

Serendipity³

and me - in
the City of New

York - New York

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año 2001

Serendipity – (n.) the faculty of happening upon fortunate discoveries when not in search of them. Coined by Horace Walpole (1754) in "The Three Pines of Serendip" (Sri Lanka).

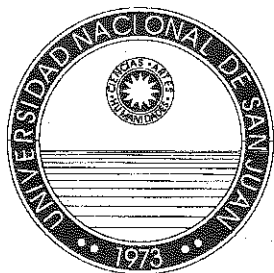
-Funk and Wagnells

Dennis Manion, who gave birth to Serendipity in 1993, was a Fulbright Exchange teacher assigned to San Juan University from the Bodine High School for International Affairs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Funny ode to English teachers

Teachers have few bills to collect,
And a lot of tests to correct.
Teachers often lose their head,
And, when tired, they feel as if dead.
Teachers' work is not recognized
That is why their salaries are paralyzed.
Teachers sometimes get mad at students' distraction,
But, more often, at their grammatical constructions.
Teachers cannot live by bread alone,
But they have to live by work alone.
Teachers feel exhausted on workdays,
But they feel bored on holidays.
Teachers sometimes feel half-full,
And sometimes they feel awe-full.
Teachers sometimes see their jobs as an obligation,
But, then, they forget it is their vocation.

Alejandra Lazzaro



SERENDIPITY

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Writing

A challenge
The most difficult task
Looking for inspiration
Never comes!
You try and you try
You are wordless, thoughtless
It's worthless
Though you are trying your best
Please help!
There must be a way.

Second Year Language class (1st level), 1998

Why?

I was told I had to write
But I just do not know how
Shall I try, oh God, shall I?

It's a task I have to fulfill
But it's hard to let it in
Can I do it, oh God, can I?

Silvana Barrionuevo

If only...

If only I could take the day off
If only I could rest the rest of the day
I wouldn't sleep but I would rest
I would spend the day singing, thinking
Or just dreaming
But, then, I would say that just for a day
I've managed to break the routine of my days.

Carolina Pandolfini

Be yourself

Feel free to complain
Though sometimes you are not right
Don't work too much
If the job is too hard
Don't listen to the others
If their words are not songs
Feel free to be a snob
Or a clown if you prefer
Whenever you want
To make it up to somebody
But, please
Be yourself
Whenever the others
Do the same!

Alejandra Pozo

Argentina

Argentina, when will you grow up?
Can't you stop making the same old mistakes?
Can't you learn from your old days?
Argentina, should I leave you
And come back when everything is OK?
Or should I stay, be patient and wait?
Argentina, don't you feel the sorrow of your children?
Don't you see your people's misery?
What do you need to react?
Argentina, I had so many dreams,
I thought you would help me achieve
But now I see, you are like a spoilt child
You only claim, require, demand
Is it that I'm nothing to you?

Mónica García

Malvinas

Kids dressed as men were sent to fight
And most of them could never again see the light
Leaving our weak country in tears, oh my God, our weak country in tears

Our people's memory is filled with images of blood and destruction
Is it that this "kindergarten war" provided someone with satisfaction?
This is the answer we don't want to know, oh my God, the answer we don't
want to know

Natacha Manrique

Argentina

*Argentina is a good country
Only for a reduced number of families
Enjoying certain benefits
Sometimes provided by the government.
Or perhaps Argentina is a good country
Only for some lucky families.*

*For the rest Argentina is in trouble
There being every day
More unemployed people,
More needs,
More teenagers giving up their studies
Because of the need of money.*

*Observing our country's problems
I reckon something should be done at this moment.
We rest in our laurels
The solution is far beyond our reach.
So, we just wonder;
Will somebody start?*

Yanina Haro

Sunflower sutra

Monday evening saw me walking
through the path I used to walk when I was a child
but that path is not the same, it is different, so am I.

When I returned to you, my priceless lady,
I expected the fair treatment you used to give the needy.
But I crashed into your new personality.

I couldn't walk anymore because the queue outside was too long
Gone are the days when you inspired me,
Gone are the days when you showed me a dear future.

A rich land with such a vast variety of colors which cover your
boundaries
A beautiful crucible with so many ideologies which made you grow up.

