis Magazine paulatinamente se trasforman en un banco de datos en el cual agentes y editores pueden buscar muestras de la calidad y diversidad de nuestros autores.

Estos datos ejemplifican el cuanto avanzamos – lo que aún es poco, aunque cada vez más significativo –, y el camino que se ha que recorrer para que la literatura brasileña enseñe de modo efectivo su voz en la República Mundial de las Letras.

Felipe Lindoso

Editor

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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MALALA, THE GIRL WHO WANTED TO GO TO SCHOOL

ADRIANA CARRANCA

Translated by Guillaume Duvignau Illustrations by Bruna Assis Brasil



Preface

Everything I am about to tell you actually happened. It is incredible that it happened this way, but it did. I know because I was there. I traveled around the world with a mission: to find out what had actually happened to a girl named Malala Yousafzai and why she was being persecuted. I went on this mission because that is what journalists do; they investigate and pry into everything, they plant questions and harvest stories.

It was a dangerous mission and I knew there would be many challenges. On the day I left I heard an order being given out on the radio: journalists were not to travel to Swat! The valley was now off limits, but, just like children, journalists love to do things that are forbidden. So I packed my backpack in a hurry. I placed my crank-powered flashlight, mosquito net, pepper-spray, and anything else that fit

and I left. I crossed the Atlantic and Africa. I reached the desert, then crossed the Arabian Sea and headed towards the mountains where Malala lived.

When I reached my destination I had to disguise myself because the valley had many dangers and nobody could know I was there. The only ones who knew of my presence were my guide and protector, Ejaz – a big man, as strong as he was kind and with a thunderous voice – and Sana’s family, brave and generous, they accepted to hide me in their home so that I could get acquainted with the terrifying and captivating story I am about to tell.

1.

Malala was a girl who wanted to go to school, but in the place where she lived that was forbidden. Books could only be read in hiding and there were many dangers on the way to school; unimaginable risks, even the risk of death.

This place is called the Swat valley.

The Swat valley is located in a distant country called Pakistan. It has rolling green fields surrounded by gigantic mountains whose peaks the snow paints white almost all year round. In the summer, when the sun warms the peaks, the snow melts into the Swat River and the river serpentine down the mountains where it meets the Cabul River; the latter comes from a neighboring country called Afghanistan. There, between the magnificent Hindu Kush mountain range and the crystalline waters of the rivers – with a foot in Pakistan and the other in Afghanistan- is where Malala’s people, the Pashtuns have lived for over two thousand years.

Pashtun: An ethnic group of warrior people who live along the Hindu Kush mountain range. Their origins are unknown, but some believe they are descendants of one of the ten lost tribes of Israel, yet there is no historical evidence confirming such claim. Others say they are descendants of Arian mixed with invader peoples. They were called the ‘mountain people’.

Their lands are so beautiful and fertile that many powerful emperors have tried to conquer it. The greatest of these emperors was Alexander the Great. The king of kings traveled to the Swat valley in 328 B.C where he challenged the gods that people believed protected the valley, crossed rivers brimming with gavials, conquered the mountains, and fought atrocious battles. He was hurt fighting the brave Pashtuns and because of that, admitted he was a regular man and not an immortal god as he used to say. His writings have not resisted the passing of time, but the stories are alive in the legends of the Swat.

Gavial: Large crocodile that inhabits the Ganges River and whose size can exceed five meters.

Ganges River: is one of the primary rivers of the Indian sub-continent and one of the planet’s twenty largest rivers. It is 2.525 km long and runs from the north of India to Bangladesh (a country that used to be a part of Pakistan). It is considered sacred by the followers of Hinduism, India’s largest religion.

Alexander said that the Pashtuns were as fierce as lions. "I am engaged in a land of lion-like, and brave people, where each foot on the ground is like a wall of steel confronting my soldiers. [...] Everyone in this land can be called Alexander".

Genghis Khan, founder of the greatest empire in history, traversed these lands in 1200 AD with his warhorses and archers so dexterous they could hit a target from a distance of five hundred meters. The Buzkashi, a warlike sport where horsemen compete for a headless goat remains as a legacy of Genghis Khan's passage through the land. Headless! This was how he trained his warriors in the mountains and the Pashtuns learned from them.

Other conquerors came, but the Pashtuns were never dominated because they are a fierce and valiant people, the most fierce and valiant of all the fierce and valiant peoples.

This was how the Greek philosopher Herodotus, the father of history, described the Indians who lived around 430 BC in a place called 'paktuike', today's Swat valley: a place inhabited by gigantic ants that mined for gold in the desert, by camels that ran like horses, and by the "most combatant of all people".

It was from these people that the girls from Swat inherited their courage.

Indians: inhabitants of India. The territory that is now Pakistan used to be a part of India until its independence in 1947.

2.

In a not too distant past, princes and princesses, kings and queens inhabited the Swat, just like the valleys in the fairy tales, except they were real.

I find it curious that kings and queens still exist, real princes and princesses. So, when I arrived in Pakistan the first thing I did was pay the prince of Swat a visit.

His name is Miangul Adnan Aurangzeb and he is now an ex-prince, he wears a suit and tie and lives in a house because he does not have a castle anymore. It is a small house for a prince, and if the walls seem to have shrunk, they do however still retain their charm with relics of the times when the Swat valley was a magnificent kingdom. While we had tea in gold and porcelain cups, he showed me pictures from his childhood and it was like taking a trip back in time.

One of the pictures was of his grandfather, general Ayub Kahn, who became president of Pakistan after a coup d'état. He was a powerful general. At his side, an elegant lady with a precise haircut and a skirt down to her knees sparks my interest.

They really are old photographs because today women in Swat cannot show either their legs or hair. In another photo the same lady is seen greeting female students in a school. That was a time when girls could study in safety. The lady is Nasim, the general's daughter and prince Adnan's mother. Nasim married Miangul Aurangzeb, the last prince of Swat and Adnan's father. The scrawny boy wearing short trousers in the photo is Adnan, without the lush mustache he has today but with the same

haircut; meticulously parted and fixed with gel. Beside him is a girl in a round dress. She was the prince's childhood friend. Her name was Benazir Bhutto. Have you heard of her? When she grew up, Benazir became the first woman to hold the highest post in a Muslim country: that of prime minister of Pakistan! But the same men who persecuted Malala also did not let her be and one day she was not able to escape their claws anymore; Benazir Bhutto was killed in a bombing.

Absorbed in his memories, Adnan runs his delicate fingers (because princes have very delicate fingers and well done nails) over a photo of his paternal great-grandfather as if he wanted to caress him. The prince really misses this grandfather of his. His name was Miangul Golshahzada Abdul-Wadud Badshah Sahib. He was the wali of the Swat valley. A real wali!

Wali: Crowned leader of a region, the equivalent of a king.

The Swat's wali had his own army, but that was useless because the valley was at peace in those days. He was a pacifist and benevolent king; at least that is how the people of the Swat remember him.

In another photograph, the Swat's wali is seen on the day of his coronation. He wore socks up to his knees, short trousers, and coke-bottle glasses. He looked like a tall boy wearing children's clothes, a 'Little Prince' with a white beard. However, he did not intend to travel the world, rather he wished to bring the world to Swat. That was his dream.

One day, queen Elizabeth II from the United Kingdom visited the valley. She was enchanted with the White Palace, the wali's summer residence. The castle is called that because it is surrounded by snowy mountains and made of white marble, the same stone used in the construction of the magnificent Taj Mahal. It was in the gardens of the White Palace, where the flowers colored the landscape, that Malala and her school friends enjoyed picnicking in the summer.

Built between 1632-1653 on the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra, India, it is considered one of the New Seven Wonders of the Modern world. It is a sumptuous monument made of white marble, which the emperor Shah Jahan had built in memory of his favorite wife, Aryumand Banu Begam, whom he called, Mumtaz Mahal (Jewel of the palace). She died after giving birth to the emperor's 14th son and the Taj Mahal was erected over her tomb in homage to her. For this reason it is also known as the greatest proof of love in the world.

I told the prince that one day, I too met queen Elizabeth. It was when I lived in England, where she lives. We were in a small church, a very old chapel in the back of the Windsor Palace, the queen's official residence and the largest occupied castle in the world. The largest in the world!

I went there because a Muslim (like Malala) friend of mine had never been inside a church and was very curious so she asked me to take her. When I visited Egypt, Diana, my friend, took me to the most beautiful mosques of her land, so I returned the favor.

Church: Where Christians pray.

Chapel: Small church

Mosque: Where Muslims pray.

Synagogue: Where Jews pray.

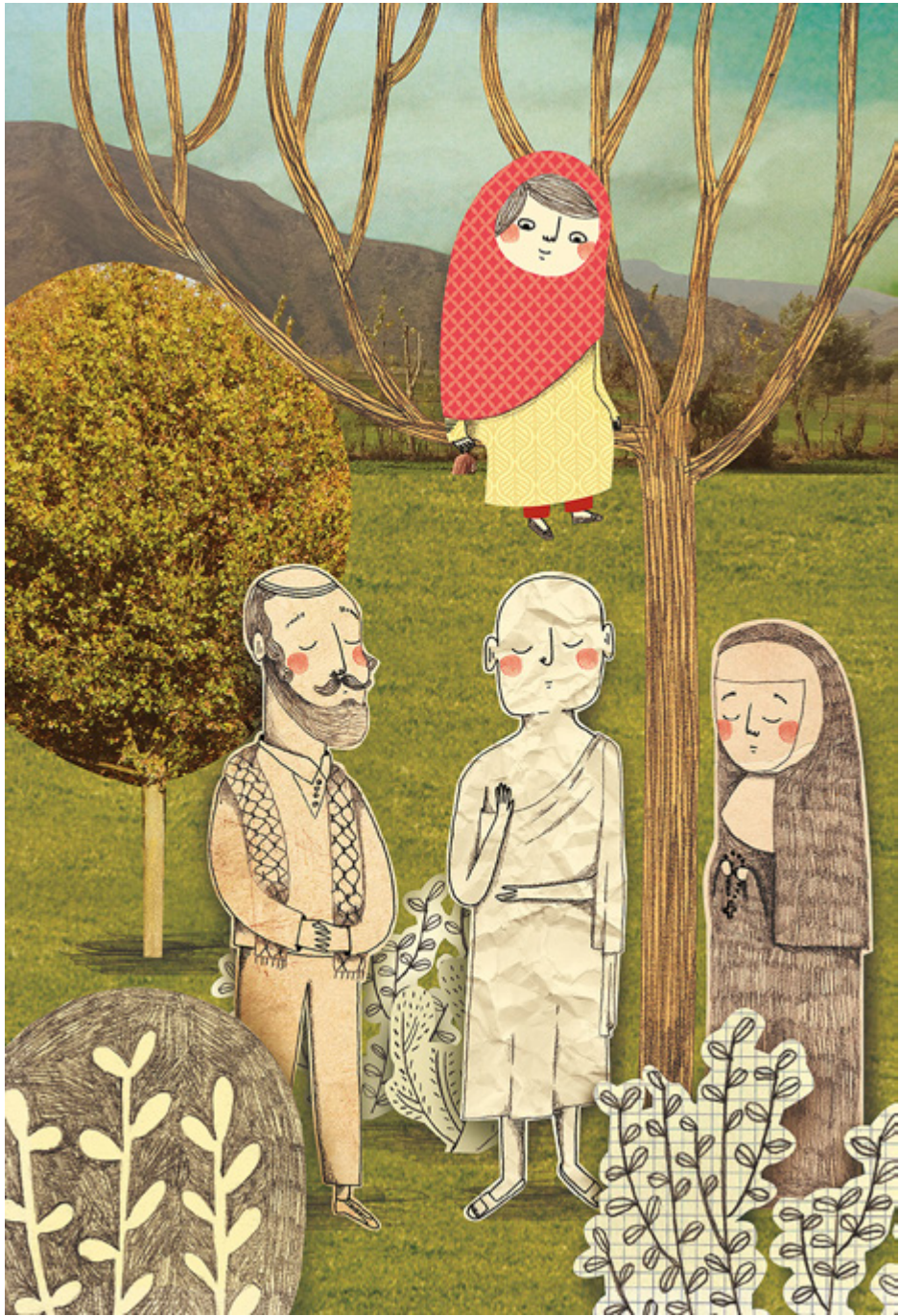
Buddhist temple: Where Buddhists pray.

How surprised were we when we saw that the queen was there (in person!) attending mass, elegantly dressed in a emerald talleur and matching hat. On the way out I expected to see her leave in a carriage, like she did in the royal parades, but she climbed into her green Jaguar (she must really like this color!) and drove off through the gardens of the small church towards the gates of her palace. Before saying goodbye she approached our group and asked, "Are you students at the London School?" We were indeed, but were so surprised we could not answer. So she said, "Very well! Study hard because education is very important for both boys and girls."

The Swat's wali also thought education was important. He was the one who set up the first schools for girls in the valley.

But this was before the war, and before girls were forbidden to study. To learn how all this happened, I continued on my travels and headed to the Swat valley.





THE BOOK



Malala, the girl who wanted to go to school

Adriana Carranca

- **Original title:** Malala, a menina que queria ir para a escola
- **ISBN:** 978-85-7406-670-7
- **Year of Publication:** 2015
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 96
- **Total print run:** 20.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

Malala, the girl who wanted to go to school brings to children the extraordinary history of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani girl shot by the Taliban because of her fight for education. The narrative follows the author's journey to the Swat Valley, in the tribal areas of Pakistan, Malala's birthplace. She stayed with a local family, lived among the women and children of the village, spent time with Malala's schoolmates at Kushal School, visited her home; spoke to friends, neighbors, teachers, and relatives. The author describes a region of astonishing beauty, coveted by conquerors like Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great, once inhabited

by kings and princes, and immersed in the traditions of the Pashtun people. In this scenario Malala raises to become the youngest-ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

PRESS REVIEWS

<http://oglobo.globo.com/cultura/livros/malala-yousafzai-entre-sonho-a-realidade-cruel-16099202>

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THE AUTHOR



Adriana Carranca Corrêa

- **Pen name:** Adriana Carranca
- **Other books:**

O Irã sob o chador (Editora Globo), runner of Jabuti Prize, in co-authorship with Marcia Camargos.

O Afeganistão depois do Talibã (Editora Civilização Brasileira)

THE ILLUSTRATOR

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Bruna Assis Brasil was born in Curitiba in 1986. After graduating in Journalism and Graphic Design in Brazil, she went to Spain for a postgraduate course in

Creative Illustration at the University School of Design and Art of Barcelona. In 2012, Bruna received the “30 Better Children’s Book of the Year” award, by Crescer magazine. In 2013, she was nominated for the Jabuti Prize. Bruna has illustrated over 30 books and continues her work in her studio, in Curitiba.

THE TRANSLATOR

Guillaume Duvignau

Guillaume Duvignau was born in France and grew up in Brazil. He has a bachelor degree in Musical Composition from Berklee College of Music (Boston, USA). He has lived in the USA, Portugal, and France where he has worked as a translator in a variety of projects in the areas of animation, film, literature, art books and catalogues, among others. He currently resides in São Paulo where he works regularly as a freelance translator for Brazilian publishers such as Companhia das Letras.

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THE TENSE PASSING OF CORPSES

CARLOS DE BRITO E MELLO

Translated by Anthony Doyle

3.

I am free to roam from town to town on the watch for the dead. I have few restrictions, so long as I undertake to describe, objectively and concisely, the conditions of the passing of those felled by enemy gunfire or the well-thrown brick, bodies that fall in the kitchen or from cliff faces
bodies turned to gas by fire
bodies lolling at the bottom of wells, forcing the family to arrange the funeral around the watering hole where the deceased lost its footing.

I have visited towns with the sole purpose of recording their most recent deaths, which sometimes enables me to relate the conditions both before and after the event and bear witness to the simple fact that in the vicinity of death none go unscathed.

When one accompanies the dead, the first thing one notes is the sheer loss they provoke

but one will also see what grows in their stead. So that something can derive from death, death must first be recognized and confirmed, granted its irrevocable status. If left undeclared, nothing can come of it, and the dead will go on, forever and to their lasting disgrace, re-elected to some mandate of the living.

Every city or town mentioned herein, even if its founding cadaver lies beyond memory, has had its most recent dead duly certified and confirmed, only then being included in my records.

Death leaves remains, and remains are my business.

5.

In all of the towns mentioned here, the men and women who suffered disease, disaster, accident, or wilful or unwitting acts of extermination were recognized, at pains, by their family and friends, who set about collecting the morbid remains produced by the dead in order to prepare them for mourning and burial.

The crying doesn't bother me, nor does the grief. That an inconsolable wife should cling to the frame of her lifeless husband, or a daughter wish to accompany her mother into the grave and its supposed eternity

I understand and present no impediment. Every corpse needs its rubber stamp, public guarantee, witness and rite. The first pronouncement of death can be gleaned from the panic-stricken or sorrowful gaze of the living,
a desperate modality of recognition and confirmation.

I observe and describe dead people, filing them away among a registry of other deaths

witnessed by me and confirmed by the communities in which they had lived. However, if the deceased should fail to turn up for its funeral, should it not be duly wept all the way to the grave, should it not be covered in earth to the monochordic hum of prayer, should it not be spoken of as the deceased at some ceremony held in its memory, I cannot register it.

6.

I compile the dead in a long list that, for reasons of my own inaptitude, is not made on the medium of paper. I am unable to write. The list of all the deaths I have witnessed is oral in nature.

I am now eagerly awaiting the consummation of one more passing. A man, the victim of poisoning, is currently in the throes.

I assume that this man, shaking and clawing at his belly here before me, will not have time to make supplications or confession, much less obtain the correct address to the place destined for the saved and worthy -

if, that is, he merits such salvation. The pernicious nature of the poison has spread throughout the organs of the body and now devours them. I wager its success will not delay in coming.

When the man slumped over, in an envenomed swoon, he was clutching the tablecloth,

which he drew with him to the floor, along with a vase of roses. The vase smashed, sending shards scuttling across the tiles.

In the kitchen, his wife stood silent.

His daughter lay unmoved on a sofa in the adjacent lounge.

The door to his son's room slammed shut.

The poisoned man managed to drag himself to a corner of the sitting room, and there remained.

Slowly rising from her position on the sofa, the daughter approached the dinner table with a dry cloth, mopped up the spilt water and collected the strewn roses. Somewhat distracted, she trod on some broken glass, acquiring two contiguous cuts on the sole of her foot, and withdrew.

The convulsions have ceased. Where are the doctors, the nurses, the man's wife, his young son, who I have not yet seen, and the daughter, who has not returned?

The man's life is at its end. His suffering is evident. His inner constitution now leaves him in liquid form. Oozing outward, part of the man now gathers in pools.

8.

I wait impatiently for the sound of a weeping widow, the arrival of the first funeral wreath, that desperate call to a relative or to the local priest. I cannot yet register this death, nor utter the name of the town in which I find myself. I need some family member to face the corpse, show some sign of recognizing the deceased and attest to his passing. Someone has to go into incontestable mourning and arrange for the necessary funeral rites.

11.

In Monte Santo de Minas, a building has collapsed around its occupants, leaving them with multiple injuries to the thorax and cranium.

12.

Fifteen of the Lord's flock have been run over while on pilgrimage to Governador Valadares, with entire lower limbs summarily plucked from their bodies.

In Manhuaçu, a penitent threw acid into the confessional where the priest was absolving sins, melting away his face and shoulders.

Faith, when it does not delay death, precipitates it.

13.

In Caeté, Fronteira, Itabira, Itambé do Mato Dentro, Joanésia, Lajinha, Leopoldina, Matipó, Nova Era, Pedra do Indaiá, Ressaquinha, Santo Antônio do Amparo and São Francisco do Glória, men and women have died just for the sake of dying.

14.

I return from the street to the site of C's agony. I have cause for expectation and exasperation, after all, my task of observing and describing deaths will draw to a close with this last record.

The house is in darkness, save for a light on in the dining room. Perhaps a funeral for select guests? Have I dallied too long out of doors and return now to see the daughter console her distraught mother?

I enter the living room.

C. is sat in a chair

dead, while his wife and daughter busily serve him supper.

He is tied so that he can neither slide nor tumble to the floor, even if his decrepit organism precludes any healthy upright posture. But what strength could C. possibly still have after all that poison, other than the energy of the knots and the insensate decision of the women to keep him at his post?

The ropes that bind the corpse start around the ankles, lashing his feet to the chair legs, and continue all the way up to the waist. Another rope keeps C's trunk tight against the back of the chair and finishes about his neck. Lengths of rope around his chin and brow keep his head held firm if not exactly high. His arms lie by his side.

Flanking C., his wife and daughter finish dishing out his food, while an empty chair awaits another member of the family who has not turned up for the nightly stew. Has the son done a bound or does he simply prefer to stay alone in his room? The daughter enquires to her mother of her brother's absence.

Mother, will we be three or four?

Three, dear.

Will my brother be staying in his room?

Yes, dear.

Shan't we call him?

We already have.

Let's call him again!

Leave your brother to himself, dear. Let's be understanding. Your father always knew when to be understanding.

I have no idea why C's son would choose to sleep on an empty stomach. I have not set eyes on the lad since entering this house, and know nothing of his habits. All I do know is that the young man's room is the third down the corridor; the one with the closed door.

The women go on serving supper.

Is there any juice?

Passion fruit, dear.

And what will father have?

Serve him the thigh.

The women move around C. without touching him, though there is no hint of disgust; it is as if they were used to having a dead man in their midst. They don't bury him, there is no scratching or hair-pulling, no accusations of traitor, murderer!

Nothing of the sort.

27.

In the town whose name I am not yet authorized to disclose, the dawn rays delay in reaching C's house, where he, his wife and daughter sleep as only each can.

I leave the house and wander through the streets. At the closest bakery, the first loaves are laid out on the counter. A small and distinct old fellow sits down and orders corn biscuits to dunk in his coffee. I envy this man, because I know how delicious this breakfast is. I cannot, however, join him in breaking the fast, as I am denied whole foods, having grown used to consuming a particular source of nutrients that is rarely appreciated, consisting wholly of remains. And besides, I could never give myself over to gluttony without neglecting my core activity, namely the production of concise narratives of the deaths to which I bear witness. The main purpose of my tongue is not to taste, but to render account.

I am made of space uncontained by bodily contours. There is much that I lack, in fact, almost everything, deprived as I am of sufficient matter to make a life one could unite in a single person, identifiable and nameable with precision and certainty. Either they do not hear me, or pretend not to. Either they don't see me, or, in their confusion, they take me for something else. I have no distinctive qualities, given my similarity with all that was lost.

Other men, normal men, men adequately constructed, have bodily orifices, such as the mouth, nostrils and anus, through which, inevitably, the connection between the inner and the outer is established. Microbes know of these routes of contamination and avail of them assiduously. Aware of the fact, man vigilantly polices his relations with the world so that the latter cannot perniciously invade the organism and assail its more sensitive parts.

I have no such capacity to limit the action of the world upon me, nor of myself upon the components of the world. Outside and far away are mere qualities of my extension. My presence is, on one hand, always fleeting, disperse and ebbing, and my contact with men comes only when their calendars reach the hour of their disappearance, of the crossing it is my task to narrate.

People, in general, are privileged, because they can bump shoulders in their fortuitous encounters as they scurry about their business in the streets, or can clash voluntarily in contests of virility, or stand naked and exposed for punishment, or lie naked and exposed for coitus. I envy them, and my envy is hard-working. Though let me declare forthwith that the lack of means caused by my inconsistency is something I fully intend to change.

I have planned my reconstitution and the pleasure of being a man, a man in full.

My matter is, as yet, far too sparse to contain all the attributes I hope one day to have. But I believe in the fundamentals that sustain my morbid book-keeping, the completion of which will coincide with my corporeal success. I want organs!

I use words to cobble together, from the dead, a body in the likeness of the living. Until then, I have no choice but to tolerate the presence of C's corpse. Why, Oh detestable kin, do they not send him off, bury him below ground, let him go?

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THE BOOK



The Tense Passing of Corpses

Carlos de Brito e Mello

- **Original title:** A Passagem Tensa dos Corpos
- **ISBN:** 9788535915730
- **Year of Publication:** 2009
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 256
- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

The narrator of this novel – we do not know whether dead or ghost – wages an indefatigable battle to reacquire human form. Paradoxically, the means at his disposal in pursuing this end are either immaterial, like language, or shapeless, like his tongue left slaving for remains. And his attention focuses on the very edge of existence, right there where life is snuffed out: his core concern is to describe the deaths he encounters along the way.

AWARDS

- Finalist of the São Paulo Literature Prize (2010)
- Finalist of the Jabuti Literature Prize (2010)
- Finalist of the Portugal Telecom of Literature Prize (2010)

PRESS REVIEWS

Comment about “The tense passing of corpses”, published in the blog “Orelha do Livro”

<http://www.orelhadolivro.com.br/tag/carlos-de-brito-e-mello/>

Article about “The tense passing of corpses”, published in the blog “Posfácio”

<http://www.posfacio.com.br/2012/03/13/a-passage-m-tensa-dos-corpos-carlos-de-brito-e-mello/>

Testimony of José Castello about “The tense passing of corpses”, published in the “Rascunho” newspaper (published before in the website of “O Globo”)

<http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/o-devorador-de-livros/>

Article written by Leyla Perrone-Moysés where she mentions and comments some aspects of “The tense passing of corpses”, in “Folha de S. Paulo” newspaper

<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrissima/33216-a-literatura-exigente.shtml>

Interview with the author about “The tense passing of corpses” for “UFMG Radio”

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Article about “The tense passing of corpses”, published in “Jornal do Brasil” newspaper

<http://www.jb.com.br/cultura/>

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<http://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/cadernog/conteudo.phtml?id=964338>

THE AUTHOR



Carlos de Brito e Mello

• **Pen name:** Carlos de Brito e Mello

• Other books:

The Cadaver Laughs at Its Own Remains (short stories, 2007, 139 pages, Scriptum);

The City, the Inquisitor and the Ordinary Folk (novel, 2014, 472 pages, Companhia das Letras).

THE TRANSLATOR

Anthony Doyle

Anthony Doyle was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1973 and has been living and working in São Paulo, Brazil, since 2000. He holds a degree in literature and a master’s degree in philosophy. He translates fiction and non-fiction in various fields, including architecture, art, design, fashion, film, history, literature, philosophy, photography, sociology and travel, as well as film scripts and treatments. He is the author of a forthcoming children’s book.

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TROVA

CARLOS EDUARDO DE MAGALHÃES

Translated by Anthony Doyle

1.

ALL

Gentle glides the breeze through the folds of the sprawling city, a stepped horizon of buildings against a dark grey mantle that smears and smites the lower sky and sullies with grime all that it touches. Prematurely aged façades, walls, skins, clothes, billboards, graffiti, venetian blinds, clay-tiled rooves of the city's tight-packed houses. A breeze that sweeps the dirty streets without cleaning them, plucking the leaves from the trees, one by one, until all that's left is a scrawl of branches. An invisible claw of air, the outboard engine of inanimate objects, that hooks and moves beings that are not beings, but ghosts and stories, the imaginary forms of fear, the cradle of faith and courage. A breeze that cannot bend the old palm tree, much less the buildings and their men. Like one who comes from nowhere and to nowhere returns, it is the breath of the world's weak lung. A breeze that permeates lives, in passing or definitively, a touse, a tingle, a sigh of relief after hours of sun and exercise. The breeze that lifts a paper airplane, folded out of a torn and scribbled page, and takes it on an uncertain jaunt toward a certain crash, the breeze that blows out the candle, that steels through the chink and rustles the curtain.

She checked her email.

Then got up to close the window she'd left open to suck out the shower steam before it could undermine her professionally-styled hair do. A lick of breeze graced her face, depositing not only the traces of everything else in the city that breeze had touched, but also, and without her understanding quite why, the memory of her grandmother's house. It just came to her, and more besides, and made her dally an unplanned moment. Revamping the old dressing-table was supposed to have been a way of revamping the self. It wasn't a plan as such, it just happened. Before she knew it she was taking measurements, hiring a carpenter, ordering some crystal mirror from the glazier, buying the mosaic tiles, the PVA glue, DIY magazines.

The moment passed. She sat down and checked her reflection again, but what she saw didn't really look like her, but someone she'd once been, only weathered and beaten by time, and mind that the mirror was brand-new, with neither stain nor scratch, set into a frame mosaicked tile by tile over the last couple of weekends, leaving her fingers numb with cuts, the same mirror she'd first looked into tired and haggard, with bags under her eyes and sweat in her armpits, and thought

that it was far too pretty a frame for such a poor portrait, and then smiled the worn smile of defeat. But she'd done it herself.

The make-up restored her in its reflected glow, Now that's a face you can present!, she said out-loud, not caring who heard—though there was no-one who could have—, while trying to erase the other visage still ghosting on her retina. She ran her fingers over the pendants adorning her neckline, a collar she'd bought that day to go with that grey dress, one size too small, which he'd brought her back from the US all those years ago, and which the weighing scales finally allowed her to wear. Three kilos in three weeks, three months without putting on any weight, a run three times a week, no sugar in her coffee, whole-wheat bread, dry pasta, lettuce, carrots, carrots and more carrots. And now he wasn't there to see her, though if he were he'd certainly be quick to say how well he'd chosen the dress, how much he'd paid for it, and he'd certainly invite some couples with more money than sense out to dinner at a fancy restaurant where'd he'd find some way to bring up her dress and that boutique in New York that they just had to check out, and then he'd change the subject to the deal he'd struck in Brasília and when it came to picking up the tab his would be the first hand out and he'd pay the whole bill from the wad of notes rolled up in an elastic band which he'd been carrying with him in his suit-jacket pocket. At that hour he was probably in his rented five-suite apartment overlooking Ibirapuera Park watching one of those UFF fights he liked so much while his wife, a former miss-something, put one of their kids to bed, one of those kids she was fortunate enough not to have borne him. How life had transformed him, or was it she who had gradually changed, until the day came round when they hardly recognized each other anymore and she left him, and had to listen in silence as her mother-in-law blasted her for an ingrate and her brother worried out-loud about losing the government job he'd fixed him up with. And her guilt would have been tripled had she told her mother-in-law, her brother and all those moneyed friends who barely knew which cutlery to use for starters about all the times he'd hurt her; about the slap in the face, the kick that left her limping for a week, the pinch that proved fatal to their marriage and the bruise she thought would never leave her arm—the mark of a time when there'd been time for time and for plans. The purple bruise had turned black, and the black had yellowed and the yellow had finally disappeared. Now the dress, which Neuza had rescued from several visits to Oxfam, really did sit well, and it was a cut that was back in fashion. To wear it for eyes other than his gave her enormous pleasure. Of course she would not have worn it had she known that, the following morning, when Ricardo left her home, there would be blood spattered on the waistline and hem. And that that blood, even after it had been washed off at the laundromat, would always be there, a living stain visible in the light that lingers behind closed eyelids. This time Neuza would not be able to talk her out of dumping it at some church bazaar or other, where it would be sold on for a tenth of the original price.

She checked her email.

She looked at the little black number on the bed, a much safer bet...She exhaled long and hard, just as a pediatrician had once told her to when she was

young. Little could he know that she had carried that tip with her ever since, and used it every time she needed to return to the world the airy anguish it had seeded in her. Later that night, she wouldn't quite manage it. The air would cling to her lungs, impossible to dislodge, like soot that would clog and suffocate her forever. It was only after she'd vomited and the police had taken the body away that she was able to get rid of it, expel that fetid, malodorous air. Animals aside, it would be the first death she had witnessed in her 37 years. Her grandmother had died, but she'd stayed home with her brother and cousins, as they were too young for funerals. There was that fairly distant grandfather too, but she was off traveling somewhere when he died. Every Christmas, which was the only time in the year they ever saw him, she'd introduce herself, Márcia, Rosa's daughter. That last year, when she was already grown up, the old man lost his patience, Stop introducing yourself, girl with the white ballet shoes!, he said, to her great surprise, and then stared off into space again, indifferent to the bustle going on around him—the wiz of the electric carving knife slicing through the turkey, the kids doing what kids do, the esfihas, the pistachios, the pita bread, the babaganuche, the hummus on the coffee-tables, which on that day alone were pulled from hibernation at the foot of the threadbare old settees. Along with the hummus there was beer, which she, the firstborn of the third generation, was offered for the first time on that last visit. Her grandfather never did receive the postcard she'd not sent from Paris, where she was studying French the January he died. It was a picture-postcard of Degas' ballerinas she'd bought at d'Orsay with him in mind; a brief thought that had caught her off-guard as she perused the stands for mementoes for family and her many friends, and for Ricardo. So her grandfather still remembered her dance performances at the club—man was she awkward....When she got back to Brazil, with the postcard in her bag, she received the news. There was no body to mourn, just the same absence as always, only now definitive. She didn't exactly feel sad, it was an odd feeling, and it soon dispersed among her many Monday morning chores, and only years later did she remember the words her aunt had whispered into her ear during a heartfelt hug in the departure lounge, You were always his favorite grandchild. Of course, there'd been innumerable deaths on TV, in newspaper photos, in books, in those dumbass action films she'd had to watch during all those years of marriage. She had taken none of them seriously. There was no stench, no temperature, no dimension or meaning. Separation meant she no longer had to watch anything she didn't want to.

She checked her email, switched off the computer and closed the lid. Not a single message the whole day long, not a single reply, not so much as a hi from some distant friend, not even the usual spam about how to get rich quick or spice up your sex life, no clients requesting a meeting or a price quote, no self-help words of wisdom, and no yellowed, blurred photos from her teenage years like the ones she'd been receiving in bevvies over the last few weeks. She hadn't seen those people in twenty years, what would have become of them? What lives would they have led? How would they see her now? And then there'd be Ricardo. She looked at herself again; a kaleidoscope of scenes colored her eyes and made her

smile. The last time she'd seen him was at the cinema, just months before he married. They didn't speak, and she pretended not to notice when he nodded to her. At the end of the film, she'd looked for him out of the corner of her eye, ready now to exchange a word or two, but he was nowhere to be seen. How stupid she'd been, she thought. She let her eyes fall on herself again and the mirror informed her that the dress really did look good on her. Panty line? No, apparently not. She flipped her laptop open, but stopped short of switching it back on. Time to quit pussy-footing around and go, because she wasn't a kid anymore, she just wasn't. Of course, she wouldn't have gone had she known that from that night on she'd panic at the sound of a firework, a popping motorbike exhaust, a banger at a Halloween party, and that it would take ages to get her breath back. And yet, despite the nightmares, which would stalk her, waking her up in the middle of the night, disoriented and soaked with sweat, those brown eyes that rested on her, then looked right through her, as if scanning her, her soul, not her body, already tattooed by myriad leering eyes. It's okay..., he said, before his sight grew dim. Okay how? No, nothing's okay, nothing could ever be okay again. Yet when all is said and done, even nightmares grow stale.

* * *

Are you sure you don't want to go?

I'm sure, go see your friends, if I went I'd just hold you back, wanting to leave early and all, I'm wrecked.

That's fine, we can come back early.

No.

I want you to come.

You'll have a better time on your own, believe me, Ri.

If you're sure...Will you be okay on your own?

Of course.

Ricardo kisses his wife, already in her nightie, teeth-brushed, hair down, magazine in-hand for a pre-sleep read.

Ri, will she be there?

He hears her from the doorway. He turns on his heel.

She who?

His wife arches an eyebrow. This is the question she swore she wouldn't ask, but which refused to be stifled at the last moment, just as he's about to leave. Though she had said he should go, he wasn't supposed to go, of course. Just as when he insisted that she come along, she was never actually supposed to come along.

I guess so.

No relapses, okay!...

