

39 Ardent Wounds

A short story

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39 Ardent Wounds

On a journey, towards a journey.

Distant sunsets, orange color, dusk, soul's tranquility, palm trees. Plants rustling in the light breeze. To move away, far away. I tell you a secret: I don't always talk much, I just do it when I'm happy. Put two and two together. And please, do it yourself, don't always make me do it. Shining moon, rocks stuck one over the other. You look at me with your dreaming big eyes. Kiss me. I shouldn't ask you, and I'm not asking. I shouldn't even ask myself, but yet I do that, conscious of sad and disappointing conclusions that still have to come. Kiss me. Drink my willpower and I will take yours. Treat me like the miserable beast you are pleased with, devoid of free will and empty of essence. Lunar light reflected on shining rocks. My advisor, guide me again. My muse, look at me and kiss me. The high peaks, the green pines, the coolness in the summer. The connections, the humans, electric networks and human networks. Neural, neurotic, neurosis. What's the difference? Machines don't disappoint. Metempsychosis, the soul's transmigration. You took me and left me. You took me and emptied me, used me, thrown away, squeezed, smashed; floating, unsettled, adrift. The fault is yours as much as it is mine. Ineluctable. I don't care about your stupid excuses, your dead-end justifications: I just want to watch the sea and feel distant. I want the stars, I want the moon, the way of the sea and far away stars. Kiss me. I want the air, the mountain, the snow and the radiant sun. Kiss me. Hypocrisy, hypophilia, hypochondria. Unavoidable, uncatchable, unfathomable. I can already see you, weaving my praises, telling me how much you like me: the usual anticipations to the looming nothing. Adulate me again, let's not think about not thinking. Kiss me. Sharing is important, and I want to share with you. Even sharing with oneself is important, otherwise who would we ever be? Kiss me. But doing it with others is quite another thing. Quiteanother. Quiiiteanother. Your eyes in someone else's eyes. Your hand in someone else's hand. Your breasts in someone else's eyes. You look at me and say no. You look at me and say it isn't good. I should have foreseen this, just like I had foreseen this foresight. I already know this path, like the back of my hand. *Six years*. You look at me and say it isn't good. I try to kiss you and you back away – *no*.

The sea's scent arrives like the echo of ancestral music.

How can you not be natural before this attraction? Let's put aside beauty, the depth of spirit, and consider this simple, primitive sentiment. What are we, if not beings who attract each other? The back and forth, the teasing, the intermitting conceding: we like all that. No more evaluations and reasonings. Kiss me. The sky is blue and perfect. It's not working, not working, not working. The attempted approach. It's in vain. Transport me asleep over funereal waters. It's alright, it's all wrong. In the middle, middlephobia, middlephilia. Realization attacks. Panic. Fibrillation. Take me by the hand through shining fields. Guide me through dark woods. I will keep your pains in the palm of my hand. But you prefer the Other, and I remain stuck. Carry me gently over funereal waters. The calm, the peace, the silence. A semi-

dark wooden attic. An amusement park, cotton candy, frozen hands. The Ferris wheel over the orange sky. I see you while you watch the Other, while you leave yourself in him. You don't care about not hurting me.

I open up my lips on yours, full. Sucked up voluptuousness. Tongues touching, eyes shut on the fire. A hand on your hip, the other on your arched back. Two becoming one, the essence of it all. The moment when we said goodbye. Thin fingers, little. Carry me slowly on funereal waters. I watched the distant sea, but I could think only of you. Stars, constellations, far and beautiful. Like you.

A bird flies free in the light of the sunset.

We are two pieces that can never fit together. I would accept it and release you, but the Other would have you all for himself. It's intolerable, because I'm superior to him.

My lips opened up on yours, yours on mine. You were breathless for me, softly, and I was for you. With little tremors, a mutual search. My superiority shattering like waves against the rocks.

Then you told me you didn't want me.

Then why?

Rain, falling light and then heavy.

She spied on us, then slipped away and went to the Other. I know well what they did after. I heard the laughs and felt that weight pushing me underground. Later, I couldn't sleep. She let him take her, under my nose, and I wanted everything from both women.

The light blue room, where you welcomed him and laughed.

The red room, with the soft lights of your pleasures.

Even if I didn't want to see, even if I didn't want to discover who you lied with, my spirit would have squashed my face against that image.

