

ALL WHO ARE LEFT

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Wiegala, wiegala, wille,
wie ist die Welt so stille!
Es stört kein Laut die süsse Ruh,
schlaf, mein Kindchen, schlaf auch du.
Wiegala, wiegala, wille,
wie ist die Welt so stille.

Ilse Weber, In memoriam

*In remembrance of all those who are left
and of all those who have left us.*

For Adolfo, for Ángel and Ángeles. Thanks.

*For my two reasons for being here,
Elena and Alejandro.*

1. OMENS

*(The face of the WOMAN is turned
toward the water)*

WOMAN: I look out and into the water.

I see myself there, over the water.

My face bounces over the crystal

of its surface. I lean into myself,

I remember, I think. Carefully.

I could sink down through

this wet mirror.

*(The OLD MAN, in the half-light,
still.)*

*OLD MAN: I am tired, tired. My
legs don't support me any
more. They have gone on
almost fifty years. So many
things lived over this time.*

So many things lost.

So many things lost.

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

A camera and a rifle.

The camera freezes the eye.

The rifle spits and the bullets whistle

Around the camera.

Fire.

*The years pass, life. The young
man who I once was is no
longer alive.*

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

*Full of vim and vigor,
enough to survive two wars.
Enough to survive something
worse than war.*

*I lived hate, cruelty, and also
tenderness and compassion.*

I lived treason.

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

September 5, 1936.

Cerro Muriano, Córdoba.

What the eye doesn't see. What the camera
captures.

The sky: A gray stain. The earth:

A prickly sea. Between the sky and the
earth, a man falls. Dying.

*I'm looking for a man, Juan
Cerrada. I imagine a tall and
strong frame. I imagine him, but
I can't see his face. I'm looking
for Juan Cerrada, for the father
I never knew.*

*Through the remembrances of
others, I am looking in the past
for the man I'll never know.*

Fire.

Fire.

*I get up every day with nothing
to do but think and remember;*

Fire.
Fire.
Fire.
Fire.
Fire.

*I get up enormously tired, I get
up and my bones ache from
exhaustion. I'm worn out from
the time that's passed. Worn
out from the time that's left.
Worn out from talking, thinking.
Worn out from looking through
the window, to the other side,
facing the sea. Worn out from
seeing an empty road.*

September 5, 1936.

Cerro Muriano, Córdoba.

A rifle fires. A man dies.

Federico Borrell García.

A camera shoots. The image
is frozen.

Robert Capa.

Cerro Muriano, Córdoba.

September 5, 1936.

1936-1939

At night, the sea turns choppy
against the earth. Its silent roar
resounds on the road.

Spain is divided in two halves,

Irreconcilable

flesh against flesh

blood against blood

*When I was little, looking at
my reflection, I would repeat*

*his name over and over. I
thought that if I repeated
his name over and over,
the water would bring him
to me.*

Fire.
Fire.
Fire.

*Juan Cerrada.
Juan Cerrada.
Juan Cerrada.*

*In front of me there's an empty
road. On it the shouts still
resound, years later.*

*In the darkness live the
ghosts of my solitude.*

*In the darkness live the ghosts
of my solitude*

1936-1939.

blood against blood.

I live with my memory.

Thousands of stories
Thousands of holes in which
to look for reasons for a pain
nearly forgotten.

Flesh against flesh

blood against blood

*Awaiting the day when I can
forget, the day when they all
have forgotten me.*

After so much time

Why remember now?

Remember in the name of
whom?

Offering a reminder to whom?

To what end?

Flesh against flesh

blood against blood

But, little by little, I forget.

Fragments are erased, details.

*If I could not forget. If I could
not remember.*

Thousands of reasons to

forget

The same reasons to

remember

1936- The city is a barricade,
a trap and a slaughterhouse
this strange hell was our home

In the soulless city, a man
allows himself to be killed
before he will allow them
to find his family.

Flesh against flesh

blood against blood

*That's the worst pain. The loss
of one's face, of the shape of
your hand. Or forgetting a
turn of phrase or
the curve of one's handwriting
on paper.*

1937- Enclosed by the sea,

On the road

the airplanes and the cannons
of the armored ships wipe out
the refugees.

*Flesh against flesh
blood against blood*

1939- The earth is full of fugitives,
of deserters. But the death squads
don't rest.

*Flesh against flesh
blood against blood*

There's no one.

1941- Mauthausen. Hell exists
on earth

Fire.
Fire.
Fire.

*That face, that hand, that voice,
that writing, will never live
again. When I forget it. There
will come other faces, other
voices, other hands. But my
eyes don't wish to see them
any longer.*

*I'm choking. There's no one
beside me. I'm alone. Alone.
Do you hear me?*

There's no one.

*No one. Darkness. Nothing
else. No one else with
me.*

*No one and nothing except
the rain. And the footsteps
of those who flee, that so
long ago have been erased.*

I need air. I'm choking.

There's no one beside me.

I'm alone.

Alone. Do you hear me?

*And your shadow disappears
and I'm alone.*

Fire.

Fire.

Fire.

*It's raining. I'm in the dark,
and on the other side it's
raining. The water blurs the
view of the other side. The
rain distorts the road's profile,
filled with mud. And the sea
is diluted in the rain.*

*I'm looking for my father, I'm
looking for Juan Cerrada.*

*The time has passed. Now,
again I'm looking for you.*

*With the moonlight in my
eyes and my lips brushing
up against the water, I call
you now as I called you before.
I whisper your name three times.*

Juan Cerrada

Juan Cerrada

Juan Cerrada.

1936-1939

Men die and no one can
stop the earth from
embracing them.

*In the darkness live the
ghosts of my solitude.
I live and the memories.*

*In the darkness live the
ghosts of my solitude.
I live and the memories.*

2. THRESHOLD

(An elderly man and the WOMAN. In the patio of a rest home, Manuel Dueñas sketches the rest of his life with pieces of his past.)

DUEÑAS: Juan Cerrada? Who's *that*?

WOMAN: *I start off on a long road toward knowing the life of my father. I put questions to veterans who must have met him. In institutions for the aged the act of forgetting is allowed to die.*

DUEÑAS: Juan Cerrada?

WOMAN: They've told me that you surely must have known him. Juan Cerrada was someone very close to me. I need to know something about Juan Cerrada.

DUEÑAS: Have you brought me tobacco?

WOMAN: No, I didn't know you smoked, but I can bring you some the next time I come...

DUEÑAS: Who are *you*?

WOMAN: My name is Ana Lebrón... I'm looking for Juan Cerrada.

DUEÑAS: Juan Cerrada. I've known so many people. So many years ago. So many people going in and out of my life.... Who are *you*?

WOMAN: I've already *told* you.

DUEÑAS: You've told *me*? *Me*? What is it you want?

WOMAN: My name is Ana Lebrón and I'm looking for a man named Juan Cerrada. He fought for the Republic, like you.

DUEÑAS: Don't raise your voice. You never know who's listening.

WOMAN: I'm not speaking loud. And you shouldn't be afraid. This is a safe place.

DUEÑAS: Are you coming to bring me medicine? I'm not planning to take it.

WOMAN: Juan Cerrada. Remember, please.

DUEÑAS: Juan Cerrada. You're wrong. I'm not Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: You met him.

DUEÑAS: When?

WOMAN: After the war, in Mauthausen.

DUEÑAS: Mauthausen.

WOMAN: Yes. Juan Cerrada was with you, in Mauthausen.

DUEÑAS: In Mauthausen we were about 8,000 Spaniards. But 5,000 stayed there, forever.

WOMAN: I know it was very hard to survive there...

DUEÑAS: Do you have chicken broth?

WOMAN: Sorry?

DUEÑAS: Tobacco.

WOMAN: No.

DUEÑAS: Weed?

WOMAN: *Listen* to me.

DUEÑAS: Why won't you just leave me alone now? I'm very tired. Give me that shitty medicine now, and get out of here.

WOMAN: I don't *have* any medicine. I'm not a nurse. Listen to me carefully. What I'm looking for is very important to me... And I know you'll be able to help me. Do you understand? My name is Ana Lebrón and I'm looking for a man named Juan Cerrada. You met him in Mauthausen.

Mauthausen. I want to know if that man, if Juan Cerrada, who was with you in Mauthausen...

DUEÑAS: Mauthausen. In Mauthausen... there were *kapos*, and informers. You understand me? They were worse than the Nazis.

WOMAN: Was Juan Cerrada one of them?

DUEÑAS: Cerrada? Juan? Good kid.

WOMAN: So you know him?

DUEÑAS: Who?

WOMAN: This man, Juan Cerrada.

(She gives him a photo.)

DUEÑAS: *You're* the nurse who comes with the pictures. Are we playing today as well? What do I have to do with this? Tell me. What is it you're doing here?

WOMAN: Look at this picture closely. This young man. I'm his daughter, Cerrada's daughter. Look at him. Juan Cerrada.

DUEÑAS: I didn't know Juan had children.

3. FOOTSTEPS IN THE RAIN

WOMAN: *When I was little, my mother hid my father's identity from me. All I knew about him was his name, nothing else. My questions collided with her silence. At times, with anger. I only had a name and a blurry wedding photo that I found hidden in a closet.*

When I grew up I got up the courage to show her the photo. She tried to grab it from me, but when she failed she acted like it meant nothing. I wasn't fooled and I stood there, looking at her silently. Then she told me a ghastly story about how she'd celebrated her wedding in 1938, right in the middle of the war and the empty space, and how the following morning a fascist squad came for my father, to 'take him for a little walk'. His body was never found. That's all she told me. I believe she really didn't know anything more.

Just after she died I got a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was a communiqué from the German government, addressed to the family of Juan Cerrada. It was something completely unexpected. They informed me of my father's imprisonment in a death camp, in Mauthausen. Likewise about his later liberation thanks to the Americans. Mauthausen. A name inscribed with horror in history and in everyone's memory. That's how I found out that Juan Cerrada hadn't died in 1938, that my father could still be alive today. It was only a possibility, and a remote one at that. But I clung to it.

(Ana and her boyfriend. A relationship that's about to end. The beginning of the search.)

ALBERTO: Have you packed the suitcases yet? Your ticket, do you have it? You'll have to check that you've got it all. You don't want to find out you left something here and have to come back.

WOMAN: Please, don't make a scene. You're not going to cause me any pain.

ALBERTO: You mean that this is over.

WOMAN: I don't know what I'm going to find, and I don't know how I'm going to react at whatever I do find. It's better that we have our freedom.

ALBERTO: Ana, you're looking for ghosts, just ghosts.

WOMAN: I'm not looking for any ghost. I'm looking for my father.

ALBERTO: Don't kid yourself. Things have followed their course. Time spares no one. Are you going to throw everything away for nothing?

WOMAN: Alberto...

ALBERTO: You want to run off and leave me. And all these years we've shared, and the child you were hoping we would have, what about that? I thought it was everything you wanted in this world... I'm trying to look at things coolly, but... You haven't been yourself for a whole year.

WOMAN: Alberto, my mother died a year ago.

ALBERTO: Just remember who was there by your side. Then and always. Ana. We were making plans, you and I. For the future. But it's been a while since you stopped talking to me about a lot of things. We haven't talked about reality for quite a while. And now, honestly, I don't know what it is that you're looking for in all of this.

WOMAN: If you don't believe me, then this relationship has never had any meaning, and it's not worth the effort of continuing.

ALBERTO: Just tell me one thing: are you sure of what you're about to do?

WOMAN: Yes.

So I began a long journey to reconstruct my father's life, beyond what little I knew from my mother. Beyond what she never learned. I began to follow his trail, step by step, with forty years between us. Files, documents, papers. I started compiling the testimony of those who are left. I started compiling the testimony of those who were still living and might have seen my father. It wasn't easy, and sometimes I gave it all up for lost. No one knew Juan Cerrada.

(The long journey of the WOMAN. Her investigations. Registry managers, civil servants, a priest...)

MANAGER 1: I've looked three times and there's no one by that name to be found in any registry.

WOMAN: Nonetheless, his birth record has to show up someplace.

MANAGER 1: Back in those days the most reliable registries were the ones in the parish churches. You'll have to inquire at the archbishopric. I hope you're lucky. As a general rule, the priests were very discreet about that sort of thing. As a general rule. But at times it wasn't that way. Also keep in mind that after all that happened in this country, all kinds of accidental losses occurred.

WOMAN: And there's no other way to find this information?

MANAGER 1: There might be, but you're not going to find it here. I've done all I can to help you. Next, please?

WOMAN: Look closely.

MANAGER 2: There was never *any* individual named Juan Cerrada in the army.

WOMAN: I'm referring to the Republican army.

MANAGER 2: I've spent an hour poring over the historical files, because there's no mention of him in the ones already digitalized either. Not on the Nationalist side, not on the Republican one. There was *no* official or soldier named Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: But I'm absolutely *certain* he was in the Republican army.

MANAGER 2: But at the time, anyone could enlist in the UGT faction, or the Communist Party, or the CNT. Just as was true on the other side, where many chose to enlist in the Carlist or fascist troops, and they didn't enlist in the strict sense of the word. Quite simply, they grabbed a rifle and immediately hit the front.

WOMAN: Are there registries for something like this?

MANAGER 2: I suppose you mean for the reds, right? The information wasn't kept in a central location. The Communists held it under the table. But the others, not at all. Anyway, with everything that went on afterward, much of it was lost or burned up. That goes for both sides. And later on, exile, purges, and witch hunts destroyed the little that was left behind.

WOMAN: But a marriage certificate *has* to exist.

MANAGER 3: The civil registries from that time were destroyed.

WOMAN: There's got to be something. A note, anything. The morning after the wedding, they moved to arrest him. There has to be *something* in print recording that police order.

MANAGER 3: What's your purpose in finding this man? He's almost surely buried in some common grave.

WOMAN: If that's so, I'd like to see his death certificate, and know where the grave is where he was buried. I need something concrete. Is he buried in Germany? In Spain?

MANAGER 3: What does it matter where it is? What's the sense of taking into account someone's nationality if he's in a common grave?

WOMAN: Common graves have no nationality. And the executioners? The victims, obviously they have no nationality. They don't have that right or any other.

MANAGER 3: Forget it, don't go looking for a dead man. It won't do him any good.

WOMAN: I'm not even absolutely certain he's *dead*. Which is why I need some answer.

MANAGER 3: Miss, you've worn out my patience. Please, I beg you to leave and let me work.

MANAGER 4: Pay attention to me. Go to Capitanía. Maybe there's something there. You're not going to find much *here*.

WOMAN: They told me there they have nothing. Anywhere.

MANAGER 4: Well, then...

WOMAN: It's very strange that in Spain there's *nothing* left. But I've just come from Germany and *there* they've provided me more solutions than here. A record of admittance to the Mauthausen camp.

MANAGER 4: You say that that man died in Mauthausen?

WOMAN: He didn't die there. But he went in as a prisoner. There's another record in existence showing he was freed by the Americans.