She says it breezily, her faced crunched into faux levity, and blows him a kiss as she snuggles in, reaches for the switch of the reading light on the bedside table

and opens the decoration mag on a write-up about one of her interiors, which she will studiously pretend to read until she's sure he's gone. She'll look toward the doorway he's just vacated, and her gaze will freeze there for a moment. After two whole weeks of reciprocal insistences, she hesitated when push came to shove. She'll close the magazine and get out of bed. She'll go out into the hallway and hear the front door close. When he pushes the elevator button, the lift will be two floors down. She'll walk into the sitting room, pick up the phone, dial two digits, then hang up. He'd be angry, of course, and with good reason, but what has reason got to do with a situation like this? She'll walk over to the window and see the car pull out of the garage ten floors down. She'll follow it to the traffic light, where it'll stop and he'll reach out an arm to give the street juggler some spare change before driving off round a corner. The phone will ring and she'll answer it at a snatch. The swirl of her arm will add to the stream of air coming through the chink in the bedroom window, and it'll curl and billow down the hallway, into the sitting-room and out onto the balcony, flipping a portrait hung haphazardly from a piece of wire just above the television. It'll be her mother on the phone, just to tell her that the kids are sound asleep and that her father loved *The Incredibles* DVD, which she'd slipped into their overnight bag. You know what he's like, don't you? Then she'll sweep up the broken glass from the fallen picture frame, reorganize the other pictures, full of memories so dear they seem so distant, and have a glass of water before finally bedding down. Contrary to her own predictions, she'll nod off straight away and will only wake up the next morning, stirred by the roar of the shower in her bedroom suite as it slowly conjures from the hum of cicada in the orchard on her grandmother's ranch, and the gurgle of a hose filling an old pale with water as she walks with the cousin she hasn't seen for ages, but who taps her on the shoulder and runs off into the woods—You're it!—and then she wakes up to the roar of the shower in her bedroom suite, and it'll take her a while to figure out what time it is and who's in there. It'll be day, of course, so blades of light will be shaving through the aluminum blinds as she gathers her wits about her. The alarm clock on the bedside table will read 8:43. She'll see across the smooth surface of his undisturbed pillow. Standing outside the bathroom door, she'll be seized by a sudden burst of anger, which will roil even hotter when she finds the door is locked. Ricardo, open the door! She'll bark. She'll hear the lock turn and will push down on the door handle, sliding inside in time to see him disappear into a cloud of steam that has smoked up the mirror, wet all the tiles and made the ceiling sweat. Before saying anything, she'll look at the pile of clothes in the bidet. She'll root through them and discover the browning bloodstains on the fine fabric. She'll open the shower box, What happened?! He'll be breathing heavily, biting on his lower lip. She'll embrace his wet body, hugging him close, and for the first time since she's known him, and for the first time since the events of the night just passed, Ricardo will break down and cry. In sobs. Once dry and dressed, he'll feel a proper fool for having lost control, and he'll apologize profusely for reasons unknown to her, and she'll be full of pity, brimming with more love and care than she would ever have thought herself capable of giving. She'll make him some warm milk with honey, just

like her mother-in-law said she used to make, and some toast and jam, which he'll eat just to please her. The phone will ring and Ricardo's every muscle will tense up. But it will just be her mother, calling with news of the kids.

* * *

Beatriz gets her nails done every Friday at a local hairdresser's hidden behind an inconspicuous door she stumbled upon soon after moving into the Vila Madalena neighborhood. So she spends the weekend with bright red nail varnish. She sometimes daydreams while gazing at the backs of her pearly white hands, with the long, slender fingers she inherited from her dad. Piano fingers, he used to say; surgeon's hands, her mother would add. She likes her hands, and carries some moisturizer with her wherever she goes. And she only wears imported surgical gloves. On Sunday nights, just before turning in, she sits out on the balcony and removes the nail varnish, filling her nostrils with acetone. In slow motion, back stream the memories of carnivals past, her T-shirt pulled up over her nose and mouth, a certain torpor, the kids all swaying and popping to tunes barely audible in the din. Fingernail by fingernail she prepares for Monday, the weekend-tint staining the damp fluffs of cotton wool consigned to the trashcan. If Caio arranges to hit the sauna with Rogério on the day the maid stays late then she'll schedule a massage for seven-thirty at that chain with a Japanese name, the one near her apartment. On her first few sessions, she'd only managed to relax at the end, Madame has many knots, said the Oriental girl. She didn't bother correcting the Madame part. She was still only a Resident doctor, so it was weird to have all these folks old enough to be her parents or grandparents going doctor-this, doctor-that, diffidently expecting answers and authority she didn't have. She was getting used to it, though. She'd defend her master's at the end of the year and maybe then she'd drum up the courage to take private patients only. They were doing alright, as a couple. Statistically-speaking, they were rich, though there was never cash standing idle at the end of the month. There's the kids' tuition, the health plan, the mortgage, the car repayments, the last instalments on last year's vacation, the building maintenance fee, psychotherapy, income tax, insurance policies, trips to the cinema, cable TV, wireless internet, the repairs on the refrigerator, the manicurist, the costs of the kids, multiplying and mounting by the day. It'd been over a year since she'd last bought clothes, nothing special mind, just that little black dress, a feminine counterweight to the masculine whites she wore day-in, day-out, to go with her nails au naturel.

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THE BOOK



Trova

Carlos Eduardo de Magalhães

- **Original title:** Trova
- **ISBN:** 978-85-61578-26-8
- **Year of Publication:** 2013
- **Original Publisher:** Grua
- **Number of pages:** 224
- **Total print run:** 1.400 copies

SYNOPSIS

On the way out of a party, in 2005, celebrating twenty years of graduation in high school, Mateus is murdered in a robbery. By reconstructing the stories of the colleagues who were closest at the time of the shooting, TROVA tracks changes of a São Paulo-generation middle class who had faced a deeply modified reality. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the predominance of the market, a freer world without mystery and with moral and religious standards different from those experienced in adolescence.

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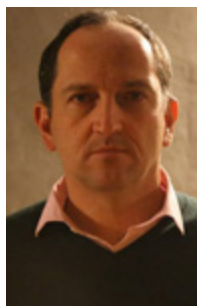
Spanish

Pitanga (Novel, Uruguay, 2013)

Bulgarian: To be published

Short storie Armando (from the book Cama de pregos), in translation to Vesela Lutzkan publishing house, to be published in Bulgary in 2016, in an anthology of Brazilian writers.

THE AUTHOR



Carlos Eduardo de Magalhães

- **Pen name:** Carlos Eduardo de Magalhães
- **Other books:**
 - Trova (Trova, novel, 2013, Grua)
 - Cama de pregos (Bed of nails, tales, 2009, Grua)
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THE TRANSLATOR

Anthony Doyle

Anthony Doyle was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1973 and has been living and working in São Paulo, Brazil, since 2000. He holds a degree in literature and a master´s degree in philosophy. He translates fiction and non-fiction in various fields, including architecture, art, design, fashion, film, history, literature, philosophy, photography, sociology and travel, as well as film scripts and treatments. He is the author of a forthcoming children´s book.

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WHILE GOD'S NOT LOOKING

DÉBORA FERRAZ

Translated by Lucy Greaves

Part 1

The end of the world came too soon this time. I'm walking uphill. The cobbled street is deserted, even though it's not yet eight p.m., and I'm surrounded by small, still houses which only occasionally give some sign of human life. The odd house has a window open with the lights on. I slow down. I look for doorbells. But it came too soon this time. And I'm already so torn apart that I couldn't care less about the end of the world or anything else.

'Érica!'

I keep walking. There are puddles all over the pavement. They soak the hems of my jeans and my boots squeak with every step as water squirts out of them. I can't help but think how the leather will never be the same again. I can't help but consider giving up on this mission once and for all. My legs are tired, the effort of walking uphill is making my thighs stiff. Too torn apart, I repeat to myself. And now I don't just mean my headache, the cuts, the bloody scabs. I stand in the middle of the road, halfway up the hill. I mean something much bigger. Something like an exhaustion so overwhelming it stops me replying to his shouts, which are echoing up the street.

'Érica!'

He hasn't turned the corner yet, but I can already hear his footsteps echoing off the walls. I would have said 'I'm fine,' just to see if he would finally give up. He's been following me for six blocks, always exactly twenty paces behind me. I know because I counted. From my aunt and uncle's door, down the road, around the corner, across the new square, up one then another big hill, turning another corner to get here.

'Say something!'

But shouting back would require an effort much greater than I can manage. I give up. My body slumps and I rest my hands on my knees to support my weight. And when I look up again, from that position, the top of the street is the horizon. It's so steep I can't see what's beyond it. From my point of view, there's only sky: the sky without a single star, heavy with clouds. Patches of phthalocyanine blue with titanium white and pale ultramarine. A demarcating wall: this is where everything ends.

'Move!' he shouts from the bottom of the hill. 'If a car comes...'

An old exhaustion. That's it. What other explanation could there be for the fact that, as I squat there, my brain whirrs away, trying to figure out what shade of blue the sky is and stubbornly combining tones as if composing an imaginary tube of paint?

After ten paces, he slows down too. I hear him panting, struggling to speak as he tells me again: 'You can't stay there.' He tries to walk quicker again. Even if I

could hear people or a car... Then, feeling even more exhausted, I drag myself to the side of the road and let my body collapse so I'm sitting on the pavement.

'What's up with you?' he mutters. He sits beside me and leans his back against the wall formed by the high curb. I look at his pale face glistening with sweat. 'Where do you think you're going?'

That's a good question. Where do I think I'm going?

Twenty-four years without getting anywhere, becoming anything. Barely any friends and only one ready answer: I'm walking in artistic exploration. Or: I'm searching for my style. Or: I'm seeking expression. Really, my life hasn't started yet. Or, even: I'm looking for my dad. Do you know this man?

'I wanted a cigarette,' I reply. There are no shops open because it's Sunday. He raises an eyebrow, lowers the other. And since when do I smoke?

Where am I going now, that's what he wants to know. Sitting on the curb, at eight p.m., silently protesting against the situation: 'It's not right,' I say to myself. 'Shouldn't you only have to look after your parents once you're grown up?'

This is where I contradict my ID card, which says: twenty-four. Does that seem grown-up enough to you?

'You can't just go out like this,' is all he says. 'Your family look at me weird when you're not around.'

They look at everyone weird like that. They look at me as if I'm a circus freak. My family is weird, that's the truth. If I had a normal family, do you think I'd have ended up like this?

'He isn't here.'

'Your dad?'

I nod. Resentment is a force that puts us violently in our place. He looks away, as if doubting what I've said. But I know he's not here. I've walked around the city like a madwoman. I've visited all my relatives. I've called at properties on the outskirts. I've looked everywhere. He really has disappeared this time. He hasn't left a trace.

'Do you want a drink?' He offers me the little bottle of whisky. And would anyone else, except me, wonder why he's giving me a drink at a time like this?

I look at Vinícius's faded jeans, Prussian blue with plenty of titanium white. Meanwhile, I hear a motorbike approaching.

'Can I?'

'Yeah. Down it. I don't know. Maybe it'll work as anaesthetic. Or reorganise your ideas.'

The sound of the bike gets closer, louder all the time, almost unbearable, stirring something up inside my chest.

But if I say that resentment and my dad are the reasons why I'm like this, that's only my version of the facts. And my heart is reacting against the noise. They put holes in the exhaust pipe so it makes that sound. I drink the whisky. Vinícius explains my nonsense in another way, using Newton's laws: An object stays at rest or in motion unless acted upon by an unbalanced force. So it's completely natural for me to be like that, he says as the buzzing reaches its peak, the motorbike about to

burst our eardrums and destroy everything around us, but instead the sound gets gradually softer and softer, until it becomes inaudible.

'Are you trying to tell me that this is natural? That a father can abandon his children, and his wife, just like that? Look at the state I'm in.'

'It is natural,' he says, putting the bottle away, 'but that doesn't stop it being shit. That's where the drink comes in.'

And I understand the concept of inertia because less than forty-eight hours ago I had a plan. I mean, it was a good clinic, that one. Everything was under control. I was having a studio built. Nice neighbourhood near the beach. Internet, cable TV, icing on the cake, resigned from my job, slammed the door in my boss's face...

Now travel, at the very least, five hundred kilometres to the west. Imagine an absurd place where supermarkets, snack bars and pharmacies don't open on Sundays, where folks show up at other people's houses without warning, where they don't know me and I don't know them, and worse, they call me by the illustrious codename 'Aluizio's daughter' and Aluizio, my dad, has disappeared. Go back to the beginning. There's no plan whatsoever any more. What can I do?

'We could look for a bar.'

'There's nothing open here on Sundays, I already said that.'

'Outside the city. There are always bars open on Sundays.'

Two days ago Vinicius didn't know much about me either. He would have said: 'Érica... Yeah, I used to know her, we were friends, but I haven't seen her for ages.' I look at him. Bag on his back, yesterday's grimy white t-shirt. Raw umber with white brushstrokes. Maybe he doesn't realise that time has passed, either. What else could explain why he's here with me now? It doesn't make sense.

'You don't know this city,' I say, looking around. 'This city,' I tell him, 'is a hole. And I don't mean a metaphorical hole, I mean a real hole.' I feel a wave of nausea, acidic lava rises up into my oesophagus. 'The city formed just like that. In the depression where two mountain ranges met. An actual hole! Everyone here is dead and no one said anything.' I think to myself: isn't the third of March too early for it to be raining? Because that's what they all say. 'Everyone's dead, I mean it. This here is the end of the world.'

'If you say so...'

I would have said that that was it: my life changed. It was no use thinking about paint, about spatulas. It was no use thinking about painting. I had another life to take care of, and I was behind with that. Maturity with no time to wait. And tomorrow. Tomorrow those romantic aspirations will be as long gone as my dad. But he wouldn't understand. I know that. And the reason I know is because my own head is still five hundred kilometres away.

'I need to go home.'

'You should,' he says, putting the bottle away. 'Everyone's pretty worried about you going out like this...'

'I don't mean home to my aunt and uncle's. I mean really home, to my house. I'm tired of this city. He wouldn't come back here.'

But, with the low visibility and those five years of fog covering our friendship, he can't read my thoughts any more and I don't want him to say: 'I don't... I don't think your dad's coming back this time. They never come back.' A motorbike rolls down the hill in neutral. It doesn't make a sound. Going so fast that I jump with fright. But he just nods sort of nostalgically and, still sitting, says:

'Fine.' He places his hands on his knees and pushes on them to stand up. 'They'll have a drink for me at the bus station. And they must have cigarettes, too.'

There were lots of specific pieces to that limbo. I lowered one foot out of the bus and immediately felt certain: the world had changed drastically. The hot, stifling weather. The sun tinging the dirt, passers-by, women, children, beggars... People all over the place. A hot mess. My sore hand throbbing, people passing me with their excess weight, baggage, hair. Motors roaring. Thousands of them. A scene flashed by in less than a second: the world has changed – I said to myself – it's changed, it's changed, it's changed. But no one noticed. They kept on moving around at ten in the morning, with the sun beating down, carrying packages, going every which way. The world changed. Was it really a second?

But my hand was still throbbing. Any chance you can hurry up?, he asked. I looked back in his direction, still half senseless, feeling what jet lag must be like, if you could get jet lag from a bus ride between the mountains and the coast. I can't, I wanted to say, but how could I say that? The right thing would have been to explain: Look, I'm not going to manage to find my dad in this chaos of people. It's impossible. It's like looking for a needle in a haystack, but instead of saying anything, I put my other foot on the ground and tried to fake it. I know how it works. I took two more mechanical steps, moving away from the bus and joining the multitude gathering on the platform to collect their bags. Another two steps: You can go, I know how this works. But what are you saying? Are you really OK?

There was no way the journey could have been comfortable. I was broken and Vinícius, sitting next to me, was getting hurt by the shards. He must have wished he could disappear plenty of times, but he was still there. I distracted myself with my own reflection in the bus window. It wasn't a nice image for either of us. That watery creature, an inert composition with dark half-moons and a face covered in scars was me: the daughter of a drunk, her semi-transparent face reflecting the dry, moving landscape. In the same reflection, Vinícius faced me and smiled slightly, leaning his head to one side, almost pitying. It was clear that among his handful of carefully selected projects he had included, for the nth time, the project of fixing me.

'Here. You were about to leave your bag behind.'

I looked at him, then at the bag, at the roulette of the platform and back at the bus.

People said I'd done all I could. That the best thing was to carry on with life as normal. That it was nobody's fault. That I had to help my mum. After all, my dad, Aluizio, was a real character, wasn't he?

I wanted to get back on the bus and go back to where I'd come from, but then, at that moment, I looked at Vinícius again. A drop of sweat was running down his forehead as he pretended everything was OK, too. He wasn't convincing me. Something was bothering him and it was my fault.

To start with, I shouldn't worry him so much. Every time I faltered – like then, in front of the bus – he seemed determined to find a way – like then, urging me to keep going and not interrupt the flow of people moving around us. There were people perched on the upper floor, watching others disembarking, smoking cigarettes... I felt a hollow pressure in my mouth, squeezing my teeth.

He held my bag out to me again. With a film of tears covering my eyes, protecting me from the rest of the world, I reached out my hands to take it. I pushed the turnstile and carried on walking, not stopping until I got to the other side, to the few rows of plastic chairs. That was when I realised I was alone.

I looked back. Vinícius was saying something to the security guard by the gate, as if asking for information, frowning, gesticulating directions, nodding his head, holding the straps of the bag on his back. I shouldn't have brought him into this. He crossed and uncrossed his arms insistently, or pushed his hands into his pockets. But none of that was, in fact, my fault. It was my dad's fault for having gone too far this time. What else can a daughter do, in those circumstances, but make her dad get treatment? Even if he screamed, even against his will. It was for his own good. It was for everyone's good. It didn't have anything to do with the workshop.

I sat down to wait for Vinícius on one of the old plastic chairs. A sign above me said 'Intermunicipal' and, next to me, a beggar was asleep, stinking of cachaça. Two women hugged:

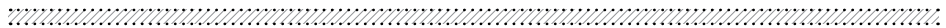
'Give me your bag, let me help, you had a long journey, right?'

It was all wrong.

'It's really not far,' they were saying, 'we missed the bus but there'll be another one soon.'

My impulse was to get up from the chair, interrupt their cordiality and say to them: Don't you understand that the world has ended? But they surely wouldn't understand. It really has ended, I would insist. Forget about the bus and the delay.

Useless! They're all on autopilot. The world has ended, can't they see?



THE BOOK



While God's Not Looking

Débora Ferraz

- **Original title:** Enquanto Deus não Está Olhando
- **ISBN:** 9788501039750
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Record
- **Number of pages:** 368
- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

While God's Not Looking tells the story of Érica, a young artist searching for her father, who ran away from the hospital where he was being treated. Érica looks for clues he may have left and tries to understand their relationship through her memories of him. Débora Ferraz's debut novel explores what the author calls a modifying instant, the split second that can completely transform someone's trajectory.

AWARDS

Prêmio Sesc de Literatura 2014

PRESS REVIEWS

'Débora Ferraz shows herself as an author who is going the right way, certainly taking no short-cuts.' Noemi Jaffe / Valor Econômico
<http://www.valor.com.br/>

cultura/3758542/um-denso-romance-de-estreia

'Present and past are pieced together from scraps of memory with rich, solid language; Débora's writing is precise, colloquial and organised, and every line vibrates.' Raimundo Neto / São Paulo Review

<http://saopauloreview.com.br/2014/10/30/resenha-as-cores-da-falta/>

'For a debut novel, this has more than passed the test and, in rare consensus between the jury and readers, it won a very much deserved prize.' Taíze Odelli / Posfácio

<http://www.posfacio.com.br/2014/08/27/enquanto-deus-nao-esta-olhando-debora-ferraz/>

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LUST

FERNANDO BONASSI

Translated by Zoë Perry

1. Initial Situation

It's a historical moment of prosperity in a country accustomed to living in shit. The climate is tropical, as it always has been, but today feels even more hot and humid than before. Clothes stick to people, who stick to the upholstery of motionless cars, stuck to the asphalt. Nothing and no one can move. No way to escape. Never have so many been able to do so little, and the reproductive force this has will make this summer the richest and muggiest in history, say climate and government forecasts. Turbulent masses of air, in constant motion. The frosty winds that issue from newly-completed buildings blow exhaust fumes back into the middle of the street and the faces of passersby. Right now, the city's last remaining empty spaces are being occupied by stakes driven into a land poisoned and reclaimed many times over, all in the name of progress, bridges and viaducts, numerous apartment buildings, industrial warehouses, ten-story parking garages, shops, offices, basements and annexes, in a precarious feat of engineering, that attempts to multiply the same space, held in place.

The construction sites of these urgent works spill over onto the sidewalks and potholed avenues, resulting in falls, pedestrian collisions, heavy traffic and a sandy concrete dust that rises and falls in swirls, blinding anyone who tries to see what is happening.

The secret is to close your eyes.

This is the best advice the old timers can give the younger generations now. And to work. When in doubt, work some more. For the sake of working. If necessary, undo and redo idly. As if they might turn into bums if they sit and think – even for a moment – about the advantages and disadvantages of living with one another that way.

Forget about it. It's best to not think.

Also, there is no shade or trees for kilometers and kilometers of enclosures and walls that rise straight up toward the sky, angering the dark clouds.

God bless us!

They know very well that the least they can do cannot be done in just one week... But everything takes too long for their liking. Ever and always. From afar the traffic appears frozen, in a satellite picture.

(...)

This is a living hell.

(...)

The paralysis is only an impression: the people sitting in these cars, for example, are about to lose what little patience they have left, and lay on their horns as if they were laying into each other's necks.

It's War with a capital "w"!

Graffiti warns of the class struggle and time wasted behind the wheel. The radio repeats what it said yesterday. It's a game of make-believe that takes place every day. In one or two wasted hours, they will be locked up at home, those who have a home, but it's early yet. There is a lot to think about now. And the eyes wet with drugs, fatigue, sadness and heavy metals drift from one side to another of these lanes, interlinking as they funnel between billboards and grimy illuminated signs, hoping to understand this uncontrollable desire they have - all of them - to go in the same direction, at the same time.

For the time being, hanging in the air, you can feel the envy of the motorcyclists, who flow unimpeded between cargo trucks. And the helicopter passengers, who have enough money to fly right over these common problems.

The real problem is that nobody wants to be or seem common. Even if it is their fate and, in a way, proof of the victory of this specie's beings: these are the ones who survived out of millions of others, identical in rights. And in modern democracy what is common prevails. The majority, with all its might.

First Movement

It's worth noting that it starts all wrong: the man this story is about was dismissed early from the metal shop where he works, but under other pretexts: a headache he had, some double vision in the street or by the machines, as if he had turned up drunk; he tasted something bitter that came from his stomach, too...

And something stuck in my throat...

He doesn't drink a drop. He hasn't smoked in over five years and decides that, for now, he won't worry. He swallows it down. Soon the distaste comes back up into his mouth. He takes a deep breath to make the thing go down. He thinks about eating better, maybe, or more, at least, since he always leaves a good part of his lunch on the brushed metal tray.

Each variety of food, on the tray, has its place.

The man in this story likes this order of things.

Makes things easier.

He gets his car, clocks out before the others. He enters the chaos of the elements: out of hours, the traffic accelerates in a dangerous rush, when everyone acquires the confidence common in his culture, and that consists of believing they can accelerate, turn, speed ahead and stop whenever and wherever they want and that there will be room for everyone. Not quite. Many are killed along the way, run over on the asphalt, crushed inside cars. And the traffic builds with the passing ambulances.

For Christ's sake!

Clearly the man should have gone home; enjoyed the rest granted him by the company doctor. But that very day, and this very man, used to doing whatever they tell him to, gets the idea to surprise his wife, who had gone across town for a dentist's appointment.

The dental insurance the factory offers is also slow to see you when you make an appointment. So, despite all the traffic jams along the way, and long after the scheduled time, our man manages to reach the office in time to find his wife still in the waiting room, before her appointment, reading a magazine.

More magazines are strewn across the coffee table, whose top is cut in the shape of a tooth, but his wife selects an architecture and construction magazine. She is so engrossed with it she barely notices her husband's arrival.

The walls of the reception desk and waiting room are covered with diplomas and certificates, and the man understands that this makes it very clear who is to be called doctor there.

It's not his place, anyway, and the man continues waiting for his wife to get distracted from her reading and turn her attention to him.

(...)

This does not happen. A bit cross, the husband sits beside his wife and places his hand on her leg. She is so spooked she screams and, without wanting to, to set things right, he is obliged to apologize.

Sorry.

And he gets upset. And like that, because of one of those stupid lovers quarrels between two people who have lived together a long time, when she tells him "I didn't expect you", it was no longer as someone having a pleasant surprise.

You should have gone home.

Then, to spoil what is already sour, the dentist comes out from inside the office. In a gleaming white uniform, a vision of fineness.

Son of a bitch.

Beg your pardon?

"Hello, Doctor."

The man hates him immediately. To him it seems the dentist is flaunting that purity in an obscene manner, without the slightest shame; all while maintaining an almost unbridled arrogance, as if to tell other mortals that, in addition to being more educated and trained, he is also the cleanest and most famous in the business of taking away peoples' toothaches.

A pretty good business, no doubt.

His wife, for example, has a bad bite, or bites too hard on a certain weak spot, a disease that wears away the jaw bones, day after day.

These headaches just kill me.

She comes to the dentist to correct the situation with some sort of harness, operation or device that keeps her teeth inside her mouth, so they don't gnaw through one another.

I've always been a nervous type.

Her gums also bleed, her mouth doesn't always smell nice, but these are not the kindest of sentiments to tell in this story. He doesn't always brush his teeth, either. The man remains suspicious, but for sure the dentist's arrogant manners do not help to improve the situation.

Who are you, sir?

I'm with her.

What's worse, the dentist calls another man's wife as if she were his own, shouting in the middle of the clinic waiting room with an audacity and a flippancy that not even his capacity as her husband had dared violate: my dear!

Luckily it was late afternoon, no lights were on and there was no one in the office to see the man's face.

Let's go in?

Our man would have liked to get an intimate look at the dentist's work, together with her and with him, but undercover, the size of an insect, or invisible, to check the surgical methods he claimed to have, and to see if they weren't also indecent, but as a grown man he thinks that would be disrespectful to himself.

I'll wait here.

Is that alright?

Fine.

He stays behind with the fish in the aquarium. The aquarium is fogged. Threads of shit hang from the asses of some of the fish. They all feel short of breath. And it looks like they're going to explode.

Fine, my ass!

He thinks every nasty thought possible of someone who feels excluded from something he really wanted to know. To distract himself from this suffering, the husband takes the magazine the woman read with interest: the cover story is on the basic types of swimming pools available on the market; fiberglass, vinyl and reinforced concrete.

Fiberglass swimming pools are the cheapest and easiest to install, just dig a hole, position the pool and fill in the gaps with sand. In this case, the consumer is restricted to the existing shapes and sizes. Vinyl pools have the advantage of a wider range of shapes, since they are made of a masonry box with a liner that adapts to any basin, in your choice of patterns and colors. The vinyl liner, however, despite measuring between six and eight millimeters thick, risks getting punctured, or tearing, even when observing rules of good use. So it's the reinforced concrete pool, for its tradition, structural characteristics and versatility of composition, the most sophisticated, strong and desirable. Its construction and operational care, however, are more complex, time consuming and expensive - leading people to call it "a second family".

The man thinks for a while about that and it could have stopped right there, but this dentist, this trained medical professional, returns to the waiting room with the same annoying manners, the same ostentatious kindness, the perma-grin glued on his face, leading his wife by her contaminated hand.

What the hell?

This girl behaved herself very well, he, the dentist, says sweetly, as if she were a child.

She's a woman.

I know, he says, lustfully, maybe. To her husband's chagrin, it is his own wife who smiles immediately, feeling better with the cheap compliment given at the end of the work day.

You spend all this time with them and then you realize you don't know a thing about any woman..., the man, the husband, thinks of saying right there, to her face, but is ashamed, or afraid, or... Maybe even of the dentist... The dentist, on the other side, sees the article in the magazine rolled up into the shape of a club in the man's hands, and commits an indiscretion, says it's his "dream" to have a pool.

What?

He'll regret it later, but at that moment, this "dentist's dream"...

This idea of grandeur this white boy son of a bitch has... And right in front of her!

That was inciting something in the man, a rage for the life he leads, a queasiness because he is the one gets dirty every day, who crawls along, passes underneath. As if, for want of something that would impress his own wife, he felt poisoned and oppressed by the framed diplomas in that waiting room, by the intimacy that the dentist achieves with others, by the cleanliness of the clothes he wears, the "dreams" he has.

(...)

Here the man realizes he is still holding the magazine with the article about swimming pools, inside his clenched hand, as if he were going to use it like club on the dentist's head, and, overcome with the rage of injustice he feels at this moment, being sick of sight, his mouth somewhat bitter and with a slight headache, just a touch, but that certainly does not help, he decides to lie, to say what he shouldn't – and what will destroy him, in a way: the unthinking bluster that he had, himself, bought a swimming pool for their house.

It's true!

The woman is more surprised than the dentist, undoubtedly, looking first at him, the dentist, then her husband, but at both with a clear look of distrust.

In the backyard. It's going to look great!

The husband still feels duty bound, but is also pleased to repeat and explain that: yes, my dear wife, I was going to surprise you with it, on the day of our wedding anniversary: a swimming pool in our backyard.

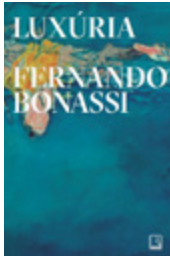
The dentist, embarrassed, tucks his tail between his legs and extends his hand to his patient's husband: congratulations.

After what is said and done, the man this story is about feels he is getting even, and that he outshines the other man in some way, since now he can even make his own dreams come true.

I have powers. Excuse us.

And he takes his wife's hand from the doctor's, and takes her home without making a new appointment.

THE BOOK



Lust

Fernando Bonassi

- **Original title:** Luxúria
- **ISBN:** 978-85-01-10430-4
- **Year of Publication:** 2015
- **Original Publisher:** Record
- **Number of pages:** 366
- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

Fernando Bonassi's new novel *Luxúria* ("Gluttony") gives an account of an unnamed man who, inspired by a glossy magazine and to impress his wife, decides to crown his self-assumed wealth by building a swimming pool – on credit and in the garden of his dwarf-sized house in a social housing area. Little by little, like a chain reaction, the absurd building process exposes not only the drain pipes of the neighbourhood but also the gaping abysses of everyday bourgeois life. In debt, harassed, jobless and driven by his own demons, he tries to kill his dog before he finds a final solution for his family and himself.

THE AUTHOR

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- **Pen name:** Fernando Bonassi
- **Other books:**



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PILAR'S DIARY OF MACHU PICCHU

FLÁVIA LINS E SILVA

Translated by Alison Entrekin Illustrations by Joana Pena



In the beginning, everything was chaos!

It was still dark out and I was woken from a nightmare by a terrible asthma attack. It happens sometimes, though I'm not really sure why. I find it hard to breathe, my chest tightens with worry, I miss my grandpa... I confess: I'm terrified of losing the people I love. Grandpa's gone forever and I still haven't found my dad. One thing is certain: no one can separate me and my cat! Ever! That's why as soon as that weird conversation started over breakfast I got a horrible taste in my mouth, as if the bread had suddenly gone sour.

'Pilar, I called the doctor to talk about your asthma attack and... I think we'd better send Samba to Bernardo's brother Betão's farm,' said my mother.

'The doctor thinks your asthma might have to do with the cat, but Samba will be fine on the farm,' added Bernardo.

My stomach began to churn so much that I couldn't even reply. I gave my mother and step-father a savage look, then grabbed Samba and ran to my room. From the corridor, I could hear my mother saying:

'Think about it, Pilar. Maybe Samba would enjoy an outdoor life and... please tidy your room!'

Tidy my room? How could my mother think about tidying in the middle of something so serious? With my diary in hand and headphones on, I threw myself onto my unmade bed. I was dying to talk to Breno. At least I could talk to my best-of-best-friends about anything, anytime. There was no way Breno would agree with that crazy idea to send Samba away to a faraway farm. Never!

To avoid thinking about it, I decided to try and write some lyrics for a song Breno was composing on his guitar. Who said writing lyrics was easy? I did a first draft:

In the heat of the Amazon,
the sun of ancient Babylon,
so many interesting faces
so many thrilling places...

No, no! What predictable rhymes! I scrunched up the paper and threw it at the bin, but Samba intercepted the ball, thinking I was playing with him. What a character! I called my cat over, gave him a big tickle and explained:

'We can play in a little while, Samba! Right now I'm writing some lyrics. Listen...

Flying over Egypt,
we see the snaking Nile.
Sailing on the Amazon,
the forest is so fertile.
Up high on Olympus,
we see for miles and miles...'

No! I didn't want to talk about our travels. I threw the scrunched up paper at the bin again, but this time Samba didn't come to play goalkeeper. Maybe he was hiding under the sheets in a heap on the floor. Just then my thoughts were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door.

'Go away. Leave me alone!' I growled.

'OK. Sorry. I'll come back later,' I heard Breno say.

How could I have known it was him? I jumped off the bed and opened the door. As he walked in, Breno couldn't help himself and said:

'Sheesh, Pilar! Was there an earthquake here?'

My room was so messy it looked like a jungle! A little sheepishly, I said:

'Well, um... Samba and I were playing scary tornadoes and hurricanes, and things flew out of my hands and landed all over the place! It was wild!'

'Hmm, right. And where are the lyrics you promised to write for my song? I can't wait to get started. I even brought my guitar!'

I couldn't find my early drafts in all that chaos. The lyrics still weren't right, but I wanted to show him anyway. I pulled back the sheets, looked under clothes and cushions hunting for the missing lyrics and... nothing!

'Samba, have you seen the lyrics I wrote for Breno?'

'Samba?' called Breno. 'Pilar, I think your cat vanished in all this chaos and you didn't even notice.'

We picked up all the books from the floor, the socks from the rug and... no sign of him. It was Breno who opened the magic hammock and found a tattered piece of paper there:

'Hey! This looks like song lyrics torn in half...'

'Then the other half must be there with Samba.'

'There where, Pilar?'

'That's what we need to find out. Magic hammock, take me away. Transport me to wherever I must go!' I said, jumping in.

Breno quickly followed me with his guitar and we began to spin forward until we lost all notion of up and down.

The ÑustaBath

When the hammock stopped spinning, I felt queasy. I stood carefully and leaned against a tree. We must have been on a mountain top because it was pretty cold, despite the sun. Nearby was a stone construction that looked like a bathtub. I thought about going over to wash my face in it, but I felt even queasier and out it came: my whole breakfast! After I had sullied the green grass at my feet, Breno helped me and I climbed – clothes and all – into the stone bathtub filled with clear running water. While I was trying to recover, Breno studied the open-air hydraulic system that brought fresh water straight there from the mountain. Without pipes, the water ran downhill in little canals carved out of the stones, which all fit together perfectly.

'Have you seen the aqueduct, Pilar? What a work of art! Somebody pretty creative came up with that!'

I was still too dizzy to look at anything and sat down to splash water on my face. I was already feeling a little better when I heard an unfamiliar voice.

'Are you a ñusta by any chance? You're in the ñusta bath!'

A girl with brown skin and long, straight hair was staring at me in surprise. Her question made absolutely no sense to me, so I decided to introduce myself.

'Hi, I think you might be mixing me up with someone else. My name's Pilar. Nice to meet you.'

'This bath is only for ñustas, princesses, those chosen by our sun god Inti! I don't even want to imagine what could happen to someone who gets in there without permission!' said the girl, making a sign of reverence to the sun.

'The god Inti? Who's that?'

'Haven't you ever heard of Inti, our most important god? I thank him for every sunny day that dawns.'

Breno gave me a little smile, knowing how curious that conversation was making me.

'How does this sun god choose someone to be a princess?' I asked.