Then why are you leaving us behind
And escaping to a better road with those who claim to be masters.

Disappointment is the only landscape left behind
by the actions of your big house members.
Fear and loneliness is what we get from your blind balance.

Your sons need you now, more than ever before,
But you just turn around taking away your beauty,
Your richness, your culture, which do not belong to you any more.

María Laura Manzanares

Dylan's Remake: To our dearest politicians

How many times must we forgive your acts
Before you decide to be frank?
How many times must we take you to court
Before you disclose all your thoughts?
The answer, my folk, has blown with the money
The answer has blown with the money

How many times must we give you our hope
Before you betray us once more?
How many lies must we swallow for sure
Before you stop cheating on us all?
The answer, my folk, has blown with the money
The answer has blown with the money

How many times must we be ready to fight
For a country that doesn't grow up?
How many days must we count from now on
Before your minds work for our home?
The answer, my folk, has blown with the money
The answer has blown with the money

Mariela Trigo

Alphabet poem: Politicians

Politicians are, alphabetically speaking,
Amazing if they are in favor of people
Brilliant and even
Courageous in times of war; also
Dynamic when working for the country
Elegant in their manners but, on the contrary,
Fake in their promises
Gory in their actions
Hypocrite
Incorrect
Just according to their interests
Kind only to their families
Loyal to their corrupt principles
Mysterious, ambiguous, disguised: politicians.

Celina Pérez

Politicians

Let your lies not grow in your bright minds
In tough times, move slowly
Always respect us
Never betray us

Let your incoherence not be our daily bread
By all means, work wisely
Always defend us,
Never look down on us

Let your selfishness not interfere with our interests
In office, don't fill your own pockets
Always serve us,
Never deceive us

Mariela Trigo

Elections

Among the blind, the one-eyed man is king
But in election time
Try to be aware enough
Not to be in two minds

First impressions are most lasting
But do not allow politicians' smart outfits fool you
Only beauty is but skin deep!

How to choose the one?
How to choose the best?
How to choose the ideal one for us
Among all of them?

Knowledge is power
Go for it!
Knowledge is freedom
Keep it and work on it!

Ana María Troncoso



Graciela Pérez

Proverbs of Hell

Countries that envy other countries' wealth,
Do not enjoy their lives with health

Care about your neighbors,
You may need them when time doesn't favor

Poverty spreads through pain and sadness,
Wealth grows out of pride and madness

Present is now, future who knows,
However work for now and future will grow

First they used swords, then bullets were the lords,
Still nothing's more useful than a few precious words.

Marcela Mora

Just for a while

Just for a while
Don't overestimate power;
Let's forget about money;
Put aside all the luxuries.
Don't think about oil
Forget about the lands of the rich,
Let's ban weapons
Just for a while.

Now,
Think of others as your brothers;
Look into their hearts...
And into yours.

Let's all be friends
Let's dream about a world without war
Let's dream about peace...
At least for a while.

Analía Adaro

Doctor to patient

Please, sit down

I'm afraid I have some bad news for you

You have been diagnosed with a genetic disease called:

Hispania

Like others similarly afflicted

You will experience feelings of

Shock, disbelief, injustice, guilt, apathy and aggressiveness

(Although not necessarily in that order)

It is a small comfort to know that this disease

is spread all over America.

However, you will discover, as time passes, that your presence in itself

Will make others obviously uncomfortable.

Try not to let your shadow

Fall across your neighbor's plate,

Eat with your right hand only,

Do not touch others in public (this can be easily misunderstood),

Keep always down-wind, if possible.

Oh yes, by the way,

You will be relieved to know

This disease is only in the minority of cases terminal.

Most *survive*...

Next, please.

Nuria Busleimán

Damn Whites!

Black?
Colored?
Negro?
Nigger?
African American?
American??

No matter what you call me,
You would still see me different.

No matter how hard I try,
No choice for me is hanging out.

I don't care what you think fellow
I'm tired of this biased bigoted hurtful world.

I feel oppressed, degraded
Down-trodden, ...enslaved!
But who does care anyway?

How can this be possible still?
Haven't we tried hard enough?
From slavery till nowadays
We have tried to make whites understand:
Within these black walls lives a man
But... who does care anyway?





