

UNDER THE MOUNTAIN'S GRASS

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CHARACTERS

FATHER

MOTHER

SISTER

DAUGHTER

And C. her lover.

THE PUNK KID

A SOLDIER

THREE OLD LADIES

"To the devil with every miserable desire to seem more than one is. It is a veritable catastrophe, which spreads over the earth danger of war, death, misery, hate, and injury and puts upon all that exists an abominable mask of malice and ugliness."

Robert Walser

DAUGHTER

Going by sea towards the east, there's a great country with endless pyramids and mountains that once were young lovers who naively defied the gods. Indeed if you follow the mountain's silhouette against the big blue sky you'll see a woman with beautiful round breasts lying on the valley. People named the mountain *Iztaccíhuatl*, which means sleeping woman. Next to her rests *Popocatepetl*, a volcano whose name means smoking mountain. People say that *Iztaccíhuatl* and *Popocatepetl* were young lovers who escaped from the thirteen heavens to earth. They disobeyed the gods and so the gods punished them by making *Iztaccíhuatl* sick, so sick she had to lie down and rest. She never woke up.

Popocatepetl waits by her side, smoking a cigarette once in a while. Both eternally doom to remain on the surface of earth. Time passed, they petrified, grass covered their bodies and voilà: the lovers became mountains, villagers became painters and the paintings remind the story of the lovers hidden under the mountain's grass.

Mother, Father and Sister enter with a birthday cake, an undefined number of candles on it. Are all their ancestors following them? Is grandma behind Ma? Both Grandfathers and some Gran Grandparents?

ALL
(Singing)

These are the little mornings
That used to sing King David.
Today being the day of your Saint,
We sing them to you.

Wake up, my dear,
Wake up, see that the day
Has already dawned
Little birds are singing,
The moon has already set.

They hug and kiss daughter.

DAUGHTER

It is not my birthday today, is it?

FATHER

No. It is not.

DAUGHTER

And I am not home, am I?

SISTER

No, you are not.

MOTHER

But you'll be home soon. Won't you?

SISTER

It's nearly the end of September
And soon we will vote for peace
In our Country.

FATHER

The streets are filled with white flags and pigeons.

MOTHER

The president is preparing a big celebration party in the highest floor of the highest building of our Capital.

SISTER

To celebrate peace. Peace after 52 years of violence.

FATHER

They've been working on a peace agreement for more than two years. We're just waiting for the plebiscite.

DAUGHTER

I can't vote. Tourists can't vote.

MOTHER

Would you come home?

DAUGHTER

Soon. I promise.

MOTHER

When would you come home?

DAUGHTER

In a couple more months, Mum. I promise.

MOTHER

You always say that but you never want to come.

DAUGHTER

I went to a play the other day and heard a beautiful story.

MOTHER

Why don't you come home to celebrate with us?

DAUGHTER

Don't you want to listen to my story?

MOTHER

I want you to come home.

DAUGHTER

It's about a fisherman whose son is sent overseas and he can't go with him except in his thoughts. That's what they said: "he can't go with him *except* in his thoughts", don't you like that? And then the fisherman meets a kid, whose father is at sea, and they talk and the kid has a great answer about waiting for someone who is abroad.

FATHER

We are having a party. You should come.

Someone brings a long rectangular table in, covers it with a white cloth and places a big deep bowl of punch. A disco ball comes down from the ceiling and the lights go down. We are now in a teenager's party, one of these very cheesy teenagers parties from American teenagers movies with rows of chairs next to the walls, the boys in one side, the girls in the other.

The teenagers' party transforms into a wedding, the wedding into a birthday party, and the birthday party into a first communion, back to the birthday party

and into the celebration of the parent's wedding anniversary. Or is it a presidential campaign? As many helium balloons as possible. Different sizes and colors. Let them be as shiny as possible. Someone enters, for example, the number 52 in silver helium balloons.

At some point, in between the celebrations, a soldier enters: black boots, military pants, no shirt but suspenders coming down his shoulders, crossing his naked torso and holding his pants on. Lightly resembling Alex from the Clockwork Orange. He's holding an old TV, plugs it somewhere. There's no signal, only an annoying noise, he tries to fix it, hits it's side, verifies the connection, etc.

DAUGHTER

Is it time for the funeral?

SISTER

A funeral? Why do you always think the worst?

DAUGHTER

I do not. I am an optimist.

SISTER

They've been together for 52 years.

DAUGHTER

They haven't divorced yet?

SISTER

You are an optimist.

DAUGHTER

They are still together after 52 years. They'll stay together until they can no longer control their sphincters,

SISTER

Until their teeth fall down,

DAUGHTER

Their eyes grow cataracts and their legs stop functioning.

SISTER

Still together, holding their wrinkled hands.

DAUGHTER

No, wait, that can't be right. They can't be that old... What year are we in?

MOTHER

Thank you all for coming; this is an important night for us. This is one in a life time moment! We are celebrating life and love.

SISTER

It's nearly the end of September and soon we'll have peace in our country.

FATHER

I want to make a toast to my wife and my beautiful successful daughters. Cheers!

MOTHER

Our first-born was conceived in a tent, we were camping in a beach. We were escaping the big city and I forgot my purse with all the documents and money in a gas station and so we had to go for the cheapest hotel, which was a tent at the beach. Cheers for tents!

FATHER

Not bad at all.

MOTHER

We are very optimistic people.

FATHER

Then, nine months passed, her belly grew, the baby was born and grandmas traveled to help. Cheers to grandmas!

MOTHER

It was 1985, the year of the big heart quake that destroyed the city. I was in the fifth or sixth month... And the hospital where the baby was supposed to born collapsed and so we had to change to a different hospital with a different doctor and/

SISTER

I jumped in the belly.

MOTHER

It felt like a hiccup.

SISTER

I jumped in the belly and then I was upside down.

MOTHER

They had to do a cesarean, although I wanted a natural birth.

FATHER

The scar wasn't so bad. It was a good doctor. Cheers to doctors!

SISTER

The sun was in Libra and the moon was in Leo.

DAUGHTER

Which means she has a gift for synthesis, a good inclination for reducing multiple problems to one concept. She is a romantic but not in the sentimental sense, but in the sense that she sees herself as a heroic person. She is. Cheers to sisters!

FATHER

We are optimistic people.

MOTHER

The second doctor, the one that helped me to give birth to the little one, he was terrible.

SISTER

While my mother was in labor, the whole crew, the doctor, his assistants and all the nurses were watching a football game. Cheers to football!

DAUGHTER

And they kept watching it although their patient was in terrible pains.

FATHER

When the Second Time was over there were still no goals, which meant they had to do extra time. Still no goals in the extra time and so they went to penalties.

MOTHER

When you were born, I felt I was going to die. I saw the light and I felt that my soul was leaving my body.

DAUGHTER

Just like in the movies.

MOTHER

And then, I heard you cry and I came back.

DAUGHTER

I was born at 3:45 pm on a Tuesday.

MOTHER

July, summertime.