'The high priests chose the ñustas, or acllas, communicating directly with the gods. Has the sun god chosen you by any chance? Has he sent you a sign?'

'Well, I was sick and needed a bath afterwards. But I'm going to get out now because this water's too cold for me.'

'It's probably soroche: altitude sickness. Chew on these coco leaves and you'll feel better soon.'

And that was how I came to chew on some terribly bitter little leaves that helped me overcome my dizziness and stop feeling queasy. I was still feeling the cold though and, seeing that I was shaking, the girl with long hair held out her colourful poncho of the softest wool. When she took it off, I saw that she had a small animal on her back. How adorable! I reached out to pat it.

'What cute animal is this?' I asked.

'It's a baby llama. The poncho's made out of its mother's wool. There she is, over there.'

'What delightful animals! And what a sweet baby! Can I hold it a little?' I said, dying to cuddle the baby llama.

'Of course! He's very tame. My name is Yma and his is Cori, which means "made of gold".'

'He must be very precious to you,' I said, thankful for the poncho and hugging the little Cori to warm myself up a little more.

Breno looked around, unable to recognise the place.

'We're on a mountain, aren't we? What city is this?'

'Don't you know we're in Ollantaytambo, in Peru's Sacred Valley? How did you get here?'

'Yma, this is my friend Breno. We always travel together, but we never know where we're going to end up and... to tell the truth, we came looking for my cat, Samba. He's white, with chocolate-coloured paws. Have you seen a lost cat around?'

'Are you talking about a white animal, with a long tail, kind of greedy?'

'Very greedy!' laughed Breno.

'Have you seen Samba? He's very precious to me.'

'I think so, Pilar. Over by the corn field. Come with me!'

PERU

Peru is a beautiful country in South America, on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Its current capital is Lima. During the Inca Empire, from the 13th to the 16th century, the capital was Cusco. The Inca civilization was one of the most important in the Americas. The Incas lived mostly in the Andes mountains, in the countries now known as Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and, of course, Peru. They spoke Quechua, a language still spoken by many Peruvians. Nowadays, however, the country's official language is Spanish. I'm going to make a big list of my favourite words in Quechua!

After I had tightly rolled up the hammock and stowed it in my jumbo-pocket, Breno and I followed Yma through the narrow streets, between houses built out of enormous blocks of stone with straw roofs. Breno was in awe of the engineering of the place.

'I wonder how they cut these huge stones? And how do they get them on top of one another? I don't even think they use cement, Pilar. They all slot together. Imagine how much strength it must take to lift such heavy stones?'

It really was curious and enchanting: an entire city made of enormous blocks of stone that slotted together perfectly, but there were no cranes, cement or jack-hammers anywhere in sight. A mystery!

We walked down a long road and came to a field planted with corn of all different colours: white, black, yellow, red, mixed! I had never seen so many kinds of corn in all my life! I felt like trying some...

Samba had beat me to it, of course! His familiar little white head popped up from inside a basket of corn cobs. I tried to coax my runaway cat over, but he didn't even flinch. He was focused on something that I couldn't see from where I was. As I drew nearer, I saw a boy in a red beanie, who must have been the owner of the basket. He was blowing into a rolled-up leaf as if it was a whistle and mosquitoes were flying around in a circle in front of him.

'Look, Breno! I think that boy knows how to tame insects!'

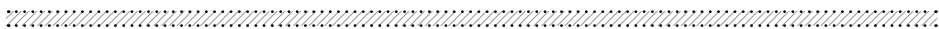
'Tame insects, Pilar? That's practically impossible!' said Breno.

'Actually, Pilco does know how to tame insects. He has many talents,' said Yma proudly.

I couldn't miss out on the opportunity to learn how to tame insects. I already knew how to talk to birds, but I'd never imagined I'd be able to communicate with flies or mosquitoes! I was so impressed that I sat down next to Pilco, introduced myself and talked him into teaching me. You had to roll up a freshly-picked leaf like a flute, then give a few short whistles followed by a longer one. I imitated everything that Pilco did, but... it was a disaster! We were soon surrounded by a swarm of bees!

'Oh dear! What now? How do I get the bees to leave?'

'Right now you'd better run, Pilar!' said Pilco, picking up his basket of corn and racing off.





THE BOOK



Pilar's Diary in Machu Picchu

Flávia Lins e Silva

- **Original title:** O Diário de Pilar em Machu Picchu
- **ISBN:** 978-85-6642-20-9
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Pequena Zahar Publisher house
- **Number of pages:** 170
- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

Pilar, Breno and Samba, the cat, enter Pilar's magical hammock and are taken to the mountains of Peru, where they meet a beautiful girl called Yma and her beloved friend Pilco. Unexpectedly, Yma is chosen by the local High Priest to be one of the "chosen woman", and to live forever at the sacred city of Machu Picchu. But is this what Yma really wants for her life? Together, Pilar, Breno, Samba and Pilco decide to follow Yma and the High Priest inside the dark forest where they have to fight against the dangerous Puma and to swim on the rushing Urubamba river. When they finally arrive at Machu Picchu, Pilar and her friends discover that entering Machu Picchu is much easier than to leave the sacred city.

TRANSLATIONS

Some Pilar books were translated to German ("Pina reist nach Griechenland"; "Pina reist zum Amazonien"; Fischer Verlag 2013); to French (Pilar in Greec and in the Amazon will be published in 2015 by Bayard Jeunesse); to Spanish (Diario de Pilar en Grecia; Diario de Pilar en Amazonia; published by V&R 2015); to Chinese (all volumes were bought and published by Shanghai Bbt Communication and Guangxi Normal University Press, 2015).

PRESS REVIEWS

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THE AUTHOR



Flávia Martins Lins e Silva

- **Pen name:** Flávia Lins e Silva
- **Other books:** Mururu along the Amazon river, published in 2010 by Manati.

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THE ILLUSTRATOR

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THE TRANSLATOR

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THE COLOURS OF SLAVERY

IEDA DE OLIVEIRA

Translated by Alison Entrekin



“ I , Sebastião Luiz Paulo, am Brazilian, age 17, with no official papers. I live in Colinas, Tocantins, in the care of my great grandmother, at Rua 18 de Setembro (no number). My father, Valdir, is dead and my mother, Zenaide, lives with Raimundo Soares and works on the Volkswagen farm between Redenção and Santana do Araguaia.

[...]

He was offering good money for work on a farm in the south of Pará, in the municipality of Xinguara, so me and another 22 workers, including two minors, got on a cattle truck and went to Lagoa das Antas Farm, which belonged to Luiz Pires, in Xinguara. When we got there, we met the gato [cat] Fagoió, João Moaramas' accountant, who took us to Flor da Mata Farm, which also belonged to Luiz Pires, 300 km away. We were taken by plane.

[...]

After clearing several hectares of regrowth and 20 km of field borders, I saw a dangerous scene with an under-age worker who must have been about 10, who was just looking out for himself: one Friday he wore some borrowed boots to work because he didn't want to buy a pair for 20 reais. He was afraid of getting into debt and not being able to leave, but then they said he'd stolen the boots and the gato Fagoiό took him to the same abandoned shack we'd stayed in when we arrived on Flor da Mata Farm, and they beat him with the side of a knife, then they got a 38., pointed it at him and told him to run without looking back, and he ran into the forest and I never saw him again.

[...]

In witness whereof, I set hereunto my hand (fingerprint)
Tucumã, 15.8.97..." (1)

1.

Forest, forest, forest, echoes of green and fear. The branches scratching his dry face. Blood everywhere. His bare little boy's feet run unprotected towards the darkness of an unknown forest. Where is the hope that was here? The 'cat' got it.

At some point in the past I'd heard stories from Grandma Tonha's withered mouth. It was incredible, but not even hunger managed to silence her way of looking at things. She saw green where the land was parched, food on empty plates, flowers on dry branches. People said she was senile, but everyone loved to gather around to listen to her stories about all kinds of things. And it was cause of one of her stories that I wanted to hop on that truck to the farm where I was going to be really happy.

Sitting on a rock, Grandma Tonha would tell my favourite story over and over. Once upon a time there was a miller who had three sons. All he had in the world was a small mill, a mule and a cat. When he saw that his time had come, he called together his three sons and gave the mill to the oldest, the mule to the second and the cat to the youngest. The youngest was upset, because the cat was worthless, but the cat told him that if he bought him a pair of boots and a bag, he'd prove that he was much more useful than the mill and the mule. And that's exactly what happened: the clever cat managed to make his master into a Marquis, to get rich, to marry the king's daughter and to live happily ever after.

¹ Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT). Trabalho escravo no Brasil contemporâneo [Slave Labour in Contemporary Brazil]. São Paulo: Loyola, 1999. p. 26-9.

I grew up hearing Grandma Tonha's story, certain that I, even though I was the oldest child, was the Marquis of Marabá and that only the cat, which I didn't have, knew it. My father took off into the world. My mother with one more in her belly was too much for him. And she ended up on her own, with us, her six and a half children.

There was still no school. But I had a friend. João. I adored him. Sometimes he'd teach me things, sometimes I taught him. Things we worked out on our own, not from books, cause he didn't have any either. I taught him how to make a firefly lantern and he taught me how to catch flies midair. I taught him how to be a goal-keeper and he taught me to pray.

João was the only one who knew I was the Marquis of Marabá. Him and the cat I didn't have. I told him that as soon as my inheritance arrived, I'd take him to live on my land. My wife, the princess, would have a princess friend, who would marry João, who would also be rich and live happily ever after.

2.

One day we were playing football in the field, when we saw a lot of people go hurrying past. We followed them. There was a man talking in a loud voice and saying really good things. He said he knew where there was decent work for everyone and you could make a lot of money. I looked him up and down. He was big, almost fat, with a hat on his head, a thin moustache and hair touching his shoulders. He was wearing huge boots. It was the gato Barbosa. He was there to help everyone get rich.

I told João that we had to go with him on that truck no matter what. João was scared and remained so, even after I reminded him of the story about the marquis. I called him a chicken. I said I was going to talk to my mother and his and ask them to talk to the gato Barbosa. I did, and my mother learned that there was decent work for us on the farm. I was sure I was going to come back rich.

João's dad had gone to work on a farm far away, somewhere over Pará way, which nobody knew where it was. João said his dad had said he wouldn't have gone if he'd had land to plant on, but seeing as how he had no education, he had to go work with an axe. His mother, who stayed behind with the children and her wicker work, just waited for him. The money she earned from the sale of her wares, which was next to nothing, didn't go very far. João was the middle child of five. I think that's why she didn't mind him going. One less mouth to feed. And the gato Barbosa also gave her and my mother some money to help out. So she just thanked her son, who had resigned himself to the idea, and went to fetch him a little flour and sugar for a journey with no tears.

I had nothing to take except my shoes with the toes cut out with a knife cause my feet had grown, a pair of trousers and my shirt. No food, there was none to be had, just water. I gave my mother and Grandma Tonha a kiss. I was so happy that when the truck arrived I flashed a smile at the gato Barbosa, who I was beginning to like.

3.

There were lots of people in the back of the truck. It sped down the highway. João was quiet, huddled in a corner. I could have sworn he was praying, but I didn't ask. Then I realized he was feeling queasy and he threw up on me. I think it was the smell of cow dung and the endless shaking. I thought I'd best give him some water and talk a lot. The engine was very noisy, so I actually had to shout. I shouted some stories I'd learned from Grandma Tonha. I made up some others. It worked. João's face became less pale and his eyes went back to their normal green.

That was the funny thing about him. He was like a spotty jaguar: kind of reddish hair, mud-coloured freckles all over his face and eyes that changed colour. When he was afraid, they were grey. When he was hungry, yellow. Listening to stories, green. But angry, I never saw.

I was quite a lot bigger and older too I think, but in a way I always thought João was better than me. And I'm talking about simple things. For example, if I didn't feel like playing football, I didn't play. But not him. He was capable of playing even if he didn't want to just so he wouldn't have to say no. And he was like that with everyone.

The trip took ages. When my first hunger pangs came, João gave me some of his sugar and flour, which didn't last us long. After the longest long time, we came to a huge farm, with a name I can't remember very well. Then I got such a good surprise that I was even happier. We were greeted by another gato, called Spark, who took us even closer to our dream, and by plane.

My fear was mixed with joy. I'd always dreamed of flying on a plane, but I knew that only the very rich did it and of course it was a sign of what awaited us. João's eyes turned a yellowy-grey. I noticed, but pretended not to. He whispered, 'Tonho, I'm scared. I don't want to go in that thing.' I told him that he had to get used to being rich and that rich people went around in planes. And besides, he was going to see everything from high up in the sky, like a bird. I said it must be so beautiful and that it was like the flying carpet in the story. He said that flying carpets didn't fall and I tried to calm him down from inside my own fear. He pleaded with his eyes and said, 'Tonho, I don't think I want to be rich.'

I talked to him for quite some time about how amazing it was to fly. Time enough to convince myself. It was no use. He just stared at me with grey eyes when we boarded the plane. We didn't exchange a word. I was so scared that my throat went dry and silent. That always happened when I was in agony. I didn't look out the window. I didn't move. The plane left the ground.

I saw that João was praying quietly to himself: 'Our Father, who art in heaven...' and I thought quietly: 'We're up here too... We're up here too.' That was all I knew.

I couldn't think about anything but Grandma Tonha. About her, about Saint Anthony next to the bed and about the vision. It was a stormy night. My mother was in labour. Grandma, between her legs, hands outstretched, waiting for the grandson that didn't come. My mother howled, perspired, panted and bled. No grandson. 'He's a breech, darling, stay calm. Nothing to worry about. It's worth it.'

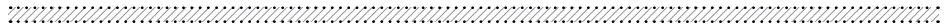
The baby didn't come. Grandma watched her daughter losing her strength and her life. No grandson in sight. That was when the flash of lightning came and the silence.

The rain stopped, the wind stopped, everything stopped. From beside the bed, Saint Anthony smiled at my mother, who didn't see him. But Grandma Tonha says she saw him and even spoke to him and promised that the breech baby would be named Antônio, after him. And that was how I got my name.

I never asked my namesake for anything. I never had to. But planes are things of the heavens, and that's a different story. And all I could do was repeat over and over in my head: 'Anthony, Anthony, Anthony... Grandma's saint, please don't let us fall.'

I stayed like that for longer than I can remember. Long enough to pluck up the courage to look out the window and see everything small and green below us. I told João to look too and we sat there together, peering down like birds, unafraid, the rest of the way.

Then I thought it all went quite fast. I could've gone on peering down, but the plane arrived on the ground and we were told to get out, cause our destination had arrived.





THE BOOK



The Colours of Slavery

Ieda de Oliveira

- **Original title:** As Cores da Escravidão
- **ISBN:** 978-85-322-8422-8
- **Year of Publication:** 2013
- **Original Publisher:** FTD
- **Number of pages:** 96
- **Total print run:** 23.500 copies

SYNOPSIS

The book tells the story of Tonny, a poor boy who dreams of a better life. Encouraged by the stories told by his grandmother Tonny convinces his friend John to join him and follow a coyote who shows up in town summoning young men to work with the promise of “making quick money.” However, the true reality turns out to be everything but. Lost innocence, broken dreams and subjugated childhood eventually give place to hope, compassion, friendship, and love in this captivating story about the endurance of the human spirit. An inspiring page turner that will remain with young readers long after they finish reading the last page.

AWARDS

Prêmio Brasília de Literatura 2014 - Categoria Juvenil - 3º lugar
Prêmio FNLIJ 2013 - Altamente

recomendável - Categoria Jovem
Um dos quatro livros brasileiros selecionados para o White Ravens 2014
Aprovado no PNBE 2014 - EJA, Ensino Fundamental e Médio

PRESS REVIEWS

Blog: Portal dos livros:
<http://meuportaldoslivros.blogspot.com.br/2014/09/resenha-as-cores-da-escravidao-de-ieda.html>

Site: Colégio São Paulo da Cruz:
http://www.saopaulodacruz.com.br/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=472:as-coers-da-escravidao&catid=7:noticias&Itemid=13

Blog: Sopa cultural
<http://www.sopacultural.com/as-cores-da-escravidao/>

Blog: Livros e café
<http://livroecafe.com/2015/01/14/cores-da-escravidao-ieda-de-oliveira/>

Site: Literatura de cabeça
<http://www.literaturadecabeca.com.br/sem-categoria/conheca-as-cores-da-escravidao/#.Va1SqPIVhHw>

Blog: Sobrecapa literal
<https://sobrecapaliteral.wordpress.com/2013/08/18/livro-as-cores-da-escravidao-de-ieda-de-oliveira/>

THE AUTHOR

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- **Pen name:** Ieda de Oliveira
- **Other books:**



For Children

Emmanuela, illustrated by Marilda Castanha (Ed. Saraiva)
Bruxa e Fada Menina Encantada, illustrated by Pink Wainer (Ed. DCL)
Cigarra & Formiga Produções Artísticas, illustrated by Maria Eugênia (Ed. Larousse)
A Cobra e o Sábio, illustrated by Ivan Zigg (Ed. Larousse)
O Sapo e o Pássaro, illustrated by Maurício Veneza (Ed. Larousse)
O Espelho, illustrated by Márcia Széliga, (Ed. Prumo)
O Leão e o Macaco, (Ed. Larousse)
Bruxa e Fada - Caldeirão ou varinha de condão. Illustrated by Pink Wainer, (Ed. DCL)
Brasileirinho - História de Amor do Brasil - livro e CD com as músicas, illustrated by Luís Dias, (Ed. DCL)
Viva o Reino da Terra - teatro e música- (Ed. Prumo) no prelo.
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As Aventuras do Gato Marquês , Ed. Globo, 2014
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For Young Adults

A Saga de Um Rei, illustrated by Rui de Oliveira, (Ed. DCL)
O Raio da Positividade, illustrated by Ennio Possebon. (Ed. FTD)

A Serpente de Olumo, illustrated by Roberto Melo (Ed. Cortez)
Raimischibilim - O Mistério da Família Salles, illustrated by Rogério Borges, (Ed. DCL)
O Cheiro da Morte e outras histórias, illustrated by Alexandre Teles, (Ed. Biruta)

Non-fiction

O Contrato de Comunicação da Literatura Infantil e Juvenil (tese de doutorado), (Ediouro).
O que é qualidade em Literatura infantil e Juvenil - com a palavra o escritor (Org), (Ed. DCL)
O que é qualidade em Ilustração no Livro Infantil e Juvenil - com a palavra o Ilustrador (Org), (Ed. DCL).
O que é qualidade em Literatura infantil e Juvenil - com a palavra o educador, (Org) (Ed. DCL).

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THE ADVENTURES OF GLAUBER AND HILDA

ÍNDIGO

Translated by Ana Cristina Araujo Ayer de Oliveira Illustrations by Caco Galhardo



Glauber and Hilda are the worst kind of parasite. He is a dust mite. She is a flea. The Health Department is constantly campaigning against them. If you rummage through the cleaning products in your home, you will surely find a can of spray capable of exterminating them in a single squirt. Sound over the top? Well... it isn't. We humans have plenty of reasons to be wary of dust mites and fleas. The destructive power of these creatures dates back to the fourteenth century! Believe it or not, fleas are to blame for the Black Plague that wiped out a large chunk of humanity. Fleas like Hilda. And mites are no better. They are responsible for that disgusting mange that causes our dear pets so much suffering.

But Glauber and Hilda know how to take advantage of the fact that they are parasites. It is in their nature to take advantage of everything. They don't feel diminished, on the contrary. They are proud of what they are. They survive all manner of attacks. And if they are still here, it is due to their great love for one another. Glauber

and Hilda have been married for many years, and, as is bound to happen, they have become dependent on one another. Of course parasitism has also had a hand in this.

Glauber and Hilda in: Monga, the Ape Woman

Glauber and Hilda hated moving house. It was always hard to find a place that met both their needs. Glauber needed human interaction while Hilda could go without. She preferred to live among animals.

In recent times they had lived on stuffed animals, livestock, household draperies, teenagers' hair and pop stars' fur coats, until the day they ended up on Monga, the Ape Woman. She was like a mother to them.

Monga lived in Zé Malaquias's circus. It was no Cirque du Soleil. It was pretty shoddy but, like all circuses, it was home to a troupe of extravagant types, some human, some not.

Parasites are highly influenced by their environment, and, a few days after they moved to Monga, Hilda began to feel a secret urge to become an artist. She would watch the family of jugglers and ponder on how unfair the world was.

The jugglers weren't even a real family, but Zé Malaquias believed that – as a family – they would generate more interest, so he made up family ties among the artists. He attributed parenthood to those who had no children and married a man to a woman just because they were more or less the same age. The only true likeness among the artists was that none of them was afraid of death. When they launched themselves from the trapeze, spinning as if they had the proper anatomy for it, it was for complete lack of better judgment. This explains why the mother didn't go into a tizzy when her son flew off. He wasn't hers to begin with...

Hilda, however, had been biologically conceived to jump 150 times her own height. One hundred and fifty times! Not even at the Imperial Circus of China can they do that. But what good was it? She had no teats, and without teats you are worth nothing in the artistic world, no matter how high you jump. The audience wants mammals.

Glauber did his best to console his wife.

"It's just a matter of identification, Hilda."

"But I have so much to offer."

"I know, sweetie. I know..."

Hilda felt belittled.

Glauber didn't share her dilemma. In this sense, he was more independent than Hilda. Every night, as soon as the audience arrived, he would race up to Monga's forehead.

"Come on, Hilda. Just look at this! It's awesome!"

Hilda would make up an excuse not to go.

"I've seen this act a thousand times."

But as soon as her husband left, she would go take a look.

Glauber became more and more audacious with each performance. First he would cling to a strand of Monga's hair. He would twirl and shimmy, rubbing himself like a shameless cobra. He would poke his tongue out at the audience and insinuate that he was going to strip.

"Oh my! Thank goodness he is microscopic," Hilda told herself.

Later on, when the circus lights began to flicker, Glauber would let go of the hair, stand with his legs apart, throw his arms up and wiggle, jumping and yelling at the same time. You would think he had suffered an electric shock.

"That is my husband..."

Poor Hilda. Although she nearly died of shame, she couldn't take her eyes off him. She would watch until the end, just to see how eccentric Glauber could be. He could be very eccentric.

Glauber would adopt Monga's rhythm. When she turned into an ape he became a super tick. It seemed to Hilda that he grew bigger, sprouted claws and drooled with pure delight. At this point she would walk home and do some breathing exercises to cool off.

One fine day Hilda was hopping here and there, taking a lift on the back of a trained monkey when she ended up on the shoulder of the popcorn vendor's son. The boy was a typical human, extremely cruel. This day he was playing at toasting ants with the help of a magnifying glass.

At first, Hilda was perplexed. Then she had an idea.

The next day she returned and brought Glauber along. The boy was playing the same game as the day before. Glauber was horrified. He could not understand why his wife insisted on showing him such a brutal thing. Neither of them was particularly fond of ants. Parasites, in general, get antsy just in seeing them toil endlessly, always so hurried and focused. But that didn't mean they thought they should be wiped off the face of the earth. Anyway, Glauber didn't understand what they were doing there.

"I have a plan," Hilda said. "Follow me!"

The flea and the mite hopped off the monkey's shoulder and entered the boy's field of vision.

Under the optical effect of the magnifying glass, Hilda became a huge star. She performed a spectacular repertoire of flips, aerials and somersaults. She outdid herself. The boy was amazed. He summoned his little brother to come and see. Hilda showed an admirable combination of impulse, coordination and creativity. At the end, she finished her act with a flourish that the brothers understood at once. It was the gesture that announces the next act. Glauber came on stage.

The popcorn vendor's sons had never seen such an exhilarating act. Glauber hopped onto the little brother's thumb, bit off a chunk of skin and devoured it like a hungry cave-man, beating his fists on his chest, roaring and smearing himself with the piece of flesh from the audience. To tell the truth, there was nothing new about this number. Yet, for the first time ever, someone was able to see it!

The little brother ran away bawling his eyes out and calling for his mother.

When the older brother saw the effect of the performance he got excited and asked Glauber and Hilda to return the following day, at the same time. He would bring more spectators.

It was a time of great glory for Glauber and Hilda. Every afternoon, five to eight speechless boys would applaud the Flea Circus. They began calling Hilda “Magniflea.” Hilda’s self-esteem had never been better.

Motivated by his newfound stardom, Glauber came up with new ways to scare his loyal audience. He improvised a pair of vampire fangs which sent the kids wild. Glauber became known as Monster Mite. One of the kids started coming to the show in long-sleeved shirts with buttoned cuffs. He endured the heat, in the name of art.

The popcorn vendor’s son was making good money with Glauber and Hilda’s show when, one fine day, they failed to show up for work.

They came two days later, but then took the next day off. They showed up again on the fourth day, then skipped three days in a row.

The boy was annoyed by their irresponsible behavior, and decided to do something about it.

The following week, the popcorn vendor’s son patiently waited for the artists. He placed a matchbox under the magnifying glass. The open lid resembled the mouth of a famished crocodile. The plan was perfect. The next time Glauber and Hilda showed up they would fall into the trap of employment law.

Everything seemed to point to a tragic ending.

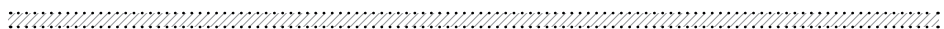
But the popcorn vendor’s son overlooked one tiny detail. Parasites are extremely lucky creatures. Nature blessed them with this gift as a way of making up for all their other shortcomings.

This being so, seconds before Glauber and Hilda hopped off the monkey’s shoulder, a strange three-legged dog hobbled past and bumped into the monkey, sent the matchbox flying and ran off.

Glauber and Hilda never returned to collect their belongings from Monga’s fur. They also never regretted the abrupt ending of The Flea Circus and Monster Mite. They were not used to working, to having a routine and to assuming responsibilities. Their lifestyle was way too carefree for that. They had acted on impulse. Just as easily as they taken to the idea of becoming circus artists, they grew bored of it.

As for the popcorn vendor’s son, he might have learned something from the episode, but he didn’t. He went back to killing ants.

Monga, the setting for this adventure, never suspected a thing. She remained oblivious to it all. She still works at Zé Malaquias’s circus, as monstrous and insensitive as always.





THE BOOK



The Adventures of Glauber and Hilda

Índigo

- **Original title:** As aventuras de Glauber e Hilda
- **ISBN:** 9788574066431
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 47
- **Total print run:** 1.900 copies

SYNOPSIS

Glauber and Hilda belong to the most despicable species. He is a dust mite. She is a flea. But they know how to take advantage of their condition as parasites. It is in their nature to take advantage of everything. They are proud to be what they are and will survive all kinds of attacks. Glauber and Hilda have been married for several years, and as it is bound to happen, they became dependant on one another. In 5 short stories they prove how love keeps them together, always.

THE AUTHOR



Ana Cristina Araujo Ayer de Oliveira

- **Pen name:** Índigo
- **Other books:**

Short stories

Cobras em compota - Moderna, 2015, 102 pages

Novels

Saga animal - Moderna, 2012 - 118 pages

Um dalmata descontrolado - Moderna, 2015 - 175 pages

Meu amigo Ovídio - SM, 2014 - 31 pages

Um pinguim tupiniquim - Manati, 2013 - 173 pages

Perdendo perninhas - Scipione, 2013 - 128 pages

O livro das cartas encantadas - Brinque Book, 2006 - 160 pages



THE ILLUSTRATOR

Caco Galhardo

The cartoonist and playwright Caco Galhardo has a comic daily strip published by the Brazilian newspaper Folha de São Paulo since 1996. He has nine books published. Some of his work also appeared in two animation series on Cartoon Network.

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ANTITHERAPIES

JACQUES FUX

Translated by Eric M. B Becker

 Damn Nazis. Eichmann. Bormann. Argentina. Brazil. Now it all makes sense. (Everything fits.) I was a normal child. Normal, but with all the peculiarities of a Jewish kid living in the modern-day ghetto. I had my Jewish mother and father, my Jewish friends, my Jewish relatives, my Jewish school, the Jewish club, and, at the time, I even thought that The Xuxa Show was kosher programming. There were plenty of wombs around to nurture me. The first of them I managed to break free from (as everyone does), with great effort. I feel like after leaving that cozy, warm, comfortable, safe place (I seek it out again and again), I got my first kick in the ass. To be honest, years later, I'm able to see that it was little more than a Michelangelean pat on the rear, since I was already a masterpiece at that point who should have parlare. But right from the start, Mom was giving me love, affection, safety and loads of milk. There was no need for me to ever cry. I could have it all. So in the end, I didn't suffer so much with this first kick in the ass. And one week later, they snipped off my foreskin. Brit Milah, my covenant with the chosen people and my protection against cruel Lilith. That is, if God and Lilith exist. Or is circumcision designed to make us certain that we're always incomplete? In my case, this incompleteness has always been physical—there's nothing more to be done. I've never heard of a foreskin implant. I've never heard of someone who wanted one. The truth is, the whole thing must have hurt a lot. I must have felt scared with all those people there eating and drinking on someone else's dime (wherever you find free food and drink and another's misfortune, you'll find plenty of Jews, especially the kind of relatives who probably only appear at a Brit Milahs and bar-mitzvahs). They looked on at me and my wee-wee. So tiny, the two of us . . . At least one of them grew up (even if it wasn't much). They even doused the tip in wine to mock me. In vino veritas. Soon after, literally, they castrated me. The castration, plagiarizing by anticipation Freudian theory, did in truth take place. Some extremist psychoanalysts consider the rite of Brit Milah to be a sort of Jewish self-mutilation, this being one of the explanations for anti-Semitism. I don't know anything, but I suspect a great many things. I don't remember a thing. This is where I would insert myself into History. The Story of Abraham and his covenant with God. In medieval Jewish literature, along with Lilith and the dybbuks. My own story began to replicate literature's. I discovered inside myself the symptoms of Portnoy's Complaint. Fascinating. The way history had reproduced history was already quite staggering; that my story could reproduce literature was inconceivable. Yet, all the same, my story went on.

The other womb that always kept me protected—this one omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent—was that of Mom and Dad, the most unforgettable people I ever met. They must have made a womb of the sort of material used to construct those black boxes in airplanes. They knew everything, could do everything, thought of everything, and I believe they were even able to guess at every one of my thoughts, the most intimate, even without knowledge of the Kabbalah and its manipulation of sacred letters. Could my parents have been followers of Tzinacan and known the Holy Scripture? Could they have been characters from literature? Was it magic? Reality? Magic realism?

Still another womb offered me protection. Or should have offered me protection. It was much bigger, much scarier, and shared with many other kids: the Jewish school. All the students were Jewish and near-twins, since they'd had similar upbringings. I lived an exaggeratedly sheltered existence and had this feeling that I was the chosen one, the special one. Could it be we're all like that as children or is it just young Jewish kids? The relationship between Stephen Dedalus and his boarding school was exactly the opposite of me with mine. Yet both of us would become artists (perhaps). My school seemed enormous with its thirty-five students. It was an extension of my home. The teachers and administrators were versions of my mother. They watched over all of us. In my class, there were little more than four students, one of which was a girl. A sweet girl. A pretty girl. A creature unknown to me. One who piqued my interest. My curiosity. Was it love for the unfamiliar? Despite all the care and protection the school offered, I needed more. My standard for comparison was the pre-school. Which was full of kids. So I needed to look for even more emotional support. More shelter, more safety, more love and affection. That's when I discovered these things in my Jewish friends. Who became my siblings for life. Companions on a long and fruitful journey.

But when you're a perfectly normal kid, everyone expects you to be simply brilliant. The most brilliant of all. Natural, smooth, outstanding. I would have to decide while still at a very young age what I would do to become a successful, intelligent, wealthy, and acclaimed young man of eighteen. Yes, for a child of four or five, to imagine yourself at eighteen is to see yourself as an adult—complete, happy, determined, with a family, money, cars, belongings, distinctions, prizes, children, books, culture, leisure time, vacations. Phew. The basics, nothing more. And so, still just a cub, I made the most important decision of my life. Which almost never changed with the passing of the years. A practical decision, straight to the point and easily within reach: I would become an astrophysicist and before long would earn a Nobel Prize. Obviously it wouldn't do to simply study the most complex mathematical theories applied to the most wild, abstract, and imaginative concepts of physics. All this led to those minor awards. Who needs a Jabuti, a Pulitzer, or any of that other crap? The Nobel it would be, a gift to Mom and Dad and all the others who'd helped me to accomplish this feat I'd already set out to accomplish. The eyes follow the paths that have been laid down for them in the work. Several times, I rehearsed my Nobel acceptance speech. My thank you remarks. My dedication of the award. My humility in

the face of such a feat. Everything was set. Only the details remained to be worked out. Hence, in my view, my story and that of my family bore resemblance to stories from literature and Jewish history. I needed to be brilliant, like Alexander Portnoy. My brother, on the other hand, like Portnoy's sister, was far from a genius. But he had many qualities. A man of plain qualities and remarkable sensitivity. In this way, my life and my family, though special, weren't unique. Other lives and other literatures had inevitably been like mine. Could that be why I'm here talking about and fabricating my life and my literature? Am I special or not? Have we all been chosen? Do we choose our own paths? Je m'en fou. I go on living, writing, reminiscing and inventing. And being a perfectly normal guy.

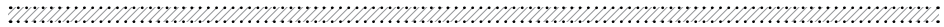
My choice of a profession wasn't mere chance. It had been coldly calculated, planned out, studied, well founded (all at the age of five). Everyone who lived in the modern ghettos had heard stories of the great achievements and discoveries made by Jews. Science, above all mathematics and physics, was revered and held great mystery. Further, the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics were considered the science of Jews, brilliant Jews. So I decided to follow the path of the other brilliant geniuses who'd come before me. I would be one more among them. I decided to trod the same path they did and be every bit as much a genius as a certain Jewish German physicist: Albert Einstein. I'd heard stories that Einstein had been unable to speak until seven years of age, or that until the age of two, he'd displayed a certain slowness in comparison to the other children. However, I'd decided upon a still easier path. Since I was a child without any developmental delay whatsoever, who spoke without difficulty and even earned good grades in reading class, my path to the Nobel would be swifter than others could imagine. Einstein, even with all his childhood difficulties, had come upon his brilliant idea at sixteen. He won the prize at forty-two. I, then, needed to be prepared to reach my insight, my brilliant epiphany, my discovery of the unknown at the gum-chewing age of eleven. My Nobel-winning idea would be the vision that would destabilize me emotionally, like a faint nausea, while still a youth. I was to have everything ready to receive my accolade at thirty-three. But life is full of obstacles. (Damn Nazis. Why did it have to be me? Why?) I wasn't prepared for a single one of them. I hadn't been raised for stumbling blocks, challenges, and failures. I wasn't meant to be like Don Quixote, storming into battle, authoring my own epopees. No, I would flee from battle. I would show no honor or virtue in the face of adversity. And later, I discovered that not even the stories I'd heard had been as simple as all that. Einstein, in reality, hadn't had all of these problems in his youth. Things, even for a mind as gifted as his, hadn't been so simple. Physics and mathematics were genuinely difficult, complicated, complex, unattainable. Many times, our stories are full of mistakes, shaped by time, by our minds, by desires, by frustrations. But I can, via literature, embellish my life. I can retell it as though it were Don Quixote's or like Forrest Gump's. And by reshaping my memory, I will reshape my past.