How long are we gonna stay hooked on this?
Hurry up! I'm not a racist.
Time is drawing near,
But who does care anyway?

My ancestors swallowed rage and hatred
And so I am in identical fashion.
I am dying inside
But nobody seems to give a damn.

Should I speak out?
Or, should I just keep to myself and never let it out?
Should I tell the world to halt it there?
Who the hell cares?

Will we ever be equal to you "whites"?
Or will this plight prevail in our lives?
Run that by me again!
Equality was a stillborn idea.

There's nothing to be happy about,
There will be a backlash, no doubt.
Yet I sit at the back,
'cause my skin remains black.

Vanesa García

I am

Who am I?

Am I the worn-out Negro

That covers your dullness with amusement?

Am I the Jew

That begs for memory in a society that forgot him?

Am I the aborigine

Whose holly land was profaned?

Who am I?

Am I the immigrant

That came to the promising New World and saw his dreams
shattered?

Am I the desperate refugee

That sought protection in your paws?

Am I the helpless woman

That escapes a meaningless war?

I am all and each of these

I am the victim of despair

The result of your personal insecurity

The object at your disposal

The thesis of your ignorant generalization

The offspring of your indifference

Who are you?

Cristina Rodriguez



Máscara
Mariela Limerutti

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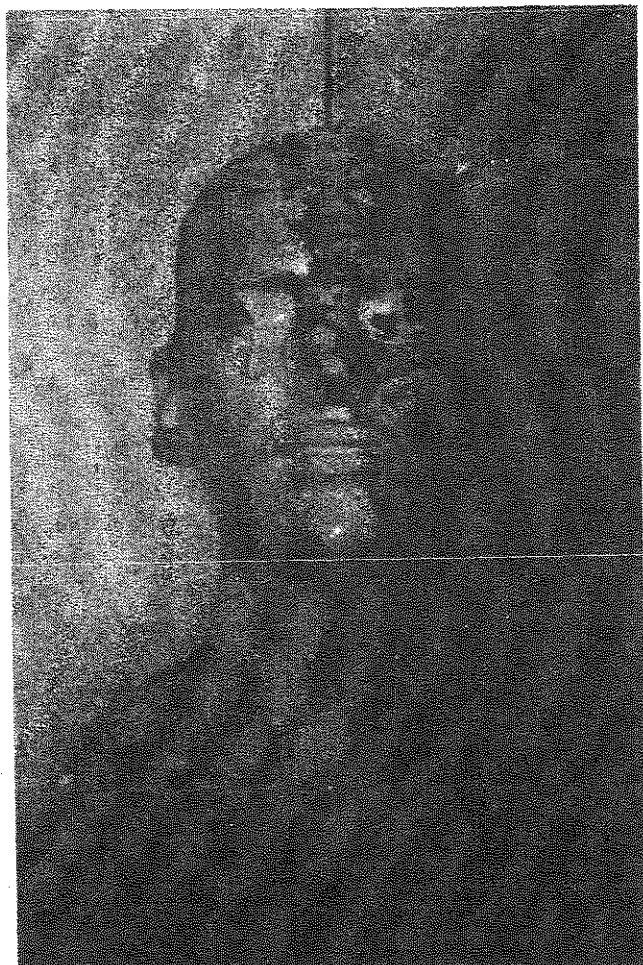
Writing....

Dear friend Jim
and me - in
the City of New

York. I am very
much interested
in the book
you are writing.



Graciela Pérez



Máscara
Mariela Limerutti

'The Wrong Way'

Peter was a very good man. At the hospital where he gave his life as a doctor, Peter was very much loved and admired because of his generosity and honesty. His very young patients waited for him everyday outside his office. As he was very good at his job, each day more and more children went to look for a cure to their illnesses. He enjoyed it very much when he could see their faces full of happiness because their suffering had disappeared.

Peter had always searched for felicity. He was not even nine years old when he promised himself that he would do anything in the pursuit of happiness. He deeply believed that if he could make God feel proud of him, He would make him attain his goals in return.

As he grew older he tried to find ways to be a good person, so each time he saw a child in the street begging for something to eat he took him to his house and fed him. He was very worried about these children left alone in the streets because he really loved them and didn't want them to suffer.

