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*The Role of the Crash of Air France #009 in
Adelaide Freitas's Novel Smiling in the Darkness*

Katharine F. Baker

Abstract

In the early morning darkness of October 28, 1949, Air France flight #009 slammed into the highest peak on the Azores' São Miguel island, killing all 48 people on board. This tragedy, which would traumatize local residents for decades to come, is a leitmotif in Adelaide Freitas's novel *Smiling in the Darkness*. This paper's author has researched the plane crash and its role in the story, and translated *crônicas* about the accident by the respected Azorean writers Daniel de Sá and Urbano Bettencourt, and a poem by Victor Rui Does mourning a more recent fatal crash in the Azores.

Keywords

Adelaide Freitas, *Smiling in the Darkness*, Air France, Plane crash, Pico da Vara, São Miguel, Azores, Ginette Neveu, Marcel Cerdan, Anthony Barcellos, Daniel de Sá, Urbano Bettencourt, Adrien Bosc, Monte Redondo, José do Couto Rodrigues, *Constellation*, Victor Rui Does

Resumo

Na escuridão da madrugada de 28 de outubro de 1949, o voo nº 009 da Air France colidiu com a montanha mais alta da ilha de São Miguel nos Açores, matando todas as 48 pessoas a bordo do avião. Essa tragédia, que traumatizou os moradores locais por décadas, é um leitmotiv no romance *Sorriso por dentro da Noite* de Adelaide Freitas. O autor deste artigo pesquisou a queda e o seu papel na história, e traduziu crônicas sobre o acidente pelos estimados escritores açorianos Daniel de Sá e Urbano Bettencourt, e um poema de Victor Rui Does a lamentar um fatal acidente aéreo mais recente nos Açores.

Palavras-chave

Adelaide Freitas, *Sorriso por dentro da Noite*, Air France, Acidente de avião, Pico da Vara, São Miguel, Azores, Ginette Neveu, Marcel Cerdan, Anthony Barcellos, Daniel de Sá, Urbano Bettencourt, Adrien Bosc, Monte Redondo, José do Couto Rodrigues, *Constellation*, Victor Rui Does



Figures 1a & 1b. Covers of *Sorriso por dentro da Noite* and *Smiling in the Darkness*.

“Anything can be true in fiction.” – Anthony Barcellos

São Miguel-born scholar and author Adelaide Freitas (1949–2018) wrote her novel *Sorriso por dentro da Noite* (2004) [*Smiling in the Darkness* (2020)] as an Azorean saga recast in homage to *Moby-Dick* (Baker, 2020).¹ This paper shows how she incorporated into her narrative one of the calamities that befell her protagonists—a deadly 1949 plane crash into a mountain near the island’s remote northeastern village where the book is primarily set. Also included in this paper are original English translations of Daniel de Sá’s *crónica* about the accident, Urbano Bettencourt’s review of *Constellation* (Adrien Bosc’s historical novel reconstructing the fate of doomed Air France flight #009), and Victor Rui Dore’s poem capturing the universal horror and grief of a later Azorean plane crash, as well as news clippings covering the 1949 accident and its aftermath.

At its root, *Smiling in the Darkness*, like many a *roman à clef*, constitutes the preservation of family, community, or other history disguised (perhaps thinly) as fiction. This approach has been taken by a number of prominent Azorean-American writers: Anthony Barcellos, for example, wove oft-told tales of his immigrant family’s experiences as hard-working dairy farmers in California’s Central Valley during the mid-twentieth century into his novel *Land of Milk and Money* (Dotar). A number of valid reasons can exist for adopting this methodology, from protecting certain individuals’ privacy to a desire to avoid alienating others—“I’m afraid you’re going to get into a lot of trouble,” Barcellos’s (2012b) sister teased.

¹ Freitas’s doctoral dissertation was titled *Moby-Dick a ilha e o mar – Metáforas do caráter do Povo Americano*. In her novel, “[j]ust as Melville’s mysterious survivor Ishmael relates his account of Captain Ahab’s obsessive pursuit of the whale that had severed his leg, so too [the narrator] recounts her mother’s struggles to avenge the amputation by her own father of her dreams and of the only family lifestyle she’d known” (Baker, 2020).

Another motive for fictionalizing real life might be a lack of sufficient connective factual details to create a coherent account. For example, French writer Adrien Bosc cast his account of the crash as a novel, despite exhaustive documentation. Alternatively, an author's goal might be to simplify the plot by telescoping multiple real people into fewer characters (or even to invent a convenient new one), or a wish to redistribute portions of one real-life person's traits and experiences across a number of characters—whether for any of the above reasons or out of artistic license, or for clarifying the underlying verity of the story's message by pruning extraneous details. As Barcellos observed, “Anything can be true in fiction” (Dotar).

Sorriso por dentro da Noite was one means for Adelaide Freitas to capture a way of Azorean village and rural life that by the time of her childhood in the 1950s was rapidly vanishing, yet still survived in oral tradition handed down by elders. In this respect, her depiction of the old culture through fiction is not unlike veterinarian James Herriot's approach in his novel series *All Creatures Great and Small*, describing pre-World War II farm and town life in northern England's remote Yorkshire dales (Encyclopedia.com). While Freitas likely gathered decades' worth of local vignettes from a wide range of sources, in *Smiling in the Darkness* she attributes some to a lone elderly neighbor who said he had shared them with the novel's fictitious youngest daughter Xana over the years:

“I know that your little girl goes to school, and when the mood strikes me I haul out a tale for her perhaps to tell others someday, or to write about everything that God has sent our way. These are scarcely tilled clods in this midocean of ours, so tiny that almost no one's heard of them. And to what small extent they have, it's that sometimes they crumble, other times they tremble with all the fury of hell” (Freitas, 2020, p. 215).

Although Xana, the central protagonist of *Smiling in the Darkness*, was born barely six months after the novelist, Freitas chose another character to narrate. In homage to *Moby-Dick*, the storyteller is not Ishmael but Isabel—note the similar names—one of Xana's sisters (Baker, 2020). All six girls and their brother were born and raised in fictional São Bento, which stands in for villages along the north coast of the *concelho* [county] of Nordeste, especially Freitas's hometown of Achadinha.

As if seismological, volcanic, meteorological and other natural catastrophes that sporadically struck the area were hard enough for Azoreans to bear, tragedies caused by human error could also intrude unexpectedly upon their lives. Among the novel's leitmotifs is the nearby airplane crash into the slope of Monte Redondo, a shoulder of São Miguel's tallest mountain, Pico da Vara, that killed all 48 people aboard in the early morning darkness of October 28, 1949. In *Smiling in the Darkness*, this accident occurred just days before Xana's premature birth following her mother's long, hard labor—which a few villagers speculated was somehow connected to the crash. Early in the novel, Freitas hinted at how deeply the trauma affected local residents:

It was November. I am backtracking a few years to the moment when my sister was born under the fateful sign of the plane crash on Pico da Vara, which days earlier had intruded upon the serenity of hamlets around here as the trees were dropping their last leaves (Freitas, 2020, p. 32).

“How do you explain the birth of our little girl occurring so unexpectedly far ahead of time? And why today, and why now, at midnight? Could the roar of that ill-fated plane have contributed to hastening our little girl's birth?” (Ibid., p. 36).

[...] At first they resembled fireworks; some thought it must be another plane crashing on Pico da Vara (Ibid., p. 84).

Freitas cast her most extended and vivid evocation of the crash as a flashback, with villagers living in terror of a bogeyman nicknamed Arregalado (due to his bug-eyed appearance)—who, if he existed, was allegedly brutalizing and robbing some of their populace:

Autumn was at the door.

At sunset that afternoon the north wind brought an unusual wave of heat to São Bento. One could feel a crumbling that was not from an earthquake, houses, or even land. The entire populace perked up its ears like rabbits, trying to detect any sound, to understand what was strange about it.

All at once the locals noticed that the evergreen trees were curling up their leaves, to the naked eye withered-looking, and then they fell shriveled to the ground. No one knew whether it was a plague that would wipe out the flora or, worse than that, a heat that would scorch everyone, human and animal alike.

Pico da Vara soon turned the color of fire. The sun became a half watermelon. Then, toward the southern region, a sudden flash traversed the skies leaving a vast swath of red that rendered the mountain blood colored. A beautiful spectacle, a horrific panorama engulfed in a coagulated hemorrhage. People were thinking that hell had arrived, then deduced it was something else. [...] To the most skeptical, it might have been another plane crashing, burning like a fireball, rolling and devouring the heavens, seven years after the first one, in more or less the same place but at a different hour.

Arregalado leapt back into the center of the controversy—he who this time had stolen some watches and rings, taken at the cost of severed fingers. The thief had never come so close to such great fortune. Drunkenness, however, led him to squander in short order what had never belonged to him in the first place.

[...] A group of the wisest men were still arguing the possibility that an accident had occurred, while others were inclined to different speculations. They realized, however, that they could not sit idly by and that they had to do something, regardless of what had or had not transpired. So they hurried, in hopes of saving some lives and, if there were none to save, at least to stand guard over the bodies until the responsible parties arrived.

They determined a course of action and set off with sickles slung over their backs, and not another word. They carried axes, pruning hooks, whatever else was at hand, ready to clear brush in search of bodies. The youngest held lanterns. When they reached Pico Redondo they surrendered to the purple silence of night. There was not a single star in the sky. Everyone huddled together, frightened. They waited patiently for the new day. And when dawn arrived, only the birds could be heard.

Traces? Not a one!

[...] But in the long run it turned out to be nothing they had thought. It was not a plane, nor the sun. For those who believed in superstitions it was another sign, along with the falling of the curled leaves and the twigs from fig trees, that Judgment Day was imminent (Freitas, 2020, pp. 124–125).

Even this extended passage, however, cannot capture the full magnitude of the horror of deadly plane crashes. News accounts of two not far from this author's home in southwestern Pennsylvania in more recent times reveal both the immediate and enduring traumas suffered by those who have witnessed such grisly scenes.

Early in the evening of September 8, 1994, USAir flight #427 spiraled nose-first into the ground on approach to Pittsburgh International Airport, killing all 132 passengers and crew aboard. The first journalist to reach the scene still recalled twenty years later how “thick dark smoke billowed into the sky” and that the “heat was so intense that when I woke up the next morning, my forehead and face looked sunburned. I could smell the stench of the crash” (Bires). When the county coroner (who was also a long-time funeral director) arrived in the morning, he “thought he'd confronted death in all of its forms [but instead] stood mute, unnerved by the scope of destruction” (Lash). “[R]escue workers described the scene as one of utter carnage. [...] ‘There’s luggage scattered everywhere, thrown wallets, body parts,’” and the county’s director of emergency services described it as “something I haven't seen since World War II” (Smith, 1994). It took over four years to determine the likely cause: a faulty rudder controlling mechanism, which had been a problem on a number of Boeing 737s (Smith, 1999).

Almost exactly seven years later, on September 11, 2001, one of four hijackers piloted a jet past Pittsburgh, as several of the passengers, who had received word via cell phone calls about the deadly attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, rushed the cockpit in an effort to prevent a fourth one, possibly on the U.S. Capitol. At 10:03 a.m. (NPR), “[h]omes shook and the earth trembled as United Airlines Flight 93 roared out of the sky and slammed into the soft earth of a former strip mine. [...] No corpses, no obvious wreckage—only a smoking crater, singed trees and an eerie silence that made it seem at first as if there had been no plane at all. [...] But eyewitnesses, family members and first responders say images from that day are seared in their memories” (Cowden). A state police sergeant, among the first to arrive, recalled that “his most salient memory is one that every other first responder repeated: ‘Disbelief. Because we had received word of a plane having crashed and there was nothing recognizable as a plane that we could see’” (Hamill).

A doctoral research study that included USAir #427 recovery workers found that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was diagnosed in some of the witnesses to such gruesome spectacles and even by some of the mental health professionals who counseled them (Rizzo, 2003, pp. 20–21, 92–93). A dozen years after 9/11, an arborist wondered if having “spent four days high up in the surrounding hemlock trees, picking human remains and airplane debris out of the branches” had caused his sleep disorder, flashbacks, and tendency to choke up “when trying to talk about the crash.” He was planning to seek out mental health care for PTSD from a program for World Trade Center workers that had recently been extended to those at the Pentagon and Shanksville, PA (Kalson).

Of course, in 1949 no such treatments for PTSD yet existed in the Azores for locals who had viewed the Pico da Vara crash site, or even heard vivid tales of its gore. São Bento's authoritarian parish priest was of no comfort to his flock in times of distress, either. In Freitas's account of the village's All Souls' Day church service several years later, her narrator compared the priest's resemblance to a terrifying blackbird, and noted how the novel's central character, baby sister Xana, found comfort instead in her maternal grandmother's smiling face:

The initial whispering of the faithful before the start of the mass gave way bit by bit to an unaccustomed shouting that cracked open and crumbled the church walls like cornbread. And

when the blackbird fell silent for a brief moment, in search of a stone with which to pelt a sinner once again, what we heard was a rollcall of laments and sighs, hollow coughs and blowing of noses, with which there converged a cascade of tears of guilt.

“Forgive us. Do not forsake us, O Lord our God,” they all said in unison.

Like so many gray reptiles they kept shedding tears, and whispering endless Hail Marys. And the [priest’s] stones did not stop coming. They were leveled with such violence that they seemed to come out of the belly of a volcano that from time to time would go dormant, only to resume with redoubled bursts in an overwhelming explosion. At first they resembled fireworks; some thought it must be another plane crashing onto Pico da Vara. And with each fury and screech from the blackbird, the sun hid behind clouds, shivering. [...]

But something was upsetting [Xana]: it was that soot-colored blackbird. Intrigued, she searched Vovó’s face. The smile that blossomed from Vovó belied what the priest was saying. Our God might be the one of that priest, of that pulpit, but Vovó’s God was different—the God of flowers, tolerance and joy.

Her head held high, Vovó assumed a facial expression that gave Xana a warm feeling and a promise of not abandoning her granddaughter to that blackbird. Vovó again gave her a broad smile, as if to say, “Believe in the God who alights every day on the flowers in our backyard.” (Freitas, 2020, pp. 83–84).

* * *

A translator must understand not only a writing’s source language but also the work’s background and nuances. Such responsibility entails more than just mechanically decoding words from one language to another without sufficient knowledge of their context; this is especially true for literary translating, where computer translation is often inadequate (American Translators Association).

For this reason, the first step in translating Freitas’s references to the plane crash in the novel was to ascertain whether such an event actually occurred, and if so, the facts surrounding it. An internet search revealed that Air France #009—departing from Orly Airport in Paris on the evening of October 27, 1949, headed for New York City’s Idlewild (now JFK) Airport—was scheduled to make a technical (maintenance) stop at the Azores’ Santa Maria airport just before 3:00 a.m. Instead, the aircraft plowed into Pico da Vara, some sixty miles off course. English-language news accounts of the accident provided details as well as the proper vocabulary that translators would need to recount the event in both *Smiling in the Darkness* and Urbano Bettencourt’s review of the book *Constellation*.



Figure 2. Delminda and José do Couto Rodrigues, São Miguel, 2016.
Photo by John J. Baker.

Additional corroboration regarding the crash was supplied by José do Couto Rodrigues,² who was living in his native village a few miles west of Freitas's hometown at the time. His recollection of the aftermath included gory tales of the crash site that he heard as local gossip:

I still remember seeing the large truck with many caskets stopped in front of my house in Lomba da Maia. They were on the way from Pico da Vara to Ponta Delgada, and Lomba da

² In 1963 Rodrigues immigrated to California, where he earned Bachelor's and MBA degrees at San Francisco State University. He pursued a career as an executive in the travel industry, then upon retirement in 2002 brought his business expertise to Portuguese Heritage Publications of California as its first president and coordinator of many of its book projects (Rodrigues).

Maia was en route. Why they stopped, although briefly, I don't know. But I remember seeing it vividly.

There was a lot of controversy because some locals in Pico da Vara got to the site way before the authorities and helped themselves to lots of stuff, including a box of watches. My mother bought one of them for herself from a street vendor [*vendilhão*]. We heard that the box of watches was cargo on the way from Switzerland to the U.S. None of the watches I saw were brand names. They were sold by people from that area who got to the plane early.

It was also rumored at the time that some people cut the fingers off some of the dead in order to get their jewelry and watches. But I don't know if it happened or was just local gossip. All I heard is that people around Pico da Vara made some money and got a bad reputation. Not a pretty story for the Azores. (Personal correspondence)



Figure 3. Ginette Neveu & Marcel Cerdan at Orly Airport before boarding.



Figure 4. Memorial monument.
Photo from Commons Wikimedia.



Figure 5. Memorial marker.
Photo from Commons Wikimedia.

Among commentaries found online about the crash of Air France #009 was a 2008 *crônica* by São Miguel writer and educator Daniel de Sá (1944–2013), a native of the adjacent *concelho* of Ribeira Grande. In it he highlighted the Stradivarius violin entrusted to the dazzling young French virtuoso Ginette Neveu—and the presence on board of French-Algerian boxer Marcel Cerdan, en route to see his paramour, international singing star Édith Piaf, as well as to arrange a rematch for the world middleweight boxing championship he had lost on June 16 (Appendix D6).³ Although de Sá speculated that Neveu and Cerdan had never met, widely published internet images show them and Ginette’s brother Jean-Paul (her piano accompanist) posing together at Orly prior to boarding the flight. The English translation of de Sá’s *crônica* “A Stradivarius on Pico da Vara” appears in Appendix A.

³ Video highlights: https://vk.com/video-103857848_456239619?list=10c54b24d4ac0bf579.



Figure 6. Daniel de Sá and Urbano Bettencourt, 2012, São Miguel.
Photo by John J. Baker.



Figures 7a & 7b. French and English covers of Adrien Bosc's novel *Constellation*.

In 2015 Urbano Bettencourt reviewed French author Adrien Bosc's historical novel *Constellation*, which delves into the Air France crash in detail. Bettencourt (2015) also cited earlier literary treatment of the disaster by Freitas's fellow Achadinha native João de Melo in his novel *O meu Mundo não é deste Reino* (My World Is Not of This Kingdom), from the perspective of the local populace: "[A]n apocalyptic tale of the people of Rosário, who faced signs of end times and ventured onto Pico da Vara's roads and trails to witness the extent of the death and its face throughout the shock and awe—which did not, however, impede their pillaging and looting of the victims." The English translation of Bettencourt's book review "The Last Flight of Constellation F-BAZN" appears in Appendix B.

The plane crash was covered exhaustively by newspapers from nearby Ponta Delgada to Lisbon, from Paris (where the flight originated) to New York City (its destination), and from places where victims resided to worldwide wire service accounts. Appendices D1 to D6 display selected clippings, including a list of all the passengers and crew (Appendix D4). Articles also reported speculation as to whether foul weather, pilot error, or radio equipment failure caused the plane, scheduled for a routine technical stop on neighboring Santa Maria island, to veer instead more than 60 miles off course to São Miguel (*Le Monde*).

However, based on Freitas's later description in the novel of delayed access by São Bento residents of that era to newspapers published in São Miguel's main city of Ponta Delgada, it seems unlikely that locals would have read journalistic accounts of the crash until considerably later. Even then, both grandmothers in *Smiling in the Darkness*—like a number of real-life villagers, especially older ones—were illiterate, and thus reliant upon word of mouth, radio reports, or being read aloud to by others for outside news:

My uncle stayed shut in his dim bedroom. Some old newspapers on the little table at the head of the bed lay waiting.... (Freitas, 2020, p. 106)

[M]y grandmother dreamed about the old shortcuts that led to [...] something of a small city, with its pharmacy and men sitting around reading the only newspaper that, although days old, circulated among those who wanted to read it. They would speak low, and even seemed to be preparing some sort of political maneuver. There were still poets, doctors, and judges who would flock there on summer vacation. And Vovó [Grandma] dreamed... dreamed that she was reading, reading, reading, savoring the perfume of words and hearing the music of writing. (Ibid., p. 193)

Sociedade Açoreana de Transportes Aéreos—now Azores Airlines—began offering passenger service to and from Santa Maria in 1947, although foreign airlines had already been landing there (SATA). However, transatlantic flight in the Azores traces back to 1919, when the United States Navy first flew a Curtiss NC-4 seaplane to Faial's Horta Bay. In June 1939, Pan American Airways inaugurated transatlantic commercial service on its luxurious clippers, with a stop at Horta—providing a scant day's journey across the ocean, compared to five days for the crossing by ship (Baker, 2021). However, exorbitant fares had long put air travel out of financial range for all but the wealthiest Azoreans. Indeed, it was not until circa 1960 before a family member in *Smiling in the Darkness*, Uncle Joe, first traveled solo from the U.S. to the Azores and back for a visit by plane, rather than ocean liner (Freitas, 2020, p. 165).

Despite this history, Adelaide Freitas depicted young Xana's naive and uniquely imaginative (mis)perceptions of aviation in the 1950s, when plane travel was still a novelty that most Azorean villagers had seen overhead only from afar and infrequently. Xana fantasized about the return of parents she could not recall who, while she was still a baby, had left her and her older siblings behind to be raised by their *vovós* [grandmas] so the cash-strapped parents could go work in New England—

her mother a figurative Captain Ahab in obsessed pursuit of the white whale of prestige and wealth that she had lost decades earlier, after her father sent her mother and their children packing back to the Azores from New Bedford at the behest of his latest mistress:

[To Xana], Vovó's enigmatic smile [...] little by little became bright and tender, redeemed like a white, white fleur-de-lis lying atop the simple ogive arch of the camellia bush planted in our backyard—above which flew a plane of airsick passengers throwing up on our camellias, turning them from snow-white to clay-colored. [. . .] Our little sister was always like that, so innocent, so childlike. She would plant her feet together and swear with resoluteness to Carolina that while the plane was flying over our yard she had found time to drag over the doormat, place a bushel-basket on it, and on top of that a half-bushel, in order to reach high enough to be able to ring the plane's bell and let Papá and Mamã know that this was the spot for them to get off. (Freitas, 2020, p. 5)

Years later, as a young woman in the Americas, Carolina herself used to swear to girlfriends that in childhood her sister Xana—still living with our grandmother on the island—possessed the power to rise into the sky in the direction of a metal bird that from time to time flew over Nordeste, with a large visible bell in its belly that Xana would ring. [. . .] The neighbor women, agitated like hens scratching in dung, believed this and insisted it was true every time a plane flew overhead. Xana would make a mad dash to put on the same show, shouting to everyone along São Bento's streets how it was not hard to fly, how the sky there was all lit up in the color of the propeller. "It's coming from the east," she would squeal in excitement, "and bringing a white, white light, flying over Pico da Vara and heading in the direction of our garden." (Ibid., p. 7)

The most recent fatal plane crash in the Azores occurred on December 11, 1999, as SATA flight SP530 from Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, was on approach to Faial. During inclement weather the aircraft plowed into a mountain on nearby São Jorge island, killing all 35 on board (BAAA). Longtime Horta educator and writer Victor Rui Dores composed a stunning poem in memory of its victims, capturing, like all plane crashes, both the routineness of a journey beforehand and the unimaginable impending calamity—"Salmo aos que morreram no Pico da Esperança" ("Psalm for Those Who Died on Pico da Esperança") (Dores). Appendix C contains the English translation.

Dominique Faria, a faculty member of the University of the Azores, and António Monteiro recently published a scholarly article (2021) titled "Aeronautical imagination and the figure of the French aviator in the Azorean press (1935/1949)." Among other points, they note how journalistic perspective has changed emphasis in its coverage over the years from the pilots to the passengers, especially when the latter (like Cerdan and Neveu) are celebrities. Faria and Monteiro also provided a wealth of additional material, including reproductions of clippings of four Azores news articles reporting the Air France crash (Appendix D1). Of course, methods of news reporting have evolved at warp speed in subsequent decades, given the advent of television (network and cable), the internet, social media, and streaming platforms—so, barring censorship, news that previously was delayed now has the potential to arrive instantaneously and in great detail almost anywhere.

The crash of Air France flight #009 on Pico da Vara has had a profound and long-lasting impact on the residents of the region and on those who study plane accidents, even to this day. One measure of the intensity of the emotional trauma is the prominence Adelaide Freitas accorded the tragedy as a leitmotif in her novel, where it continued to haunt the characters for many years, as it has people in real life.

Author's Note

Prior to translating *Sorriso por dentro da Noite*, I had no memory of having heard of the crash of Air France #009. So I was startled when, during background research, the name of victim Ginette Neveu seemed familiar. As I read of her brief but ascendant career, I realized that while I was a music major in college in the 1960s, some of her recordings were included on class syllabi as recommended listening for foundational works we studied in repertoire and analysis courses. Nowadays her recordings are available online for listening or purchase, so like Daniel de Sá, I could hear her performances of the Brahms (1949) and Sibelius (1945) concertos as I worked.⁴

Although boxer Marcel Cerdan was arguably the most famous of the accident victims, his name rang no bells with me (not being a boxing fan). But in childhood I had become familiar with the singing of his surviving paramour Édith Piaf (an international star since her hit “La Vie en Rose”) through recordings played on a local radio program—and from her live performances on CBS’s popular Sunday night television variety show hosted by sports columnist Ed Sullivan (who, as a boxing aficionado, likely had known Cerdan). Ironically, not long before Cerdan’s death, Piaf and her frequent collaborator Marguerite Monnot had composed “Hymne à l’Amour” in tribute to him. On September 14, 1949, Piaf performed it at the Cabaret Versailles in New York City, but did not record it until more than six months after Cerdan’s death.⁵ Only after learning this information did I realize that as a child I had seen Piaf’s 1955 live performance of the song on Sullivan’s show, preceded by an introduction referring to its significance, which I had been too young to grasp.

* * *

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I salute Adelaide Freitas’s artistry, inspiration, and dedication in writing *Sorriso por dentro da Noite*, and her husband Vamberto Freitas for encouraging its translation. I gratefully acknowledge the hard work of co-translators Bobby J. Chamberlain (1946–2022), Reinaldo F. Silva, Emanuel Melo, and the staff at Tagus Press—without whom the novel’s English version, *Smiling in the Darkness*, would never have reached fruition.

Thank you to José do Couto Rodrigues for generously sharing recollections of accounts he heard in his youth on São Miguel of the accident’s aftermath. And my gratitude to John J. Baker, Anthony Barcellos, and Steven Mueller for critiquing and proofreading this manuscript at multiple stages.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Chamberlain, my infinitely patient longtime professor at the University of Pittsburgh, who taught me both Portuguese and translation, and fostered my research into my Azorean genealogy.

⁴ Brahms, Johannes. Concerto for Violin in D, Op. 77. Hague Residentie Orchestra, Antal Doráti-conductor.

Mvt. I: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YIP897fMus>

Mvt. II: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkODm9aHyns>

Mvt. III: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3tiacSii6c>

Sibelius, Jean. Concerto for Violin in d, Op. 47. Philharmonia Orchestra, Walter Susskind-conductor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgAYWK1Zy5U>

⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYgVDXUIAuo. Piaf sang the song’s English lyrics during one of her eight television appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show (between 1952 and 1959): www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhLvhM6XDCE.

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Appendix A

“*A Stradivarius on Pico da Vara*,” by Daniel de Sá
aspirinab.com/visitas-actuais/um-stradivarius-no-pico-da-vara

Translated into English by Katharine F. Baker

Paris, Orly Airport, October 27, 1949. The boarding of the Air France flight bound for New York is complete. In America’s largest city, Édith Piaf in her loneliness is suffering one of her frequent bouts of depression. And she hopes that the next morning Marcel Cerdan will be joining her. But there is no space on the Lockheed Constellation for her lover, her physically opposite number, who in June lost his middleweight championship title to boxer Jake LaMotta. However, luck seems to be on Marcel and Edith’s side. Honeymooners relinquish their seats to the great Algerian-born French idol. The plane takes off at 8:05 PM.

This part of the story is perhaps a romantic legend, for the flight boarded only 37 passengers, and the Constellation had a capacity of more than 60 seats.

Ginette and Marcel have probably never met. She does not frequent boxing rings, nor he attend musical performances unless Edith Piaf is singing. But this young woman of serene beauty, as slim and confident as a Greek goddess, surely does not go unnoticed by Cerdan. Nor perhaps does the violin that she carries with her, a Stradivarius. Also traveling with her is a younger man vaguely resembling her. He is her brother Jean-Paul, who normally accompanies her when pieces she plays require piano.

Ginette is still only 30 years old, but by age 18 she has already triumphed in New York, which grew to worship her. Soon after the war ended four years earlier, she made her first recording in London for EMI. On a day when she and others should have been resting up from a strenuous tour, she has spent many hours recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra, which also debuted long-playing records: Sibelius’ Violin Concerto, which appropriately enough I am listening to while writing this—one of the most challenging works for any violinist.

Yet Ginette does not let up. In the break scheduled for all the musicians, while the other players rest she insists on rehearsing sections that still need work. By 8:00 PM, her neck is looking like a raw wound, but that does not matter to Ginette. Not only will she keep recording until the end, she will convince the orchestra to stay an extra half-hour so it can be completed that day. And then after 10 PM, she will still do a full rehearsal of William Walton’s revised Violin Concerto, set to be premiered soon.

At 1:04 AM Paris time, the Constellation contacts the control tower at Santa Maria airport, where it will have to stop for refueling. The plane is 150 nautical miles from this intermediate destination. Its landing is scheduled for 2:45 AM, later updated to 2:55 AM.

It is 2:51 AM when the captain strangely informs the tower that the airport is in sight. The flight proceeds at 3,000 feet altitude. He receives landing instructions. Then... radio silence. At the same moment a terrifying noise wakens most of the villages in São Miguel’s *concelho* of Nordeste. Ginette Neveu has just died on a slope of the Pico da Vara massif, along with her brother, and Marcel Cerdan, and 34 other passengers and 11 crew.

Marcel Cerdan’s body will be transported to his hometown of Sidi Bel Abdés, where he will be laid out for viewing in the gymnasium. In the days leading up to his funeral service, the war between Algerian resisters and the French occupation forces is suspended, not unlike the way such occasions were handled for the ancient Olympic games.

A devastated Edith Piaf will eventually dedicate herself to spiritualism in a futile effort to hear her beloved's voice again. As for Ginette Neveu, it is said she died clutching the violin that Antonio Stradivari's son Omobono⁶ had fashioned more than two centuries earlier. And I have just finished listening to her play it on recordings of the Brahms and Sibelius concertos.

⁶ maestronet.com/forum/index.php?/topic/327791-ginette-neveus-violin/&tab=comments#comment-574454

Appendix B

“*The Last Flight of Constellation F-BAZN*,” by Urbano Bettencourt
urbanobettencourt.wordpress.com/tag/acidente-aereo-pico-da-vara

Translated into English by Katharine F. Baker

On the night of October 27, 1949, an Air France Constellation F-BAZN slammed into Monte Redondo on São Miguel’s Pico da Vara massif while preparing to land on neighboring Santa Maria, in what was to be a technical stop before the second leg of its Paris-New York flight.

From mainland Europe’s perspective, the accident took on the drama and mystique of things that occur in remote locations (like an island somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic), adding further confusion as to the possible causes of this disaster. And if public and media emotions were connected to the fact that its forty-eight occupants had died, celebrity was conversely not alien to two passengers: renowned French violinist Ginette Neveu, and famed boxer Marcel Cerdan, who was going to New York to try to regain his middleweight championship title and enjoy singer Edith Piaf’s company.

João de Melo, in his novel *O meu mundo não é deste reino* (My World Is Not of This Kingdom), has already left us with an account of the Constellation disaster from the perspective of a populace startled by the thunderous boom and fire falling from the sky that shattered the peace and quiet of a night consigned to the routine of time immemorial. His pages narrate an apocalyptic tale of the people of Rosário, who faced signs of end times and ventured onto Pico da Vara’s roads and trails to witness the extent of the death and its face throughout the shock and awe—which did not, however, impede their pillaging and looting of the victims.

In December 2014, Adrien Bosc’s novel *Constellation*, which meticulously recounts the Air France flight, was published in France. The journey is in fact the narrative’s organizational thread, from preparations for departure until the plane crash, and subsequent events—recovery of the bodies and their return, and even some errors in identifying victims (Ginette Neveu, for example). But these are elements of quasi-direct reference, “transcribed” by a stripped-down dry discourse; the most novelistic parts surely consist of the reconstruction of the travels of the plane’s occupants (crew and passengers), the paths that led them to the fateful flight: chance, the combination of fortuitous life events, random episodes that wrought upon them the invisible finger of fate that caused them all to meet on the wrong plane on the wrong day (just as, conversely, others who were to have been on the flight but wound up not taking it, thus escaping death).

Alternating these biographical elements with descriptions of the flight, Adrien Bosc reconstructs the human and personal dimensions of victims’ lives beyond a plane ticket. And if “the airplane of the stars” in fact carried other celebrities besides Ginette Neveu and Marcel Cerdan—for example, painter Bernard Boutet de Monvel and entrepreneur Kay Kamen (head of the marketing licensee for Disney Studios)—it also welcomed into its cabin humble people who saw New York as a mere transfer point to other destinations where the American dream awaited them: five Basque sheep herders who had planned one day on returning home from the United States with their savings; and Amélie Ringler, whom a letter had summoned to America as sole heir to a godmother who had fled France in the 1930s and grown wealthy in Detroit.

“Hear the dead, write their small legend, and offer to these forty-eight men and women, like so many constellations, a life and a story”⁷—this aptly summarizes Bosc’s project and the results of his novel, which wraps the life of each person in an aura of doom and awakens the sense of injustice

⁷ Bosc, A. (2017). *Constellation*. (W. Wood, Trans.). Serpent’s Tail.

always inevitable before the tragic spectacle of happiness within arm's reach that is abruptly snatched away.

It is not by chance that Adrien Bosc's book opens with the epigraph "Sometimes the direction we take in our lives can be decided by the combination of a few words"⁸ by Antonio Tabucchi, drawn appropriately from (what else?) his *The Woman of Porto Pim*. This slight Italian volume, whose success surprised the author himself, truly became a type of guide for the Azores' literary discovery and reinvention (as seen by Romana Petri and Enrique Vila-Matas).

In Adrien Bosc's case, his literary voyage to the Azores likewise follows in Tabucchi's footsteps, via not only that general epigraph but also topics or Tabucchian motifs cited in *Constellation*, like Peter Café Sport, or those little shrines that in this French novel are perfectly suited to the placement of the small monument on Pico da Vara marking the 1949 accident site and bidding passersby to offer an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" for the victims—all this, as well as his balance between fiction and fact, his author's voice in the space outside pure fiction, with island references inserted into the text as a result of his own experience, and here too (as in Tabucchi's work, incidentally) not avoiding some factual inaccuracies.

Constellation's strong literary dimension is not spent, however, in Tabucchi's text before it is implemented and deepened in each chapter's epigraph, drawn from a wide variety of sources—and in quotes convened within the narrative discourse like small beams of light that illuminate the direction of their lives, as they soar over their night in a brief flash that ultimately still projects into the author's text and makes it the receptacle of memories of reading, of survivors from earlier texts.

Notes:

In April 12, 1950's *Diário dos Açores*, Fernando de Lima published an article describing his pilgrimage to Monte Redondo to accompany Mme Salvatori (widow of the *Constellation's* navigator Jean Salvatori), who came to São Miguel to view with her own eyes the spot where her husband had lost his life (this piece was included in de Lima's book *Dez Contos e Outras Histórias*, ed. Filomena Medeiros. Ponta Delgada: 2004).

In his article revisiting a J.P. Lacroix essay in the newspaper *Franc Tireur*, Fernando de Lima objected to the fact that the disaster's media coverage concentrated on the figure of Cerdan while ignoring the rest. Adrien Bosc's novel finds a way to rescue the memory and lives of the others who also lost their lives on São Miguel.

Writer Daniel de Sá wrote a brief "musical" note (in multiple senses) titled "Um Stradivarius no Pico da Vara" centering on Ginette Neveu's violin, which Adrien Bosc relates that legend claims was snatched in the 1950s by a crazy man on São Miguel, before winding up in the United States and being purchased for the price of gold.

But Ginette Neveu had two violins, as Adrien Bosc further points out. More than thirty years after the accident, a Guadagnini violin scroll⁹ found on the slopes of Monte Redondo was presented live on television to Étienne Vatelot, son of luthier Marcel Vatelot, from whom the artist had purchased it not long before her trip to the United States. Having traveled from the Azores to Brazil, the scroll finally reached the hands of Étienne, who in 1949 had been scheduled to accompany the violinist's performances, but instead booked a transatlantic sailing for October 30.

⁸ Tabucchi, A. (2013). *The woman of Porto Pim*. (T. Park, Trans.). Archipelago Books, 2013.

⁹ <http://maestronet.com/forum/index.php?/topic/327791-ginette-neveus-violin/&tab=comments#comment-574454>.

Appendix C

“Psalm for Those Who Died on Pico da Esperança” by Victor Rui Dorés

Translated into English by Katharine F. Baker

The foggy skies proclaim thy glory, O Lord, on this morning of December 11, 1999.

Thou who art the light and salvation, do not abandon the thirty-one passengers and four crew members of flight *SP 530*.

Lift up thine eyes, O Lord, and calm the turbulence of the rain and the wrath of the wind. Behold at the airport those people who look around at each other (vaguely sleepy and perplexed) because they know they will share a trip flown thousands of times.

Watch, O Lord, the joy of the children who embark, Icaruses of the dream.

Take heed, O Lord, of the preparations for the maneuver. Hear the drone of the twin engines, the speed of the propellers’ rotation. Contemplate on high the glorious and graceful ascent of the ATP.
(Below, the ocean’s surface is infinitely vast.)

And off we go, by the grace of God and with trust in science.

Have mercy, O Lord, on our human frailties and our technical failures, and deliver us from the cumulo-nimbus clouds and the falling and rising currents.

O Lord who art generous and merciful, make sure no peak interferes with our hope of reaching our destination safe and sound.

Illuminate, O Lord, the one who pilots us on the alternate route, authorized for us now to descend to 12,000 feet.

That communication with the control tower may not be lost and that silence does not prevail, O Lord.

O, the silence... the silence...

What happened is unknown (or was it thy brief and fatal distraction, O Lord?).

Delivered to the undisturbed hum, the passengers felt a sudden vertical drop. Scared, they looked out the windows and noticed that the sky had lost its color. Their plane had begun losing altitude. O Highest, hear our clamor, our cries of pain and piercing moans that now erupt. I close my eyes so as not to see the crash against the mountain, the violence of the flames, the smoldering wreckage, the bodies destroyed, the heads crushed.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why, God? Why?

Turn not a deaf ear to our supplication, O Lord, as the greatest afflictions are for those who remain on Earth.

And now, O Lord, save our souls, while the rescue teams must recover our bodies...

O Lord, it would be good if none of this had happened.

O, if none of this had happened...

Appendices D1-D6

DESPENHOU-SE ONTEM
no Pico Redondo, do Nordeste,
UM "CONSTELATION"
DA AIR FRANCE
TENDO PERECIDO OS SEUS 48 OCUPANTES

A região nordeste desta ilha foi ontem teatro de um grave desastre de aviação.

Saiu de Paris, às 8,05 horas, com destino a New York, via Santa Maria, um avião da Air France, com 37 passageiros e 11 tripulantes. Por cerca de 1,30 horas, quando sobrevoava o concelho do Nordeste, foi visto por pescadores e trabalhadores rurais da Povoação e do Nordeste um grande clarão, seguido de outros, facto que causou grande alarme. Os mais avisados presumiram tratar-se da explosão duma aeronave.

E, assim era, infelizmente.

Dado o alarme, iniciaram-se as buscas. Tudo fazia crer que o avião se despenhara próximo do Pico da Vara, a montanha mais alta desta ilha. E para ali se encaminharam as pesquisas, difíceis pelo acidente e precário acesso do terreno e pelo nevoeiro que cobria o local.

Por volta das 14 horas, brigadas de socorro da Câmara Municipal do Nordeste e populares conseguiram localizar o aparelho, ou melhor um amontoado de destroços, ainda fumegantes, no Pico Redondo, cerca do Pico da Vara. Foi doador o espectáculo que se lhes deparou. Numa área aproximada de 2000 metros, espalhavam-se os destroços do grande avião. A mistura com restos de corpos humanos, esfacelados, irreconhecíveis na sua quase totalidade: um conjunto de tragédia dantesca de onde se evolia odor de carne queimada.

Poucos dos ocupantes do avião resistiram à carbonização. Aqui e ali há um pedaço de corpo, acotado um homem como que rachado ao meio; mais alem um rapariga a quem falta uma perna. Um horror!

O avião sinistrado é o «Constellation» 009/261.

Em sua busca, na persuasão de que tivesse caído no mar, saíram os patrulhas da Armada Nacional «Madeira» e

«Flores» e aviões portugueses e americanos da Base das Lages. Também seguiu por terra, para o local do sinistro, uma equipa de socorro do Aeródromo de Sant'Ana, desta ilha, chefiada pelo alferes Machado do B. L. 18.

O avião sinistrado estava em comunicação com o Aeroporto de Santa Maria, quando sobrevoava esta ilha. No momento do desastre deixou de se fazer ouvir. Presume-se assim, que voando baixo, tenha batido no Pico Redondo.

Pelas 13 horas, chegou a esta cidade, num avião da Sata, **SEGUIE NA PAG. 4**

Ponta Delgada
São Miguel
newspapers
29 October
1949

← **AÇORES**
AÇORIANO
ORIENTAL →

ASAS FRANCESAS DE LUTO
Um terrível desastre

vitima 37 passageiros e 11 tripulantes de um Constellation da Air France sobre as terras nortenhas da nossa ilha.

ÀS primeiras horas da manhã de ontem correu na cidade a noticia de que um grande desastre de aviação tinha tido lugar na parte norte desta ilha.

No entretanto, os telegramas chegados a esta cidade de Londres e Paris e enviados por agencias telegráficas, procurando colher informações, eram as centenas.

Tudo indicava, portanto, tratar-se de uma grande catástrofe, sabendo-se então que era um *super-Constellation* da «Air France» que, da uma para as duas horas da madrugada, fora avistado sobrevoando a freguesia da Algarvia, vindo despenhar-se no Pico Redondo nas faldas do Pico da Vara, do

que resultou a morte de 11 tripulantes e 37 passageiros, entre os quais Marcel Cerdan, campeão francês de *box*, que seguia para a América, afim de ali disputar o campeonato mundial, no dia 1 do próximo mês.

Enquanto não foi localizado o desastre, os patrulhas «Madeira» e «Flores», estacionados no nosso porto, fizeram imediatamente rumo ao mar, em procura dos destroços e vítimas ou no seu salvamento, pois supunha-se, pelas informações das pessoas que virão o clarão das explosões, que o aparelho tivesse caído no mar, o que ao amanhecer se constatou não ser um facto.