I remember the whistle in my ears, the buzzing; the absurd, useless dismay; the disappointment, the bitterness, the pain. I remember the rage when I found myself between the sheets of the empty bed. I remember the senseless shouts with the head under the pillow, the punch to the guilty mattress. Realizing that every piece was in the exact position I had foreseen was like seeing my own grave, dug with my own hands. Learning that the Other was just who I had suspected was like seeing myself pointing a knife at my own throat.

How could you? And you talk to me about honesty?

Talk to me about pity.

Talk to me about how you despise me, and enjoy a bath of decency. I don't want to see you anymore, nor to speak to you again. About the Other, how could I take revenge on someone whose face I can't remember? And even if I remembered, could I blame him?

I will instead exit the scene, disappear. It will be my final song. I will leave behind your moans, your panting in unison for the Other. I lost and I must accept defeat. The disappointment remains marked with fire, as symbol of shame that everyone can see.

Bitter tears, they struggle to come out. And when they do, they burn.

Transparent, then opaque, then nothing.

At the gates of a cemetery.

Before a large gate.

Thin fences, pointy.

The white surrounds me.

What is this place where I lost myself?

I open the squeaking gate and slowly enter.

Two parallel rows of cypresses on my sides. I almost can't see the top of these incredibly high guardians. They are alive, and encourage me to go on, but everything else is death. I smell the strong odor of humidity left by the rain, but there isn't a single trace of water.

Cawing crows, they fly high over my head.

I start walking and time slips away.

Days? Months? Years? Hours?

How much time did I spend in this cemetery without graves, walking guided by the cypresses? I close my eyes and breathe in deeply the aroma of resin. The air is the freshest, and I let short moments of pleasure overwhelm me. Maybe I desired too much.

The gravel creaks under my feet.

I see an end to my road, but I don't accelerate the pace. Like every time I look forward to something, I strive to appear calm, but my heart is pounding.

I arrive there and find a tombstone immersed in a frame of grass. Few words are written on it, together with my name:

HERE LIES FRANK,

BURNT BETWEEN TWO FIRES

I tell myself I should find another way, hastily, but then I end up in a long and narrow little church. White, with black lines traversing the walls and the ceiling.

The few wooden pews are occupied by my loved ones. There is my family, my friends: I seem to see everyone.

It is my funeral.

Slow, calm organ notes fill the place.

Few soft lights, warm.

No one notices my entrance, so I sit on an empty pew at the end of the church. In front of the altar, the coffin lies a little elevated from behind, pointed towards the listeners. You two are on its sides, different fires but parallel, binary stars that have burnt me.

The priest is giving the homily.

But priest and altar of what? Who has the right to celebrate my funeral? I wanted to be buried in a green meadow and become a tree, or I would have gone adrift in space, and finally travelled where no man has ever been. Maybe I would have been awakened by an alien civilization and idolized as a god that came from the stars. Though my loved ones didn't want to offend me by going against my wills, I'm sure of this.

In this place apparently sacred there are no religious symbols of any sort, and the priest wears the clothes of a businessman. He rattles on, and I can't follow him at all.

Fed up, I go through the nave ignored by everyone except you two.

I believe it is strange: the funeral is one of the most important days of your life, but you can't be there. Today I'm inverting that rule.

I get near the coffin and first lay my eyes on one of you, then on the other. You watch me without expression and don't bother to say even a word. You just stare at me, like in observation of my next move. Like always, you calculate my shameless honesty.

I slide my fingers on the brown wooden coffin, following the pretty edges. It's beautiful, and I have the strongest temptation to open it; I can't resist at all and uncover it. I realize that its interior, very perfumed, hosts no guest. The cushions and the lacework make it appear so comfortable that I want to sleep inside, so I lie into it and close my eyes.

Supine, with the arms attached to the body, I see your faces peek on me. You smile lightly, and close the coffin over my head.

Darkness.

The priest's voice becomes more and more distant, and gets undermined by a dead silence.

I'm good here.

But like every time I'm free from bad feelings, you both arrive to unsettle me.

From the dark arises a figure in flames.

You never wanted me, refused every invitation to be alone, declined every offer of mine. You used to hate me, distance me, glare me, betray me, and finally feel guilty.

It takes form.

And now you come to me, of your own free will, to tell me that one day we shall be together.

Then I get closer to kiss you, but you push me away.

Blind, alone, in the dark.