SISTER

There are no seasons in the far away land we were born in. It's more like an eternal summer with rainy days or an eternal winter with sunny days.

MOTHER

It all depends on how you look at it.

SISTER

We are optimistic people.

DAUGHTER

The Sun was in Cancer and the moon in Scorpion.

SISTER

Which means she is clear and abrupt, energetic, positive, and/

FATHER

Capable of carrying out projects that involve hard work and dedication.

SISTER

On the same level, she is also fond of the good things of the world. Her personality is irritable and she may be subject to fits of anger. Internally she is a very cautious person; but externally the position of the Moon in Scorpio indicates sensuality. Her romantic life will be intense and varied. Her object of love may find her difficult to understand.

FATHER

I once pick her up from a party and the first thing she said when she jumped into the car was: "I have a boyfriend now. I am an adult".

DAUGHTER

I did not!

SISTER

You did.

FATHER

Cheers to boyfriends!

MOTHER

You grew up. Both of you.

FATHER

Way to fast.

MOTHER

And we turn old.

DAUGHTER

Not so old.

FATHER

And you hated us.

SISTER

We did not.

FATHER

And you disagreed with us.

DAUGHTER

You grew up in the 50's in a religious country where TV arrived before women acquired their right to vote!

SISTER

When Father was a child, he had to go up the mountain every morning to pick up water so his brothers could shower and grandpa was really cruel with him but it was normal. You loved him.

FATHER

And he loved me.

MOTHER

But he would disappear for days.

SISTER

With some lover or getting drunk with friends and gambling the family's goods...!

FATHER

He loved us.

SISTER

And grandma would wait for him with the newspaper ready and cozy slippers.

FATHER

He died when I was 24 years old.

DAUGHTER

There are great stories about him. So great you could write a whole book about him. Something like "La Casa grande". Cheers to grandfathers!

FATHER

In the 80's our country will enter a dark period: the rise of the drug cartels.

MOTHER

We won't want our daughters to grow up in a Country at War. We will move as soon as we get the chance.

FATHER

But we didn't go far and we were always coming back, by land, to visit family.

DAUGHTER

We used to cross the border once every month.

FATHER

Mostly in Christmas, so we can celebrate with my mother.

MOTHER

And mine...

DAUGHTER

We grew up in the country next door... never quite belonging to either.

SISTER

But now, we are back, back home, and we are about to celebrate peace.

MOTHER

Only if the plebiscite is positive.

DAUGHTER

Are you going to vote?

FATHER

We'll go once the game is over.

DAUGHTER

The game?

FATHER

Yes. It's the end of the championship. You're the goalkeeper; you were the best goalkeeper of your generation!

The whole family engages in a football match with an imaginary ball.

The soldier never left. War will always be a silent presence.

DAUGHTER

Tell me the story of the mountains.

SISTER

It's late.

DAUGHTER

Tell me.

SISTER

You'll be tired tomorrow.

DAUGHTER

I won't sleep if you don't tell me.

SISTER

They've turn off the lights.

DAUGHTER

Can I move to your bed then?

SISTER

Are you afraid of the clown?

DAUGHTER

I am not.

SISTER

The clown gives you nightmares.

DAUGHTER

I don't like his smile.

SISTER

It's just a painting. Paintings are harmless.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

If I stay in my bed would you tell me the story of the lovers?

Silence.

DAUGHTER

Are you scared of the clown?

SISTER

... Sometimes.

DAUGHTER moves closer to her sister.

SISTER

Do you see those two big round clouds that look like two big howling wolves? Do

you see the wolves?

DAUGHTER

Howling wolves?

SISTER

Yes, the two wolves. They are howling to the moon on top of the valley.

DAUGHTER

I see fluffy rabbits with fluffy round tails.

SISTER

The wolves are chasing the rabbits.

DAUGHTER

To eat them?

SISTER

They are hungry.

DAUGHTER

They'll eat them?

SISTER

They are made of water. They don't care.

DAUGHTER

Tomorrow, I'll paint the wolves...

SISTER

Better to paint the mountains.

DAUGHTER

The lovers.

SISTER

They both came down although they had to stay up there, in the thirteen skies.

They disobey the gods. Earth was far more interesting than the skies. Sun didn't shine all the time; night could fall on its surface for them to hide. They came down and made the gods mad. So mad that they made *Iztaccíhuatl* sick and she had to lay at the end of the valley to rest and she fell asleep and snow cover her body and she could never wake up again. *Popocatepétl* waits by her side but she never wakes up. He gets bored, so once in a while, he turns on a cigarette and smokes.

DAUGHTER

And he fights the dragons sleeping in the deep water of the lake.

SISTER

There's no lake in the Pyramid's land, only a big vast desert. We live in the land of Volcanoes now. And there's no dragon sleeping in the deepness of its lakes, nor sirens looking for a man to turn mad. But there's tiny fish and if you manage to put your feet in the cold water, if you are brave enough, if you stay still the fish will come to your feet and would bite you, they'll eat all your dead skin. Like going to the salon with Mother but better.

DAUGHTER

Can we go to the lake tomorrow?

A punk kid with a French poodle dog enters. The dog's hair is painted red, and green and yellow. The kid has a third eye on their front head, they are wearing black boots, the ones with laces, really short jeans, more like shorts made of jeans, so we can see their hairy legs, a purple tank top with a low neckline and the drawing of an eagle in their chest. Their hair is tight up; the other half of their hair is shaved. They have a little star under their right eye, in the upper part of their cheek.

SISTER

Who is... *that*?

DAUGHTER

A kid from the future.

THE PUNK KID

It all started seventy millions years ago. Countless aliens had invaded planet Earth. There was a whole different population back then, humans with three eyes, one in their front heads and only four fingers, no retractable thumb. All eating grass like cows, going around in four legs and licking their hands to make them sticky and climb trees. Aliens came with one only goal: to extinct human beings. It is well known that human race has disappeared before. But we keep coming back. Like a plague. And Aliens, the Aliens that came to earth, they also had Mothers, up there. They left their families to come and invade our planet. And the alien's mothers up there, somewhere in the long vast universe, cooked breakfast with their three-eye face and their multiple tentacles. They cooked intergalactic eggs, eggs with no white, only the yellow part because that's the richest part and nature in their planet had evolved freely, they didn't resist it, as we do. Anyways, mothers of the aliens were making breakfast up there, somewhere in the boundless space, and they let the eggs cooking in their new age oven and they forget to take them out of the fire and their breakfast was all ruined because they were thinking on their babies, their baby aliens, those aliens that had come to destroy human race, to eat us in some horrible way.

DAUGHTER

There's one dream, of all childhood dreams, I remember the most. I remember mostly me remembering the dream and feeling guilty. Ashamed. Almost hiding. I couldn't look at her for days. She though I was mad. Or she didn't, I don't know.

MOTHER

Nena? Is something wrong?

DAUGHTER

Wrong?

MOTHER

You haven't look at me for days. Are you mad?

DAUGHTER

No, I...