No entretanto, ao amanhecer aviões portugueses e americanos da Base das Lages lançaram-se em procura do aparelho e só mais tarde e devido ao nevoeiro que caia na serra é que foram encontrados os destroços do Constellation e todo o seu horrível espectáculo de mutilações.

Do B. L. 18, partiram 25 soldados, uma camionete e uma ambulancia, o mesmo sucedendo do Grupo de Artilharia de Guarnição, tendo o Quartel General enviado tambem viaturas.

A direcção do Campo de Sant'Ana, de acordo com o ar. Governador do Distrito, tomou tambem providencias, enviando para o local os devidos socorros, médicos e enfermeiros, tendo ficado todos os Hospitais desta ilha de prevenção, bem assim os Bombeiros Voluntarios.

Às 16 horas e 45 minutos, chegou a Sant'Ana o Inspector da Aviação Civil francesa, M. Deleves Mirepois, acompanhado de seis técnicos que seguiram imediatamente para o local, que fica situado a duas horas do povoado da Algarvia, a fim de verificar emas possiveis causas do desastre.

E' profundamente emocionado com o grande desastre de ontem que escrevemos estas ligeiras linhas, acompanhando as familias das victimas, ainda que as não conhecemos, na sua grande dor, e enviado à direcção da Air France, na pessoa do seu director, no aeroporto de Santa Maria, as nossas mais sinceras condolencias por esta tragédia.

Nesta ilha de S. Miguel
nas faldas do Pico da Vara
caiu incendiado um aparelho da "AIR FRANCE" com 48 vítimas já carbonizadas

A noticia de que um grande desastre de aviação tinha tido lugar na madrugada de ontem, na parte nordeste desta ilha, correu depressa pela cidade.

Os boatos eram contraditórios, mas ao mesmo tempo, os telegramas que chegavam a esta cidade de Londres e Paris, enviados por agencias telegráficas, atingiram no decorrer do dia, um quantitativo que pode computar-se por centenas.

Tudo indicava, por tanto, tratar-se de uma grande catástrofe, sabendo-se então que um *super-Constellation* da «Air France», das duas para as três horas da madrugada, fora avistado na freguesia da Algarvia, envolvido em chama, vindo a despenhar-se no Pico Redondo nas faldas do

Pico da Vara de que resultou a morte de 11 tripulantes e 37 passageiros, entre os quais Marcel Cerdan, campeão francês de *box*, que seguia para a América, afim de disputar o campeonato mundial no dia 1 do próximo mês.

Das estações do norte dos C. T. T. informaram-nos amavelmente que os destroços do avião se encontravam em puro *ferro*, estando os corpos das victimas carbonizados, em dólis montões, a muitos metros de distancia.

Os socorros

Enquanto não foi localizado o desastre, os patrulhas «Madeira» e «Flores», estacionados no nosso porto, fizeram rumo ao mar, tendo sido a

(Continua na 4.ª pag.)

DIÁRIO DOS AÇORES
Um grande avião
despenhou-se esta noite
na parte nordeste da ilha
supondo-se que tenha caído no Pico da Vara

Cerca de uma milha para o nordeste do Pico da Vara, um avião da Air France, com 48 ocupantes, caiu esta noite, supondo-se que tenha caído no Pico da Vara. O avião era um *super-Constellation* da Air France, com 37 passageiros e 11 tripulantes. O avião estava em comunicação com o Aeroporto de Santa Maria, quando sobrevoava esta ilha. No momento do desastre deixou de se fazer ouvir. Presume-se assim, que voando baixo, tenha batido no Pico Redondo nas faldas do Pico da Vara, do que resultou a morte de 11 tripulantes e 37 passageiros, entre os quais Marcel Cerdan, campeão francês de *box*, que seguia para a América, afim de disputar o campeonato mundial no dia 1 do próximo mês.

Das estações do norte dos C. T. T. informaram-nos amavelmente que os destroços do avião se encontravam em puro *ferro*, estando os corpos das victimas carbonizados, em dólis montões, a muitos metros de distancia.

Os socorros

Enquanto não foi localizado o desastre, os patrulhas «Madeira» e «Flores», estacionados no nosso porto, fizeram rumo ao mar, tendo sido a

(Continua na 4.ª pag.)

NDRES
de outono
is de S. Miguel
ra de Viena

Um avião da Air France, com 48 ocupantes, caiu esta noite, supondo-se que tenha caído no Pico da Vara. O avião era um *super-Constellation* da Air France, com 37 passageiros e 11 tripulantes. O avião estava em comunicação com o Aeroporto de Santa Maria, quando sobrevoava esta ilha. No momento do desastre deixou de se fazer ouvir. Presume-se assim, que voando baixo, tenha batido no Pico Redondo nas faldas do Pico da Vara, do que resultou a morte de 11 tripulantes e 37 passageiros, entre os quais Marcel Cerdan, campeão francês de *box*, que seguia para a América, afim de disputar o campeonato mundial no dia 1 do próximo mês.

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(Continua na 4.ª pag.)

CORREIO DOS AÇORES

Diário de Lisboa

ANO 29. DOMINGO, 30 DE OUTUBRO DE 1949. DIRECTOR — JOAQUIM MANSO. REDACÇÃO, COMPOZIÇÃO E IMPRESSÃO: IMPRENSA NACIONAL DA REPUBLICA PORTUGUESA, LISBOA — JUNTO DO THEATRO DE S. JOAQUIM. ADMINISTRAÇÃO — RUA DA ALFA, 17. LISBOA. N.º 10.000. CUSTO DE VENDA: 100 REIS.



O CAMPEONATO NACIONAL DE FUTEBOL

A jornada de hoje opôs Lisboa aos grupos da Província e revelou relativo equilíbrio

O Campeonato Nacional de Futebol teve hoje um dia de jogos muito interessantes, revelando um relativo equilíbrio entre as equipas de Lisboa e as dos grupos da Província. O jogo mais importante foi o disputado entre o Sporting e o Benfica, que se realizou no Estádio Nacional, em Lisboa, às 19 horas. O jogo foi muito disputado e terminou com o empate a zero. Outros jogos importantes foram disputados em Coimbra, Braga e Faro, revelando também um relativo equilíbrio entre as equipas locais e as de Lisboa.

Estóri Praia, 1-F. C. Porto, 0

Foi no campo de Estóri Praia, em Estoril, que se realizou o jogo mais interessante da jornada. O Sporting venceu o F. C. Porto por 1-0. O jogo foi muito disputado e terminou com o triunfo do Sporting.

O que ocorreu em S. Miguel foi um verdadeiro desastre. A explosão da bomba que explodiu no meio da multidão causou a morte de 48 pessoas e feriu muitas outras. A explosão ocorreu no momento em que se estavam a cantar os cânticos de louvação ao Senhor. A explosão foi muito forte e causou um grande estrago. Os corpos das vítimas foram encontrados espalhados pelo chão. A explosão ocorreu no meio da multidão que se estava a cantar os cânticos de louvação ao Senhor.

O desastre de S. Miguel devia ter sido causado por má visibilidade. É impossível identificar os corpos das 48 vítimas

A explosão que ocorreu em S. Miguel foi muito forte e causou um grande estrago. Os corpos das vítimas foram encontrados espalhados pelo chão. A explosão ocorreu no meio da multidão que se estava a cantar os cânticos de louvação ao Senhor. A explosão foi muito forte e causou um grande estrago. Os corpos das vítimas foram encontrados espalhados pelo chão. A explosão ocorreu no meio da multidão que se estava a cantar os cânticos de louvação ao Senhor.

O DUELO TIPO-STALINE

A guerra de nervos contra a Jugoslávia

A guerra de nervos entre a Jugoslávia e o Ocidente continua a aumentar de intensidade. O conflito é do tipo Stalinista, caracterizado por uma luta constante de influência e contra-influência. A Jugoslávia mantém uma postura independente, o que gera a desconfiança dos países ocidentais.

Este numero foi visado pela Comissão de Censura

Renita e Sporting mantém as polémas à frente só com vitórias

Franco não se avistam com o príncipe D. João

As notícias de que Franco não se avistaria com o príncipe D. João continuam a circular. Segundo os rumores, o encontro não se realizou devido a problemas de agenda. A situação política em Espanha continua a ser tensa, com rumores de uma possível mudança de liderança.

O desastre de S. Miguel

(Continuação da página anterior)

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Entre as vítimas, confirma-se uma operária que ia viver um lado novo

Entre as vítimas do desastre de S. Miguel, confirma-se a existência de uma operária que ia viver um lado novo. Segundo os relatos, a operária estava a trabalhar numa fábrica quando ocorreu a explosão. Ela estava a caminho de casa quando ocorreu o acidente.

LE FIGARO (FRANCE) 29 OCTOBRE 1949

LE FIGARO

Directeur: Pierre BRISSON... Samedi 29-30 Dimanche 29-30

TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE AERIEENNE AUX AÇORES

Les 48 passagers du Paris-New-York ont été carbonisés la nuit dernière Ginette NEVEU et Marcel CERDAN figurent parmi les victimes



L'avion a percuté le mont Algarvia dans l'île Sao-Miguel alors que, normalement, il aurait dû faire escale sur l'aérodrome de Santa-Maria ON IGNORE ENCORE LES CAUSES DE CET EFFROYABLE ACCIDENT

Les 48 passagers du Paris-New-York... Ginette Neveu et Marcel Cerdan figurent parmi les victimes... L'avion a percuté le mont Algarvia dans l'île Sao-Miguel...

L'EXPULSION DU COLONEL HELLIOT LA FRANCE ne peut admettre les procédés du gouvernement de Prague

d'Algérie

réaction religieuse, les autres de caractère politique et pacifique...



Le 23 de ce mois, la presse anglaise, et particulièrement le Daily Mail, publiait des informations...

LA CATASTROPHE AERIEENNE DES AÇORES

La présence de survivants, après un tel accident, en un tel lieu, était bien peu vraisemblable... Suite de la première page... Les 48 passagers du Paris-New-York ont été carbonisés la nuit dernière...

UN GRAND CHAMPION Marcel CERDAN était simple et bon

Marcel CERDAN est parti hier 28 septembre de France vers le port de New York... Un grand champion, simple et bon...

Le 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté aux Etats-Unis

New-York, 28 octobre (A.P.F.). — Au cours d'une cérémonie organisée à l'occasion du 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté...

Le 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté aux Etats-Unis

New-York, 28 octobre (A.P.F.). — Au cours d'une cérémonie organisée à l'occasion du 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté...

Arrêt du meurtrier présumé de Setty

London, 28 octobre (A.P.F.). — Le policier britannique a arrêté ce soir un certain nombre de personnes...

Le 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté aux Etats-Unis

New-York, 28 octobre (A.P.F.). — Au cours d'une cérémonie organisée à l'occasion du 63^e anniversaire de la remise par la France de la statue de la Liberté...

Comment je n'ai pas vu l'attaque aérienne de Cercottes...

(De notre envoyé spécial, Edmond ANTHÉRIEU) Cercottes, 28 octobre. E' habitier de reporter avait dans la poche le plus fidèle de monde...

Une autre dépêche arrivait... L'attaque aérienne de Cercottes...

Le 23 de ce mois, la presse anglaise, et particulièrement le Daily Mail, publiait des informations...

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SKETCHES OF DEAD FROM U. S. IN CRASH; MANY ...
New York Times (1923-); Oct 29, 1949, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index
pg. 3

KILLED IN AZORES PLANE CRASH; ROUTE OF THE AIRLINER



Bernard B. de Monvel
Associated Press



Pierre Etcheparie
Associated Press



Jo Longman
Associated Press



Ernest Lowenstein
Associated Press



Jean Ringler
Associated Press



Mrs. Kate Kamen
The New York Times



Kay Kamen
The New York Times



Mrs. Irene Sivanich
Associated Press

SKETCHES OF DEAD FROM U. S. IN CRASH

Many of American Passengers Were Returning From Trips to Europe on Business

Following are biographical details on some of the Americans killed yesterday in the plane crash in the Azores:

MR. AND MRS. KAY KAMEN
Mr. and Mrs. Kay Kamen, who lived at 875 Fifth Avenue, were returning from a business trip to France. Mr. Kamen, 56, owner and president of Kay Kamen, Ltd., a concern known officially as a licensing representative for Walt Disney creations, was a pioneer in the merchandising of copyrighted cartoon characters. His wife, Kate, was well known in fashion circles and had been active in the shoe and leather business for many years.



THE NEW YORK TIMES
Where the Paris-New York airliner crashed. Oct. 29, 1949

Death List in the Azores Cras

and had been active in the shoe and leather business for many years.

The Kamens were married about fifteen years. It was the second marriage for Mr. Kamen and he is survived by two daughters of his first marriage, Mrs. David Prency and Mrs. Herbert Dietz, both of New York. Mrs. Kamen was the former Kate Ariens Goldstein of Omaha, a graduate of the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Kamen became associated with the Walt Disney productions more than fifteen years ago, following a career as a hat and cap factory.

EMERY H. KOMLOS
Emery H. Komlos, 32, an attorney who lived at 330 East Seventy-ninth Street, was assistant to Charles J. Liebman, president of the Refugio Economic Corporation, 570 Lexington Avenue.

Mr. Komlos had been abroad since Aug. 31, visiting Australia, Italy, Israel and France for the corporation. According to Mr. Liebman, Mr. Komlos had joined the organization twelve years ago and studied law at night. He was admitted to the bar two years ago.

Mr. Komlos is survived by his mother, Mrs. Bertha Komlos, and a sister, Miss Edith Komlos, with whom he lived. He was unmarried.

EDWARD H. GEHRING
Edward H. Gehring, 29, was secretary of Gehring Laces, Inc., of 149 Madison Avenue, and had been on a two-week lace-buying trip to France. He lived at 303 Mill Spring Road, Mahanassett, L. I., with his wife, Betty Lou, and a 4-year-old daughter, Pamela. His father, Harry Gehring, is president of the lace company.

Mr. Gehring was born in Brooklyn and attended La Salle Military Academy, Oakdale, L. I., and the University of Pennsylvania. He and his family lived in Bellaire, Queens, until several months ago. He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Gertrude Mellish of Elmont, L. I., and Miss Grace Gehring of Bellaire in addition to his parents and his wife and daughter.

EDWARD I. SUPINE
Edward I. Supine of 149 Irwin Street, Brooklyn, also was a lace importer with offices at 149 Madison Avenue. His wife, Pauline, said he had made many domestic flights for business purposes, but on his trip to Europe had crossed the Atlantic by air for the first time.

Mr. Supine was born in Brooklyn and attended James Madison High School and St. John's College. In addition to his wife he is survived by two daughters, Hope, 14, and Joy, 9.

RAOUL P. SILBERNAGEL
Raoul P. Silbernagel, 59, of 250 East 229th Street, the Bronx, was president of the optical importing Sela Company, Inc., 43 West Twenty-third Street. He had been on a three-week business trip to

NEW YORK TIMES
29 OCTOBER 1949

Death List in the Azores Crash

The following is the list of passengers and crew aboard the Air France plane that crashed in the Azores, as released by the New York office of the airline:

- PASSENGERS**
- ABBOTT, Hanna, Butte, Mont., Butte.
 - ABDOUNI, Muslapha, Logan, W. Va.
 - ABDURETZ, Jean Pierre, c/o Michael Estrus, Cedarville, Calif.
 - AFGHANI, Ebrahim, Butte, Mont.
 - ARAKONY, Joseph, c/o Kaplan, Chicago.
 - ARABELL, Jean Louis, c/o Marin Arambel, Los Banos, Calif.
 - BRANDIERE, Miss Françoise, Havanna.
 - BRANDIERE, Mrs. Jenny, Havana.
 - CELEDAN, Marcel, Paris.
 - CHOURROUT, Guillaume, c/o Peter Hospital, Stockton, Calif.
 - DE MONVEL, Bernard Boutet, c/o Haseltine, 209 West Fifteenth Street, New York.
 - ETCHEPARIE, Pierre, c/o Pierre Oshberri, Tempe, Ariz.
 - GEHRING, Edward, 303 Mill Spring Road, Mahanassett, N. Y.
 - GENESSY, Paul, Paris.
 - HAUTH, Rene, 116 East Seventy-third Street, New York.
 - HENNESSY, Simone Broche, Beacon Hill Manor, Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.
 - HERNANDORENA, Remilio, Havana.
 - JASMIN, Guy, Montreal.

- JASMIN, Rachel, Montreal.
- KAMEN, Mrs. Kate, 875 Fifth Avenue, New York.
- KAMEN, Kay, same address.
- KOMLOS, Emery, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York.
- LOWENSTEIN, Ernest, 165 East Ninety-first Street, New York.
- LONGMAN, Jo, Paris.
- MATTI, Jacob, Jacksonville, Fla.
- NEVEU, Ginette, Paris.
- NEVEU, Jean Paul, Paris.
- RYAN, Maud, 2015 Boulevard Avenue, Atlantic City, N. J.
- RINGLER, Miss Jean, Detroit.
- SALES, Mrs. Margarita, 508 West 115th Street, New York.
- SALEN, Philip, same address.
- SILBERNAGEL, Raoul, 250 East 229th Street, the Bronx, New York.
- SIVANICH, Mrs. Irene, Detroit.
- SUPINE, Edward, 149 Irwin Street, Brooklyn.
- SUQUILLIDE, Jean Pierre, c/o Pierre Ardans, Pocatello, Idaho.
- ZEBINER, Jeanne, c/o Hotel Taft, New York.

- CREW**
- CAMILLE, Flancy, 35, co-pilot.
 - DE LA NOUE, Capt. Jean, 31, pilot.
 - GIRARD, Paul, 24, radio operator.
 - PIERRE, Roger, 36, radio operator.
 - ROIG, Suzanne, stewardess.
 - SALVATORI, Jean, 37, navigator.
 - SARRASIN, Marcel, 45, mechanic.
 - VILLETT, Andre, 31, mechanic.
 - WOLFFER, Charles, 29, co-pilot.
 - Two stewards, Redon and Rucker.

France. He is survived by his wife, Marie; a son, Walter, and two daughters, Mrs. Margaret Haut and Mrs. Elsa Antonsen.

MRS. MAUD RYAN
Mrs. Maud Ryan, who lived in Atlantic City with her husband, John Ryan, an electrician, had been a French war bride in 1919 and had returned to France to visit relatives. Her husband said she had made several similar trips since coming to the United States after World War I.

Mrs. Ryan was prominent in Veterans of Foreign Wars activities and was serving her second term as a member of the organization's national council for the districts that include New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Delaware. For the past fifteen years she had been an old-age assistance investigator for Atlantic County, N. J. The Ryans had no children.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN ABBOTT
At the Syrian Consulate in New York John Abbott was described as a 45-year-old business man of Butte, Mont., who had gone abroad six months ago to be married. He and his Syrian wife, Hanna, were coming to the United States to make their home here at the time of the crash. No other information was available.

MRS. M. P. HENNESSY
Mrs. Simone Broche Hennessy, 35, was the wife of Michael P. Hennessy and lived at Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., in the Castle Apart-

ments, Beacon Hill Manor. Mr. Hennessy is part-owner of the Beacon Hill Manor development.

Mr. and Mrs. Hennessy left for France two weeks ago to settle a family estate, and Mr. Hennessy remained there when his wife boarded the plane. There are two daughters, Bridget, 10, and Eileen, 8, at the Dobbs Ferry home.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
29 OCTOBER 1949

AIR LINER CRASH IN AZORES KILLS 48: FRENCH BOXING CHAMP MARCEL CERDAN
Los Angeles Times (1923-1995); Oct. 29, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times
pg. 1

AIR LINER CRASH IN AZORES KILLS 48

French Boxing Champ Marcel Cerdan and 11 Americans Victims of Air France Disaster

PONTA DELGADA, Sao Miguel, the Azores, Oct. 28 — An Air France Constellation bound from Paris to New York crashed in flames against an Azores mountain 90 miles north of its normal course early today and all 48 persons aboard were killed. They included the former world middleweight boxing champion, Marcel Cerdan, and 11 Americans.

Advices reaching here said rescue parties found all 37 passengers and 11 crewmen dead about the wreckage near the summit of the 3500-foot Algarvia peak of Sao Miguel, largest island of the Azores group. The bodies were charred and unrecognizable.

Weather Clear

The plane, in command of Capt. Jean de la Noue, 37, dropped out of radio contact with ground bases after sending a message at 2:50 a.m.

"Having accomplished first part of trip normally, ready to land at 2:55 on Santa Maria airdrome, Azores, weather being clear."

Eight hours later the wreckage was sighted on Sao Miguel, 90 miles north of Santa Maria, which lies at the extreme southeast side of the Portuguese-administered archipelago in the Eastern Atlantic.

Scheduled Flight

Air Force officials said the weather had turned bad. They could not explain, however, why they had heard nothing from the plane after its 2:50 a.m. report.

Cerdan was flying to New York with his manager, Jo Longman, and his trainer, Paul Genser, for a title fight at Madison Square Garden Dec. 2 with Jake LaMotta. He lost the world middleweight championship to LaMotta in Detroit June 18 after injuring his left arm in the first round. He has been a national hero to the French and his native Morocco.

Also aboard was Miss Ginette Neveu, 28, noted French violinist who was to give concerts in 21 North American cities next month. Jean, her brother, who was her piano accompanist, died with her.

Bernard Boutet de Montvel, 67, French portrait painter and son of the equally well known artist, Louis Boutet de Montvel, was another passenger.

Several Americans

Several business persons were among the Americans on the passenger list. The Americans were identified as:

Kay Kamen, 56, of New York, owner of Kay Kamen, Ltd., a licensing representative for Walt Disney characters.

Mrs. Kate Kamen, about 42, long active in the advertising field.

Philip Sales, New York.

Mrs. Margarita Sales, his wife. John Abbott, Butte (Mont.) businessman who was flying home from Syria with Hanna Abbott, whom the Syrian Consulate in New York presumed to be his bride.

Raoul Silbernagel, 59, of the Bronx, N.Y.

Edward L. Supine, 39, of Brooklyn, a lace importer.

Two Canadians Killed

Mrs. Maud Ryan of Atlantic City, an old age assistance department investigator who was returning home from a month's visit with relatives.

Edward Gehring of Manhasset, N.Y.

Emery Komlos of New York. Mrs. Irene Sivanich, Detroit.

Besides these, several of the

Turn to Page 6, Column 2



BEFORE FATAL FLIGHT—Marcel Cerdan, right, former world's middleweight boxing champion, chats with Vincent Ginette Neveu, left, and her brother, J. P. Neveu, at field at France prior to take-off on the French plane which crashed, killing all aboard.



CRASH VICTIMS—Kay Kamen and his wife, Mrs. Kate Kamen, were killed in the air-liner crash. Kamen owned Kay Kamen, Ltd., licensing representative for Walt Disney characters. Wife was an advertising field.

PLANE CRASH

Continued from First Page
other victims had American connections. These included:

Simone Broche Hennessy, a French citizen, bound for Beacon Hill Manor, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., where her husband, Michael P. Hennessy, owns the Castle Apartments.

Ernest Lowenstein, 30, of New York, the owner of tanneries in France and in Casablanca, Morocco.

Two Canadians, a Cuban and a Mexican were on the passenger list. The others were of French nationality or from the Middle East.

The Canadians were Guy Jasmin, editor-in-chief of the Montreal newspaper Le Canada, and his mother, Mrs. Rachel Jasmin.

The Cuban was Remigio Hernandezorena, a prominent yachtsman.

A truck driver saw the explosion in the night. The search was organized within an hour. The burned bodies were seen spread over a large area, about 500 feet from the tip of the peak.

Fog and rain hampered visibility. It was a steep climb to the site of the crash for medical aid men, civilians and soldiers. Eight planes and two ships were dispatched to Sao Miguel to help.

Air France, which is owned by the French government, said that since the start of its Transatlantic service July 1, 1946, it had made 1971 flights without an accident. Capt. De La Noue had flown the ocean 88 times and had logged 6700 hours of flying time.

Air Crash Victims Known in Southland

Kay Kamen, killed with his wife Kate in an Azores air crash, headed a concern which licenses

Walt Disney characters to manufacturing companies.

Kamen, 57, was associated with Disney as a merchandiser for 17 years. His wife was active in the fashion business. The couple lived in New York.

Kay Kamen, Ltd., offices in Los Angeles are at 9155 Sunset Blvd. Kamen traveled frequently here and to his other offices in Chicago, Toronto and Mexico City.

Disney and his associates expressed sorrow over the tragedy. Roy Disney, now in London, confirmed the Kamens' deaths through Air France and telephoned the news to Los Angeles.

All 48 Die In Air Crash On Azores; Ex-Champ Cerdan, Elve
The Washington Post (1952-1954), Oct. 29, 1949. ProQuest Historical Newspapers

All 48 Die In Air Crash On Azores

Ex-Champ Cerdan, Eleven Americans Killed as Plane Rams Into Mountain

(Other Story, Page 13)

Ponta Delgada, The Azores, Oct. 28.—An Air France Constellation airliner bound from Paris to New York crashed in flames against an Azores mountain 90 miles north of its normal course early today and all 48 persons were killed.

They included the former world middleweight boxing champion, Marcel Cerdan, and 11 Americans. Advices reaching here said rescue parties found all 37 passengers and 11 crewmen dead about the wreckage near the summit of the 3500-foot Algarvia peak of Sao Miguel, largest island of the Azores group. The bodies were charred and unrecognizable.

The plane, in command of the veteran Capt. Jean de la Noue, 37, dropped out of radio contact with ground bases after sending a message at 2:50 a. m. G. M. T., (9:50 P. M. EST yesterday);

WASHINGTON POST 29 OCTOBER 1949

"Having accomplished first part of trip normally, ready to land at 2:55 on Santa Maria Airdrome, Azores, weather being clear,"

Fog, Rain Cut Visibility

Eight hours later the wreckage was sighted on Sao Miguel, at the southeast side of the rugged, Portuguese-administered archipelago in the eastern Atlantic.

Air France officials said the weather had turned bad. They could not explain why they had heard nothing from the plane after its 2:50 a. m. report.

A truck driver saw the explosion in the night. The search was organized within an hour. The burned bodies were seen spread over a large area, about 500 feet from the tip of the peak.

Fog and rain hampered visibility. It was a steep climb to the site of the crash for medical aid men, civilians and soldiers. Eight planes and two ships were sent to Sao Miguel to help.

The company said that since the start of its trans-Atlantic service July 1, 1946, it had made 1972 flights without an accident. Captain de la Noue had flown the ocean 88 times and had logged 6700 hours of flying time.

Cerdan was flying to New York with his manager, Jo Lungman, and his trainer, Paul Genser, for a little fight at Madison Square Garden December 2 with Jake Lamotta. He lost the world middleweight championship to Lamotta in Detroit June 18. He has been a national hero to the French and his native Morocco.

Violinist, Brother Aboard

Also aboard was Miss Ginette Neveu, 28, noted French violinist who was to give concerts in 21 North American cities next month. Her brother and piano accompanist died with her. Miss Neveu was described as "a fantastic success" on a previous tour of the United States in 1947.

Several business persons were among the Americans on the Air France passenger list. The Americans were identified as:

Kay-Kamen, 56, of New York, owner of Kay Kamen, Ltd., world licensing representative for Walt Disney toy characters.

Mrs. Kate Kamen about 42, a University of Nebraska graduate long active in the advertising field. Philip Sales, 509 West 112th st., New York.

Mrs. Margarita Sales, his wife, John Abbott, Butte, Mont., businessman who was flying home and from Syria with Hanna Abbott, who the Syrian Consulate in New York presumed to be his bride.

Bronx Importer on List
Raoul Silbernagel, 59, of the Bronx, president of the importing firm of Selsi Co., Inc., who was returning from a business trip to Paris.

Edward L. Supine, 39, of Brooklyn, a lace importer returning from a visit to Calais, France.

Mrs. Maud Ryan of Atlantic City, N. J., a French war bride in 1919 and an Old Age Assistance recipient.

See PLANE, Page 16, Column 1.

Department investigator returning home from a month's visit with relatives.

Edward Gehring of Manhasset, N. Y.

Emery Komlos of New York. Mrs. Irene Sivanich, Detroit widow who had been visiting her mother in Yugoslavia.

Several of the other victims had American connections. These included Mustapha Abdoney, 27-year-old farmer who was flying from his native Syria to rejoin his wife at Logan, W. Va., and see his 21-month-old son for the first time. His uncle, M. O. Abdoney, operates a general store at Logan.

6 Die in 'Mystery' Crash Of Airliner at London

London, Oct. 28 (AP).—The crash of a Superior Oil Company plane which killed four Americans and two Britons here early today is a mystery to the sole survivor, pilot Earl Sivage, of Los Angeles.

"I do not know what happened," the 33-year-old flier said from his hospital bed. "When we crashed the cockpit was split open and I was thrown clear."

The twin-engine plane went out of control as it roared off the London airport runway bound for Rome.

With his gasoline-soaked clothes blazing, Sivage was thrown 50 feet. He rolled in rain puddles to put out the flames.

Two officials of the oil company were among the dead. They were Robert Allen and James Lewis, 40, both of Los Angeles.

Also killed were the pilot, Capt. Joseph Jordan of San Fernando, Calif.; Andrew Cole, of Long Beach, radio operator; and Sir Hugh Weightman, 50, and W. J. Horne, about 40, British officials. The group was en route to Cairo.

Sports World Mourns

Cerdan Said He'd Win Back Title or Die

Plane Crash Takes French Fighter's Life

By Jack Hand

NEW YORK, Oct. 28 (AP).—Marcel Cerdan bubbled with the joy of living. His dancing eyes and gold-toothed smile were among the best ambassadors France ever sent to America.

It was an honest grief the sports world expressed today when it learned of Marcel's death in a plane crash in the Azores. They liked the man over here where so many foreign boxers have failed.

Here was a Frenchman who really could fight, a man who seemed to enjoy his work.

When the fight was over, Marcel could be gay, too. In the ring it was strictly business.

His last trip also was strictly business—almost a mission. The aim was to regain the world middleweight boxing championship he lost to Jake La Motta at Detroit in June.

Cerdan was gay when he boarded the plane at Orly Airfield, Paris, yesterday. Just before taking off, he telephoned his wife at Casablanca, Morocco, and said: "I promise you I'll bring back the world title."

More than a title was wrenched from the fun-loving Frenchman in the last of his 105 fights. Marcel's pride was deeply wounded that dark and rainy night when he surrendered because of a shoulder injury.

"What will the people in Paris say?"

Those were Cerdan's first words as he slumped in the ring, surrounded by Jo Longman, his manager, who also died in the crash, and Lew Burston, his American representative.

PATRIOTISM, perhaps, isn't the word. But Cerdan's deep, abiding love of his native country never was better expressed than in his post-flight comment. Many said he never would re-

LaMotta Eulogizes His Dead Opponent

New York, Oct. 28 (AP).—Jake LaMotta, who was to have defended his world middleweight title against Marcel Cerdan on December 2, said today "you had to fight him as I did to know what a fine sportsman he was."

"My mother has been at church all morning, praying and lighting candles for the safety of our friends."

But he was back in mid-summer, grim and determined to regain his lost glory—for Marcel and for France.

"This is the fight of my life—I win—or I die."

Thus did Cerdan solemnly state his aims on his arrival from Paris in August for a bout that never was held.

An injury to La Motta's shoulder forced postponement of the

bout, originally scheduled for September 28. Just the other day it was resigned for December 2 at Madison Square Garden. That was why Cerdan and Longman were on the plane that crashed in the Azores.

It was a shame that America never saw Cerdan at his peak. When he first attracted widespread notice in 1944 by winning the inter-Allied boxing crown, he was 28. He was 32 when he won the world championship and might have been favored to whip La Motta in the return although he was 33 on July 22.

MARCEL WAS BORN of Spanish parents at Bel-Abbes, Algeria, July 22, 1916. Because he lived for many years on a small farm near Casablanca with his wife and children, American fight writers called him the Casablanca clouter.

New York first saw him in 1946 after he had been fighting 11 years. George Abrams was his first victim by a close de-

Bubbling Marcel Captivated U. S. Fans

at Madison Square Garden. Cerdan had a badly wrenched back but he told nobody. He came back in 1947 to beat Harold Green at New York and Billy Walker at Montreal, but Anton Raadik had him on the floor three times in the last round at Chicago before Cerdan skinned through with a decision.

After knocking out young Lavern Roach in March of 1948, Cerdan returned to Europe, where he suffered the only loss by decision of his career to Cyrille Hanriot at Brussels. Later he reversed it.

Cerdan surprised the boxing experts by stopping Tony Zale at Jersey City September 21, 1948, to win the middleweight crown. He had given Tony a bad beating all the way before Zale collapsed at the end of the eleventh round and was unable to answer the bell for the twelfth.

Natália Correia e a América: dois quase-inéditos

Vasco Rosa

Natália Correia visitou os Estados Unidos da América em Junho de 1950, escrevendo depois o conhecido e um tanto controverso *Descobri que Era Europeia*,¹ mas um ano antes já publicara no semanário *Sol*, em que colaborava regularmente, dois artigos sobre o país, abordando tópicos particularmente relevantes para ela (como açoriana, a geopolítica do pós-guerra; como mulher, a condição feminina no país), que ficaram inéditos em livro. Diria que não lhes será estranho o seu casamento, nesse mesmo ano, com William Creighton Hylan em Lisboa, com quem, curiosamente, morou na Residência América, antes de se instalarem num apartamento na Rua da Lapa.

Estas colaborações surgem ali sem a consistência serial do ciclo de oito artigos consagrados à «História da Mulher no Mundo», ou dum feixe de comentários sobre a política internacional, e nem sequer como estes têm evidente adesão a relevantes factos do momento. São matéria de crónicas avulsas, sem alcance ensaístico, que a página de jornal não comporta, apontamentos que ajudam a fixar o espírito da escritora micalense, mesmo que no primeiro deles ela prefira por uma vez escudar-se num inquérito a terceiros, figuras do arquipélago residentes em Lisboa. Atestam a segunda participação regular de Natália Correia na imprensa (este *Sol* teria vida muito curta, 1948–49), depois de entre Abril de 1945 e Novembro de 1946 ter escrito para *Portugal, Madeira e Açores* e três décadas antes da colaboração dada à *Capital* que resultaria em *Não Percas a Rosa*, diário dos anos de brasa 1974–75 e a sua intervenção jornalística mais relevante, logo depois complementadas com um novo ciclo de crónicas n’*A Luta* dirigida por Vitorino Nemésio, de Agosto de 1975 a Março de 1976.²

A lenda do estrangeirismo açoriano

Afirma-se existir nos Açores uma corrente pró-americana. O depoimento de alguns açorianos elucidados de que os Açores, estando gratos à América, conservam-se acima de tudo portugueses, repudiando qualquer atitude americana que colida com a sua nacionalidade portuguesa.

Por motivo de ordem económica, a prosperidade açoriana, que foi encher os cofres no caudal americano, devido a emigração, não pode furtar-se a um grato americanofilismo. Resta saber até que ponto vai esta manifesta simpatia por tudo o que venha da América e se ela chega mesmo a colidir com o sentimento nacional dos açorianos, tão portugueses como os melhores, pela raça e pelo amor à mesma terra, defendida com os mesmos sacrifícios e enfrentando os mesmos perigos.

Assim resolvemos consultar alguns açorianos, não tantos como seria de desejar para formar um critério amplo, porém os suficientes para dissipar qualquer dúvida que possa existir sobre o portuguêsismo açoriano.

¹ Victor de Luna Meireles testemunhou no *In Memoriam* de Natália Correia (2005, p. 89): «Em 1972, em Boston [...] recordou o seu livro *Descobri que Era Europeia*, constatando que as opiniões que tinha manifestado nesse livro de 1951 se encontravam actualíssimas».

² Um e outras reunidas pela primeira vez na monumental edição de 2015 de *Não Percas a Rosa*, pela Ponto de Fuga.

Ouçamos, em primeiro lugar, o dr. Nicolau d'Ávila Pereira, Presidente da Casa dos Açores, em Lisboa:

Em 1911 deixei os Açores. Tenho-me conservado um pouco à margem (não ignorado, pois acima de tudo sou açoriano) dos acontecimentos que ali se desenrolaram nestes últimos tempos.

Porém, seja qual for o curso que estes tenham tomado, há um sentimento que se conserva inalterado: o amor à terra.

A corrente pró-americana das Ilhas portuguesas do Atlântico encontra-se apenas ligada a factores económicos: durante muito tempo a riqueza do ilhéu era a emigração. O próspero “calafona” (corrupção local da palavra *Califórnia*), no regresso ao lar, não esquecia a bandeira americana, utilizando-a como colcha, na sua cama. Porém, isto não era mais do que uma gratidão para com a terra generosa que os acarinhava. Pois não fora o sentimento patriótico que os trouxera de volta?

Na primeira guerra mundial os Açores — falo por Ponta Delgada — foram teatro de manifesta incompatibilidade entre açorianos e americanos.³ Assumindo atitudes quixotescas e insolentes, estes iam ao ponto de perturbar senhoras casadas. Semelhantes atrevimentos deram lugar a rixas e cenas violentas. Isto dá-nos a medida de quanto difere o temperamento dos dois povos.



Figura 1. *Sol*, Lisboa, 22 de Maio de 1949, pp. 1 e 9.

O depoimento do padre Dinis da Luz⁴ tem para nós um valor muito particular. Sendo o primeiro jornalista a defender uma aproximação entre Portugal e os Estados Unidos, bem como o Brasil, o que

³ A bibliografia sobre os Açores e a guerra de 1914–18 é considerável. V., entre outros autores, José Medeiros Ferreira e Sérgio Rezendes.

⁴ Em 1949 Dinis da Luz era jornalista de *A Voz*. É extensa e variada a sua colaboração na imprensa do arquipélago e das comunidades açorianas nos Estados Unidos. Também poeta, faleceu em 1988 em São Pedro do Nordeste, São Miguel, onde nascera c. 1915.

lhe valeu ser chamado pelos «gansos do patriotismo» (a expressão é dele) o padre católico, apostólico, americano, coloca-o esse facto numa verdadeira linha de imparcialidade.

Eis o que nos confiou o padre Dinis da Luz:

Falo em nome do grande sector açoriano que simpatiza com a América. Com a mão na consciência posso garantir que os açorianos não são menos portugueses do que os continentais. Houve, é certo, alguns desvairados que sonharam com a independência,⁵ mas os seus folhetos dormem o sono dos condenados no pó das bibliotecas.

Não sei como persiste a lenda do estrangeirismo açoriano. Caso curioso: só em Lisboa ouvi falar nisso. Agora, sim, em vastas camadas açorianas há uma enraizada simpatia pela América que deriva de emigração e de muitos interesses legítimos dela provenientes. É esta emigração que fomenta a grande amizade pela América do Norte, amizade que se conserva alheia a qualquer outra influência de natureza política da parte oficial norte-americana. Mas até essa corrente emigratória tende a cessar, dadas as dificuldades que lhe opõem as leis americanas.⁶ De modo que, sob este aspecto, se atenua até esse suposto perigo de desnacionalização por contágio.

Não creio que os Estados Unidos necessitem de bases estratégicas nas ilhas dos Açores, que não foram abrangidas pela linha que, ao largo das Américas, traça o limite da zona de defesa do hemisfério ocidental. Aliás, como salientou Walter Lippmann,⁷ essa concepção do hemisfério ocidental tende a integrar-se na concepção mais vasta de uma Comunidade Atlântica. Independentemente disso, Portugal pode garantir a defesa dos Açores. Se houvesse um perigo directo e imediato, o governo português saberia agir, como agiu na guerra de forma a satisfazer plenamente o interesse nacional. Os Açores lutariam até ao fim, como já lutou, contra quem pretendesse servir-se dele como base de ataque à América do Norte ou ao Brasil.

Os açorianos sabem também que um americano pode falar com excessiva franqueza acerca de certos assuntos, mas que das palavras à obra vai uma distância enorme. Roosevelt também sugeriu que o Conselho de Segurança tivesse uma das suas sedes permanentes nos Açores, como explicou Cordell Hull.⁸ Não poderia, no entanto, deixar, para isso, de se entender com o governo português... naturalmente.

Em suma: os açorianos esperam não ser teatro maior ou menor de uma guerra. Porque, felizmente, há caminhos mais curtos entre os adversários.

Mas aceitarão com gosto e com os necessários sacrifícios o que o governo português exigir, segundo o interesse nacional.

Os açorianos que pensam como eu (após desgostos e vexames do tempo da guerra) regozijaram-se com o ministro português⁹ que agradeceu à Providência a posição do

⁵ Em 1949, naturalmente, estavam muito longe de poder prever tudo o que se passaria em 1974-75.

⁶ Algo que seria exemplarmente revertido em consequência — e solidariedade — com a crise criada pelo vulcão dos Capelinhos, na Ilha do Faial, em 1957-58.

⁷ Lippmann (1889-1974) publicara em 1947 o livro *The Cold War: a study in US foreign policy*.

⁸ Hull (1871-1955) foi Nobel da Paz em 1945, pelo seu papel na criação da Organização das Nações Unidas.

⁹ Deduzo tratar-se de José Caeiro da Mata (1877-1963), ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros entre Fevereiro de 1947 e Agosto de 1950 e representante de Portugal na Conferência de Paris sobre o Plano Marshall (1947-48).

arquipélago que serviu de elo para uma futura amizade entre portugueses e a América do Norte.

Pois como português, cem por cento, não posso esquecer que milhares de filhos dos Açores vivem e prosperam na América do Norte, onde são estimados pelo seu labor e pela sua honradez.

José Furtado de Medeiros, um açoriano «anónimo» que representa a espontaneidade do sentimento nacional açoriano, um nome escolhido ao acaso, expôs-nos rapidamente o seu ponto de vista:

Em primeiro lugar como homem, e não como português ou açoriano, deixe-me dizer-lhe o que penso sobre a declaração do sr. Kenneth Royal: Esta atmosfera densa, onde parece desenvolver-se o mórbus duma nova guerra não é mais de que uma deplorável carência de valores morais, crise de que são culpados os homens que tão levemente esqueceram os horrores da última guerra. Eu porém acredito numa vitória final do bom senso; por isso abomino, como homem, qualquer atitude que chame a atenção do mundo para a simples ideia duma nova guerra.

Como açoriano, a declaração do sr. Kenneth Royal assume uma importância muito particular. Embora agradecidos à terra americana pela prosperidade de que ali gozam muito açorianos, somos portugueses e sê-lo-íamos através de todas as contingências, mesmo das que nos forçassem a uma desnacionalização que todos repudiamos.

Sobre o perigo de qualquer nação inimiga tomar bases nos Açores, a soberania portuguesa não pode deixar de oferecer garantia de segurança à América do Norte, a cujo auxílio recorreria, assim como a qualquer país aliado, no caso de verificar-se esse perigo.

