

Life and death, the two sides of the coin. The beginning and the end, that end from which no one is saved. The only thing that makes the difference is time and what we do with it.

In that short span of time that is life, it is time that separates it from death, and no one is saved from it. Sooner or later, it comes looking for us.

Some of us know her better than others. Some of us saw her up close and had her in front of us. But it just went on for a long time, because maybe it was not our time or we were lucky.

Many are afraid of it, while others do not give it importance or give it the same value as life.

There is only one thing that can keep our memory and our recollection alive after death: eternity.

Writing is my eternity.

## **The Torturers**

*Nano*

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Torturers have evolved. Their means keep pace with them. A plea, an entreaty, begging for health and medical care, the basics just to live normally. To live without pain, to live without this torture extended in time.

Months of abandonment, months of humiliation, months of contempt. Months of the most intense pain I have ever experienced. And all this ended with the collapse of an organism lacking hydration and nourishment.

There are moments in which you notice the self-consumption of your body. You feel it, you live it, you experience it, you express it. But the torturer boasts. He gets stronger with every request for help. With your deterioration he achieves his purpose. With your suffering, his satisfaction.

O bearers of truth. That nonexistent, that incomprehensible truth.

That atrocious and bloodthirsty foundation that subdues and imposes incomprehensible logics.

Lacking respect for life, oaths and social pacts, satraps.

They are covered by an ideology without logic.

Undercover, they use the State to torture without remorse, shameless executioners.

Mere judges without courts, merchants of suffering, violators of the human right to live.

But everything has a beginning as well as an end. The beginning is far away. The end is not yet concluded.

Scarcely sixty hours of postoperative period. Time to remove probes, infiltrations and so on. An abdomen with the thread just knotted and still bleeding. Signs of the organ removed from my body.

I have not yet stood up but a utility demands to get going. It hastens the imminent journey.

Jumps, movements, braking, make my body a mass that comes and goes without ceasing. The pain is heartbreaking, the tears running down my cheek are mute witnesses of this torture.

At last, we arrive, after an interminable drive and a lot of back and forth. The driver was forgetting a curb, which finally reminds me that once again we have to jump. A brake, a bounce and that's it, back to the "César Tabares" model penitentiary unit, Coronda, Santa Fe province.

The red stain on my girded abdomen indicates my reality. When I said at last we arrived, it was only an expression of desire. I must be strong, there is less left. Step by step and forced by a lack of empathy, I must go. When I finally reach the prison infirmary.

In this place, another human being who is called a doctor or health professional, asked me only one question: "You don't have any clothes on, nigger? My silence says it all, a warm fluid runs down my abdomen and the red hand gets bigger. "I must go on", I say to myself inside, "there is less to go".

I try hard to keep my sanity, and I want to live.

I focus on my goal: only fifty meters and two flights of stairs remain.

The pain is too severe.

I feel that from one moment to the next my abdomen opens up.

I squeeze him as hard as I can with my cuffed hands and my arms swollen from so many punctures.

One step at a time. A little more to go. I speak inwardly, I concentrate on the horizon. It's only a few meters but endless, until I finally arrive.

A cold cell awaits to shelter me. Pancho, a condemned prisoner, is immediately ready to take care of me.

There I was a doctor, a nurse, a patient, a doctor, a nutritionist. As best I could I was cared for, as best I could I was controlled, as best I could I survived.

I was never attended, I was never controlled, I was never assisted. In short, the violation of the right in its maximum expression.

Abandonment and torture deserve a separate paragraph, which are part of the daily actions of certain State officials, but they use the State to satiate their most perverse desires.

What a paradox, isn't it? To think that a person works and generates sustenance for the very system that in the end ends up torturing him. It is not everyone, it is only some who enjoy seeing others suffer, and fortunately the fewest.

But, in the end, they will become extinct.

## The Best Preaching

### *Gabriel, Siervo de Cristo*

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**C**órdoba, 2016. Cruz del Eje. Module No. 2, Ward 11. Prison Complex No. 2.

I am doing some handicrafts in my cell, where I live with seven other prisoners. I leave the cell, go to another cell and look towards the courtyard of the cellblock. It is a sunny day. It is about 2 p.m.

I see a companion in the ward, crestfallen, alone in the courtyard. As a convert to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, a thought comes to my heart: to give a hug to this companion who is alone in the courtyard of the pavilion. I approached him and said, “Brother, can I give you a hug?” and he answered, “Of course, servant of God”.

I gave him a big hug and told him that the Lord loved him very much and went on my way.

More than a year passed. In 2017, thanks to God, I was transferred to Santa Fe. I went through the prison complex N°1 of Bouwer. While I was in the transit sector, since I was being transferred to Coronda, they brought other imprisoned people and one of them was the companion of that hug.

He gave me very good news, it was the day of his freedom. I told him that I had won my transfer to my province of Santa Fe.

He remembered something, he told me “that day when you asked me if you could give me a hug and told me that the Lord loved me, I felt very bad”.

And he told me something else: “Before you came, I talked to God in my own way and asked him if he loved me”.

Tears welled up in his eyes as he recounted this. That was a preaching that marked a heart. “The strong embrace, with the Love of God” is the best preaching.

Today it has been years since I preached the word, by grace and mercy. Sometimes I think that we should talk less and embrace more, because there will always be someone who needs an embrace in God’s love, or rather, to feel loved by God (1 John 4:19-21).

## **Balance**

### *Fénix*

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I am a fan of the night, in it I find something serene but not quiet at all. It invites me to sin, to think, to remember that I must forget, to write, to listen, to mis-say, to read, to dream nonsense that the next day or the following days, I reread and feel sorrow, laughter, shame and re-think in the future nights longing, observing, flying, curious, at times to believe, at others to lack, to cry, and the desire, the strength, the responsibility to make room following the conscience, the contradictions, conversing with the space, waiting for them to understand, that patience is hurrying me because death is already on its way to my cell.

