





# SIETE MINUTOS

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## **Beginnings**

The backyard looked dark with its muddy floor and shrubs growing by the wall. As the sun careered through the sky in its journey towards infinity, Homer played with his toys by the edge of a puddle, his paper boats sailing amidst the muck left by the rains.

“Hurrah,” he said.

Homer danced around the water, when a woman wearing a dressing gown and her hair tied in a bun, stood amidst the mud, shivering in the breeze blowing through the garden.

“It’s time for lunch,” she said.

Those words brought Homer back to reality. He had to eat before conquering the world. Mother waited while he put his cars on a ledge by the door and away from any danger lurking around him.

“Wash your hands now,” she said.

Leaving a trail of mud on the floor, he washed himself in the sink as father appeared at the door. Middle aged, plump and with a round face, Mr. Homer had to fight the devils of the market in a daily basis and mother brought the food to the table.

“I have a surprise for you,” father said.

Mother stopped with a plate in her hands, smoke rising to the ceiling like a staircase to heaven. Father didn’t bring surprises very often, even though one day he had found a puppy in the street, but he had taken it to the dog shelter in spite of Homer’s complaints. A tall man interrupted them, his glasses shining under the light, as silence filled the world.

“Uncle Hugh,” mother said. “We didn’t expect you today.”

He smiled. “I have to work in the country.”

“Your job must be exciting,” she said.

Mother poured soup on another bowl, Uncle Hugh sitting at the table after saying something else.

“How was your journey?” she asked.

He shrugged. "I felt sick all the time."

"You should have taken an alka seltzer."

"Nothing works for me."

"New York must be missing you," father said.

Uncle Hugh had not enjoyed the fresh Caribbean sun amidst his bouts of sickness, his stomach hurting for most of the journey through the sea, when he had to remain in his cabin with the curtains drawn in order to stop his head annoying him to death. Then he smiled, touching Homer's shoulders.

"I remember the day you rescued a dollar bill," he said.

"He put it in his wet nappy, after flying up a tree" mother said.

Homer knew all the rest. A neighbour hanging the washing at that moment had dropped her husband's pants in the mud, and he left her for the barmaid living next door. School children sang songs of glory, Father Ricardo praising the qualities of the child during Sunday mass because he was a star. Uncle Hugh found a black and white photograph in his bag.

"This is you," he said. "I took this picture with my first camera."

Homer saw a chubby baby without much hair and a toothless smile, sitting in a chair. Uncle Hugh waited for the reaction to that moment in time when he had snapped reality forever.

"I developed it in my studio," he said.

"Those were the times," mother said.

Mother talked of Homer's birth in the midst of a solar eclipse while doctors and nurses looked at the sun from the hospital roof, an old nurse who didn't have good eyes helping with the delivery, when she said those famous words.

"You have a girl."

The sun hid behind the moon as mother thought she had a daughter and father sulked. The nurse found her mistake a few minutes later.

“He had lots of hair,” father said.

Mrs. Homer held a baby in one of the pictures his father had put by the dinner table, as Homer stood next to his parents in another one.

“Why did you call him Homer?” Uncle Hugh asked.

“We thought it might bring him good luck.”

“He’s Homer Homer then.”

“That’s the idea.”

Uncle Hugh found a cent in one of his pockets, with a man’s face in one of its sides.

“Put it in your money box,” he said. “It will bring you good luck.”

“He’s a good boy,” mother said.

Homer admired the coin as the adults spoke about nothing in particular, the brown marks on the wall turning into monsters amidst the buildings of New York.

“Mum,” he said.

“You can have more soup,” she said.

Homer shook his head. “I want to play outside.”

“He’s full of beans,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer had to get some fresh air before his life finished of boredom.

“He’ll get filthy,” mother said.

“Never mind,” Uncle Hugh said.

He had chased film stars in their limousines in a place called Broadway, where Marilyn Monroe showed her pants forever in front of the adults, time standing still like in one of those films his father took him on Saturday nights. As he went outside, a child picking his nose stood by the tree full of ants and other creatures.

“Hello,” Homer said.

The stranger wiped his nose, leaving muddy streaks across his face.

“Would you like to play with my cars?” Homer asked.

Running a toy truck along the dirt, the child picked his nose with dirty fingers, putting lots of microbes in his face.

“I’ll call my mum,” Homer said.

The child had to be deaf, like his mother said when Homer didn’t listen to her on busy mornings.

“I come from the jungle,” the child said.

Those words broke the spell in the world.

“You’re a liar,” Homer said.

“I’m not.”

They fought in the dirt, disturbing a few birds looking for worms but then Homer barked.

“I’m a dog,” he said.

“You are not.”

After taking a deep breath, the child barked, interrupting the peace of the place.

“You must do like this,” Homer said.

He cupped his hands round his mouth, barking louder than the dog next door as his mother appeared at the door.

“That dog is noisy,” she said. “I’ll complain to the owner.”

Mother shut the door, leaving Homer alone with the stranger from another dimension, where they must have met before time began by the tree. On looking up, he saw the stars appearing in the sky, the child speeding up time in the backyard like a magician performing his tricks in the market.

“You are magic,” Homer said.

The child smiled. “Thank you.”

The boy performed miracles, when his parents talked to his uncle about their shop and the city welcoming them to reality.

“The stars are mine,” the child said.

“They can’t be,” Homer said.

Homer saw worlds blinking in the night and nothing else, time and space merging into nothingness in the shadows around them.

“Two and two are seven,” the boy said.

Homer frowned. “No, it isn’t.”

“I say whatever I want.”

“It’s your mouth.”

Shadows spread around them, more stars appearing in the sky around the tree.

“You have to remember,” the child said. “I’m Jose as you know.”

Homer struggled with the meaning of those words, the backyard looking empty, before reaching reality. On moving through the darkness, he stumbled on a few papers his mother must have dropped on the floor, their words not making sense or they had to be in one of those languages Father Ricardo had learned in his fight with the devil.

The adults stopped talking as Homer appeared at the door.

“You must throw those papers away,” his mother said.

“He likes to recycle all kinds all things,” his father said.

Homer ate his dinner, thinking of the child lost in time, while Uncle Hugh told them about his life in the USA, and the stars burned in the sky like Jose had said.

“Mum,” he interrupted.

“You must be tired,” she said.

“Don’t have bad dreams,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer rushed upstairs after wishing them goodnight. Once in his room, he counted the pesos he had collected during the weeks, his uncle’s coin the prettiest thing on earth. He put it in his bag before going to sleep, hoping it would bring him good luck, whilst the marks on the wall underwent some kind of transformation but he had to remember something...



## Maria

Jose's last words didn't make any sense as Homer danced around the tree of life chanting to the stars, scaring the squirrels and stepping on centipedes.

"Where are you?" he asked.

The breeze moved his hair, reminding him of the storm to come, while the bushes formed a mass of plants and hedges around the pond.

"Hi," someone said.

A pretty girl, wearing a blue dress interrupted his thoughts. At first Homer thought he imagined her, before her perfect smile changed his life.

"You're real," he said.

The girl's laughter frightened some of the shadows lurking in the background, waiting to do something nasty to the eternity around them.

"I'm Miguel's daughter," she said.

The man helping in his parent's shop was Miguel and this creature his daughter, taking him to other planes beyond his reverie, when the dog next door interrupted his thoughts.

"I don't like dogs," she said.

They ran back into a kitchen full of saucepans, the tricycle Uncle Hugh had given him on his first day on earth resting by the sink.

"My parents came here in a big ship," Homer said.

She frowned. "They must be rich."

"It had many floors, and windows."

He explained how they had bought the shop after borrowing money from his uncle, even though the business had not given them much money.

"Dad showed me the seagulls chasing the ship."

"Seagulls?"

“They catch flying fish.”

He showed her a few pictures of that trip lost in his imagination.

“This is not my country,” he said.

“I don’t think it matters.”

“Have a biscuit,” he said.

On trying to remember that place he had never known, he saw the crumbs falling between the infinity of her breasts.

“You should sell coca leaves,” she said.

“I have never heard of them.”

“The Indians will travel long distances to buy them.”

Homer’s eyes rose from her breasts to her face. He would keep her by his side, even if he had to get whatever thing she wanted.

“Father buys coca in the central cordillera,” she said.

After rummaging in her bag, she found a few crushed leaves without any smell, her breasts looking better all the time.

“Put them in your mouth,” she said.

“I don’t know,” he said.

She frowned. “The leaves.”

Homer imagined people queuing outside the shop, bringing the spells of the jungle to his business, while munching the coca.

“Your life will end with the sun,” she said.

“How do you know?”

“I can see it in your hands.”

Her mother had taught her to read palms on quiet evenings, when her brothers and sisters had gone to sleep on the muddy floor, her teats trembling like jelly in the depths of his mind. He showed her the papers Jose had left, filled with the dirt of the ages, in order to gain her heart.

“He was my invisible friend,” Homer said. “We went around the tree of life, chanting to the stars.”

“It looks like Egyptian language,” she said.

It had to be a magical if she thought so.

“Can you decipher it for me?” Homer asked.

“You can call me Maria.”

“Maria,” he said. “Will you help me to translate the papers?”

“I’m busy.”

She lived in a small room with three beds and a cooker in the corner, her father sleeping on the sofa and some of her brothers on the floor.

“I have seen rats in the latrine,” she said.

“A latrine?”

“It’s a hole in the backyard.”

He had never heard of such a thing. They had to move over piles of rubbish strewn on the floor to go to the latrine by the shed, a crucifix moving all the time between her breasts like a lost angel.

“Would you sleep with me tonight?” he asked.

“I’d have to marry you first.”

She wouldn’t accept the offer of his bed, when she had to sleep with her family in a cramped room full of rats.

“I’ll buy you a house when I’m a millionaire,” he said.

“You’ll forget me.”

“I won’t,” he said.

“It says in your hands.”

Homer wondered whatever she had seen in his palms, her thighs inviting him to sin amidst the boxes on the floor, as he explained more about his papers.

“They’re important,” he said.

“You think so.”

“Come with me,” he led her to a corner of the shop without much furniture, tightening his grip on her hand.

“What do you want?” she asked.

“You.”

“That’s not available.”

He kissed her, his hands feeling her teats under her blouse, even if they had just met under the tree in another day of his life.

“Stop it,” she said.

He ignored her pleas, tasting some of her skin under the blouse she must have bought somewhere in the market, like a dream in the depths of the shop, where all kind of things might happen.

“I’ll call my father,” she said.

Those words brought him back to reality, space and time starting all around him while she closed her blouse, keeping her teats out of his hands.

“Don’t tell him,” Homer said.

Homer opened the album of photos on the table, showing her some more of the pictures of that journey across the ocean aeons ago, when he wanted to do more things to her.

“You were a nice baby,” she said.

She gave him electric shocks, standing by his side in her cheap shirt and her erect teats calling him to sin.

“You must read this,” she handed him an old book full of dust.

“It’s the bible,” he said.

She nodded. “Good for your soul.”

He felt that urgency to have her body, even if Jesus Christ might judge them on their last day of earth, like it said in the book.

“Someone wants you,” she said.

On looking at the tree, he saw the foliage surrounding it amidst the mud from the rains, the shadows of noon dancing like a carrousel without an end.

“I see no one,” Homer said.

“It’s weird.”

“What is?”

“Your parents are dead, can’t you remember”

## Darkness

Homer struggled amidst reality, tears running down his cheeks, while remembering the little boy playing with his car amidst the coca leaves at the end of time. Maria led him to the front door, his mind wandering back to the saddest day of his life, but he had to find some coca leaves, the cure for the pain in his soul. Then the shadows parted, revealing that moment when the coffin had travelled in the back of the carriage some time ago.

“I miss my parents,” he said.

He remembered arriving at the new land from the fog, before the future made him forget everything, like a bad dream beyond the kingdom of the mud.

“Ashes to ashes,” she said.

“They shouldn’t have died,” he said.

Homer went back in time to that day, when he had danced around the water, and a woman wearing a dressing gown with her hair tied in a bun, waited across the boundaries of the universe, when he had gained his first cent and his invisible friend told him tales from other lands.

*We bury you in the name of the father, of the son and the holy spirit,* Father Ricardo had said, as the coffins descended into the bowels of the earth, the sound of thunder interrupting his journey across his memories.

“I don’t trust Father Ricardo,” he said.

“You are paranoid.”

Homer had to awaken from the limbo he had fallen since his parent’s death, when he felt alone in the world, Maria helping him through the loss with her body made in heaven.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

She nodded. “I understand.”

“I have to show you something,” he said.

Homer opened an envelope, a picture of the Empire State Building with its many floors and windows falling to the floor.

“That is New York,” he said. “Uncle Hugh sent it in the post.”

He told her about the money his uncle had sent inside the letter.

“They have lifts,” Homer said.

“Lifts?”

“Metal boxes inside the buildings.”

She looked at him with eyes full of wonder, whilst trying to understand the USA.

“We won’t have another chance,” he said.

“Your mother’s in heaven,” she said.

She had helped him to get through life after his mother had died.

“I’m honouring the past,” he said.

He felt anger and compassion for his life even though New York beckoned from the infinity of time.

“Your uncle wants you to come,” Maria said.

Lightning interrupted the moment, changing the world around them.

“New York is an evil place,” she said.

She talked of a city of loose women, evil staking him in every corner while moving through its misery.

“I need money,” Homer said.

“The Devil wants to take you away,” she said.

“He can’t win,” Homer said.

“We’ll see about that.”

She mentioned all the things his mother had done for helping the people in the slums, when some of them didn’t have much to eat during the day, their children going to bed with an empty stomach.

“She devoted most of her existence to charity,” she said.

Homer thought of all the money his mother had spent in the poor.

“She will be remembered by while thinking of all the times he had wanted a toy or nice clothes while his mother gave everything to charity his need for revenge rising in his soul.

“We didn’t have any money,” he said.

“God will thank her,” she said.

“I’ll call my shop, El Baratillo,” Homer said.

“El Baratillo?”

Homer nodded. “Everything will be cheaper than anywhere else.”

“God thanks you,” she said.

“Why?”

“For giving your money to the poorest members of society.”

Homer gave her the cheque, in order to help the children God had left in the streets, after the death of his parents in exchange for her body.

“Let’s go to the toilet,” he said.

Maria followed him to the small bathroom by the back door, before letting him suck her teats.

“I’m a virgin,” she said.

He caressed her body, his mind high in the coca leaves or it had to be a dream because he didn’t remember much more.



### The visitor

The death of his parents had taught him many things, even in the adversities on this earth. That is why *El Baratillo* became an institution, where a neck tie that cost ten pesos, Homer sold for eight pesos and the same with everything else, in order to help his suffering sent by God.

One day something happened that changed his life. It started in a simple way, when an Indian with high cheek bones, a long black skirt and his hair in a pony tail came in the shop early in the morning. Miguel had gone to sort out a consignment of coca leaves and Maria helped her mother to tidy the house, while Homer sold to the customers, feeding their families on the minimum wage the government had stated in the papers.

“Can I help you?” Homer asked.

The Indian fiddled with something in his hands, the meaning of eternity coming closer to Homer’s mind.

“What do you want?” he asked.

As Homer crouched by the coca bags waiting for death, a small head surrounded by black hair, eyes shut and lips sewn together, appeared out of a bag.

“It looks real,” Homer said.

He understood why the man had brought the head to his shop, while checking the bags of coca by his feet: the fame of his coca leaves must have spread amongst the inhabitants of the jungle.

“You want coca” Homer said.

“Mmmm,” the man said.

“You have to bring me more heads.”

Homer thought he had discovered something never imagined. Balboa must have felt like that, on setting eyes on the Pacific Ocean or Columbus when he shouted “Land” for the first time. No one else had Indian heads stuck in a kitchen cupboard, an idea forming in his mind at that time of the morning.

“Would you like a cup of tea?” he asked.

The Indian didn't listen, coca leaves being his favourite thing.

“No heads,” Homer pointed at the bags. “No coca.”

He found a map of the country his father had kept amidst some papers in the wardrobe, where the capital and big cities of the cordillera appeared next to the jungle.

“This is Florencia,” he said. “Where do you live?”

The Indian looked at the map, listening to the stories of piranhas and giant snakes eating men alive in a land no one had conquered yet.

“This is the Guaviare River,” Homer said.

“River,” the Indian said.

The Indian pointed at a place in the jungle, lost amidst the trees and other things, Homer had to imagine.

“That must be your home.” He said.

On jumping around the boxes littering the floor, he interrupted the man's scrutiny of the map.

“Do you go there by horse?” Homer asked.

He imitated a horse riding through the jungle in another plane of existence.

“I want to know where you live,” he said.

The Indian sniffed the coca leaves inside the boxes, while Homer showed him a few pictures he had found in a book, a puma hoping to catch his dinner from behind the trees looked at them from the trees.

“Jungle,” the Indian said.

Homer nodded. “You understand me.”

The Indian got ready to go back home, wherever that was.

“Wait a minute,” Homer said.

Holding one of the coca boxes, he gave it to the Indian, who muttered something.

“Remember to bring me more heads,” Homer said.

“Mmm,” the Indian said.

The Indian moved along the corridor, cradling one of the boxes in his hands, before opening the door to the outside world. Homer watched the little man disappearing around the corner, as the head waited on the table, its eyes shut and the lips sewn together: someone must have died for the head to be in his possession or it was a forgery. Then Maria screamed.

“Something is on the floor,” she said.

The head hid amidst the boxes, as the girl tried to kill it with her mop.

“It’s horrible,” she said.

“An Indian brought it to me,” Homer said.

“He must hate you,” she said.

“I don’t think so.”

She had to wash the plates, even if Homer held the head by the hair and the world had gone mad.

“Would you come with me to the jungle?” he asked.

On dropping the saucepan she had been washing, the noise echoed around the room for some time, awakening the dog guarding the patio next door.

“I will ask father,” she said.

The thought of them making love amidst the trees, made him shudder with desire: this girl would kill him one day with her charms.

“The Indian lives by the Guaviare River,” he said.

“Did he tell you that?”

“He can’t talk.”

Homer touched her teats, while showing her where the Indian lived amidst the trees, even if the man had never said anything.

“The jungle is dangerous,” she said.

“He wants coca leaves,” he said.

The end of the world happened when she left a red mark on his cheeks. It had been a good day, the stranger leaving a head in his hands, after visiting him from a land beyond reality.

“Auuf,” Homer said.

Maria stopped looking at the bag with the head, her face a picture of many things.

“I’m a dog,” he said.

“Don’t intimidate me.”

“I’m not.”

The tree outside the kitchen eclipsed the sun heating the roof on that important day in Homer’s life, when he had to send the head to his Uncle Hugh, living in New York.

## Jaramillo

Homer imagined the money he might make with the heads, the noises of the world intruding in this reality, as the tree of life swayed in the breeze. He must have dozed for a few moments, because the sun had gone behind the clouds when he opened his eyes. At first the red bricks looked grubby but then a little boy with dirty clothes and picking his nose stood against the wall, after moving along the path the apparition stopped by the tree.

“I must be dreaming,” Homer said.

“Where is your mother?” the boy asked.

Homer understood the stranger’s identity like many other things waiting to be solved in his life.

“She’s gone,” he said.

“I’m sorry.”

Looking at the kitchen window, Homer noticed the bottles he had left there a few days before and the cloth Maria used to wipe the surfaces. His mother had gone to the kingdom of the sky, but a mirage like Jose wouldn’t understand that.

“I left yesterday,” the boy said.

“That was a long time ago.”

“Time doesn’t exist here.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ll understand one day.”

On caressing the tree full of brown patches, Homer barked, the nature of time and life dissolving into nothing.

“Where is your uncle?” the child asked.

“He’s a journalist in New York.”

“Good for him.”

The memories of that day flooded back to Homer's mind, as he looked at a toy car amidst the wild flowers, the tricycle his uncle had given him forgotten in the shed.

"Can you guess the future?" Homer asked.

"It's all around you."

Homer shrugged. "I don't understand."

"Two and two are seven."

The sounds of the garden interrupted his words, but as Homer touched his nose, the child did the same thing.

"Shut your eyes," Jose said.

Homer wanted to go to sleep, the breeze making him shiver, while the sounds of the garden filled his soul with nice thoughts.

"He wanted to see you," Maria said.

On opening his eyes, he saw the girl with a man, keeping away from the wall and the tree branches full of muck.

"I hope I haven't disturbed you," he said. "I'm Jaramillo."

"Jaramillo?" Homer asked.

"A friend of your Uncle Hugh."

"He's in New York."

"I met him there."

Rummaging in his bag, he showed Homer a few pictures of the shrunken head along with some articles of the Amazonian jungle he must have found in a magazine.

"A shop wants more heads," he said.

Images of the money he could have went through Homer's mind, while taking the journalist to a kitchen full of dust.

"I have to wait for the Indian," he said.

Homer showed him the mark the Indian had made with a pencil in the map he kept in the wardrobe.

“He lives by the Guaviare River,” he said.

“Your heads must be there,” Jaramillo said.

“I hope so.”

“It’s incredible.”

Jaramillo left greasy spots in the paper. He must have touched something dirty while writing the conversation in his notebook.

“I’ll take civilization to the jungle,” Homer said.

“Well done.”

After writing Homer’s statements for future reference, Jaramillo spent a few moments cleaning his clothes.

“You must come to my office,” he said.

Homer nodded. “It’s a good idea.”

Jaramillo got ready to go back to his house at the other end of the town.

“Call me if the Indian comes back,” he said.

“I’ll do that.”

“We’ll be in contact,” he said, before disappearing amidst the merchandise stored by the door.

Homer hoped he had found the street amidst the mess in his shop, the uncanny mixing with the realities of life.

### The trip

The Indian resembled one of those statues of San Agustin with its plaited hair, olive skin and high cheek bones, while waiting amidst the coca boxes with none of the heads he had promised Homer in the past.

“He’s from the jungle,” Homer told one of his customers.

“Don’t worry, Mr. Homer,” the woman said.

On putting some boxes on the floor, he held a dress with golden buttons around the waist.

“It came from Paris yesterday,” he said. “I have my contacts there.”

The woman looked at her reflection in the mirror by the counter, holding the dress against her body: anything good in Paris had to look nice on her.

“It’s beautiful,” she said.

He found some more clothes in different colours and sizes, their buttons shining under the light of the lamp.

“This red blouse suits you,” he said.

She turned it around, inspecting the front and back, her eyebrows rising in admiration, but frowned on looking at the price.

“I’ll give you eighty pesos for this one,” she said.

He shrugged. “I’d be losing money.”

“Eighty pesos,” she said.

“One hundred is my last offer.”

“You will lose a customer, Mr. Homer.”

Everything seemed to stop, as she moved towards the door.

“You can have it for ninety pesos,” Homer said.

“Eighty pesos.”

He shrugged. “Ninety.”



*A satisfied customer might bring more business,* Homer thought, her long nails caressing the material she loved. A few coins fell to the counter, disturbing the peace, before she handed him crisp notes she had must have withdrawn from the bank that morning, with the water mark and the signature of the vice-president of the country.

“You’ll look like a princess,” he said.

“Thank you, Mr. Homer.”

“And it’s a good price.”

“I hope so.”

Homer wrote a receipt, hoping she would buy something else to go with the blouse, amongst the other dresses in the counter.

“I’ll have nice clothes next week,” he said.

“Fine, Mr. Homer.”

Waves of cheap perfume wafted through the air, as she walked towards the door before disappearing in the street. He had to go back to his customer, even if next time he invited her behind the counter.

“Here is your bag of coca,” Homer put one of the boxes by his side.

“Ummm,” the Indian said.

“I want my payment.”

“Mmmm,” the man said.

“I’ll take the coca away then.”

The man didn’t react. On opening his drawer, Homer found his gun but then he remembered the promise the Indian had made.

“Are we going to the jungle?” Homer asked.

The Indian examined the box, as Miguel appeared at the door.

“I don’t like him, Mr. Homer,” he said.

“He’s harmless.”

“I don’t think so.”

Homer put a few tins of food in his bag, the Indian's eyes following his actions from across the room.

"I'll come back in a few days," Homer said.

"Mr. Homer.."

"I'll be OK."

After examining the cash machine, Homer checked the merchandise around the shop, hoping Miguel wouldn't damage anything during his absence.

"You must write a receipt every time someone buys something," he said.

Miguel nodded. "I know that."

Homer took the mosquito lotion and a good watch to tell the time in the jungle.

"I thought the journalist might go with you," Miguel said.

Homer shook his head. "He's a nuisance."

Jaramillo would be useless with his notebooks in the land of the trees stretching up to the horizon.

"You won't come back," Jaramillo said.

Homer trusted the Indian, examining the bags of coca by the counter.

"I'll have my heads," Homer said.

"Let's hope so."

### The savannah

A grey station loomed amidst the buildings, like a sentinel in space: *Espresso Palmira*, said in big letters by the door, as passengers sat on the benches and a girl painted her nails behind the counter. Homer interrupted her concentration by knocking on the window.

“I want two tickets to Villavicencio,” he said.

She checked a notebook, full of the names and numbers many other passengers must have given her throughout time.

“It’s four hundred pesos,” she said.

He let his money fall in the counter, the vision of her breasts under her frock relieving some of the pressure of the journey.

“I’m going to the Amazon jungle,” he said.

“That’s good.”

“Can I suck your teats behind the door?”

“Your friend is waiting,” she said.

“I’ll give you a hundred pesos,” he said.

“Pervert.”

*The heads are more important than her virginity*, he thought while going back to the Indian by the entrance.

“I have the tickets,” he said.

Faced with the man’s silence, Homer wondered how much money his own head might fetch in the shops.

“Are we going the right way?” he asked.

“Mmmm,” the Indian said.

The Indian looked lost, a bus leaving the parking lot at that minute in time.

“It is our bus,” Homer asked.

“Mmm,” the Indian said.

“You are an idiot.”

Homer rushed along the street with his case in one hand, his bag in another and the tickets in his mouth, no one caring about his troubles.

“Can you let us in?” he knocked on the bus door, hoping the driver felt sorry for his soul.

Then he put a hundred pesos note on the glass window.

“It will be yours,” Homer said.

The bus driver beckoned them inside the unknown, the darkness waiting to swallow their souls amidst the limbo.

“It’s not a sin to leave on time,” the driver said.

“I paid you money,” Homer said.

“You have to help your friend,” he said.

On looking back, Homer saw the Indian stepping on people’s feet, while struggling with his bag of coca.

“I’ll kill you,” a fat woman said.

Homer shrugged. “I’m sorry, Madam.”

“He’s broken my leg.”

She gestured somewhere, where her legs had to be, two empty seats beckoning him at the back of the bus next to a cage full of chickens and shit. God had kept those places empty for a reason no one else seemed to know.

“I want one hundred pesos,” a voice said under the cage.

A woman with feathers on her face looked at him from another dimension.

“Leave me alone,” Homer said.

The apparition pushed him away and the birds cried.

“You can’t sit next to me,” she said.

“Bad luck then,” he said.

The birds looked at him through pink eyes, the place smelling of hell.

“Mmmm,” the Indian said.

“I agree,” Homer said.

As the bus drove along the countryside, the wind brought him a rain of feathers and shit.

“The birds don’t like you,” she said.

The Indian sat at the other side of the cage, ignoring the birds next to his head or the fact that he was in hell, while Homer tried to rest, his mind going along the mountains he could see at the distance.

“Empanadas,” someone interrupted his dreams.

On opening his eyes, he saw a woman lifting a plate full of flies and food, towards the bus window.

“Tamales,” someone else said.

They tempted Homer with their concoctions harbouring zillion of illnesses amidst the dust covering everything.

“I’m not hungry,” he said.

“He eats shit,” the woman under the cage said.

She had to be the biggest fucker in the world. As Homer tried to sit amidst his problems, he saw the other seat next to the woman empty.

“Your friend is gone,” she said.

He couldn’t lose the man leading him to his heads in the undergrowth, while annoying the other passengers in his way to the bus door.

“Have you seen my friend?” Homer asked.

“He wore a long gown,” he said.

Moving towards the front of the vehicle, he squashed bits of humanity under his feet and other things they took on their journeys to other universes.

“Your friend is outside,” the bus driver interrupted.

Following his pointing finger, Homer noticed the Indian by some mules, he must have found amidst the vendors selling their concoctions for a bit of money. Homer crossed the street accosted by the sellers offering all kind of things, his friend waiting across the street with the mules.

“Where is the jungle?” Homer asked.

The Indian climbed in one of the mules, leaving him on his own.

“Can’t we take a bus?” Homer asked.

“Mmmm,” the Indian said.

“You won’t have any coca.”

The Indian didn’t seem to care or he might get his coca from another place, the sellers laughing at Homer’s efforts to go on the animal.

“Wait for me,” he said.

“You must buy my tamales now,” someone said.

Homer ignored the mass wrapped in some leaves the woman put by his side, his heart urging him to follow the Indian carrying his bags all the way to eternity.

“Thief,” Homer said.

After climbing in one of the mules, he made his way behind the Indian, his back hurting from all the effort to get in the animal from hell, when he needed the money the heads might bring him.

### **The jungle**

They galloped towards the edge of the universe, the trees reaching for the sky in the most beautiful display of nature, as a river ran towards oblivion, rivulets of water splashing about them like in a fair.

“I can’t swim,” Homer said.

“Mmmm.”

The Indian found a fishing rod in his bags, after tying his donkey to some bushes, the sound of drums echoing around them.

“Is someone having a party?” Homer asked.

As the Indian fished in the pond, hundreds of things stirred in the water, a fish struggling to get away from his fate interrupted the scene a few moments later.

“Bravo,” Homer said.

The Indian smiled. “Mmmmm.”

“You must learn my language,” Homer said.

“Mmm.”

“That is called a fish.”

“Mmmmm.”

“Fish,” Homer said.

The Indian cleaned it with his knife, the scales mixing with the grass where small animals had to take them to their homes, hidden from the predators, and after making a fire with some matches he had in his pockets, the smoke rose to the sky: a signal to the gods, looking at them from above the clouds.

“How many heads do you have?” Homer asked.

They could be under the foliage or inside a hole in the ground. Homer looked behind the bushes, expecting to find his heads to sell to Uncle Hugh for a few hundred dollars, the sound of the drums going on forever.

“We have to talk,” Homer said.

The Indian served the food in a few palm leaves he had found somewhere, a sacrifice to the god of hunger looking at them from heaven.

“I want my heads,” Homer said.

He ate the fish he had seen alive, thinking of all the money he might make with the heads.

“Hurray to our business,” Homer said.

The man opened a tent he had in his bag, the sun turning into a ball of fire before disappearing behind the trees in a beautiful display of colours before the end of the day.

“We must drink to this,” Homer said.

He found a bottle of aguardiente Miguel had put inside his bag in order to keep him healthy during his journey, and the Indian gave him a headache by knocking on the ground with a stone he must have found somewhere.

“Do you want an aguardiente?” Homer asked.

“Mmm.”

“That must mean yes.”

The Indian gulped the liquid Homer offered him in a small cup, before going back to his task of erecting the tent for the night.

“We must awake early tomorrow,” Homer said.

On feeling tired after the aguardiente, the spirit of the night infected his mind, whilst running along a path leading to the jungle, his penis moving every time he stepped through the unknown. Homer didn't know what had happened after waiting for the Indian to go to sleep amidst the noise the insects made.

“Help me,” he said.

The wind answered his words, his feet hurting from the sharp stones in his way, hundreds of insects illuminating his path along the shores of hell, where unknown animals tried to kill him with their stings. Homer had wandered through his home during



childhood dreams, when his mother had to take him back to bed, but he still moved about the place even if Father Ricardo had blessed him with the holy water he kept in his church. That food he had eaten before going to sleep had to be drugged or the aguardiente had given him bad dreams.

“I want to wake up,” Homer said.

A child came towards him in the moonlight, picking his nose with his little finger.

“You have to find her,” the child said.

Following his pointing finger, Homer saw dark shapes under the moonlight. On moving towards them, he found huts with conical roofs but no one seemed to be around.

“They have gone,” Jose said.

The child disappeared, as Homer found a hammock hanging inside one of the huts, the sound of his own breathing disturbing reality. At first he thought a ghost had come to get him, but then a girl holding a candle in her hands appeared by his side, her teats trembling every time she moved.

“Help me,” he said.

The darkness quivered at the sound of his voice, the candle dissolving in drops of wax in the wonderful dream he had.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“Mmm,” she said.

“No one talks in the jungle,” he said.

He felt her pubic hair darker than the night, the drums drowning his senses while she muttered something in his ears, the darkness acquiring visions of ecstasy.

“Come here,” he led her inside the hammock.

“Mmmm,” she said.

“What’s your name?” he asked.

“Kam,” she said.

“You understand me.”

Homer heard her muttering more things in her language.

“I know,” he said.

He promised her eternal love in the kingdom of the shadows, where she had to adore an idol in a town of ghosts and the insects feasted in his flesh. *I have to be in the tent*, he said to himself, a candle bringing light to the shadows amidst the sounds of the drums infecting the night.

“Welcome to our world, Mr Homer,” a voice said.

He saw the Indian standing before them.

“You speak my language,” he said.

“The Gods led you to us.”

“What Gods?”

“The ones who live in heaven,” the Indian said.

“Why don’t you let me go?” Homer asked.

“You are sick.”

“I’m not.”

Homer fell back inside the blankets, where the girl waited for his caresses.

“You must think about it,” the Indian said.

The girl kissed Homer’s body.

“She cares about you,” the Indian said.

“I want my heads,” Homer said.

The Indian shrugged. “We have enough coca for the moment.”

Homer wanted to talk about his business, the drums echoing around them and the girl kissed him under the blankets.

“You’ll understand one day,” the Indian said.

Thunder interrupted his words, when the rain falling on the hut brought him closer to Kam, tasting his body.

## Escape

Homer had gone to a land of love in the sky where Kam reigned supreme, dreaming of his shop on the other side of the jungle.

“I love you,” he said in his dreams.

“Mmmm,” he heard her answering somewhere in the night.

On waking up, he studied the darkness around him, the hammock moving in the empty space waiting for his body. After lowering his legs to the floor, he felt the earth greeting his toes, a few shadows scurrying along the walls but he didn't care, while wondering what would happen if she found him amidst the darkness, when they might eat his entrails with potatoes and soup after selling his head for a few bags of coca in the nearest town. Then he felt her fingers exploring his body, one of the delights of his trip to the jungle.

“I want to go home,” Homer said.

“Home,” she said.

“You understand me.”

Getting entangled in the cobwebs adorning the place, he felt something running down his chest and tickling his cock. It had to be one of those spiders from the vegetation or Kam had learned a few jungle tricks.

“Where is the door?” he asked.

“Door,” she said.

“I want to find it.”

After she had pressed something in the wall, a sky full of stars appeared above their heads, the breeze welcoming them to the jungle.

“Will you come with me?” he asked.

“Home,” she said.

Kam led him along the path, the sound of the drums increasing amidst the shadows of the trees sneaking in their way somewhere in time.

“Thank you,” he said.

She smiled in the twilight, her breasts bouncing under her gown as they made their way through the undergrowth filling everything.

“Come with me,” he said.

“Mmmm.”

“You can boil your herbs in my kitchen.”

“Kitchen,” she said.

“You’re getting better.”

On arriving at the shores of a river, Homer tasted the goodness of the jungle in its molecules of hydrogen and oxygen, the sound of the drums bringing him back to reality. They had to be Kam’s friends punishing him for whatever he had done, after getting lost in the jungle.

“We have to hurry,” he said.

“Kam,” she said.

“I know.”

She followed him along the shore.

“They’ll be jealous at home,” Homer said.

“Mmmm.”

“Women will hate you, and men will love you.”

“Home,” she said.

“You know,” he said.

On hearing footsteps following them in the darkness, they hurried through the path leading them into the unknown. Homer had to awaken from his coma under the cover of the night, the sound of the drums assaulting his senses somewhere in time and space.

“I’m frightened,” he said.

“Kam,” she said.

He kissed her lips. “You are beautiful.”

The branches of the trees got entangled in their hair while they ran away from the huts, the sun struggling to appear behind the clouds in the horizon.

“No,” Kam said.

“What is it?”

She ran along the field, her hair flying in the wind like a mantle, the rays of the sun starting to warm the world around them.

“Kam,” Homer said.

On following her through the foliage, he scratched his legs with a few thorns in his way but nothing mattered.

“Come back,” he said.

The drums went on in a day he might never forget, the trees welcoming him to the forest as the birds celebrated their luck on being alive in such a place.

Homer listened to the drums, calling the inhabitants of the jungle to pray for their souls, like father Ricardo did in his church on Sundays, while he water rushed through the boulders, legions of insects feasting on his blood and the mules ate their grass full of the goodness of the forest.

“Hello,” Homer said.

One of the animals looked at him, wondering where he had been during the last hours of his life. That aguardiente he had by the fire, had sent him into a world of magic behind the paths of time, even if Kam had run along the path, memories of his love sessions going through his mind.

The mules didn't seem to be the same ones he had left tied to the tree, looking a bit different with their manes or the Indians must haven enchanted him with their potions, cooked somewhere in the jungle.

“Let's go,” he said to the mules.

The animas looked at him, brown eyes guarded by a few lashes caked in dirt, before starting to move down the path.

“Wait for me,” Homer said.

Homer chased the animals for some time, his feet getting tired of running so much, before the beasts stopped for no apparent reason.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

After riding along the plains for some time, he found houses instead of huts by the road, a few people gathering to look at the stranger on a mule.

“It isn’t palm Sunday yet,” they said.

“I escaped from the Indians,” Homer told a policeman. “They wanted to shrink my head.”

“The sun has made you crazy,” the man said.

“It’s true,” Homer said.

The policeman led him to the health centre, other patients moving away from him.

“He must be mad,” they said.

“I want to take the bus to the nearest city,” Homer said.

“It leaves tomorrow morning,” a nurse said. “You won’t need the mules anymore.”

Homer kept Kam’s possessions in his bag, a reminder of his journey to the jungle, where the heads had disappeared forever.

### The sea

Homer didn't get the hero's welcome he expected, countless of mosquitoes leaving marks in his body, but the Indian got away with the coca from his shop.