When he finished secondary school, he decided to study to be a doctor. In this way he would be able to cure ill children and make them smile again. God would be pleased with him and would give him his desired happiness. He worked very hard to get his degree and in less than six years he was qualified to start working in a nearby hospital.

The moment he healed the first child who came to see him, Peter could experiment the feeling of satisfaction only achieved by being able to cure little kids. However, he thought: 'What is one child cured when there are more of them waiting outside my office, I must cure them all'.

Each day he came home later and later. He stayed longer at the hospital so as to examine more and more children. As this hospital was run by the state, he didn't earn much money. In fact, he didn't need much in life, he just needed happiness.

One day at the staff room he was introduced to a new nurse that had started to work in the hospital a few days before. For both of them it was love at first sight and within two years they were married. On the wedding day Peter could experiment the feeling of satisfaction only achieved by marrying someone he really loved, Christine. However, he had another goal to achieve in order to feel pleased. He had to cure as many children as he could. Just out of principle.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as he would have liked at the hospital. It was running out of supplies and the state couldn't afford all the necessary medical equipment. Trying to help so many children with such a limited quantity of resources was like trying to square the circle. Peter thought: 'Why are only some children cured when there are thousands of them whom I cannot cure outside in the streets? I must cure them all'.

One night Peter pondered over the situation and out of the blue he had an idea. If he and Christine worked very hard and saved every penny they earned, they could build a place where homeless children could go to have something to eat. The next morning he told Christine about his idea and she agreed immediately because she thought that it would make Peter feel better.

Little by little they started to see the building reach completion. They spent every cent on this perfect place. They called it ' Sweet Home '. When it was open Peter could experiment the feeling of satisfaction only achieved by having a place where he could feed and cure homeless kids. However, Peter thought: ' What are thousands of children cured and fed when there are millions of them outside in the streets waiting for someone to help them. I will be a very good person if I can cure all of them. Then I will be glad '.

Two days after the building was finished Christine told Peter she was pregnant and nine months later Peter could hold in his arms that beautiful baby called Maggy. Looking at her Peter could experiment the feeling of satisfaction only achieved by having a child. However he could not feel at ease yet, he still had something pending in his life.

Sweet Home grew bigger and bigger and each year it could receive more children. At this time, Peter was rather tired but he could see his building bursting with joyful children everyday. He didn't feel completely satisfied yet, there were lots of children in the streets whom he could not afford to help.

On the night of his 54th birthday, Peter went to bed early. He had not been feeling well for some days. Christine had told him that his problem was that he was depressed. He closed his eyes and in a while he was asleep. Suddenly he could see God calling him. As he approached Him, He asked him: ' Peter, why are you feeling blue? What is worrying you? ' and Peter full of shame answered: ' I haven't been able to reach happiness, I wanted you to feel proud of me and I failed. I cannot help all the homeless children '. But God replied: ' Why do you think I am not proud of you? You have proved to be a very noble person through all your life. I always wanted you to be happy. That's why I made you enjoy the faces of those children when you helped them. Then I gave you a wonderful wife but you still were not satisfied. After that I gave you Maggy, a precious daughter, because I knew that you loved kids. Sweet Home was made for your happiness but it was not enough for you, I don't need to see you helping all the children to feel pleased with you, I am proud of you now and I have always been. So forget about your sorrow and don't worry about what you cannot do. I'll be watching you from above and remember I will always be proud of you. Come on, be happy, life is beautiful when you can enjoy every little achievement '.

The next morning Peter had a different look in his eyes. Happiness could be seen through them.

Marcela Mora

We are never alone

“Why me?” There was nobody around. “Why me? What have I done wrong?” Those were the phrases that he kept saying. “Why me?” He repeated them several times but the only answer he could get was the song of birds and the sound of falling leaves. March had come and with Autumn his wife’s disease. Hopeless, Peter Trevor sat on a wooden bench.

The Trevor couple had led a quiet kind of life. Both of them were honest professionals and they had known each other since childhood. They had two children, a boy and a girl, who were graced with beauty, intelligence and a good heart. The Trevor couple had worked really hard to have a comfortable home. They had always contributed to their church by sending money to help the needy. All in all, they had always had an easy and happy life. But during the fall, on their fifteenth anniversary, the most striking news pushed Peter to deep pain and confusion, his wife was diagnosed with lung cancer. Peter just couldn’t accept losing his wife, the love of his life.