One day is always too late. For each beautiful moment you decided to give me, you stabbed me twice in the back. While your flesh is taken by the Other, I want to be in your mind. I want the feeling of guilt to assail you.

Your confusion, my illusion.

The flatteries, the compliments, big eyes, nice lips, the things you don't tell me.

I hear you panting.

And I can't sleep. When it's day, while I'm occupied with anything else, that horrible image pierces my mind. You two on that bed, in the dim light, flesh and heat. Brown and dark green pillowcases. Nude, trembling, panting.

I will impress this scene into my mind and use it as catalyst to despise you. If I don't transform this negativity in naked rage, I shall inevitably dissolve.

And if I scatter myself to the wind, like pollen, don't you care about it.

I will watch the colors fade and I will burst gently.

In a thousand bubbles,

in a thousand laughs,

in that dream,

on the sailing ship.

I was holding to a rope on the prow, on the edge of the hull. The wind was throwing my hair back.

I closed my eyes, tasting the freedom and the hope coming from those unknown lands that were waiting for me. They knew about me and my imminent arrival.

The boat was large, but there was only me. It was all made of wood, full of elegant lines and golden inlays.

Ahead of me, well visible, a promontory dense of trees, green and lush.

I was happy about this departure, about diving in new experiences and adventures. To start again from zero.

Enjoying the sea's scent, I slowly started to see what lied beyond the promontory: safe between the arms of a gulf, a city with strong ivory walls let itself be admired.

The sun was shining high and the city reflected the light as it were its own. My heart jumped before the promises that this vision had been capable of offering.

I wonder who I would have known, what I would have seen, which road I would have taken. I wonder who would have been my friend, who would have been my enemy. I wonder who I would have loved, who I would have hated.

I could already see me, losing myself among those towers and those ivory bastions, rapidly going up and down a thousand steps. I could already see me walking by the pier and by the market, and between the snow-white sheets of a pale and auburn-haired maiden.

And yet, there was something weird.

I opened my eyes and found myself in the nocturnal, gloomy roads of my own town, the real one, with an eerie silence reigning supreme. On sequential steps, all the lampposts turned off before my eyes, throwing the road in total darkness.

I left my friends behind, at the bar, wasting time and doing those things that help you fill boring nights. But they were not where I left them shortly before: with the corner of my eye, I saw them on a balcony to my left.

I realized they were there just because their dark shadows were moving. They were crowding, observing me. They judged me from above, without saying a word. And I did not say anything either.

Remain where you are, unite against me. You can only look at me and plot lurking in the shadow, from the height of your stupidity, because you know well the fate of whoever gets between me and my goals. There is no way of stopping my voracious being.

I laid on them a last challenging look and continued in the only direction I could follow to return home.

But something broke.

She was together with the almost shapeless black masses that once were my friends. She too looked at me from that balcony, careless about the shards of our feelings scattered on the ground.

Thus, I am going to return home, walking in the darkness.

Before me I can see absolutely nothing. I continue by heart, going forward, and arrive at what I recognize as the main square. It's empty and spectral. I turn right, then right again, to enter the way that leads to my house. I move a step after the other more and more swiftly. My eyes get used to the dark, but I'm afraid. There's not a single light, a single sound.

Halfway through the road I see a car turning and moving slowly towards me. Its headlights tear the darkness like two penetrating eyes. Since it is on my only available way, I go against the car without knowing what to expect. I have even more fear compared to when I was wandering in the dark. Who's in there? What do they want from me?

The closer I get to home, the more the car blinds me as it nears. My heart beats increasingly faster. Will it be a robber; will they take everything I have. I won't be able to run away; I won't be able to react because they'll be too many. It won't go like I envisioned thousands of times, because heroes don't exist. I'm done. And what if they want to kill me? What if they want to hurt me just because they want to? Sooner or later, this would have happened. My heart accelerates without stopping, the car is so close to me. We cross our paths and I feel my chest exploding, even more so when I realize that there is no one inside it.

The car passes besides me, slow as before, ignoring me totally. Experiencing restlessness mixed with a sensation of stupidity, I find myself still and following the vehicle with my eyes as it goes away.

When it is well distant, I realize that I am bathed by a green light coming from where the car came. I turn around again in that direction, and *damn*, I swear I have never seen something like that before.

In my short life I witnessed beauty almost unacceptable, but never, *never* I have seen something like this.