MANAGER 4: So if you have all that information, what are you looking for *here*?

WOMAN: I want to locate him, in the event he's still alive.

MANAGER 4: I tell you again that you won't find anything here. What's your purpose in looking for information about this man?

WOMAN: He was my father.

MANAGER 4: You want my advice? Stop worrying so much about the papers. Look in the veterans groups. Anything could have happened. Maybe your father even changed his identity at some point.

WOMAN: But is that *possible*? For him to change his *name*? And his documents? And his *life*?

(A huge noise is heard coming from above them.)

What's that noise? Is something happening?

MANAGER 4: It's raining. It always sounds that way when it rains.

(It's raining.

Just as it did in that fall of 1936. A merciless rain, respecting neither day nor night. Neither life nor death.

A cruel time that's making men kill one another.

Voices in the rain intermingle.)

-Rain.

-A fine curtain of rain was falling, a warm, spring rain.

-Rain mixed into the earth. It was forming pools of mud. It was hard to move forward with so much mud.

-It was falling on my face. I remembered...

-The rain was inhuman. It was falling as though it wanted to put an end to us. From the force of its fall, we were thrown to the ground.

-We would raise our faces to the sky, and tell ourselves, if only the rain would fall. If it would just start to rain. Then, the airplanes wouldn't be able to fly. We would sigh, looking up at the sky. And from far away, you could hear the thunder of the motors. We would run to take shelter, because what was going to fall now was a rain of bombs.

-We had nothing to smoke. We'd even our try to smoke our rope. But the rain soaked our tinderboxes and we couldn't get a light.

-The rain complicated everything. It turned the possibility of a hiding place into an impossibility. The rain made the city more uninhabitable. The city that had turned into a strange place. Anybody would take advantage of the most minor slip to report me.

-Have you seen this man? Surely you know him. Have you ever seen him around here?

-It'd be best if you left to change your clothes. And put on some new boots. If not, you won't be able to walk more than a few steps.

-The rain would fall on my face. I was remembering.

-Above all was the work, the fields needed our attention. The seasons were passing. And over our bodies, the years were passing as well. The war created a new time.

-I can't remember. I don't know what there was before. There wasn't anything. When this war is over, if I go back home, I don't know who'll be waiting for me. If anyone's waiting for me.

-The rain wouldn't let us sleep. It penetrated, right to the marrow. Our bones were heavy laden with the wet cold of the rain. And the water wore away the faces of the corpses, until it turned them into mud.

-It's raining. Just the same as it was raining in Spain in that fall of 1936. A merciless rain for a cruel war.

-It's raining and tears of rain erase my face. It's raining: pitilessly blasting the roof of the barrack hut.

-When will it stop raining?

-Come, take shelter here. You're going to freeze.

-Who are you?

-Don't you trust me? I know you.

-I had never seen you before.

(It's raining.

The WOMAN runs underneath the rain.

She knocks at the window for someone to open it, but is ignored.

WOMAN: I'm looking for a man and they told me you may know where he is. His name is Juan Cerrada. Even though you may know him by another name. He's about 70 years old. I don't know anything else about him.

MANAGER 5: You got here too late. There's nobody left now.

WOMAN: Where's everyone gone?

MANAGER 5: The old folks take off early. You need to come on Monday. It's better that you talk with them. Because according to what you've said about him, he could be anybody. If you have something more substantial...

WOMAN: More substantial?

MANAGER 5: A photo, some i.d. Something.

WOMAN: Look at this photo. Maybe you know him. He's an older person. He could be in hiding, living apart from everyone. He may have told people he took part in the Civil War. It could be that he hasn't said anything to anyone.

MANAGER 5: Pardon me, but I don't have my glasses. It's better if you come back on Monday and talk with the old folks. As for me, there isn't much I can do to help you. Want a cup of coffee? Drink it and come back Monday. I've got to close up now.

WOMAN: *I've looked in archives, in institutions, in cities and villages. I went to Germany to ask about a man who must have arrived from Spain via France. In Spain I'm searching in the rain for one more clue, something to bring me closer to the enigma of a father who appears and disappears.*

MANAGER 6: But lady, you're going to get soaked. Don't you have a place to stay? Grab a hotel, it's almost night time. And go on with your questions tomorrow, if you want. But now you're going to catch pneumonia.

WOMAN: Are you going to open the door for me or not?

MANAGER 6: I already told you we're closed. I can't attend to you now.

WOMAN: You can't do this to me.

MANAGER 6: If you don't have a place to stay, I can take you to the village pub. They rent rooms there.

WOMAN: I don't want a room or a hotel or a cup of coffee. I need you to open the door for me. I need to talk. To search. I need to find. I don't want to sleep. Not yet. I'll sleep later on. Open the door. Please.

MANAGER 6: But, what do you want?

WOMAN: I'm looking for a man. His name is Juan Cerrada.

4. DOUBT

WOMAN: *I've had a long road to cover in order to get to know my father's life, to learn something beyond what my mother told me. Beyond what she ever learned. I began to follow his trail, step by step, with fifty years between us. With the testimony of those still left. It wasn't easy, and everything now seemed for naught. Nobody knew Juan Cerrada.*

Focus carefully. Juan Cerrada.

DUEÑAS: I knew many people. Almost everyone. First through the war. Then, through exile and the concentration camp. Later on, through the resistance and jail. A whole lot. So many dead. So much pain. So much. Almost everyone. And now I truly know all who are left. Time. We die off. There aren't so many of us any more. Some of them you can see right here. Do you see them, under that tree? Or in the dining hall?

WOMAN: Really, you know them all?

DUEÑAS: Time ravages much more than war. There are fewer of us every day. Age, sickness, death. All of us who are left, every day there are fewer of us. Every day I know more, every day there are fewer of us.

WOMAN: Please, focus on the man in the photo. Juan Cerrada. That was his name.

DUEÑAS: What's that you say?

WOMAN: Juan. Juan Cerrada.

DUEÑAS: There were many Juans back then. Juan is way too common a name.

WOMAN: But you have to know him. You told me the other day...

DUEÑAS: I don't need for you to repeat it. You just told me. You think I'm out of it? Give me that photo. The other day. Why this is the first time I've seen you. You're confused. I may not be able to feel my legs, but as far as my memory... I hold it all in here. I remember it all. I would remember you and this photo.

WOMAN: *Dueñas knew many of the veterans who must have gone into exile with him. But time passes and age is a disloyal companion. I had to be patient. To sit by the man, while he rolled his cigarettes and then crushed them on the ground without ever having smoked them. To sit by his side while he picked off names and fragments from lives that had now disappeared. And to hope, hoping that from that*

tangle of his memory there might appear what I needed to hear. Many times, the memories weren't at all pleasant. The road toward Juan Cerrada was torturous, and following it I crossed over into hell.

DUEÑAS: Of course, I remember him. Cerrada, yes. He went into exile, like so many others. In France, once he crossed the border, he was arrested in Argelès-sur-mer. But I didn't meet him until we saw each other in Mauthausen.

WOMAN: *Juan Cerrada reappears in the words of Manuel Dueñas, which confirm the threadbare information from the German archives. My father arrived in Mauthausen. According to the archives from the camp's liberation, he survived.*

That gave me hope. That maybe my father was alive. I would like to think it could have been so. That Juan Cerrada left the camp, alive. But according to Dueñas, and to everyone who I later interviewed, it wasn't that way.

WOMAN: Dead?

DUEÑAS: Gusen.

WOMAN: Gusen. That was part of Mauthausen.

DUEÑAS: It was only two miles from there. It was one of the fifty sub-camps of Mauthausen. The worst of them all.

WOMAN: So I have read. For the ones who ended up there, a camp guaranteeing their death. Are you sure Juan Cerrada died in Gusen?

DUEÑAS: I saw him riding in a truck headed for that place. Those who went in there never left. If he had managed to escape, if that truck had never arrived there, we would have heard about it and celebrated.

WOMAN: So, my father is dead.

WOMAN: *As a result, when I researched more in Germany, where they confirmed my father's imprisonment, and where they certified that he'd survived, that he had to be alive, my world ended up falling apart. The worst thing of all is doubt, and living without knowing for certain what happened. I started to review the interviews all over again. Many times, I re-interviewed the witnesses, just in case*

there might be a shred of hope. Everyone confirmed again that my father couldn't have survived under any circumstance.

DUEÑAS: Juan Cerrada? I don't know him. Should I know him from somewhere? Why don't you pass me my medication, miss? And let me have a smoke, don't be a killjoy. One little butt won't kill me. Nurse. Won't you do me a favor?

WAITER: Cerrada. Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: Do you know him?

WAITER: You're not going to order anything to drink?

WOMAN: If you put it that way, a glass of wine.

WAITER: Of course I know Cerrada. Why are you looking for him?

WOMAN: I'm writing a story about former soldiers in the Civil War.

WAITER: I didn't know Juan was so important that anyone would want to interview him. He's a good man. But I don't see him coming out on TV or speaking out in the papers.

WOMAN: Has he told you what he did in the war?

WAITER: I never heard him talk about the war.

WOMAN: Has he lived here a long time?

WAITER: About ten years, more or less. Wouldn't it be better if you asked him yourself?

WOMAN: That's what I want. Where does he live?

WAITER: He lives here. On the outskirts of town. On the Málaga-Motril road. A bit away from everything. Kind of how he is.

WOMAN: Is it easy to get there?

WAITER: Do you have a car?

WOMAN: No. Can you take me?

WAITER: Even by car I wouldn't recommend you go now. If you want, I can get you close tomorrow. I have some business to take care of in that area. But right now you better not, it's too late to do anything.

WOMAN: *I've retraced the steps of Juan Cerrada since the moment a fascist squadron stormed into his home and grabbed him out of his wife's, my mother's, arms. I've followed him into exile in France. I followed him on his journey to Mauthausen. And from there, finally, to Gusen. From Gusen, no one got out.*

Up to this point the steps of my search have led me up to this man who claims to be named Juan Cerrada. If my father's dead, who is this man who wants to impersonate him, to take his name and use it for who knows what and to what end?

5. DARKNESS

OLD MAN: I survived Mauthausen. I was locked up there, together with Jews, Poles, with Germans. We were all under the ruthless knife of the Nazis. And Spaniards, too.

YOUNG MAN: Am I alive? Why this darkness? Are you still alive? I hear your breathing. You *are* there. Talk to me. Tell me if I'm still living.

OLD MAN: There isn't anyone. I'm still here, alone. Alone!

YOUNG MAN: You're going to wake everyone up with your shouting. Be quiet or they'll come for us.

OLD MAN: I'm still shouting in my dreams, every night as though I were still there, in Mauthausen. I keep hearing the voices of the others. Although this may be Spain and forty years may have passed since then.

YOUNG MAN: There's a long road that ends in front of this window. But I'm still closed up in a barrack at Mauthausen.

OLD MAN: There's a long road that ends here. In front of this huge, immense window, opened to the sea, closed by the road.

YOUNG MAN: Through that window, only darkness enters. I need light. Light. It's starting to rain. There's a letter in the mailbox.

OLD MAN: *"I'm a researcher in contemporary history and my field of study is the consequences of the Civil War on those who suffered defeat. I am currently developing a documentary project about what occurred to those who, like you, experienced it all on the losing side. I'm very interested in arranging an interview with you and learning in the process about your war experiences, as well as how the Spanish and you as well survived imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp."*

...the consequences of the Civil War on those who suffered defeat...

Incredible stupidity... *those who suffered defeat...*

How's she found me? So much time has passed. I thought that I'd never again.... This letter... It scares me. After so many years... I don't know who that woman is. What's she after?

I ought to throw away these papers, forget about it all. For the time I have left, it makes no sense to get more involved. It's time now to rest. To forget.

She can't suspect anything. Really, what *did* happen? Nothing. What evil did I *do*? None. Let her come. I'll meet with her openly. Let her come, let her look, let her see and question me, she can go over it all, if she wants. Let her see that the only thing she'll find here is an old man with a short time left to live.

... very interested in arranging an interview... ... your experiences in the war... ...a Nazi concentration camp...

YOUNG MAN: In the bottom of a well. A black and deep well. It's strange I can keep breathing, when it's so deep, so black. It's strange two such different people can share so much. If I breathe, you breathe. If I move my hand, you move yours. Open the door. If you were to open it, I would open it. If you were to go out, I would go out. To the sunlight. To the rain. I'm enclosed in your enclosure. I want to go out, I want to live.

OLD MAN: An old man facing this road.

YOUNG MAN: I'm going to open the door to the street. Open the door.

OLD MAN: I've concealed myself from the world. And now, once more, the world is knocking at my door. Someone's threatening to open that door and the entire world will follow behind.

YOUNG MAN: Open it, wide open. Do you hear me? You need to leave the windows wide open, so that the air can come in and the light can burn it all up. Yes. You hear me.

OLD MAN: No one's talking. I don't hear anything.

YOUNG MAN: I'm here, with you.

OLD MAN: There's nobody here. Nobody. No one's come in. The doors are closed. The windows are closed, and nobody's going to open them.

YOUNG MAN: And on the road you'll see men and women, children and old people, falling under the weight of the machine gun fire. That's what you always say.

OLD MAN: No one can get into this house. I don't want anyone coming in.

YOUNG MAN: They're simply ghosts. They're not even your own ghosts. Me, I'm here. Even if you ignore me, I'm always here.

OLD MAN: I can't breathe. I'm choking. I feel a fire inside.

YOUNG MAN: Fire. This room, the chair you can't get out of, the entire house, you and I. A fire inside.

No, nothing's burning.

You ought to sleep more at night. At your age, you need to take care better care of yourself, or let someone care for you. The years go by for everybody. Let me get you dressed, like a child. Now aren't you better? It isn't good for someone your age to live by yourself.

OLD MAN: Let me die in peace.

YOUNG MAN: You cling to life like a curse. You've always survived. You've gotten out on your own two feet, not from just one, but various hells, so you're not going to die so easily *now*.

OLD MAN: We hadn't spoken to one another in a long time.

YOUNG MAN: You hadn't thought about me for a long time.

OLD MAN: Don't make a martyr out of me.

YOUNG MAN: Memories hurt. Do you hear the wind?

OLD MAN: I don't hear anything.

YOUNG MAN: The wind. It's howling. Does it remind you of anything? It's raining.

OLD MAN: The rain has more pity than you.

Battle.

A fight to the death between two people who it seems impossible could be lovers.

It seems impossible that they could even love each other. Their bodies intertwine in the battle, and sex joins them at the same time their words separate them.

ALBERTO: You're not leaving here.

WOMAN: How are you going to stop me?

ALBERTO: I'll lock all the doors. I'll tie your hands. I'll blindfold you.

WOMAN: Let me go.

ALBERTO: It's you who won't separate yourself from me.

WOMAN: In a little while it won't... Let me go. I need you. No. Let me go.

ALBERTO: Ask me again.

