

slightly. Pancho was still tagging after the new Messiah and his amorous ties with the girl had been temporarily interrupted; years later, he would marry her, divorce her, then marry and divorce her a second time. This extremely pleasant woman asked me politely how I was, and before the words were out of her mouth I had clamped my arms around her neck and babbled that I was dying of syphilis. With admirable composure, she took me to a nearby tea shop, where she ordered coffee and tea cake and then questioned me on the details of my volcanic confession. The minute we finished the last forkful of cake, she escorted me to the office of a physician friend who diagnosed a urinary tract infection, possibly provoked by the icy drafts in my parents' colonial house. He prescribed bed rest and antibiotics and sent me on my way with a waggish smile. "The next time you have an attack of syphilis, don't wait so long, come see me right away," he said. This rescue was the beginning of an unbroken friendship. We adopted each other because I needed another mother and she had room to spare in her heart; she came to call herself Mama Hilda, and has beautifully fulfilled that role.

My children have determined my life; since the day they were born I have never thought of myself as an individual but as part of an inseparable trio. Once, years ago, I tried to give priority to a lover, but it did not work out and in the end I left him to return to my family. This is something we must talk about later, Paula, but for now I will pass over it. It never occurred to me that motherhood was optional, I thought it was as inevitable as the seasons. I knew I was pregnant before it was confirmed medically; you appeared to me in a dream, just as your brother, Nicolás, did later. I have not lost that gift, and now can predict my daughter-in-law's children. I dreamed my grandson Alejandro before his<sup>le</sup> parents suspected he had been conceived, and I know that the child who will be born in the spring will be a girl, and will be named Andrea, though Nicolás and Celia still don't believe me and are planning to have a sonogram and are making lists of names. In the first dream I ever had of you, you were two years old and your name was Paula. You were a slender child, with dark hair, large black eyes, and a limpid gaze like that

of martyrs in the stained-glass windows of some medieval churches. You were wearing a checked coat and hat, something like the classic costume of Sherlock Holmes. In the next months I gained so much weight that one morning when I stooped down to put on my shoes, the watermelon in my belly rolled up to my throat, toppling me head over heels and so definitively displacing my center of gravity that it was never restored: I still stumble my way through the world. Those months you were inside me were a time of perfect happiness; I have never since felt so closely accompanied. We learned to communicate in code. I knew how you would be at different periods in your life: I saw you at seven, fifteen, and twenty, I saw you with your long hair and happy laugh, in your blue jeans and your wedding dress, but I never dreamed you as you are now, breathing through a tube in your throat . . . inert . . . unconscious. More than nine months passed, and as you showed no intention of abandoning the tranquil grotto in which you floated, the doctor decided to take drastic measures and, on October 22, 1963, he opened my abdomen to bring you into the world. Mama Hilda was the only one at my side during that crisis, because Michael was in bed with a case of nerves, my mother was in Switzerland, and I did not want to notify my in-laws until everything was over. You were born with fine hair over all your body, giving you a slight resemblance to a little pink fairy armadillo, but I would not have traded you for the world, and besides, you soon shed that fuzz, leaving a delicate and beautiful baby girl with two glowing pearls in her ears that my mother insisted on giving you to continue a long-standing family tradition. I went back to work right away, but nothing was the same as before; half my time, my attention, and my energy were given to you, and I developed antennas to divine your needs even from a distance. I went to my office with dragging feet and looked for any excuse to escape; I got there late, left early, and pretended to be sick in order to stay home. Watching you grow and discover the world seemed a thousand times more interesting than the United Nations and their ambitious plans to improve the fate of the planet. I couldn't wait for Michael to get his engineering degree and support the family, so I could be with you. In the meantime, Michael's mother and father had moved to a large house a block away from where we were.

building ours, and were preparing to devote the rest of their lives to spoiling you. They had a naive view of life, because they had never stepped outside the small circle that protected them from ill winds; for them, the future looked rosy, just as it did to us. Nothing bad could happen if we did nothing bad. I wanted to be a model wife and mother, even if I didn't know exactly how. Michael planned to find a good job in his profession, live comfortably, travel a little, and much later inherit his parents' large house, where he would spend his old age surrounded by grandchildren and playing bridge and golf with his lifelong friends.