"You've been away for weeks," Miguel said.

Homer shook his head. "It's a mistake."

"Look at the date."

On looking at the calendar he had in the table, he felt his world collapsing in shock. The Indian must have mixed up his brain, after taking him away from his customers for a few days, the trip in the bus a bad figment of his imagination.

"It must be a miracle," he said.

Then he remembered walking in his dreams by the side of the road, the traffic going past him in its way to the city or someone had bewitched him to death.

"You must have fallen asleep somewhere," Miguel said.

"I doubt it."

"There must be some explanation."

"Bad people don't have to explain anything," Homer said.

As he thought of the bus, he remembered its windows clogged with the chicken feathers, emanating from the monsters the woman kept in the cage, amidst his fears of someone stealing his soul in the jungle, and Kam charming him to death with her beauty from the depths of the forest.

"I saw a girl," Homer said.

"You always do."

"She was beautiful."

The memories of that encounter in the hammock blinded his senses to the other things happening during his trip, when the Indian had stolen his coca without asking him for any permission.

"Where is she now?" Miguel asked.

“In the jungle.”

His father kept some books in a box by the window, talking about time dilation in other dimensions, but that journey across the ocean interrupted his thoughts of travelling to other dimensions.

“I love the sea,” he said.

“You care about money,” Miguel said.

Homer had to find fame amidst the waves, even though the Indian had finished with his dreams, the memory of his mother spurring his vision of the future, before conquering the world like she wanted.

“Don’t make any more mistakes,” Miguel said.

“I won’t.”

On looking for his wallet, he opened a few drawers, papers falling on the floor, between the boxes and other things.

“I want to borrow some books,” Homer said. “They’ll help me think of my plans.”

“You must fill the library card first,” Miguel said.

After looking in his bag, Homer found a pencil along with a few other papers, but he had not learned how to write even if he could read.

“I don’t have my glasses,” he said. “Could you do it for me?”

Miguel wrote his name and address after asking him some more questions, irrelevant to the sea or whatever he wanted to know.

“You have the name of a Greek hero,” he said.

“Do you think so?”

“He fell in love with Helen during the Trojan War.”

Homer had never heard of his name sake doing exciting things in the name of love.

“His books are by the window,” Miguel said.

Following his pointing finger, Homer crashed with more boxes in his way, before finding the books his father must have kept for him across time. One of them had a man



with a big nose in the cover, its pages filled with a poem talking of a Trojan War, where people fought each other in the midst of time.

“It’s boring,” he said.

“Your father must have liked it.”

As Homer turned the pages, he tried to understand some of the language, translated from the original Greek by someone with bad taste.

“You have to understand all about Zeus, Hector, and King Hermes doing their dealings with the Trojans,” Miguel said.

“Who were they?”

“They lived in Greece,” Miguel said. “Here is the map your father had.”

On opening a map on the table, Homer saw the Greek capital with mount Olympus by its side, waiting for someone to go up its slopes, like the Trojans had done in the long poem.

“I remember my mother being sick,” Homer said.

“Was it in the boat?”

Homer nodded. “My father tried to comfort her.”

“The sea can be rough,” Miguel said. “I worked in the port a few years ago.”

Homer had to think of his trip across the ocean, even if Father Ricardo thought he had began in the Garden of Eden in a day lost in time.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he said in front of a mirror by the door. “I want to help the world.”

He had to buy a ship and a few trucks to fetch his merchandise from the port, bringing the luxuries of other lands to his customers in the market, who liked the best things in the world.

“I want to phone the library,” he said.

Miguel got him the telephone they used only in emergencies, or when something had gone wrong in the shop.

“I want the library,” Homer said to the voice at the other end of the line.

He cried a few tears for himself while waiting for the girl to connect him.

“This is the library,” a voice interrupted him.

“I want to talk about the local economy,” he said. “This is Mr. Homer.”

He heard her voice again, after a pause, when he thought she had hung up.

“I’ll call you when we arrange something,” she said.

Homer felt excitement running through him, the thought of conquering the world stealing his soul, when he had to get ready for the most important appointment in his life.

On looking for a pencil, he crashed with a few more things blocking his way to the table.

“I must write my speech,” he said.

“Tell them you want lots of money.”

“That won’t be any good.”

On thinking of all the things to say, Homer’s eyes filled with tears, his memories of the sea coming to him from across the abyss of time.

“I’m supposed to protect you,” Miguel said.

“Protect me from what?”

“Yourself.”

“We have gathered here today,” Homer said. “In order to celebrate that trip my parents did across an ocean an eternity ago.”

“You must explain what that journey has done for you,” Miguel said.

“It has helped me to conquer the ocean.”

### **The library**

As he entered the library the receptionist lifted her eyebrows at the sight of the foreigner with the big nose.

“Mr. Homer,” she said. “They are waiting for you.”

“No one will see us,” he said.

As he touched the fine pants her mama must have bought for Christmas, she slapped his cheeks, leaving a red mark by his mouth.

“I’ll call the police,” she said.

“Nobody wants to know,” he said, the clock ticking towards the end of time.

“You shouldn’t touch me,” she said.

“I’ll marry you.”

“Liar.”

Homer rubbed his face, hoping the mark would fade before confronting the public in the most important day of his life, when he had to decide the fate of the city.

“Your friend is waiting for you,” she said.

He saw Jaramillo at the end of the corridor, where the public auditorium had to be, amidst other rooms used for studying.

“Hurry up,” she said.

“I’ll give you money,” he said.

The girl considered his words, her pretty lips quivering at the thought of getting pesos for doing nothing.

“How much?” she asked.

“Lots of money.”

“Prove it then.”

Homer showed her his purse, a few notes struggling amidst the other things he needed to survive.

“Be quick,” she said.

She showed him her legs, tanned by the sun on her days out in the park.

“I want my money” she said.

“We haven’t done anything.”

She shrugged. “You’ve raped me.”

“Liar,” he said.

“The police will get you.”

Homer gave her ten pesos, before running along the corridor, the sound of her voice following him to the auditorium.

“He raped me,” she said.

Jaramillo welcomed him in the room, before offering him some aguardiente and a microphone.

“I don’t know what to say,” Homer said.

Jaramillo smiled. “Tell them that.”

On clearing his throat, Homer thought of that trip he had undertaken a long time ago in his way to another country with his parents.

“Good evening,” he said to the people gathered in front of him.

“Go on,” Jaramillo said.

“This country has coasts filled with treasures,” Homer said. “I love the sea.”

People applauded when he promised to have the best ships in the world. They had to support the young entrepreneur leading the country to the future instead of lying like everyone else had done for some time.

“I’ll give employment to local people, he said.”

“That sounds fair,” they said.

“We must help our businessman,” Jaramillo said.

Homer talked of another land across the sea, when he spirits had guided his parents in their quest to find their luck in a place filled with happiness.

“I love the sea,” he said.

“Hurrah to Homer,” they said.

They toasted their hero with a bottle of champagne someone must have bought in the market that morning.

“You can help the economy,” they said.

Homer drank some aguardiente mixed with the champagne, as the public promised to help him to buy his boats.

“I need lots of pesos,” he said.

A pretty librarian moved between the seats, collecting the money in a basket someone had brought to the library, her teats bouncing every time she stepped amidst the crowd.

“I was borne during a solar eclipse,” he said.

“Hurrah to Homer,” they said.

“I had to play with the stones my father collected in the road,” he said.

“Didn’t you have any toys?” Jaramillo asked.

“My uncle brought them from New York.”

Homer’s eyes filled with tears, on remembering those times his uncle had visited them amidst his dreams of the future.

“We have a few thousand pesos,” the girl said.

“I’ll buy my boats tomorrow,” Homer said.

The roar of thunder interrupted his words, the sound reverberating around them like the drums of hell. It had to be Armageddon.

“He raped me,” the receptionist said.

“She must be drunk,” Homer said.

### **The ships**

The papers spoke of the foreign businessman travelling in the back of his truck to the port. Homer had a fare paying passenger next to the driver, while sleeping between a sack of potatoes and one of plantains, after buying the truck with some of the money from the library.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

Jose had taught him that sentence in another plane he glimpsed through his dreams, when he wished to change the world, the spirits of his parents encouraging him from across the chasm of time.

“We have arrived, Mr. Homer,” a voice said.

On opening his eyes, he saw the driver standing over him, the smell of the sea greeting his senses after his siesta in the back of the truck.

“I’m thirsty,” Homer said.

“Have some more aguardiente,” the driver said.

The other drivers talked to each other, rivulets of sweat running down their shirts as they discussed a few things making them suffer at that moment.

“Hello, Mr. Homer,” they greeted.

“I want to go to the harbour,” he said.

“It’s at the end of the road.”

Homer scared a few dogs mating with each other, after jumping off the truck, amidst the mosquitoes and other things annoying his life, the sun welcoming him to his new venture. He moved inside the office, hoping someone might take him in his car to buy a few vessels with the money from the library.

“You can’t trust the sun,” he said. “But you’ll believe the sea.”

“That’s interesting,” a little man with a red hat said.

Homer opened a bottle of aguardiente, the smell of alcohol filling his senses, before losing a grip on the world.

"I'm calling my boats Athena, Esparta and The Thermopiles," Homer said.

"Nice names," the man said. "My brother has boats."

They talked for some time, Homer's mind thinking of the promises he had made to the people in the library a few days before.

"I'm Cesar," the little man said.

"I'm glad to meet you," Homer said.

Putting his aguardiente on the table, Homer looked at the little man promising to get him the world.

"I have a ship," Cesar said.

"Where?"

"It's in the port."

On following his pointing finger, Homer saw the plain outside the window, getting together with the clouds in the horizon where the sea had to be. He didn't know whether to trust the stranger, talking about his vessels floating in the harbour.

"My friends bring me merchandise," Cesar said.

"I don't understand."

"They buy things in the ports."

"That's good," Homer said.

"You can sell them in your shop."

Homer had to keep his money for another day, where it might grow in the bank, giving him lots of interest.

"I'll show you," Cesar said.

He took Homer through the crates, blocking their way and up to a row of boxes someone had put against the wall, whilst talking about his business in the port, pausing to show him some more boxes.

"They are full of perfume from Japan," he said.

"It's no good."

“Smells lovely.”

On opening one of the boxes, he sprayed the liquid around Homer, explaining all about the aroma imported from Tokyo in the spring.

“One thousand pesos each one,” Cesar said.

“They’re expensive.”

“Your customers will love them.”

He sprayed a bit of the perfume in his hand, the scent mixing with the fishy smells from the garage.

“I’ll give you eight hundred pesos per each one,” Homer said.

Cesar shrugged. “Done.”

He told Homer all about the island of Salvacion, where he had spent his childhood amidst the best things in his life.

“We slept in hammocks by the sea,” he said.

“I like hammocks,” Homer said.

“The president is a nice man.”

“He lives in paradise.”

“I’ll take you there one day,” Cesar said.

He talked of the battles his island had to deal with its neighbours from hell, forever annoying them with their fights about the sea.

“Hurrah to Salvacion,” Cesar said.

“And they have nice perfumes.”

“You are right.”

Homer climbed in the back of his truck getting ready to go back to the city. Then the driver appeared.

“Mr. Homer,” he said. “Would you mind if a dog travelled in the back?”

“He will have to pay,” Homer said.

“It’s fine,” the driver said. “But you must feed him.”



He gave Homer a warm packet, smelling of chicken and other things.

“He eats at this time of the day,” he said.

Homer nodded. “I will do that.”

“Thank you, Mr. Homer.”

As the truck moved amidst the traffic, Homer’s stomach grumbled, the animal looking at him with dark eyes. On opening the parcel, he saw some beef in a brown sauce, a waste of money if he gave it to the animal. Throwing a piece of meat in the air, the dog caught it with a thud.

“It’s mine,” Homer said.

The animal sat in one of the crates, while Homer finished with his lunch, the brown sauce running down his face and ending in his shirt. *It had to be the best banquet in his life*, he thought while getting hot, the spices in the meat bringing his desires to the light of day.

Homer masturbated, the sounds of the world fading amongst his pleasure until the sperm ran through the boxes the driver had piled by his side. Why didn’t he marry himself? He would pay less tax to the country, helping the economy to recover from the recession. Homer’s Industries answered in an unexpected way after a long declaration of love to himself, the prospect of being hungry making him say yes. After a long hour of speculation, the city slums filed past the truck and the dog whimpered.

“Shut up,” Homer said. “He’ll buy you more food.”

Homer dozed in the back of the truck, dreaming of that day he had seen the country for the first time, the rows of trees welcoming him to a place in heaven: a hut with a hammock waiting for his soul to rest in peace, in spite of the mosquitoes tormenting his body forever.

*I was waiting for you*, a voice said. Homer saw the most beautiful girl amidst the darkness, inviting him to sin in the middle of the jungle, where no one cared whether he lived or died. Then the sky opened amidst the roar of thunder. *You must save the world*,

she said. Homer awoke, the wind ruffling his hair, the apparition he had witnessed in his dreams, bringing some hope to his life.

“We have arrived,” the driver said.

## Marriage

Homer couldn't wait to tell Miguel the good news once he had arrived back at the shop.

"I'm getting married," he said.

"Who is the lucky girl?" Miguel asked.

"I'm getting married to myself."

"The doctor will give you medication," Miguel said.

"I don't need any medication," Homer said. "I need a wife."

"You are mad."

Homer heard of the miracles doctors performed on mad people while chewing his coca leaves: nobody married himself or herself unless they were crazy. He had to keep his employee happy, while looking for Jaramillo's number in the phone book, the journalist's voice interrupting his thoughts.

"I'm getting married to myself," Homer said.

"Is it to raise money?" the journalist asked

"Yes."

"It's the best idea you ever had," he said.

"Thank you."

Homer congratulated himself for his plans to conquer the world, thinking of more witnesses for his marriage.

"My daughters are here," Miguel interrupted his thoughts.

Maria appeared with Amelia on tow.

"We have brought some rice pudding," the child said.

"Homer's getting married to himself," Miguel told them.

"Stop joking," Maria said.

"I'm not."

She poured the pudding in a few plates she found in a cupboard, trying to avoid Homer's hands, but women wanted food, clothes and toys for the children.

"Think of your wedding," Maria said.

"I want to hang the balloons," Amelia said.

She opened a bag from the shop, filled with multicoloured balloons and by the time she had finished hanging them around, the house looked like the jungle where Homer's dreams had ended in disaster.

"Why doesn't he marry you?" the child asked.

"I don't know," Maria said.

The child shrugged. "You are pretty."

Homer thought of ways of attracting the girl, weary of his advances in the face of the wedding of the century, the sound of the door bell ending the peace of the day, before his love for himself finished with all that.

"We must have other guests," Maria said.

He felt her teats, as Father Ricardo appeared by their side, ready to conquer Homer's evils with his holy water.

"Miguel called me," he said.

"I'm getting married," Homer said.

The priest smiled. "Congratulations."

"I'm getting married to myself."

"In the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit," Father Ricardo said.

"Amen," Homer and Maria said in unison.

"Why is she here?" he gestured to the child.

"It's Homer's party," Maria said.

Putting the cross on the floor, Father Ricardo opened his bible in order to exorcise their souls, words of wisdom leaving his mouth, guided by the Holy Spirit living in heaven.

“I’ll give you money for the church tower,” Homer said.

Father Ricardo nodded. “The clock doesn’t work.”

“I’ll have it repaired.”

“What about the confessional?”

“You can have a new one, father.”

“Our Lord’s picture by the altar is looking pale.”

“I’ll have it painted, father.”

“God bless you,” Father Ricardo said.

“Thank you.”

As Homer made a mental note of all the equipment he needed for Father Ricardo’s evangelical work, Cesar and his sailors stepped on some of the confetti in the floor, unaware of the priest’s prayers.

“I called them,” Miguel said.

Homer nodded. “You are a good man.”

“Are you getting married to yourself?” they asked.

“It’s a good idea,” they said.

“Hurray to Homer,” they chanted.

They looked for Homer’s bride behind the boxes of merchandise, while passing a bottle of aguardiente around the room,

“Are you his girl?” they asked Maria.

She shook her head. “No.”

“Dear God,” Father Ricardo said.

Maria moved her hips every time she took a few slices of cake around the room, raising the men’s passions by the minute.

“She has a boyfriend,” Homer said.

“You love yourself.”

The sound of the door bell interrupted the party, as Jaramillo appeared with his camera crew and equipment.

“Miguel called us,” he said.

“I’ll give him better wages,” Homer said.

“Hurrah to Homer,” everyone said.

They mixed coca leaves with the aguardiente, everyone talking about Homer’s wedding while the clock ticked towards the end of time.

“We want Maria,” the sailors said.

“She’s mine,” Homer said.

“You are marrying yourself.”

Father Ricardo wanted to start the ceremony, the sounds of the wedding march from a gramophone giving life to the scene.

“We want more aguardiente,” the sailors said.

“Shut up,” Homer said.

“Don’t tell us what to do.”

“It’s my party.”

“Go to hell.”

“I must join this man in matrimony to himself,” the priest interrupted

Homer held his own hands, while Father Ricardo read passages of the bible and the journalists took pictures for everyone to see.

“Do you accept yourself as your wife?” Father Ricardo asked.

Homer nodded. “I do.”

“I pronounce you husband and wife,” Father Ricardo said.

Everyone congratulated Homer for choosing such a nice person to spend the rest of his days in harmony, Maria kissing his cheeks a few times as Jaramillo recorded the moment for posterity.

“I want to marry you,” Amelia said.

“Congratulations,” Maria said.

“Come to the cellar tonight,” Homer said.

Little Amelia’s dolls married each other, the festivities lasting til the morning when everyone looked tired.

“You must start your honeymoon,” they said.

“It’ll be in the papers tomorrow,” Jaramillo said.

“Amen,” Father Ricardo said.

“Don’t you want more aguardiente?” Homer asked.

“Keep it for some other day.”

They left Homer alone, getting ready to spend a night of passion with the world. After washing his hands he kissed his image in the mirror.

“I’m here,” a voice said.

Maria appeared, like an angel of mercy in the middle of the night, the pleasures of the flesh calling him to sin in the name of evil.

“Are you real?” Homer asked.

“You chew too much coca,” she said.

On kissing her lips, he savoured her flesh.

“This is not a dream,” he said.

Blood ran down her legs by the time he had finished making love to her, the sheets turning purple like her heart in a night like no other in a long time.

“I was a virgin,” she said.

She had gone by the morning, leaving her fragrance of cheap perfume around him in the middle of the night. *Businessman marries himself*, said in big letters in *El Pais* and *El Tiempo* the next day, as people donated their money to the foreigner with the best ideas in the world.

### The widows

Miguel had to go home, leaving Homer in charge of the shop, as a beautiful girl dressed in black moved amongst the merchandise he had left on the floor, small feet avoiding the bags of coca Miguel had left in the corridor.

“Can I help you?” Homer asked.

“I’m just looking,” she said.

The light of the sun showed her curves through the dress, bringing memories of that other world of trees and hammocks amidst the intricacies of his mind.

“These clothes might suit you,” he said.

She looked at her reflection in the mirror by the window, while Homer crashed with a display by the door Miguel had arranged earlier on.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

He had to enjoy his days, before the sun blew everything up at the end of the world, even though she didn’t seem to care about his fate.

“I have some merchandise from Paris,” he said.

“That’s a long way.”

“But it’s nice.”

Homer hoped she might buy something in the shop, before leaving him alone with his thoughts.

“The soldiers killed my husband,” she interrupted his reverie.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

This woman deserved some happiness after suffering in the hands of the government.

“I have been hungry many times,” she said.

“The tights are a present,” he said.

“I don’t want them.”

She headed for the door, her hips swaying at the rhythm of imaginary music as Homer’s soul despaired or his life might finish now.



"I have to go back to my children," she said.

"What children?" he asked.

"I have lots of them."

She opened the door with delicate hands, made rough by scrubbing her children's clothes.

"I'll give you money," he said.

"Bye," she said.

"Wait a minute," he said.

On hurrying after her, Homer crashed with a woman standing by the counter, who had come in the shop a few minutes before.

"I'm sorry," he said.

The woman held a pink dress with sequels in her hands.

"It costs fifty pesos," he said.

Homer saw the girl disappearing amidst a crowd of shoppers, getting some food for their lunch.

"She won't come back," the woman said.

"Do you know where she lives?" he asked.

"In the slums, I suppose."

Homer had to find the girl, hoping to feed her family in the recession.

"I'll give you one hundred pesos for this dress," the woman held another one in the light of the sun coming through the window.

"It costs more money," he said.

She looked at a few more things in the counter, while he studied a map of the slums in his desk.

"I'll take her out of the gutter," he said.

"I believe you, Mr. Homer," she said.

"Thank you."

He wrote down the prices of the clothes in the notebook Maria had given him for his birthday, trying to earn his money somehow.

“I want eighty pesos for the blouse,” he said.

“You’re a good man, Mr. Homer.”

Homer wrapped the clothes in a nice paper for the woman to give someone else living in the tugurios.

“My neighbour was attacked last night,” she interrupted his reverie.

She explained how men, women and children appeared dead and nobody cared, genocide becoming a national industry just as football and politics. Homer’s eyes filled with tears as he had another idea.

“Would you give money to stop the violence?” he asked.

“Yes, I would.”

The woman went away, leaving him alone with his revenge for the poor widows of the city. After getting a bicycle Miguel had in the cellar amidst a few things he had found in the dump, Homer got ready for his trip to the slums.

### **Homer builds houses**

Homer cycled the poor parts of the city, people eying him with suspicion, as no one ventured inside the slums unless they lived there. A few dogs followed him along the street, their noise awakening the people sleeping the siesta under the mud, where no one cared whether he wanted something from them or if the world might finish in a second.

“Can I help you?” a voice asked.

At first he saw no one, but then a little boy dressed in rags appeared in front of him, taking a deep breath from a bag he held in his hands while looking at Homer with dark eyes. They must have met in the city centre or in the market because he looked familiar.

“This is good stuff,” the boy said.

“Is it?”

“You can try it, mister.”

Shaking his head, Homer looked for somewhere to leave his bike, before finding some loose change he might have amidst the remains of a chewing gum and some coca leaves inside his pocket. The child had to be ten or eleven years old, difficult to tell with all the rags on his body and the mud covering his face.

“Look mister,” the child said. “I want some money.”

Homer didn't want to give him the few pesos Miguel had given him that morning, after paying for the coca boxes to sell in the market.

“Do you know of any builders around here?” he asked.

The boy gestured at a place where a few gamines played with a ball, a dog chasing them around the rubbish strewn about the place.

“It's behind those trees, mister” he said.

On moving towards there, Homer's shoes splashed in the water but the rainy season had not come yet, as the children made rude gestures with their hands. Then they surrounded him, talking at the same time about something he didn't understand.

“Leave me alone,” Homer said.

The first boy imitated his accent and his friends laughed.

“Go away,” Homer said.

He fell on the floor after tripping with something in his way, the children’s laughter interrupting his thoughts of revenge for a world treating him so badly.

“I’ll give you lots of money,” he said.

His bicycle had to be behind the bushes, where he had left it at the start of his adventure.

“We want your first coin,” they said.

“I don’t know what you mean,” Homer said.

“You do.”

The children gathered by his side like wolves out of hell, their laughter echoing amidst the remnants of his dreams. He had to get away quickly, his visions of the future in tatters.

“We’ll build your houses,” they said.

“You are not builders,” Homer said.

“This will be their floor,” they said.

Homer shrugged. “It’s mud.”

“We’ll get cheap materials from the streets.”

“That’s stealing,” Homer said.

“Nobody cares about poor people.”

“I do,” Homer said.

“You must have your reasons.”

Homer listened to their plans for sheltering the widows from the dangers of the slums, although they would have not have any electricity, water, sewers or other amenities of the modern world.

“What about the toilets?” Homer asked.

“Poor people don’t care.”

Homer hated that place more than anything on earth, the children reminding him of all the evil things in his life.

“I want to find a widow,” he said.

“We’ll get them for you,” they said.

“Will you?”

“We’ll provide you with the houses and the widows,” they said.

On looking at the rubbish, Homer imagined the houses sheltering the widows against the elements in a world gone mad.

“We’ll build them in seven days,” they said.

“That’s good,” Homer said.

“You must trust us.”

Homer shook their hands while listening to their stories, giving them a few more coins he found in his pockets for a better world.

“We’ll build nice huts,” they said.

“I want houses,” Homer said.

“You could call them that.”

“Bastards.”

“We’ll be waiting for you,” they said.

Homer found his bicycle amidst the mud. It had been a good day, when a beautiful girl had shown him a way of helping the world, although the children couldn’t build the houses.

“I know real builders,” a voice said.

Homer found the child picking his nose.

“You don’t know anything,” he said.

Getting on his bike, he got ready to go back home, when he saw a hut with a strange name.

“Builders galore,” Homer read.

“I told you,” the boy said.

Homer moved amidst the mud caking his shoes onto the pavement ending in the doorway.

“Good luck,” the child said.

On entering the shop, he saw a few men tinkering around with an assortment of tools, a fishy smell filling his senses with disgust.

“Can I help you?” someone asked.

“I want to build huts,” Homer said.

“You come to the right place.”

“I’ve heard that before.”

“Where?”

“Never mind.”

Homer explained his plans to the men, hovering by his side in the dirt, the slums, becoming stranger to him every moment of his adventure.

“They won’t have a floor, or toilets,” they said.

“I know,” Homer said. “The children told me that.”

“What children?”

“The gamines.”

“They are not engineers,” they said.

Homer looked at the drawing they had made, his mind wandering back to the moment he had met the beauty with lots of children and without a husband, sending him in the path of glory.

### **Homer attends a party**

The inhabitants of the slums admired the young entrepreneur and as Journalists heard of the widow's helper, Homer became more famous than Saint Francis of Assize. The papers spoke of the five chalets destined to redeem the widows of the violence.

"We admire you," the journalists said. "First you marry yourself and now you want to help the widows."

"I have my talents," Homer said.

Jaramillo took Homer's picture talking to the women and smiling at the children in front of the huts.

"Homer's like a father to us," they said with tears in their eyes.

"Thank you," Homer said.

One of the women hugged him for some time, the essence of baby powder and cologne entering his body while a child wriggled in her arms.

"I could be in the gutter," she said.

"Hurrah to Homer," they said.

She made him frantic with desire, before getting ready to talk in front of the slums, smelling of one hundred things at that time of the morning.

"I want to help the women," Homer said.

"Hurrah to Homer," they said.

He showed them pictures of the families living rough, the press recording the moment in time.

"What about the rubble?" the journalists asked.

"The workmen will take it away," Homer said.

"We hope so."

The sewers stunk in the middle of the day as Homer tried to get money for his plans, a car sprinkling mud all over the crowd and frightening some pigs frolicking in the dirt.

"It must be the bishop," Jaramillo said.

A short man dressed in a black gown and with a crucifix dangling from his belt left the vehicle, other priests following him down the path to the huts.

“I want to see Homer,” the first man said.

After a short silence, Homer stepped forwards, taking care of his clothes.

“I’m pleased to meet you, Excellency,” he said.

Homer didn’t know whether to kiss the expensive rings the man had in his fingers, worth lots of money in the market.

“We have helped the families, Excellency” Homer said.

“That’s good,” the bishop said.

“They are building some more houses over there,” Homer gestured at an empty space, where a few shadows hid behind a wall.

“They didn’t have anywhere to go,” Homer said.

“I see.”

Moving through the dirt, his Excellency reached the woman and her children lurking in the mud, the cameras recording the moment for posterity.

“We were afraid,” she said.

“God loves you,” the bishop said.

On blessing her in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit, he wanted God to take her far from the poverty and hunger she must have experienced during her life.

“My children love you, Excellency,” she said.

The bishop touched her erect teats with trembling fingers, hoping to have some satisfaction from God’s children, even if hell might be waiting for his actions at the end of the road.

“Will I go straight to heaven, Excellency?” she asked.

The bishop nodded. “You’ll sit next to Saint Peter up there.”

“I’m glad,” she said.



As the country followed the events in the first radio station in the city, the bishop's holy water absolved her sins forever, bringing Jesus Christ into her life.

"Homer is our benefactor," she said.

The bishop prayed to the Virgin Mary while offering her his ring, covered in people's saliva and other things not good for her health.

"I'll see you in the church tomorrow," he said.

"Thank you Excellency," she said.

Homer admired the bishop, a man of integrity battling to save humankind from hell, while helping the poor people amidst the poverty punishing their lives for something they had not done.

"God wants you in the kingdom of heaven," the bishop said.

The woman knelt in the floor, waiting for the bishop to do something for her soul suffering in the torment of her sins.

"Jesus Christ loved poor people," the bishop said. "He performed miracles to help their souls enter the kingdom of God."

"Amen," a few people said.

The woman cried, hugging her children to her bosom, his Excellency caressing her head, amidst other things his hands dreamed of desecrating.

"I have written this letter to be read for a few weeks in the churches of the city," the bishop said.

"Dear children," he said.

"Our flock has been invaded by the wolves the scriptures talk about, atheists and sinners leading my herd through the wrong path, filling our churches with orphans and widows.

"You have to remember the Egyptian children, punished by God for a crime they had not done in the annals of time, but He hasn't abandoned us yet.

“A foreigner called Homer is asking for your solidarity in order to help the widows and orphans of the violence and the evil pursuing our lives.

“You must send money to our Episcopal palace at the end of the road.

“We mustn’t forget our place up in heaven or down in hell for the sinners, who did not help their poor brothers and sisters in their time of need, whilst having God’s blessing for every million pesos you give to Homer’s mission on earth.

“His Highness, Pomponio, bishop of the city.”

The letter had a good effect. Homer received many times the money he had spent in the houses, even if a few priests took a percentage of the earnings, and Jaramillo kept the press quiet about the lack of amenities in the widow’s housing, Homer’s face becoming synonymous with pain and endurance as the citizens filled millions of petitions asking for social solidarity. The governor with all his cabinet marched to the Widow’s Houses, failing to notice the absence of toilets, water or electricity.

### **Amelia's wishes**

Homer had to attend a party at the widow's housing, a chance for getting more money for his charity even if he had to endure people talking about nonsense for hours. On admiring his image in the mirror, his green eyes looked back at him within the paleness of his face, when he had to choose his clothes for such an important date in his life.

"You are clever," he said to himself.

He had to conquer the evils harassing him in time, before the world dissolved in the colours of pain, the demons giving him a headache from the moment of his birth under the dark sun. Lying down on the floor, he did his exercises, touching his toes a hundred times, good for his health like they said in the radio he had bought in the market

"One, two," Homer said.

On touching the end of his toes for the tenth time, he felt strong before facing the most important folk in the city. The best thing he had done since arriving with his parents in the country on a sunny morning lost in his memory.

"Uncle Homer," someone said.

On turning around, he saw Miguel and his young daughter standing by the door.

"Good morning, Mr. Homer" they said.

"You are early."

"It's nine o'clock in the morning."

"Is it?"

Homer stopped his exercises, his stomach making a few noises after the work out in the name of health.

"Your breakfast is on the table," Amelia said.

Following her through the coca boxes, Homer saw the food waiting for him next to a few newspapers showing the latest news in the city.

"You are in the papers," Amelia said.

On looking at the headlines across the pages of *El Pais*, Homer saw his picture amidst the governor and other personalities raising money for the widow's housing, his eyes widening at the amounts of pesos promised by some people.

"You are rich, Uncle Homer," Amelia said.

"That's the widow's money," Miguel said.

Then Amelia marched around the room at the rhythm of imaginary music, like those soldiers fighting the insurgents in the mountains.

"She wants to join the army," Miguel said.

Homer had been thinking of the widows and his words didn't make any sense. She could become a lawyer or an accountant instead of being a soldier.

"I'll pay for your university," he said. "The army is for men."

Sitting in his only chair, he discussed her education as Miguel checked the boxes of coca stored against the wall. She had to learn how to conquer the world like he had done from his birth with the help of his imaginary friend.

"The army is the best university," Amelia said.

She marched around the shop once more.

"One, two, one two," she said.

"It must be her age," Miguel said.

"I hope so," Homer said.

He thought of his speech that afternoon, waiting for the money the city might give him for the widow's suffering.

"I am the apostle of the oppressed," he said. "Full of love for my people."

Amelia would remember his words one day, when the world collapsed around her in an explosion of colours.

"I like it, Uncle Homer," she said.

"Thank you."

"Won't you say anything else?" Miguel asked.

Homer looked hurt, as if those first words had not been the best.

“I’ll think about it,” he said.

He had to convince the world of his intentions towards the poor women, forgotten by society, no one willing to help them like Jesus Christ had done in the bible many times.

“One, two, one, two,” Amelia said.

The sun shone through the cheap curtains Homer had found in the market, bringing some happiness to his life, before the widows’ problems finished with his health

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

“You don’t know anything,” she said.

“Yes, I do.”

“You’ll be late for your party,” Miguel said.

“Can I come?” Amelia asked.

“It’s for adults.”

“Everything is for adults,” she said.

He got ready to go, thinking of the country his parents had left aeons ago, when he had been a small child in another land beyond the rainbow, adorning the horizon after the rains.

“Look for the shadows, Uncle Homer,” Amelia said.

“What shadows?”

The child confused him with her jokes, like the day she had spoken about time, her laughter ending with his depression in life.

“Ladies and gentleman,” he said. “I want to save the world.”

“It sounds better, Uncle Homer,” she said. “But you must avoid them,” she said.

“Don’t listen to her,” Miguel said.

Homer shrugged. “I know.”

On patting her head, he thought of the sewers where the women lived amidst the aroma of putrefying garbage and other things hard to imagine. Homer wrote more of his

discourse to the multitudes, waiting for a miracle in the slums, when he had to feed the poor with a few loaves of bread provided by city.

“Tell them you love them,” Amelia said.

“The truth is your enemy,” Miguel said.

Homer thought of the implications of his words, the world waiting to hear of his feelings for the families he had saved from the dirt in the midst of his problems.

### **The banquet**

“We were waiting for you,” a young woman said in the town hall.

As she took him along the aisle, Homer felt people’s eyes following his journey to the podium, when he wanted to go back to his shop.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the governor said. “This is the apostle of the poor.”

“Hurrah to Homer,” people said.

Homer waited for the applause to die down, before looking at an old bible Miguel had given him that morning, God filling the land with water in seven days, a miracle he had to replicate once more.

“Our father who art in heaven,” Homer said. “Hollowed be thy name.”

“Thy kingdom will come,” the governor said.

“Give us our daily bread,” people said.

Homer felt lost amidst the public, the noises of the world subsiding in his mind, as the jungle appeared in between the shadows surrounding him, the dream of reality mixing with the riches his parents had craved on their voyage to other lands, while Kam kissed him inside a hammock.

“Mister Homer,” someone said.

A girl held a handkerchief full of cologne on his nose.

“You fainted,” she said.

“It must be the excitement,” he said.

After helping him to sit down at one of the tables, the girl brought him an aspirin, the public expressing their concerns for his welfare, when the widows had to be saved from the fires of hell.

“You must relax,” she said.

“Come to bed with me.”

“Never.”

“I won’t get better.”

“Suit yourself.”

She left him with the guests, a few señoritas serving the food in his honour, before redeeming the poor families from the misery. They had short dresses, showing their curves like God had ordered in the bible, even if the bishop and his priests didn't believe it. *Women must give me joy*, Homer thought, pushing his illness to the back of his mind, the voices of his parents encouraging him from the abyss of time.

“Hi Mr. Homer,” the girls said.

The beauty queen of Colombia, the queen of the potato, the yucca, the corn, the banana, the peas, the pumpkin, the yucca bread, the tamales, the *guarapo*, and a hundred more things brought them a bowl of boiling water and cold bread for thousands of pesos, rich people hoping God might absolve their sins and those still to come for a good cause.

“Are you feeling better?” the governor asked.

“I think so,” Homer said.

Homer saw the guests having their hot water with a few things floating in it, like God had given food to the people from an empty basket, according to the scriptures.

“Enjoy your lunch, Mr. Homer,” a girl said.

She had long black hair, held together by a few ribbons and other things used by women to decorate themselves.

“Why don't you sit with me?” he asked.

“I'm busy.”

“I'll give you money.”

Jaramillo appeared by his side, looking smart and inspiring confidence amidst the slums, where Homer hoped to become a millionaire.

“I have to attend a beauty pageant tonight,” he said.

“You'll win.”

“Thank you.”

“With pleasure.”



They wanted to have lots of money after their party in the slums, the journalist getting ready to jot his thoughts about helping the widows from hell.

“The food is awful,” he said.

“I know.”

“Why are you having it?”

“I’m a masochist.”

Homer glanced at the girls going past him with their trays full of nothingness, ready to please the guests attending the event, even though he wanted to touch their bodies.

“I’m Mr. Homer,” he said to one of them.

“That’s nice.”

“Make me happy.”

“How?”

The girl gave him a bowl of hot water, waiting for the widow’s benefactor to pay her a compliment,

“Thank you,” Homer said.

“It’s a pleasure.”

“Sit on my lap.”

“The soup will get cold.”

“I like cold water.”

“It has herbs and spices.”

“I like that too.”

Homer took her arms, forcing her to sit on his lap, like a good girl she had to be.

“I have to work,” she said.

“It will take a few moments.”

She kept on moving her bottom until the semen wet his trousers in the most important day of his life.

“It’s my turn now,” the coffee queen said, her breasts trembling under her gown.

“Are you a virgin?” Homer asked.

“Of course I am,” the girl said.

“You must prove it.”

“We have collected a million pesos,” a voice interrupted the conversation.

“Hurrah to Homer,” everyone said.

People in the restaurant sobbed, radio audiences cried, and the newspaper readers would cry the next day, while some of the widows who liked the bishop went to live in the huts built with the money. Homer had never made so much cash in a few moments of ecstasy, drowning in glory.

“Are you happy now?” Jaramillo interrupted his thoughts.

“I’m a millionaire,” Homer said.

“The nation is waiting for your words.”

“Tell them I love the families.”