Desmentindo essa lenda do pró-americanismo, as vozes açorianas erguem-se para afirmar em coro o seu repúdio por qualquer atitude americana ou estrangeira que afecte a sua dignidade nacional.

Na improvável iminência dum ataque, os açorianos lutariam, não como açorianos, mas como portugueses, colocando acima de interesses eventuais o interesse nacional.

E assim se dissipa a lenda do estrangeirismo açoriano.

O excesso da população feminina: uma sombra no país do progresso

Nos Estados Unidos existe um grande excesso de população feminina, votada ao ostracismo do celibato. O Dr. Rice vem a público com um plano de poligamia legalizada, a seu ver a solução mais inteligente, dentro do ponto de vista biológico.

Nesta viragem da História, porta que se abre para uma nova idade, os homens parecem por vezes borboletas tontas à volta da sua própria perplexidade.

O progresso é sem dúvida uma tremenda responsabilidade a pesar sobre os ombros humanos. Nem sempre o homem sabe encarar essa responsabilidade. Nem sempre ele ordena no mesmo ritmo de evolução, progresso científico e as leis da sociologia. Porém, é como se fugisse dele próprio. E quando aquelas duas forças não caminham a par, a insânia social produz-se na pessoa do homem.

Não nos admiremos, pois, que dos países mais adiantados no que respeita ao progresso da ciência nos venham por vezes ideias singulares envoltas na embalagem agreste do mais rude primitivismo.

A América é um exemplo típico desta incoerência. A explicação será talvez fácil.

Num país onde os recursos da ciência, aplicados à superprodução industrial, representam o empório económico dum reduzido número de habitantes da grande pátria da liberdade, não existindo uma unidade de interesses, não existe, conseqüentemente, uma unidade de pensamento. Por outro lado, essa Torre de Babel, quadro berrante, onde cada pincelada representa a cor local duma raça diferente, alimenta no seu seio uma tal multiplicidade de cultos e de influências espirituais diferentes.

E agora põe-se esta pergunta: um país vale pela sua unidade de pensamento, ou pelo conflito interno das diversas correntes de pensamento que nele pulsam?

Esta pergunta é precisamente o ponto de fricção das duas grandes zonas de influência que se assenhorearam dos destinos do mundo. E a resposta a esta pergunta só a História nos poderá dar.

Singular, singular é este exemplo que nos vem da América, para ver como aquele país procura sanar as suas feridas sociais.

Um dos problemas que ali se levanta (problema mundial) é o de milhões de mulheres condenadas ao ostracismo do celibato. Estes casos são outros tantos milhões de perturbações psiconeuróticas.

Nesta ordem de ideias, um cientista, J. N. Rice, vem a público com um plano para a solução deste problema, partindo do ponto de vista biológico para o ponto de vista social.

Até agora está provado que a igualdade numérica de sexos não existe. Concebem-se mais indivíduos do sexo masculino. A percentagem vai de 35 a 50 por cento.

Já na vida intra-uterina a fraqueza inerente ao sexo masculino começa a manifestar-se. Apenas mais 5 por cento, sobre as fêmeas, sobrevivem.

Esta vitalidade feminina continua através da vida. A resistência física da mulher muito superior à do homem constitui uma espécie de defesa natural contra os perigos da maternidade.



Figura 2. Sol, Lisboa, 28 de Maio de 1949, p. 3.

A contrabalançar a superioridade numérica dos nascimentos masculinos, está o número de mortes entre os homens também muito superior. Daí um excesso de população feminina.

Até 1930, um factor artificial chamou a si a solução deste problema. A emigração era constituída por muito mais homens do que mulheres.

Esses homens iam encher a lacuna da raridade matrimonial nos Estados Unidos. Até essa data um milhão e meio de emigrantes contraiu matrimónio na América.

Depois vieram as restrições à emigração. Os perigos da maternidade decresceram sensivelmente nestes últimos anos, devido ao progresso da medicina, tornando ainda maior o número de sobreviventes femininas. Veio a guerra. Ceifou a vida de muitos homens.¹⁰ E eis que se chegou ao ponto crucial da questão: milhões de mulheres sem a esperança de constituir um lar.

Mas o americano que não recua ante as soluções mais inesperadas aparece-nos agora, na pessoa do dr. Rice, com um plano de «poligamia legalizada».

Em boa verdade não nos capacitamos de que a mulher americana, tão independente, tão ciosa dos seus direitos, pudesse preferir esta situação à de *old maid*. Ela que foi uma das primeiras a lançar o Grito do Ipiranga contra os preconceitos que selavam a usurpação dos direitos femininos.

A união entre indivíduos de sexos diferentes é a forma mais respeitável das relações humanas. É um problema que pertence a cada indivíduo. Pode representar a sua felicidade ou o seu infortúnio. Chega a ser criminoso querer impor normas àquilo que faz parte do património interior do indivíduo.

Um país progressivo que adoptasse e legalizasse a poligamia atraía na sua essência o conceito mais puro do progresso.

A sociologia, no que respeita ao casamento, tende a identificá-lo mais e mais com o que existe de mais livre e puro na natureza humana.

Querer ressuscitar a poligamia na sociedade moderna é como desenterrar das sombras da História bárbara múmias de escravos cingidos por correntes de aço.

América... a grande pátria do paradoxo!....

¹⁰ Estimativas apontam para 290 mil norte-americanos.

POESIA / POETRY

Two Poems

M. Zeferino Spring

the only species of mammal endemic to the Azores

I am tiny inside the caldera
thinking about the diurnal bats
weaving patterns
above parasitic cones

the caldera
centuries ago sunk the peak of the mountain
into its magma

but then spouted another peak –
one volcano
inside the other

perhaps to say I am here
as these bats are here
as I am here

I had no idea these bats
hunted during the day

they woke me from my daydream
here as I climb Mt. Pico
for my 55th birthday

although I'm older
I'm no longer old

glass mermaid

so that her glass body doesn't crack
she anneals in the oven
as her torso fuses with her dichroic tail

if her body were a wine glass
it would sing with a wet fingertip

most nights tending the oven I sip red wine
with a violin quartet on the radio
or with a woman singing fado

but tonight I pour a glass of vinho verde
and wait in silence as the mermaid is resting

the dichroic shimmers
a thousand metallic colors
like the sun brings out on fish scales

the mermaid has yet to sing
I would risk drowning to hear her

Cinco poemas

Rose Angelina Baptista

Aves do sul

Das naus que
fazem velas
em março

e não mais
amainam
em Belém.

Andam calmas
`a vista d'ilhas,
nos vagalhões
sem prumo
atormentam
o santo do dia
com calendários
de promessas.

`A noite, cegas naus
se folgam com
chuvaceiros
de estrelas ligeiras.

Na aurora
estampam
o arcabouço em quilha

e olheiras
irritadiças feito as
aves do sul
maldormidas

que estimam cobrir
as águas
e mostrar sinais

de terra para
o mar lhe
quebrar as costas.

Stella maris

Acudida
`as cousas do mar,
aberta `a vida
sem preferências
a favor ou contra.

Estrela sem mastro,
grande olhos túrbios,
corpo frio.

Sempre de boa
presença na pressa
das marés vivas, mortas.

Cumpre `a deriva
no céu pesado de betume,

alheia às ilhas que se
perdem no regresso
duma viagem.

Alheia aos raios que partiram
mataréus de esquadras

e dos homens
de fortaleza e cal que se
desprenderam dos
contrafortes do mar
como tonéis de vinho.

Estrela que zarpa sem rastro
e veleja com sua bandeira
enfunada, tomando cargas
que lumem ouro,
cargas de marfim e prata.

Estrela que peleja em
levar cartas
de perdão a um mundo
de lodo.

Estrela que mareja
levando notícias tristes
da finada monção

Banho de nuvens

Lua arredia
lasca de unha
encravada no azul
aos pés do meio dia.

E as nuvens
montanhosas
de cor laranja e roxa
esplendor de pura calma.

As nuvens que
aprenderam fazer seus
sonhos virtuosos.
Por isso tem
esse equilíbrio
aéreo entre o dito
E não dito.
Sem reter qualquer memória,
ou desejo de mudança.
Apenas atentas as suas liberdades
não mapeadas, sem forma.

Poderosa imaginação
humana
Tudo que pensa toma
Forma.
Como as nuvens
latentes de
sentimentos
num spray marinho.

Ilhas postiças

Almas da ilha que bóiam
nos olhos do rio.
Nos pés cordas de coco.
No pescoço cordões de fortes.

Sentinelas procuram Dona Úrsula,
marinheiros bêbados, a concertina.
Amantes atiram em poços públicos,
Anéis, pulseiras de lata.
Fantasmas bailam com pernas
de mangue.

Almas da ilha,
apaguem as lamparinas da noite
as galés já vos esperam.

Arranquem os pés' d' aluvião do rio
deixem a erodida alcova.

A nau Cinco Chagas está pronta.
Nossa Senhora Do Mar,
Nossa Senhora Dos Navegantes,
`as fragatas guiá-los-ás
a não serem sucumbidos
pela intrepidez do mar.

As cordas

Vens ouvir
a pressa dessa guitarra
contrária do tempo de
ventear.

Nas linhas do braço,
pinça mares de correntes,
muitos baixos.

As caravelas,
ao fogo despacha,
corte-lhas os mastros.

Pisoteia restingas
e reinóis de ilhas
rasas.

Solta e vai
ao mar livre
O' Dama das Carreiras!

Acode as notas todas
deste compasso de
prosas, brisas e brasas,

aporta-te em mim
grande sol-e-chuva,
teu estandarte em arco
de doze cordas.

Rumo à minha casa - A Miniseries of Poems

Paula Gândara

Meu céu e seio

a vida encontrada por um ou dois dias para
logo se perder enevoadado o mar e o canto das
sereias
que chega de Lisboa ao centro do Ohraio de nada
este lugar onde o prazer não se senta e nem
o canto se faz rio, pouco mais que o frio
aqui
e a vida já perdida há tantos anos atrás que
agora só a manhã verde lima da morte
me aparece gulosa melosa inflada de
flamingos e céus cor-de-rosa
Minha pele algodão esfiapado
de tanto esperar se arrepia
e meu riso de sol esperneia
qual criança arredia
Mas se aprendi alguma coisa
é que não vale a pena fugir
das reprises de amor dos absurdos
infantis que nos perseguem
até ao último jardim.
Aquieto-me
antecipando quando já não seja eu
e tudo possa ser novo
na praia clara que há de ser
meu seio
espraiado no mar do meu sonhar
enraizado lá longe
de onde há muito não ouço o cantar
Quem chega de Lisboa
ao centro do Ohraio do nada
encontra pelo menos
meu seio
pulsante anseio de chegar
ao meu velho enevoadado mar.

Tenho medo deste ar

no estrondo do clamor a loucura
bruta do alto de famigerados
gritos absurdamente plenos da essência do mal
que espicha sobre o ventre da terra amada deles

maior loucura ainda a daqueles que aplaudem
gravetos de desenraizadas árvores ardidas já
suas entranhas pelos guinchos infernais
de todos os nossos Verões
onde sempre me pergunto
como se pode arder assim e ainda assim
ser?

à flor da pele agora
exatos outros gritos são, na ânsia
de tudo ver o que antes era só luz
leve de graça e garça
negra na brancura que não clama
tal qual abutre que de si não sabe
senão a sua natureza
e onde a luz é o que não da escuridão
belíssima do apenas ser.

Que fazeis vós aplaudindo
quando nem braços estendeis
para segurar o abismo?
Que fazeis vós gritando
quando vossa língua
não amacia o ventre
puríssimo da língua de minha mãe?

Choro tão aflita
que até minhas lágrimas fogem
quisera ao menos que nelas se afogassem
os homens
loucos e roucos
que aos poucos
nos roubam
o apenas ser
no meio deste lugar
onde tudo me falta menos que o ar

Dos Estados em que nos Unimos na América do Norte

Resigno-me às portas fechadas, à boca fechada
às janelas abertas de par em par que aplaudem o frio
que se me cola às entranhas
estranhas partes onde tudo se resolve
sem que se confraternize a alma
o espírito e o coração
com as chamadas
partes
baixas
Estranhas partes que trazem à tona
sangue e bÍlis
prazeirosas artes
e tais incensos paradisÍacos
como os que nos unem num só
- Agora e Para Sempre
Seja Feita a Vossa Vontade -
resigno-me enfim à solidão
onde
sem frio
nem calor
prossequimos,
civilizadamente.

Águas Lusas

sem ter mais como chegar-me
revolvo a terra empurro solo
mergulho no rouco do ventre escuro
e inspiro o
fundo
lago das águas lusas
que permeiam o recôncavo do meu ser
desde há milénios

troco o ar por essa água límpida
que a todos faria peixes da aurora
e já escamas já guelras
desponto uma vez mais
ao de cima
expirando sobre o seco rio
cujo lenho abri
as águas onde nadarei
de volta
a mim

Rumo a tudo, menos à minha casa

Odeia-me, cospe-me, bate-me na vida, ensanguenta-me a alma
dolorida de tanta miséria vinda do oco que abarrotei
quando mal te via
mas não nos tires os tenros filhos
que cantam baixinho na madrugada!

Declaro-me culpada,
há vinte anos que nos puno com
querença de ser outra
que ficasse menos, mas não sou dona da vida
cega e rouca, e mais assim nos enjeitas em surtos daninhos
que nos dizimam, dia sim, dia sim.

Errada sou, rastejando na terra que nos não abençoou,
alma já ida em rios de sangue que não se juntam
ao mar
pelo medo de o alagar
com as minhas caravelas já geladas, engatinhadas em neve raiada.

Remitida a nossa vida em tuas mãos rotas, agarraste-te
à ruindade crua e só escorre
pelos teus dedos a vida longe do meu lugar,
onde já me teria
enterrado,
devagarinho,
mas aqui...

Aqui, cuida-te,
porque aqui não gostam de gente,
e menos ainda de latinos e ainda menos de pretos
e ainda menos portugueses e brasileiros
mas quase nada,
quase só desprezo e tropeços
nos nossos corpos,
quase fiapos
debaixo de tanta patada.

Cuida-te,
não te matarão,
só humilharão a nossa lusitanidade
e eu ainda pagarei pelos murros
que disparam no ar, o teu braço destroçando
o nosso abraço
como paguei antes por gente que não sendo minha
era da terra abençoada onde nos criámos,

comandando o sol e suas quenturas,
e só porque se verme sou
também astro serei,
colada na água gelada
do rio, que ao redor de ti me cansa...

Cuida-te,
não quero que entre cinzas e fumo
se escoe tua voz,
e a de nossos tristes filhos,
nos calabouços lustrosos norte-americanos
onde nos soterrarão, sem dó.

E querendo-me tanto mal,
como segurarás minha mão
escultura adiada?

Não nos tires os tenros filhos
que cantam baixinho na madrugada
ainda tenho a minha barriga redonda
de tantas noites encandeada
mareando de rezas
terços e terços
contra a náusea desta triste romagem
rumo a tudo menos à minha casa.

On the Beach (Madeira)

Alexis Levitin

I don't remember now how I found him. But somehow I did. The chess champion of Funchal, Madeira. It was a bustling little city of bougainvillea and palm trees and the birthplace of Christopher Columbus's wife. By stubborn questioning, I somehow unearthed a modest, poorly lit room that served as the local chess club and discovered the unassuming local champ, Ricardo. I had just arrived on a banana boat from Lisbon on a two week escape from family life. I was looking forward to some of the innocent pleasures of a renewed bachelorhood.

We played rewarding games for several days, before I went off to explore the island. The games were, as usual, a pleasure, but what remains most memorable for me are the naked mountains rising like a spine down the center of the small island and the system of *levadas*, stone flumes carrying water from the rocky heights to irrigate the widespread fields and vineyards of the terraced island domain. Alongside each of these quiet flumes of cold water is a narrow footpath and following these paths one can penetrate to all parts of the uninhabited interior. At one point, the *levada* led me through a low-ceiled tunnel, utterly black. I had no flashlight, of course. The only thing I could see was a tiny pinprick of light hovering like an optical illusion in the far distance. It took at least half an hour to traverse that unfathomable blackness, one hand held before me, to prevent cracking my skull on rocky projections from the vaulted ceiling. For what seemed like ages, nothing changed, as the tiny dot bobbed beyond the tunnel's ink. Finally, the dot began to grow a bit larger, and I knew I would finally rejoin a world of vineyards, forests, and the flowing water of the *levada* sparkling beneath the sun. Leaving the seemingly endless dark, I found myself on the other side of the island, terraced fields dropping below me to the distant sea. I spent the night at a forestry cabin, sharing a simple meal with the lone mountain warden stationed in that remote spot. He suffered from a congenital spinal problem, used two mountain stocks to get around, and seemed grateful for the temporary companionship. It was rare that visitors came, he said, and rarer still that anyone would spend the night, making use of the mountain club's bunk beds. The world felt clean and idyllic, as I tucked into my sleeping bag against the nighttime chill, listening to the embers on the hearth shift as they slowly crumbled to ash. I felt sorry to leave the guard to his solitude the following morning.

Before returning to the mainland, I stopped by the chess club to promise a return someday. We found time to play two or three last games and a young kid of twelve or so watched avidly. The local champ and I were evenly matched, we split our games, and all three of us were equally pleased.

Three years later, I made it back. But this time I decided to visit the neighboring island of Porto Santo and told the chess champ of my plans. His family had a small vacation house on the island, so he decided to come and join me in a few days, bringing along his side-kick, Pedro, now an awkward fifteen-year old. So I took the *Blue Pirate*, vomited shamefully from the rough passage, and embarked on the almost deserted neighboring island. I found a small hollow between two dunes and there I laid out my Army-Navy poncho ground sheet, spread my sleeping bag, and unpacked a modest dinner of canned sardines, some bread, and a carrot and tomato that I washed in the gentle surf fifty yards away. That was what I ate for the ensuing week and I was content. Sun, sand, sea, bodysurfing, swimming,

running kept me utterly happy and I seemed to have no desire for food. When I returned to the States, I had lost so much weight I had to go out and buy some tighter trousers.

For several days, then, I simply slept on the beach, swam in the sea, rode the waves, and pounded my five-mile standard run down the beach and back, along the flat, wet sand. I read some Graham Greene and watched a nun herding her brood of young schoolchildren, like a solicitous hen with her chicks. After a couple of days, Ricardo showed up, with gawky Pedro at his side. We settled down with my portable, magnetic, black and white folding chess set in the warm sand and began to play. It was like the good old days. Ricardo and I were still even and we happily split our games. Then came the revelation.

“Posso?” said the gangly sidekick, and Ricardo made room for him opposite me in the sand. I played my usual Ruy Lopez. His responses were swift and certain. I never got the open lines I hoped for, my pieces seemed to be stumbling sluggishly against each other, as if only half-awake. In a bit over half an hour, I watched helpless as my king was mated. I clapped the kid on the back and congratulated him. Three years ago he had just been an on-looker. Now he was a player.

Ricardo took my place, a Sicilian Dragon variation ensued, and in forty minutes Ricardo had to resign. Then I played young Pedro again and again he swiftly defeated me. Ricardo and I exchanged a rueful, but amused smile. Now it was Ricardo’s turn. And again he lost. At that point he revealed to me that young Pedro was now, in fact, the new chess champ of Madeira.

A changing of the guard had occurred. A teenager now ruled and we could confront him and do our best, but our best was no longer good enough. And so we lost all our games for the rest of the week. It was, after all, the way of the world.

And I remembered a National Geographic special following the fate of an old alpha lion, defeated by a young upstart and forced to leave the pride and wander the savannah alone. Unable to capture prey without group support, he appears in the last scene, emaciated, exhausted, barely able to stand up. And then he comes across his last chance, an equally exhausted buffalo, mired in a pit of viscous mud, unable to escape. Slowly he crawls through the muck toward the buffalo, bites him repeatedly on the back of the neck, but cannot penetrate the thick hide and thick muscles. The buffalo can do nothing to defend itself, but the lion cannot kill its prey. And so, totally depleted, they lie there dying together, defeated by time and the insidious, clinging, primordial mud. But we, after all, were only playing chess, and I was merely beginning to enter middle age and so, with genuine warmth, I was able to congratulate the adolescent Pedro on his new status as the alpha chess player of Madeira and Porto Santo.

Terra Nova

Romance

Regina Duarte Moreira

Nota introdutória

O texto que se segue não é uma sinopse do livro “Terra Nova”, mas sim as vinte primeiras páginas sem interrupções.

Trata-se de um romance de cariz marcadamente psicológico, género que a autora privilegia, em que as tensões e os confrontos entre os inevitáveis heróis e vilões romanescos tradicionais são substituídos pelos conflitos íntimos das personagens que, banhadas no caldo das memórias e afectos conscientes bem como nos que se escondem nos recônditos escuros da psique, determinam as suas escolhas e comportamentos e tecem o fio condutor da história.

Dois trágicos acontecimentos reais, ocorridos nos mares da Terra Nova, estão no âmago da vida de três gerações de uma família fictícia; a trama desenrola-se em torno do modo como cada personagem utiliza os seus recursos internos para suplantar os desafios e os traumas deles decorrentes.

A deslumbrante beleza natural da “Newfoundland” é pretexto para a autora, geógrafa, poder pintar com as maravilhosas paisagens dessa região canadiana os cenários de fundo da narrativa que, aqui e ali, é guarnecida de referências à história das civilizações e das gentes que fizeram desta região ou ponto de passagem, ou o seu lugar de enraizamento.

Entrelaçada com a narrativa principal, está a saga da Pesca do Bacalhau nos mares da Terra Nova, homenagem da autora aos bravos portugueses que a protagonizaram.

Erica herdara não só o nome, mas também os genes bons daquela avó que, ainda na barriga da mãe, fora levada da Noruega para uma terra com nome de lenda e magia, a Península de Avalon, povoada pelos colonos que no século XVI aportaram à Terra Nova idos do outro lado do Atlântico. Na cidade de St. John's, viria a nascer, no ano de 1900, aquela que, com dezanove anos, a paixão pelo capitão de um lugre bacalhoeiro português arrebataria à terra natal e levaria para Sul, para águas mais quentes e luminosas, as da terra lusitana, a bordo do navio do marido – que só casada, a jovem teve permissão para deixar a casa de seus pais. Nem toda a valentia da noiva, que bem tentou fazer “pé de marinheiro”, nem o ardente amor que inflamava o casal foram bastantes para fazer da terrível viagem, em que por pouco o veleiro não resistiu a duas violentas tempestades, algo que vagamente se assemelhasse a uma lua-de-mel. E foi preciso muito tempo, para Érika deixar de sentir o cheiro a peixe entranhado na pele e na memória. Mas durante vinte e duas vezes, tantas quantos os anos, ela ansiou por esse cheiro porque com ele lhe vinha o marido de volta dos mares da sua terra, no final de mais uma campanha. Quando em 1942, a Sul da Gronelândia, um submarino alemão, a pretexto de que o lugre não ostentava marcas de neutralidade – o que era falso já que o navio tinha uma grande bandeira portuguesa pintada no casco – abriu fogo contra ele repetidamente acabando por afundá-lo, também matou Érika que, ao receber em Lisboa a terrível notícia, caiu fulminada por um ataque de coração.

Elisa, a filha única, moveu mundos e fundos para saber o que realmente se passara no mar, naquele funesto dia de Julho, mas só viria a conhecer a verdade pela boca de dois dos oito sobreviventes da catástrofe quando, em Setembro, estes chegaram a Lisboa e, muito a custo, se dispuseram a falar com a filha do seu capitão. E o que lhe contaram produziu nela um efeito tal, que Ricardo, com quem a jovem mulher viria a casar-se dois anos depois, se convenceu de que fora a acumulação de tanto sofrimento a causa da doença súbita que viria a vitimá-la aos quarenta e um anos. Elisa tinha-lhe confessado, bastante tempo depois da tragédia, já com as duas filhas nascidas, não ser capaz de ultrapassar o trauma que a morte súbita da mãe lhe provocara e que o pensamento do pai a morrer de sede e de fome num pequeno bote à deriva no oceano, nunca a abandonava e lhe era insuportável.

Ao volante do carro, a caminho do trabalho, Isabela estremeceu. Porque lhe teriam vindo à ideia tão tristes recordações? O coração apertou-se-lhe como se sentisse a dor da mãe, essa mãe que se fora era ela ainda menina, com sete anos apenas, e da qual lhe ficara uma tênue recordação – a voz meiga e a suavidade do gesto, o olhar triste e distante como se adivinhasse que o seu lugar não seria ali por muito tempo. E não fora, pois numa trágica manhã de Fevereiro, tinham ido dar com ela morta, no chão do escritório.

Ainda adolescente, Erica fizera a si mesma duas promessas solenes: uma quando a mãe partira, e que pôs imediatamente em prática - tomar conta de Isabela, a irmã mais nova do que ela oito anos. E a segunda que pouco a pouco amadureceu a partir do dia em que pediu ao pai que lhe contasse o que acontecera ao navio do avô. Ricardo Vaz de Amorim olhou para a filha, na altura com dezassete anos, sentada a seu lado num dos sofás da sala - no rosto redondo, emoldurado por uma farta cabeleira loira, os olhos verdes fitavam-no, inquiridores e determinados -, e compreendeu que tinha chegado a hora de ela saber a verdade. Quando acabou de lhe contar os terríveis acontecimentos, Erica estava hirta e pálida.

- E é verdade que a avó morreu quando lhe deram a notícia?
- Sim, Erica. O coração não resistiu ao choque.
- E a mãe? De que é que morreu? Também foi do coração?
- Foi. O coração da tua mãe estava muito fraco, mas nem ela nem eu o sabíamos.
- Então como é que o pai sabe que foi do coração?
- Pelas conclusões da autópsia.

Ela soltou um Ah...! e desviou o olhar angustiado. Ricardo pegou-lhe nas mãos, e nada disse por não conseguir encontrar palavras capazes de confortar mais do que o gesto.

Ficaram assim, de mãos unidas durante um longo momento. Depois, ela levantou-se e dirigiu-se para junto da lareira no rebordo da qual se alinhavam as fotos de família. Quedou-se a olhar para elas.

— Sabe pai, vou fazer tudo o que puder para saber o mais possível sobre a Terra Nova – sobre a pesca do bacalhau nesse mar onde o meu avô ficou, e sobre a terra onde a avó nasceu e onde os dois se conheceram. Eles merecem isso.

Ricardo olhou-a surpreendido e os olhos humedeceram-se-lhe.

— Não tenho dúvidas de que vais fazer isso e vais fazê-lo muito bem. És uma rapariga extraordinária, minha filha!

E a partir desse momento, Erica iniciou o caminho que não só a levaria a cumprir a segunda promessa, como fez dela uma das mais prestigiadas investigadoras do país na área da Antropologia Social e Cultural. Pouco depois de concluir a licenciatura em Antropologia pela Universidade de Lisboa, foi admitida no Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas. Em 1979, doutorou-se com uma tese sobre as migrações pendulares dos pescadores portugueses de bacalhau na Terra Nova, depois do que a sua investigação se focou nas relações transoceânicas entre a Escandinávia e a costa Leste do Canadá. Seria um trabalho para toda a vida.

Era uma fria tarde de Fevereiro do ano de 1990. O telefone de Isabela Vaz de Amorim tocou na secretária do seu consultório. A voz calma da irmã fez-se ouvir:

— Isa...

— Olá mana!

— Estás em consulta?

— Estou entre duas consultas. Diz!

— Recebi hoje um convite para fazer uma comunicação no final de Maio, princípio de Junho e imagina onde...

— Onde?

— Na Terra Nova.

Do outro lado, fez-se um breve silêncio - Isabela procurava medir as palavras na reacção a tão inesperada notícia, e disfarçando a perturbação que sentia, disse num tom que se esforçou por ser ligeiro:

— Que surpresa! Mas não tens já um seminário qualquer mais ou menos nessa altura, na Dinamarca?

— Não. Esse é em Março. Gostava muito que fosses comigo à Terra Nova. Se calhar, nessa altura já podes meter as férias de Verão do hospital... Que dizes?

— Vou, pois! O João Luís estará algures pelo mundo, e, portanto, estou livre que nem um passarinho! Quanto tempo tencionas lá ficar?

— O seminário vai ser entre 30 de Maio, uma Quarta-Feira, a 3 de Junho, Domingo, mas quero ir na Segunda-feira anterior. Se fores comigo, ficaremos pelo menos um mês para, nesta tua primeira ida, te dar a conhecer o mais possível: a casa dos nossos bisavós, os icebergs, as baleias, as partes mais bonitas da ilha...

— Deixa-me ver quantas operações estão previstas e só depois é que posso dizer a partir de que data fico livre.

— Então vá, Isa. Vê lá isso e dá-me a resposta o mais depressa possível. É já daqui a quatro meses e é preciso comprar as passagens e reservar o alojamento.

— Espero que no Sábado já ta possa dar. Não te esqueças que vais almoçar lá a casa.

Ao desligar o telefone, Isabela sentia-se muito desassossegada. Já em casa, depois de jantar, enroscou-se em frente à lareira; de olhos fixos nas chamas irrequietas, pensava no passado distante e em Erica, esse ser tão especial que a vida lhe ofertara.

Quando três anos depois de enviuar, o pai decidiu casar de novo, foi como se a mãe lhes tivesse morrido outra vez, desta feita às mãos da madrastra que até nem era má pessoa, mas que não tinha sido talhada para cuidar de filhos e, talvez por isso, nunca viria a tê-los.

Talvez por isso, também, o pai não ficara muito surpreendido quando menos de cinco anos após esse casamento, Erica lhe disse que ela e a irmã queriam ter uma conversa a sós com ele e, nessa conversa, Erica disse:

— Pai, eu quero sair de casa e quero levar a Isa comigo. Como já trabalho, acho que chegou a altura de ser independente; o que ganho dá-me para pagar a renda da casa, mas não para sustentar a Isa. Por isso, gostava de saber se o pai está disposto a ajudar-nos.

Há quem, como Ricardo, acredite que o nome próprio de uma pessoa lhe está predestinado e intimamente ligado aos traços mais marcantes do seu carácter. Talvez isso explique a indecisão de muitos pais, que andam às voltas com nomes e mais nomes durante toda a gravidez quando, de repente, surge um que nunca lhes tinha ocorrido e imediatamente se decidem por ele; outros nem têm que dar-se ao trabalho da escolha porque alguém decretou que a criança tem de ter o nome do avô ou da avó, da madrinha ou de um parente já falecido; já para não falar de muitas situações singulares, algumas quase anedóticas que estão na origem das escolhas.

Em vez de responder directamente à pergunta da filha, começou por lhe falar do nome, o que surpreendeu a jovem:

— Erica, como sabes chamas-te assim porque a tua mãe adorava a mãe dela que faleceu, nas condições trágicas que vocês conhecem, três anos antes de tu nasceres e quis que tivesses o seu nome; eu não a contrariei embora tivesse preferido que te chamasses Isabela. Mas realmente, tu só poderias chamar-te Erica! Como sabes, tem origem norueguesa, o país dos vossos bisavós maternos, mas penso que nunca te explicámos que quer dizer “sempre poderosa” e que está ligado à perseverança e à dedicação. E tu sempre foste assim, desde pequena. Quando se te metia uma ideia na cabeça, não descansavas enquanto não a levavas a cabo. Quando a vossa mãe faleceu, decidiste tomar conta da tua irmã sem que ninguém to tivesse pedido, e fizeste-o primorosamente. Tens vinte e três anos, não precisas do meu consentimento para sair de casa, mas a Isabela precisa. Se ela quiser ir contigo não vou impedi-la porque ela é também tua filha. Isabela, queres ir viver com a tua irmã?

— Quero papá, mas gosto muito de ti, muito! Não fiques zangado.

— Não fico, filha, está descansada. Mas vou sentir muito a vossa falta. E sim, claro que podes contar com a minha ajuda, Erica.

No dia seguinte, Erica começou a procurar um apartamento para alugar, mas ao fim de dois meses teve de admitir que não era tarefa fácil – havia poucos, os bons eram muito caros e não gostou de nenhum dos que estavam ao alcance da sua bolsa. Então, Ricardo, que era um pai atento, perguntou-lhe:

— Importas-te que eu te dê uma ajuda?

Ela, que era perseverante, mas de parva nada tinha, respondeu-lhe:

— Estou a ver a coisa tão difícil que até lhe agradeço, pai.

Uma semana depois, ele agarrou nas duas filhas e foi mostrar-lhes um apartamento na Avenida António Augusto de Aguiar a cinquenta metros do cruzamento com a Fontes Pereira de Melo. Tinha

três assoalhadas e duas casas de banho, era amplo e com bons acabamentos. As raparigas ficaram entusiasmadas. Erica admirou-se por o preço ser tão em conta e a explicação que o homem da imobiliária lhe deu soou-lhe a falso fazendo-a suspeitar de que ali andava dedo do pai. Sentiu-se incomodada e passou-lhe pela cabeça não aceitar, mas naquele preciso momento, Isabela exclamou:

— Ainda por cima, ficamos muito perto de si, pai!

Ricardo fitou a filha mais velha e esta percebeu-lhe uma súplica no olhar.

— Gosto muito. Ficamos com ele – disse.

Só anos mais tarde vieram a saber – pela madrasta, já muito doente – que o pai havia recorrido aos muitos conhecimentos que tinha para desencantar rapidamente um apartamento nas imediações, e que o preço que ela pagava era apenas um terço do valor da renda – o restante, era suportado por ele. Maria Amélia, assim se chamava a senhora, também lhes dissera na mesma ocasião, entre outras coisas muito sérias, que, naquela altura, o pai não se tinha oposto à saída de Isabela, não só por não querer separar as duas irmãs, mas porque sabia que elas nunca tinham sido felizes desde que ela tinha entrado naquela casa.

As duas jovens haveriam de viver juntas durante doze anos, até ao dia do casamento de Isabela. Foi no mês de Setembro de 1980. A noiva tinha acabado de se vestir com a ajuda da irmã, quando o pai foi ter com elas e lhes falou da mãe – poucas palavras, que ele não era de grandes falas. Contou-lhes que certo dia, Elisa, observando as duas filhas que seguiam, de mãos dadas, cantarolando, uns passos à frente deles, se virou para ele e disse: “De vez em quando, penso que se eu desaparecesse para sempre, a Erica seria uma maravilhosa mãe para a nossa pequenina”.

— Em meu nome e no da vossa mãe, obrigado Erica por te teres tornado mulher sem uma mãe para te orientar e pelo modo como cuidaste da tua irmã e a educaste.

Erica não se conteve e chorou. Chorou tão sentidamente, que Isabela só naquele momento se apercebeu de que nunca tinha pensado no que a morte da mãe teria significado para uma rapariga de quinze anos forçada a sair da adolescência de modo tão abrupto e dramático. Erica, a poderosa, a intensa, a protectora, que lhe dera a alegria de viver – no riso fácil e contagiante, no baloiçar alegre dos seus braços, no entusiasmo das brincadeiras como se tivessem a mesma idade, na descoberta das flores e dos bichos...e mais tarde, nos ensinamentos sobre coisas de mulheres.

Mas o que Isabela, agora à distância, achava mais extraordinário era o dom da irmã para educar - serenamente, sem excessos nem rigidez, soube impor-lhe os limites tão necessários na adolescência sem, contudo, lhe coartar a autonomia – quantos pais teriam a aprender com ela! Sorriu - parecia estar ainda a ouvir Erica a contar-lhe uma das conversas semanais que, obrigatoriamente, tinha com o pai, por imposição deste quando as duas saíram da casa paterna – e que eram uma maneira de, à distância, ele controlar o modo como estava a decorrer a evolução da filha ainda menor de idade.

— Pai, a Isa quer começar a sair à noite.

— Com quem?

— Com amigas da idade dela, quase todas colegas de turma.

— Ela tem um namorico, não tem?

— Nada de especial. O costume nestas idades.

— Mas suponho que não vão só raparigas... os namorados ou amigos também, não?

— O que é que acha, pai?

— Pois... Mas ela é ainda muito nova. Gostava que estivesse em casa o mais tardar à meia-noite.

Erica disfarçou um sorriso.

— Oh pai! Isso era no meu tempo! Oito anos de diferença é muito. Ficamos pelas duas da manhã, pode ser?

— No máximo dos máximos! E só há saída uma vez por semana - à Sexta ou ao Sábado. Quanto aos lugares, também é preciso estar atento. Uma coisa são concertos, cinemas ou jantares, outra, bem

diferente, são as discotecas e os bares. Tu nunca me deste preocupações nessa matéria. Eras pouco de sair à noite.

Chegado o grande dia, Isabela e as três amigas lá foram rumo ao bar onde os rapazes já se encontravam. Rui, o namorado, veio ao encontro dela com uma atitude muito diferente da que era habitual: brejeiro, puxou-a para ele e beijou-a ousadamente o que a surpreendeu já que, até então, os seus beijos tinham sido algo púdicos. Mas a coisa não ficou por ali – a seguir, ele assentou-lhe uma mão nas nádegas. Sem hesitar, ela pregou-lhe uma valente estalada! A reacção dos outros jovens, em defesa do rapaz, indignou-a de tal maneira que deu meia volta e saiu disparada direita a casa. Quando Erica a viu entrar ficou pasmada.

— Já? Que cara é essa? Aconteceu alguma coisa?

Depois de lhe ouvir contar o que se tinha passado, disse:

— Olha, Isa, o que fizeste naquele bar, tu uma rapariga de quinze anos frente a um grupo de amigos da mesma idade, prova que não só és corajosa, mas que também tens a noção das proporções, que és sensata. Se pela vida fora conseguires agir de acordo com as tuas convicções, com os teus princípios, sem te deixares intimidar ou influenciar pelos outros, se conseguires dizer não, serás uma mulher forte e independente. Não é nada fácil, aviso-te já, mas pela amostra de hoje, tens força para isso.

Aquele foi um momento capital para a construção da sua identidade. Desencantada e zangada com o perturbante episódio, as palavras ditas pela pessoa em quem mais confiava foram determinantes para adquirir a autoconfiança e a independência de espírito que nunca viria a perder.

A lenha deu um forte estalido na lareira arrancando-a às suas recordações, mas a irmã-mãe, permanecia nos seus pensamentos. Há pessoas a quem a vida parece dizer, com mal disfarçada perversidade: “Com que então pensas que és forte? Então, aguenta ainda mais esta!” um repto para lhes testar os limites, espécie de jogo de sobrevivência, desleal e injusto, se é que a injustiça existe – lembrou-se de um amigo que acreditava na reencarnação, no karma e nas ideias que defendem que a alma tem a possibilidade de resgatar, de vida em vida, as questões pendentes e o que parece injustiça na vida presente, nada mais é do que a factura desse resgate. Assim, a responsabilidade do que acontece a cada ser humano é exclusivamente sua já que as suas sucessivas existências são por si escolhidas de modo a possibilitar-lhe a aprendizagem e conseqüente evolução – por vezes aprende, outras vezes, não. À luz desse conceito da existência humana, o que teria a irmã a aprender nesta vida que tão dura tinha sido para ela?

Já Erica sentia um misto de emoções. Ir a St. John’s falar do tema ao qual dedicara a sua carreira, e que estudava havia já duas décadas, tinha um significado muito especial. Em S. João da Terra Nova passara nove dos doze meses da licença sabática - o tempo da gestação da sua tese de licenciatura, mas também o do início de uma história única. Aí voltara durante os cinco anos seguintes – 1982 fora o último. Sete anos decorridos, que impacto teria sobre ela o regresso àqueles lugares que haviam saltado do imaginário da sua adolescência para a vida real, proporcionando-lhe intensas e tumultuosas vivências? Tinha-as dentro de si, entranhadas - vibrantes e doloridas. Amava aquela terra como se ama uma mãe que dá a um filho o melhor, mas também o pior de que é capaz! E as suas recordações da Terra Nova fizeram-se presentes, como se a outras pessoas dissessem respeito, pois era essa a maneira que tinha de se distanciar emocionalmente.

Fora em Setembro de 1976, que chegara pela primeira vez à terra de Érika, sua avó materna – a ilha da Terra Nova onde, na Península de Avalon, se situa a capital, St. John’s, a cidade mais antiga da América do Norte, assim baptizada pelo navegador e explorador John Cabot que aí aportou no dia de S. João Baptista e, em honra do Santo lhe deu o seu nome. Cabot era genovês e chamava-se Giovanni Caboto, mas alterara o nome em Inglaterra para onde emigrara com a família. E fora ao serviço do rei Henry VII que, vindo do extremo ocidental da Europa, aportou em 1497 a essa extremidade Leste da América do Norte num pequeno navio de nome St. Matthew com a

incumbência de descobrir o estreito entre os Oceanos Atlântico e Pacífico, a chamada Passagem de Noroeste, missão que não conseguiria levar a cabo. Antes disso, em 1492, o português João Côrte-Real havia explorado a Terra Nova, mas o território só viria a ser efectivamente colonizado - e por franceses - em 1603. No final desse mesmo século, os ingleses tomaram-no aos franceses e mantiveram-no na sua posse até 1948, altura em que foi integrado no Canadá.

Deixara Lisboa com destino a Nova Iorque – que tanto queria conhecer - e, três dias depois, embarcou no aeroporto de Newark num dos voos diários que dali partiam para St. John’s.

Sabia que ainda tinha parentes na Terra Nova e ia disposta a descobri-los. As duas partes da família, a portuguesa e a canadiana, tinham deixado de comunicar com regularidade desde que Érika falecera levando com ela a mágoa de nunca ter podido rever o seu país natal. Traumatizada pela provação que fora a viagem para Portugal no lugre bacalhoeiro a seguir ao casamento, recusara-se terminantemente a pôr de novo os pés no navio do marido. Quando, quase vinte anos depois de ter partido de St. John’s, se decidira a viajar num navio de passageiros para ir matar saudades dos pais e dos irmãos, rebentara a segunda Guerra Mundial que obrigou à limitação do tráfego marítimo comercial e o tornou muito arriscado pois os mares estavam dominados pelas frotas de guerra. Após a sua morte, Elisa, a filha única, ainda se correspondeu esporadicamente com um dos tios, o irmão mais novo da mãe, que não deixou descendência; já com o tio mais velho, que tinha emigrado para outra região do Canadá, nunca teve qualquer contacto; aliás, nunca tivera desejo de conhecer a terra em cujos mares o pai tinha perecido. Com a sua morte prematura, nem Ricardo, o viúvo, nem as filhas, na altura ainda crianças, deram continuidade à relação com os parentes canadianos.

