

Alejandro Ricaño's *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*: The Challenges of Translating
Mexican Theater

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to introduce a young Mexican dramatist and to situate his plays within the context of contemporary Mexican theater, highlighting how Alejandro Ricano's work reflects and differs from his theatrical heritage. Later in the introduction, I describe the theoretical framework and the process that I followed in translating *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*.

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Introduction

“Would you rather work with someone who is living or dead?” This is not a question with which I imagine most thesis projects begin, but it was one of the questions posed by Jacqueline Bixler, my advisor, when discussing possible thesis topics. After taking a graduate class in the theory and practice of Spanish translation and having some experience translating narrative, literary and legal documents, I came to enjoy the task and wanted to explore it further. For me, translation is like a puzzle in which almost every word has to be researched thoroughly in order to truly understand the text. This investigation is both solitary and interactive because the clues needed to put the verbal puzzle together are as likely to come from dictionaries and encyclopedias as from a friend or mentor. When the time came to choose a thesis topic, translation was my first choice. After weighing the options of the kinds of texts that I could translate, Dr. Bixler and I decided that because of its conversational nature, a theatrical work would be a good first long-term project. In response to the question of working with a living or dead writer, I chose a living one to secure at least the possibility of communication with the author. Of the possible authors, Alejandro Ricano was an easy choice because I would have the opportunity to see two of his plays performed in Mexico and also because his correspondence with Dr. Bixler indicated a willingness to have his work translated. After seeing *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* and *Timbouctou*, I chose *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*. I chose this play because, in addition to being one of Ricano’s most recent works, the play’s universal themes allow it to transcend the borders of Mexico. *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* offers a portrait of middle-class life in Mexico and in distinctly Mexican language. The thematic relevance of the play and its Mexican context make it an excellent representative of current Mexican theater. The last influence on my decision to translate *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* was my own enjoyment of the play. Knowing I would spend countless hours working with the text, I wanted to choose something that would be entertaining as well as challenging for me. Even after reading the play numerous times, I still enjoy it.

The purpose of this section of my thesis is to introduce a young Mexican dramatist and to situate his plays within the context of contemporary Mexican theater, highlighting how Ricano's work reflects and differs from his theatrical heritage. Later in this introduction, I describe the theoretical framework and the process that I followed in translating *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*.

Alejandro Ricaño's Theater in the Context of 20th-century Mexican Theater

Alejandro Ricaño was born in 1983 in Xalapa, the capital of the Mexican state of Veracruz. He studied theater and earned a degree in dramaturgy at the Universidad Veracruzana, where he attended classes and workshops given by Emilio Carballido (1928-2008), one of the most prominent names in Mexican theater since his first play was performed in 1950. Ricaño has already won multiple awards, including the 2009 Premio Nacional de Dramaturgia "Emilio Carballido" for his play *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim*, as well as an honorable mention for *Timbouctou* that same year. The previous year the Fundación Antonio Gala awarded him a scholarship to work under the tutelage of established artists for a year in Córdoba, Spain. During the years 2006-2008 and 2009-2010 he had a grant from FONCA (Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes), which supported him in his creative work. Ricaño was also a finalist for the Premio Nacional de Dramaturgia Joven in 2005 and 2008 for the plays *Un torso, mierda y el secreto del carnicero* and *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo*. Some of Ricaño's works have earned invitations to theater festivals. *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim*, for example, was invited to the Muestra Nacional de Teatro and the Muestra Internacional de Dramaturgia Contemporánea. *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo* was invited to the Rencontres Internationales de Théâtre Universitaire in Belgium. *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, the work presented in translation here, will be the main stage play at the Festival Nacional de Teatro Universitario, held during the summer of 2011 at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). At present, Ricaño is resident dramatist for the Compañía Titular de la Universidad Veracruzana. He writes for and directs the theater group Los Guggenheim and is working on a Master's degree in Mexican Literature at the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, his hometown.

In the process of reading a new author's work it is helpful to understand the literary context in which the work was produced. In researching contemporary Mexican theater I found that while several studies of specific authors and theatrical trends have been published in the past few decades, no comprehensive study of contemporary Mexican theater has been published since 1991. Ronald Burgess's book, *The New Dramatists of Mexico: 1967-1985*, centers on the theater that was produced in Mexico between 1967 and 1985, focusing on the formation, styles, themes, and defining characteristics of dramatists who were considered part of a new generation, specifically those born between 1939 and 1954. Another recent study by Stuart Day deals with political theater written and performed in the mid-90s. In *Staging Politics in Mexico*, Day looks at recent theater as a vehicle for social change, focusing on plays that share several features, in particular an overt political message, the portrayal of situations without obvious remedies, and the use of humor as a tool both for the expression of social criticism and the alleviation of tension through laughter. Day focuses on the critique of neoliberal politics in works by Sabina Berman, Vicente Leñero, Alejandra Trigueros and Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda. Another book, *Convention and Transgression: The Theatre of Emilio Carballido*, published by Jacqueline Bixler in 1997, discusses only Carballido's work, but because of the sheer volume of plays that Carballido produced in the second half of the 20th century it is relevant to any study of contemporary Mexican theater. As Bixler notes, Carballido provided a much-needed breath of fresh air when his first play, *Rosalba y los Llaveros*, was staged in Mexico City in 1950. Carballido's work as a writer and relentless promoter of the dramatic arts made him a driving force in Mexican theater from 1950 until his death in 2008.

For information about current plays being staged in Mexico, the report published yearly by Timothy Compton in the *Latin American Theatre Review* is very helpful. His detailed description of the theater performances offered each summer in Mexico City serves to familiarize readers with what is being staged, and is particularly useful to those who are unable to travel to Mexico. Nonetheless, aside from the aforementioned studies on specific playwrights and generations of playwrights and the annual reports on stagings in Mexico City, no comprehensive study of contemporary Mexican theater has been published since

Burgess's book, which focuses on theater produced before Alejandro Ricaño was born.¹ In sum, it is difficult to find critical documentation of recent trends in Mexican theater and therefore difficult to situate emerging authors and works vis-à-vis their theatrical heritage.

While this lack of documentation is problematic for the classification of authors at work in this generation, one in which artistic norms are still being defined, it is easy to see how Ricaño's style compares to the traditions handed down from previous generations. In recent decades, a difficult professional climate created in part by the popularity of foreign works and compounded by the economic crisis, has resulted in a generation of do-it-yourselfers. That is, many dramatists have participated broadly and actively in the production of their work, taking on a variety of tasks as producers, directors, and even actors. Two notable examples of this are Vicente Leñero (born 1933) and Sabina Berman (born 1955), both of whom have written for the theater, cinema, and television, directed some of their own plays, and devoted considerable time to other genres, including narrative and essay. Through his prolific writing, teaching and promotion of young dramatists, Carballido has had a profound influence on much of what has been written for the stage in Mexico in recent decades. He is also an excellent example of this multiple activity, having written short stories, novels, screen plays and numerous dramatic works, all while promoting Mexican theater as the founder and life-long editor of the theater journal *Tramoya*. During the 1960s, young writers, such as Carballido and Leñero, demonstrated the ability to write culturally relevant, insightful plays. They dealt with themes that appealed to Mexican youth, using colloquial language, and expressed strong social commentary in new and innovative ways. Ronald Burgess underscores four tendencies in this group of young writers for whom he created the name "The New Dramatists of Mexico": the realistic presentation of contemporary problems; the concern with youth and the desire to portray them realistically through the use of highly colloquial language; a focus on difficult interpersonal relationships or the lack of meaningful ones; and the desire for control (31). Nonetheless, despite Carballido, Leñero, and an abundance of young

¹Other texts of interest include: *Theater of Crisis: Drama and Politics in Latin America* (1991) by Diana Taylor; *Lecturas desde afuera: ensayos sobre la obra de Vicente Leñero*, edited by Kirsten F. Nigro (1997); *Sediciosas seducciones: Sexo, poder y palabras en el teatro de Sabina Berman* (2004), edited by Jacqueline E. Bixler; *Trans/Acting: Latin American and Latino Performing Arts* (2009), edited by Jacqueline E. Bixler and Laurietz Seda, and *El teatro de Rascón Banda: Voces en el umbral*, edited by Jacqueline E. Bixler and Stuart Day.

talent, Mexican theater did not flourish during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Instead, a trend of importing works from other countries became pervasive, leaving a void in the production of Mexican theater. “At [this] point, Mexican was ‘out,’ foreign was ‘in,’ and the public seemed more interested in escapism and light entertainment than social commentary” (Burgess 45). Active playwrights, such as Jesús González Dávila and Carlos Olmos, did not receive the public acceptance that they may have desired due to their bleak and fatalistic depictions of an urban life so terrible that the characters are desperate to escape it. This blunt and pessimistic dramatic style no doubt reflected the national feeling of disillusionment that followed the brutal massacre of protesting citizens in the Plaza de Tlatelolco on October 2, 1968.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Mexican playwrights continued to focus on Mexican society, politics, and history, but in a more playful, critical, and postmodern style. For example, Sabina Berman’s irreverent, parodic treatment of official history in *Aguila o sol* (1984) represents a fresh and entertaining way of challenging Mexico’s institutionalized history and national myths, in this case regarding the Conquest of Mexico. Similarly, Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda used theater to critique different aspects of society, such as the widespread effects of drug trafficking, corruption and the marginalization of the nation’s indigenous population.

In his own way, Ricaño has built upon this foundation to make a name for himself in Mexican theater today. He has followed certain traditions and norms while breaking away from others, combining his talent and personal writing style with those earlier conventions to produce a distinct voice in Mexican theater. In addition to a steady output of dramatic texts, he has directed his own work and acted in plays written by others. He has also written and published essays on theater, proving himself to be a serious scholar as well as a talented writer. Despite his young age, Ricaño has already written ten plays, eight of which have been published.² To date, *La caja musical* (2001), *La constante sospecha de un hombre* (2003), *Recuerdo immaculado de un cine* (2003), *La bella Ana* (2003), *Los imperfectos* (2005), *Un torso, mierda, y el secreto del carnicero* (2006), *Más pequeños que*

² *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* and *Timboctou* have been performed and will be published in a book titled *Timboctou y otros ensayos sobre la estupidez* along with *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim*. The date of publication has not yet been announced.

el Guggenheim (2008), and *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo* (2009) have all been published. Publication of the original text of *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* has been planned for the near future along with *Timboctou* and *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim*. Ricaño's plays are set in a variety of places (e.g., Paris, Mexico City) and cover a diverse range of topics and themes.

Like dramatists of previous generations, Ricaño tends to focus on critical social and economic issues. The critical social commentary made through the depiction of corrupt government officials, the flawed education system, and the characters' fruitless search for "a little something" to make their lives more bearable is present throughout the play. In *Idiotas Contemplating the Snow*, the characters' attitudes toward modern life is aptly described by the author in the program for the June 2010 premiere of *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* in Xalapa, Mexico:

Es una verdad dolorosa, ignoramos que estamos jodidos... cometemos estupideces para satisfacer necesidades absurdas, con la esperanza de que un día sea suficiente, que un día nos sintamos plenos. Pero evitemos el suspenso, de sobra sabemos que no será así. Si el de Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding o Mick Jagger fue un grito de euforia, el de nosotros, condenados a permanecer afuera del aparador, es un grito de ansiedad: I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION [It is a painful truth, we ignore that we are all fucked.... We do stupid things to satisfy absurd needs with the hope that one day it will be sufficient, that one day we will be satisfied. But let's end the suspense; we already know all too well that it will not be. If that of Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding or Mick Jagger was a shout of euphoria, for us, those condemned to remain forever window shopping, it is an anxious cry: I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION!]

The dramatist's comments clearly echo Day's characterization of political theater of the 90s: "none explicitly suggests 'remedies' for the problems Mexico faces; this job is left to the spectator or reader, who must play a crucial role in the production of meaning" (31). In *Idiotas Contemplating the Snow*, Ricaño offers no solutions to the crisis currently being faced by middle-class Mexicans, but rather allows the audience to see itself portrayed on the stage. Humor is used to soften the grim depiction of reality by showing the foolish

consequences of any attempt to resist fate. Humor is combined with depictions of the characters' futile attempts to improve their dismal reality when they are interrupted by an unexpected snowfall. The snowfall is perceived as a small improvement. After their attempts to secure some small form of satisfaction have been crushed by the reality of their lives, they refuse to accept that the snow is just another cold reality. Instead, it takes the place of the "little something" they were looking for. In the final scene, the narrators explain:

¿Había nevado para cubrir ese mundo chueco y desajustado al que no lograban adaptarse, al menos por un momento? Tal vez.

O tal vez el mundo había decidido repararse por su cuenta, partiendo por dismantelar el cielo.

[Had it snowed to cover that warped and maladjusted world to which they hadn't managed to adapt, at least for a moment? Maybe.

Or maybe, they wonder, the world had decided to mend itself, starting by dismantling the sky.]

The characters choose to believe that the pure white snow is the world's way of beginning to slowly repair itself without their intervention.

Ricaño provides relief from the serious problems faced by the characters through the constant use of humor, which ranges from witty puns to dark humor. The kind of dark humor present in Ricaño's work is identified by J.L. Styan in his description of the dark comedic style as:

drama which impels the spectator forward by stimulus to mind or heart, then distracts him, muddles him, so that time and again he must review his own activity in watching the play. [...] He is charged with a tension as a result of which he is a more alert and therefore responsive participant. (Styan 262)

The audience's tense reflection is usually achieved, as Styan indicates, through a presentation of daily life in which the characters are mirrors designed to make the audience see themselves on the stage. This kind of play "prohibits easy solutions [...] the detachment of comedy is not allowed us, nor the sympathy of tragedy" (Styan 257). Adding humor to the uncomfortable realities faced softens the audience's reaction and makes the

disconcerting portrait on stage more acceptable to viewers. Ricaño's consistent addition of dark humor to critical social commentary does not, however, diminish the message. Instead, the satire complements the criticism and makes it more palatable for the audience.

Dark humor is a constant in Ricaño's plays and serves various purposes. Humor occurs in multiple forms, ranging from colloquial language to absurd behavior on the part of the characters. From the very start of his career as a playwright, Ricaño's style has been marked by his ability to find humor in life's most serious challenges. Yet his use of humor is not frivolous nor does it take away from the didactic intent of his plays. In *Idiots contemplating the snow*, the great lengths to which the characters are willing to go to make their lives a little better seem far-fetched, but they are oddly relatable. Our ability to identify with Ricaño's characters makes it easy, as a spectator, to be swept up in the action and to begin to see oneself, friends and neighbors on the stage, while the dark humor makes it easy to laugh at the uncomfortable situations in which we find ourselves. Ricaño's agile use of dark humor in his plays serves various purposes without inhibiting the more serious matters depicted in his work. He softens a harsh topic, for example, in *Un torso, mierda y el secreto del carnicero*, when a woman turns in a decapitated head to a police officer, who asks "¿Ha perdido los sesos, *Madame!*?" [Have you lost your mind, *Madame!*?]. The officer is asking the woman if she has lost her mind, but in Spanish it is not immediately discernable whether he is asking about her own brains or those of the decapitated head. The confused woman replies that she does not know because she has not checked. In this play, the disturbing reality depicted by the dramatist leaves a lasting impression, one made bearable, and even funny, through the author's adept use of dark humor. *Timboctou* likewise includes humor to soften the opening scene, in which orders are given to leave four dismembered bodies and a hand-written message in the trunk of a Cadillac parked at McDonald's. Twin brothers Ivonne and Ivette, small-time *narcos* in Tijuana, are put in charge of this task. In the opening scene, the two argue about how to write the message, at which point it becomes apparent that neither of them is sure how to spell the incredibly simple word "sabes." Unable to agree, they call their boss, who appears to be in charge of

the local government as well as this band of *narcos*. In the end, they comically misspell the message.³

Another source of humor in Ricaño's work is the use of intertextual references. In *La constante sospecha de un hombre*, one of the characters buys a book titled *Recuerdo immaculado de un cine*, which is the name of another play by Ricaño published the same year. Even more explicitly, in *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*, the story of the deceased Sr. Moncada, an incompetent government official formerly married to Nana, is referenced in *Timboctou*. These intertextual references are like inside jokes that the author shares with those spectators familiar with his work. These, among many other examples, show the author's sense of humor even in the most unpleasant of situations and make the tragic aspects of the plays not just bearable, but also laughable for the audience.

Humor allows Ricaño to present tragic cases from human existence in a way that allows the audience to perceive an underlying glimmer of hope in these desperate or despairing situations. Ricaño describes his style in the following way:

Escribo sobre todo comedias de humor negro en las que los personajes, conforme va desarrollándose la trama, van desarrollando una profundidad emocional. Al final dejan de ser graciosas las desgracias de los personajes, pero procuro que el espectador no se quede con una sensación de malestar. [I write mostly dark comedies in which the characters, as the plot develops, become more emotionally profound. In the end, their failures cease to be funny, but I try not to leave the spectator feeling ill at ease.] (Bixler and Morris)

The cathartic hope with which Ricaño's plays end is often achieved through the idea that the situations in which the characters find themselves are not permanent situations and that there is a possibility for improvement in the future. In the final scene of *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*, each character reflects on his or her failures while standing in the gently falling snow. The narrators explain:

Para ellos es un llamado de atención. Un sacudida. Un recordatorio de que todos, absolutamente todos, requerimos de pequeñas reparaciones. Y está bien. Quizá no

³ The end of the message, "*Atentamente, ya sabes quién*" becomes "*Atentamente, ya saves quién*"

sea tarde para empezar. Quizá, después de todo, haya algo mejor al derretirse la nieve.

[For them it is a wake-up call. A nudge. A reminder that everyone, absolutely everyone, needs a little something. And that's okay. Perhaps it isn't too late to begin. Perhaps, after all, there will be something better after the snow melts away.]

Leaving the spectator with a sense of hope after the bleak presentation of the characters' lives is also an example of the cathartic endings typical of Ricaño's work.

In the majority of his plays, Ricaño writes within a distinctly Mexican context. He explains, "lo que la gente tendría que ver es un retrato de México, son problemas mexicanos" [what people need to see is a portrait of Mexico, these are Mexican problems] (Ricaño re: Traducción de su obra). This comment reflects Ronald Burgess's observation of the theater produced between 1967 and 1985: "This generation's works commonly depict characters who lack control and situations in which a prime element is an unstable reality often accompanied by a critical commentary on social structures" (137). In the case of *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*, the social structures under attack are represented by individuals and range from average, middle-class citizens such as Bernardita and Marisa, to government officials like Nana, and the clergy, which is personified through Virgilio.⁴ The volatility of decisions made by the characters in their search for happiness demonstrates the lack of control in their lives, while presenting a humorous, yet believable sample of life in Mexico.

The style and structure of Ricaño's plays have also varied. There are some exceptions, such as *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim* and *Timboctou*, but the structure in the majority of his plays is linear. In some of his more recent works, Ricaño has employed a fragmented plot. This is especially notable in both *Idiots Contemplating the Snow* and *Timboctou*, in which the fragmentation of the plot increases the suspense through the simultaneous, interweaving development of several stories. Even in shorter plays, Ricaño prefers to present multiple points of view. *La bella Ana* focuses on a love triangle between Ana, Martín and Martín's father, showing the perspectives of each character through the

⁴ The Spanish title, *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, will refer to the original Spanish text. To reference the translated text, I will use the English title, *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*.

dialogue, while in *La constante sospecha de un hombre* two sides of the same story are told. The first point of view is that of a husband who is convinced that his wife is unfaithful, but only because he was. After the man recovers from his fears, some scenes already seen from his perspective are revisited from the point of view of his wife, who was indeed unfaithful. In the end, neither admits their infidelity to the other. This play uniquely depicts equality between the sexes by shifting the audience's perspectives and resulting perceptions of the characters throughout the play. Another repeated feature in Ricaño's dramaturgy is the use of narrators and asides,⁵ which serves to advance the plot and at the same time creates a sense of fragmentation. Ricaño's theater is also characterized by a lack of detailed stage directions. In his earlier work, he included detailed descriptions of the stage design as well as physical descriptions of the characters, possibly reflecting the influence of Carballido, whose early plays included lengthy stage directions. In Ricaño's *Recuerdo immaculado de un cine* (2003), the stage directions occupy nearly half of the dramatic text. In his more recent work, asides, flash backs, and the use of narrators communicate most of the pertinent peripheral information to the audience, as in *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*. Ricaño explains the relative lack of explicit stage directions as a reflection of his work as a director:

Siempre he pensado en dirigir mis textos [...] dejé de escribir acotaciones cuando empezaron a montar mis textos otras personas para que la puesta en escena fuera completamente libre. [...] Actualmente no me rehúso a las acotaciones, pero evito que sean indicaciones escénicas, sólo son acotaciones de la misma ficción, indican únicamente en el lugar que están, o acciones muy simples. [I have always thought about directing my own work [...] I stopped writing stage directions when other people began directing my work so that the staging would be completely free [...] Currently I don't refuse to use stage directions but I avoid writing staging directions; they are only descriptions of the story, indicating only the location or very simple actions.] (Ricaño Re: obras)

⁵ The dramatist was unable to provide a copy of his very early piece, *La caja musical*. Consequently, I cannot comment on its style or contents.

The lack of explicit instruction in the written text of Ricaño's play leaves his works subject to individual interpretation, but not impossible to visualize thanks to the information provided through narrators and other forms of asides.

In terms of content, Ricaño's plays usually center on the characters' personal and interpersonal problems, a focus best seen in *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim*, and *Timboctou*. These three plays focus on misunderstandings and the problems that can come from failure to communicate and the lack of socioeconomic opportunity. In contrast, there are some notable exceptions to these common themes. For example, *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo* and *Un torso, mierda, y el secreto del carnicero* are both set in Paris and follow the absurdist style established by Samuel Beckett and Alfred Jarry. The problems experienced by the characters in these two plays are not typical troubles. *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo* takes place within the context of the 1953 production of *Waiting for Godot*. Main characters Marie and Gustave are obsessed with Beckett and his play. They watch his every move and even break into his house, wherein Gustave finds and begins to rewrite Beckett's play. In the final scene, the two are left alone in a prison cell awaiting Gustave's execution, while at the same time hopelessly awaiting the arrival of Godot like the characters in the original play. In *Un torso, mierda, y el secreto del carnicero*, the plot follows Felicia, the daughter of a prostitute, orphaned when the latter is murdered by a dramatist who wants to be a contemporary of Alfred Jarry and his *Ubú Rey*, though he cannot seem to find the inspiration to write. Felicia, in her desperate situation, later becomes the muse of the same homicidal dramatist, who tries to inspire himself to write by using her misery to make himself feel less miserable. These two plays are atypical, as they do not end with the catharsis commonly found in Ricaño's other plays; the first ends with the idea of an improbable arrival, and the latter with the two protagonists waiting for death to claim them. Another notable exception is *Los imperfectos*, which depicts topics such as child pornography, infidelity, murder and suicide. In a general description of his plays, Ricaño says,

En general no tengo un tema recurrente. Al principio casi todas mis obras hablaban sobre el teatro; algunas sobre personajes de la historia de la literatura dramática, otras simplemente sobre el quehacer escénico. Y ahora escribo prácticamente sobre

cualquier tema. Lo que une a mis obras, principalmente es el humor negro. [Generally speaking, I don't have a recurring theme. In the beginning almost all of my work was about theater; some about characters from canonical dramatic literature, others simply about the writing of theater. And now I write about practically any topic. What unifies my work, principally, is dark humor.] (Bixler and Morris)

Even during the period of time in which his plays were about theater itself, the topics presented in Ricaño's work are varied enough that they never begin to feel repetitious.⁶

In addition to its popularity among theater-goers, *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* was well received by local critics following the premiere in June 2010. Ricaño was recognized by the *Revista Digital Justa* as one of the authors currently at work in “una nueva generación de dramaturgos mexicanos que se caracterizan por una peculiar inclinación por la comedia y el desprecio a la teoría de géneros que tanto tiempo marcó al teatro mexicano” [a new generation of Mexican dramatists characterized by a marked preference for comedy and the eschewal of the genre theory that has defined Mexican theater for so long] (*Revista Digital Justo*). Humor, even in the darkest of situations, is a trademark of Ricaño's plays. *El Sol de México*, a newspaper published in Xalapa, situates Ricaño among the vanguard of Mexican playwrights. The newspaper notes that, although he is significantly younger than his contemporaries, he writes with a maturity that distinguishes him from other notable writers of his generation, such as Enrique Olmos, Gibrán Portella and Hugo Wirth. *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* is described by another local theater critic as “una obra para todo entendimiento, con personajes absurdamente reales y de suma complejidad, donde la frustración combate con la mediocridad sin encontrar puntos medios” [a work for everyone, with absurdly real and fully complex characters, where frustration struggles against mediocrity without finding a middle ground] The same critic adds, “Hay obras para reír, obras para llorar... esta obra, pertenece a ambos géneros.” [There are plays for laughing and plays for crying... this play pertains to both genres] (Serrano, Axel). Other critics focus on the themes of the play, observing that *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* is Ricaño's most lighthearted work, but nevertheless “una obra potente, dinámica, divertida, llena de

⁶ *Los imperfectos* (2005); *Un torso, mierda, y el secreto del carnicero* (2006); *Riñón de cerdo para el desconsuelo* (2008); *Más pequeños que el Guggenheim* (2009).

revelaciones sobre la pequeñez humana” [a work that is potent, dynamic, fun, full of revelations of human shortcomings] (Serrano, Alejandra). This observation recognizes the comedic aspects present in the production of the play as well as the thematic content of the play, whose contemporary themes are all too familiar to the audience.