I recall the day I decided to announce my profession to the world. The profession I'd chosen. The profession to end all professions. I remember perfectly how

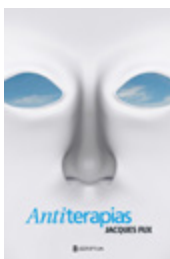
we all sat in a circle, all the students in my class. The *doda* went from student to student asking what we wanted to be when we grew up. I'd have to grow up (rats!) and this would result in a great many news things. Everyone said they wanted to be doctors, lawyers, or soccer players (such innocence, little did they know, Pelé wasn't Jewish, nor had there ever been a Jewish winner of the Nobel for Soccer, and, as a result, there was little reason to become a soccer star. Women, money, fame, cars, culture—astrophysicists had everything and then some.) So I filled my lungs with a deep breath. I swallowed all my shame, my timidity, and announced: I'm going to be an astrophysicist. Declaring at age five that you want to become an astrophysicist entails, above all, social suicide. All those present in such a solemn and illustrious moment were charged, as a civic and moral duty, with the responsibility to mock, attack, and ridicule each coming step taken by this idiot who hadn't chosen medicine, engineering, or law. (If I had, for example, chosen to be a noble knight at five years of age, it would have shocked everyone much less.) A great deal of courage had been required. And stupidity, to make such a declaration. Later, the result of such a declaration is a gulf that's created between you and others and even yourself, from the *unheimlich*. The bizarre idiot. I was about to become the eternal victim of bullying (a contemporary and polite term for human and literary relations as old as the Earth). And so, returning to my unusual declaration: not even the teacher was able to figure out what I'd actually said. My teachers, the era's guardians of knowledge, were unfamiliar with the term. They all knew very well how to repeat old wives' tales. They were important figures in the global history of such things. They would tell us, for example, that the Amazon is the world's lungs, that sleeping with a plant next to your bed is almost certain suicide (seeing as how plants give off carbon dioxide), and that the theory of relativity is rather simple: everything is *r l* relative. And so faced the jeers of my classmates and the stupidity of my teacher when it came to science and the Nobel Prize. And I, so often vulgar, so often obscene, so often vile, found such common wisdom hard to believe. I had been chosen to blaze a noble path (as had everyone who was present there). I couldn't imagine how they didn't know what an astrophysicist was. Hardly anyone at all knew what the word meant. And, honestly, neither did I. But, all the same, I proudly declared my future profession.

Yet all my grand declarations, my grand achievements, my grand dreams, prizes, desires, aspirations are (were?) motivated by two simple factors: pleasing my mother and, at the time, pleasing *Silvinha*. (Years later, each great achievement would also have the aim of pleasing my mother and, of course, getting laid). The only girl in my class: *Silvinha*. A blondie. A real cutie. My little girlfriend. My girlfriend in grand style: I never really came near her. I never managed to trade so much as a word with her. I only knew how much I liked her by my shortness of breath, the way I began to sweat, and the quickening of my heartbeat when I sat at her side. I was her protector during recess. I was a knight whose mission it was to protect my *Dulcinea* with valor. She baked beautiful cakes of sand with her friends. Childhood works of art. I admired her early works with love, care, and attention. I

was already possessor of a sensitive and feminine soul for appreciating art, at least the art of affection. That was why I sought to protect the girls and their sand cakes from the cruel, horrible fate handed down by the other boys, the young dybbuks: the total destruction of these tiny monuments by kicks and blows. I tried in vain to protect them. I exercised tikkum olam. I'd been raised by my mother to be a virtuous, kind, and generous boy. A real tzadik. I thought my mother was perfect, too. That she was a virgin. And she thought I was a god. What a sublime relationship! As sublime as the story of Jesus. Who was, in fact, Jewish and whose mother was said to be a virgin. And so I, too, had a moral, social, and prophetic duty to be perfect. I fancied myself protector of the young ladies. Or at least I imagined myself in such a role. They were beautiful. And I dreamed of Silvinha. I don't even remember these dreams, but they didn't have any sexual component. *Vivre sans volupté, c'est vivre sous la terre.* I never dreamed and didn't have a clue that the fact that I had a little wee-wee and Silvinha did not could result in unimaginable pleasures. I went on loving her. What can one do if not, in the presence of others, love? Love and forget, love and mislove, love, unlove and love again? Despite never making a public declaration of my love, my eyes guarded no secrets. Ah, if only she would guess, if she could hear my gaze's call, if a single look was enough for her to know how my eyes adored the sight of her . . . That's how I continued loving my mother and protecting Silvinha.



THE BOOK



Antitherapies

Jacques Fux

- **Original title:** Antiterapias
- **ISBN:** 978-85-89044-53-0
- **Year of Publication:** 2012
- **Original Publisher:** Scriptum
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- **Total print run:** 1.500 copies

SYNOPSIS

Jacques Fux's work of autofiction, *Antitherapies*, is, more than anything else, a tale of growing up Jewish in Brazil and the constant balancing act between assimilation and staying true to one's identity and history. Peppered with generous doses of humor, Fux sheds light on the sometimes tragic, sometimes uproariously funny Jewish experience in Brazil, one much different from that in the United States and elsewhere.

PRESS REVIEWS

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THE AUTHOR



Jacques Fux

- **Pen name:** Jacques Fux
- **Other books:**
Literatura e Matemática: Jorge Luis Borges, Georges Perec e o OULIPO. Belo Horizonte: Tradição Planalto, 2011, 260p.
Brochadas: Confissões Sexuais de um jovem escritor. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2015. 240p.

THE TRANSLATOR

Eric M. B. Becker

In 2014, he earned a PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for his translation of a collection of short stories from the Portuguese by Neustadt Prize for International Literature winner Mia Couto, forthcoming from Biblioasis. He has also published translations of work by Brazilian writers Paulo Scott, Eric Nepomuceno, and Carlos Drummond

de Andrade. He was resident writer at the Louis Armstrong House Museum in 2014. Becker was recently awarded a 2016 Fulbright grant to translate Brazilian literature. Before assuming the editorship of Words without Borders, he was assistant managing editor at world literature journal Asymptote when it earned a London Book Fair International Excellence Award. He holds an MFA from Queens College-City University of New York and lives in New York.

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THE BOUNDLESS FRONTIER

JOÃO BATISTA MELO

Translated by Marina Coelho

The street is in all my memories. Without the street, there wouldn't be any houses. Without the houses, there wouldn't be the toys, the games, and the stories. I can see myself running on the sidewalk, leaves falling from the trees on my restless feet. I can see Sophie with her blonde braided hair, hopping through the squares, and her small sandals covering the numbers. A dog watches us with lowered ears.

I'm not sure if it was 1935 or 1940 the same way as I don't know if we were 10 or 12 years old. It's just a remote memory crossing my mind. A framed picture I could hang on the wall. It could be an illusion built from fragments of reality. Perhaps, that single afternoon has never happened, and the girl jumping on the chalk hopscotch grid is just a synthesis of the moments I spent on that street.

Once again, the street: a paved stone road crossing my past. From that street houses would grow, and in their midst, people would move. Daddy and Mommy. Sophie. The Germans and other neighbors. All of them walking through the street, from one side to the other. It was like a river where I sailed with my childhood dreams, polishing a feeling of happiness built of small, yet deep, moments of joy. If I looked for that river today I wouldn't find it. It's true that the street is still there, somewhere in Belo Horizonte, even if it's covered by asphalt and enclosed between sky-high buildings. Even if the houses were still there and the asphalt didn't fill the space once occupied by cobble stones, the street still wouldn't be the same. That old one is trapped in time, framed by my own story.

I can't tell when exactly the order broke. Maybe on that afternoon of hopscotch games. Maybe sometime later. Anyway, every time I think about that time, about my affection for the German girl, or even about the change that transformed my father before my eyes – like some of the characters from Mr Konrad's stories –, the first encounter with Erika comes always to my mind. Maybe she came in our direction when we were playing hopscotch. Her steps were steady; her blond hair flew along with the leaves that fell from the trees. She had a big bag with a few pieces of clothing and lots of books, and a little child wrapped in a blue blanket sleeping in her arms.

I remember all these things and also things that I haven't even seen. Sentences that I once heard turned into images, giving life to my imagination as if they conducted reality. That is how I recreate my past and the world as I knew it, hoping to find reasons for my dreams that have never become true and for the nightmares I still bring with me.

The stone hits the square. Sophie bends one of her legs like an egret while the other one carries the weight of her body. Then she slightly hops with her eyes closed. Her dress is blown up by the same movement that also makes her stockings drop down to her ankles. The squares cover the sidewalk forming a pattern that ends in a semicircle where it reads “safe” written with chalk. I wait for her on the safe area, always anxious that at some point her feet might touch the wrong square.

From this point on, I guide my memories. I don't allow the facts to command my mind. I prefer the impressions, the emotions, and the senses. I forget about the solitude and the longing. This image is all I care about. Sophie raises her hands to regain balance, like a bird about to take off. A fountain statue in the static fluidity of the garden. When arriving at the end of the drawn course, she loses balance. The bent leg touches the ground, while her small body tumbles forward. Then I give her my hand in support, and convert that moment into the most tender memory of my childhood.

1 Building walls

She looked at the sea fearing the ultimate destination of the ship. The captain had informed hundreds of passengers that the Brazilians hadn't authorized him to moor Buena Esperanza. Although very close, the shore was a forbidden land. From the crowded third class deck to the wealthiest passengers' deck, faces turned to the South America coast visible on the background.

Erika turned her back to that scene, refusing to look at the distant land outlined like a pencil trace in the horizon. She walked to Hans; his little body rested on a very small portion of the queen-sized bed. He slept with his legs bent in a fetal position and his forefinger slightly touching his lips. He showed a fleeting smile oblivious of the tempest that disturbed his mother's blue eyes.

Erika walked around the cabin making sure Hans would be safe if he awakened before her return. She knew he wasn't likely to wake up around that time, but even if he did, he would probably be quietly playing with his own hands, waiting for her to open the door. He then would happily open his arms and say the only word to give some sense to his recent existence: mom.

Since that night in Berlin, Erika feared leaving her son by himself. But at the Buena Esperanza, locked inside the cabin, nothing could take away her only link with life. Moreover, she needed all the fresh air her lungs could absorb and all the vastness her eyes could reach. She closed the hatch, locked the door, and went up to the deck to join the crowd in contemplating the dense clouds and the lightning on the distant traces of land. On her side, a man grumbled to himself with his hands clawed on the gunwale. Down bellow, a big mass of people crowded onto the third class deck uneasily waiting for the upcoming storm.

- Where are we going? - Asked the man while wiping his eyes with a handkerchief. He sneezed and straightened his back in an effort to show some dignity.

- I don't know. - Answered Erika, trying to sight the coast. - I don't know.

- Rio de Janeiro is right there, just behind those clouds. - He pointed with raised arms perhaps dreaming that he had the power to disperse the thickness of the clouds lined up in the sky and pulling the looming land towards the boat.

- I don't know. - Erika felt the humid wind blowing on her face. She stood still expecting the rain to ascend upon her head clearing the debris of her mind. For the sake of her son, she tried to find reasons to live in that unattractive and hopeless world. Anything could be a good reason, even a blow of the wind or a tempestuous storm.

- We are going south. - The man was young; he was maybe in his early twenties. - Would they let us disembark in Buenos Aires? - She was also young, even though she looked way older than the man. Seen together at the deck they could be easily mistaken for mother and son. However, just a few months ago and despite all the fears and problems, Erika was a beautiful and elegant woman, with shiny legs and small and firm breasts. A figure completely different from that shadowy one who leaned over the gunwale while refraining herself from jumping into the waves.

- I haven't seen any Argentinean - she mentioned.

- I haven't either - he said. - But we need to land somewhere. I can't just go back to Germany.

- None of us could go back.

- Are you Jewish?

- Why does it matter?

It was getting dark and as the storm was getting closer people started to go back to their cabins or to the covered deck. Though, Erika and the man remained still.

- That's all that matters - he whispered. - For all of us. That's why we are drifting around. Nobody wants to deal with Jewish people. Not there, or here. Nowhere.

The first drops of rain clattered on the metallic surface of the ship. Little rivers ran throughout the plate forming little lakes. The waves hit the side of the ship, tilting it from one side to the other as the few remaining passengers left the decks. Erika and the man were still over the gunwale. He took his hands off the handrail ignoring the ship's movement. With the hands on his head, he shouted to the ocean:

- Shit!

Then he repeated with a softer voice:

- Shit.

He lost balance and almost fell over Erika before leaning again on the handrail. He excused himself both for losing his balance and for cursing. The rain came heavier and they had to go into the cabin corridor.

- Are you traveling by yourself? - Erika asked.

- My wife and our two kids are sleeping. And so is my mother. My father passed away last year, after they robbed our factory and house. We used everything we had left to buy the tickets and the visa to enter Brazil.

- The visa is now expired. - She mentioned.

- Everybody's visa is expired. We had to stop here and there. They knew we would have to stop a few times. Why would they issue visas with such a short expiration period?

- They do it so they expire.

- I can't go back to Germany.

She felt the air with her hands, almost touching it with her fingers. One more time she felt like a mother. It was lightning over the ship, invoking the daylight to invade the evening. The roll of the ship was getting stronger, leading the passengers to lean against the walls. Erika recalled her son was alone. She nodded goodbye and went back to her cabin. The boy was still asleep. A strong thunder echoed inside the Buena Esperanza, taking her mind to Berlin, to a dark and silent night in Berlin, when the snow fell peacefully over the rooftops. Gunshots reverberating as if memory was a great bell and inside it, the toll moved through life, intermittent, and interminable.

Hans moved on the bed. He brought his arms to his face, troubled by the light coming through the windows. So many times he had a peculiar look on his face, making Erika sure he somehow knew everything. During the months following that night in Berlin she tried to make up for Albert's absence. However, every time she felt like she could protect her son from the weight of his father's absence, the boy would point to something as if to remind her she could not. It could be a balloon like the ones his father used to inflate, or it could be a suit like the ones he used to wear before the beginning of the terror. During these moments, Hans babbled syllables that, to Erika, sounded like daddy.

After changing the dress that she quickly wore to go to the deck for a nightdress, she lay down next to Hans and started singing to help him fall asleep again. The ceiling light went on and off with the rhythm of the waves bringing penumbra to the cabin.

Berlin had a night like that months ago. Deserted streets besides the platoons of soldiers and the hooligans, who wandered around aimlessly like a swarm of bees. Buzzing around the city to create chaos. Eventually, some of those men invaded Erika and Albert's store, destroying books and furniture. In fact, the couple no longer held illegal activities. They quit helping people to leave a so troubled Germany since it became fatally dangerous. But even so, their store was thoroughly ruined by those men who seemed to master the art of destruction.

Erika covered her ears to muffle the sound of the thunders while singing for Hans, helping him to fall asleep once again. But the cupped hands over the ears, as well as the closed eyelids to avoid the lightning, couldn't hold her memories back in time. They were tattooed inside her mind. When Hans subsided into sleep, she got up to walk through the cabin.

Her hair danced around her face, like raindrops over the lightning flashes. It covered her eyes while she leaned her head over the cabin door. Rocked by the shadows of falling night, she fell asleep for a brief moment and dreamed that the ship turned around to go back to its departure point. She could hear the men whining and the women in despair, fearing an eventual return to Europe.

She opened her eyes and leaned over the bed rest. She dozed and awakened several times, eventually hearing Albert calling her name. In another time they

danced together around her father's castle, the music emerging from the accordion bellows. She closed the window shades to block the sight of the sea but not without seeing the stars reflecting on the dark waves. The storm was then over, remaining only the howl of the winds.

The castle might not exist anymore. It might have been knocked down or, most likely, occupied and secured by National Socialists. The memories faded in time as its history was destroyed and erased. Her parents transformed into photographs on a wall, and now, into photographs that didn't even have a wall from which to hang.

She threw the blanket over Hans to protect him from the bitter cold that invaded the cabin. She recognized that gesture from another earlier moment: her hands pulling the blanket to cover the sleeping body of the child. The blanket rested softly on his body like a bird landing on the ground. Much as she rummaged through her own thoughts, the only clear memory was the one of the blanket touching Hans' little body. The memory would always come back the same way, without beginning or end, like a film roll with its extremities spliced together.

Hugging her son, Erika crashed on the uncomfortable pillow, waiting for the darkness of the night to take her into unconsciousness. Hans whined in his sleep reminding her of the oncoming morning. She kissed his face and lay him down on the edge of the bed. She removed the diaper pins and set them aside. After changing him into a clean cloth diaper, she dressed her son in pants and a quilted fox t-shirt. She carried Hans to the cabins' aisle where somebody greeted her in German with a tone of voice that reminded her of Albert's. She was going to lose it if she had to stay much longer in such a limited space like the ship. Albert. Albert. She loved him so much and the little baby was the only thing left of that love. That and the memories of a night she would rather forget forever.

Erika and Albert went to the bookstore after the swirl of soldiers dispersed. They knew they had to leave. They had to take the same route they once helped so many people to take. The route to leave Germany. They had to pay for visas and buy off the few authorities that could still be of help. They had to sell all their valuables to pay for their own freedom. For some reason, even though they had previously helped others in that situation, they didn't anticipate how it was going to be like when their turn arrived. Yet, after seeing the destruction left by the soldiers, they had no doubts.

Erika had to feed Hans breakfast but decided to stop by the flagship first. Although looking for the captain, she agreed to talk to the chief mate. He confirmed they were going to Buenos Aires. They were hoping to be allowed to dock there. They received only a reticent telegraph from the Argentineans, but heading to Buenos Aires seemed to be their only option once they were already prohibited to dock on Brazilian soil. Right after breakfast, Erika took Hans for a few tottering steps around the deck. She looked down to the third class deck where the poorest passengers crowded together for few minutes of sun. She thought about all the people she had once helped board a ship like this one.

Holding a cloth doll, a little girl with a scarf on her head looked up and waved in Hans's direction. Right behind her, a man, maybe her father, looked away to the horizon. After lunch, Erika sat down to watch Hans play with a ball at the deck. She could feel the excitement around the ship and wished all the water around them would disappear and give way to a port where they could disembark. She was impatient with the neglect and the slowness of time. Sometime later Hans fell asleep like he did that night in the past. On the second floor of the house in Berlin, Erika woke up from a nap when she heard the knock on the door. On the first floor, Albert stood still while she approached the edge of the stairs from where she could see the broken door. Several men surrounded Albert and one of them pressed a gun to his head. She wanted to scream but remembered that Hans was sleeping in the room upstairs. Worrying about her son, she kept her mouth shut. When the gun fired silencing the man she loved, all she could think of was the baby: "don't wake up, please, don't wake up."



THE BOOK



The Boundless Frontier

João Batista Melo

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- **ISBN:** 978-85-8240-134-7
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- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

It's the eve of World War II. A Brazilian boy and a German Girl are neighbors and good friends in Belo Horizonte city. They live surrounded by the pressures posed by Valentino's Father, a businessman on the rise who rejects the presence of foreigners in his country, and the caring and affectionate companionship of Sophie's Grandfather, an old German master brewer. The kids enjoy the latest moments of their childhood while learning the meaning of integration and respect among different cultures. However, they also discover the intolerance and prejudice.

AWARDS

Prêmio Nacional Cidade de Belo Horizonte - "Malditas fronteiras", 2013; Finalist at Prêmio Benvirá de Literatura - "Malditas fronteiras", São Paulo, 2013;

Finalist at Prêmio Jabuti - "Lanterna mágica: infância e cinema infantil", São Paulo, 2010;

Prêmio Nacional Cruz e Sousa de Romance - "Patagônia", Santa Catarina, 1998;

Prêmio Paraná - "As baleias do Saguenay", 1994;

Prêmio Nacional Cidade de Belo Horizonte - "As baleias do Saguenay", 1994;

Prêmio Guimarães Rosa - "O inventor de estrelas", 1989;

Awarded with Brazilian National Library Foundation Grant to Works by Brazilian Authors Nearing Completion - "Um pouco mais de swing", 1999.

PRESS REVIEWS

"Malditas Fronteiras is one of the finest novels I've read in recent times. I suspect that is also one of the most beautiful in the current scenery of our literature." - Alexandre Bonafim, Diário da Manhã (06/10/2014), about "Malditas Fronteiras"

<http://www.dm.com.br:9000/texto/193225>

"Malditas Fronteiras undoubtedly is one of the most significant contemporary Brazilian novels about an ancient and recurring theme in the world of literature".

- Ronaldo Cagiano, Correio Braziliense (19/04/2015) and Estado de Minas (25/04/2015), about "Malditas fronteiras"

http://divirta-se.uai.com.br/app/noticia/pensar/2015/04/25/noticia_pensar,167079/no-horizonte-do-espanto.shtml

"Of course part of the charm of its historical alternatives is in the elegant

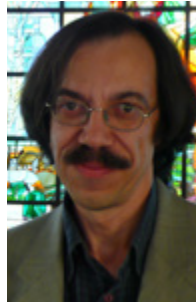
narrative flow - sometimes dreamy, sometimes lyrical, never prosaic or artificial - that characterizes all his literature” - Luiz Brás, Folha de São Paulo (Guia Folha) (25/08/2012), about “Descobrimentos”

“Patagonia is a superior novel that demonstrates a confident and powerful narrative, as well as language elegance.” - Jefferson Del Rios, Bravo! Magazine (10/1998), about the novel “Patagônia”

“Melo shows that he has skill and prodigious imagination to compose sentences and to choose words”. - Bernardo Ajzenberg, Folha de São Paulo (28/01/1996), about “As baleias do Saguenay”
<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1996/1/28/mais/20.html>

“As far as the magical realism, science fiction should be fictional in the science and realistic in the fiction, as seen on one of the best short stories (‘One Voice’).” - Wilson Martins, Jornal do Brasil (06/09/1995), about “As baleias do Saguenay”

THE AUTHOR



João Batista Melo dos Santos

- **Pen name:** João Batista Melo
- **Other books:**

Short stories

Descobrimentos, 93 p. (Devir, 2011)

O colecionador de sombras, 192 p. (Record, 2008)

Um pouco mais de swing, 138 p. (Rocco, 1999)

As baleias do Saguenay, 118 p. (Rocco, 1995) - “Après le crépuscule” from the book “As baleias do Saguenay” at anthology “Des nouvelles du Brésil” (Editions Métailié, France, 2000)

O inventor de estrelas, 78 p. (Editora Lê, 1991) - “L’inventeur d’étoiles” from the book “O inventor de estrelas” at “Imago - La Revue Littéraire Franco-Latino-Américaine” (Amazones Editions, France, 1994)

Novel

Patagônia, 298 p. (Rocco, 1998)

Essay

Lanterna mágica: infância e cinema infantil, 207 p. (Civilização Brasileira, 2010).

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THE SILVER MINES (A NOVEL)

PART ONE

JOSÉ DE ALENCAR

Translated by Matthew Rinaldi

Here we make the acquaintance of two finely gifted youths. Day broke on the year 1609.

Shedding serene light on the pure, silken horizons, the first morning of January gilded the heads of the mountains that girdle the lovely Salvador of Bahia and drew a tint of opal and crimson upon the superb panorama of Brazil's old capital.

A mere nascent city at the time, though graceful and gentile, raising the heights of its towers into the air and looking upon the sea that polished its feet like a carpet of velvet, it was, by virtue of its beauty and by right of its offspring, the queen of the wild empire that yet slumbered in the bosom of the virgin forests.

On the set of crowded hilltops, nature had prepared a throne of turf from which the lovely city reigned over the ocean, smiling upon the sailor who, at the end of the horizon, saluted it with friendly eyes to bid him good morning when he arrived, and send him his last farewell when he departed.

Awakening with the first rays of daybreak, the Bahian population resumed their activities after their rest. Houses opened to let in the air and light of the morning; little by little, the thousands of whispers of the day, which are the voice of cities, filled the space formerly occupied by silence and darkness.

The tradesmen and villains now swarmed the streets, not with the calm and evenness of men going to work or tending to their daily duties, but with the sweet excitement and jovial eagerness of those seeking pleasure and pursuing some joyous hope.

Dressed more smartly than in their Sunday outfits, men and women greeted one another so gushingly, wishing each other well with the departure of the old year and debut of the new; pressing hands with such cordiality that in the general disposition of emotions one could detect the sweet influence of a certain reason for public rejoice.

Indeed, the New Year's festivities were not the only reason for the jovial expansiveness; there was another. This was the day on which the celebrations were scheduled for Bahia to commemorate the arrival of the new Governor-General of the State of Brazil, Dom Diogo de Menezes e Siqueira, who, after a stay of one year in the Captancy of Pernambuco presiding over administrative matters, had finally docked in the capital on December 17, 1608.

Never before had there been such demonstrations in a city where governors and captains general, endowed with absolute powers, were received with suspicion, and often bid farewell with joy. But Dom Diogo de Menezes, later the Count of Conde da Ericeira, one of the competent men to govern the State of Brazil, for his noble character and superior spirit, was deserving of a special demonstration on the part of the Bahian people.

Still, this circumstance alone would not have been enough to instill the wealthy class with a desire to receive the new governor with public festivities, if interest, the first law of human action, had not inspired the same thought regarding this capable expedient of colonial policy.

During the time he had lingered in Pernambuco, Dom Diogo de Menezes had revealed the force of his will, and shown a firm intention to stave off the influence that Bishop D. Constantino Barradas and the Society of Jesus had previously exerted on the secular government. The struggle was conducted as a matter of etiquette and precedence, giving way to the celebration of the Corpus Christi procession in Olinda.

It was precisely at this time that the plantation owners, who comprised the wealthy, noble class in Bahia, found themselves up against the Jesuits on the great question of Indian servitude, and understood the advantage of having a man like Dom Diogo de Menezes on their side, a man whose authoritative vote would hold sway in the decisions of the Council of India and the mood of the King Dom Filipe III.

As such, with the arrival of the governor, they colluded to give him a brilliant reception. In fourteen days, all the necessary preparations and furnishings had been finalized to celebrate, along with the start of the new year, the benefits of the new government.

The lineup of celebrations placed importance on variety and good taste. After the mass was said, followed by the Te Deum, there was an inspection of troops and companies of ordinance in front of the palaces; in the afternoon, a stately cavalcade paraded on the academy grounds, engaging in games, tournaments and carousel jousts with balls of clays; at night, dances in the streets and arches of lamps fastened with palm trees or garlands of flowers at the Praça do Governador.

Such fanfare was more than enough to excite the vivid imaginations of Bahia's young ladies and make the devoted midwives and gossipy spinsters, of which the Brazilian metropolis was then abundantly populated, twirl like pinwheels.

At the time, Bahia was little more than a small town inhabited by roughly 1500 souls; but its neighbors were well-heeled and had a taste for luxury; there were many rich settlers with working farms, pieces of silver and gold, harnesses for their horses and household implements; some had incomes of over 5000 cruzados, and according to Gabriel Soares, "they treated their people quite honorably with many horses, servants and slaves."

These means, which seem meager by today's standards, were at that time substantial; the ease with which they were acquired and the natural gifts of the population inclined toward pageantry and lavishness nourished in Bahia and Pernambuco a luxury superior to that of Lisbon, and fueled a taste for parties and amusement.

It was therefore no wonder that the Capital of Brazil awoke on Thursday, January 1, 1609 possessed by a pleasant chorus that forges a hope soon to be realized, and precedes the satisfaction of a longing lulled in our soul.

At six o'clock, the small bell of Sé, quickly tolled, let off joyous chimes, which, due to its Argentine sound, resembled the restless voices of the angels of the Lord, calling the faithful; the echoes vibrating in the air hastened the pace of many hearts who had awaited it with impatience.

Nearly at the same time, the carillon at the Jesuit academy resounding through the space accompanied the morning sound of the Episcopal tower; its deep, somber and plangent notes, joining with the chimes from other churches, formed a majestic concert with which the religion of light and truth greeted the birth of the day.

When the first tolls of the bell resounded in the air and the broad gates of Sé opened wide, the group of old women parishioners, who had passed the daybreak in the churchyard draped in long mantillas and shawls, slunk through the network of naves and took their places within the cathedral.

Soon, the stone slabs of the vast pavement were covered by those black and brown rags of silk and wool, far from having the appearance of human contours; from the enormous mass arose a whisper, undetectable at first, which grew as if a swarm of wasps were buzzing throughout the church interior.

At that instant, the altar was invaded by a collective, which today has lost much of its earlier social importance, but which in the 17th century played a distinct role in all areas of devotion and mockery of the time; twelve chorus boys, wrapped in sacks of red wool, spread throughout the church's body accompanied by the competent candle lighter.

There was an uproar: the mischievous boys, laughing like mad, intentionally stepped on the dresses of the old devout women, who huddled together muttering a litany of imprecations; the imprudent youths refused to respect their elders; emotions ran high, blood boiled; finally, with the rosario of the day's fashionable expletives exhausted on both sides, the two camps mutually cast the last and most terrible insults.

The boys unleashed the slanderous word "cockroach," to which the old women retorted with the equally derogatory epithet "ant": and, after this, as there was no possible retaliation for such a strong provocation, except for the actual means which respect for the place impeded, each of the enemy regiments retracted and silently returned to their occupations.

It was time; because the church was filled with the faithful, and the churchyard was peopled with small chairs and the litters which had brought the wives and daughters of Bahia's wealthy gentlemen to the mass.

Two young men had paused on the sidewalk, both in the prime of their lives, both elegant and good-looking, but each equally dissimilar in their dress as in the mold of their manly beauty.

The elder, 23 years old, was dark. His frank and open posture, his fresh, pinkish colors, the firm and direct poise of his even stature, showed a complexion of vigor;

while his expression exuded such grace, the smile that splayed across his lips was so flashy, his movements so debonair, that his muscular power vanished beneath the flower of happy organization, like the robustness of a tree trunk covered with verdant leaves.

He wore a pearl-colored grosgrain vest garnished at the edges by a thin gold thread with evenly threaded passementerie, and indigo velvet trousers fringed in back by a fine silver trim. A tassel of scarlet silk hung from the left side of his small-sword; a plush blue velvet cap with a ruby brooch curbed the rings of his black hair; pine comb colored stockings hugged his well-contoured legs, and low shoes with tapered spurs covered his fine, aristocratic feet.

At that time, when a profusion of bright colors and embroidery was the height of fashion, you certainly could not find a gentleman groomed with more gentility and splendor; the wealth was discreetly displayed, in order to not outshine the good taste in the artful combination of lovely colors, and the elegance of the cut and trim of his clothing.

And in Bahia there was no dandy quite like Cristóvão de Garcia de Ávila, the master of a plantation which earned over 50,000 cruzados, and descendent of one of the noble families that had come over from the Kingdom with Tomé de Sousa in 1549.

At that moment, facing the Praça do Governador, he cast his gaze on the street that led to Largo da Sé, where he hoped for something of visual interest to appear.

The other young man was just 19 years old. Dressed all in black in extreme simplicity, but with exquisite elegance. A single pearl shone on his black velvet cap; folds of the finest tunic linens hung on him dazzlingly; the light spurs that gripped the heels of his boots and the cross of his sword were steel, but so well-polished that they gleamed like precious jewelry.

The black satin of his garments accented his handsome head held with haughty posture, and the pinkish paleness of his complexion. His large mulatto eyes had a glint of depth and reflection that and reflexive that exuded intelligence at moments of pause; his upper lip, covered in silky peach fuzz, curled graciously in an expression of seriousness; he was tall in stature, and, like his companion, had a svelte figure and supremely groomed hands and feet.

But he was especially characterized by an unnoticeable shadow, which cast upon his high and intelligent brow at times, subtly weighting down the lines of his profile and imprinting his countenance with a mark of tenacious willpower; at these moments, one got the sense that calm, firm and inflexible reason was capable of taming the unruly nature of youth, if need be.

The two gentlemen continued the conversation they had begun in the churchyard.

— You are wasting your time, said Cristóvão de Ávila without taking his eyes off of his favorite target.

— I know of no better way to employ it than by practicing with a friend, the gentlemen replied smiling.

— Disguises that do not fit you are of no use, for the truth is there for all to

discover. I say you are wasting your time when you insist that, amidst so many kindly maidens, there is not one for whom you would wish to try your hand at a joust or a passage of arms on this afternoon.

— And is there one for you? Asked the other, deflecting attention from himself.

— You well know there is. I am not one for secrets; so sacred is the love that God places in our souls that I have no shame in wearing it on my face for all to see.

— So it must be for those who are noble and wealthy, and do not fear rejection; while others have not the right to raise their sights, no matter how much higher their hearts may be.

The last words were pronounced with a hint of offended pride, which was immediately smothered and vanished with a melancholy smile.

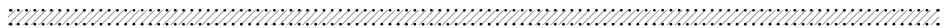
— I swear I do not understand you, Estácio. You are as noble as the best of them, and as wealthy; because no one has more right to the lands that your grandfather Diogo Álvares honorably conquered for the king, from whom they are granted to us and our parents.

The young man was about to respond when a small chair with a golden dome, which had come from the grounds of the schoolyard, carried by two negroes dressed in Moorish garments with cloaks of scarlet wool, keenly excited his attention.

Cristóvão feigned that he had not noticed the shudder of pleasure that passed through his companion and turned his smiling face.

Neither of them noticed a certain maiden who at that very instant passed by them heading to the church, accompanied by an old chaperone. She was entirely veiled by a thick, crepe mantilla so that it was impossible to distinguish her features. Seeing Estácio's gesture, he cast a quick, furtive glance to discover the cause of his emotion and entered Sé murmuring to himself:

— He is already conquered by love!



THE BOOK



The Silver Mines (a Novel) Part One

José de Alencar

- **Original title:** As Minas de Prata Volume 1
- **ISBN:** 9000000897250
- **Year of Publication:** 1865
- **Original Publisher:** B.L. Garnier
- **Number of pages:** 267

SYNOPSIS

In the early 1600s, when Brazil was a Portuguese colony beset by invasions from the Dutch and Spanish, the fortune promised by the legendary silver mines of Robério Dias could well decide the colony's fate. To defend his father's legacy and win the hand of the noble Inês, Robério's son Estácio sets off to discover the location of the lost mines, facing death-defying adventures along the way.

THE AUTHOR



José Martiniano de Alencar

- **Pen name:** José de Alencar
- **Other books:**

Novels

Cinco Minutos, 1856, originally published in feuilleton format by the newspaper *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*. Recent print edition: 1997, 80 pages, published by L&PM Editores.

A viuvinha, 1857. Recent print edition: 2009, 44 pages, published by Globus.

O Guarani, 1857, originally published in feuilleton format by the newspaper *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*. Published in English in 1893 under the title "The Guarany." Kindle edition: 2012, 421 pages, Pastfolio.

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Iracema, 1865. First published in English in 1886 under the title "Iracema, the honey lips: a legend of Brasil." A new translation by Clifford E. Landers appeared in 2000, 176 pages, published by Oxford University Press.

O Gaúcho, 1870. Recent print edition: 2007, 256 pages, published by Martin Claret.

A pata da gazela, 1870. Recent print edition: 2009, 141 pages, published by Martin Claret.

O tronco de ipê, 1871. Recent print edition: 1998, 360 pages, published by Núcleo.

Guerra dos Mascates (Volume 1), 1871. Recent print edition: 2000, 208 pages, published by Escala.

Til, 1871. Recent print edition: 2012, 238 pages, published by Pontes.

Sonhos d'ouro, 1872. Recent print edition: 1981, 160 pages, published by Atica Editora.

Alfarrábios, 1873. Recent print edition: 1973, 277 pages, published by José M. Pontes.

Guerra dos Mascates (Volume 2), 1873. Recent print edition of Volumes 1 and 2: 2010, 278 pages, published by Martin Claret.

Ubirajara, 1874. Recent print edition: 2003, 112 pages, published by Martins Fontes.

O Sertanejo, 1875. Recent print edition: 1996, 272 pages, published by Atica Editora.

Senhora, 1875. Recent print edition: 2013, 336 pages, published by Penguin Companhia.

Encarnação, 1877. Recent print edition: 1998, 112 pages, published by Atica Editora.

THE TRANSLATOR

Matthew Rinaldi

Other translations:

Marina Linhares - Morar e Viver (“Marina Linhares – A Home to Live”) text by Maiá Mendonça, Portuguese to English, Brazil, Editora Equador

Brasil Invisível (“Invisible Brazil”), by Valdemir Cunha, Portuguese to English, Brazil, Editora Origem.