## Tragedy

Jealousy reigned in heavens and as they heard of Homer's good work, bad angels opened the gates of rain over the city: a few widows and orphans drowned, the newspapers calling it a calamity of nature. *God takes away innocent lives*, the headlines said, exalting the women's bravery on confronting the elements in their homes. The wooden coffins would be lowered into the ground later that day without any ceremony. Homer had been looking after his money the night before, when he heard someone knocking at the door early in the morning. Miguel must have forgotten his keys or the coca delivery had arrived early.

"Go away," Homer said.

"It rained last night," a voice said.

"I don't care."

"The river burst its banks."

"I'm not a plumber."

"The widows died."

Homer opened the door to the outside world, the news filling him with dread. Jaramillo had to be joking, or he had gone mad. Nobody died inside his or her house, after raining in the night but the journalist looked like an angel of death after killing innocents with his sword.

"It's true," he said.

Homer asked him to go inside, before he did something crazy in front of the neighbours.

"You must tell me everything," he said.

"Look at the papers," Jaramillo said.

As Homer sat on his bed, he saw mud clad people moving through the rubble in some of the pictures someone must have planted in the papers.

"The families are in the church at the moment," Jaramillo interrupted.

“It’s true then,” Homer said.

He felt pity for his life, on remembering the day the orchestra had played, and the bishop promised lots of money for his charity, in order to help the women suffering in their huts.

“How much do you want?” Homer asked.

“Money won’t buy their lives.”

Homer offered a cheque to the journalist, who took it with trembling hands.

“Thank you,” he said.

“Can you drive me to the builders?” Homer asked.

“They’ll hate you.”

“I don’t mind.”

The city cried for the innocents in a night to remember, but God loved them, according to father Ricardo’s teachings on Sundays, the sounds of the world interrupting his suffering.

“Someone wants to see you,” Jaramillo said.

A woman appeared out of the darkness, her face a picture of piety, like one of those paintings he had seen in the church.

“I’m Alicia,” she said.

Homer watched her breasts trembling under her dress, while she talked nonstop.

“The rains killed the widows,” she said.

“I know.”

She must have read the papers blaming the weather for the tragedy shaking the nation at that time of the morning.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “Would you like a cup of tea?”

Alicia looked like one of those Hollywood stars he had seen in the local cinema, while showing a bit of her legs and other parts of her body he could not think about.

“This tragedy is killing me,” he said.

“It wasn’t your fault.”

On kissing her lips, he savoured her tongue amidst his pain, sent by God to erase his sins.

“I have to go” Jaramillo said.

Homer shrugged. “We can have a threesome.”

“Bastard,” he said.

“I was joking.”

Jaramillo made his way to the door, taking care of his clothes.

“Think of the widows,” he said.

“He’s a saint,” she said.

Homer shrugged. “Thank you.”

No one could blame him for the tragedy killing the families, living in huts without any toilets, according to a few souls around him.

“Tell me about your life,” she said.

“Why?”

“It might help.”

As he showed her the pages he had kept from the beginning of time, the sounds of the world got lost in the stillness of the day.

“This is weird,” she said.

“My invisible friend wrote them,” he said.

“Invisible friend?”

“Yes.”

He didn’t have a beginning or an end, like God or Father Ricardo’s sermons. As she moved through the room, she crashed against a few more things the devil must have put in her way, before falling to hell on that day God had cursed him with incompetence.

“You must help me with the papers,” he said.

Homer showed her the zeros going on forever in a forgotten universe, where the speed of light might take him to other dimensions amidst the mysteries of his soul.

“Once I flew up a tree,” he said.

“Poor you,” she said.

“My mother told me.”

The skirt she wore felt soft under his touch, sending him to the depths of his heart but she had other ideas.

“I’ll help you with the nation,” she said.

As he reached inside her dress, her body felt soft like the wings of an angel or the clothes of Santa Theresa during her divine inspirations.

“I want to rebuild the slums,” he said.

“They’re in tatters.”

They stopped by the bags of coca Miguel had left there the night before, his hands reaching into the recesses of her body while thinking of the tragedy. He had to get some more money for the survivors of the catastrophe, before they starved from the lack of food and other things in the world.

“You must appeal to the public,” he said.

“Where?”

“In the library.”

“I wouldn’t know what to say,” she said.

“We have gathered here today to remember those brothers and sisters losing their lives in a calamity of nature,” Homer said. “They will go straight to heaven, because the meek and the poor are welcome in his kingdom.”

“You are sweating,” she said.

“It’s my nerves.”

Homer thought of the water punishing the women for something they had not done, his hands caressing her breasts softer than anything else he had known during his time on earth.

“Mr. Homer,” she said. “We are not alone.”

He smiled. “God watches over us.”

He entered her, interrupting a line of ants taking their food to the colony they had by the pond, as she prayed to God living in heaven or it must have been his imagination, fuelled by the coca Miguel had brought the day before.

“Ahhhh,” he said.

“You’ve raped me,” she said.

As he finished, they rested on the floor beside the tree, a few birds watching them from the wall Homer had built to stop the neighbours from harassing him during the night.

“Do you want some champagne?” he asked her.

“You will bring the end of the world,” she said.

“I hope so.”

### **The widow's business**

The widow's business brought great publicity, benefiting Homer's smuggled goods and taxes. The women had to sign a few documents but most of them couldn't read, so Homer had to stand next to the children, while the mothers scribbled their names under a few pages of legal language they couldn't understand.

"Would you like to eat with us?" they asked.

Homer had to show the nation what a kind man he was, even though he could get an infection from the dirt around the place in the middle of the day.

"It would be an honour," he said.

"We love you," they said.

On following one of the women inside a hut, she showed him part of her legs under a black skirt, while clearing some space by the stove. Homer didn't know how they could sleep by the chickens and other things wriggling in the mud

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" she asked.

"Thank you," he said.

She disappeared beyond the shadows, covering the horrors of the world around him.

"I can show you my rabbit," one of the children interrupted his reverie.

"Do you have a rabbit?" Homer asked.

The child smiled. "We rescued him from the sewer."

Homer noticed a rodent looking at him from the child's hands, as he put the papers on the table and the woman appeared with two cups on a tray.

"You must have a cup of coffee first," she said.

Homer took one of the cups she offered him, hoping the hot water had killed the germs.

"Thank you," he said.

He didn't want to catch cholera, dysentery or something else, while listening to the trauma the rains had brought to her people a few days before.



“My eldest daughter woke me up,” she said.

Homer nodded. “That’s good.”

The rodent ran between his legs, rabies or some other disease unknown to the scientists infecting his life in a second of madness, as he felt her breasts through her blouse, her teats more erect by the minute.

“I’ll give you money,” he said.

The woman thought about it for a few moments, before taking him to a room without any windows at the back of the kitchen, where boxes of some kind blocked all the available space.

“I have found another one,” a little boy interrupted as Homer zipped down his trousers, a rodent looking at him from the boy’s hands.

“Antonio has been living with us for some time,” the woman said.

“Who?”

“The rat.”

Homer studied the shadows around him, expecting to see more things behind the boxes.

“Can I do something for you?” she asked.

As the children played with the rats, Homer spent the next few minutes feeling inside her bra, before slipping his hands in her pants. After shutting the door, she made sure the windows had been locked, everything becoming quiet in Homer’s world, when she opened his trousers with trembling hands.

“It’s a monster,” she said.

“You are welcome.”

She sucked the thing for a few moments of bliss, the world losing its meaning in the best orgasm he had, when he gave her a few pesos for her service to humanity.

“I thank you,” she said.

He didn't know why she thanked him, amidst the mud covering everything around them. After wiping his hands in his handkerchief, he took some papers out of his bag, essential for his business.

"I want you to sign these forms," he said.

"I can't read Mr. Homer."

"It's to improve your lives."

"You are a saint."

She signed them with trembling hands, ready to give him some more pleasure, if the children did not interrupt them again.

"Mum," a child said. "The baby got stuck in the mud."

"In the mud?" Homer asked.

"Outside the toilet."

"I didn't know you had a toilet."

"We call it the latrine."

Homer followed her to the door, where a muddy child waited. It had to be a bad thing if you don't have running water.

"Thank you, for signing the papers," he said.

"I hope you help us,"

"Don't worry," Homer said.

He left after feeling inside her bra for a last time, the papers the women signed leaving him out of reach of the income tax, as his expenditure was greater than his earnings. He bought tax free goods to the country inside big boxes with a cross on them: *This food is for the poor of Colombia. Look after it!* It said in red letters.

Sacks full of wheat arrived sometimes but they usually contained goods. Sport cars were smuggled with 'frozen food,' written on them and any food in the packets would be sold at high prices to Homer's customers. He bought Swiss watches, Scotch whisky,

French Wines, tinned food from all over the world, televisions, videos, pants, bras and other things to sell in his shop.

Homer's business became a world bazaar, a Mercedes Benz, the best wine and fine French pants resting next to the boxes of coca from the mountains, while he gave the custom officials whisky, cigarettes and sometimes fat cheques for Christmas. What a remarkable man!

Cesar's old boats had been replaced by three new and powerful ships: Odysseus, Ajax, Diogenes and Cyclops. They traded in goods. Homer slept better during the nights, counting and recounting the day's earnings in his dreams. He had put on some weight, as he got ready for conquering the world.

## Lola

As he spoke about the widows he had saved from the gutter, the public got to know the shy man helping the women at the other side of reality.

“I think of the widows all the time,” Homer said in the radio.

People showered him with money when he cried in the studio, the papers cashing on his fame, when he appeared in the front page of *El Pais* and some of the other papers. After hiring the builders to paint the widow’s houses for a few pesos, he put the rest of the money in his safe, waiting for a day when he might help the world.

Someone else had an impact on his life at that time, even though the pesos had been growing in his safe for some time, and his face had become synonymous with charity. On doing his shopping one day, he saw a beautiful woman walking through the crowd at that time of the morning.

“What a woman,” he muttered to himself.

She moved her hips like nothing else in the world, while getting wolf whistles from the passersby.

“Maricones,” Homer said.

She must have gone inside one of the houses at the end of the street with small gardens by the doors, an achievement for the slums.

“How are the widows, Mr. Homer?” someone interrupted his thoughts.

“They’re fine,” he said.

Homer ignored the comments, life crumbling at his feet like a packet of cards if he couldn’t see her again.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

That sentence brought comfort to his soul, like the day he had touched the widow in her hut, a ghost from another age tempting him with her charms.

“She’s called Lola and works in a shop,” someone said.

Homer had not noticed an old man standing by his side, his face a mask of suffering, because of the problems life must have brought on his soul.

“How do you know?” Homer asked.

“Everyone likes Lola,” the man said.

He planned to meet her that evening, after the man told him where she worked.

“She lives with her mother,” the man said.

“That’s interesting,” Homer said.

“Why?”

“She doesn’t have a husband.”

Homer imagined making love to her before the end of time, his shyness an obstacle when he wanted to lure her into his bed. Visions of Father Ricardo blessing their union fled through his mind, even though he had married himself in the recesses of his shop, on a day when the sailors had got drunk and Maria had lost her virginity in a dream he had.

“Mr. Homer,” someone said.

On turning around, he came face to face with Father Ricardo in his way to the mass or any other important thing in the city.

“I saw a girl,” Homer said.

“You always do.”

“She was beautiful.”

“Come to mass,” the priest said.

“I want to meet her.”

“Where?”

“Outside her job.”

“Women will end your dreams,” the priest said.

They arrived at the church, where a few women waited by the door in order to purify their souls from the evil residing in every corner of the city.

“Come with me,” the priest said.

“Bye father,” Homer said.

“You’ll regret it.”

“I hope not.”

Father Ricardo pushed Homer towards the house of God, as taught in the bible he had in his hand.

“The old testament,” Homer read in the cover.

“It will help with Lola.”

“How do you know her name?”

“Everyone knows Lola.”

“You must have heard my conversation with the old man.”

“That’s a secret.”

Homer followed the priest inside the cove, pictures of the saints looking at him from a wall someone must have painted during a bad patch in his life.

“You must be afraid,” the priest said.

“I don’t understand.”

“Of his anger.”

Homer didn’t know what the church had to do with his life or the fact that he liked a girl working by the market.

“Tell me more about her,” Homer said.

“She has a sergeant.”

“What sergeant?”

“He commands an army of bullies.”

“That’s nice.”

“It’s the truth.”

Homer thought of his options, if he decided to pursue the girl’s affections instead of disappearing from her life, like a good boy. Kneeling down at the pew, he begged the

gods, if they existed to give him a chance of love with the most beautiful girl in the town, promising to love them forever, whenever he got what he wanted more than anything.

Homer believed a polytheist religion would have more followers than the religions he had known during his life time, offering more exciting theories of everything he wanted to know in the universe.

“He will kill you,” the priest said.

“No one does anything to Homer.”

Father Ricardo stood under the image of the Virgin Mary killing the devil at her feet, in the shape of a snake, the sky changing to the darkness of a storm in a matter of moments, when the priest had decided to damn his soul against the universe.

“She must be a virgin,” Homer said.

The priest’s laughter disturbed a few old ladies lightning candles to the virgin, their faces a picture of consternation and pity. He must be going mad or Homer had done something terrible to provoke that kind of reaction in God’s representative on earth.

### **Lola's home**

Homer waited for the girl that evening instead of counting his money in El Baratillo, or looking after his ships in the port, when someone could rob his money or his trucks. Then she appeared, moving down the street like a princess, ready to put up with his advances.

“You look like a million pesos,” Homer said.

He didn't feel well because he had masturbated the day before or the thought of a million pesos, but any woman would fall in love with his money.

“Can I walk you home?” he asked.

He had to be strong in front of the most beautiful girl in town, her teats trembling under her bra like a pair of jellies.

“I work hard to pay my debts,” Lola said.

“I'm also poor.”

It had to be love at first sight like they said in the soap operas. Walking by her side, he touched her hands, thinking of her body under the clothes she must have bought with her pay-packet, even if the sergeant might appear from the unknown.

“Do you live far?” he asked.

“My name is Lola,” she said.

Looking at her legs, he remembered his childhood in another country where the money flew to heaven.

“I travel to the port in my trucks,” he said.

“That's interesting.”

She led him amidst the pigeons looking for breadcrumbs by the park benches, when he wanted to talk about his feelings.

“My mother's very strict,” she said.

Moving by her side, he listened to all the things she had to say about her mother, raised in a hut by the slums.



“She’s had a tough life,” she said.

He shrugged. “I imagine.”

She showed him a picture of a man dressed in military clothes, looking regal in spite of the spots in the paper.

“My father died when I was a baby,” she said.

“It must have been difficult.”

On stopping by a house, a nice woman with Lola’s eyes and hair opened the door.

“Mr. Homer,” she said.

“She knows all about you,” Lola said.

“I have seen your picture in the papers.”

Homer sat next to Lola in the sitting room, the woman talking nonstop about their lives.

“We want some coffee,” Lola said.

“I take a hint,” the woman said.

After she left, Homer explored her vagina under the pants her mother must have given her for Christmas or her birthday.

“Stop it,” she said.

“I love you.”

“What’s that?” she pointed at his hair.

“I must have caught them in the widow’s houses,” Homer said.

“They are horrible,” Lola said.

He thought she made a fuss about nothing. His business in the slums had left him with money and lice.

“I’ll get some poison tomorrow,” he said.

“You must do it today,” she said.

He nodded. “OK.”

Lola prepared the bath, while her mother showed him her teats, after putting a few glasses on the table.

“My daughter wants to marry a rich man,” she said.

“Mother,” Lola said.

“We need the money,” the woman said.

She told him all about their life before Lola’s father had died of a heart attack. It must have been an exciting time because she touched his scrotum while crying.

“Mother thinks our destiny is written somewhere,” Lola said.

Homer shrugged. “I don’t understand.”

The woman showed him some papers she kept in a draw, with diagrams of the life line travelling through the universe.

“We have lived before,” she said.

“I see,” Homer said.

“Mum knows about it,” Lola said.

“I knew you would come here today,” she said.

Putting some cards face down on the table, she asked Homer to take one of them.

“Darkness surrounds your soul,” she said.

“I was born during a solar eclipse.”

She smiled. “That explains everything.”

The electricity went off as everyone screamed. Lola’s mother must have wanted to scare him to death or she wanted his money.

“Did we pay the bill?” Lola asked.

“I never forget,” the woman said.

As the light of a candle illuminated the room, they talked about the electrical plant stopping the energy whenever they wanted to.

“They do it on purpose,” the woman said.

Homer saw shadows looking at him beyond the candle, while the woman put the cards on the table.

“Pick another card,” she said.

Homer took one of them, but the woman shook her head.

“A child keeps you company in the darkness,” she said.

“What happened before the darkness?” he asked.

The woman shrugged. “This is your first life cycle.”

Homer touched Lola’s thighs, the woman speaking of the universe and everything else in it, in a rhythm with his life.

“You must finish with the danger,” the woman said.

“Stop it, mother,” Lola said.

“It’s Armageddon,” the woman said.

Homer went in the bathroom, where he took his pants off, letting her see his erect penis, a present from his father and a few other members of his paternal line.

“It’s huge,” the woman said.

“Thank you,” Homer said.

“I have to kill your lice now,” Lola said.

Homer hoped the girl had not seen his mother looking at his body.

“You have to rub this in your head,” Lola handed him a plastic bottle.

Homer took her hand, forcing her behind the curtain, the water falling on their bodies, as his hands caressed her erogenous places, like it said in a book Father Ricardo kept by the bible in his church.

“I’m wet,” she said.

Homer put his hands under her blouse, his fingers reaching the right places within a matter of minutes, the priest’s book, Karma Sutra or something else like that, guiding his moves all the time.

“Mother might see us,” she said.

“She doesn’t, care.”

### **Homer is in love**

Homer had never felt like that before, a beautiful woman changing the way he saw the world, as he bought some soap and had a bath, but he wanted Lola to soap his back. He had never done so many things on the same day, while she slept alone in her room.

You know where to start when you are in love but you don't know how it will end: He forgot to bark outside his neighbour's house, sat next to the driver on his journey to the port and slept in a hotel that charged a few hundred pesos per night. On the way back to the city, the truck driver kept a bit of Homer's coconut, a gesture of good luck from the richest man in town.

Lola enchanted him with her nice teats, amidst the sadness of his past and the mud from the backyard bringing him back to life.

"I'll stop here," he told the driver.

The cab left him by a fountain spewing its water amidst the pigeons falling in love with each other in spite of their problems, when he wanted to see his girl.

"Good luck, Mr. Homer," the driver said.

Homer got ready to meet the prettiest woman in the city in the stench of the slums.

"Hi, Mr. Homer," someone said. "How are the widows?"

He hated those questions about the women dying in the name of God, as the cars went somewhere in the city, and he crashed with some of the people crowding the pavement by the coca shops, trying to bring ruin to his soul.

"Huevones," Homer said.

A girl stopped by her side, her face obscured by the eclipsed sun, her body reminding him of happier times in her company.

"This is for you," Homer gave her the piece of coconut.

He read the disappointment in her face: a coconut wasn't the best thing for her, even if she made him mad with desire, after all those nights exploring the secrets of their bodies when the widows didn't have any toilets.

“Mother waits for me,” she said.

“I like her,” he said.

“What do you mean?”

“She’s nice.”

They stopped by the Bolivar statue, defying time with his stance against the Spaniards, old men discussing their affairs while the children played football by their side.

“You didn’t like the coconut,” he said.

As Homer held her hands, rough from helping her mother clean their home, he admired her legs inside the tights he had given her after one of the moments of ecstasy in between the sheets.

“I’m allergic to them,” she said.

“Nobody told me.”

Homer kicked a stone by his shoes, the noise disturbing the birds looking for the worms amidst the grass growing behind the benches.

“I’ve had a rough life,” she said.

“Me too,” he said.

Homer offered her his hand. “We are partners then.”

“I have to go,” she said.

“Your mother needs your help.”

“How did you know?”

“You’ve told me.”

She stopped by the fountain, where no one cared about his plight and the water made their clothes wet.

“Mother will be waiting,” she said.

“I’ll give you money.”

She went on her way, amidst the ants and other things crawling in the grass, the stone dolphins sending jets of water around their world.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

“I knew it,” she said.

“I’ll marry you,” he said.

“You married yourself.”

“How did you know?”

“I’ve heard the rumours.”

Homer kissed her mouth, the park fading away from his thoughts at the edge of reality.

“Terrible things will happen,” he said.

“You are mad.”

“It’s the end of time.”

Lola stopped, a group of people with their placards waving in the air interrupting their argument of life and death in the universe.

“We want the general,” they said.

“The general?” Homer asked.

“The next president of the country,” they said.

He followed her, the men looking at her curves, while waving their placards.

“I hate coconuts,” she said.

“Hurrah to Homer,” they said.

“Let’s forget the coconut,” he said.

She moved amidst the general’s supporters when he had very important things to discuss or his life might end forever.

“I love you to death,” he said.

“Prove it,” she said.

“I’ll annul my marriage to myself.”

“Liar.”

“I’ll see Father Ricardo tomorrow.”

“He’ll remind you of your sins.”

They stood under the light struggling to come to their souls through the atmosphere.

“I want to be with you forever,” he said.

Leading her to a bench under the branches, he kept his arms around her body as the pigeons chased each other across the fountain and the crowd wanted to general more than anything else on earth.

“People are looking,” she said.

“I don’t care.”

She left his embrace, disturbing another coupling having sex in the next bench.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,” he said.

“It won’t happen,” she said.

“How do you know?”

“I just do.”



## Disgrace

As Lola moved past the people doing their shopping in the market, the builders admired her charms. On arriving at the church, she went through its heavy doors, looking for the confessional, hiding behind one of the saints adorning the walls, while disturbing a few old ladies praying to Jesus Christ.

“Ora pro novis,” they said.

Lola remembered her sins, as God’s representative on earth hid behind the shutters, protecting him from the evil lurking in the shadows. On kneeling down, she made a hole in one of the tights her mother had given her for her birthday.

“Oh no,” she said.

“What is it?” a voice asked.

“I have sinned, father,” she said.

Father Ricardo shifted in his seat expecting to hear some more silly things, when he had to help his parishioners.

“I have slept with three men at the same time,” Lola said.

“In the same bed?” he asked.

“No father. I’ve seen the sergeant during the day, Homer in my room in the evenings while Fray Serapio hid under the bed.”

Father Ricardo knew Fray Serapio had been up to something. He would run up to anything wearing skirts in the street, compromising his position as God’s representative on earth.

“You must pray,” he said.

Puttying her hands together, she uttered a prayer before the Lord took pity of a sinner like her, but she had a question keeping her awake at night.

“Has Homer had sex with the widows?” she asked.

Father Ricardo had to tell the truth whatever the consequences.

“He was sick,” he said. “And the women helped him.”

Lola punched the wooden decorations on the confessional, leaving an ugly mark in one of the pews by the Virgin's image after stamping on the wood.

"She shouldn't be allowed here," the women said. "Father Ricardo will have to pay the carpenter lots of money."

"Shut up," she said.

"Don't desecrate God's house," they said.

Lola had something else in her life. Her period had not come that month, the blood refusing to stain her pants in spite of jumping from a sofa and eating hot potatoes with mustard, as she got ready to tell the priest some more of the sins darkening her life.

"I think I'm pregnant," she said.

Father Ricardo jumped at the sound of her voice. The girl had done it this time.

"Is it Fray Serapio's?" he asked.

Lola shook her head. The priest practiced coitus interruptus, leaving a mess in the bed every time he slept with her: Jesus Christ's seeds, the priest called them, while cleaning his gown in the toilet.

"What are you going to do?" Father Ricardo asked.

Lola wanted a termination, even though Father Ricardo might exorcise the bad spirits around her.

"Don't tell Homer," she said.

"You have to pray now."

Lola sat on the pew thinking of her sins, while Father Ricardo looked at her legs and the women recited the rosary.

"I want to abort this baby," she muttered to herself.

Lola prayed to stop the anger in her soul, when a child might stop Homer's plans of conquering the world.

"Jesus Christ," she said. "I'll be a nun if you help me."

She remained in the church, thunder disturbing her thoughts of revenge as the weather punished her for having bad thoughts about Jesus Christ, her saviour.

“Can I have a coin?” a child said.

Lola must have seen him in her nightmares, whenever she went to sleep with Fray Serapio.

“I’m in a hurry,” she said.

He had to be living in the streets amidst people doing their shopping or other things Satan cared about.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

Lola had to be going mad with all the problems in her life, whilst hurrying amidst the men eyeing her assets.

“You’ll never forget him,” the child said.

“How do you know?”

“I sit by his tree.”

Lola looked at the child in a world she couldn’t understand, the future looking uncertain and she wanted to vomit her lunch. She had to get herself together before going back home, where her mother waited for her money to do the shopping and she couldn’t stop her sickness anymore.

Hiding behind a tree, she threw most of the food she had during her break in the shop, covering the grass with a mixture of rice, beans and other things bad for her health.

“You should go to the doctor,” the child said.

Lola looked at him amidst her tears, the dress her mother had given her for her birthday looking dirty with the remains of her lunch but she didn’t care, while moving amidst the crowds of shoppers looking for the best bargains of the moment.

“You are in a hurry,” a voice said.

On turning back, she saw Father Ricardo’s face, looking concerned.

“I’m going home,” she said.

“How’s your problem?” the priest asked.

“I have to tell Homer.”

“He won’t be happy.”

“I know.”

Father Ricardo led her to the church, where a few people waited by the Virgin Mary, the patron of their souls all the time.

“You must pray to the Lord,” he said.

Lola didn’t want to pray to a piece of wood in a cross, the priest’s words reminding her of Fray Serapio’s love making amidst her sheets, while his God didn’t care about his mission on earth.

“You must have followed me,” she said.

“I was worried.”

“More people waited for confessions,” she said.

“They’re not pregnant with the Devil’s baby.”

Father Ricardo asked her to sit by the confessionary, before taking his place behind the curtains, Lola’s stomach feeling worst by the minute.

“He’ll marry you,” Father Ricardo said.

“Who?”

“Fray Serapio.”

Lola had not thought of a man of God marrying a human, when they had a place in heaven, next to Jesus Christ sitting in his throne for all to see, according to the scriptures Fray Serapio had read many times.

“Repeat after me,” Father Ricardo said.

“I won’t get rid of this child.”

Lola wanted to go home, the priest asking her to stop her thoughts of murdering an embryo, implanted by the king of hell in her womb.

### **Lola's revenge**

Lola's mother thought the girl's boyfriend might take them away from poverty, as her daughter broke the presents Homer had given her during their affair, the coconut ending at her feet.

"You have done this before," the woman said. "Can you remember the sergeant, the policeman and the young lawyer?"

Lola shook her head.

"Mother, Homer is evil."

Dumping the piece of coconut in the bin, she felt betrayed by someone offering her his love for eternity after touching the widows' bodies, feasting himself while putting his money in the bank. Then Lola jumped from the sofa onto the some of the mess on the floor, trying to loosen that part of Homer she might have acquired after their meetings.

"Are you pregnant?" her mother asked.

Lola dissolved in a flood of tears no one would stop in the shores of time, the sun shining in the sky in the worst day of her life.

"Tell him," the woman said.

"He loves the widows."

"The witch doctor will get rid of it," the woman said.

Lola jumped from the kitchen table after taking castor oil and punching her entrails with her fits like a mad woman.

"One of your lovers might marry you," the woman said.

Lola climbed up a ladder they had to get to the ceiling on bad days, when the rains opened holes in the roofing.

"You'll kill yourself," the woman said.

Lola didn't want to die because of Homer's baby, even if she had look at the child's face all her life, before phoning the sergeant in charge of a battalion of bullies in the barracks.

“In want to see you tomorrow,” she said.

“You have your rich boyfriend,” he said.

“I’ve finished with him,” she said.

Lola wiped her tears with the handkerchief Homer had given her a few days before, thinking of the man giving her a child the world didn’t want.

“Let’s talk about this,” her mother said.

Sitting by her side, she reminded her daughter of all the things Homer might get them with his money, if she told him about the child.

“We need a better house,” the woman said.

“The sergeant will beat him up tomorrow,” Lola said.

The woman shook her head. “That’s a mistake.”

They discussed their options, not forgetting the money they needed to improve their lives, the mother jotting down each idea in her notebook.

“The cards don’t want you to dump him,” the woman said.

“They talk of failure, mother.”

“Where?”

“This one,” Lola put one of them by her side.

The woman shuffled the cards, before putting them back on the table.

“He’ll be in the shit very soon,” Lola said.

“You need a father for your baby.”

“The sergeant will do.”

Lola’s mother put some more cards on the table, as her daughter punched her stomach, before rushing to the toilet, the cards telling her more things about Homer, the richest man in town.

“Lola,” the mother said.

The girl appeared wrapped in a towel, clutching her clothes in her hands, before vomiting on the floor.

“I’m sorry,” she said.

She had to do something about her pregnancy, before she lost her health to the baby growing in her uterus.

“We’ll visit Homer tomorrow morning,” the mother said.

“Mum,” Lola said.

“We need his money,” the woman said.

She sat down next to her daughter, opening a booklet she had found on the table, a red ship adorning its cover.

“Homer has these ships,” the woman said.

“They belong to Cesar,” Lola said. “He’s Homer’s helper in the port.”

They read the articles in the papers, talking of the ships bringing merchandise to the market, Homer’s money growing exponentially after his business affairs in the country.

“I don’t want Homer,” Lola said.

The woman ironed a few clothes, keeping her eyes on her daughter, the best asset she could have for a future devoid of problems, where she might buy whatever she wanted.

“It’s raining,” Lola said.

“Let’s do bad things to him,” the woman said.

She lit a few candles in a row by a picture of the last supper, Jesus Christ and his apostles sitting down at a table at the end of time.

### A hero's farewell

It rained that night. Thunder rumbled through the heavens, the tree of life shaking amidst the backyard, as a noise interrupted Homer's nightmare of sergeants chasing him along the streets of infinity.

"Go away," he said.

"I have to see you," Miguel said.

On opening the door, Homer saw his employee, his clothes a bit wet from the rain.

"Seven widows and their children have drowned in the rains," Miguel said.

"You must be joking," Homer said

"Look at the papers," Miguel put the front page of *El Pais* on the table.

The widow's faces appeared amidst scenes of life and death in the mud in a terrible night he wanted to forget, before the police accused him of exposing the families to the dangers of nature by building huts without anything else. Amelia appeared by their side, holding an umbrella to protect her from the rain.

"Hi, Uncle Homer," she said.

"You should go to school today."

The child shook her head. "It's too early."

Homer took them inside, before pouring himself a large aguardiente with a few coca leaves to brighten up his day.

"I'm leaving you in charge of my business," Homer said.

"What about Maria?"

"She doesn't love me."

Homer had to be tough with his friend in order to escape from reality.

"Don't go, Uncle Homer," Amelia said.

"I'll look after you forever," he said.



Putting his pants in his case, he looked for a few other things he might need in his voyage to the unknown, a bit of coca providing some comfort at that time of the morning, when the sun struggled to get over the horizon in spite of the problems.

“What will I tell everyone?” Miguel asked.

“I’ll be back,” he said.

Thunder interrupted his words, the sky punishing him for the tragedy in the slums, as he packed a few bags of coca along with his books.

“Don’t forget your papers,” Amelia said.

She held the pages his invisible friend had left on a day like any other in his life.

“They came from the jungle,” Homer said.

“That’s a dream you had, Uncle Homer.”

Homer shut his suitcase, hoping to get away before the journalists came looking for him, after reading the news.

“You must write to me,” the child said.

Homer nodded. “I’ll do that.”

The noises of the world intruded into that reality he tried to forget, the death of the women chasing him for the rest of his life, wherever he might be.

“You must hurry,” Amelia said.

On looking for a few more things, Homer found the coconut Lola had rejected, because of her allergy, but he had to be quick.

“You must buy coca bags every month,” he said.

“Take these tablets during the trip,” Miguel gave him an envelope.

“Thank you.”

“We love you,” Miguel said.

“Look after the shadows, Uncle Homer,” the child said.

Homer had to make sure his business would be all right. On opening his safe, he took his money, leaving Miguel the keys to put away the pesos after his transactions in the shop, his first coin falling to the floor.

“Can I have it?” Amelia asked.

“You’ll inherit it one day,” Homer said.

“I won’t.”

He put the bills in his bag, the rays of the sun getting through the patio doors where the birds sang by the tree in a day like any other.

“You must hurry,” Miguel said.

On looking at the papers in his safe, Homer found a receipt with the sums of money his mother had left to the slums somewhere in time, as the telephone ringing disturbed his thoughts.

“It’s Jaramillo,” Miguel said.

Homer answered the phone, trying to think of an excuse to tell the journalist, if he wanted to run away from everything he had known.

“Don’t come here yet,” Homer said.

“Why?”

“I’m getting dressed.”

Homer put the phone down, feeling confident the press wouldn’t find him, while packing his suitcase with all the things he might need for his future enterprises.

“Don’t talk to the press,” he said.

“We know nothing,” Miguel said.

“Uncle Homer is with the angels,” Amelia said.

Homer found his glasses in his desk, before wearing a moustache he had bought for the fair and the Mexican hat for singing rancheras with the church choir. On posing in front of the mirror, he smiled at himself at that time of the morning.

“You look funny,” Amelia said.

“I have to change my identity,” Homer said.

The child found some of the make up her sister had given her for her birthday, good for concealing the imperfections of the skin, but his moustache might confuse anyone he met in the street.

“I must go now,” he said.

“No one will know you,” Amelia said.

“I hope so.”

After doing a bit more preparations, Homer moved along the house carrying one of the bags his mother had given him some time ago.

“That’s the backyard,” Amelia said.

Homer left them the bunch of keys to open everything in the shop, before escaping through the backyard wall, his clothes becoming entangled in the thorns and a few things people had thrown away.

“Be careful,” Miguel said from the other side of the wall.

“Run, Uncle Homer,” Amelia said.

He found another universe, the streets looking deserted after the rains had left puddles everywhere he looked.

### The voyage

Miguel and Amelia were miles away as Homer found the ship waiting for him in the port a few hours later.

“Mr. Homer,” Cesar said. “We were expecting you.”

“My employee must have phoned,” Homer said.

“I saw the papers.”

He showed Homer pictures of the dead people splashed across the pages, finishing with whatever hope he held for the world he knew.

“We’ll be delayed for a few hours,” Cesar said.

“Why?”

“They haven’t brought the supplies yet.”

“We’ll get them from the port.”

“Mr. Homer,” Cesar said.

“I’ll buy your boat then,” Homer said.

“It will be expensive.”

“I don’t mind.”

Leading him through the corridors, Cesar gave orders to anyone on sight while touching his balls, wet with the excitement of the trip. Homer had some money in the wallet Miguel had given him for his birthday, the rest of his treasure waiting in a bank somewhere in the world.

“We have a swimming pool,” Cesar said.

“That’s good,” Homer said.

He noticed the sailors checking the equipment on board, while thinking of the women searching for his soul in the slums, instead of giving him pleasure with their bodies.

“Two and two are seven,” Homer muttered to himself.

Cesar shrugged. “I know.”

“Do you?”

Homer thought of the future waiting for him, feeling his scrotum like Cesar had done during his life.

“I don’t feel well,” he said.

On moving along the ship, he disappeared amidst his dreams within the confines of his nightmares on the worst day of his life.

“This is your room,” Cesar pushed him towards a small cabin.

“The boat is mine,” Homer said.

“You must give me ten thousand pesos,” Cesar said.

Homer found his wallet amidst other things in his bags, thinking of his fortune in the universe.

“I’ll give you five thousand,” he said.

“The police are looking for you.”

Homer counted the pesos he kept in his wallet, hoping his investment might pay in the future.

“I want the documents of ownership,” he said.

“Very well,” Cesar said.

He spoke with the sailors waiting for his orders, as Homer rested in his bunk, his stomach hurting like his soul.

“Here is your alka seltzer,” Cesar said.

Homer drank the effervescent water, listening to Cesar’s tales of love and glory inside the ship, as the cool liquid made him feel sleepy.

“That’s your ownership papers,” Cesar said. “It’s all legal.”

“I’ll read them later,” Homer said.

He slipped into darkness, Cesar’s words echoing within the confines of his mind, while the naked body of a girl appeared through the shadows.

“I’m hope,” she said.

“That’s great,” Homer said.

She got into bed with him, disturbing his thoughts of life and death inside the ship he had bought with the money earned during the years of labour in his shop. On touching her bottom, he felt like a schoolboy on his first day, the pleasures of the sea awakening his senses to her sensual body.

“I don’t like the waves,” he said.

“They’re caused by the moon,” she said.

He admired her body, full of curves in the right places, the darkness of his mind letting him glimpse the pleasures of the gods, living somewhere else beyond his senses. After touching her breasts, he entered her from behind, measuring each thrust inside her body.

“Ahhh,” she said.

They rested for a few moments, the world dissolving in the colours of pleasure while his stomach hurt.

“Gravity makes them angry,” she said.

“What?”

“The waves.”

Covering his face with the blanket, Homer imagined his soul floating in the ether of the ship, nothing mattering in his life apart from her beauty.

“I can quote you the bible,” she said.

“It’s madness.”

“And the word of God.”

“Amen.”

Homer sat on the bed, his stomach hurting more than anything.

“The heavens will disappear with a roar,” she said. “And everything will lay bare.”

“You invented it.”

“It says in the book.”

Homer ignored her words, the memory of the widows' pain intruding into his journey to another world.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Your saviour."

"The one with the bible."

"And many blessings."

On leafing through the book, Homer saw nonsense sprinkled with prayers when he wanted to rest.

"I gave you an alka seltzer," she said.

Homer shrugged. "It isn't enough."

Taking some pills out of her pocket, she left them on the bedside table.

"Take one every six hours," she said.

"You are a doctor."

"I might be."

"It's crazy."

"Thanks."

Homer took one of the tablets, after reading the instructions in the box, claiming to send him to heaven in a few seconds of orgy

"We have to prepare ourselves for the end," she said.

Her words went away, the nature of time itself disintegrating into a myriad of things in the shapes of the world, where she must have come from.