Ahead of me the road doesn't end like it always used to, with the usual fences and the train tracks: in the distance, a city stands out emanating an intense green light, spectral and alien, of the color of northern lights. A city that blends with the stars, perched into the space. Its levels overlap, creating the most incomprehensible image ever – but marvelous. I can see all its squared buildings, organized on a descending wall. Their squared windows are all lightened, hinting the presence of life coming from paradoxical and unknown places.

Never in my life I have witnessed something so ethereal. I can't understand if I am looking at a construction or at a living organism, which is calling me. The green lights envelope the city and attract me, as a planet brings dead debris to itself.

I'm in ecstasy, enlightened by lucid and transparent visions.

I'm struck by white stars that blend with the city. Living constellations, immersed in something ancestral. It's like watching a city suspended in space, but on the ground, amidst what surrounds the mortals. I look at this city as I'm seeing God, like I was blessed with a supreme consciousness, ultimate, unreachable. For some moments everything is at its place, in dilated melodies, ancient and muffled. For some moments there are no others, burning wounds and flames to be burned by. For some moments I own everything, the absolute truth, and nothing else exists.

Everything is still, perfect, immortal.

But some moments are uncatchable.

I perfectly remember the transition to the next moment. I perfectly remember the overlap of the image of the city to the image of your car.

I'm on the back seat, in the middle. You're in front with him. You keep him lying on your legs, and gently caress each other. How should I feel before the prelude of a fuck?

I can't escape from you.

I slowly see us from a great height, increasingly little, as I rise to the sky. I see the roof of your car, of my house, the town where I live, the trees, the mountain, the lake, the people's little houses, the square, the stars, the constellations, the moon. I see everyone passing in front of me. I see myself going back home, the Other coming out from your car, and you going to your home. I see the moon leaving, the sun coming in, the change underway. I see seagulls flying and greeting the morning, the sea stretching on the beaches. The scent of sea breeze, the sounds of the pier and the morning. Fed up with you and the Other, I decide to fluctuate towards the sea.

Now I'm a seagull.

I fiercely open my wings and feel the wind dilating my eyes, pulling my face. I glide to the sea, on the surface of very fast waters. With a long and slow mantra in my ears I rise again to see the waves from above. I fly straight for an eternity, admiring the beauty of the limpid and shining waters, wonderfully azure. They calm and pity me, on my journey with no destination and a single direction: *forward*.

Sweet music accompanies me. Arches and chants, angelic but painful. It must go this way. I deluded myself with the thought of having you.

From ingenuity to extreme lust.

I open my eyes.

I hear the phone ring; I take it and say yes. We meet urgently, you quickly get out of the car, speak those three words and then I kiss you – and finally you're at your place.

But this won't happen.

I'm on the edge of the precipice, staring at the emptiness below in which I will jump.

A giant church, dark and full of fog. Full of rage. Full of nothing. Glass windows above welcome the lunar light. I let myself be devoured by thoughts on things that happened, that are maybe happening, or that maybe will never happen.

Headache.

We sit on the same bench, eyes closed.

You thought about a lot of things, you say.

You care for me, you say.

I do for you, I say.

Too much, I say.

And you don't believe me.

Shining rocks precede my steps.

The summer afternoon sun beats high over my head. Running, I hear just the muffled sound of my breath.

Step by step, I tread on those many and smooth shining rocks. I watch the open sea in admiration, the soft and unpredictable horizon. I watch the side of the gulf towards which I'm walking; like always, it is a feast for the eyes. I see the houses, the trees, and every concern now appears at the very least futile. I observe the boat leaving slow trails on the water's surface, without having an apparent destination.

It is this way that I should be, that I should behave: I should just pass, leaving a trail. It's not normal to spend entire days being sore, waiting for the evening to come, to then discover yourself being even more numb.

That portrait of the Other, that you suddenly showed me, I would have ripped it in a thousand pieces. Not for what it was, but for what it represented. Don't you ever dare again to leave me signs leading to him. It would be such a squalor. Months and years always circling around the same point, and nothing seems to change.

Contact, abandonment, regret; repeat.

Contact, abandonment, regret; repeat.

I would like not to think about you, but every time I imagine speaking with someone, that someone is you. My soul naturally prepares to get in contact with you.

Every morning I wake up with the desire to do nothing, paralyzed in bed. Unable to react to any of those stimuli that in the past have led me so far.

I contemplate pleasures I do not know.