Owing to the incorporation of distinctly Mexican themes, relevant, contemporary topics and, of course, the humor that is ever-present in Ricaño’s plays, his theater is both timely and timeless. Ricaño employs a theatrical style that is marked by satire, dark humor, and social commentary, but also optimism. Even in the worst situations, there is “a little something” that gives the characters, and therefore the audience, hope. As Ricaño continues to write, I believe he will remain among the defining writers of his generation and that his work will continue to be enjoyed by audiences both in Mexico and abroad.

The Challenges of Translating Mexican Theater

The translation of theater is, in a way, a process as old as theater itself. When a play is performed, directors, producers, actors and actresses interpret an author’s words. Later, an audience interprets the performance and extrapolates meaning from the presentation of the interpretations of the original work as they are acted out on the stage. In this sense, all communication requires interpretation of a sort. These layers of translation are only deepened when a theatrical work is translated and eventually performed in another language and in a culture other than the one for which it was originally written. In this case, the original text of *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* is mediated not only by the interpretation of directors and actors, but also by my translation— which is itself influenced by my experience of seeing the play performed.

Translations seem to be most appreciated when the work of the translator is invisible. In other words, a good translation is measured by the degree to which the translated work has the same meaning and effect on the intended audience as it does in the source language. Well-known translator Gregory Rabassa maintains that “a good translation is essentially a good reading; if we know how to read as we should we will be

able to put down what we are reading in another language into our own. I might have said into our own words, but these, even in English, belong to the author who indirectly thought them up” (37). Translation is a process of reading and reformulating, not into the words of the translator, but into the words of the original author only in a different language, perhaps one unknown to the original author. The difficulty in translating theater is that when a reader reads a book, the only mediation between the author and the reader is the text. In the case of theater, many people are involved in the presentation of meaning (e.g., directors, actors). Furthermore, in the case of cross-cultural exportation of theatrical works, there is a danger of loss of meaning. This danger, as described by Peter Newmark, includes transcultural losses that may occur through differences in lexical, grammatical and sound systems, individual differences in the use of language, and different perceptions of meaning for the writer and translator (7-8). Additionally, there are theater-specific challenges in translation, principally the performability of the translation text, discussed later in this introduction.

Publications in the field of translation of Latin American theater are predominately represented by three categories: translation theory, practical guides, and pieces written by prominent translators based on their experiences. The first category can be further divided into two distinct theoretical approaches to translation: applied theories and critical theories. Three works from the applied theoretical translation genre that I found useful in this translation are Christine Nord’s *Translation as a Purposeful Activity*, Peter Newmark’s *Approaches to Translation*, and Marianne Lederer’s description of the Interpretive theory in the article, “Can Theory Help Translator and Interpreter Trainers and Trainees?” Nord provides a detailed description of functionalist translation theories. Building on the original German theories *Handlungstheorie* and *Skopostheorie*, she provides readers an introduction to the development, use and limitations of the functionalist approach to translation. Nord defines the functionalist approach by building on Hans J. Vermeer’s *Skopostheorie*. According to this approach, the translator and client should begin by negotiating the intended purpose of the text. Afterwards, the translator should focus on translating in such a way that the intended purpose of the text is served in the translation. Of course, in many cases the purpose of a text is evident and does not need to be negotiated. According to Vermeer, “each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose [...]

translate/ interpret/ speak/ write in a way that enables your text/ translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function” (Nord 29). As Nord explains, a text can have multiple purposes (*skopos*) and that more than one purpose can be addressed in the translation process. This approach allows the translator the freedom to translate in a more holistic manner rather than follow the traditional word-by-word approach. The practical discussion of translation provided by Newmark focuses on semantic and communicative translation approaches. Later, specific challenges faced within the task are identified along with ways each approach can be used to address them.

The Interpretive theory of translation, on the other hand, takes into account “the general psychological processes of the understanding and production of discourse and the function of both source and target texts, and underscores the role played by translators in carrying *sense* across language barriers” (Lederer 21). The Interpretive approach has two stages: “understanding the text to be translated and reformulating the results of the understanding” (Lederer 23). The Interpretive approach uses a process of de-verbalizing and reformulation, or having a conceptual understanding of the text to be translated, and then putting that understanding into words that will be understood by a different audience. In theatrical translation this process can be compared to visualizing the work before re-wording the text. When translating *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, I began the process of understanding the play by carefully reading the text and later seeing it performed, which enhanced my visualization of the play. Using this process, I was able to separate my understanding of the play from the way it was verbally presented in the text and the performance in order to translate in a way that did not necessarily reflect the same sentence style or grammatical structure as the original. This is the concept Lederer describes as de-verbalization. The Functionalist and Interpretive approaches combined were practical in this translation because, as a theatrical work, the text has a very specific purpose – that of being performed. Seeing the translation task through the lens of these theories helped me clearly identify my goals as well as focus the methods I used to achieve them. In addition to the books that define the applied theories of translation, there are numerous publications

that are more aptly categorized as critical theories of translation.⁷ These studies belong to the genre of literary criticism and are more suitable for situating the role of the translator or shaping what translators may choose to translate.

The second category of translation study is represented by practical guides. These guides are usually written by very experienced translators and describe recommendations and pitfalls based on their personal experiences. Three volumes that I found particularly helpful were: *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Adaptation* (2000), edited by Carol-Anne Upton; *Practical Approaches to Translating Theater: Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation* (2006), by Phyllis Zatlin, and *Voice-overs: Translation and Latin American Literature* (2002), edited by David Balderston and Mary E. Schwartz. All three collections include practical advice based on experiences with different translated texts from the perspectives of translators and original authors. Reading the experiences of seasoned translators helped me, as a newcomer to the field, to see the translation task through the lens of a more experienced translator. For example, when the question of adapting the play arose, I was able to identify areas of the play that should not be adapted or that otherwise may have seemed inconsequential, such as Spanish nicknames and terms like CONACYT.

The final category of translation study is made up of descriptions of years of translation experience. Writings in this category are generally authored by prolific translators such as Gregory Rabassa and Margaret Sayers Peden, both of whom have translated numerous works by literary giants such as Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes. These types of descriptions were helpful to me because they, like the practical guides, offer another perspective of the translation task. The direct nature of theatrical text makes it easy, as a translator, to get caught up in specific lines and details. Borrowing the holistic perspective that comes from years of experience enabled me to see the project as a whole, rather than in parts, pieces and acts. The impracticality of translating the play in one sitting is apparent, but acknowledging that the play should be translated with the entire text

⁷For a thorough discussion of these topics, see: *Translation and the Rise of Inter-American Literature* (2007) by Elizabeth Lowe and Earl E. Fitz; *The Traffic in Meaning, Translation, Contagion, Infiltration* by Mary Louise Pratt (2002); *Translation Studies* (1980) by Susan Bassnett, and “Getting the Word Out: Issues in the Translation of Latin American Theatre for US Audiences” (2000) by Kirsten Nigro

taken into consideration helped me recognize repeated terms from the play, which acquire further meaning through repetition. The verb *contemplar* [to contemplate], because it is part of the title of the play and repeated throughout the text, would not be accurately represented by a variety of synonyms. A similar example is found in the term *pequeñas reparaciones*, the “little something” that all of the characters are seeking. A word-for-word approach would have rendered “little reparations” which does not accurately convey the idea intended in the Spanish original. I chose the term “a little something” since it most accurately fit each context in which the term was used. Without the same repetition, the meaning and the poetic quality of the play would have been altered.

The first and most obvious step in the translation process was to carefully read the text. Shortly afterwards, I had the opportunity to see *Idiotas contemplando la nieve* twice during the the June 2010 premiere in Xalapa, Mexico, under the direction of Alberto Lomnitz, winner of the 2010 National Dramaturgy award. Only upon seeing the play performed did I understand the role of the narrators, whose lines are italicized in the original playscript. In addition to traditional tools such as dictionaries, I used pictures that I took discreetly during the performance and later captioned with the lines they depicted to give myself a visual account of the play. While translating, I was able to reference the pictures as necessary to remember the scenes with which I was working. During the days after the performance, I read reviews in the local newspapers of Xalapa. As a non-Mexican, these critical reviews helped me understand the perception of the play from a Mexican point of view. I was better able to focus on retaining the communicative qualities of the play knowing how the play was being perceived and received locally. To avoid a translation that was effectively an English rendition of the performances that I saw, I shared my completed translation with readers whose understanding would not be influenced by the performance or the original manuscript. The reactions of readers unfamiliar with the performance or Mexican culture and society allowed me to identify areas that were left unclear in my translation. For example, an early draft of my translation described the vehicle in which Sr. Moncada was assassinated simply as a van. I discovered that it was important to clarify that he was murdered in his campaign van. Without that detail, the political nature of this violent act is lost. Additionally, I read all of Ricaño’s other works to familiarize myself with his style so that any stylistic changes due to stage directions or

interpretation of the performance that I saw would not overshadow the author's intended style. Throughout the process, I remained in contact with Ricaño and had the opportunity to interview him and to contact him with any doubts or questions that arose as I translated the dramatic text.⁸

My primary approach in shaping my goals in the translation of this play has been communicative, meaning that the translated work should have the same effect on the audience as did the original. I established this goal with the recognition that it is somewhat idealistic or perhaps even unrealistic; written for a Mexican audience, the play cannot be experienced in exactly the same way by an American audience. However, within the limitations set by cultural understanding, I attempted to retain the play's cultural significance and local flavor. My secondary goal has been semantic, to maintain the authentic Mexican context and flavor of the play while keeping the lines smooth and performable.⁹ These goals are directly related to the challenges specific to translating this play, which were undoubtedly the translation of verbal humor and idiomatic expressions, while at the same time conveying the work's social commentary.

While translating *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, I tried to ensure that the effect of the translation on the audience would match that of the audience watching the play in the source language. To accomplish this, I took advantage of the performance to observe the attitudes conveyed by the actors as well as the audience's reactions to expressions that were highly idiomatic. The close study of both actors and audience helped me choose comparable words and phrases throughout the translation of the play, particularly with regard to tone and register. My experience as a spectator was also very helpful in the sense that this dramatic text, like most of Ricaño's work, is almost completely devoid of stage directions. My participation as a spectator allowed me to understand the play on a different level; the performance allowed me to de-verbalize my understanding of the play and to identify the sentiments that at times lie behind the lines. My observation of emotions portrayed through actions and other forms of body language was invaluable when

⁸ For the full text of the interview, see Jacqueline Bixler and Shana Morris, "Del humor negro al discurso esperanzador: Entrevista con Alejandro Ricaño," *Latin American Theatre Review* 44.2 (spring 2011) (forthcoming).

⁹ For a detailed definition of semantic vs. communicative translation, see Peter Newmark's *Approaches to Translation* (1981).

translating the tone of phrases that either did not exist or did not translate easily into English. For example, prior to my viewing of the play, it was difficult to understand the emotional intensity of the first conversation between Bernardita and Nana, especially when Bernardita is explicitly describing Nana's questionable ascent to the political realm. By recalling the way that particular scene was portrayed, I believe I was able to more accurately transfer the sentiments of the original scene into the translated one.

My secondary goal of maintaining the Mexican context of the play while keeping the lines smooth and performable was more tedious than my first goal of maintaining its communicative qualities. Performability is a concept that has been discussed widely among theater translators and critics. In her aptly titled article, "Translating for Theater: The Case Against Performability," Bassnett maintains that the notion of performability is multi-dimensional and potentially problematic. In her words, the term is used to "justify substantial variations in the target language text, including cuts and additions. Moreover, the term *performability* is also frequently used to describe the indescribable, the supposedly existent concealed gestic text within the written" (102). In other words, aside from serving as an excuse for taking editorial liberties during the process of translation, this term also describes an ideological assumption that the text contains an invisible subtext that is to be guarded by the translator. For the purpose of the present translation, I have adhered to the theory of Eva Espassa, who argues in favor of "putting theatre ideology and power negotiation at the heart of performability and mak[ing] such textual and theatrical factors as speakability and playability relative to it" (58). For Espassa, the performability of the play is governed by those who make decisions in the theater on what and whose works to produce. Speakability and playability are also considered, but perhaps less than other factors. Strictly speaking, many things, regardless of practicality, can be considered performance, as exemplified by *La orgástula*, by Chilean Jorge Díaz. In this play, the drama consists of a man and a woman wrapped together in bandages, face-to-face. The dialogue contains no recognizable words, yet manages, through tone alone, to communicate the characters' emotions. In traditional spoken performance, however, the lines must be speakable, pronounceable and clearly worded so that the audience, who cannot rewind or re-read, can follow the plot as it is acted out before them. Using the functionalist approach, I first considered the purpose of the play, which, as a dramatic text, is to be performed.

Likewise, I considered that those who will potentially “use” the translated text will be actors, and that the speakability of the play is directly affected by their ability to perform it. Since Spanish phrases are generally longer, a word-for-word translation into English often renders a sentence that is cumbersome and not conducive to a smooth performance. In the translation of *Idiotas contemplando la nieve*, I focused on keeping the lines smooth and performable and maintaining a native-sounding flow in the dialogue. To facilitate this process, I made a habit of reading the play aloud and even acted out some of the scenes myself (much to the amusement of those nearby) to test the lines. This process helped me address the needs of actors by avoiding drawn-out sentences and choppy lines. Finally, I consulted a variety of people with regards to exclamations, expletives, and other colloquialisms in the hope of maintaining the authenticity, flow, register and tenor of the original wording. To gain a better understanding of the distinctly Mexican vocabulary, particularly vulgarities, I consulted young Mexicans, mostly from Xalapa, who would be familiar with the terms in question. For terms in English, I asked a sample set of English-speaking friends in the same age group who were perhaps more familiar with English vulgarities than I am— this also kept me from letting my own vocabulary be reflected too heavily in the translation.

In addition to my stated goals in the process of this translation, the text itself presented additional challenges in the form of the vocabulary used by the characters. The most difficult parts to translate were the *palabrotas* (vulgar words that are uniquely Mexican) and other colloquialisms. Ricaño’s use of profanity and everyday language makes the characters more authentic and believable and at the same time accentuates the humor of the text. As translator, my objective was to produce a translation faithful to the original while maintaining the humorous and colloquial nature of the language.

My biggest challenge as a non-Mexican translator was profanity, which abounds in *Idiotas Contemplating the Snow*. Knowing that profanity should never be translated literally into a second language, I began by attempting to get a strong understanding of the literal and figurative meaning of the most common Mexican vulgarities from young native speakers of Mexican Spanish. I then selected the English profanity that seemed to match best the Spanish original, consistently using the same English word for the original Spanish

one. This approach quickly proved to be impractical since the context, which is easily as important as the word itself, was not being considered. As in other languages, profanities in Mexican Spanish derive more meaning from the tone and the context in which they are used than from the literal meaning of the word. Consequently, in order to capture the characters' sentiments and emotional reactions to the events taking place on stage, I looked for equivalent terms based on the dramatic context in which the word was used. The use of the word *chingar* was the most varied. When Minervo finishes remodeling his wife's bathroom, it is used as a compliment when he says "Soy un chingón o qué?" which I translated as "Am I the shit or what?" At other times, *chingar* was used in a negative sense, as in the scene where Bernardita asks Virgilio, "¿Qué chingados es un ay-fon?" which I translated as "What the fuck is an ay-fon?" For obvious reasons, the context of these two statements dictated that the same English word not be used.

Shortly after I began this translation project, a New York theater producer asked the dramatist, Alejandro Ricano, to send him one of his texts. Given that *Idiots Contemplating the Snow* is to date the first of his plays to be translated, it was the logical choice. This prompted the question of how much of the original text we would want to change in adapting the play for an American audience. This question included culturally-specific references to Mexico's social and governmental structures, monetary terms, measurements, and commonly-used nicknames, such as *gordo*. When I asked the dramatist for his opinion on modifying the play for an English-speaking audience his opinion was definite: any attempt to adapt the work for an American audience would result in excessive alteration of the play. Given that he had written the play for a Mexican audience, he felt strongly that adjusting the play for an American audience would be tantamount to writing a completely new play about American socio-economic issues. A clear example of cultural "translation" is the reference to Liverpool, a Mexican chain of department stores known for its importation of luxury goods from the United States and Europe. It is unlikely that an American audience would understand the implicit reference to *malinchismo*, but contextual clues in the text should define the referent without significant loss of meaning.¹⁰ Additionally, there are cultural concepts in the play that are not likely to translate to an American audience unfamiliar with the Mexican socio-political context. A prime example

¹⁰ A term that refers to the rejection of local or national items or ideas in favor of foreign ones.

is the recommendation that Elvis, the bus driver, flee the scene if he were ever to run over a pedestrian. For those unfamiliar with the presumption of guilt in the Mexican justice system, this recommendation would seem ill-advised, not to mention illegal. Also, Fofy, Nana's pet *axolotl* (Mexican mole lizard), is not a species familiar to the average American theater-goer. However, the meaning of the referent should be clear through the use of performed visual clues. Based on the author's stated preference, I kept all terms related to measurement and money in meters and *pesos*. Nicknames and terms of endearment were also preserved in their original form to accentuate the specifically Mexican cultural aspects of the play, and of course to remind the audience that the play, although verbally translated into English, is set in contemporary Mexico.

Another challenge that I faced was the question of how to communicate in English certain aspects of Mexico's socio-political reality. This challenge arose most frequently in the presentation of authority figures, from Virgilio the priest to Nana the politician, all of whom are corrupt. The range of character types is not random, but rather intended to show the breadth and depth of the systemic corruption that plagues contemporary Mexico. An American audience might, for example, find it difficult to appreciate or even understand the multiple references to Nana's former boyfriend, Sr. Moncada, ex-secretary of communications and transportation, through whom she slept her way to the world of politics and literally became a politician overnight. The story of Sr. Moncada's assassination in his campaign van may seem unfamiliar, or even far-fetched, to an American audience, yet, during the very same month that the play premiered in Xalapa, Veracruz, the candidate for governor in Tamaulipas, the state north of Veracruz, was murdered in the very same way. An American audience is likely to perceive this as a shocking, random act of violence. Yet the Mexican spectators with whom I watched the play in Xalapa clearly appreciated the realistic depiction of their political environment and even laughed as they recognized the farcical recreation of political processes and events all too familiar to them. As a result of this experience, I translated these particular parts of the text with the knowledge that not everyone would understand the references or the intended effect. I also worked with the expectation that the director of a non-Spanish performance of the play will use non-verbal means to convey the more subtle meanings, as in the original.

In the on-stage performance, for example, Nana wore a red dress, the dominant color used by the PRI, particularly during political campaigns and elections.¹¹

Another significant theater-specific challenge of translation consists of recognizing and preserving the range and tone of voice that distinguishes each character in the play. Margaret Sayers Peden, one of the most successful and prolific translators of Latin American literature, explains, “in ordinary circumstances, once I can find the voice, other things begin to fall into place” (76). In the translation of other literary genres, such as novel and short story, the translator can normally locate the voice by becoming familiar with the author and the work to be translated, which typically consists of a single narrator. In the case of theater, however, this dimension of translation is compounded and complicated by the number of voices that form the dialogue. In *Idiots Contemplating the Snow*, the characters’ voices are actually not as varied as the voices in Ricaño’s other works. While this lack of range in voice may simply be a reflection of his classification of all the characters as “idiots,” it also adds a layer of unification across social strata, which in turn highlights the similarities that exist among the characters, all of whom are searching desperately to find “a little something” with which to improve their lives. While the voices do not vary much in tone, there are some notable differences in the register of the language used, particularly with regard to age.¹² All of the characters, even the priest, use an abundance of vulgarities, while Ramsés’ mother, older in years, uses a milder form of speech that is accompanied by an almost tired tone, discernable in the pausing flow of her dialogue, which contains more ellipses than actual words. The rest of the characters spoke in the uncouth register commonly used by the urban lower class, a linguistic aspect that supplies the dialogue with a touch of realism and a steady stream of humor.

A translated manuscript is only a fraction of a potential performance, but choices made by the translator are inextricably connected to that production. As Susan Bassnett observes, “‘real’ translation takes place on the level of the *mise en scene*, in other words, [...] a theater text is an incomplete entity” (101). Bassnett recognizes the text as only a part of the eventual performance and equates choices made by the translator to the choices made

¹¹ The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) is the political party that has dominated Mexican politics since its inception in 1928.

¹² The term *register* is used to refer to the degree of formality in the language used by the character.

by the director. The translator's decisions shape the verbal contents of each scene. Nonetheless, the translated manuscript is merely a part of the eventual performance, through which future actors and directors will portray their interpretation of the words. Thus, there are multiple people with varying skillsets who mediate the text between the author and the audience.

Finally, to avoid any discrepancies in the translation that could have been caused by differences in individual language use or ambiguous grammar in the source text, I sent the translation to Ricaño, who, as the author of the original text, was able to compare the translation to his intended understanding of the text. After reviewing the translated play in its entirety, Ricaño approved and even staged excerpts from the translation at a theater festival for translated works. In the words of Gregory Rabassa, “a translator is a reader, then, but one who writes what he reads. He is a writer but really only half a one. He need not trouble his imagination about plot or theme or characters but still [...] he must know what the writer was up to when he established all of that” (32). Translation is a process that involves multiple skills and talents with no shortage of pitfalls and challenges. In addressing the challenges presented by the text, I endeavored to reproduce the Mexican play as authentically as possible in English, setting goals for myself and methodically working to achieve those goals. I hope to have “restated” this play, which I have enjoyed as a spectator and even more intimately as its translator, in a way that English-speaking audiences will find equally enjoyable.

Idiots Contemplating the Snow

By Alejandro Ricaño

For my mother, who tells me so amusingly about her neighbors.

Characters:

Johnny

Ramona

Agustina/ Madre

Ramsés

Benito

Elvis

Marisa

Sarita

Secretary

Bernardita

Adriana/ Nana

Virgilio

Josefina

Minervo

Dr. Esquerra

Luzma

Coroner

Fofy, the axolotl

Part One

One.

Narrator(s): These are the unfortunate events that preceded the snow.

Ramona was distraught. Her son, a juggler in a show in Las Vegas, had committed suicide.

The reason was simple; the arrival of the Cirque du Soleil had made his show look like shit.

Johnny: Damn it! God damn it!

Narrator(s): He took his unicycle, got on the tight rope and pretended to lose his balance. He broke his neck in front of four spectators, who later asked for a refund.

Ramona called her sister to tell her that no one in the entire world could possibly understand how fucking sad she felt.

Ramona: Can you come down?

Madre: To Tijuana?

Narrator(s): But Ramona's sister depended financially on her son Ramsés. And Ramsés had done something stupid; so stupid that it would screw up the trip for Ramona's sister.

Ramsés had decided to pursue a Masters degree in order to avoid seeking a job.

He chose whatever boring shit would earn him a scholarship from CONACYT.

All he had to do was open a bank account and enter his information on the scholarship webpage.

But Ramsés typed one wrong letter in his last name when he opened the account: only one, without noticing.

And one month later, when Ramsés' name didn't match the information from the bank, his payment was held, indefinitely.

Madre/Agustina: Let me ask Ramsés if he has money.

Ramona: Okay.

Narrator: This was unfortunate event number one, before the snow.

Two.

Benito: Was it flashing?

Ramsés: Was what flashing?

Benito: The crosswalk signal; was it flashing?

Ramsés: I already said it wasn't. It just suddenly turned red.

Benito: And it caught you in the middle of the street?

Ramsés: In the middle of the street, Benito. If I had known that it would turn red in the middle of the street, I wouldn't have crossed. But I didn't know and it caught me in the middle of the street.

Benito: Did you run?

Ramsés: I hurried up. It was no big deal.

Benito: And that bastard ran you over?

Ramsés: He tried to run me over, Benito. You tell me what it would have cost him to wait just a few seconds. It was a narrow street, Benito, and I would have finished crossing in a few seconds.

Benito: How many?

Ramsés: How should I know how many, Benito? There were only two meters left. How many seconds would it take me to cross two meters?