Tata could not put up with the boredom and solitude of the beach for very long. He had to give up his swims in the ocean because the glacial temperature of the Humboldt current fossilized his bones and his fishing expeditions because the oil refinery had wiped out both fresh and saltwater fish. He was increasingly lame and ailing, but remained faithful to his theory that illness is a natural punishment of humankind and pain is felt less if one ignores it. He kept himself going on the gin and aspirins that replaced his homeopathic pills when they ceased to have any effect. It was not too surprising they would, because when my brothers and I were children and could not resist the temptation of that ancient wood medicine cabinet filled with mysterious vials, we not only ate the homeopathic nostrums by the handful but also switched them around in the bottles. So my grandfather spent months of silence reviewing his memories and concluded that life is a crock and there is not much reason to be afraid of leaving it. "We forget," he often said, "that no matter what we do, we are on the road to death." Memé's ghost was lost in the gelid crannies of that house built for summer pleasure, not winter wind and rain. As the last straw, the parrot fell ill of a catarrh and neither the homeopathic pills nor the aspirins dissolved in gin its owner forced into its beak with a dropper did any good. One Monday morning Tata found it stone cold dead at the foot of the perch where it had sat so many years screaming insults. He had it packed in ice and sent to a taxidermist in Santiago, who shortly returned it, stuffed, with new feathers and an intelligent expression it had never worn in life. When my grandfather had made the last

repairs on the house, and tired of fighting the ineluctable erosion on the hill and the plagues of ants, roaches, and mice, a year had gone by and solitude had embittered him. As a last desperate measure against boredom, he began to watch soap operas and without realizing it became ensnared in that vice; before long the fates of those cardboard characters became more important to him than those of his own family. He used to follow several at one time, and gradually the story lines blended together and he ended up lost in a labyrinth of vicarious passions. That was when he realized that the moment had come to return to civilization, before old age delivered its last blow and left him half loony. He returned to Santiago just as we were ready to move into our new house, a prefabricated cottage slapped together by a half dozen workmen and crowned by a straw thatch that gave it a touch of Africa. I renewed my old custom of visiting my grandfather in the afternoons after work. I had learned to drive and Michael and I shared a very primitive plastic vehicle with a single door in the front that took steering wheel and controls with it as it opened. I am not a good driver, and dodging through traffic in that mechanical egg was little short of suicidal. My daily visits with Tata provided me with enough material for all the books I have written, possibly for all I will ever write. He was a virtuoso storyteller, gifted with perfidious humor, able to recount the most hair-raising stories while bellowing with laughter. He held back none of the anecdotes accumulated through his many years of living: the principal historical events of the century, the excesses of our family, and the infinite knowledge acquired in his reading. The only forbidden subjects were religion and illness; he considered that God is not a topic for discussion and that anything relating to the body and its functions is private—to him, even looking in the mirror was a ridiculous vanity, and he shaved by memory. He was authoritarian by nature, but not inflexible. When I began to work as a journalist and had finally articulated a language for expressing my frustrations as a woman in that macho culture, my grandfather did not at first want to hear my arguments, which to his ears were pure poppycock, an attack upon the foundations of family and society, but when he became aware of the silence that had settled over our afternoon tea and rolls, he began to question me in an offhand way. One day I

surprised him leafing through a book I thought I recognized, and with time he came to accept female liberation as a point of elemental justice; his tolerance, however, did not extend to social changes: politically, just as in religion, he was a conservative, and espoused individualism. One day, he asked me to promise to help him die, because death can be so obscenely clumsy and slow.

"How shall we do it?" I asked, amused, thinking he was joking.

"We will know when the time comes. For now all I want is your promise."

"But it's against the law, Tata."

"Don't worry about that, I shall assume all responsibility."

"Sure, you'll be in your coffin and I'll be marched off to the gallows. Besides, it must be a sin. Are you a Christian or not?"

"How dare you ask me something so personal!"

"It's a lot more personal to ask me to kill you, don't you think?"

"If you don't do it, you who are my eldest grandchild and the only one who can help me, who will? A man has a right to die with dignity!"