## The Greedy Labyrinth

MF

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Beggars bemoan their fates when they observe well-positioned people being petty and guilty of their many misfortunes, denying them their genuine rights.

These faceless misers maneuver with their wealth, indifferent to the suffering of others, pursuing an infinite tomorrow without listening to the cries of the homeless who cry out, from their simple humanity, for a roof, food and shelter, being only basic necessities that it is the right of all to ensure.

One can be *one of those*, or *one of these*. Many of us are also victims of greed. A narcissism that raptures us when the desire becomes usury, where deaf selfishness, the fruit of an impure conscience, comes to the surface. Although human beings have the ability to reason and overcome their instincts, they often fall into the trap of evil, perpetuating suffering in every story to be told.

It is like a stone in the road: when someone walks where the wind blows, he stumbles over it, tending to blame fate. They are a bunch of foolish beings who find it hard to understand that banal and mundane wealth is not taken to the grave, but continue, pursuing an inordinate ambition that feeds a petty appetite, treading a wrong path that leads nowhere else but to the desert.

## **The Misunderstood**

### *Nano*

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The misunderstood.

Those who dream of a different tomorrow.

Those who do not remain silent and whose words hurt.

Those who project towards the horizon.

Those who debate to improve.

Those who learn and teach.

Those who are hated and loved in an instant.

Those who are praised and condemned.

Those who bother to think differently.

Those who complain to the unjust.

Those who are not afraid of oppression.

Those hidden and silenced by the system.

Those who look for a way out of confinement.

Those ignored but finally the reason assists them.

Those who do not pact with the prevailing tyranny.

Those denied by the fear of those who try to justify the unjustifiable.

Those who point out the error of the dominant know the price to be paid for it.

Those who are misunderstood by some backward incapable people who aggravate the problems and delay the solutions.

## In the Key of Life

MF

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Life is a symphony, a constantly evolving score, where every day is a different note in the staff of our time.

Sometimes we encounter unexpected surprises that challenge us, like unforeseen twists in the melody of existence.

At other times we enjoy the blacks and whites that mark the rhythm, the moments of pause and movement in our history. In puffs of calm, we live the *piano* of tranquility, while in others, experience the *fortissimo* of intensity.

The flats of adversity remind us that life does not always follow tempo, it could be constant, sometimes speeding up like an *allegro vivace* and occasionally slowing down like a melancholic *adagio*.

But even amidst the flats of adversity, the music of life continues to flow, creating a unique composition for each of us.

## **Lifestyle**

### *An Argentinian*

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If we are anarchists, why write, and why not?

Why say or write what is right or to make it sound right?

Why not say what is wrong even if it sounds wrong?

Yes, people like to hear people say what they want to hear, but why should I care what they want to hear?

I don't care and it's short, I'm like a mirror: I treat you the way you treat me.

Even though I'm in prison, I think I'm as free as a pencil.

A pencil that flies on a blank sheet of paper.

If I don't like something I say it, I drop it like a stone into the abyss, no matter how it sounds.

Maybe that's why not everyone likes me and, although they want to pretend otherwise, their faces don't convince me.

If when things go badly for me you frown at me and turn your face away from me, when things go well don't show your teeth. It is so normal to be untruthful among criminals.

This is from a survivor who was bitten by the snake.

## The Gringo

*Victor Malisani*

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I do not like to write, I prefer to tell the story I want to tell you. It is the story of a corondino gringo, Victorio Victoriano Victorino, born on the banks of the river, in front of the islet, where the Chana was located, Don Colo, a wise and long-suffering old man, from whom I have learned to philosophize.

How can I not remember so many moments lived, if it was thanks to you, my friend, that today I can express myself and put down on paper what I think, what I feel and what I live. Even if you are not with me today, you will be with us, if in the fourth there was no other like it and there will not be.

Looking back in time I start to think and I am glad to remember one of the many moments I have lived.

It was an afternoon at the river, I'm sure you remember. We were bathing with Vinito, Chuli, Gabi and Pindonga. We saw you arrive with the oars on your shoulder, surrounded by those you love so much, your sons Talo, Juan and Gordo who came behind.

You invited us to cross to your ranch where the Moon and the free Star varied. They were your beloved mares, the ones you proposed to lend us if the ranch would help you finish. "Yes", we said without hesitation.

After finishing your beloved ranch, we drove the mares from here to there, without thinking that among the bushes the beast was hiding, stealthy, ready to attack. It grabbed me by the ankle, what a scare I got, but I was even more frightened when in the distance I heard "don't run because if it is a rattlesnake, you will die!"

I remained stiff and suddenly I heard some stumbling feet. It was Juan who quickly approached me and in a single sitting on his shoulders carried me and headed for the river, in search of the canoe, which, like a great swimmer, crossed the river and beached itself on the shore, as if saying "I have arrived".

Fortunately, we are people of faith, we trust in God, he never let us off the hook and this would not be the exception.

To the memory of the great Chana Colo Ñañes. Forbidden to forget.

## Thanks to the Output

*Jorge*

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Looking around, I realized what we do not appreciate on a daily basis.

Like living by the river and not stopping to look at the landscape, watching the water mingling with the blue sky, and seeing it in a different way, I realized what we do not appreciate in our daily life of the trees on the islet in the middle of the river.

In the distance you can see the parachutes in the wind, coming and going like kites in the blue sky.

I was looking lost in that landscape, and the kids were looking at me as if to say, “look at this crazy guy”.

I thought the same about them, as if they were saying, “look at what they have in front of their eyes and they don’t see it... maybe they’re stalking what we can’t see every day”.