Waiting, waiting and waiting, my dear, sometimes is unsustainable. But I don't want your pity, nor your commiseration.

Tiny black men, born out of shadows.

Faceless and without a clear shape.

They run around the city in the dark, torches in their hands. They climb up everywhere, roam the squares, enter houses, from doors, from windows. They interrupt lovers in their beds, friends having fun, workers respecting their duties, enemies fighting their battles.

They go everywhere, they are everywhere. They multiply, but most of all, they *burn*.

With their torches, they burn houses, schools, churches, trees, bars, shops. Their flames spare nothing.

People still awake, people who were asleep before: now they're all on their feet witnessing the great fire of the city. In a few, agitated moments, the city becomes an enormous and screaming mass of iron and fire.

Don't you worry, because from now on nothing can touch you anymore.

The job, the garden, your pretty house. The car to repair, the broken strings of your heart, what to do tomorrow night. The exam to pass, the family to consider, the taxes to pay. Smiling politicians, handshakes, kids at school. Broken computers, messages not arriving, that phone call to make. The inspiration not coming back, the dissatisfaction that blocks you, the debts. The news to verify, the snakes next door, the knives between the vertebrae. The gift to make, the train that is late, the low salary. The trips you'll never take, the hours staring at a screen, words you can't find. What you hid from your parents, the back pain, the concert ticket. The appointments you don't care about, the parties that bring to nothing, the phone that doesn't ring. The inconclusive nights, the keys that don't fit, the too fast calendar. The deadline to meet, the relatives to visit, the mirror staring at you. The wolf at the door, the TV that won't shut up, the meddlers in the way. Those you don't greet, the crackly radio, the shouting neighbor. The bullshit on seduction, your friend's girlfriend, the elevator that stopped. The team that doesn't score, keeping yourself fit, the Other who always wins. Music that doesn't come out, the arguing at home, the plays to keep together. The things that aren't as before, the mosquitos ripping your veins, the girl you always run into. The movies to catch up to not stay behind, the books to read to stay ahead, the albums to listen to. The beard you have to groom, the wedding you have to go to, the equation to solve. The hair you have to cut, the clothes you have to buy, the eyes red, tired.

Tired.

Little sparks fly fast through the roads of the city.

Little flames flare up in parallel.

On the gulf's waters, the light of the moon mixes with the reflection of fire.

Light spheres gather in groups of three, forming triangles pointing upwards, and slowly rise from the sea.

Nothing is source of concern anymore, while the city is in flames. I see it from the seaside, on the shining rocks. The black of the starless sky unites with the red and yellow of the enormous, roaring flames. The gulf is not riddled with trees and pretty little houses anymore, but with pillars of concrete and metal that burn, crack, collapse and melt.

I'm sorry, but it was the only possible solution. Leaving it all behind is not enough to start again: you have to destroy it. You have to watch everything as it becomes prey to the fire, as it twitches. Screams, roars, agonies. People ends up in the fire, I hear them in despair. Everything collapses and the sky falls down, to join the dances started on the ground. Only a few people are safe, and starting from them I will create the new garden of human race.

You probably burned while you were with the Other.

I observe the catastrophe from a distance, with a livid face enlightened by flames; the eyes filled with flowing hate.

When the flames have all calmed down, and nothing is left of the city other than empty ruins consumed by time, I feel a peace I never experienced.

This is it.

In an imprecise future neither too close nor too distant, I'm at work.

My office is really nice. You can breathe a strong air of creativity, and on the screens around you can see very promising images. You can see showcases of prizes and objects that nourish my passions, but also those of the other people working here. There are many desks, each different from one other, and with a lot of personality.

I'm about to return home. The backpack is on the chair, ready to be brought with me. I give a last thoughtful look around and prepare to leave the room, when he enters, the friend of a lifetime and trusted associate. He makes the music for my works. Who ever thought that we would have come this far together? From school desks to working together as adults. Unbreakable bonds. He's one of the very few people I can truly trust blindly. I won't ever find someone to replace him with.

He handles me a disc with the latest version of some tracks, so I tell him that I will listen to them tomorrow with a fresh mind. He goes back to his room, I say bye, and start walking between the cubicles to get to the exit.

Passing, I rapidly check the progress on the screens of the few people still in the office. Some give me sheets, and I stop from time to time, if something requires my attention.