Sedenta que estava de conhecer a terra da sua avó para assim poder cumprir a promessa que havia feito a si mesma, queria saber tudo sobre aquele lugar; e apesar de ter definido um objectivo bem preciso sobre o qual centraria o trabalho de investigação académica, tencionava não descuidar todos os aspectos que lhe permitissem retratar o mais fielmente possível a Ilha da Terra Nova, a Newfoundland, o nome em inglês que literalmente significa “Terra recém-descoberta” - as paisagens, os costumes, a vida cultural, a história e as raízes da sua família materna. E porque todas as informações que tinha recolhido em Portugal lhe haviam criado uma enorme expectativa sobre a beleza natural e o rico património cultural da ilha, queria não só verificar *in loco* o que em teoria já sabia, como partir desse conhecimento para o multiplicar até ao limite das suas possibilidades. Antevia, aliás, que tendo de passar a primeira estada a trabalhar quase exclusivamente para a tese, precisaria de lá voltar para continuar a estudar a região. O que não previra é que lá retornaria muito mais vezes, mas por outro motivo.

Quando, do ar, avistou o litoral da Terra Nova, ficou impressionada com a imponência da costa alta e escarpada retalhada em inúmeras enseadas e fiordes; as florestas, que em muitos pontos se estendiam até ao mar, e a profusão de lagos que a salpicavam contribuíam para a fascinante beleza do cenário; quando o avião iniciou a descida e a paisagem começou a revelar mais detalhes, maravilhou-se com o fantástico mosaico formado pelo azul da água dos lagos e o verde da vegetação. Uma densa rede de rios e riachos correndo pela terra e contagiando-a com a sua vivacidade tropeçava nos declives rochosos formando graciosas quedas de água.

Ao taxista que a trouxe do aeroporto pediu que fizesse um trajecto em que pudesse ter uma ideia geral da cidade e um aspecto que lhe chamou a atenção foi o relevo acidentado, os altos e baixos, as subidas e descidas muito semelhantes às de S. Francisco da Califórnia que visitara uns anos antes com o pai e a irmã. Ainda nesse dia, depois de deixar a bagagem no hotel, não longe da baixa e do porto, ansiosa por um primeiro contacto com St. John’s, saiu para dar um primeiro passeio. Eram seis da tarde.

Enquanto descia a rua do hotel, a Monkstown Road, observava as encantadoras casas de madeira tão diferentes das portuguesas – cada uma de sua cor, com predominância do vermelho e do azul - mas também verdes e amarelas -, de ripas horizontais, com pitorescas mansardas nos tectos cinza

escuro; algumas com janelas salientes em arco - as típicas *bow-windows* vitorianas – e o acesso por uma pequena e graciosa escada exterior, também em madeira pintada. Os jardins, muito arborizados, por vezes fechados por cercas baixas de madeira de tábuas verticais, geralmente pintadas de branco, emprestavam ao conjunto um ar alegre e acolhedor.

“Mas que coisa bonita!” Disse de si para si, confirmando a impressão que tivera quando o táxi a conduzira ao pequeno hotel também ele com o mesmo estilo de construção e onde ficaria até encontrar uma casa para habitar durante os meses da sua permanência.

As árvores do jardim público fronteiro estavam despidas de folhas e Isabela sentiu uma ligeira melancolia. Nesse Sábado de Inverno, aguardando a chegada da irmã, lembrou-se da tristeza que sentiu quando Erica partira para a Terra Nova e das saudades que teve durante aqueles nove meses, só mitigadas por sabê-la bem e muito empolgada com a experiência que estava a viver. Correspondiam-se regularmente e falavam por telefone, mas não muito, porque saía caro – uma vez por semana e a chamada era a pagar no destinatário, o pai. Foi desses tempos que lhe ficou o gosto pelos Domingos, dia que tinham escolhido para a conversa semanal; passava a tarde em casa do pai, recebiam o telefonema de Erica e depois, ao jantar, falavam das novidades que ela acabara de lhes dar, esmiuçando cada pormenor, tentando antever o que se seguiria, regozijando-se com os progressos na investigação para a tese; mas do que ela gostava mesmo, era das descrições que a irmã lhe fazia dos lugares e, mais ainda, das pessoas que ia conhecendo. E alegrava-se sempre que percebia o entusiasmo transparecer-lhe na voz; é que Erica vivera até então quase exclusivamente dedicada a duas coisas: a cuidar da irmã e ao trabalho; ócio e divertimento não faziam parte da sua agenda. Quantas vezes ouvira o pai dizer-lhe:

— Oh filha, porque é que não sais com amigas? Precisas de te divertir! Se não o fizeres agora, quando é que vais fazê-lo?

Erica quase não reagia. Limitava-se a dizer qualquer coisa como:

— O pai sabe que eu não sou muito de sair..., mas vou de vez em quando ao cinema e a concertos.

Ricardo olhava-a com um ar desconsolado e nem se atrevia a falar-lhe da preocupação que sentia por ela nunca ter tido namorados.

Neste ponto das suas recordações, Isabela estremeceu e o olhar ensombrou-se-lhe de uma enorme tristeza, a mesma que tinha sentido no dia, já longínquo, em que a vida da irmã mudara drasticamente. Mas tratou de se recompor porque a campanha tocava.

Abraçaram-se como se há muito não se vissem, hábito que haviam adoptado desde que tinham deixado de viver juntas. Não podia haver duas irmãs tão unidas apesar de tão diferentes! E não só de temperamento. Também fisicamente, ninguém diria que o eram. Erica herdara a cor muito clara de pele, os olhos verdes e os cabelos loiros da avó norueguesa e da mãe, mas era alta como o pai e tinha um corpo bem proporcionado que a ginástica e a corrida que fazia com regularidade ajudavam a manter escoreito. Não sendo uma beleza, era o que se chamava uma rapariga gira que não passava despercebida onde quer que entrasse não só por ter um tipo invulgar para portuguesa, como por um quê indefinível que lhe conferia um charme especial. Já Isabela tinha ido buscar ao pai as características vincadamente latinas – morena, de cabelo e de pele, os olhos castanhos no rosto de traços perfeitos e um corpo bem proporcionado de estatura mediana, como a mãe. Era uma bela mulher.

Se a Erica não se lhe conheciam namorados, por vontade dela e não por não ter tido pretendentes, já à irmã mais nova o que não faltou foi experiência amorosa. Namoradeira desde muito nova, dera ao pai algumas dores de cabeça a ponto de Ricardo temer que ela nunca viesse a

assentar, mas enganou-se. No terceiro ano de Medicina, Isabela e João Luís, um colega do curso anterior ao dela, tomaram-se de amores e a relação foi-se estreitando acabando em casamento mal ela terminou o curso; mas não sem que antes ele a tivesse avisado de que não era pássaro de gaiola – entendendo por gaiola um hospital ou um consultório – e o seu sonho era poder andar pelo mundo a tratar de populações carenciadas ou em teatros de guerra. Angustiada, ao antever que o marido viveria mais tempo fora do que em casa, ainda ponderou a possibilidade de poder acompanhá-lo nesse projecto de vida, mas não sentia vocação para tal. Como pôr termo à relação era impensável, concluiu que ou aceitava plenamente a realidade ou iria sofrer muito. E, claro está, o tempo deu-lhe a resposta.

— Então como vai a minha médica preferida? Estás com um ar cansado.

— Ontem tive um dia muito cheio! Operei de manhã, estive toda a tarde no consultório e voltei ao hospital já de noite para o acompanhamento pós-operatório.

Erica ficou uns segundos em silêncio a olhar fixamente para a irmã.

— Isa, lembras-te de quando decidiste ser cardiologista?

— Perfeitamente! Tinha chegado a altura de ter de escolher a especialidade e estava muito hesitante entre Endocrinologia e Pneumologia. Não havia meio de me decidir, quando uma certa noite, já na cama, quase a adormecer, tive um *flash* e vi absolutamente claro o que queria. Fui ao teu quarto e como estavas ainda acordada, disse-te o que te disse.

— Que tal como eu tinha escolhido o meu curso para prestar homenagem ao avô e à avó, tu ias ser cardiologista porque querias perceber porque tinham a nossa avó e a nossa mãe morrido repentinamente do coração, ainda tão novas. E que querias evitar que me acontecesse o mesmo. Não falaste de ti e eu fiquei muito comovida. Quando te vejo assim cansada do muito trabalho que tens, pergunto a mim mesma se não deverias ter-te ficado pela cardiologia em vez de teres enveredado pela cirurgia cardíaca. E tenho algum medo de que te canses demasiado e o teu coração se ressinta.

— Eu controlo o meu coração, mana, está descansada! Não sabemos o que causou a morte da avó, mas a da mãe ficou perfeitamente determinada na autópsia - isquemia cardíaca por embolia coronária, que não é hereditária. Asseguro-te de que não precisas de te preocupar comigo. Tens alguma razão quando dizes que me devia ter ficado pela cardiologia pois o esforço que a cirurgia me exige é incomparavelmente maior, mas agora não posso voltar atrás e não me arrependo. Aliás, sabes bem porque decidi ser cirurgiã.

— Se sei! O que já não sei, é se tê-lo feito para ocupares inteiramente o teu tempo e assim não sentires tanto a falta do teu marido, te resolveu o problema! Resolveu?

— Nunca me fizeste essa pergunta.

— Não... Estou a fazê-la agora.

Isabela olhou para fora, para as árvores despidas e tristes daquele dia de Inverno e os olhos encheram-se-lhe de lágrimas.

— Não resolveu, não! Só anestesiou. Oh, Erica, porque havia eu de me ter apaixonado por este homem?

João Luís Silva Marques nascera numa família modesta da Margem Sul do Tejo, em Corroios, terra rural dividida até ao final do século XIX em quintas de nobres e fidalgos. Numa dessas propriedades, nascera o seu avô, filho de um homem que trabalhava nas vinhas - que na quinta se produzia vinho de alta qualidade com fama até no estrangeiro.

O declínio das propriedades rurais e a industrialização da margem Sul provocou um êxodo massivo para as fábricas e foi assim que o pai de João se empregou na Vidreira da Amora, onde se fabricavam garrafas pretas, e o filho pôde estudar e encantar os professores com a sua inteligência e aplicação aos estudos. Para que ele pudesse ir para a universidade, a mãe arranjou trabalho numa

fábrica de cortiça ali perto e, com os dois salários dos pais operários, o filho pôde fazer o curso de medicina com uma brilhante classificação.

— Porque é um homem de inteligência invulgar, generoso e solidário e, para mais, charmoso! E porque te ama e porque o amas. Não achas razões mais do que suficientes, caramba?

— Sabes muito bem o que eu quero dizer!

— Oh Isa! Não te massacres com os teus ciúmes! Se porventura ele teve algum deslize durante as longas ausências em condições tão difíceis, tens de te convencer que não é por que deixou de te amar. A força das circunstâncias, a intimidade que certas situações de crise e mesmo de perigo propiciam não é controlável. Mas uma coisa é certa: o teu marido não é mulherengo!

— Se ele me foi infiel, nunca o admitiu, mas que houve qualquer coisa entre ele e a tal colega francesa, isso houve e, se calhar, ainda há. Mas não são só os meus ciúmes e sabes bem o quanto luto contra eles. São os meses e meses sem o ver, é a imprevisibilidade, o risco que ele corre, muitas vezes risco de morte.... É tudo junto!

Erica tinha uma expressão condoída.

— Mas Isabela, esses aspectos já foram tão discutidos entre vocês, tão falados entre nós as duas, tão lamentados por ti, que se não conseguires ultrapassar essa mágoa, esse inconformismo, se não te convenceres de uma vez por todas de que tens de aceitar as coisas como elas são, já que não podes mudá-las, vais acabar por adoecer até fisicamente. Porque, mana, emocionalmente e psicologicamente já estás a ficar mais afectada do que é desejável. E chego a temer pelo teu casamento. Por favor, Isa!

Não respondeu. Por uns momentos, o pensamento viajou-lhe ao passado, a uma tarde de Junho de 1981. O sol radioso num céu sem nuvens, o ar quieto e cálido, o marido a pegar-lhe na mão e a mostrar-lhe, entusiasmado, a beleza do sapal de Corroios, fascinante lugar que ele conhecia desde a tenra infância onde José, o pai, apaixonado por aves, o levava tantas e tantas vezes, que o rapazinho, à medida que crescia, se deixara enfeitiçar irremediavelmente por aquele oásis de vida selvagem cercado por vilas e cidades. E porque na escola, os professores faziam daquele ecossistema assunto incontornável para muitos trabalhos e projectos, João Luís alargou o interesse pelas aves a tudo o que existe no sapal - à pequena fauna que serve de alimento aos milhares de aves que aí procuram abrigo, às plantas, à água que ora desce, ora sobe, ao ritmo das marés e que fazem do sapal um lugar sempre em movimento. Como que hipnotizada, Isabela fixava o espelho da água onde se reflectiam, com perfeita nitidez e espantosa simetria, o moinho de maré e as silhuetas das aves que na parte em que a água era quase rasa, descansavam imóveis da sua lida pesqueira. Ele levou-a a dar um passeio de barco e, ao longe, puderam ver os maravilhosos frisos rosados de flamingos. Ouvia-lhe as explicações do que iam vendo e descobria pormenores que lhe teriam passado completamente despercebidos se ali tivesse ido sozinha.

Já quase no fim do passeio, sentaram-se perto do belo moinho de maré - mandado construir em 1403 por D. Nuno Álvares Pereira e que, muito danificado pelo terramoto de 1755, fora posteriormente restaurado. Foi ali que o marido lhe anunciou a decisão que viria a alterar para sempre não só a vida de cada um, mas sobretudo a vida em comum: tinha aderido aos Médicos Sem Fronteiras. Apesar de ter vivido até então com o medo latente de ver chegar esse momento, percebeu que não estava preparada. Cravou nele um olhar desesperado.

— Como?

— Perdoa-me não ter pedido a tua opinião, mas avisei-te de que não iria ficar aqui preso por muito tempo. Sou um pouco como estas aves migratórias que, para sobreviver, são forçadas a viajar para este lugar onde existe alimento abundante, mas que se vão embora quando o Inverno está para chegar. Mas estes meus ansios, estas minhas necessidades não ameaçam nem nunca ameaçarão o meu amor por ti. Sabes isso, não sabes?

Para disfarçar o choque e a súbita vontade de chorar que a acometeu, ela ironizou:

— A última coisa que eu esperava ouvir era essa comparação entre ti e uma garça-real, uma andorinha-do-mar ou outros desses passarocos cujos nomes me ensinaste ainda há pouco! Parece cómico, mas não é!

Se não lhe visse a angústia no olhar, ele teria soltado uma gargalhada. Em vez disso, sorriu-lhe meigamente, prendeu-lhe o rosto entre as mãos e disse-lhe:

— Amo-te, Isabela! Quando nos conhecemos, além da tua beleza, o que mais me atraiu foi o teu senso de humor.

Ela não teve ânimo para replicar nem saberia o que dizer. O que sabia, sem sombra de dúvida, era que nada mais seria igual a partir daquele instante.

Ao recordar o penoso episódio, deu um fundo suspiro e fitou a irmã que não despregava os olhos dela parecendo esperar uma reacção ao apelo que lhe fizera, mas naquele momento, nada do que pudesse dizer seria novo ou tranquilizador pois tal como Erica, também ela temia pelo futuro do seu casamento.

— Vamos mas é jantar porque o *soufflé* não pode esperar.

— *Soufflé* de quê?

— De camarão.

Já à mesa, Erica soltou uma interjeição de prazer.

— Se não fosses tu, acho que nunca comeria *soufflé*, pois nos restaurantes é raríssimo servirem-no! Quando penso que te tornaste uma cozinheira requintada, eu que não passo do bife, do peixe cozido ou grelhado e de uns ovitos, fico mesmo orgulhosa.

Isabela sorriu.

— De facto, não foste para mim o modelo da cozinheira ideal e quando saímos da casa do pai, fiquei tão triste por não termos a deliciosa comida da Lucinda, que sempre que lá íamos, plantava-me ao pé dela e pedia-lhe que me ensinasse a cozinhar. Aliás, ainda quando lá morávamos, adorava ir para a cozinha observá-la e ela dava-me pequenas tarefas a fazer. Dizia que eu era a sua ajudante. Querida Lucinda que já lá está...

— Que orgulho sentiria se pudesse ver a belíssima cozinheira em que a sua pupila se tornou! Eu é que sempre fui e serei um caso perdido no que a cozinheiros diz respeito! Só ia à cozinha para saber o que íamos comer. Mas o teu jeito veio com certeza da nossa mãe pois ela adorava cozinhar e ensinou muita coisa à Lucinda, principalmente os pratos mais elaborados. Tu eras pequenina e não te lembras.

Depois de servir a irmã segunda vez, Isabela, radiante, deu-lhe, de chofre, a notícia.

— Vou contigo à Terra Nova.

Erica ficou estática, o garfo imobilizado a meio caminho da boca, soltou um grande suspiro ao mesmo tempo de alívio e de prazer e estendeu a mão agarrando a da irmã.

— Finalmente! Vais poder maravilhar-te tanto como eu com aquela terra extraordinária! Nada do que te contei nem nada do que possa contar-te é suficiente para a descrever.

— Não duvido! E que bom ter-te como cicerone!

Erica ficou-se silenciosa, o pensamento num outro tempo e num outro lugar, uma tristeza no olhar que não passou despercebida a Isabela que a puxou suavemente por um braço.

— Anda! Vamos comer a sobremesa e beber o café à frente da lareira. Vou pôr um CD com música animada.

Mas o som da bossa nova não animou Erica que, reparando no olhar condoído de Isabela, explodiu:

— Não quero que tenhas pena de mim, Isa! Não podes ter pena de mim! – endireitou as costas e sacudiu a cabeça, no gesto tão próprio dela. Era a Erica forte, era a Erica estoica que Isabela conhecia desde que a mãe se fora e ela lhe tomara o lugar.

— Eu não sou forte como tu, Erica! – e desfez-se em lágrimas. Como consegues suportar tanto sofrimento?

Erica olhou-a - um longo e doloroso olhar.

— Não sei. Deve ser do meu nome, como o pai diz – e quis esboçar um sorriso, mas o que lhe saiu foi um esgar misto de ironia e amargura.

Isabela percebeu queurgia mudar de assunto e o resto da noite foi passada a fazerem planos para a viagem. Erica deixou-se entusiasmar - queria que a irmã visse tudo quanto a tinha encantado desde o primeiro dia em que pusera os pés naquela terra a que iria ficar eternamente ligada.

Quando no seu primeiro dia em St John's, deixou o hotel e desceu até à marginal, quedou-se deslumbrada com a beleza do porto. Relativamente pequeno, instalado num golfo alongado, era resguardado do mar aberto por uma passagem estreita entre dois imponentes promontórios – a que davam o nome de The Narrows, viria a saber mais tarde. O casario de mil cores que descia em anfiteatro até quase à superfície da água calma e espelhenta compunha uma moldura perfeita. Olhava, pasmada, para os muitos navios acostados a toda a volta: barcos de recreio nas marinas de pequenas enseadas; grande número de navios de pesca de variados portes; muitos cargueiros e petroleiros de grande dimensão acostados aos cais; ferries e pequenos barcos de turismo e também gigantescos navios de cruzeiro - naquele momento eram quatro. Queria avidamente absorver tanta beleza, mas era impossível fazê-lo de uma vez só e aí voltou muitas vezes sempre descobrindo algo que lhe escapara até então, ou vendo de um modo diferente o que já conhecia.

Deu por si a imaginar como seria aquele porto no tempo do seu avô, em que os lugres bacalhoeiros seriam, senão os únicos navios que ali acostavam, por certo a grande maioria. Isso viria a confirmar quando, de entre as centenas de documentos que consultou no decorrer da sua investigação, pôde ver fotografias antigas do porto, a preto e branco ou em sépia - tão característica das fotos antigas – em que se via o golfo juncado desses veleiros piscatórios, com as velas recolhidas, um ou outro com elas içadas, embarcações aparentemente frágeis se comparadas com as suas sucessoras a motor, meio século mais jovens.

Cansada da viagem e com fome, decidiu regressar ao hotel, o seu primeiro ponto de referência naquele lugar. Foi de táxi pois o caminho era a subir, a noite aproximava-se e embora ainda fosse Verão, a temperatura parecia-lhe a de uma tarde de Inverno suave em Lisboa. No hotel, começaria por pedir informações sobre a localização das instituições que já tinha referenciadas para iniciar as suas pesquisas. O dia seguinte era Domingo. Aproveitaria para continuar a conhecer a cidade pois as repartições públicas e a universidade estariam encerradas.

— Erica, ainda me lembro da tua alegria esfusante quando nos anunciaste que tinhas descoberto a casa dos nossos bisavós! Apesar de já a conhecer pelas tuas descrições, acho que quando a vir vou emocionar-me.

— Pois se até eu, que sou muito menos emotiva do que tu, me comovi!

Foi só ao fim de quatro meses, em finais de Janeiro, que as suas buscas pelos familiares deram frutos. Nesse momento, ia conhecer a casa dos pais da avó Érika. Estava-se no pino do Inverno. De um céu nublado, caía uma chuva congelada, o meio-termo entre chuva e neve, própria das temperaturas baixas e do ar carregado de humidade. O vento, não muito forte, mas cortante de tão frio, enregelava-lhe o corpo habituado à amenidade do clima de Lisboa. O pavimento das ruas e avenidas reluzia de gelo e nas bermas, a neve removida pelos limpa-neves ou pelas pás dos moradores, acumulava-se formando autênticos muros. O porto emoldurava-se do branco das encostas e das manchas multicores das casas que as polvilhavam. Era uma vista encantadora e ela estava rendida a tanta beleza.

Kevin, que a acompanhava, disse em Inglês, a língua em que comunicavam:

— É difícil não gostar, não é?

— É maravilhoso! Vi o porto pela primeira vez no Verão e fiquei deslumbrada. Venho aqui frequentemente e acompanho as transformações que vai sofrendo com a mudança das estações. O Inverno torna esta vista absolutamente encantadora! Estou rendida à tua terra, primo!

Ele fez um grande sorriso - uma pontinha de orgulho nos olhos verdes como os dela. Erica tinha-o localizado uma semana antes quando, depois de muitas diligências, descobriu que ele vivia em Placentia na costa Oeste de Avalon, a pouco mais de cem quilómetros de St. John's. O trabalho para a tese não lhe deixava o tempo que gostaria para procurar o paradeiro dos seus parentes, mas ainda assim conseguira certificar-se de que na capital não vivia nenhum deles. Não perdia uma oportunidade para os localizar e, desde consultas no Registo Civil, na Biblioteca Municipal e em jornais antigos até à informalidade de conversas com habitantes idosos, tentava de tudo. Ora, fora precisamente um velho carteiro, conhecido por ser a memória viva da comunidade, quem lhe dera a valiosa pista que a conduziria a Kevin.

Sentiu o encontro como um momento simbólico. Aquele homem de trinta e quatro anos, dois anos mais velho do que ela, era o representante da sua família materna. Neto de Sven, um dos irmãos da sua avó Érika, era seu primo em terceiro grau; filho de mãe irlandesa e ela, Erica, filha de uma portuguesa, eram os frutos de origens bem diversas. Vivia com uma companheira de ascendência francesa que conheceu em Placentia, de seu nome Plaisance no tempo da colonização francesa. Enquanto antropóloga, Erica estava fascinada pelo verdadeiro *melting pot* de culturas e religiões que era a Terra Nova, produto de uma História atribulada, feita de conflitos e de guerras, de sucessão de diferentes soberanias, de conveniências económicas e estratégicas – uma fonte de interesse inesgotável.

— Lembro-me como se fosse hoje, Isa! Estava uma manhã gelada. O Kevin, antes de irmos ver a casa, propôs-me tomarmos o pequeno-almoço num dos muitos cafés da baixa. Enquanto comíamos, foi contando coisas que, segundo ele, eram significativas e importantes e respondia às perguntas que eu lhe ia fazendo sobre a nossa família. Ele é extrovertido e muito simpático. Começou por confirmar o que já sabíamos: que o bisavô Soren era comerciante especializado em todo o tipo de artigos e utensílios de pesca; o que eu desconhecia é que se tratava de um importante estabelecimento que fornecia frotas bacalhoeiras de vários países; localizava-se na Water Street, a principal rua comercial de St. John's que, como o nome sugere, fica à beira-mar. Mas isso já tu sabias...

— Mas conta, até porque de cada vez que falas disso, lembrás-te sempre de pormenores novos.

Erica sorriu ternamente porque lhe parecia estar a ver a Isabela pequenita que adorava ouvir as mesmas histórias vezes sem conta, surpreendendo a irmã mais velha pelas interpretações analíticas e as correcções que fazia de cada vez que ela lhas contava já que era impossível contar a mesma história inúmeras vezes exactamente da mesma maneira.

— O prédio em que ficava a loja já não existe. Talvez não te tenha dito que em 1987, há dois anos pois, o Governo classificou como Local Histórico Nacional um troço da Water Street que compreende edifícios de meados do séc. XIX ligados à pesca e ao comércio atlântico.

— Não, não disseste.

— Pena que a loja dos bisavós não se localizasse nesse troço, mas sim num dos prédios deitados abaixo quando começou a dar-se a modernização da rua. No local, existe hoje um edifício governamental bonito, comprido, em tijolo vermelho, de cinco andares, que faz esquina com a rua da antiga casa deles. Como te lembrás, eu levava a morada da loja que estava nas cartas escritas pela bisavó Mikaela à avó Érika, mas não havia correspondência com a morada da casa, talvez porque eles passassem a maior parte do tempo na loja e seria para lá que o correio era dirigido. Mal sabia eu, quando fui ao local onde era a loja, que estava pertíssimo da casa! Vai-se a pé num instantinho.

— Vês? Esse pormenor de se poder ir a pé desconhecia! E, se bem que não seja importante, também não me falaste do prédio construído no local da loja.

Era o número 21 da Cochrane Street, segunda casa de uma longa fiada das típicas construções de madeira pintadas de cores diversas e alegres. Ladeada por uma vermelha e outra laranja, era branca, com o telhado cinza escuro coroado por duas graciosas mansardas brancas e a porta e a janela do rés-do-chão pintadas de vermelho. De primeiro andar e com águas-furtadas, era simples, como os donos – gente trabalhadora e honrada – que tinham vindo da Noruega, com o filho mais velho e a segunda no quinto mês de gestação, à procura de uma vida melhor. Viriam a ter ainda um terceiro filho, concebido já na terra de adopção.

Sentia-se emocionada. Aquela casa representava parte do seu passado desconhecido, completamente diferente da realidade em que nascera e crescera. As casas coloridas de desenho *naij*, em que até a neve estava presente para emprestar um toque de magia, provocava-lhe um encantamento que se lhe espelhava no olhar. O primo percebeu.

— Queres conhecê-la por dentro? Os donos de certeza que nos deixam visitá-la.

— Não, obrigada. Prefiro imaginar como seria no tempo dos nossos bisavós. Depois de tantos anos, certamente que já não é a mesma.

— Tens razão. Depois da morte deles, quem ficou aqui foi o nosso tio-avô Kristofer que nunca casou e, como a casa era grande demais para ele, acabou por vendê-la poucos anos depois da morte dos pais. A tua avó havia muito que tinha ido para Portugal e o meu avô Sven tinha arranjado a sua própria casa quando constituiu família.

O frio intenso não convidava a passeios, mas ainda assim ela pediu ao primo se podiam deixar o carro junto à casa para fazerem a pé o caminho até ao sítio da antiga loja e assim reconstituírem o trajecto entre os dois locais. Com mil cuidados para não escorregarem no gelo, desceram o pequeno troço da rua até ao primeiro cruzamento, atravessaram a Duckworth St, continuaram a descer e viraram à direita na Water Street; a loja ficava uns trinta metros do lado direito; nem era preciso atravessar a rua.

— Realmente, eles moravam a dois passos da loja.

— O meu avô adorava falar da vida da família. Eu era curioso e bom ouvinte e fixei muita coisa. Estes sítios eram tudo para ele pois eram o cenário onde se desenrolava a maior parte da sua vida. Se não te maçar, posso contar-te muitas coisas.

— Oh Kevin! Pois se eu, como antropóloga, me interesso por tudo o que diz respeito às culturas humanas, como é que não iria querer saber do passado da minha família? Aliás, se vim para aqui foi não só para estudar as migrações ligadas à pesca do bacalhau, tema da minha tese, mas também para conhecer as minhas raízes norueguesas.

Aquele foi o começo de uma amizade forte e duradoura; através de Kevin, Erica viria a conhecer os outros primos e respectivas famílias que viviam na Terra Nova, mas não em St. John's.

Antes de voltarem ao carro, ele chamou-lhe a atenção para a vista: praticamente no enfiamento da rua da antiga casa, ficava a passagem estreita entre o porto e o mar aberto.

— Que privilégio uma vista assim de cada vez que se sai de casa! E da loja, que ficava mesmo de frente para o porto, se não havia nada a tapar a vista, eles viam o mar!

— Sim, viam. Aliás, o bisavô escolheu abrir a loja na Water Street por ser a rua mais frequentada pelos marinheiros e pescadores e depois procuraram casa perto. O mar, omnipresente nesta terra, foi a razão de vida dos nossos bisavós. Dos três filhos, só o tio Kristofer quis ficar com a loja, mas poucos anos antes da sua morte, como não tinha descendência, trespassou-a.

— Erica, já não me lembro se foi nesse dia da ida à casa que conheceste o Kevin ou se já se tinham encontrado antes.

— Foi nesse mesmo dia. Ele vive na costa Oeste da ilha e St. John's fica na costa Este. São pouco mais de 100 quilómetros, mas o suficiente para não se fazer a viagem com frequência, para mais no Inverno. Era um Sábado e ele reservou o dia para mim. A Mélanie estava de serviço no hospital – disse-te que é enfermeira, não disse?

A irmã assentiu com a cabeça.

Para esse primeiro encontro com o primo, planeava fazer-lhe uma série de perguntas para as quais havia muito procurava resposta. A primeira já tinha sido esclarecida: conhecer o local da casa dos seus antepassados. Outra, de cariz bem diferente, tinha a ver com a ida da avó Érika para Portugal, no navio do marido. Tinha uma enorme curiosidade em saber como se tinham sentido os bisavós depois da partida da filha para terra tão longínqua. Kevin conhecia bem a história pois de tão inédita e marcante, tinha sido contada de geração em geração para que todos ficassem a saber que um deles tinha partido para muito longe e porque razão a ferida que a partida de Érika tinha deixado nos seus pais e irmãos nunca sarara completamente.

A filha do meio de Soren e Mikaela Jensen trabalhava na loja dos pais e foi aí que, num dia de finais de Maio, conheceu Eduardo Rodrigues da Costa. A rapariga tinha dezoito anos e o capitão trinta e dois. Ele entrou acompanhado de dois membros da sua tripulação para comprarem artefactos de pesca, sobretudo linhas e anzóis o que acontecia em quase todas as campanhas pois o bacalhau era, nesse tempo, ainda pescado à linha nos dórís, pequenos barquitos que eram arriados do lugre e tripulados por um só homem.

Aqueles que duvidam de que o amor à primeira vista existe é porque nunca ouviram a história dos avós de Erica e Isabela. Eduardo viu-a primeiro. Estava de costas, a arrumar qualquer coisa numa prateleira, mas a silhueta esguia envergando uma saia bem justa nas ancas e rodada em baixo - deixando apenas à mostra os pés calçados de botins de salto pequeno -, a blusa branca de mangas compridas tufadas em cima e de punhos altos e apertados, chamou-lhe imediatamente a atenção. Quando ao som da sua voz, ela se voltou e ele lhe viu no rosto de feições bem esculpidas e emoldurado por uma cabeleira loira apanhada num desalinho de bandós, uns olhos verdes tão transparentes que incapazes de esconder o vivo interesse que ele lhe despertou, Eduardo apaixonou-se irremediavelmente. Embora o seu Inglês não fosse fluente, não os impediu de comunicar. Mas, mais do que as palavras, era o que os corações sentiam e os olhos diziam o que os ligou para sempre, se bem que tivesses sido preciso ainda mais um ano depois deste primeiro encontro para que as suas vidas viessem a juntar-se.

Eduardo ficou apenas três dias em St. John's - o tempo de recolher o correio chegado de Portugal e de abastecer o lugre de água potável e de isco pois o que tinham trazido - sardinha fresca - dera só para um mês. Mas o abastecimento do navio era, naquela ocasião, a menor das suas preocupações pois o que lhe ocupava a mente era a jovem da loja - Érika de seu nome, pois ela lho dissera. Como conciliar a escassez de tempo com a necessidade imperiosa de a prender para sempre? Como ter, da parte dela, a confirmação de que havia reciprocidade de sentimentos? Como conseguir convencê-la de que a breve, mas intensa troca de olhares e as poucas palavras que disseram eram garantia de que o afastamento a que iam ser obrigados em nada faria esmorecer a determinação que ele tinha de se casar com ela um dia? Depois de muito matutar no assunto, decidiu escrever-lhe um pequeno, mas incisivo bilhete porque nem o seu Inglês dava para mais, nem ele era homem de rodeios:

“Érika,

Apaixonei-me por si desde o primeiro momento em que a vi.

Quero casar consigo, mas para isso preciso de saber se os meus sentimentos são correspondidos.

Se sim, daqui a um ano, na próxima campanha, casamo-nos e levo-a comigo para Portugal se aceitar ir.

Hei-de aqui voltar antes do fim desta campanha. Preciso de saber a sua morada para lhe escrever de Portugal.

Seu,

Eduardo.”

No dia seguinte, voltou à loja e, sem grande dificuldade, conseguiu meter-lhe o papel na mão, cuidando de fazê-lo de modo discreto. A jovem não pareceu surpreendida. Antes lhe sorriu cumplicemente o que lhe pareceu um bom augúrio. Para que o pai e o irmão dela não desconfiassem, teve de comprar mais qualquer coisa – escolheu umas belas luvas de pele – e esperou pelo dia seguinte....

E esse foi o dia do início de uma ardente relação que chegaria brutalmente ao seu termo vinte e três anos depois. Foi também o dia em que ele começou a perceber a fibra de que era feita aquela mulher. Tal como a neta que haveria de nascer depois da sua morte, e que lhe herdaria o nome, Érika era uma força da Natureza. Não havia nada que desejasse que não conseguisse.

Ao voltar à loja pela terceira vez, Eduardo teve uma surpresa. Mal o viu entrar, e depois de ter sussurrado qualquer coisa ao ouvido do pai, ela foi ter com ele e perguntou-lhe se podiam sair à rua. Uns metros à frente, fê-lo parar e disse-lhe olhando-o bem nos olhos:

— Eduardo, quero casar consigo, sim – e, num fio de voz, acrescentou: também estou apaixonada por si. Está aqui a minha morada - deu-lhe um papel. Ele prendeu-lhe a mão entre as dele - Ainda volta à cidade antes de a campanha terminar?

— Sim. Uma vez de certeza, mas se houver aviso de tempestade, temos de vir abrigar-nos no porto.

— Quando regressar, quer vir a minha casa conhecer os meus pais e os meus irmãos?

— Gostaria muito!

Ela pôs-se em bicos dos pés, deu-lhe um beijo fugaz na face e correu para a loja.

Tornariam a encontrar-se mais duas vezes antes de o navio regressar a Portugal. Jantou em casa dela e pediu-a em casamento; percebeu que os pais estavam absolutamente resignados à ideia de, um dia, ele lhes levar a filha para tão longe – “Se é o que a Érika quer, é o que ela vai fazer”.

E foi mesmo o que Érika fez um ano depois, no dia 25 de Agosto de 1919.

— Era uma mulher levada da breca, caramba! Como é que no princípio do século, numa época em que as mulheres tinham tão poucos direitos, uma rapariga de dezoito anos conseguiu levar a dela avante? – Isabela tinha uma expressão ao mesmo tempo divertida e de admiração.

— É do nome, mana! – disse Erica com ar gozão -. Agora a sério: que o que ela fez foi extraordinário, foi. Mas creio que o amor entre os dois, a paixão que os arrebatou, deve ter dado uma grande ajuda. Além disso, não nos esqueçamos de que na altura as raparigas casavam cedo e os pais estimulavam isso, e talvez a mentalidade norueguesa fosse mais aberta do que a nossa. Mas o facto de os pais terem dito que ela fazia o que queria, é a prova de que tinha uma personalidade fortíssima.

Dito isto, Erica olhou para o relógio.

— Sabes que horas são? Quase duas. Tu precisas de dormir, rapariga! E eu tenho de me ir embora porque amanhã quero ir correr cedo e já não vai ser às sete.

Teve dificuldade em adormecer. A determinação da avó tinha sido premiada por uma vida plena, uma união feliz - tão feliz e tão plena que ela não conseguiu, ou não quis, sobreviver ao marido. Seguiu-o na morte tal como, sem hesitar, o tinha seguido até Portugal arrostando com ele um mar que por pouco não os matou; e em todos os anos do seu casamento, temeu que esse mar um dia lho levasse. Não sabia ela que tal viria a acontecer não pela violência das ondas, mas pela insânia de uma guerra que não era dele.

Pois ela, Erica, que em tudo comparavam a essa avó, não ousara, num momento crucial, tomar a decisão que teria alterado radicalmente o rumo da sua existência - e, desde então, carregava o enorme fardo da escolha que tinha feito. Não com culpa, já tinha ultrapassado essa fase. Não com mágoa, também já a tinha deixado para trás, mas com um profundo vazio no qual tinha querido atirar-se para esquecer – sem sucesso. Sete anos tinham passado. O perfeito e poderoso número sete

– pelo menos na opinião de Pitágoras. O mágico número sete, que representa o processo de passagem do conhecido para o desconhecido, o número da transformação. Como ela ansiava pela transformação, como desejava pegar em todos os bocados da sua vida e com eles moldar uma forma renascida, uma forma que resgatasse o passado e o colocasse num lugar onde ela o pudesse visitar com amor e gratidão. E com a paz que tanto lhe faltava!

Quando em 1977, no regresso da sua estada de nove meses na Terra Nova, Erica revelou ao pai e à irmã que tinha lá deixado um namorado, Ricardo Vaz de Amorim olhou para o céu – não se sabe se para Deus se para a mãe das suas filhas – e agradeceu o que lhe parecia um quase milagre – finalmente, a sua filha mais velha namorava! Com jeito, paciência e tempo – ela tinha-lhe ido buscar o feitiço reservado – conseguiu saber os contornos da história, algo insólita por sinal, o que não o surpreendeu porque entre as características mais marcantes de Erica, a originalidade ocupava lugar de relevo. A tendência que já na adolescência revelava para desvalorizar as convenções sociais e determinar o seu próprio estilo de vida consolidou-se na idade adulta conferindo-lhe a imagem de um espírito independente, de livre pensadora e, para as mentes mais conservadoras, de mulher excêntrica o que a deixava totalmente indiferente e, desconfiava o pai, até a divertia.

Estava em St. John's havia já seis meses, quando se lhe meteu em cabeça aprender mergulho para poder ver o que diziam ser a maravilhosa fauna marinha da região e, como se estava na Primavera e dali a três meses tinha que regressar a Portugal, achou que era a altura ideal. Muito dada ao desporto e com espírito de aventura, pensou que era uma oportunidade a não perder. Foi no curso que conheceu Brian, o seu instrutor. Não se tratou de amor à primeira vista como aconteceu com os seus avós, bem pelo contrário. Nos primeiros contactos, até antipatizou com ele. Muito exigente, chegava a ser bruto o que até incomodava os outros alunos – todos homens. Ela compreendia que a exigência dele era garantia de uma formação sólida, mas não conseguia deixar de se irritar, um pouco demais até. O curso durou um mês; as primeiras aulas foram em piscina e as seguintes já no mar, numa das inúmeras baías que recortam as costas da ilha. Fosse pelo bonito dia que estava na primeira aula no mar, fosse pelo entusiasmo da experiência, sentia-se muito bem-disposta e comunicativa. Para sua surpresa, ele meteu-se com ela:

— Estás muito contente!

— Por acaso, estou! O curso está a chegar ao fim e eu vou ver-me livre de ti! – não conseguiu resistir a dar-lhe a alfinetada.

Percebeu-lhe no rosto uma expressão de surpresa e de incredulidade. Estavam todos sentados na beira do bote de borracha. Já com os fatos impermeáveis vestidos, mas ainda sem o restante equipamento. Sem dizer uma palavra, ele levantou-se de um ápice, venceu a pequena distância que os separava e empurrou-a borda fora atirando-se de imediato, ele também. Dentro de água, aproximou-se dela e enlaçando-a pela cintura deu o impulso para subirem. Quando emergiram, Erica desatou a rir e ele, colou-lhe a boca ao ouvido e disse muito baixinho: “Vamos ser bons amigos.” Completamente desarmada, ela não replicou. Treparam para o barco e a aula prosseguiu. Voltou a casa com uma invulgar boa disposição e um sentimento desconhecido que muito a intrigou.

Terminado o curso, em finais de Abril, no jantar de confraternização, Brian fez um pequeno discurso no qual lhe dedicou algumas palavras.

— Quero salientar o empenho que a Erica pôs no curso e que resultou num excelente resultado. Já que não fiz qualquer distinção entre ela e vocês, permitam-me que hoje a distinga. Afinal, é a única mulher entre vós, e que mulher!

Ela, que corava com facilidade, ficou toda vermelha, o que os colegas, com grande galhofa, fizeram questão de denunciar. Ele, que se tinha posto de pé para discursar, olhava-a de modo ambíguo, do alto do seu metro e noventa. No dia seguinte, telefonou-lhe e perguntou-lhe, no seu jeito um tanto brusco, se queria jantar com ele. Respondeu que sim e quando desligou o telefone,

toda ela tremia. Sentia-se muito perturbada. Aos trinta e dois anos, era uma mulher totalmente inexperiente nas coisas do amor e assustadoramente virgem.

Não conseguia conciliar o sono. Viu-se com quinze anos, quando a mãe morreu e ela decidiu tomar conta da irmã. Já não tinha avós maternos nem a avó paterna. Não tinha tias, apenas um tio, irmão do pai. Era, pois, a única figura feminina da família. O ano era o de 1960. A mãe não lhe tinha dado qualquer educação sexual, o que não era invulgar para a época – tinha-lhe explicado o que era e para que servia a menstruação no dia em que correu para ela com lágrimas nos olhos, o horror estampado no rosto “Estou a deitar sangue mãe!”; a revolução sexual ainda não tinha eclodido, a televisão tinha acabado de nascer, as raparigas ainda eram inocentes ou ignorantes. E ela passara repentinamente de menina a mulher não para experimentar o amor por um homem, mas para dar à irmã o amor primordial. O pouco tempo que lhe sobrava era para estudar. Estudar para que um dia pudesse conhecer a Terra Nova – a terra e o mar. A terra onde nascera a avó com o mesmo nome que o dela e o mar onde o avô ficara para sempre. Quando acabou o curso, continuou a estudar, a par do trabalho, a fim de poder doutorar-se no que constituiria o passaporte para a sua ligação àquela ilha que entrara no seu imaginário para nunca mais sair.