Na Trilha da Cultura (“On the Trail of Culture”) by Liz Wood and Clarissa H. Rocha, Portuguese to English, Brazil, Posigraf.

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A SQUARE IN ANTWERP

LUIZE VALENTE

Translated by Lori Beuligmann

Historical note

In June of 1940, the city of Bordeaux set the scene for crucial events of World War II. The French government fled there after Nazi occupation of Paris and it was there that Marshal Pétain officially announced their surrender to the Germans. Amidst the disbelief and conformity of a Europe trapped under the steamroller of the Third Reich, it was also in Bordeaux that a Portuguese consul stood strong against the fear and challenged the order of dictator Antonio Salazar. Aristides Sousa Mendes was the protagonist of what is considered by many as the greatest rescue movement by a single person during World War II. After locking himself in his office for days, witnesses say that Sousa Mendes emerged with strangely grey hair and began issuing transit visas to Portugal, unbeknownst to the government and without the usual bureaucracy, to Jews and non-Jews fleeing from Nazism. The number is uncertain, but it is estimated to be about thirty thousand. He lost his diplomatic status as a result and lived out the rest of his days in poverty, never receiving recognition while alive for the thousands of people he saved during the Holocaust.

This is a work of fiction that uses these and other historical facts from the 20th century as its backdrop.

Rio de Janeiro, January 1, 2000

PROLOGUE

The grey sky and misty rain replaced the sunshine on the first day of the new year, the new millennium. The world hadn't come to an end. People could be heard here and there on the street, singing and laughing their way home. The cups, cans and champagne bottles lying on the curb were the full extent of what remained that Saturday morning after New Year's in Copacabana.

Under the weight of her eighty-three years of age, from the heights of her penthouse at the most coveted spot to ring in the New Year, Olivia felt small. It was six in the morning and she hadn't slept a wink. A little after two in the morning, she'd gone to her room, giving the silent signal that it was time for everyone to leave. Twenty minutes later her granddaughter, also named Olivia, entered the bedroom and she kept her eyes closed. A few minutes later, the sounds of cups

being thrown away followed by the click of the door cleared the way for her to get up and go to the balcony, where she remained until daybreak.

She remembered how at midnight she'd wished that the world had ended. The champagne was popped as a farewell to last year, as a farewell to her son. They drank amidst the exchange of trivial greetings of Happy New Year and empty words common to moments of deep sadness. For the last twenty years - since Olivia moved to the penthouse in the annex of the most glamorous hotel in the city - her apartment had been the gathering place for the family at the end of the year.

As the end of the millennium approached, the expectations and bets about the New Year's celebration rose. Olivia never thought she'd live past eighty years old to see that day, much less that Luiz Felipe wouldn't be there.

The urn with his ashes rested on the buffet alongside the picture of him as a baby with his father, Antonio. In a few minutes, she would grant him his last wish.

— Grandma, are you sure you want to go? — Her oldest grandson's question was followed by silence. He insisted, — Grandma, maybe we should wait for daybreak, we can go in the morning when it will be calmer.

Olivia caressed the urn and responded with a firm smile on her face.

— Tom, remember how your father refused to watch the fireworks from up here? Twenty minutes to midnight and there he would go with the bottle of champagne and plastic cups... "Happy New Year Mom, this place for this Portuguese is down there, in the midst of all those people!" Well, that's where we're going. Now!

And now, Olivia was still there, sitting on the balcony on the first day of the new year. The world really had come to an end — it's not fair to watch your son die without being able to do anything about it.

She picked up the photo she always carried with her. She then slowly studied it, the woman, the man and the child.

She didn't even hear the sound of the door opening, nor the light footsteps across the rug. Tita, her granddaughter who was also named Olivia, entered slowly. She had not slept that night either.

It wasn't her uncle's death that kept Tita awake; it was the death of her dream. Why was it so difficult for some women to get pregnant?

Tita lost her first baby, then the second and now the third. She kept the pregnancy a secret already expecting another failure. Only her grandmother knew about it. Tita needed to tell her now, needed to share her pain even though she knew she was being selfish. Her grandmother had just lost her son, but she had too.

The granddaughter sat down. Olivia rested her head on her granddaughter's shoulder. She rested the weight of eight decades. Tita felt embarrassed. Truth be told, she'd gone there to cry, to vent her loss. Maybe it was time to see the world without having to be the center of attention. A few seconds of silence passed, both of them staring straight ahead. The grandmother was the first to speak.

— You lost the baby, didn't you? — She said without looking directly at her granddaughter, who nodded her head in confirmation. — I also lost a baby — she whispered as she ran her fingers over the photo, as if that would allow her to reach out to the child.

That was when the yellowed and worn photograph in Olivia's hand drew Tita's attention. She recognized the young woman as her grandmother. She was pregnant, probably with her own mother. However, she didn't recognize the man beside her, nor the boy in his arms. Who were they? Where was it taken? A square in some European city, but certainly not Lisbon, from which her grandmother came.

Words were written on the back in a language she didn't understand.

Antwerpen, Familie Zus, Verjaardag Bernardo, drie jaar, 4 februari 1940.

She took the picture from her grandmother's hand, who offered no resistance. She stared straight ahead, as if she were somewhere far away, in a place that only she knew.

— Grandma, who is this man? And this child? — her voice was low and fearful. Her grandmother translated the words written in Flemish.

— Antwerp, Zus family, Bernard's third birthday, February 4, 1940.

Then she got up. She motioned for her granddaughter to wait. Seconds later, she came back with another picture from the same timeframe. Tita recognized her grandmother, her grandfather Antonio who died before her own mother was born, and Uncle Luiz Felipe as a very young boy.

Olivia placed the two photographs side by side. After a brief silence, she turned back her granddaughter and first pointed to the photo that was familiar to her.

— This is Antonio in Portugal, shortly before coming to Brazil, with Luiz Felipe...still a baby. I kept my promise and took care of him right up to the last minute, loved him more than life itself. I wished for the cancer to be mine, for it to take me and not make me go through this all again!

Tita listened incredulous. Her grandmother then picked up the other photograph and spoke while looking back and forth between the picture and her granddaughter.

— This is Theodor, oh, how I miss him... — she paused, which seemed more like a prayer, as she stared at the tall and thin man, then ran her finger over the boy's face. — And this is Bernardo, who I never forget for even a minute.

Tita started to speak, but was interrupted. There was a catch in her grandmother's voice as she pointed at the pregnant woman beside Theodor.

— And here I am, pregnant with your mother, Helena. — She then pointed at the woman in the other photograph, who also seemed to be her. — And this is Olivia... my twin sister. I am Clarice.

Border of Spain with France, 1940

Clarice and Olivia observed everything, scared. They weren't sure what was happening. The only thing everybody talked about were the terrible conditions of the armistice that France negotiated with Germany. For them, however, it was something that would remain on the other side of the border. A single night had never seemed so long. They were close to the corner near the church. Olivia

helped the boy unbutton his pants and then crouched down to urinate in a dark corner. Clarice remained alert, like a guard, under the dim light of a lamppost.

A car slowly passed by, downshifting. In the back seat, there was a man with fine, arched lips. His curved nose gave him the appearance of an eagle. The man set his eyes on Clarice. He stuck his head out the window and continued to watch her until the car turned left. A bad feeling ran through her body. She was in the crosshairs of that eagle eye. Olivia approached in a state of shock. She knew that face well. She took a deep breath and returned to her sister.

- Clarice - her tone was calm, but tense -, that man is from the Portuguese police. His name is Fagundes. I've seen him several times in the market. He's always kind, but a treacherous type. When he arrived, Antonio treated him like a special client. We didn't want any trouble with him. Word is that he's a slick and dangerous man. I'm sure he confused you with me. - Her voice came out trembling. - We have to get out of here.

- Olivia, calm down! - Clarice tried to calm her sister, as she also tried to calm herself. - We're tired, nervous. Nothing is going to happen. There was hardly any light. And what would you be doing here on the Spanish border, alone, in the middle of the night? He probably thought I was a familiar face...that's all! The car kept going, already gone! - She tried to sound unconcerned. - Soon Theodor will be back with the tickets and we'll be on our way to Lisbon. Everything's going to be ok! We made it this far! The worst is over! - she said, squeezing her sister's hands.

But neither Clarice nor Olivia believed that. Clarice grabbed Bernardo and hugged him tight. She felt real fear. Much different from the panic before the bombings, or when they escaped death in that open field alongside the road and in the shelters in Calais and Bordeaux. Theodor wasn't there. If that man were to return, what should they do? They could tell the truth. Say that they were twins, that Olivia went to find her in France, that her husband had a visa to enter Portugal, that they would be going to Brazil. But Theodor was a Jew, communist and had fled Lisbon, from men just like that one. The best thing to do was to blend in with the crowd, return to the café and wait for her husband. He would have the answer.

From there, everything happened very fast. The car appeared on the corner again. Clarice squeezed Bernardo tight and passed him to her sister.

- Listen, Olivia. Everything will be ok. I'll make up a story. I'll pretend I'm you and it will all work out! This man will continue on his way and we will too! Now go! Stay in the café with Bernardo - she said, hurrying her sister along. - I'll talk to him and then I'll meet you there!

Olivia crossed the street with her head down, Bernardo clinging to her neck, just before the car stopped.

The man slowly approached, like a hunter observing its prey before the attack. A chill ran down Clarice's spine and she felt the baby kick. "Not now", she pled softly. "Be quiet, my dear. Mommy needs to be calm." She closed her eyes and then opened them with an angelic smile on her face.

- Olivia? - he said gently, just as her sister described him. - It's really you! - he said, taken aback.

She nodded her head and remained silent.

- What are you doing here? Where is Antonio? Did he come back from Brazil?
- he asked. - And with this belly?! How did you end up here? - he fired one question after the next, still unbelieving she was there.

Clarice waited for a pause and responded, with all sincerity. Antonio was still in Rio de Janeiro. She invented a story of half-truths. She'd come to Bordeaux a month ago to get her only aunt, a widow who was ill and lived alone there. She intended to take her to Portugal. The old woman, however, was hospitalized and she ended up staying. Unfortunately, she died, which delayed her return to Lisbon. After that, it was the same story that everybody else knew. The city was bombed. The building was struck and destroyed. She only had the clothes on her back. Antonio didn't even know she was there. It wouldn't do any good to worry him anyway. But now everything was ok. She would leave on the express to the capital in the morning. She thanked him for his attention. Now she had to go. She was with friends, who were waiting for her in the café.

When she finished talking, Clarice recovered. Even she believed what she'd said. Fagundes can't be all that bad, she thought. He listened to her attentively, without interrupting. It seemed like they were the only two people on the street. Not even the intense movement and rumbling bothered that man who lit one cigarette on the other and kept his arms crossed. Clarice then extended her hand to say goodbye. At that moment, he threw the cigarette butt on the ground and slowly put it out with the toe of his shoe. He turned back to her.

- That's quite an adventure! - he said in a suave voice. - But you have nothing more to worry about. - He faced her with eagle eyes. - I hold your husband in high regard. You will return to Lisbon with me. I'll take you back to your home, safe and sound. We're on our way to the capital. - He pointed to the car stopped a few yards away.

Clarice froze. She wasn't expecting that response. She had to think quickly. There was no way out of the lie. Her voice came out low and unsteady.

- That's very kind of you - her tone was formal - , but the convoy leaves in a few hours. I'm well, with friends. We'll leave at sunrise... Speaking of, they must be worried! I left the café to get a little air, I have to get back - she said, hurried.

He took another cigarette from the pack and lit it with a terrifying serenity. After taking the first drag, he looked her in the eyes once again.

- Olivia, I don't want to be rude, but you seem to be a little lost and outside of reality. - He paused. - We're in the middle of a war! This here - he extended his arm, pointing around - is not a vacation spot! It's full of refugees; this filthy mob is going to Portugal with illegal visas! Jews, communists, every type of traitor. You have no idea what is about to happen. I was in Bordeaux and in Bayonne to see up close and personal the insanity of our consul. The man went mad giving authorizations without the government's consent! - His soft voice gave place to an agitated tone. - But this party is about to end! The Spanish were warned. Nobody gets through anymore! - he ended, snorting. - You will leave with me, now. If you like, I'll accompany you to the café to say goodbye to your friends. - He lowered his

tone and the soft voice returned. - I'm sure they are good people, but I don't have room to take all of them. Everybody will meet again in Lisbon. Now - he completed unwaivering - it's my obligation to get you out of here! - he exclaimed, stomping his foot on the ground.

Clarice listened with her head down, wide eyed. She wanted to run away and get lost in the crowd. There was nowhere to run. She was cheated by her own lie. If she were to change her story now, it would only confirm that she was hiding something. It would certainly raise suspicion. She would have to go to Lisbon in that car. She raised her head and, with her wits about her, spoke calmly.

-You are right. I'm very confused, many hours without sleep... All these people around... - She sighed. - I'll go to the café and return in five minutes. - He moved to accompany her, but she stopped him. - It's better if I go alone, you understand, don't you? They were so kind up until now. I'll say I met up with my husband's friend and that I'll return by car... That way they won't bother you with requests for a spot in the vehicle. - She whispered.

Fagundes agreed with a nod and remained silent. Clarice crossed the stone street slowly and entered the café. Olivia was at a table close to the counter, watching the door. She was afraid that Fagundes would enter. Clarice made a motion for her not to get up. Upon arriving at the table, she was quick.

- Listen, Olivia. I can't take too long. Fagundes could enter any moment now. He believed that I'm you...and I confirmed it with an untrue story...that I can't undo! I'm going to have to go back to Lisbon with him. He was unwavering. - She swallowed hard. - I need your passport. Theodor has mine. The situation is getting worse and worse... We were lucky to cross the border. From now on, the Spanish will be more rigorous. The important thing is that we're already in! And soon you will be on the convoy to Lisbon. - She fell silent, her eyes filled with tears.

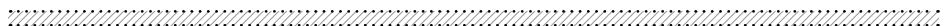
She then picked up Bernardo and kissed him all over.

- Son, I want you to know that I love you so, so much. Your aunt is going to take care of you. We'll soon be together again! - She returned to Olivia and gave her the boy. - I'm so sorry for all this trouble, my dear sister... Take care of my boy as if he were yours. Explain to Theodor what happened. I have to go - she ended, wiping away the tears.

Olivia was also crying. The two of them hugged each other and stood still as if they were back in their mother's womb, until Olivia spoke.

- This will all be over soon! Go now. - She paused. - And give my little boy lots of kisses when you arrive... Tell him I love him more than anything... Take care of him as if he were your son! And I'll take care of Bernardo as if he were mine! We'll soon be together... Now go!

Clarice hugged her son one last time. She felt pain, a deep sense of loss. She didn't want to think about it. She walked to the door of the café and, just like hours before when she'd said goodbye to Theodor, she waved to Bernardo and Olivia. The two of them waved back. It was the last image she had of them.



THE BOOK



A Square in Antwerp

Luíze Valente

• **Original title:**

Uma praça em Antuérpia

• **ISBN:** 978-85-01-10317-8

• **Year of Publication:** 2015

• **Original Publisher:** Record

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• **Total print run:** 5.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

A square in Antwerp takes place nowadays and during the II World War and brings the saga of two sisters and their families. Olivia marries a Portuguese, who comes to Brazil. Clarice marries a German Jew and goes to live in Antwerp, Belgium. They have a happy life, until the war starts. Clarice's family receive help from Portuguese consul Aristides Sousa Mendes, a diplomat who saved thousands of lives by issuing transit visas to Portugal in 1940, when he served in Bordeaux, France. They go to Portugal but when arriving there a tragic fate is waiting. Fate that will change forever Clarice and Olivia's lives because of a secret that will be revealed 60 years later.

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ALL IN

MALU GASPAR

Translated by Lisa Shaw

PROLOGUE

Eike Batista entered the large boardroom accompanied by two advisors. He was dressed in a business suit and was unshaven. His expression was heavy but oddly tranquil. His trademark toothpaste-advert grin had been replaced by just a faint suggestion of a smile, the result of months of public agony.

After greeting a few board members he sat at the table and glanced around him. He knew that the meeting would bring to a close a chapter in his career. He was ready to lose power within the company. He had already sold a good chunk of his shares over the past few months. He was aware that it was a terrible time but, inwardly, he was already making plans to return with full force. But he could not have anticipated what happened next. “Eike, you’re out. As of today you’re no longer the boss of this company. Creditors are taking over and I’ll be representing them. And if you dare to try and claim any compensation, we’ll sue you.”

The businessman opened his blue eyes wide and faced his interlocutor, but he offered no resistance. On the contrary, he bowed his head and stayed quiet. There was nothing else to be said. The Brazilian Midas, the man who had the incredible ability to multiply shareholders’ money, had reached the end of the road. There was no point in arguing to shareholders and creditors that, before the crisis, he had made many people rich; that several of his enterprises had been bought by powerful big companies; that his audaciousness had paved the way for countless entrepreneurs; or even that he had been as much a victim of circumstance as they had all been. For those who had watched the value of their stocks be reduced to a few cents, powerless to do anything about it, it seemed obvious that while Mr. Batista was at the helm, the company’s fate would continue in free fall until it completely disintegrated.

The once celebrated “Midas touch” had become a curse. No one laughed at his jokes or curried his favour with perks any more. No one asked him for business advice. For a while now he had stopped giving interviews because journalists who used to praise him in earlier interviews now portrayed him as a lunatic. His public appearances, once frequent and over-the-top — veritable live-audience shows, were now restricted to safe environments, protected from the potential jeers of disgruntled individuals. It seemed obvious that it was vital to remove him from power before there was nothing left to be sold to pay off the debts. After receiving this ultimatum, Eike Batista signed his letter of resignation and left the board of the company he had built from nothing and transformed into a

phenomenon, a true symbol of his power and genius. Surrounded by half a dozen loyal supporters, he headed home and went back to square one.

Although it seems incredibly current, the above episode did not happen in Brazil or in 2013. It took place in Toronto, Canada's financial capital, in 2001. It was in that foreign country that Eike first experienced glory and failure with his TVX gold mining company. This story of his rise and fall in Canada bears a striking resemblance to the drama that unfolded in the business world in Brazil in 2013, which was avidly followed by millions of stupefied Brazilians.

When the "X empire" — the conglomerate of mining, logistics, energy and oil companies created by Eike over the previous decade — went into bankruptcy, causing shockwaves in the Brazilian stock exchange, there was a general sense of bewilderment. How could Eike Batista — the man who symbolized Brazilian capitalism, who had amassed one of the largest fortunes in the world, had been lauded by the biggest names in the world's financial markets, and whose failure in 2001 no one knew about — be totally wiped out like that?

For the majority of the public, it was both surprising and frustrating that the "X companies" — created from ambitious plans and a rare combination of long-term vision and sharp intuition for opportunities — were in the end just incomplete projects riddled with problems. The usual explanations were given. Eike's success had been the result of a bubble, and the two had burst simultaneously. Or perhaps he was the product of the self-righteousness of the PT (the Brazilian Workers Party), and his success had dissolved hand in hand with that of the Brazilian economy. For some, he was simply an embezzler who had cheated the shareholders and wanted to get away with it all. For others, he had been the victim of his delusions of grandeur and his faith in Brazil, a modern equivalent of Brazil's Baron of Mauá, someone who could not be blamed for his mistakes.

None of the above theories adequately explains the rise and fall of his group of companies between 2006 and 2013. Only by examining what was going on behind the scenes of this exciting and unique business saga — the product of an unprecedented time in the country's history and of a complex and controversial personality — is it possible to obtain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.

For the first time in decades, Brazil was in the spotlight on the world's economic stage. The country's market — the hot tip for those who believed in the emergence of a new and powerful economic player — was one of the greatest beneficiaries of the excess of liquidity that had taken over the world up to 2008 and one of the prime players in the cycle of over-valorisation of commodities and emerging economies that followed the economic crisis that year. Moreover Brazil had elected a leftist president who, nevertheless, understood the market well. The country had it all.

Eike Batista, with his insatiable entrepreneurial zeal, was the right man in the right place at the right time. He had projects to sell to those who could not find anything to buy. He knew how to play the 'free-for-all' game of the markets, and he employed the boldest strategy of Las Vegas gamblers, but he did not apply the same filters that most Brazilian entrepreneurs did. The story of his Canadian

failure shows that he was always like this. It was Brazil that had changed. When the time was right, Eike took the plunge and did what he knew how to do — the same as he had always done.

He was so convinced of his own power that he believed it was possible to stop time or at the eleventh hour turn the tables and prevent harsh truths from coming to light. However, time did not stop, the portal closed and reality punished him again the same way as it had done the previous decade.

To tell the story of Eike and the “X empire” is to lay bare one of the most colourful and controversial characters of recent times. It is a story that is both a metaphor for Brazil as a nation and a cautionary tale for the future. It exposes a country that aspires to be special, modern and sophisticated, but relies on vices of all kinds to move forward.

Who is Eike Batista? A compulsive liar or an entrepreneurial genius? A nationalist committed to Brazil’s progress or a self-centred individual with no boundaries or morals? A man ahead of his time or a cheat?

These are the questions that I have sought to answer in the following pages.

Chapter 7

FEED THE DUCKS

Someone popped his head around the door of the OGX boardroom and warned: “There’s going to be a meeting this afternoon at the Florida Hotel and you all have to be there.” It was 22 April 2008. The team of geologists had lunch quickly and set off on foot to the meeting, held just a few blocks away from the X group’s head office. They knew the venue well, since it was where Petrobras used to hold their exploration team meetings. They were curious and became even more so when they realized that almost all the forty people in the room were strangers. They then sat down on chairs set out in a U shape and were given a brochure on the cover of which was written “The Doors Project — next steps”. It was marked “strictly confidential”. They looked at each other. Next steps? What on earth were the first ones?!

None of the bankers or lawyers gathered there seemed to notice that the OGX technical specialists did not have the slightest idea why they were there; nor did they attach any importance to the look of shock on their faces when they discovered that the “The Doors Project” was the IPO of OGX — and that they would have less than two months to float the company on the stock exchange, on 17 June 2008, according to the schedule outlined on the second page.

The tribute to the Californian band, they would later discover, had been the idea of Marcelo Torres, the company’s financial director, who played the guitar and was a fan of the rock musician Jim Morrison. The text outlining the steps that needed to be taken was a deluge of ‘finance speak’. Deadline for printing of “pre-

deal research” — 9 May; deadline for finalising “road show presentation” — 16 May; deadline for sending “backups” — 21 May; launch of “road show” — 27 May. The heavy gunfire lasted four hours — long enough for the former Petrobras employees to familiarise themselves with that kind of vocabulary. Their presence was fundamental to help build the case — the bankers from the Itaú BBA and Credit Suisse banks explained.

In a nutshell the technical experts would help to create and cement the story that would be told to the business world to convince people to invest in the company. Some of them would even be given top jobs in the organisation, and be invited to attend meetings with investors. Charts, statistics, geological terminology, explanations of the potential of the exploratory fields — all this would be left to them.

On leaving the Florida Hotel, walking down Catete street the team of geologists seemed to be suffering from a kind of claustrophobia. If that schedule was serious — and it seemed to be —, there would be no time to do anything else. “We’re scuppered. We’re never going to see our families any more...” one of them commented. In just a few minutes, however, their concerns gave way to euphoria. They would finally be participating in one of Eike Batista’s IPOs. They were going to be rich!

Their boss had begun 2008 insufferable, excited about the success of OGX’s debut on the financial market and about having launched yet another record-breaking IPO for a company that was still only at the planning stage, the energy company MPX. In December 2007 this company had raised 1.1 billion US dollars on the stock exchange.

And as early as February, when the first stock-market jitters of what would prove to be a crisis year damaged the company’s performance, he injected a further 1 billion dollars into MPX. He had also closed the sale of MMX to Anglo, delighting the shareholders. Those who had invested 1 dollar when the mining company was floated in 2006 would have made 6 dollars with its sale to the multinational. Furthermore, this megadeal had succeeded in lessening the doubts of the market and the press about Eike’s ventures. “What company with a market knowledge like Anglo’s would invest 5.5 billion dollars in a business set up to dupe careless shareholders?” This was the question posed by the magazine *Exame* in a report about the deal.

However, despite his association with this billion-dollar deal and his new status in the business world, Eike still felt he was an outsider, discriminated against and misunderstood by Brazil’s economic elite — the likes of Jorge Paulo Lemann and Joseph Safra. In his opinion this stigma had to do with the fact that his companies are in Rio de Janeiro, something the long-established business elite of São Paulo could not tolerate. Although he was born in the state of Minas Gerais, Eike felt more at home in Rio than most cariocas. He loved the city and wanted to invest there. If, on top of that, this enhanced his public image, so much the better.

In the last few years he had invested in some smaller ventures, like the restaurant Mr Lam, a medical clinic in the Barra da Tijuca district and the newly launched Pink Fleet — a ship built in the 1970s that he had renovated for tourist cruises in Guanabara Bay. All of these, he used to say, were presents for the city and part of his fictitious company MPIX (which stood for ‘Die of envy, São Paulo’).

In March 2008, just after he had announced the sale of MMX to Anglo, Eike went public with the fictitious MPIX group's greatest venture to date. He had bought the down-at-heel Glória Hotel, which at one time had been home of presidents and international celebrities in Rio, and he promised to restore it to its former splendour. He paid 80 million Brazilian reais for the building and some of the furniture and art works. His idea was to transform around 20% of the building into the X group's head office. The rest would continue to be a hotel, which he planned on transforming into his personal empire's calling card. The extensive refurbishments— in which he estimated that he would spend more than 200 million reais — would make the Glória Hotel one of the most modern and sophisticated in the world. Looking forward to the glory and prestige that this initiative would bring him, he registered the name he planned on giving to his new venture at the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI): Billionaire.

With his high-profile businesses resulting in improvements for the city of Rio de Janeiro, Eike soon came to personify the state of Rio's economic renaissance. The state governor, Sérgio Cabral also profited from the entrepreneur's moment of glory and exploited the positive mood that seemed to emanate from him. After giving him generous support during the electoral campaign, Eike had become very close to the governor. As each of the entrepreneur's projects progressed—signing a memorandum with a potential business partner, receiving a license or starting building works —, the authorities would find occasion to immediately turn it into an event, with speeches, a lot of flattery and a large number of interviews.

In addition to having a success story to tell, Eike, unlike his peers, made a point of being accessible. There were no middlemen between him and the leading columnists and reporters in Brazil, whom he always supplied with information that underscored his successes. Like a good salesman he excelled at the art of self-promotion and used it to its full potential.

There was, however, something that Eike understood even more than self-promotion and marketing: bankers. "Greeeed", he used to say, in a reedy, fairy-tale witch's voice, rubbing his index and middle fingers against his thumb, when explaining what motivated them. If it was money they wanted, he would give it to them. Plenty of it. Since 2004 he had already sold six companies or parts of companies, two of which had been floated on the stock exchange. And he had even created a new one, a logistics company, which he called LLX.

They were all deals the banks worked on and that were generously remunerated. In MMX's IPO, for example, he had paid the banks 6.22% commission — the equivalent of 64 million reais. By the standards of the Brazilian market this was an extraordinary amount. He had also made a point of not claiming back the money taken from his own pocket to ensure that the IPO took place. Paying well, however, was not everything.

Another trick that he had used throughout his life was to divide the commission into two parts: a fixed fee, depending on the money involved, and a discre-

tionary amount that was performance-related. Eike used to say that this was the “carrot” that he would offer to make them work like they had never worked before on his public offering. With an eye on the variable portion of the commission, the banks bent over backwards to please the entrepreneur, selling the X group’s companies like there was no tomorrow.

Not that it was a very difficult task. During those years of irrational exuberance, with all the world’s banks swimming in easy money obtained from the real-estate bubble in the USA, there were hordes of investors looking for more profitable assets than the paltry 3.9% per year offered by the American Treasury’s long-term bonds.

Even before setting off on his first international trip to sell MMX, Eike had grasped the obvious: the big international investors were desperate for ventures in emerging markets, which were then recording economic growth unparalleled anywhere else on the planet. From 2003 to 2007 the daily amount dealt by foreigners on the Brazilian stock exchange had risen in geometric progression, increasing from 49 million to 410 million reals. Boosted by this demand, twenty construction companies had gone public on the Brazilian stock exchange – the Bovespa – twice the number available on the US capitals market.

Medium-sized banks, retailers, construction companies, energy companies. There was an appetite for everything. “We realized we could sell anything”, one of the bankers that lived through the IPOs era later reflected. It signalled the victory of one of the oldest commandments of the financial market: “If the ducks are quacking, feed the ducks”. For that group of quacking ducks, Eike had prepared a veritable banquet.



THE BOOK



All in

Malu Gaspar

• **Original title:**

Tudo ou Nada – Eike Batista e a verdadeira história do Grupo X

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SYNOPSIS

“All In” recounts the greatest business adventure in recent Brazilian history – the dramatic rise and fall of Eike Batista, once the richest man in Brazil and the 7th richest in the world. Based on over one hundred exclusive interviews and a wealth of never-before-seen private documents, Malu Gaspar tells the inner story of the entrepreneur, at the same time that explores the schemes that allowed major banks to bankroll his ascent and attracted the support of politicians and the media.

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I'M HERE

MARCELO RUBENS PAIVA

Translated by Alison Entrekin

Memory is an unexplained magic trick. A trick life plays on you. One memory doesn't settle over another, but beside it. A recent memory isn't retrieved before the thousandth. They become tangled. My mother, with Alzheimer's, can't remember what she had for breakfast. My mother, with Alzheimer's, sees my one-year-old son, who looks just like me, and recognizes him. She doesn't think he is me, but she calls him sweet child, my sweet child. And she always says:

"He's just adorable."

Sometimes she gets confused and says:

"She's just adorable."

Perhaps, having had four daughters, all babies are girl babies to her. My mother complains a lot when we leave with him.

Old city center of São Paulo. We got out at the train station in Liberdade. My mother, my sister Veroca and me. We crossed Sete de Setembro Square. I remember the smell of impending rain and the movement around the courthouse. Mother had already walked this way hundreds of times. But if we'd left her there alone that muggy afternoon, she'd have stopped short, unable to find her way home. She'd have lost herself in a circular reasoning; a flood of images, synapses, commands and memories would have inundated her brain, making the familiar unfamiliar, resulting in a single question:

"What am I doing here?"

Or better:

"What was it I came here to do?"

And perhaps:

"Where is this?"

Because the answer wouldn't have been forthcoming, as the storm in her brain prevented clarity of thought, she'd have uttered the phrase that marked the beginning of her Alzheimer's:

"I want to leave."

Or:

"I want to go home."

Sometimes smiling. Sometimes furious. Always surprising.

We entered João Mendes Court House. She looked at the place with familiarity and smiled. She was enjoying the outing. We queued for a lift. Signs above the lift doors showed which floors they were on. A busy ebb and flow of lawyers, in-

terns, defendants, witnesses, plaintiffs, police officers, prisoners, assistants, victims and couples parting ways.

Turiçu is a river in the state of Maranhão. The name comes from “tury” = “torch” + “assu” = “big”. Big torch, big light, big fire. A bonfire in a high place seen from afar used to help shrimp fishermen at sea. On dark nights, it showed those who were further out from the coast the point of return. It guided the lost. Turyasu: the big fire, the beacon that lit the way home, to the village, to their families.

Someone crashed into my car on a thoroughfare parallel to Turiçu Street, one cloudless day, and I was sued in that courthouse. My mother was my lawyer. Even though the other guy was guilty, he was asking me for money. My mother agreed to settle. The guy wanted five times the cost of his car repairs. He presented false quotes. I was disappointed in her for not fighting to the end, not making justice prevail. I was innocent. He'd crashed into me and now he was saying it was my fault!

“Just settle, son. It's not worth the fight...”

Justice did not prevail. I paid for the guy's repairs. We took the lift down with the crook and his opportunistic lawyer. We rode in respectful silence and parted ways without a word. I should have throttled them both, him and his lawyer. We headed for Liberdade Station. On other occasions I heard, defeated:

“Just settle, son. It's not worth the fight...”

I was legally separated in that courthouse, years later. My mother was supposed to have been my lawyer, as she had been my whole life, for everything: car crashes, contracts, labor squabbles, problems with the tax man. She was my proof-reader and accountant, as well as lawyer for all five of her children and a dozen cousins, friends, and even cousins' friends and friends' parents. She handled friends' divorces, probate, and represented factories, businesses, and Indians. She was the divorce lawyer for Ronnie Von, the celebrity, who caused a furor when he showed up at the office.

As one of few specialists in indigenous law, she acted as lawyer for the Gilberto Gil Foundation, and for Sting, who donated money to the Cayapó Indians, in his Brazilian affairs. He would call her at home, with his unmistakable English accent:

“Eunice Paiva, porrrfa-vorrr.”

“Mom! Stingi's on the phone again! Make it quick, I'm waiting for a call!”

She represented the illustrious and the unknown, and was a legal consultant to the federal government, the World Bank, and the United Nations. Where has all that knowledge gone? It's adrift in her memory, bobbing here and there in a sea of chemical connections, where the big torch on the coast can't be seen - the big fire, that guides one back to land, to their point of departure. Like David Bowie's Major Tom, stuck floating around the earth in a most peculiar way.

“Ground Control to Major Tom.

Your circuit's dead, there's something wrong.

Can you hear me, Major Tom?

Can you hear me, Major Tom?”

Major Tom, in the dark, on his blind flight, at the door of his tin-can-like space ship. “Planet Earth is blue, and there’s nothing I can do.” I wonder if there is something conformist in this outlook, the outlook of one who doesn’t believe in transformative action or that man, a political creature, might make history, with actions he once called revolution, or if, in some cases, the Earth is blue, it is much bigger than us in our insignificance, and there really is nothing one can do.

We stepped out of the lift into the Family Division of the João Mendes Court House, where we met our two lawyers, whom my mother had chosen, back when she was still lucid, and groomed, in an office on Avenida Paulista, on what to do.

We waited in the corridor.

Handcuffed prisoners stood with their backs turned, faces to the wall, always with a police escort. Sitting on the many benches, defendants, witnesses and plaintiffs were all bothered by the same heat, by the knowledge that it was going to rain, that by the time we left the building chaos would have fallen over the city. All of them almost silent, respectfully silent, yes, sir, no, sir. Have I already said this?

The curious thing is that inside the different divisions, all hell breaks loose. But outside, in the corridors, in the foyer, in the lifts, few words are spoken. When someone speaks, it is in whispers.

At no point did my mother ask what we were doing, nor did she ask to leave. At that stage in her illness, “going out,” seeing people and things, could make her happy. And perhaps she felt comfortable there. The many times she had waited on those benches were still somewhere in her memory. She must have felt at home, which was why she didn’t complain. She still had some notion of the present, and thus, of memory. And perhaps we don’t have just ONE single memory.

In front of each division was a secretary at a little desk. When they called us, I looked at her. Let’s go? It’s our turn. She looked at Veroca. She trusted the two of us, not just me. She trusted her oldest daughter and her only son. She didn’t trust us blindly. She had never trusted anyone blindly. She was a lawyer. She double-checked every decision we made to make sure it was the right one. She knew that we were in command now. And, if she signed a document, even with Alzheimer’s, she would check it five times. If she didn’t agree, she wouldn’t sign it. She double-checked every decision that her lawyers made to make sure it was the right one. She knew what her future would be like. She knew that dementia was a case not just for medicine, but also for the legal system. She knew that there were laws that protected her and safeguarded the greater good (and goods) of the family. She believed in the legal system. She was proud to be a part of that world. She always used to tell me:

“It exists to defend the weakest among us.”