Benito: Walking fast?

Ramsés: Walking fast.

Benito: (*Calculating*) Two?

Ramsés: Let's say three, to give him the benefit of the doubt. What would it have cost him to wait three seconds, Benito?

Benito: There's no time for anything anymore.

Ramsés: Oh, yeah? Well, he had time to call me an asshole out his window, but he didn't want to wait the three seconds that it would have taken me to cross the street.

Benito: Walking quickly?

Ramsés: Walking quickly. But he did have time to yell at me through the window. He stopped the car in the middle of the street and called me an asshole through the window.

Benito: Insult to injury.

Ramsés: That, Benito, is rude. Not a lack of time. In the face of something like that, one must retaliate.

Benito: Retaliate how?

Ramsés: Severely. Retaliate severely. I climbed into my car, which was right there where I had jumped out of the way so that he wouldn't hit me, and I followed him.

Benito: Did he see you?

Ramsés: Following him? No. At first I thought, "If I find him I am going to kick his ass!"

Benito: And then?

Ramsés: Then I saw that he was bigger than me and I gave up on that idea. "I'm going to key his car at the very least," I thought. "I'll follow him until he parks somewhere and then I'll key his car."

Benito: Did you scratch the shit out of it?

Ramsés: I didn't do it.

Benito: You didn't do it?

Ramsés: He parked at a hospital, Benito! How could I key his car at a hospital?

Benito: Discreetly.

Ramsés: I'm saying that I couldn't do it, Benito. Morally I couldn't do it. What if he were there to pick up his wife?

Benito: Why was he picking up his wife?

Ramsés: Because they amputated her leg.

Benito: They amputated his wife's leg?

Ramsés: Hypothetically.

Benito: Why did they amputate her leg?

Ramsés: She... she was bitten by a tiger.

Benito: A tiger? Why would a tiger bite her?

Ramsés: Because they have a tiger, Benito.

Benito: In the house?

Ramsés: In the house.

Benito: Why would they have a tiger in the house?

Ramsés: Because they own a damn circus, okay?

Benito: That's stupid.

Ramsés: It's a hypothetical case, Benito!

Benito: I still don't get it.

Ramsés: She was in the hospital with the fucking flu! Do you get that she was in the hospital with the fucking flu?

Benito: If it were turning into pneumonia.

Ramsés: He was at the hospital because he went to get his wife who had the nearly-pneumonia flu. You can't key someone's car while they are at the hospital to pick up their wife with nearly-pneumonia flu. That's just plain heartless.

Benito: It was a hypothetical case.

Ramsés: You never know, Benito. When you leave the hospital, you leave unhappy, that's all. You go just to have them tell you that you're fucked up and that being fucked up is going to cost you more than you have. Just to have them tell you this, you have to wait three hours. And to wait those three hours, you have to do – I don't even know how much – paper work. This happens every time I

go to the hospital with my mother. And the last thing that I would want to happen after all of that, Benito, is to find my car keyed in the parking lot.

Benito: Then you didn't key it.

Ramsés: Are you not listening to me?

Benito: If you didn't key his car, why are you standing here regretting it?

Ramsés: Because I didn't just stand there with my arms crossed. I didn't key his car, but I waited for him.

Benito: Did he come out with his crippled wife?

Ramsés: He must have left her inside.

Benito: And you kicked his ass.

Ramsés: I told you he was bigger than me. I followed him to his house. When he went in, I left a note on his windshield that said, "You tried to run me over, asshole. I know where you live. When you least expect it I am going to break your back with a baseball bat.

Benito: You are going to break his back with a bat?

Ramsés: What do you take me for, Benito? I simply stole his peace of mind. Now he is going to spend the rest of his life waiting for someone to break his back with a bat.

Benito: After visiting his crippled wife with pneumonia, it seemed less heartless to break his back with a bat than to key his car?

Ramsés: That's why I feel bad. This morning I was pissed, Benito. I went to the ATM and they hadn't deposited my money. It has already been three months, Benito, just because one letter in my last name is wrong. In three months they haven't been able to fix one little mistake so that they can pay me. I was fucking pissed, Benito. I promised my mom that I would give her money so that she can visit her sister in Tijuana. My cousin broke his neck, you know. And those assholes don't pay me because my last name has one fucking wrong letter. She is always out looking at luggage prices, but I can't even give her one *peso* because they won't pay me. I told her this week that it was a sure thing. I couldn't tell her again that they still haven't paid me. I was just leaving the bank when that asshole tried to run me over. I was so fucking angry, Benito.

Three.

Narrator(s): Unfortunate event two:

Elvis's dad had a grocery store. Behind the counter, on Wednesday at noon, he made love to his wife as no man ever before had made love to a woman.

A song by Elvis played on the radio.

Convinced that his son was conceived at that very moment, he decided to call him... Elvis...

Elvis Rosendo, to keep with the tradition of giving children the ghastly names of their grandparents and fucking up their lives forever.

But this is not the unfortunate event. Forty years later, Elvis Rosendo got a job as a janitor in a high school.

Forty years and three days later, Elvis Rosendo lost his job after being accused of stealing nine cell phones.

Marisa: Fill out the yellow forms to enroll in Social Security. Sign here and here. Don't write outside of the box, Elvis.

Elvis found himself with the mortifying need to apply for a job in the only other thing that he knew how to do: drive a bus.

Elvis Rosendo had been born with one leg shorter than the other and he knew from past experiences that he could not always reach the brake in time.

But he had no other option. So he kept that a secret.

Marisa: Didn't I tell you not to write outside of the box?

Elvis: I'm sorry.

Marisa: There is no base wage. You get a percentage; fifteen percent of the fare. That way it depends on you. If you fuck up, you lose the fare.

Elvis: Yes.

Marisa: Yes, you are going to fuck up?

Elvis: No... I was trying to say that...

Marisa: I know, I know. Every time you can, cheat the buses on route 52. Go about 60 to 80 kilometers per hour and don't slow down. As for the traffic cops, don't worry. My husband warns us when they are out there, but you have to give him a little reward. It's taken out of your salary.

Elvis: What salary?

Marisa: ...

Elvis: ...

Marisa: That is, at the end of the month you pay out 50 *pesos*.

Elvis: Okay.

Marisa: Do you have somewhere to park the bus?

Elvis: Like a garage?

Marisa: A garage, Elvis, for a bus? Are you an idiot?

Elvis: I got an eight out of ten on the aptitude test.

Marisa: A space on the street, Elvis, where it won't bother your neighbors.

Elvis: A space on the street, yes.

Marisa: You start your shift at five.

Elvis: In the afternoon?

Marisa: In the morning, Elvis. You get off at eleven at night. You have one hour to eat. Now, if by some act of God, Elvis, you hit another vehicle, the company absorbs the cost but they will take it out of your pay imperceptibly.

Elvis: Impercepti- what?

Marisa: I mean that with the shit that you get paid your kids will end up paying for it. Do you have kids, Elvis?

Elvis: Six.

Marisa: They won't have enough to pay for it. So, drive carefully.

Elvis: Fast, but safe.

Marisa: Don't send text messages while you drive, Elvis. I don't know how else to ask you guys not to send text messages while you drive.

Elvis: I don't know how to send text messages.

Marisa: Even better. There is one more little thing, Elvis.

Elvis: What?

Marisa: Close the door.

Elvis: Do what?

Marisa: The door. Close it.

Elvis: Okay. (*Closes the door. Whispers*) What's up?

Marisa: Why the hell are you whispering?

Elvis: I thought that...

Marisa: What?

Elvis: You asked me to close the door.

Marisa: Because I'm sick of the cold. Listen, Elvis. You are going to work a shit-load of hours, starving, driving the same route time and time again, doing the same thing the whole fucking day.

After a while, Elvis, you will enter a state of utter stupidity. You are going to lose your mental clarity, your reflexes. So it won't be at all odd, Elvis, that the day a fellow human being gets in your way, you will be so stupidified, driving like a bat out of hell to keep the route 57 buses from screwing you out of your fare, you will run him over. Elvis, this is my advice. Don't misunderstand me. I am a Christian woman with Christian principles. But if you are going to run someone over, run him over well. Make sure he's dead. Don't leave him half lame. Don't leave him half stupid. If you leave...

(Sarita enters without warning)

Marisa: What's up?

Sarita: Are you going to want lunch?

Marisa: What is there?

Sarita: Chicken tacos or *enchiladas verdes*.

Marisa: *Enchiladas*.

Sarita: Okay.

(Sarita leaves)

Marisa: What?

Elvis: Don't leave him stupid.

Marisa: Right, if you leave him half stupid, handicapped, etcetera, etcetera, it will cost you more than your seven kids.

Elvis: Six.

Marisa: Well, it will cost more than seven. It's a life-long pension, Elvis. If you kill him, Elvis, it will cost you seven years in the slammer or twenty thousand at the most. I know it's fucked up, Elvis. I know that I shouldn't tell you this, but it is for your own good. Throw the bus in reverse and make sure he's dead. And if you can, flee the scene, because there is no money for legal assistance. This advice is for your own good. Got it, Elvis?

Four.

Narrator: Unfortunate event three. Bernardita, with her nose pressed against the window of Liverpool department store, contemplates the cappuccino machine on the other side. Fifteen minutes later, Bernardita has been informed of their payment plans.

Bernardita: Suddenly the products are selling. I don't know how; I only know that suddenly they began to sell.

Adriana: Miraculously.

Bernardita: How do I know, Nana? My neighbors suddenly found themselves ugly overnight.

Adriana: All of them?

Bernardita: They think collectively, Nana. It's a mystery. Suddenly they were at my door buying my products. And now I have money.

Adriana: Good. Pay me what you owe me.

Bernardita: One step at a time, Nana. Today, at least, I won't ask you for money. See? I'm changing. It's a start. I only need your check stubs to get the coffee maker I told you about. I'm going to pay for it myself; it's just that otherwise they won't give me credit.

Adriana: Now why would that be?

Bernardita: Because they're heartless, Nana.

Adriana: You don't have to respond, Bernardita, I'm being sarcastic.

Bernardita: Oh, okay. But you will let me borrow your check stubs, right?

Adriana: No.

Bernardita: Why not?

Adriana: Because you won't be able to pay for it.

Bernardita: Yes, I will be able to pay for it. What I don't have, at the moment, is a way to prove that I have a monthly income of 50 thousand *pesos*.

Adriana: 50 thousand?

Bernardita: Who, with a shred of honesty, Nana, earns 50 thousand *pesos* every month?

Adriana: I do.

Bernardita: You don't earn 50, you earn 75 thousand plus what you screw people out of. And only because that asshole who was fucking you was kind enough to die.

Adriana: Get out of here.

Bernardita: Wait.

Adriana: Go insult Virgilio, He'll let you, I won't.

Bernardita: Listen to me. Listen! Listen to me, damn it! I need this coffee maker. I didn't mean to offend you. Let's not play dumb, Nana. That hideous lover of yours arranged your appointment so that you could later step down and he could replace you. But before that happened, the asshole died. And there you stayed. That's dishonest, right? You don't have a shred of honesty, Nana. What you do have are the last three pay stubs that I need to get my coffee maker.

(Pause)

Adriana: How much does your coffee maker cost?

Bernardita: You don't give a damn.

Adriana: No, I do give a damn. I am going to pay for it.

Bernardita: No, no, no! I am going to pay for it myself. Two thousand *pesos* every month.

Adriana: Two thousand?

Bernardita: A little less, like nineteen hundred.

Adriana: Nineteen hundred?

Bernardita: For thirteen months, without interest.

Adriana: How much is your fucking coffee pot?

Bernardita: Twenty-four thousand *pesos*.

Adriana: Twenty-four thousand *pesos*! For a fucking coffee pot?

Bernardita: But it isn't just any coffee pot, Nana. It's a Krups Espresseria Automatic XP 9000.

Adriana: Does it really need all of those names?

Bernardita: That's how awesome it is! It has a little LCD screen!

Adriana: What do you need a twenty-four thousand *peso* coffee maker for?

Bernardita: To make coffee.

Adriana: You need a twenty-four thousand *peso* coffee maker to make coffee?

Bernardita: Strictly speaking, no. Damn it! Who needs a twenty-four thousand *peso* coffee pot? Strictly speaking, I'm saying that no one needs strictly anything. It's the little pleasures, Nana. One needs the little pleasures to give meaning to, well, to life.

Adriana: What the hell are you talking about?

Bernardita: You, you, you know better than anyone, Nana. You don't need the 75 thousand that you earn – plus what you steal from people. Strictly speaking, you don't need it. You don't need that big fucking van. As if you had a troop of brats. You don't even have kids. Who is going to ride in it with you? That stupid fish that cost you so much? Tell me, what do you need that fucking fish for if it doesn't even pay attention to you?

Adriana: It's an axolotl.

Bernardita: That piece of shit with feet that you have in your aquarium. What do you need it for?

Adriana: So that he can give me affection.

Bernardita: Affection?

Adriana: With his little feet.

Bernardita: How does he give you affection with his little feet?

Adriana: I stick my nose on the side of the aquarium and he moves his little feet.

Bernardita: Because he is scared shitless! You're already ugly as sin. I don't even want to think about looking at your face through a fish tank. Get yourself a dog.

Adriana: Dogs shed.

Bernardita: Get a hairless one.

Adriana: When have you ever heard of hairless dogs, you idiot? Fofy is unique!

Bernardita: All the same, he isn't indispensable in your life, strictly speaking. But you have all of those things that give your life meaning and I didn't come here to bitch at you about which ones are necessary and which aren't. You screw half of the world so that you can have those things. I just

need to screw you out of your last three pay stubs. I want that coffee maker more than anything. Get me the credit, Nana, I am your sister.

Adriana: Half-sister

Bernardita: Ok, fine, half-sister. There is no way I am going to screw you. I need that coffee maker.

Narrator(s): Three years before, Nana was at a riding camp hugging a tree, with her dress up over her head, while the ex-Secretary of Communication and Transportation fucked her, gently, on tiptoes.

Seven years prior to that, the ex-Secretary of Communication and Transportation was the head of the Teachers' Union.

When the presidential election came around, he approached the candidate and offered him all of the votes from his labor union.

More than one million votes.

More than one million votes that, one year later, were given to a Secretary of Communication and Transportation who didn't have the slightest idea of his responsibilities.

Every time he got in a jam, he gave a friend the task of building a bridge.

When the third bridge fell, they threw the secretary to the dogs, discreetly.

Then he met Nana.

Nana was technically a beautician, but for the moment she was working a register in McDonald's.

The Secretary met her one afternoon when he nostalgically fancied a Happy Meal. He contemplated her breasts, which jiggled each time she bent over to take a tray, provoking a sudden erection that he interpreted as love.

Nana went from being an illiterate hair dresser, temporarily working at McDonald's, to being in charge of unimportant things in the office of the ex-Secretary of Communication and Transportation.

Since then, every once in a while, the ex-Secretary took Nana to his daughter's riding shows, and fucked her against a tree, gently, on tip-toes.

One day, he locked himself in a hotel room with her for a week and made her memorize the forged resume of a die-hard member of the party.

Secretary: Damn it, Nana. I told you it's all a lie.

Adriana: Okay, little lies.

Secretary: Little lies.

Adriana: Right. *(Pause)* But this part about me being delegate of something-or-other, I don't remember that either!

Secretary: Jesus, you are an idiot!

Narrator(s): And so, six months later, Nana appeared smiling like an idiot in hundreds of billboards that presented her as a candidate for congresswoman.

The plan was very simple. Nana would be a congresswoman. She would name the ex-Secretary as her substitute and, after six months, she would step down.

But the ex-Secretary was shot fifteen times inside his campaign van.

And Nana remained in Congress, indefinitely.

That is the story of Nana.

Nana, the congresswoman.

Five.

Narrator: Fourth and final unfortunate event, before the snow.

Minervo: Now what, *Chepita*?

Josefina: Now what? I'm a wreck!

Minervo: A wreck?

Josefina: Inconsolable, Mino.

Minervo: Why, *Chepita*?

Josefina: Our bathroom, Minervo.

Minervo: What is wrong with it?

Josephina: It is the end of a pipe! I feel as if I were sitting on the end of a pipe. I need a decent bathroom, like Doña Reyna's.

Minervo: Like Doña Reyna's?

Josephina: You have to see her bathroom, Minervo. If urinating is a pleasure, urinating in that bathroom is the fucking peak of pleasure. Actually, I was going to do number two.

Minervo: You never do number two in someone else's bathroom.

Josefina: Sometimes I do.

Minervo: You never do number two in...

Josefina: I was about to shit myself, okay? Occasionally, I shit in another bathroom. But when I saw that bathroom, my sphincter contracted. My God, you can't do number two in a bathroom like that. It would be a shame!

Minervo: A shame?

Josefina: It's a saying.

Minervo: You want a bathroom that you can't use?

Josefina: I told you it's a saying.

Minervo: Were you able to go?

Josefina: No.

Minervo: Because your sphincter closed up.

Josefina: I was amazed. When we have our own, the muscles will relax.

Minervo: Are you still closed up?

Josefina: A little.

Minervo: You want a bathroom that stops you from shitting?

Josefina: It doesn't stop me! I was intimidated; temporarily, just temporarily. That will go away as the days go by. You don't understand, Mino. Economic stability is reflected in people's bathrooms.

Minervo: In bathrooms?

Josefina: In bathrooms, Mino. When we neighbors go to pee in each other's bathrooms, we think about their economic stability. One...one notices these things. One talks about them. I don't want to be the only loser on our street. I want a decent bathroom. To invite your neighbors to piss in a bathroom like that, is to piss on their misery.

Minervo: You want to piss on the neighbors!

Josefina: Don't repeat everything I say, Minervo. Don't repeat everything I say with that...irony. I want to piss on their misery. On *them*, no; on their misery.

Minervo: And why the hell, *Chepita*, do you want to piss on their misery?

Josefina: Why?

Minervo: Why?

Josefina: What do you mean why, Minervo?

Minervo: I don't understand at all.

Josefina: When you all went to don Victor's house, didn't all of the husbands go out and buy pistols? Really, as if they were actually going to use them. And you all went around showing off your pistols to one another. And what did you guys say about Jorge, who didn't buy one? Remember?

Minervo: That's different.

Josefina: That he didn't even have the money to buy something to protect himself. As if you did have it. You were out there selling old metal scraps and whatever junk you could find in the house to come up with the money. And there is the fucking pistol, tucked away.

Minervo: One never knows.

Josefina: Who is going to come in here, Minervo, if there is nothing to steal? The pistol, nothing else. I, at least, will use my bathroom. (*Pause*) I have never asked you for anything, Mino. Until

now I have been satisfied. But I need a decent bathroom. Do you understand me? One needs to urinate with dignity.

Minervo: Piss with dignity in ours!

Josefina: You are a miserable prick, Minervo! A miserable prick! I hope you die shitting in that bathroom! Do you hear me? Shitting!

Narrator(s): Minervo knew that sooner or later he would have to give in.

His wife was born impatient.

She was born prematurely at seven months.

You couldn't even wait to be born, he would tell her. Ever since then, you are in a fucking hurry that drives me crazy!

Minervo: Well, I hope I die shitting, like you say!

Josefina: Me, too!

Narrator(s): He stretched out in his arm chair and fell asleep, scheming how to get the money to build the bathroom.

Minervo was a drama teacher in a private middle school.

His students, almost all children of government officials or local business owners, without exception considered him a hopeless asshole.

In a recurring dream, Minervo entered the classroom and killed them all with a shotgun. As they lay dying on the floor, he convinced them that he was a great artist and that he was there only because of a series of unfortunate events.

The next day, he awoke with a brilliant idea.

Minervo: I'm leaving.

Josefina: I don't give a damn.

Narrator: My old teacher is dying, he told his students.

Minervo: Multiple sclerosis. Do you know what multiple sclerosis is like? You go around like a disjointed puppet. Everyone laughs at you. It is degenerative. Well.

Narrator: Well. He's dying and I am collecting money to help him, he told them.

Minervo: Would anyone like to donate?

Narrator: Silence.

Minervo: No one wants to give something to save the life of Professor Shoeman?

Narrator(s): Professor Shoeman had died ten years before and to Minervo it didn't seem so bad to lie about someone who had already died.

Finally a few donated, but it wasn't enough.

His infallible plan had failed.

He needed a backup plan. Drastic measures had to be taken.

Minervo: Okay. *(Pause)* We are going to do an exercise!

Narrator: He asked them to put their things in a corner and to form a group in the center of the room.

Minervo: Lean back and close your eyes. Breathe deeply.

Narrator(s): You are at the beach, he told them. And you feel profoundly calm.

So profoundly calm that they didn't notice that Minervo, sweating with fear, was stealing their cell phones from the backpacks piled up in the corner.

Minervo: You are at the beach.... Nothing worries you.... You hear only the gentle sound of the waves. Woooooosh.....

Narrator(s): Nine cell phones.

When the students discovered that they had been stolen, Minervo ordered them to check all of their backpacks.

Minervo: No one leaves this room until those cell phones appear!

Narrator(s): Of course nothing appeared.

The parents were called and finally Minervo confessed that he suspected the new janitor, who was always snooping around the classrooms.

The janitor was fired.

That same evening, Minervo went to the pawn shop.

He left with 14 thousand *pesos*. Smiling like an idiot.

Narrator(s): Minervo didn't skimp. He replaced his wife's old sink with a frosted glass one that wobbled and didn't completely match, but it was held up by a stainless steel immersion blender that had no business being there since it was made for restaurant use only. But to Minervo, it looked "very sophisticated." Stainless towel holders, stainless soap dish, stainless toothbrush holder. Everything fucking stainless, he decided. Why? He hadn't the slightest idea. But he was sure that his wife would like it. His prematurely born wife, so difficult to please. Sliding glass doors that got stuck. An ivory-colored *Torreto Luxus* toilet with a curved wooden seat and chrome hinges that gleamed and were not well tightened. He installed a fan so that his wife would not have to wait an hour before being able to use the bathroom after he used it, but he never figured out how to make it work. Finally, with a few sheets of laminate and the saw that his neighbor lent him, having to do it more than wanting to do it, he built her a little cabinet under the sink that clashed with everything. Crooked, beat-up, but made, in the end, with love.

Minervo: Here is your damn bathroom! Eh? No one can say that I don't take care of my old lady!

Josefina: Thank you, *Papi!*

Minervo: Thank you, hell! It is going to cost you two blowjobs and some *chilaquiles*.

Josefina: Whatever you want, you opportunistic jerk!

Minervo: Am I the shit or what?

Josefina: The best, *Papi!*

Minervo: Go on, piss with dignity!

Josefina: I'm going to tell the neighbors right away so that they can shit themselves with envy!

(Pause) Wait.

Minervo: What?

Josefina: Cut off this little bit, would you, dear?

Minervo: What little bit?

Josefina: The one that you left on the sink.

Minervo: No one will notice it.

Josefina: Yes, it is noticeable, *gordo*, don't be a pain, go on.

Minervo: Who is going to see it?

Josefina: I will see it. Go on, since you're already here.

Narrator(s): Minervo took the saw to cut off the little piece. But his hands were so tired that the saw fell and cut off a piece of his knee. Blood began to spurt in every direction, while his wife screamed hysterically watching the saw dance around on the floor.

Minervo: Fucking hell!!!!

Narrator(s): These are the unfortunate events, before the snow.

Part Two

One.

Josefina: Does it hurt?

Minervo: A little.

Josefina: Do you want me to take off the bandage?

Minervo: What for?

Josefina: I don't know, so I can feel useful.

Minervo: Better yet just make me those *chilaquiles*.

Josefina: And the other thing?

Minervo: What other thing?

Josefina: The other thing, Mino. You know what other thing.

Minervo: The blow jobs?

Josefina: Mmhm.

Minervo: Can't you see that I can't even move?

Josefina: No, then?

Minervo: No, then, *Chepita*.

Josefina: Look, I'm not going to beg.

Minervo: God damn it, *Chepa!* Look at me! All because of your damn bathroom!

Josefina: Are you saying that this is my fault?

Minervo: I am not saying that it is your fault.

Josefina: That's the impression I got.

Minervo: I'm just saying that if Doña Reina's fucking bathroom had not given you such a complex, I wouldn't be like this.

Josefina: Well, if you weren't so lazy, Mino, if you did a little exercise from time to time, you would have been able to hold on to that saw.

Minervo: Now it's my fault.

Josefina: I didn't say that.

Minervo: Well, that's the impression I got.

Josefina: Well, aren't you impressionable.

(Pause)

Minervo: Come on. Help me get to the bathroom. I think I'm about to shit myself.

Narrator(s): Reluctantly, Josefina helped him to the bathroom. She then went to the kitchen to prepare the *chilaquiles*.