WOMAN: Let me go now. Let me go at once.

ALBERTO: Repeat it again.

WOMAN: Be quiet. Just go on like that.

(The WOMAN pulls herself away from him, violently.)

I have to go away now.

ALBERTO: I never thought this moment would come. When I thought about it, I couldn't imagine what I could possibly say to you. Now. What I would say to you now: you're not leaving here.

WOMAN: Are you threatening me?

ALBERTO: Don't come near me. Don't do it, if you're going to abandon me.

WOMAN: Someday I'll come back.

ALBERTO: So, if you leave me, I don't know if I'll want you back by my side. Don't leave.

WOMAN: I have to do it.

ALBERTO: This place where you're going, will you get in touch with me from there?

WOMAN: I don't know.

ALBERTO: Do you mean it, that you'll come back?

WOMAN: I don't know.

ALBERTO: Can I ask you something?

WOMAN: Yes.

ALBERTO: What'll you do when you find your ghost?

WOMAN: It isn't any ghost.

ALBERTO: What'll you do?

WOMAN: I don't know.

ALBERTO: It's raining. Wouldn't it be better for you to stay here tonight?

WOMAN: Sooner or later it's going to have to stop raining.

ALBERTO: It's raining. Bring along something to protect yourself.

WOMAN: I don't think an umbrella will do much good against this downpour.

ALBERTO: It's raining. Don't you realize? It's raining.

(The WOMAN enters the bedroom, carefully, with great caution, measuring each one of her steps. The house is almost dark. The furniture and objects are all clean. It seems uninhabited, but the emptiness quivers disturbed by an indefinite presence.)

WOMAN: Juan Cerrada?

I'm Ana Lebrón.

We'd arranged to meet today.

I thought that you knew I'd be coming now. I thought that you'd be here to meet me.

(The WOMAN begins to get nervous, and to doubt every step she takes.)

But I don't see anyone.

(Silence.)

Juan Cerrada?

I hope I've come at a good time. I wouldn't want to bother you.

(Indecision. Pause.)

Mr. Cerrada?

Juan Cerrada?

Could you come out, please?

(The WOMAN takes out a small agenda book from her purse and checks it. In a soft voice.)

This is the address. Motril Road. It can't be any other house.

(Silence. The WOMAN wonders if she should leave. But she stays, waiting.)

Do you hear me?

(The woman waits. There is no answer.)

Juan Cerrada?

(The Woman waits a moment, and then begins to leave, heading toward the door.

A clearing of the throat. The WOMAN is startled.)

Are you there?

Is it you?

Are you playing a game with me?

(Silence.

And she raises her voice.)

Who's there?

(From a corner of the house, from behind a large armchair, hiding any view of its occupant, we hear the voice of the OLD MAN. And observe his hand, extended, in a dry gesture of trustworthiness.)

OLD MAN: Don't be afraid.

(The WOMAN jumps. She looks toward where the OLD MAN has been seated. But between the cover of darkness and the OLD MAN's placement, she can't see anything.)

WOMAN: It's you. Juan Cerrada. Finally, in my presence. I'm glad to meet up with you.

6. CITY

(The wind and the rain transport us back to the past. 1936. A man hides his gaze.)

POLICE INSPECTOR: 1936. It was a good year for nothing. The winter was extremely cold. The summer heat, stifling. The rain, when there was rain, fell in torrential fashion. And beyond all of this, that. The Rebellion, or as others called it, the Uprising. The end of everything, or perhaps the opportunity for a beginning of too many things. That brought not only the war, but wars within the war. It wasn't only a battle against fascism, but a road toward the future where we faced off against too many counterrevolutions. 1936 was the year that Madrid began a siege that was going to last the entire war. In 1936 they made me the people's police inspector. I had to do things that in other times I would have found repulsive. But at the time I thought that what I was doing was just. Or at least, it was what I had to do at that moment. I still feel the same.

(The POLICE INSPECTOR intimidates the YOUNG MAN, holding a rifle at his back.)

Documentation.

YOUNG MAN: I haven't done anything.

POLICE INSPECTOR: We'll leave that for the Popular Tribunal to decide. Documentation.

YOUNG MAN: If you leave me alone, I can make it worth your while.

POLICE INSPECTOR: I've already told you. Documentation.

YOUNG MAN: Please.

(The POLICE INSPECTOR laughs.)

POLICE INSPECTOR: I know you. Don't you know who I am? You don't remember me. Look at me closely. I'm not going to bite. Come on, man, show a little life.

YOUNG MAN: You must be mistaken.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Of course I'm not mistaken. Of course we know one another. For years. We were neighbors... We used to play together.

YOUNG MAN: Wait, let me look at you closely...

POLICE INSPECTOR: You can't remember anything, I know. We grew up. We stopped playing, then we stopped talking to each other, and finally you even stopped saying hello when we'd cross the street. These things happen.

YOUNG MAN: I know who you are.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Give me a hug.

(The YOUNG MAN steps forward timidly to hug him, but the POLICE INSPECTOR doesn't move an inch. He laughs. The YOUNG MAN returns awkwardly to his place.)

YOUNG MAN: You lived two floors up. I remember it well. And I remember that I did say hello back to you. You can't have forgotten. It's true that we didn't treat each other as we had as children. But we kept talking whenever we ran into each other.

POLICE INSPECTOR: You don't have to justify yourself. There are things that happen. Such is life. And politics. We're human beings after all. It is that way, don't you think?

YOUNG MAN: I was always on your side, and when everyone said things about you I was there to defend you.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Of course. I'm glad to find you here. I was looking for you. You already know.

YOUNG MAN: Tell me what it is I have to know.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Look, this can be handled one way or the other. But it would be best if you didn't resist. Don't fight it. It'll go faster and hurt you less.

YOUNG MAN: Please, don't denounce me. Don't tell anyone you've seen me.

POLICE INSPECTOR: You don't understand. I don't need to tell anybody anything. I've found you. If you want, we'll dispense with the pleasantries. Documentation.

YOUNG MAN: You can't do this to me.

POLICE INSPECTOR: We've landed on different sides of the line once more. But this time, it's your turn to lose out.

YOUNG MAN: Is this a matter of revenge?

POLICE INSPECTOR: No. It's life.

YOUNG MAN: If I pay you, we could make a deal.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Your money's worth nothing here.

YOUNG MAN: Listen to me. I'm not saying it for myself. I have children. If you take me away, if they're left alone, you already know what could happen to them.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Please, don't make this hard on yourself. The sooner we finish, the better off we both are.

YOUNG MAN: But, my children... They don't have anyone to take care of them. Their mother died.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Somebody will take care of them.

YOUNG MAN: In this city we have nobody left.

POLICE INSPECTOR: Let's go.

YOUNG MAN: Let me talk with them first. Please.

POLICE INSPECTOR: You're not going to get away from me. I'm going with you.

YOUNG MAN: Let me go by myself. Then I'll go wherever you tell me. I swear it.

POLICE INSPECTOR: You're the only one we're after. We're human, we don't wipe out families. We believe in the future. In progress. That's why we don't do anything to the children. They're the bricks in our building of a new life, the future. Because the past no longer matters to us, just the future. I'll accompany you, you can do what you want to do, and then you'll come with me.

(The WOMAN, to the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: What I'm asking you is necessary. It's about justice. In my mind it's a moral obligation for anyone. Restoring the memory of those who suffered because of the Civil War.

(The YOUNG MAN, to someone we can't see.)

YOUNG MAN: If you're there, don't do anything. Don't come out from where you are. Don't move. Don't answer me. Just listen. It's a game. It's a game of hide and seek, and you mustn't be found. I've got to go away now. I don't know how long it'll be before we see each other again. I know I'll come back to you, but I don't know if it'll be soon or a long time from now. You mustn't be scared. You have to keep hiding, like we've done up to now. You, Benito, have to look for food, like we used to do when we were together. You're the oldest child, and you need to take care of them like I did all of you. If I don't come back in three days, listen up, three days, you must go with your brothers and sister from here, and make it to Aravaca. Go to Moncloa, and follow the road to get there. Ask for Uncle Andrés. You have to find him. He'll treat you as if you were his own children. And you must treat him as if he were your real father. Tell him nothing about me. Forget about me. I promise you that one day I'll come to look for you. And then...

POLICE INSPECTOR: Let's go...

7. QUESTIONS

OLD MAN: Have you been here long?

WOMAN: I'm sorry to have awakened you.

OLD MAN: It's / who should be apologizing. You haven't had much of a welcome, waiting here for such a long time.

WOMAN: I just got here.

OLD MAN: I can see you've gotten nervous, not finding anyone. After the long trip you've just made. Quite uncomfortable, no? So much effort, so much trouble, to what end, I don't know. You shouldn't have troubled yourself.

WOMAN: It'll be worth the trouble, I know.

OLD MAN: Please, have a seat if you'd like. There's a chair behind you.

(The OLD MAN points without getting up.)

WOMAN: Thanks.

OLD MAN: Help yourself. The cupboard's full. There's an herb liqueur. But with this heat you might want something more refreshing. I made a pitcher of ice tea. It's probably still cold.

WOMAN: Thanks. I'll pour myself a glass of water.

OLD MAN: I have cherries. Try them, there they are, in a bowl beside the water.

WOMAN: Very appropriate. Thanks very much. They're delicious. Very sweet.

OLD MAN: Thank the cherry tree. There are things that go beyond our most rational explanation, don't you think?

WOMAN: Yes, it's seems quite strange.

OLD MAN: You seem to me to be a very intelligent woman. You've managed to find out something about me, and you've figured out where I live after all this time.

WOMAN: When one interviews a witness, it always leads to information about others, although you have to be patient about finding it. What's left is to connect one story with another one, one fact with another, and there you are.

OLD MAN: Ana, you don't have anything to do with the police, do you?

WOMAN: Of course not. There's no connection at all. And naturally I'm not a cop myself, or anything like one. There are other kinds of investigations besides the police type.

OLD MAN: You've rushed to get here. There are things that can be resolved from a distance, saving yourself the trouble. What is it you want from me?

WOMAN: I've been with people who know you. And they've spoken a great deal about you. Everything that happened to you is of interest to me. But I need to know it firsthand. A whole lot of details need to be confirmed. I know how important a collaboration with you would be to my project.

OLD MAN: Why?

WOMAN: You survived a German concentration camp. Mauthausen.

(Silence)

Afterwards, you dared to return to Spain in the middle of the postwar era, in the roughest time period of the Franco regime. You showed incredible audacity.

OLD MAN: Really, I see that you know a lot about me.

(A moment of tense silence, which the OLD MAN breaks by clearing his throat.)

WOMAN: The best thing would be to get started now, before it's too late.

OLD MAN: It's been a hard day for me. Please, let's drop it.

WOMAN: I won't take much of your time.

OLD MAN: I'm sorry.

WOMAN: If you could offer me just an hour. It'll take a bit of effort, I realize. But I will be as delicate as possible.

(The OLD MAN gets up with great difficulty from his corner, without showing any sign of following the conversation. The WOMAN takes a business card and an envelope out of her purse. She offers them to the OLD MAN. But he waves her off.)

Look!

OLD MAN: What do you want to show me?

WOMAN: This is my research card from the National Library. And in this letter of introduction you'll find that everything I've told you is true.

(The WOMAN hands it to him, but the OLD MAN, with a gesture of rebuff, stops her before she can get near.)

OLD MAN: I'm not interested.

WOMAN: But you can see the university stamp.

(A tense pause. The WOMAN puts away her things in the purse. She closes it. She looks at the OLD MAN.)

Call me, please, at the number on the card. You can verify everything I'm telling you.

OLD MAN: I have no reason to call or speak with anyone.

WOMAN: Mr. Cerrada, I'm asking you to grant me this interview.

OLD MAN: Don't press the matter.

WOMAN: I'm not leaving here. There are many people for whom your story would be of great use. You owe it to them.

OLD MAN: I owe *what* to *whom*? Don't make me laugh.

WOMAN: I believe in what I'm doing. I believe that it's necessary. That after so many years of silence, you have to give voice to those like you, who've lived under repression. People who through the war have been forced into exile, into other wars and even into the horrors of the Nazis. Like *you*.

OLD MAN: The wounds never heal. It's better not to reopen what's past and forgotten.

(The WOMAN smiles.)

WOMAN: We're in September of 1983. Freedom has come back to Spain. There's a constitution, political parties. People can think, read, and write whatever they wish, they can talk freely in the streets, without feeling like they're being watched. It's time to remember. Without fear.

OLD MAN: I'm not as young as you. Seventy years, almost seventy years old. I could be your father. From what I hear, things aren't as clear out there as you say. Terrorist attacks, police riots, fascist groups leading assaults in the streets. And a coup.

WOMAN: In time all of that will pass. They're simple tremors, temper tantrums that mean nothing now. The attempted military coup meant nothing. The socialists, just a few months later, won the elections.

OLD MAN: Are you a socialist?

WOMAN: No.

OLD MAN: You couldn't be an anarchist?

WOMAN: Anarchism is a thing of the past.

OLD MAN: So, communist. There are still some of them left, too many of them.

(The WOMAN hesitates briefly, observing the OLD MAN's disdainful tone.)

WOMAN: No. I don't belong to *any* party. The only card I carry is the one you saw before, from the National Library.

OLD MAN: I'd like to know what it is you're *really* after.

(The OLD MAN talks to himself.)

Too many years have passed. Spain has changed. Europe, the whole world. I'm almost not of this world. Everything that I've lived has died. Some time ago I stopped asking myself questions. The only thing I hope is to be left alone.

(The OLD MAN and the YOUNG MAN speak.)

There was no need for me to respond to her letter. There was no need for me to allow her into my house.

YOUNG MAN: Take a deep breath. If you want, I can get you something to drink. You could use it.

OLD MAN: You can't give me anything to make me feel well. You can't give me anything. I shouldn't be talking to you now. I can't make out your face. Why not?

YOUNG MAN: I remember how we used to talk about certain things... About cherries. Do you remember?

OLD MAN: I remember *everything*.

YOUNG MAN: Everything?

OLD MAN: Yes.

YOUNG MAN: I don't think you can remember everything.

OLD MAN: I remember, it's ingrained in my head. The barracks, the path full of mud. The hunger and the fatigue. The quarry. The corpses. The ovens. The ash. The ash. I can't make out your face. This road. Do you remember the road?

YOUNG MAN: I can't remember it.

OLD MAN: I get up every day and see it. It makes me incredibly exhausted. To think that right here, so long ago, everything happened that happened.

YOUNG MAN: An empty road.

OLD MAN: Thousands of refugees, fleeing.

YOUNG MAN: A sky that's always blue.

OLD MAN: Clouded over by a squadron of airplanes flying flush with the ground.

YOUNG MAN: The sea splashing the road. The waves, with their purring.

OLD MAN: And the shouts of the children, and the mothers raising their hands against the sky and the sea, and the old people falling silently.

YOUNG MAN: An empty road facing the sea.