"The earth will lay bare," she said.

"Stop it," Homer said.

The mathematical shapes crumbled at his feet, as he floated around the room, the widows' death filling his existence with dread from the first minute he had opened his eyes to his senses.

"I'm the doctor," a tall man said.

Homer adjusted his eyes to the light coming through the window, amidst the waves trying to swallow him at the end of his dream. The man listened to his chest after taking his pulse with cold hands.

“I don’t want to die,” Homer said.

“Don’t worry.”

The doctor wanted to know if he could sit up in the bed, but Homer’s head hurt too much.

“I will find a girl,” Cesar said.

The doctor nodded. “It’s a good idea.”

“She was here,” Homer said.

“He keeps on dreaming,” Cesar said.

“Bless him,” the doctor said.

Homer wondered about the connection between his illness and his sex life, the essence of the universe leaving him stranded in the realm of the extraordinary.

“That’s the statue of liberty,” Cesar said.

On opening his eyes, Homer saw a big lady with a torch by the window.

“Where is the girl?” Homer asked.

“You must be mad,” Cesar said.

“She touched my balls.”

“We must disembark,” Cesar said.

“Stop hiding her.”

“You must give me some of those coca leaves,” Cesar said.

The statue of liberty waved her torch in the sky, when he wanted to sleep forever.



## New York

The ship stopped moving and people went down the steps towards the waiting officials but Homer had nothing to declare as none of his belongings cost more than one dollar.

“Look after my ship,” he said.

Cesar nodded. “I’ll be waiting for your orders.”

Homer gave him a card with his uncle’s address in New York, if he wanted to contact him before taking some merchandise to his shop by the market, where Miguel would sell it to the customers.

“I hope you have a nice time,” Cesar said.

“Thank you,” Homer said.

Having a last look at the ship, he approached the tall man holding a notebook by the foot of the stairs.

“I’m innocent,” Homer said.

The man smiled, looking at him.

“You might be,” he said in Spanish. “What’s your purpose of your trip to the USA?”

Homer showed him the letter his uncle had sent him, and a bank statement with the money he had made during the years.

“I have a big shop,” he said.

“That’s nice,” the officer said.

He stamped one of the pages, giving him back the passport he had acquired after visiting the government office in the outskirts of the city amidst his other functions.

“You can go,” the man said.

“Where?”

“To meet your friends,” the official said.

As Homer pushed his suitcase towards the crowd, he looked at the sea of faces surrounding him, a middle aged man with a moustache hugging him to his heart.

"I'm your uncle," he said.

"You were taller," Homer said.

"I must have shrunk during the years."

Childhood memories came back to Homer's mind, amidst the last days of eternity but it had to be his imagination playing tricks with his feelings.

"How was your trip?" Uncle Hugh asked.

"I was sick all the time."

"Ships are terrible."

"You are right."

They had to sit down, before the sea of people pushed them somewhere else in space.

"Let's go to the coffee shop," Uncle Hugh said.

Following his pointing finger, Homer saw a pretty waitress keeping the customers happy. *Everything is cheap here*, he read above the door, where the owner used Spanish to entice Latin people into his business.

"I'll have to learn English," he said.

Uncle Hugh handed him a booklet with a few words in both languages, whilst leading him through the smoke filled place.

"This is crazy," Homer said.

"We'll sit there," Uncle Hugh pushed him towards a small table between the corner and a group of people eating cakes with their coffee.

The pretty waitress stopped by their table, her teats shaking under her bra.

"Foreigners are funny," she said in English.

"You must learn my language," Homer said.

He thought of bringing the peace to a country filled with the horrors of war, keeping his eyes on the girl's teats.

"Bring us two coffees," Uncle Hugh said.

"I'll show you something," Homer said in broken English.

“Some other time.”

“Let’s go to the toilet.”

“Bastard.”

“You know some English,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer shrugged. “The sailors taught me a few words.”

“Do you keep my cent?” Uncle Hugh asked.

After looking in his pockets, Homer showed him the coin he kept amidst loose change and other things stuck to the fabric of his trousers.

“It brings me good luck,” he said.

The memory of his invisible friend and the tree of life haunted his thoughts, while remembering his childhood enveloped in the extraordinary.

“Father brought you home,” Homer said.

“You were a child.”

“I never was.”

They drank their coffee in silence, Homer thinking of his money bringing the peace to foreign lands.

“I’ll put my fleet to the service of my country,” Homer said.

“You offer your life for your land.”

Homer had never meant that, the waiter interrupting their discussion about the best way to deal with Hitler’s troops in Europe, before pouring some champagne in their glasses.

“To the end of the war,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer nodded. “To us.”

On looking around, he saw a country full of opportunities, the stars appearing in an autumn sky outside their window.

“Are you OK?” Uncle Hugh asked.

Homer smiled. “I couldn’t be better.”

“Your mother used to cook a nice chicken,” Uncle Hugh interrupted his reverie.

Homer nodded. “I know.”

He had been a boy some time ago, his invisible friend dancing around the tree and the ants invading their home in the limbo of his soul, as Homer thought of his uncle bringing him toys.

“I can’t remember much of my childhood,” Homer said.

“You were a chubby baby,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Time didn’t exist before you appeared.”

“That’s nonsense,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Two and two are seven,” Homer said.

Uncle Hugh smiled. “You should have come here after your mother’s death.”

“I spent the money in her funeral.”

“I thought so,” Uncle Hugh said.

Dark clouds gathered in the sky, warning them of the worst storm humanity had ever seen in a long time.

### **Another day**

Homer sat up in his bed, the memory of his dreams fresh in his mind, reminding him of other lands, where Lola had fun with the sergeant from hell. Then Uncle Hugh appeared in the room, with a cup of coffee in a tray.

“Good morning,” he said. “Di you sleep well?”

“Like a baby,” Homer said.

“We must listen to the news,” Uncle Hugh said.

After fumbling with a radio he had found under some clothes, they heard the presenter talking of the war, Churchill promising to free Europe from Nazi’s hands.

“It’s a Latin radio station,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Churchill must be a clever man.”

“He’ll win the war.”

Homer heard some more things about the conflict in Europe, threatening the peace of the country he had fled with his parents an eternity ago, even if he could only remember the dollar flying up a tree.

“Our people die in the concentration camps,” Uncle Hugh said.

“That’s terrible.”

Uncle Hugh shrugged. “We must do something about it.”

The grey skies threatened to finish with his soul from beyond the window, when he thought of helping the war effort.

“You must wear a coat,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Why?”

“We’ll go to see Maria.”

“Maria...”

“We meet at her house.”

After looking in a wardrobe, he gave Homer a coat, ready to protect him from the winds blowing through the streets at that time of the year.

“I bought it in before the recession,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer wanted to hide under his blankets, before selling his merchandise on easy terms and without any interest to a city in the grip of despair.

“Two and two are seven,” he muttered to himself.

“I thought so.”

On admiring the coat, he thought of starting a fur business in a cold place like New York, languishing under the winds sweeping through the streets for a few months every year.

“I’ll have to learn English,” he said.

“That’s good.”

Taking his bag, he followed Uncle Hugh down the stairs and into the street, hundreds of people making their way to somewhere in the city.

“Think of your mission,” Uncle Hugh said.

After moving through the streets for some time, they went past a few buildings, reaching for the sky.

“Once upon a time I lived in a bedroom flat,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Was it in New York?”

“I wouldn’t live anywhere else.”

A dog barked from the garden of a block of flats, its top floors lost into the clouds covering the sun at that time of the day, while a few pigeons flew up to the top floors amidst the fog.

“It’s on the eighth floor,” Uncle Hugh said.

A plant pot smelling of urine in the foyer welcomed them to another world, when a few flies hovering around wanted to taste his body, the thought of getting money keeping him alive beyond his fear of the lift.

“She lives in number 84,” Uncle Hugh said.

After going in the metal cage, they found the flat at the end of a corridor, the windows showing a view of the city from the heavens.

“It’s beautiful,” Homer said.

Uncle Hugh nodded. “I love it.”

A woman with black hair and a round face opened the door, her face dissolving in a smile.

“This is Homer,” Uncle Hugh said.

The woman smiled. “I’ve heard lots about you.”

Her dark eyes studied his movements, after leading them to a large room, they saw a table full of papers and some more people sitting amidst cups of coffee.

“This is Homer,” Maria said.

“Hi,” they said in Spanish.

“He has something to tell us,” she said.

They waited for his words, their faces looking pale in the light of the bulb hanging from the ceiling.

“I’ll use my ships to defeat the intruders,” Homer said.

“You’re a hero,” they said.

They had to help their country to defeat the Nazis, murdering their people across Europe.

“I escaped from a concentration camp,” someone said.

He had dug a tunnel under the mud, where hundreds of people had died at the hands of the villains, because of fascism spreading its roots amongst the population.

“They gassed us in the bathroom,” he said.

“It must have been terrible,” Homer said.

“These are the pictures,” he said.

Homer saw a few thin people gathered outside a prison in a crumpled picture he put in his hand. *"I didn't have a childhood,* he thought amidst the noise, even though it didn't have anything to do with reality.

"This is me," the man interrupted his reverie.

Homer saw one of the men, waiting for the Nazis to finish with his life in a few seconds of desperation.

"I dug the tunnel with spoons and forks," the man said.

He made a mess on the table after digging in his rice, while they asked him questions about his bravery.

"This man will avenge us," Maria said.

"Long live Homer," everyone said.

They dropped lots of money in a basket Maria took across the room, the flames of freedom burning in the house where Homer hoped to make a fortune.

"This is to help the war effort," she said.

On kissing her, Homer tasted the spices she must have eaten for lunch that day, amidst other things she liked.

"You are nice," he said.

After sitting down, they heard the voices of their country men and women discussing the freedom of their country, his hands looking for her body under the tablecloth she must have bought somewhere in the city.

"You'll have your money," Maria interrupted his job.

"I know."

"Stop feeling my legs then."

He accepted the money they had collected in the name of freedom, after wiping his hands with a serviette Maria gave him.

"I promise to put my boats at your service," he said.

"Hurrah to Homer," they said.



They toasted to the hero as snow blanketed the world outside the windows, and New York welcomed him in style. *I am rich*, Homer thought.

### Homer's invisible friend

Homer had to help the war in Europe and instead of dying in New York he would do it at the bottom of the sea, the USA government giving him arms to liberate the world. On sorting through some of the papers in his desk, a picture of Miguel's family fell to the floor, reminding him of his employee across the ocean in a place called, *El Baratillo*. After finding the telephone under a few things, he asked the operator to put him through his shop in Colombia, where Miguel had to be earning his money with the boxes of coca he got from the mountains.

"I think of you all the time," Homer said.

"Come to visit us one day," Miguel said.

"I can write now," Amelia's voice said at the other end of the line.

"That's good," Homer said.

"The reporters have been asking for you," Miguel said.

"What did you tell them?"

"We know nothing."

Tears ran down his face as Uncle Hugh appeared at the door and Amelia sent him lots of kisses through the receiver.

"When will you come, Uncle Homer?"

"I don't know."

Homer said farewell to Miguel and Amelia, before accepting a check for a few thousand dollars Uncle Hugh gave him.

"Thank you," he said.

"You must thank Maria"

"I'll do it later."

Homer's money had multiplied since his arrival at New York, the country trusting someone like him with the fate of the world. *Foreigner wants to help his country*, it said

in big letters across the paper his uncle had purchased that morning, no one mentioning the widows' death or anything else like that.

"I want to defeat fascism," Homer said.

Uncle Hugh nodded. "It's a good idea."

Cesar's ships would turn him into the richest man in the country, in spite of the recession punishing the world, his coin bringing him luck whenever he went. Sitting down in a chair, he read about his life from the beginning of time in that remote country Hitler wanted to erase from the face of the earth.

"They wonder about the dark sun," Uncle Hugh said.

"It's called an eclipse," Homer said.

"It happened in your name."

"That's what my mother thought."

Homer read all about the sun getting behind the moon at the moment of his birth, the flames of the corona visible against the darkness of space in a few pictures of an eclipse in the front page of the paper, when the writer talked about his appearance in this world like Jesus Christ had done aeons ago.

"You must have planned your birth," Uncle Hugh said.

Homer shrugged. "I wonder if there is a new star at that time."

"You are the messiah then."

Leafing through the paper, Homer thought of the implications of his existence in a world where people could become famous beyond belief, the meaning of his life linked to the birth of humanity. He didn't notice the passage of time while studying the pages, the minutes ticking towards somewhere no one could escape.

"I want to find it," Homer said.

The noise of the rain splattering against the window bought him back to reality, the day getting darker by the minutes, as the radio warned of the coming storm.

"Two and two are seven," Homer said.

His words got together with the sounds of the weather bringing mayhem to the city, thunder exploding above his head interrupted his study.

“I’ve got it,” Homer said.

“What do you have?” Uncle Hugh asked.

Homer showed him the papers he had translated with the help of a dictionary, his story from the beginning of time becoming clearer by the moment.

“My invisible friend dropped some papers on the floor,” Homer said.

He showed his uncle the ancient writing he kept in the suitcase, with more characters than the Latin alphabet.

“I found it on the floor,” Homer said.

Uncle Hugh shrugged. “It might be rubbish.”

“That is what you think.”

Homer looked at the pages again, trying to figure out what they said, before something bad happened to the world, like Lola’s mother had said after showing him her teats in another universe.

“What do you think they are?” Uncle Hugh asked.

“The word of God,” Homer said.

“You must be joking.”

“Amen.”

Homer put them next to the papers telling the story of his life to a country in the midst of recession, when everything cost more money, prompting him to draw a graph explaining his journey since leaving his country in the dark ages.

“I have to find their meaning,” Homer said.

“They must talk of the rubbish in the backyard.”

Homer shook his head. “I think they tell us about the future in a world we don’t comprehend.”

### **The journey**

Odysseus- the first ship to leave the port- was surrounded by absolute secrecy, as Homer looked after the sailors bringing the armament to the boats: machine guns, bombs that looked like corn on the hob and munitions disguised as chocolates. Canons pretending to be canoes and tanks camouflaged as ambulances joined the rest of the things to punish Hitler's men somewhere in Europe. Homer didn't know why they had bothered hiding his arms, when he would take them to the allies at the other side of the ocean, the crowd following Homer's actions from the dock.

"Hurrah to Homer," they said.

He waved to his admirers, thinking of all the dollars he might get with his enterprise.

"You must give this letter to our president," Uncle Hugh said.

Homer leafed through the pages written in his uncle's words, asking the first man of the nation to fight the enemy, when the dark sun helped him with his deeds.

"We must fight for democracy," Uncle Hugh said.

Homer nodded. "I'll do that."

A girl appeared with a bunch of flowers, hugging Homer to her chest like a ballerina about to start her debut in his life.

"I wish you a good journey," she said in Spanish.

"Thank you," he said.

Her teats trembled under her bra on kissing him goodbye, the aroma of her hair clinging to his clothes.

"Come with me," he said.

"I can't," she said.

The photographers took Homer's pictures as her lipstick left a few marks in his face, raising his hopes on a day lost in time.

"Hurrah to our country," she said.

"I want you," he said.

“You must go now,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer went up the steps of one of the ships, as the public sang the national anthem, Cesar appearing by his side with a glass of water and an alka seltzer.

“I didn’t forget your sea sickness,” he said.

“It’s early.”

“You must get ready for everything.”

The sound of the cannons disturbed the day, the statue of liberty bidding him farewell towards the infinity of his journey.

“I’ll take you to your room,” Cesar said.

On making their way to the lower deck, they met the sailors checking the boxes of ammunition to fight against Nazism.

“Hi Mr. Homer,” they said.

Homer held the walls in order to keep his balance, waves of nausea invading his senses while Cesar pushed him inside a cabin like any other.

“I forgot the coca,” Cesar said.

Homer shrugged. “Fool.”

After lying down in the bed, his soul floated through the ether, waiting to conquer his dreams of naked girls forever, when he had to fight a tyrant. Homer didn’t notice the passage of time, his dreams taking him to other lands inhabited by some of the people he had known during his life, and a plump man sat by his side.

“Why are we going south? He asked. “Europe is to the east.”

Homer awoke from his sleep, trying to understand the question in his state of mind.

“We are helping the war effort,” he said.

“Is it in Latin America?”

Homer smiled. “Those countries are part of our mission.”

“I see,” the man said.

“Europe is dangerous,” Homer said.

He knew the world waited for its freedom, while getting back to his dreams of girls showing him their teats.

“Two and two are seven,” they said.

Homer smiled. “You are learning.”

“Hurrah to Homer,” they said.

One of the girls got into his bed, warm hands giving him lots of enjoyment under the blankets.

“We are on our way to heaven,” Cesar interrupted the action.

“Let me dream,” Homer said.

“Whatever you say.”

“I’m the ship’s owner.”

Homer moved through his dream, his legs taking him to the best pleasure on earth.

“Come here,” the girl said.

He floated in the low gravity of space, able to jump great distances, the view of the earth filling his horizon, before confronting the war he had to solve by the time he got back home. It had to be Jesus Christ’s second coming, because his face hovered over them his smile making him feel nervous, if he wanted to fuck the girl.

## Salvacion

“Land,” someone said.

As Homer looked out of his porthole, he saw trees in the distance, a few boats approaching them through the sea.

“Are they pirates?” he asked.

Cesar put the cards on the table.

“We don’t have pirates in Salvacion,” he said. “Welcome to my country, Mr. Homer.”

“I hope they buy my tanks,” Homer said.

“They will.”

On looking for his best clothes, Homer chose the same outfit he had worn during the widow’s party some time ago, when the young ladies had sat on his lap for a few moments of ecstasy.

“You must hurry,” Cesar said.

Turning a few times in front of the mirror, Homer’s eyes admired his physique after all the problems during his journey, the memory of the girl getting into his bed fresh in his mind. She had big breasts making him enjoy his sickness, when she had shared his bed during the days of his voyage, the sound of music interrupting his reverie of life and death in paradise.

“They are celebrating your arrival,” Cesar said.

Homer put the coin in his pocket, his heart warming to the music surrounding his senses, when a girl appeared by his side, like a nymph waiting for his soul at the end of time.

“Come with me,” she said.

“You must be a virgin.”

“I don’t understand,” she said.



Homer followed the beauty along the corridor full of sailors getting ready to disembark in a place of fun, where the girls might go to bed with them amidst the hammocks hanging from the palm trees. The girl stopped in front of a small man full of medals. He had a big nose and spectacles held up in mount Everest, his mouth moving forever whilst trying to keep his dentures in place, a hard job for a head of the state.

“You must be Homer,” he said.

Homer shook hands with the stranger.

“I’m glad to meet you, Excellency.”

The president smiled. “I have seen your pictures in the papers.”

The band played the national hymn as the president led him to a table full of papers, a few señoritas waiting by their side.

“I like the girls,” Homer said.

“You can have anyone of them,” the president said.

“Thanks, Excellency.”

“We welcome you to my country.”

“I have canons, airplanes and guns,” Homer said.

“Are they good?”

“You must see them, Excellency.”

After a few moments, the tanks drove through a ramp, soldiers carrying machine guns marching along the deck, reminding Homer of the Easter processions in the market, where several people carried a dying Jesus along the streets.

“Everything is cheap,” Homer said.

“God bless Mr. Roosevelt,” the president said.

“Your neighbours must be taught a lesson.”

The president puffed his cigar, looking for any imperfections in the armour of the tanks rolling by his side.

“Atenagoras,” he called.

A small man wearing sailor clothes and a blue hat appeared by his side.

“Can you bring me my check book?” the president asked.

Atenagoras disappeared through one of the doors, the sailors bringing more arms for the president to see.

“We lost a few islands last year,” the president said.

“You mustn’t worry this time, Excellency,” Homer said.

“I thought so.”

Atenagoras appeared with the cheque book and a few glasses of wine in a tray.

“It is twenty thousand dollars Excellency,” Homer said.

The president hesitated before writing down such a large sum, the band playing a salsa lifting his spirits.

“Salvacion will be fine now,” Homer said.

“The best country in the world,” the president said.

“Hurrah to the president,” everyone said.

The señoritas toasted to the armaments the president had bought, the sailors eyeing their bodies, hungry for action after their long sea journeys.

“Let’s drink to that,” the president said.

The band played a salsa, as a pretty girl with big teats and black hair looked at Homer through her long lashes.

“You are nice,” he said. “Would you like to dance?”

Homer practiced the dance steps Maria had taught him in the shop, the music turning him on at that time of the day.

“I’m a virgin,” she said.

“I’ve heard that excuse many times.”

On caressing her breasts, he felt her body with trembling fingers.

“I’ll marry you,” he said.

“You are funny.”

The music echoed around them, his hands searching for her cunt amidst her silk pants, bought with the money the president paid for her service.

“Shall we go to my cabin?” he asked. “I’ll pay you well.”

He took her behind some plants at the back of the room, where he penetrated her, millions of sperm reaching her ovum within her uterus. As they rested next to each other under the plants, she told him how her mother wanted her to marry the father of her child.

“I have a wife,” he said.

“Is she in new York?”

“The president is pleased with the armaments,” Atenagoras interrupted them.

“That’s good,” Homer said.

“We had sex behind the furniture,” she said.

Homer smiled. “You are a dreamer.”

“Liar.”

She kicked him in the groin, before Atenagoras took her away to her mother.

“Women,” he said.

“They never leave me alone,” Homer said.

“It must be your green eyes.”

“I think so.”

Homer drank aguardiente with the president, listening to all the horrible things Salvacion had to endure in its war with its neighbours, spilling the blood of the martyrs during the years of pain, when the innocent had been killed amidst scenes of Armageddon.

“It has been a brutal conflict,” the president said.

He wiped his tears with the napkin someone had left in a table, while drinking another aguardiente spiced with gin.

“You must destroy them, Excellency.”

The president nodded. “I’ll do that.”

After leaving Salvacion, the ship sailed through the Caribbean Sea with a few tanks, armaments and Atenagoras, who wanted to help the planet.

“The world needs me,” Homer said.

### **I'll finish with Salvacion**

They arrived at a bigger and more powerful South American country, where another leader signed a cheque for a few thousand dollars, while showing him a row of golden teeth, and Atenagoras poured some champagne into their glasses.

“To my country,” the president said.

Homer raised his glass. “I hope you attack Salvacion.”

The president talked of Salvacion bombing their cities, spreading fear amidst the population whenever they could.

“They must be eliminated,” he said.

“I agree,” Homer said.

They had to keep the peace in the Caribbean with the best ammunition in the world.

“I need more planes, canons and bombs,” the president said.

“That will teach Salvacion,” Homer said.

“You are right.”

The president wrote down everything he needed, scribbling in a notebook one of his aides had given him, as Homer studied one of the girls accompanying him, with long hair, dark eyes and big breasts.

“Death to Salvacion,” the president said.

“You are right,” Homer said.

Cesar opened a bottle of aguardiente, the aroma of alcohol spreading around the place, but he had to finish his business, before having more fun.

“To our health,” the president said.

Homer raised his glass, hoping to do business with some more Caribbean presidents waiting to defeat their neighbours with his arms, even though the girl seemed a bit shy.

“I want your child,” he said.

“My mother won't approve,” she said.

As the president talked of his army finishing with Salvacion, the girl massaged Homer's balls under the table.

"Let's drink to that," the president said.

"Do it faster," Homer said.

"I am a virgin," she said.

The president went to sleep on the table after finishing with most of the alcohol, and Homer had fun with the girl under the furniture, where she told him about her life by the beach.

"I have never made love before," she said.

"There's a first time for everything."

On opening her gown, she showed Homer a scar with lots of stitches near her belly bottom.

"They tried to kill me," she said.

"Who?"

"The rebels."

Homer heard all about the subversives fighting against the government forces, commanded by the president in his palace.

"They want to change the government," she said.

"The president wouldn't like that," Homer said.

"We need a strong leader."

Homer could be the president of the island, while enjoying the sex with the girls sent to him by God.

"Once upon a time I lived in a market," he said.

"Did you sell anything?"

Homer nodded. "I used to sell to the locals, before travelling abroad."

He tasted her teats, bringing his lust to life on a night when his arms would get rid of the oppressors in the region.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you," Atenagoras said.

"What is it?" Homer asked.

"One of your boats has sunk."

Homer had been kissing the girl, forgetting about his mission in the Caribbean Sea.

"A German submarine bombed it," Atenagoras said.

"I love you," Homer told the girl.

"Listen to me," Atenagoras said.

Homer sat up in the floor, digesting the news provided by the little man, while caressing the girl's bottom.

"Send a message to New York," he said. "Tell them I was in another ship."

"You were the captain, sir."

"I missed the ship then."

"They saw you inside it."

On thinking of his dilemma, Homer touched the girl's cunt: he had been a patriot, trying to rid the world of Hitler.

"I'm leaving you in charge of the ship," he said.

"Are you dead, sir?" Atenagoras asked.

Homer nodded. "Medical science performs miracles."

"That's fine, sir."

"Take her back to her country," Homer said.

"The sky will kill you," she said.

"They all say that."

Homer hurried behind Atenagoras, leaving her by the pool muttering something about the prophecies of the world bringing disgrace to Homer's affairs in the earth.

"I have to go," Homer said.

"Where?"

"Anywhere."

Atenagoras took him to his aides, waiting in a small room without any windows in order to arrange Homer's death, before anyone found him alive in the Caribbean Sea.

"I have to go away," he said. "I will change my name."

Homer had to deceive the journalists of the world about his whereabouts, if he wanted to come back to life without problems. Taking a few of his possessions, he got ready to go anywhere, provided a nice girl massaged his body under the palm trees adorning most of the islands he had seen in the pictures.

"We'll leave you somewhere," Atenagoras said.

"That's good," Homer said.

After getting a few tins from the storage, he got ready to start a new chapter in his life, the future looking brighter for the hero disappearing from history.



### **Homer's lost**

Homer's name was in everyone's lips, his pictures appearing in the first page of the papers amidst the claims of martyrdom for his land. He had to think what to do before the night ended and the world forgot his tragedy at the hands of the enemy.

"I'll leave you here," the boatman interrupted his reverie.

On looking at the beach, Homer imagined a paradise waiting for him beyond the palm trees, welcoming him to a heaven by the huts, far away from civilisation and other mundane things

"Where is the nearest continent?" he asked.

The boatman pointed somewhere in the distance. "Nicaragua is that way."

"That's far."

"They have airplanes now," the boatman said.

Homer wanted recognition for his struggles, before getting ready to disembark into the unknown.

"Will you be all right?" the boatman asked.

Homer nodded. "I need a hotel."

"You'll find one by the shore."

"Thank you."

Homer made his way amidst the waves battering the beach, the sound of music interrupting his thoughts of life and death in the sea, where the girls had nice teats and the presidents wanted to kill each other with his arms. On sitting under a palm tree, Homer reflected in his fate. He had to start a new life away from the world, as a girl moving along the sand interrupted his thoughts.

"Hi," she said.

It had to be heaven, even if he had promised to forget the world in a moment of madness.

"Buy my coconuts," she said.

Homer felt thirsty, his body needing the attention of the girl, before she left her money to the charities.

“I want you,” he said.

The girl balanced the basket on her head, thinking of his words.

“I’m busy,” she said.

Putting her basket on the floor, she showed him her hips burned by the sun, the angels of the apocalypse taking vengeance on his soul for leaving his people at the mercy of the enemy.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

“You are mad,” she said.

That phrase brought him back to reality, houses appearing amidst the coconut palms in an enchanted world where the spectre of lies disturbed his thoughts, and a statue looked at him behind the palm trees.

“That’s our leader,” she said.

“He seems nice.”

“His palace is there.”

Following her pointed finger, Homer went down amidst the huts, where nothing might happen to someone like him trying to find another president.

“Come with me,” he said.

“I have to sell my coconuts.”

“I’ll give you money.”

“How much.”

“Thousands of dollars.”

“You are a rich gringo.”

“I might be.”

After walking along the beach adorned by a few more coconut trees, Homer found a few huts abandoned by time.

“Come here,” Homer said.

He kissed her mouth, admiring her skin full of the wonders of the sea, while her pubic hair tasted of the lotions Homer had sold in his shop at the edge of the market.

“Don’t rape me,” she said.

“I’ll marry you.”

“Liar.”

They rolled on the sand, attracting a couple of dogs, looking for scraps to eat amidst the rubbish someone must have left in the beach.

“Ahhhh,” Homer said.

“I’ll call my dad,” she said.

“He’ll like me.”

They rested next to each other, the sun burning Homer’s skin before the sins of the human race clamoured for his attention in another day of his life. Homer buttoned his shirt, hoping no one had seen him sinning with the stranger, when he had to get lost from the press haunting his soul forever.

“I’m Hope,” the girl said.

“Nice to have met you,” he said.

Homer gave her a hundred dollars for the pleasure she had given him under the palm trees, helping him to come to terms with his death aboard the ship. She gave him a glass of aguardiente.

“To your health,” she said.

He shared the bottle with her, glad to be in the island where fate had brought him after his death had been declared to the world. A man appeared by their side, his trousers a bit muddy from whatever he had to do for his living in the island.

“This is my uncle,” she said.

“Nice to meet you,” Homer said.

“I want an aguardiente,” the man said.

He told Homer about his job, flying a plane over the Caribbean most days of the week,

“That’s interesting,” Homer said.

“I can take you somewhere else now,” he said.

Homer mulled about the idea, when he had to get away from everything he had known in his life.

“Is someone looking for you?” the man asked.

“Sort of.”

“Tell me about it.”

Homer told him about his plan for getting lost in the sea, before returning to life three days later, like Jesus Christ had done, according to the bible Father Ricardo had in his church.

“You have to specify the sea,” the pilot said.

Homer shrugged. “Anywhere.”

“Let’s go,” the pilot said.

The man led him to his cart, the horse taking them somewhere else in the isle, while Homer tried to think through the alcohol induced trance about getting more money than the Catholic Church had done throughout its history.

“I understand your plan,” the pilot said.

“Someone must find me later,” Homer said.

“Have some more aguardiente,” the pilot said.

Homer admired the countryside with the coconut palms, as the pilot spoke to someone in his radio in that peculiar way the radio operators do, switching off his apparatus for the other person to answer.

“They are waiting for us,” he said.

“Who?”

“Your rescuers,”

Homer couldn't understand how the man had organised everything so quickly, his head hurting after the alcohol he had consumed an eternity ago.

"Where is Hope?" Homer asked.

"She's not coming with us."

Homer nodded. "Women can get in the way."

"You are right."

The man could kidnap him in order to finance his business enterprises in the island, when he wanted to be more famous than the president of the USA.

"Have some more aguardiente," the pilot said.

Homer gulped some of the liquid in the bottle the man kept by his side, the horses taking them amidst the fields in a day when bad things had happened.

"We'll fly to Europe," the pilot said.

"That's far," Homer said.

"You'll have to give me some more money."

They arrived at an airport, a small plane with orange wings waiting in the tarmac, when he wanted to go back home instead of rushing through the air at a few miles an hour.

"You're getting lost, before coming back to life," the pilot said.

"That's the idea."

After taking off over the palm trees, they flew for some time, the pilot taking him to the ends of the earth where no one would find Homer in a thousand years.

"Have another aguardiente," the pilot said.

### **Homer's lost**

“Welcome to Ibiza,” the pilot said.

Homer opened his eyes to the light of the day and his hangover.

“We didn’t fall in the sea,” he said.

“You are lucky,” the pilot said.

They had arrived at a place with trees and sun, as Homer admired the vegetation next to the remains of a building.

“That is the airport,” the pilot said.

Homer hoped they wouldn’t crash with the palm trees adorning parts of the beach, where the crabs looked for food under the sun, and a man dressed in bright clothes signalled amidst the wind.

They stopped by a hanger next to the beach, the palm trees greeting them to paradise in spite of the war ranging in the continent, the bright sunshine bringing him back to life after drinking a few bottles of aguardiente during his journey. It had been rather quick, one moment he had gone in the plane and the next one they had arrived at a paradise by the sea but he had to think of his mission.

“I’m the intermediary,” a voice interrupted his reverie.

A man waved his arms in the air, while smiling all the time, like one of those adverts for nice teeth he had seen in New York.

“You have an unusual name,” Homer said.

The man shrugged. “This is a war.”

The intermediary took them throughout the airport, chattering about many things Homer didn’t comprehend like the day he had met Mussolini, who thought he had to be one of his cronies with a funny accent.

“I hate fascists,” he said.

Hitler’s picture looked at them from some of the newspapers in the shop, a bad omen for Homer’s adventure in the sea.

“We’ll leave you a few miles away from the coast,” the intermediary said.

“What if a German submarine finds me?” Homer asked.

“They won’t,” the Intermediary said.

They gave Homer a few tins of coke, bars of chocolate, caviar, biscuits, bottled water, an umbrella for the bad weather and flares to pass the time. The thought of being a hero helped him to conquer his fear of the unknown, even though he might die if something went wrong during his mission.

“I’ll be bored,” he said.

“You have the Financial Times,” the intermediary said.

Homer saw a newspaper with yellow pages and a few pictures, informing him of the state of the world at that moment in time.

“Thank you” Homer said.

“I think of everything.”

Homer offered his life for the world when evil might conspire against him in a clear sky filled with the wonders of the Mediterranean Sea.

“We’ll take care of you,” the intermediary said.

A boat waited by a cove, a few men lowering everything he would need during his time in the sea.

“A smaller boat will be your home,” the intermediary said.

After getting in the boat, Homer’s trousers hang limp against his legs, ready to battle the elements for a few hours of hell, before they found his vessel floating amidst the waves.

“You should have rested today,” the Intermediary said.

“This is urgent,” Homer said.

They sailed amidst the waves for some time, the sky clouding for his adventure in the middle of the sea.

“This is your destination,” the Intermediary said. “We’ll be close by.”

Homer noticed a few clouds darkening the sky, the wind moving the vessel through the sea, gray and unforgiving.

“You can change your mind,” the Intermediary said.

After lowering another boat in the sea, they helped him to transfer a few bottles of aguardiente, tins of sardines and other things into the boat, as Homer kept his balance while getting into the vessel with his equipment by his side.

“Don’t worry,” the intermediary said.

He gave him some flares and other things Homer might need during his time in the sea, while promising to come back with the press for the biggest rescue of the century.

“Two and two are seven,” Homer said.

“Bye,” the intermediary said.

“I’ll be waiting for you,” Homer said.

He had to enjoy his time amidst the waves, the clouds invading his universe as the intermediary and his friends disappeared in the horizon along his hopes. On opening a tin of sardines, Homer watered them down with some coca- cola from his bag, pondering what to say to the press in his moment of glory from beyond the boundaries of time. The umbrella kept him dry but his food got spoiled every time a wave drenched him in salty water.

On getting a bottle of aguardiente from his bag, the liquid burned his throat all the way down to his stomach, before sinking his soul into the depths of despair. He should have never come looking for fame in the depths of the sea, even though he had to conquer the world. Then he thought of a poem his father used to recite sometimes.

*I love the love of the sailors*

*Kissing you before goodbye*

*Leaving you a promise*

*They’ll never achieve*

*One day waking with the death*



*In the bottom of the sea*

He had to show the world his charisma over the dangers he encountered in the universe, his life seeking adventure from the first moment he opened his eyes to the eclipse bringing darkness to the world.

Homer spent some time covering his food with the clothes he had brought in his adventure, the aguardiente giving him a headache amidst his journey to fame.

*I love the love of kisses*

*Bed and bread*

*Love that might be eternal or fast*

*Love getting near you*

*Love getting far*

Sitting down with his head in his hands, he felt his headache getting stronger, the verses his father recited not making any sense within the darkness, he widows paying for his insecurities in the depths of his despair.

*My eyes won't like your eyes*

*My pain won't get better by your side*

*Wherever I go I'll take your memory*

*Anywhere you walk you'll feel my pain*

The verses got him away from his suffering, wandering around a sea hounded by Hitler's men, ready to bomb him to death.

"I am thirsty," he said.

Those words had no meaning in a place full of salty water, leaving him at the mercy of confusion, as out of the water emerged a U225 submarine, commanded by Lieutenant Fritz Wise.

"Help me," Homer said.

"Are you a friend or foe?" the Lieutenant asked.

"I don't know."

After doing the Nazi salute, he gave him a salted fish for his hunger. Homer vomited his anger in the sea, after eating the fish, a light shining in his face from the abyss.

“Homer, my son,” a voice said.

“I’m crazy,” Homer said.

“It’s your father who lives in heaven,” the voice said. “Heavens and earth will end but my words will go on.”

An angel brought him an amphora full of coca cola, the best drink in the world, the sea becoming a skating ring, where Jesus Christ danced with Maria Magdalene and the Virgin with Saint Joseph. Night came to his world of death and desperation, mirages appearing in front of his eyes, while the sky exploded in a multitude of colours.

“It must be Armageddon,” Homer said.

After throwing the water out of the boat with a bucket he found under his seat during the night, he went to sleep with his head on the seat by morning, the waves taking him up and down for eternity.

“I don’t want to die,” he said in his dreams.

The tree of life appeared by his side in a moment of madness, the wind whistling by his side for eternity.

“There are no trees in the sea,” he said.

Homer saw his backyard in the waves, Maria showing him her teats tanned by the sun, through the pinafore dress he had given her for her birthday in another era.

“Drink this,” she offered him a glass of sea water, rich in nutrients and salt.

“You won’t die,” she said.

“Liar.”

The girl lied for some reason he couldn’t understand, reality getting farther away from his mind.

“Help me,” he said.

A boat appeared from beyond reality, a few men calling him from the boundaries of time in the spiral of his dreams.

## Rescue

As a man appeared by his side, Homer told the hallucination to go away.

“I’m the intermediary,” he said.

Homer kicked and punched him, shadows sending him to the abyss of hell for failing to help his people.

“Mr. Homer,” a voice said.

On opening his eyes, he found himself inside a cabin, the intermediary sitting by his side.

“We thought you had died,” he said.

The intermediary offered him a spoon full of medicine for whatever illness he had caught in the sea, while Homer struggled to talk.

“It’s good for you,” the intermediary said.