I can see the growing respect in the eyes of my employees, and I use it to feed myself. I feed on leadership, but without being bad or arrogant. On the contrary, I believe that respect, modesty and humility are cornerstones of every relationship with one's co-workers. I'm just conscious of my capabilities, as I think everyone should be, and never had trouble in challenging someone.

There are also geniuses that are infinitely superior to me, and fighting with them wouldn't make sense at all: in a way or another, they can help me instead. With time I learned that if there is someone with whom I fear confrontation, I have to rise and look them straight in the eyes, crushing the fear. I have to arrive to that person and absorb everything I can.

Anyone, even if they seem the worst or most distant person of them all, can give you something. You don't have to spend a lifetime with them or share even that much, but they surely have something to offer. Something little, something big.

I wanted to do things bigger than myself. Too much bigger. I wanted to lock myself up in a room, for months, alone on a mountain, otherwise I couldn't bring to an end what was necessary for the survival of my own spirit.

So I did it: I locked myself up. And now here I am, at the objective I wanted to reach, in a large office full of people hanging on my lips. Hundreds of people that, like ants, spend almost the entirety of their days acting as an engine of a giant mechanism; the pulsating heart, essential pillar, is me.

Every pharaoh needed thousands of slaves to build a pyramid. Every king needed the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of people to conquer the promised land. They look at me and know that following me is the right thing to do. I need them, to carry out enterprises of greatness beyond each individuality; vice versa, they need me, to keep the lives they chose to live.

But I don't want any slaves: I want to be surrounded by thinking heads, creative, critical, collaborative. I want to create a relationship of mutual betterment. I want to see the fruits of my art growing thanks to the care of us all, so that they may become each one's art and message.

My mother would be proud to see everything I have built. I wouldn't ever have her look into my head – it's always too soon – but she would be proud of this place. I walked on roads so difficult... but here I am.

I call the elevator and wait for it. After entering, I press for the ground floor. Rubbing my eyes, for a moment I abandon myself to the drowsy, pre-evening thoughts. Walls of red carpets bordered in golden. I'm alone. I look at myself in the mirror and tidy my hair. I'm older.

I arrive at destination, say bye to the girls at the reception and pass through the glass doors of the high skyscraper. I walk absent-minded and relaxed for some blocks, carrying my backpack.

Litter around, cans everywhere, flying newspapers; luxurious fast cars, well-defined white lines on perfect roads, elevated railways between buildings; metro stations at every corner, buses always on the move. Lifting the eyes to the sky, I see that so pleasant color between blue and azure, which precedes the red of the evening.

I go towards the multi-story car park. I speak to the man in the cage, and after a minute my black car is brought by a young employee. I thank them, put my backpack on the passenger seat and enter the car to go home. I feel like listening to Joy Division, so I spin *Unknown Pleasures*. Here are the hits of *Disorder*.

I leave the metropolitan center behind, so crowded and full of skyscrapers. I take the highway and pass by dark green fields. The dusk is arriving.

Now I live more outside the city, where you can carry on a much calmer, domiciliary life.

My house is on a wide circular space, with a fountain in the middle and other houses around, immersed in green. It's a nice house with two stories, pretty big. The style is modern for the most part, but pleasant to the sight: warm colors, not vulgar or tasteless at all.

I park close to my house and lock the car.

As I step inside, I get struck by the perfume that resides there. It's indefinable, unremarkable; you almost have the sensation of it being an illusion.

Such a tranquil atmosphere...

I leave the keys at the front door, put down the backpack and go to the kitchen, which confines with the living room without dividing walls.

I remember that when I was a boy, for years and years, I had the absolute certainty that in the future I would have married a foreign woman, and started a family together.

And yet, now it's you there.

Yes, you.

You've grown up, of course, but I see you from behind exactly as the woman I met so many years ago. Sitting at the high wooden table between the kitchen and the living room, eagerly waiting for the dinner to be ready, our beautiful children play. They play with the toys from the old times, without any screen before their eyes.

I can't distinctly describe the commotion, the joy, the astonishment of this vision. Flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood. Part of me passed to another person, not just through spiritual ways.

The boy is basically the copy of me when I was a kid: little bright eyes, clever face and enough curiosity to submerge the whole world. He wears dungarees, and never stays still. So similar to me, yet so different, thanks to you. He has shades in his expressions that are clearly yours, and that render him even more beautiful.