OLD MAN: My ears worn out from the boom of the mortar shells striking from the sea, shot from the warships.

YOUNG MAN: Calm yourself. You mustn't get so nervous. Tomorrow is another day.

(The YOUNG MAN approaches from behind the OLD MAN's chair, and kisses him on the head.)

8. FACE

(The OLD MAN, silent in the darkness. The woman looks at him.)

OLD MAN: What are you looking at?

(The WOMAN lowers her gaze. The OLD MAN's face has been deformed by deep and closed wounds for quite some time.)

WOMAN: Your face. It's completely disfigured. What happened to you?

OLD MAN: Does that interest you as well?

WOMAN: Sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.

OLD MAN: It doesn't upset me. Nor does it hurt me. There could be worse things. A traffic accident, about twenty years ago. A car, on a wet road, and a curve. How I lost my family, my wife and my son.

WOMAN: The family you had at the time of the war?

OLD MAN: How do you know I had any family at the time of the war?

WOMAN: I assumed it through other people's statements, from your own words...

OLD MAN: I haven't asked you for any explanations. Nor do I like you asking them of me.

I was married during the war, but my wife didn't survive. When I went back to look for her, she'd already died. Later, I managed to remake my life. A long time after going back to Spain, I met a woman and married. I got married. If I hadn't done it, that accident wouldn't have happened and she would still be alive.

WOMAN: You got married after returning from Germany.

OLD MAN: I've already told you this. Quite a while after returning from the war. When a sufficient period of time had passed to think that I could start over. I thought I could be happy at last. But happiness seems insufficient for me.

WOMAN: You ended up with your face marked forever.

OLD MAN: What do I care about that? In that accident... there, back then, I killed my wife and son. I was driving and... I don't know what happened to me.

WOMAN: Pardon me. I'm very sorry for you.

OLD MAN: I don't like people pitying me. Which is why I avoid people seeing me. Don't look at me. Please.

WOMAN: I'm *not*.

OLD MAN: I would give my right hand, my arm, I'd give my entire life, to be able to go back and stop that accident from happening.

WOMAN: Accidents. They happen unexpectedly. You can't avoid them. If you could, they wouldn't happen.

OLD MAN: If I could, I assure you... If I could go back.

WOMAN: I understand you. If one could only go back. There's always something for someone to regret, you know? But things happen and there's no way of going back.

OLD MAN: I wish that my wife were here with me, alive. That my son could have had the life that he couldn't enjoy. He was eleven. And I was driving, and I thought I was in control, but...

WOMAN: It was an accident. So why do you worry so much about it? Nothing can be done now.

OLD MAN: She discovered everything.

WOMAN: What are you talking about?

OLD MAN: She found it all out. She'd discovered that my entire story was a farce. My name, my past, and every one of my words. And she felt that her own life was a deception, contaminated by my lies. That her own son, our son, was the product of a lie.

WOMAN: We all hide something, right?

OLD MAN: Enough. Enough!

WOMAN: What's happening to you?

OLD MAN: Leave me alone.

(The WOMAN confronts him.)

WOMAN: You agreed in a letter to talk to me.

OLD MAN: I didn't do it. It was *you* who said you were coming, without waiting for my response and any kind of authorization. I *never* gave you any cause to think I'd agreed to an interview.

(After a brief pause and a hard moment of indecision, she speaks.)

WOMAN: You lived through a war, and apparently fought for the Republic. For freedom.

OLD MAN: Where did you reach *that* conclusion?

WOMAN: From being in Mauthausen...

OLD MAN: In the Civil War you fought wherever luck brought you and they put a rifle in your hands, and they'd tell you, 'point there, that's your enemy'.

WOMAN: But in the end it was *your* luck to suffer the fate of the losers.

OLD MAN: In a war there are no winners and losers. *Everybody's* a loser.

WOMAN: That's why I believe you have an obligation to talk. You're obligated because of all you suffered.

OLD MAN: I lived through it all, and I suffered through it all. Which is why I feel no obligation to do as you say.

WOMAN: I cannot believe that *that's* your final word.

OLD MAN: I'm going to call so that they can pick you up and bring you back to town.

9. LONELINESS

WOMAN: *I imagine my mother. A girl in the middle of the war. A youngster, almost a little girl, like so many others. I imagine a very young woman, alone, whose boyfriend has left her to go to the front. I imagine her in her home, uselessly counting the days left until her wedding day. Gazing out the window and looking over the horizon, listening for footsteps that aren't approaching. I imagine her opening her closet and caring for her wedding dress.*

(The past. The YOUNG MAN with the WOMAN, who now plays the role of WIFE.)

WIFE: 1938. War is everywhere. In every region, in every city. In the town. In the countryside. Everything is war, all Spaniards feel they're at war against something.

YOUNG MAN: I was only thinking about survival. I was a deserter, fleeing all fronts. I didn't want to belong to *any* side. The war had nothing to do with me. I only wanted to live.

WIFE: Come here. You'll be safe, don't be afraid. It's taken you so long to come back.

YOUNG MAN: Do I know you?

WIFE: You know I don't like joking around. I'm your *girl*, your fiancée. And tomorrow I'll be your wife. You've come. No one believed me. They laughed at me, as though I were some poor lunatic. For trusting that you'd come back for our wedding day. On the day you promised me you'd come back. No one expected you'd return on *my* account. No one. But *I* did, I've waited for you, because above all I knew you were going to come back. Shh. Be quiet. No one has to hear this. I have everything ready. The guests, the church, the reception. Even the dance. I have you here, next to me.

YOUNG MAN: I'm here, next to you, but I don't understand what you're telling me.

WIFE: Come on in. It's cold and you're soaked.

YOUNG MAN: The rain.

WIFE: It won't rain tomorrow. Take off your clothes or you'll catch cold. I have something of my brother's that'll do for you.

YOUNG MAN: Your brother? He's here, with you?

WIFE: What are you saying? He's at the front, like all the young men. But tomorrow he'll come back for the wedding, with all the other guests.

OLD MAN: The wedding.

YOUNG MAN: The wedding.

WIFE: Of course, the wedding. The wedding we set precisely for tomorrow, five years ago now.

OLD MAN: The wedding.

WIFE: We'll be married. We'll forget there's a war going on, that there's another world. We'll be married.

YOUNG MAN: We'll be married, you and I, and I won't go away from here any more. What's your name?

WIFE: Silly. Don't tease me.

OLD MAN: I like hearing you say your name.

WIFE: You're a fool.

OLD MAN: Say it for me. Come on, say it, please.

WIFE: Margarita.

OLD MAN: Margarita.

YOUNG MAN: Margarita, we'll be married, you and I.

OLD MAN: We'll be married, you and I.

WIFE: We'll be married, you and I. We'll celebrate and we'll kiss in front of all the guests. Then, we'll dance. And everyone will dance with us. But little by little, they'll be leaving. And you and I will be left alone. At night, under the stars, you'll take me in your arms and hug me. And we'll go inside the house. In the morning, they'll knock at the door, and even if you refuse to open it up, they'll force it open and come looking for you. They'll ask about your name.

YOUNG MAN: What name?

WIFE: Your name, the name you used, to get married, the name by which I call you. Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada.

YOUNG MAN: That's not my name.

WIFE: That *is* your name. That *is* your name and I'll cry and shout it out with pain when they take you away. That *is* your name and I'll repeat it all my life. I'll cry for your name when the years go by and you haven't come back.

YOUNG MAN: If it's going to happen that way, it would be best for me to leave.

OLD MAN: No.

WIFE: No. If you do, the ones outside will seize you and take you away now. Here, in my arms, you have a refuge. In the early morning, you can try to run, at the first light of day. But I know you'll be entangled between the sheets and the day will come. And that they'll have found out about our wedding and they'll come for you. And they'll break the door down, and they'll find you here, with your head rested against my breasts. And they'll take you away and leave me with a broken heart. Because one day I stole from the war the man I love, and the next day the war will snatch him from me forever.

(The town pub. An hour too early or too late. No one is around, and perhaps the Waiter wants to close up and leave.)

WAITER: I've seen you every night, for almost a week, ever since that day you showed up for the old man, Juan Cerrada. You order a beer, I serve it and after a while you ask for a gin and tonic. I serve it to you the way I know you like it, with a little ice and two slices of lemon, and that's the way you pass the time before you head upstairs to your room. You've been here now for too long. Without talking to anybody. Without mixing with any of the regulars. You come to the bar, you eat your meal separate from the rest, you drink without toasting with anybody. A reserved woman.

Do you need me to get you something else?

WOMAN: Are you talking to *me*?

WAITER: It's odd to see a woman like you in this place, in the middle of nowhere. Did you find what you were after?

WOMAN: I don't need to explain to anyone what I'm doing.

WAITER: I'm not asking for an explanation. I'm just curious about you. If you don't feel like answering me, that's fine. How's it going with Cerrada?

WOMAN: Cerrada. That man who *says* his name is Cerrada. I thought he held the key to something very important to me. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I've got it all wrong.

WAITER: Nothing's more important than taking care of yourself. Maybe you're not showing enough concern for yourself.

WOMAN: I suppose you're right. A friend of mine told me something similar.

WAITER: In just a minute I'm going to close up.

WOMAN: It's still early.

WAITER: But there aren't any customers.

WOMAN: *I'm* here.

WAITER: Yes.

WOMAN: Can I have one last round?

WAITER: I don't think that's a good idea.

WOMAN: Is there somewhere else I can get something to drink?

WAITER: In town there's nothing. You'll have to grab a car and head to the city. It's a half hour from here.

WOMAN: It'll be too late then. By the time I get there, I won't feel like having anything.

WAITER: That's *your* problem.

WOMAN: It seems like you don't care much for me.

WAITER: It's just that I have to close up.

WOMAN: I need to talk to somebody.

WAITER: It's always good to talk.

WOMAN: Today I've seen... Something that's hard for me to forget. A head without a face. A head with two holes where the nose and mouth should be. With one eye that looks like it was yanked out and tossed on to what was left of that face.

WAITER: Sounds like a nightmare the way you put it.

WOMAN: It was very real. And the strange part is that it didn't make me feel in the least repulsed. It was like seeing any other face.

WAITER: The face is the mirror of the soul. So they say.

WOMAN: They say a lot of stupid things. If you look at my face, what could you say about my soul?

WAITER: Would you like that last round?

WOMAN: Thanks.

WAITER: I hope they don't close down my bar because of this. What are you looking at?

WOMAN: Can I touch your face?

WAITER: If you want, let's end this and take a walk along the beach.

WOMAN: *The morning after his wedding, they came looking for my father. They didn't ask him his real name, the fascists simply grabbed him by his arms and took him from his house. His wife clung to him and was dragged down the path behind them, until they clocked her with the rifle and left her abandoned in the middle of nowhere.*

They crossed town, pushing and shoving my father, bringing him like that right up to the river. That's where the people on his side were accustomed to bringing those who they took out on their 'little walks.' The ones on the other side, when the front would change, would typically finish their own 'little walks' at the mine. The man should have been finished off right there at the river. The following day, my mother, his widow, searched up and down the river. She didn't find anything. Nothing was ever found. No one found his body. Nothing else was ever heard of Juan Cerrada.

10. THOSE WHO ARE LEFT

(The WOMAN with the OLD MAN.)

OLD MAN: Here again? Yet another day? I didn't think you'd be back. You are stubborn, really pigheaded. Has anyone ever told you that?

WOMAN: All the time, Mr. Cerrada. But I already told you that there are very good reasons behind my pushing this.

(Hesitating. Perhaps it's hard for her to speak again. But it's also hard to keep silent.)

I'm telling you again, this isn't anything trivial. It's necessary. It's more than fair. For me, it's an obligation. To recover the memory of those who suffered because of the Civil War.

OLD MAN: To recover the memory. Don't tell me we're going to open up tombs now. What's past is past. Live your life, and stop recovering the memory of people you don't know.

WOMAN: It's the memory of an entire country. That's what needs to be dug up. That's why I won't go away from here so easily.

OLD MAN: Why do you want to force me to do what you want? To be silent is also a right.

WOMAN: I need you to collaborate with me. The facts and accounts of survivors like you are really valuable, very much so. And every day that goes by, they're going to be harder to retrieve. That's why I'm feeling desperate, since it seems like I'm running into a wall of silence. If people like yourself would testify, it might be critical in tearing it down. If you spoke up, maybe many would follow your example.

OLD MAN: At times, silence is the best choice. And that's what I choose. To be silent.

WOMAN: If *you* are silent, if everyone is silent, if this silence goes on, very soon everything that you and others like you have lived through will be lost. A part of our history will be lost.

OLD MAN: You're talking about history, in capital letters? A bunch of documents that nobody reads.

WOMAN: But everything you've suffered, everything that's been forgotten, all the disregard of the defeated...

OLD MAN: After a civil war there are only losers, and which side you've been on hardly matters any more. Haven't I said this to you already? Because what's forgotten is best forgotten. And *you*, do they pay you well to do what you do?

WOMAN: I don't have any contract, I draw no salary of any kind. At all.

OLD MAN: So why do you persist so in all this?

WOMAN: It's a research project. With no other benefit. If one day I manage to finish it, maybe it'll interest some editor, and I'll publish it all as a book. But I'm not hoping to earn any money, let alone get famous from it.

OLD MAN: What are you planning to call the book?

WOMAN: *Those Who Are Left.*

OLD MAN: *Those Who Are Left.* A bit macabre. *Those Who Are Left.*

I don't believe a word about your book story. What's really pushing you? Tell me the truth. If you want me to answer *your* questions, you're going to have to answer *mine* first.

WOMAN: I've already told you. I believe that...

OLD MAN: I believe, I believe. You're not going to tell me it's all a question of believing or not.

WOMAN: If I didn't believe all of this, I wouldn't be here.

OLD MAN: We tend to believe in a lot of things. But few of them compel us to do crazy things like what you've done.

WOMAN: Perhaps all I'm doing is for the sake of one person.

OLD MAN: Who?

WOMAN: Maybe... you.

OLD MAN: Me?

WOMAN: It's a way for you to recover from life as much as life's stolen away from you.

OLD MAN: Me?

WOMAN: You and all those who lost the war...

OLD MAN: OK, I've heard enough. Whenever everything's conveyed in pretty phrases, I can always be certain there's something else concealed beneath them. Something more concrete. More direct. What is it you're after here? What is it you really want from me? *Answer* me.

(A moment of vacillation for the WOMAN, who doesn't dare to look at the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: My father.

OLD MAN: What *happened* to your father?

WOMAN: My father disappeared in the middle of the Civil War.

OLD MAN: That's what you're *really* after, finding your father?

WOMAN: I don't think my father's going to appear, ever. All signs are that he died. But even so, a little doubt remains. I have to explore it to the end. I need to be completely sure that that's what happened to him.

(The OLD MAN looks at her. The WOMAN doesn't say anything. Silence weighs on them.)