Homer hated him for robbing his speech, a beautiful girl with brown eyes and a short skirt sending him beyond reality.

“Are you Homer?” she asked.

“Mmmm,” he said.

She held his hands between hers, her cleavage showing him the beauty of God.

“I have heard all about you,” she said.

Homer found his voice amidst his erection.

“You must be a princess,” he said. “Take me to your king.”

She smiled. “I’ll do that.”

He noticed the letter F embroidered in her clothes, welcoming him to the luxuries of her body in the heavens around him.

“My name is Fifi,” she interrupted his thoughts.

Homer had never met a Fifi in his life, the name fitting the beautiful woman wrapped in the colours of love. The intermediary left them alone in the room, after muttering something about the press waiting for him somewhere in the ship.

"I'll see you later," he said.

They heard his footsteps getting fainter until silence greeted their senses. The press had to be planning a conference beyond his imagination or the intermediary wanted something else.

"Everyone knows you didn't die," she said.

"Who is everyone?"

"The world."

"That's good," Homer said.

On remembering his soldiers at the mercy of the bombs, tears ran down his face, her teats inviting him to sin for his comrades.

"The boats were on fire," he said.

She sighed. "My God."

On exploring her face and neck, he saw her breasts waiting for his caresses under her bra.

"I love you," he muttered.

"We have just met."

The rays of the sun fought with each other to reach her heart, her body inviting him under her clothes.

"I remember my men amidst the noise," he said.

"You are a hero."

Homer sucked her teats, running his hands through her body.

"You mustn't get excited," she said.

He cried on remembering the tragedy destroying his soul, her blood dirtying the sheets the intermediary had changed that morning.

"It hurts," she said.

Homer found the recesses of her body, tasting her charms born in the sea, as the intermediary interrupted the scene, a pink towel wrapped around his body like a ballerina about to start a show.

“You must be feeling better,” he said.

“Homer nodded. “Thanks to Fifi.”

He joined them on the bed, his semen healing her soreness after Homer had taken her virginity.

“I must be dreaming,” he said.

“You drink too much,” the intermediary said.

On going to sleep, memories of his life assaulted his senses, deaf to the sounds of love by his side. It had been a strange day, when he had been rescued from the sea, before falling in the hands of a nymph loving him for his glory. Homer’s strength returned under Fifi’s love, while wondering whether he had been lost in the sea under the dark sun.

“I used to sit by the tree of life,” Homer said.

“The tree of life?”

“My invisible friend, called it that way.”

“No one has invisible friends.”

“I did,” Homer said.

On telling her about the times he had played in the garden muck by himself, he remembered his pleasure in a world lost in time, his dreams floating around his soul for eternity.

“You must have been lonely,” she said.

He nodded. “I had no friends.”

“Poor you.”

As his soul struggled to understand the complexities of the tragedy behind the sea, his body gave her lots of pleasure.

“Jose left me a few papers,” he said.

“I see.”

On trying to explain about his invisible friend, he cried for his parents’ death within the mysteries of time, conspiring to keep his memories away from his mind.

“People love you,” she said.

“I hope so.”

Everything had an end, before going to those stars he could see in the sky, while sitting by her side every night.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

“Why didn’t you go down with the ship?” she asked.

“The life jacket wouldn’t go away,” Homer said.

“That’s strange,” she said.

Homer had got better since his rescue from the sea, the ship taking them towards civilisation where the journalists waited by the statue of Liberty, looking after the streets of New York.

“Tell me more about Jose,” she said.

“He had freckles.”

“Many people have them.”

“Jose had them mixed with the dirt on his face.”

On giving her one of the pages he had found by the tree, he hoped she might decipher the characters haunting him to death.

“They have exes and other things,” Homer said.

He tried to convey the feeling of the letters he had to study in order to stop some crazy God destroying the world.

“What do they mean?” she asked.

“I don’t know.”

“It’s interesting.”

Holding her hands, he led her down the steps towards the deck.

“Can you remember your country?” she asked.

They had arrived at the corridor, flanked by doors, taking them to his cabin with a window by the sea.

“Not much,” he said.

“You must have been small.”

On thinking of that place within the shadows, warm tears ran down his cheeks, their footsteps bringing them to the door.

“I have the manuscripts,” he said.

The sea greeted them beyond the window as he pushed her towards the bed, taking off her clothes with trembling hands, like a lion devoid of food for a few hours, before disappearing within the pleasures of her flesh.

“You’ll see them later,” he said.



### **Fifi in love**

They arrived at New York a few days later, the Statue of Liberty greeting them beyond the windows of the ship, as Homer's star eclipsed Hitler's war of hate. He had learned to love the journalist healing her problems with her body, after asking him a few questions about his adventure, the best one in the world according to her. Fifi's chronicle: Alone between the sky and the sea won the first prize in international journalism and the peace prize, a good account of Homer's suffering at the hands of the sea.

They toasted their love in a bar at the top floor of the Empire State building, tiny people moving through the streets as drops of rain made everything wet, and Fifi listened to his confession of passion in another place, where he had loved her inside a hut lost in the jungle.

"You look like her," he said.

"Are you sure?"

He thought of Kam's body luring him to sin in that hut waiting for him amongst his nightmares.

"Make a wish to the god of heights," she interrupted his reverie.

"I love you," he said.

"Make your wish then."

The clouds welcomed him to distant lands, amidst the jungle of his dreams, before fate stole her affections forever.

"I lived in a cellar with my dog," he said.

She shrugged. "I didn't know you had a dog."

"Then I married myself."

She thought it was a joke but Homer looked serious.

"It's all legal," he said.

A document inside his bag confirmed his marriage to himself in *El Baratillo*. Fifi had never heard so much nonsense. Homer read it aloud, stopping in a few places he thought might interest her and that poem he had written in his loneliness.

*Love me for myself*

*Never leave my side*

*Love me to the end of time*

*Taking us away*

*In a flurry of stars*

That's beautiful," she said.

"You inspired me."

"We didn't know each other."

Homer tried to explain how his life had been written in the annals of time.

"First you met me in the jungle and then you married yourself," she said.

"We had a party afterwards," he said. "Amelia played with her dolls."

"Amelia?"

"She's Miguel's daughter, the man who worked in the shop."

Uncle Hugh had visited them from beyond reality as his invisible friend intruded in his life before time.

"What happened to the widows?" she interrupted his narrative.

"The rain flooded their homes," Homer said.

"I'm sorry."

"I was born under a dark sun," he said. "My mother had me during a solar eclipse."

That's interesting."

"Thanks."

As he spoke of the sun in space, dark clouds threatened to mar their day of glory amidst the heavens.

"I love you," he said.

“You must say that to all the girls.”

The city hid beneath the storm, thunder bringing him memories of another world, where everyone liked his merchandise and the noise rumbled through the emptiness.

“You are full of mysteries,” she said.

“They are my life.”

Homer stood by the window, the city gleaming at his feet like a galaxy of stars, the recollections of that day haunting his soul.

“She had a strange name.”

“Your jungle girl?”

He had to stop talking about his life, when they had to enjoy the time they had around them.

“It all started on a nice day, when I arrived at the world,” he said.

“The day of your birth.”

“Not exactly.”

He found it difficult to explain the reasons for his existence, like the fact that his mother had left her money to the poor, before disappearing from his life.

“Do you have any more secrets?” she asked.

They had been together from the beginning of eternity, because he had no beginning or an end, the mysteries of time coming together beyond eternity.

“I arrived at the backyard on a sunny day,” he said.

“You must have dreamt it.”

“Uncle Hugh welcomed me.”

“What did he say?”

“He gave me one cent.”

Homer had no words for his experiences, his imagination reminding him of the space continuum going through his life. A few tourists interrupted their conversation with their

shouts of admiration for the beauty of the city amidst the clouds, giving him time to reflect about their relationship during the war.

“I want to be with you forever,” he said.

She shrugged. “Stop joking.”

“One day you and I will be together within the chasm of our lives.”

The rain had stopped, while the tourists looked at the people moving down below, like magic toys brought to life by the God of heights.

“You are a dreamer,” she said.

“And I love you.”

“Forever?”

“That’s the idea.”

### The meeting

Fifi took him to the metro the next afternoon amidst the crowds of people doing their shopping or going to work. As the houses flew past their windows in a carriage with graffiti on the walls and despair on its floor, Homer hoped Maria would give him money, the best cure for his soul.

“You mustn’t worry,” Fifi said.

“I’ll try”

On kissing her amidst the noise, he tasted her toothpaste hiding in her mouth, the widows asking for clemency beyond the boundaries of the universe.

“I’ve made it all up,” he said.

“I don’t understand.”

Homer didn’t know what to say, as the rest of the passengers looked at them from their seats, no one caring about his suffering or the fact that he felt so guilty.

“I wasn’t in the boat,” he said.

“I knew it.”

“Did you?”

“You are losing your mind.”

He had to explain about the deceit he had played upon the world, fooling the people he wanted to help against Hitler’s war in Europe.

“You mustn’t tell anyone,” he said.

Homer hoped she wouldn’t divulge his secret in a day he might never forget, while thinking of Maria’s flat in Brooklyn, where she wanted to discuss the threat to their country.

“It’s on the tenth floor,” Fifi said.

“What is?”

“Maria’s flat.”

“That’s a lot of stairs,” he said.

“We’ll take the lift.”

They left the train, a few moments later, stepping amidst the crowd going somewhere in the city, the thought of the money brightening his future. Fifi led him along the street, a few teenagers waiting for something to happen in the corners, while the sun struggled to come out of the clouds freezing their souls.

“Don’t mention anything about the boat,” she said.

He nodded. “They’ll hate me.”

“They might.”

After arriving at the building, they went inside the metal cage waiting by the door, where graffiti filled every space on the walls, the stench of urine saluting their senses. Then they found the flat at the end of the corridor, as Maria opened the door amidst the cold winter air.

“Come inside,” she said.

She took them to the sitting room, a few people waiting around the table.

“I’ve cooked a nice chicken,” she said.

“And I’ve made the sprouts,” someone else said.

“We must feed our hero.”

Uncle Hugh appeared at the door. Looking tall and gaunt, the man had aged since the last time Homer had seen him in his way to the war.

“Two and two are seven,” Homer said.

Uncle Hugh smiled. “I knew that.”

“Hurrah to Homer,” they said.

He needed the money for his future, as he attacked a cake swimming in a sweet sauce, the best thing he had in a long time.

“We want your autograph,” they said.

He signed their diaries and notebooks, remembering his drama amidst the Mediterranean Sea filled with his chit.

“They died for their country,” they said.

“Big fish swam around me,” Homer said.

“You are a hero.”

On defying Hitler’s reign of hate, Homer had tried to save the sailors’ lives on a night like any other.

“He’s our holly man,” Maria said.

Homer had offered his life for his country and they loved him.

“We’ll have his picture by the altar,” Maria gestured to the candles burning all the time in a niche by the door.

“I’m not God,” he said.

They toasted to the liberation of their country, as she went around the room collecting money for their hero, his heart jumping in his chest every time she moved her hips.

“Let’s go to the toilet,” Homer said.

“Your girlfriend is here,” she said.

Homer looked at Fifi, busy writing the proceedings of the meeting in order to get money for his arms and other things he needed to defeat the enemy. She wouldn’t notice anything amiss, if he did something with Maria, tempting his passion with her attributes.

“It will be quick,” he said.

“I don’t know.”

Homer led her to the other room, where people had left their coats between the pillows and other things, ready to protect themselves from the weather punishing the city.

“She doesn’t understand me,” Homer said.

“That’s your excuse.”

“Let’s run away to another country.”

“Where?”

“You decide.”

“We have raised thousands of pesos for Homer’s projects,” a voice interrupted the conversation.

Everybody applauded, the noise, echoing around the flat, like the waves from the sea where Homer had nearly died for his country.

The telephone rang and Maria answered it with that mouth he liked so much.

“The president of the United States wants to give you a medal,” she said.

“Hurrah to our hero,” everyone said.

It had been a good evening, even if the clock ran towards the end of time.



### **Homer loves**

“Where are my notes?” he asked.

Maria held a few pages in her hand, looking beautiful amidst the papers and other things adorning the room.

“They’re waiting,” she said.

Getting lost in her body, his hands touched the important points the psychologists kept on talking about in their books about sex, the world waiting for his words after the tragedy had transformed his life.

“You must like it,” he said.

“Ahhh.”

They lay next to each other, the sound of the rain outside the window interrupting the pleasure of the last moments, while a plane flying over them disturbed their minds.

“We have to talk,” he said.

He wanted to discuss their affair, after lying to the woman he had loved since his adventure in the sea at the start of a new life.

“Fifi is waiting with the journalists,” she said.

“Let her wait.”

“I love you.”

He hugged her, his fingers caressing the body he loved so much, as she disentangled herself from his grasp, the electric lights flickering above them like monsters waiting to finish with time.

“Think of the present,” he said.

They had met in a hotel, whilst trying to understand the attraction they felt for each other, the minutes ticking towards that moment he had to go back to his girlfriend, after confronting the journalists in another interview.

“I don’t know what to say,” he said.

“Just answer their questions.”

“In the beginning there was nothing,” he said. “Then the light appeared.”

“That’s the bible,” she said.

“And my words.”

It rained, flashes of lightning wakening his feelings for that world away from reality, before the darkness took him to other places lost in time and hard to comprehend, his soul floating in the ether of his thoughts.

“Take me with you,” she said.

“I can’t.”

“You’ll regret it,” she said.

Making his way across the room, he crashed with a few boxes she had left there, hurting his toe with the side of the bed, his soul regretting his actions.

“The telephone is under my clothes,” she said.

“Thanks.”

After dialling a number, he heard the operator’s voice.

“I want a taxi,” he said.

Maria let him pack, her face red from the tears struggling to leave her eyes, while writing something in her notebook.

“The press is waiting,” she said.

“I’ll leave after the interview.”

“What about Fifi?”

“I’ll tell her nothing.”

He had spent his life running away from everything, afraid of facing his problems like everyone had done from the beginning of time. Putting the shirts in the suitcase, he waited for her to give him the pants drying in the bathroom and the handkerchiefs he had left on the heating, after bringing a few things to spend a few nights with her.

“You’ll regret it,” she said.

“I hope not.”

Thunder interrupted his words, the colours of the rainbow welcoming him to a new life outside the window, when the present would take him to the future. Homer got ready, thinking of his path through the stars if he could run away from the mayhem surrounding his life.

“Are you coming?” he asked.

Homer found his clothes, while she applied her makeup, before confronting the world in another day in his life.

“Let’s run away together,” he said.

“I don’t know.”

Homer told her how they would travel the world, spending their money however they wanted.

“There is Fifi,” she said.

“She’s not in my plans.”

“Liar.”

Homer’s affair with Maria had gone unnoticed by Fifi, worried about her journalist job getting better over time, when she needed to conquer the world like Homer had done.

“I have a lover,” she said.

“It’s a lie.”

“The man escaping from the concentration camp,” she said.

“He’s weird.”

Homer digested the news, the sins of the world descending on his shoulders after her confession of love behind his back. Sitting by his side, he wanted to talk to her about her affair with the little man using his spoons to open a hole in the floor, when he had to run away from reality after talking to the press about his achievements in life.

“I’ll be in contact,” he said.

“It’ll be difficult.”

Homer packed his papers, before looking for a few more things he had brought from Fifi's house, where he had left his soul.

"You'll have to get your things from her room," she said.

"She can send them to me."

"Where?"

He had to do many things in the way to his future, waiting for him in the Caribbean Sea of his dreams.

"We'll see each other in my yacht," he said.

"It might be when the sky gets lighter, the moon distracting our thoughts from the cataclysm to come."

"You are right."

"I knew that."

Homer kissed her mouth, his body seeking more satisfaction, tendrils of pain clouding the moment of pleasure, when he had to say goodbye for a last time.

### **A new life**

Homer received a medal from the United States congress in a sober ceremony attended by the heads of many countries, three hundred thousand soldiers, nine hundred thousand students and a lot of veterans of the world wars. Stalin declared him leader of the Soviet Union, General De Gaulle kissed him repeatedly in the cheeks, while bigger ships sailed under his flag and he sold arms to Latin American countries.

“Time is nothing,” he said to himself.

*They could write a story about his life, the actor going through his years of hunger in the best adventure of the world,* he thought while looking at his reflection in the mirror. Homer had gone back to Colombia after his uncle had been invited to work in one of the newspapers ruling the country, hidden within its writing lost in time.

“It’s a question of words,” he said to himself.

He thought of the realms of time in his nightmares of the jungle, where he ran naked through the night, before finding love inside a hammock.

“Two and two are seven,” he said.

Homer believed space and time would merge into one, the reason for his existence becoming clearer by the moment: he had to sail the seas or God might finish with his life before the sun hid behind the moon one day in the future. On studying the pages he kept in his suitcase, time stopped within the realms of reality, whilst coming together with other universes in his subconscious.

He went around the room thinking of the papers he had found within the boundaries of truth and the fate of the universe. Homer recited whatever Father Ricardo had taught him during his time in the Christian school, even though most of the teachings had been about Jesus Christ’s mission in the world, if he wanted to go to heaven some day.

*It’s a question of words*

*Coming from across time*

*And making me reflect of the things*

*Hidden from my senses*

*In the realm of the extraordinary*

He thought of the birth of the universe out of the big bang, space and time coming together at the dawn of time, amidst the black holes peppering the space time continuum through the infinity.

“Hi,” his uncle interrupted his reverie.

“I thought you had gone,” Homer said.

After putting the papers back in the suitcase, he waited for the future to solve the problems of his existence as his uncle cooked him some breakfast, the memory of his early years chasing the clouds out of his mind.

“You appeared by my side,” he said.

“Do you want fried eggs?” Uncle Hugh asked.

“Yes, please.”

The frying pan made a noise, every time his uncle threw the eggs in the oil, the room smelling funny.

“Lola’s mother told me my future,” Homer said.

“Lola?”

“A girlfriend I had.”

“You’ve had many women.”

On sipping his coffee, Homer thought of the darkness preceding the woman’s words, when he had found his future amidst the stars.

“My life will end with the sun,” he said.

“That’s nonsense.”

Homer reflected in the woman’s predictions of the end of time, while buttering his bread and sipping his coffee.

“Do you want an arepa?” Uncle Hugh asked.

Homer took one of the concoctions his uncle must have bought in the market, the memory of that evening haunting his soul amidst the bits of scrambled egg in his mouth.

“Would you like another coffee?” Uncle Hugh interrupted his reverie.

As the sun warmed the city, Homer wanted to win the game of life, like his parents had done an eternity ago.

“You shouldn’t have left Fifi,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer thought of his words, feelings of sadness washing over him on remembering his life.

“My mother called me to the table,” he said.

“When?”

“The day you appeared at our home.”

“I went to see your parents many times.”

“You gave me the coin.”

Uncle Hugh stopped looking at the papers, pushing his glasses up his nose while coughing.

“I remember that” he said.

“I put it in my pocket.”

“Do you still keep it?” Uncle Hugh asked.

“It’s in my suitcase.”

Homer struggled to understand his life, the sounds of the city interrupting his thoughts about the mysteries of the universe. On opening his case, he took out the clothes he had to iron, a few pictures falling on the floor from within his things.

“That’s Maria,” Uncle Hugh said.

Homer looked at the woman sitting by the table in one of the meetings at her home.

“She gave it to me,” he said.

“You liked her.”

“I love my fellow human beings.”

“It must say in your papers,” Uncle Hugh pointed to the pages, tucked next to the underwear.

Homer studied them once more, wishing to understand whatever they said about the end of humanity, when he had to solve one thousand problems in his life.

“I have a confession to make,” he said. “I like a few Marias in the world.”

“This Maria turns you on.”

“She might have done.”

His uncle told the truth whatever the consequences, like the time he had seen him flying or when he believed the story of his invisible friend visiting the garden.



## Memories

On reaching the cemetery, Homer found his parents' graves hiding behind rows of stones, the grass invading everything in its way, as tears of pain rolled down his cheeks but he had to be strong beyond the boundaries of time.

"Hey mister," a voice said. "Can I have a coin?"

A child looked at him from the grass, his long hair covering his eyes like a portent of doom.

"I haven't eaten today," he said.

Homer looked in his pockets for a few cents amidst the bits of rubbish he kept in there.

"Two and two are seven," he said to himself.

The noise of the cars interrupted his thoughts about life and death, the birds waking up the place with their songs.

"It might be," the child said.

"What?"

"Nothing."

Homer found the pesos he had forgotten in his pocket but the little boy had gone, the noise of the cars becoming stronger in a world devoid of love, as the tree of life called him from somewhere in time.

"I must be going mad," Homer said.

The little boy must have gone to play with his friends, or perhaps he had been a ghoul from another universe, Maria's ghost beckoning him from the tree inside the building.

"You can't go inside," the porter said.

Homer rushed past him, adrenaline guiding his body along the building, his dreams waiting in the shape of his childhood memories.

"This building is mine," Homer said.

"Prove it," the porter said.

Looking in his pockets, Homer found a contract he had signed a long time ago.

“You must be Mr. Homer,” the porter said.

“That’s right.”

The sun went behind the clouds, thunder echoing across the sky as thick drops of rain disturbed the peace of the day.

“It’s raining,” the porter said.

Homer expected to see Maria’s shadow amidst the garden muck and the pleasures of his body.

“Some of the rooms are rented,” the porter interrupted his thoughts.

On going in the backyard, Homer saw mirages of other dimensions haunting him from the tree of life.

“You rescued my mother from the rains,” a voice said.

On looking up, he noticed a woman standing by his side, big teats trembling every time she moved beside the tree reaching for the sky.

“It’s a hallucination,” Homer said.

“I’m not.”

Homer shrugged. “Prove it.”

She kissed it with the most beautiful lips he had ever seen.

“I am one of the widow’s children,” she said.

On pressing herself against his hard member, she gave him the happiness he desired for this life and the next one.

“The widows died,” Homer said.

“I survived.”

Homer savoured her tongue, full of the taste of glory and many other things he could only think about.

“Come to my place,” she said.

He touched her in a few moments of glory, her flesh inviting him to sin amidst the garden muck, when he wanted to conquer the world.

“Give me a hundred dollars,” she said.

Homer realised she wanted money for her body, awakening his link to the past through the tree of his life.

“I only have a cheque,” he said.

“American express?” she asked.

Homer had to find the cheque book he had in his bag, before writing the quantity of money she wanted.

“My mother met you once,” she said.

“I knew a few of the widows,” he said.

“She met you before I was born.”

Homer stopped with the pen in his hand, her words interrupting his thoughts of life and death in the worst storm he had ever seen.

“I’m not your father,” he said.

“I was one of the little children,” she said. “I remember you.”

She knelt down on the floor, caressing his monster after unzipping his trousers, letting him see the stars he hoped to attain in the world.

“Thank you,” he said.

“That will be another cheque for my mother’s sake.”

Homer gave her some more money, to honour the woman giving him pleasure, before the rains had left her homeless, the sounds of the market intruding in their business transactions. On kissing her lips, he remembered the rats the children had in the kitchen, where their mother calmed his passion for a few pesos.

“Call me whenever you want,” she said.

Homer savoured her teats for a last time, hoping to cool his appetite amidst the things he had to do in the city, amongst the memories of other times, as she tried to please him with her body.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Homer,” the porter said.

He stood by their side, trying not to look at her teats.

“Someone wants you in the phone.”

On following him to the entrance, Homer saw the place where he had kept his bags of coca, and the cellar by the window in that other existence at the beginning of time.

“It’s Uncle Hugh,” someone said at the other side of the line.

“How did you know I would be here?” Homer asked.

“You had to visit your shop.”

“And my tree.”

“We have to talk,” Uncle Hugh said.

“The end in nigh,” Homer said.

“I know.”

He gave the girl another cheque in the name of her family and friends killed during the rains, before moving down the street in his way to his uncle house at the other side of the city.

### The news

Homer found a letter addressed to him the next morning. On opening it, he saw Fifi's writing in a paper smelling of cologne and flowers: *I will arrive at six o'clock*, she wrote in fine letters. Homer tried to make sense of the news, while reading that paragraph a thousand times: a wealthy uncle had left her a few thousand dollars in his will, giving her a chance to travel the world. On reading it again, he wondered why she had loved him so much, his soul craving her affections after his comrades had died in the sea, as his uncle prepared some breakfast in the kitchen.

"Fifi is coming tonight," Homer said.

"That's good."

"But I'm going to my yacht."

"You wanted your freedom."

"Once upon a time a child sailed his boats in the garden pond," Homer said.

"That must have been you."

Homer looked at some pictures he had in his case, his heart feeling the flames he had experienced when making love under the stars of a jungle filled with passion, while his life yearned for the excitement of another era amidst the tall buildings of New York or sunny days in the park.

"She's a nice woman," he said.

"You shouldn't have left her."

He told her the secrets in his life in the Empire State building, looking at the city at their feet, while an aeroplane did acrobatics in the sky, before the storm darkened the horizon in a day lost in time..

"Lover of mine," Homer said. "Remember the time we had together."

"You sound poetic."

"I feel it."

On packing his suitcase, he took care with the shirts and trousers he would wear in his new abode above the ocean, a million memories coming to his mind of other times in the path of his existence.

“I’ll take her with me,” he said.

Uncle Hugh shrugged. “She’s used to being alone.”

Homer posed in front of the mirror, after putting his clothes on, admiring his bald head under the electric light, making him look like a rich man in search of women.

“Time has gone quickly,” Homer said.

“It does sometimes.”

“You greeted me back from limbo.”

“You are nervous.”

Homer smiled. “I’m sorry.”

He had to stop thinking in his role in everything concerning the universe, his uncle’s presence overshadowing everything to do with his life, since welcoming him back in the garden, where the good and bad got together. After packing his suitcase, Homer splashed some lotion on his face, hoping Fifi might go with him to the port, where they would go on his yacht, waiting in the Caribbean Sea.

Uncle Hugh led him down the stairs, the noises of the city intruding in his problems.

“It’s a question of words,” Homer said.

“I have heard that before.”

Homer had loved Fifi more than Lola, the woman who rejected him because of the coconut he gave her, when the widows drowned in the rains.

“I’ll be travelling to the coast,” Homer said.

“Fifi won’t mind.”

Uncle Hugh led him to the car he had bought on his return to the country, even though he had sworn never to leave New York. It started to rain, dampening their spirits in an

important day in Homer's life, tears running down his face, as he thought of another idea for having money.

"I could sell the air to entrepreneurs," he said.

"It's free," Uncle Hugh said.

"Whoever can't buy it will suffocate to death."

"You and your ideas."

Uncle Hugh drove through the fields, where the tractors planted the seeds in order to feed the city, a few planes disturbing the peace of the day, while Homer thought of Fifi loving him in the boat, after his rescue from the Mediterranean Sea. Homer's affair with Maria had never gone anywhere, apart from the few times they made love in a hotel, far from his mind, as Uncle Hugh stopped in front of a large building surrounded by many cars.

"We are just on time," he said.

On going through the terminal, a few people pushed their suitcases towards the desks with their passports on hand.

"I don't like planes," Homer said.

"They are better than boats."

Some of the passengers came towards them pushing the suitcases, their faces a mixture of boredom after being for an eternity inside an airplane, flying from faraway lands. She had to be coming amidst the chaos of relatives welcoming their long lost cousin, nephew, etc, some more memories of Fifi coming back to his mind, like the way she had cried on finding out about his departure to distant lands. An attractive blonde strolling along the corridor interrupted his reverie.

"My love," she said.

She smiled. "You look lost."

"Hi Fifi," Uncle Hugh said.

"Darling," she said. "I have missed you."

Homer pushed her case towards the nearest cafeteria, after recovering from his shock. She had changed a lot since the last time they had seen each other in New York a life time ago.

“You look fantastic,” he said.

“I’ve had an operation to enlarge my breasts,” she said.

That is why she looked so voluptuous, enhancing her curves and sex appeal, his hands exploring the body he had loved for some time.

“I have missed you,” she said.

“Prove it then,” he said.

“Now?”

“Yes.”

He felt her scent, while waiting for her to make up her mind about their love.

“Your flight is leaving soon,” she said.

A tap in his shoulders brought him back to reality.

“I have your drinks,” Uncle Hugh said.

“Thank you,” Homer said.

She had changed a lot since their meeting in the sea some time ago, when she couldn’t wait to lay her hands on him.

“Do you want to come with me to Santa Marta?” he asked.

“I don’t have a ticket,” she said.

“I’ll get you a ticket,” he said. “I’ll buy the whole plane.”

“But...” she said.

“Come with me,” Homer said.

Taking her along the hall, he explained his problem to the woman sitting behind the window at the ticket office: his heart might suffer if he didn’t take her to the ends of the earth.

“We don’t have any more seats,” the girl said.



Homer took his check book out of his pocket.

“How much do you want?” he asked.

A middle aged man came towards them, interrupting the conversation.

“How are you, general?” Fifi asked.

She kissed him in the mouth.

“This is General Gomez Ayala,” she said. “He’s my fiancé.”

The man shook Homer’s hand.

“You must be Homer,” he said. “I have heard lots about you.”

Homer couldn’t believe Fifi’s ingratitude. She should have told him about the general, instead of leading him on. Looking in his bag, he gave the man a card with his phone number.

“I’ll keep our business a secret,” he said.

The general turned it several times, a smile spreading in his face.

“Do you sell arms?” he asked.

“We’ll keep in touch,” Homer said.

As Homer went to board his plane, the first day of his life mixed in with his uncle’s arrival from across time.

### The general

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

We see the top part of a yacht. The seats, the floor and the walls are luxurious while moving in synchronisation with the waves, a reason to believe we're in high seas and it's night time. On the top of a mast, a seagull opens her left eye. That's the one she shows to the public.

SEAGULL

I forgot to take the tablet of *Sinogan*. I couldn't sleep last night.

She puts her head under his wings as a young woman appears at the door, with platinum blond hair, electric blue eyelashes, and sensual lips. Measures: 94-39-90

Wearing a long gown the colour of dry wine, she moves her hips while walking along the deck, bits of bronze skin peeping out of her dress while her forty plus bra is in danger of exploding.

FIFI

Alone between the sky and sea!

She sighs, defying the stability of her bra.

FIFI

The night and the sea are the sailor's love.

The seagull opens her eyes.

SEAGULL

I can't sleep if she says stupid things.

Fifi looks at the seagull.

FIFI

Poor bird, are you cold?

SEAGULL

The night is a bit fresh. Do you have a sinogan?

FIFI

What is it?

SEAGULL

It's a sleeping tablet.

FIFI

I sleep with my husband but sometimes I use a friend to have more fun.

She turns to look at a middle-aged man, wearing a captain's uniform with a white shirt, trousers and shoes.

FIFI

Homer, my darling.

She kisses him.

HOMER

What is my blond angel doing here alone?

FIFI

I asked this little bird who was the greatest sailor in the world, my captain.

HOMER

I'd like to be the greatest pirate of them all, but I can't hide you anywhere in the Caribbean.

FIFI

We must hide ourselves from my husband, the general.

HOMER

Generals are nice.

FIFI

My captain won't remember me tomorrow.

SEAGULL

I'll have a nice time.

HOMER

I will follow you everywhere, like a good dog.

FIFI

I do believe you're a dog.

HOMER

I feel like a schoolboy in love.

SEAGULL

I see that soap opera.

FIFI

This is our last night. We'll be far from each other by tomorrow.

HOMER

We should be on our own if the general doesn't disturb us.

FIFI

The general sleeps as deeply as a trench. Nothing wakes him up.

HOMER

He's an antitank ditch.

SEAGULL

He made the Maginot line.

Cardinal Anastasio appears, wearing a red skirt with golden buttons, a triple crown with a diamond cross, socks and shoes similar to the skirt. Measurements: 94-344-480

He coughs, his deep and authoritative voice coming out of his rounded stomach.

CARDINAL

I'm sorry for the interruption. I was talking to my God as usual.

Fifi and Homer kneel down on the floor.

FIFI AND HOMER (In unison)

Your highness..

The cardinal blesses them, while praying in Latin.

CARDINAL

Stand up now my children. God will be with you forever.

They straighten their clothes, after standing up.

HOMER

Your highness, I want to thank you for visiting my ship.

CARDINAL

You're the modest one.

FIFI

It's an honour to have a prince of the church in this important journey. It's like travelling with God himself.

CARDINAL

We, the shepherds have to be with our sheep. By the way, hasn't Aurita come yet?

FIFI

The admiral was seasick today.

HOMER

Let's have a glass of wine while we wait.

CARDINAL

God must bless you.

SEAGULL

The lady in red must be pregnant.

Homer gives orders to a nearby sailor.

HOMER

My activities need the protection of the Almighty.

FIFI

You are the father of freedom. They must erect statues in your honour.

HOMER

Stop saying foolish things.

CARDINAL

Don't be so modest. We know about your adventure in the middle of the Atlantic.

HOMER

I did what anyone else would have done.

FIFI

I wrote between the sea and the sky in your honour. It's hard not to notice  
a great man.

SEAGULL

The smallest ship that man knows is the Queen Elizabeth II.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

The sailors bring a few bottles, glasses and jars with flowers and put them on a table.

CARDINAL

I wonder what has happened to Aurita.

FIFI

Love is beautiful.

HOMER

It's the substance of life.

The cardinal sighs.

CARDINAL

I'm in love.

FIFI

You must have been a good looking man, a blessing for Aurita to be in God's  
heart.

CARDINAL

I've loved God and my fellow human beings all my life.

HOMER

God protects his apostles.

CARDINAL

I can have my own pleasures, after serving eternity forever.

CUT TO

EXT YATCH-EVENING

Homer pours wine in the glasses as the guests come to the table.

HOMER

I toast for a saint apostle and the most beautiful woman in the world.

CARDINAL AND FIFI (In unison)

Thank you.

They all drink.

SEAGULL

I'm glad I didn't take that *sinogan*.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

A beautiful girl appears, wearing a long black dress with an opening along her hips, styles her black hair like Cleopatra before she met Mark Anthony while her eyes are black, her teeth white and her lips pink. She looks like Aphrodite with a pair of well shaped arms and teats.

Measurements: 8-31- 82

CARDINAL

An angel has arrived.

Aurita kisses him.

HOMER

That's love.

FIFI

What about us?

Fifi and Homer kiss each other.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

The girls sit on the men's laps.

SEAGULL

What are these people doing?

The cardinal offers Aurita a glass of wine.

CARDINAL

Have a drink, my darling.

She drinks almost all of it.

AURITA

I must leave some for my saint.

CARDINAL

You don't want to be a vampire.

The cardinal caresses the embroidery in Aurita's pants.

CARDINAL

I've given them to you, haven't I?

AURITA

I'm wearing them in your honour.

CARDINAL

You must take them off later.

SEAGULL

The woman wearing the red skirt wants to eat the other one.

The admiral appears with medals on his lapel as the women step away from their men.

HOMER

We waited for you, Admiral. How are you?

The admiral goes past the women and kneels in front of the cardinal.

ADMIRAL



Good evening, your highness.

The cardinal blesses him.

CARDINAL

God has taken pity on your soul.

The Admiral stands up, greets Homer, hugs Fifi and kisses Aurita.

AURITA

How is my sea wolf?

ADMIRAL

I'm a bit seasick.

Homer gives him a large glass of wine.

HOMER

You'll feel better after taking this medicine.

FIFI

I wonder what has happened to the general.

The admiral sips his wine.

ADMIRAL

He is looking for his sun.

CARDINAL

He must be a general of four suns.

SEAGULL

One sun is enough for me.

AURITA

Admirals should be of four moons.

HOMER

It's a good idea.

FIFI

And romantic..

SEAGULL

Having four moons must be a good thing.

Homer has a word with the sailors and music drifts around the ship, while the Admiral finishes his drink.

ADMIRAL

This wine is like a woman's milk.

CARDINAL

When God left us his blood he never thought in women.

AURITA

I believe he really talks to God.

A general with four suns in his uniform appears in the scene. Everyone stands up.

HOMER

Hurrah to our future president!

EVERYBODY

Hurrah to the president!

GENERAL

I thank the cardinal in this adventure, to the great Homer giving us arms for our freedom and to our women.

Homer fills up the glasses of wine.

HOMER

We must celebrate our general's victory.

GENERAL

Thank you.

CARDINAL

I toast for the general's sword and for our religion.

GENERAL

I ask for the protection of God and the army.

ADMIRAL

My army recognises you as the new head of state.

GENERAL

Thank you.

AURITA

Tonight is the start of a new country. Hurray to the general!

EVERYBODY

Hurray!

FIFI

I'll be with you whatever happens.

Aurita wipes a runaway tear, affected by Fifi's declaration of love.

SEAGULL

Where do they keep the suns?

Homer replenishes the empty glasses with some more wine.

CARDINAL

We must stop the president with a military coup tomorrow.

GENERAL

Homer's arms are first class, a bit expensive but good for our cause.

HOMER

The price is not high if you consider a few details.

GENERAL

I appreciate Homer's attitude and I assure you we'll win. Our group is regular and the army backs us.

ADMIRAL

We back our general.

CARDINAL

We back him spiritually. The church has better arms than canons but we have a few tanks.

GENERAL

We have powerful arms, organisation and God's blessings

CARDINAL

I haven't changed my Cadillac and cars for the last two years.

FIFI

Two years?

HOMER

Two years?

CARDINAL

I only have a chalet by the beach, after helping those idiots with their coup.

AURITA

Imbeciles!

GENERAL

Your highness will be treated very well by my government.

EVERYBODY

Hurrah to our new president. Hurrah!

FIFI

Religion has gone down the drain. We have communist bishops, married priests, naked nuns, crazy Franciscans, bad Jesuits, bigamist Dominicans, destitute saints, canonised footballers, archangels who have been warned, cherubs working for the Metro Goldwin Mayer, virgins with no reference, Adam and Eve without an apple and Jesus Christ trying to pass a driving test.

CARDINAL

That's why we need a new government to lead the country but the general mustn't forget my needs.

GENERAL

You'll have your chalet.

CARDINAL

I'll give you my blessings.

GENERAL

Thank you, your highness.