MOTHER

Why won't you look at me?

DAUGHTER

I don't feel like it.

MOTHER

Did I do something wrong?

DAUGHTER

No. You're... No.

MOTHER

So, look at me.

DAUGHTER

I can't.

MOTHER

Why?

DAUGHTER

I don't want to.

MOTHER

Why?

DAUGHTER

I can't.

MOTHER

Look at me.

DAUGHTER

No.

Why?

MOTHER

I had a dream.

DAUGHTER

So what? We all have dreams.

MOTHER

...

DAUGHTER

Tell me.

MOTHER

I can't.

DAUGHTER

Ok.

MOTHER

Silence.

Are you sure?

MOTHER

Silence.

MOTHER

Would you come to have dinner with us? I made your favorite dish.

SISTER

Mother never cooked. She didn't made dinner for us, nor waited for Dad, "the man of the house" to bring home the bread. She was a businesswoman. She had high heels and a suitcase. Didn't know how to cook an egg, rice would burn and milk would over-boil, a mountain of foam would grow on the pot and soak the counter.

She couldn't cook but she had a fancy office.

DAUGHTER

She knew how to do *lasaña*.

SISTER

She did.

DAUGHTER

You don't make *lasaña* anymore.

MOTHER

You're never home.

DAUGHTER

You never taught me how to cook... It would be lovely, to learn, to do a meal, a really tasty and beautiful meal for a lover. A perfect meal with wine and a shared desert. Wouldn't it be good? For a boring night, one of those nights where there's nothing else to do but cook and perhaps to watch a movie. Wouldn't it be nice?

The three woman dance, a dance of gestures: like ironing, stirring a pot, carrying a baby, breast feeding it, serving plates, vacuum, putting pantyhose up their legs, driving a car, writing in a computer, saying goodbye. Something cheerful, empowering.

FATHER

During a regular office day one spends most of the time sitting down. The good thing is that to go to the office I have to take the bus and the bus stop is more or less 1300 meters away from home, which means I give at least 2700 steps in the mornings and 2700 steps every afternoon. Plus, if one goes out running before the sun goes out, in a slow pace, one gives around 60 or 80 steps per minute. You can do the math. If I give more than 6000 steps per day, I consider I've done well.

The soldier brings a fridge in, one of

those old fridges from the 80's or 90's, depending where we are in the world. He plugs it somewhere, opens it and takes a box of milk out of it. From somewhere he takes out a box of cereals, Choco Crispis? He serves a boll, puts milk on top and eats.

Or perhaps he performs a magic trick for the audience.

SISTER

Where are we now?

DAUGHTER

We are in the car, we've already crossed the frontier. You fell asleep.

SISTER

I never did. It was you who slept during the whole trip.

DAUGHTER

Did I?

SISTER

Look. You woke up just in time.

DAUGHTER

What do you see?

SISTER

It's a military stop. They've stopped a bus and there's some man helping the soldiers to look through the suitcases. There's a line of cars before ours.

FATHER

Not one sound girls.

DAUGHTER

Have we already celebrated we are back home? Back in our country?

MOTHER

Just a minute ago.

SISTER

You missed it. You were sleeping.

DAUGHTER

I was not!

SISTER

You were snoring.

DAUGHTER

I was not!

FATHER

Shush!

MOTHER

You are sisters, sisters shouldn't fight.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

And now, what do you see now?

SISTER

The sun is shining behind the mountains, here comes a soldier but I can't see his face.

DAUGHTER

We didn't move out because of the war. Did we?

FATHER

We moved because your Mother got a job offer. Now, shush!

MOTHER

He doesn't look like the soldiers we saw last time.

FATHER

It's okay. They must be from a different squad. They are just kids doing their military service.

MOTHER

We forgot to pray. Why did we forget to pray?

FATHER

Our papers are in the glove compartment.

MOTHER whispers a praying.

DAUGHTER

Do you see the soldiers?

SISTER

I see a long shadow on the asphalt, taller than any soldier. I see a pair of boots but I can't see his face.

DAUGHTER

What's the color of the boots?

SISTER

Black, black muddy boots.

DAUGHTER

Not green?

SISTER

No, he doesn't look like one of the boys from the national army. Something is off. He's covered in mud. He has long hair and a red shirt.

FATHER

Enough, girls!

MOTHER

Don't stop.

FATHER

I can't do that!

MOTHER

Just speed up.

FATHER

They will open fire in a minute.

MOTHER

Don't stop.

FATHER

Just relax. We'll be ok.

MOTHER

Girls, put on the seat belts. Now!

FATHER

It's okay. They're looking for bigger fish...

DAUGHTER

How many more cars before ours?

SISTER

One.

MOTHER

Girls, belts!

FATHER

They're not stopping everybody.

MOTHER

It's just like roulette. They are playing with us.

FATHER

They just want some money. Shush!

SISTER

They've stopped one of the cars; they've taken the driver out. They are taking him to the back of the car. They want him to open the trunk. He refuses.

DAUGHTER

Is time starting to move slower?

FATHER

Girls, seat belts!

Mother keeps praying.

DAUGHTER

What's happening?

SISTER

Two more soldiers approach the man. They circle him.

DAUGHTER

They show him their guns, guns that are as big as cathedrals?

MOTHER

I've heard terrible things...

DAUGHTER

The first soldier, the one that asked for their papers and that made him go out of the car, that soldier whose face we can not see, he's going to hit him first. The butt of his gun will crash against his skull. The man will grab his head with both hands and the warm blood at the tip of his fingers will confuse him. Soon the soldiers will start hitting his belly with their muddy boots, one kick after the other until the

man's mouth is filled up with the same warm blood of his head.

SISTER

And then the car will blow up in a big explosion and splinters will come our way but weirdly enough, not one splinter will touch any of us. We will be safe because we are good people.

DAUGHTER

What? No, that only happens in the movies.

SISTER

Exactly.

FATHER

Shush!

SISTER

Time did slow down but they didn't hit him. The man opens the trunk and they went through his suitcases. That's it.

FATHER

They just took some pants and a pair of shoes.

DAUGHTER

Are you sure? I remember it differently.

SISTER

That's because you're a paranoiac...

DAUGHTER

I am not!

SISTER

You are!

DAUGHTER

What's happening now?

SISTER

There's a cloud passing, the shadow is gone. I can see the face of the soldier. He's smiling. He's lifting one arm. They are letting us pass.

The soldier finishes his trick. We need something mellow here, a song perhaps, something like Nicolas Jaar's "History Lesson".

SISTER

Here comes someone
You'll come to love.

C. enters. Somehow, DAUGHTER and C. are left alone. Let C. stand somewhere in the space, let her look for the sunlight. Once she has found a generous beam, let her feel the warm in her skin.

DAUGHTER

What are you doing?

C.

Sometimes, I'd like to be a sunflower. Is that wrong?

DAUGHTER

It's silly.

C.

I know.

C. remains under the light, her eyes closed, enjoying the warmth. Finally, DAUGHTER joins. Both woman feel the sun on their skin, they smile. Their hands touch?