Minervo sat for a good while, contemplating the bathroom. Damn, I'm good, he repeated to himself. It has a few little flaws, maybe, but no one is perfect. God, perhaps. But God, he rambled, is not in the business of designing bathrooms. I could make a living doing this. I could tell the school to go to hell, he was thinking, hopefully, when he suddenly felt as if an elephant were pressing against his chest or as if a horse were kicking him in the back. He was having a heart attack. He knew at once that this was the end. He raised his hand to his chest and asked, distraught: Could it be that my last words will be "I think I am about to shit myself?" Will those be my last words before dying? If you are kindhearted, God, don't let me die like this. With no space in which to fall, Minervo remained slumped on the toilet, with his pants around his knees. After an hour, Josefina went to look for him.

Josefina: What the hell are you doing in there?

Two.

Narrator(s): Bernardita's neighbors hadn't found themselves ugly overnight.

Nor did they think collectively, as Bernardita had thought.

Bernardita's neighbors had all simply received a visit from Benito.

One evening, Benito had found Bernardita crying her room.

Bernardita: I am an idiot, Benito. I am not even capable of selling lotion. What else can I hope to do?

Narrator(s): That same night, Benito visited all of the neighbors and gave them money so that they could buy products from his mother.

Benito: Next month, I will give you more. Don't tell my mother.

Narrator(s): But the following month Benito's pay ended up somewhere else.

Sarita: I want to get this damn thing out of me, Benito.

Benito: Don't you prefer that I talk to your father?

Sarita: What for?

Benito: So that he can give us his consent.

Sarita: His consent for what? Cut the bullshit, Benito; and don't be thinking stupid things.

Benito: Why not?

Sarita: Because he's going to beat the shit out of you and then sue you for statutory rape.

Benito: Why?

Sarita: Because I'm 16 years old!

Benito: No. I mean the thing you said he would sue me for.

Sarita: Statutory rape.

Benito: What's that?

Sarita: Corruption of minors, Benito. You should be familiar with the term if you are going to go around making babies. For statutory rape, if you play stupid.

Benito: But we both wanted to, both...

Sarita: No, Benito. I'm not going to look like a whore. If my dad asks me, you made me do it.

Benito: ...

Sarita: Don't bother putting on that innocent face. I am your 16-year-old girlfriend, right?

Benito: Yes.

Sarita: And your 16-year-old girlfriend doesn't want to have a little Benito right now. I need money to get rid of it. You choose. I can take some pills that cost five hundred *pesos*. They are for gastritis. But they aren't very safe. I could end up dead in the middle of the room. And I would leave a letter exposing your role in this. A friend of Liliana's boyfriend could give me a shot. It would cost us one thousand five hundred *pesos*. But, like the other, it isn't certain, he says, and doesn't give us any guarantee. And Liliana's uncle could do in his office. He sticks something like a little vacuum in me and it's guaranteed.

Benito: Is it safe?

Sarita: Very.

Benito: How much?

Sarita: Four thousand.

Benito: Four thousand?

Sarita: This is about my safety, Benito. I imagine you wouldn't want to save on something like this.

Benito: No.

Sarita: He would do it this Friday.

Benito: Do you want to go together?

Sarita: This is not a picnic, Benito. Liliana is going with me. Do you have the money now?

Benito: I will have to go to the ATM.

Narrator(s): This is why Bernardita's neighbors didn't get their visit from Benito and Bernardita didn't get a visit from any of her neighbors and couldn't pay the monthly payment on her coffee maker.

Adriana: (*On the phone*) Bernardita?

Bernardita: (*Also on the phone*) No.

Adriana: Bernardita, Liverpool is hassling me. They told me that you didn't pay this month.

Bernardita: I just paid.

Adriana: I don't want them hassling me, Bernardita.

Bernardita: I'm telling you that I already paid.

Adriana: From now on, Bernardita, I won't pay a *peso*!

Bernardita: You aren't going to pay a thing. Done.

Narrator(s): Well, that was useless, thought Bernardita.

She took a basket full of her products and went to knock on her neighbors' doors, one by one.

But no one wanted to buy anything.

Bernardita: Now it turns out that the products worked on them in just one fucking month, when what each of them needs is fucking plastic surgery!

Narrator(s): She needed 25,000 *pesos*. She needed to pay for her coffee maker in cash now that she didn't have an income. She thought about the interest, accumulating, accumulating and accumulating.

And the only person who could lend her the money was the last person she wanted to ask: her other half sibling. A parish priest in the neighboring town.

Three.

Narrator(s): Insofar as was possible, Elvis was more or less happy in his new job. His short leg had not caused him any problem yet, and his wife called him from time to time so that he wouldn't be bored.

Luzma: (*On the phone*) Where are you?

Elvis: (*Likewise*) In the bus.

Luzma: So why did you answer?

Elvis: ...

Luzma: I feel lonely, Elvis.

Elvis: You have six children.

Luzma: Your kids aren't going to make love to me.

Elvis: Ask them.

Luzma: You idiot. What time will you come make love to me?

Elvis: For God's sake, I'm eating.

Luzma: Idiot!

Elvis: At 11 o'clock.

Luzma: Elvissexual, can we get a heater?

Elvis: What for?

Luzma: What do you mean what for, Elvisteak?

Elvis: But it's never cold here.

Luzma: The temperature is getting really low; I can't stand it any longer.

Elvis: I'm going to hang up. The passengers are giving me ugly looks.

Ramsés: (*On the phone*) No, nothing. The fucking driver was talking on the phone. But you report them and no one gives a fuck.

Benito: (*Also on the phone*) You're on a bus?

Ramsés: The spark plugs on my car are shot.

Benito: Did you take it to the repair shop?

Ramsés: No. It sucks. They haven't paid me. It's just sitting there.

Benito: Talk to CONACYT, if you don't pressure them they won't do shit.

Ramsés: Yeah. Are you going out later?

Benito: I'm fucked, too.

Ramsés: You didn't get paid yesterday?

Benito: Something came up.

Four.

Narrator(s): The Red Cross didn't want to move Minervo's body. They just pulled his pants up, out of courtesy.

The local officials arrived later and Josefina didn't stop repeating to them that her husband had done nothing other than go to take a shit.

At almost midnight they called the coroner so that they would move Minervo to the medical examiner's lab.

Josefina: He said, “I think I’m shitting myself.” I took him to the bathroom and later he was just there, slumped over...

Narrator(s): She still didn’t understand that her husband was dead, or she did not understand, at least not now, that death was something irrevocable.

The only thing that tormented Josefina, the only thing that truly mortified her, was to think that someone could die from going to the bathroom.

Is it possible that shitting is dangerous? Should she feel panicked every time she went to the bathroom? Would she suffer a heart attack?

Occupied with these important musings, Josefina passed the night without feeling, at any moment, sadness over her husband’s death.

Five.

Virgilio: I don’t have access to that money!

Bernardita: But the treasurer of the church board does and you have access to the treasurer of the church board.

Virgilio: How do you know?

Bernardita: Everyone knows about his dicking around. I also know that you two stole part of the money designated for the reconstruction of the church. Martita’s accounts didn’t add up and, when I saw that the treasurer had a new car, I could smell that you had also gotten in on it.

Virgilio: What do you need twenty-five thousand *pesos* for?

Bernardita: I have cancer.

Virgilio: What?!

Bernardita: It isn’t serious, but if I don’t take care of it, it’ll get worse.

Virgilio: Are you sure?

Bernardita: It’s a little tumor, Virgilio. But I need to have it removed.

Virgilio: I will pray for you.

Bernardita: Better yet, lend me the twenty-five thousand *pesos*.

Virgilio: I don't have it. I'm in love, Bernardita.

Bernardita: You're in love.

Virgilio: Like you have no idea.

(Pause)

Bernardita: And what the fuck does it matter, Virgilio, that you are in love?

Virgilio: I'm in love, Bernardita. God knows it. He knows the difference between carnal desire and true love. My love is true love, Bernardita.

Bernardita: What the fuck are you talking about?

Virgilio: God knows that everything that I have done wrong, in his name, Bernardita, I did for love. God wouldn't punish an act of love, right, Bernardita? No act of love is condemnable... as different as it may be.

Bernardita: Now what have you gotten yourself into, you bastard?

(Pause)

Virgilio: I'm in love with a boy, Bernardita.

Bernardita: Seems to be a fad these days.

Virgilio: He's not that kind of a boy, Bernardita. He's an angel, trapped in the body of an adolescent.

Bernardita: Have you fucked him yet?

Virgilio: For God's sake, Bernardita!

Bernardita: It's not as if he didn't have a place for doing that.

Virgilio: Angels don't have a place for that. They are asexual.

Bernardita: Oh, sure. That's why they are all born looking like faggots. Besides, he has the body of an adolescent, you said, and adolescents have a place for that.

Virgilio: Well, no. We haven't performed the act.

Bernardita: The act.

Virgilio: Of love. We've remained chaste.

Bernardita: Does he love you?

Virgilio: In his own way.

Bernardita: That means no.

Virgilio: He is shy. It's difficult for him to express what he feels.

Bernardita: Okay. Lend me the twenty-five thousand, Virgilio. I am dying. I know that you have the money.

Virgilio: I am telling you that I don't have it.

Bernardita: And I am telling you that I am dying. Don't be such a bastard, Virgilio.

Virgilio: I already spent my part, Bernardita.

Bernardita: Then you did steal the money?

Virgilio: Only what was left over, which otherwise the archdiocese would have stolen.

Bernardita: How much?

Virgilio: Just the part from the paint.

Bernardita: Ten thousand? *(Pause)* Twenty?

(Pause)

Virgilio: Ninety thousand *pesos*.

Bernardita: Ninety? Just from the paint? You guys are real bastards. That means you have forty-five thousand.

Virgilio: I'm telling you I don't have anything.

Bernardita: How did you lose forty-five thousand *pesos* overnight?

Virgilio: Thirty-five. We never split in equal parts. The deal is sixty-forty.

Bernardita: Which means you do this often.

Virgilio: Occasionally, very rarely.

Bernardita: What did you spend thirty-five thousand *pesos* on?

Virgilio: Knick-knacks.

Bernardita: Thirty-five thousand on knick-knacks?

Virgilio: Knick-knacks, I told you.

Bernardita: What kind of knick-knacks?

Virgilio: Knick-knacks. You don't know what knick-knacks are?

Bernardita: Knick-knacks that cost thirty-five thousand *pesos*? No.

Virgilio: Knick-knacks. Clothes. Video games. An iPhone.

Bernardita: What the fuck is an ay-fon?

Virgilio: It is a cell phone.

Bernardita: That piece of shit you already have that does everything but shoot water cost you thirty-five thousand *pesos*?

Virgilio: No, not that one. And the iphone only cost me ten thousand *pesos*.

Bernardita: Oh, that's all? And what the fuck do you want ...? (*Pause*) Oh, boy, am I an idiot. I didn't get it. For a minute there I imagined you playing video games in your cassock. The poor thing must be bored, I thought.

Virgilio: I'm in love, Bernardita.

Bernardita: Here is your sister, dying of cancer, and you satisfying the whims of your little angel.

Virgilio: What am I supposed to do with what I feel? I can't control it.

Bernardita: Stick your dick in him. Don't spend thirty-five thousand *pesos* on him, thirty-five thousand *pesos* that could save your sister's life!

Virgilio: I'm telling you, it's an innocent love.

Bernardita: Go tell his parents that it's innocent love, you bastard! See what they think.

Virgilio: It's my secret, Bernardita. That's what makes it special. It's my unconfessable love. If I confess it, it will disappear. I want him deep inside me, filling me.

Bernardita: Well, you'll see how I'm going to yank him right out of you if you don't help me get the twenty-five thousand. For the sake of your gay God, Virgilio, help me get the money or I will tell your secret.

Six.

Narrator(s): Only God could know how tight Josefina's sphincter was when she awoke. She waited for the medical examiner to give her a logical explanation, something that would make more sense than that her husband had died from the simple act of defecating.

She went to the coroner's office a little before noon.

Coroner: What happened to your husband's knee?

Josefina: He cut it.

Coroner: With what?

Josefina: A saw.

Coroner: Where did they operate on him?

Josefina: In the ICU.

Coroner: Who performed the surgery?

Josefina: A... doctor.

Coroner: You don't remember his name?

Josefina: (*Looks at the ceiling*) Esquerra. I think his last name was Esquerra.

Coroner: Was he given any medication?

Josefina: A little pill for the pain or for swelling. I don't know.

Coroner: An anti-coagulant?

Josefina: No.

(Silence)

Coroner: They left your husband with a blood clot in his knee during the operation. That clot clogged an artery. That is what caused the heart attack.

Josefina: He didn't die from going to the bathroom?

Coroner: It was medical negligence, ma'am. With my report, you would have enough to sue the ICU. But, frankly, it's usually a waste of time to sue the hospitals. It was my duty to tell you that.

Seven.

Virgilio: Her what?

Bernardita: Her axolotl.

Virgilio: What is that?

Bernardita: A fish.

Virgilio: We are going to kidnap a fish?

Bernardita: It's not just any old fish. It has tiny little feet.

Virgilio: So?

Bernardita: He does sweet things when Nana is around.

Virgilio: With his tiny little feet?

Bernardita: To each his own, Virgilio.

Virgilio: Why the hell are we going to kidnap a fish?

Bernardita: Because Nana will pay the ransom.

Virgilio: For a fish?

Bernardita: With tiny little feet.

Virgilio: Why would she pay ransom for a fish?

Bernardita: Because rich people do that sort of thing.

Virgilio: Ask her for the money. You're dying. She will understand.

Bernardita: I already asked her.

Virgilio: And she refused?

Bernardita: She's heartless.

Virgilio: But, she would save the life of a fish instead of yours?

Bernardita: I told you, she is heartless.

Virgilio: What a bitch.

Bernardita: Listen to me, Virgilio. We enter her house, take the fish out in a bucket, and then ask for the ransom.

Virgilio: That is a stupid plan.

Bernardita: What do you suggest?

Virgilio: What do I know? Something more elaborate; more like what kidnappers do.

Bernardita: Like kidnappers? What are they, mathematicians? Their plans are just as stupid as ours, Virgilio. If it works for them, it will work for us.

(Pause)

Virgilio: Okay, okay. *(Silence)* Do you have a bucket?

Bernardita: No.

Part Three

One.

Virgilio dials from a public telephone. Waits.

Bernardita: What are you going to say to her?

Virgilio: That we have her...

Adriana: *(On the phone)* Hello?

Virgilio: Yes, Hello...um, Mrs. Moncada?

Bernardita: *(Whispering)* Why are you talking like an idiot?

Virgilio: *(Whispering)* I'm not talking like an idiot.

Bernardita: Yes, you are talking like an idiot.

Virgilio: This is my kidnapper voice!

Adriana: Hello?

Virgilio: Yes, hello.

Adriana: Who is it?

Virgilio: *(Turns and looks with anguish at Bernardita)*

Adriana: Who is calling?

Virgilio: Ga..Gabriel

Adriana: Gabriel who?

Virgilio: García.

Adriana: García what?

Virgilio: Már...quez

Adriana: Who?

Virgilio: Listen lady, we have your fish.

Adriana: What fish?

Virgilio: The one with the tiny little feet.

Adriana: It's an axolotl.

Virgilio: We have kidnapped him!

Adriana: Fofy? Who is this?

Virgilio: Gabriel García Márquez, ma'am.

Adriana: Listen to me, you moron. Save the jokes for your fuckin' mother.

Virgilio: We will torture him if you don't give us what we want.

Adriana: Look, you asshole. I'm in front of the fish tank and I don't...

(Pause)

Virgilio: *(To Bernardita, covering the receiver)* She just noticed.

Adriana: What have you done with my axolotl, you assholes?

Virgilio: We want fifty thousand *pesos*.

Bernardita: *(In a whisper)* Fifty thousand?

Virgilio: *(In a whisper)* Well, while we're at it...

Adriana: Fifty thousand! Go fuck your mother! Do you know who you are talking to, you moron? I have people who will cut off your balls, shove them up your ass, and kick your ass until you spit them out, at the snap of my fingers. I'll give you one hour to bring back my axolotl. You understand?

(Silence)

Virgilio: We're on our way. *(Hangs up)*

Bernardita: What happened?

Virgilio: We have to take the axolotl to her.

Bernardita: And the ransom?

Virgilio: This is too much, Bernardita. If you want, let's rob a pharmacy.

Bernardita: A pharmacy?

Virgilio: They are going to do something horrible to my balls, Bernardita. It's too much.

Bernardita: Give me the phone! (*Dials, waits*)

Adriana: (*On the phone*) Hello?

Bernardita: Listen up, you bitch. I just cut one of the feet off your damn fish. If you don't show up with fifty thousand *pesos* at the downtown McDonalds in two hours, I will send you your fish breaded and on a skewer so you can eat him for supper. In two hours! (*Hangs up. To Virgilio*) Get moving, you pussy. We have to get ready.

Two.

Ramsés: *Mamá?*

Madre: What happened, son?

Ramsés: They are going to pay me, *mamá*.

Madre: They called you?

Ramsés: Hell no. I called them. They said that they will deposit the money on Friday.

Madre: That's the same way they have kept you going, around in circles.

Ramsés: Why are you always so negative?

Madre: Well, son, that's exactly what they said the last time. That it would be this Friday for sure and here you are, another two months and nothing.

Ramsés: No, *mamá*. They explained the problem. What happened is that my name was registered wrong in the computer. I spelled it wrong. Because of that, the bank didn't accept it. But now they've fixed it.

Madre: And why did you write your name wrong?

Ramsés: Well, because I'm an idiot. And they didn't correct it because they are lazy-asses. But now everything is fine. Tell my aunt that you're going soon. We'll buy your ticket on Friday.

Narrator(s): Ramsés' mother hung up. She put on lipstick and went out into the street.

She wanted to buy a suitcase.

She walked in spite of the cold that made her hunch over. She wanted to have some time to think about what it would be like to see her sister.

She walked until something stopped her on the edge of a curb.

Madre: Pedestrian bridges are torture to me. Rather than feeling the bridge sway under my feet 10 meters above the ground, I prefer to dodge the cars. I wait on the edge of the curb. A freezing wind suddenly gusts while I wait to cross the street. Up above, I suddenly notice a dog crossing the pedestrian bridge. How civilized, I think. Dogs aren't afraid of pedestrian overpasses. Something frozen falls in my eye. Something like a bit of ice. *(Pause)* Snow. It's snowing. I'm surprised to discover that it's snowing. I have never seen it snow. There comes to mind a certain afternoon, who knows how long ago, that my father took my sister and me to some place I don't recall seeing snow. But the snow was already there, covering everything. We didn't see it fall. *(Pause)* So, that's how it is. That's the way it falls, so slowly, as if it were weightless. It's hypnotizing. The snow.

Narrator(s): She stayed a long time contemplating the little flakes that fell in spirals, with her neck craned upward to the sky, fascinated.

Without knowing why, she began to laugh and the snow landed on her tongue.

It really is frozen, she thought. Really frozen.

Meanwhile, Elvis' wife saw the snow through the window of their apartment.

Luzma: It's snowing... it's snowing!

Narrator(s): She ran to the kitchen for the telephone and dialed her husband's number as fast as she could.

Luzma: *(Speaking into the phone)* Answer, Elvisito! Answer!

(Silence)

Elvis: *(Answers)* Eh-oo?

Luzma: It's snowing, Elvis!

Elvis: Yes, I saw. I saw it.

Luzma: Where are you?

Elvis: In the bus.

Luzma: I know, but where?

Elvis: Near the station, at the bridge...

(Short silence)

Luzma: Elvis?

Elvis: What?

Luzma: You got quiet.

Elvis: A dog just came down.

Luzma: From where?

Elvis: The steps of the pedestrian bridge, as if he were a person...

Luzma: Do you remember when we took the girls to see the...

Elvis: Shit!

(Pause)

Luzma: Elvis?

Elvis: Fuck! Fuck!

Narrator(s): It really is frozen, thought Ramsés' mother. Really frozen, when she lost her balance on the edge of the curb.

After a good beating, Josefina got Dr. Esquerra's address from a nurse who, silenced by the blows, had been trying to tell her that the doctor had a clinic in his house and that the address could be found in the Yellow Pages. But Josefina was blind with rage. She took her car, went to Dr.

Esquerra's house, parked in front, took the pistol from her purse and walked hurriedly to the door. Oddly, Esquerra opened the door terrified, as if he were expecting this.

Josefina: On your knees, you fucking son of a bitch!

Esquerra: Why?

Josefina: You killed my husband, you bastard!

Esquerra: Excuse me?

Josefina: Excuse me, my ass! On your knees!

Esquerra: What are you talking about?

Josefina: Get on your knees, bastard!

Esquerra: I don't know what you are talking about!

Josefina: You are about to find out, asshole.

Esquerra: You must have me confused with someone else!

(Pause)

Josefina: Doctor Esquerra?

Esquerra: Yes?

Josefina: I'm not confusing you with someone else, you asshole. You killed my husband.

Esquerra: Who is your husband? I don't know your husband.

Josefina: Minervo González.

Esquerra: No, that doesn't sound familiar. I don't know any Minervo.

Josefina: You operated on his knee. You left a blood clot in him. You did it wrong, you asshole. Had you been drinking?

Esquerra: ...

Josefina: Answer me! Did you drink the night before?

Esquerra: No. No.

Josefina: Did you buy your diploma?

Esquerra: What?

Josefina: Did you really go to a university, asshole?!

Esquerra: Yes! Yes!

Josefina: You are a fucking liar! You left a blood clot in him! At the university they must have taught you not to leave blood clots. How could you leave a blood clot in him!

Esquerra: I was...

Josefina: Where? Where were you, you asshole!

Esquerra: Awake all night.

Josefina: Awake all night?

Esquerra: I hadn't slept.

Josefina: Because you drank the night before!

Esquerra: No!

Josefina: Then, why? God damn it!

Esquerra: Someone wants to kill me!

Josefina: Yes, me!

Esquerra: No, someone else!

Josefina: ...

Esquerra: Someone left a note on my car.

Josefina: A note?

Esquerra: He wants to hit me in the head with a bat.

(Silence)

Josefina: Did you kill his wife?

Esquerra: What?

Josefina: Did you leave a blood clot in her?

Esquerra: No.

Josefina: Then?

Esquerra: I didn't yield.

Josefina: To his wife?

Esquerra: To him, I don't know if he has a wife. I didn't let him cross the street. He crossed when the light turned green.

Josefina: And because of that he wants to break your back with a bat?

Esquerra: I'm expecting him. He's going to come at any moment. I can't sleep. *(Pause)* I lie there thinking the law can't deal with certain specific cases. It is impossible to predict specific cases. When they make a law, I mean. There must be thousands of variants for each law, for those specific cases. And who resolves those specific cases? Common sense. Common sense fills in the gaps that the law leaves empty. I understand, I ran a red light one block before. Technically, I committed an infraction. But if the red light is there to let cars enter from a road that is closed for repairs, a street from which, logically, no car will be coming, what sense does the red light have? Mine is a specific case. The law could not predict my case. The officer should have used common sense, but instead he gave me a ticket. I was fucking furious. He crossed when the light turned green. I took my anger out on him. I should have waited, but I was fucking furious. When he gets here, I will explain it to him. He will...

Narrator(s): Josefina didn't understand what he was telling her. Nor was she interested. Suddenly, something in the garden distracted her. She lowered the revolver slightly, still holding it, trembling, with sweaty palms, while the Doctor continued his soliloquy on his knees, with his hands towards the sky as if he were praying.

Chepa contemplated through the window the snowflakes that began to cover the flowers in the garden when the image of her dead husband, sitting on the toilet, came to her mind. And she

imagined that the snowflakes were covering him completely, like a dead animal, forgotten in the middle of the highway, and she felt so deeply sad that her body tensed against her will.

(A shot fires and perforates the doctor's hand)

Esquerra: Ahhh! My hand!

Josefina: I'm sorry!

Esquerra: You fucking bitch!

Josefina: I'm sorry, I didn't...! The snow...

Esquerra: What snow?

Josefina: It's snowing...

Esquerra: Where is it snowing? You fucked up my hand!

Josefina: Outside.

(The man turns to the window. Silence.)

Josefina: See?

Esquerra: It is snowing...

Narrator(s): Josefina and Doctor Esquerra sat on the armchair and contemplated the snow while Bernardita and Virgilio walked towards the downtown McDonalds, carrying Fofy in a bucket.

Bernardita: They predicted it, Virgilio. They said it would be fucking cold. Not in those words, but more or less. And look at us, underdressed. I'm fucking freezing. It's just that they never quite get it right, Virgilio. Just a few days ago it was hot as hell and suddenly they say that it's going to get fucking cold. Those things aren't possible. My neighbor said it's because of Styrofoam. I don't know what the hell Styrofoam has to do with the weather.