Essa tinha sido a sua vida até àquele dia. Uma vida em que não se interessara por nenhum rapaz quando era rapariga nem por nenhum homem quando já mulher. Alguns tinham tentado aproximar-se, pedir-lhe namoro - como então se dizia - mas depressa esmoreciam e dali a desistirem era um passo. Já no trabalho, teria uns vinte e cinco anos, um colega ressabiado quis espalhar, sem sucesso, a insinuação de que ela seria lésbica o que não a afectara minimamente.

E agora, ali tão longe da sua terra, de repente, sem que nada tivesse feito para isso, acontecia-lhe o que nunca tinha acontecido – sentia-se atraída por um homem. Um homem que mal conhecia, um estrangeiro, um estranho. Emoções novas, preocupações nunca sentidas. Só lhe restava fazer uma coisa: enfrentar o desafio.

A seguir, adormeceu.

Sentados num dos bares da famosa George Street, a tomar um *cocktail* antes do jantar, mantinham-se silenciosos como se as palavras não fossem tão eloquentes quanto os olhares. Durante uns momentos, fitaram-se apenas – atentamente, com curiosidade. Foi ela quem primeiro falou.

— St.John’s é fascinante. Apesar do luxo das ruas de comércio e dos restaurantes e bares, conserva um charme irresistível e as memórias da sua longa existência.

— Pareces conhecer bem a cidade.

— Conheço-a muito bem e conheço razoavelmente bem a ilha. Há seis meses que não tenho feito outra coisa senão estudar a tua terra. Os *newfoundlanders* são muito amigáveis e nunca senti qualquer dificuldade em aceder à informação de todo o tipo. Adoram falar da sua terra, dos seus costumes e do tempo.

— Quando te apresentaste na primeira aula do curso, disseste que és portuguesa e que estás cá a fazer investigação para uma tese de doutoramento. Sei a tua idade pois tiveste que preencher a ficha de inscrição. Acho que é só o que sei de ti.

— Pois sabes mais de mim do que eu de ti – disse ela com um olhar travesso.

— Mas isso resolve-se! Temos toda a noite à nossa frente! Amanhã é Sábado; se tudo correr bem, depois de amanhã é Domingo e talvez que dois dias sejam suficientes para contarmos um ao outro o que temos feito desde que nascemos e quem pensamos que somos.

A descoberta começava. Ele revelava um senso de humor que lhe agradava e começou a sentir-se menos ansiosa. Ele prosseguiu:

— Aqui vai: os meus avós paternos vieram da Irlanda. O meu pai nasceu já cá e casou com uma rapariga cujos pais também eram imigrantes irlandeses. Portanto, embora canadiano, corre-me nas veias puro sangue irlandês. Tenho dois irmãos que vivem no continente, ambos mais velhos do que eu: um em Alberta e o outro em Vancouver. Decidiram sair daqui quando o declínio da pesca do

bacalhau começou a ter sérias consequências na economia, gerando muito desemprego e afunilando as perspectivas de vida. Só fiquei cá eu porque adoro tudo na minha terra – o mar, em primeiro lugar, pois desde muito pequeno comecei a explorá-lo; gosto da Natureza que em muitos sítios ainda está quase intacta; não me canso da beleza das paisagens; acho que somos gente simpática e amigável; enfim, se tivesse de deixar a Terra Nova, seria uma violência. Tenho trinta e cinco anos, tirei o curso de Oceanografia e depois quis ser mergulhador, em primeiro lugar por prazer e depois porque é útil para o meu trabalho. Gostei tanto que me tornei instrutor. Por enquanto, não tenho um emprego fixo na área da Oceanografia, mas sou consultor de uma das empresas que fazem exploração petrolífera ao largo da nossa costa. Agora tu - proponho-te uma espécie de ping-pong.

— Eu tenho uma ascendência mais multicultural – disse ela.

E descreveu-lhe a origem da sua família, a profissão que abraçara e o motivo que a trouxera à Península de Avalon.

— Estranhei que uma portuguesa tivesse um tipo tão nórdico. Apesar de nunca ter estado em Portugal, o meu conhecimento dos povos dá para saber que lá no Sul vocês têm sobretudo olhos e cabelos escuros e não são tão altos como as gentes do Norte. Agora, está explicado. A história da tua família é original e trágica. É bela a homenagem que fazes aos teus avós maternos ao vires conhecer a região a que estiveram tão ligados! E é interessante saber que temos algo tão importante em comum.

Ela aproveitou a deixa para satisfazer a curiosidade que a atazanava – se ele seria casado ou se tinha companheira.

— Os teus irmãos não vivem cá, mas ainda tens família na Terra Nova?

— Os meus pais vivem em Portugal Cove – fez uma pequena pausa para espreitar a reacção dela ao nome da terra, o que não se fez esperar:

— Vivem em Portugal Cove?

— Exactamente! – disse ele com uma expressão radiante. Eu e os meus irmãos nascemos lá. Conheces?

— Claro! Se o lugar que tem o nome do meu país tivesse fugido ao crivo da minha pesquisa, que fraca investigadora seria eu! Sabes por que razão deram o nome de Portugal à tua terra?

— Na escola, ensinaram-nos que foi fundada por pescadores portugueses.

— Sim. Diz a História que terá sido fundada no século XVI por Gaspar Corte-Real mestre de uma embarcação de pesca. O navio fundeou na enseada para enterrar dois homens que haviam falecido na viagem de Lisboa para cá. Pensa-se que esses pescadores fundaram uma localidade para servir de abrigo e apoio à pesca e secagem do bacalhau que depois seria enviado para Portugal.

— Queres ir amanhã conhecer a casa dos meus pais, onde cresci e de onde só saí quando arranjei o meu primeiro emprego?

Apanhada de surpresa, ficou hesitante. Ainda não sabia se ele tinha alguma mulher na sua vida. Não se conteve e foi directa ao assunto.

— Desculpa-me a indiscrição, Brian, mas és casado ou tens alguma companheira?

— Porquê essa pergunta? – a expressão vagamente maliciosa – Se eu tiver companheira, não queres ir conhecer a casa dos meus pais?

Ela sentiu-se incomodada e hesitou na resposta. Ele percebeu-lhe o embaraço.

— Desculpa, Erica. Não, não sou casado nem tenho namorada. Já tive, mas agora estou livre que nem um passarinho. E tu?

“Isto está a ir depressa demais...” pensou ela entre aliviada e apreensiva.

— Não sou casada nem tenho namorado – não teve coragem para dizer que nunca tivera.

Transportou-se àquele preciso momento, inolvidável, em que ambos perceberam que algo de muito sério estava a nascer. Com o tempo, Brian revelou-se de uma insuspeitada delicadeza de sentimentos. Com o seu senso de humor e uma discrição invulgares, conquistou-a por inteiro, de

corpo e alma - como a expressão popular, tão banalizada, se aplicava de forma perfeita e plena ao que sentia por ele! Inúmeras vezes pensou que, se até aí, a vida lhe vedara o acesso a relações amorosas fora para que toda a sua capacidade de amar e de ser amada estivesse incólume e inteiramente disponível para o encontro da sua vida. Isso mesmo partilhou com a irmã quando de regresso a Portugal retomaram as longas conversas tão habituais entre elas, mas em que por norma a irmã falava e ela escutava. Isabela respondera-lhe:

— É curioso! Compreendo perfeitamente que o digas, mas todos os relacionamentos que tive antes de conhecer o João Luís, apesar de se terem traduzido em desenganos, e em alguns desgostos, acabaram por ter a sua utilidade pois me permitiram distinguir o que queria do que não me interessava e, como tal, quando o conheci, soube que tínhamos um futuro juntos. Mas contigo, mana, é tudo tão extremo – não sei se extremo é o melhor termo – tudo tão único, tudo tão original, que o que seria inconcebível comigo, em ti é como se não pudesse ser de outra maneira.

O dia em que ele a levou a visitar a casa dos pais fora, sem que nem ela nem ele o tivessem planeado, o do início da sua relação. Portugal Cove aninha-se na Conception Bay, uma enorme e profunda reentrância da costa ocidental da península de Avalon – a mesma onde, no lado oriental se situa St John’s – distando as duas cidades doze quilómetros uma da outra. Erica, que nessa altura da sua estada na terra da sua avó já conhecia uma boa parte da ilha, sobretudo as regiões de maior interesse para a sua tese, estava apaixonada pelas esplendorosas vistas do oceano e a pequena cidade não era excepção; se quando lá fora pela primeira vez, tinha ficado encantada com as graciosas casas de madeira debruçadas sobre o mar ou espalhadas pela íngreme encosta acima – conforme os seus moradores, em tempos mais recuados, se dedicavam à pesca ou à agricultura –, nesta visita em companhia de Brian tudo lhe parecia ainda mais fascinante o que, em parte se devia ao estado de encantamento em que se encontrava. Da moradia dos Callahan, avistava-se o cais para os *ferry-boats* que fazem a ligação entre Portugal Cove e Bell Island separadas por um estreito largo de apenas cinco quilómetros. Os pais de Brian, um casal que na altura andaria pelos sessenta, contaram-lhe que a ilha exercera sempre uma enorme atracção sobre o filho mais novo o que em grande parte se ficara a dever ao facto de o pai, capitão de um dos *ferries*, levar Brian com ele no barco sempre que o garoto não tinha aulas. Extrovertidos e acolhedores, foi com naturalidade que Carol e Liam a receberam na sua inevitável vivenda de madeira com o jardim um tanto descuidado, mas acolhedor – filhos de agricultores, não tinham escolhido esse modo de vida e se o pai optara pela vida marítima, já a mãe era professora numa escola de ensino básico. Pelo que se apercebeu, eram ambos muito populares na terra.

Embora o convívio estivesse a ser agradável, Brian dava alguns sinais de impaciência.

— Bem! - exclamou ele – a conversa está boa, mas eu quero levar a Erica a almoçar. Se ela passar cá a noite, amanhã podemos cá voltar.

“Se ela passar cá a noite?” – ecoou Erica de si para si. “Onde? Como?”, perguntou-se.

Enquanto se dirigiam para o restaurante em que, segundo ele, serviam o melhor Fish and Chips da Terra Nova, esse prato tipicamente britânico que ela já tinha comido algumas vezes desde que chegara, e até gostava, interpelou-o:

— O que é isso de eu passar cá a noite?

— Ainda não te disse que vivo aqui –. Começava a familiarizar-se com o olhar curioso e expectante com que ele a fitava sempre que lhe fazia uma revelação. Quando saí de casa dos meus pais, aluguei um apartamento em St. John’s, mas assim que pude, que foi há dois anos, realizei o meu sonho: construí aqui uma vivenda. Gostava de te mostrar se quiseses. E como tenho um quarto de hóspedes, podes cá passar a noite.

— Se eu tivesse sabido isso antes de ter saído de casa, teria trazido roupa, produtos de higiene, enfim, as coisas de que preciso para me sentir confortável. Assim, tenho pena, mas não posso ficar.

Embora o convite a tivesse lisonjeado, teve de lhe fazer sentir que ele não podia dispor dela a seu bel prazer. Sentiu-se presa entre a necessidade de mostrar a sua independência e a vontade de passar mais tempo com ele. Não era só essa a razão, reconheceu de si para si: a inevitável intimidade que representaria passar a noite em casa dele era um tanto assustadora. Assim, enquanto pegava num bocado de peixe com os dedos - porque assim se come o peixe com batatas fritas - e o mergulhava no molho tártaro, desviou os olhos do mar que se via através da enorme vidraça do restaurante, e virou-os para ele.

— Brian, estou aqui a pensar, que achas de eu vir amanhã até cá outra vez? St. John's é aqui tão perto que não me custa nada ir hoje ao final da tarde e voltar a meio da manhã. Assim não te importes de me levar.

— Ideia brilhante! E já tenho programa para amanhã! Vou levar-te à ilha e acho que vais adorar.

Há já muitos anos que Erica sonhava com acontecimentos que não queria lembrar acordada. Freud dizia: “o que o consciente recalca, acaba por emergir por diferentes formas enviesadas – os sonhos ou as neuroses”. Recusando-se a ceder à depressão e à instabilidade emocional, resignou-se ao assalto nocturno das memórias que lhe apareciam embrulhadas nos mais diversos disfarces; tantas eram as versões que a mente fabricava sobre este ou aquele episódio vivido, que ao acordar passava por uns breves momentos de dúvida ou de incredulidade acerca do que na realidade tinha acontecido. Ao cabo de sete anos, esse mecanismo de defesa estava a tornar-se penoso demais porque se até ali tinha sido o modo de lhe permitir adaptar-se à realidade, agora assumia-se claramente como um aspecto doentio. Sentia-se sucumbir à necessidade imperiosa de se pacificar com o passado.

No dia seguinte ao do jantar em casa da irmã, encontraram-se com o pai. Tinham o hábito de ao Domingo, almoçarem os três, ora em casa de um deles, ora num restaurante, mas sempre terminando a tarde na casa paterna.

Ricardo Vaz de Amorim era um homem interessante. Circunspecto, elegante no trato, não se dava facilmente a conhecer – por timidez, não por arrogância. Ponderado e moderado em tudo, agia sempre com prudência. Preferia observar e ouvir, a falar; era um bom confidente, muito por força da sua profissão – e deleitava-se a escutar as pessoas de quem gostava. Alto e bem-parecido, cabelo e olhos escuros, pele morena, atraía facilmente as atenções, sobretudo as femininas. Elisa, que viria a ser a mãe das suas filhas, conheceu-o em casa de amigos comuns e ficou caidinha por ele. Estava-se em 1941, época em que à mulher se atribuía um papel passivo em muitos domínios sociais e, claro, no que à arte de cortejar dizia respeito – rapariga séria não se atirava a um homem, antes esperava que ele desse o primeiro passo. Ousada e desinibida - herdara isso da mãe -, tais convenções não se aplicavam a Elisa que, ao perceber logo que, ou agia sem demora ou lá se ia o rapaz que tanto a atraía, não hesitou em avançar. Abençoada intuição! Inteligente, para além de bonita, facilmente o prendeu aos seus encantos. Tiveram um casamento feliz que acabou precocemente, de maneira repentina e trágica deixando o viúvo em estado de choque. Valeu-lhe o trabalho - o seu escritório de solicitador - e as filhas menores que tanto precisavam dele. Três anos depois, decidiu-se a casar outra vez, mais por necessidade de mulher do que por amor, e para dar às filhas o que julgava poder ser uma substituta da mãe, o contributo feminino para a educação das raparigas; não sem antes avisar a noiva de que Erica e Isabela estariam sempre em primeiro lugar. Ela, compreensiva e boa pessoa, aceitou a condição e a nova vida de família foi pacífica e deslavada. Mas Ricardo Vaz de Amorim não fora fadado para ter casamentos para toda a vida - os dois tinham terminado ao fim de dezasseis anos - o que lhe fazia uma certa confusão. Para mais, ao choque da morte repentina da primeira mulher, sucedeu-se o tormento da doença prolongada da segunda – uma leucemia. Ao ver-se viúvo mais uma vez, jurou a si mesmo que nunca mais tornaria a juntar-se com uma mulher, com ou sem casamento. Tinha então sessenta e um anos. A partir daí, tornou-se um pai ainda mais extremo.

Por isso se afligi quando Isabela - que, de propósito, apareceu mais cedo em casa dele antes do almoço -, lhe contou o episódio da véspera em que Erica, quase aos gritos, lhe pedira que não tivesse pena dela.

— Pai, ela está a sofrer muito e não vejo que a dor tenha vindo a diminuir com o passar do tempo!

— Eu penso o mesmo, filha, mas depois dos esforços que na altura fizemos para a ajudar, depois de ela ter recusado fazer psicoterapia e sobretudo porque consegue desempenhar as suas funções e trabalhar com os mesmos níveis de competência, decidi não insistir porque achei que seria contraproducente. E não me arrependo, porque a interferência poderia alterar perigosamente o equilíbrio que ela, a tanto custo, se esforça por encontrar. Não quero com isto dizer que deslizei, longe disso.

— Não sei se equilíbrio é o termo mais indicado porque não me parece que ela esteja equilibrada. O que arranjou foi um mecanismo de defesa, uma tentativa de adaptação à situação para não sucumbir. Aliás, tal como o pai, também eu acabei por desistir de fazer com que ela se abrisse e quem me convenceu foi o Jorge, aquele meu colega de curso que foi para Psiquiatria; dada a recusa da Erica em se tratar e em falar do assunto, ele aconselhou-me a deixar andar até ver como é que ela evoluía. E com isto passaram-se sete anos! Custa a crer... parece que foi ontem! Ora o que me está a parecer é que, agora, ela está a atingir o limite da capacidade de auto-controlo. Tenho alguma esperança de que o regresso à Terra Nova possa desencadear uma qualquer dinâmica que lhe permita confrontar-se com todas as memórias que reprimiu e possa acabar com o sofrimento de uma vez por todas, mas por outro lado, tenho muito medo das consequências.

Inquieto e profundamente preocupado, o pai retorquiu:

— Também tenho muito medo, Isa, mas tenho esperança de que as vantagens sejam maiores do que os inconvenientes. Nem imaginas como me tranquiliza saber que vais com ela!

Sagres

Alexis Levitin

Surf came rolling in, crystal clear, icy cold. Richard and his new friend Jake had to force themselves to stride out through the swirl and tug, dive through a cresting breaker, do a wild crawl for twenty seconds, then dive through another onrushing wall of foaming water, feeling the whole time the burn of the Atlantic's icy grip on their skin. They would dive, ride the waves, exult, leap up, cry out, and feel foolishly, utterly, triumphantly alive. Emerging finally from the ocean, they would be tingling with life in every pore. It was a great beach for the young and Jake, at least, was young.

After leaving the water, they would run down the hard-packed sand beneath the towering orange cliffs, then back again, drying off in the ocean breeze and warmed by the vertical summer sun. Returning to their towels, they would flop down, split open an orange, munch on some almonds, and drink from their still sweating cans of Sumol. Then Richard would snap open his magnetic chess set and, shifting gears, they would begin to play. Richard could see that Jake was better, but only a little better, so they both immersed themselves in the game and had the pleasure of mortal combat. Usually, after a lengthy battle, Jake would win, but once in a while Richard would find himself with the extra pawn and a winning end game. It turned out that his partner, his rival, was first board back at the Cal Berkeley chess club. A stronger player, he was also taller than Richard, slender and good looking. Richard had always been proud of his dark summer tan, but he ruefully noticed that Jake's tan had a deeper resonance of robust health. And, of course, he himself was already *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, hairline beginning to recede, waist slowly beginning to thicken. Despite the contrast, however, hanging with Jake felt good, as his blood rose to a remembrance of days past and he wrestled his body back to the vigor of youth.

He had first discovered this beach of demanding purity fifteen years earlier and had been coming back ever since. The cliffs, the waves, the wind, remained the same. So, too, the youngsters on the beach, or so it seemed. In fact, during the unrolling of those years, the only thing that had changed had been Richard himself. Sagres remained a living photograph, a kind of miracle. It never aged. The kids on the beach never aged. Only he was caught, wriggling in the fisherman's net of time.

It was an idyllic existence, but, of course, it couldn't last. Every year he would spend the last two weeks of summer in Sagres and every year would have to tear himself away, packing up just in time to catch the afternoon bus for Lisbon, leaving paradise to the eternally young. He was a professor and had to fly home to begin the fall semester. The others were unencumbered by outside reality, or so it seemed to him. In any case, this particular summer the forced departure was even more painful than usual. For this was the summer in which, at the last moment, Pascale turned up. And time held its breath.

They first saw her coolly downing an afternoon beer at the Dromedário, as they passed by on their way to the beach. She looked a bit older than the usual crowd, eyes sparkling blue-green, as if drawn straight from the sea. One glimpse of her, and all Richard could do was swallow. He looked at Jake and could see it was the same for him. But they kept on walking, made it to the beach, and did their usual thing. The ocean was as transparent as ever, its sting as sharp as always. They ran the hard-

packed sand left by the receding tide, flopped down on their towels, split open an orange, shared their almonds, gripped their still-cool cans of Sumol, and joined combat once again in that infinite realm hidden within sixty-four squares. The crashing of the waves, the chatter of little children building sandcastles, the occasional piercing cry of a gull, all receded as, entering the accustomed field of battle, growing enmeshed in the usual *agon*, they began to test, and probe, seeking for weaknesses, like wary wrestlers circling the mat. Two hours later, as was almost predictable, Richard resigned. They took another swim, dried off with another run, then headed up to town together.

As they passed through the oblong square with its open-air bars, there she was, calmly sipping a coffee and eating a Danish. They took the next table, ordered a couple of beers, and introduced themselves. She flashed glistening white teeth and replied with a charming French accent, “Je m’appelle Pascale, I am Pascale.” She gazed at them with eyes like the translucent waves of the sea and as piercing as the ocean’s icy freshness. She sat there, trim, quiet, confident, in a well-cut white beach blouse, a floppy white hat jaunty on her head. “It’s good here, is it not?” she said, tapping her Gauloise on the edge of the seashell ashtray. She looked at them both through a puff of smoke and her eyes, old with wisdom, but dancing with amused vitality, narrowed and seemed to lock on like radar. Somehow her banal words felt like a challenge, but all Richard could manage was a pleasant platitude: “Best place in the world.”

Her lips were finely etched, her cheeks were high, her forehead broad, her blond hair a tangle somehow at peace beneath the straw hat perched on its nest. She talked about Paris, about Cap Ferrat, about her travels in Spain. “I have come here because it is the end of the world, n’est-ce pas?” she said through another puff of mesmerizing smoke, narrowing her eyes once again. Struck almost mute by her presence, Richard and Jake simply nodded in agreement. It was indeed the end of the world, the final jumping off point. Nothing beyond but the icy beauty of the endless Atlantic, cresting and breaking, spreading spume in the air and foam on the beach. “Well,” she said, “it is time for my afternoon nap. Perhaps we shall meet at the Dromedário tonight?” She crushed her last cigarette in the seashell, stood up, gestured to the waiter, paid her bill, and strode off, her white free-flowing dress swirling around her. Jake took a last pull on his beer. Richard sat there stunned, then said, “Wow!”

After dinner, the chess partners wandered down to the harbor and listened to the clinking of the rigging on the sailboats swaying in the evening breeze down below. They got an ice cream at the last kiosk, then made their way back towards the brightness before the Dromedário. The street was filled with the usual overflow of the young and eager. They pushed their way inside, got a beer each, then looked around. Pascale was at a corner table, speaking French. They grinned and nodded to her and, surprisingly, she excused herself and came to them. “My compatriots,” she said, gesturing to the table. They went outside and stood in the milling crowd with the attentive seagulls on its edges. Richard picked up a French fry from the ground and threw it, but before it could land a seagull had fluttered up to grab it midair. They chatted about the beaches, Jake told them about surfing down at Santa Cruz, back home in California. Pascale said she hoped to see more of the coast before heading home to France. Richard then surprised even himself.

“My summer is coming to an end. Tomorrow’s my last day in Sagres. I’m going to rent a scooter and go up the coast to the beaches around Carrapateira.” He hazarded a quick glance at her face. “Want to come along?” He couldn’t believe his sudden temerity. Jake gave him a funny look and smiled. Pascale paused, took a last drag on her Gauloise, threw the butt down, crushed it into the ground with a circular motion, and, gazing off into the night, said with a slow smile, “Pourquoi pas?” After some more chit-chat, Pascale said “Et alors, demain, ici, how about ten o’clock, yes?” and with a smile she took her leave and returned to the round table of her compatriots.

The next morning Richard was there in front of the Dromedário with his scooter and a small knapsack laden with sandwiches, fruit, and a bottle of wine. Pascale showed up with the floppy white hat, a very short skirt, and a luxurious silk scarf calculated to complement her eyes. They went inside,

ate a breakfast of yogurt topped with granola and strawberries, then set off on their adventure up the coast.

As they rode out of town, Richard could hear her hat flopping in the wind, as she tightened her grip around his waist. He could feel her fingernails through his light summer shirt. They made their way to Vila do Bispo, then took the old dirt road to the lonely beach at Cordoama, where they settled beneath the pulsating heat of the friable orange cliffs and strolled through the foamy shallows between the beach and the seven rows of breakers rolling in. Back at their towels, they had a snack, and she looked out at him from beneath the shelter of her silky blue-green scarf. He should have kissed her, but he didn't dare.

Back on the scooter they returned to Vila do Bispo, then took the main road north through pine barrens towards Carrapateira. Before getting there, they branched off on the sandy road to Amado. It was already late September, so they found the beach deserted. They settled down and watched the heavy surf breaking and rolling toward them, powerful, eternal, beautiful, and indifferent. They ate their sandwiches hiding from the wind, within the gossamer penumbra of her blue-green scarf. They drank the bottle of Dão. On the wind-swept naked beach, they lay close together, and Richard gathered enough courage to kiss her sun-warmed shoulder. She lazily rolled over and brushed her mouth across his lips. She tasted of salt, and he felt grains of sand on his tingling lips.

As the sun dropped in the sky, they gathered up their things and returned to the scooter. Again she wrapped her arms around his waist and her fingernails dug into his flesh. Richard knew what he had to do and, when they passed a solitary structure advertising rooms, he pulled in. The owner looked as if he had been napping. "No," he said, "Keine Zimmer, no rooms, season over. Fechado. Finished. Schluss," and he turned away and closed his door. Feeling like a fool, Richard got back on the scooter, Pascale tightened her grip, and they rode home through the chill evening breeze. He could have gone north to seek a room in Carrapateira, but he did not. He could have stopped off in Vila do Bispo, but he did not. Defeated, he drove back to Sagres, kissed her good-bye on the cheek in front of the Dromedário, and, disconsolate, drove back to his hotel.

A few years later, Richard found himself, once again in late summer, on his favorite beach. And to his surprise, there was Jake, smiling and deeply tanned. "Jake," he exclaimed, and the men embraced. "How's it going, Jake?"

"Great. I'm half-way through grad school now. Marine biology. I spend a lot of time at the labs down at Monterrey. And still go surfing up at Santa Cruz. Say, did you hear? A guy up at Santa Cruz got eaten by a Great White. His board came floating in three days later with this jagged cookie-cutter hunk missing. They never found his body."

They spread their beach towels beside each other and lay there soaking in the afternoon sun. Then Jake rolled over and said, "Remember that sexy Pascale we both liked a few years ago? She was something else. A bit old for me, but you know, an older French woman knows her way around. Anyway, as it turned out, a week after you left, we went hitch-hiking together all the way from Sagres to Paris. She flagged down all the rides, of course, in her white miniskirt, those long, tanned legs. We took our time: down the Algarve, over to Seville, Cordoba, Granada, great place Granada, down to Barcelona, through the Pyrenees, then through Carcassonne, another great place, then up to Angoulême, Poitiers, the Loire, Orleans, Chartres, and finally Paris. Great trip. Good old Pascale, with that sensuous silk scarf, remember? Boy, did she like to laugh. We had a really good time. She was the greatest!"

And once again Richard felt how Jake, indeed, was the better man, and all he could do, brimming with jealousy, was smile, clap him on the back, and say: "Good man!" And after gazing off into the distance for a bit, they returned to the present. Richard snapped open his trusty traveling set, lay down the black and white metallic board, shuffled two pawns behind his back, then held out his fists. Jake

nonchalantly slapped the left hand and, as one might have predicted, he had chosen white. Richard smiled and prepared to defend himself. “Perhaps I’ll play the French this time,” he thought with a wry smile, “in memory of Pascale.” But, though the game had not yet begun, he felt strangely weary and quite sure of what the result would be.

*Três poemas e uma pergunta de Habitar: um ecopoema**

Scott Edward Anderson
traduzido por Margarida Vale de Gato

Cartografar

Mais delicadas que as dos historiadores são as cores dos cartógrafos.
— Elizabeth Bishop

Um limite é onde algo começa,
os espaços são formados por locais.
Cartografar é construir espaços
e localizações, que assim se fazem.

Os limites da natureza
definindo-se por interrelações,
e fatos geofísicos
não fricções geopolíticas —

O aspeto, o clima, o relevo,
formações terrestres e cursos de água,
agregação de espécies,
separação de águas,
solo, tempo, rocha-mãe, estratos,
e deslizos tectónicos —

Disso podemos ter a certeza:
os limites deslizam sempre.
(Só o Homem o tenta negar,
impor ordem onde reina o caos.)

Digamos que os limites
são o começo,
onde arrancam as coisas,
não a meta;

* Três Poemas e uma pergunta de *Habitar: um ecopoema* de Scott Edward Anderson, traduzido por Margarida Vale de Gato, que as Poéticas Edições (Lisboa) vão publicar em 2022.

* Three Poems and a Question from *Habitar: um ecopoema* by Scott Edward Anderson, translated by Margarida Vale de Gato. The original English poems and prose appeared in *Dwelling: an ecopoem* (Shanti Arts, 2018).

digamos que os limites são um começo;
um entre muitos.

A cartografia traceja os espaços,
localizando por meio da forma.
Cada limite,
ao mesmo tempo que define o fim
do espaço que tem forma,
é também um começo.

Habitar

I.

Pontes e fábricas,
supermercados e armazéns,
aeroportos e refinarias
são edifícios, não habitações.

Estações de comboios e destilarias,
parques empresariais e barragens,
centros comerciais, estádios, pavilhões
constroem-se, mas não são habitações.

O camionista está «como em casa»
na estrada nacional
ou na área de serviço,
mas não pretende aí abrigar-se.

A CEO retira certo conforto
da sala da direção,
mas não é aí
que tem a sua habitação.

*(São edifícios que “acomodam” seres humanos.
Ocupamo-los, mas não os habitamos.)*

II.

Habitar no sentido de permanência,
de-morar num lugar,
aprender um lugar, intimamente,
é uma forma de estar em casa.

Pensar sobre a habitação
é ser humano.

“Habito logo existo”.

Habitar significa fazer parte
(e não estar à parte) da natureza.

Existimos na medida em que habitamos.
É «habitual» construir para habitação.
Então habitamos por hábito
ou porque é próprio da nossa ação?

Os habitantes buscam uma casa,
mais do que edifícios,
meros alojamentos.
Residir, tornar a estar, é habitar.

III.

Habitamos,
habitamos a terra,
habitamos um ecossistema,
habitamos um edifício,
habitamos uma morada,
somos um animal de hábitos.

Não habitamos por construirmos.
Construímos porque
habitamos.
Habitamos *porque*
somos habitantes.
Existimos na medida em que habitamos.
A morada habita-te.

Saborear

Às vezes penso que isto, a nossa vida na terra, é um ovo de que temos de romper.
— Susan Mitchell

Vê os pássaros a desabrochar com a primavera
em flor. Do nada surgem abelhas rapaces

todas barrando-se com pólen. Até
ficarem cobertas de um pastel viscoso —

húmido, mole, úbere de desejo, apenas
de ser carregado, de se espalhar em húmido pó.

Pega nesse pólen com os dedos, esfrega
dois dedos juntos, faz uma pasta cerosa

de pólen e esfrega-a sobre as pálpebras.
Abeira-te depois do teu amor, do teu «mais-que-mel»,

e fecha os olhos.

Alagado de sol, o jardim cresce fecundo
na terra nomeadora — dentro de dias

as peónias chegarão a meio metro, carregadas
de formigas negras, a sugar o viço dos rebentos —

corre a seiva, e o jardim enverdece
e será rosa, azul, branco, amarelo, roxo.

O ocre pólen cobre o estrado do alpendre
e o corrimão — o pólen não discrimina,

a não ser flor a for, ansa a ansa,
enquanto as árvores lançam a sua vida folhosa.

A questão do “Lingualugar”¹

Lingualugar (*langscaping*) pode ser verbo ou nome, processo de desvelar o ser da paisagem, do mundo à nossa volta, desvendar o que lá está — visível e invisível — entre o passado e o futuro. É a topografia e a taxonomia da mente através de palavras que concretizam a presença da terra. Isto quer dizer não só descrever, representar, ou observar o que se vê, mas ir além do temporal. Os lingualugares revelam por meio de palavras — *logos* de paisagens — desvelando o ser das coisas que se espraiam como água sobre a terra, como numa bacia de um rio.

Todos os sedimentos recolhem e alimentam as palavras que compõem um lingualugar, misturando-se o que reside no coração e na mente, a um nível quase subconsciente. Para se trazer à luz esse ser, há que focar e afinar bem todos os sentidos, para poderem cheirar, saborear, escutar, ver e tocar a terra e a maneira como a paisagem se desenvolve, assim como as memórias que a envolvem. Porque não, então, fazer uma poesia do lingualugar? Terra feita de palavras, a natureza revelada por palavras da nossa invenção. Pode ser que lingualugar nos ajude a sarar o desejo de ligação ao nosso ambiente, nos permita reconectarmo-nos com a natureza de um modo que derrube as barreiras criadas pelas nossas linguagem e tecnologias.

A linguagem torna-se então uma ponte entre duas margens de um rio. O rio corre por baixo da ponte sem se preocupar com ela. Estando em cima da ponte, se prestarmos atenção, as nossas redes talvez apanhem um lingualugar à borda da água. “O homem é uma ponte, não um fim”, escreveu Robert Pogue Harrison em *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Florestas: A Sombra da Civilização). («O homem não é um produto final, garante a larva», disse o poeta Basil Bunting).

Os lingualugares “desenvolvem-se de forma orgânica em vez de mecânica” para usar a linguagem das tecnologias emergentes. Através de uma dinâmica complexa de *inputs* e *outputs*, de ciclos de *feedback* positivos e negativos, de leitura, de observação atenta e pensamento, de *networking* e escrita, surge o poema.

Esta poesia orgânica usa o processo emergente para desvelar o ser das coisas. “O todo é maior do que a soma das partes” e o poeta não sabe onde vai dar o poema nem como lá chegará. O poema entra num jogo de sedução com a fimbria do caos e “estremece na fimbria da ordem”, parafraseando Adrian Woolfson. É essa a tarefa do poeta, deixar o poema emergir como quer, tornar-se o poema em que se quer tornar.

“A poesia é a alma a inaugurar uma forma”, disse o poeta Pierre Jean-Jouve. A forma emerge como trechos, secções, segmentos, fases, sistemas, documentos, citações, etc. Tudo isso se agrega para se materializar numa «comunidade» tematicamente relacionada. No ecopoema cada parte do todo se expande, contrai, reage, contrasta, elucida, explora, converge e faz explodir todas as outras partes, participando entre si e umas com as outras. Trata-se de uma comunidade de *logos*.

“Sem o logos não existe a natureza nem a história”, afirma Robert Pogue Harrison, “o que equivale a dizer não existir ‘paisagem’”. Ou, como escreve Simon Schama em *Landscape and Memory* (Paisagem e Memória), “as paisagens são cultura antes de serem natureza; construções da imaginação projetadas na madeira e na água e nas pedras.”

Esse logos da paisagem — ou lingualugar — pode ser uma forma de o poeta explorar a interrelação entre os mundos humano e não-humano, entre a percepção da nossa mente e a habitação da terra. Esta é a poesia do habitar. Isto é o que faz um ecopoema.

¹ “Langscaping” é um neologismo inventado pelo autor, que significa “uma paisagem feita de palavras”. Margarida Vale de Gato decidiu -- depois de muita deliberação -- traduzir esta palavra como “Lingualugar”.

Poems from The Invention of Summer

José Pedro Leite
Translated by Richard Simas

10

Quem primeiro ouviu
escorrerem pela pele os sinos do desejo
Quando começou a água a correr
Qual de nós sentiu o calor
e a casa fluindo através dos membros
Quem assumiu as vertentes do fogo
Quem atirou e recolheu as facas
Que corpo entrou na noite
ou no outro sem ruído
Quem adormeceu despido sobre o dorso do verão

Who first heard
desire's chimes flow through skin
When did water start to flow
Which of us felt the heat
and the house flowing through our limbs
Who took on the branches of fire
Who threw and collected the knives
What body entered night
or the other silently
Who fell asleep naked on summer's back

12

Tanto lume pode a candura extrema
 Assim o vento
 e a velocidade da crosta terrestre
 o tempo vertiginoso nos ouvidos
 soando branco
 até o mais vibrante silêncio
 quando apenas o fogo sulca as têmporas

Assim
 bebido o luminoso vinho da manhã
 fundeámos alados pés sedentos
 na gasolina e na doçura dos dias
 Assim
 anémonas ancoradas em oceanos de trigo
 ensaiamos mil mortes recobertas de pétalas
 cumprimos casas e caminhos muito limpos
 o poema

Assim
 com dentes crus
 implacáveis
 conscientes
 sôfregos
 ternos
 abrimos as solenes veias do mundo
 e florescemos no cimo da trepadeira do desejo
 vine

Assim
 arados de algas
 aves ou marés
 habitantes despídos dos imensos crepúsculos
 trincamos a vida na explosão dos lírios

Assim dissemos
 dizemos pedra
 ou coluna ascendente
 para a união dos elementos todos
 Assim
 crianças muito antigas
 fomos árvores onde medimos o Verão
 No silencioso e altíssimo resplendor das cerejas

Assim
 iguais
 nus e primeiros
 entramos na deflagrada água
 e anulamos a não-cor de todos os desertos

Extreme candor can cause such flame
 Thus the wind
 and speed of the earth's crust
 dizzying time in the ears
 sounding white
 until the most vibrant silence
 when only fire furrows the temples

Thus
 drunk on luminous morning wine
 we land winged and thirsty feet
 in gasoline and the day's sweetness
 Thus
 anemones anchored in oceans of wheat
 we rehearsed a thousand deaths covered in
 petals
 we kept such clean houses and roads
 the poem

Thus
 with raw teeth
 implacable
 conscious
 eager
 tender
 we open the world's solemn veins
 and blossom at the summit of desire's creeping

Thus
 ploughshares of algae
 birds or tides
 undressed inhabitants of immense twilights
 we crunch life in an explosion of lilies

Thus we said
 stone we say
 or ascending pillar
 or the union of all elements
 Thus
 very ancient children
 we were trees where we measured summer
 In the silent and towering splendor of cherries

Thus
 equals
 naked and primal
 we enter the shattered water
 and cancel the no-color of all deserts

Ouvir-te
é prece de mar ao fundo

Não te disse ainda
que a tua boca conforma o arco das marés
como se antes de ti
tua língua
barco e velame a prumo
âncora de lume
idêntica à luminosidade dos dias limpos
descobertos
nunca ninguém tivesse dito
vaga
gaivota
sol ou meio-dia

Faço das minhas mãos
suspensa cada palavra tua
ascendidas as sílabas
amarras de pólen
duas cigarras no cima do verão
um verso que a água transcorresse
um interior de búzio
um mapa de navegação

E de meus braços
estendidos para a frente à altura dos ombros
dois canais de irrigação
para que
cumprindo a terra
a subtil trajectória das algas
possas
se quiseres
voz
tua
matéria líquida
e tenra seara inteira
tudo fluir
e fecundar

Não te disse ainda
que trago no peito
uma anémone feita de todos os vidros
Não te disse ainda
que apenas tu
rompes a surda linfa nocturna
e consubstancias a orla verde do poema

Não te disse ainda

Entro na água sem ruído
até à cintura
do coração

To hear you
is an entreaty from the sea depths

I didn't tell you yet
that your mouth takes after the arc of tides
as if before you
your tongue
ship and hoisted sail
flaming anchor
identical to the brightness of clear days
uncovered
no one would have ever said
wave
seagull
sun or midday

From my hands
suspend each of your words
ascended syllables
moorings of pollen
two locusts at summer's summit
a verse that water spends
the inside of a conch
a map for navigation

And from my arms
extended at shoulder height
two canals of irrigation
so that
serving the earth
the subtle trajectory of seaweed
you could
if you wish
voice
yours
liquid material
and a tender full harvest
flowing all
and fertile

I have yet to tell you
In my breast I bring
an anemone made of all the windows
I didn't tell you yet
that only you
break night's deaf fluid
and make flesh of the poem's green edge

I didn't tell you yet

I enter water quietly
to the waist
of the heart

Six Prose-Poems from The Sky Beneath My Entrails

Luís Miguel Nava

Translated into English by Alexis Levitin and Ricardo Vasconcelos

Insónia

Fechou os olhos, procurando adicionar à escuridão do quarto a escuridão suplementar das suas entranhas. Agradou-lhe a ideia de que, através desse simples gesto, pudesse homogeneizar o exterior e o interior, como se as trevas em que o aposento mergulhava e as que dentro de si assim se desprendiam fossem de uma só e mesma natureza e, por uma progressiva porosidade do seu corpo, circulassem em ambos os sentidos até por completo lhe anularem os limites. De certa forma deixava de ter corpo, ou pelo menos um corpo exterior, e o que a ele se atinha quando havia luz podia agora reduzir-se a um núcleo ou expandir-se em círculos que só não abarcavam sucessivamente o quarto, o apartamento, o prédio, o bairro, porque no escuro nada disso chega a ter sentido. A única referência era, de quando em quando, o longínquo motor de um camião ou o apito de um comboio na linha de Sintra. Esse ruído, que em seu entender constituía o modo de a distância se exprimir, proporcionava-lhe então um incomensurável prazer, que tanto podia advir de, na sequência da transformação que as trevas haviam provocado no seu corpo, o ouvido se ter aproximado do coração, como de, graças à assimilação que essas mesmas trevas haviam produzido entre o interior e o exterior, esses ruídos lhe chegarem como vindos de dentro de si próprio, de dentro desse coração a que os sentidos pareciam encostar-se, e, mediante uma identificação entre o espaço e o tempo a que a escuridão também era propícia, se lhe apresentarem como provenientes duma época remota, tão distante do presente como da sua cama o inimaginável troço de estrada ou de linha férrea donde a espaços irrompiam.

Insomnia

He closed his eyes, trying to add to the darkness of the room the additional darkness of his entrails. It pleased him, the idea that, through that simple action, he could make the outside and the inside one, as if the darkness in which the room plunged and the darkness emanating from within him were of the same nature, and, through a growing porousness of his body, circulated in both directions until they had completely erased all of his boundaries. In a way, he no longer had a body, or in any case an exterior body, and what would typically be confined in it when there was light could now be reduced to a core or expand itself in circles that could encompass the room, the apartment, the building, the neighborhood, if that made any real sense in the darkness. The only reference was, from time to time, the distant rumble of a passing truck or the whistle of a train on the Sintra line. That sound, which to him was the way in which distance expressed itself, offered him then an enormous pleasure, which could arise either from the fact that his ear had moved closer to his heart, due to the transformation that the darkness had caused in his body, or from the fact that, thanks to the melding of the inside and the outside brought about by the darkness, those noises came to him as if arriving from within himself, from within his own heart, against which his feelings seemed to be resting, and, thanks to the joining of space and time to which the darkness was also propitious, those sounds seemed as if arriving from a remote time, as distant from the present as his bed was from the stretch of highway or railroad from where they would blare out now and then.