MOTHER

Where are you now?

DAUGHTER

In the city of the broken wall, Mum.

A woman with a burka and groceries bags, if possible, with a baby's carriage, crosses the stage. She's counting something, holding her fingers up. Doing some mathematics in her head.

MOTHER

Would you stay long there?

DAUGHTER

No, Mum. Just one more month.

MOTHER

When would you come home?

DAUGHTER

I'm falling in love, Mum...

Silence.

This city is amazing. Lots have tattoos, beautiful tattoos. Some are abstract, like diamonds, or three dimensional squares or just lines traversing the body, like cyborgs from a science fiction movie. And some have lots of colors and others are just black and white. And then some others are drawings of animals and nature and more random stuff. They have eagles in their chests or trees in their forearms and tea cups on their calves and clouds with seagulls flying over them just next to their shoulder blades and smoking volcanoes at the end of their backs, mountains like the ones Hokusai paints and fishes, lots of fishes everywhere.

I'm falling in love, mum.

MOTHER

Falling in love? Again?

DAUGHTER

This time is different.

MOTHER

Different how?

DAUGHTER

Well, it's different.

MOTHER

Does this mean you won't be coming home?

DAUGHTER

I will, Mum. I promise.

MOTHER

You always say that.

DAUGHTER

It will just take me longer this time.

MOTHER

We'll let you work. I promise.

DAUGHTER

It's not that, Mum.

MOTHER

(Counting with her fingers)

What time is it there? It's already morning?

DAUGHTER

The sun hasn't come out yet. I wanted to talk to you.

MOTHER

I see.

DAUGHTER

Everything is quiet, not one soul in the streets. We cooked fish last night.

MOTHER

You never cook.

DAUGHTER

C. is teaching me. The whole house smells like the ocean. Just like that one time at the beach, do you remember? That one time Dad took us to see the fisherman come back from their night catch and we came back with tones of fish and mollusks and salty sand in our flip-flops. Do you remember, Mum?

MOTHER

Who's C.?

FATHER

Girls! Time to wake up.

SISTER

Kids should sleep at last eight hours per day, Dad!

MOTHER

You went fishing?

DAUGHTER

No. We went to see the fishermen coming back from fishing. Don't you remember?

MOTHER

I must have stayed in bed...

DAUGHTER

Would you come this time?

MOTHER

That was a long time ago.

DAUGHTER

You can come this time. The four of us at the beach, wouldn't that be nice?

MOTHER

We have other memories together, there's no point on going back.

DAUGHTER

I know. But this one, I keep coming back to this one... But you weren't there.

MOTHER

Tell me about the seagulls.

DAUGHTER

Father woke us up before the sun was out.

FATHER

Girls? You can come with your pajamas on. No need to change.

DAUGHTER

The fishermen had been out in the sea all night and they were coming back to the shore with their nets full.

FATHER

We are going to miss it.

MOTHER

I will tell you to not forget your sweaters. It's cold outside.

DAUGHTER

And sister will complain.

SISTER

No, I won't!

DAUGHTER

I remember putting my clothes in the dark. I remember leaving the warm of the sheets and my sticky eyes.

SISTER

You have such a bad memory.

DAUGHTER

I do not!

SISTER

He took us to the beach to see the seagulls, tones of them gather in the beach when the fisherman came back from the sea, circling the smelly canoes.

DAUGHTER

The seagulls will appear with the sun and will soar above the fishermen's heads, patiently waiting.

SISTER

We waited to. We knew the dance was about to start.

FATHER

Girls? Are you ready?

DAUGHTER

I can't find one of my flip-flops...

FATHER

Use your Mother's. Hurry up! We're going to miss it.

SISTER

Can I bring my lantern?

FATHER

The sun is coming out, girls. We have to go.

DAUGHTER

We used to take off our flip-flops at the beach so we could feel the sand between our fingers. Father rushed us to the end of the shore, where the fishermen canoes were suppose to land.

SISTER

He looks funny running with the blue cooler on his back.

FATHER

Now, we wait.

DAUGHTER

Father, do fish sleep?

FATHER

They sleep with their eyes wide open.

SISTER

We liked to arrive early, so we could see the canoes, lit up by small oil lanterns, floating in the ocean.

DAUGHTER

I remember the fishermen silhouettes against the horizon gathering up the last nets.

SISTER

Sometimes we would look for seashells hidden in the sand, but most of the times, we used to do pirouettes and we shook our arms to let the fishermen know we were waiting for them.

DAUGHTER

We never screamed or made any noise, it had to be a silent dance. We didn't want to scare the fish.

SISTER

We used to welcome them in the shore with the small fridge wide open.

FATHER

There's cold cokes and bread for everybody.

DAUGHTER

They ate with their salty hands and then, they spread the nets on the beach. That's when the seagulls gathered around them.

SISTER

We use to help them chose the little fish, we had to separate them from the big fishes: they had buckets for the big ones.

FATHER

Choose carefully.

SISTER

The fishermen sell the big ones in the market.

DAUGHTER

When we found one, small enough or defective, I felt we had won the lottery. The real dance began with the small fishes.

SISTER

Found one!

DAUGHTER

I have mine too!

FATHER

And I have mine! Ready?

One, two, three: up into the sky they go.

Seagulls gather in the sky. A fish comes up, the seagulls fly around it, rushing to catch him first: only one does. They scatter. Then another fish goes up, the seagulls cross the sky again as arrows, and the fish is grabbed in the air once

more. Then and other and another and another. Fish and seagulls dance in the sky.

C.

Sometimes, it hits me: the world exists with out me.

I'd love for home to be outside my main door. I wished it were that easy to go back home. Open the main door and exit into our Capital...

DAUGHTER

Our Capital?

C.

You are not the only one who runs away.

DAUGHTER

I am not running away.

C.

I am.

DAUGHTER

We should have flown back for the plebiscite.

C.

We've work here. We can hold hands here. I like my life here.

C. grabs Daughter's hand, as asking her for a dance.

DAUGHTER

Tourists can't vote.

C.

Ours is a conservative country.

DAUGHTER

What if there is not?

C.

There is not what?

DAUGHTER

Peace?

C.

We will never go back.

They dance in a tight hug.

DAUGHTER

I'm leaving. Moving to one more foreign country.

C.

That's... ok.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

Will you miss me?

C.

Of course.

DAUGHTER

No, will you really miss me?

Miss me so much you will get sick thinking on me? So sick you will puke your heart out? So sick you will lose your appetite? You would stop eating; you will enter in a hunger strike. You will scream and hit the floor with your legs, and cry and scream and everybody in the mall will look at you? And then you would be really tired, so tired you won't be able to move anymore, you'll fall asleep and your body will petrify and snow will cover your breasts and you'll become a mountain

and I'll come after the battle to lye at your side?

C.

You have weird ideas about what love is...

THE PUNK KID

(Has they been eating popcorn,
somewhere, siting between the
audience?)