OLD MAN: You shouldn't have come.

(A moment of tense silence, which the OLD MAN breaks by clearing his throat.)

WOMAN: Please. I'm begging you.

OLD MAN: No.

(The OLD MAN shows no sign of planning to continue the conversation. The WOMAN keeps staring at him.)

(The YOUNG MAN intervenes between the two.)

YOUNG MAN: Hey, you. Are you still alive? Come on, tell me that I'm alive and it's worth going on with this.

OLD MAN: Where *are* we?

YOUNG MAN: You make me laugh. Where? You tell me. We're still here, facing an empty road. What's happening to you now?

OLD MAN: I don't like them looking at me as though they were judging me.

YOUNG MAN: I wasn't looking at you.

OLD MAN: I didn't mean you. It's her.

YOUNG MAN: Her? You must be delirious.

OLD MAN: I feel... hatred for that woman. She's pacing around like a tiger on the verge of clawing its prey. I've had it. Maybe I ought to rest a little. Maybe I ought to sleep.

(The OLD MAN sleeps.)

YOUNG MAN: *1939. A man flees from his past and his future. From the war that's flooded his country. From the city under siege where saving his skin has meant losing everything. From the woman who opened up his life without knowing it. He doesn't wish to remember anything, and he renounces his name and his face. But fleeing from himself leaves him prisoner of another man's name and another man's fate. 1943. A train crosses Europe with a load of deported Spaniards. Their destination is Mauthausen.*

(Mauthausen. The OLD MAN sleeps and in his dreams he cries out. The YOUNG MAN approaches him.)

YOUNG MAN: Hey, wake up. Are we in Germany? Mauthausen?

OLD MAN: What's happening? Is it the head-count already?

YOUNG MAN: The head-count? It's got to be two o'clock in the morning. Are we in Mauthausen? Is that true?

OLD MAN: Two. And at five we have to already be standing. Spanish, right?

YOUNG MAN: Yes. We arrived yesterday.

OLD MAN: We're in Mauthausen. We're in Germany.

YOUNG MAN: You cry out like a condemned man and you don't let anyone sleep.

OLD MAN: Do you have anything to eat?

YOUNG MAN: Take this. I don't want it.

OLD MAN: You don't want it? You're crazy. What are you planning to live on?

YOUNG MAN: Not on that.

OLD MAN: After you've been here a few more days, you'll eat whatever there is.

YOUNG MAN: It smells like shit here.

OLD MAN: It's not only shit. Every night half a dozen die.

YOUNG MAN: Dead? Murdered? Do they come in the barrack huts at night?

OLD MAN: The guards come in whenever they fucking feel like it. But those who die, they die from being worn down, from exhaustion, from starvation. From fear of living. From anything, everything, and nothing. This is Mauthausen.

YOUNG MAN: They've stuck us for a week on a freight train. Like animals, and like animals they've had us closed up the entire trip, without opening the doors up for anybody. You couldn't even move or breathe. People did everything standing up. But that was the least of it. If you fell down, you didn't get up. The weakest, those who'd fall, would die crushed by the others. And there they stayed, underneath us, rotting while the rest of the living stepped on top of them.

OLD MAN: What you're telling we've all been through it. But that's nothing, just the beginning.

YOUNG MAN: *You're* not Spanish.

OLD MAN: No. I'm German.

YOUNG MAN: You speak Spanish pretty well. Just now you were dreaming and going back and forth without any problem between German and Spanish.

OLD MAN: I know Spain. I like your country.

YOUNG MAN: I'm from Málaga. You know Málaga, don't you? You were talking about it in your dreams. That's what made me notice you. What's a German doing in Málaga? What's a German doing here?

OLD MAN: The same as everybody.

YOUNG MAN: You're not a Jew.

OLD MAN: No. Not a Gypsy, or a homosexual. Or a Hungarian, or anything.

YOUNG MAN: Communist.

OLD MAN: Army deserter. Are you a Communist?

YOUNG MAN: No, I'm not.

OLD MAN: I'm not either. I'm just a prisoner, like any other. Ask any of these guys about me. You'll find I don't get any special treatment or anything. The Nazis and I don't get along. I don't know how I'm still alive. But even if you don't trust me, take your bread. You'll need it in order to make it to the quarry tomorrow.

YOUNG MAN: The quarry?

OLD MAN: You want some advice? When you're there, don't stop, but don't wear yourself out either. Always let them see you active, but don't work yourself into the ground. If not, in a few weeks you're a dead man.

YOUNG MAN: Listen, is there any way to get out of here?

OLD MAN: Do you see those chimneys?

YOUNG MAN: They've already told me about the chimneys.

OLD MAN: Well, we're all going to get out through *them*.

YOUNG MAN: Everyone, you and I, too. Or not *you*?

OLD MAN: If my crying out bothers you, don't worry. You'll get used to it. Before long, you'll be crying out in *your* dreams, too. It's two in the morning. Go to sleep.

11. HELL'S DOOR

(The WOMAN corners the OLD MAN.)

OLD MAN: My body's no longer the same as that young man's who lived through the war. That young man who stayed in the past, that's the person you're interested in, not me.

(The WOMAN removes from her purse a small pocket recorder, which she connects.)

WOMAN: It's a tool of the trade. A little tape recorder. Don't worry. Nothing that we discuss will be used without your permission. Name.

OLD MAN: What?

WOMAN: Answer *whatever* I ask you, no matter how obvious it may seem. Let's begin with a piece of personal data. Your name, please.

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada Martín.

WOMAN: Age.

OLD MAN: I was born in 1915. The thirteenth of September, so pretty soon, I'll turn 68 years old.

(The WOMAN rewinds, pushing the playback key. The sound of the rewinder is heard. And, in a metallic and unpleasant way, we can hear the voice of the OLD MAN.)

Juan Cerrada Martín... September, so pretty soon...

(Returning to the point where she stopped, the WOMAN begins to record again.)

WOMAN: Tell me about the end of the Civil War. What happened then?

OLD MAN: Are you back recording?

(The WOMAN gestures affirmatively.)

Well... Franco's troops were advancing... They were pushing us back... And many of us left for France. When we crossed the border, we didn't think about going back. Everything had ended, at least for us. We thought it couldn't get any worse. That we were in a free country and out of the war. But the French didn't play clean. They piled us up into internment camps, and they put in as our guards Senegalese soldiers, who didn't understand any Spanish, and nobody did a thing to understand us. And if we thought *they* treated us like dogs? Well. The worst was yet to come.

WOMAN: Mauthausen.

OLD MAN: Mauthausen. I'm always going back to Mauthausen. Mauthausen. There was no mercy there.

Back then no one got any. Not the Stalinists, not the Trotskyists, not the Anarchists, not the Fascists, to say nothing of the bourgeoisie, who many times took advantage of the situation for their own good. But the Nazis did something worse than the rest. They turned the lack of mercy into a religion.

WOMAN: You survive Mauthausen. How do you manage it? Did you meet many Spaniards there? Tell me about it.

OLD MAN: I've had forty years of this and I still feel as though I'm within the walls and wire fences of ... that place. They made us work in a quarry, a hell hole.

YOUNG MAN: ... a quarry, a hell hole.

OLD MAN: Rocks of up to 130 pounds, we had to lift them up a 160 foot high wall, getting beaten by officials and *kapos*. From the height of the cliff the SS would toss down into the hole anybody who couldn't go on. Parachutes, that's what they called them. If the poor devil didn't die at first, they repeated the operation.

YOUNG MAN: ... getting beaten by the officials and bosses.

OLD MAN: When you sleep in a barrack hut, as I've done, in front of the crematorium, and all night long you see flames burning in the chimney, hope ceases to have any meaning.

YOUNG MAN: ... all night long...

WOMAN: From 1943...

OLD MAN: Through 1945...

WOMAN: When the Americans liberate the camp. You return then to a totalitarian Spain that hadn't yet come out of a climate of confrontation. And in Spain you manage to avoid jail time.

OLD MAN: It wasn't so easy. I was detained and interrogated. My case went through a kangaroo court, where the sentence was decided in advance. I was going to be sent to prison, but I managed to escape. From then, I became a fugitive.

WOMAN: Even so, during the worst time of Francoist Spain, after being convicted and put on a wanted list, you survive with your name. As though everyone had forgotten about you.

OLD MAN: If what you're asking is how it was I didn't go to jail, I recognize it, I never did. I got lucky. I got accustomed to being on the run and not staying in the same place more than a few months. But they could have arrested me at any point.

WOMAN: At *that* time *any* investigation would guarantee a jail sentence. Twenty eight thousand death sentences were recorded in the ten years following the end of the war. Some elevate that figure to up to 200,000.

OLD MAN: Winners, losers. You've prepared yourself very well with those figures. But you seem to refuse to *understand* anything.

WOMAN: What happened to the family you left behind in Spain?

(Silence.)

Did you meet up with them again when you went back to Spain?

OLD MAN: No. My wife died before I returned to Spain.

WOMAN: You didn't have any children?

OLD MAN: No.

WOMAN: How and when did you learn of her death? It must have been a great blow, I would think.

OLD MAN: Do I have to talk about *this*, too?

WOMAN: Just answer me, please.

OLD MAN: It was in France, before I was arrested by the Vichy police. I got the news of her death in Spain.

WOMAN: Did you attempt to verify it later, when you went back?

(Silence. The OLD MAN appears uncomfortable.)

OLD MAN: As soon as it was possible for me.

What the war couldn't do to me the hunger and sickness managed. And the pain. After our wedding they came to look for me to take me 'out for a little walk.' I managed to escape, but she was left alone, and the pressure she had to have tolerated was horrible.

(The OLD MAN is quiet for a moment.)

WOMAN: Tell me that story. They were on the verge of killing you halfway through the war.

OLD MAN: Things were that way in those times. The red militias would come along, and they'd have their purges. Then, the front would change, and the fascist squads would come along, and they purged whatever remained.

What's the matter with you?

(The OLD MAN has realized that the WOMAN is worked up, just stifling a nervous attack.)

What's the matter with you?

WOMAN: It's nothing. Just a little dizziness.

(The light is turned off.)

OLD MAN: We can leave this for another time. I think it's for the best.

(In Mauthausen, the two men.)

Hey, Spaniard. What's happening to you now? Are you sick? We can't let *that* happen. Get up. It may be playtime for *you*, but you're putting all of *us* in danger.

YOUNG MAN: It's just a little dizziness.

OLD MAN: That means you're hungry. Look, keep this here, for emergencies like this one. Once you gave *me* a piece of bread. Take it now, and eat. We're even. Eat even if you feel like you're going to puke it all up. If you start to weaken now, you're a dead man and the others will pay for it. You've got to get up *now*. If you stay like this, we're all screwed. I never see you talking to the other Spaniards.

YOUNG MAN: Leave me alone. I'm tired.

OLD MAN: If you want to die, wait until we get out to the quarry. Out *there* you can't bring us any trouble. Don't you know where you've ended up?

YOUNG MAN: In a camp, obviously. I've already been in others. In the south of France, and then in Alsace.

OLD MAN: Look alive and don't go to sleep. They're going to get to the head-count now. This isn't a camp like the others you know.

YOUNG MAN: Go fuck yourself and leave me alone!

OLD MAN: *You're* going to get up now and head straight to the head-count.

YOUNG MAN: And if I don't, are you going to kill me or what?

OLD MAN: I'm not going to kill you. Hans and Franz are just dying to pound the shit out of a Spaniard like you, though. Let's go. Wake the fuck up.

YOUNG MAN: Isn't there any way to get out of here?

OLD MAN: Besides through the chimneys?

YOUNG MAN: I don't see the humor of talking now about the chimneys. There has to be some way to get out of here.

OLD MAN: Endure. Don't die. Be lucky and hope that they keep losing the war. That the Allies show up and liberate us before then. *That's* what we can do. Wait, endure, survive.

YOUNG MAN: Wait for a miracle.

OLD MAN: A miracle, yes. They say the front is getting closer. Now it's best not to think about escaping, and just endure.

YOUNG MAN: You *can't* tell me *no* one has tried to escape.

OLD MAN: Of course many have tried. Haven't I told you about Gellert, the big-nosed Hungarian? A good guy. They tried, he and a few other guys. They offered me the chance to go with them. I helped

them, I wished them good luck... but I stayed behind. They captured them when they'd just climbed over the first walls.

YOUNG MAN: And?

OLD MAN: They strung them up in the middle of the camp. We would pass underneath them, every day. They were hanged there until their bodies rotted and then dried up. We'd pass underneath them, and worms would fall on our faces. One guy started to whistle a tune. Little by little, we were all whistling it when they made us pass underneath them. Listen.

(The Old Man whistles.)

YOUNG MAN: Honestly, you don't intend to get out of this hell? I believe you know how to escape.

OLD MAN: Why are you so sure?

YOUNG MAN: Because if *you're* talking to me now, it's because you want something from me. And the only thing you can get out of someone like me is for me to help you run away.

OLD MAN: I've seen them shoot someone down just for hiding a spoon in his clothes. Nobody gets out of here. Only through there. Night and mist. Smoke, ash. Nothing.

YOUNG MAN: There's no trap yet invented that can hold me. And I think you feel the same.

(The YOUNG MAN whistles the song.)

12. MASKS

(Silence. The WOMAN composes herself.)

WOMAN: Your wife, your first wife, her name was Margarita Lebrón.

OLD MAN: Yes. That's right.

WOMAN: Margarita Lebrón. Married to Juan Cerrada on February 2, 1938.

OLD MAN: That's right.

WOMAN: On the morning following the wedding, a squadron carried off Juan Cerrada, and Margarita Lebrón was left alone. But she didn't die, *not* in the war and *not* later on in the postwar.

OLD MAN: What is it you're saying?

WOMAN: Margarita Lebrón died only three years ago. All this time she was alive. Did you know Juan Cerrada had a daughter?

OLD MAN: A daughter?

WOMAN: No, of course you don't know *anything*. Despite your saying you searched all over for her.

OLD MAN: You're talking about my wife. Don't you realize? About my wife. What are you driving at? Don't toy with me.

(The WOMAN turns to where the OLD MAN is hidden. She corners him.)

WOMAN: Anyone you could have inquired with in Barrera de Solís would have been able to tell you what happened to her. You didn't make any effort to find her.

OLD MAN: What is this? A trap? What do you want from me?

WOMAN: Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: It's a name that sounds nice. Really, is that your name?

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada Martín. That *is* my name, and you know it.

WOMAN: I'd like for you to say it to me. You tell me that you really *are* Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: But...

WOMAN: You're *not* Juan Cerrada. You didn't marry Margarita Lebrón. I don't believe you ever came to fight in the Civil War on any side.

(In Mauthausen.)

YOUNG MAN: German.

OLD MAN: What, Spaniard?

YOUNG MAN: Today they took François away to the quarry. They ripped him to pieces.