They called her name. She obeyed, resigned. We walked in. The family judge was sitting at a raised bench. We sat where the clerk told us to. An enormous, badly-painted portrait of a soldier in uniform was the only picture hanging on the wall, in front of the judge. To break the ice, I observed that it would have been impossible for someone to fight in that ridiculous uniform, not to mention the heavy helmet. He interrupted, saying it was his father, who had been a police officer with

the Public Force, the former Military Police, an example of good character. And that that was his dress uniform. I couldn't take it back. The judge read the case out loud, skipping paragraphs, and looked at everyone. He turned to my mother.

"I see we have a fellow legal practitioner here."

"Yes, I'm a lawyer. Retired."

"Do you know why you are here?"

"Because I'm old and I need others to look after me," she replied with her trademark sincerity and logic.

We were in the Family Division of the João Mendes Court House because she was old. That was the great irony. A specialist in declaring friends' parents incompetent, trusted lawyer of many, she was about to be declared incompetent at 2.35 p.m. She was seventy-seven years old. Not that old. She had had old acquaintances declared incompetent in dramatic circumstances. She knew, step by step, how it was done.

The judge had in front of him certificates from two medical specialists, one a professor at the University of São Paulo, plus clinical exams, images of her brain with the characteristic white marks that indicate the disease, and powers of attorney from all five of her children requesting that she be declared incompetent. We hoped that, as was the practice, the judge would appoint a reliable legal expert to remove her civil rights. He treated the case with cool objectivity and respect; after all, my mother was a fellow practitioner of law. He didn't speak in legalese. It was routine. How many cases like that had he judged that very week? How many times had he read them out loud and seen the same words, terms, requests?

He turned to my mother and surprised her with the question, "What year is it?"

She looked at me in desperation. It was that expression, the new expression, acquired in the last few years, as if she was trying to remember something banal and couldn't, the date!, what day is it today!, date!, day/month/year!, humiliated by the connections in her brain, proteins that were dwindling by the day, more and more, they want the date!, which left her with a strange blank. Where was the torch? She looked at us as if she was being dragged by the current into the emptiness of the ocean, she was going to drown, drown in forgetting. Startled, surprised that she couldn't remember such a simple thing. It took a superhuman effort to row back. She had to guess the direction, defend herself, and answer what year it was. She didn't know. She didn't know what year it was, what month it was, what day it was. Time didn't make much sense. She couldn't have said for sure what she had eaten for breakfast. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't get the first question right. The disease was winning, one-nil.

"What's the name of the president of Brazil?" asked the judge.

Again, the look, despair, shame, blank, I've drawn a blank. She suffered terribly, she always suffered when she didn't recognize someone and the person asked, "Remember me?" It was unnerving not to remember if she'd showered, forgotten to take her medicine, left a pot on the stove, unable to see the fire on the hill to guide her back to the coast with a boat full of shrimp, trawling done, mission accomplished.

The president of Brazil, mother, you know him personally. He came over to our house, twice, when he was still a union leader. You helped found his party. You

fought beside him for Amnesty, for the direct vote, to restore democracy. They even wanted you to be a substitute senator with his party. The house was a mess when he came over one night. I was playing War in the living room with some friends. We'd smoked pot. We were laughing loudly. You were in the bedroom. Veroca brought him in with Geraldinho. He walked in and we cracked up laughing because we were really stoned. He greeted us and chuckled too. He must have smelled it from outside. Of course we didn't offer him any. He came in and went to talk to you about the direction Brazilian politics were taking. Brazil was organizing itself, coming out of the dictatorship. We debated whether we should offer the former steelworker-cum-union leader some pot or not. Best not. Back then, I smoked at home with my friends. In my room, on the veranda, never in front of you. After you found out that I smoked, after you found out that my friends smoked, after you found out that your friends, and friends that you made after you were widowed, all smoked, after your friends who smoked offered you some, and you didn't refuse, out of politeness, or shyness, and took a few tokes, curious... and didn't feel a thing, you saw that it wasn't the devil's work. You relaxed the rules.

Memory isn't the capacity to organize and file away recollections. There are no files. The layering of past on past persists to the end, memory upon memory, through memories that become jumbled, distorted, blocked, recurrent or hidden, or that are repressed or encased in lead by the survival instinct. A fire in a high place would help. But fires burn low with time. And we can't sail back home.

The judge waited for her answer. Veroca, as if talking to a child, tried again, "Mother, you know him, it's Lu..."

Nothing. Silence. She glanced at me. Nothing. It's OK, Mother. It's OK, it's normal to forget, you're old, it happens, we all forget, you don't need to get worked up or feel guilty, we're here to help you, we're all going to get old, remember your mother-in-law, Grandma?, it happened to her too, she ended up senile, your mother aged and got old too, remember the friends of friends that you had declared incompetent?, it happened to them, aging is a part of life, forgetting is normal, I'll forget things in the future too, me, Veroca, the lawyers, this judge, his dad, in that ridiculous uniform, must be a forgetful old man now, don't worry, we all forget, forgetting is a part of life, it's normal, growing old is normal, it's a part of life, everything's going to be alright, the law will protect you, you believe in the law, we'll look after you, don't worry...

The judge had asked the questions because he wanted to be sure we had a case. Yes, my mother, the lawyer, was incompetent. She was suffering from some kind of dementia. It was the disease that prevented her from remembering. It could be Alzheimer's. It could be hormonal or another kind of dementia. These days dementias are identified and named, each different to the other. People grow old. People's brains grow old. An expert appointed by the judge would conduct the final assessment. But Mother needed to be declared incompetent temporarily.

"We are assembled here today because your children are asking that you be declared legally incompetent. They elect your son, Marcelo, to be your guardian.

Are you aware of this?"

"It's because I'm old and I need them to take care of me."

She didn't name the thing that ailed her. She tried, at all costs, to be treated not as a person who was sick or demented, but as someone who was equal to everyone else, who, with age, was betrayed by memory, who grew old, doddering, gaga, a little old lady.

"Can she be my guardian too?" she asked, referring to Veroca.

"No, only one can."

"But can she look after me?"

"Of course, Mother, I'll always look after you," said Veroca.

And she did. They had already established a partnership of love and trust. I wondered why I, and not her, my older sister, was being elected guardian. Because I'm a man. The only man of the house. I had been chosen. After everything she had done for me, my whole life, it was payback.

She began to talk about her two daughters who lived abroad, one in Switzerland, the other in Paris, the grandchildren who lived in France. She said she wanted to pay for them to come see her every year, since she could no longer travel. She insisted that we should always keep her grandchildren close to her, that she could afford it. The judge agreed. She insisted. She said again that she had two daughters who lived abroad, one in Switzerland, the other in France, and three grandchildren in Paris, and that she needed them to come every year, that she would pay for it if they didn't have the money, because she went to see them every year, but now she was old, she couldn't travel, she got lost in airports, she got lost in the street looking for a taxi, she couldn't buy tickets on the internet, she couldn't buy anything on the internet, she couldn't use the internet, despite the afternoons I'd spent teaching her, the mouse irritated her, she didn't really understand the mouse, the cursor vanished and reappeared, what she really wanted was to buy tickets directly from Varig on Avenida Paulista, but the agency had closed, the company was going under, Vasp had folded too, the company she had routinely travelled with because of their promotion (save nine boarding passes and get one trip FREE). They'd gone bankrupt. So had Transbrasil, everything was changing too quickly, the banks were becoming automated, her newsletter from the São Paulo Lawyers Association came by email now, instead of through the post on stapled newspaper, and the dratted mouse wouldn't obey her!

Repeating things is routine for those with dementia. I don't know if it's because they've forgotten what they said or if it's to reiterate what they said, since some people don't pay attention. This repetition, in fact, is a warning: it's when the family receives the first signs that the person's thoughts are not on a continuous path.

The judge was surprisingly courteous and listened the second time as if it was the first: she had daughters and grandchildren abroad and would pay for them to come visit her every year. Of course, don't worry, we'll take care of it, he replied.

The judge gave me a serious look.

"From this date, you are legally and criminally responsible for your mother," he announced.

He said that I was supposed to do everything in my power to ensure her comfort and wellbeing. He determined that she could not be left alone anymore. We would have to arrange for her to be cared for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three-hundred and sixty-five days a year. And he reminded me that I was obliged to bring her daughters and grandchildren who lived abroad to come see her.

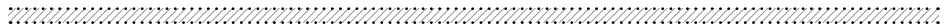
From that moment on, my mother would never again be left on her own.

The tables turned that very instant.

On 30th January 2008, that muggy afternoon, in compliance with the law, in the Central Civil Court on João Mendes Square, 4th floor, room 426 of the São Paulo State Court, first temporarily and then permanently, she who had looked after me for forty-eight years would now be looked after by me. In witness whereof, I certify that the foregoing is true and accurate.

I had become my mother's mother.

And it didn't rain.



THE BOOK



I'm Here

Marcelo Rubens Paiva

- **Original title:** Ainda estou aqui
- **ISBN:** 9788579624162
- **Year of Publication:** 2015
- **Original Publisher:** Editora Objetiva – Selo Alfaguara
- **Number of pages:** 296
- **Total print run:** 20.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

On a Sunday morning in 1971, Marcelo's father, deputy Rubens Paiva, was imprisoned and tortured. His widow, Eunice Paiva, had to fight for forty years to reveal the truth about his disappearance. This autobiographic novel is a moving portrayal of the dictatorship in Brazil seen through the eyes of a boy whose own personal story is enmeshed in his country's history. It is centered around Eunice Paiva, the 'family heroine', a mother of five who raised her children on her own after her husband was declared 'missing'. Amid her pain she managed to reinvent herself. She went back to school, became a lawyer and an advocate for indigenous people's rights, while still adamantly pursuing her endeavor to discover the truth. This woman who has never shed a tear in front of the cameras is

now fighting her last battle; a battle against Alzheimer's.

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- **Pen name:** Marcelo Rubens Paiva
- **Other books:**
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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO JULIANA KLEIN?

MARCOS PERES

Translated by Zoë Alexandra Perry

1. How Irineu became what he is

2011

All roads lead to Curitiba, sooner or later. Every journey demands a homecoming, the return to a place where we've been expected, because it's from there we departed. Curitiba is a river, on this Curitiba I travel, I travel and return to a familiar spot, to the place that makes me what I am, what I truly am, he thought, confused, as echoes of Juliana Klein told him about choices and fate, about love for what lies ahead and about conformity.

As soon as the plane landed at Afonso Pena Airport in Curitiba, a police cruiser was waiting for him. It was embarrassing, for all fourteen of Curitiba's police districts, that they needed a detective all the way from Maringá to solve yet another battle in that war – known as Klein versus Koch in the academic world, and on true crime shows and in the popular vernacular as “The Curse of the Germans”. On top of that, it was Irineu de Freitas, the troubled detective, wrapped up with Klein and Koch, and who was facing charges in various judicial proceedings for the illegal investigation he led back in 2008. For these reasons, the detectives in Curitiba had signed a letter advising against his deployment on this particular case. The document was sent to the state police commissioner of Paraná, who had denied the request. The break in jurisdiction might have seemed like an affront to the Curitiba authorities, but an outside effort could put a welcome end to the antics of those gringo philosophers, who consistently made the headlines in the *Gazeta* and on local TV news. Klein & Koch had become a statewide public safety issue. In other words, this was a series of murders of bourgeois academics, children of European immigrants, whose motives were unclear and their *modus operandi*, bizarre – something the TV news and news sites liked to point out, linking them to the incompetent police and justice system.

A young, pimply-faced cop waited for the detective at the airport. They had never met, but he didn't want to hold a sign with the arrival's name. He trusted the description he'd been given and confirmed it upon seeing the man in a white Armani shirt. He must have been between 35 and 40 years old, and had a few grey hairs mixed through his wavy curls. He was tall – 6'2", maybe 6'3"-, and his eyes were hidden behind a pair of Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses. His beard – also sporting some grey hairs – was bushy and his skin, pale. He wasn't fat, but no longer had the athletic build he'd boasted until he was 27 or 28, and which had been instrumental

in several cases, back when he was a starry-eyed rookie, trying to incorporate the idealisms of his detective novels into his profession. But, as he'd found out, Maringa wasn't London and the Polícia Civil was no Scotland Yard. And reading Doyle and Poe wasn't going to make him detective or bring him the stability on which his colleagues prided themselves. He'd married and divorced within a year, and around the bar, invariably drunk, he would justify himself on the grounds his wife couldn't stand a husband who fought crime for a living, which was a half-truth. The other side of the story was that, off-duty, he refused to put any work into his marriage. It was not, therefore, a consequence, but an unrelated fact, and one which would come to light if the title of detective were replaced by any other. Altering the underlying cause of the facts was an innocent way to contend that he wasn't fit for sharing the company of a mate, that he preferred to be alone with his own quirks and sex without strings, either with professionals or any of the many women who crossed his path with a "fetish for men in uniform." He maintained, if not the athleticism of days gone by, at least the charm of an experienced man, stemming from his white hair, dark circles from sleepless nights, teeth yellowed by caffeine, the full beard - the product of his tangled family tree, Portuguese and Moorish. His angular, oval face, the Ray-Ban aviators and his resolute stride lent him the air of a retired model. He was a handsome man, thought the young, pimply-faced cop, who had been told about all about Irineu de Freitas, except that he had come to Curitiba in a bad mood.

They stood face to face, and the young officer extended his hand. The police chief took off his glasses and, from that simple act, the young cop corroborated that the man before him was indeed the famed Irineu de Freitas. He was able to confirm his identity not because he knew Irineu always took off his sunglasses in front of a stranger, his way of showing respect, in the manner of those who remove their hats at the table. But he had been told that above the left eye of the man he was to pick up was a visible gash. A reddish scar that began at the eyebrow, went down the eyelid and ended on the apple of his left cheek. A cut, as legendary as its owner, the subject of controversy: some claimed it to be the result of torture at the hands of a drug dealer; others that it had been made by a 12-year-old girl who had just lost her mother.

"Are you hungry?" asked the cop, without taking his eyes off the scar. "There's a diner not far from here that serves cops on the house..."

"Thanks. I'd rather go to the Klein house."

"Sure? It's going to be a long day. I guarantee you'll..."

"Thank you," the deputy snapped. "I want to see the girl. And my stomach's churning."

Soon they were in the car, heading toward Batel. They took Comendador Franco Avenue, and Irineu closed his eyes. How was little Gabriela Klein Scaciotto? Three years had passed since their fateful last encounter. He remembered Gabi at nine and at 12, he recalled the expectation that the girl would grow into a beautiful young woman, and her bright blue eyes, so much like her mother's. His thoughts swirled and again he saw the daughter, a miniature copy of Juliana Klein.

When the cruiser turned left onto Sergio Venci street, Freitas snapped back from his thoughts. The officer must have noticed and began to talk about the grey Curitiba weather, the sudden change in temperature, the hooliganism following the last match between rivals Atletico and Coritiba. Irineu grunted in reply, looking out at the road. What can I say to Gabriela? Once again, he would have to justify himself, embodying the incompetent justice system. Once again, he would have to look deep into the girl's blue eyes, an unforgettable and unjustifiable victim. Inevitably, one's thoughts turn to archetypes, of the victim, belated justice, troubled parents, obscure villains... And if thinking in patterns was imperious, then it was inevitable to think of Juliana laughing, strangely laughing, as she said that that porcelain teacup with gold accents on the table, the teacup that would cost months' worth of his detective's salary, that teacup was nothing more than a form of a celestial, immemorial Cup, in which archetypal Gods drank archetypal Teas, while they (Irineu and Juliana) just imitated them, imperfect copies, Curitiba is a River, Irineu and Juliana go by boat.

"I changed my mind. I want to grab a paper and a cup of coffee."

"You mean breakfast?"

"No, just a black coffee. I need to wake up."

They stopped at a gas station. Inside the convenience store Irineu flipped through the newspaper as he drank his coffee. Atlético Paranaense had hired coach Antônio Lopes again, it said in big letters across the sports page. Alongside it, a history of the coach's life. According to the article, Lopes had had a short-lived career as a soccer player. After that failed attempt, he took a shot at two distinct career paths: soccer coach and detective. He became a cop, studied law to get promoted to detective. At the time, his life seemed headed in one direction, with no turning back. With a law degree, he became inspector general. And, at that point, one event changed everything: a classmate from his days as a physical education student, now a team trainer for Vasco da Gama, asked the inspector to help him apprehend a vehicle belonging to the team's goalie. There was an opening for a trainer, and Lopes was hired.

Irineu smiled. Things very nearly took a completely different turn. If Antônio Lopes had worked as a detective in Curitiba, maybe the police force wouldn't have been short-staffed in 2005. And if, six years later, the Klein vs. Koch case hadn't sparked so much criticism among the general public, perhaps the authorities wouldn't need, today, a detective from the countryside. And if he hadn't been called in, Irineu would have never met Gabriela, wouldn't have spent those sleepless nights over Juliana Klein. The series of events, from another angle, looking back, all seemed unlikely.

Opposite the article, it stated that Antônio Lopes was hired for the fifth time as head coach of Atlético Paranaense. On four previous occasions, someone had decided Lopes wasn't suitable for the job and given him his walking papers. Then, whoever was coach at the time would get sacked and once again Lopes was named. And, at his press conference, the newly-named once-former coach would again state the love he felt for the team, his desire and determination to win new

titles, new glories, and every other known sports cliché. It was all written, not in the stars, not by some improbable and metaphysical dervish, not in a kabbalistic study, but in the very newspapers, from years past, already yellowed, whose sports headlines read: “Antônio Lopes hired for fourth time by Atlético.” Or: “For the third time, Lopes at helm of Atlético” or even “Lopes reaffirms love he feels for team”, etc.

Seeing the future in the past is something else ripped from the sports pages, thought Irineu, trying to imagine what Juliana would think of that thought. His coffee had already started to get cold and the pimply-faced cop was beginning to showing signs of impatience, when the chief reached the crime section. There, in black and white, was an enormous photo of Mirna. Below it, the details of her murder.

Mirna Klein had just arrived home from the Mercadorama supermarket with Gabriela. “She only had a few bags,” said the cashier in an interview who had served the woman, minutes before her death. “She was happy, she was playing with the girl.” They had bought Nutella, a container of ice cream, waffles, a two-liter bottle of Coca-Cola. It wasn’t much, Mirna could have gone to the store alone. She didn’t need help, she must have taken the girl along for fun, they were buying treats. They must have been planning a night in with chocolates and sappy romance movies. A man wearing a black, hooded overcoat entered the house with them. He went for the girl and grabbed her, but Gabriela knows the fate and the name she bears, and was able to escape. Then the old woman planted herself in the man’s way and took a gunshot to the face. And two more gunshots, one by her heart, the other in her stomach. Oddly, before fleeing, the murderer left the weapon, an H&K semiautomatic, at the scene.

Irineu sighed sadly and closed the newspaper.



THE BOOK



Whatever Happened to Juliana Klein?

Marcos Peres

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Que Fim Levou Juliana Klein?

• **ISBN:** 978-85-01-10429-8

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SYNOPSIS

The strange disappearance of philosophy professor Juliana Klein brings a detective back to the city of Curitiba from Maringá. Dante, Saint Augustine, Sartre and primarily Nietzsche provide clues to unravel the murders that keep piling up. Spanning several periods in time and with more than one narrative focus, Marcos Peres challenges us with a puzzle that is solved to a certain extent by Irineu, but which also demands that the reader participate, choosing between possible hypotheses.

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ANOTHER DISCOURSE ON METHOD

SÉRGIO SANT'ANNA

Translated by Rex P. Nielson

He found himself on the narrow ledge of the eighteenth story. He had jumped there in order to clean the outside windows of the empty offices of suite 1801/5, which were to be occupied shortly by an engineering firm. He was a recently hired employee of Pan-American—General Services. That he was sitting on the ledge with his legs swinging in space was simply due to the fact that he had paused to smoke half the cigarette he had brought in his pocket. He didn't want to waste this pleasure by mixing it with work.

When he saw the people gathering below, pointing more or less in his direction, it never crossed his mind that he could be the center of their attention. He was not used to being at the center of things and so he looked below and above and even behind at the window to his back. Perhaps a fire had broken out somewhere or there was some scaffolding in danger of falling or someone was about to jump.

There was nothing identifiable in sight and so he, by a very logical process of elimination, concluded that the only potential suicide was he himself. Not that the desire had already crystallized in his mind that perhaps some day, but just like everyone else, from time to time ... And we could say that the lack of importance he gave to himself didn't prevent the possibility of such a grandiose gesture from flowering in his field of decisions. And we could also say that his blind instinct for survival had carried an advantage of around forty percent over his instinct for death, so that he had gone on living his life until this exact moment under the most adverse conditions.

In his pocket, for example, besides the cigarette, all he had was his employee card and some loose change, not enough to pay for the bus to Central Station at an hour when the trains would have already stopped running. He could still make it on foot, though, and he was used to walking with his head down, not because he was embarrassed by anything in particular, but as a way of finding lost coins, which weren't as rare as one might think. A lot of people won't take the trouble to bend over and pick them up after they've dropped them.

Before coming to work today for the four-to-midnight shift, he had hesitated to spend his bus fare. But the empty in his stomach spoke loudly and so he had bought a cup of coffee, filling it three-fourths full with sugar, which at least gave him some calories, though he didn't think of that, in terms of calories that is, but rather that it would take away some of the hunger, and as an added pleasure, a cigarette, even just half a cigarette, was much, much better after some coffee.

He had also meditated about the current meteorological conditions. Looking at the sky, he had decided that the weather would remain the same, which meant he would be able to spend the night on a park bench or on some grass in the

center of the city. It made him so tired, sleeping in the street, facing those endless mornings while waiting for his shift to begin. He would try to distract himself by watching the ocean or the planes landing and taking off or the rotisserie chickens cooking behind restaurant windows or the movie posters with naked women and action men. But this was a problem for tomorrow and, at the most, for the day after tomorrow, because on the third day he'd be paid. He was a man who lived in the immediacy of the present, since the past held no pleasing memory in particular and as for the future, his was so obvious that it was better not to think about it. Payday, however, was a chronological marker he latched onto.

The guy who had hired him at minimum wage had even told him he was lucky, because unemployment was promulgating throughout the country—the guy liked using verbs like this, from the dictionary, which seemed to grant him dignity and pomp, though he was incapable of visualizing in his mind such abstract nouns. Yes, authority and import were the prerogatives with which the man adorned himself in his position: seated there with a tie and the word, while those who paraded before him stood mute, except for a few monosyllabic answers such as “yes, sir,” or “no sir,” when asked about vices such as the bottle. If his audience were a little more qualified, he would also elaborate on the country's problems, which stemmed from the people's lack of education and the dishonesty and incompetence of the politicians, which was aggravated by the gargantuan nature of the State. In the intimacy of his home, he would also point to such causes as climactic conditions, Brazil's history of colonization by exiles, and the mixture of races. He was a man without initiative in an intermediary position of command, and though he felt he earned very little, he was mollified by the fact of having been moved up the ladder a few rungs by being persevering and hard to the point of inflexibility. And the name Pan-American granted him a multinational aura, and though it was nothing more than this, it was an aura that in truth extended to even the man out on the ledge sitting in his uniform with those embossed letters, which signified something he didn't quite understand and consequently respected, something tied to certain international athletic competitions Brazil disputed. It was something impressive, without question, such that this is why they who worked at Pan-American were prohibited, in theory, from wearing the uniform outside of work: precisely to prevent employees from disgracing the company name in bars or on park benches.

But for the man on the ledge the thought of spending the night in either of these two places held the advantage that, not going home, he would not have to witness what was happening there, with his wife and three kids standing before a pantry—which is what they called several stacked boxes—totally empty. Not that he had been thinking about this as he made his way out on the ledge, much to the contrary; he was accustomed to disconnecting himself from his problems at home as soon as his feet hit the road. He knew that women were truly capable of miracles: there was an unwritten accounting of eggs and flour taken and borrowed among the women of the neighborhood, but if a man found himself nearby, all complaints would fall upon him. At least this is what he thought, when he was thinking about it.

Such afflictions existed as but a sort of latency inside him—an agreeable absence—there on the ledge, and they would have never arisen along with the very way of getting rid of them had he not identified the chorus of cries from the people below as requests for him to jump. Not that he would have been willing to give in to such petitions, well understood; but he merely discovered, a little perplexed and even fascinated, that this was a plausible alternative for a human being in difficulties, such as himself, who possessed all of his faculties. And this gave him a certain unsuspected freedom and a weightlessness, once that tenuous strand was cut separating him from the common goal of the species, which is to avoid suffering.

One could inquire about fear, whether he wasn't afraid to be suspended up there, but it's important not to forget that he was used to occupying delicate positions in space.

Any other, in his place, perhaps would have felt offended by how little importance those below gave to his life. But, as we have already seen, he too gave little importance to himself, as a barely visible, minor supporting character in a polyphonic spectacle. That's why the idea of forging his destiny with a gun in hand, assaulting individuals or institutions, had never crystallized within him, though it had in fact passed through his head, just like everyone else, from time to time ... And in this spectacle there were those who simply watched from the margins, and even he, if it had been one of those mornings in which he wandered aimlessly, would have joined the gathering below to pass the time, but without raising his voice, because he was sober in his actions and modest. So he wasn't offended and he even knew without thinking consciously that in similar gatherings there were always those, like certain women who would melodramatically bring their hand to their face and say things like "for the love of God, no," or something in that vein, and there were others who would call the police and the fire department, even though a truck from the closest station was already arriving at that very moment.

He was a man who respected laws and powers and so in the name of that respect, and even fear, he immediately stood up to go back to cleaning the windows. The suspenseful silence, broken by cries of encouragement coming from below, quickly turned into boos and hisses when the crowd realized that he was simply a man working, albeit in precarious conditions that suggested risk, action, emotion, and courage.

He was hurt somewhat by the boos and hisses, because the previous shouting had been something like the enthusiasm of the bleachers for an athlete, and suddenly he felt like a runner who had just run in the wrong race. With the brush and towel in his hands, and the bucket at his feet, he turned towards the crowd and took a small step forward, so he could distinctly hear the cries, "jump," "jump."

The fact was that he had never been on a stage, on a pedestal, and this was affecting his modesty. One need not know the word pedestal to understand that statues rest upon a base, just as one need not know the word polyphonic to hear the many voices and mixture of sounds in the city. And there was always someone who could narrate this for him, until the time that the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the working class had transformed themselves within the country such that the working class could speak with its own voice.

When this had happened, for example, in England, it gave rise to the unexpected phenomenon of the Beatles and the angry young men. Already in the Soviet Union or in Cuba, the gleam of several voices had been snuffed out in the name of unquestionable economic priorities. He had seen in the opening of the Olympic games in Moscow the health and beauty of the soviet youth. Like everyone else in Brazil, he had found a way to buy a TV. He had bought his from a neighbor boy, without asking for a receipt or inquiring about its brand or origin. The kid was an angry Brazilian teenager and he was holding up individuals to prepare himself for the local bank branch. Neither of them knew the Beatles.

As for statues, he knew them well, though he never read the placards. He would frequently wander around them and he intuited that they were erected (though he would not have used a verb like that, which was more the style of the head of the Pan-American Personnel Department) in homage to people who had accomplished important things, to the point that they were there exhibited to the public as moral examples.

He wasn't exactly in the same situation, for sure, but he was also experiencing a certain power over the masses, just like some of those other illustrious men up on pedestals. And this suddenly enlarged, in a literally vertiginous manner, his own social conscience. Those people below, along with he himself, his wife and children, were not pretty people, well fed and imbued with high-minded ideals; to the contrary, they needed to be appeased with blood and circus. So he began to reflect—if that's what you could call the flash of anger that swept through him—on several violent methods of transforming society. Someone more sophisticated might suggest constitutional methods for change, but these would take decades or even a century, or might not ever happen at all.

And in the meantime his case was pressing: the financial situation of absolute deficiency, aggravated by the fact of his having distinguished himself so much in the previous few instants on the ledge at Pan-American, in a way that was incompatible with the politics of the company management. And there was the most important fact that he only had one life to live, in spite of the fact that, paradoxically, he had been airing in these past few moments, as an exercise, the hypothesis of freeing himself from his life. Faced with all of this, society as a whole was an abstraction. He was now becoming, ever more vertiginously, an individualist. If he had had a gun at hand, perhaps he would have shot it off at random. He in fact did not have a gun at hand and so could only take aim at himself in the form of an acute sadness.

In compensation, this heightened his poetic sensibilities, perhaps justifying those who see in art a redemption for suffering. The hour of twilight was approaching, a beautiful hour, and he thought so too. In the beauty and melancholy of that moment he considered the possibility of it becoming the moment of his own twilight, which he could make beautiful and meaningful. If he were to jump, he would transform himself into a newspaper figure, a martyr of the current economic crisis, deserving more than a simple obituary, because he would have succeeded in transforming Rio Branco Avenue below, which had been named for some nobleman he had never heard of, into pandemonium. With the wailing of sirens and the

arrival of fire trucks the State would take advantage of the opportunity to return some of the money collected from its citizens.

Crowd control ropes had already been set up so that he wouldn't fall on top of anyone, and without realizing it he was approaching one of those romantic ideals, which is to die young and at the pinnacle of fame. All that he lacked was beauty. He was a young man of twenty-five, though he didn't look it. To the conventional arguments that all this would be of no use to him after death, he could answer—that is if besides being a romantic he were also a poet or a philosopher—that he was simply enjoying to the greatest degree possible the dramatic events that could precede death, like witnessing a duel at sunset. The city was unquestionably beautiful, with its peaks and mountains, the ocean, some sea birds, a plane was landing in that instant, and its passengers observed the scene from an angle different than his. It's obvious that beauty doesn't exist unless it's observed. But, on the other hand, there wouldn't exist such an intensity in contemplation, in his case, if it weren't for a certain imminence ... An imminence that was becoming more and more discernible to his ears, a polyphonic symphony from the streets, as though he were a sophisticated connoisseur of aleatoric music, which at the very least demonstrates that one need not be versed in certain definitions and aesthetic currents to enjoy the effects and the materials from which they are composed and which here merged together as a sort of cosmic drone that seemed to emanate from within him.

There was also something of an existentialist in him, with this business of intensely living some moment on the edge and giving it meaning, like some character out of Jean-Paul Sartre, beyond having been assailed moments before by a good dose of existential nausea in relation to himself and the rest of humanity. On the other hand, even in more favorable socio-economic conditions, there was the absurd in existence. He was an absurd.

An unhappy conscience thrown out into the world who could die at any moment and wasn't happy.

It's obvious that from the point of view of a psychoanalytic approach, his newly born anxiety about jumping could possibly be analyzed from other angles, some less and others still more romantic. The fact that his energies should return against him at the precise moment in which he could not direct them outside of himself was only the most obvious part of the question that, with just a little patience, could be explained to him by a government psychiatrist, who would then probably consider it apt he return to his work. He wasn't stupid, he just hadn't been raised in an environment that cultivated his education.

As for his narcissism, reflected in the act of flaunting himself in the mirror of the masses, he could channel it toward activities more socially acceptable, such as progressing in his branch of windows and floors until he could leave them so impeccably clean that they could reflect an image without distortion or pernicious fantasies. Or, in the case that his ambitions should extend beyond the realm of work to the world of spectacle—as was happening now—he could always try the possibility of making it on some television talent search, or in football, although

probably not this latter case because of an absolutely traumatic event that had occurred during his childhood when he had been thrown out, literally pushed off his youth team because of certain deficiencies in technique that possibly stemmed from his physical deficiencies, though he had been slated to play left wing, a position that in Brazil is usually closest to being put on the reserve team.

This experience had had such an effect that if one were to mention that Brazil, in all of its sporting history, had never had on any of its national teams a single left wing who had been the star of the team, he would have understood in a fraction of a second the origin and spirit of what was being said, remitting it to his own case and this, without question, would clearly be an insight that would cause him to laugh nervously and perhaps convince himself to better accept his own limits, since he was left-footed and clumsy and could hardly cross the ball with his opposite foot. And even after he was able to get over this harmfully idealized image, he would still have to root for and identify himself with a team that could, every once in a while, reward his dedication with a championship; after all, not everyone can step on stage.

What's more difficult—and romantic—though not impossible if one could find the right expression, would be to really get into the issue itself with him in the sense of understanding it: his sudden temptation to jump, as a desire to return to the maternal arms and breast and perhaps even to the pre-birth life of the uterus, to that state of undifferentiation that levels everyone, where he had been surprised and shocked by certain attempts against his life by inadequate methods—perhaps felt by him as submarine earthquakes in the liquid in which he was floating—though, after having at his insistence been born, he was viewed, because of his rickets, as both a punishment and a gift, which placed him in the world from the beginning as a paradox and faced with conflict. For the same behavior that led him to be shaken and beaten when he cried during the night because of a unexplainable hollow in his bowls was the same reason for which he was rocked and breast-fed in full public view, in the shadow of high-rise balconies because his mother complemented their meager domestic income by begging in the center of the city, where he arrived by an electric train wearing his worst coverings, if he had on any at all, and at this point, as though he were material proof of their poverty to pedestrians, he was well worth his weight in coins.

And if, after an initial treatment of shock therapy by the aforementioned government psychiatrist, he were referred to another specialist in the branch of the mind, perhaps this other one could note on his little pad, not as a certainty—having learned to distrust them—but as a beautiful hypothesis to be investigated, the fact that he had chosen (or had been himself chosen, it doesn't matter, since coincidences don't exist, but are rather necessary causalities) a profession that would forever bring him to the edge of ledges and that he was now at the imminence of throwing himself from one of them to fall into his crib, which was the pavement where his mother had rocked him. To reinforce this deduction there was the unquestionable fact that he had literally traveled this path in life, where he was always obliged to take the metro to his place of work, which he mistook for the mythical

point wherein he would be soothed, and from there, perhaps, one could explain to him his delirious walks and maybe even cure him of them, seeing that on a certain day, one like today, having spent his money for the commute home on coffee and principally sugar (since the sweetness in his mouth was a factor that, besides the calories, necessarily had to be taken into consideration) this action could not stop from being recognized for what it probably was: a mere pretext to conceal things even more secretly repressed in his unconscious. And the end of all this concatenation would reveal that he had spent his money for the bus, the vehicle which would return him to the suffering of his home, and not for the metro (his little electric train from his infancy) that would conduct him to the comfort of the maternal breast. And the specialist would smile at such an insight—not the patient’s but his own—which could even be taken to a conference and published in a journal, spurring on the Lacanians, for such associations derived not from any play on words or alliterations but rather from semantically correct images, the true embryo of a monograph that could be entitled *The Psychoanalysis of the Working Class*, and this time, without any irony, Europe would truly bow before Brazil.

It’s obvious that such a specialist, because of his integrity, to which was added a good dose of shrewdness, would anticipate with a post-script the possible arguments skeptical of his model, criticizing it himself precisely on account of its perfection, as the perfection of a circle, not allowing for any gaps or rifts, but redeeming it with the argument that, much more than for the scientific correctness of an answer, a psychoanalytic model validated itself by the greater or lesser possibility of a patient being able to adjust within himself, in the same way that the possibility of a cure exists within the individual, if one can speak about a cure when dealing with such a volatile thing as a mind, which, like a soul, does not properly occupy a space. And in any event, within the limitations of an attempt at knowledge that is not exactly a science but a method, perhaps he would favor this model so that the patient could return home, rather than waste his money in the street, and once there kiss his wife on the cheek like any other middle-class citizen. Then they could conclude together, patient and analyst, that in the beginning and end everything is always love, and on this point all the Freudians, Lacanians, and bio-energetic-Jungians would concur that what was most important in the analytic relationship was the affective, even amorous, complicity between the analyst and the analyzed. What a shame that such a potential client, who was here suspended on a ledge by a delicate line between life and death, could not pay to see this up close.