It's a strange thing how people meet. How do they come together? With all their contradictions, with all their opposite desires?

It's kind of like a miracle.

Two people... together.

DAUGHTER

You will remember that one time when I will cry so badly I won't be able to sleep. You will hold me and kiss me until I feel better. You will drink my tears; you will lick them from my eyes. And I'll think you are about to grab one and chew it. Like that awful Sara Kane play. Or like Lina Meruane's novel. That novel about a woman going blind, and her need for an eye, a fresh eye to replace her defecting one. A woman needing a new eye and her lover who had such beautiful eyes.

C.

You have beautiful eyes.

THE PUNK KID

Aren't we all desperately looking for someone to fully and passionately fall in love with? Like Cicadas in the south of France, fully committed to sing?

C.

In the Red Republic they fry and eat cicadas.

DAUGHTER

What? Do you hear the cicadas sing?

C.

You're going there? Aren't you? To the Red Republic? Over there, they fry and eat cicadas.

DAUGHTER

Do they?

C.

They also eat scorpions on a spike.

DAUGHTER

They do not!

C.

They do! You'll see.

SISTER

And so, the dream... What was it?

DAUGHTER

Which dream?

SISTER

The one that made you feel so guilty.

DAUGHTER

Right. The dream. It's silly.

SISTER

Come on.

DAUGHTER

It is.

SISTER

So say it.

DAUGHTER

Ok.

She says nothing.

SISTER

Say it.

DAUGHTER

Well. I was little, you know, growing up... I mean, my boobs were growing up and one night I dreamt I kissed someone.

SISTER

We all did. It is called puberty.

DAUGHTER

Exactly, puberty.

SISTER

But you felt guilty.

DAUGHTER

I knew the kiss was coming, so I closed my eyes. I closed my eyes, and then I opened them in the middle of the kiss, you know, just to verify the person I was kissing had also closed his eyes, and when I open my eyes, the face in front of my face was the face of a different person.

SISTER

Hum Hu.

DAUGHTER

I know; it's silly. It wasn't even like a kiss in real life. Like nobody can go into my brain and dig to find that kiss, nobody but God and the Virgin and all the Saints... I felt guilty, for years.

SISTER

Did you like it?

DAUGHTER

Oh, yes, I did. I guess that was the problem: I liked it.

SISTER

Then it was a good kiss.

DAUGHTER

I guess...

SISTER

If you liked it, it was a good one.

DAUGHTER

I liked it.

SISTER

Good.

DAUGHTER

Good.

Three old women enter; they seat together on a bench and start gossiping. They laugh and ventilate themselves with their big wooden fans. One of them has the hiccup.

MOTHER

She hasn't come home yet. Do you think she'll ever will? Do you think she loves us?

FATHER

Of course she does, she is our daughter.

Silence.

FATHER

She's traveling around the world. You should be excited for her.

MOTHER

I am.

FATHER

Good.

MOTHER

She will come home and we will make a party. A big party to celebrate she's home, with flying balloons and I will cook her favorite meal.

FATHER

You don't cook.

Silence.

MOTHER

I think I will start bowling again.

FATHER

Bowling?

MOTHER

Yes, like I did when we just got married. Remember?

FATHER

Bowling?

MOTHER

(She starts looking for her bowling ball).

My bowling ball must be somewhere. Or did we leave it behind when we moved? Did we?

FATHER

I don't know. We brought the bikes, the old china and your mother's sewing machine, the two cats and the dogs... but I don't remember bringing a bowling ball.

MOTHER

It was such a long time ago...

DAUGHTER

What are you looking for?

MOTHER

I've lost my bowling ball.

DAUGHTER

What?

MOTHER

I can't find it.

DAUGHTER

You haven't played in years.

MOTHER

I need it.

DAUGHTER

I am not even sure we have one.

MOTHER

I love my bowling ball.

DAUGHTER

Love is a strong word for a bowling ball.

MOTHER

Aren't we all looking for something? I am just like you. I want more, more of life.

DAUGHTER

C.'s mother died last month. She went home, our home, to see her die. Her mother passed away and C. brought back some of her ashes in a blue plastic pill's bottle. We went to the lake in our bikes and we rented a small boat and lit some candles and we put some boleros on our iPods and we let her ashes in the water and we swam among them. And then, we went back to the city and life continued. Would you like that, Mum? Would you like your ashes to be thrown in a lake?

MOTHER

(Still looking for her bowling ball)

What?

DAUGHTER

When you die, would you like that?

MUM

I am not dying.

DAUGHTER

I know, it's just...

MOTHER

Cancer is over. I won.

DAUGHTER

Is that why you're looking for your bowling ball? You were so close of dying that/

MOTHER

I am not dying!

DAUGHTER

I know, Mum. But if you were...

Mother leaves.

DAUGHTER

Mum?

Silence.

DAUGHTER

Mum? I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way. I'm sorry.

Silence.

C.

I haven't dreamt with her. It's been two months and I haven't dreamt with my mother. Something must be block inside me. Or not. She's just busy elsewhere.

DAUGHTER

There's an uncle who says he has mastered flying in his dreams. He goes to sleep thinking on a big cliff, the biggest fall from the highest mountain. He imagines the colors of the valley, he finds the rocky paths that will take him to the top of the mountain and he pictures the clouds resting in the horizon. He says, every time he does he dreams with the mountain and once he is at its top he lets himself fall and he flies. He overflies the whole valley.

C.

Does he ever crash?

DAUGHTER

He has to... in order to wake up?

C.

Must be painful.

DAUGHTER

Very.

Silence.

C.

I don't want to fly. I just want to dream with my mother.

DAUGHTER

Make a wish.

C.

I wish to fall sleep and dream with my mother.

DAUGHTER

You can't say wishes out loud. They won't happen if you say them out loud.

C.

That's silly.

DAUGHTER

Here, try again. Write it.

She does. Daughter puts the paper on fire. They both watch it burn.

DAUGHTER

I do this thing I don't feel very proud of but I still do it. I imagine people's death. Not even, I imagine people's funeral. Relative's funeral or sometimes even strangers. The man from the bus stop or the lady that sold me the bread in the morning... Is that wrong? I imagine who will come to the funeral, who will cry the most.

C.

Where are we now?

DAUGHTER

In my grandmother's country house.

C.

I don't have a bathing suit...

DAUGHTER

Shush! I don't want them to see us.

C.

Why not?

DAUGHTER

I haven't told them.

C.

I thought you did.

DAUGHTER

Just half of it... Shush!

C.

You don't need to tell them if you don't want to. I have friends that have never told their parents.

DAUGHTER

It doesn't exist anymore. They sold it.

C.

What?

DAUGHTER

The country house. They sold it.

C.

Why do you keep avoiding conflict?

DAUGHTER

I do not!

C.

You do. Just now, you did.

DAUGHTER

Would you stop loving me if I decide to never tell my parents?

C.

That's not a reason to stop loving you...

DAUGHTER

So? Why are we discussing it?

C.

Because it matters to you, because you are terrified and apparently can't even say it out loud!