CARDINAL

I'm all yours, Excellency.

AURITA

He'll have his new Cadillac.

GENERAL

Yes.

SEAGULL

I am hungry.

ADMIRAL

We need a strong government for our people, the country and the church.

CARDINAL

You speak of sanctity and virtue.

GENERAL

We'll fix it with our canons.

ADMIRAL

We can't forget the tanks, ships and submarines.

HOMER

I have good submarines for you.

GENERAL

Thank you. We'll parade them around the cities.

ADMIRAL

We can also use them in the manoeuvres.

HOMER

My submarines must be protected against humidity.

ADMIRAL

That's good. Sea water finishes with everything.

GENERAL

A parade with no submarines is like a party without a drink.

AURITA

Or without any music.

SEAGULL

And food.

HOMER

We must have music.

FIFI

I want hot music.

Homer exits through the door. As the sailors return with more bottles, clean the table and change the floral decoration.

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

Modern music floats around the ship. The cardinal and Aurita dance, Homer dances with Fifi, whilst the general and the admiral dance with each other.

As the cardinal trips and falls on the floor, Homer helps him to the nearest chair.

CARDINAL

I can't cope with this music. We used to dance minuet and bolero some time ago.

He touches his head.

CARDINAL

Where is my crown?

FIFI

I've found it.

She hands him a golden crown. The cardinal crosses himself and puts it back on his head.

As the music drifts about the place, the cardinal dances with Aurita, while Homer and Fifi hide in a corner. The militaries drink and talk about their plans.

CUT TO

EXT. CORNER IN LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

HOMER

You'll be a queen tomorrow.

FIFI

And you'll be my prince.

HOMER

That must be the general.

FIFI

He's my prince consort.

Homer kisses her, before caressing her teats.

HOMER

You've made me the happiest man in the world.

FIFI

Make love to me.

Homer holds her close.

HOMER

We must get rid of your husband first.

He puts his hand up her pants.

FIFI

The revolution might kill him.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

CARDINAL

Homer knows about strategies. Look where he has taken Fifi.

AURITA

Let's follow their example.

His highness limps with Aurita to another corner, where they kiss each other.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

Homer and Fifi dance at the tune of a bolero.

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

GENERAL

The destroyer will be ready tomorrow then...

ADMIRAL

Those people won't survive.

GENERAL

We must have an airplane ready to send the president away. I'm feeling generous.

ADMIRAL

You are always generous.

GENERAL

I don't want much blood in our coup.

ADMIRAL

That's good.

GENERAL

You must be the war minister.



ADMIRAL

I'm overwhelmed with your generosity.

GENERAL

We have to sign Homer's cheques.

ADMIRAL

He'll take care of that.

GENERAL

What a man!

ADMIRAL

He's a shrewd businessman.

GENERAL

Let's drink another one.

They drink more wine.

ADMIRAL

Our women are saints

GENERAL

They'll be the first lady and the minister's wife. We have to give them beautiful decorations.

ADMIRAL

We need titles and honours.

GENERAL

Leave that to me.

ADMIRAL

A few more medals wouldn't be bad for us.

They drink more wine.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YATCH- NIGHT

The boleros have stopped and everybody is back at the table.

ADMIRAL

Your Highness dances well.

CARDINAL

I'm bothering your beautiful wife. She's nice.

AURITA

It's an honour to be with your highness.

ADMIRAL

It's for both of us.

CARDINAL

You're kind.

The sailors bring more food and wine.

HOMER

I'm happy, dancing with the first lady.

FIFI

Your yacht is important.

GENERAL

Queens and kings have been here.

HOMER

I've never had anyone like you.

CARDINAL

The pope has been here on holydays.

ADMIRAL

The Aga Khan was here.

AURITA

And Miss Universe.

CARDINAL

And the Dalai Lama.

HOMER

I have fulfilled my aspirations tonight.

GENERAL

Thank you. I'll never forget it.

They drink to Homer's honour. More bottles of wine arrive, the music of a *ranchera* drifting about the deck.

CUT TO

EXT. DANCE FLOOR IN YACHT- NIGHT

The couples dance. The general shoots his revolver while the admiral does that with his pocket machine gun and the cardinal passes wind.

SEAGULL

They make too much noise. I can't sleep.

Aurita and the cardinal talk as Fifi and Homer whisper to each other. The militaries go back to the table while the others dance.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

GENERAL

We have enough wine to calm our nerves.

ADMIRAL

This is a very important moment in our lives.

GENERAL

We need a new government...

ADMIRAL

It will give us happiness for the rest of our days.

GENERAL

Homer is wonderful.

ADMIRAL

We should have at least eighty generals and as many admirals.

GENERAL

There are three generals for each soldier at the moment. It would be ideal to have an army of only generals.

ADMIRAL

And admirals.

GENERAL

Of course.

The sailors bring some more bottles of wine as the *ranchera* comes to an end.

HOMER

My distinguished guests, you must sign my cheques now.

ADMIRAL

I have a short speech bought from the national factory.

GENERAL

I've got one from the same place.

The sailors bring a table covered with a green cloth. It is full of papers, pens, typewriters and calculators. A man without much hair bows in front of the people and sits at the table. They all gather around the table, except for the general, who looks at his medals while standing up.

GENERAL

Good evening your highness, ladies and gentlemen.

We have gathered here today in the middle of the sea and under the light of a thousand constellations...

He waves his spade and cuts the tail of the seagull as he eats tuna from the plates.

GENERAL

...to save my country from the chains. I'm prepared to offer my life for my people.

They applaud.

GENERAL

We need faith and dignity, greatness and altruism to give our people peace, justice and bread.

They applaud again. The seagull sips some wine from a glass and also applauds.

GENERAL

We come back like the Spartans with the emblems...

They cry, applaud and drink wine.

GENERAL

Dawn will find us in the trenches defending our country, who taught us love from the cradle, with our mother's tears and the efforts of a dying father. God, Christ and freedom! Here is a saying of my government: for the country and to the country.

They applaud. The general searches for his glass to refresh his mouth but the seagull has finished with the wine.

GENERAL

I invite you to follow my comrades. If I go back, kill me. If I die, look for revenge.

They all hug the general. Fifi and the seagull kiss him in the mouth while the cardinal straightens his crown and gets ready to speak.

CARDENAL

In this night full of faith and hope, I represent the catholic people of my country to follow our leaders beyond death, if necessary.

They applaud.

CARDINAL

On the twenty seventh of October of the year 1312, the emperor Constantine found the troops of his rival Magencio twelve kilometres away from Rome. He called the Christian God while turning his eyes to the sunset, where he saw a luminous cross with the following words: With this sign you'll win. He was promoted as Jesus Christ, God of the armies.

They applaud.

CARDINAL

That's why at this solemn moment of our lives, we turn our eyes towards God, and find his words: with the saint cross, we'll have victory.

Everyone goes mad.

CARDINAL

I must give you the papal blessing with a plenary indulgence.

They all kneel on the floor, including the seagull. The cardinal prays in Latin while pouring holy water around him. The seagull doesn't like it and goes back to the food.

They all congratulate his highness.

HOMER

General, supreme boss, protector and father of our country: I had never seen such a unanimous opinion about our government. I have the honour of showing the receipts, your signatures proving the courage of your hearts.

The general goes to the table, reads a few lines of the document and signs it. The admiral also signs without reading the paper. The cardinal adds postdate: don't forget the ten per cent, before signing it.

HOMER

I want to offer the pens we have used in the ceremony to our ladies.

He gives one to Fifi, another one to Aurita and the third one to the seagull.

The admiral drinks some wine, clears his throat and gets ready to talk.

ADMIRAL

General, supreme boss, admiral, protector and father of our country, the cardinal, ladies and gentlemen: I want to say a few words in this day, when we decide the future of a free country. Since the birth of our nation, a few ethnic races have come to America. It opened its entrails to the Iberian race, pregnant with God, and to the black torrent of Africa. All of this was mixed in the new land and new hearts.

They applaud.

ADMIRAL

In between the paths of the virgin jungle..

CARDINAL

This is not a good moment to talk about virgins.

ADMIRAL

In their perpetual fight against a hostile medium, our ancestors grew in the highest Andean mountain, the tree of a victorious Christ against the moors in Lepanto.

They applaud.

ADMIRAL

This blood made plants grow next to the cross. It turned into the chastity of our women, charity in the toughness of our men, and sanctity with the beats of the sword. The eternal reflex of the sea changed into a pyramid of light in between paths of hope and amidst dawns full of awe. The weeping of children sent a choir to the wind, forming the first notes of the symphony of America.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

The seagull eats the fish swimming in the aquarium.

Homer shoos him away.

HOMER

Stop it.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

ADMIRAL

Atahualpa and Gaspar joining their titanic forces over mountains full of snow, wrote the last page of the Inca culture...

CUT TO

CARDINAL

I think the admiral wants to tell us the history of America.

AURITA

I'm a fan of the America football team. He doesn't have to discuss the games, citing the classic ones would be enough.

CARDINAL

The last classic finished 2-2.



AURITA

We should dance.

The cardinal disappears through the door.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT –NIGHT

The music of a *ranchera* drifts through the ship.

MUSIC

The day I die, it will be by four gunshots...

ADMIRAL

...When the warrior talent of Pizarro met the idolatrous Indians, celestial fire took the last Inca in front of his first cause. He...

MUSIC

He didn't have time to go on his horse...

The cardinal gestures to Aurita.

CARDINAL

My love, can we escape while the admiral remembers our country?

They leave the scene.

ADMIRAL

Loyalty to the institutions is one of the duties of a patriot.

The general decides to dance with the seagull after drinking some more wine.

CUT TO

EXT- LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Homer sits close to Fifi.

HOMER

His highness stole Aurita.

FIFI

It's natural. Her husband's mind is in Cusco now.

CUT TO

ADMIRAL

....And then the Incas, suffered in rivers of blood...

The general looks at the seagull.

GENERAL

What's your opinion of the miniskirt?

CUT TO

ADMIRAL

...From the Orinoco, the water is full of remains...

MUSIC

I'm drinking like a madman...

CUT TO

Homer and Fifi sit holding hands.

HOMER

Our general of four suns hasn't had much sun.

FIFI

We must give him the sleeping drug.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

The general dances with the seagull.

GENERAL

Do you like the music?

SEAGULL

I prefer rock.

CUT TU

ADMIRAL

...And then freedom grew like a tropical plant. One of those creepers climbing forever towards the light, without looking at its own whiteness, because it counts its energies...

MUSIC

If they tell you, they saw me very drunk...

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

The music has stopped and everybody has come back to the table. Homer pours a few drops of *sinogan* in the general's cup.

SEAGULL

They told me nothing was good for sleeping.

ADMIRAL

...The centaurs of freedom broke their arrows on the armours of the sons of El Cid...

They all drink and eat.

CUT TO

GENERAL

Our admiral is still talking. I'll give him a glass of wine.  
After pouring wine in a glass, he gets near the admiral.

ADMIRAL

...The great achievements of the Iberian race, which couldn't fight against its own children in whom...  
He sips wine from the glass the general has offered him.

ADMIRAL

...The seeds of his genius proliferate...

CUT TO

HOMER

The admiral is a master of rhetoric without any doubts.

GENERAL

I'll ask him for a copy to edit in the official paper. I think it's very interesting.

HOMER

Do you want another glass of wine, general?

CUT TO

Homer pours a bag of powder in the wine. The general drinks the wine with the strong mixture of medicines.

EVERYBODY

Hurrah to the admiral!

ADMIRAL

...And then the fecund rivers of the dark women gave birth to heroes, who multiplied themselves just as his children...

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT – NIGHT

HOMER

I've given him the whole solution. We'll have the rest of the night to ourselves.

FIFI

When will the admiral end?

CUT TO

The cardinal and Aurita come back to the table rearranging their clothes. They ask for glasses of wine.

ADMIRAL

...And then the flag of freedom displayed its colours...

AURITA

My husband must be finishing.

The seagull flies away, crashing against some of the mastiffs as the general goes to sleep on the table after drinking his wine. He snores with the peculiar sound of heroes.

CUT TO

ADMIRAL

...That is why we must shout once more: Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! I've spoken.

They applaud while the admiral drinks his wine.

CARDINAL

We must go to sleep, my sons. I have to say mass early tomorrow.

ADMIRAL

We understand.

Homer calls the sailors.

HOMER

Take the general to his cabin and help him to undress.

**Human Bombs**

EXT. SHIP- NIGHT

A few sailors look into the night with binoculars as a middle aged man wearing a short shirt stands with a glass in his hand.

Sipping his drink, he looks out into the sea.

INTERMEDIARY

Are you sure this is the place?

FIRST SAILOR

The pilot swears it is.

INTERMEDIARY

It's strange. These people arrive on time.

SECOND SAILOR

They must have been found.

INTERMEDIARY

Don't be a pessimist.

SECOND SAILOR

Everything is possible, my captain.

INTERMEDIARY

I'm only an intermediary, remember?

ALL THE SAILORS

Yes sir.

INTERMEDIARY

Are you all armed?

ALL THE SAILORS

Yes sir.

INTERMEDIARY

Have you checked the security installations?

ALL THE SAILORS

Yes sir.

INTERMEDIARY

Tell radar.

He moves across ship. Then he sits and drinks from his glass.

SOMEONE (VO)

A boat is coming.

The intermediary takes a microphone.

INTERMEDIARY

A boat is coming. Prepare the reception.

He lights up his pipe, the sailors move around the ship as a boat approaches amidst the roar of the sea.

The intermediary walks across the ship to greet the newcomers.

CUT TO

EXT. SHIP- NIGHT

After the small boat docks, men and women jump into the ship and stand in front of the intermediary.

NEWCOMERS (All together)

National Liberation Army.

As they disperse around the ship, a bearded man who seems to be in charge, stands by the intermediary.

CUT TO

More people come to greet the intermediary as they arrive.

NEWCOMERS (All together)

National Liberation Army.

The bearded man takes off his hat, while doing a military salute and spitting on the floor.

BEARDED MAN

X- Bombs automatic battalion is ready for its secret mission of economic character.

INTERMEDIARY

Thank you.

BEARDED MAN

Attention!

The men assume a formal position.

BEARDED MAN

Rest.

They all relax.

INTERMEDIARY

You're in the presence of someone who agrees with your ideas. Hurrah to freedom.

EVERYBODY

Hurrah!

The intermediary offers the bearded man a cigar, as the other people sit around the floor.

INTERMEDIARY

You'll receive the arms tomorrow night, we are idealists like you.

BEARDED MAN

We have everything ready. The bosses authorise me to give you 28,000 dollars.

INTERMEDIARY (Calling aloud)

Atenagoras! Atenagoras.

CUT TO

EXT. SHIP- EVENING

A little bald man with a wallet under his left arm takes off his glasses, before saluting the intermediary.



ATENAGORAS

Do you want something Mr. Intermediary?

INTERMEDIARY

Show me the revolutionary men's papers.

Atenagoras sits next to the intermediary and the bearded man, who looks through the papers in his wallet after putting his glasses on.

INTERMEDIARY

I want to show my admiration and solidarity...

The bearded man stands up.

BEARDED MAN

We're on a mission here. We don't accept anything.

INTERMEDIARY

This is a disinterested help, Mr. Revolutionary.

BEARDED MAN

Mr. Intermediary, tell me how much we owe you. We are not beggars.

INTERMEDIARY

You must forgive me. I only have the best intentions in the world.

BEARDED MAN

Thank you.

Atenagoras takes off his glasses.

ATENAGORAS

Tonight you must give us the sum of 28,000...

He puts his glasses on again and looks at the paper, following the writing with his finger.

ATENAGORAS

...And 835 dollars.

BEARDED MAN

You're mistaken. I only have to give 28,300 dollars.

INTERMEDIARY

Let's not fight for such a stupid thing.

He looks at Atenagoras.

INTERMEDIARY

Write a receipt for whatever money he says.

The bearded man opens his shirt and takes out a roll of dollars.

BEARDED MAN

Thank you. Here is your money,

INTERMEDIARY

Count the money, my dear Atenagoras.

The bald employee starts to count the money.

INTERMEDIARY

Idealism is something beautiful. Someone thinks of his glorious work, after having so much money in his pocket.

BEARDED MAN

We're revolutionaries.

INTERMEDIARY

They're men.

BEARDED MAN

No one is a man here.

INTERMEDIARY

What do you mean?

BEARDED MAN

We're bombs.

INTERMEDIARY

I understand less than before.

BEARDED MAN

It's the last tactic discovered by the heroes in Vietnam. Our battalion is made up of walking bombs, auto guided while exploding in the most convenient places.

INTERMEDIARY

It's a novelty. I had not thought of that idea.

BEARDED MAN

Our fight is our life. We're the soldiers of the revolution.

INTERMEDIARY

Sorry but I'm nervous. Can I drink an aguardiente?

BEARDED MAN

Of course you can.

INTERMEDIARY

You should do the same thing. It calms the nerves.

BEARDED MAN

Alcohol is only for rich people.

INTERMEDIARY

I'm a progressive rich.

BEARDED MAN

Mr. Intermediary, you can drink as much as you want to. It's not your fault. You are controlled by your powerful masters.

INTERMEDIARY

My spirit is weak.

As he claps his hands, a sailor appears. The intermediary mutters something to the man.

BEARDED MAN

Our leaders' plans will liberate us from the oppressors.

INTERMEDIARY

I had never imagined so much strength.

BEARDED MAN

The fight is just starting. Don't forget it.

Someone from the NLA itches his leg.

INTERMEDIARY

My God! You can blow yourself up, young man.

BEARDED MAN

Don't worry Mr. Intermediary. Drink an aguardiente.

A sailor comes in with a few bottles, glasses and soda. After the intermediary pours a drink for himself and Atenagoras, who is counting his money, he drinks it in a gulp.

INTERMEDIARY

I belong to the hated rich. We can't cope with so much idealism.

BEARDED MAN

Atenagoras is counting your idealism.

INTERMEDIARY

We are the slaves, the others are the masters.

BEARDED MAN

It's the exploitation of man by man.

Atenagoras stops counting the dollars.

ATENAGORAS

You mean that man exploits himself.

BEARDED MAN

Isn't it funny?

ATENAGORAS

I don't believe in that.

INTERMEDIARY

You count your dollars.

BEARDED MAN

Don't you want a demonstration?

INTERMEDIARY

No, I don't.

BEARDED MAN

We could try our system in the sea.

INTERMEDIARY

I can't swim but I'll give you your money back, Mr. Revolutionary.

BEARDED MAN

Be calm, Mr. Intermediary. We wouldn't waste our ammunitions in this boat.

INTERMEDIARY

I always knew you were noble.

He drinks three aguardientes. Atenagoras stops counting the money.

ATENAGORAS

Everything seems to be OK.

He writes in a paper and signs it. The intermediary also signs it.

INTERMEDIARY

Tomorrow you'll have your arms in the place we agreed, according to our promises.

BEARDED MAN

You must keep your word.

Atenagoras gestures to the NLA members.

ATENAGORAS

What happened to the test of the bombs?

BEARDED MAN

I'm thinking about it.

INTERMEDIARY

But Mr. Revolutionary, this is not a warship.

BEARDED MAN

I want to try something.

INTERMEDIARY

I beg you, sir.

BEARDED MAN

Nothing will happen to your ship.

ATENAGORAS

Let them test their weapons, Mr. Intermediary.

The bearded man mutters something,

BEARDED MAN

These are military manoeuvres, nothing will happen to you.

INTERMEDIARY

Do you want to lose one bomb?

BEARDED MAN

You're a rich terrorist. I want to show you a submarine fight, we must live for the revolution.

He moves towards the human bombs.

BEARDED MAN

I want a bomb with small charge for a submarine. Number eight, what charge do you have?

A man stands up.

NUMBER EIGHT

I have four kilograms, my lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

And number six?

One of the men sitting at the table raises his hand.

NUMBER SIX

I'm three and a half with incorporated ammunition.

BEARDED MAN

I need a small bomb without ammunition. Stand up.

Number six stands up. He's a skinny man, who looks like a child

NUMBER SIX

I'm three kilos without the ammunition, my lieutenant.

The bearded man looks at the intermediary.

BEARDED MAN

You must sail as fast as possible. Can you understand me?

INTERMEDIARY

Why?

BEARDED MAN

The explosion might send us to the bottom of the sea.

INTERMEDIARY

What explosion?

The bearded man gestures towards the young man.

BEARDED MAN

That explosion.

INTERMEDIARY

I see a man.

BEARDED MAN

Make this ship go fast or I'll explode it in your face, stupid rich man.

As the intermediary says a few things to the sailors, the motor groans, the wind blows over the bombs and the intermediary wipes his brow.

BEARDED MAN

What's the speed?

INTERMEDIARY

Fifteen knots.

BEARDED MAN

Is that all?

ATENAGORAS

We'll go at fifty kilometres per hour in ten minutes.

BEARDED MAN

Is this a joke?

INTERMEDIARY

We have to go into the open sea first.

BEARDED MAN

When will it be?

ATENAGORAS

It should be in half an hour.

The bearded man looks at the young man.

BEARDED MAN

You can rest for now.

The young man sits down.

BEARDED MAN

I need a life jacket.

ATENAGORAS

We have several kinds of life jackets.

BEARDED MAN

Can I see them?

The intermediary calls a sailor while sipping his drink.

INTERMEDIARY

Bring the life jackets.

ATENAGORAS

How will the manoeuvre be, my lieutenant?



BEARDED MAN

After floating in the sea, the bomb will explode when the ship nears it.

ATENAGORAS

I thought you wanted manoeuvres under the sea.

BEARDED MAN

This is what it is.

ATENAGORAS

Submarines go under the sea.

BEARDED MAN

He'll swim over the surface, anything wrong with it?

ATENAGORAS

I don't know.

BEARDED MAN

I'll explain it with a graphic.

CUT TO

EXT SHIP- NIGHT

The bearded man writes something on a notebook.

A few sailors arrive with the life jackets and wait for the bearded man to finish with his plans while the intermediary and Atenagoras drink aguardiente. The din of the motors indicates they're moving fast.

ATENAGORAS

Excuse me lieutenant but the life jackets have arrived.

The bearded man examines one by one the different kinds of life jackets. Then he offers a life jacket to the young man.

BEARDED MAN

Attention.

The young man stands up and puts the life jacket on.

BEARDED MAN

The life jacket is very good. Can I have the reference?

A sailor gives one to the bearded man, who writes something down in his notebook.

INTERMEDIARY

Why don't we give the man a glass of *aguardiente*? He might feel less nervous.

BEARDED MAN

Do you think he's a nun?

ATENAGORAS

The sea is cold at this time.

BEARDED MAN

He'll get wet for four minutes.

The bearded man gestures to the young man with the bomb.

BEARDED MAN

On reaching the railings, you jump after I count up to three but you must wait for my signal before igniting the bomb. Do you understand?

NUMBER SIX

Yes, lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

Can you repeat what I've just said?

NUMBER SIX

At the count of three, I go to the railings and then I jump into the sea. I wait for your signal before igniting the bomb.

BEARDED MAN

Get ready.

Number six moves to the railings.

ATENAGORAS

Can you do the same thing without a bomb, lieutenant?

BEARDED MAN

How else could I do it?

ATENAGORAS

You can throw the life jacket into the sea.

BEARDED MAN

If you keep on interfering, I'll send you instead.

INTERMEDIARY

Excuse me, lieutenant but the life jacket costs money. I'm responsible for it.

BEARDED MAN

How much is it?

INTERMEDIARY

Two dollars.

The bearded man searches in his pockets. He throws two dollars on the table.

BEARDED MAN

Is the ship going fast?

SAILOR

Yes, lieutenant.

The bearded man gestures at bomb number six.

BEARDED MAN

Get ready.

Everyone is quiet as the motor groans.

The bearded man looks at his watch.

BEARDED MAN

One, two and three!

As number six jumps into the water, four minutes pass, the bearded man holds the signal gun and everyone look at the sea.

CUT TO

EXT. SHIP- NIGHT

On shooting his gun at the sky, the bearded man shouts something but they only hear the roaring motor, a pink light filling everything.

BEARDED MAN

The bastard must have gone to sleep!

ATENAGORAS

He must have drowned.

BEARDED MAN

Was the life jacket faulty?

INTERMEDIARY

I can assure you, it's as good as new.

BEARDED MAN

Let's find him.

The intermediary gives orders to the sailors and the boat slows down.

BEARDED MAN

Let's go back.

INTERMEDIARY

It could blow near us.

BEARDED MAN

You'll have to swim.

The ship goes back, everybody looks at the sea and Atenagoras pour *aguardiente* in their glasses.

CUT TO

EXT. SHIP- NIGHT

They hear a voice through the microphone.

VOICE

We're very close to the place.

They see something floating in the sea, under the light of a battery operated torch.

NUMBER SIX

I'm here, my lieutenant. The bomb didn't explode.

A sailor brings a microphone to the bearded man.

BEARDED MAN

Number six, can you hear me?

NUMBER SIX

Yes, lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

We're going to destroy you.

NUMBER SIX

Yes, lieutenant.

The bearded man shoots his gun several times.

BEARDED MAN

Can you hear me, number six?

NUMBER SIX

Yes, sir. I've been wounded in my legs and chest.

BEARDED MAN

We'll use another method.

He looks at the people in the ship.

BEARDED MAN

If the body is found by the reactionaries, we'll be dead. I need a low charge. Two kilograms should be enough.

SAILOR

We don't have one.

A girl stands up, her companions taking some ammunition from her brassiere. After counting a few things, they put the rest back in the bra.

SAILOR

She's ready, my lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

You must revise her equipment.

The men check the wires connected to the girl and she helps them with their job until her young and attractive body appears naked under the light of the torch.

The bearded man looks at the sea.

BEARDED MAN

Number six, can you hear me?

NUMBER SIX

Yes, lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

How are you?

NUMBER SIX

I'm hoping to blow up soon.

BEARDED MAN

Don't worry. Number ten is coming to you in a few minutes.

NUMBER SIX

Thank you, lieutenant.

ATENAGORAS

Why don't we pick him up?

BEARDED MAN

This isn't your business.

ATENAGORAS

I'll take him to a hospital.

BEARDED MAN

If you keep on interfering, you'll end up in hospital.

INTERMEDIARY

Will anything happen to the ship?

BEARDED MAN

No.

INTERMEDIARY

I just wanted to know.

He goes back to the table with Atenagoras. The bearded man gestures at the girl, who is dressed now.

BEARDED MAN

Attention.

She stands in front of him.

BEARDED MAN

You must swim to number six hug him to your chest and ignite the bomb. Do you understand?

NUMBER TWENTY

Yes, lieutenant.

The bearded man takes a few dollars out of his pocket and hands them over to the intermediary.

BEARDED MAN

I want another life jacket.

INTERMEDIARY

“Yes, sir.

A sailor brings another life jacket, while the girl moves towards the railings, before putting the life jacket over her curves.

BEARDED MAN

Are you ready?

NUMBER TWENTY

Yes lieutenant.

BEARDED MAN

One, two and three.

She jumps into the sea, the ship going faster for some time, when an explosion illuminates the sky with a pinkish light.

BEARDED MAN

Mr. Intermediary, let's go back to the base.

INTERMEDIARY

Yes, sir.



**Chucho**

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

A sailor moves with a tray full of drinks, at first sight he looks strange with his long arms, hairs sprouting from under his clothes and walking bow legged. As he moves across the ship and disappears in the shadows, we notice his hairy face, like that of an ape, while wearing a sailor's hat on his head.

An old man with many decorations on his lapel, walks across the scene, the waves roaring in the background give us a taste of the scene.

He has a big stomach and a wide forehead flanked by a pair of glasses, while holding four books under his right arm and three under the other one, before sitting on them in the floor.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

Another old gentleman appears, wearing a suit full of decorations. Thin, bold and with a suitcase, he looks at the man sitting on the books.

FAT PROFESSOR

Hi.

THIN PROFESSOR

Why are you sitting on the books?

FAT PROFESSOR

Who?

THIN PROFESSOR

You.

The fat man looks at his feet and nods.

FAT PROFESSOR

Thank you.

He sits on a chair and the thin man sits down on another one as a sailor appears.

THIN PROFESSOR

Can you bring me a table, please?

The sailor disappears through the door.

A middle-aged woman wearing a long dress and with a child in her arms appears. The child wears a small suit with decorations.

WOMAN

Good evening, wise men.

The men kiss her hand and smile at the child.

After leaving a small table in front of the thin professor, the hairy sailor leaves the scene, as Homer appears through the door, coughing and wearing a suit with decorations.

HOMER

I beg your pardon, wise men, for interrupting your thoughts.

They all stand up.

FAT PROFESSOR

I've never seen a ship as luxurious as this one in my life.

THIN PROFESSOR

This is a marvel, dear Homer. That's the truth.

HOMER

Don't exaggerate, please.

THIN PROFESSOR

Our words are mathematical formulae.

Homer caresses the child.

HOMER

How is the infant today?

WOMAN

He's all right. The diarrhoea has stopped.

HOMER

It's not easy to find three novel prize scientists in a ship like mine.

FAT PROFESSOR

We have found pleasure and rest in this trip, but you wished to show us something else.

HOMER

It's a bit different. I never imagined I'd have the famous professor Irwin in my ship.

EVERYBODY

It's hard to believe.

HOMER

Professor Irwin found the formula of eternal youth, made a mistake and went back to being a baby.

WOMAN

I have to feed him now.

On opening her dress, she guides the child to the pink blossoms of her teats.

HOMER

He has to tell us where he left the formula.

FAT PROFESSOR

We couldn't find the formula in Professor Irwin's laboratory, even though I drank the contents of a bottle with a yellow liquid.

Everybody laughs.

THIN PROFESSOR

Did he tell you about his experiments?

FAT PROFESSOR

We were in constant communication since he started his experiments.

HOMER

Tell us more.

FAT PROFESSOR

He needed to sort out a few more details before his formula was ready.

HOMER

He thought he had found the fountain of youth.

The woman puts the child against her shoulders, knocking his back gently.

WOMAN

I never imagined I would be feeding a baby at my age.

HOMER

It's your husband. You're lucky.

WOMAN

He eats a lot.

She puts the baby on her other breast.

WOMAN

As we have many obsolete anti aging medicines, he wanted to keep his investigations secret before telling the world.

THIN PROFESSOR

If they were any good, I should be in my mother's womb by now.

FAT PROFESSOR

You're an orphan.

THIN PROFESSOR

I wouldn't mind any other womb then.

They laugh.

HOMER

We must drink to that.

As he claps his hands, the hairy sailor appears.

THIN PROFESSOR

I want a Coca cola

FAT PROFESSOR

I want Coca cola.

WOMAN

I want Coca cola.

HOMER

Why don't you drink a whisky?

FAT PROFESSOR

It's bad for my liver.

THIN PROFESSOR

It kills my pancreas.

WOMAN

I can't drink alcohol while feeding the baby.

HOMER

What about a soft wine?

THIN PROFESSOR

My transverse colon will burst.

FAT PROFESSOR

My kidneys will be affected.

WOMAN

I'll burst if I don't drink one.

The hairy sailor bows and disappears through the door.

HOMER

Tell us the story, my dear lady.

WOMAN

That night he drank the contents of a milky liquid inside a bottle, before going to bed.

Darling, he said, I have just taken the formula of youth.

Don't be daft, I said.

On hearing a child crying in the early hours of the morning, I called Irwin but no one answered. After looking for my husband with the maids, we found a baby by the bedroom door, my maternal instincts telling me the truth. The baby had the same birthmarks in that body I knew so well.

FAT PROFESSOR

What did you do with the bottle?

WOMAN

What bottle?

FAT PROFESSOR

I thought he left it on the bedside table.

WOMAN

I forgot about the bottle, while looking after the infant.

FAT PROFESSOR

You'll be a millionaire if you find it.

The hairy sailor comes in with everything they have ordered plus a bottle of whisky and soda for Homer. He bows and leaves.

The child cries as the woman wipes her dress with a serviette, after covering her breasts.

WOMAN

I'm sorry! He usually does these things after dinner.

She leaves a wet trail, as she moves away with the child in her arms.

HOMER

The professor worked for many years to get to his goal. He can't even talk now.

FAT PROFESSOR

He's breastfed during a discussion with his colleagues, before dirtying his nappy.

HOMER

Professor Irwin must have drunk too much of the potion. If he had tested the formula properly, he would have made a fortune.

THIN PROFESSOR

We'll wait for the child to tell us.

FAT PROFESSOR

Will he remember anything?

HOMER

He'll collect balls and chewing gum.

FAT PROFESSOR

What a waste of time.

HOMER

Think of all the money he could have made.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- EVENING

A sailor appears with a message in a tray. Homer gives instructions to the sailors, after reading it.

HOMER

A helicopter is bringing Professor Greer, his wife and Fifi.

THIN PROFESSOR

I like Fifi. Is she bringing the general?

HOMER

He's busy with a coup at the moment.

THIN PROFESSOR

That man likes his revolutions.

FAT PROFESSOR

And Fifi loves Homer.

THIN PROFESSOR

Has Professor Greer married?

HOMER

He was single the last time I saw him, scientists are boring.

FAT PROFESSOR

Women want everything.

THIN PROFESSOR

You're right. Science has been my love up to now.

HOMER

I'm a frustrated scientist.

THIN PROFESSOR

I have to study the angels by the sea side.

He takes an electronic microscope out of his bag and a small box with beautiful decorations.

THIN PROFESSOR

You must kneel down on the floor and pray before I start my research with the needle that touched baby Jesus' nappies.

They all kneel as the professor places a needle under the microscope. Then they all stand up.

CUT TO

EXT.LUXURIOUS YACHT- EVENING

FAT PROFESSOR

Do you know of my colleague's work?

HOMER

I have heard about it. He can't do anything else because of his job.

FAT PROFESSOR

This man is the greatest genius of all time.

HOMER



I'm sure of that.

FAT PROFESSOR

Businessmen have a direct influence on our lives.

HOMER

Yes, of course.

FAT PROFESSOR

This illustrious scientist used to dress in a tunic and wings during Christmas time.

Have you seen him sleeping?

HOMER

I haven't had that honour.

FAT PROFESSOR

He wears a long blue gown, beautiful plastic wings with golden beads and a blond wig that goes down to his hips. He keeps a golden harp on his bedside table.

HOMER

It's very interesting. Do you want another coke?

FAT PROFESSOR

All right.

Homer claps his hands and a sailor appears.

HOMER

Bring the professor another coke.

WAITER

Yes, Sir.

The man leaves the scene.

FAT PROFESSOR

After graduating with honours in the theology faculty of Rome, he wrote his thesis in old Latin. It not been translated even though it won the novel prize a few years ago.

The sailor arrives with the coca colas.

HOMER

What does the book say?

FAT PROFESSOR

It has 834 pages, written in verses of ten lines. Nobody knows what it says, until someone translates it.

HOMER

It's very interesting.

FAT PROFESSOR

He has won the first prize in the story of science, being a genius must be an illness.

HOMER

That's obvious to me. Drink your coca cola.

FAT PROFESSOR

He earns 2,500 dollars a month, plus eight hundred dollars for expenses.

HOMER

It's not much for such an important job.

FAT PROFESSOR

They don't remunerate geniuses like us.

HOMER

We'll have to change that.

FAT PROFESSOR

He has wondered about the sex of angels since his infancy. Are they men or women?

It's something to weaken the toughest guys.

HOMER

He's a hero.

FAT PROFESSOR

How can he see an angel? He's thought about the problem for twenty years and one day he ran along the streets of Rome shouting: Eureka! Eureka!

HOMER

What does it mean?

FAT PROFESSOR

I don't know. It's another one of his fantastic words.

HOMER

What happened then?

The woman appears at this moment. She has changed her clothes and doesn't have the child.

WOMAN

I'm sorry for interrupting the conversation.

HOMER

Where is the professor?

WOMAN

He's asleep. He'll wake up for his next feed in three hours. He's so beautiful.

EVERYBODY

Bless him.

She looks at the professor working with the microscope.

WOMAN

Our wise man doesn't belong to this world anymore.

She sits down.

HOMER

Would you like some wine?

WOMAN

It has to be dry.

Homer gives orders to the hairy sailor.

FAT PROFESSOR

I told Homer of the extraordinary things the professor has done.

WOMAN

He has broken all the records with his work.

The thin professor smiles, while looking at his microscope.

THIN PROFESSOR

Thanks.

HOMER

I've heard of the moment he ran along the street naked.

WOMAN

Didn't you know that?

HOMER

I'm sorry, but my business...

WOMAN

It was first page news in all the world papers.

FAT PROFESSOR

L. Clay's won his fight for the heavy belt on the same day.

WOMAN

They wrote eight columns in the first page about the professor nakedness.

FAT PROFESSOR

He was a member of the Pieni Order eight days later.

HOMER

I like that opera.

WOMAN

The Pieni Order is not an opera but a papal decoration.

HOMER

Sorry, I didn't know.

WOMAN

The Beatles sing operas.

FAT PROFESSOR

Our friend the businessman doesn't have time for these things.

HOMER

What happened after he went naked?

FAT PROFESSOR

He could see the angels.

HOMER

Really?

FAT PROFESSOR

It shows us how the mind works. The professor had to see angels, so he went to find them.

HOMER

Did he go to heaven?

FAT PROFESSOR

You have to be dead to go to heaven and our professor was alive.

HOMER

How did he do it then?

FAT PROFESSOR

He ran naked through the streets on remembering Jesus Christ's nappy kept in the Corraplitences Monastery.

HOMER

What a man!

FAT PROFESSOR

He found them on putting some faecal matter from the nappy with a needle blessed by the pope under the microscope.

HOMER

Who did he find?

FAT PROFESSOR

He saw the angels, of course.

HOMER

It's incredible.

WOMAN

Did you think he found worms?

FAT PROFESSOR

Let's not have crazy thoughts. He only saw angels in his microscopic field.

HOMER

What a genius!

FAT PROFESSOR

He wanted to know the angels' sex, and how many of them could dance on the head of the needle.

WOMAN

It's a fascinating topic.

FAT PROFESSOR

As he centred the microscope on the head of the needle, he saw male and female angels dancing in pairs.