OLD MAN: You can't do anything for him anymore. Tomorrow they could come for you or me. For whom the bell tolls, it tolls, period. So long as it doesn't affect you, you've got to go on, always go on. Wherever you can. That's it.

YOUNG MAN: This is all fucked. We're not getting out of here alive.

OLD MAN: Thinking about what you left behind there on the outside, aren't you? Don't do it. Don't think about cherries or anything of that sort.

YOUNG MAN: You *tell* me how we're going to escape from here. I won't stand another second more in this pit.

OLD MAN: Don't think about escaping from here.

YOUNG MAN: I can't avoid it. I *need* to think that we're going to get out of here.

OLD MAN: It's best to forget that there's something out there beyond these walls.

YOUNG MAN: I can't.

OLD MAN: That woman. She's the one you talk to me about every night. The one you ate cherries with. What's her name?

YOUNG MAN: Margarita.

OLD MAN: Gretchen.

YOUNG MAN: Margarita. Don't get it all confused with your language.

OLD MAN: Margarita. Tell me what she's like.

YOUNG MAN: Very young. Back then she must not have been much more than 18. But in war time girls seem much older.

OLD MAN: But tell me the good stuff. Did she have a nice rack?

YOUNG MAN: Hey, Kraut. You're talking about my *wife*. My *wife*.

OLD MAN: You married her? You never told me that.

YOUNG MAN: *Yes*, I married her. With a priest and guests. The whole big production. During the war. When what I *needed* to think about was escaping and hiding out, I meet a stranger and marry her.

OLD MAN: A wedding on the large side, during the war. How you Spanish are. You must have had it all well prepared.

YOUNG MAN: No. I tell you I didn't know the girl. I got to Barrera, her town, looking for a way out. She must have mixed me up with someone else. Or maybe she was simply desperate... And... I got married to her the next day. It was *she* who had it all prepared in advance, as though she knew I was going to get there that day. As though she'd been waiting for me.

OLD MAN: She had it all prepared and she was only missing the groom. You got there and everything was arranged. Now she had her groom, now she had her wedding.

YOUNG MAN: She was waiting for me, that's right.

OLD MAN: But you didn't know her beforehand.

YOUNG MAN: No. I'd never been to that town before.

OLD MAN: So, if it's really like you say, you only shared a few days with her.

YOUNG MAN: Three days... The day after the wedding they came for me. I don't know how they found me.

OLD MAN: You got married without knowing her and only spent one night with her?

YOUNG MAN: I met her one day, got married to her the next, and got arrested the day after that, and here I am. And now I want to get out of here and go back.

OLD MAN: And she's still there?

YOUNG MAN: She's still there.

OLD MAN: And you want to escape in order to get back to her. Or is there something else? I hope you're not hiding something unpleasant from me. If you keep secrets from me, it's going to be hard for us to plan our escape. You understand?

YOUNG MAN: Tell me your plan.

OLD MAN: I haven't told you I was going to escape. And least of all with you. Listen, is your name really Juan Cerrada?

(The WOMAN corners the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: You're not Juan Cerrada. You're an imposter.

(Mauthausen.)

OLD MAN: Why are you concealing your name from me? Is there something unpleasant in your past, that even a war or a hell like this can't manage to erase? Who *is* that Juan Cerrada really?

YOUNG MAN: I *am* who I *am*. Myself.

OLD MAN: You ought to be careful with your yelling.

YOUNG MAN: Yelling?

OLD MAN: At night, you howl like a lunatic, and at times you scream that you're *not* Juan Cerrada. That you haven't fought in the war on *any* side. That you're not like the others here. That they ought to set

you loose, that it's all been a terrible misunderstanding. Be careful with the Nazis. They won't put up with a registry error. And they have a hard and fast way of eliminating errors like these.

YOUNG MAN: They've told me about you. About when you were in Spain. About what you were doing there.

OLD MAN: What is it they've told you?

YOUNG MAN: That indeed you know Málaga well. That you kicked up a big fuss there amongst the Queipo group, the Italians, and your own crew, the Nazis. A big joint action. And now, let me sleep.

OLD MAN: Get up, you son of a bitch. I'm no Nazi. You hear me, Spaniard? For refusing to obey my superior officers, I landed in Mauthausen. With Jews, Poles, with other Germans. And Spaniards like you. Here we're *all* under the ruthless knife of the SS.

(The WOMAN closes in on the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: You're not Juan Cerrada. You're an imposter.

OLD MAN: I'm going to call the police.

WOMAN: It's not in your interest to call *anyone*, and you know it well. I spoke with Margarita Lebrón. She told me her husband had died in the war, shortly after marrying. A squadron of fascists assaulted her house to take him for 'a little walk.'

OLD MAN: Turn that off, please.

WOMAN: I can't figure out what it was you really did in the past. I can't figure out who you really are. But I *do* know I'm sure you're lying and that your life has always been a farce.

OLD MAN: Turn off that device.

WOMAN: You lie and you hide out. You lie and live a lie that I'm not going to tolerate any more. Juan Cerrada died in Mauthausen, in Gusen.

(In Mauthausen. Bach is playing: The Magnificat.)

YOUNG MAN: What's that music?

OLD MAN: Bad news.

YOUNG MAN: Opera? I don't know how anyone can like this music... Although I'm sure *you* like it.

OLD MAN: It isn't opera. It's Bach. The *Magnificat*. That's how their armies celebrate a victory. When you hear Bach, it's because it's going well for them. And they lay it on thick for us so that we find out. We're not men any longer. They've turned us into things. And they use Bach to mock us.

YOUNG MAN: So, each time that this plays, we've got it worse.

OLD MAN: Bach is playing. Don't you get it? Bach plays and the ovens work overtime. It rains ash around the clock and the Bach chorales are raised over our bones. The ash gets stuck in your eyes and they profane Bach inside your head.

YOUNG MAN: But the front's getting closer, that's a fact. And the Allies aren't pulling back.

OLD MAN: It may be they're surrounding us. The front advances by another direction, and we're left here trapped, in the rearguard. And the trains arrive full of more and more Hungarian Jews, and the ovens work overtime. They've got to complete all their work before the Allies arrive, and Bach keeps playing.

YOUNG MAN: Let's escape.

(On the road.)

OLD MAN: Who are *you* to come in this fashion to my home? I don't know you at all and I don't know why you've shown up here to intimidate me, I don't even know with what purpose. If you have something to accuse me of, denounce me. Who or what's behind all of this?

WOMAN: *I'm* the one asking the questions.

OLD MAN: You're threatening me.

WOMAN: Do you still refuse to recognize the truth?

OLD MAN: How am I going to admit such an absurd story? I know very well who I am. It's not going to be worth anything for you to threaten me with that tape recorder.

(The WOMAN turns off the recorder and moves toward where the OLD MAN is seated. The OLD MAN gets up, quickly, turning his back to her.)

WOMAN: I have good reasons for not leaving you alone.

OLD MAN: What do you want? Money? To turn me over to some Zionist group? Is that it?

(The WOMAN pays no attention. She turns off the recorder. And she responds, calmly.)

WOMAN: Juan Cerrada was my father. You stole his name from him.

OLD MAN: Your father.

WOMAN: You're stealing my father from me. The only thing that I probably had left of him. The right to mourn him.

OLD MAN: That's absurd.

(The WOMAN rushes toward the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: How can you be such a hypocrite?

(The WOMAN can't control herself, and she throws her hands on the OLD MAN. He, with great difficulty, holds them back.)

OLD MAN: You're hurting me, a great deal.

WOMAN: You think you can go on lying?

OLD MAN: I don't know you at all. You must be mistaken. Everything's a misunderstanding.

WOMAN: I'm not mistaken. I can't be mistaken.

(The WOMAN stops, the OLD MAN seeks shelter, covering his face behind his arms. The OLD MAN looks at her. The WOMAN turns her back on him.)

When the war ended, back in her town, they almost killed my mother. They didn't do it, but they made sure to ruin her life. They cropped her hair, they stripped her naked in the rain, they beat her. The men would insult her and spit at her, while the women and children threw mud and manure at her. Women who previously were her friends, and who'd even been her bridesmaids. They humiliated her and mocked her. All of them. After that, she closed herself up in her home, but it was impossible to go on like that. She found she had to get away forever, to the capital. If you really *had* asked anyone about Margarita Lebrón in Barrera, *anybody* could have told you this story and where to find her.

OLD MAN: It's a hard story. Sad. But I find it repugnant that you come here to throw it in my face.

Where are you planning to go with your manipulation?

WOMAN: *Did* you personally know Juan Cerrada, my father?

(The OLD MAN doesn't answer.)

Answer.

OLD MAN: I don't know who your father is. I am Juan Cerrada, and I've known nothing about you until today.

WOMAN: What do you say is your name?

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: Don't try to deceive me any further. You are *not* who you say you are. Why have you been passing as my father?

(The OLD MAN sways.)

OLD MAN: I am Juan Cerrada. I am Juan Cerrada. I... I *am* Juan Cerrada. The cherries. We would talk about the cherries. About their flavor, sweet and sour at the same time. There, in Mauthausen, where everything was gray and yellow, we would talk about the cherries, about their red color; in the middle of our desperation, we would imagine their flavor.

(In Mauthausen.)

OLD MAN: Cherries?

YOUNG MAN: Sweet and sour at the same time. Red cherries. Filling all the valley with their color. I look and can no longer see the big barracks; I imagine that the cherry trees are growing and that they're filling up with the red of their fruit.

OLD MAN: I don't know what cherries taste like.

YOUNG MAN: Aren't there cherries in your town?

OLD MAN: Of course there are cherries.

YOUNG MAN: Don't you know how to eat them then?

OLD MAN: Cherries have never appealed to me.

YOUNG MAN: Your loss.

OLD MAN: Please, stop talking about food. You're going to give me an ulcer that's going to cross over into my bones.

YOUNG MAN: Didn't you say you didn't like cherries?

OLD MAN: In my land it's the apricots that are everywhere. Juicy, sweet, thick.

YOUNG MAN: Are you talking about fruit or something else?

OLD MAN: I'm talking about things to eat, Spaniard.

YOUNG MAN: When you're outside there, all you have to do is reach out your hand to grab the cherries.

OLD MAN: Don't keep pushing the point. Don't talk to me about food. Keep your cherries. No. Go on. Keep talking to me about cherries. Just about cherries.

YOUNG MAN: I'll talk to you about cherries and the lips of a woman eating cherries. I'll talk to you of lips that have lost their color but with cherries have recovered their vitality. I'll talk to you about...

OLD MAN: Shut up.

(Facing the sea.)

OLD MAN: I'm choking.

(The WOMAN helps him.)

WOMAN: Breathe.

(The WOMAN gives him water.)

WOMAN: Take a deep breath.

(The OLD MAN loosens his collar.)

OLD MAN: Leave me. Let me die here and now.

WOMAN: No, I'm not going to let you. You *have* something of mine. That belongs to *me*, that's been hidden from me forever. I'm not going to leave without finding out the truth.

OLD MAN: Tell me *your* name. Your whole name.

(She takes out her card again and places it in front of him.)

WOMAN: Ana Cerrada Lebrón.

(He picks up the card. He reads it.)

OLD MAN: Ana Cerrada Lebrón. Daughter of Juan and Margarita.

(She snatches the card from him.)

This is a sick joke.

WOMAN: Why would I lie to you?

OLD MAN: It can't be true.

WOMAN: What reason do you have to keep denying I'm the daughter of Juan Cerrada, the real Juan Cerrada? Do you want me to speak to you about my mother? Do you want me to describe our house? But that doesn't make sense. I know I have the truth on my side. *I've* lived it. You're the one who's lying.

OLD MAN: This document could be false. I can show you my documentation.

WOMAN: Now isn't the time for more papers.

OLD MAN: Ana, look me in the eye.

WOMAN: I haven't *stopped* looking at you since I got here.

OLD MAN: Look at me, please. With all the disdain and hate in this world, but look at me, I *beg* you. Look at me.

(She holds her gaze, but he lowers his own.)

(In Mauthausen)

YOUNG MAN: German. Wake up. You're yelling.

OLD MAN: Get out of here and leave me alone.

YOUNG MAN: What's happening to you?

OLD MAN: Leave me.

YOUNG MAN: Come on, get up. You can't stay here. If they see you this way, that'll be the end of you. I learned that from you. That we can't get sick; and if we do, we can't let anyone know. That's what you taught me. So get up. What is it—you don't have the balls any more, you fucking German?

OLD MAN: I can't *take* it today.

YOUNG MAN: Is this because of yesterday's beating? Weren't you saying you could take it *all*? Come on, keep hoping for your miracle.

OLD MAN: It's not just that. I feel... I feel weak.

YOUNG MAN: A cold.

OLD MAN: It's not a cold.

YOUNG MAN: Really, are you sick or not? It smells really bad here, buddy. Get up.

OLD MAN: Just leave me. I'm going to get shit everywhere. I must have typhus. People have died from typhus in the barracks. The other day my clothes were full of fleas. They must have passed it on.

YOUNG MAN: People die from typhus every day here. From typhus and everything else. But that's not your problem. You don't have typhus. Not that or anything else. You can't give up now.

OLD MAN: You go on.

YOUNG MAN: I'm bringing you with me, whether you like it or not.

OLD MAN: Leave me.

YOUNG MAN: No.

OLD MAN: Leave me now. You want to know what I did in Málaga. I served on the *Admiral Graff Spee*. Our mission was to make up part of the international forces. I was an artillery officer. At that time I still believed in justice. Right up to that cold day in February of '37. Málaga had to be taken. The Italians accomplished it by land, and from the sea they had the help of three Francoist warships. From the *Admiral Graff Spee* we were making sure the nationalists avoided any surprises. So we were keeping a watch on the little road to Almería. The civil population started to flee the city. Then the planes appeared. The Italians started to let loose the machine gun fire. You could see the faces of the women crying. The children were running, without knowing where to hide. The Spanish boats pointed their cannons toward the people on the run.

When I tried to react and rebel, everything was already over. You still want to go with me?

YOUNG MAN: You're here, paying for your guilt.

OLD MAN: At a certain point, we were ordered to provide friendly support. And I was the gunman of the *Graff Spee*. You get it? I fired against those poor wretches because they ordered me to. And I never made any effort to rebel.

YOUNG MAN: You're saying you participated in the massacre.

OLD MAN: I did.

YOUNG MAN: But in the end you rebelled.

OLD MAN: When it was already too late. Hasn't it occurred to you that among those wretches were some of your friends? That even some of your family may have died on that road?

YOUNG MAN: What is it you *want*? For me to jump on top of you and pound you to death? We have a plan. Let's make this escape. Then, we'll see. But I have to get out of here and you have to help me. So get up, they're about to do the head-count.

(On the road, facing the sea.

The OLD MAN looks at the WOMAN. He raises his hand to touch her face. But he doesn't dare, dropping it, at the same time lowering his gaze.)

OLD MAN: Those who are left. The cost makes no difference to you.