Silence.

DAUGHTER

I felt outraged when they sold grandma's country house. I felt like they were selling a part of my childhood. An important part that defined me as a person, as an adult.

C.

I feel I am vanishing...

DAUGHTER

They sell it with out even asking...

C.

Because of war?

DAUGHTER

No. I don't think so. When Grandma died they split everything and... I don't know. They sold it.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

This is also the place where I had my first love... but nobody should know.

C.

You've told me nothing.

DAUGHTER

Right.

C.

What's that noise?

DAUGHTER

Everybody is here. All the cousins.

C.

Are they cheering?

DAUGHTER

They are all in the kitchen. Look: there's a big black butterfly in one corner of the roof. One big circle of light in each feather, like eyes.

C.

I hated those butterflies. Constantly watching. They say they bring bad luck.

DAUGHTER

That's weird. I've heard they bring good luck...

C.

What are they cheering for?

DAUGHTER

They've made a circle, just like when two kids fight at school. Just like in all those movies about growing up in a school, sometimes is a private school, sometimes is a public school and sometimes its a mix but there's always a fight in the playground.

C.

Who's fighting?

DAUGHTER

We've found a scorpion. Grandma poured some oil around it, threw a match to the circle of oil and the circle light up with fire.

C.

Why would she do that?

DAUGHTER

Scorpions can't stand the heat so they sting their own back.

C.

What a cruel thing to do.

DAUGHTER

That's how they dealt with them back then. Scorpions are mortal. If they sting you, their poison will fill your body.

C.

And you were all there? Looking at it die?

DAUGHTER

Do you think we will go to hell?

C.

For what? For being gay or watching scorpions die?

Silence.

DAUGHTER

What do you desire the most?

SISTER

I want a child.

DAUGHTER

What's your deepest desire?

SISTER

A child.

DAUGHTER

You are not married.

SISTER

I know.

DAUGHTER

In some parts of the world we are left over woman...

SISTER

I am going to adopt. And if they don't give it to me, I will go to a small village and I will find the poorest and hungriest kid and I will take him home with me. To the city.

DAUGHTER

They'll find you and you'll appear in all the night news: you and the kid happily eating cereals in your fancy penthouse, you caressing his greasy hair and kissing him one, two, three, ten times per cheek.

SISTER

I will take him to the mall and I will buy tones of clothes to him and then, I'll take him to the ice cream shop and we will have a banana split with chocolate chips and the ice cream will melt way to fast in his tiny dark beautiful hands and he will have ice cream all over his face and his clothes will be ruined with all that ice cream but I won't care, I won't clean him I will let him eat the ice cream and clean his hands with the new shirt and he will smile and I will smile and people will look at us thinking where did I took that child from, or perhaps they would think I married a basketball player, a tall brown as a caramel candy basketball player.

DAUGHTER

Isn't that racist?

SISTER

What?

DAUGHTER

Poorest and hungriest kid?

SISTER

There's way to many hungry kids out there...

DAUGHTER

We are many.

It will soon be midnight.

SISTER

Can I sleep with you?

DAUGHTER

Are you afraid of the scorpions?

SISTER

I am not.

DAUGHTER

I am.

SISTER

Night falls on the stage. The sound of crickets, fireflies here and there.

Where are you going?

C.

Can I use your phone? I have to make a call.

DAUGHTER

Is too early. They will be sleeping.

C.

No. She's won't. She is waiting for my call. She felt a pain in her chest and knows there's something wrong, just like in the movies.

DAUGHTER

Is there something wrong?

C.

Life keeps accumulating.

DAUGHTER

Of course it does.

C.

Aló?
FATHER

Dad?
DAUGHTER

Kid?
FATHER

Mum is not home?
DAUGHTER

She's out.
FATHER

Shouldn't she be sleeping?
DAUGHTER

It's almost noon here.
FATHER

I've must had made the math wrong.
DAUGHTER

You once were the best student in mathematics.
FATHER

Sister?
DAUGHTER

With your Mum.
FATHER

I see.
DAUGHTER

Silence.

Did they go voting?
DAUGHTER

They went to buy some umbrellas.
FATHER

Umbrellas? DAUGHTER

It's going to rain. FATHER

Are you going to vote? DAUGHTER

The voting center is way to far. FATHER

AND SO? DAUGHTER

I have work. FATHER

You should be voting. DAUGHTER

You are not voting either. FATHER

It's different. I'm in a different country! DAUGHTER

When would you be home? FATHER

I am falling in love. DAUGHTER

Is he a good man? FATHER

No. DAUGHTER

No? FATHER

Dad, I love you. DAUGHTER

I love you to. FATHER

Good. DAUGHTER

Good. FATHER

Silence.

Do you need more money? FATHER

I am ok. Thanks. DAUGHTER

Good. FATHER

Good. DAUGHTER

Good. FATHER

There's somebody speaking badly of me. DAUGHTER

I've walked 250 steps. I didn't go far today. FATHER

What? C.

Yes, look at my ear. Is it red? Is my ear red? Is it? DAUGHTER

It is, so what? C.

So... somebody is speaking badly of me. DAUGHTER

C.

What?

DAUGHTER

When your left ear burns it means somebody is speaking badly of you. That's what they say.

C.

Who cares? Do you really care what some stupid asshole is thinking or saying of you in the other side of the city or perhaps in another country or even in the room next door? I think you are fucking amazing and that should be enough.

Everybody changes to their bathing suits and they put flip-flops on, they pack some grocery bags, to make a picnic next to river, and their towels and parasols and sun's cream.

DAUGHTER

At some point, you were obsessed with volcanoes. You would have nightmares and Father would take you outside, in the middle of the night, to calm you down.

SISTER

A teacher asked me to do a presentation on geology for school. That's when I understood we lived surrounded by volcanoes, all active and about to explode.

DAUGHTER

You thought they would erupt and lava would fill our house and we would die in our sleep like that old couple in the titanic movie but water is not water but fire, lava.

FATHER

You were born in 1985, a terrible year.

MOTHER

The same year of the heart quake in the pyramids land and the same year the volcano erupted and that small city of our home country lying at its feet was covered by lava.

FATHER

The same year the Marxist guerrilla group stormed the Supreme Court in our capital/

DAUGHTER

Lots of people disappeared

MOTHER

A tragedy.

SISTER

Dad read the leader's books and believed in the revolution.

FATHER

I was this close (*he pinches his fingers together as saying very very close*) to become a rebel.

DAUGHTER

He broke apart the night they showed him how to wrap a bomb.

FATHER

How many steps do you think one gives from one side to the other of the big square?

DAUGHTER

They've put a fence. You can't go in. But there's a beautiful floral thing in the middle and they lit it up at night and his face is still at the entrance of the Forbidden City.

SISTER

They wanted to change its name, the name of the volcano, they wanted to change it to the girl's name: Omayra.

MOTHER

Omayra was the only survivor of the explosion. The volcano burst and, because the mountain was full of snow in the top, it formed a giant wave of hot mud that covered the whole city.