WOMAN

All the honours in the world are not enough for such a genius.

HOMER

Do you want another coca cola?

THIN PROFESSOR

I want a cold one.

FAT PROFESSOR

I also want one.

WOMAN

I want a triple wine.

Homer leaves the scene.

WOMAN

He's an ignorant man with a heart of gold.

FAT PROFESSOR

He wants to support science.

WOMAN

We've talked about that. I'd prefer if someone helps me financially to bring up Irwin.

THIN PROFESSOR

My purpose is to find a vaccine against sin under his protection. The present intravenous one has a few side effects, while leaving the original sin untarnished.

FAT PROFESSOR

I want to finish my Donald Duck encyclopaedia under Homer's protection.

THIN PROFESSOR

That's a literary work of the twentieth century. Nothing can compare with it.

FAT PROFESSOR

Thank you.

Homer comes in.

HOMER

I have just spoken with the helicopter Mr. wise men. Professor Greer and Fifi are about to arrive.

A sailor calls Homer.

HOMER

Excuse me, but I have to get them now.

As Homer leaves, the thin professor is with the microscope, the fat one reads his Donald Duck collections and the woman combs her hair. They hear the noise of a helicopter.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

Homer appears.

HOMER

Professor Greer came without his wife.

FAT PROFESSOR

They are on their honeymoon and perhaps he's not jealous. Did he come alone?

HOMER

No, he brought a friend.

FAT PROFESSOR

Is it Fifi?

A forty year old man appears accompanied by a young man, wearing light blue jeans, long hair, and a miniskirt over his trousers. Fifi comes behind them wearing a short dress with a low cleavage. She kisses Homer in the mouth.

PROFESSOR GREER

This must be a meeting of the seven wise men of Greece.

FAT PROFESSOR

And the eighth one has just arrived.

He looks at Fifi's voluptuous body.

FAT PROFESSOR

You must be Fifi.

FIFI



I'm glad to meet you.

Fifi's dress goes up as she hugs the little man while the thin professor looks through the microscope.

THIN PROFESSOR

I think the greatest financier of all times has just arrived.

HOMER

My dear professor Greer, make yourself at home, or in your own ship.

They hug each other. Mrs. Irwin kisses Greer while the young man fiddles with his earring. Then Fifi hugs Mrs. Irwin.

WOMAN

I've seen your picture in the papers.

THIN PROFESSOR

They care about her life, while ignoring everything else in the country.

FIFI

I'm not so important.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

PROFESSOR GREER

I married before coming to the ship and this is my wife Ferny. We're on our honeymoon.

Ferny shakes hands with everyone and sits next to Greer.

HOMER

I thought he was your friend.

PROFESSOR GREER

He's my wife. Marriage between men is common now.

FAT PROFESSOR

It's accepted in most countries of the world.

Professor Greer hugs Ferny.

PROFESSOR GREER

I adore you.

The couple kiss and hug each other as Fifi leads Homer away from the scene.

INT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Fifi passes an arm around Homer's shoulders.

FIFI

I have missed you.

HOMER

How's the general?

Fifi licks his ear.

FIFI

He's fighting his wars.

HOMER

Let's have sex.

FIFI

You haven't changed.

Fifi caresses his chest.

As she fiddles with his trousers, Chucho appears by their side.

CHUCHO

The drinks are ready, Mr. Homer.

Fifi straightens her clothes.

HOMER

Chucho, I didn't ask you to come in.

CHUCHO

I did knock first, Mr. Homer.

HOMER

Chucho, have you ever been to the jungle?

CHUCHO

I lived in Leticia for a few months, Mr. Homer.

Homer finds the manuscript inside a wardrobe.

HOMER

I want you to look at these pages.

Chucho takes the manuscripts.

CHUCHO

I'll do that later, Mr. Homer.

Chucho leaves with the manuscripts.

INT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Homer and Fifi lay next to each other on a bed by the window, the blue sea shining under the sun.

FIFI

I love you more than anything on earth.

He opens his trousers.

HOMER

You must be joking.

She goes on top of him, putting his cock between her legs, as he moves his hips up and down.

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

Ferny and Professor Greer are in each other's arms.

WOMAN

Love is a wonderful thing. I was like that with Irwin.

FERNY

This is my first and last love.

After pressing a handkerchief against his heart, he then straightens his miniskirt.

Greer kisses him.

HOMER

Let's drink to this couple's happiness.

Fifi plays with his hair.

FIFI

What about our happiness?

She rests her head on his chest.

HOMER

We'll talk about that later.

THIN PROFESSOR

I've finished with my observations for today.

The thin professor picks up his equipment and puts it in his bag, bowing in front of the needle before touching it.

INT. LUXUROUS YACHT- NIGHT

HOMER

We're on our way to Gibraltar.

PROFESSOR GREER

Hurrah to our host.

EVERYBODY

Hurrah!

HOMER

Let's see. The professors want coca cola and the lady wants dry wine but what about you, Professor Greer?

PROFESSOR GREER

I want dry Jamaican rum.

HOMER

And what does Ferny want?

FERNY

I want sweet wine in rose water. Everything else gives me a headache.

PROFESSOR GREER

He's a flower.

HOMER

He looks like a plastic flower.

FERNY

I can't drink anything strong.

Homer turns to Fifi.

HOMER

Do you want gin and soda?

FIFI

Yes, and with a slice of lemon in it.

They come to the table, while Ferny applies his makeup by the rails. Professor Greer pours himself a large glass of rum, Homer brings some glasses and Fifi opens a bottle of gin.

THIN PROFESSOR

Professor Greer, don't you feel sick with that drink?

FERNY

He's a strong man. I adore him.

PROFESSOR GREER

You'll have your sweet wine, dissolved in a water of yellow flowers.

FERNY

Thank you, my treasure.

HOMER

Professor Greer, we have here the best men of science to take charge of my Philanthropic Foundation.

PROFESSOR GREER

I'm an assessor of Homer's financial business.

HOMER

Thank you. Professor Greer will explain the problem, so that you know what to do. Professor Greer drinks his rum.

PROFESSOR GREER

We have decided to start the Philanthropic Society to help the greatest men of science. As you'll get one million dollars a year for your activities, we want to donate that money to you instead of giving it to the tax and Homer wants a small favour. You'll Give us five millions in exchange for the million, a better way to use your capital, while evading taxes and helping science.

THIN PROFESSOR

Five million dollars for only one million is a lot of money.

FAT PROFESSOR

I agree with you.

WOMAN

I also agree.

As Homer and Professor Greer talk in a low voice, Ferny looks at Fifi.

FERNY

Where did you buy your dress?

FIFI

I made it myself.

FERNY

It's beautiful. I must learn to make my own clothes.

FIFI

I can teach you.

FERNY

Thank you.

PROFESSOR GREER

Homer's generosity doesn't have a name. He only wants one million and two hundred thousand dollars.

THIN PROFESSOR

We'll give him fifty thousand dollars more.

HOMER

I accept it from such distinguished wise men.

They all applaud as Professor Greer takes a few documents out of his bag.

PROFESSOR GREER

You must sign these papers now.

They all sign the documents.

THIN PROFESSOR

I'll call my vaccine Angelic Homer.

HOMER

Thank you.

FAT PROFESSOR

I'll dedicate my book to you.

HOMER

Thank you.

WOMAN

Irwin will call you father.

FERNY

You're a dangerous man.

FIFI

I'll love you forever.

WOMAN

What is the surprise?

HOMER

I had forgotten about that. Excuse me for a moment.

He leaves the scene.

FERNY

What a wonderful man.

FIFI

He's my hero.

WOMAN

He's a real Mecenat.

THIN PROFESSOR

He was a man who used to give things to people.

FERNY

How boring.

WOMAN

I thought he was a Greek emperor.

FAT PROFESSOR.

Charlemagne was the Greek Emperor.

WOMAN

I never liked geography.

FIFI

I hate maths.

FERNY

I still don't know what Christopher Columbus did.



THIN PROFESSOR

He discovered penicillin.

FAT PROFESSOR

Don't confuse him with Gagarin. He discovered the moon.

FERNY

Was it the full moon?

THIN PROFESSOR

No, it was the honeymoon.

FERNY

I forbid you to talk about that.

FIFI

Professor Greer is Gagarin then.

Professor Greer looks drunk.

PROFESSOR GREER

Excuse me. I don't like to gargle.

FIFI

It isn't Gargarin but Gagarin.

PROFESSOR GREER

Is that a medication for the flu?

FERNY

No honey, he's the discoverer of the moon.

Homer arrives with Chucho.

HOMER

I want to introduce Chucho to these prominent scientists.

The sailor bows.

HOMER

Chucho must be a surprise for my scientists. Greet my guests properly Chucho.

The sailor shakes hands with everyone.

CHUCHO

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure for me to serve you.

They applaud.

HOMER

You can ask him questions.

THIN PROFESSOR

Can you tell us something about the first football championship?

CHUCHO

It was played in Montevideo, Paraguay from the 13 of June to the 31 of July 1930.

Argentina won over the United States in the semi final. It was 6- 1. Uruguay bit

Yugoslavia 6- 1. Uruguay bit Argentina in the final game, 6- 2.

EVERYBODY

Unbelievable!

FAT PROFESSOR

Who was the chess champion in 1926?

CHUCHO

Jose Raul Casablanca.

HOMER

Who won the boxing championship in the same year?

CHUCHO

Jack Dempsey.

EVERYBODY

AHHHHHHH!

FERNY

Tell me who won the Derby at Epsom in 1956?

CHUCHO

Lavandin.

PROFESSOR GREER

What is the square and cubic root of 1.085?

CHUCHO

The square root is 32.94, and the cubic root is 10.28.

FERNY

What is the highest mountain in the world?

CHUCHO

Mount Everest. It is 8.848 meters high.

FERNEY

How tiring!

PROFESSOR GREER

You don't have a sailor here, but a calculator.

FAT PROFESSOR

He's marvellous.

THIN PROFESSOR

He should be in the Academy of Science.

HOMER

Thank you very much, Chucho. You can go now.

Chucho bows.

CHUCHO

Yes, Sir.

Chucho leaves the scene.

HOMER

What do you think about him?

EVERYBODY

He's a genius.

THIN PROFESSOR

Where did you find such a brain?

FAT PROFESSOR

He should be the director of the Academy of science.

FERNY

He's as intelligent as he's ugly.

FIFI

He has sex appeal.

THIN PROFESSOR

He could be from anywhere in the world.

PROFESSOR GREER

I can't believe he's so intelligent.

FERNY

They say ugly men are very clever.

THIN PROFESSOR

That face has a price.

PROFESSOR GREER

It is beauty and the beast, if we compare him with Ferny.

FAT PROPHESSOR

He reminds me of a film.

FERNY

Don't go on talking or I'll faint.

A sailor comes in with a glass in a tray.

PROFESSOR GREER

Here is your drink.

FERNY

I want my water of yellow flowers.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- EVENING

HOMER

Do you think Chucho is super intelligent?

EVERYBODY

Yes.

HOMER

Chucho is a chimpanzee.

EVERYBODY

What?????

FAT PROFESSOR

A chimpanzee?

THIN PROFESSOR

A chimpanzee?

PROFESSOR GREER

A chimpanzee?

WOMAN

A chimpanzee?

FIFI

I believe you, my darling.

FERNEY

He's a chimp. How boring!

HOMER

Here comes Chucho again.

The sailor appears wearing a swimming costume. He is a chimpanzee, who shaves his face in the morning like anyone else. Ferny faints in Professor Greer's arms.

FAT PROFESSOR

It must be the devil.

HOMER

You can go now, Chucho.

Chucho leaves the scene after vowing.

PROFESSOR GREER

Where did you find such a genius?

FIFI

He might be an Antioqueno in disguise.

HOMER.

He's a chimpanzee and he's at your disposition if you want to study him. He works for nothing and likes to eat soap after blowing bubbles.

PROFESSOR GREER

It isn't bad. He works for a box of soap a day. Have you offered him aguardiente?

HOMER

He doesn't like the smell.

THIN PROFESSOR

Who is the author of such a phenomenon?

FAT PROFESSOR

It's an attempt against human dignity.

HOMER

His owner is a Colombian man called Mario. He sold Chucho for very little money.

PROFESSOR GREER

How much was it?

HOMER

He only charged \$85,000 dollars.

WOMAN

Is he healthy?

HOMER

He's examined every year at Rochester.

THIN PROFESSOR

Does he bite?

HOMER

He's harmless.

FIFI

Can he make love?

FAT PROFESSOR?

It's too much money for a monkey.

HOMER

I can arrange exhibitions all over the world.

FAT PROFESSOR

Why don't you do it?

HOMER

I promised Miguel I wouldn't do that. Chucho's very useful here.

PROFESSOR GREER

Homer knows about business.

FERNY

I want more sangria with water of rose petals.

### **Chucho's story**

Mr. Homer

I used to work for you a long time ago. If you have any patience, I'll tell you how I met the man who trained Chucho, without paying a single dollar for the service. Congratulations!

I'm not surprised that your wise men did not feel any admiration for Chucho. I believe wise men have small brains, even though they might have big bodies like the dinosaurs had a long time ago, as the day has a million moments to enjoy, instead of thinking in stupid things.

Once upon a time, I accepted Jaramillo's offer of LSD he had brought from Europe, where aristocrats use it to go to the stars, time and space dissolving into nothingness, while rushing through the heavens in something resembling an aeroplane.

"Where are we?" I asked on waking up amidst some bushes with spines rather than leaves.

As a plane glistened under the sun, I thought it had to be real, the wind making me shiver or I was going mad: I had to be lost in the middle of the jungle, my dirty clothes smelling of many things, after flying in the air for some time. I found the journalist, kneeling by the plane, his shirt a mixture of colours like the forest around us in the mysteries of the universe.

"We have no aguardiente," Jaramillo said.

His voice brought me back to reality.

"It's a tragedy," I said.

I looked between the wreckage for anything else we could have, the noise of a river awakening my senses. We could drink its water, filled with fish and other things living amidst its molecules spreading through the shores, the trees obscuring the light of the sun with their branches above our heads.

"We must have been abducted by aliens," I said.



“I wonder where we are,” Jaramillo said.

“Let’s look at the stars.”

“It’s sunny.”

The small river led us to a bigger one, on following that one we found a very big river, and two days later we moved by the shores of a huge river.

“That must be the Amazon,” Jaramillo said.

We saw no buildings with the exception of a few Hilton Hotels, full of gringos studying the butterflies of the region.

“Don’t disturb us,” they said.

“We want civilisation,” I said.

“It’s that way,” they said.

On following their instructions, we arrived at a small town inhabited by nice people, but getting closer, we found the place full of rude people. The *campesinos* (10) shot their guns three times, because of our beards and some marihuana in our pockets, killing two chickens of a heart attack.

“We come in peace,” I said.

“Prove it.”

The dollars I had saved from the wreckage proved my point, the *campesinos* taking us along the streets for everyone to see.

“We have the moon men,” someone said.

“They’re oligarchs,” someone else said.

The town had been built around an idiot called *patepiña* his right foot had elephantiasis and his left foot had mamustiasis, as a few beauty queens, wearing crowns on their heads, welcomed us in style.

“I’ll feel your balls for a few pesos,” the pineapple queen said.

“That’s my job,” the arepa queen said.

I let them feel inside my pants for a few moments, while the queens of sausages and beans, green cheese, white cheese, cheese spread, free plantain, kumis, marmalade, yellow fever, rice and *mazato* (12) waited for their turn.

“We want your money,” they said.

I had been there for some time, when Jaramillo appeared with one of the girls.

“I’ve been having fun,” I said.

The mazato queen looked at him with a few pesos in her hand, before making her way to the hall, where the major spoke to the campesinos about the beauty queens invading their land.

“Don’t you have some spare clothes?” I interrupted his speech.

He sent us to the priest, crowning the queen of the jungle a few streets away.

“You must join the party,” he said.

We crowned a few more girls in our dirty clothes, the world acquiring the colours of lust while feeling their teats through their dresses.

“Come with me to that hut,” I said to one of the girls.

“That’s Miss Lola’s house,” she said.

I took her virginity behind some bushes by the hut, a few rats interrupting our pleasure of the day with their squeals.

“Who is there?” a woman’s voice said.

The girl frowned. “That’s Miss Lola.”

She ran away from my arms, leaving a trail of blood along the mud, as a small woman appeared amidst the bushes.

“You must have a shower,” she said.

Taking me inside the house, she offered me some of her husband’s clothes, covering her nose for some reason. As I enjoyed the cold water behind the curtain she used to cover my dignity, she told me she had been the queen of the onion, the black bean, the

coffee, the *curuba* (14) and the peanut, the base of her skull collapsing under the weight of the crowns she wore on her head.

“It must be painful,” I said.

“I’ve got used to it.”

Every seventh of August she helped to recreate the battle of *Boyaca* (15) making the Spaniards win the battle on leap years.

“Then we have a party,” she said.

“There must be more queens.”

“We have lots of them.”

I saw the first stone someone had placed there in 1922, as she showed me the school building later, and the children had their classes next to the first stone, waiting for the building to be completed. At first they told her she could have children of both sexes, but after a detailed analysis, she realised it had to be boys and girls, and two years later she had permission for the school. An old bus took them to the train station sometimes, an adventure for most of the people who had never left the place in their lives.

“They might bring the trains here one day,” she said.

“I’ll be looking forwards to that,” I said.

Jaramillo appeared by our side, as we drank aguardiente amidst the *campesinos*.

“I’m the doctor,” a small man said, wearing a poncho and sandals in his feet.

He told us about the parties they had in the town hall, everyone vomiting under the light of the moon.

“It must be horrible,” I said.

He could diagnose people’s illness by their vomits, even if they had bad diets, the night robbing them of their sanity in an alcohol induced limbo, instead of raping the barmaid behind the bar.

“This is the best place in the world,” the doctor said.

I believed him, even if I couldn't have girl. Later that night we went into the doctor's house singing the Marseilles, followed by a few of the beauty queens.

"This is your bed," he said.

I saw a four poster bed in a room, the pictures of a few conquistadors adorning the walls while the mosquitoes dined in my body. Then I dreamt of Homer leading me to apocalypse, the queens taking care of my body under the blankets and something crawled down my chest.

"Ha, ha, ha," someone said. "Margarita woke you up."

On opening my eyes, I found myself in the middle of the park, a snake slithered over my body, as a parrot's laughter interrupted the moment.

"I must be dreaming," I said.

"She should bite your bottom," the parrot said.

I tripped on a turtle, while a monkey offered me a banana, the parrot sang an opera and a fat iguana looked for flies on a stone. A man wearing underpants greeted me by a big house.

"I'm the doctor," he said.

I nodded. "I remember."

It had to be the Indian curse like Homer had told me, twisting time around the continuum of the universe.

"What happened last night?" I asked.

"You must have a shower first," the doctor said.

I met a dead caiman in the toilet, before Chucho –the monkey- rescued me from the lion bringing me some breakfast in his muzzle.

"I want to explain everything," the doctor said.

"You must do," I patted Chucho's head.

"Help me," Jaramillo appeared by our side.

"What is it?" I asked.

“A snake is chasing me.”

I'll give you a few details of the story the doctor told us:

My friend had a colleague with a son who was a doctor, a nice trick of nature, as nothing else like that had happened in the family, apart from an uncle helping in the court. The man died before his son had his degree and started to study dead people. The doctor didn't eat much to pay for the university, but after graduating, he practiced in a hospital, where he had dinner for the first time, the only way doctors can survive till they die.

He went to find the health minister but the lift didn't work and by the time he got to the ninth floor, the girl had left him a message to come back at three o'clock. He came back two months later, when the lift had been repaired after the education minister collapsed with a stroke because of all the stairs he had to climb.

They told him the minister of war might need a doctor, while someone put him in contact with an architect Perez, the president of the society for the protection of yellow beetles living in Barranquilla. Our doctor found the man on the beach, crying next to the body of a dead beetle.

“We need doctors in a town in the central cordillera,” the architect said.

“A few days later the doctor arrived at the station, carrying a suitcase with a blood pressure monitor, a stethoscope and a syringe. He also had his degree documents.

“Can I have a ticket for station X?” he said to the girl at the ticket window.

The ticket seller looked at him up and down. Then she did the same but down and up.

“You must be joking,” she said while cleaning her nails.

The doctor shrugged. “But I need a ticket for X.”

“Are you serious?” the girl asked.

“Yes, I'm.”

After going inside the office, she came back a few moments later with two fat men and a skinny one. Two women came behind them.

“There he is,” the girl said.

One of the fat men removed his glasses before confronting the young man.

“Do you know about the punishment for jokers?” he asked.

“You must be ashamed of yourself,” one of the women said.

The other fat man frowned: “What a terrible thing.”

“I don’t understand,” the doctor said.

“You must come with me,” one of the fat men said.

They entered a big room where some men sat around a big table. The one with more authority addressed him:

“Tell me young man, why do you want to go to that town?”

“They don’t have any doctors in the next town,” the doctor replied.

“Why do you hate doctors?”

“No, sir,” the young man said. “I’m a doctor.”

“But you want to live in town X.”

The doctor shook his head. “I’ll live in the next town.”

“Look, young man. I’ve been working in the trains for 34 years and this is the first time someone goes to town X. Why are you going there?”

“I want to go to the next town,” the doctor said.

The fat man talked to his colleagues.

“This young man has the most unusual ideas,” he said. “Can we give him a job at our offices?”

“I’m a doctor,” our man said.

“You must have a real job.”

The doctor shrugged. “I know a bit of medicine.”

“Do you own a bicycle?” the first man asked.

“I can’t ride.”

The fat man grinned. “You are useless.”

“Sell me the ticket then.”

“We’re giving you a free train ticket to the town plus a hand grenade,” the first man said. “You must explode it near the town.”

They gave him the ticket and the grenade before the train arrived at the platform, where some children ran around the passengers, unaware of their fate near the town, where no one ever went.

“The train is coming,” someone said.

The smoke rose to the sky, the noise of the engine disturbing the peaceful afternoon as our man hoped the bomb wouldn’t explode before time.

“It’s a hard life,” he muttered to himself.

The voice in the microphone disturbed his thoughts about life and death aboard the train.

“Can you help me?” a woman with a pram asked.

Homer helped her get in the train, his bag bouncing every time he moved by her side.

“Thank you,” the woman said.

“It didn’t explode,” he said.

“What?”

“Nothing.”

After the train had run for a bit, our man threw the grenade out of the window, landing between some cows taking a rest after their lunch in the fields. The bang derailed the train, killing the cows, some chickens and a few neurosurgeons, working in the rail company. Our man went rolling down the hill towards a point in time he couldn’t imagine, darkness overpowering his senses.

“Are you dead?” someone asked.

On opening his eyes, he saw people looking at him.

“I’m alive,” he said.

“We know.”

The pharmacist applied disinfectant to his bruises.

“You must meet the priest, the owner of the pharmacy, and Miss Lola, who knows about injections,” the pharmacist said.

“I’m a doctor,” our man said.

Mr. Procolo, the richest man in town took him to his home, asking the new arrival to help with a pregnant sow, giving birth to its piglets.

“She could die,” Mr. Procolo said.

Our man helped the sow with his skill, becoming the best doctor of pigs in the region. Mr. Procolo consented for his daughter to live with him and some of his animals.

The doctor made his anti Edison investigations, after inheriting the pigs, the house and his wife when the old man died a few years later. The wife let him do his research on the silent radio, enough for our hero to get condemned to the electric chair, the chamber of gases or to go around *Marquetalia forever*.

Our towns don’t have any schools, hospitals, health centres, toilets or clean water. The only water running through them is smelly and dirty but they have millions of transistors infecting the streets with *rancheras* twenty five hours a day. The priest puts four giant speakers on the church tower, and if the ones in the café in the corner, or in the café with no corner are not working, his highness switches his music on. The smallest and sickest town in Colombia makes more noise than a dormitory of Maristas brothers after the Christmas supper.

Our country has thousands of radio stations for square mile and each one of them has two programs: popular music and commercials, making us hear hundreds of radio stations and commercials, even though some of us do not have a radio. Then the doctor brought me the machine made by him.

“Switch it on,” he said.

I wanted to crash it against his glasses, but the tiger licking my feet stopped me. As I switched it on, I experienced a wonderful sensation: I couldn’t hear the voice of the priest



offering the next tango to the president of the daughters of Maria. The anti Edison man had invented the greatest discovery of the twentieth century: the anti transistor.

I can't describe the sensation of hearing nothing, while asking his permission to lick his other shoe, instead of the tiger. It didn't stop there. He had managed to tame all kinds of animals, teaching them to open traps after acoustic or luminous signals, where they learned to find their food avoiding the electric shocks.

On sacrificing some of the animals and extracting an acid with a complicated name, but known by its initials: DNA, he introduced it in the nervous system of other mice, who behaved as if they had the memory of the dead animals or in mystic terms they had metempsychosis. I can't explain the proceeding properly. My friend contacted the Academy of medicine, but its representative drove away in their Mercedes Benz, after finding about his pigs.

According to this noble man, the process of knowledge is linked to a big, curved molecule: DNA and RNA, inside the code of life. I don't know how he does it. He bought Chucho –the chimpanzee- after an Antioqueño businessman had won him in a game of cards with the guards of the Bucharest zoo. You don't know how important he is from a scientific point of view.

Chucho's not just the best monkey in the world, intelligent, disinterested, and a very good worker, helping us to understand our evolution throughout the centuries. The tiger's more intelligent than any dog, the parrot sings the opera Traviata by memory, while the snake drinks milk and eats mice. The monkeys sweep the house, wash the clothes and do some other chores as the turtles reproduce only when they're asked to. The iguanas are fed by hand.

He has a troop of multicoloured mice, dancing Stravinsky's ballet with Russian perfection. Margarita the snake is harmless but I can't say the same thing of the debt collectors making his life hell with their letters, promising to take away everything he

owns, if he doesn't repay them within days. I gave him a few hundred pesos and promised to sell Chucho to stop the danger.

I can't tell you anymore, or my friend's discoveries might be in danger in a world obsessed with the money to be made from his research. Look after Chucho.

Sincerely yours.

Miguel

### Twentieth century symphony

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- MORNING

A middle aged man with Prussian hair style pedals an exercise bike. On checking the speed and the distance he has achieved, he pedals again with more enthusiasm for a few moments, before going down to the floor. Then he lifts weights over his head while breathing deeply, a Chinese bell adding music to the scene.

He rests standing on his head, before exercising on the portable bars and a trapeze as Chucho appears.

CHUCHO

You must have an appetite, Mr. Astronaut. Do you want any breakfast?

ASTRONAUT

What time is it?

Chucho looks at the clock.

CHUCHO

It is twenty minutes past ten.

ASTRONAUT

Not that one. Look at the chronometer and tell me the whole thing.

Chucho looks at a small electronic chronometer on a table.

CHUCHO

It's ten, twenty two minutes, four seconds and two decimals.

ASTRONAUT

Bring breakfast at ten thirty flat.

CHUCHO

What do you want, sir?

ASTRONAUT

The menu is on the table.

Chucho picks up a paper from the table, reads it and then leaves the scene.

The astronaut goes on the bars and the trapeze with all the strength of an anthropoid as Chucho arrives with two litres of oil, two pounds of grease on a plate, petrol in a bottle and two one inch screws. After putting everything on a small table, he looks at the chronometer.

CHUCHO

Ten thirty flat.

The astronaut jumps down from the trapeze, cleans his face and hands while breathing ten times, before nearing the breakfast table.

On tasting the grease from the motor with a spoon, he mixes it with the petrol.

ASTRONAUT

I like the grease a bit thicker.

CHUCHO

You should have told us of your favourite oil. We use that one for our diesel motor.

ASTRONAUT

I like all the brands.

A calculator moving on four wheels and reading a paper appears through the door. He smiles on seeing the astronaut.

CALCULATOR

Hello Sompson.

ASTRONAUT

My name is Simpson.

CALCULATOR

I like the Spanish word sonso.

ASTRONAUT

I don't like dialects.

CALCULATOR

Don't get upset or you'll lose your appetite.

The astronaut drinks the oil.

ASTRONAUT

I like this oil.

CALCULATOR

I love the sea. I'd like to be a submarine computer.

ASTRONAUT

You'd be rusty.

CALCULATOR

I like being rusty.

ASTRONAUT

Uhhmmm!

He sips the oil.

The calculator looks at Chucho.

CALCULATOR

Boy, I'm dying of hunger.

CHUCHO

How can I help you?

CALCULATOR

I want a beefsteak, toasts with butter and marmalade. Coffee with milk and cereal  
as a starter.

ASTRONAUT

You might get an electric stroke in the system ZX34.

CALCULATOR

I have an iron health, cement and transistors.

The astronaut looks at the chronometer.

ASTRONAUT

I still have twelve minutes, thirty seconds and two decimals.

CALCULATOR

You're drinking thick oil, bad for your physique.

ASTRONAUT

It's all due to atmospheric pressure.

CALCULATOR

I think you should rest. This marine environment is beautiful.

ASTRONAUT

Although I've worked twenty two hours and ten decimals of a second today, I'm resting now.

CALCULATOR

Something might happen to your brain.

ASTRONAUT

That is not important.

CALCULATOR

The brain, altogether with the head ends the symmetry of the body. Women use it for hair styles, hats, wigs and headaches. A woman without headaches is not a woman.

ASTRONAUT

I have to test the manoeuvre L-09...

CALCULATOR (interrupting)

I want to see a dwarf transformer I met last night.

ASTRONAUT

Love is degrading. Men have more important functions to accomplish.

CALCULATOR

It's bad to be a man.

Chucho comes in with the breakfast for the calculator on a tray, the sound of a clarinet interrupting the scene.

The calculator looks at Chucho.

CALCULATOR

What's that?

CHUCHO

It's the matador's guard. He wakes his master with the clarinet.

CALCULATOR

What matador?

CHUCHO

He boarded the ship last night. He's called Cagangosto and he's Homer's guest.

CALCULATOR

What does he kill?

CHUCHO

He kills bulls. He's Spanish.

CALCULATOR

Do they wake up with clarinets?

CHUCHO

I think so, sir.

CALCULATOR

Why doesn't he use an alarm clock?

A middle-aged man with mongoloid eyes, a mongoloid smile and a moustache appears at the door, waving his hands.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Good morning everyone.

The calculator and the astronaut stand up.

ASTRONAUT AND CALCULATOR

Good morning.

The president wears a sport shirt and white trousers, while wiping his moustache with the back of his hand.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Homer is a genius. This is a beautiful yacht.

CALCULATOR

Have you tasted the food?

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I had a bit of caviar last night.

The astronaut looks at the chronometer.

ASTRONAUT

Excuse me.

He leaves the room.

The president of Salvacion sits at the table as the calculator finishes with the food and wipes his face with a screw driver.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

We, the men of state, should rest from government pressure and have a good time in Homer's yacht.

CALCULATOR

We call that a good business.

The president of Salvacion looks at Chucho.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Would you bring me something to drink?

CALCULATOR

What about a dry wine?

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

It's a good idea.



Chucho leaves the scene.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Is the great Mele one of Homer's guests?

CALCULATOR

I came here last night.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I'm here as an incognito. I love humility.

The conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a man with a red cape, chased by another one holding a tripod with the head of a bull. As the one with the cape waves it, he runs away along the deck chased by the bull head.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Isn't that the great matador Cagangosto? It's incredible.

CALCULATOR

They've told me everything about him. He should cure his haemorrhoids, a problem shared by a Houston technician I know.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

He's the greatest matador of all times. He's a monster, superb, splendid, immortal, wonderful, and sublime.

As Chucho arrives with the bottle of wine, the calculator pours it in a glass.

CALCULATOR

Mr. President, here is the wine.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

You must say Excellency.

CALCULATOR

I'm sorry, Excellency. I've brought you the wine.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

My wife likes Cagangosto.

## CALCULATOR

Drink the wine, Excellency.

As the president brings the glass to his mouth, a ball crashes against him, his false teeth flying in the air.

## PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What the...

Before he finishes his sentence, the ball crashes against his glasses.

A small man wearing a gown and with a crown on his head runs across the scene.

## MELE

Hiya!

As the president of Salvacion crawls on the floor, Chucho finds the glasses under a table and gives them to him. The president wipes his glasses with a handkerchief.

## PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Who has done this to me?

He finds a machine gun under his shirt, with Dun- Dun bullets. As Mele throws the ball, it lands in the mouth of an ornamental shark.

## PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

But...it's the...the king.

He looks at the man with the ball, as gets ready to kick it again.

## PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

It must be his majesty, King Mele, in person.

He puts his machine gun away and kneels on the floor.

## MELE

Hiya!

Mele kicks the ball through the scene.

## PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

We have two famous people here. I can't believe it.

His voice sounds strange without his false teeth.

Chucho appears with some more bottles and glasses, while Homer enters the scene accompanied by a beautiful woman.

HOMER

Good morning Excellency, good morning calculator. How did you sleep?

Everyone stands up.

HOMER

This is Madam Bulla, the best soprano in the world.

Madam shakes a Venetian fan.

MADAM

Excellency, and how's Mr. Calculator?

The president of Salvacion covers his mouth with a silk handkerchief.

PRESIDENTE OF SALVACION

I have some of your records. It's an honour to meet you.

MADAM

You're so kind.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Excuse me. I'll come back in a moment.

He leaves the scene.

CALCULATOR

He lost his false teeth.

MADAM

It's funny.

A head with horns crashes against her, and she falls down on the floor.

The calculator and Chucho help her to her feet.

CALCULATOR

Cagangosto has knocked you down.

Chucho picks up Madame's wig from a bust of Julius Cesar.

MADAM

What an honour. He's the best bullfighter in the world.

The astronaut moves across the scene, wearing a space headgear while driving a blackboard.

MADAM

Who is he?

HOMER

He's Simpson, the first American astronaut on Mars.

MADAME

I've seen many people on the camp of Marte.

HOMER

I'm talking of a star in the sky called Mars.

The president of Salvacion appears, wearing another set of false teeth.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

The man who was eating here seems to be mad.

He makes circles on his head.

HOMER

He's Simpson, the first man to step on Mars.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I remember now. It was that football game where they fought for the tenth star.

MADAM

I'm sorry Excellency, but Homer talks about those little stars in the night sky.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I'm always so busy. Homer's guests are famous all over the world.

HOMER

I would say the universe.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

We've been through university.

Mele runs in, breathing fast. They all stand up.

MELE

Hiya!

HOMER

Your majesty, the twentieth century will remember you for your thousand goals.

Mele wipes his mouth with his cape.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I keep a piece of the ball scoring that thousandth goal in a golden box.

MADAM

I have a thread of his socks after I sang ten concerts for the benefit of the flu victims.

MELE

Hiya!

Cagangosto comes in with the bull in pursuit. As Mele kicks the desiccated head of the bull, it rolls down the floor.

CAGANGOSTO

What's the matter with you, man?

MELE

Hiya!

CAGANGOSTO

You've just broken my training bull.

MELE

Hiya!

CAGANGOSTO

You have to mend it or I...

As Homer, Madam and the president, followed by Chucho and the calculator try to stop the argument, Mele kicks Cagangosto overboard and confusion reigns in the ship.

Homer shouts through the microphone.

HOMER

Man overboard! Switch off the engine!

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

It must be an honour being kicked by such a football champion.

MADAM

It's as if the Beatles sang one of their songs for me.

CALCULATOR

Your majesty has scored one thousand and one goals now.

MELE

Hiya!

As the sailors lower a boat down to the sea, the astronaut appears with a square wheel.

He's counting: 25...24...23...22...21...

FIRST SAILOR

I see a shoe.

SECOND SAILOR

I see the suit of lights and the red cape.

MELE

Hiya!

HOMER

Can we throw a cable?

FIRST SAILOR

He's too far.

Madam takes her clothes off.

MADAM

I offer my life for his.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Madam, your life is precious.

CALCULATOR

Why don't you tie the cable to the ball for his majesty to kick it?

MELE

Hiya!

HOMER

It's a good idea.

A few sailors fasten the rope to Mele's ball.

HOMER

Hurry up!

FIRST SAILOR

How can his majesty know where the matador is?

CALCULATOR

We'll tell him that it's goal 2002.

MELE

Hiya!

Homer ties the ball to the rope and calls Mele, who is eating a banana.

Homer bows.

HOMER

Your majesty

Mele puts the banana peeling on his bold head.

MELE

Hiya!

Homer gives the peeling to a sailor.

HOMER

Do you want to score goal 2002 your majesty?

MELE

Hiya!

As king Mele kicks the ball, it goes faster than sound and the president's wig flies up in the air.

FIRST SAILOR

It's perfect.

MADAM

He's a genius!

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Where is my wig?

MELE

Hiya!

FIRST SAILOR

He's holding the cable.

Madam wears only her pants and bra by now.

MADAM

Thank God!

HOMER

You must pull at the same time now.

FIRST SAILOR

Bring the boat.

SECOND SAILOR

We must get the oxygen ready.

FIRST SAILOR

Bring him onboard now.



On hearing a shout of horror, Madam runs to the bars without her bra.

MADAM

He doesn't have a head.

She faints.

HOMER

A shark must have eaten his head.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

The greatest bullfighter of all times has died.

He cries.

CALCULATOR

It isn't so bad. He'll perform better without a head.

HOMER

He's breathing!

The men leave the scene, as Madam takes off her pants, the calculator drinks some wine and everyone else waits in silence.

A few sailors bring the headless body of Cagangosto on a stretcher, accompanied by Homer and the President of Salvacion.

HOMER

He needs oxygen.

Blood pours out of the neck

FIRST SAILOR

We must stop the bleeding!

SECOND SAILOR

We need Cobwebs.

A sailor puts a lot of cobwebs over the bleeding neck.

PRESIDENT OD SALVACION

We must place a plantain leaf above it.

MADAM

What will happen to the world without Cagangosto?

She cries.

MADAM

The sun has died.

HOMER

Madam, he's still alive.

Madam stands up.

MADAM

He doesn't have a head.

CALCULATOR

He could have lost his right arm. That would have been more terrible.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

He has to hold his cape.