So the only thing which in fact remained for him was love. The love of a woman, for example, who could extend a hand in this crucial moment. Not his own wife, obviously, since the relationship that had developed between them of late with the wear and tear of life was the same as that between a stick and a hole whose dimensions had been more or less adjusted to the stick, though dissociated from a Gestaltian configuration integrating them in a unity that would include an aspect of spiritual sublimation, which human beings typically identify as love. Or at least an intense desire for another’s flesh that was more than the desire to satisfy an

itch. But nature didn't care about extra-biological conditions: at the end of nine months a child would be born, and he already had three. A good portion of the rolling masses circulating below had come from the encounter of bodies in circumstances of material and spiritual poverty, so it was natural that in terms of quality there was a progressive degeneration.

The love that could possibly save him would be, for example, that of a typist he sometimes saw working late at one of the firms he cleaned. She was young, full-figured and well-proportioned, and would probably become chubby as time passed. But this was a problem for later and which did not occupy his fantasies, since we are concerned here with the most immediate present. Besides the fact that he was truly taken with her comely form as well as with the velocity with which she typed without looking at the keys, there was a detail that gave her an appearance that was simultaneously distinct and distant (because he was well aware of his place in the world): her glasses. It seemed to him so incredible that a woman could be at the same time young and desirable and complemented by a pair of glasses that brought to mind one of those mild-mannered teachers that he had not had the opportunity to know. Those glasses were a symbol of inaccessibility and culture and the fantasies that surfaced within him in their preliminary form saw him taking her to the movies and to museums, until one day he would hold her hand, and only afterward, little by little, would he hold the rest. The moment he finally slept with her would be solemn and delicate, the last thing he would take from her body, if he could effectively remove them, would be her glasses. Because those glasses, without him realizing it, were his fetish.

Perhaps he would be surprised to know that within her were daydreams in which a sensitive man would discover her gentle soul, sheltered in that body curved over a keyboard and hidden behind those glasses. Though she had a sporadic relationship with a married accountant and with a young man in her neighborhood who owned an automobile, this did not disrupt her dream of marrying someone who truly needed her, like some young medical student who would make it to graduation after so much sacrifice, which she would share with happy resignation. And if she should meet such a man when he was on the brink of despair, she would be even more vitally capable of giving herself to him, rejoicing amid tears of joy in what it is to extend one's hand to a drowning man, to bring him not just to the surface, but to raise him to the heights of the sublime.

The problem is that for one to have the right to love, in despair, it's necessary to bear some recognizable type of beauty, even if it's through art, like a Toulouse-Lautrec. Even though Van Gogh, in spite of everything ... But as for him, the man on the ledge, he had been destined to that radical solitude that is ugliness in poverty. But even he would be capable of recognizing, modestly, if he had had a more refined education, that Toulouse-Lautrec had suffered more than he, because he had tasted of that world where the women were beautiful and the men were artists so eager for that beauty that at times, for lack of beauty, one would banish himself from that world to a better one.

So the only thing remaining for him, in fact, was the love of God or for God, who, through one of his Christian personae, the Son, could be concretely seen with open arms dominating the city. He could be seen, there from his privileged position, by the man on the ledge. Christ was illuminated at night and turned off at dawn; he was enveloped in black clouds during storms and then would shine again when clear skies returned. But never, since the inauguration of the statue, in 1931, and including the Pope's visit in 1980, was he seen moving even one of his arms to assuage a single calamity, individual or collective, not even when the torrents of rain, which descended the hill that held up his image, would precipitate a catastrophe below, flooding away homes, animals, and people, and leading these to believe they were receiving some punishment which they certainly had earned. It was not then foreseeable by the man on the ledge that the Christ should move a single one of his fingers, let alone that he, finding himself in such a precarious position, should possess a sense of free will far more accentuated than normally characterized people in his position, position here being understood in its most ample sense possible. For not only he dominated the heights, since he had come to stop there out of duty to his office and not out of despair—not counting that which was inherent to his office—and he could come down any time he wanted, from inside the building. And, if he didn't do it, it was because of the sin of pride.

Though he had many times abandoned Christ for idols from the periphery like the African orixás and exus, he had heard during his childhood catechisms in his parish—after which a lunch was typically served—that the poor would receive a place of honor in the kingdom of heaven and that, on the other hand, suicides would not be forgiven. So to be with God, in his particular case, he needed only to be patient.

And so what the man did was to open his arms to the Christ, moved a little by a vague plea, because he did not know how to honorably get out of that snare, and a little for the sake of exhibitionism or the spirit of imitation, which not rarely are the origins of madness, when a human being realizes that, if certain realities cannot be changed, one can simply change oneself, exchanging a modest role for a better one, like that of Napoleon or some other general, in extreme cases, or that of an ordinary guard, in less extreme cases. Imitation, in this case, was successful, as the crowd thrilled below, perhaps because of the popularity of the model, perhaps out of belief that the personage they were watching was finally going to fly.

It was at this moment that he heard a voice. The voice thundered, not from the heavens, but from within the office of the engineering firm:

"Sir, come down now because you are under arrest," said an officer holding a revolver. He immediately realized he had invoked a semantic impropriety that could bring grave consequences if the man should jump, so he extended his arm through the window to grab him.

For the first time in his life, this other man was called sir; treatment, nonetheless, that the man guessed would be immediately abandoned as soon as he was in the savage arms of the Law. So he retreated on the ledge to the furthest most precarious point that fatally placed him under the jurisdiction of the fire department.

The individual present who most categorically represented this organization had received training which included, among other disciplines, the humanities. He motioned such that the member of the other organization retreated to a discreet corner and then assumed command of the operations with a speech that had been prepared since the day in which, while watching a made-for-TV movie, he had discovered that his true vocation was to be a fireman. A speech in which formal, ceremonial language was substituted, along with any weapons, for the most cordial Brazilianism of “you.”

“Hey man,” he said. “Everything in life has an answer and one day you’re gonna laugh about the problems that brought you up here, whatever they are. Why don’t you come in so we can talk? Or if you’d rather talk from there, we’re here to help.”

Besides the mixed signals and a certain rehearsed sense about his speech, his voice had hit exactly that tone of affective complicity, even affection, that is needed for any relationship to be established. And it mustn’t be forgotten that the man had never had the intention of jumping in the first place; he had merely been tempted, inadvertently, by the vertigo and power of the height. He turned then to the fireman, who had already come out onto the ledge, with the voluble applause of the public, and smiled embarrassed, as if apologizing.

He could have explained, simply, that he was there washing windows and that everything was nothing more than misunderstanding, one need only look at the bucket of water, etc., and check with Pan-American—General Services.

But the truth is that some quite complex phenomena had taken place in his mind, which had modified his world view and which he wanted to explain, including to himself, but he couldn’t find the words.

“It’s like I was someone else. Do you understand?” he said to the fireman, who had grasped him, without encountering any resistance, to bring him inside the room. “A possible being inside me, who was whispering thoughts in my head.”

At this moment he smiled widely, because those were exactly the words. However, the fireman’s training had not taken into account certain more abstruse aspects of the mind, subtle and contradictory, and from his professional perspective and within the limitations of his duties, he had no doubt in his assessment.

“He’s crazy,” he informed the others, as he pushed the man into the room where he was immediately immobilized.

He had been betrayed, but, on the other hand, his savior—if he could be called such—had given him a new label that also offered him a new identity, perhaps explaining his new feelings, which he now preferred to keep to himself.

—It’s as though everything were only a dream, including myself and the fireman.

A highly agreeable feeling, nonetheless, because it released him from certain jails.

He was mistaken, but not too far from the truth, though he was quite original: he was not a dream but rather a social allegory. Social, political, psychological, and whatever else you prefer. To those who condemn such metaphorical practice, one must remember that the working class, principally that segment which is called lumpen, is still far from the day in which it can speak, literarily, with its own voice.

So one can write about it in this way as well as any other.

But in this interim a character arrived on the scene, sweaty, panting, and fat, quite close to reality: the head of personnel from Pan-American—General Services. He came imbued with the formality, dignity, and prerogatives of his office, besides being burdened with the fear of losing said office, facing a public that was not quite what the company's Public Relations department had in mind. With his feet well stuck to the floor, he said:

"You have dishonored the uniform. You can change your clothing and deliver it to me personally. The act you have committed is a grave lapse, beyond just cause. You are hereby fired."

His judicious words, this time, were intended much more than stylistically impressing his audience to assure all present that he was doing all that he could, given the circumstances, since his clinical eye for drunks, vagabonds, thieves, and crazies had lamentably failed in this case. Inadvertently, he was committing one more error: his words were recorded by the press, which was somewhat frustrated until then with the refusal of the man from the ledge to give any statement that clarified his motives. And crazy was a word that editors, excluding those from popular newspapers, considered a little vague.

And the executive had not really appeared in this story, where, to the contrary of what he thought, he was also not the subject, but a pathetic piece, the first step in a downfall that would begin with his dismissal and end with his suicide, when, from an innate sense of justice, he would come to apply to himself the same severe code he used to apply to his subordinates. But that is another story.

In this one, only the officers were impressed, and though they too lacked the right words to say so, they saw there a manifestation of temporal, as well as that other, greater power that had here been offended in one of its principal personae. And, as exemplary punishment of the desperate, more desperation.

The fireman, meanwhile, wasn't quite so harsh, and the young man from the ledge celebrated in the shadow of his actions, which hadn't quite reached the status of heroism. As the veteran of so many fires and landslides, he said to the young man that he would only change his clothes at the psychiatric hospital, to where he was certainly headed. These words were also recorded and, once again, with all justice, the department came off well in the public opinion, as a beacon of hope that not all was lost.

As for the main character of the story, the man from the ledge, upon learning his destiny, perhaps in other circumstances he would have felt wounded and vulnerable and taking advantage of their relaxed attention, who knows but he would have jumped to his death. Not because of the loss of salary, in and of itself, since for a long time he had found himself but a step from absolute economic depravity. But more because he could see with clarity that Pan-American—General Services had been until then more than a mere occupation, a firm where he worked, but an outward-skin, materialized through the uniform, within which he grounded himself—he who had felt since birth a sort of hollow something inside—and which, if it had not afforded him a distinct identity, had given him membership in a team, like in football,

allowing him—contrary to normal—to walk among the local vagabonds without feeling like he was one of them, though he just like they didn't have a dime to his name.

The fireman, who had indisputably arisen before his eyes as the individual of greatest moral authority among those present, had spoken about changing uniforms at the psychiatric hospital in the same manner that he had made, with respect to himself and without mincing words, his precise diagnosis: crazy. Thus, there was no reason for distrust and he walked ahead satisfied and even anxious to trade positions and teams.

In reality, he had already come under another's jurisdiction. Not that of the two men in white who had arrived to take him in the ambulance, even while he still wore the Pan-American uniform and everything. The jurisdiction under which he now found himself was that of the "other," that possible someone who had whispered thoughts in his head out on the ledge. And he anticipated, intuitively, that there in the hospital there must be a patio, somewhere where as he sauntered freely in the shade of the trees or sat on a bench he would have all the time in the world to meet and get to know better that "other," until he and they became the same person and spoke with the same voice.



THE BOOK



Another Discourse on Method

Sérgio Sant'Anna

• **Original title:**

Um discurso sobre o método

• **ISBN:** 8571640297

• **Year of Publication:** 1989

• **Original Publisher:**

Companhia das Letras

• **Number of pages:** 232

SYNOPSIS

The story is a modern-day parody of the Cartesian method about a poor and humble window washer who, in sitting down on the ledge of a high-rise for a brief rest, is mistaken for a potential suicide. After being “rescued” by a local fireman, he invents the explanation that his act was motivated by the voice of “another” inside him.

While society entertains the possibility that he is deranged, in his own simple manner he ponders the possibilities of this “otherness.”

AWARDS

The author has twice won the prestigious Jabuti Prize in Brazil. He has also received the Portugal Telecom award for Brazilian Literature as well as the Clarice Lispector award from the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional.

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O sobrevivente (short stories, 1969)

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O homem-mulher (short stories, 2014)

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THE TIME TO DIE

SIMONE CAMPOS

Translated by Lisa Shaw

Toronto, 2014

She went in, walked up to the table and sat down. She pulled off her beanie hat: her hair was flat against the nape of her neck and sticking out at the sides. The person in Tim Hortons on Queen Street that grey Wednesday was called Mark. Mark Lin.

“Sorry I’m late.”

She had seen Mark on other occasions. His face was oriental, perpetually curious, freckled. This time the conversation was slow to get off the ground. He still had not commented on her hair. Maybe he did not like it.

“I suppose you’ve noticed my hair”, she said sarcastically.

“You look like a totally different person. Who are you?”, he laughed.

“Well, what do you think of her?”

“I like her, a lot”.

And he fell silent. Izabel did too.

“You look like a goth.” He decided to be honest.

“I was a goth once.”

Mark pretended to inspect her.

“Where are the satanic tattoos?”

“I never wanted any. Or any piercings. I used to wear bracelets, black clothes. The most I ever did – she showed him a mark on her shin – was scratch myself where I’d been bitten by a mosquito. It left a hole and then this mark.”

“A kind of tropical self-harming.”

“That’s it”, she smiled.

“Why did you used to do that?”

“Oh. Classic self-harming. I felt powerless. I used to bite my nails as well.” She showed him her long fingernails painted in a checked pattern. “Today no one would ever know, would they? But, funnily enough, you’ve had a tattoo done recently.” His arm was wrapped in cling film. “And a piercing. At the age of twenty-nine. Explain yourself, Mark.”

“It’s fashionable.”

“Does that attract female goths?”

“Sometimes.”

“Poser.”

He felt a bit offended, but did not say anything. Izabel giggled and grabbed hold of his hand, which was much hotter than hers.

"The noise of you having sex woke me up", said Greg, with bags under his eyes. Izabel grinned.

"Sorry, Greg."

Greg was eating cereal and reading something on his mobile phone. He put it down and looked at her, as she was making coffee.

"I didn't even see him leave. Was he good-looking?"

"Yes, he's hot."

Izabel remembered a few things about the previous night. She pursed her lips and took a deep breath.

"It was really loud, wasn't it?"

Her roommate gripped his spoon tightly while giving her a dirty look. Izabel stood side on to him, watching the coffee drip through the filter. He fiddled with the tabletop with his free hand:

"You can tell me more! Stop being mean!"

Izabel laughed and sat opposite him with her coffee cup, looking at him, complicit.

"I used that thing we bought that day."

"What? The toy? Did you fuck him?"

Izabel shrugged her shoulders slowly:

"How should I know! I felt an opening..."

"Oh my God!", Greg said. "It's just as well that they don't let you into MaleHunt."

"It's your loss", Izabel said, rolling her eyes. "He told me that no one had ever done that to him before."

Greg stared at her.

"There's money in that, you know."

"Absolutely. Some people just don't know how to earn money."

"I'm being serious. People will pay good money for that. Especially as you're hot."

"Thanks."

"Your nom de guerre could be Pegging Sue."

"Pff." She rolled her eyes again. "No way."

"Please. It's a compliment."

"You don't understand. It's not that the floodgates are now open and I'm gonna go around doing that to everyone. It's more that I got close to this guy, and I liked him, but at the same time I was a little bit annoyed by him. He irritated me, you know? He was always calling me, wanting to meet up, to know what I was up to. He was like a dog, always there, following at my heels. So..." Izabel took a breath, "You see? That's it."

Greg was about half the size of Izabel, but she was sitting down. When he hugged her and planted a kiss on her new fringe, she felt very small indeed.

"You're beautiful", he said. "I have to go. I'll speak to you later."

Izabel liked to drink her coffee slowly. She thought things over. The question is not what but how. She wondered if secretly she had found it fun to be sufficiently annoyed with someone to assault him. Or had she always wanted to assault someone and see how things turned out afterwards?

She suspected that it was neither one thing nor the other. A little bit of annoy-

ance, for sure. She wanted to kind of use sex to show him her annoyance. It was a kind of test — not for him but for her. To see if you really like me even knowing that I think that of you. Even when I did that to you in response to your devotion. Maybe that's what it was all about.

She felt a bit ashamed to admit it, but she had found it pleasurable. She had not had an orgasm but she had experienced pleasure.

She looked into the bottom of her coffee cup and wished she knew how to predict the future. But there were not even any coffee grounds in the cup.

She sensed that if she carried on daydreaming she would be late again. She went to unplug her mobile phone from its charger. She spotted a new text message, which had arrived in the early hours of the morning. She read it.

Darling, your grandfather has just passed away. Call me. Mum.

PART I

Tuesday, 30 December

The illuminated rectangles moved from side to side as the vehicles climbed the BR-040 road with its many twists and turns. It had gone dark at 21:00 and the scorching summer heat had remained back in the distance, on the red line of the horizon. Its silhouette could still be seen through the window in the darkness of the bus.

Izabel had got one of the last available seats, next to the toilet. Now and again she looked up from her book and tried to blur the image of the rectangles of light to imagine that she was in a space ship, a futuristic airplane, or anything more exciting than what awaited her.

It will soon be November. Friends that I meet up with all ask me the same question: where are you going to spend the summer? Going to spend the months of December, January, February and March, what Europeans refer to as the winter months, in the mountains is taken as read, or is at least an long-standing tradition that the emperor Pedro II of Brazil introduced into Rio de Janeiro society. In the Brazilian summer he used to transfer his residence to Petrópolis. The royal court accompanied him and the rest of society followed; all the embassies, delegations and ministries transferred their activities to that cooler garden-city near to the Brazilian capital that today, thanks to the motor car, is a kind of suburb of Rio.

Izabel went back to the beginning of her book: the date of publication was 1941. That was already true in 1941. Brazil, land of the future.

The road opened up to a cobalt sky. At any moment now the white construction that had replaced the old bus station, at least for those coming from Rio, would come into view. There it was, and then Izabel caught sight of the queue of taxis, also white, which charged per destination and not based on distance. The taxi from the

bus station to Araras was always exorbitant. She normally preferred to continue her journey by bus. But on this occasion she had luggage and she was tired.

It was only when she went into the bus station that she noticed how thick the mist was. White flurries were invading the inside of the terminal. The cold was too. White cold.

Izabel put a jacket on and bought a savoury fritter. She ate it slowly, paid to use the toilets and went to the taxi rank, on the other side of the bus station.

"Hello. How much do you charge to go to Araras?"

"Which part of Araras?"

"Ten kilometres in. The Bernardo Coutinho Road."

By this she was making it clear that it was not an unpaved road. It is paved. It is not going to dirty your taxi or damage the suspension."

"A hundred reais", he said.

"No way. That's very expensive."

"That's the price. Band two, on the taximeter... That's what it comes to."

"Can you do it for ninety?"

"I'm sorry. It's a hundred."

Izabel looked around. It was late. The three free taxi drivers were all following the conversation.

"Ninety five", she suggested.

The taxi driver looked at her closely, at her shapeless holdall, and agreed.

"I'll do it for ninety five."

The light went out.

Izabel was pleased with herself at having foreseen this. Pleased and irritated. She walked along in the dark towards the candles that were already in the candelabra, and lit them with her cigarette lighter. The rain was heavy and incessant. The electricity company employees would be waiting for it to ease off before trying to fix the problem.

It was already raining hard when Izabel was dropped off next to the bottom gate of the farm. There was the 'BEWARE OF THE DOG' sign, still resolutely telling a lie. On the other side of the wall, the hedge, and behind that, the slope with two cement tracks for car tyres that extended as far as the eye could see. She tackled the slope by holding out her mobile phone in front of her, her umbrella tucked under her neck, until she reached the camouflaged switch, only to discover that someone had either stolen the bulbs or that the wiring was faulty.

Up there she had taken shelter in the house. It was a state-of-the-art country cottage, with a well-equipped kitchen, two bathrooms, three bedrooms, a TV room, and wine cellar, and surrounded by a much larger plot of land than was necessary for someone who did not grow anything and lived alone.

Izabel took her jacket off and used her lighter to light her last-but-one cigarette.

The countryside is now just another place that is tedious when the lights go out. With one difference: the lights go out more often.

The countryside. This was not normal countryside. It was not a place with lots

of large farms dutifully producing foodstuffs. There was nothing to harvest here. It was where you went to spend the holidays, or the weekend.

At the top of the hill, two numbers higher, there was the owner of a bank. A little further back, some two kilometres away, was the former pop singer, now a recluse, who could always be seen naked through the gaps in the hedge. More than one illegal gambling boss had a house there. There were also several actors, who got fed up with the place and sold their houses to other actors, which meant that Izabel could never say with certainty which famous people were her neighbours.

In addition to these owners, there were the caretakers, and their large families, who lived nearby. They attended the many local evangelical churches.

So what am I doing here?

The farm was her own, or rather it belonged to her family. Her grandfather bought it by saving hard towards the end of the dictatorship. Soon afterward the price had shot up. Then again. And again. It had never stopped going up. In the 90s Araras had become an area of upmarket restaurants, a sophisticated weekend destination, a hangout for celebrities taking a quick holiday from the TV studios in Rio.

This was the story that people told her. She had been born in 1991, and it had always been like this in her lifetime.

When she became a teenager she virtually stopped going there. She preferred the beach. Actually during the time when Ivan was on the scene she still went there, to have sex in the bushes. But that was years ago, and without her own car or the inclination to drag herself up there, she had then gone travelling. Then her grandfather died.

Then my grandfather died.

She stubbed out her cigarette in the dark wood ashtray, very 1970s.

Of pulmonary emphysema.

She got up and stood in front of the glass wall consisting entirely of windows. She was sure that it had an architectural name – “winter garden”? Designed to allow people to enjoy the natural environment without feeling the cold. The only problem was that, in the pitch black, you could not see anything outside. That is not entirely true: you could see the threads of water, overflowing from the gutters and boring holes into the earth in the vases under the eaves. And, through each clearing in the trees, the mountain in the distance, where waterfalls cascaded down. But nothing else.

She went into the smallest of the bedrooms and opened the wardrobe. At the back were the orange flip-flops that had been hers since she was twelve years old. The iron bed that she sat on to put them on had been her mother’s until she married.

She thought that these things would smell of her grandfather. But she could only smell mustiness.

She left the room carrying her trainers and went into the main bedroom. She left them near the door and put her bag on top of the dressing table. She then opened her bag and took out smaller ones, which she arranged alongside it. From one of them she took out a toothbrush, and she went into the bathroom to pinch some toothpaste.

The toothpaste was a bit dried up, but it was there. This was an odd but accommodating hotel.

The bed was made. And it was musty. She got undressed and into bed. She checked her mobile – it was relatively early, one in the morning. She took a while to drop off to sleep due to the intermittent barking coming from to the west of the house. It was the first time she had heard so much barking and so close by: that was not a stray dog – one of the neighbours must have been breeding dogs.

Wednesday, 31 December

She walked across the flagstones that separated the house from the swimming pool, stepping carefully over the tall grass. The hedges were overgrown, the forest was taking over the flowerbeds. More than six months without her grandfather. Almost a year without being cared for. The house had been entrusted to the occasional inspection of a female neighbour, but it seemed like she had not even set foot there.

When the light began to disturb her and it was not a working day, Izabel normally just turned over and went back to sleep. Today she did not. She had woken up with a start, put chlorine in the pool, turned the pump on. Then she had gulped down a coffee – not strained, as there were no filters. And now she was surveying her surroundings.

The pool was overflowing, topped up by the rain. It was green. Lake-green. The edging stones were rough and curved upwards, holding in the water above ground level. The damp deck was shining sadly without the PVC sun-loungers.

Around the edge there were hibiscus in flower, the magnolia tree, the assorted pine trees and the never-ending row of flamingo flowers. It was obvious that the farm had at one time belonged to a woman. It had belonged to a man for thirty years, and even if he did not replace the flowers that died, he zealously fertilised and pruned those that survived.

The flat area where today the swimming pool was located was previously used by the neighbourhood for football matches, with the blessing of the former lady owner. It had been difficult to get the locals to forgo this habit, as well as that of using the farm as a shortcut between the upper and lower roads. But her grandfather's monumental unfriendliness eventually prevailed. That and the fawn-coloured Doberman that he acquired.

The dry part of the lawn had to be watered during the winter, and it obviously had not been. There were also ants' nests in the lawn, and Izabel discovered when walking around barefoot that some areas were full of a kind of weed with spines that got stuck into the foot of unwitting bathers. You could only get them out with poison. But the holes in the lawn were more worrying. Later, when she could, she would bring some new pieces of turf and replace the bald parts.

Her grandfather used to sigh: If only you could do the same with hair.

The magnolia tree at the far end had become definitively lighter and thinner

with age. The moss-coloured swing that hung in its shade had been a present for Izabel. She thought for a while about having a go on it, but then remembered that the seat had not accommodated her hips since she was about twelve years old.

On the opposite side of the pool, there was a pitanga tree shading the floor of a caretaker's house that lay in ruins. In contrast the tree was still very green and flourishing.

The old satellite aerial was still sticking out of the slope. All rusted up. Trees had been cut down because of it. So that it could communicate with the satellite. Today they had the portable set-top aerial and its half a dozen free channels. Later they would have to get someone to take that away.

She went past the dog's grave, a circle of earth marked out with round pebbles. Káli was her name. She had died about four years ago; her grandfather was adamant that he did not want another one (male or female). He stayed in that enormous farm on his own.

Izabel went down the internal road with her chin up and noticed that only one of the lampposts had a bulb in it. And that one was not working. Incredible.

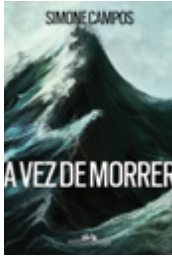
She reached the lower entrance and then went all the way back up again towards the vegetable garden. She was eager to start working on it. It had become a mass of tangled vegetation with a few banana trees around the edge.

Behind the vegetable garden there was a loquat tree that was refusing to produce any more fruit. There was the mango tree. The vine that had never produced grapes. A row of lime trees whose fruit they would use to make caipirinha cocktails when they had guests. There was also the rock where she had drunk her first beer, smoked her first cigarettes and refused her second kiss, offered by Thales Nesser, a chubby boy with glasses from her old school who also had a house in Araras and who, although he barely spoke to her in the playground, kept turning up at the farm, with the effusive approval of Izabel's mother. Sometimes he came across Izabel on her own, on other occasions accompanied by some friend or other that he would always try to kiss, sometimes successfully. Izabel herself he never managed to.

After she had finished her inspection she went back to the house and opened the doors of all the wardrobes. She would take out all the clothes as soon as she could and would hang them out to get rid of the musty smell. There's time, she thought. First she would take care of the non-essentials.



THE BOOK



The Time to Die

Simone Campos

- **Original title:** A vez de morrer
- **ISBN:** 9788535924596
- **Year of Publication:** 2014
- **Original Publisher:** Companhia das Letras
- **Number of pages:** 256
- **Total print run:** 3.000 copies

SYNOPSIS

When Izabel returned spending her weekends in Araras, the family home was practically abandoned. Selling the land would guarantee hers and her mother's lives. What could come in handy, especially for Izabel. Spending time there, the air of abandonment gradually gives way to a living house, as if the ruins were being rebuilt by her memory.

The crossroads of several lives, Simone Campos builds piece by piece a plot of high sexual voltage, a portrait of generation at the same time acid and delicate, violent and bucolic.

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 - No shopping, 2000, 72 páginas, Editora 7Letras
 - A Feia noite, 2006, 104 páginas, Editora 7Letras
 - Penados y rebeldes, romance online de ficção-científica <http://penadosyrebeldes.blogspot.com.br/>
 - OWNED - Um novo jogador, livro-jogo online e em papel <http://www.novojogador.com.br/>

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EN LA PATA DEL CABALLO HAY SIETE ABISMOS

CLARISSA MACEDO

Traducido por Verónica Aranda Casado

Trilogía

Ayer se abrió un hueco
rasgando mis reinos.

Hoy se yergue una columna
en la trampa de mi pecho.

Mañana una herida que nunca tuve
crecerá hasta romperme por la mitad.

Ejercicio

Cerrar los ojos
para que la última
lágrima crezca.

Cerrar los ojos
para que el mundo
sea memoria.

Abrir los ojos
para que, al fin,
todo se pierda.

Teorema

La vida es una mujer estéril
nombrando a los hijos
que nunca podrá tener.

Alegoría

El pan enmohecido
de casi siempre
muestra
que entre
la verdad y el hambre
hay un abismo
de puentes
imaginarios.

Iconoclasia

Caen monumentos
como cae la ropa
de los que se quieren.

En la lucha de lo que tropieza
mueren hombres
como nacen dioses

y las noticias que llegan
cierran quejas abiertas
abren heridas secas.

Pecado

De tocar lo intocable
de comer el sueño
de otro mundo,
de querer fondear en mares
sin tener que censurar
a villanos.

Si el camino no fuese
tan feroz, un puerto aún
me vería.
Y yo, isla salvaje que llora,
fingiría que un día nació.

Silencio

Lanza de punta curvada
audición de terribles pensamientos
palabra enterrada en la carne

cactus que hace señas con la corteza

llanto de niño sin lamento;

quejido lento de casa
rumor que oye lo que llega:
el amor, con su manto de raíz amarga.

Oasis

El desierto es una ventana abierta:
lo que se escapa de sus camellos,
forjados en el agua de vapor y sal,
es el talón de todos los deseos.

En las arenas hechas de misterio
se habla de tierras donde nunca fui.
Allá, los fantasmas de mi río seco.

El gesto de la creación

En la trama de las melodías que callan
de los versos que huyen en bandada
se clava la flecha de un síntoma.

Al romper signos, penetrar asombros,
lejos de escribir las nupcias,
me ahogo en un río de dudas
y perezco... sólo la palabra es cómplice
de lo que me hace enloquecer.

Cuestión de color

Como carne masticada
la vida envejece sin color.

Toda piel camina hacia su fin:
negra, blanca, rosada, mulata.

Y si el fin anuncia su llegada,
todo el mundo lo siente
todo el mundo es rojo como la carne
como la sangre que tiñe el dolor,
y que todo despedaza.

Hermanidad

¿Cuál es el color de tu drama?
¿Cuántos hogares salen de tus cabellos?

¿Entre cuántos hombres se reparte
el último hilo de desesperación?

En tiempos de pasión y hambre
los credos son mayores que las ropas
los vuelos mayores que las alas.

Ritmo

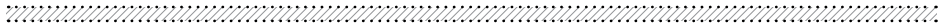
Cada paso es una trampa,
un abismo en la nueva casa.
En las paredes que nos testifican
resbala el color del precipicio.

Lo que queda, ahora, es la marca
del vacío - largo espacio -,
el riesgo de la palabra.

Cada paso es una trampa
coro de muerte en la nueva casa.

Concierto para caballos

Desnudos de crines que no se reconocen
Marcados con hierro
Huidos por la paja que niega lo que desean
Muertos por las pirámides que migraron
Sordos por la sinfonía que no se nombra
Locos de manadas de dragones que escupen estrellas
Vivos por las corrientes que chillan astros
... así son los caballos del concierto de mi corazón
niños que preparan el primer verso,
fieras que no se doblegan.



EL LIBRO



En la pata del caballo hay siete abismos

Clarissa Macedo

• **Título original:**

Na pata do cavalo há sete abismos

• **ISBN:** 978-85-421-0295-6

• **Año de publicación:** 2014

• **Editorial de la publicación original:**

Editora 7Letras

• **Número de páginas:** 64

• **Tirada total en Brasil:** 1.000 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

Reflexión, lirismo, sensibilidad y la precisión aguda en el trato con el lenguaje. Es con estas cualidades - raras - y una experimentada madurez de poeta, que Clarissa Macedo publica En la pata del caballo hay siete abismos. Se pliega en la piel, cicatrices, cuchillas afiladas, grietas, pecados y acantilados - el peligro y la parte secreta del universo de ficción de esta autora original, que combina el estilo de la ligereza y la fluidez del verso en las imágenes densas verso que nos alcanzan a llenar en la lectura.

PRÉMIOS

Prêmio Nacional de la Academia de Letras da Bahia - Poesía (28/10/2014)

LA AUTORA



Clarissa Moreira de Macedo

• **Nombre de pluma:** Clarissa Macedo

• **Otros libros**

El tren rojo que partió de las cenizas (O trem vermelho que partiu das cinzas) 2014, Agora

LA TRADUCTORA

Verónica Aranda Casado




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LOS OJOS DEL TORO

IEDA MAGRI

Traducido por Julia Tomasini

Era junio, por la mañana, el calor se disipaba a lo lejos, estaba sentada en mi silla, en esa época todavía abría las ventanas y miraba el mar que entraba por el comedor y me robaba de mí. Recuerdo que deseé tan profundamente que algo novedoso sucediera en mi vida que me pareció estar en sueños cuando oí el timbre. No me animé a creer que era verdad. Esperé a que sonara algunas veces más y miré desde lo alto de la escalera, sin que me viera, al joven que venía en bicicleta. La casa está en la cima y hay que hacer un gran esfuerzo para subir en bicicleta, pero el muchacho no parecía agotado. Incluso mirándolo desde arriba, parecía inmenso. Hombros anchos bajo una camiseta roja. Un short común, beige, usado, y zapatillas de viejo. Pero las zapatillas las vi cuando abrí el portón, y muy rápidamente, por-que enseguida solo le presté atención a su boca que, recuerdo, me pareció muy grande. No digo los labios sino la boca entera era grande, dominaba la cara. Me pareció simpático aquel joven que quería alquilarme un cuarto. Luego le pregunté todo lo habido y por haber, y decidí mostrarle la dependencia de la planta baja. A él le pareció pequeña, pero tenía una enorme ventaja: con una salida independiente, no debería pasar por mi sala para entrar y salir, si bien podía sentarse allí para desayunar. Adiviné enseguida que ese jovencito me quitaría la paz.

No tardé mucho en tomarle cariño. En aquel entonces yo tenía sesenta años y viviría hasta los ochenta y siete. Al principio nos veíamos en el desayuno y él se quedaba charlando conmigo. Era un amor. Luego empezó a hacer pequeños arreglos en la cocina. Reparó una pérdida de gas, cambió piezas del fregadero. Entonces le fui pidiendo que hiciera los servicios de hombre de la casa, y él me lo agradecía, con la falta que sentía de esas cosas. Un día llegó con veneno para hormigas y comenzó a cuidar del jardín. Fue por esa época que empecé a enamorarme de él. Yo sabía que no era correspondida, tampoco esperaba que él deseara a una vieja de quien solo conocía el nombre y la casa.

Al poco tiempo de su llegada, comencé a oír en las madrugadas silenciosas de la Urca unos gemidos casi inaudibles que surgían no mucho después del sonido de una película en volumen alto. Principalmente los martes por la noche, como a las diez, cuando me metía en la cama, oía que abría la puerta, que conversaba con alguien en voz baja, que des-corchaba una botella de champagne. Los besos no llegaba a oírlos. El comienzo de la película, sí. Y los gemidos. A veces pensaba que venían de la película, pero por la música me daba cuenta de que no. Eran sofisticados. Esos sonidos estaban fuera del aparato. Las mujeres no eran las mismas. Los ruidos siempre diferentes.

Comencé a pensar en un modo de tenerlo más cerca de mí y resolver así dos problemas. Mi primer inquilino, que vivía con la mujer y dos hijos, tenía el vicio

de la bebida. No es que yo no lo tuviera, pero por lo menos bebía en silencio. Recuerdo que cuando aquel señor llegó para instalarse con la familia, enseguida le di el mejor lugar, en la parte de arriba de la casa, el más grande y más cómodo. Lúcio era trabajador y no me daba problemas durante el día. Pero cuando volvía ebrio en la madrugada, maldiciendo a la familia y gritando barbaridades a los vecinos, moría dos veces de vergüenza. Una noche, después de que acabaran los ruidos sutiles del cuarto de abajo, oí a Lúcio insultando a grito pelado a mi vecina de enfrente, Lesbiana, puta, búscate otra tortillera como tú. Lo recuerdo como si fue-ra hoy. A partir de aquella noche humillante, comencé a estudiar la forma de expulsarlo de casa. Pero mi corazón se ablandaba todas las mañanas ante las disculpas de su mujer. Aquella noche fue R. quien mandó a Lúcio a cerrar la boca e irse a dormir. Avergonzada en mi cama, pensé en alguna manera de agradecerle. Fue simple. Traje a R. cerca de mí -justo encima, para ser exacta- y pasé a Lúcio al sofocante cuarto del primer piso. Lo hice por su mujer, que quede claro, que lo dejó enseguida porque no aguantaba la convivencia apretada con aquel hombre a quien ciertamente comenzó a desconocer, hinchado y rojo de bebida.