Virgilio: How can you have cancer and be so calm?

Bernardita: I'm not calm. I'm fighting to save my life. I'm carrying an axolotl in a bucket. When one carries an axolotl in a bucket, Virgilio, to demand a ransom for a fish with feet, Virgilio, it is because something is wrong. I am not calm.

Virgilio: This is too much, Bernardita. Let me talk to her.

Bernardita: You aren't going to talk to anyone. It's too late. She isn't even our full sister. It's natural that she doesn't care about us.

Virgilio: We grew up together, missing different dads, but together. She will take pity on you. You have cancer, for heaven's sake.

Bernardita: Stick to the plan, Virgilio. You aren't going to fuck me over. We'll leave the axolotl in the bathroom, pay someone to give her instructions, and pick up the money.

Virgilio: In a Happy Meal box?

Bernardita: That Nana is going to leave, forgotten, on a bench.

Virgilio: She will be waiting for us. Someone will be there waiting for us when we pick up the money.

Bernardita: Nana will be looking for her axolotl.

Virgilio: Someone else. The police. What if she called the police? What if they organized a rescue operation?

Bernardita: For a fish? Are you an idiot, Virgilio? She is only coming to leave 50 thousand *pesos*. What are 50 thousand *pesos* to her? One television less? Tires for her van?

Virgilio: Then ask her for the money for your illness! She can't be that much of a bitch!

Narrator(s): Virgilio felt something cold on his bald head. He turned toward the sky. Bernardita saw him and looked up, looking for whatever had distracted Virgilio. They stayed there, paralyzed, contemplating the falling snow, unable to say a word for quite a while. They were remembering their childhood. And it occurred to them that if they had shared something like this back then, together, like contemplating the gentle snowfall, they would have found a more pleasant way to deal with the idea that they were children of different fathers. But the snow had been delayed for a long time and now there was nothing to be done. Now they were just there, looking for a little peace amidst the unusual snowfall, holding a dead axolotl, frozen to the side of an old bucket.

Bernardita: The fucking axolotl, Virgilio!

Narrator(s): Very close by, Elvis was terrified. His short leg was trembling like crazy. He saw Ramsés' mother in the rearview mirror, spread out in the middle of the street, surrounded by horrified passersby. He knew, in the middle of that frightening scene, that he had no choice but to throw the bus into reverse or ruin his life forever. He removed his short leg from the brake, put in the clutch, shifted into reverse, and accelerated with his eyes closed.

(Pause) But something suddenly stopped him. He hit the brakes, captured by the image of the woman, fragile and dying in the middle of the street, being covered, little by little by the snow, an image that provoked a shudder in his heart that he could not define as pain or as an aggressive need for compassion. He ran out of the bus. He took the woman in his arms and ran a few disconcerted steps.

Elvis: A cell phone! Who has a cell phone?

Narrator(s): You have a cell phone, you asshole, he heard his wife say from within his pant pocket.

Meanwhile, elsewhere, Benito experienced a sort of epiphany. All living things, in the end, he thought, need simple pleasures. And now he had the opportunity to have one of them. He abandoned his car in the middle of the street and began to run, reckless and euphoric, like an escaped animal. My 16-year-old sweetheart is going to have a Benito, he repeated to himself.

Adriana: Shit! Shit!

Narrator(s): Shouted Nana, six cars behind, not understanding why traffic had stopped. She looked at her watch and saw that her time had run out.

Adriana: Damn it, Fofy! Damn it! Hold on!!!

Narrator(s): But Fofy was dead in a bucket just 200 meters ahead of her.

Bernardita: Warm him up!

Virgilio: He's dead, Bernardita!

Bernardita: Resuscitate him, you whimp!

Virgilio: What?!

Bernardita: Pound on his little chest! Not so hard, idiot! You're going to kill him!

Virgilio: He's already dead.

Bernardita: Fuckin' A, Virgilio. Fuck!

Virgilio: What time is it?

Bernardita: Why the hell do you want to know the time? Are you going to record the time of death?

Virgilio: Nana should be arriving at McDonalds.

Bernardita: And why the hell does it matter now that she is at McDonalds? Her fucking axolotl has died of hypothermia.

Virgilio: She doesn't know that.

Bernardita: ...

Virgilio: By the time she finds Fofy dead in the toilet, we will be splitting the money.

(Silence)

Bernardita: You are a perverse bastard, Virgilio. Run. Run!

Narrator(s): From the laundry room of her apartment, Sarita contemplated the snow accumulating on the roofs of the cars parked below. It's so fucking white, she was thinking, when she heard someone pounding on the door. She opened it, bewildered.

Benito: Don't kill him!

Sarita: What the hell are you doing here, Benito?

Benito: Don't kill him, please.

Sarita: Who?

Benito: We haven't named him yet, but we could call him Benito, if you think it's okay.

Sarita: What the fuck are you talking about?

Benito: Our child. I don't want you to go to Liliana's uncle.

Sarita: Benito, do you want to have the shit beaten out of you? Don't come to my house to tell me that shit.

Benito: We just need little things to make us happy, Sarita. Don't throw us away.

Sarita: Go home, Benito.

Benito: We all need simple little things to make us happy.

Sarita: I said, go home!

(Pause)

Benito: What do you have in your mouth?

Sarita: Nothing.

Benito: Is it a retainer?

Sarita: They're just some mouth guards.

Benito: Some what?

Sarita: Some molds, Benito.

Benito: What for?

Sarita: To whiten my teeth. Benito, get the hell out of here before my dad wakes up.

Benito: You already have white teeth.

Sarita: No I don't.

Benito: Yes you do.

Sarita: Benito, these fucking things make my teeth hurt and keep me awake all night. That's why I'm in a bad mood. And you know that the only thing that relaxes me is my cigarette and my coffee, but I can't smoke or drink coffee because it would screw up the treatment. And that's why I don't feel well. Really, I don't feel well. I only have to put up with this for one more week. You would be doing me a favor if you left me alone during that week. Do you understand?

Benito: Where did you get the money to whiten your teeth?

Sarita: Where do you think, Benito?

(Silence)

Benito: Then you aren't going to go to Liliana's uncle?

Sarita: I'm going to close the door.

Narrator(s): Benito stood there in the foyer of the building, even after Sarita had closed the door. He was confused. He didn't know if Sarita's words had truly been confusing, or if he was simply refusing to listen to the truth. The only simple little pleasure that he had managed to get, he thought, was Sarita's half-yellow teeth. But there would be no child and he didn't know how to feel about that. He was neither happy nor disappointed. He only felt the snow melting on his shoulders and thought that it was incredibly cold.

Narrator(s): Meanwhile, Virgilio and Bernardita were running towards McDonalds in the snow, dangling the bucket with the dead axolotl, when they noticed that someone was running alongside them with the same desperation.

Bernardita: Nana?

Adriana: What the hell are you doing here?

Bernardita: Running...

Adriana: They've kidnapped Fofy!

Bernardita: ...

Narrator(s): It took Nana a moment to understand what was going on. They even ran a little longer. Then they stopped and remained silent. Nana looked in the bucket but there wasn't anything there.

Virgilio: Where....?

Narrator(s): They looked back. Twenty meters behind, Fofy was lying in the middle of the sidewalk. His little feet and his pink color, accentuated by the cold, granted him a certain humanity. From a distance he looked like a fetus, slowly freezing on the ground, a disconcerting image for the three of them.

Adriana: Fofy...?

Narrator(s): She ran and knelt in front of him as if he truly were a child.

Nana. You two are going to hell! To hell! To hell!

(Virgilio starts crying)

Virgilio: Bernardita is dying!

Bernardita: Shut up, Virgilio!

Adriana: What?

Virgilio: She is dying and all you care about is your fucking fish.

Bernardita: I told you to shut up!

Adriana: You're dying?

Bernardita: In a way.

Virgilio: She's dying of cancer, you bitch. And you could save her life with 25 thousand *pesos*!

Bernardita: God damn it, Virgilio. I told you to shut up!

Virgilio: What are 25 thousand *pesos* to you?

Adriana: 25 thousand *pesos*?

Virgilio: You were going to pay 50 thousand for a fish!

Bernardita: God damn it, Virgilio!

Virgilio: Stop trying to hide it.

Bernardita: I told you to shut up!

(Bernardita knocks Virgilio to the ground. They fight.)

Adriana: You told him that you have cancer?

Virgilio: Don't play dumb, you bitch!

Adriana: You told him that you have cancer!?

Bernardita: I didn't tell him that I have cancer.

Virgilio: She has a tumor in... Where is the tumor, Bernardita?

Bernardita: I don't have any tumor, Virgilio.

Virgilio: She can't even remember, she is so distraught!

Adriana: Bernardita doesn't have a tumor, Virgilio. What she wants is a fucking coffee maker.

Virgilio: A what?

Bernardita: Virgilio is fucking a boy!

Adriana: What?

Virgilio: What?

Bernardita: What?

(Silence)

Virgilio: You want a coffee maker?

Bernardita: You are fucking a boy!

Adriana: You are fucking a boy?

Virgilio: We haven't performed the act!

Adriana: The act?

Virgilio: You want a coffee maker?

Bernardita: Yes!

Adriana: What act? Are you fucking him or not?

Virgilio: Are you dying?

Bernardita: ...

Adriana: What act, Virgilio?

Virgilio: Are you dying, Bernardita?

Bernardita: In a way. And the only thing I want is a fucking coffee maker!

Virgilio: What for?

Bernardita: To make coffee!

Virgilio: ...

Bernardita: I'm not well, Virgilio. Something is wrong. That coffee maker makes me feel better. And they are going to take it away from me if I don't pay for it. I don't want them to take it away from me, Virgilio. I already got used to seeing it in my kitchen. I like it a lot. Do you understand?

Virgilio: Then you don't have cancer?

Bernardita: You're not listening to me! They are going to take away my coffee maker, Virgilio. My coffee maker! It means a lot to me, do you understand?

Virgilio: Do you have cancer, Bernardita?

Bernardita: Go to hell, Virgilio. You two have everything. All I want is a coffee maker. For 24 thousand *pesos*. I want to be able to say that I can make coffee in a coffee maker that costs 24 thousand *pesos*. Why the hell does it matter to you if it makes me feel good?

Virgilio: Do you have cancer?!

Bernardita: No, I don't have cancer!

(Silence)

Adriana: Are you fucking a boy, Virgilio?

Virgilio: You made me believe that you were going to die.

Adriana: As if you would care.

Virgilio: I cared.

Bernardita: ...

Adriana: I don't want to insist, Virgilio, but I am curious to know if...

Virgilio: I haven't fucked him! *(Pause)* I tried to caress him, but it scared him. *(Silence)* But I scared him... *(Silence)* I think I scared him... I only see him from time to time, from a distance. I buy him things. *(Pause)* I'm fucked. I'm so fucked! But I could make everything okay with 25 thousand *pesos*!

Adriana: What the hell do you want 25 thousand *pesos* for?

Virgilio: To keep him close to me! Just give us the money, Nana. We are really sorry about Fufis, but we have needs. Give us our money and we'll stop bothering you. Okay? You will never hear from us again. Just... please? Give us... give us the money. Bernardita needs to make coffee.

(Silence)

(Nana attacks both of them. They try to defend themselves, swinging at the air with their eyes closed. It is a clumsy fight. Nana lands a blow on Virgilio's jaw.)

Virgilio: My tooth... You knocked out my tooth!

Adriana: I don't give a fuck!

Virgilio: You knocked out a tooth! Where is my tooth?

(He kneels to look on the ground. He touches his empty gum. He gets up to hit Nana.)

Virgilio: You knocked out my tooth, you bitch!

Adriana: I don't give a fuck!

Virgilio: I'm going to beat the shit out of you!

(They go back to hitting each other. Bernardita intercedes, but after receiving a punch she joins in the fight without caring whom she hits. They end up on the ground. They grapple until they are exhausted. They pant.)

Narrator(s): They stayed there for a while, watching the snow fall. It was better that they didn't have the breath to speak because they had nothing to say other than just how much they hated each other, and they were already really tired of saying that. For a moment, they felt the need to huddle together against the cold, but they didn't know how to say so. So they just stayed there, getting slowly covered in snow.

Bernardita: Nana?

Adriana: What?

Bernardita: I'm really cold.

Adriana: Yeah?

Bernardita: You aren't?

(Pause)

Adriana: No.

(Pause)

Bernardita: Nana?

Adriana: What?

Bernardita: That money isn't yours. You do nothing. It's as if you were stealing it.

Adriana: Do you want me to give it back?

(Pause)

Bernardita: Share it with us.

(Pause)

Adriana: I wouldn't have enough, Bernardita.

Bernardita: Why not?

Adriana: Do you know how much an axolotl costs, Bernardita?

Bernardita: ...

Adriana: 30 pesos. 30 pesos, Bernardita. If I shared my money with you two, and one day I wanted to buy another axolotl, and I lacked those 30 pesos, I would be really upset. I can't take that risk.

(Silence)

Bernardita: Okay...

Narrator(s): Nana stood up and pried her axolotl from the frozen ground, but one of his little feet came off. Still on the ground, Virgilio and Bernardita watched her with the hope that she would give them some money. But it didn't happen.

Virgilio: Are you going to call us, Nana?

Narrator(s): Nana left without saying a word. Bernardita then got to her feet and watched her sister leave for the last time, walking unsteadily and bent over with her back soaked, carrying her dead axolotl in her hand as if it were something she had found on the street.

Virgilio: Where is my tooth? Help me find my tooth, Bernardita.

Bernardita: Get up.

Virgilio: He's not going to like me without my tooth.

Bernardita: Please get up.

Virgilio: ...

Narrator(s): Josefina was close by, contemplating the snow through the doctor's window, without noticing that Doctor Esquerra was unconscious because of all the blood he had lost.

Josefina: Doctor?

Narrator(s): The carpet next to him was stained with blood under his perforated hand.

Josefina: Doctor? (*Silence*) Damn it!

Narrator(s): She grabbed the doctor by his shirt and dragged him with great effort to her car. She sped off toward the hospital in the desperate hope of saving the life of the man who, only a few days earlier, had killed her husband.

Josefina: Damn it. Damn it!

Narrator(s): Meanwhile, Elvis was running several blocks through the snow, with Ramses' mother in his arms, dying. His lungs hurt. He could see his breath. He dragged his feet, losing speed. His arms were giving out on him. Suddenly he contemplated the woman's face, pallid and covered in snow, her mouth hanging open. And he knew it was time to stop.

Elvis: No, no, no. No, damn it, no.

Epilogue

Agent: You can go.

Elvis: Mmh?

Agent: You can go.

Elvis: Why?

Agent: The witness report says that the lady crossed the street under a pedestrian bridge. That clears you of all responsibility.

Elvis: But I ran her over.

Agent: I need you to sign your statement.

Elvis: ...

Narrator(s): Elvis signs his statement, then walks through the halls of the police station, disconcerted.

At the hospital, Doctor Esquerro sleeps like he hasn't slept in a long time.

At her house, Josefina goes to the bathroom and destroys one of the walls with a hammer until she falls to the floor, exhausted.

Bernardita leaves Virgilio at the bus station. She wants to hug him, but she can't. What the hell does it matter now, she thinks.

After identifying his mother's body on a table at the morgue, Ramses stops at an ATM. He wants to punish himself. He knows that he will find the deposit now that it is too late. I would have been able to do something for her, he thinks. I would have at least been able to tell her that I wanted to do something for her. But when he puts in the card, he finds that there is nothing. His account is empty. He starts beating the ATM.

Nana throws Fofy into the toilet. She then looks for hairless dogs on the internet but finds nothing.

Benito tries to remember where he left his car, but can only think about how incredibly stupid he felt on the stairway landing of Sarita's building.

And for a moment, somehow connected, they all remember the snow, doubtfully.

(It begins to snow again. All of the characters resume the position they were in when they first saw the snow).

Had it snowed to cover that warped and maladjusted world to which they hadn't managed to adapt, at least for a moment? Maybe.

Or maybe, they wonder, the world had decided to mend itself, starting by dismantling the sky. But in any case, they refuse to believe that it was simply a meteorological phenomenon provoked by a high level of water in the atmosphere at a temperature below zero degrees Celsius provoking the fall of ice crystals in minutely different geometric forms grouped in snowflakes. No, that would be completely stupid.

For them it is a wake-up call. A nudge. A reminder that everyone, absolutely everyone, needs a little something. And that's okay. Perhaps it isn't too late to begin. Perhaps, after all, there will be something better after the snow melts away.

(The snow continues to fall)

Idiotas contemplando la nieve

Alejandro Ricaño

Para mi madre, que me platica de sus vecinos, tan graciosamente.

Personajes:

Johnny

Ramona

Madre

Ramsés

Benito

Elvis

Marisa

Sarita

Secretario

Bernardita

Nana

Virgilio

Josefina

Minervo

Esquerra

Luzma

Forense

Axolote

PRIMERA PARTE

Uno.

Estos son los sucesos desafortunados antes de la nieve: Ramona estaba deshecha. Su hijo era malabarista de un espectáculo en las vegas y se había suicidado.

Es simple: la llegada del Circo del Sol había hecho que su espectáculo luciera como una mierda.

Johnny.- ¡Puta madre! ¡Reputa madre!

Tomó su monociclo, subió a la cuerda floja y fingió perder el equilibrio. Se desnucó frente a cuatro espectadores que pidieron más tarde que les devolvieran su dinero.

Ramona llamó entonces a su hermana para decirle que estaba tan jodidamente triste como el mundo no podía tener una idea.

Ramona.- ¿Puedes venir?

Madre.- ¿Hasta Tijuana?

Pero la hermana de Ramona dependía directamente de su hijo Ramsés. Y Ramsés había cometido una estupidez que jodería el viaje de la hermana de Ramona.

Ramsés había decidido estudiar una maestría para no tener que conseguir trabajo.

Escogió cualquier mierda aburrida que tuviera beca de CONACYT.

Sólo tenía que abrir una cuenta en el banco, luego ingresar sus datos en la página del programa de becas.

Pero Ramsés tecleó una letra equivocada en su apellido, una sola, sin notarlo.

Y un mes más tarde, cuando el nombre de Ramsés no concordó con la base de datos del banco, su pago fue retenido, indefinidamente.

Madre.- Déjame preguntarle a Ramsés si tiene dinero.

Agustina.- Ok.

Este fue el suceso desafortunado número uno, antes de la nieve.

Dos.

Benito.- ¿Parpadeaba?

Ramsés.- ¿Qué cosa?

Benito.- El semáforo peatonal. ¿Parpadeaba?

Ramsés.- Te digo que no, se ponía rojo de pronto.

Benito.- ¿Y te agarró a medio camino?

Ramsés.- A medio camino, Benito. Si yo hubiera sabido que se iba a poner rojo a medio camino, no me cruzaba. Pero no sabía y me agarró a medio camino.

Benito.- ¿Corriste?

Ramsés.- Apreté el paso, no era para tanto.

Benito.- ¿Y el cabrón te echó el carro?

Ramsés.- Me echó el carro, Benito. Dime tú qué le costaba esperarse unos segundos. Porque era una calle angosta, Benito, que iba a terminar de cruzar en unos segundos.

Benito.- ¿Cuántos?

Ramsés.- ¿Cómo voy a saber cuántos, Benito? Me faltaban dos metros. ¿Cuántos segundos te toma recorrer dos metros?

Benito.- ¿Apretando el paso?

Ramsés.- Apretando el paso.

Benito.- (*Cuenta mentalmente*) ¿Dos?

Ramsés.- Digamos que tres, para darle ventaja. ¿Qué le costaba esperarse tres segundos, Benito?

Benito.- Es que ya no hay tiempo para nada.

Ramsés.- ¿Para nada? Te voy a decir para qué sí tuvo tiempo: para pendejarme por la ventana. No quiso detenerse los tres segundos que me iba tomar cruzar la calle.

Benito.- Apretando el paso.

Ramsés.- Apretando el paso. Pero sí tuvo tiempo para pendejarme por la ventana. Detuvo el carro a media calle y me pendejeó por la ventana.

Benito.- Encima de todo.

Ramsés.- Eso, Benito, es una descortesía. No es falta de tiempo. Contra eso, Benito, uno debe tomar represalias.

Benito.- ¿Qué tipo de represalias?

Ramsés.- Severas. Represalias severas. Me subí a mi carro -que estaba ahí donde pegué el brinco para que no me atropellara- y lo seguí.

Benito.- ¿Te vio?

Ramsés.- ¿Siguiéndolo? No. Primero pensé, si lo alcanzo, le voy a romper la madre.

Benito.- ¿Luego?

Ramsés.- Luego lo vi más grande que yo y descarté la idea. Voy a rayarle el carro por lo menos, pensé. Voy a seguirlo hasta que se estacione en algún lado y voy a rayarle el carro.

Benito.- ¿Se lo rayaste mucho?

Ramsés.- No se lo rayé.

Benito.- ¿No se lo rayaste?

Ramsés.- ¡Se estacionó en un hospital, Benito! ¿Cómo iba a rayarle el carro en un hospital?

Benito.- Discretamente.

Ramsés.- Quiero decir que no podía, Benito. Moralmente no podía. Imagina que iba a recoger a su esposa.

Benito.- ¿Por qué iba a recoger a su esposa?

Ramsés.- Porque le amputaron una pierna.

Benito.- ¿Le amputaron una pierna a su esposa?

Ramsés.- Hipotéticamente.

Benito.- ¿Por qué le amputaron una pierna?

Ramsés.- La... la mordió un tigre.

Benito.- ¿Un tigre? ¿Por qué iba a morderla un tigre?

Ramsés.- Porque ellos tienen un tigre, Benito.

Benito.- En la casa.

Ramsés.- En la casa.

Benito.- ¿Por qué iban a tener un tigre en la casa?

Ramsés.- ¡Porque son dueños de un puto circo, de acuerdo!

Benito.- Es estúpido.

Ramsés.- ¡Es un caso hipotético, Benito!

Benito.- Es que no me cuadra.

Ramsés.- ¡Estaba en el hospital por una chingada gripa! ¿Te cuadra que esté en el hospital por una chingada gripa?

Benito.- Si se está volviendo pulmonía.

Ramsés.- Estaba en el hospital porque fue a recoger a su mujer con gripa casipulmonía. No puedes rayarle el carro a alguien que va a recoger a su mujer con gripa casipulmonía. Es desalmado.

Benito.- Era un caso hipotético.

Ramsés.- Uno nunca sabe, Benito. Cuando sales del hospital sales derrumbado, no hay más. Vas a que te digan que te va a llevar la chingada y que llevarte la chingada te va salir en una lana que no tienes; para que te digan eso tienes que esperar tres horas y para esperar esas tres horas tienes que hacer no sé cuánto papeleo. A mí me pasa cada vez que llevo a mi mamá. Y lo último que me gustaría después de pasar por todo eso, Benito, es encontrar mi carro rayado en el estacionamiento.

Benito.- Entonces no lo rayaste.

Ramsés.- ¿No me estás escuchando?

Benito.- Si no lo rayaste por qué vienes con remordimiento.

Ramsés.- Porque no me quedé con los brazos cruzados. No le rayé el carro, pero lo esperé.

Benito.- ¿Salió con su mujer coja?

Ramsés.- Debió dejarla adentro.

Benito.- Y le rompiste la madre.

Ramsés.- Te digo que era más grande que yo. Lo seguí hasta su casa. Cuando entró le dejé una nota en el parabrisas que decía “me echaste el carro encima cabrón, ya sé dónde vives, cuando menos te lo esperes te voy a dar un batazo por la espalda”.

Benito.- ¿Vas a darle un batazo por la espalda?

Ramsés.- ¿Por quién me tomas, Benito? Sólo le robé su tranquilidad. Ahora va a pasar el resto de su vida esperando un batazo por la espalda.

Benito.- ¿Después de visitar a su mujer coja con pulmonía te pareció menos desalmado un batazo por la espalda que rayarle el carro?

Ramsés.- Por eso siento remordimiento. En la mañana estaba encabronado, Benito. Pasé al cajero y no me han depositado. Ya van más tres meses, Benito, porque mi apellido tiene una letra equivocada. En tres meses no han podido resolver un errorcito para que puedan depositarme. Estaba desquiciado, Benito. Le prometí a mi mamá hace un mes que le iba dar dinero para que fuera a ver su hermana a Tijuana. Mi primo se desnucó, sabes. Y estos cabrones no me pagan, porque mi apellido tiene una

pinche letra equivocada. Siempre anda viendo precios de maletas. Y yo no puedo darle un peso porque no me depositan. Le dije que esta semana ya era seguro. No podía decirle que otra vez no me habían depositado. Iba saliendo del banco cuando este pendejo me echó el carro encima. Estaba desquiciado, Benito.

Tres.