O Corpo Espacejado

Perdia-se-lhe o corpo no deserto, que dentro dele aos poucos conquistava um espaço cada vez maior, novos contornos, novas posições, e lhe envolvia os órgãos que, isolados nas areias, adquiriam uma reverberação particular. Ia-se de dia para dia espacejando. As várias partes de que só por abstracção se chegava à noção de um todo começavam a afastar-se umas das outras, de forma que entre elas não tardou que espumegassem as marés e a própria via-láctea principiasse a abrir caminho. A sua carne exercia aliás uma enigmática atracção sobre as estrelas, que em breve conseguiu assimilar, exibindo-as, aos olhos de quem o não soubesse, como luminosas cicatrizes cujo brilho, transmutado em sangue, lentamente se esvaía. Ele mais não era, nessas ocasiões, do que um morrão, nas cinzas do qual, quase imperceptível, se podia no entanto detectar ainda a palpitação das vísceras, que a mais pequena alteração na direcção do vento era capaz de pôr de novo a funcionar. Resolveu então plastificar-se. Principiou pelas extremidades, pelos dedos das mãos e pelos pés, mas passado pouco tempo eram já os pulmões, os intestinos e o coração o que minuciosamente ele embrulhava em celofane, contra o qual as ondas produziam um ruído aterrador.

Body Scattering

His body was getting lost in the desert, which gradually was gaining more space inside him, new contours, new positions, while wrapping itself around the organs that, isolated in the sand, were acquiring a particular reverberation. Day after day it was scattering itself further. The various parts which only in very abstract terms would allow us to consider the notion of a whole began to distance themselves from each other, so much so that it didn't take long before tides were crashing and the milky way itself was beginning to insinuate itself between them. His flesh, indeed, held an enigmatic attraction for the stars, which it soon managed to assimilate, displaying them, to the gaze of those who did not know it, as luminous scars whose radiance, transmuted into blood, slowly faded. He was, on those occasions, nothing more than a burned down candle wick, in the ashes of which, almost imperceptibly, one could still detect the throbbing of the entrails, which the slightest change in the direction of the wind was capable of setting in motion again. He then decided to laminate his body. He started at the extremities, fingers and feet, but shortly after it was already the lungs, intestines and heart that he carefully wrapped in cellophane, against which the waves produced a terrifying noise.

Céu Árido

Devemos, ao falar, ter o maior cuidado com as palavras que empregamos, pois, sendo algumas delas particularmente vulneráveis às raízes, arriscamo-nos a ver apoderar-se-nos da fala uma vegetação que talvez chegue mesmo a destruir-nos. A fala quer-se árida, de uma aridez idêntica à da roupa que nos cobre o corpo ou à do céu, de que me esforço, sempre que dele falo, por deixar à mostra um dos grafos mais profundos.

Parched Sky

We must, when we speak, take the greatest care with the words we employ, for, some of them being especially vulnerable to roots, we risk watching vegetation that might even destroy us take over our voice. Our speech should be dry, as arid as the clothes that cover our body or as the sky, whose most deeply embedded staples I strive, whenever I speak of it, to expose.

Uma Candela

Poisei na margem desta folha uma candeia, para que se tornassem mais claras as palavras deste texto. Uma candeia também ela feita de palavras e que, contrariamente às aparências, não está na margem mas dispersa nas palavras, de tal forma que, se eu falar das praias, por exemplo, o próprio olhar dos leitores torna visíveis os contornos dos banhistas.

A Lamp

I placed a lamp on the edge of this page, so that the words of this text would grow clearer. A lamp made itself of words and which, contrary to appearances, is not on the edge but spread out among the words, so much so that, if I were to speak of beaches, for example, the very gaze of my readers would make visible the silhouettes of bathers.

Transparência

Momentos há em que a toda a nossa volta os objectos se tornam insuportáveis como se nos roubassem o ar, como se neles houvesse uma respiração onde o ar e a luz interviessem simultaneamente. Entre os sabores que tocam no meu espírito procuro então o que melhor me possa devolver à transparência, não a dos espelhos ou dos vidros, que a literalidade impregna, mas a abrupta transparência dos sentidos.

Transparency

There are moments when all around us objects grow unbearable as if depriving us of air, as if in them there were a respiration in which air and light were interwoven. Among the flavors that touch my spirit, I search then for the one that best might give me back transparency, not that of mirrors or of windowpanes, filled with literalness, but the sudden transparency of my five senses.

Identidade

Ignoro o que ao certo seja ser, mas, seja o que for, dispõe de intensidade própria e regulável como o som dum aparelho ou a velocidade dum motor. Há momentos em que «sou» mais do que noutros, em que, se assim pode dizer-se, tenho a minha identidade acelerada.

Identity

I don't know exactly what being is, but whatever it is, it has its own intensity, adjustable like the sound of a stereo or the velocity of an engine. There are moments in which I "am" more than in others, moments in which I have, so to speak, an accelerated identity.

Breaking Free from Ethnicity and Dissolving within the Mainstream

Reinaldo Francisco Silva

Abstract

Another City Upon a Hill: A New England Memoir (2013), by Joseph A. Conforti, tells the story of a once prosperous and dynamic city – Fall River, Massachusetts – during the decades of intensive textile manufacturing to its demise. Within this piecemeal industrial account of “Spindle City,” as it was then known as, lies a riveting coming of age story of a young man and his immediate Azorean/Portuguese (on his mother’s side) and Italian (on his father’s side) families. A product of a hybrid, that is, biological and cultural milieux, Conforti tells his readers how he had to negotiate these two identities while squeezing more and more into the mainstream—represented by the sports he engaged in and his scholarly pursuits in higher education. At the time, ethnic heritage and the racial stereotypes associated with both Latin heritages mattered there.

Keywords

Portuguese Americans in literature, Emigration and immigration in literature, Identity, Italian Americans, Portuguese Americans, Azores, Fall River (Mass.)

Resumo

Another City Upon a Hill: A New England Memoir (2013), de Joseph A. Conforti, conta a história de uma cidade outrora próspera e dinâmica — Fall River, Massachusetts —, durante as décadas de intensa atividade têxtil até seu fim. Dentro deste relato industrial fragmentado de “Spindle City”, como era então conhecida, encontra-se uma fascinante história de amadurecimento de um jovem e suas famílias açorianas/portuguesas (por parte de sua mãe) e italianas (por parte de seu pai). Produto de um meio híbrido, ou seja, biológico e cultural, Conforti conta aos seus leitores como teve que negociar essas duas identidades enquanto se acomodava cada vez mais no *mainstream* — representado pelos desportos que praticava e as suas atividades acadêmicas no ensino superior. Nessa altura, a herança étnica e os estereótipos raciais associados a ambas as identidades latinas eram relevantes.

Palavras-chave

Luso-americanos na literatura, Emigração e imigração na literatura, Identidade, ítalo-americanos, luso-americanos, Açores, Fall River (Mass.)

Published in 2013, *Another City Upon a Hill: A New England Memoir*, by Joseph A. Conforti, tells the story of a once prosperous and dynamic city —Fall River, Massachusetts—during the decades of intensive textile manufacturing to its demise. Within this piecemeal industrial account of “Spindle City,” as it was then known, lies a riveting coming-of-age story of a young man and his immediate Azorean/Portuguese (on his mother’s side) and Italian (on his father’s side) families. A product of a hybrid, that is, biological and cultural milieu, Conforti tells his readers how he had to negotiate these two identities while squeezing more and more into the mainstream – represented by the sports he engaged in and his scholarly pursuits in higher education. At the time, ethnic heritage and the racial stereotypes associated with both Latin heritages mattered there.

This memoir is both a personal story and a detailed account of a major immigrant and industrial landmark in New England: Fall River, Massachusetts, once the industrial heart of the cotton cloth enterprises in the United States. *Another City Upon a Hill* evokes a particular time and a place, defined by rolling hills, granite mills, and rows of triple-deckers. Moreover, it gives us an engrossing narrative of his family’s story of three generations of Portuguese and Italians who had to find ways to survive in this ruthless industrial jungle where the captains of industry were intent on squeezing the most vulnerable.

Joseph A. Conforti is a distinguished Professor of American and New England Studies (Emeritus) at the University of Southern Maine. He is the author of five books, including *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* and the acclaimed *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-twentieth-Century*. A careful reading and analysis of the work under review might help us understand how he got here.

In the following pages, my aim is to analyze this memoir from three focal points of view. Firstly, the ways in which the Bento family can be seen as a representative case study of an Azorean/Portuguese family who settled in industrial New England. Unlike other Portuguese immigrants in California or Hawaii, those in Fall River or New England, in general, were historically subject to backbreaking labor, economic instability and exploitation, especially the Portuguese. From commercial fishing during the early-mid twentieth century and the death of the whaling days in the New England whaling centers of New Bedford and Nantucket to unstable textile mills closing down during the Depression era and other forced labor adaptations, the Portuguese in New England were some of the most vulnerable immigrants and the ones to prosper the least compared to other Portuguese immigrants who settled down in California and Hawaii. Of these three older patterns of settlement of Portuguese immigrants in the United States dating back to the nineteenth-century, the predominantly Azorean immigrants based in New England fared the worst compared to their fellow countrymen in the other two regions. These issues must be taken into account when reading about Conforti’s maternal grandparents in *Another City Upon a Hill*, especially when depicting them in their hand-to-mouth existence in industrial Fall River.

Another matter related to this issue is race and class and how Conforti is put off by their lifestyle and victimized by the racial stigma embodied in the “black Portagee” racial slurs often voiced at them and his own Portuguese ethnicity. Arguably, he shied away from these in an attempt at plunging into the wider American world offered by the mainstream.

Secondly, however, his ethnically-mixed heritage enabled him to distance himself from his Portuguese heritage (even if this memoir dwells mostly on it) to find a greater sense of belonging and enrapture in his extensive Italian family. These feelings are conveyed through the passages focusing on the intimacy and joy his Italian family members derived from their year-round family gatherings and their overall greater upward social mobility provided by ownership of property as opposed to his Portuguese grandparents. Even if the focus on his Italian heritage is shorter than his Portuguese one, the former leaves the reader with much stronger feelings of family warmth, companionship,

excitement, and joy when describing their meals and the drinking on the Fourth of July or even during Christmas. In contrast, passages focusing on the latter suggest feelings of bitterness, frustration, weaker family ties, and an overall attempt at distancing himself from his Portuguese roots. Surprisingly, these feelings are also expressed by his mother's discomfort with her roots and her focus on Americanization, which the author of this memoir has grasped during his upbringing.

Finally, this memoir narrates Conforti's personal saga or, perhaps, *bildungsroman*, and how he had to juggle both ethnic backgrounds within the context of having been reared in a working-class, immigrant background. Taking Richard Rodriguez's account in his autobiography, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982) into consideration—especially on how Rodriguez's life revolved around the private and public spheres represented, on the one hand, by the family and his immigrant background and, on the other hand, school—it is worth observing how Conforti's life story follows a similar pattern. In Conforti's memoir, it is represented by, on the one hand, his two ethnic families and his community in Fall River and, on the other hand, the Irish school he attended, the all-American sports he played (baseball, basketball and football), and, later on, higher education.

What did the world the Bento family left behind look like? Povoação, a small, peaceful village on the island of São Miguel was radically different from the locale they would settle down in Fall River, Massachusetts. In *The Portuguese-Americans* (1981), Leo Pap gives us useful background historical information on the world the Azoreans from the island of São Miguel departed from—and, for our purposes, the Bento family as a case in point—and the industrial jungle (cf. *The Jungle*, 1906, by Upton Sinclair) they would plunge into in New England. These Portuguese, he notes, did not begin to settle in Fall River in any appreciable numbers until about 1890, when they responded to the labor demand of a rapidly expanding cotton industry. The Fall River mills aimed direct recruiting efforts at the most populous Azorean island, São Miguel, in the eastern part of the archipelago. As a result, Fall River's Portuguese element assumed a predominantly São Miguelian or “Micaelense” character, as distinguishable from the western Azorean type as from the Madeiran or Continental in dialect, local traditions, and other traits. By 1920 the Portuguese constituted about one-fifth of the city's total population of 120,000, with Columbia Street (soon known as “Portuguese Street”) serving as their main thoroughfare (Pap, 1981, pp. 62–63).

Around 1900, Fall River was in the lead of cotton manufacturing centers in the United States (about eighty mills), overtaking New Bedford, Lowell, and other industrial sites. Pap (1981) writes that during this period, in the Fall River mills, “the Portuguese immigrants equaled the French-Canadians (c. 19 percent each)” and that, “By and large, the Portuguese (i.e., Azoreans and Cape-verdeans), together with Poles and Italians, were then holding the lowest-paid positions – below the average level of the French-Canadians and Irish, who had gotten there first” (p. 138). The Immigration Commission, notes Pap (1981), found that “the average weekly earnings of all foreign-born ‘races’ in all industries as of 1908-1909 were \$11.92 for males and \$7.90 for females; in the cotton-goods industry the average was lower, \$9.28 and \$7.93 – but for the foreign-born Portuguese in that industry it was still lower, \$8.05 and \$7.28” (p. 138).

In *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature* (2008a), I discuss a few literary works on the Portuguese presence in California, either by Anglo writers or Portuguese-American writers, and how the stereotypes associated with them differed from those fictional works containing Portuguese characters in New England and Hawaii writings. Broadly speaking, I attempted to compare and contrast racial stereotypes and those associating some of these Portuguese fictional representations with a propensity for engaging in violent behavior in a New England industrial setting (Edward McSorley's *The Young McDermott*, 1949) and sexual license (Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story “Drowne's Wooden Image” (1846), and Edith Wharton's “Beatrice Palmato” (1936), etc.), stories which still carried the legacy of New England puritanical fears of sexual temptation and tried, at the same time, to show the ways in which these writings often portrayed the Californian Portuguese in

similar ways, too, but also showing that they led more meaningful, and often happier lives than their New England counterparts. Briefly, the character of Maria Silva in Jack London's semi-autobiographical piece of writing, *Martin Eden* (1909) tells Martin Eden that her very greatest dream in life is to be the proud owner of

One milka ranch – good milka ranch. Plenty cow, plenty land, plenty grass. I like da have near San Le-an; my sister liva dere. I sella da milka in Oakland. I maka da plentee mon. Joe an' Nick no runna da cow. Dey go-a to school. Bimeby maka da good engineer, worka da railroad. Yes, I lika da milka ranch. (pp. 260–61)

Maria Silva's version of the American dream—like that of many Portuguese in California—was to own a dairy farm because this activity provided economic security while enabling them to preserve a familiar way of life as the one in the old country. Unlike Azoreans in Massachusetts often caught in industrial strife, the Portuguese in California enjoyed comparative wealth from the dairy industry. Alfred Lewis's (Alfredo Luís) novel, *Sixty Acres and a Barn* (2005), is immersed in the agrarian world of California's dairy industry, which was dominated by the Portuguese. This lucrative business is well-rendered in Anthony Barcellos' *Land of Milk and Money* (2012) and was previously dealt with by Katherine Vaz in *Saudade* (1994) and *Fado & Other Stories* (1997).

A pattern in some of the novels I discuss in *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature*, especially in McSorley's piece of writing, *The Young McDermott* (1949), which, like *Another City Upon a Hill*, centers on industrial New England settings. McSorley's novel suggests that, in the responses of the Portuguese to labor strikes and economic and sexual exploitation, their violent outbursts are, in a way, contextualized and justified by their social marginality. Portrayals of violence in works with a New England setting tend to be far more brutal than ones set in California, and this is due to an overall ambience of tension in the New England industrial setting as opposed to the more relaxed rural atmosphere in California. True, the Bento family come across as submissive, resilient, docile, and uncomplaining people. The patriarch in the family, the author's maternal grandfather, attempts to survive, initially, on a garbage collector's contract for four years, and, later on, provide for his entire family. This occurred when his wife, older daughter, and son immigrated to the United States after 1909, after his mother-in-law had passed away. He would later toil for all of them and for his younger daughter, Agnes, the author's mother (born in Massachusetts) for twenty-five years. The unappealing lives of the Bento family, stigmatized by race and class—with whom Joseph Conforti lived with for many years—how could they be more appealing than they actually were, we may ask, when taking into account my previous remarks? Leo Pap (1981) ends chapter nine, "Economic Conditions," asking a provocative question:

We may ask why the Portuguese immigrant experience (we are thinking of the earlier mass immigration, not the recent one) has been generally more favorable in California, in an economic and social-status sense, than it has been in the East. For one thing, as Eduardo de Carvalho pointed out long ago, the Portuguese in California became more prosperous because there they had more of a chance to do the kind of work for which their "aptitude" or background had fitted them, viz., agriculture; whereas most of those in the East had to adapt painfully to factory work, in an alien industrial setting. It is also true, we might add, that California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century still offered much more of the opportunities of a "frontier" society, a rapidly expanding economy, than did New England-New York region. (p. 154)

Like Conforti's Italian grandparents and father, the Portuguese, too, had better job opportunities elsewhere – but clearly not in industrial Fall River, as Pap (1981) writes, when wrapping this chapter up:

Perhaps we can say that in New England the Portuguese were drawn (very often through referral by relatives of friends) into “trap jobs,” viz., in the cotton mills and the like; there was little or no possibility of promotion on the basis of skills – let alone the possibility of renting or buying such capital equipment as cotton-mill machinery for independent operation. In California, being drawn into farm labor – or the tuna fisheries, for that matter – provided “step jobs,” at least in the sense that through thrift and application of skills one could gradually rise to economic independence. That, at least, seems part of the story. (p. 155)

In more recent times, such opportunities for unskilled Portuguese immigrants could be found in construction-related work, landscaping or as a cobbler, as had been the case with Charles Reis Felix's (1923–2017) father in *Through a Portagee Gate* (2004). This autobiography/biography recounts the lives of Charley and his father, whose strong desire to move beyond the Portuguese ethnic enclave of New Bedford, Massachusetts, is nevertheless saturated with feelings of nostalgia for the past in this ethnic community. In Part One, Felix, who was born in New Bedford but spent most of his adult life in Northern California as a teacher, also conveys his astonishment on learning how well Portuguese immigrants had prospered in California through agriculture and dairy farming, unlike his own childhood observations of Portuguese immigrant life in the industrially unstable cotton mills of New England. His father, like most of his fellow countrymen, led a frugal life in order to afford a substantial down payment on a house just three or four years after arriving in America. Part Two is a tribute to his father, Joe Felix, who immigrated to the United States in 1915. After a brief stay in Philadelphia, he settled in the North End immigrant section of New Bedford and made his living as a cobbler. He worked on average thirteen hours per day, charged less than his competitors, and had a mainly blue-collar clientele. In this sense, his father's saga was not radically different from that of Conforti's own father, a barber who owned his own barber shop, or even grandfather who also bought property in the United States.

When the patriarch Bento immigrated to Fall River in 1899, in Povoação, São Miguel, he left behind an agrarian way of life that was kept alive by small peasants intensively tilling small plots, on a volcanic archipelago, with relatively rudimentary farm tools. Anything than this—or so they believed—would clearly be much better for most of these unskilled, penniless, predominantly illiterate peasants, caught in the middle of the Atlantic, yearning to breathe free, as we read in Emma Lazarus (1849–87), of Portuguese Sephardic Jewish ancestry, in her poem, “The New Colossus,” on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty (Matias, 2008, pp. 15–18). Earlier Azorean immigrants in New England, mostly in Martha's Vineyard, Truro, and other locales on Cape Cod, or even Portsmouth, Rhode Island, had prospered as small farmers, “growing fruits and vegetables shortly before World War I on what had been considered barren wasteland” (Pap, 1981, p. 141). Some succeeded at growing strawberries near Falmouth and cranberries around Plymouth and Barnstable. Intent on holding on to the mode of life they had left behind, notes Pap (1981), and their persistence “in returning neglected soil to productivity gave rise to the saying, in parts of southeastern New England, that ‘a potato will not grow unless you speak to it in Portuguese’” (p. 141).

Upon his grandfather's (Jose/José) return to Fall River, he “found work with a man who held the contract to collect garbage in the city,” we read in Chapter Two, “Family Migrations,” and that “Azorean immigrants had come to dominate *this sordid line of work*,” which was only suitable for such resident citizens as the “black Portagee” (Conforti, 2013, p. 36; my emphasis). Jose worked there for four years. After returning to the Azores to bring his thirty-nine-year-old wife, Alexandrina, their

seventeen-year-old son, Manuel, and eleven-year-old daughter, Aunt May, to Fall River, Jose “would spend the next twenty-five years mired near the bottom rung of the textile mill hierarchy along with scores of other oft-despised Azoreans. He labored in the spool room, doling out yarn to machine operators and most likely nursing his disappointment with how his life had turned out” (Conforti, 2013, p. 37). Moreover, he was surrounded by hazardous situations such as the one where a twenty-four-year-old young Azorean man had been “strangled to death” and other casualties. This industrial nightmare is reminiscent of a similar one we encounter in the Chicago meat-packing industry, in Upton Sinclair’s, *The Jungle*, as noted earlier. Toiling like a slave, a mere cog in this textile inferno, “Little did he know that he would never own an inch of soil in America, a double wound for a proud man who had already been cheated out of his father’s land on St. Michael” (Conforti, 2013, p. 36).

We are reminded in the previous page that the author’s mother “came from a fair-skinned, blue-eyed, propertied family with some claim to social status in the town of Povoação on the island of St. Michael. But her immigrant family would live in a succession of Fall River triple-deckers and never achieve home ownership” (Conforti, 2013, p. 35). In my view, the patriarch in this family, Mr. Bento, was humbled by these economic conditions and humiliated by the reality that forced him to support his family with the few or only job Spindle City could offer him given his language-barrier and lack of skills or education. His wife, Alexandrina, owned property in Povoação, which supports my contention that Azoreans also regarded ownership of land and property as fundamental to provide a sense of pride, dignity, and economic safety or collateral for times of economic uncertainty. They wished to replicate this practice in their new adopted country, but the problem is that their lives were always conditioned by economic and labor instability and wage exploitation. Located at the very bottom of the social and labor pyramid in Fall River, upward mobility was simply a farce. Coming from a similar agrarian society as his Italian grandparents, whose adult life-purpose was, as we read in this book, to own a roof over their heads and/or a plot of land in Massachusetts, for Mr. Bento, the sting and bitterness could not be more painful.

In contrast, we can read between the lines the author’s pride in his Italian grandfather and father and their jobs as a hatter and a barber, respectively, especially through his choice of diction. As for his grandfather, we read, he “probably worked at a variety of jobs before he acquired *the skills of a hatter, which would be his calling* once he decided to put down roots in Fall River” (Conforti, 2013, p. 31; my emphasis). As for his father, we read, if “gender and birth order defined my father’s place in the family, *he earned the respect of his brothers and sisters because he was the first Conforti to start a business – a barbershop – and he did so in the teeth of the Depression with Fall River still insolvent*” (Conforti, 2013, p. 33; my emphasis). Words defining his grandfather’s and father’s trades as requiring job “skills,” the religious undertone in the phrase “his calling” to “earning the respect” of his siblings upon being the first capable of starting a business in times of adversity position these men as having achieved a higher plateau as opposed to the “sordid”-ness in his grandfather’s jobs and his “black”-ness as a “Portagee.”

We, as readers, cannot ignore the fact that his Italian “grandparents’ entry into the property-owning class” was possible, in part, through the assistance of his father, who had been “barbering full time for three years, and his earnings, however meagre, undoubtedly assisted” them into this class, a reference which is, without a doubt, glossed over as a major achievement, triumphantly. As for Jose Bento, we should not forget, he had three women to support on a meagre salary: his wife and two daughters, one older, May, who was referred to as a “slow-witted sister,” and a much younger one, Agnes, the author’s mother (Conforti, 2013, p. 49). May only reached the fifth grade, hardly learned how to write in English, and was “quickly dispatched to the mill, where she labored at low-skill tasks for six dollars a week. Eventually her full-time job became caring for her aged parents, while she began a lifelong dependency on [his] mother” (Conforti, 2013, p. 39). Manuel Bento, the author’s uncle, whom he never met, had married many years before his own mother and was living in Pawtucket. Unlike Conforti’s father, who had helped his parents financially, there is no reference in this memoir

to Manuel ever having contributed with any money towards the family budget as a single young man. His daughter, Lydia Bento, had been Agnes's maid of honor. "Sometime after the wedding," Agnes "learned that her niece Lydia and [his] father were seen walking arm in arm down Main Street in Fall River" and his "mother apparently assumed the worst; she often did so about [his] father"; presumably, this episode may have helped her make up her mind about becoming "permanently estranged from her brother" (Conforti, 2013, p. 49). These family financial details regarding their budgets suggest that Jose Bento's frustration derived from these economic realities – he was simply toiling and vegetating and trying to make ends meet every single day of his life in America. There was absolutely no American dream for him, nothing to look forward to but provide for his family's survival. He lived for decades in a straitjacket, experiencing a similar situation as the one narrated in the short story, "Under the Lion's Paw," by Hamlin Garland, in *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891). The economic exploitation of unskilled, immigrant workers in Spindle City coupled with his own family circumstances—of only one male figure with a low salary to provide for three women—his epitaph of "owner of nothing" was spelled outright as soon as his family joined him in America. As a case study, Jose Bento's story confirms the overall conditions of economic instability most Portuguese immigrants experienced in industrial New England.

As for his Italian grandparents after moving around from "tenement to tenement" and "after scrimping and saving for two decades [...] purchased a small bungalow on Beattie Street" but after

two decades of tenement life, the Conforti family would now be able to *live more like they believed Italians should*. My grandfather laid out extensive vegetable gardens. He cultivated grape arbors and set up a wine press in an outlying shed. My grandmother raised chickens in addition to her brood of children. Salvatore and Anna acquired more land, purchasing an acre in an undeveloped section at Fall River's East End, about a half mile from their new home. (Conforti, 2013, p. 34; my emphasis)

One wonders if the Bento family, too, wouldn't have enjoyed living like the Portuguese believed they should? Having immigrated from an agrarian society, where they or their own parents (the author's great-grandparents) owned land and, like the Italians at the time, they, too, would have enjoyed having similar conditions as the Conforti family, such as owning a wine press to make wine (as most older Portuguese immigrants have been doing for decades in the Portuguese diaspora in the United States), a backyard with a few vines and a barbecue area. These are realities I have witnessed, for example, in the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey, where I lived for about two decades, and elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic States.

This Italian family was better-off economically because grandfather Conforti was a successful hatter, and his older son, Orlando (shortened to Ollie or "Primo," the author's father), who was a successful barber that helped towards the down payment on their house. Knowing that his "grandparents had eight more children over the next twenty years – three boys and five girls," and that siblings' earnings helped with the family budget, it is quite evident that this family's economic and family conditions were not like those of the Bento family (Conforti, 2013, p. 33). When Joseph Conforti's parents purchased their own house on Way Street, most of the dishing-out came from his mother, aunt, and some money his mother inherited from the sale of property in the Azores: "I had known that my mother and Titia came up with most of the down payment for the property. By 1954 they had finally settled my grandmother's estate in the Azores, selling her house and land. When Titia contributed her half of the \$2,000 in proceeds to purchase 83 Way Street, she punched the ticket that gave her permanent admission to our household, joined at the hip with my mother" (Conforti, 2013, p. 78). These funds came, on the one hand, from their frugality and, on the other hand, from the money sent from the Old World, a clear sign that their last ties with the Azores had been severed.

With no place to return to or stay at in the Old World, America now definitively became their home. Unfortunately, this memoir does not clarify whether the Confortis had owned land in Italy or whether they had sold it.

What readers are told is that there were no other funds coming out of Italian pockets for the down payment other than those from his father, who was also responsible for keeping up with the monthly mortgage payments: “After all, I now know, he contributed only \$1,000 toward the purchase of the house, though he did become responsible for the \$24 monthly payment on the ten-year mortgage” (Conforti, 2013, p. 79). He was, nonetheless, a hardworking man who worked for six decades and only took about two weeks of vacation time in August of 1939 to visit his “revered patron,” Father Sullivan, in Tucson, Arizona. During his first years as an independent barber, he “quickly became a successful, respected small businessman in downtown Fall River” (Conforti, 2013, pp. 46, 45). Perhaps out of a “pique of jealousy and mistrust,” the Bento family, as seen through the eyes of the author, regarded his father as having a few “vices,” which, to Conforti, were “mostly small change: he smoked too much; he occasionally drank too much at family gatherings; he was a petty gambler; he kept my mother in the dark about his finances; he made her ask, sometimes plead, for money to buy things for her kids [...] and he often spent as much time on Beattie Street as on Bowler” (Conforti, 2013, p. 50). Moreover, he was often moody with his wife or, at least, went about one year without the couple speaking to each other. As if there were an on-going competition between both families, Ollie preferred to spend most of his free time with his Italian family and his wife resented this. Furthermore, the author of this memoir did not recall his “father ever having a conversation with Titia. He never said much more to her than ‘Merry Christmas’ and ‘Happy New Year’” (Conforti, 2013, p. 78).

For his mother, who was keen on upward mobility and Americanization both for herself and her children, she felt as if in purchasing this house she had “lowered” herself, hence falling short in such a pursuit. Moreover, she seemed as if she was “disheartened by her marriage” and she “sought solace in her sister and overinvested in the lives of her kids. The move to 83 Way Street must have added to her disappointment with how her life had unspooled. She found herself living next to earthy, even peasant-like Italians, in a shoddily built handyman special with perennial plumbing problems and a yard that required years of labor to tidy up” (Conforti, 2013, p. 85). Unlike her husband, who cherished his Italian roots, she had a “conflicted ethnic identity and longing for assimilation” (Conforti, 2013, p. 51). Her life at this house, living close to other Italians, the author’s mother “found herself caught in the vortex of an earthy, expressive, largely working-class Italian family” and unlike his Portuguese uncles, “who blended seamlessly into the family, she resisted the Conforti’s embrace throughout her life and tried to shield us from their influence. They resembled the insufficiently scrubbed, often darker Azoreans from whom she remained aloof, even as she cherished her Portuguese heritage and identity” (Conforti, 2013, p. 52.)

Possibly one of the foremost reasons for Conforti to pull away from his Portuguese ethnic roots—even if he had to live with them in his household due to his mother’s influence—was due to racial issues. He disliked being told by one of his teachers, an Irish nun, when she was lecturing on Portugal at the Sacred Heart School that Conforti attended, that “Most of the Portuguese in Fall River have Negro blood” (Conforti, 2013, p. 89). He could not understand why if his own grandparents and mother had “light skin and blue eyes” (Conforti, 2013, p. 38). This reference to the Fall River Portuguese being called “darkies” was, in part, due to the work of Donald R. Taft, a name or allusion featuring in *Another City Upon a Hill*, especially on page twenty-two.

In “The Rhetoric of Eugenics and the Portuguese in New England: A Case Study,” when discussing the Ku Klux Klan’s attack on the Portuguese church in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1923, I have shown that this anti-Catholic mindset was gaining momentum throughout the nineteenth-century and culminating, in a full-blown manner, during the Progressive era. I analyze why the Portuguese communities in New England were repulsed by the study *Two Portuguese Communities in New*

England (1923), written by the criminologist and sociologist of the University of Illinois, Donald R. Taft. The strong reaction by the Portuguese to this study is intriguing for a number of reasons. First, it suggests that the Portuguese in New England were mindful of what the dominant culture was saying or writing about them. And, second, because they had the courage to get together as a group to demonstrate and use the press to express their grievances. This essay argues that Taft's study supports the exclusionary rhetoric of Progressive politics of the 1920s, which culminated in the immigration acts of 1917–1924 that all but closed America's doors to Southern Europeans. Moreover, it voices America's paranoia about the boundaries of whiteness. More specifically, this article shows that Taft taps from the rhetoric of eugenics, which was deeply ingrained in Anglo-American thought. In addition, Taft's application of eugenics discourses to the Portuguese supported Progressive politics by formulating an intellectual, scientific basis for this rhetoric of exclusion.

Briefly, the first chapter in Taft's study proposes to analyze the high infant mortality rate of the Portuguese children in the urban community of Fall River, Massachusetts, and in the rural community of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, places where thousands of Portuguese immigrants settled in the nineteenth century. While the former ethnic enclave included immigrants mostly from the island of São Miguel, the latter was composed of immigrants from Faial, who were mostly of Flemish extraction. While offering explanations for the high infant mortality rates in both communities in chapters three and five, Taft evinces a particular bias towards the Fall River community. In his view, the high infant mortality rate there was due to the inability of the Portuguese mothers to communicate in English, their illiteracy and ignorance (chapters three and five), and their darker complexion and alleged African blood (chapters two and seven). In a country such as the United States where the one-drop rule disqualified immediate access to white privileges, racial allegations directed toward these immigrants are worth considering in the light of racial discourse in America.

Possibly one of the most powerful rhetorical strategies employed by eugenicists in the early twentieth-century was to portray prospective immigrants hailing from Southern European countries as parasitic carriers of tainted germ plasm that threatened the purity of white Americans. It was believed that this contamination would weaken the fitness of Americans of Anglo stock. Like the Irish before them, these Southern Europeans had to earn their whiteness, and the Portuguese were no exception since the image of the "black Portygee" was widely present in a few narratives featuring the Portuguese, an issue I focus on in *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature*. This new wave of immigrants, notes Marouf A. Hasian, Jr. (1996), were said to be "permanent parasites on the American body politic, forever tainted by their blood and incapable of having their condition ameliorated" (p. 93). Taft (1969) also viewed the Fall River Portuguese as superstitious and ignorant: "We may say," he argues, "that Portuguese children die because of ignorance; Portuguese adults are exploited because of ignorance; their women continue their lives of toil and endless child-bearing because of their ignorance; their children are backward in school through ignorance; and very many of the other tragedies of their lives are the product of ignorance" (p. 339). These were, in essence, the scholarly and scientific arguments that the Ku Klux Klan was looking for to exclude, terrorize, and denigrate the Catholic Southern Europeans. One wonders where the progeny of some of these mothers Taft was referring to and their "ignorance"—something their children would inherit, these nativists believed, at the time—can be actually seen in, at least two prominent natives of Fall River of whom I am aware, Joseph Conforti and Thomas J. Braga (1943–). The latter was a Professor of French at SUNY-Plattsburgh and a Portuguese-American poet.

And for Joseph Conforti, this racial epiphany may have left him, as a young man, confused about his dual ethnic composition and identity to the point of eschewing both, especially his Portuguese one, even if he had to live in its midst much longer at home with his mother and Aunt May. Not wanting to delve much into his forebears' past, the author of this memoir confesses that he "grew up with only a patchy knowledge of [his] grandparents' ordeals" nor did he "fully comprehend [his] own parents'

reverence for their parents” (Conforti, 2013, p. 30). Bearing the weight of racial stigma, he opts for squeezing into the mainstream, first, through sports, and then through education:

Even after I became a professional historian of New England, I remained disengaged from my family’s story – not to mention the larger drama of the mass immigration that transformed the region. I chose to specialize on early New England. Only much later did I realize that this decision partly represented a way of distancing myself from my family history, which always seemed inconsequential to the official pageant of America’s past. Some mills grind slowly. I now see my choice as a denial of my roots – an attempt by an outsider from gritty Fall River to stride toward becoming something of an insider. (Conforti, 2013, p. 30)

It was only much later, in the more recent decades after the emergence of ethnicity, post-colonial, and multiculturalism studies that he started to realize what he had missed out on such a choice or social pressure to assimilate. Both sides of his family had been the living history of Fall River in the 1950s:

My Italian and Portuguese grandparents and their offspring helped transform the homeland of Pilgrims, Puritans, and Yankees. In 1950, 49.5 percent of Massachusetts’ population, twice the national average, consisted of immigrants and their children. Only nearby Rhode Island had a slightly higher average. I would only discover this fact decades later. Had I possessed such knowledge earlier, it might have eased my feelings of being an outsider and perhaps altered some decisions that shaped the trajectory of my life. (Conforti, 2013, p. 52)

His parents, too, assisted him and his siblings in dropping their “ethnic footprint” (Dearborn, 1989, p. 105) by enrolling them at the Sacred Heart School, instead of the Portuguese Catholic School, Espírito Santo, in the Flint, because they believed that in “choosing the distant Sacred Heart School and the neighboring paper route, my parents wanted us to have sustained contact with the ‘respectable,’ assimilated, middle-class Irish” (Conforti, 2013, p. 88). The Irish, by then, had gained their whiteness, to paraphrase Noel Ignatiev. Ironically, the school his parents had declined as unsuitable would turn out to be the one where he “would begin [his] teaching career” and meet his future wife, Sister Josetta, a teacher and “nun who was married to Christ,” but whose birth name was Dorothy Morelli (Conforti, 2013, pp. 88, 159, 161).

In an e-mail, Joseph Conforti has acknowledged that marrying an American woman of Italian descent actually clarified for him which side of his ethnicity he identified with the most. While living *in loco* in the midst of Azorean/Portuguese culture for a longer period of his life as a child and young man, it should be quite clear by now that, as he notes, his “youthful identity was predominately Portuguese. But I was also a member of my father’s large, extended, and spirited Italian family” (Conforti, 2013, pp. 68–69). In the aforementioned e-mail, he outlines his Portuguese side, writing that, “My immigrant aunt lived with us; we ate more Portuguese than Italian food; we went to Portuguese church; I played for its athletic teams, etc. My father worked long hours including on Saturday. He spent a lot of time with his relatives and without us. We heard Portuguese constantly.” But, he further adds, “It wasn’t until I married my Italian wife and had a child that I began to think of myself as more Italian than Portuguese” (Conforti, 2018). In a sense, I concur with Christian Aguiar (2015) when he compared this memoir to Charles Reis Felix’s *Through a Portagee Gate*, alluded to earlier, when arguing that “Conforti’s ethnically-mixed heritage – his mother is Azorean and his father Sicilian – positions him in such a way that he is of the Luso-American community without necessarily being an insider” (pp. 37–38).

In Conforti’s memoir, he expresses his fondness for his mother and “Aunt May, who would live the rest of her days in our family, assisted my mother with the care of her children and contributed a

measly disability check from the city to the household. A simple, devout, hardworking immigrant, aunt May gave her life to us as if we were her own children. For good and for ill, we grew up with two mothers” (Conforti, 2013, p. 51). Many years later, however, already settled down and teaching in Maine, his mother “would be on her deathbed barely conscious from the Alzheimer’s disease that ruled the last decade of her life. I just could not pull myself away from Maine, drive for three hours to Fall River, and say a final goodbye [...] I made excuses. I was too busy. It was the end of the semester. I was writing a book. These were evasions. Like some of my Follow Through kids, affect had seemingly abandoned me” (Conforti, 2013, p. 183). When his aunt had a “second massive stroke in the fall of 1976” and it “snuffed out what remained of Titia’s life,” Conforti writes that he “regretfully [...] didn’t attend her funeral” due to his recent part-time teaching appointment at Rhode Island College and that he “feared [he] would jeopardize [his] temporary position and future prospects by canceling classes” and thinks that “Titia would have understood, or at least accepted, [his] calculated, if not twisted, priorities” (Conforti, 2013, p. 187). Without any attempt at being judgmental, one may conclude that his ethnic allegiance with his Portuguese side had practically dissolved during these milestones in the lives of the two women who were always there for him and his siblings, when he himself has acknowledged, in the passage above, his love and endearment for both. In contrast, he was by his father when he was on his deathbed. The passage excerpted below, however, underscores his coming to terms with his feelings of guilt regarding his alienation from his mother:

Several years after my mother’s death a tidal wave of guilt washed over me: for not visiting her more often at Catholic Memorial Home; for feeling no compulsion to say one last goodbye; and for resenting the emotional dependencies she cultivated. I wrote her a long love letter. She had unfailingly cared for us and cooked wonderful meals. She stretched the family budget. She worked to pay for our Catholic education and pushed us to fulfill the respectable social aspiration that she and Titia imposed on themselves. In our jobs and our family lives we all turned out successfully. And yet, I am a historian and sadly I cannot pin down precisely the year my mother passed away.

My father died in January of 1993, four months short of his ninetieth birthday. Over the decades after we had all left home and grandchildren kept arriving, he increasingly mellowed. On his deathbed, he occasionally cracked open his eyes. I kissed him on his cheek and broke down in tears. I cried halfway home to Maine. (Conforti, 2013, pp. 183–184)

His mother and his aunt often spoke to each other in Portuguese while he and his siblings often listened to the sounds of their closed São Miguel accent of Azorean Portuguese. She took pride in keeping her house clean and in order as well as making sure her children looked clean and well groomed. Of the very few instances in which this memoir refers to his mother’s kitchen and the meals she made, Conforti (2013) notes that “Beyond the weekly menu there were special occasions such as Easter, when my mother made Portuguese sweet bread that was moist and tastier than the Moonlight Bakery’s” (p. 68). As I have noted elsewhere when writing about food as a means for ethnic identity and cultural preservation, baking sweet bread or *bolo da Páscoa* is depicted as a communal ritual (Provincetown, Massachusetts) in a poem by Frank Gaspar, “Acts,” in his collection, *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death* (1994). Briefly, in the poem “Acts,” baking sweet bread is a community ritual that traditionally takes place the few days before Easter Sunday. In this poem, Gaspar shows how sweet bread and the ritual associated with baking it during Lent reinforces the bond between specific foodstuffs and religion in Portuguese and Portuguese American culture. Worth noting—and interestingly—is that this memoir ends with an episode where the author and his wife, many years later, returned to Fall River, on a mid-July hot day, to visit a Lizzie Borden exhibit and could not return to Maine without taking “two freshly baked round loaves” of sweet bread with them. They asked a

young girl at the Portuguese bakery “using its Portuguese name” and also bought “two small rolls to satisfy [their] sudden cravings” and, Conforti (2013) writes, “As soon as we returned to the car, we began devouring the rolls. Savoring the taste of the Fall River to which I belonged and that Dorothy had come to know, we made our way to the interstate. We headed toward Maine, to the wonderful bayside city where I have lived for many years – but true north is not the direction of home” (p. 197).