SISTER

Everybody was sleeping so they didn't noticed but the little girl was awake. She heard the wave coming; she felt the ground scream. And she went outside, she wanted to see where the scream came from and so she climbed a tree. And then her eyes confirmed what her ears and body felt, but it was too late. She climbed as high as she could, as fast as her heart allowed her, to the highest and toughest branch of a tree.

DAUGHTER

But the wave reached her.

FATHER

It didn't cover her completely; she beat the wave. At least for a couple of hours.

DAUGHTER

Days.

FATHER

She had half body trapped under the mud with a cemetery at her feet when the reporters found her.

SISTER

We all saw her die on TV. The whole country; waiting for a miracle.

MOTHER

Always waiting for miracles.

SISTER

Do you believe I am cursed? I was born in that terrible year...

The sound of a thunder. A storm is coming.

DAUGHTER

That same year, as response to the high demand from the north, the drug cartels rose. From then on, they only became more violent.

SISTER

Some say the one that should not be named backed up the storming of the Supreme Court.

DAUGHTER

He should not be named.

FATHER

You like it or not, he was a hero.

DAUGHTER

I would say Villain. That stupid TV series is just making it worst.

SISTER

If everybody is watching it, must be good.

MOTHER

He did build many schools, hospitals and churches. He loved his mother.

DAUGHTER

We all love our mothers; he was a criminal.

FATHER

The governments vilified him.

DAUGHTER

Are you defending him?

SISTER

No.

MOTHER

No.

FATHER

No.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

The world seems to be destroying it self.

FATHER

It has always been like this.

DAUGHTER

Right, but this is the first time we are living it.

Silence.

FATHER

The bombs stopped in the 90's.

DAUGHTER

Communitarian leaders are still being killed all over the country.

SISTER

Ceasefire will start soon.

MOTHER

Only if the peace agreement wins.

SISTER

Peace will win and the soldier will go away.

DAUGHTER

He will always be around. He never left and never will. War will always be a silent presence.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

Don't we have to go voting? Isn't it getting late?

MOTHER

We will vote. *You* are in a foreign land.

FATHER

Tourists can't vote.

DAUGHTER

I am studying.

SISTER

You should have registered your ID.

DAUGHTER

I know. I'm sorry.

MOTHER

When would you be home?

DAUGHTER

Soon, Mum. I promise.

MOTHER

You always have an excuse.

DAUGHTER

It's getting late...

MOTHER

Don't change the subject!

FATHER

We'll go once the game is over.

DAUGHTER

What game?

SISTER

It's raining.

FATHER

We'll go once the rain stops.

MOTHER

I won't go if I don't find my bowling ball!!

DAUGHTER

Why is everybody acting like a child? We have to vote!

ALL OF THEM

You are not home.

SISTER

Tourists can't vote. (*She pulls her tongue out to DAUGHTER*).

DAUGHTER

I am not a tourist! I am studying. I am doing research!

SISTER

Are you? Or are you just avoiding us?

DAUGHTER

I'm not/

FATHER

Are you having fun?

DAUGHTER

Sometimes...

FATHER
Most of the times?

DAUGHTER
Most of the times.

SISTER
Ergo: you're not studying. Scholars suffer.

DAUGHTER
I'm an artist!

SISTER
Artists suffer.

FATHER
Do you suffer?

DAUGHTER
Sometimes.

FATHER
"Sometimes", she says.

SISTER
Artists suffer until they died. That's why they cut their ears off.

MOTHER
There are worst places than home.

FATHER
She misses you. Don't you understand? Someone is suffering because of you...

The family leaves the stage.

DAUGHTER
She's a mother. She's supposed to miss me.

THE PUNK KID
Isn't it tragic?

C.

What?

THE PUNK KID

Isn't it?

C.

What?

THE PUNK KID

Everything. Tragic.

C.

What?

THE PUNK KID

The world.

C.

The world?

Silence.

C.

We used to learn in school how to look for bombs, how to identify a package. And we were told to cross tape every window of our homes, just in case a bomb detonated nearby, that way the broken glass wouldn't hurt us.

And now, every time I see an abandoned bag pack, alone like a lost child waiting for mummy, somewhere, in the middle of a restaurant or left under one of the subway seats, I will instantly think there's a bomb in there. Does that happen to you?

THE PUNK KID

There's two ways to face history: either you believe in chaos and that things happen just by chance or you spend your life looking back for a murderer hand... isn't it everything a conspiracy?

C.

It's happening all over the world nowadays, laser machines everywhere, dogs

sniffing looking for bombs at the entrance of every public place. We have to show your papers everywhere...

THE PUNK KID

It seems to me the world is shrinking. Like there are too many people and there's no more place. Like an elevator. The elevator is full; doors won't close. It will never go up. It's too heavy. We are all packed, shoulder against shoulder. Sweat coming down our front heads, sliding under our armpits... Air is running out. Heads fight for the top. You feel trapped. You close your eyes in a desperate attempt to make the others, the aliens, go away.

C.

Close your eyes. No, really. Close them. Done? Good. Now imagine you are alone. That lady that hasn't stopped coughing the whole show, gone. The giant head in front of you, the head in between you and the actors, gone. The girl, some seats to your left, the one that unwrapped the candy in the most tensioning moment, in the most moving moment, that girl, gone. The one that stood in your feet to reach its seat, gone. The young girl looking at her cellphone, the bright screen at your side, gone. They are all gone. There's nobody next to you, either. No warm hand to squeeze, no knee to gently caress, no one to go home with, no one to discuss the play with. You're alone.

THE PUNK KID

Tragic. Completely tragic.

Silence.

C.'s mother comes in and sits next to C.

C.

You are not here, are you?

C.'s MOTHER

It's the 20th of October. I've been dead for three months.

C.

Why can't I dream with you? All my siblings dream with you.

C.'s MOTHER

Isn't this a dream?

C.

I'm not sleeping much these days.

C.'s MOTHER

Can I have some mate?

C.

Sure.

C.'s MOTHER

Would you take me to the Castel? I don't want to be late this time.

C.

Mum, I haven't been sleeping. You are not here.

C.'s MOTHER

This is good mate. Where did you get it? The leave doesn't grow in this land.

C.

You don't drink mate, Mum. The leave doesn't grow in our land either.

C's MOTHER

You were always moving away from us.

C.

You are not here.

C.'s MOTHER

You don't want me here?

C.

(Singing)

What? No, of course I do.

C's MOTHER

I always liked to visit you.

C.

You never visited me in the mate's land.

C's MOTHER

But I did come to the lake...

C.

I'm sorry about the tower... I made you come down so fast.

C's MOTHER

I wanted to see the city from above.

C.

I was afraid.

C's MOTHER

You are a paranoiac.

C.

How can we not be?

The soldier enters with a radio, two big speakers. He turns it on. There's an opera playing. He sings along. A beautiful, powerful and crashing song.

THE DAUGHTER

It's the beginning of October
And today we will know
If there is peace in our country.

C.