Suceso desafortunado número dos: El papá de Elvis tenía un abarrote. Detrás del mostrador, cierto miércoles al medio día, le hizo el amor a su mujer como ningún hombre le ha hecho el amor a una mujer.

Sonaba una canción de Elvis en la radio.

Convencido de que en ese momento había concebido a su hijo, decidió llamarlo Elvis.

Elvis Rosendo, para no faltar a la tradición de ponerle a los hijos los espantosos nombres de los abuelos, y joderle la vida para siempre.

Pero ese no es el suceso desafortunado. Cuarenta años más tarde, Elvis Rosendo consigue empleo como conserje de una secundaria.

Cuarenta años y tres días más tarde, Elvis Rosendo pierde su empleo acusado de robar nueve teléfonos celulares.

MARISA.- Llena las formas amarillas para que se te afilie al IMSS. Firmas aquí y aquí. No te salgas del recuadro, Elvis.

Elvis se vio entonces en la mortificante necesidad de pedir empleo de la única otra cosa que sabía hacer: conducir un autobús.

Elvis Rosendo había nacido con una pierna más corta que la otra y sabía, por experiencias pasadas, que no alcanzaba el freno a tiempo.

Pero no tenía otra opción. Y guardó el secreto.

Marisa.- ¿No te dije que no te salieras del recuadro?

Elvis.- Perdón.

Marisa.- No hay sueldo base. Vas a porcentaje. Quince por ciento de los boletos. Así es que depende de ti. Te apendejas, te chingan el pasaje.

Elvis.- Sí.

Marisa.- ¿Si te vas a apendejar?

Elvis.- No... quiero decir que/

Marisa.- Ya sé, ya sé. Cada vez que puedas chingate a las ballenitas de la 52. Llévatela entre 60 y 80, no te bajes de ahí. Por los de tránsito no te preocupes. Mi marido nos da el pitazo cuando hay operativo, pero hay que darle a una lana. Se te descuenta del sueldo.

Elvis.- ¿Cuál sueldo?

Marisa.- ...

Elvis.- ...

Marisa.- O sea que a fin de mes te desembolsas cincuenta pesos.

Elvis.- Ya.

Marisa.- ¿Tienes dónde guardar la unidad?

Elvis.- ¿Como una cochera?

Marisa.- ¿Una cochera, Elvis, para un autobús? ¿Eres idiota?

Elvis.- Saqué ocho en el examen teórico.

Marisa.- Un espacio en la calle, Elvis, que no moleste a tus vecinos.

Elvis.- Un espacio en la calle, sí.

Marisa.- Empiezas en el turno de las cinco.

Elvis.- ¿De la tarde?

Marisa.- De la mañana, Elvis. Sales a las once de la noche. Tienes una hora para comer. Ahora, si por algún designio del Señor, Elvis, vas a estamparte con otro coche, la empresa solventa los gastos pero se te va a descontar paulatinamente de tu sueldo.

Elvis.- ¿Paulaqué?

Marisa.- Quiere decir que con la mierda que ganas lo van a terminar de pagar tus hijos. ¿Tienes hijos, Elvis?

Elvis.- Seis.

Marisa.- No les va a alcanzar. Así es que ándate con cuidado,

Elvis. En chinga pero seguro.

Elvis.- En chinga pero seguro.

Marisa.- No mandes mensajitos mientras manejas, Elvis. Ya no sé de qué manera pedirles que no manden mensajitos mientras manejan.

Elvis.- No sé enviar mensajitos.

Marisa.- Así está mejor. Hay algo más, Elvis.

Elvis.- Dígame.

Marisa.- Empareja la puerta.

Elvis.- ¿Qué cosa?

Marisa.- La puerta, que la emparejes.

Elvis.- Sí. (*Empareja la puerta. Susurra.*) ¿Qué pasó?

Marisa.- ¿Por qué carajos susurras?

Elvis.- Pensé qué...

Marisa.- ¿Qué?

Elvis.- Me pidió que emparejara la puerta.

Marisa.- Porque me estoy cagando de frío. Escucha, Elvis, vas a trabajar un chingo de horas, malcomido, recorriendo la misma ruta una y otra vez, haciendo las mismas acciones todo el santo día. Después de un rato, Elvis, vas a entrar en un estado de embrutecimiento. Vas a perder la lucidez, Elvis, los reflejos. Así es que no va ser nada raro, Elvis, que el día que se te atravesara un cristiano, apendejado como irás, echo la

madre para que los de la 57 no te chinguen el pasaje, te lo pases a traer, Elvis. Este es mi consejo. No me malinterpretes, soy una mujer cristiana con principios cristianos. Pero si ya lo vas a atropellar, atropéllalo bien. Remátalo. No lo dejes medio cojo. No lo dejes medio idiota. Si lo dejas...

(Entra Sarita sin avisar)

Marisa.- ¿Qué pasó?

Sarita.- ¿Vas a querer comida?

Marisa.- ¿Qué hay?

Sarita.- Tacos dorados de pollo o enchiladas verdes.

Marisa.- Las enchiladas.

Sarita.- ok.

(Sale Sarita)

Marisa.- ¿Qué?

Elvis.- No lo deje idiota.

Marisa.- Eso. Si lo dejas medio idiota, inválido, etc, etc, te va a salir más caro que tus siete hijos.

Elvis.- Seis.

Marisa.- Pues te va a salir más caro que siete. Son pensiones de por vida, Elvis. Si lo matas, Elvis, te cuesta siete años en el tambo o 20 mil, a lo mucho. Sé que es una chingadera, Elvis, sé que no debería decirte esto, pero es por tu bien. Échate el reversazo y asegúrate de que no quede vivo. Y si puedes pélate, porque luego no hay para pagarte asistencia legal. Es un consejo por tu bien. ¿Estamos, Elvis?

Cuatro.

Suceso tres: Bernardita pega la nariz en el aparador de un Liverpool y contempla del otro lado una máquina para hacer capuchinos. Quince minutos más tarde, Bernardita es informada sobre los planes de crédito.

Bernardita.- De pronto se están vendiendo los productos. No sé cómo, Nana, sólo sé que de pronto comenzaron a venderse.

Adriana.- Milagrosamente.

Bernardita.- Yo qué sé, Nana, las vecinas se encontraron feas de la noche a la mañana.

Adriana.- ¿Todas a la vez?

Bernardita.- Las vecinas piensan colectivamente, Nana. Es un misterio. De pronto las tuve en la puerta comprando mis productos. Y ahora tengo dinero.

Adriana.- Bueno, págame lo que me debes.

Bernardita.- Un paso a la vez, Nana. Hoy al menos no voy a pedirte dinero, ¿ves? Estoy cambiando. Es un inicio. Sólo necesito los talones de tus cheques para sacar esta cafetera que te digo, pero la voy a pagar yo, es sólo que no me dan el crédito.

Adriana.- Por qué será.

Bernardita.- Porque son desalmados, Nana.

Adriana.- No tienes que responder, Bernardita, estoy siendo sarcástica.

Bernardita.- Sí, bien. Pero, sí me prestas tus talones, ¿verdad?

Adriana.- No.

Bernardita.- ¿Por qué no?

Adriana.- Porque no vas a tener para pagarla.

Bernardita.- Sí voy a tener para pagarla, lo que no tengo, por lo pronto, es cómo comprobar un ingreso de 50 mil pesos mensuales.

Adrianita.- ¿50 mil?

Bernardita.- ¿Quién, con un vestigio de honradez, Nana, gana 50 mil pesos mensuales?

Adriana.- Yo.

Bernardita.- Tú no ganas 50, ganas 75 más lo que te chingas, y sólo porque el infeliz de tu marido tuvo a bien morir.

Adriana.- Lárgate.

Bernardita.- Espérate.

Adriana.- Ve a ofender a Virgilio, él se deja, yo no.

Bernardita.- Escúchame, escúchame. ¡Escúchame, carajo! Necesito esa cafetera. No era mi intención ofenderte. Pero no nos hagamos tarugas, Nana. Tu marido promovió tu diputación para que después renunciaras y él te supliera. Pero antes se murió el pendejo. Y tú ahí te quedaste. Eso no es honrado, ¿verdad? Tú no tienes un vestigio de honradez, Nana. Lo que sí tienes son los últimos tres talones de cheque de tu sueldo que yo necesito para sacar mi cafetera.

(Pausa)

Adriana.- ¿Cuánto cuesta tu cafetera?

Bernardita.- Te vale madres.

Adriana.- No, no me vale madres, la voy a pagar yo.

Bernardita.- No, no, no, la voy a pagar yo, 2 mil pesos mensuales.

Adriana.- ¿2 mil?

Bernardita.- Poquito menos, como 1900.

Adriana.- ¿1900?

Bernardita.- A trece meses sin intereses.

Adriana.- ¿Cuánto cuesta tu chingada cafetera?

Bernardita.- 24 mil pesos.

Adriana.- ¡24 mil pesos! ¿Por una jodida cafetera?

Bernardita.- Pero no es cualquier cafetera, Nana, es una Krups Espresseria Automatic XP 9000.

Adriana.- ¿Necesita todos esos nombres?

Bernardita.- Así de chingona está. Tiene una pantallita de LCD.

Adriana.- ¿Para qué necesitas una cafetera de 24 mil pesos?

Bernardita.- Para hacer café.

Adriana.- ¿Necesitas una cafetera de 24 mil pesos para hacer café?

Bernardita.- ¡Estrictamente no, carajo! ¿Quién necesita una cafetera de 24 mil pesos? Estrictamente, quiero decir. Nadie necesita estrictamente nada. Son los pequeños placeres, Nana, uno necesita de los pequeños placeres para darle sentido a... pues a la vida.

Adriana.- ¿De qué pendejada me estás hablando?

Bernardita.- Tú, tú, tú lo sabes mejor que nadie, Nana. Tú no necesitas los 75 mil pesos –más lo que te chingas- que ganas. Estrictamente no los necesitas. No necesitas la, la chingada camionetota esa, como si tuvieras un regimiento de mocosos. Ni hijos tienes. ¿A quién vas a subir, al pendejo pescado ese que te salió tan caro? Dime, ¿para qué necesitas el chingado pescado ese, si ni te hace caso?

Adriana.- Es un axolote.

Bernardita.- La mierda con patas que tienes en tu pecera, ¿para qué la necesitas?

Adriana.- Para que me haga cariños.

Bernardita.- ¿Cariños?

Adriana.- Con sus patitas.

Bernardita.- ¿Cómo te hace cariños con sus patitas?

Adriana.- Pego la nariz en la pecera y mueve sus patitas.

Bernardita.- Porque se caga del miedo, si de por si eres más fea que pegarle a Dios por espalda, deformada por el cristal de la pecera, ni te digo. Cómprate un perro.

Adriana.- Los perros sueltan pelos.

Bernardita.- Cómprate uno lampiño.

Adriana.- ¿Cuándo escuchaste de perros lampiños, imbécil? Fofy es único.

Bernardita.- Igual no es indispensable en tu vida, estrictamente te repito. Pero tienes todas esas cosas que le dan sentido a tu vida y yo no vengo a joderte con que si las necesitas o no las necesitas. Tú te jodes a medio mundo para tener todas esas cosas. Yo sólo necesito joderte a ti con tus tres últimos aranceles de pago. Quiero esa cafetera más que nada, Nana. Sácame el crédito. Soy tu hermana.

Nana.- Media hermana.

Bernardita.- Bueno, media hermana. Ni modo que vaya a chingarte. Necesito esa cafetera, Nana.

Tres años atrás, Nana estaba en un campo de equitación, agarrada a un árbol con el vestido sobre la cabeza, mientras el ex secretario de seguridad pública se la cogía ligeramente de puntitas.

El ex secretario de seguridad pública, siete años atrás, se encontraba al frente del sindicato de trabajadores de la educación.

Cuando se presentaron las elecciones presidenciales, se acercó al candidato y le ofreció todos los votos de su sindicato.

Más de un millón de votos.

Más de un millón de votos que, un año después, lo colocaron en la secretaría de seguridad pública sin el más remoto conocimiento de sus obligaciones.

Después conoció a Nana.

Nana tenía la carrera técnica de belleza, pero trabajaba por el momento como cajera de un macdonalds.

Cuando el secretario la conoció, cierta tarde que sintió un nostálgico antojo por una cajita feliz, contempló sus senos que colgaban cada vez que se agachaba para tomar una charola, provocándole una repentina erección que interpretó como amor.

Nana pasó de ser una peluquera iletrada temporalmente empleada en un macdnalds, a encargada de asuntos sin importancia en la oficina del ex secretario de seguridad pública.

Desde entonces, cada tanto, el secretario la llevaba a las exhibiciones de equitación de su hija, y se la cogía contra un árbol, ligeramente de puntitas.

Un día, se encerró durante una semana con ella en un hotel y la hizo memorizar un currículum falso como militante del partido.

Secretario.- ¡Con una chingada, Nana, te digo que todo es ficticio!

Nana.- Ya, de mentiritas.

Secretario.- De mentiritas.

Nana.- Ya. (Pausa) Pero esto de que fui delegada de no sé qué cosa, tampoco lo recuerdo.

Secretario.- Por Dios que eres idiota.

Y así, seis meses más tarde, Nana apareció sonriendo como una imbécil en cientos de espectaculares que la promovían como diputada federal.

El plan era muy simple. Nana sería diputada, nombrarían como suplente al ex secretario, y al cabo de seis meses Nana renunciaría a su puesto.

Pero al ex secretario le dispararon quince veces en el interior de su camioneta.

Y Nana se quedó como diputada, indefinidamente.

Esa es la historia de Nana.

La diputada Nana.

Cinco.

Cuarto y último suceso desafortunado, antes de la nieve:

Minervo.- ¿Ahora qué, Chepita?

Josefina.- *¿Ahora qué?* Estoy deshecha.

Minervo.- *Deshecha.*

Josefina.- Inconsolable, Mino.

Minervo.- ¿Por qué, Chepita?

Josefina.- Nuestro baño, Minervo.

Minervo.- ¿Qué tiene?

Josefina.- ¡Es el final de una tubería! Lo mismo da que me siente en el final de una tubería. Necesito un baño decente, como el de Doña Reyna.

Minervo.- ¿Como el de Doña Reyna?

Josefina.- Tienes que ver su baño, Minervo. Si orinar es un placer, orinar en ese baño, Mino, es la fregada plenitud. Yo en realidad iba a hacer del dos/

Minervo.- Tú nunca haces del dos en otro baño.

Josefina.- A veces.

Minervo.- Nunca haces del dos en/

Josefina.- ¡Me estaba cagando! ¿Bien? Ocasionalmente cago en otro baño. Pero cuando vi ese baño se me contrajeron los esfínteres, por Dios. No se puede hacer del dos en un baño como ese, sería lamentable.

Minervo.- ¿Lamentable?

Josefina.- Es un decir.

Minervo.- ¿Quieres un baño en el que no puedes hacer?

Josefina.- Te digo que es un decir.

Minervo.- ¿Pudiste hacer?

Josefina.- No.

Minervo.- Porque se te contrajeron los esfínteres.

Josefina.- Estaba deslumbrada, cuando tengamos el nuestro se me van a aflojar.

Minervo.- ¿Sigues contraída?

Josefina.- Un poquito.

Minervo.- ¿Quieres un baño que te impide cagar?

Josefina.- No, no me impide. Me intimida, temporalmente, sólo temporalmente, con los días se me irá quitando. Tú no lo entiendes, Mino, la estabilidad económica se ve en los baños de las personas.

Minervo.- En los baños.

Josefina.- En los baños, Mino. Cuando las vecinas vamos a orinar en los baños de las otras vecinas, contemplamos la estabilidad económica. Una, una se da cuenta de esas cosas. Una comenta esas cosas. No quiero ser la jodida de la calle, quiero un baño decente. Invitar a tus vecinas a orinar en un baño como ese, es orinarte sobre su miseria.

Minervo.- ¡Quieres orinarte sobre las vecinas!

Josefina.- No repitas todo lo que digo, Minervo, no repitas todo lo que digo con esa cierta... ironía. Quiero orinarme sobre sus miserias. Sobre ellas no, sobre sus miserias.

Minervo.- ¿Y para qué, con una chingada, Chepita, quieres orinarte sobre sus miserias?

Josefina.- ¿Para qué?

Minervo.- ¿Para qué?

Josefina.- ¿Cómo para qué, Minervo?

Minervo.- Es que no entiendo nada.

Josefina.- Cuando se metieron a la casa de don Víctor, ¿no fueron todos los maridos a comprarse una pistola? Como si la fuerana a usar, de veras. Y ahí andaban todos, pues ahora sí que enseñándose las pistolas. ¿Y qué dijeron de don Jorge que no compró una? ¿Te acuerdas?

Minervo.- Es distinto.

Josefina.- Que no tenía ni para comprar algo para protegerse. Como si tú si hubieras tenido. Ahí andabas vendiendo fierro viejo y cuanto tiliche encontrabas en la casa para acompletarte. Y ahí está la jodida pistola, guardada.

Minervo.- Uno nunca sabe.

Josefina.- Quién se va a meter a aquí, Minervo, si ni hay qué robar. La pistola, nomás. Yo por lo menos sí voy a usar mi baño. (Pausa) Nunca te he pedido nada, Mino, hasta ahora he sido una mujer plena, pero es que necesito un baño decente, ¿me entiendes? Una necesita orinar con dignidad.

Minervo.- ¡Mea con dignidad en el nuestro!

Josefina.- ¡Eres un pinche miserable, Minervo! ¡Un pinche miserable! ¡Ojalá te mueras cagando en ese baño! ¿Me oíste? ¡Cagando!

Minervo sabía que tarde o temprano tendría que complacerla. Su mujer era impaciente por nacimiento.

Había sido una sietemesina.

Ni siquiera para nacer fuiste paciente, le decía. Desde entonces traes una pinche prisa que me vuelve loco.

Minervo.- ¡Pues ojalá me muera cagando, como dices!

Josefina.- ¡Ojalá!

Se acostó en el sillón y se durmió maquinando cómo iba conseguir el dinero para construir el baño.

Minervo era maestro de teatro en una secundaria particular.

Sus alumnos, casi todos hijos de funcionarios de gobierno o dueños de alguna empresa local, sin excepción, lo tomaban por un pendejo fracasado.

En un sueño recurrente, Minervo entraba al salón y los mataba a todos con una escopeta. Mientras agonizaban en el suelo, Minervo los convencía de que él era un gran artista y que si estaba ahí, era sencillamente por una serie de circunstancias desafortunadas.

A la mañana siguiente despertó con una idea brillante.

Minervo.- Ya me voy.

Josefina.- Me vale madres.

Mi maestro está muriendo, le dijo a sus alumnos.

Minervo.- Esclerosis múltiple. ¿Saben cómo es la esclerosis múltiple? Vas por ahí como un títere dislocado. Todo el mundo se ríe de ti. Es degenerativo. En fin.

En fin. Se está muriendo y estoy haciendo una colecta para ayudarlo, les dijo.

Minervo.- ¿Alguien desea donar algo?

Silencio.

Minervo.- ¿Nadie quiere aportar algo para salvar la vida del maestro Shoeman?

El maestro Shoeman había muerto diez años atrás, y a Minervo no le pareció que estuviera mal mentir sobre alguien muerto.

Finalmente algunos donaron pero no era suficiente.

Su plan infalible se había venido abajo.

Necesitaba un plan emergente. Necesitaba tomar medidas drásticas.

Minervo.- Bien. (Pausa) Bien. ¡Vamos a hacer un ejercicio!

Les pidió que dejaran sus cosas en una esquina y que se reunieran todos al centro del salón.

Minervo.- Recuéstense y cierren los ojos. Inhalen hondo.

Están en una playa, les dijo, y se sienten profundamente tranquilos.

Tan profundamente tranquilos como para no notar que Minervo, sudando de miedo, les robaba sus teléfonos celulares de las mochilas apiladas en la esquina.

Minervo.- Están en una playa... No les preocupa nada. Sólo escuchan el sonido apacible de las olas, shhhhhhhhhhh...

Nueve teléfonos celulares.

Cuando los alumnos descubrieron que los habían robado, Minervo hizo revisar las mochilas de todos.

Minervo.- ¡Nadie sale de aquí hasta que aparezcan esos teléfonos celulares!

Por su puesto no apreció nada.

Llamaron a los padres. Y finalmente Minervo confesó que sospechaba del nuevo conserje que merodeaba todo el tiempo en los salones.

El conserje fue despedido.

Esa misma tarde, Minervo fue a la casa de empeños.

Salió de ahí con 14 mil pesos, sonriendo como un idiota.

Minervo no escatimó. Cambió el lavabo viejo de su mujer por un ovalín de cristal esmerilado, que no embonaba del todo y que bailaba a cada rato, pero que se sostenía después de todo con una mezcladora unimando de acero inoxidable, que nada tenía que hacer ahí, puesto que era exclusiva para restaurantes, pero que a Minervo le había parecido “muy sofisticada”. Toalleros inoxidables, jabonera inoxidable, portacepillos inoxidable. Todo jodidamente inoxidable, determinó. Para qué. No tenía la menor idea. Pero seguro a su mujer le gustaría. Su mujer sietemesina, tan difícil de complacer. Puertas de cristal corredizas, que se atoraban cuando querían. Un sanitario toretto luxus color hueso con asiento de madera modelada y bisagras cromadas que giñaban resplandecientes, con todo y que no estaban bien apretadas. Colocó un extractor para que su mujer no tuviera que esperar una hora antes de poder usar el baño después de que él lo hubiera usado, pero jamás lo supo echar a andar. Finalmente, con un par de hojas de melamina y la

cierra que su vecino le prestó, más de a fuerzas que de ganas, le construyó un pequeño mueble debajo del ovalín, que desentonaba con todo, chueco y desvencijado, pero hecho, al fin y al cabo, con mucho corazón. En su resumen, el baño de Minervo no era sino una piltrafa construida con las mejores intenciones, pero fea, hasta el último detalle.

Minervo.- ¡Ahí está el pinche baño! ¿Eh? Que no se diga que no le cumplo a mi vieja.

Josefina.- Gracias, papito.

Minervo.- Gracias la madre, te va a costar dos mamaditas y unos chilaquiles.

Josefina.- Lo que quieras, gordo aprovechado.

Minervo.- ¿Soy un chingón o qué?

Josefina.- El mejor, papi.

Minervo.- Ándale, mea con dignidad.

Josefina.- Ahorita les hablo a las vecinas para que se caguen de la envidia. (Pausa)
Oye.

Minervo.- ¿Qué?

Josefina.- Córtale este piquito ¿no, gordo?

Minerva.- ¿Cuál piquito?

Josefina.- Este que te quedó en el lavabo.

Minerva.- No se nota.

Josefina.- Sí se nota, gordo, no seas mal hecho, ándale.

Minerva.- ¿Quién lo va a ver?

Josefina.- Yo lo voy a ver. Ándale, ya estás ahí.

Minervo tomó la sierra para volar el piquito, pero tenía la mano tan cansada que dejó caer la sierra y fue a acortarle un trozo de rodilla. Comenzó a salpicar sangre

por todos lados, mientras su mujer gritaba histérica, viendo bailar la sierra por el suelo.

Minervo.- ¡Me carga la puta madre!

Estos son los sucesos desafortunados, antes de la nieve.

SEGUNDA PARTE

Uno.

Josefina.- ¿Te duele?

Minervo.- Un poquito.

Josefina.- ¿Te quito la venda?

Minervo.- ¿Para qué?

Josefina.- Yo que sé, Mino, para sentirme útil.

Minervo.- Mejor hazme unos chilaquiles.

Josefina.- ¿Y lo otro?

Minervo.- ¿Cuál otro?

Josefina.- Lo otro, Mino, tú sabes cuál otro.

Minervo.- ¿Las mamaditas?

Josefina.- Ei.

Minervo.- No ves que no puedo ni moverme.

Josefina.- ¿Entonces no?

Minervo.- Entonces no, Chepita.

Josefina.- Mira que no te voy a estar rogando.

Minervo.- Con una chingada, Chepa, mira cómo estoy, todo por tu puto baño.

Josefina.- ¿Estás diciendo que es mi culpa?

Minervo.- No estoy diciendo que es tu culpa.

Josefina.- Me dio la impresión.

Minervo.- Sólo digo que si el puto baño de doña Reyna no te hubiera acomplejado, no estaría así.

Josefina.- Pues si tú no fueras tan huevón, Mino, si hicieras de vez en cuando un poquito de ejercicio, te hubieras aguantado esa sierra.

Minervo.- Ahora es mi culpa.

Josefina.- No dije eso.

Minervo.- Pues me dio la impresión.

Josefina.- Pues que impresionativo eres, mira.

(Pausa)

Minervo.- Ándale, ayúdame a ir al baño. Creo que me estoy cagando.