Then there is she, the older one. She's like you, so thin. She has a little face with graceful traits identical to yours. The mouth is drawn by a perfect hand, just like yours, and has a wondrous smile. Not to mention the wonderful, magnetic, big eyes. Her hair is even tied in your style. Besides, what little girl has never emulated her own mother?

I'm speechless before such a masterpiece. I'm overwhelmed by the beauty of this family picture, to the point of having tears in my eyes.

As the children realize that their dad is back home, they leave the toys and run to hug me tight, together. Nothing can match this sensation.

While you cook, you slowly turn to us and smile. The children dissolve their long hug, and as they fill my mind with questions, I finally come to greet you.

I gently hug you from behind, holding your soft hips with slow hands. I feel our bodies fit together like they always did. I lean my chin on your shoulder, whisper something to your ear, and you turn to me with that wonderful smile. You give me the most beautiful kiss I have ever received: that of the woman who chose to stay.

But all this will never happen.

Stale visions of scenarios that will never occur.

Because you said no. You preferred enjoying the pleasures of someone else, and remained to die, to burn in that infernal city in flames. You wanted to stay behind telling me to wait, but I would have waited forever. And I would have never done it either way, because I wouldn't have watched you panting in the arms of the Other.

Don't cry.

I'm not mad at you because I want to be right: I'm mad at you because life slips away, and we lost experiences, moments, feelings we will never recover.

Burn, mean traitor of blindly-told promises.

Burn, you that kept me so unworthily on the edge.

You that reacted to nothing, while I explained why I couldn't stay close to you – and I bled, while illustrating your faults in vibrant colors.

Burn, now.

I keep myself away.

But it's not over yet.

I sit on a wooden throne with a wide seatback, contemplating the marble statue before me. They're two lovers, clinging to each other in an embrace that seems a grip. Their gaze, motionless and inanimate, is insistently on me, as if they wanted to pass through me. On the background, music composed by distant echoes, dilated, muffled, on a journey from the future to my present. A deafening whistle perforates my hearing, brought by an interference that is not merely abstract. Green snakes slowly crawl from the bottom of the statue up to my feet, but they don't attack: they're there just to be looked at, to remind me of that jealousy. I close my eyes and see that spirit nude and wild. I remember of that yearning that has crawled inside my bones, that has possessed and controlled my flesh, that has flowed into my veins to first freeze and then boil my blood.

It's too much: I open my eyes again.

Moans and breathlessness now come from the statue.

One day is always too late, there is no other way but escape – a familiar voice gently whispers into my ear. A worn-out voice, wounded by events, but also by hope and pride.

Before disappearing completely, I look through eyes that are not mine and see a crossroads. On the right, a flat road illuminated by the sun, full of green and thriving vegetation. On the left a downhill road, red of the flames it leads to; burnt earth, dark and creaking.

Arisen by confusion and unfounded fears, ascending flames envelop the woman who observe the crossroads.

But it's not over yet.

Calm waters, the trees' scent, the quiet lake. Signs traced in the air by migrating birds. Silent clouds.

My eyes are everywhere and suddenly, that terrible recurring scene is thrown in my face. The rage then sinks heavy in an ocean of grudge, starving me, destabilizing me, removing my breath. Light and stinging spires wrap me up, make me tremble, slowly take me under in profound darkness – but I carry your image with me.

I spit poison like it was dark and bitter blood, coming from a pit generated only by the disgusting reflection of your actions. Your flesh consumes and your bones wear thin. Dense fumes on agitated waters, cawing crows, an enormous face is about to devour us.

Bright ascending flames embrace me and make me explode in a billion fragments, black and shining. But I smile bleakly, seeing you trampled by the hot light of deflagration.

Then an ancient flame returns.

I could find some peace beside her, now that things look different.

Then I impatiently wait for the day when I'll see her again, with a little and dull desire of transversal vengeance against the one who burned.

Then the day comes.

And you're on that bed, and I'm in the middle of the room.

We talked, we laughed, we met again, but my mind spins out of control around the soft thought of having you. Sweet shadows accompany us, surround us. The bed on which you sit gradually becomes a homogeneous black mass of comfort.

I hear a voice calling me.

My skin, and the molecules that compose me, are attracted to you as they were taken by an invisible strength, strangely vehicular. Your face is pure attraction, and an uncontrollable instinct pushes my legs.

I find my face near yours. Feeling hallucinated I look at you. Long and black eyelashes, dark eyes penetrating my sight. With a slow movement, my lips and yours become one. Your taste and your languor become mine, they flow inside me like fluids bringers of life.