I realized he meant what he was saying, and finally I agreed, because he looked so healthy and strong, in spite of his eighty years, that I took it for granted I would never have to live up to my word. Two months later, he developed a cough, the dry cough of a sick dog. Furious, he buckled a saddle cinch around his waist and when he had a coughing fit gave himself a brutal tug to "subdue his lungs," as he explained it to me. He refused to go to bed, convinced that would be the beginning of the end—"From the bed to the tomb," he said—and was adamant that he would not see a doctor because Benjamin Viel was in the United States all caught up in contraceptive concerns and any doctor his own age was already dead or too sick to practice; added to that, the young doctors were a bunch of charlatans puffed up with modern theories. He put all his faith in the blind old man who "adjusted" his bones and his boxes of unpredictable homeopathic pills prescribed with more hope than knowledge. Soon my grandfather had a raging fever, and tried to cure it with ice cold showers and large glasses of gin; instead, two nights later, his head was split by a lightning bolt and a

roaring earthquake filled his ears. When he could breathe again, he couldn't move: half his body had turned to granite. No one dared call an ambulance because with the half of his mouth still functioning he growled that the first person who moved him out of his house would be disinherited—he was not, however, saved from doctors. Someone called an emergency service and, to the amazement of all, who appeared but a woman wearing a silk dress and a triple strand of pearls about her neck. "I'm sorry," she apologized, "I was on my way to a party," and she began removing her kid gloves to examine the patient. My grandfather felt that in addition to being paralyzed he was hallucinating, and fought to stop this woman who with inexplicable familiarity was trying to unbutton his clothing and touch him where no one in her right mind would venture. He defended himself with his last vestiges of strength, moaning desperately, but after a few minutes of tug-of-war, and with a smile of her painted lips, the doctor conquered. Her examination revealed that, besides the stroke, that hardheaded old goat was suffering from pneumonia and had also broken several ribs with his cinch-tugging act. "The prognosis is not good," she murmured to the family gathered at the foot of the bed, not counting on the patient's overhearing her. "We'll see about that!" Tata replied in a quavering voice, resolved to show this woman what a real man was made of. I was therewith relieved of fulfilling a promise lightly made. I spent the critical days of his illness at his bedside. Lying flat on his back between the white sheets, pale, motionless, with his chiseled bones and ascetic profile, he resembled the sculpted figure of a Celtic king on a marble sarcophagus. Attentive to his every movement, I silently prayed for him to keep fighting and forget his idea of dying. During those long vigils, I often wondered how I would do it in case he asked, and concluded that I would never be capable of hastening his death. In those weeks I came to realize how resistant the body is and how it clings to life, even when crushed by illness and age.

In a relatively brief time, my grandfather could speak fairly clearly, dress himself, and laboriously drag himself to the big armchair in the living room, where he sat rereading the encyclopedia propped before him on a music stand, squeezing a rubber ball to

exercise the muscles of his hands, and slowly sipping tall glasses of water. Later I discovered that the drink wasn't water but gin, which was emphatically forbidden by the lady in pearls; as he seemed to be getting well, however, I became the one who brought it to him. He bought the gin at a corner liquor store whose proprietress often disturbed the sleep of that concupiscent old patriarch. She was a ripe widow with the energetic bosom of a soprano and heroic hindquarters, who waited on him like the favored client he was, and poured his gin into mineral water bottles to avoid problems with the rest of the family. One afternoon, my grandfather started talking about my grandmother's death, a subject he had never mentioned before. "She lives on," he said, "because I have never forgotten her, not for a single minute. She visits me, you know."

"You mean she appears to you, like a ghost?"

"She talks to me. I feel her breath on the back of my neck, her presence in my room. When I was sick, she held my hand."

"That was me, Tata."

"I'm not daft, I know that sometimes it was you. But other times, it was her."

"You won't ever die, either, Tata, because I will always remember you. I've never forgotten a single word you've told me."

"I can't trust you, though, because you change everything around. When I die there won't be anyone to rein you in, and sure as you're born, you'll go around telling lies about me," and he laughed, covering his mouth with his handkerchief because he still did not have total control of his facial muscles.

For the next few months he exercised doggedly, until he was mobile; he recovered completely and lived almost twenty years longer, time enough to know you, Paula. You are the only one who caught his eye among the throng of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was not one to display his emotions, but his eyes shone when he looked at you, and he used to say, "This little girl has a special destiny." What would he do if he saw you as you are now? I think he would drive away the doctors and nurses with his cane and with his own hands tear out the tubes and probes to help you die. And if I didn't think you would get well, perhaps I would do that myself.