We don't need to see the future to know what is going to happen.

SISTER

We will go to vote together, Mother and I.

DAUGHTER

It will rain and lots of people will stay home.

MOTHER

The president will prepare a big celebration party in the highest floor of the highest building of the Capital.

SISTER

The ex president, that ex president who was always against any peace agreement, will hide in his country house.

FATHER

A hurricane or something of the sort will attack the pacific coast and more people will stay home.

SISTER

Lots of people won't go to the ballot box.

C.

64% of the population will abstain.

THE DAUGHTER

I will go to sleep Sunday Oct. 2, before the end of the counting of the votes. I will be completely sure my country will vote for peace. I will be wrong.

FATHER

The president will be left with the champagne unopened,

DAUGHTER

The ex President will go out of his cave. Like a mole.

SISTER

He has been distorting reality to sink the peace process.

DAUGHTER

It will sink. Like the Titanic.

FATHER

Nobody will see it coming. There are barely any ads to support the negative vote.

SISTER

Au contraire, we are celebrating already, we are all wearing white dove's pins on our chests.

MOTHER

There's no plan B. There are no emergency boats.

SISTER

Guerrillas will order troops to retake position.

C.

There's so much unsaid.

DAUGHTER

We will vote "No". "No" to the peace agreement.

FATHER

The end of the cease-fire will start on October 31.

SISTER

It's been more than 50 years and nothing seems to change.

VOICE OFF

Realizing that your request has become obsolete, we ask for your understanding that we will not go into details.

MOTHER

Now you'll never come back, would you?

DAUGHTER

I don't know.

FATHER

I know you're disappointed but we have to keep an open mind. We will go again through the agreements and we will make it better.

DAUGHTER

How do you pack a whole life in one hour? It's an impossible task.

FATHER

You always liked challenges.

DAUGHTER

Don't flatter me.

FATHER

Why not? You are my daughter and I love you.

DAUGHTER

You are my father and you have to love me.

Silence.

DAUGHTER

Dad, I'm in love with a woman.

FATHER

Silence.

FATHER

Would it go away?

DAUGHTER

Love?

FATHER

You falling for women... Is it a phase? You know, kids go far away from their homes and they get confuse.

DAUGHTER

I don't know. I don't think so.

FATHER

Have you gone to the psychologist?

DAUGHTER

Dad...

FATHER

A father should be granted certain basic things: a waltz when his young lady becomes a woman and a waltz when she's given to another man.

DAUGHTER

We'll do a variation of it, when time comes... We will make a really big party, we'll invite the whole family, all the cousins and their boyfriends and girlfriends, and they will be lots of kids running around in their white dresses and we will fill the church with flowers and we'll spend astronomical amounts of money on my dress and you will hold my hand walking down the aisle, and you will lift my veil, just like in the movies, and you will kiss my front head. And there she will be, my lover, waiting for me at the altar.

Or is it I? Standing there, next to the priest? My hands sweating and you by my side? Scanning the room with your eyes, making sure everything is in place? The bride coming down the aisle. Wouldn't that be nice too? We'll have some really famous pop singer waiting at the reception for us and she will sing her heart out and we will dance the waltz and we'll have a delicious banquet with many different desserts and we will have a trio for the end of the night and hot soup the next morning.

FATHER

We live in a conservative country.

DAUGHTER

Exactly.

Would you stop talking to me? Would you banish me from your home? Would you die with a deep sorrow in your heart?

FATHER
(He laughs).

You didn't want to celebrate your 15th birthday either and we were ok.

DAUGHTER
You brought Mariachis and made me dance with you.

FATHER
We'll find the way.

DAUGHTER
Did we move out because of the war?

FATHER
You're mother was transferred. They raised her salary and helped us relocate. We moved but we didn't go that far. And we were always thinking on coming back... We finally did.

DAUGHTER
I am not sure if I want to go back.

FATHER
You promised you would.

DAUGHTER
Would you come to visit if I decide to stay in a foreign land?

FATHER
We'll see. One thing at a time.

Silence.

FATHER
When you're done come inside. We will be waiting for you.

DAUGHTER
I'm never going to end. Life keeps accumulating.

C.

Anyways, I think marriages are the worst part of every movie.

DAUGHTER

The cheesiest part.

C.

The very worsts.

Silence.

C.

Perhaps we could invent our own ceremony... We can go to the middle of the jungle and have a Shaman instead of a Priest and have lots of food and good music.

DAUGHTER

If we ever go home...

C.

Ours is a conservative country.

THE DAUGHTER

We didn't vote.

C.

I know. I'm sorry.

DAUGHTER

I'm leaving tomorrow.

C.

I know. It was nice meeting you...

DAUGHTER

Perhaps we will see each other again.

C.

Perhaps.

DAUGHTER

Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps...

MOTHER

Where are you now?

DAUGHTER

I've just arrived to The Red Republic.

People cross the street when the red light is still on, smiling, just like in our Capital. And they sell fruits on the corners, and once in a while there's a mad man screaming nonsense down the streets. There's street performers and there's rivers of people coming and going and they close some streets during the National Holidays and they let people wander and they put their national flags on the windows and they paint it on their cheeks, just like us, and they sell all sort of things like small Buddha's and panda's key rings and Opera dolls. And between the crowds there's fathers carrying their kids on their shoulders and people looking at their screens and buying and eating boiled eggs with scorpion's tales.

MOTHER

When would you be back?

DAUGHTER

And the brooms are still made of grass and they have statues everywhere, in the main squares but also in their buildings, always a head at the entrance. The head of a former Emperor or a famous artist or a revolutionary writer... Someone meaningful enough to remember, and that someone is almost never a woman... But they have also statues on the streets of normal people, like the men that drove the chariots or hairdressers and street musicians. And people see them and touch them and the kids climb on their laps and their parents take pictures of them...

MOTHER

When would you be back home?

DAUGHTER

I went to the hospital, it happened almost by mistake, the guard thought I wanted to take pictures and I thought it was a little weird and voyeuristic and even a little scary, you know, like in the movies when they enter in this big empty and way too suspicious hallway, so I did. And they do look the same than ours, hospitals are the same everywhere, I guess, and the smell of disinfectant covers the walls and the floor and there are families waiting and people crying in a corner and people laughing in the other. Three women were looking at something in a telephone screen, they couldn't stop laughing and one of them had the hiccup, just like grandma after eating rice... And then, then I went into the courtyard and through the windows I saw a father fixing the Atari for his kid. Or perhaps it was just a nurse, a male nurse? But there was also a woman next to him, watching him coming and going and I thought she might be the wife, the mother of the kid, the kid jumping in the bed in his pajamas. He must be sick or something must be

wrong with him, or perhaps is nothing, a routinely procedure. The kid wants to play and Father's fixing the Atari for him. Anyways, that's what I imagined.

There's the sound of destruction, then the sound of the desert. Daughter disappeared?

From the back a trio emerges. It's a trio from Los Andes, singing "Los caminos de la vida" (Look for Los Panchos' version).

THE END