WOMAN: I've been paying. Since the day I was born.

OLD MAN: Go away. Go away.

WOMAN: Breathe.

OLD MAN: Leave me. Don't touch me. Don't look at me.

WOMAN: Calm down. I don't want to hurt you. I need you to talk.

(The OLD MAN calms down, little by little, under the WOMAN's cold gaze.)

Do you feel better now?

OLD MAN: Ana...

I beg you. Go away.

WOMAN: I'm not doing it.

OLD MAN: Ana...

WOMAN: I'm *not* going to leave you alone.

OLD MAN: What are you after from me?

WOMAN: I made this trip to find out who you really are. I don't believe you're my father. You're hiding behind his name. And I want to know why.

OLD MAN: Are you after revenge?

(Silence.)

WOMAN: I want the truth.

OLD MAN: Were things really like that?

(In Mauthausen.)

OLD MAN: Were things really like that?

Tomorrow, Spaniard. Tomorrow will be the day. Tomorrow we'll make our escape. It's been hard, though the hardest part for both of us may have been you convincing me. But everything's prepared now. Now, finally, we're going to escape, Spaniard.

YOUNG MAN: I'm not going with you.

OLD MAN: Look, it's clear the front's not going to advance this far. The Allies are more interested in attacking in other zones, and the Nazis are going to hold their positions. And they're cleaning out the camps. They know they don't have much time and they want to finish us off so nothing's left hanging. So *everything's* wiped off the map. If we don't escape *now*, we won't have any chance at all.

YOUNG MAN: There's a group leaving tomorrow for Gusen. When I got here in my train there were around 200 children in the train. There are only around 50 left. Tomorrow all of the survivors from my train are leaving in the direction of Gusen. And so those 50 children will be headed there.

OLD MAN: You already know what awaits them there. And if you go with them, the same thing will happen to *you*, and you're not going to be able to save them that way.

YOUNG MAN: No.

OLD MAN: You're going to die. And you won't accomplish anything. It'd be better for everyone, for those children and you, if you just grab a piece of wood and take out a couple of guards before they finish you off with a bullet.

YOUNG MAN: It's all the same to me, old man.

OLD MAN: After all our preparations? If we don't take off, they'll figure it all out and then the whole thing will get worse.

YOUNG MAN: I'm going to Gusen. I couldn't live with myself later on thinking about those children.

OLD MAN: Did things really happen that way?

YOUNG MAN: I'm going to Gusen.

OLD MAN: Nobody would believe this. We're in hell. No one acts this way in hell. "I'm going with the children." That's crap. Even *I* can't believe it. And don't call me old man. Back then, this German wasn't any old man.

YOUNG MAN: So, what *is* it that really happened? If there really weren't heroes, there certainly were traitors.

OLD MAN: Heroes and traitors. Winners and losers. The same old story as always. Did things really happen that way?

YOUNG MAN: We're never getting out of here. I'm not stupid. You're not planning to get us out of here.

OLD MAN: Yes, I *do* know how to escape.

YOUNG MAN: There's only one way to get out of here. Through the chimneys. That's what you always told me. Tomorrow the only survivors from my train are leaving for Gusen. I would have to go with them.

OLD MAN: Gusen.

YOUNG MAN: I don't plan on doing it.

OLD MAN: How can you change that?

YOUNG MAN: I can be of some use to the Nazis. They have no reason to kill me. I don't want to die. I can't let them kill me now.

OLD MAN: Are you selling out, Spaniard? Is that what you're going to do?

YOUNG MAN: I've left a lot behind. I need to go back. Perhaps I'm cursed. Cursed with the stigma of staying alive, of surviving.

OLD MAN: Did things really happen that way? No, they didn't turn out that way. Neither that way nor the other. I was neither a hero nor a traitor.

(Facing the road.)

OLD MAN: It may be that in another time my name was different from Juan Cerrada. At a certain point, I grew to be ashamed of the name I was born with, of the man I was with that cursed name. I don't want to remember it. What's the need of looking backward?

WOMAN: My need isn't to look backward but rather to move forward. That's why I *need* to hear you.

OLD MAN: You want to move forward. For me, on the other hand, there's nothing I can do about it now. Offer you an explanation. It's time now to settle my debt with the man who died at Gusen for me.

WOMAN: At last, you admit it.

OLD MAN: Don't look at me. I can't stand you looking at me.

WOMAN: Who *are* you really?

OLD MAN: My name doesn't matter any longer.

WOMAN: All my life I've carried with me the ghost of Juan Cerrada. And today I want to resolve all my doubts.

OLD MAN: Get out of here.

WOMAN: I'm not leaving.

OLD MAN: Kill me then.

WOMAN: I haven't come here to kill anybody.

(Silence.)

The truth.

OLD MAN: You want to get to the truth? Are you sure?

WOMAN: This journey began before I was born. It's got to end here.

OLD MAN: You're very young. You have a lot to live, your own life. It's not healthy to persist in hunting a ghost.

WOMAN: For a long time, I believed in the story my mother told me over and over about my father. But I never had a grave to cry at. All I have left of my father is a blurry photo, fragments of a story almost forgotten, and you. *You*, who bears his name.

(The OLD MAN remains silent. The WOMAN continues, without anger, as if she were speaking to a child from whom she's attempting to extract the confession of a minor sin.)

It doesn't have anything to do with me. It's pointless to continue with your lies.

OLD MAN: You show no compassion.

WOMAN: Compassion? I don't think that that's the right word in this case. Who was compassionate back then with Juan Cerrada, with each one of the thousands of Juan Cerradas that existed?

OLD MAN: Tell me that you're really the daughter of Margarita Lebrón.

WOMAN: I'm the daughter of Juan Cerrada.

13. END OF THE ROAD

(The WOMAN writes a letter to her former lover.)

WOMAN: I'd sworn to myself not to bother you again. I've hurt you a great deal, I know. I destroyed our relationship and in doing so played the villain's role. That's what I chose. Just as I chose to avoid the victim's role. At no point could I allow you to feel pity for me and I suffered as a result. I prefer a thousand times your hate, your disdain. After leaving you as I did, I wouldn't be able to stand your kindness, your infinite understanding. I'm not good enough to deserve it. Just as you wouldn't deserve it if I dragged you along with all my self-absorption, to have you start to suffer what you so aptly called my ghost hunt.

It's not that I don't love you. The problem is that I love you too much, so much that I would go to incredible extremes to have you by my side. But for that reason, because I love you, I have to hold back, even if it means biting my lips so hard that they start to bleed. The battle I'm fighting against myself is brutal. I've succeeded, even if it's at great cost, in repressing my feelings for you, my desires for you, to make myself not want you for my own at any price, putting that above everything.

I can't go on any more and I'm going to tell you: I want you. I love you. I desire you. I keep wanting, loving, desiring you. I love you. I love you. I love you. That's why I couldn't take it if you sunk into the hole I've created with my obstinacy. But I desire you. I desire you, I desire you. I long for the strength of your arms, the roughness of your chest, the weight of your body. Your mouth, your breath. I ought to erase all of this. I'll do it, before I send you this letter. But now I need to feel that it's really written down here, that I'm not going to erase it. That it's all going to reach you in this letter and you're going to read it and I'm going to fill you with all my words and soon I'm going to have you here, now.

It's not going to be that way. You're not going to read it. I'm fighting again against myself and I'm winning and with my victory I'm the loser. By winning I lose everything. You have to be free from my loving you. That's why this letter will never be sent to you.

I'll go on with my search, in a maze I'm growing more and more lost in. I'd promised myself not to talk or write to you until I'd achieved my objective, or until I'd failed completely. I needed to reach the end before you found out my whereabouts. I didn't want to burden you with any of my worries. I needed to put an end, by myself, to this obsession, and then get close to you, my arms raised high and my hands wide open, and then give you free rein to hate me or accept me all over. So that you'd be the one to decide if you want to find out, or not, about the one who'd been your woman.

I'm asking for your forgiveness now, both for being so weak and for writing you and for not having enough courage to present myself before you face to face. I'm lonely, and I need to get this off my chest. I need to express to someone everything I feel inside. If you don't want to read this letter, that's your right. If you tear it up or leave it someplace, or if you throw it out or burn it, I'll never blame you for it. You've suffered a great deal because of me, and I'd like to support you and tell you I'm not really worth the trouble. That your generosity is worth more than anything I can give you. But today more than ever I miss your embraces, and I'm dying to be at your side.

I hear "Wiegala," the song by Ilse Weber. Ilse Weber was a Jewish writer of children's stories. Ilse Weber, together with her husband and son, were confined in Theresienstadt, the camp for the supposedly fortunate Jews. When they didn't matter any more, Ilse Weber, along with her husband and son, ended up in Auschwitz, like all the supposedly fortunate Jews from Theresienstadt, like all of them. I'm listening to "Wiegala." The lullaby Ilse Weber composed and sang for her son. The lullaby Ilse Weber sang for all the children who were there with them. The lullaby with which she tried to console them as she voluntarily accompanied the children of Auschwitz to die in the showers.

*Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
der Wind spielt auf der Leier,
er spielt so süß im grünen Ried,
die Nachtigall, die singt ihr Lied.
Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
der Wind spielt auf der Leier.
Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
der Mond ist die Laterne,
er steht am dunklen Himmelszelt
und schaut hernieder auf die Welt.
Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
der Mond ist die Laterne,
Wiegala, wiegala, wille,
wie ist die Welt so stille!
Es stört kein Laut die süsse Ruh,
schlaf mein Kindchen, schlaf auch du.*

*Wiegala, wiegala, wille,
wie ist die Welt so stille!
(Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
The wind plays the lyre.
It plays sweetly among the green reeds.
The nightingale sings her song.
Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
The wind plays the lyre.
Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
The moon is a torch
In the dark depths of the sky,
From there it looks on to the world.
Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
The moon is a torch.
Wiegala, wiegala, wille.
How silent is the world!
Not a sound mars the peace,
You, too, little one, go to sleep.
Wiegala, wiegala, wille,
How silent is the world!)*

I found many stories. I found my father's, or rather, the remains of my father's story. I hope someday you can be with me again and, in doing so, help me understand it.

(The OLD MAN vacillates. A long silence.)

OLD MAN: I was German.

WOMAN: So, you took part in my father's death.

OLD MAN: I didn't kill your father. I was your father's mate in Mauthausen. I was just another prisoner there with him. Another hill of flesh to kill off. We were barrack mates. We were friends.

WOMAN: How do I know your Mauthausen story is all true, and that your weren't there as a jailer and executioner?

OLD MAN: I served in the German troops, not in the Nazis. I was insubordinate and tried to desert. I was convicted and ended up in Mauthausen. Are you going to believe me--yes or no? Turn that gadget on now. Don't you want to have my story? Connect that machine.

(The WOMAN connects the recorder.)

OLD MAN: I was an artillery gunner on a German battleship that was part of the international bloc. It was a February day in '37, and we were facing the Málaga coast. The Italians from land, supported from the sea by three Nationalist ships, were taking the city. From that day forward, everything collapsed for me. I saw how from the Spanish ships they were pointing their cannons toward the civilian population fleeing the city. I could see the faces of the women crying, the children running...

We were keeping watch to ensure nothing interfered with the attack. I could see how, coldly, changing their position to make every shot count, sharpening their aim with every hit, the Spanish friends of the Germans were annihilating the Spanish enemies of the Germans.

WOMAN: To do nothing is to become an accomplice in crime.

OLD MAN: I carried out my duty. I even *believe* in that, in my need to carry out an order. But when the command gave us orders to shoot, when the commandant ordered me to shoot...

WOMAN: The German command ordered you to shoot.

OLD MAN: I was an artillery officer. It was my obligation.

WOMAN: You're talking about shooting at civilians.

OLD MAN: Look out the window. That's the road. It all happened there. *You* don't see anything, just an abandoned road. *I* see all the faces of the children, of the mothers crying over the butchered babies in their arms, of the people fleeing, exploding in the air from the mortars' impact.

WOMAN: You might *not* have done it.

OLD MAN: I might *not* have done it.

(The WOMAN's letter.)

I've traveled a long way to find Juan Cerrada. My father. I found many stories along the way. Many kept me awake at night, and forever left me with a bitter taste in my mouth. I'm going to tell you one of them.

By the seashore, in Motrico, there's a convent called Santurrarán. In 1938 it was converted to a jail where they imprisoned any type of woman deemed undesirable by the new regime. The jail was guarded over by Mercedarian nuns. Sister María Aranzazu, known as "The Panther," was prioress and warden in

that ungodly monastery. Despite the jail having a capacity of some 750 inmates, the number of prisoners was easily doubled. Deaths were routine.

At the time of their arrival at Santurrarán, quite a few of the women would enter pregnant. When the baby was born, birth would be, as they say, “unrecorded in any register,” and the child would be snatched out of the mother’s arms. One was supposed to assume that there was always a decent and well-to-do family to welcome that product of sin. Now, in the postwar era, it was decreed that children under three years of age could not remain in the jail, with the result that under the pretense of the so-called “orphanage removal” provision, they were separated from their mothers.

When they would arrive to the infirmary, the admission of those babies was left “unrecorded in any register.” Thus they were separated from their mother and legitimate families forever, given that now as a general rule any official trace of them was gone. Any later effort to find them proved useless. Given the situation, before reaching that point, some women opted to give them up for direct adoption to Motrico families, and thus have the chance to find out later where their children had gone.

Those who had older children weren’t separated from them. If a problem arose, if a child got sick, no matter how grave it was, the inmates would attempt to cure it themselves. They didn’t let the Francoists take them away. They were all on the lookout for any child who got admitted to the clinic but didn’t come back. If a child went missing, there was no point in making a complaint later on, crying and protesting. The thing dearest to you, more than your own blood, would be erased from your life. Birth certificates erased, legal weddings annulled. You’d never had a child.

But the horror hurts most when it’s encased in the sinister cloak of sarcasm.

One sunny day in 1942 the women prisoners of Santurrarán were surprised to find that an excursion to the beach had been organized for the mothers and children. That day, on the beach, many believed that everything had changed. That the time of repression was nearing its end, and soon everyone would be going back home. They were happy with their children, and the nuns even took pictures of them. We can see the luminous faces of the women of that real concentration camp, and no one could guess what hell they were going through. When they returned to the jail, they learned that their children weren’t going back with them. They never saw them again.

I imagine what that night was like. No, I can’t imagine it.

What happened to those children, what could have become of them? Did any of them think later about their mother, of the jail, of the hardship? Of the arms that protected them, of the tear-stained kisses, of the love of their mothers shut up in those cells? No. Not a single child who disappeared ever came to be found by her family.

Here, by the seaside, I remember those women, and I feel like I hear their cries as their children were being yanked from their arms.

Here, by the seaside, I understand how very much I need you.

14. JUAN CERRADA

(With the YOUNG MAN.)

OLD MAN: I've been Juan Cerrada for a long time. I've defended that name with more force than I have my own. Juan Cerrada never existed. He was simply the fantasy of a lonely girl in the middle of the war.