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Don Manuel died today. They wheeled his body out the back door and his family took him away to be buried in his village. Here in the corridor of lost steps, his wife and son have shared the most painful time of their lives with us, the anguish of every visit to intensive care, the endless patient hours, days, weeks, of dying. In a way, we have become a family. She brings cheeses and bread from the country to share with my mother and me; sometimes she falls asleep from exhaustion with her head on my knees, stretched out on the row of chairs in the waiting room, while I quietly stroke her forehead. She is a small, dark, compact woman, always in black but with a face lined with festive wrinkles. The minute she enters the hospital, she takes off her shoes and puts on her bedroom slippers. In his sixtieth year of life, don Manuel was strong as a horse, but after three operations on his stomach he grew weary of humiliations and stopped fighting. We watched him slowly decline. In the last days, he turned his face to the wall, refusing the consolation of the chaplain, who often passes through this room. He died holding the hand of his loved ones, and I, too, managed to say goodbye. Before he escaped his body, I reminded him quietly, "Remember to speak for Paula on the other side." His widow told me, "When your daughter gets better, you must come visit us in the country; we have a pretty piece of land, clean air, and the hearty food will do Paula good." They left in a taxi, following the hearse. She seemed smaller. She left without tears, slippers in hand.

For several days now, we have been disconnecting your respirator, always a little longer, and now you can last ten minutes on the air you breathe yourself. You take slow, shallow breaths; the muscles of your chest struggle against the paralysis and then lift ever so slightly. In a week, perhaps, we can take you from this intensive care unit and move you to a normal ward. There are no private rooms, except for Room 0, where the dying go. I would like to take you to a quiet, sunny place with a window that looks out on birds and flowers; you would like that, but I'm afraid that all we can provide is a bed in a ward. I hope my mother can last until then, I think she is about at the breaking point.



THE WORST FOREBODINGS ASSAULT ME AT NIGHT WHEN I SENSE THE hours passing, one by one, until I hear the first faint sounds of dawn, long before light streaks the sky, and only then do I sleep—the sleep of the dead—wrapped in Willie's gray cashmere sweater. He brought it to me the first time he came, as if he knew we would be separated for a long time. This sweater has wonderful memories; to me it symbolizes the magic of our first meeting. The first weeks I was here, in order to sleep, I was taking some blue pills that are another of the many mysterious remedies my mother prescribes and generously extracts from the large satchel where from time immemorial she has accumulated medications. Once she injected me with a double dose of a tonic to be used in cases of extreme weakness—something she had acquired nineteen years before in Turkey—and nearly killed me. The aftermath of the blue pills was a drugged stupor; I awoke with my eyes crossed, and it took half the morning to reach a state of semilucidity. Then in a little street close to the hotel, I found an armoire-sized pharmacy run by a large, curt woman always in black buttoned up to her chin, to whom I told my woes. She sold me some valerian in a dark glass vial, and now, with few variations, I dream the same dream every night. I am you, Paula, I have your long hair and large eyes, your long slender fingers with your wedding band, which in fact I have worn since they handed it to me in the hospital the day you fell ill. I put it on to keep from losing it during those frantic moments, and since then have not wanted to take it off. When you regain consciousness, I will give it to Ernesto so he can slip it on your finger as he did a little more than a year ago on your wedding day. "Don't you think it's a nuisance to get married by the Church?" I inquired at the time. You shot me a stern look and, in that admonitory tone you never use with your students but sometimes favor me with, you replied that Ernesto and you were both believers, and that you wanted to consecrate your union in public because in private you had been married before God the first time you slept together. At the ceremony, you looked like a sylvan sprite. The family came to the cele-

bration in Caracas from all points of the globe, I from California, carrying your wedding gown, half smothered beneath a mountain of white. You got dressed in the home of my friend Ildemaro, who was as proud as if he were your father, and you asked him to drive you to the church in his old car, washed and polished for the occasion. "When I think of Paula," Ildemaro told me emotionally during a visit to Madrid during the early days of your illness, "I always see her dressed as a bride and wearing a crown of flowers."