Mele appears kicking the ball.

MELE

Hiya!

The astronaut walks on his hands and with a multicolour parachute tied to his right foot.

HOMER

He's still bleeding. What do we do?"

CALCULATOR

Let's put the head of the bull on his neck.

MADAM

The calculator is clever.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

It's a good idea.

Chucho gives Homer the head of the bull.

HOMER

Let's try it.

He places the head of the bull on the matador's neck.

CALCULATOR

It needs a few stitches.

Madam leaves the scene.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

He's not bleeding anymore.

HOMER

It's a miracle.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- MORNING

Madam kneels by the body of Cagangosto, holding a golden coffer.

HOMER

You must be careful

MADAM

I'll sew my best stitches.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Use different colours.

CALCULATOR

He'll be better than before.

Madam sews the head, while the sailors put away all the things they've used to save the man's life.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE SEA- MORNING

Meanwhile in the bottom of the sea:

FIRST SHARK

I'm not feeling well. I must have appendicitis.

SECOND SHARK

Did you eat something heavy?

FIRST SHARK

I devoured the head of a bullfighter.

SECOND SHARK

The feet are the best things they have.

FIRST SHARK

I didn't know that.

SECOND SHARK

You'll learn the secrets of the job one day.

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- MORNING

Madam has finished sewing the head. They all applaud.

The head of the bull moves as its eyes open.

CAGANGOSTO

Where am I?

HOMER

Don't worry, matador. You're with me.

CAGANGOSTO

Who is me?

HOMER

I'm me.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Can't you see?

Cagangosto looks at the president.

CAGANGOSTA

Who is him?

HOMER.

You must remember the president of Salvacion, Excellency.

As Homer helps Cagangosto to stand up, he feels his right horn.

CAGANGOSTO

I'm thirsty.

CALCULATOR

Drink some wine.

The calculator gives him the bottle and Cagangosto drinks everything.

MADAM

He's beautiful. He looks like a Miura.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I'll find my other wig.

He leaves the scene.

CALCULATOR

I think the matador is better off now. Some bulls are very intelligent.

CAGANGOSTO

Bulls are the most intelligent animals in the world.

CALCULATOR

You can't include calculators, of course.

CAGANGOSTO

I'm talking about animals.

HOMER

I feel thirsty after the incident. Do you want another bottle of wine, matador?

CAGANGOSTO

Yes, man.

A sailor says something to Homer.

HOMER

I have good news for you. A helicopter with the Beatles on board is about to land on the ship.

CAGANGOSTO

The Beatles?

Madam is still naked.

MADAM

The Beatles??????

The president of Salvacion comes in, wearing a new wig.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Have I heard right?

HOMER

The Beatles will arrive in a few minutes, Excellency.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Are they the heroes of the British Empire???

MADAME

Yes, I'm very excited.

Homer shouts.

Mele runs across the scene, kicking his ball.

HOMER

Your majesty.

MELE

Hiya!

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Your majesty, the Beatles are coming.

HOMER

They are the most resplendent jewel in the British crown.

CAGANGOSTO

They are members of the order Garreteer.

MELE

Hiya!

He runs after the ball.

MADAM

His majesty is a genius.

HOMER

He's superman.

CAGANGOSTO

The wine is very good.

CALCULATOR

Let's drink to your health, matador.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

We represent the best of humankind.

MADAM

God has gathered the best people on this ship.

The astronaut moves across the scene pulling a tower with luminous lights as a siren goes on. He stops and walks backwards.

CALCULATOR

Can I have some more prawns?

As Homer leaves the scene, the noise of the approaching helicopter fills everything.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

They have arrived.

MADAM

I'm going to faint.

CAGANGOSTO

You can faint here.

He opens his arms.

MADAM

AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

She falls in the arms of Cagangosto.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What a sensible woman.

CAGANGOSTO

She's very nice.

As he licks her body, she faints even more.

CALCULATOR

Where's the urinal?

SAILOR

It's over there.

He gestures with his hand.

The calculator goes away with the sailor.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I don't like that machine.

CAGANGOSTO

It looks like a domesticated space ship.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

He must be indifferent to human glory.

CAGANGOSTO

I don't think he understands much about bulls.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

He doesn't like art.

CAGANGOSTO

That astronaut plays a science fiction game all the time.



Homer appears followed by a few people with electric guitars, long hair and wearing similar clothes. The president of Salvacion rises to his feet.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

The Beatles!

Madam stands up.

MADAM

The Beatles.

Cagangosto doesn't stand up.

CAGANGOSTO

The boys have arrived.

HOMER

Ladies and gentleman, these are the Beatles and their girlfriends.

The men in funny costumes sit in a circle on the floor, ignoring everyone around them, while the astronaut crawls along the scene singing to himself.

ASTRONAUT

My old Kentucky home...

The first Beatle looks at him.

FIRST BEATLE

We want the same stuff he has had.

HOMER

He's the astronaut Simpson, the conqueror of the Martian mountains.

SECOND BEATLE

We want the same marihuana he's had and not the girls he has conquered.

FIRST GIRL

I want some mescaline.

SECOND GIRL

I want LSD.

THIRD BEATLE

Bring everything you have.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

They're geniuses.

Homer leaves the scene with one of the sailors as the calculator comes back.

CALCULATOR

Everything here is rubbish.

CAGANGOSTO

I remember an afternoon in Seville with bulls of Domec...

MADAM

I love his wines.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I want to have a picture with the geniuses.

A few sailors come in with food, wine, cigarettes and multicoloured sweets, as Homer appears behind them.

HOMER

You have all kind of liquors here. I have brought blonde, brown, and Asian Marihuana, different concentrations of opium plus LSD, mescaline, sublimated heroin and morphine.

The Beatles fiddle with their guitars, while everyone else applauds.

CALCULATOR

I'll drink some wine.

As the guests help themselves to food and stimulants, Mele arrives behind the ball.

MELE

Hiya!

HOMER

Would you like something, your majesty?

MELE

Hiya!

He goes after the ball.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- AFTERNOON

A sailor moves towards the president.

SAILOR

You are needed in the phone, Excellency.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Someone wants me?

SAILOR

Yes, sir. They say it's urgent.

HOMER

Bring him the phone.

The sailor goes away as the Beatles smoke marihuana and other drugs.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- AFTERNOON

After the sailor brings the phone to the president, a man wearing a suit with decorations appears in the small three-dimensional screen.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What's the matter minister?

MINISTER

It's bad, Excellency.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Tell me, man.

MINISTER

The referee has made a penalty against our team, after twenty five minutes of the football match against the republic of Bajuras.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

That's not possible. It's an attempt against me. That's...

MINISTER

Excuse me, excellent president of the republic of Salvacion but the penalty has been effective. We're losing one to zero.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Dirty dogs! Call all the reserves of air and sea.

The astronaut moves across the scene holding two globes of different colours.

MINISTER

We'll do as your Excellency says.

He bows before the screen.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Keep me informed.

He puts the receiver down and breathes deeply.

HOMER

Is it bad news, Excellency?

Madam sits next to the Beatles and sings, while showing her goods.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Something awful has happened, dear Homer. In the football game for the final of the Jules Rimmet cup, the Barujas team has scored a penalty. What an indignity!

My country has been dirtied by that bunch of idiots.

The voice of Madam singing with the Beatles floats around the ship.

CAGANGOSTO

During a bullfight in Cali, I...

CALCULATOR

Drink more wine, matador.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I want to buy thirty planes with bombs. My country is in danger and we can't wait any more time.

HOMER

Yes, of course.

He leaves the scene.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Assassins, BASTARDS!

CAGANGOSTO

Why don't you take the man who is kicking about?

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Do you mean his majesty, King Mele?

CAGANGOSTO

Yes, man.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

I don't think his country would want to lose such a jewel. It is as if Venezuela gave away its petrol, Japan its factories, England its queen, Argentina its generals, Colombia the Tequendama Falls, Brazil the Amazon River or China its great wall.

The Beatles are singing in a choir, while the girls take off their clothes.

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- LATE AFTERNOON

The figure of the minister appears in the telephone screen.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What's happening?

The minister vows.

MINISTER

The first time finished 1-0. Seven members of our sporting agency have been killed, including the technical director, the trainer and two advisers.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What have you done?

MINISTER

One of our small planes dropped a bomb over the stadium, killing a central judge and four spectators.

As a sailor puts a few papers on the table, The Beatles and the girls appear naked in the deck.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

You'll get more arms in a few minutes.

MINISTER

Thank you, Excellency.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

Let me see the match on the telephone.

After the minister vows, they see several men kicking a ball in the screen, while others lie on the floor.

PRESENTER

The player of Salvacion at the right side of the field takes the ball, passes it to another one, who is stabbed by the central defence of Barujas.

The left defence of Salvacion points the machine gun towards the opposite goalie but the referee stops the bloodshed.

Bajuras is winning 1-0, as they come to take the wounded with a stretcher. The left defence of Bajuras is dead, the referee replacing the one killed during the first time, calls the substitute. The new player shows the carnet of FIFA on the right side of the field. What an interesting game! Ladies and gentlemen, Salvacion army invades the northern frontiers of the other country.

As Mele kicks his ball against the phone, it breaks in a thousand pieces.

MELE

Hiya!

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

No, man.

HOMER

What a problem.

CALCULATOR

His Majesty has finished with the game.

CAGANGOSTO

It was interesting.

PRESIDENT OF SALVACION

What can I do now?

HOMER

I have the papers for your majesty to sign, before getting the helicopter.

After picking up the papers from the table, Homer leaves with the president, while the Beatles sing with the naked girls.

After climbing up a wall, the astronaut drops down into a net, he had put there before.

EXT. LUXURIOUS SHIP- LATE AFTERNOON

Homer and the sailors bring a few things.

HOMER

We must sing together, boys.

The Beatles sing their songs. Cagangosto dances flamenco on a table, Homer looks after his instruments and king Mele kicks his ball about.

They all fall down on the floor a few moments later, except Mele, kicking his ball and Homer.

HOMER

Thank you everyone. I have just recorded the twentieth century symphony for the future.



### The nuns

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Two men wearing long gowns sit on the top deck of a yacht. One of them is a big man with an even bigger stomach, a crown on his head and rings on his fingers.

The other one doesn't have a crown but a few pendants with crosses hung around his neck.

They drink cups of tea, looking at the sea under the light of the full moon. Some cups are on the table along with a plate full of cakes and biscuits.

CARDINAL

It's nice of Homer to let us hide in his floating mansion.

BISHOP

He helps his friends.

CARDINAL

He gets my blessings.

As they drink their cups of tea, the cardinal takes one of the cakes, crumbs falling down his gown.

A nun wearing a blue tunic with matching head gear moves towards them.

SISTER CAMILLA

It's nice to find the children of God together.

CARDINAL

Homer let us use his boat while ignoring the general and showing us his generosity.

SISTER CAMILLA

They want to take him to court in the mainland.

BISHOP

He's a hero.

SISTER CAMILLA

The pope must canonize him.

Sitting at the table, she takes a cup of tea, and Fifi appears in the scene showing her pants under a small mini skirt.

BISHOP

Fifi, it's nice to see you here.

FIFI

I'm enjoying Homer's hospitality.

Fifi shakes hands with the priests while hugging Sister Camilla and a tall nun wearing the same clothes as the other one appears in the scene.

SISTER ROSA

I find so many members of the clergy in this yacht.

CARDINAL

We haven't seen our host yet.

Sister Rosa pours herself a cup of coffee, taking a biscuit from the plate as Homer appears accompanied by a young woman in combat clothes. She's tall with long legs, black hair, false eye lashes and big breasts.

They all stand up and applaud.

HOMER

I hope you're enjoying your stay in my yacht.

SISTER CAMILLA

We are glad to be far from a dangerous country.

HOMER

Consider me as your saviour.

He gestures to the girl.

HOMER

Amelia is the head of the revolutionary movement of our country.

On saluting everyone army style, she looks at Fifi.

AMELIA

I have seen your face in the papers. You must be the wife of the general.

Fifi nods.

FIFI

I'm glad to meet you.

AMELIA

I wish I could say the same thing.

HOMER

Let's drink to our health and freedom.

He puts a tray full of glasses and two bottles of wine one of the sailors has brought, on the table.

HOMER

Cardinal, would you like a glass of wine?

CARDINAL

I want a cup of tea.

HOMER

Does anyone want wine?

FIFI

I want a gin and tonic.

AMELIA

I wouldn't mind a gin and tonic, Uncle Homer.

A sailor goes around replenishing cups of tea and coffee, pouring gin and tonic in the girls' glasses, as Amelia stands in front of everyone.

AMELIA

Dear comrades. Our countries must be governed by people who don't slave and torture their fellow human beings in the name of bigotry.

She pauses to take a sip of gin and tonic.

AMELIA

We must attack the forces of evil.

They applaud.

HOMER

I have the arms ready for your fight.

AMELIA

It's God's fight, Uncle Homer. We must win over the people who kill and torture us.

She kisses him.

HOMER

I have a surprise for you.

On clapping his hands, a few women wearing uniforms appear from one of the doors, saluting them military style.

Amelia smiles.

AMELIA

Thanks, Uncle Homer.

HOMER

I knew you wanted your girls.

AMELIA

Attention!

The women stand in front of her.

AMELIA

One, two, one, two...

They march around the scene.

AMELIA

Rest now.

They disperse as Amelia sips her drink. Homer hugs her, feeling around her bosom.

CARDINAL

That was a good show of solidarity.

BISHOP

You're fighting for the country.

AMELIA

We want the liberation from the oppressor.

They all look at Fifi.

FIFI

I have left my husband, the general.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Music comes out of the loudspeakers. Homer dances with Amelia, Sister Camilla and Sister Rosa dance with each other, while the bishop, the cardinal and Fifi sip their drinks.

Every time a bottle stops spinning on the floor, the army women take their clothes off.

SISTER ROSA

Our father who art in heaven...

CARDINAL

Hallowed be thy name...

SISTER CAMILLE

Thou kingdom will come...

Fifi moves across the scene and disappears through a door.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN IN LUXURIOUS SHIP- NIGHT

Chucho writes on his notebook under the light of a lamp. Someone knocks at the door.

FIFI (O.S)

Chucho, it's me. Can I come in?

On stepping in the untidy room, she sees papers covering the floor, the table lying under lots of other things.

FIFI

It's crazy outside there.

Chucho stops writing.

CHUCHO

I'm working on Homer's manuscripts.

FIFI

Jose was an invisible friend.

CHUCHO

I know.

Fifi caresses his fur and kisses his mouth.

CHUCHO

Not now.

She reads what Chucho writes.

FIFI

Why are you leaving a space here?

CHUCHO

It's something I don't understand.

She keeps on reading, loud music interrupting her concentration.

CHUCHO

You must go back to the party.

FIFI

I want to stay with you.

She kisses his fur, Chucho's hands pushing her away.

FIFI

When will you finish?

CHUCHO

I don't know.

INT.CABIN IN LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Fifi tidies the room.

CHUCHO

Don't touch my papers.

FIFI

They'll explain everything.

CHUCHO

I hope so.

FIFI

Tell me, please.

CHUCHO

It's complicated.

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

Fireworks go up the sky, the air has a pinkish hue of smoke rising to the stars, while the cardinal, the bishop and the nuns pray around the naked women.

HOMER

This is a night to remember.

AMELIA

Hurrah to our hero!

EVERYONE

Hurrah!

The music starts again, as Amelia approaches the cardinal and the girls dance with each other.

SISTER ROSA

You are naked, my child.

AMELIA

This is the way God sent me to this world.

HOMER

I'll dance with you.

The cardinal prays.

CUT TO

EXT. LUXURIOUS YACHT- NIGHT

The sailors bring a table with papers and calculators.

HOMER

We must talk about business now.

AMELIA

I'll sign a cheque for the ammunitions and the tanks, Uncle Homer.

She sits at the table, her breasts trembling over her glasses, before writing a cheque for lots of dollars.

AMELIA

We'll kill those bastards.

On coming to the table for their drinks, the girls look more naked under the deck lights.

AMELIA

We toast to the revolution.

ALL THE GIRLS

To the revolution.

CARDINAL

Ora pro novis...

HOMER

We'll have a firework display tonight.



CARDINAL

I won't be here.

## Miguel

I arrived at Homer's yacht on a warm night, as a group of girls waved at us from the pool, their laughter brightening Homer's world of fun.

"They're Homer's angels," someone said.

The music reminded me of my home in the heart of the city I had known all my life, before travelling to other lands, when the celebrities wanted to come to the yacht, lost in the Caribbean Sea of fun.

"I'm glad to see you," Homer's voice interrupted my reverie.

We shook hands amidst the fireworks exploding beyond the curtains of reality, my host looking a picture of happiness with his round face and bold head, while the girls followed his actions from the pool.

"Amelia visited us last week," he said.

I had heard my daughter recounting her experience in the radio, the press getting on her nerves with their questions about the yacht, where weird things happened by forces unknown to man. Then I noticed a nymph swimming through the pool, her body moving in the water like an angel of sin about to meet the king of hell.

"Hi," she said. "Will you join me in the water?"

The girl moved through the water, her teats like balloons, ready to explode after a few moments of fun in the pool, her throne amidst the stars of the universe.

"She's got blue blood," Homer said. "She's a duchess."

She didn't look that colour, but rich people can be funny.

"I want an aperitif," she said.

Homer shrugged. "You must join us."

On leaving the pool, she looked at me with light eyes, the same colour as her blood, while drying herself with a towel.

"I can show you around," she said.

I nodded. "That would be nice."

“Would you like an aguardiente?” a voice interrupted my thoughts.

I came face to face with a chimpanzee pushing a tray towards my chest, memories of the beauty queens in the mountains coming back to my mind, after my trip to the unknown.

“Thanks Chuchu,” I said.

“I hope you enjoy here,” he said.

He could talk, proving all the scientists wrong about their predictions for his vocal chords and size of the brain, the professor’s experiments with DNA and other things, coming to me amidst the memories of the mountains.

“He used to belong to a professor,” I said.

“A teacher?” she asked.

“A scientist.”

I told her of my adventure to the land of the beauty queens, filling my days with joy under my pants in the most extraordinary place in the world.

“Chucho loves us,” I said.

“He must be clever.”

I felt her body, burned by the sun, in spite the lotion she put on herself in order to protect her skin from damage from the X rays and other things invading our planet from space.

“Your wife must be waiting in New York,” she said.

“We are divorced.”

She smiled. “I used to be married.”

On drying her hair, she let me see her breasts, like doves about to fly away to better lands at the end of time.

“What happened to your marriage?” she asked.

“We had our disagreements.”

I wanted her body, her breasts calling me to the pleasures inside her bra on my first night in the yacht.

“Chucho will take you to your cabin,” Homer interrupted the conversation.

I noticed the chimpanzee flirting with the girls by the pool, bringing memories of that trip to the land beyond time.

“He’s busy,” I said.

“I’ll get some more drinks,” the duchess said.

After looking at her reflection in the mirror by the bar, she moved towards the other side of the pool, where a few of the guests rested from the pleasures of the day.

“She’ll be back,” Homer said.

“I hope so.”

Chucho looked at the ticket attached to my bag, stating my destination to another part of the world.

“I flew to the yacht tonight,” I said.

He nodded. “The professor works hard.”

I couldn’t stop thinking of the man I had met in the mountains, thoughts of fantasy getting together with the magic I had seen in the town lost in time.

“You are clever,” I said.

He nodded. “Thanks the doctor.”

After taking my bags with his hairy hands, he disappeared down a corridor amidst the shouts of the girls by the pool in a world beyond reality, where the unthinkable happened sometimes. Tears streaked his face, on remembering his life in the market some time ago.

“I was lost in the sea,” he said.

He showed me the pictures of his rescue from the sea, a girl standing by his side like a guardian angel in most of them.

“It’s Fifi,” Homer said.

Jaramillo arrived, looking smart in a suit he must have purchased in New York, before making his way between the people resting by the pool, taking care of his clothes.

“Homer showed me his trophies,” he said.

“What trophies?”

“He had a matador with the head of a bull.”

“That’s strange,” I said.

“Matadors are funny people.”

The sound of thunder sent shivers up my spine, lightning illuminating the top of the clouds as mountains of water took the yacht up and down.

“I want an orgy,” Homer said. “Thunder turns me on.”

“Can’t you wait till the morning?” I asked.

He shook his head. “We must have fun.”

“I have to talk to you,” I said.

“Some other time.”

“The doctor needs money,” I said.

“It’s the scourge of society.”

On taking off his clothes, I saw his body tanned by the sun, the girls dancing naked around the pool like in a nudist camp by the sea.

“Yes,” my duchess said.

I had not seen her coming back with the drinks on a tray, and after throwing away her panties, she joined the party within the complexities of the yacht.

“You must join us,” she said.

Fireworks exploded in the sky, making me forget my problems, while most of the people had fun, their cries of joy echoing around me.

“Take your clothes off,” my duchess said.

On unbuttoning my shirt, her fingers caressed my chest, making me shudder with desire.

“Can I suck it?” she asked.

I let her put it in her mouth, her fingers drawing the foreskin up and down, until the semen splashed her teats and everyone cheered.

“One, two, three,” they chanted.

“I want to wake up,” I said.

“Four, five, six...”

I sucked her teats, playing with her clitoris in the name of enjoyment, even though I had just arrived at the yacht.

“Ahhh,” she said.

We had fun, the moon rising in a sky sending us out of reality, as she showed me the tattoos on her body.

“What is that name?” I pointed to the blue letters near her elbow.

“I thought I loved my husband.”

“Nothing lasts.”

She had consummated her marriage in High Park, the clock striking midnight in a summer’s night, when the foxes mated amongst the bushes.

“Homer married himself,” I said.

“You must be joking.”

“It’s the truth.”

I explained the ceremony in his house, some of his friends bringing merchandise from the port in order to sell in the market.

“It must have been exciting,” she said.

“He claimed my daughter visited him afterwards.”

“Did she?”

“He must have imagined it.”

“That’s Homer,” she said.

We sat by the railings admiring the view, the storm far from our emotions by the sea in a night we might never forget.

“The president has died,” Homer said. “Hurrah to the general.”

“Fifi must be happy,” I said.

Homer shrugged. “She never loved him.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

He jumped on a few of the things littering the deck, holding the manuscripts he had been studying in his cabin.

“Stop it,” Jaramillo said.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

Father Ricardo taught me that word in the school some years ago, memories of the fat priest coming back to my mind amidst my childhood in the market.

“He’s found it,” I said.

“What has he found?” my duchess asked.

The chimpanzee’s short legs bent every time he jumped, stopping the orgy in its tracks.

“Eureka,” he said.

“The papers,” Homer said.

He ran through the folk enjoying themselves in the deck, ending a night of pleasure in the yacht.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“I want more,” the duchess said.

“They’re my papers,” Homer said.

“Leave him alone,” I said.

Chucho ran with his knuckles on the floor, shouting strange words before climbing up the mast to the clouds.

“Homer is a genius,” the duchess said.

On offering me her lips, we fell to the floor amidst a mixture of sex, fun and confusion, the lights in the sky mirroring the chaos around us.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“Do it faster,” the duchess said.

As the sky erupted in many colours, throngs of naked people moved around the deck, my duchess urging me to keep on doing it.

“You must listen to this,” Homer switched a radio on.

“Astronomers think our sun might explode in a nova,” the presenter said. “The word means new, because a star appears in the sky where nothing was there before. We have put together the radio stations in the country to keep you informed of the developments.”

“It is a joke,” I said.

“Look at the sky,” he said.

On looking up, I noticed pink clouds floating in a blue and grey horizon.

“It’s dawn,” I said.

Homer shrugged. “A very strange dawn.”

“We must remain calm,” the presenter said.

I nodded. “I’m calm.”

“Me too,” the duchess caressed my body.

“It’s the end of time,” Homer said.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“These are the latest news,” the presenter interrupted. “Our sun has undergone a few changes, according to the astronomers around the planet. We urge everyone to remain at home, as some people have died in the churches.”

“I don’t like churches,” my duchess said.

Homer drank a glass of aguardiente someone had forgotten in the table.

“This must be a joke,” I said.

“I like the colours,” my duchess said.



On following her pointing finger, I saw a patch of red emerging from the sea, shades of pink, struggling to appear behind the red.

“Thanks for the welcome,” I said.

“I haven’t done anything,” Homer said.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

He had gone up the pole, his eyes surveying the fog forming on the sea.

“It might rain,” my duchess said.

We went inside the cafeteria, where the sailors enjoyed the party of the century, after drinking aguardiente and playing with the girls.

“We want more rum,” they said.

On entering the place, Homer led us to a corner of the room, the smell of alcohol assaulting our senses.

“The sun is changing,” the presenter said. “The hydrogen around its core is being consumed, while the helium expands.”

“Bring us aguardiente,” Homer said to the waitress.

“I want some mint in mine” the duchess said.

“Don’t you care about Armageddon?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” she said.

“We have fog all over the world,” the presenter said. “Bringing panic to the planet.”

I noticed the fog outside the window, time and space getting together, like in a horror film about to get worse.

“The colours have gone,” I said.

“They must be behind the fog,” the duchess said.

“Astronomers believe our sun has exhausted its helium, causing the rare phenomenon this morning,” the presenter said.

“Is helium the gas for balloons?” I asked.

“The sun is funny,” the duchess said.

“Let’s have another orgy,” Homer said.

He gulped his aguardiente, his face getting red with all the effort, even though he must have planned the night.

“Lola’s mother warned me about this,” he said.

“Was she the pretty girl from the shop?” I asked.

Homer nodded. “She had a sergeant.”

“You tickle me,” the duchess said.

“I bring you the latest news,” the presenter said. “Most of the earth has disappeared under the fog, bringing chaos to the cities, where cars have been crashing with each other.”

Some more mist gathered around the yacht, the seagulls flying through the chaos like lost angels.

“Will you marry me?” the duchess asked.

“If you have my baby,” I said.

“That’s not fair.”

“I’m talking to some of our newsmen waiting amidst the traffic,” the presenter said.

“They might be able to tell us what is going on in the roads.”

After a few moments, another voice spoke in the radio.

“We have been standing in the same spot for the past hour, the fog getting thicker all the time.”

“How’s the mood of the people around you?” the presenter asked.

“They are frightened, and bored as the fog thickens.”

“What about the lights?” the presenter said.

“We can’t see them through the fog.”

## Armageddon

We saw the tragedy unfolding outside after Homer had shown us the complexities of his body, amidst the lights dancing in the sky and Chucho's cries of despair.

"I want more aguardiente," my duchess said.

I shrugged. "Alcohol is bad for your health."

"The sun might kill us," she said.

"Kiss me and I'll tell you."

"Tell me what?"

I touched her body sent by the Gods, the spectre of death smiling beyond the curtains of reality, when Chucho shouted and the guests got excited.

"I haven't slept at all," I said.

"Sleep here," she pointed to the floor by our side.

It didn't seem to be the best place for me to rest, images of my life haunting me at that moment, even though I might die soon.

"Eureka," Chucho said.

The monkey held a bunch of papers in his hands, jumping and shouting around the deck.

"According to the latest news, the sun is pulsating," the presenter said. "The authorities are trying to stop the panic engulfing the country, amongst the developments in the sky."

"This is real," Homer said.

"Is it?" I asked.

"The radio says so."

"It's your radio."

I hoped he would finish with his joke, fingers of fire reaching for the furthest parts of the sky in the most beautiful display I had ever seen in my life.

“The country has awoken to a rare phenomenon,” the presenter said. “The sun is pulsating. We don’t know why this is happening.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

The voice in the radio urged us to keep away from the sea, the world collapsing in a symphony of colours, while throngs of naked people got lost amidst the confusion around me.

“This is the national news at the moment,” the presenter interrupted. “It’s raining in Bogotá. Attention! An electric storm has developed over the city, with rain and hail.”

It also rained in the yacht, wisps of lightning dancing above our heads in a mighty display of power.

“It’s the end of time,” Homer said.

“Liar,” I said.

My duchess nodded. “I want more drugs.”

She couldn’t take her eyes off the sky, excited by the carrousel of fire stretching through the heavens.

“Can you see that?” she asked.

More lights appeared in the horizon, reminding me of my trip to the mountains, when strange things flew through the atmosphere, the beauty queens bringing me back to reality afterwards.

“Marihuana, L.S.D or heroin never made me so mad,” I said.

She nodded. “Homer must have put something in the cocktails.”

“I haven’t done anything,” he said.

“You are a liar.”

We drank alcohol to calm our nerves, the sky giving us the best display on earth, while the chimp went crazy with his shouts in another language.

“Homer found some Indians in the jungle,” I said.

My duchess smiled. “That’s interesting.”

“They dammed the world.”

“I hope so.”

“We give you an extraordinary bulletin,” the presenter said. “The sun will explode as a nova. The word means new, because a star appears where nothing was there before.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“I knew it,” I said.

I had to stop the madness aboard the yacht, the chimpanzee enraging the guests with his screams about finding something.

“Listen to the news,” Homer said.

“They’re lies.”

I cursed the lights dancing in the sky, the end of the world filling our souls with all kinds of emotions.

“Look at the clouds,” my duchess said.

A fountain of blue light evaporated like a Christmas decoration in the fog, turning the heavens into a display of power.

“It has crashed with the arch,” she said.

“I hate Homer,” I said.

“Why?”

“He wants to be God.”

“A fat sun is rising over there,” she said.

Some other people congregated by the pool, the orchestra playing a waltz, even if we might die at the end of the show, nature giving us the best spectacle anyone could wish on earth.

“Don’t bite me,” someone said.

“Hurrah to our host.”

“The captain is a cynic.”

“You’re mad.”

“Where’s my cup?”

“If you kiss me ten times, I’ll tell you.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

The fog had thickened, a fountain of colours adorning the sky at the edge of reality, in the strangest night of my life.

“I want to kill him,” I said.

“Fuck me first,” my duchess said.

Homer lied to us about the threat of destruction from the sun, while trying to impress his friends aboard the yacht.

“You have to lie down in a safe place as I say the words: we have seven minutes,” the presenter interrupted my thoughts. “That is when the force of the nova will reach us.”

“What is a nova?” Fifi asked.

“The sun swells, before discarding its outer layers,” I said.

“I don’t understand.”

“It will explode,” I said.

“That’s horrible.”

She cried in my arms, the skies threatening to finish with our lives in the face of adversity.

“Make it stop,” she said.

“I can’t.”

“Homer can do it,” she said.

I shook my head. “He’s stupid.”

I thought of the things Homer had done in the name of fun, scaring us to death with his pranks, when we had not infuriated him in any way. On looking up at the sky, I noticed the colours getting stronger, smoke leaving a trail across the heavens, as fireworks flew across the horizon.

“I can’t believe it,” I said.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“We must keep calm,” the radio presenter said. “Most of the victims have happened because of the panic everywhere. The skyscrapers have disappeared under the fog in New York, a number of ships and planes getting lost in the confusion reigning everywhere.”

“Are we running away from New York?” someone said.

“They’re right. It’s boring.”

“It must be the high rents.”

“Homer is a genius. First he shows us the lights, and now he frightens us.”

“Where did you buy that record?”

“I have that novel by Wells.”

“Attention,” the presenter said. “You must lie somewhere safe when I say we have seven minutes.”

Everybody got excited, the ship looking like a crazy hospital in the last hours of humankind, while the waves took us up and down. Then Homer appeared by my side, looking pale in under the lights.

“Chucho must have found something,” he said.

“You think so.”

I saw the pages with the letters from beyond reality, the tragedy changing the way he saw the world, before the sun destroyed us.

“Jose left them on the floor,” I said.

“The nova is sending radiation through space,” he said.

Homer showed me a few words smudged by his hands, the waves taking the yacht up and down like a yo-yo.

“The sun is expanding,” the presenter said. “Its outer layers reaching our way, according to the astronomers.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

I had a headache, the world becoming a mass of confusion, when Homer blamed everything in his invisible friend.

“The monkey has Jose’s papers,” he said.

I nodded. “I know.”

“You never saw my friend in the backyard,” he said.

“He was invisible.”

On thinking of the house behind the shop, I remembered the death of Homer’s parents in the midst of time, when he had fancied my daughter and his coca.

“We have some news,” the presenter interrupted. “The planet Mercury has exploded. We’ll see the results soon.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

On hugging my duchess, I thought of the countdown the radio had mentioned.

“Have LSD,” Homer said.

The universe looked different after swallowing some of the tablets with a sip of aguardiente.

“We must talk,” I said.

“You are drugged.”

“It’s your fault.”

The world swirled around me, the sea looking darker amidst reality.

“We have seven minutes,” the presenter said. “Attention. We have seven minutes!!”

The clock ticked towards the end of time, setting in motion my thought processes as Homer crouched on Fifi in another part of the deck, talking about the death and destruction of the world.

“We have six minutes,” the presenter said.

“Read my pages,” Jaramillo said. “They tell the truth.”

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“He knows,” Jaramillo said.



“Talk to him then.”

I felt time slipping, Homer’s pages numbing my mind, as he deceived us with his lies of Armageddon.

“Attention,” the radio interrupted. “We have five minutes.”

“Fuck me,” my duchess said.

“The world is ending.”

“It won’t.”

We cuddled each other, the noise of thunder getting mixed with the fireworks some crazy person sent up the sky.

“To the end of the world,” I said.

“I don’t want to know.”

We made love, the end of humankind hanging over our heads and the guests enjoying themselves in spite of everything

“What’s happened to the countdown?” I asked.

“We have five minutes,” she said.

“According to Homer.”

“We must talk.”

“About what?” I asked.

“Our lives.”

I saw some people lying under the furniture, in an attempt to protect themselves against any radiation from the sun.

“Ahhhh,” Homer said.

“Do it faster,” Fifi said.

I sucked my duchess breasts in a day to remember, if we didn’t dissolve in zillions of atoms in a few moments.

“Move your hips,” I said.

“I love you,” she said.

“Listen to me,” Jaramillo said.

A couple copulated under the sheets someone must have brought from the bedrooms, their faces red with the excitement, when the sea teemed with colours in the last moments of humanity.

“Stop that radio,” I said.

“Don’t interrupt us,” Fifi said.

“We have four minutes,” the presenter said.

Someone ran along the deck as the countdown went on, the lights in the sky becoming more intense before the sun had a chance of killing us.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

“I want my petrol ships,” Homer said.

“Let’s do it again,” Fifi said.

“Look at my notes,” Jaramillo said.

I thought of all the things since the beginning of time, when the duchess wanted more excitement in her life.

“It’s the end of the world,” I said.

She shrugged. “I don’t mind.”

On opening her legs, she wanted more excitement in the best night our host had given us.

“We have three minutes,” the voice in the radio interrupted all the action.

“It doesn’t make any sense,” I said.

“Stop worrying,” she said.

I fell in a stupor after swallowing some more pills, the man in the radio uttering things about the planet disintegrating amidst the cries of people copulating in the deck.

“Bye, world,” I said.

“Ahhh,” my duchess said.

“You are sexy.”

A giant moon had appeared over our heads, no one could have done that with lasers or any other inventions of nature.

“I miss my family,” I said.

I kissed her ass, trying to achieve the best orgasm of the world in the last moments of humanity.

“We have two minutes,” the radio said.

I reached my climax, as my duchess called her mother and Fifi cried her love for Homer, time and space getting together for a final act amidst the waves.

“We have one minute,” the radio said.

My duchess' hands massaged my erect penis, before everything went dark.

“Eureka,” Chucho said.

## Prologue

Homer awakes in another land after the best party in the universe, a moon with spots of different colours shining in the sky, as a child picks his nose within the shadows of time.

“I’m Jose,” the child says.

“I know.”

On moving closer, Homer sees his freckles in the moonlight of the kingdom beyond the clouds, as he finds the notes of the end of time.

“Has everything finished?” he asks.

“I think so.”

“Stop talking in riddles.”

“No one is.”

Homer thinks of the day Uncle Hugh appeared in the middle of lunch, amidst the debris of his life and the end of time.

“It started with the dark sun,” he says.

Sitting by his side, Jose runs his truck along the floor.

“It might have done.”

Then everything falls into place on remembering his mother’s womb and the death of a nation: the Indians, the boats, the widows and the manuscripts making sense across reality.

“Send me back,” Homer says.

Jose shakes his head. “I don’t know.”

“Please.”

Sifting through the shadows, he finds a few more things from the past, reminders of that universe he inhabited, before the sun careered through the sky in its journey to Armageddon. The child plays, unaware of the distress he has caused to the planet.

“I’ll give you anything,” Homer says.

“Anything.”

“Yes.”

The child smiles, dimples forming at the sides of his mouth, like a cherub thrown from heaven for misbehaving.

“You didn’t care about the Indians,” he says.

“I did.”

“The widows died.”

“It wasn’t my fault.”

“Nothing was.”

Homer wonders what has happened to his world, the memory of the tragedy assaulting his senses.

“I died,” he says.

“You might have done.”

He has to find out the mysteries of time, through the utopia at the end of humankind.

“Stop annoying me,” he says.

“I’m not.”

As Homer sees his boats sailing across the garden pond, the ants crawl in his shoes and the muck covers his face in another day by the market.

“I have a surprise for you,” his mother says.

A shadow appears in front of him, dissolving into his uncle’s face a few moments later.

“I haven’t seen you for some time,” he says.

## SPANISH WORDS

- 1: El Baratillo: a shop that sells cheap things.
- 2: Aguardiente: Colombian liquor.
- 3: Socorro is a woman's name.
- 4: Mulato: person of mixed origin.
- 5: Pandebobo is a kind of bread.
- 6: Panela is made of sugar cane.
- 7: Antioqueno is someone from Antioquia, a region in North West Colombia.
- 8: Morcilla is a kind of sausage. It's made with the intestines of a pig.
- 9: Bocadoillos: Colombian sweet made with Guava and sugar.
- 10: Campesinos: country people.
- 11: Sancocho is a regional chicken soup.
- 12: Mazato: a drink made with corn.
- 13: Arepa: pastry made with corn and sometimes cheese.
- 14: Curuba: tropical fruit.
- 15: Boyaca is a region of Colombia.