A regañadientes Minerva lo llevó hasta el baño. Luego fue a la cocina a preparar los chilaquiles.

Minervo se quedó largo rato contemplando el baño. Su puta madre si soy bueno, se repetía. Tiene sus detalles, a lo mejor, pero nadie es perfecto. Dios, quizá. Pero Dios no está en el negocio de hacer baños, divagaba. Podría dedicarme a esto, podría mandar al carajo la escuela, pensaba con esperanzas, cuando sintió como si un elefante le oprimiera el pecho, o como si un caballo lo espoleara por la espalda. Estaba sufriendo un infarto. Supo enseguida que se trataba del fin. Se llevó la mano al pecho y se preguntó consternado: ¿Acaso lo último que dije fue: creo que me estoy cagando? ¿Serán esas mis últimas palabras, antes de morir? Si eres bondadoso, Dios, no me dejes morir así. Sin tener espacio dónde caer, Minervo se quedó torcido sobre la taza, con los pantalones a la rodilla. Al cabo de una hora, Josefina fue a buscarlo.

JOSEFINA.- ¿Qué chingados haces ahí dentro?

Dos.

Las vecinas de Bernardita no se habían encontrado feas de la noche a la mañana.

Ni pensaban colectivamente, como sospechaba Bernardita.

Las vecinas de Bernardita, sencillamente, habían recibido una visita de Benito.

Una tarde, Benito encontró a Bernardita llorando en su cuarto.

Bernardita.- Soy una imbécil, Benito. No soy capaz de vender una crema. ¿A qué otra cosa puedo aspirar?

Esa misma noche, Benito visitó a todas las vecinas y les dio dinero para que le compraran productos a su mamá.

Benito.- El próximo mes les doy más. No le digan a mi mamá.

Pero el próximo mes el sueldo de Benito fue a parar a otra parte.

Sarita.- Me quiero sacar esta madre, Benito.

Benito.- ¿No prefieres que hable con tu papá?

Sarita.- ¿Para qué?

Benito.- Para que nos dé su consentimiento.

Sarita.- ¿Su consentimiento para qué? No mames, Benito, no estés pensando tonterías.

Benito.- ¿Por qué no?

Sarita.- Porque te va a poner una madriza y luego te va demandar por estupro.

Benito.- ¿Por qué?

Sarita.- ¡Porque tengo 16 años!

Benito.- No, me refiero a por qué cosa dijiste que me iba a demandar.

Sarita.- Estupro.

Benito.- ¿Qué eso?

Sarita.- Perversión de menores, Benito. Deberías estar familiarizado con el término si vas a andarme haciendo niños. Por estupro y violación, si te apendejas.

Benito.- Pero los dos quisimos, los dos...

Sarita.- No Benito, no voy a quedar como una golfa. Si mi papá me pregunta, tú me obligaste.

Benito.-...

Sarita.- Ni pongas tu carita de inocente. ¿Soy tu nena de 16 años, o no?

Benito.- Sí.

Sarita.- Y tu nena de 16 años no quiere tener un Benito ahorita. Necesito dinero para sacármelo. Tú elige, puedo meterme unas pastillas que valen quinientos pesos. Son para la gastritis. Pero no son muy seguras, me puedo quedar muerta en medio de la sala y dejaría una carta comprometiéndote. Un amigo del novio de Liliana me puede poner una inyección, nos cobra mil quinientos, pero igual no pega, dice, no nos da ninguna garantía. Y el tío de Liliana me lo puede hacer en su consultorio, me mete como una aspiradorcita y no hay falla.

Benito.- ¿Es seguro?

Sarita.- Mucho.

Benito.- ¿Cuánto?

Sarita.- Cuatro mil.

Benito.- ¿Cuatro mil?

Sarita.- Se trata de mi seguridad, Benito. Supongo que no querrás ahorrar en una cosa así.

Benito.- No.

Sarita.- Me lo haría este viernes.

Benito.- ¿Quieres que vayamos juntos?

Sarita.- No es un picnic, Benito. Lilitiana me va a acompañar. ¿Tienes el dinero ahorita?

Benito.- Tendría que ir al cajero.

Así es que las vecinas de Bernardita no recibieron la visita de Benito y Bernardita no recibió la visita de ninguna de sus vecinas. Y no pudo pagar más la mensualidad de su cafetera.

Nana.- (Al teléfono) ¿Bernardita?

Bernardita.- (Igual) No.

Nana.- Bernardita, me están chingando del Liverpool. Dicen que no pagaste este mes.

Bernardita.- Acabo de pagar.

Nana.- No quiero que me estén chingando, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- Te digo que ya pagué.

Nana.- Desde ahorita te lo digo, yo no voy a pagar un peso.

Bernardita.- Tú no vas a pagar nada. Ya.

Ya valió verga pensó Bernardita.

Tomó una canasta llena de sus productos y fue a tocar una a una las puertas de sus vecinas.

Pero nadie le quiso comprar nada.

Bernardita.- ¡No se supone que son una chingada mentira los productos! ¡Ahora resulta que las arregló a todas! ¡Ahora resulta que nadie necesita mis productos!

Necesitaba 25 mil pesos. Necesitaba pagar su cafetera de contado ahora que no tenía ingresos. Pensaba en los intereses, acumulándose y acumulándose y acumulándose.

Y la única persona que podía prestarle ese dinero era la última persona a la que quería pedirselo: su otro medio hermano, un párroco del pueblo aledaño.

Tres.

Dentro de lo que cabía, Elvis era más o menos feliz en su nuevo empleo. Su pierna corta no le había traído hasta ahora ningún problema y su mujer le hablaba de cuando en cuando para que no se aburriera.

Luzma.- *(Al teléfono)* ¿En dónde estás?

Elvis.- (Igual) En el camión.

Luzma.- ¿Y por qué contestas?

Elvis.- ...

Luzma.- Me siento sola, Elvis.

Elvis.- Tienes seis hijos.

Luzma.- Tus hijos no van a hacerme el amor.

Elvis.- Pregúntales.

Luzma.- Idiota. ¿A qué hora vas a venir a hacerme el amor?

Elvis.- ¡Por Dios, estoy comiendo!

Luzma.- ¡Idiota!

Elvis.- A las once.

Luzma.- ¿Elvissexual podemos tener un calefactor?

Elvis.- No.

Luzma.- ¿Por qué no Elvistec? Este frío me está jodiendo.

Elvis.- Voy a colgar, el pasaje ya me está viendo feo.

Ramsés.- *(Al teléfono)* No, nada, el pinche chofer iba hablando por teléfono, pero los reportas y nos les dicen ni madres.

Benito.- *(Igual)* ¿Vas en camión?

Ramsés.- Se chingó la bobina de encendido del cacahuete.

Benito.- ¿Lo metiste al taller?

Ramsés.- No qué madres, no me han pagado, está ahí tirado.

Benito.- Habla al CONACYT, si no los presionas no hacen ni madres.

Ramsés.- Pues sí. ¿Vas a salir al rato?

Benito.- También ando jodido.

Ramsés.- ¿No te pagaron ayer?

Benito.- Surgió algo.

Cuatro.

La cruz roja no quiso mover el cuerpo de Minervo. Sólo le subieron los pantalones, por cortesía.

Los del ministerio público llegaron más tarde y Josefina no terminó de repetirles que su marido no había hecho más que ir a cagar.

Casi a la media noche, el emepé llamó al forense para que se llevaran a Minervo al semefo.

Josefina.- Dijo, creo me estoy cagando, lo llevé al baño y luego ya namás estaba ahí torcido...

No terminaba de entender que su marido estaba muerto, o no entendía, por lo menos no ahora, que la muerte era algo irrevocable.

Lo único que atormentaba a Josefina, lo único que la mortificaba de veras, era especular que alguien pudiera morir por ir al baño.

¿Es que acaso era peligroso cagar? ¿Debía sentir pánico cada vez que fuera al baño? ¿Sufriría un infarto?

Bajo estas importantes divagaciones, Josefina pasó la noche sin llegar a sentir, en ningún momento, tristeza por la muerte de marido.

Cinco.

Virgilio.- ¡Yo no tengo acceso a ese dinero!

Bernardita.- Pero el tesorero de la junta parroquial sí y tú tienes acceso al tesorero de la junta parroquial.

Virgilio.- ¿Cómo sabes?

Bernardita.- De sus joterías todo el mundo sabe. Yo además sé que se chingaron juntos una parte del dinero para la reconstrucción de la parroquia. A Martita no le salieron las cuentas, y cuando vi que el güero había cambiado carro, me olí que a ti también te había tocado una parte.

(Pausa)

Virgilio.- ¿Para qué necesitas 25 mil pesos?

Bernardita.- Tengo cáncer.

Virgilio.- ¿Qué?

Bernardita.- No es grave, pero si no me atienden, se va a poner feo.

Virgilio.- ¿Estás segura?

Bernardita.- Es un tumorcito, Virgilio. Pero necesito quitármelo.

Virgilio.- Voy a rezar por ti.

Bernardita.- Mejor préstame 25 mil pesos.

Virgilio.- No tengo. Estoy enamorado, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- Estás enamorado.

Virgilio.- Como no tienes una idea.

(Pausa)

Bernardita.- ¿Y qué tiene que ver, con una chingada, Virgilio, que estés enamorado?

Virgilio.- Estoy enamorado, Bernardita. Dios lo sabe. Sabe diferenciar entre un deseo carnal y un amor verdadero. El mío es un amor verdadero, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- ¿De qué chingados me estás hablando?

Virgilio.- Dios sabe que todo lo que hice mal, en su nombre, Bernardita, lo hice por amor. Dios no puede reprender un acto de amor, ¿verdad Bernardita? Ningún acto de amor es condenable, por... distinto que sea.

Bernardita.- ¿Ahora en que te metiste, cabrón?

(Pausa)

Virgilio.- Estoy enamorado de un niño, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- Ya le entraste a la modita.

Virgilio.- No ese tipo de niño, Bernardita. Un ángel, encerrado en el cuerpo de un adolescente.

Bernardita.- ¿Ya te lo cogiste?

Virgilio.- ¡Por Dios, Bernardita!

Bernardita.- ¡Como si no tuviera por dónde!

Virgilio.- Los ángeles no tienen por dónde, son asexuados.

Bernardita.- Sí cómo no, si salen todos con una cara de putos. Además está en el cuerpo de un adolescente, dices. Los adolescentes tienen por dónde.

Virgilio.- Pues no, no hemos consumado el acto.

Bernardita.- El acto.

Virgilio.- De amor. Nos mantenemos castos.

Bernardita.- ¿El te quiere?

Virgilio.- A su manera.

Bernardita.- O sea no.

Virgilio.- Es huraño, le cuesta expresar lo que siente.

Bernardita.- Bueno. Préstame 25 mil pesos, Virgilio, me estoy muriendo. Yo sé que tienes ese dinero.

Virgilio.- Te digo que no tengo.

Bernardita.- Y yo te digo que me estoy muriendo, no seas hijo de la chingada, Virgilio.

Virgilio.- Ya me gasté mi parte, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- ¿Entonces si se la chingaron?

Virgilio.- Una parte que sobraba, que igual se la hubiera robado la arquidiócesis.

Bernardita.- ¿Cuánto?

Virgilio.- Una parte, lo de la pintura.

Bernardita.- ¿Diez mil? (Pausa) ¿Veinte?

(Pausa)

Virgilio.- 90 mil pesos.

Bernardita.- ¡Noventa...! Nada más lo de la pintura. Que hijos de la chingada. O sea que tienes 45.

Virgilio.- Te digo que no tengo nada.

Bernardita.- ¿Cómo perdiste 45 mil pesos de la noche a la mañana?

Virgilio.- 35. Nunca vamos por partes iguales, el trato es 60-40.

Bernardita.- O sea que lo hacen seguido.

Virgilio.- Ocasionalmente. Muy de vez en cuando.

Bernardita.- ¿En qué te gastaste 35 mil pesos?

Virgilio.- Chucherías.

Bernardita.- ¿35 mil pesos en chucherías?

Virgilio.- Chucherías, te digo.

Bernardita.- ¿Qué tipo de chucherías?

Virgilio.- Chucherías, ¿no conoces las chucherías?

Bernardita.- Las que cuestan 35 mil pesos no.

Virgilio.- Chucherías. Ropa. Video juegos. Un iPhone.

Bernardita.- ¿Un qué?

Virgilio.- Un iPhone.

Bernardita.- ¿Qué chingados es un ayfon?

Virgilio.- Un teléfono celular.

Bernardita.- ¿La mierda esa que tienes que sólo le falta disparar agua te costó 35 mil pesos?

Virgilio.- Claro que no es ese. Y el iPhone me costó sólo diez mil pesos.

Bernardita.- *Sólo.* ¿Y para qué chingados quieres tú...? (Pausa) Ah, mira si soy pendeja. No había caído. Si hasta por un momento te imaginé jugando video juegos con tu sotanita. Estará aburrido, pensé.

Virgilio.- Estoy enamorado, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- Tu hermana muriéndose de cáncer y tú cumpliéndole los caprichitos a tu angelito.

Virgilio.- ¡Qué hago con esto que siento! No lo puedo contener.

Bernardita.- ¡Pues métele el pito, no te gastes 35 mil pesos en él! ¡35 mil pesos que podrían salvar la vida de tu hermana!

Virgilio.- ¡Te digo que es un amor inocente!

Bernardita.- Ve y dile a sus padres que es un amor inocente, cabrón, a ver qué piensan.

Virgilio.- Es mi secreto, Bernardita. Eso lo hace especial. Es mi amor inconfesable. Si lo digo se esparciría. Y yo lo quiero en mi interior, rebotándome entre las entrañas.

Bernardita.- Pues vas a ver cómo te lo saco de un pedo si no me ayudas a conseguir 25 mil pesos. Por tu Dios alcahuete, Virgilio, rajo. Ayúdame a conseguir mi dinero o te delato.

Seis.

Josefina despertó con los esfínteres tan duros como sólo Dios podía saber.

Esperaba que el forense le diera una explicación lógica, algo que tuviera más sentido que el hecho de que su marido hubiera muerto por el simple hecho de defecar.

Se presentó en el semefo poco antes del medio día.

Forense.- ¿Qué le pasó a su marido en la rodilla?

Josefina.- Se cortó.

Forense.- ¿Con qué?

Josefina.- Con una sierra.

Forense.- ¿Dónde lo operaron?

Josefina.- En el seguro.

Forense.- ¿Quién lo operó?

Josefina.- Un... doctor.

Forense.- ¿No recuerda su nombre?

Josefina.- ... *(Busca en el techo)* Esquerra. Creo que se apellidaba Esquerra.

Forense.- ¿Le dio algún medicamento?

Josefina.- Una pastilla para el dolor, o para desinflamar, no sé.

Forense.- ¿Un anticoagulante?

Josefina.- No.

(Silencio)

Forense.- A su marido le dejaron un coagulo en la rodilla, durante la operación. Ese coágulo le tapó una arteria. Eso fue lo que le provocó el infarto.

Josefina.- ¿No se murió por ir al baño?

Forense.- Fue negligencia médica, señora. Con mi informe bastaría para demandar al seguro. Pero, francamente, la demandas normalmente no proceden contra el seguro. Era mi deber decírselo.

Siete.

Virgilio.- ¿Su qué?

Bernardita.- Su axolote.

Virgilio.- ¿Qué es eso?

Bernardita.- Un pez.

Virgilio.- ¿Vamos a raptar un pez?

Bernardita.- No es cualquier pez. Tiene patitas.

Virgilio.- ¿Y qué?

Bernardita.- Le hace cariños a Nana.

Virgilio.- ¿Con las patitas?

Bernardita.- Cada quién, Virgilio.

Virgilio.- ¿Por qué carajos íbamos a raptar un pez?

Bernardita.- Porque Nana va a pagar el rescate.

Virgilio.- ¿Por un pez?

Bernardita.- Con patitas.

Virgilio.- ¿Por qué iba a pagar el rescate de un pez?

Bernardita.- Porque la gente con dinero hace ese tipo de cosas.

Virgilio.- Pídele el dinero. Te estás muriendo. Va a entender.

Bernardita.- Se lo pedí.

Virgilio.- ¿Y se negó?

Bernardita.- Es deslamada.

Virgilio.- Pero... ¿salvar la vida de un pez, en lugar de la tuya?

Bernardita.- Te digo que es desalmada.

Virgilio.- Hija de puta...

Bernardita.- Escúchame, Virgilio. Entramos a su casa, sacamos al axolote en una cubeta y después pedimos el rescate.

Virgilio.- ¿En una cubeta?

Bernardita.- ¿Qué tiene?

Virgilio.- Es un plan estúpido.

Bernardita.- ¿Qué sugieres?

Virgilio.- Yo qué sé, algo más elaborado, más de secuestradores.

Bernardita.- ¿De secuestradores? ¿Qué son, matemáticos? Sus planes son tan estúpidos como el nuestro, Virgilio, si a ellos les funciona, a nosotros también.

(Pausa)

Virgilio.- Ok. Ok. *(Silencio)* ¿Tú tienes una cubeta?

Bernardita.- No.

TERCERA PARTE

Uno.

(Virgilio marca desde un teléfono público. Espera.)

Bernardita.- ¿Qué le vas a decir?

Virgilio.- Que tenemos a su...

Nana.- *(Al teléfono)* ¿Bueno?

Virgilio.- ¡Sí, bueno! Eh... ¿Señora Moncada?

Bernardita.- *(Murmurando)* ¿Por qué hablas como idiota?

Virgilio.- *(Igual)* No estoy hablando como idiota.

Bernardita.- Estás hablando como idiota.

Virgilio.- ¡Es mi voz de secuestrador!

Nana.- ¿Bueno?

Virgilio.- Sí, bueno.

Nana.- ¿Quién habla?

Virgilio.- ... *(Voltea a ver angustiado a Bernardita.)*

Nana.- ¿Quién habla?

Virgilio.- Ga... Gabriel.

Nana.- ¿Gabriel qué?

Virgilio.- García.

Nana.- ¿García qué?

Virgilio.- Már...quez.

Nana.- ¿Quién?

Virgilio.- Escuche señora, tenemos a su pescado.

Nana.- ¿Cuál pescado?

Virgilio.- El de las patitas.

Nana.- Es un axolote.

Virgilio.- Lo tenemos secuestrado.

Nana.- ¿A Fofy? ¿Quién habla?

Virgilio.- Gabriel García Márquez, señora.

Nana.- Escúchame imbécil, tus bromas para tu puta madre.

Virgilio.- Lo vamos a torturar si no nos da lo que le pedimos.

Nana.- Mira pendejo, estoy enfrente de la pecera y no...

(Pausa)

Virgilio.- *(A Bernardita, tapando el auricular.)* Ya se dio cuenta.

Nana.- ¿Qué le hicieron a mi axolote, pendejos?

Virgilio.- Queremos cincuenta mil pesos.

Bernardita.- *(Murmurando)* ¿50 mil?

Virgilio.- *(Igual)* Pues ya que estamos aquí...

Nana.- ¡Cincuenta mil tu puta madre! ¿Sabes con quién estás hablando imbécil?

Tengo gente que te cortaría los huevos, te los metería por el culo y te patearía hasta que los escupieras si les truena los dedos. Te doy una hora para que me traigas a mi axolote, ¿me entendiste?

(Silencio)

Virgilio.- Vamos para allá. *(Cuelga)*

Bernardita.- ¿Qué pasó?

Virgilio.- Tenemos que llevarle su axolote.

Bernardita.- ¿Y el rescate?

Virgilio.- Esto ya es demasiado, Bernardita. Si quieres robamos una farmacia.

Bernardita.- ¿Una farmacia?

Virgilio.- Van a hacerme una cosa horrible con los huevos, Bernardita, es demasiado.

Bernardita.- ¡Préstame el teléfono! (*Marca. Espera*)

Nana.- (*Al teléfono*) ¿Bueno?

Bernardita.- ¡Escúchame bien hija de la chingada, le acabo de cortar una pata al puto de tu pescado, si no vienes con cincuenta mil pesos al Macdonalds del centro, en dos horas, te lo voy a enviar empanizado en una brocheta para que te lo tragues en la noche! ¡En dos horas! (*Cuelga. A Virgilio*) Camina marica, hay que prepararnos.

Dos

Ramsés.- ¿Má?

Madre.- ¿Qué pasó hijo?

Ramsés.- Ya me van a pagar, má.

Madre.- ¿Te hablaron?

Ramsés.- Pura chingada, les hablé yo. Dicen que el viernes me depositan.

Madre.- Así te han traído, mijo, dando vueltas.

Ramsés.- ¿Por qué siempre eres tan negativa má?

Madre.- Pues es que así te dijeron la vez pasada mijo, que ahora sí el viernes, y ahí está, otros dos meses y nada.

Ramsés.- No mamá, ya me explicaron cómo estuvo el problema. Lo que pasa es que la computadora tenía registrado mal mi nombre. Yo lo escribí mal. Por eso el banco no lo aceptaba. Pero ya lo arreglaron.

Madre.- ¿Y por qué escribiste mal tu nombre?

Ramsés.- Pues por pendejo, má. Y ellos por huevones no lo corregían. Pero ya está bien. Avísale a mi tía que ya vas para allá. El viernes sacamos tu boleto.

La madre de Ramsés colgó el teléfono. Se pintó los labios. Y salió a la calle.

Quería comprar una maleta.

Caminó con todo y que el frío de afuera la encorbaba. Quería tener un tiempo para imaginar el encuentro con su hermana.

Caminó hasta que algo la detuvo en el borde de una banqueta.

MADRE.- Los puentes peatonales me torturan. Antes de sentir un mínimo temblor a diez metros del suelo, prefiero sortear los carros. Espero en el borde de la banqueta. Un viento helado corre de pronto, mientras espero cruzar la calle. Arriba, advierto de pronto, un perro cruza por el puente peatonal. Que civilizado, pienso. A los perros no les asustan los puentes peatonales. Algo helado cae en mi ojo. Algo parecido a un grumo de hielo. (Pausa) Nieve. Está nevando, descubro sorprendida que está nevando. Jamás había visto nevar. Y me viene a la cabeza esa cierta tarde que mi papá nos llevó a mi hermana y a mí a conocer la nieve a no sé dónde, hace quién sabe cuánto, pero la nieve ya estaba ahí, cubriéndolo todo. No la vimos caer. (Pausa) De modo que así es. De modo que así cae, tan lenta, como si no pesara. Es hipnotizante. Es imposible dejar de verla. La nieve.

Se quedó largamente contemplando los pequeños copos que caían en espirales, con el cuello torcido hacia el cielo, fascinada.

Sin saber por qué, comenzó a reírse y la nieve entró hasta su lengua.

Es realmente helada, pensó. Realmente helada.

La mujer de Elvis, mientras tanto, descubrió la nieve a través de la ventana de su departamento.

Luzma.- Está nevando.... ¡Está nevando!

Corrió a la cocina por el teléfono y marcó tan rápido como pudo el número de su marido.

Luzma.- (Al teléfono) Contesta Elvisito, contesta.

(Silencio)

ELVIS.- (Igual) ¿Eu?

Luzma.- ¡Está nevando, Elvis!

Elvis.- Sí, ya vi, ya vi.

Luzma.- ¿En dónde estás?

Elvis.- En el camión.

Luzma.- Ya sé, ¿pero en dónde?

Elvis.- Por la estación, en el puente de...

(Un breve silencio)

Luzma.- ¿Elvis?

ELVIS.- ¿Qué?

Luzma.- Te quedaste callado.

Elvis.- Bajó un perro.

Luzma.- ¿De dónde?

Elvis.- Por las escaleras del puente, como si fuera una persona...

Luzma.- ¿Te acuerdas cuándo llevamos a las niñas a ver la...

Elvis.- ¡Putra madre!

(Pausa)

Luzma.- ¿Elvis?

Elvis.- ¡Putra madre! ¡Putra madre!

Es realmente helada, pensó la madre de Ramsés. Realmente helada, cuando perdió el equilibrio en el borde de la banqueta.

A punta de muchos madrazos, Josefina le sacó la dirección del doctor Esquerra a una enfermera que, muda por los golpes, intentaba decirle que el doctor tenía un consultorio en su casa y que la dirección podía encontrarla en cualquier sección amarilla, pero Josefina estaba cegada por la ira. Tomó su carro. Fue a la casa del doctor Esquerra, se estacionó en frente, tomó la pistola de su bolso y caminó apresuradamente hasta la entrada. Extrañamente Esquerra abrió atemorizado, como si lo esperara.

Josefina.- ¡Híncate hijo de tu puta madre!

Esquerra.- ¿Qué pasó?

Josefina.- ¡Mataste a mi esposo, cabrón!

Esquerra.- ¿Perdón?

Josefina.- ¡Perdón huevos! ¡Híncate!