For five days there has been a janitors' strike in the hospital. The building looks like a medieval market square; soon roaches and rats will be spreading pestilence from human to human. The strikers, surrounded by security guards, congregate at the entrance to the building and smile for the television cameras. Doctors, nurses, patients in pajamas and slippers, and others in wheelchairs, avail themselves of the opportunity to amuse themselves, chatting, smoking, and drinking coffee from the dispensing machines; although garbage mounts like sea foam, no one seems in any hurry to resolve the problem. The floor is strewn with used rubber gloves, paper cups, heaps of cigarette butts, and nauseating blobs and splotches. The families of the patients clean the rooms as well as they can, but the dirt ends up in the corridors where feet carry it right back into the same rooms. Garbage cans are overflowing, plastic bags filled to bursting are piled in every corner, the bathrooms are revolting and can't be used anymore—in fact, most have been locked: the whole building stinks like a stable. I have tried to find out if it's possible to take you to a private clinic, but they tell me that the risk of moving you is too great. It is my feeling that the risk of an infection is worse.

"Be calm," the neurologist advises me, imperturbable. "Paula is in the one clean area in the building."

"But people are carrying the contamination on their shoes! They come in and out through those filthy corridors!"

My mother leads me to a quiet spot and reminds me of the virtue of patience: "This is a public hospital, the State has no funds to settle the strike, we have nothing to gain by getting nervous, besides, Paula was raised on the water in Chile and can certainly resist a few puny Spanish germs." At that point, the nurse opened

the door to authorize visits and for once called your name first. Twenty-one steps, cloth smocks, plastic bags on our shoes; the staff doesn't wear them, they just slop through all the trash, but I have to admit that in the unit everything looked as if it had recently been scrubbed. I become more nervous with every step, my heart galloping, as it always does as I approach your bedside, still furious about the strike. The nurse on the morning shift comes to meet me, the one who cries when Ernesto talks to you of love.

"Good news!" she greets me. "Paula is breathing on her own. Her fever is gone, and she seems more responsive. Talk to her, I think she hears. . . ."

I took you in my arms, then held your face in my hands and kissed your forehead, your cheeks, your eyelids; I shook your shoulders, calling, Paula, Paula. . . . And then, oh, Paula . . . ! and then you opened your eyes and looked at me!

"She has reacted well to the antibiotic. And she's not losing as much sodium. With luck, we can move her in a few more days," the physician on duty reported, without elaboration.

"She opened her eyes!"

"That doesn't mean anything, don't get your hopes up. Her level of consciousness is zero; she may hear a little, but she doesn't understand or recognize anything. I don't think she is suffering."

"Let's go have some hot chocolate and crullers to celebrate this splendid morning," my mother said, and we left the hospital, jubilant, threading our way through the filth.

You left the intensive care unit the same day the janitors' strike ended. While a team of people in rubber boots and gloves swabbed the floors with disinfectant, you were being wheeled on a cot, with Ernesto holding your hand, to a room in the Department of Neurology. Here there are six beds, all occupied, a lavatory, and two large windows that offer a glimpse of the end of winter; here is where you will stay until we can take you home. Now I can be with you all the time, but after forty-eight hours without leaving your side, I realized that my strength will not stand that pace and that it is more productive to hire someone to help. My mother and the nuns found a pair of nurses to look after you; the day nurse is a

young, chubby, smiling girl who is constantly singing, and the night nurse is a taciturn and efficient woman in heavily starched white. Your mind is still somewhere in limbo; you open your eyes and look frightened, as if you were seeing ghosts. The neurologist is concerned, and after the Easter holidays he is going to perform various tests to check the state of your brain; they have prodigious machines capable of photographing one's most ancient memories. I try not to think of tomorrow. The future does not exist, the Indians of the Altiplano say, we can only be sure of the past—from which we draw experience and knowledge—and the present—a brief spark that at the instant it is born becomes yesterday. You have no control over your body; you cannot move yourself and you suffer violent spasms like electric shocks. In one way I am grateful for your state of complete innocence; it would be much worse if you understood how ill you are. By trial and error I am learning to care for you; at first the opening in your throat, the tubes and probes, horrified me, but I'm used to them now; I can bathe you and change your bedding without help. I have bought a white dress and nurses' shoes in order to blend in with the staff and avoid explanations. No one has ever heard of porphyria here and they believe you will never get well. "Your daughter is so pretty, poor child; pray God to take her quickly," patients who are still able to speak tell me. The atmosphere in this room is depressing; it reminds me of a place to warehouse the mad. One woman who is curled up like a snail never stops howling; she began to turn in upon herself two years ago and her merciless metamorphosis has advanced steadily ever since. Her husband comes in the evening after work; he washes her with a wet cloth, combs her hair, checks the restraints that confine her to her bed, and then sits down to observe her without a word to anyone. At the other end of the room, near a window, lies a stout country woman my age, jerking and thrashing. Elvira is mentally lucid, but has lost the meanings of words and command of her movements. She has clear ideas but cannot express them; she wants to ask for water and her lips form the word "train"; her hands and legs refuse to obey her, and she flounders about like a marionette with tangled cords. Her husband told me that when he came home from work one day he found her collapsed in a chair, babbling incoherently. He