There are no dominators: just bodies that unite for the joy of mutual pleasure.

My hand meticulously explores the surface of your arms, of your breasts, of your legs. The spontaneous process brings my fingers down there, and I feel a sudden trembling in your breath.

Millions of white and pink impulses run over us, overwhelming us in paralysis. In very short periods they take us in darkness, but bonding us more than any other thing.

We talked, we laughed, we met again.

You're on that bed, and I'm in the middle of the room.

My mind spins out of control around the thought of having you. Quickly, I move to you, I bend down and near my lips to yours. First you look at me curious, then you turn away.

No?

Then you talk and bring to life one of my most terrible fears. The Other has left a permanent sign into your flesh: a seed, that you say you want to get rid of.

You beg for my help, and I can't feel less involved than I am. The blood flows fast into my brain, and I feel nervous like if the seed was mine.

How can I kill it just to have you?

Once, everything was different. When you liked a girl, if she felt the same way about you, the very magic of attraction used to bring you to become one. It was simple.

Now everything is different. Now there is always the Other and ardent wounds to heal. When will this all end? When will I be free to return to that unconditional liberty? Two flames, racing to ruin me. Where the hell did I end up?

You're on that bed, and I'm in the middle of the room.

We laughed, we watched a movie, we got emotional. You smoked a cigarette; we had a tea. My mind doesn't spin, but I physically walk around the room, pretending to be looking for something. In truth I know well that what I seek is sitting on that bed, but I have to keep a certain degree of fortuity.

I bend down, lay my hand on her legs, near my lips to hers.

She kisses me.

You're on that bed, and I'm in the middle of the room.

She pushes me away.

He's on that bed and you in the middle of the room.

No.

On a bench, in front of a nocturnal landscape, under the feeble light of a streetlight.

I'm in the middle, you two at my sides.

Immersed in the calm and silence, we watch the view ahead, conscious of being back to the real world.

Enough fantasies.

I burst in a loud laugh: I finally got it all.

Gentle fingers lay on my shoulders, friendly. Without delay, I turn around and look at you both. You smile at me calming me, and I finally feel free.

Now everything is so clear and true.

Nothing, nothing will slow down the now.

Bodies twitching in purplish embraces, driven by naked pleasure alone.

We discover what was unthinkable before, circling those sensible spots now exposed. We touch them avidly, like we could lose them at any moment. Without resistance, heart and soul dive into an act of pure love. We sink more and more into an ecstatic alchemy, enhanced by sudden flashes of consciousness.

I wished so much for this moment, more than anything else, and you realized I was right about us. Standing on you, entering you, looking at your soul, I feel alive. Whatever I had to go through; I can now say it was worth it. Each torment, each desperation, has anyway led to this.

I open my eyes and see yours, beautiful, big.

I drown in them as in sweet waters.

I see the perfect traits of your mouth, that I waited for too long.

I close my eyes and discover that I opened them even more.

Me, you, lost in an empty space lighted by red lights. The red room of your pleasures.

I open my eyes and see yours, beautiful, thin.

Beauty that goes beyond the edge of time, tearing it, shaking me.

I see the perfect traits of your lips, in which I wanted to immerge myself for so long.

I close my eyes and indulge the movement.

Pleasure assumes life and form. Something is born from the uniting bodies.

Gorgeous, little groin, source of incomparable pleasures.

My legs rub on your short legs. Feet little and perfect.

Two become one.

Three become one.

My legs rub on your long legs. Feet little and imperfect.

Gorgeous, wide groin, source of unknown pleasures.

Neither time, nor space: only infinite moments following each other and overlapping, wild, instinctive, unstoppable. Your head thrown back. Beautiful panting muse, inundated by pleasure, be mine. I move my tongue on yours at the rhythm of your pelvis and your desires. Slowly, a light takes form, together with the dual pleasure we are living. I will take some of this light, and every time I'll feel lost, I will watch it to let it guide me. But please, promise me to do the same. Hold me, and think about nothing else.

Two flames will slowly fade.

Two flames will slowly dissolve.

You will not remember me, and I won't remember you.

You will not miss me, and you won't call me again.

All will be lost and nothing recovered.

Nothing has happened and we will walk no road.

Nothing has happened and no future will save us.

Nothing is all I have left.

Nothing.