This memoir comes full circle in the sense that its author, caught in a web of nostalgia, reliving a sense of place from his youth in this Portuguese ethnic enclave in Fall River, is absorbing and inhaling the “bread’s sweet aroma” (Conforti, 2013, p. 197). After spending decades of his life studying and teaching, now living in an America playing a different ethnic tune, and eventually having sorted out his twisted, contradictory impulses, it is as if he has finally understood the psychological brutality America has imposed on its immigrants and their descendants with its discourse on race. Or, as Toni Morrison would have aptly put it, “playing in the dark,” a phrase, whose cultural and literary implications she diagnoses in her study *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. The “black Portagee” he often heard or the racial slur of “you f---ing pork chop,” attributed to the Portuguese immigrants, was an epithet I often heard as a young boy in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey. The stigma and burden of such racist stereotypes do not kill or maim you (an echo of Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*, published in 1987, when Sethe refers to black women slaves having been raped), but they certainly leave psychological wounds. The message is that one should not be proud of his or her origins or ethnicity and that one should start using a different race and cultural make-up, so to speak, and forget one’s origins and be ashamed of cherishing them. As with Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl in Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), her life would be much better if she looked like an Anglo. Fortunately, the United States of America now plays a different tune. American writers of Portuguese descent such as Katherine Vaz, Frank Gaspar, Thomas Braga, Julian Silva, Charles Reis Felix, etc. do not shy away from or are ashamed of their ancestry or perceive it as an encumbrance as John Dos Passos (1896-1970), one-fourth Portuguese from Madeira, did when he was in the prime of his writing career: an America where one’s ethnic background was an encumbrance and assimilation and depersonalization were, instead, desirable.

In this memoir, the “sweet aroma” of the sweet bread can be compared to that mythical moment, the epiphany Richard Rodriguez in *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982) tells us about when, on a particular day when he was at the reading room in the British Museum, feeling lonely while working there, days on end, on his doctoral dissertation on Shakespeare, he heard “some Spanish academics whispering back and forth to each other, and their sounds seemed ghostly voices recalling my life. Yearning became preoccupation then. Boyhood memories beckoned, flooded my mind” and right away, he learned there that he “needed to learn how far I had moved from my past – to determine how fast I would be able to recover something of it once again” (p. 71). It is impossible to read this memoir without reflecting on the similarities and differences between *Another City Upon the Hill* and *Hunger for Memory*, especially Rodriguez’s discussion of the scholarship boy; both narratives tapping from the stigma of both men coming from an immigrant/working-class background; the racial slurs because of possessing a “darker” Chicano complexion or being told in school that most Portuguese in Fall River are “negroid”; the tensions between Catholicism and Protestantism in both their upbringings and education; both pulling away from their ancestral Chicano/ Mexican/Spanish or Azorean/Portuguese cultures and language, etc. The list could go on and on. Uncomfortable with their own hybridity and assimilation of all-American WASP values at school, in both stories, the time came when both scholars felt the need, like Rodriguez, to figure out how America’s rhetoric of assimilation (prompted by the bogey-man of not being “lily-white” as his Anglo classmates in Graduate School) to start paying attention to both the meaning of his success as a student and, as he realized, its consequent price: the loss. For Conforti, it seems as if he was confronted with this ethnic

loss when he suffered “panic attacks after resigning his first job as a professor at Rhode Island College for a new position at a state university in Maine, Conforti consulted a psychiatrist” (Moniz, 2018). Asked about what had happened on his first day of school, Conforti admits having cried and clutched his mother. His fear and aversion of taking risks and change, which remained with him until adulthood, had been inherited from his mother and aunt. While reflecting on that pivotal day when he had to let go of his mother to attend his first day of classes, it brought him all the way back to his life as an ethnically mixed young boy who was reared in an immigrant, hybrid, multi-ethnic environment. The germ for this memoir comes from this pivotal moment when he realized that he had left Fall River a long time ago, but that the city had not left him (Conforti, 2013, p. 6). *Another City Upon A Hill* revisits his ethnic roots while paying homage to an ethnic past.

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Storying the “I” of Community, or How the Community is Shaped by Stories in José Francisco Costa’s Mar e tudo

Carmen Ramos Villar

Abstract

This essay will first analyse *Mar e tudo* (1998) by José Francisco Costa as an American short story cycle that shapes the Azorean American community for the reader. Analysing *Mar e tudo* as an American short story cycle, as this essay concludes, uncovers how the collection contributes to the specificity of the Azorean American experience, and also forms part of a wider project of understanding the U.S. as a nation made up by individual ethnic stories which contribute to a larger collective.

Keywords

Portuguese Americans in literature, Emigration and immigration in literature, Friends and associates, Family, Azores, United States

Resumo

Este ensaio analisará primeiro *Mar e tudo* (1998) de José Francisco Costa como um ciclo de contos americano que molda a comunidade açoriana americana para o leitor. Analisando *Mar e tudo* como um ciclo de contos americano, como este ensaio conclui, descortina como a coleção de contos contribui para a especificidade da experiência açoriana americana, e também faz parte de um projeto mais amplo de compreensão dos EUA como uma nação composta por histórias étnicas individuais que se combinam.

Palavras-chave

Luso-americanos na literatura, Emigração e imigração na literatura, Amigos e associados, Família, Açores, Estados Unidos

Before making his case for the existence of an American short story cycle, James Nagel (2001) provides a useful definition of how short stories can both stand alone and combine to create a collective work: “[T]wo ideas become clear in the concept of a cycle: that each contributing unit of the work be an independent narrative episode, and that there be some principle of unification that gives structure, movement, and thematic development to the whole” (p. 19). He also observes the following:

a [short story] cycle is less unified than a novel but has much greater coherence and thematic integrity than a mere collection of interrelated stories. It can focus on the development of a single character, but it is more likely to involve scenes devoted to a series of characters that interact with each other throughout the episodes, so that the major character of our story may function in the background of another. In the history of the genre, the most persistent continuity in the form has been in setting, so that all shorter works constituting a cycle occur in some general location, with prominent landmarks recurring throughout, tying the events to an underlying sense of place. (2001, p. 17)

For Nagel, the American short story cycle includes the examination of ethnicity and of the drama of emigration. He argues that the American short story cycle centers on the drama of the immigrant experience, commenting that the “American experience is, after all, the process of making one of many” (2001, p. 258). To analyse José Francisco Costa’s *Mar e tudo* (1998) as an American short story cycle might not be immediately obvious, particularly when the stories are written in Portuguese and, at first sight, might not appear to be directed at an American audience. However, as Francisco Cota Fagundes (2003) points out, *Mar e tudo* has a certain unity at the structural and thematic level:

[a] análise sequencial e independente de cada um dos nove contos de *Mar e tudo* não pressupõe, de modo algum, que esta coletânea não seria possível de ser lida como uma sequência integrada. Tornar-se-á óbvio que vários padrões estruturais, temáticos e imagísticos, entre outros, se repetem, com variações, ao longo do volume. (p. 7)

Onésimo Teotónio Almeida (1999) also points to *Mar e tudo* being a long poem of linked stories. At the basic structural level, *Mar e tudo* is composed of 9 stories, referencing the number of islands that compose the Azorean archipelago. Each of the stories is preceded by a little poem that frames the reading of the story itself. As Fagundes (2003) notes, the nine poems function both as epigraphs to the stories and as a preliminary text that guides the interpretation of the story that follows, also suggesting that what looks like nine separate poems are, in fact, the verses of the same poem (pp. 2–3). The poems also provide a multi-layered intertextual reference to aspects of the Azorean cultural and literary landscape that works in many levels.¹ For instance, the poem that precedes the second

¹ *Mar e tudo* contains further intertextual references. For instance, in the first story, the estrangement felt after emigrating that concludes the memory of being escorted back to the bus at the end of the school day because a teacher “percebeu que não éramos ainda deste mundo” (19-20) as well as recalling the biblical reference, it is also a nod to João de Melo’s novel *O Meu mundo não é deste reino* (1983), where the inhabitants of an Azorean village struggle to make sense of how their lives change after a plane crashes in the village. Also in this first story, the child’s goodbye to his dog, Bocanegra, echoes Daniel de Sá’s *Ilha grande fechada* (1992), which describes how the main character kills his beloved dog on the eve of emigrating as a first step taken to sever the attachment to the island. Fagundes also states that the dog’s name, Bocanegra, is also the name of a fish found in the Azores, becoming another instance in which *Mar e tudo* explores the islander’s relationship to the sea (10). Fagundes also points further intertextual references to Jorge de Sena in the third story (see p.15 and 17), perhaps reflecting Costa’s interest in Sena (his doctorate examined this author), to Onésimo

story, “sapateia teia teia / com fios entelçados / no olhar” (Costa, 1998, p. 11) is a multi-layered intertextual reference to the *Sapateia* dance of the Azores, to a collection of poetry by Vitorino Nemésio (1976) called *Sapatéia açoriana, andamento holandês e outros poemas*,² and to a short story collection called *(Sapa)teia Americana* that examines the life of the Azorean emigrants in the US, written by Onésimo Teotónio Almeida (1983). On a narrative level, the poem alerts the reader to the presence of the islands’ cultural parameters in the reality that the emigrant inhabits. These multi-layered intertextual references highlight one of the themes in the story: how imagination aids the creative act.

This essay will show how the individual short stories that compose *Mar e tudo* must be comprehended as a whole. To do so, the essay will group together the stories into sections that examine specific thematic or structural elements. The first section is composed of the second story, “Nome próprio,” the seventh story, “Fala comum,” and the third story, “Terra de longe,” and will analyse how the creative act is a structural link in many of the stories. The second section is composed of the first story, “School bus,” the fourth and fifth stories, “Segundo *shift*,” and “Fio do tempo,” respectively, and the ninth story, “*Enquanto a ilha for...*,” and will examine the strategic placement of the stories in *Mar e tudo*. The final section is composed of the fourth story once more, the sixth story, “À nossa!,” and the eighth story, “Suor frio,” and analyses the importance of friends and family as a thematic link in the collection. The essay concludes that the depiction of the Azorean American community in *Mar e tudo* forms part of the wider project of the US as a nation shaped by many emigrant experiences. In so doing, the essay will examine how a portrait of the Azorean American community evolves through the exploration of specific thematic and structural landmarks, making *Mar e tudo* an example of an American short story cycle.

The Creative Act

As was commented above, the creative act is a structural link in many of the stories in *Mar e tudo*, and this is particularly seen in the self-reflexivity of the writer-narrator present in the three stories that will be examined in this section. In the first of these, “Nome próprio,” the writer-narrator is preoccupied with how to move beyond the limitations imposed by the words on the page, and also by memory. For him, the task is not only in bringing a story to life with words, but also how to communicate feelings. It is also a story about how memory interrupts the flow of life.

The setting for this story is the interview for admission into an English for foreign speakers class. The plot of the story is simple: along the course of the interview, the writer-narrator learns about his new pupil Glória’s life, as she explains why she wishes to learn English. As the writer-narrator listens to Glória, he goes off into reveries. The island of origins emerges as a link between the two characters; the writer-narrator attempts to write Glória’s story by re-inscribing her within his own memory of the island environment. In so doing, the writer-narrator anchors Glória into the island environment:

Eu gostaria de pintar-te com uns óleos ainda mais cor de terra. Saia rodada pelo joelho. Andar ajeitado às tamanhas feitas, à medida do pé, por Ti Chico da Farinha. Deixa colocar-te no colo a toalha de bordar, e sentar-te à soleira da porta, na aldeia a que pertences. [...] Outras desejaram a tua sorte. E um sorriso estrangeiro tomou conta do teu destino. Eu também parti. Não deste pela minha ausência porque fui sempre embarcado. Cresci desconhecido. Para sempre fiquei com esta dor de alma de saber que, lado a lado, caminhávamos desencontrados.

Teotónio Almeida in the fifth story (26), to Vitorino Nemésio and João de Melo in the sixth story (30), to Fernando Pessoa in the eighth story (37-38), and to Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen in the last story (38).

² Vitorino Nemésio was the main literary figure in promoting açorianidade, which led to a cultural movement that saw Azorean literature and culture as being distinct from Portuguese literature.

Deixa-me pintar-te com as cores do chão de novelões, serradura e ramos de criptoméria, sinais da última festa que te aliviou o luto.... (Costa, 1998, p. 26)

By re-starting the narration of her life and interrupting the writer-narrator's reveries, Glória imposes her story, her reality. This establishes a narrative tension between the story told and the story imagined, presenting a to-ing and fro-ing between characters that is almost like a dance, recalling the references to the *Sapateia* dance of the poem that frames this story.

The seventh story, "Fala comum," also has a writer-narrator who struggles to put into words the story he is listening to. This time, the writer-narrator cannot hear the words of this story until the voice finally addresses him directly: "[n]ão sabes como iniciar esta estória, não?" (73). A conversation is then established in which the voice speaks about his family in the Azores so as to encourage the creative act of writing. When the writer-narrator realises that he is speaking with his grandfather, the grandfather states: "Debaixo da terra, sou a voz de muitas bocas em adeus constante. A fala comum dos teus mortos" (77). In what could be perceived as a structural mirror to "Nome próprio," the conversation in this story establishes a connection with the memory of the island past and unleashes the creative act of writing. The title of this seventh story, "Fala comum," echoed in the way the grandfather describes himself as one voice amongst many voices in the quote above, speaks of a collective project, or experience. This breaks the writer's block to create a self-reflexive project where the writer-narrator challenges the reader to join in:

ao viadante que acabou de arribar a este abrigo cerzido de meias falas se esclarece que não se lava a mal as duas possíveis atitudes que poderá tomar: ficar à porta da narrativa ou sentar-se na esteira a distribuir nacos do seu próprio pão feito palavra. Tudo lhe parecerá fácil se não quiser entrar. Ficarà estrangeiro, como os soldados-de-lisboa que, por uma questão de falta de ouvido, nunca acertaram com o sotaque dos homens-bons da minha terra. Estrangeiro, que não peregrino. E tire daí as ilações que lhe aprouver. Não se esqueça, porém, que está fora do seu próprio tempo e espaço. Pelo contrário, se escolher o nosso chão, será um dos santos nesta comunhão de errantes. Peregrinos solidários.... (Costa, 1998, p. 74)

The choice presented to the reader highlights the power of the written word to entertain, on the one hand, or, on the other, to empathize and be sensitive in understanding beyond what is stated in words. Participating in the act of constructing a story implies a communal dimension which, as Fagundes (2003) comments, "aponta para a solidariedade entre o escritor e sua fonte de inspiração, e para a solidariedade entre 'ele' e os 'eus' que o habitam" (p. 36). I would add that the reader is also involved in the story's construction, as part of the ultimate communal project; the story, a flight of imagination, is understood only if the reader is able to commune with the islanders. In so doing, the acts of reading and writing create a community of understanding so that the struggle of putting words onto paper that the writer-narrators face in both stories becomes part of accepting that some things can only be intuitively understood. The act of writing thus is exposed as requiring the use of appropriate language, as Glória explains in the second story when she chastises the writer-narrator for suggesting that, one day, she will be able to tell her story in English: "A vida só se conta a Deus e na nossa língua..." (Costa, 1998, p. 26). It is not that English is inadequate as a language, but that some things can only be understood and appreciated by those who move beyond the limitations of words towards finding empathy, and this empathy results in moving beyond a common language towards achieving a common and shared understanding. As Fagundes (2003) comments, Glória

se "recusa" a permanecer integrada no subjectivismo do seu criador e vem a ocupar o palco da realidade emigrante. Este choque entre a subjectividade poética e a realidade actual constitui

uma auto-reflexiva dramatização do duplo compromisso do narrador deste conto e do autor de *Mar e tudo*: dum lado o apelo à realidade exterior, da experiência, que desperta o seu empenho e o seu testemunho, do outro, o apelo ao poético, do devaneio lírico, da fuga à ficção transcritiva e à realidade permanente. (p. 14)

The act of writing, of learning how to write, of communicating, then, is an ongoing and incomplete process of finding meaning, underscoring the difficulty of writing something down so that it can be contained and examined. For the writing act to be successful, it requires a communal understanding of the shared experience of the Azorean American community that moves beyond the limits of language.

The placement of “Terra de longe,” the third story in *Mar e tudo*, makes sense if one considers how the second story, “Nome próprio,” has prepared the reader to transcend the physical limitations of words on the page. The third story consists of three smaller and intercalated stories: the story of an old man who emigrated, Tiago’s story, and the story that Tiago tells. In the first of these intercalated stories, the self-reflexive author-narrator speaks directly to the reader about an old man who emigrated, enticing the reader to suspend reality and see a narrative in the act of constructing itself. Once more, the reader is given an active role in the construction of the story:

Chegados que somos até este ponto, poderá o leitor imaginar o resto de vida que falta ao nosso amigo? Claro que sim. Uma vez que tal personagem é imaginado, recrie-se o leitor num sonho, e imagine-se menino nos joelhos do seu avô. Ou decida-se pela poesia, se o coração para tanto lhe der. Façamos roda no chão da nossa herança. Venha daí, que o velhinho, depois que atravessou o mar, tem uma ilha cheia de pequeninas histórias para contar. Ele não é louco, não. O leitor é que, sem o saber, é poeta!!! Não é sua a seguinte estória? Nunca a imaginou, contada ou vivida? Deveras? (Costa, 1998, p. 34)

The idea of the island as a place containing many stories raises the possibility of a never-ending connection of lives, and of a community made up of stories. Here, emigration enables further stories to be told, remembered, and to emerge. However, in all this, the act of emigrating is also presented as a reluctant journey:

Não queríamos fugir. Embarcávamos. O lado de lá do oceano chamava, latia como fêmea ciosa. É verdade que a terra, às vezes, metia medo. E o mar vomitava-se, medonho. A gente, em novelos, ficava ainda mais rente ao chão. Mas quando se partia, chorava-se. E ríamos por mor do choro. Vinham os velhos. E diziam que era pior que a morte a despedida em vida. (Costa, 1998, p. 35)

This “despedida em vida” is a thematic echo to the poem that frames the first story, “para quê o adeus /se partir é / ficar para sempre?” (Costa, 1998, p. 11), suggesting the emigrant metaphorically dies for those remaining in the island, and that, for the emigrant, the island becomes the memory of another life that is left behind. This perceived death is also a rebirth, if the writer-narrator’s request to the old man, and perhaps the reader, is heeded: “leva esta estória a quantos repousam nas margens deste rio de palavras” (Costa, 1998, p. 36). In so doing, the emigrant enters a community which constructs itself anew by the stories to be heard, read, constructed, told, and so on, which in turn shapes a shared understanding of the Azorean American community for the reader.

In “Terra de longe,” the request to carry on telling stories acts as a structural transition to the other intercalated stories, showing how the interconnection of stories within other stories that are waiting to be told can be done; here, the story of the old man who emigrates moves to Tiago, a child born in

the islands who now lives in the U.S., who tells impossible stories that he believes are true, then moving to Tiago's story about a field of flowers on the island whose work is to grow and provide color. The world outside of the field in Tiago's story is described as one of conforming to certain established behaviours, where the police extinguish any opposition or difference, including the red flowers that disappear every spring, and where these red flowers must be picked from the field.³ The third story ends as follows:

Muitos, do povo, fugiram receosos. Mas eram cada vez mais os que, da terra, aprendiam a tenacidade das flores. Os que fugiram e os que ficaram eram agora uma multidão sem conta que gritava, acenando, para a flor vermelha. [...] e Tiago já não sabe dizer se é sonho o que alguns da terra lhe trazem por notícia. Prefere olhar sobre o dorso do mar, à procura de outra margem. Assim vai crescendo o menino. Flor em outro chão. Longe da terra onde terá acontecido Primavera. (Costa, 1998, pp. 39–40)

Tiago, the “Flor em outro chão,” one of many people who left the Azores reluctantly, comes up with stories to make sense of his new life after emigrating, and also of the life he has left behind. The new political situation in Tiago's story, where the red flowers, read people who are no longer prosecuted, is heard second hand, and not directly experienced, becoming a story in itself. The use of the future tense in the last line, “terá” hints at a distancing effect between the events in the island, the so-called news, and the reality of the experience of emigration. As Fagundes (2003, p. 19) notes, Tiago is a “fusão dos que contam e escutam/lêem a sua estória,” echoing this essay's reading above of how writing in *Mar e tudo* is a communal experience in which the reader is asked to take an active role. In this way, the blur between reality and fiction becomes uncertain, perhaps reflecting the emigrant's changing relationship to the island of origin exemplified by the ending of Tiago's story; a celebration from afar of an imagined possibility (freedom from political persecution or from social restrictions) that has become a reality, but one that is not experienced directly. Fagundes (2003) describes Tiago's situation as one where “o menino está deste lado, isto é, na diáspora, olhando o lá, que para ele é o longe; e pensando também no que poderia ter sido e não foi. Esse longe é assim um longe especial, um longe temporal e existencial” (pp. 17–18). This suggests reality as subjective and, when seen from the perspective of the emigration setting, as having the potential of becoming a story. Emigration, therefore, enables a creative act that is guided by a shared experience of making stories, and this creative act slowly gives shape to understanding the Azorean American community as a universe of many stories for the reader. In effect, the Azorean American community shaped by the creative act is a place where the individual stories of the emigrant experience shape themselves as prominent landmarks, in the same emotional and spatial location, to echo Nagel's words about form in a short story cycle at the beginning of this essay.

The Strategic Placement of the Stories in *Mar e tudo*

As the universe of the Azorean American community shapes itself for the reader, *Mar e tudo's* treatment of the island as a space also evolves. To explain, the first story in *Mar e tudo* places the island of origins as central within the life of the main character; the second story points to the need to acknowledge the limitations of calling upon the island space because it cannot be fully evoked; the third story slowly moves attention beyond the island borders so as to accept something more abstract; the fourth story

³ The story of the red flower suggests a carnation, the symbol of the April 1974 revolution, represents, as Fagundes comments an autobiographical moment in *Mar e tudo* for Costa, echoed also in the story's use of the names of his children (2003: 16, 18).

presents the emigration experience as unsettling upon which the fifth story develops to suggest that the island environment must be left behind in order for the emigrant to adapt to the new reality, and, as the stories in *Mar e tudo* are read, there is a movement away from the characters having the island as the center of meaning. By the last story in the collection, the emigration experience is not so painful. In a sense, the evolution of the emigrant's relationship to the island environment presents characters at different stages in that relationship. Taken as a whole, the structural progression of the stories enables a deeper understanding of the disorienting effect of emigration, and also the changing relationship that the Azorean emigrant has with the island of origins. This enables *Mar e tudo* to show the island space as the site of memory, as a landmark, as the universe of the Azorean American community emerges for the reader.

This section of the essay will focus on four key stories within *Mar e tudo*, so as to examine their strategic placement within the collection, and how they develop the structural progression outlined above.

The first story, “*School bus*,” follows a recently-emigrated boy during his first day of school in the US. As the story unfolds, the advice received from his grandmother, “*Nunca se olha para trás*,” is shown to be impossible to follow (Costa, 1998, p. 13). Like a ritual, the boy constantly remembers the island which, as the poem which frames this story had already warned, he is unable to leave behind. This is reflected in how familiar routines feel unfamiliar in the new setting:

Tinha de me levantar sem pensar mais em dormir. Lavar a cara. Vestir-me. Rezar. Comer. E andar pela porta fora direitinho para a escola. [...] se não fosse o cheiro diferente das roupas, do ar, das pessoas e das casas e das coisas; se não fosse sei lá o quê no sol e no céu que não era exactamente o mesmo do dia anterior... e sentir-me-ia ainda nas ilhas, no limiar de mais um dia do rapazinho de bata branca e mala de fardo à tiracolo. (Costa, 1998, p. 13)

Basing this story on the first day of school enables the exploration of an awareness that something has intrinsically changed, and that it will keep on changing, moving forward even if the mind wanders back to the island. The story, then, becomes an exploration of how the memory of the island, the memory of imagined life outside of the island, and the contrast with the new reality of emigration, become an evolving cycle of finding meaning. Fagundes (2003) describes these as “*ritos de passagem transformativos resultantes de conquistas mentais, psicológicas e emocionais*” (p. 11). Thus, memory is contrasted with direct experience, triggering a revisiting of the past to make sense of the new experiences. For instance, watching the snow on the ground as he gets ready for school triggers memories of how the schoolchildren back in the island had created a whole repertoire of stories and myths. This creates a reversed perspective so that, instead of dreaming about things that have not been experienced, like snow, what is now imagined and mythologized is the island space and everything that has been left behind by the act of emigrating. The landmarks which memory revisits remain the same, but their meaning shifts as the Azorean American experience unfolds.

The boy's first day at school is one more step on a journey begun by emigrating that will forever change his life. The literal journey of boarding the school bus joins up with a figurative journey of change caused not only by entry into the new educational system, but also the possibilities that this experience will bring. The temporal movement in the narration, particularly in the figure of the narrator of this story, is worth noting here. At times, the narrator's present seems to be in the island, at others, it seems to be in the emigration setting, echoing how a train of thought triggers associations. Fagundes (2003) explains this as presenting “*a ambiguidade de o conto ser ‘acerca de’ experiências de lá ou de cá. De facto, o conto é a fusão de ambas as “realidades”*” (p. 10). I would add that the timeline is collapsed further when one observes that there is also an adult narrator looking at his past child self, at the memory of the first arrival in the U.S., suggesting another pursuit of finding meaning by

revisiting the landmarks of past experiences. The quote below shows the crossing of these three timelines:

Apreensivos, entrámos na camioneta amarela que nos levou para a escola. Na memória, ficaram algumas aparas do que conversámos na primeira viagem. Foi um percurso cheio de vozes a que me iria habituando pelos anos fora. Era ainda muito verde, pelo que os meus olhos, a abarrotar da novidade, iam enchendo a alma deste outro mundo que rodopiava agora à nossa volta. Mas o coração, teimoso, ainda se batia por manter vivas algumas saudades nascidas na despedida da véspera. Foi assim que terei sonhado, no meio da conversa com meu primo, que me acotovelava todas as vezes que não respondia às suas interpelações, e a algarviada dos outros meninos, recheio trepidante e alegre do tacidurno autocarro. Era tão verde que ainda sonhava. (Costa, 1998, p. 16)

The impression created is of a rite of passage that is being experienced and acknowledged by the now adult narrator who understands a little bit more, yet still seeks to go explore experiences that changed him. This revisiting of key experiences is also present in "Enquanto a ilha for..." the last story of *Mar e tudo*. The narrator in this story comes across the obituary of an islander, Ti Cordeiro, who was his childhood friend.⁴ Reading the obituary results in the narrator's return to his island childhood. In broad terms, the story is the narrator's private obituary to his childhood friend and a story of a child's journey into adulthood, from the island to Lisbon and then to the day in Fall River (Massachusetts, U.S.), where he reads the obituary in a newspaper by chance. In effect, the obituary triggers an interweaving of memory and reality in the narration so that the last time the narrator meets Ti Cordeiro becomes the first memory of him. Ti Cordeiro emerges as a storyteller of adventures where the two friends defy the authority of the child's mother. After Ti Cordeiro ends telling the story about how the narrator learnt how to swim, the narrator confesses that he wants to leave the seminary, a decision that will result in emigrating. This is a beginning that is the end of a life in the islands, and also an end that is a beginning for memory to launch itself and create a story weaved from memories that act as landmarks of life after emigrating. In other words, a kind of rebirth is achieved through the construction of stories by the act of remembering as an ever-evolving story. As Fagundes (2003) points out, "[a]s reticências do título do conto [of the ninth story] apontam para um fim em aberto. [...] Trata-se, portanto e como é lógico, de um conto de despedida pela morte da personagem e de promessa de retorno pela sua estrutura aberta" (p. 38). As such, it reworks the examination of emigration as an eternal journey in Azorean literature (see Ramos Villar, 2006).

The adult narrator in the first story in the collection is perhaps the same narrator in the ninth and final story, emphasizing the idea of never-ending rebirth through stories and creating another structural layer that connects the stories in *Mar e tudo*, and making it an example of a short story cycle. The mixing of timelines within the narratives of the first and ninth stories is part of this connection. In the last story of the collection, the mixing of timelines give the idea of concentric cycles that contract and expand the narrative, making connections between the events remembered with the present of the narrative; the timeline of the last time that the narrator returned to the island from the seminary also intercalates with the timeline of how the two friends met, which is framed by a third timeline years later, when the narrator reads Ti Cordeiro's obituary and remembers him once more. In a sense,

⁴ Looking at the intratextual references in *Mar e tudo*, Fagundes examines Ti Cordeiro as a "personagem recorrente na coletânea: é o avó de "Fala comum"; é, como a personagem deste conto, um Alter-Ego do Autor" (38). I would add that further intratextual references in 'Segundo shift' that can be found in, for instance, the figure of the ESL teacher in the second story, the boy, the dog and the evocation of the grandparents in the first story, and the advice Raul receives from a friend in the eighth story, reinforcing this essay's analysis of the structural importance of the fourth story in *Mar e tudo*.

the third timeline in “Enquanto a ilha for...” brings the narrative full circle, enabling the narrator to remember, to make new connections as he revisits memories to see the many landmarks of memory anew. In many ways, these concentric timelines develop the shape of the whole in this story and also reflect the structural and thematic repetitions present in *Mar e tudo* that enable the construction of the Azorean American community to take shape for the reader. This concentric repetition permeates the whole of *Mar e tudo*, showing how the stories within the collection build up to create an experience that is both communal and individual.

As was noted above, the last story of *Mar e tudo* is an incomplete conclusion to the collection whereby the news of the death of Ti Cordeiro brings him back to life through the memories that the obituary triggers in the narrator. The first memory triggered by the obituary shows Ti Cordeiro as someone whose teachings are not immediately apparent:

Era o Ti Cordeiro. Quando me viu, afastou-se do grupo de Pescadores, e veio saudar-me com uma das costumadas sentenças de *ciência* que possui do mar. Com ele tenho aprendido a andar sobre calhaus e musgos. A ouvir o mar. A escutar a gente. (Costa, 1998, p. 90)

The idea of listening that Ti Cordeiro teaches is perhaps a reminder for the narrator and the reader to listen/read the many stories that are waiting to be told by the islanders, and also by the Azorean American community. In listening/reading, both the narrator and the reader gain an understanding of the emigration experience. This is an experience that can have an unsettling and destabilising effect, as the fourth and fifth stories in the collection examine in more detail. As will be shown below, these two stories act as a kind of a conceptual turning point within *Mar e tudo*.

The sea is central in the fourth story from the poem that frames it, “e em cada ilhéu / um barco / na linha dos olhos” (Costa, 1998, p. 41), which already hints at restless movement, at the possibility which a different reality brings. When the poem is combined with the title, “Segundo *shiff*” a duality of perception is brought to attention. For Fagundes (2003), this story is an attempt to “encontrar uma saída para o drama da emigração, sobretudo à condição tão pertinente que é a relação do emigrado com o país de origem e com o país adoptivo” (p. 20). The main character in this story, Duarte, exemplifies this duality in his struggle to come to terms with the culture shock resulting from emigrating. Duarte’s work in a factory presents the other side of emigration, where one day blends into the next, and time passes imperceptibly:

Como corria o tempo por aqui! Foi logo na segunda semana de América. Enfiara-se de cabeça no ritmo infernal do fazer dinheiro. Contraíu dívidas. Veio mais um filho. A vida exigia-lhe demais. Os planos que trouxera na bagagem ficaram, até agora, por terra. Apesar do ânimo que Alzira lhe tenta incutir, não sente forzas para fazer mais. A sorte anda-lhe destemperada. Roto. Todo roto, por dentro. Quase envergonhado de si mesmo. Anda frio nos últimos dias. Não lhe fala. Não lhe toca. Envelheceram. E, os filhos? “Alzira, por que nos fizemos a esta Aventura?” (Costa, 1998, pp. 44–45)

Duarte seeks refuge in a café frequented by other islanders, which is significantly described as “estas **ilhas espalhadas neste mar** feito de Rhode Island a Massachusetts” (Costa, 1998, p. 45, my emphasis).⁵ The emigrant communities as islands that are made up of people who seek a momentary connection presents a structural echo to one of the central themes in the collection; Duarte’s story is

⁵ This description recalls the idea of the Azorean American community composing the tenth island of the Azorean archipelago proposed by Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, which formed the central part of my analysis of the theme of emigration in Azorean literature (see Ramos Villar, 2006)

one of the many stories that arise in the isolation of being an emigrant within a wider social sea in the new setting. As the quote above shows, emigration is an adventure at first, but, as Duarte's experience likewise shows, it is also a journey of adapting to a new life, echoing the idea of emigration as a rebirth examined earlier in this essay. To echo the second word in this story's title, this is a conceptual shift of perception in how emigration is far from the dream of a better life, representing once more the exploration of communal experience of the Azorean American community that *Mar e tudo* lays bare. Duarte is at a crossroads in his life: he can either dwell on the negative aspects of emigrating, on the plans that did not come to fruition, or he can accept what he has achieved.⁶ The sea becomes a way to facilitate this acceptance, whilst also enabling a connection to the island past. This is evident in the description of *Tavatana* (Tiverton) beach as a place

onde a água se parecia mais com o mar que desde o nascer fora o seu conselheiro. Fora nesta praia de mais pedra que areia que, num dia de Inverno, chorara sozinho o luto do pai, o único homem que conhecera com a alma eternamente salgada. É-lhe querido este sítio. Há, por aqui, um silêncio que o atrai, uma serenidade que o consola, e um ar que o purifica. É o mar. (Costa, 1998, p. 50)

The sea is a stabilizing influence where Duarte is able to scream his frustration and, once this is done, invite Alex, a friend who accompanies him, to go back to Duarte's home to eat the limpets they picked. The beach, what the sea has to offer, and his wife's cooking skills become a synthesis for Duarte: "lapas *iankis* com molho d'afonso. [...] A mistura perfeita. Lapas de cá, receita de lá" (Costa, 1998, p. 51), which Fagundes (2003) describes as "o equilíbrio procurado (e encontrável) mediante o apego a certos valores ancestrais" (p. 20). These are landmarks that shape Duarte's individual Azorean American experience so that, when Alex proposes for Duarte to "combinar assim as coisas" (Costa, 1998, p. 52), he is presenting Duarte with a choice that highlights the value of family, cementing the synthesis between places and people, and presenting Duarte with the possibility of moving beyond the perceived loss towards appreciating what has been gained. This is a structural echo to Glória's situation in the second story of *Mar e tudo*, but it is slightly different in the shift it proposes: Glória accepts what she has in her second marriage to an American man even if the writer-narrator tries to pull her back into the island environment she has left behind. Alex, on the other hand, enables Duarte to see that he can still take refuge on customs that would be familiar in the island of origin, such as going to the café and reading the news whilst enjoying a coffee as it would be made back in the island, or picking limpets to then eat with his family. These simple acts, small connections with the island, become another way of exploring the evolving relationship with the island of origins for the Azorean American community in *Mar e tudo*. They also show the stories of emigrants at different stages in the emigration journey, as will be examined later on this essay. In this way, Duarte is on the cusp of realising that many connections are possible with the island space without being held back by its loss, the "conciliação entre as culturas e as gentes" that Fagundes (2003, p. 25) notes. However, this is a gradual process, as the last line of the story suggests: "Como em toda a parte, de mansinho, o dia aconchegava-se à noite" (Costa, 1998, p. 52).

The fifth story, "Fio do tempo," an almost mirror image of the fourth story, also presents further structural echoes within *Mar e tudo*. Like the first story, "School bus," António da Rosa observes the snow that covers the ground as he waits for a lift to take him to his first day at work in a factory.⁷ The

⁶ Fagundes suggests that the choice of "shift" instead of "turno" in the title of this story reflects the situation of the central character, namely "mudança, deslocação, alteração" (20).

⁷ The sea, including the presence of water in many states, such as snow, or the movement of the dialogue between characters, as noted when analysing the interaction between Glória and the narrator in 'Nome próprio', is a recurrent

poem that precedes this fifth story, “dias plúmbeos / indistintas manhãs / num tempo diluído” (Costa, 1998, p. 53), frames António’s situation as uncertain, but also echoes the mindless routine and the lost track of time inherent in the emigration experience of the first and fourth stories, suggesting a ritual cycle that the emigrant embarks upon when adapting to the new “island” of emigration, as a space for meaning is shaped from the experience of emigrating. While in the car on the way to work, when the conversation turns to a request for António to provide news from the island, this request is presented as the first step of an established ritual: “As perguntas foram rolando com o fumo que afavaga uma pontinha de saudade a despontar em todos. E António da Rosa, também ele com uma interrogação no fundo do estômago, foi respondendo ao como-vai-aquilo saído da boca de todos, em versões diferentes” (Costa, 1998, p. 56). Once more, the island environment emerges through stories, but, this time, it forms part of a ritual.⁸

Like other stories in *Mar e tudo*, “Fio do tempo” also contains a crossing of timelines: António is about to experience his new life in the factory, a new beginning, whilst mentally revisiting the events back in the island that led him to emigrate. Like “Nome próprio,” the narrative present is interrupted by the memory and imagining of the island past. However, the mixing of timelines enables António to reconcile himself with his new situation. In this way, it is not so much the memory of the island that imposes itself into the emigration setting, but it is the memory of the island that enables António to come to terms with his decision.

António’s story represents a conceptual turning point in *Mar e tudo*, particularly when taken together with Duarte’s story. Albeit at different stages in the journey, both Duarte and António are at a crossroads. Structurally, their situation is the same, almost like a mirror image, yet also subtly different. Like Duarte, António will eventually find his path of reconciliation between experiences and memories. Until then, like Duarte, António experiences the monotony of the work in the factory, and this monotony causes him to withdraw into retrospective examination: “António da Rosa passou aquela manhã debatendo-se entre o desespero de ter que olhar para o que fazia e a vontade crescente de fechar os olhos para dentro de si” (Costa, 1998, p. 57). Like Duarte, António’s monotonous work causes him to lose track of time. Crucially, unlike Duarte, António does not question his reasons for emigrating. António wishes to seek refuge in the sea, imagining himself wetting his feet on the shore whilst seated on a rock. However, the sea is not such a comforting presence for António as it was for Duarte. During his lunch break, António reminisces about the death of a fisherman, and of his own brother at sea. It is his individual story, but it is also the universal story of other islanders; António recognises that he could also potentially have suffered the same fate if he had remained in the island. The sea thus emerges as a space that can both provide life and take it away, a dangerous force likened to a “cão desconfiado do dono.” (Costa, 1998, p. 60). This presents an idea of cyclical fate, emphasised through António’s experience, suggesting the repetition of the same situations, an idea that is also echoed in the following line in the story: “A ilha é redonda e à sua volta é tudo na mesma” (Costa, 1998, p. 59). This is yet another structural echo of the infinite amount of stories to be found in the Azores that slowly shape the experience of the Azorean American community as a location for understanding the emigration experience in the collection as a whole.

The resulting shift that “Fio do tempo” causes is that the stories that follow it in the collection to begin to move further away from the island environment, and from its nostalgic depiction. Placing Duarte’s and António’s stories at this point of the collection, and ending António’s story with the

motif in the collection. As such, it represents another landmark, to echo Nagel’s words, to which memory returns, or which the character encounters.

⁸ Fagundes’ reading of the emigrants in the car is as “uma marcante analogia com os vários estágios em que cada um deles se encontra nessa outra viagem em que todos estão embarcados: a da emigração” (26), also reflected in the juxtaposition between António and Manuel da Marça, the supervisor of the place António works at in this fifth story.

statement “[a]qui... não há tempo para sonhar” (Costa, 1998, p. 60), provides a clear message to the reader regarding the changes needed to adapt to the emigration setting: the suggestion is that there needs to be a change in mindset in order to move forward and adapt to the new life after emigrating, but that this change will be difficult. In this way, dealing with life changes after emigrating is presented as one of the challenges that the Azorean American community faces collectively.

Beyond the Individual: The Importance of Friends and Family in *Mar e tudo*

As was previously stated, in “Segundo *shifit*,” Alex enables Duarte to appreciate what he has, his family, rather than what he has lost by emigrating. Alex, also an emigrant from the Azores, teaches Duarte English as a second language. As such, Alex has already experienced the process of adaptation, and has seen this process in other emigrants, making him an empathetic ear for Duarte. Like Duarte, the island past still forms part of his every day after emigrating: “Ainda me recordo que senti, no avião, o ladrar de um cachorrinho que vavô me tinha dado. E os olhos de vavó, na manhã do dia em que a gente abalou!... Tu pensas que me esqueci? Eu ainda sinto” (Costa, 1998, p. 49). As a character, Alex fulfils the role of someone whose experience is put at the benefit of helping others, becoming a guiding hand that steers other emigrants towards accepting their new life after emigrating, and a bridge between cultures or, more precisely, between stages, or landmarks, in the emigration journey, as this quote shows:

[Alex] Demorava-se no bar da associação para, como dizia, “não se esquecer do português”. Identificava-se com quase todas aquelas caras. Viviam-lhes os dramas que às vezes, até acabavam por fazer transparecer nas “composições” de inglês. Para alguns, mais do que professor, era um irmão com mais idade e já experimentado nos trilhos da imigração. Também ele fora romeiro neste sonho de tantos. Partira com a família. Chegara aqui o Alexandre com treze anos. Vivera a partida para a América com o entusiasmo certo para uma aventura de garotos. As saudades vieram depois. Conhece Duarte há pouco tempo, mas tem por ele uma afeição diferente. [...] Aí o tem a seu lado. Ele sabe, e sente-o no silêncio que agora os separa, que aquela alma, com apenas sete anos de América, anda em profundo desatino. (Costa, 1998, pp. 47–48)

Friendship also forms the background for “À nossa!,” the sixth story in *Mar e tudo*. The idea of the need to combine things to find purpose and meaning that Alex advised Duarte to do in the fourth story is taken up through the cross-stitch motif in the poem that precedes the sixth story: “para além do olhar / fazemos ponto de cruz / com a linha do horizonte” (Costa, 1998, p. 61). This is a further structural mirror in the collection, with the fifth story as the point in the middle between them, but not as an exact copy; as Fagundes (2003) points out, the sixth story’s return to the islands becomes a symbolic acceptance of being foreign in there too, presenting the idea of emigration as a process (p. 32). Here, the idea is to create (or stitch) something meaningful from the two separate concepts of seeing and feeling, which the call to action in the title, “À nossa!,” proposes as a communal project.

The sixth story focuses on a man who returns to the island and meets up with a friend, continuing “um hábito que viera desde o liceu” in what is perhaps their last meeting. Their last conversation discusses “o tema preferido dos dois amigos,” whether to stay on the island or emigrate, perceiving emigration as a “vaga monstruosa que nos leva os braços e alma” (Costa, 1998, pp. 64, 65). Once more, emigration emerges as an inevitable call on the islander and as an escape, be it from the island hardship or institutional expectations such as that of being drafted to fight in the Portuguese colonial war that one friend raises. As the friends toast the courage of both those who left and those who stayed behind, the toast signals their joint predicament of needing to take a momentous decision that

will affect their future, their turning point. Here, the island emerges as a more primordial presence where both friends recognise that “[a]qui sentimos muito mais perto a presença das nossas origens,” and where there is a thin line between life and death, as the “alma dos meus sobrevoa este lugar” (Costa, 1998, p. 68). This leads them to sing a song whose verses remember the dead, recognising a kind of shared community that is built from the hardship of survival. This, once more, presents the idea of the Azores as having many stories that are waiting to be told, showing that there is a collective story of survival, and of a community waiting to be recognised as a conceptual location of experiences.