YOUNG MAN: I *am* Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: You *were* Juan Cerrada and I have been him and I still *am* him with you.

YOUNG MAN: Who are *you*? Who am *I*?

OLD MAN: Look around you.

(Mauthausen.)

YOUNG MAN: The barracks. Out there, the ovens. The ash falling over everything. Are we in Mauthausen again?

OLD MAN: Again.

YOUNG MAN: I can't go on here. Help me escape, German.

OLD MAN: I'm not the German, you still don't *get* it?

YOUNG MAN: I can't die yet.

OLD MAN: You can't die. Everything around you is dying, and you don't have the strength to do it.

YOUNG MAN: And who deserves it?

(Facing the sea.)

WOMAN: I don't know why you've told me that story about the Málaga road. It doesn't interest me at all. Do you have something else to tell me about Juan Cerrada, yes or no?

OLD MAN: Wait...

(In Cerrada's mind.)

OLD MAN: You don't exist outside of me. You're only the young man I was in Mauthausen. That young man who stayed there, who never left that barrack house.

YOUNG MAN: But, the German...? He was going to escape with you.

OLD MAN: The German existed. He never left Mauthausen, but thanks to him I'm here. It's his fault I'm here. If we had escaped together, we wouldn't have got very far. The Nazis were methodical. Detail men. They didn't miss anything.

YOUNG MAN: You left the camp with the name of Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: That German son of a bitch was huge, a giant. And he still kept his strength. He got up and threw himself on top of me. I tried to defend myself, but I didn't have the strength to stop him. He got on top of me and he beat me viciously, over and over. He nailed his fists into my body, into my face. He battered me until I was unconscious. Then he switched my clothes with his and my documentation with his. He scratched out his own identification number and re-marked it with mine. When I managed to come to the next day, I was in his bunk. And on my hand he'd written his name. So that I'd remember well how I had to say my name from then on. That's what happened. I lived under German identity until the American forces liberated Mauthausen.

YOUNG MAN: It's all a farce.

OLD MAN: No, it's all real.

Reality. Sleeping in a barrack house in front of the crematorium, and in the night seeing flames come out of the chimney... Reality... Hope stops making sense. *That* indeed was real.

(In Málaga, at the very end of the day.)

This is real.

(Facing the sea.)

WOMAN: But are you going to talk about Juan Cerrada, yes or no?

OLD MAN: What's the need of looking backward?

WOMAN: My need isn't to look back but to move forward. I *need* to hear you.

OLD MAN: *You* want to move forward. *I*, on the other hand, can do little now. Offer an explanation.

Now's the time to settle my debt with that man who died in Gusen. In Mauthausen I found myself with him, and with Jews, with Poles, with other Germans like myself. We were all under the ruthless knife of the Nazis. And the Spaniards, too.

WOMAN: Among them, Juan Cerrada.

OLD MAN: Cerrada, and many more Spaniards. And with them, fifty children, almost babies. At 13 they were already judged old enough to be imprisoned at Mauthausen. Children of the road. The children of Mauthausen. Spain's worst nightmares had grown into a monstrous shape at Mauthausen, until it turned into the one thing you had ahead of you. Remembering the pain of those faces in Málaga was becoming a relief. It was a way of contrasting the strangeness of horror with the everyday routine of what I was going through.

I spoke Spanish well and I became quite friendly with Cerrada. We planned our escape from the camp. We had everything nearly set to go, when Juan found out he was being sent out to Gusen. Those who went into Gusen never came out of there. We should have hurried. But Cerrada learned they were also sending out to Gusen those children from Angouleme who were still alive. At the last moment, the thought of all those children weighed on him, and the idea that he'd be a traitor to them if he let them die alone. He looked at me and turned around. He didn't turn his head back to look at me, and he faced down his own death without questioning it.

(Mauthausen.)

OLD MAN: He went to Gusen in our place. He'd arranged it all to fool me and to fool everyone. His remorse for what he'd done on this road was superior to his strength. That was his escape plan.

YOUNG MAN: I didn't go to Gusen. I didn't die in Mauthausen. The German died for me. That's why I'm still here, facing the doors of hell.

OLD MAN: That's why I'm here, trying to live his pain. Do you know what the German said? *Now I'm going to pay my dues. You'll pay mine.* I didn't know what he meant at the time.

(In the dark of the house. To the WOMAN.)

Your father died. He went into Gusen. Whoever went into Gusen didn't come out of there. When the Americans appeared, I pretended to be him. So, I left Mauthausen being Juan Cerrada.

I have to ask for forgiveness, from you. I ask your forgiveness, even if I don't deserve it.

WOMAN: This isn't the time for forgiveness. I want to keep listening to you.

OLD MAN: My story's now a part of your own. I tried to visit your mother, and tell her what had happened. But I couldn't do it. I didn't have the courage to do it. I roamed through postwar Spain, and I started to use your father's papers, which I made my own after I left Mauthausen. I was married as Juan Cerrada. And so I had a family, a child, just as Cerrada had you, and I gave my son the Cerrada name. Perhaps for that reason, life took them from me, my family, my wife and son.

(The MAN and the YOUNG MAN. Dialogue. Between delirium, guilt, remembrance. Which the YOUNG MAN throws in the face of the MAN.)

OLD MAN: One day I dream I get that car again, and go on a trip with my family.

YOUNG MAN: The road's clear and it's sunny. The sun dries up all the rain.

OLD MAN: One day I dream that I have no past. That there's only a long road ahead.

YOUNG MAN: One day I dream that life is easier. That we must be happy.

OLD MAN: One day I dream that I'm with my loved ones and we sing together.

YOUNG MAN: One day I dream that I hug my wife and eat cherries from her mouth.

OLD MAN: One day I dream that it's possible to be happy.

YOUNG MAN: It is possible to be happy.

15. S OF "SPANIER"

(Facing the sea.)

WOMAN: What's your real name?

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: Your name.

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada.

WOMAN: Tell me your name, your *real* name.

OLD MAN: Juan Cerrada, it's the only thing I have left.

(The WOMAN gets up. She turns her back to the OLD MAN, who dries the sweat that's running down his face. The WOMAN doesn't turn around to respond to the OLD MAN.)

WOMAN: I don't believe you could have had such good luck in Spain, that they wouldn't have posed any problem for you. It doesn't make any sense either that you could take on the identity of an anti-fascist without somebody doubting the validity of your papers. What you've told me is really quite illogical. I'm not at all sure that in Mauthausen you were a victim rather than an executioner.

(The OLD MAN reveals himself to the WOMAN. And raising a shirt sleeve, the number on his arm which marks his stay in Mauthausen.)

OLD MAN: At times, I open my eyes frightened. In the darkness, I hear the cries, I smell the stench...

Bags of skin and bones. I'm surrounded by them. Can you see my arm?

(The WOMAN steps back horrified. The deep mark of the number of the OLD MAN's arm offers evidence of part of his story.)

WOMAN: An extermination number.

OLD MAN: Some show it off with pride. I can't.

(The WOMAN acts defeated.)

WOMAN: I've chased a ghost. And now, that ghost is inside me. If you really were in Mauthausen, if you really say your name is Juan Cerrada, what does all the rest matter to you?

OLD MAN: Ana, what is it you want *now*?

WOMAN: I don't know yet. Perhaps I need to deceive myself, and live ignoring the truth. Living with a different past.

OLD MAN: *Look* at me. This is what's left of that Juan Cerrada whom you hate so much.

WOMAN: I'd like to forget that anyone like you exists.

OLD MAN: You won't be *able* to forget it. You won't be *able* to forget that Juan Cerrada existed. You won't be *able* to forget that the war existed. No matter how much you wanted.

I don't want to live either, but I can't kill myself. If I did, it would be as though I were killing Cerrada again, as though I were killing the children of Mauthausen again, the mothers and children of Mauthausen. Every one of the victims of the horror that's chased me through my life, through all of the twentieth century. History. If I were to die. If you were to kill me. *Kill me, I'm asking you to do it. Kill me and in the process you'll free your father's name.*

WOMAN: I haven't come here to kill you. I would be incapable of it.

OLD MAN: So?

WOMAN: I needed to convince myself my father had died.

OLD MAN: Nothing led you to think the opposite.

WOMAN: But...

OLD MAN: I want to give you *this*. It's the only thing I have left from the past. Now it must be yours.

(The OLD MAN gives the WOMAN a blue cloth triangle. The WOMAN takes it, visibly moved.)

WOMAN: This is it.

OLD MAN: This is it. There *are* no more words. There's nothing else. The blue triangle that marked your father in the camp.

WOMAN: What am I going to do from this point on?

OLD MAN: For *me*, it's death that awaits me. I want it to come, with longing. I want to rest. But for *you* the worst is still ahead. One day, and another, then another. You're left with one thing, the memory of your father, and also another, my own.

(Silence.)

WOMAN: This is the final point of my journey.

(The WOMAN rewinds the tape. As the room goes dark, we hear intermittently the voice on the cassette.)

...cherries...father and I... its flavor... where everything was gray... its red color, in the middle of... flavor... if for anything... that's why... the flavor... those cherries.

Here ends Juan Cerrada's journey.

(Silence falls over the OLD MAN, who sinks into the darkness, slowly.)

WOMAN: I turned around, turning my back on that old man. He remained surrounded by darkness, talking to himself, between his teeth. Arguing with the ghosts of his past. I didn't want to know anything more. Everything I'd thought, everything I'd believed in, was turning against me.

16. FALSE WITNESSES

(Suitcases, unopened, by the side of the door. Through the other side, the Woman enters, dressed in a nightgown. Inside, her partner waits for her.)

ALBERTO: Did you get a good rest? You slept the entire day.

WOMAN: I feel like I could have slept longer.

ALBERTO: Are you back to stay?

WOMAN: I don't know yet.

ALBERTO: Haven't you finished your search yet?

WOMAN: I've reached the end. But now I really don't know what it's worth.

(The WOMAN is unsure of how to kiss Alberto. But, finally, she throws herself in his arms and cries.)

ALBERTO: Easy.

WOMAN: I'm sorry.

ALBERTO: Has it been hard?

WOMAN: Very hard.

ALBERTO: It's all over now.

WOMAN: I want to be with you.

ALBERTO: Have you thought again about what you found out?

WOMAN: Yes. But I still don't know what's good and what's bad.

(He hands her a photo.)

ALBERTO: Do you know what this is?

WOMAN: Of course. Capa's dead militiaman. *Why this, now?*

ALBERTO: Your story reminded me of the international brigadesman in the Civil War who later met up with his father in Mauthausen.

Many argue that this is the emblematic image of our war, and not Picasso's *Guernica*. The image that Robert Capa caught with his camera. of the dead militiaman in Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936. The shot shows a hatless man, dressed in a white shirt, without a uniform, with a rifle in his hand, falling in a seated position, in the exact moment of his death. A bullet drills through his heart at the exact point that the photo immobilizes him.

WOMAN: I don't know what you're trying to *tell* me with this.

ALBERTO: The militiaman died, and they've now been able to determine his full name. Federico Borrell García. So then, the authenticity of this photo, its truth, they confirmed it as absolute. That day, Capa captured through his camera the reality of Federico Borrell's death.

WOMAN: It all seems to fit.

ALBERTO: Everything but a series of minor details. Number one, the actual position of the body as it falls. A dead person doesn't die that way.

WOMAN: The photo's a fraud?

ALBERTO: There are people who clearly see it as a fraud, given these details. Some assert that that man wasn't dying at the time of the photo. He was pretending. But the other proof of the photo being a fraud is more convincing.

WOMAN: What's that?

ALBERTO: The photo of that militiaman falling mortally wounded isn't unique. Capa has various others taken the same day, with different militiamen, falling on the same hill. Macabre studies in fraud.

WOMAN: So, *is* it a fraud?

ALBERTO: A falsification, a sinister masquerade? A coincidence? Capa's photo only provided advance notice of what was going to be reality. Death would arrive to claim the life of his model just a few hours after Capa realized his simulation. It's been suggested that Capa tried to stage the death of a militiaman and that a group of them, generously, agreed to pose for him. Among them, Federico Borrell, whose fiancée was waiting for him in town so they could get married. The irony is that that image, which Capa or his editor chose as the most awful reflection of the Civil War, would have its real completion later on.

WOMAN: That *is*, if the theory's *true*. But I wonder if Capa heard about the militiaman's death.

ALBERTO: They don't know. But there's another story, another death, that indeed affected the photographer. It was the reporter Gerda Taro's accident after she'd covered the Battle of Brunete. That day, Capa wanted to die and he sought refuge through a bottle of *orujo*. He forgot his camera. A soldier returned it to him, because everybody knew him. You see, Gerda was Capa's lover. Capa became famous for his war photos. If his photographs, later so controversial, of dead militiamen gave a face to the Civil War, the ones from the Normandy landing did the same with the Second World War. Because beyond their political content, those photos come from an eye that's both wounded and stressed, at its breaking point, just as their subjects are on the verge of dying under fire and explosive attack.

It's best that you rest.

WOMAN: I love you.

ALBERTO: The story ends here.

WOMAN: The story ends here.

17. THE SEA

My name should be Ana Cerrada.

My father fought in the Civil War and died condemned by the Spanish Government in Gusen, a sub-camp of Mauthausen. The Mauthausen camps were built with the enslaved hands and lives of the Spaniards. The Spaniards at Mauthausen were marked with the inverted blue triangle of the stateless, with the S, of "Spanier," in the middle. But the Spaniards wouldn't be subdued.

When asked by the Nazi authorities what to do with those fugitives, Serrano Suñer, Government Minister and Franco's brother-in-law, answered that no Spaniard existed beyond the Spanish borders. 7,300 Spaniards were confined to Mauthausen. 5,000 Spaniards died in the camp or in sub-camps like Gusen. In Spain today there has still been no honor paid to the memory of those 5,000 martyrs, nor to the 2300 survivors. These heroes of freedom are still forced to suffer disgrace and oblivion. Only two things are left of them. The remembrance of their fight against terror, and their sleepless nights of hell.

My name is Ana Cerrada, and one day I went off to face my father's ghost. I found it in another man who finally admitted to not being him, a man wounded by History, and a man whose face had been erased by time.

I want to stop thinking about Juan Cerrada, a man who closes himself off with his nothingness in a house, facing the sea. The sea from which cruisers gunned down the population fleeing the onslaught of the war. The sea that's witnessed other wars, the sea that keeps hushed, and rocks itself, snoozing through the day until that moment comes when it finally awakens. When that happens I hope it carries us all away.

(The WOMAN's face leans toward the water, and she whispers.)

When I was little, I would call out to my father, whose name was all I knew of him. In the night, with an overflowing water jug in my hands, my face lit by the reflection from the moon, I whisper now, three times in a row, my father's name.

Juan Cerrada.

Juan Cerrada.

Juan Cerrada.