Esquerra.- De qué me está hablando...

Josefina.- ¡Que te hinques, cabrón!

Esquerra.- ¡No entiendo de qué me está hablando!

Josefina.- ¡Ahorita entiendes pendejo!

Esquerra.- ¡Me está confundiendo!

(Pausa)

Josefina.- ¿Doctor Esquerra?

Esquerra.- Sí...

Josefina.- No te estoy confundiendo, pendejo. Mataste a mi esposo.

Esquerra.- ¿Quién es su esposo? No conozco a su esposo.

Josefina.- Minervo González.

Esquerra.- No, no me suena. No conozco a ningún Minervo.

Josefina.- Le operaste la rodilla. Le dejaste un coágulo. Hiciste las cosas mal, pendejo. ¿Habías bebido?

Esquerra.- ...

Josefina.- ¡Contéstame! ¿Tomaste la noche anterior?

Esquerra.- No. No.

Josefina.- ¿Compraste tu título?

Esquerra.- ¿Qué?

Josefina.- ¡Que si fuiste a la universidad pendejo!

Esquerra.- ¡Sí, sí!

Josefina.- ¡Eres un pinche mentiroso! ¡Le dejaste un coagulo! ¡En la universidad debieron enseñarte a no dejar coágulos! ¡Cómo pudiste dejarle un coágulo!

Esquerra.- Estaba...

Josefina.- ¡Estabas dónde, pendejo!

Esquerra.- Desvelado.

Josefina.- ¿Desvelado?

Esquerra.- No había dormido.

Josefina.- ¡Porque bebiste la noche anterior!

Esquerra.- ¡No!

Josefina.- ¡Entonces por qué chingados!

Esquerra.- ¡Alguien quiere matarme!

Josefina.- ¡Yo!

Esquerra.- ¡Alguien más!

Josefina.- ...

Esquerra.- Alguien dejó una nota en mi carro.

Josefina.- ¿Una nota?

Esquerra.- Quiere darme un batazo en la cabeza.

(Silencio)

Josefina.- ¿Mataste a su esposa?

Esquerra.- ¿Cómo?

Josefina.- ¿Le dejaste un coágulo?

Esquerra.- No.

Josefina.- ¿Entonces?

Esquerra.- No le di el paso.

Josefina.- ¿A su esposa?

Esquerra.- No sé si tenga esposa. A él, no le di el paso a él. Cruzó cuando la luz se puso verde.

Josefina.- ¿Y por eso quiere darte un batazo en la espalda?

Esquerra.- Lo estoy esperando. Va a venir en cualquier momento. No puedo dormir. (Pausa) Pienso, la ley no puede lidiar con ciertos casos específicos. Es imposible predecir los casos específicos. Cuando se crea una ley, me refiero. Serían miles de variantes para cada ley, para esos ciertos casos específicos. ¿Y quién resuelve esos casos específicos? El sentido común. El sentido común cubre los huecos que la ley deja vacíos. De acuerdo, yo me pasé la luz roja, una cuadra atrás, técnicamente cometí una infracción. Pero si la luz roja es para esperar a que pasen los carros de una calle que está cerrada por reparación, una calle de la que lógicamente no va salir ningún carro, ¿qué sentido tiene esa luz roja? El mío es un caso específico, la ley no podía predecir mi caso, el oficial debió emplear el sentido común, y en lugar de eso me infraccionó. Yo estaba encabronado. El se cruzó cuando la luz se puso verde. Me desquité con él. Debí esperar, pero estaba encabronado. Cuando él venga se lo voy a explicar, él va...

Josefina no entendía de qué le estaba hablando. Ni le interesaba. Repentinamente algo la distrajo desde el jardín. Bajó ligeramente el revólver, sin dejar de sostenerlo, temblorosa, con las manos sudadas, mientras el médico continuaba su soliloquio hincado, con las manos hacia el cielo como si rezara. Chepa contemplaba el montón de copos de nieve que comenzaban a cubrir las flores del jardín, a través de la ventana, cuando le vino la imagen de su marido muerto sentado en la taza, e imaginó que los copos lo cubrirían por completo, como a un animal muerto, olvidado en medio de la nieve, y se sintió tan profundamente triste, que su cuerpo se contrajo contra su voluntad.

(Se le escapa un tiro que le perfora la mano al médico)

Esquerra.- ¡Ahhh! ¡Mi mano!

Josefina.- ¡Perdón!

Esquerra.- ¡Hija de toda su puta madre!

Josefina.- ¡Perdón, yo no...! La nieve...

Esquerra.- ¡Cuál nieve!

Josefina.- Está nevando...

Esquerra.- ¿En dónde está nevando? ¡Me desmadró la mano!

Josefina.- Afuera.

(El hombre voltea hacia la ventana. Silencio.)

Josefina.- ¿Ve?

Esquerra.- Está nevando...

Josefina y el doctor Esquerra se sentaron a contemplar la nieve en el sillón mientras Bernardita y Virgilio caminaban hacia el Macdonals del centro llevando a Fofy en el interior de la cubeta.

Bernardita.- Es estúpido, ¿sabes? Que anuncien los frentes fríos si aquí hace frío todo el tiempo. No se requiere un meteorólogo para eso. Cualquier imbécil puede predecir un frente frío, incluso tú Virgilio. En lugar de eso, deberían pronosticarnos

los días soleados, para hacer planes, lavar ropa, casarse, esas cosas, ¿no crees, Virgilio?

Virgilio.- ¿Cómo puedes tener cáncer y estar tan tranquila?

Bernardita.- No estoy tranquila, estoy luchando por salvar mi vida. Llevo un axolote en una cubeta. Cuando una lleva un axolote en una cubeta, Virgilio, para pedir un rescate por un pescado con patas, Virgilio, es que algo está mal. No estoy tranquila.

Virgilio.- Esto es demasiado, Bernardita, déjame hablar con ella.

Bernardita.- No vas a hablar con nadie. Ya es demasiado tarde. Ni siquiera es nuestra hermana completa, es natural que no se preocupe por nosotros.

Virgilio.- Crecimos juntos, extrañando papás distintos, pero juntos. Se apiadará de ti, tienes cáncer, por amor del cielo.

Bernardita.- Atente al plan, Virgilio, no vayas a joderme. Dejamos el axolote en el baño, le pagamos a alguien para que le de las instrucciones y recogemos el dinero.

Virgilio.- ¿En una cajita feliz?

Bernardita.- Que Nana va a dejar olvidada en una banca.

Virgilio.- Estará esperándonos, alguien estará esperándonos cuando recojamos el dinero.

Bernardita.- Nana va a estar buscando a su axolote.

Virgilio.- Alguien más. Policías. Qué tal si llamó a la policía. Qué tal si organizaron un operativo de rescate.

Bernardita.- ¿Para un pez? ¿Eres idiota Virgilio? Sólo viene a dejar 50 mil pesos, ¿qué son cincuenta mil pesos para ella, una televisión menos? ¿Llantas para su camioneta?

Virgilio.- ¡Entonces pídeselos para tu enfermedad! ¡No puede ser tan hija de puta!

Virgilio sintió algo helado en su cabeza calva. Volteó hacia el cielo. Bernardita lo observó y miró hacia arriba, buscando lo que había distraído a Virgilio. Se quedaron ahí, paralizados, contemplando caer la nieve sin poder decir una palabra, durante un

buen rato. Recordaban su infancia. Se les ocurría que de haber compartido algo así entonces, juntos, como contemplar la caída apacible de la nieve, habrían encontrado una manera más amable de lidiar con la idea de que eran hijos de distintos padres. Pero la nieve había demorado mucho tiempo, y ahora no había nada que hacer. Ahora sólo estaban ahí, buscando un poquito de tranquilidad entre la caída irregular de la nieve, sosteniendo un axolote muerto, congelado en la superficie de una cubeta vieja.

Bernardita.- ¡El puto axolote, Virgilio!

Muy cerca de ahí, Elvis estaba aterrado. Su pierna corta temblaba desquiciada. Veía a la madre de Ramsés por el retrovisor, tirada en medio de la calle, rodeada de gente horrorizada. Sabía, en medio de esa espantosa escena, que no tenía más remedio que echar el camión en reversa o arruinaría su vida para siempre. Retiró su piernita del freno, apretó el embragué, metió la reversa y aceleró con los ojos cerrados. (Pausa) Pero algo lo detuvo de pronto. Frenó de golpe, en atención arrebatada. La imagen de la mujer frágil y moribunda en medio de la calle, cubriéndose poco a poco de nieve, le provocó una sacudida en el corazón que no pudo definir como un dolor o como una agresiva necesidad de compasión. Bajó corriendo. Tomó a la mujer en brazos y echó andar un par de pasos desconcertados.

Elvis.- ¡Un teléfono celular! ¡Quién tiene un teléfono celular!

Tú tienes un teléfono celular, pendejo, escuchó a su mujer desde la bolsa de su pantalón.

En otro lugar, Benito experimentaba una especie de epifanía. Toda vida, después de todo, pensaba, requiere de pequeñas reparaciones. Y ahora él tenía la oportunidad de comenzar por una de ellas. Abandonó su auto en medio de la calle y se echó a correr, imbécil y eufórico, como un animal desengaulado. Mi nena de 16 años tendrá un Benito, se repetía.

Nana.- ¡Mierda! ¡Mierda!

Gritaba Nana seis coches atrás sin entender por qué el tráfico se había detenido. Miró su reloj y vio que el tiempo se le había agotado.

Nana.- ¡Putra madre, Fofy! ¡Putra madre, aguanta!

Pero Fofy estaba muerto en una cubeta doscientos metros más adelante.

Bernardita.- ¡Dale calor!

Virgilio.- ¡Está muerto, Bernardita!

Bernardita.- ¡Resucítalo, maricón!

Virgilio.- ¡Cómo!

Bernardita.- ¡Golpéale su pechito! ¡No tan fuerte imbécil, lo vas a matar!

Virgilio.- ¡Ya está muerto!

Bernardita.- ¡Putísima madre, Virgilio! ¡Putísima madre!

Virgilio.- ¿Qué hora es?

Bernardita.- ¿Para qué mierdas quieres saber qué hora es? ¿Vas a anotar la hora del deceso?

Virgilio.- Nana debe estar por llegar al McDonald's.

Bernardita.- ¿Y ya qué mierdas importa que llegue al McDonald's? A su puto axolote le dio una hipotermia.

Virgilio.- Ella no lo sabe.

Bernardita.-...

Virgilio.- Para cuando encuentre a Fofy muerto en la caja de agua del baño, nosotros estaremos repartiéndonos el dinero.

(Silencio)

Bernardita.- Eres un cabrón perverso, Virgilio. Corre. ¡Corre!

Desde el cuarto de lavado de su departamento, Sarita contemplaba la nieve que se acumulaba en los techos de los autos estacionados abajo. Que putamente blanca es, pensaba, cuando escuchó que tiraban su puerta a golpes. Abrió desconcertada.

Benito.- ¡No lo mates!

Sarita.- ¿Qué chingados haces aquí, Benito?

Benito.- No lo mates, por favor.

Sarita.- ¿A quién?

Benito.- No le hemos puesto nombre, pero podría llamarse Benito, si estás de acuerdo.

Sarita.- ¿De qué chingados estás hablando?

Benito.- De nuestro niño. No quiero que vayas con el tío de Liliana.

Sarita.- ¿¡Benito, quieres que te rompan la madre!?! No vengas a decirme esas pendejadas a la casa.

Benito.- Sólo requerimos pequeñas reparaciones, Sarita, no nos tires a la basura.

Sarita.- Vete a tu casa Benito.

Benito.- Todos requerimos reparaciones.

Sarita.- ¡Qué te vayas a tu casa!

(Pausa)

Benito.- ¿Qué tienes en la boca?

Sarita.- Nada.

Benito.- ¿Es un protector?

Sarita.- Son unas guardas.

Benito.- ¿Unas qué?

Sarita.- Unos moldes, Benito.

Benito.- ¿Para qué?

Sarita.- Para blanquear los dientes. Benito, llégale a la verga antes de que se despierte mi papá.

Benito.- Tú tienes los dientes blancos.

Sarita.- No es cierto.

Benito.- Sí.

Sarita.- Benito estas mierdas no me dejan dormir porque me duelen los dientes toda la noche, así es que estoy alterada. Y tú sabes que lo único que me relaja es mi cigarro y mi café, pero no puedo fumar ni tomar café porque echo a perder el tratamiento, así es que estoy mal. De veras estoy mal. Sólo tengo que soportar esto una semana. Me harías un favor si no te apareces en esa semana, ¿me entiendes?

Benito.- ¿De dónde sacaste dinero para blanquearte los dientes?

Sarita.- ¿De dónde crees, Benito?

(Silencio)

Benito.- ¿Entonces ya no vas a ir con el tío de Liliana?

Sarita.- Voy a cerrar la puerta.

Benito se quedó inmóvil en el descanso del edificio aún después de que Sarita hubiera cerrado la puerta. Estaba confundido. No sabía si las palabras de Sarita habían sido verdaderamente confusas o si sencillamente se negaba a escuchar la verdad. La única reparación que había logrado, pensaba, eran los dientes medio amarillos de Sarita. Pero no habría ningún niño y no sabía cómo sentirse al respecto. Ni se alegró ni se desilusionó. Únicamente sintió la nieve helada derritiéndose en sus hombros y pensó que era increíblemente fría.

Mientras tanto, Virgilio y Bernardita corría camino al McDonald's, en medio de la nieve, zangoloteando la cubeta con el axolote muerto, cuando descubrieron que alguien corría junto de ellos, con la misma desesperación.

Bernardita.- ¿Nana?

Nana.- ¿Qué mierdas hacen aquí?

Bernardita.- Corriendo...

Nana.- ¡Raptaron a Fofy!

Bernardita.-...

Nana tardó un momento en comprender lo que estaba ocurriendo. Incluso corrieron un rato más. Luego se detuvieron y permanecieron en silencio. Nana echó un vistazo a la cubeta, pero no había nada.

Virgilio.- ¿Dónde..?

Buscaron con la mirada. Veinte metros atrás, Fofy estaba tirado a media banqueta. El color rosa, acentuado por el frío, y las patitas, lo dotaban de cierta humanidad. A la distancia, parecía un feto arrojado contra el suelo, congelándose, y la imagen, para los tres, fue desconcertante.

Nana.- ¿Fofy...?

Corrió y se arrodilló frente a él como si se tratara verdaderamente de un niño.

Nana.- ¡Se van a la mierda! ¡Se van a la mierda! ¡Se van a la mierda!

(Virgilio comienza a llorar)

Virgilio.- ¡Bernardita se está muriendo!

Bernardita.- ¡Cállate, Virgilio!

Nana.- ¿Qué?

Virgilio.- ¡Se está muriendo y a ti sólo te importa un puto pescado!

Bernardita.- ¡Te digo que te calles!

Nana.- ¿Te estás muriendo?

Bernardita.- De alguna manera.

Virgilio.- ¡Se está muriendo de cáncer, maldita hija de puta, y tú podrías salvarle la vida con 25 mil pesos!

Bernardita.- ¡Putra madre Virgilio, te digo que te calles!

Virgilio.- ¿Qué son 25 mil pesos para ti?

Nana.- ¿25 mil pesos?

Virgilio.- ¡Ibas a pagar 50 mil pesos por un pescado!

Bernardita.- ¡Con una chingada Virgilio!

Virgilio.- ¡Deja de solaparla!

Bernardita.- ¡Te digo que te calles!

(Bernardita somete a Virgilio contra el suelo. Forcejean.)

Nana.- ¿Le dijiste que tienes cáncer?

Virgilio.- ¡No te hagas la loca hija de puta!

Nana.- ¿¡Le dijiste que tienes cáncer!?

Bernardita.- ¡No le dije que tengo cáncer!

Virgilio.- ¡Tiene un tumor en... ¿dónde tienes el tumor Bernarda?

Bernardita.- No tengo ningún tumor, Virgilio.

Virgilio.- ¡Ni siquiera puede recordarlo, está tan consternada!

Nana.- ¡Bernardita no tiene ningún tumor, Virgilio, lo que quiere es una chingada cafetera!

Virgilio.- ¿Una qué?

Bernardita.- ¡Virgilio se está cogiendo a un niño!

Nana.- ¿Qué?

Virgilio.- ¿Qué?

Bernardita.- ¿Qué?

(Silencio)

Virgilio.- ¿Quieres una cafetera?

Bernardita.- ¡Tú te estás cogiendo a un niño!

Nana.- ¿Te estás cogiendo a un niño?

Virgilio.- ¡No hemos consumado el acto!

Nana.- ¿El acto?

Virgilio.- ¿Quieres una cafetera?

Bernardita.- ¡Sí!

Nana.- ¿Cuál acto? ¿Te lo está cogiendo o no?

Virgilio.- ¿Te estás muriendo?

Bernardita.- ...

Nana.- ¿Cuál acto, Virgilio?

Virgilio.- ¿Te estás muriendo, Bernardita?

Bernardita.- ¡De alguna manera! ¡Y lo único que quiero es una jodida cafetera!

Virgilio.- ¿Para qué?

Bernardita.- ¡Para hacer café!

Virgilio.- ...

Bernardita.- No estoy bien, Virgilio. Algo está mal. Esa cafetera me hace sentir mejor. Y me la van a quitar si no la pago. No quiero que me la quiten, Virgilio. Ya me acostumbré a verla en mi cocina. Me gusta mucho. ¿Me entiendes?

Virgilio.- ¿Entonces no tienes cáncer?

Bernardita.- ¡No me estás escuchando! Me van a quitar mi cafetera, Virgilio. ¡Mi cafetera! Significa mucho para mí, ¿Entiendes?

Virgilio.- ¿Tienes cáncer, Bernadita?

Bernardita.- Vete a la mierda, Virgilio. Ustedes lo tienen todo, yo sólo quiero una cafetera. De 24 mil pesos. Quiero decir que puedo hacer café en una cafetera de 24 mil pesos. ¿A ti qué mierda te importa si eso me hace sentir bien?

Virgilio.- ¡¿Tienes cáncer?!
¿Tienes cáncer?!

Bernardita.- ¡No tengo cáncer!

(Silencio)

Nana.- ¿Te estás cogiendo a un niño, Virgilio?

Virgilio.- Me hiciste creer que te ibas a morir.

Nana.- Como si te importara.

Virgilio.- Me importaba.

Bernardita.-...

Nana.- No quiero insistir, Virgilio, pero me intriga saber si...

Virgilio.- ¡No me lo he cogido! *(Pausa)* Intenté acariciarlo. Pero lo asusté. *(Silencio)*
Creo que lo asusté... Sólo lo veo de vez en cuando, a la distancia. Le compro cosas.
(Pausa) Estoy hecho mierda. ¡Estoy hecho mierda, y podría arreglarme con 25 mil pesos!

Nana.- ¿Para qué carajos quieres 25 mil pesos?

Virgilio.- ¡Para mantenerlo cerca! Sólo danos nuestro dinero, Nana. Sentimos mucho lo de Fufis, pero tenemos necesidades. Danos nuestro dinero y dejaremos de molestarte, ¿de acuerdo? No volverás a saber de nosotros. Sólo... ¿quieres? Danos... danos el dinero... Bernardita necesita hacer café...

(Silencio)

(Nana se lanza a golpes contra ellos. Ellos intentan defenderse, tirando golpes al azar, con los ojos cerrados. Es una pelea torpe. Nana acierta a la mandíbula de Virgilio.)

Virgilio.- Mi diente... ¡Me tiraste mi diente!

Nana.- ¡Me vale verga!

Virgilio.- ¡Me tiraste un diente! ¿Dónde está mi diente?

(Se hinca para buscar en el suelo. Se palpa la encía vacía. Se levanta para golpear a Nana.)

Virgilio.- ¡Me tiraste un diente, pendeja!

Nana.- ¡¡Me vale verga!!

Virgilio.- ¡Te voy a romper tu madre!

(Vuelven a los golpes. Bernardita intercede pero al recibir el primer golpe se une a la pelea sin importar a quién golpea. Terminan en el suelo. Forcejean hasta que se agotan. Jadean.)

Se quedaron tendidos un rato viendo caer la nieve. Era mejor no tener aliento para hablar, pensaron, porque no tenían otra cosa que decir sino lo mucho que se odiaban, y ya estaban exhaustos de eso. Por un momento tuvieron la necesidad de juntarse un poco para soportar el frío, pero no supieron cómo decírselo. Así es que sólo se quedaron ahí, cubriéndose de nieve.

Bernardita.- Todo ese dinero que ganas, Nana, no es tuyo. Es de alguien más, pero no tuyo.

Nana.- Bueno. Voy a averiguar de quién es. Mientras tanto voy a revolcarme en él a mi antojo.

Nana se puso de pie y despegó a su axolote del suelo congelado, pero le desprendió una patita. Todavía en el suelo Virgilio y Bernarda la contemplaron con la esperanza de que les diera algún dinero. Pero no fue así.

Nana.- No quiero volver a verlos.

Luego Bernardita se puso de pie y vio partir a su hermana por última vez, caminando temblorosa y torcida con la espalda empapada, llevando a su axolote muerto en la mano como si fuera cualquier objeto que hubiera recogido de la calle.

Virgilio.- ¿Dónde está mi diente? Ayúdame a buscar mi diente, Bernardita.

Bernardita.- Párate del suelo.

Virgilio.- No voy a gustarle sin mi diente.

Bernardita.- Por favor párate del suelo.

Virgilio.-...

Josefina contemplaba la nieve muy cerca de ahí, a través de la ventana del doctor, sin notar que el doctor Esquerra había perdido el sentido por toda la sangre que había perdido.

Josefina.- ¿Doctor?

Al lado suyo, la alfombra teñida de sangre, bajo su mano perforada.

Josefina.- ¿Doctor? (Silencio) Puta madre.

Tomó al doctor por la camisa y lo arrastró hasta su auto, haciendo un esfuerzo descomunal. Aceleró con dirección al hospital con el deseo desesperado de salvarle la vida al hombre que, apenas unos días atrás, había matado su esposo.

Josefina.- Puta madre. Puta madre.

Mientras, Elvis corría varias cuerdas a través de la nieve, con la madre de Ramsés en sus brazos, agonizante. Le dolían los pulmones. Veía su aliento salir de su boca. Arrastraba los pies dando pequeñas zancadas agotadas. Sus brazos no le respondían más. De pronto contempló el rostro de la mujer, cubierto de nieve, pálido, con la boca abierta. Y supo que era momento de detenerse.

Elvis.- No, no, no. No, carajo, no. ¡No!

EPÍLOGO

Agente.- Puede irse.

Elvis.- ¿Eh?

Agente.- Que puede irse.

Elvis.- ¿Por qué?

Agente.- El informe de los peritos dice que la señora cruzó la calle debajo de un puente peatonal. Eso lo deslinda a usted de toda responsabilidad.

Elvis.- Pero yo la atropellé.

Agente.- Necesito que firme su declaración.

Elvis.-...

Elvis firma su declaración. Luego recorre los pasillos del ministerio público, desconcertado.

En el hospital, el doctor Esquerra duerme como no lo ha hecho en mucho tiempo.

Josefina entra al baño de su casa y destruye una de las paredes con un martillo hasta quedar tirada en el suelo, exhausta.

Bernardita deja a Virgilio en la estación de autobuses. Quiere abrazarlo pero no puede. Qué puta madre importa ya, piensa.

Luego de reconocer el cuerpo de su madre sobre una plancha del semefo, Ramsés se detiene en un cajero. Quiere castigarse. Sabe que encontrará el depósito ahora que es demasiado tarde. Hubiera podido hacer algo por ella, piensa. Hubiera podido, por lo menos, decirle que quería hacer algo por ella. Pero al meter la tarjeta, descubre que no hay nada. Su cuenta está vacía. Se abalanza a golpes contra el cajero.

Nana tira a Fofy por la taza del baño. Luego busca perros lampiños por internet, pero no encuentra nada.

Benito intenta recordar en dónde dejó su carro pero sólo puede pensar en lo increíblemente estúpido que se sintió en medio del descanso del edificio de Sarita.

Y por un momento, conectados de alguna manera, recuerdan la nieve con cierta melancolía.

(Comienza a nevar. Se ve a todos los personajes en el momento que descubrieron la nieve.)

¿Era un llamado de atención? Después de todo la nieve había cubierto, siquiera por un momento, ese mundo chueco y desajustado al que no lograban adaptarse. ¿Pero qué significaba? No lo saben. La única certeza que tienen es la de haber sido, simplemente, un montón de idiotas contemplando la nieve. Y está bien, al fin y al cabo. Toda vida requiere de pequeñas reparaciones. Quizá no sea tarde para empezar. Quizá, después de todo, haya algo mejor al derretirse la nieve.

(Permanece nevando)

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