thought she was pretending to be drunk to entertain her grandchildren, but after hours went by and the children were sobbing with fear, he decided to bring her to Madrid. No one has been able to put a name to her illness. Every morning, professors and medical students pass through and examine her like some animal; they prick her with needles, ask her questions she cannot answer, and then leave, shrugging their shoulders. On weekends, her daughters and a stream of friends and neighbors file by to visit: she was the heart of her village. Her husband never budes from the chair beside her bed; there he spends the day and there he sleeps at night. He is indefatigable in his care for her, at the same time he scolds her, "Come on now, for Chrissakes, swallow the soup or I'll empty it over your head. Jesus God, this woman is a pain in the ass." This language is accompanied by loving solicitude and the tenderest of expressions. He confessed to me, blushing, that Elvira is the light of his life and without her nothing matters. Do you sense what is going on around you, Paula? I don't know whether you hear, whether you see, whether you understand any of the things happening in this madhouse, or even if you know me. You just stare toward your right, your wide eyes and dilated pupils fixed on the window where occasionally a pigeon alights. The doctors' pessimism and the sordidness of the ward are eating holes in my heart. Ernesto also looks very tired, but the one most affected is my mother.

One hundred days. It has been exactly one hundred days since you fell into your coma. My mother is drained; yesterday she could not get out of bed. She is so exhausted that finally she has bowed to our pressure to return to Chile. I bought her a ticket, and just a couple of hours ago took her to the plane. "Now, don't you dare die and make me the orphan of all orphans," I warned as we said goodbye. When I returned to the hotel, I found my bed turned back, a pot of lentil soup on the burner, and her prayer book left for company. And so that is the end of our honeymoon. Never before have we had so much time together; never, except when my children were babies, have I shared such a long and profound intimacy. With men I have loved, living together has always included elements of passion, flirtation, and modesty—or has degenerated into frank dis-

gust. I didn't know how comfortable it is to share a space with another woman. I will miss her, but I need to be alone and gather my energy in silence: I am being deafened by hospital noises.

Ernesto's father is leaving soon, and I will miss him, too. I have spent hours in the company of this very manly man who takes a chair beside your bed to watch over you with uncommon delicacy and to divert me with his life's adventures. He lost his father and his uncles in the Spanish Civil War; of all his family, only the women and youngest children survived. Your husband's grandfather was executed against the wall of a church; during the confusion of those days, his wife, unaware that she was a widow, escaped from village to village with her three children, suffering hunger and terrible deprivations. She saved all three, and they grew up in Franco's Spain without modifying their strong Republican convictions. At eighteen, Ernesto's father was a young student; it was the height of General Franco's dictatorship, just when repression was at its worst. Like his brothers, he secretly belonged to the Communist Party. One day a female comrade fell into the hands of the police. He was immediately advised, and he told his mother and brothers goodbye and fled before the girl was forced to reveal his whereabouts. He first rambled through North Africa, but his steps led him to the New World, and finally to Venezuela; he worked there for more than thirty years, married, and had children. At Franco's death, he returned to his village in Cordoba in search of his past. He located some of his old comrades and from them found the address of the girl he had thought about every day for three decades. In a barren flat with stained walls, the woman was waiting, sitting by the window with her embroidery. He did not recognize her but she had not forgotten him, and held out her hands, thankful for that long overdue visit. That was when he learned that she had been tortured but had confessed nothing, and realized that his flight and his long exile had been unnecessary; the police had never been looking for him because no one had informed against him. It is too late now to think of changing things, the map of his destiny has already been drawn. He cannot return to Spain because his soul has been tanned like leather in the forests of the Amazon. During the countless hours we share in the hospital, he recounts, in the calmest of voices,