Con R. en el cuarto de arriba, comencé a verlo más veces y seguí de cerca sus amos. Puedo decir que incluso fui parte de ellos. Todavía me ruborizo solo con la idea de contarlo. Muchos meses después del día que comenzó a vivir en el piso de arriba, R. llegó a casa un poco irritado con una joven rubia, muy delgada y medio desmayada. Hizo un gran esfuerzo para subir las escaleras, a pesar de la fuerza de él y la delgadez de ella. Uno de los descansos de la escalera daba a mi cocina. Despierta, sentada en el sillón, con las ventanas cerradas y viendo todavía el mar azul en la oscuridad que adivinaba afuera, absorta con mi tercer vaso de whisky en la mano, no noté que habían llegado. Era temprano. En verdad, yo no lo esperaba todavía. Mis ojos deben haber brillado porque me asusté de mi alegría al verlo llegar con aquella muñeca casi en brazos casi a rastras. Pero solo le dije buenas noches y me quedé mirándolo subir la escalera. En ese momento me sentí joven, bonita. Alta y delgada, claro. Si bien que no recuerdo si pensé en el color de mi cabello. Sé que deseé mucho subir la escalera con él y creo que hasta le coqueteé un poco al preguntarle si necesitaba ayuda. No me respondió y entonces pensé que la aventura había acabado allí. Que él se acostaría con ella, pondrían una película y la noche terminaría silenciosa como la anterior. Pero entonces él bajó. Le ofrecí un vaso, que él llenó, y nos sentamos en el pequeño y oscuro balcón. No recuerdo sobre qué conversamos, solo que yo hablaba y reía de una manera que pensaba haber olvidado. Él apreciaba la charla, las cosas que le contaba. Se levantó más de una vez para llenar los vasos, pero yo no me sentía ebria; saboreaba la bebida lentamente. Permanecimos así mucho tiempo hasta que un avión atravesó el cielo y nos transportó lejos de nosotros mismos. Él dijo que le gustaría viajar a Nueva York y yo le dije que en mis épocas solo se viajaba a Lisboa. Y en barco. El recuerdo provocó un silencio que desentonaba y no sé si fue por eso pero él tomó mi mano. Sus manos estaban calientes y yo no sabía lo que vendría después. Sentí sus labios en la oscuridad, no lo creí. ¿Entonces yo no era la señora sentada eternamente en su sillón y que engordó esperando a un hombre que atravesó el mar? ¿Mi olor no era repugnante, como de

agua estancada? No. Yo era la mu-chacha delgada, alta y rubia que él había cargado en sus brazos, aquella que yo había sido en la juventud. Perdí el pudor e hice uso de todos mis conocimientos olvidados. Lo besé ansiosamente adivinando que sería la última vez, gemí como las muchachitas que él se lle-vaba al cuarto, casi lloré cuando me quitó la ropa. No sabía que los pelos de su pecho po-dían ser tan suaves -los hombres con quienes me había acostumbrado a hacer esas cosas no tenían pelos en el pecho- ni que su olor podía ser tan, tan... de hombre. Puedo decir que tuvimos sexo sin amor la noche entera, o lo que quedaba de la noche, y que me quedaría esperando por una repetición. Que nunca, nunca ocurrió.

Sin ver mis antiguas fotografías, nadie podría decir que fui una Dietrich a mis veinte años. Los amigos de R. y los vecinos de la avenida São Sebastião solo veían una casa con una vieja dentro. Me llamaban la portuguesa. Nunca fui portuguesa ni conozco Portugal. No tengo nada de portuguesa. Pero quien me haya conocido después de mi marido, y ellos me conocieron mucho después de Alberto, mucho después del dinero de Alberto, no sabría cómo inventarme a mí de joven. R. sabía de la Dietrich... ¿Habría existido realmente aquella noche?... Él vio la caja de fotografías que guardé después de recortarlo a Alberto de todas. Entró en mi cuarto más de una vez y vio los portarretratos que saqué de la sala en la que todos tomaban el desayuno. No había motivos para mostrar mi infortunio. Que pensaran que siempre fui una portuguesa arruinada con una verruga en la cara. Mejor que tuvieran pena de mí por lo que me hice a mí misma, sentada mirando el mar y pidiendo por favor que me dieran algo de dinero para pagar las cuentas.

Me gustaría que R. quemara las fotos... pero el día que morí él llevó la caja y los portarretratos a su cuarto y guardó todo con mi pasaporte y certificado de casamiento. Solo dejó aquel con una foto del día que cumplí setenta y nueve. Él tenía predilección por un re-trato, uno en el que estoy con mi perro camino a la Urca. De traje de baño, con una salida de playa y gafas de sol. No sé si me miraba a mí o al barrio, tan diferente de cómo lo cono-ció años después. No había aceras, solo la calle ancha, la barranca, las siemprevivas en los muros bajos de las casas. No terminaba de comprender, me dijo una vez, o la escenografía o la mujer no cabían en su realidad. ¿Era realmente yo? ¿Era realmente Urca? Urca, sí, no había dudas, no podía desmentirlo la entrada del fuerte, la propiedad de la Marina, la escalinata que sube a nuestra calle. La escenografía era correcta, pero ¿dónde estaba ahora aquella mujer? Respondí ofendida que había muerto a los treinta y ocho años, después de veinte de amor. Él también vio la única fotografía que guardé de Alberto: con corbata y una amplia sonrisa, una mano en el bolsillo y el otro brazo entrelazado al mío. Teníamos una manera muy nuestra de andar tomados del brazo: él doblaba el brazo a la altura del codo, yo hacía lo mismo y coordinábamos el paso. Como en ese baile de las películas de R., de campesinas antiguas. Los dos brazos doblados a la altura de la cintura y las manos unidas al frente, indicando el camino. Cuánta certeza. Cuánta resolución. Cuánta alegría. Confianza. Yo podía quedarme con ese Alberto en la memoria. Tan brasileño. Hasta el traje era blanco. Es una lástima que no me acuerde de los zapatos (no aparecen en la foto). Fue poco antes de irse, frío

y decepcionado porque no podía tener hijos. Quería una familia grande. Yo también; pero tenía la sensación de que podía abandonar ese deseo si él también lo hacía. R. supo que él tenía una familia. Grande, con varias hijas. Me dijo que se casó con una negra y vivía aquí en Río. Pero yo estoy segura de que se fue a Portugal la noche que me dejó. Eso me dijo él y no encontré motivos para sospechar. Si viviera aquí me habría visitado por lo me-nos una vez, habría querido la casa. No me vería pasando necesidad. Era un hombre bueno y tenía el derecho de dejarme.

Puede parecer que sufrí mucho: una extranjera en el Brasil, una felicidad pasajera y el resto de la vida sola en una casa en Urca, donde no hay nada, que para comprar hilo y aguja hay que ir hasta Botafogo. Mi marido y yo vivimos aquí, con este mar, esta calle si-lenciosa, estos árboles, estas flores, mi perro, durante veinte años. De amor. Sí, señora. Y cuando él se fue no voy a decir que no sufrí, pero tampoco morí de dolor. Ya habíamos vi-vido tanto. A decir verdad, a veces creía que era bueno estar un poco sola. Los hombres cansan. Las noches eran bastante iguales, cuando él llegaba, un paseo por el jardín, senta-dos en el césped y un vaso de whisky. Después yo hacía la comida, comíamos, y la noche era a veces silencio, a veces conversación. Él me contaba su día y yo no decía nada. Pasaba los días en casa, controlaba las hormigas, peleaba con la sirvienta, corría con el perro, to-maba el sol de la mañana recostada en la arena de la playa. No iba a contarle sobre los hom-bres bonitos que corrían en la arena ni sobre los que quería que me salvaran del mar que me ahogaba. En verdad, quería que él se fuera. Quería que otro tomara su lugar. Quería volver a Suiza, quería hacer el viaje de nuevo, revivir mis veinte años, con otro hombre, sin bigo-tes. Mi amor había acabado, pero no las ganas de amar. Cuando él se fue, se fue. Pasaron muchos días hasta que entendí que no habría otro para abrir el portón cien escalones abajo. El día que R. tocó el timbre y vi la camisa roja, la bermuda beige, esos brazos fuertes, ya estaba vieja. Pero los bigotes en la fotografía de mi marido fueron borrándose poco a poco, cayeron pelo por pelo, y su cara estrecha de ojos grandes y verdes que se diluyeron y se volvieron azules, parecía ser más redonda cada mañana.

Todos querían la casa. Todos hacían propuestas y las mujeres me prestaban a sus maridos, todas querían que amara más al suyo. ¿Para qué? Para que dejara mi casa a sus hijos. Y decían, no sin razón, que yo no tenía hijos y que aceptara que me ayudaran mien-tras viviera para que después ellos estuvieran mejor. Pero tenía miedo, miedo de que me mataran para quedarse con la casa. Se la prometí a todos. Sería de todos ellos. Y cada uno de ellos lo creyó, creyó que la casa sería suya. Y así todos los meses yo iba teniendo algo de dinero para el mercado, la car-nicería, la ropa de cama, la sirvienta, la cuenta de luz. Pero nadie tenía dinero para comprar la casa. R. hizo la propuesta. Que la vendiera y con el dine-ro comprara un apartamento allí mismo en Urca. En la calle de la playa, sin escaleras que subir, sin tantas habitaciones que limpiar. Me dijo que la casa valía unos tres millones. Yo no sabía hacer la cuenta, pero calculé que allá mi soledad sería más grande. No necesitaba dinero, necesitaba mis plantas, mi perro, ¿todavía vive? Creo que no, no recuerdo a R. con un perro. No fueron contemporáneos. ¿A R. le gustan los perros, le gustan mis escaleras agotadoras, le gusta cada rincón de la casa en la que hab-

itaba mi memoria? Si la vendiera ya nadie me visitaría. Nadie tocaría el timbre con una torta de maíz y un bolígrafo en el bolsillo, Firme, Dietrich, escriba en el papel que la casa es mía después de su muerte. Firme, no le cuesta nada. Y yo, Otro día, señor Francisco, la semana que viene, José, tú sabes que eres mi preferido, todavía falta mucho para que muera, Antonino, olvídelo. O entonces solo reía y me iba al fondo a buscar más bebida. Yo lo sabía, nunca fui tonta, mi vida sería demasiado monótona sin esa casa. Sería terriblemente pobre, aun cuando la caja de ahorros tuviera llena. No viajaría sola; en el fondo, siempre me gustó mucho mi vida para aventurarme a buscar otra. Solo me faltaba un marido nuevo, quizás un hijo adoptado. Tenía esa esperanza, pero no debía ser tan importante porque no seduje a ningún otro hombre. Podría haberle dado la casa a alguien, pero siempre estaba el miedo de que me mataran.

Solo a R. A él le dejaría la casa porque parecía no quererla. No estaba interesado en la casa hasta que las goteras comenzaron a hacer ruido, a mojar su sueño. Y él decidió repararlas. Arregló la teja, hizo un balcón, puso vidrios en las ventanas. Comencé a preocuparme.



EL LIBRO



Los Ojos del Toro

Ieda Magri

- **Título original:** Olhos de Bicho
- **ISBN:** 978-85-325-2848-3
- **Año de publicación:** 2013
- **Editorial de la publicación original:** Rocco
- **Número de páginas:** 160
- **Tirada total en Brasil:** 3.000 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

La novela está estructurada como una casa. Cada personaje pertenece a un cuarto, pero el acceso a estos cuartos, iluminados uno por vez, como en el teatro, parece imposible.

A medida que entramos en la casa, encontramos a Emma, la actriz; a Dietrich, la extranjera misteriosa; a R., el único que se relaciona con todos los personajes; a Louis y Gisele, que esconden o encuentran pedazos de una historia compartida y que tienen en común una casa en Urca. Todos ellos están sumergidos en aquella “niebla a través de la cual miramos todo”, como dijo Leskov alguna vez.

PRÉMIOS

Finalista del Premio São Paulo de Literatura 2014.
Beca Funarte de Creación Literaria 2010.

RESEÑAS

Revista Pessoa, seção Terceiro Caderno/ 25 de fevereiro de 2014
“Ojos, cosas, imaginación”/ de Manoel Ricardo de Lima
<http://www.revistapessoa.com/2014/02/olhos-coisas-e-imaginacao/>

Criação e crítica/ Revista da USP número 13, 2014
“Un error que sea tuyo (o casi una ilusión)”/ de Carolina Correia dos Santos
http://www.revistas.usp.br/criacaoecritica/article/view/85647/pdf_46

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“Olhos de bicho, de Ieda Magri”/ de Luiz Antonio Ribeiro
<http://indiqueumlivro.literatortura.com/2013/12/02/olhos-de-bicho-de-ieda-magri/>

LA AUTORA



Ieda Maria Magri

- **Nombre de pluma:** Ieda Magri
- **Otros libros**
Tinha uma coisa aqui, 2007, 7Letras, 72 páginas - prosa (cuentos/nouvelle)
O nervo exposto — João Antônio, experiência e literatura, 2013, Lume editor, 105 páginas - ensayo

LA TRADUCTORA

Julia Tomasini

Julia Tomasini es argentina, licenciada en Letras por la Universidad de Buenos Aires y actualmente estudiante de doctorado en literatura latinoamericana en la Universidad de Maryland. Edita la página Web especializada en traducción de literatura brasileña en español Brasil Papeles sueltos, proyecto que desarrolló con el objetivo de divulgar la literatura brasileña en el exterior. En este momento está trabajando como coeditora y traductora en una antología de nuevos escritores brasileños en español.

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RUÍNA Y LEVEZA

JULIA DANTAS

Traducido por Julia Barbosa Dantas

Uno

Le contesto a Lucho que vamos juntos, no hay manera de que me quede allá abajo sin él. Estamos en el nivel más profundo de la mina, donde se terminan los túneles, de frente a un pozo donde solo puede entrar una persona a la vez. Los mineros se entran en esos hoyos para seguir abriendo caminos en el interior de la montaña. Porque Lucho y yo queremos bajar juntos, nuestro guía necesita decirle a su compañero de abajo que suba, para que haya espacio para nosotros dos. El Fraile grita al amigo que suba. En pocos segundos, emerge una cabeza inmundada y de piel reseca mascando una inmensa bola de hojas de coca en las mejillas. El hombre termina de salir, y los rasgos de su ropa dejan aparecer un cuerpo chico pero robusto. Pueden bajar, dice nuestro guía. Lucho me dice que vaya antes, mientras revira el pelo para atar su docena de largos dread locks. Bajamos por una escalera de cuerdas, mi inexperiencia me hace balancearla de un lado a otro, arañándome los codos en las paredes pedregosas. Llego al fondo. El pozo termina en una minúscula cámara donde el minero abandonó un pico y una linterna. Sola, ya comienzo a sentirme oprimida. No hay suficiente altura para estar de pie ni el ancho suficiente para abrir los brazos. Me agacho y espero que Lucho aparezca. Me aprieto contra las paredes y él se sienta delante de mí.

La idea de visitar una mina de estaño fue de Lucho. Él ya había estado allí y me aseguró que nunca le creería sin ver aquel lugar con mis propios ojos. También había sido él quien me había persuadido a conocer tantas realidades cuantas fuese posible antes de regresar a Porto Alegre. Así que viajamos a Potosí, donde Lucho, con su usual desenvoltura argentina, tomó mi brazo y entramos, confiados y altivos, en el primer cafetín que encontramos en las afueras de la ciudad.

Él sabía que, a excepción del dueño, todos serían mineros; entonces eligió al tipo más borracho del salón y trató de persuadirlo a darnos un tour. Así conocimos a El Fraile, un hombrecito medio tartamudo a quien le dieron el apodo porque, cuando joven, quiso seguir la carrera eclesiástica. Desistió de la idea cuando supo que los padres no pueden casarse e, irónicamente, nunca encontró mujer.

Después de analizarnos por un buen tiempo - estudiándonos mientras esperábamos de pie al lado de su mesa, el Fraile dijo que nos llevaría a la mina por diez dólares y una botella de alcohol potable. Cerramos el trato y compramos ahí mismo la bebida, una cosa erizante que ellos mezclaban con gaseosa. Tal vez no fuese peor que los malos vinos de mi adolescencia, pero debiera haber comprendido que alcohol potable no podría ser nada más que un mal augurio. De

todas formas, nos sentamos con el Fraile y arreglamos que nos encontraríamos en frente al bar a la mañana siguiente.

Lucho y yo llegamos a la hora marcada. Esperamos por Fraile más de media hora y, cuando lo vimos doblar la esquina, él venía rumiándose una grande resaca. Nos saludó con menos tartamudez que a la noche anterior y nos llevó a la mina. No era un paseo con agencia turística, entonces el Fraile se disculpó y dijo que no habrían cascos para nosotros dos. Pero los accidentes graves son raros, dijo.

En la entrada nos esperaba una personificación del diablo, El Tío, cercado de velas y cigarrillos que, según nuestro falso fraile, compraban la protección de los trabajadores. Era una estatua con dos guampas rojas y una sonrisa que hacía intuir algo maligno, lo que, de todos modos, debe ser común con imágenes de demonios. Lucho dejó un cigarrillo en el altar y siguió caminando. Lo agarré del brazo y le pedí que dejara uno más, por mí, por las dudas. Uno nunca sabe, ¿verdad?

La mina tiene cinco niveles, cada cual más profundo que el anterior. El camino es más inquietante que difícil. Cada vez que bajábamos a un nuevo rellano, yo intentaba no pensar en la obviedad de que solo habría un camino para salir, exactamente el mismo que hacíamos para bajar. El primer túnel que tuvimos que atravesar gateando tenía diez metros y fue hasta divertido. La primera escalera de cuerdas que bajamos fue una aventura. Pero mientras se multiplicaban los corredores estrechos y las escaleras podridas, yo pensaba que no sería capaz de regresar: eso era cosa para hacerse una sola vez en la vida. Pero los mineros negaban mi teoría, y no solo ellos repetían ese trayecto diariamente como pasaban doce horas atrapados como lombrices dentro de la tierra.

Yo creí en la idea de “ver con los propios ojos”. Si uno quiere saber como viven los miserables bolivianos, vaya hasta ellos. Pero distribuyendo “buenos días” para los mineros famélicos cuyas caras enfermas translucían por debajo del polvo pegajoso del estaño, me vi como a los gringos que van a la Rocinha en el Favela Tour. Explotaba la miseria humana para comprarme una “experiencia de vida”, algo que yo lamentablemente hubiera esperado contar luego en alguna mesa de bar para impresionar a los amigos. Pero la experiencia se mostraría imposible de ser narrada, no hay manera de comunicar la soledad oscura que nace del peligro y de la pobreza cuando tomados por naturales. Por cinco dólares, yo tenía el derecho de saludar a decenas de hombres en cascos corroídos y tomarme una foto a su lado.

Pero estas eran las reglas del juego, y yo me había decidido a jugar: callé y seguí los pasos del Fraile y de Lucho por las venas oscuras de la mina. Tardamos más de una hora hasta llegar al último nivel. El Fraile llevó gaseosa para su solitario compañero de la cámara subterránea y dijo que nos tomásemos el tiempo que quisiéramos allá abajo mientras ellos hablarían arriba.

A pesar de la posición incómoda de estar agachados y sin espacio para movernos, le pido a Lucho que nos quedemos allí hasta que recupere mis fuerzas antes de empezar el camino de regreso. Mi orgullo me impide decirlo, pero necesito de unos minutos para controlar el miedo que gana espacio en mi cabeza.

Venía persuadiéndome con argumentos bastante razonables de que yo sería capaz de ir hasta el fin. La claustrofobia es un miedo irracional, me decía, lo puedes

controlar. No hay razón para que no consigas regresar. El cuerpo está funcionando, solo necesitas controlar los pensamientos. Tienes agua, todos los músculos en orden, pudiste bajar, podrás subir. Eso me trajo hasta la cámara del quinto nivel, ahora necesito cultivar la idea de que eso me va a sacar de aquí.

Mientras mentalizo mi pequeño mantra de la racionalidad, Lucho juega con el pico dejado por el minero robusto. La herramienta hace piruetas en el aire hasta que Lucho la deja caer cuando nos sacude el primer temblor. Nuestras miradas se buscan para confirmar si de hecho sentimos lo que parecía habíamos sentido.

Sin convicción, Lucho se apura y dice tranquila, no será nada. Estiro la cabeza para afuera de la cámara. Fraile, está todo bien ahí arriba?, grito por el hueco que nos había llevado hasta allí. Él grita de vuelta que no pasa nada, pero creo que sería mejor que ustedes subiesen. Apenas pongo el pié en la escalera de cuerdas y comienzan los verdaderos estremecimientos. Escuchamos los chillidos del Fraile, la voz estridente por miedo o por sorpresa:

— No se muevan!

Lucho me agarra de las piernas y me arrastra junto a él.

— Aléjate del pozo, nena.

Es un terremoto. Ya no tengo dudas de que es un terremoto. No puede ser otra cosa. Estoy viviendo mi primer terremoto. Lucho y yo estamos sentados en una redoma de tierra intranquila, y él me avisa que (la linterna se va a apagar) va a apagar la linterna para ahorrar batería, porque ese es el tipo de cosas que uno hace en un terremoto, que es lo que estamos viviendo. En la completa oscuridad, él está recostado contra la pared, yo estoy en el medio de sus piernas, y es a través de su cuerpo y del suelo que siento los temblores de lo que aún deseo que no sea un terremoto, aunque ya sepa que es un terremoto. Me abrazo a mis rodillas y siento las de Lucho rodeándome por los lados. Sus codos están sobre mis hombros. Siento una de sus manos sobre mi cabeza y supongo que la otra esté sobre la suya propia. Me acomete una inmensa gratitud por su protección a la vez que lo odio por haberme llevado hasta allí. Tierra y pedazos de piedra caen sobre nosotros — es un terremoto — y escucho la voz del Fraile gritando que no nos movamos, que no nos movamos todavía. Él no está más tartamudo.

Sé que aquí me voy a morir, en tierra extranjera, al fin de un túnel oscuro y asustador, abrazada por un argentino, cercada por bolivianos, abandonada a una tumultuosa soledad. Los estremecimientos se manifiestan con pequeñas pausas, y la montaña no parece capaz de aguantar.

Estiro las piernas hasta tocar los pies en la pared opuesta. Empujo las suelas de mis zapatos contra la tierra, como si mi fuerza pudiera sujetar las placas tectónicas. Desenredo mis brazos de mis piernas. Espalmo las dos manos en el suelo, quiero pegarme a la superficie con la esperanza de que se sacuda menos. La tierra fría asústame. Mis dedos temblorosos, o mis dedos firmes en un cuerpo tembloroso, intentan hundirse en el suelo, cavando entre piedras y fragmentos de metal. En la mano izquierda, la uña del dedo índice se parte. Imagino que un hilo de sangre se mezcla a la montaña. Tal vez la tierra quiera entrar en mí de la misma manera en que mi sangre está entrando en ella. Tal vez la tierra me acoja, en fin. Recojo

las piernas. Suelto los dedos de las montaña y me agarro a una de las rodillas de Lucho. Le digo que no puedo morir. Le digo que necesito regresar. Una parte de mí nunca salió de casa. Está allá, esperándome. Yo preciso regresar. La voz me sale atascada, o así es como la escucho. Siento el polvo arañándome la garganta. Ya no sé si hablo portugués, español o inconcebibles gruñidos. Lloro e imploro:

— Olvídate de todo lo que odias en mí y sigue abrazándome , por favor?

— Está bien — escucho Lucho decirme por detrás de mi llanto. Y mientras intento secar las lágrimas frotando mi ojos en su pantalón, él rinde las manos que nos protegían y apriétame contra el pecho.

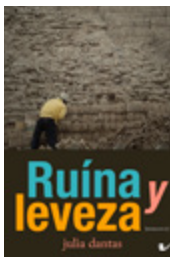
— Lucho, por favor, hálame.

La voz grave y cuidadosa contesta:

Una vez conocí a un vendedor de chifles y él buscaba un amor.



EL LIBRO



Ruína y leveza

Julia Dantas

- **Título original:** Ruína y leveza
- **ISBN:** 9788561249533
- **Año de publicación:** 2015
- **Editorial de la publicación original:** Não Editora
- **Número de páginas:** 208
- **Tirada total en Brasil:** 1.000 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

Cuando está delante de la pérdida de (supuestas) certidumbres, una joven publicista se lanza en un viaje sin objetivos claros y sin rota predefinida. Por pequeños pueblos arenosos del Perú y en una mina de estaño en Bolivia, ella cruza fronteras y se permite descubrir nuevos caminos y personas, llevando en la mochila un pasado que todavía le duele.

PRÉMIOS

“Ruína y leveza” fue finalista del premio Açorianos de Criação Literária, en 2014

RESEÑAS

Site Nonada, 13/8/2015, “Ruína y Leveza, de Julia Dantas: um romance para uma geração de aventureiros”, en www.nonada.com.br/2015/08/ruina-y-leveza-de-julia-dantas/

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LUZIA

SUSANA FUENTES

Traducido por Julia Tomasini

El árbol que tanto le gustaba. Ella se subía, se subía por las ramas. Cuando estaba triste, se escondía en lo alto, entre las hojas. Recuerda su último refugio, aquel árbol, y sigue a pie su camino en la lluvia hasta su casa. Avanza. La lluvia hace mover los recuerdos. De repente, otro destello. Es el pasado que viene hacia ella.

En la Lagoa, abrazó al árbol en pensamientos. Luzia veía aún las raíces en el aire, selló sus pies en el suelo, imaginó un abrazo todavía más fuerte. Los pies enterrados, un nuevo árbol, con sus raíces hundidas en la tierra. Todo el tiempo del camino se demoró en el pensamiento del árbol que había elegido. Las raíces de nuevo en el suelo, el tronco, en capas finas, se deshojaba. Los pies bajan del árbol, pisan la tierra, ya no evitan el suelo. Hay que plantar de nuevo la raíz. Hundir el lápiz en el libro, en el cuaderno.

En un relampaguear, se ve. Su vestido está mojado. Recuerda aquel día, no había pensamiento, el vestido empapado. No era agua, era rojo. La sangre en el vestido. Los huesos helados. Agua, siempre el agua, de nuevo. Vio a Dora, vio su cuerpito, le dio la muñeca y el vestido floreado. Ya, una hermanita con quien jugar y compartir secretos, correr y decir tonterías y escapar de la mujer del tío antes de que ella nos agarre. No voy a dejar que nada te pase. Escapar, contigo mis piernas tendrán fuerzas de correr el mundo.

Adelante, ve el pasado a la luz del cielo, usa la espada, descarga golpes de trueno. Adelante. El rayo le dice que está viva. La lluvia alrededor, ya, ya, llega a casa. El paraguas es refugio incierto, protege solo el alto de la cabeza, el pecho, pero la sandalia se desliza nuevamente, de la pierna el agua se derrama hasta la suela. Tiene nuevamente esta visión, la tarde olvidada, en la calle de Botafogo la sandalia se sale del pie, se fuga de su apoyo en el suelo, está helado, el vestido mojado en las puntas, la parte de arriba seca. En el ruedo del vestido lo mojado, lo rojo, lo helado subiéndole por los huesos, viene de abajo, aquí en lo alto todavía estoy segura, el calor del pecho, no, el hielo sube por la espalda, el malestar, no me gusta la lluvia, quiero un pañuelo seco, una toalla blanca y perfumada, una cobija suave para meterme por debajo hasta el fondo y no tener que volver nunca más.

De la Lagoa al Jardim de Alá. Cuando Luzia ve, había perdido el paraguas. En la calle alguien le pregunta:

¿Estás bien?

Luzia siente que se le cae una lágrima. Sabe distinguir la lágrima a pesar de las gotas de lluvia en su rostro, a pesar de la lluvia.

La niña, la lluvia

Afuera llueve. Con el corazón reconfortado, en el cuarto de hotel en Marabierto, Luzia cierra los ojos y ve los ladrillos bajo la escalera, los rollos de papel. El recuerdo de cuando volvía de la antigua escuela, a los trece años. El recuerdo de cuando comenzó a pensar en el viaje a Marabierto. Ahora que viajó hasta allí, el recuerdo del recuerdo. Luzia cierra los ojos y deja entrar la tarde de sus trece años, el recuerdo escondido. Su pensamiento vuela al escondite de antes. Antes de los ladrillos, el escondite era el árbol. Su escondite. Aquella tarde de lluvia, se ve corriendo hacia allí. O no corre, camina sin rumbo, el vestido mojado. Lo mojado es rojo, es agua color tinta, es agua sin color, helada, agua que se le derrama. Caliente, roja, también blanca. Sigue lloviendo. La leche blanca en la pierna, no siente dolor, no siente nada. Solo el helado del agua. No quiere tocar el suelo. Levanta una rodilla en el aire, luego la otra. Nadie con quien conversar. Sube al árbol, una rodilla en el aire, una y otra. Arriba de todo, llora, en la rama más alta, su escondite, llora, un dolor sin culpa, perdió un cuerpo que era suyo.

Luzia había mantenido el silencio, y cuando percibió el cambio en su cuerpo, los senos hinchados, doloridos, comenzó a vivir algunos días de inesperada paz. En casa del tío, Luzia se puso a hacer todo el trabajo, atenta a todo. Anatércia sospechaba: la niña parece más bien una santa. Pero Luzia seguía empeñada en el trabajo de la casa, no dejaba que la mujer del tío lavara siquiera una olla, y la señora se fue acostumbrando. El único momento a solas era en lo alto del árbol, de allí nadie la sacaba. En esos momentos Anatércia dormía. Pero lo que nadie sabía, y era secreto de ella, solo de ella, era que Luzia miraba y veía, veía crecer a Dora en su panza.

El socio del tío la vio sonriendo de esa forma extraña. No le gustó. No le gustó que la jovencita no se dejara derribar. Pues entonces, al día siguiente, el árbol ya no estaba en pie.

- Mandé a que lo cortaran, Augusto.

- Pero ¿por qué hombre? ¿No estaba bien allí?

- Convengamos que daba mucho trabajo. Cuidar la farmacia y que el patio esté limpio da mucho trabajo. Largaba muchas hojas y ¿quien iba a pagar después para que barrieran todo el tiempo? Estaba dando mala impresión. ¿Y sabe una cosa? Ya estaba enfermo.

El tío inclinó la cabeza, la levantó, tomó la maleta, atravesó el jardín y subió los escalones de la entrada. No miró el tocón, el espacio vacío que había quedado. Fue Luzia que volvió del colegio y gritó. Un grito sordo, pasó corriendo por el patio y abrazó el tronco caído.

La panza creció junto al tocón del árbol. Después, como si fuera inevitable, con el árbol caído el bebé también se dejó caer. Nació y murió. Como si acelerando el camino, simplemente muriera, sin crecer. Luzia no aceptó la fatalidad, y creyó que Dora seguía creciendo en otro lugar.

Su locura particular, su secreto. Estaba en el aire, en la mesa, en la cama. Su hermanita Dora, la niña que murió, que escapó de sus brazos. El árbol. Allí enterró los juguetes de Dora. Y plantó flores para Dora. Y Dora siguió creciendo, creciendo. Luzia también, crecía, terminaba de crecer solo en tamaño, y cada vestido nuevo era suyo y era de Dora. En el armario había para las dos. Incluso después de que muriera el tío, de que se fuera la tía, y el apartamento cerrado de su madre en Glória pasara a ser suyo. Quiso creer que Dora estaba allí, bajo el techo de la infancia que había quedado atrás. Allí donde la madre pasó sus últimos días, cuando Luzia aún respiraba felicidad. Después no respiró más. Nada. El árbol en el jardín de Botafogo fue el único lugar donde pudo respirar. Donde logró sobrevivir al día terrible. Al ataque. El árbol era quien la mimaba, quien cuidaba de sus lágrimas ante cada sobresalto. La hermana también subía, ella sabe que sí, cargada por los brazos del árbol, y le hacía cosquillas en los cabellos enredados. Dora, Dorinha, cuando el día está escondido tras el humo, entre el ruido de los sapos. ¿Quieres palomitas? Vendedor a la vista. ¡Míralo! Y Luzia desde lo alto del árbol abría una sonrisa porque de repente estaba muy feliz.

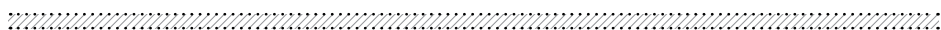
Cuando perdió el árbol, comenzó a escribir con el papel apoyado sobre la panza:

Una niña. Dora. Adorada.

Cuando perdió la panza, apoyó el papel en el tocón del árbol. Y fue lo último que escribió:

El bebé murió. Un angelito.

Allí quedó el papel, en el suelo, al capricho del viento. En la tierra solo las flores. Y los juguetes, enterrados por último, donde las raíces persistían vivas.



EL LIBRO



Luzia

Susana Fuentes

- **Título original:** Luzia
- **ISBN:** 978-85-7577-875-3
- **Año de publicación:** 2011
- **Editorial de la publicación original:** Editora 7Letras
- **Número de páginas:** 155
- **Tirada total en Brasil:** 1.000 ejemplares

SINOPSIS

De un lado, la infancia triste, olvidada. Del otro, el coraje de tomar la vida en las manos y inventarse. La historia de Luzia guía al lector por un mosaico de memorias, sensaciones y imágenes de una niña huérfana que crece entre el deseo y el miedo de vivir, acompañada siempre por la sombra de Dora. En las páginas de un cuaderno o sobre un escenario, ella sabe que debe ser más rápida que sus miedos y embarca en un viaje íntimo que la llevará a reinventar su inocencia y redescubrir su fuerza.

PRÉMIOS

Finalista del Prémio São Paulo de Literatura 2012 en la categoría Mejor Libro del Año - Autor novel.

RESEÑAS

“Alcanzar los aires”, por Vilma Costa. Jornal Rascunho

<http://rascunho.gazetadopovo.com.br/ganhar-os-ares/>

“De cristal, en líquida pureza”, por Lúcia Bettencourt, Estudos lusófonos. <http://etudeslusophonesparis4.blogspot.com.br/2014/08/um-dedo-de-prosa-com-susana-fuentes.html>

LA AUTORA



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- **Nombre de pluma:** Susana Fuentes
- **Otros libros:** Escola de Gigantes, 7Letras: 2005, 122 páginas, cuentos. Seleccionado para la Biblioteca del Profesor del programa Rio, uma cidade de leitores, de la Secretaría Municipal de Educación de Río de Janeiro, en noviembre de 2010, con la impresión de 17.000 ejemplares para distribuir a los profesores de la ciudad. Segunda edición: 2011. En 2015, uno de los cuentos del libro, “Sumaúma e reco-reco”, fue publicado en el número dedicado a Brasil de la revista inglesa Wasafiri, con traducción de Alison Entrekin. Wasafiri, Special Issue: The Brazilian Contemporary (London: Routledge, Summer 2015).

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Julia Tomasini es argentina, licenciada en Letras por la Universidad de Buenos Aires y actualmente estudiante de doctorado en literatura latinoamericana en la Universidad de Maryland. Edita la página Web especializada en traducción de literatura brasileña en español Brasil Papeles sueltos, proyecto que desarrolló con el objetivo de divulgar la literatura brasileña en el exterior. En este momento está trabajando como coeditora y traductora en una antología de nuevos escritores brasileños en español.

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