“À nossa!” ends years later, with one of the friends returning to visit the island and repeating the ritual of going back to the meeting place, recognising that “os sonhos têm um tempo que às vezes é igual à lonjura da vida” (Costa, 1998, p. 70). This line picks up the idea given by last sentence of the previous (fifth) story; whilst memory endures, people move on with their lives. In a sense, the reader sees a return to a familiar idea in the collection; life needs to move on and not dwell in the past. As the friend that returns to the meeting place “[e]m silêncio, percorre o mar com o olhar magoado,” the suggestion is that pain can provide a learning experience, and that pain needs to be embraced through the act of remembering (Costa, 1998, p. 70). The suggestion of joining, or stitching, things so as to gradually create something meaningful is evoked once more, providing a productive move forward.⁹

The eighth story, “Suor frio,” also explores how to deal with the pain caused by emigration by combining opposites. In this penultimate story, emigration emerges as a series of concentric journeys, of cycles, and of remembering who is important along the way. The protagonist, Raul, suffers from insomnia and gets up from his bed preoccupied with how he had, once again, shouted at his children earlier that day. Like Duarte and António, Raul ponders about his life after emigrating. Like Duarte, Raul directs his pain towards his wife and children. However, Raul’s situation is slightly different, in that, prior to emigrating, one of his friends had warned both about what to expect:

- Vocês vão iniciar uma viagem que nunca mais conhecerá o termo. Não há praia, porto, varadouro onde um emigrante possa descansar. O melhor que fazem é tirar o maior proveito e algum sabor dos desconsolos desta aventura. [...] Cuidado, porque isto vai doer. Mas têm uma força danada, caneco!... Vão vencer, mesmo com as canelas a arder de pontapés levados por todos os lados menos por um...
- Qual é?
- ... que é onde estarão os vossos filhos e alguns amigos. (Costa, 1998, pp. 84–85)

Once more, the idea is that the destabilising reality of the emigration setting will be endurable through the stable influence of family and close friends, who act as a communal support network of stabilising voices, and forces. Raul is described as always remembering his friend’s words, suggesting that the crisis of the story is part of a cycle. As the emotional cycle of each crisis is completed, so too begins another cycle, in this case, a cycle where the support network of Raul’s family and friends is re-established. Emigration, thus, emerges as an adventure where the endurance of the islander will be tested, presenting a familiar concentricity to other stories in *Mar e tudo*. The presence of friends and family, then, makes this experience endurable. Through them, there is a support network made up of individual people at different stages of the emigration journey that share a commonality of experience; this shapes the Azorean American community as a recurring location of meaning.

⁹ The poem that precedes the second story, analysed earlier for the multi-layered intertextual reference to the *Sapateia*, is worth noting here. *Sapar* is an Azorean term that means to work, and its combination with *teia*, or web, gives the impression of something that is woven and combined to make something bigger from many components (Brookshaw 2006: 14).

Conclusion

Seeing *Mar e tudo* as an example of a short story cycle enables the reader to appreciate the structural and thematic links within the stories, such as the self-reflexive style of the narration which invites the reader to participate in the imagining of the narrative, or its treatment of the underlying sense of place embodied, for instance, in the emigrant's evolving relationship with the island of origins. Here, it is interesting to read José Francisco Costa's reflexions on *Mar e tudo*:

Considero os meus contos, (estou a parafrasear Sena) como romances (que nunca escreverei) em suspensão; são, por assim dizer, o registo de momentos de contemplação de personagens que me visitaram. Só que minhas histórias limitam-se a um tempo e espaço que eu recrio mas que não posso e não quero multiplicar. [...] Cada conto é como um flash de uma vivência. (Almeida, 2008, p. 40)

It makes sense to see *Mar e tudo* as an exploration of time and space, and of the individual stories as flashes of a life, or lives which provide instances of the drama of the immigrant experience within US society of, to repeat Nagel's (2001) words at the beginning of this essay, the "process of making one out of many" identified as one of the features of the American short story cycle (p. 258). Taken as a whole, the stories that compose *Mar e tudo* point to the communal nature of storytelling, and of writing, which shape the Azorean American community for the reader, but the movement in the collection is more akin to that of a helix, rather than a circle, in that the stories within *Mar e tudo* are not exact repetitions; they are concentric ideas around a central point that examines the experience of the Azorean American community.¹⁰ As such, it makes sense to see *Mar e tudo* as an example of ethnic semiosis in American literature that William Boelhower (1984) describes as being "ultimately organized on the basis of a topological system that generates an open series of such binary isotopies as old world/new world [...] presence/absence, origins/traces, dwelling/nomadism, house/road, orientation/disorientation" (p. 13), which is and is not ethnic specificity in the wider assimilatory American multicultural discourse. The Azorean American community is the general location through which the landmarks of memory that shape individual emigration experiences are explored in all the stories in *Mar e tudo*. Here, Fagundes's (2003) observation regarding "Segundo *Shiff*" could well be applied to the collection as a whole, when he comments that the "integração ou adaptação total aos valores da cultura adoptiva, com um correspondente abandono dos valores da cultura mãe, presumindo que isto fosse possível, é implicitamente rejeitado. [...] O oposto da integração no melting pot seria a ghettoização geográfica e cultural do emigrante, que o conto implicitamente também rejeita" (p. 21).

Seeing *Mar e tudo* as an example of an American short story cycle, regardless of the language it is written in, calls attention to its nature as interconnected stories that are also part of a wider literary universe that seeks to achieve an understanding of the US as a nation. *Mar e tudo* also contributes to this understanding of the whole by showing heritage is as important as adaptation. As such, *Mar e tudo* is a contribution to the specificity of the Azorean American experience shown through the creative act, and part of a wider project of understanding the US as a nation made up by individual ethnic stories which combine towards a commonality of experience. The Portuguese American community is shaped by this combination of experiences. This commonality of experience creates a space in which the creative act can emerge, where the telling of individual stories is possible, and where the emigration experience can move beyond its negative association with loss.

¹⁰ I wish to thank Igor Cussack for this observation regarding the helix, and also for his helpful suggestions on how to improve this essay prior to submission. I also want to thank the three student cohorts who discussed and wrote essays on *Mar e tudo*, as they helped me nuance my understanding of the text. It goes without saying that any mistakes or inaccuracies are entirely my own responsibility.

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*A Review of Millicent Borges Accardi's 2021 Book
Through a Grainy Landscape: Poems*

Scott Edward Anderson

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The poetry of immigration is multifold. Common themes include adjusting to new customs in a new land, while trying to maintain old traditions, as well as longing, loss, and a kind of nostalgia often associated with the Portuguese word *saudade*. A curious thing, this *saudade*. As a third-generation Azorean Portuguese American, I always associated this word with a “longing for lost things,” which is how I defined it in my poem, “Saudade” (Anderson, 2013). My bilingual, book-length poem, *Azorean Suite/Suite Açoriana*, has been described as filled with a longing for that which I had never known, for a past I never had. (Anderson et al., 2020)

However, after a recent conversation with my friend Rui Faria, head of the Azorean Emigrants Association in Ribeira Grande, São Miguel, my perspective on the word expanded. For Rui, *saudade* was not about longing for what was lost, but rather a longing to see someone or someplace again. “We often signed our letters ‘with *saudades*,’” he explained, “meaning, ‘until I see you again’ or ‘until we meet again’” (Private conversation, 2022). What a difference!

I now understand that for those of us whose families left our ancestral homelands—specifically, in the case of those from the Azores or mainland Portugal—our feeling of *saudade* is different from those whose families didn’t leave. Of course it would be different for those who stayed behind. This makes sense and, not to belabor the point, poets of the second, third, and fourth generations who may be further removed from that homeland, may feel that longing for what was lost more profoundly than others. For me, whose Azorean Portuguese heritage was denied me by my first-generation grandfather’s desire to be an *American* rather than a hyphenated American, I have long felt something was missing and have now embraced what I found there with the zealously of a convert.

Millicent Borges Accardi, a first-generation Portuguese American had a similar experience, although she grew up with the traditions and foods, and a father whose first language was Portuguese, she has said in an interview that she was not “Portuguese” but “American,” and consequently, she didn’t learn the language as a kid (Stafford, 2011). It wasn’t until she visited Portugal, attending the DISQUIET Literary Program in Lisbon, that she reconnected with her roots in a meaningful way and started exploring them further. Her family came from Terceira in the Azores.

For many of us with Azorean ancestry, no matter how distant, the connection feels so deep it’s almost as if it is part of our DNA—the connection to the land and the sea compels us to write about it, it becomes part of us. This inherited cultural identity links us to what Vitorino Nemésio (1932) called an “elemental love,” a love that is based on impulse rather than reason.

In *Through a Grainy Landscape*, Accardi pays homage to her heritage with poems influenced and inspired by Portuguese and Portuguese American writers, often using a line, quote, or title from a

poem as a starting point or inspiration. The poem that gives title to this book is a revisiting, as Accardi (2021) puts it, of “conduzi toda a noite...” by Tiago Araújo.

She writes, “Longing is the middle ground, when you have/ distant connections. It’s such a hard place to be in.” (Accardi, 2021, p. 85). This middle ground is, as Accardi (2021) writes in another poem, “halfway between loss and joy.” (p. 3) She describes being “trapped/ inside an identity you did not imagine/ you would be.” (Accardi, 2021, p. 5) Indeed, longing runs like a red and green thread through this entire collection, “for an absent tongue, an absent island/ where we were born and left and then/ never born to, a family abandoning its/ land and itself moving into a larger state/ of being memory alone...” (Accardi, 2021, p. 71)

Accardi has said when she writes she puts herself “in a place where the poem can grow safely rather than [be] pushed into some artificial form” (Stafford, 2011). And, in fact, her poems have an organic, natural quality consisting of stories simply told in a language that is direct and conversational.

Take, for example, “The Graphics of Home,” which tells the tale of “the lifecycle of a shirt,” starting with its arrival “from Sears, sent as a hand-me-down/ from Fall River,” worn until “the sleeves were too worn/ to restore,” and the shirt is remade into short-sleeves, then a “summer top/ or costume for play time, sleeveless,/ perhaps a vest for a pirate.” The shirt ultimately lends itself to doll clothes, cleaning materials, and is finally “sold to the rag man/ who made his round in the neighborhood,” its usefulness carried throughout its lifecycle, its story instructive for how to live a regenerative life, and an example of the old ways when nothing was wasted (Accardi, 2021, pp. 47–48).

Elsewhere, Accardi (2021) tells stories of a green dress, “the cloth of happiness,” (p. 13) and a “lemon/ polyester dress,/ matching shoes and the/ purse gotten for free from/ a soap company after/ box tops were collected.” (p. 49) The colorful fabrics of memory make up for the poet’s occasional lapses in prosody, where the line breaks feel more forced than natural.

A more natural mix of what James Longenbach (2008) called parsing and annotating line endings appears in “Lacuna: A Blank Space or a Missing Part,” with its long, meandering single sentence that speaks of

A house 65 years in the past now, a paradise
Key where the object of longing is missing
Like a deed or a lucky charm, it is the saudade
Of all we have, lost in fact, the stern dedication
Of a bridge in American, a statue in San Pedro,
Memorializing a Portuguese fisherman, our people
Carpenters, fishermen, dairy farmers, whalers,
Some worked in the mills or in the grey oblong
Factories where they manufactured golfballs,
Workers hand-wrapping string around tight wooden spheres
That they held in their hands as the machines
Whirled around them, with plastic coverings
Poured over a hardening shell, the object
Of a longing that might never return, saudade. (p. 71)

It seems to me that Accardi’s project in *Through a Grainy Landscape* is like those workers she describes winding string around wooden spheres, encasing longing in poems of faith and memory and belonging, and if you peer long enough through the windshield at her grainy landscape, you just might find your way home.

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Uma longínqua história de emigração:
A Review of Mario Augusto's 2022 Book Mandem Saudades

Susana Caldeira

Augusto, Mario. (2022). *Mandem Saudades*, 132 pp. ISBN 978-9899064645.

Já conhecia o Mário Augusto de vê-lo todas as semanas na televisão a apresentar programas relacionados com o cinema. Um dia, vi um documentário de sua autoria sobre os portugueses no Havai. Estando eu a desenvolver uma tese de mestrado sobre os madeirenses naquele arquipélago do Pacífico, tratei de entrar em contacto com ele de imediato. A receção foi fantástica e, por isso, conhecemo-nos há muitos, muitos anos.

Recentemente, o Mário publicou, através da Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, o livro *Mandem Saudades: Uma longínqua história de emigração*. É sobre as suas pesquisas, entrevistas e experiências relativamente aos portugueses no Havai. Curiosamente, e talvez para não repetir o que já se dissera em trabalhos académicos publicados, o seu foco não são os madeirenses e açorianos — que foram, na verdade, os que emigraram para o Havai em maior número e durante mais tempo —, mas os portugueses de Trás-os-Montes e do Alentejo.

É uma história contada na primeira pessoa, em que o autor/ narrador autodiegético faz um pacto com o leitor, de lhe contar o que viu, ouviu e pesquisou da forma mais verdadeira:

Cresci a ouvir contar histórias de emigrantes, histórias que exerciam em mim um fascínio incrível, que me despertavam a imaginação. [...] Para vos contar esta experiência de emigração única, segui-lhe a rota, procurei quem a experimentou e não esqueceu, fui esmiuçando todos os pormenores soltos, investiguei juntando peças da história como num *puzzle*, cruzei registos antigos, passei horas nos arquivos a abrir livros carregados de nomes escritos a tinta de aparo em caligrafia de amanuense. (p. 15)

E revela Mário Augusto que o que despertou tamanha curiosidade foi uma reportagem do jornal *Público*, assinada por José António Cerejo, em 1993, e intitulada “Os escorraçados da fome”. A reportagem relatava uma gravíssima seca que acontecia no Alentejo profundo e lembrava uma semelhante — de que apenas os mais velhos ainda tinham memória —, que, no início do século XX, havia escorraçado homens, mulheres e crianças para umas ilhas distantes e desconhecidas que os folhetos dos “vendedores de sonhos” diziam ser afortunadas e férteis.

Este é um livro recheado de histórias, umas mais alegres, outras muito tristes, como de resto o são as narrativas que envolvem emigrantes que se jogam à sorte por esse mundo fora. Logo a abrir, temos o panorama de um Portugal sem respostas sociais, que reduz a escolha do seu povo aos apelos dos empregadores:

Não fossem a miséria e a fome a escorraçarem tantas famílias das ilhas, das terras do interior, de Trás-os-Montes e do Alentejo, muitos teriam morrido nas aldeias sem nunca verem o mar ou ousarem navegar. Assim, a pensar numas ilhas que nem o nome sabiam, transformaram-se em marinheiros improváveis. Partiram famílias inteiras numa longa viagem à procura de nova vida. Uma jornada difícil de vários meses no alto-mar. (p. 11)

Ao longo de quase trinta anos, nestas viagens, que poderiam durar seis meses — a maioria com bilhete só de ida —, muitos emigrantes pereciam, muitas crianças nasciam e muitos episódios caricatos aconteciam a bordo. “Os engajadores garantiam essa viagem para a família toda, as custas ficavam por conta do novo patrão nas tais ilhas distantes, as Canecas, diziam eles” (p. 18). Os contratos eram de três anos, pagavam bons salários, tinham direito a casa, horta para cuidar, escola para os filhos, ração diária nos campos e médico. O futuro só poderia parecer mais promissor. Mas a verdade é que enquanto os madeirenses e açorianos se aculturavam com relativa facilidade, os alentejanos e transmontanos, menos habituados à vivência nas ilhas, retornavam às suas terras ou davam o “salto” para a Califórnia no final dos contratos, onde encontravam paisagens mais semelhantes às suas aldeias portuguesas.

Mas para contar esta história, Mário Augusto tem de recuar no tempo e falar sobre a chegada dos primeiros europeus ao Havai, das guerras de unificação travadas pelo rei Kamehameha I, o Grande e, como não podia deixar de ser, dos três grandes motivos que levaram o reino havaiano a querer importar mão-de-obra das ilhas atlânticas portuguesas: a circunstância de Jason Perry (nome anglicizado de Jacinto Pereira) aconselhar tal importação, baseando-se no bom carácter da pequena colónia de portugueses já residente no Havai: a maioria desertores das frotas baleeiras; o facto da base da economia havaiana ter passado a ser a cana sacarina e faltar mão-de-obra com conhecimento suficiente para tais trabalhos nos campos; e ainda o facto de se encontrar a viver na Madeira Wilhelm Hillebrand que, tendo sido médico e conselheiro do rei Kalakaua, escreve ao monarca a elogiar os portugueses ilhéus:

Na minha opinião, as vossas ilhas não poderiam ter uma classe de imigrantes mais desejável do que a população das ilhas da Madeira e dos Açores. Sóbrios, honestos, trabalhadores e pacíficos, combinam todas as qualidades de um bom colono e além disso, estão habituados ao seu clima. A sua educação e ideias de conforto, as suas exigências sociais são baixas, o suficiente para deixá-los contentes com a sorte de um colono isolado e as privações que o acompanham. Por outro lado, as suas capacidades mentais e os hábitos de trabalho, irão garantir-lhes um status muito mais elevado na próxima geração, à medida que os meios de melhoria de vida crescem em torno deles. (p. 69)

E assim se inaugurou a emigração portuguesa para o Havai, com um contingente de 120 madeirenses que, a bordo do *Priscilla*, chegaram àquele arquipélago em setembro de 1878: “O último navio que terminou essa rota de emigração foi o *Ascot*, em 1913, que levou mais 1283 emigrantes do continente e ilhas. Foi a 29ª e derradeira embarcação da aventura da emigração organizada para o Havai” (p. 26). Das primeiras grandes levas, começaram a chegar à imprensa cartas que denunciavam abusos, relatos de sofrimento, a tormenta da viagem e uma espécie de “escravatura branca” nas plantações havaianas. Em 1881, numa viagem encetada pelo monarca havaiano, o rei David Kalakaua, este passa por Lisboa, onde assina um tratado de amizade, comércio e navegação que visava a continuidade da emigração portuguesa para o Havai, então em perigo de extinguir-se.

E o povo, faminto, continuou a emigrar, a cumprir contratos e a aculturar-se naquelas paragens longínquas do Pacífico. Criaram associações — como as ainda resistentes Portuguese Genealogical and Historical Society e o Hawaii Council on Portuguese Heritage —, e sociedades de beneficência

— a mais antiga, a Sociedade Portuguesa de Santo António Beneficente de Havai, foi criada em 1877, um ano antes do primeiro fluxo da emigração organizada, tendo nos seus fundadores o tal Jacinto Pereira, ou Jason Perry, e António Joaquim Lopes, um comerciante cabo-verdiano que havia desertado de uma baleeira. Estabeleceram-se também no pequeno comércio. Levaram da Madeira o braguinha, ou machete, que se popularizou no Havai como o ukelele, manufaturado por madeirenses e apadrinhado pelo rei Kalakaua e pela sua irmã Lili'uokalani, que viria a ser a última rainha do Havai. Construíram escolas portuguesas e igrejas, como a Sé de Honolulu (Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Paz) e a igreja do Espírito Santo de Kula, em Maui. No término dos contratos, formaram bairros étnicos no Punchbowl e no vale Kalihi Uka. Perpetuaram memórias através de testemunhos escritos por descendentes de emigrantes, através de encontros e festas anuais onde se dança folclore português, onde se canta o fado e onde se evidenciam os sabores gastronómicos portugueses, hoje já disseminados na comunidade de acolhimento. Manteve-se, quase até a atualidade, um programa de rádio em português: “Sounds of Portugal” brilhantemente conduzido pela Audrey Rocha Reed. Mantem-se a memória de nomes que singraram no Havai, como é o caso do Bispo porto-santense Estevão de Alencastre, do juiz do supremo tribunal, António Perry (filho do cônsul português Jason Perry), dos Mayors John Felix e Elmer Carvalho, entre outros.

Os madeirenses e açorianos continuaram a emigrar em grandes números e só em 1911, no início da primeira república, é que o *SS Orteric*, transportou os primeiros portugueses de Portugal continental:

O navio passou pelo Porto, onde embarcaram centenas de transmontanos e beirões, rumou a Lisboa para apanhar mais 500 alentejanos, seguindo depois para Gibraltar, onde embarcariam mais 900 espanhóis. No total, foram 1525 os que seguiram para o mesmo destino. Ao que se sabe, os últimos a entrar, os andaluzes, vinham infetados com sarampo e sarna. (p. 22) [...] O *SS Orteric* lá partiu e, nos dois anos seguintes, outros quatro navios passaram pelo continente para levar portugueses. As notícias da viagem não eram boas, mas a fome matava mais. (p. 23)

Uma vez no Havai, tinham de cumprir os seus contratos. No final eram muitos os continentais que retornavam à terra por não conseguirem aculturar-se como faziam os ilhéus. No Alentejo, Mário Augusto falou da Maria da América, com Francisco Pedro — também conhecido por Xico Manhoso —, e com o ti Domingos Trindade — também conhecido por Domingos Havaiano. Em Trás-os-Montes encontrou uma Maria Pedra, uma Emília Veiga e uma Adelaide, e todos lhe falaram dos regressos para a pacatez e para a miséria de uma terra que pouco ou nada tinha para dar:

Neste mundo redondo e pequenino, há sempre uns quantos que voltam ao lugar de partida. As terras mandavam saudades e o coração não resistia. Lá vinham com pouquinho nos bolsos, uns dólares amealhados, fortunas é que nem vê-las, e assim se fragmentava uma população escorraçada, cada um por si. (p. 122)

No Havai, os alentejanos, beirões e transmontanos que não conseguiam fazer a viagem de regresso para Portugal, tentavam “o salto” para a Califórnia, onde esperavam encontrar paisagens mais idênticas às suas terras natal. Os alentejanos “migraram para as vistas amplas dos campos na região da baía de São Francisco” (p. 115):

Uns chegaram a San Leandro, outros, não muitos, voltaram ao Alentejo, mas já tinham visto mundo, perceberam no regresso que a sua aldeia continuava pobre e sem oportunidades que se vissem. Os conterrâneos que ficaram tão longe, na Califórnia, começaram a enviar as novas cartas de chamada para que viajassem outra vez. Esses recados de regresso definiram uma nova rota para a cidade de Hayward, conhecida como o Alentejo da Califórnia. (p. 117)

Já os transmontanos “seguiram uns 140 quilómetros para o interior, para uma região mais montanhosa” (pp. 118–119), estabelecendo-se em Sacramento. Mário Augusto seguiu o rasto das irmãs Forneirinhas — a Ilda e a Cristina —, de Ana Correia, Francisco Cachopo e Josephine para poder recriar estas histórias ainda carregadas de sotaque e de saudade.

Calcula-se que, hoje, pelo menos 10% ou talvez mais, da população das ilhas tenha sangue luso. É uma longa história que começa num Portugal sem esperança — e com uma população que não sabia como matar a fome. (p. 26)

As histórias de emigração são, de facto, sempre uma aventura. Esta história, que com mestria nos conta Mário Augusto, é uma história de sofrimento, em que os “escorraçados da fome” não têm outra alternativa senão a de empreender uma viagem tormentosa, rumo a umas ilhas distantes, muito distantes no meio do Pacífico. Umas ilhas que tudo tinham para serem paradisíacas, mas que lhes exigiram o suor diário e que “nunca [fizeram] esquecer o país triste para onde se mandavam saudades”.

Domingos Rebêlo at the New Bedford Whaling Museum

Stuart Blazer

When first walking into this exposition at the Wattles Gallery I deliberately didn't read the informational placard about the artist. Having lived in Terceira for several years and during that time traveled to all the islands except Corvo (which I will explore next visit), it felt instantly familiar, even though it's been a long while since my last journey.

Art offers us a beguiling, a muddle, then an end. I must make a middle in which to begin. After roaming around, staring at some pictures more than once, I circle back to his self-portrait (1920s, oil on canvas) and pause in front of this handsome figure, cigarette dangling from his lip, Bogart *avant la lettre*. A man worth examining. I go back and read about him, giving referentiality its due after a first immersion in raw perception. I thought about Cezanne, about Portuguese painters with unfamiliar names that I loved in that small gem of a museum in the Chiado district in Lisbon. Island life given a European touch.

The fine catalogue, *The Azorean Spirit: The Art of Domingos Rebêlo (1891–1975)*, which accompanies the show and is available for purchase in the gift shop (and hopefully available in local libraries) is published by the museum along with support from FLAD (the Luso-American Development Foundation), the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at Brown University. Aside from a series of fine reproductions of many paintings not displayed in the show there are several well-written essays in both Portuguese and English that provide pertinent details which contribute to our understanding of this versatile and compelling artist. In addition to drawing and painting he was an accomplished sculptor and tapestry designer.

One does not need to know a recipe in order to enjoy a plate of food, or read about styles of cooking to recognize what is delicious. Information exists and can be of assistance. The proof, as has been said, is in the eating. Or, in this instance, the visual feast set before us. We are invited to look, then look again. The rewards, as with all truths, are self-evident.

What greets us as we walk around the gallery? Vivid, believable surfaces that one enters easily. Evidence of struggle and reward. The record of a simple man who becomes more complex upon further reflection. His roots in São Miguel inspired life-long loyalty, but as for regionalism, his version included the world. Studies in Paris, friendships with international artists, travels in Brazil, Italy and the U.S. all led to a distinguished career as both teacher and practitioner in Lisbon.

We are in the company of a cosmopolitan provincial whose craft is informed by his many points (lines, planes) of reference. It is an art that celebrates the local when recognized as part of a larger whole. Vitorino Nemésio, the famous Azorean author of *Mau Tempo no Canal*, translated as *Stormy Isles: An Azorean Tale*, named Rebêlo “the complete painter of the Azores.” His work incarnates the particulars of the Azorean crossroads: nature infused with imported culture. After some centuries this living network has become indigenous. Every aspect of island life is fair game, and his treatment of these chosen subjects reveals both a developed technique and a deep empathic engagement.

Before focusing upon a selection of paintings for which I will attempt to provide written equivalents, these companions *du voyage* from roughly the same timeframe have been suggested by a shared feeling-tone: four writers and one composer/musician. Eca de Queirós (1845–1900), referred to as the Portuguese Proust; Raul Brandão (1867–1930), a well-known journalist and writer whose loving tribute to the Azores, *As Ilhas Desconhecidas*, has been recently translated as *The Unknown Islands*; Jean Giono (1895–1970), a well-known Provençal author whom Wikipedia cites as “having written a series of regionalist anti-intellectual novels about the nobility of simple people”; Emanuel Félix (1936–2004), a poet, essayist and art critic from Terceira who cultivated a rich Azorean field seeded with curated international specimens; and Bela Bartok (1881–1945), the Hungarian musical pioneer who went into remote rural areas to record local songs and melodies, many of which have been transcribed, transposed, given another life within his string quartets, violin sonatas and works for piano.

These are the works that call for repeated viewing:

The Emigrants, 1956, engraving on cardboard. Strong composition in brown and black with an interesting well-achieved set of separate studies, two of which are dated 1959, a case of preparation (or continuance) after the fact.

The Emigrants, (study), 1926, pencil on paper. A sturdy figure, sleeves rolled, carries a suitcase on his shoulder. Each line, and these are few, carries more than its weight.

Study for The Emigrants, 1926, pencil on paper. Its people are kept within a tight grid except for the woman stage left, whose costume partly overflows the set of squares while the rest of her maintains a distance. The child pictured at lower right offers the most endearing image with its big hat and what could be a pacifier in its mouth.

Study for The Emigrants, 1926, pencil on paper. This features a young woman, still a girl in some ways, whose coloring suggests blue eyes and blond hair, a type which does surprisingly exist throughout the islands. Her face is done with a tenderness that persists. The eyes appear to be looking within while staring into space.

Embrace, 1959, mixed media on paper. This is a study in shared solitude, with three figures, no, a fourth, drawn much lighter and placed mostly inside its mother's (grandmother's? aunt's?) skirts. The child gradually emerges as a separate creature, her legs and the suggestion of feet stand apart while closely held against the older woman. This figure radiates a sadness, kerchief to mouth, eyes staring inwardly into the open. The other two characters, another female and a man, embrace. We see only his head over her shoulder, no emotion. (This is for us to receive, or create).

Embrace, (study for *The Emigrants*, 1959, charcoal on paper. This has the quality of an engraving. The man's densely-lined face contrasts with an equally formed hat, vertically drawn against the bold horizontals which compose his facial features and expression. He's holding a woman turned away from us. Her hand rests on his left shoulder as he reaches around her back to hold her.

Rebêlo's work as an academic painter brings with it a wide set of references. *The Emigrants* has echoes of both Orozco (1883–1949) and Siqueiros (1896–1974). Other paintings ripple with other associations.

A first glance at the large rush of images which comprise *Maria da Glória Pereira Rebêlo* (oil on canvas, 1912) flashes Gauguin to mind, its structure as well as these luminous colors. But it remains a deeply Azorean picture, however universal its components and concerns. A brightly-dressed woman, eyes downcast enough to be almost shut, holds grapes just cut from surrounding vines, several bunches of which are arranged on a platter. We are immediately within a lush pastoral space above a village with other women nearby. A table is laden with two bottles of wine, one considerably bigger than the other, both half-filled. The peaches look ripe and are a lovely counterpoint to the reddish-orange dress Maria wears. A melon, sliced, offers its echo of her shirt, a rich yellow patterned with red. A freshly-cut watermelon invites our appreciation. Both hunger and thirst respond. I'm reminded of my first time seeing Bosch and Breughel in European museums after knowing only reproductions. Angel's wings looked organic, not pasted on. They shimmered in place like these beautifully rendered fruits. Upon a second or third examination we enter a still life that moves us. The woman with baskets on her shoulders stares us down. Her direct gaze refuses to look away. Her clothes and the baskets are identical shades: a woman who is her work. As we glance once more through this mental window it's time to notice that a man stands behind her, his back to us, tending to some necessary task. To his right three more figures circle to bring us to face Maria's quiet presence once again, perfectly at peace with herself and her environment.

Other pieces not to be missed:

Portrait of a Girl, undated, charcoal on paper. Innocence, a knowing innocence. Wide eyes, broad nose, womanly lips. Hair pulled back. Quiet, lovely interplay of background with foreground. She looks like she's wearing the wall.

Hermitage of Sant'Ana, 1917, oil on canvas. What's the visual match for a ringing in the ears? Landscape vibrates. Colors in perfect accord. One shadowed street whose grey rises to a greenish wall. Another flat surface stretches opposite, tall trees behind it. Flashes of pink on white: a patch of man-made sky. The building is so organically part of nature that it somehow provides a sense of peace.

Holy Spirit Festivities (study), 1930's, oil on canvas. A man in black in front of a blur which is a building. Bull and cow in front of him, yoked beneath a bright round banner that rises from the harness linking both animals. It looks like a huge lollipop. A woman with two children keep their secrets, their backs toward us. Something joyous, mysterious, is happening. The whole thing is a kaleidoscope. A explosion of light caught and released.

Balcony of the Painter's House, 1929, oil on canvas. Small rectangle, brightly colored but filtered by some mist, subdued. Three clay flowerpots with red and yellow blooms rest on a green surface in contrast to the white stone terrace with its grey stone floor. The room is open to the elements which here include a roof that could be a ploughed field, mountain and hills in the distance beneath a whirled van Gogh sky. The lattice overhead lets light through, as does the entire picture. It might be thick with grapevines in another season.

Armando C. Rodrigues and Domingos Rebêlo, 1913, pencil on paper. Minimal and perfectly realized. Two figures walk together, one gestures with an expression that indicates he's saying something, the other in an attitude of listening. How can we not eavesdrop? All is done with a variety of thick lines. None are thin. Both men are sketched at the left of the paper, leaving comfortable space around them as they enact the word *flaneur*.

Fisherman of Mosteiros, 1924, oil on canvas. A man bent to his task amidst a wash of blues, yellows and pinks that register as both sky and sea. He's available to us just until the upper chest. Shoulders, but no arms. The gaze is downward, calm. I imagine him looking into his boat, checking to make sure things are in order. Does that green hat signify land or is it simply chosen for balance? A famous art critic once wrote of a Miró self-portrait that it portrayed the most beautiful pair of shoes in modern art, (soft brown suede, if I recall). Here we have a perfectly achieved pair of blue overalls with only one strap shown, its black hook and clasp doing its job without fuss. That sunny hint of gold button is a bonus.

Fisherman, 1930, oil on cardboard. Perfect catch (and release) of a working man whose weathered face reflects both sun and the rigors of his trade. Each line, each chosen color contributes to this luminous registration.

Ponta Delgada Pier, 1926, oil on canvas. A Moroccan vista, or something like it. Dome and minaret reflected in a sea too picturesquely rendered for my taste, a wilted salad redeemed by a believably crisp boat, unmanned, hovering bird-like.

Boats in Mosteiros, 1924, oil on canvas. Brilliant display of fishing vessels on shore, close to water, with houses and a windmill shown as a partial view of a village. Such a delicate version of horizon. (In this part of the world a space often continues after the initial dividing line, then there is a final falling away.) Only a vigorous artist can confidently create rocks as fallen clouds. Especially with such a restrained palette. These sleek boats are probes, ambassadors, aspects of land venturing forth into danger. They rest on the beach until called upon, at which time terra firma must do its best not to be pulled under.

Brushstrokes are manifestations, bringing interiority into space. In its applied gesture, the ways in which surface is addressed have a visible corollary as thought seeking expression. The Blakean model of Innocence/Experience/Higher Innocence is summoned here: an informed regionalism mindfully located within a wider world.

Urbano Bettencourt's article in the catalogue, entitled "Domingos Rebêlo in the Twenties: Arts and Literature" cites Luís Ribeiro's idea of artists giving their work "an Azorean orientation." This principle also obtains when "modern" approaches are factored in: with certain of Rebêlo's abstractions based upon nature he risked an Azorean disorientation as well, (for example *Landscape in Bretanha*, 1908, and *São Miguel Landscape* from the 1940s) give local weather its second (plastic) life as fog, then sudden clarity, with often more than one horizon glimpsed in the distance.

HOMENAGEM / TRIBUTE

In Memoriam: Bobby J. Chamberlain, Ph.D. (1946-2022)

Katharine F. Baker¹

Dr. Bobby John Chamberlain died on August 7, 2022, at age 75. His family reported that he suffered from dementia, compounded by a catastrophic brain injury. Like many colleagues, former students, and friends, I received this sad news two days later via email from the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, where he taught for 33 years until his retirement in 2018. He is survived by his wife Kay, daughter Katie, son Robert, five grandchildren, and his sister and brother. He was preceded in death by his parents and an infant grandson. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.

How much difference can one teacher make? Thanks to Dr. Chamberlain, my midlife dream of learning enough Portuguese to be able to research my hidden Azorean ancestry led not only to unearthing my lost heritage but also to an unexpected translating career. For more than a decade and a half, Dr. Chamberlain guided my academic progress—first in the classroom, then as a mentor on genealogical research (one of his personal interests)—and eventually my professional development, first as a mentor, then as a collaborator with me on numerous projects.



Dr. Bobby J. Chamberlain with some of his third-year Portuguese students at the University of Pittsburgh, Fall 2002. Photo by John J. Baker.

Unwittingly or otherwise, in retrospect Dr. Chamberlain may well have been “paying it forward” for his own college experience. After graduating from Los Angeles public schools in 1964, he enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he considered majoring in Spanish or French. As part

¹ Portions of this article were adapted from the author's personal remembrances of Dr. Chamberlain, published in the August 15, 2022 edition of *The Portuguese Tribune*.

of his study of romance languages, he registered in his first semester for beginning Portuguese, taught by a newly-hired doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California, Eduardo Mayone Dias (1927–2021). The experience permanently altered Chamberlain’s career trajectory.

This was not Chamberlain’s only connection to Portugal at UCLA, however. Another faculty member there who influenced his education was Azorean emigrant Dr. Alberto Machado da Rosa (1924–1974), a native of Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira. Among other classes he taught was a rigorous graduate course in which students read Camões’ entire *Os Lusíadas* in Portuguese, replete with its many hundreds of mythological allusions.

The eldest of three children, Bobby John Chamberlain was born in Huntington Park, California, on October 30, 1946, to Robert P. and Dorothy J. Chamberlain, originally from Texas. At UCLA Chamberlain earned his bachelor’s degree and then his Ph.D. in Brazilian and Spanish Linguistics and Literature. While in graduate school, Chamberlain was twice a Fulbright Scholar, enabling him to conduct research in Brazil—even meeting Jorge Amado, whose writings would become one of Chamberlain’s research specialties. He received the California Governor’s Award for his doctorate in Brazilian and Spanish Literature and Linguistics.

One measure of the caliber of UCLA’s program was the number of Chamberlain’s grad school contemporaries who also went on to careers as academics: Heraldo da Silva (1937–2021), San Jose State University; Francisco Cota Fagundes, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Manuel da Costa Fontes, Kent State University; Ron Harmon, California State University, Fullerton; and, Lasse T. Tihonen, Baylor University. In addition, one of the undergraduates in the department, Rosa Maria Neves Simas, would later earn her Ph.D. at the University of California, Davis and the University of California, Berkeley, then became a professor at the University of the Azores. Alvin Ray Graves (now at West Hills College-Coalinga, after decades in business) earned his Ph.D. in Geography at UCLA; when I met him in 2004 he still recalled Chamberlain, memorable for his red hair and beard, as having been his Portuguese TA.

After completing his doctorate, Dr. Chamberlain taught at the University of Southern California, then for several years at Michigan State University. From there he was hired by the University of Pittsburgh, where he spent the bulk of his career. Emeritus professor Dr. Keith A. McDuffie, a longtime chair of Pitt’s Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, recalled to *The University Times*, Pitt’s newspaper for faculty and staff, that Dr. Chamberlain was an asset to not only the department but also “the Center for Latin American Studies and the University Center for International Studies. When he came he gave structure to the program and permanence, which was big. He was a nationally known figure at the time I hired him. He had published quite a bit. He’d also taught and we’d had good reports on his teaching.”

Another emeritus professor of Hispanic Languages and Literatures at Pitt, Dr. John R. Beverley, told *The University Times* that before Dr. Chamberlain arrived, “few universities had programs in Portuguese language and literature. By dint of his patient and dedicated work, Pitt now has an undergraduate minor in Portuguese and a series of graduate courses in Brazilian literature that most grad students take as part of their preparation for the Ph.D. Our department decided to move from a Spanish peninsular focus to a Latin American focus in the late 1980s. Brazil is the largest and most advanced country of the region, so it was decisive for both the department in its new orientation and the Center for Latin American Studies to offer that country as an area of study.”

Among his administrative duties at Pitt, Dr. Chamberlain served as head of the Portuguese program, then of the Brazilian studies program. He also directed the university’s student field trips to Brazil for the Center for Latin American Studies. For many years he was secretary-treasurer of the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana. In other professional service, from 1979–1984 he was national chair of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese’s Task Force for the Promotion of Portuguese, and was a member of the editorial boards of Arizona State

University's *Chasqui Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* and the University of Pittsburgh's *Revista Iberoamericana*.

Dr. Chamberlain's departmental biography at Pitt lists his areas of research interest as the Portuguese language, literary theory and modern Brazilian prose fiction. His scholarly books range from Brazilian literature (including studies on Jorge Amado) to curriculum building, and both English-Portuguese and informal Portuguese dictionaries. His numerous journal articles deal with postmodernism, anthropophagy, canon formation, periodization and the role of U.S. Brazilianists.

Dr. Chamberlain's links between Dr. Eduardo Mayone Dias and me came full circle three times over the years. The first occurred in Fall 2000, with his use of the textbook *Brasil! Língua e Cultura* by Tom Lathrop and Dr. Dias for Pitt's first year Portuguese course. The text was the counterpart to Lathrop and Dias' earlier textbook *Portugal! Língua e Cultura*, and the choice reflected the university's switch away from Iberian focus, prompted by its Center for Latin American Studies.

The next time was in mid-2008, when Portuguese Heritage Publications of California [PHPC] asked me to translate Dr. Dias' slender history, *A Presença Portuguesa na Califórnia*. In weighing my decision, I consulted Dr. Chamberlain, who encouraged me to do it, emailing, "I wholeheartedly encourage you to accept the invitation [...]. As you know, Eduardo was one of my professors at UCLA, and I have always been a booster of his." I asked Dr. Chamberlain to be a co-translator (along with Diniz Borges, who updated a lengthy section about Luso-Californian authors), and Dr. Chamberlain consented.

When I consulted Dr. Dias about my choice, he approved, adding, "If you see Bobby, please tell him I send him 'um grande abraço.'" While I didn't give Chamberlain a literal hug of course, I conveyed the message, which pleased him greatly. *The Portuguese Presence in California* was published in September 2009, and became among PHPC's largest publications, with three printings.

My final collaboration with Dr. Chamberlain was a profile of Dr. Dias, "Towering Scholar," for PHPC's 2016 anthology *Untamed Dreams: Faces of America*. Upon Dr. Dias's death in April 2021, I emailed the sad news to Dr. Chamberlain, but was puzzled to receive no reply.

Dr. Dias had been a stalwart in the Luso-American community for decades, especially in California, as well as a regular contributor to the *Portuguese Tribune*. Due to the looming press deadline for the *Tribune's* section in tribute to him, I obtained permission from PHPC to update the essay for publication as "A Scholar and a Gentleman," including Dr. Chamberlain's name as the article's co-author. After the issue was published, I emailed the page to Dr. Chamberlain, but received no reply.

I received one last brief message from Dr. Chamberlain in February 2020, when Tagus Press published *Smiling in the Darkness*, the English translation of Adelaide Freitas's novel *Sorriso por dentro da Noite*, on which he was one of my co-translators. After Tagus sent him a complimentary copy, I received a brief note from his email address confirming that he received it; I was relieved even to have heard from him, although he did not respond to my follow-up email.

In the past year, when I forwarded the call for papers for the *Gávea-Brown* issue honoring UCLA's Dr. da Rosa (organized by Dr. Francisco Cota Fagundes), and later the announcement of its publication in April 2022, I heard nothing from Dr. Chamberlain, which by then I found troubling. Only since the announcement of his cause of death do I understand that the sad reason I heard so little from him since his retirement in 2018 must have been due to the onset of his dementia.

A number of translation collaborations between Dr. Chamberlain and me—including an updated edition of Dr. Onésimo T. Almeida's book of essays *The Weight of the Hyphen*, and Álamo Oliveira's poetry collection *andanças de pedra e cal* and his play *Bocas de Mulheres*, as well as assorted *crônicas* and short stories—remain to be published. They will constitute a fitting tribute to a teacher who made such a huge difference in this student's life.

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