Sitting on that lonely wooden bench in that square, accompanied only by his sorrow, Peter cried and cursed recalling the black word: cancer. Endless minutes went by. He couldn’t put up with this burden, with this loss, with this end. One yellow leaf fell on his shoulder. A soft breeze took it away while a tall boy with fair skin and dark hair, wearing loose white clothes, sat on the same bench Peter was sitting on. Probably Peter wouldn’t have noticed him if the boy hadn’t said: “Excuse me, could you tell me where I can find my...” “Sorry?” said Peter not even looking at the boy, “Here you have; go away”, said Peter passing some coins to him. The boy reached Peter’s shoulder with his small hand, “I don’t want any money. I was hoping you could help me find happiness.” Disconcerted by the unusual question, Peter raised his head and looked into the boy’s eyes. A deep green look caught his attention; in a way he felt protected, full of peace. “Excuse me, what did you say?” and the boy repeated “I was wondering if you could help me find happiness.” Peter whispered the word happiness; then he led his look to the horizon and closed his eyes. He began to cry, “I can’t help you, the only thing I can think of right now is my sadness.”

“Why are you sad?”

“I’m losing my wife, I’m losing everything.”

“At least you have something.”

“What?” asked Peter again confused.

“Yes, at least you have something... do you realize that if it hurts so much now it is because she made you so happy that you would feel lost without her?”

“But why me! Why do I have to lose her? Jesus, why?”

“You are asking the wrong question. Instead of asking why you’re losing her, you should be asking what you can do to prevent your family from falling apart. Your children will need you”...

“But I will need my wife!”

"But your wife will be there for you, every time your daughter smiles and every time you look into your boy's sparkling eyes."

"I can't lose her; we were a team. She can't leave me!"

"She is not leaving you; she is just going home."

"Here is her home" screamed Peter, "we are her home, our children are."

With a peaceful voice, the boy said: "She needs you more than ever before but your selfishness, your fear at being alone doesn't let you see that your wife is going to be there for you. She will accompany you, she will be there every time you need her. You just have to think about every single moment you were happy. Can't you see that..."

"Why are you telling me this?" Peter interrupted him, "I'm not afraid of being left alone, I'm not..." He cried again. The boy led Peter's head to his shoulder. Peter, as if he were a little boy, cried his painful sorrow. "I'm scared; I don't know what to do without her. I'm so afraid, what will I say to my children when they ask me where their mom is?"

"Just tell them the truth, that their mom is in the best place God has chosen to keep our beloved people: in our hearts. You will have to teach them that, no matter what, you will stay together as a family. It doesn't matter if your bodies are no longer together, the important truth is that your souls will be; because you were able to grow from a powerful love, as a real family. Can you get it now?"

"I think so..." Peter thought deeply "My whole life has been so wonderful, even during bad times, we were always graced by true love; and that love brought us two miracles. I have so much, so many things...Nevertheless, it is very painful."

"I know, and that's why it's so hard to understand."

"If only I could make her stay; she has so much life to live, so much love to give..."

"She will, don't worry, from a different place. She will be in your hearts; she will give you her deep love from there."

Peter opened his eyes when another gust of wind dried his tears.

"Where is happiness?" Peter looked for the boy, who had already disappeared; but his voice was still around Peter: "Where is happiness?"

"In my hope, my love, in my strength, even in my tears. My happiness is in my children and in their future."

"Why are you thankful?"

"For everything, for every single minute I was given to enjoy with my wife, with my family."

"Don't forget our conversation," the soft voice whispered, fainting in the wind. "I'm always with you."

Peter felt something in his pocket. To his surprise, a little white pigeon came out of it. Hanging from its neck there was a small piece of paper with a message in lightblue handwriting: "I'll be with you, whenever you can't take it anymore. Your angel."

Bless me father for I have sinned

Clyde worked in the refrigeration sector of a meat-packing company, he was in charge of the cold storage of meat and, although it was an exhausting job, he had developed a taste for it. He was the only one with access to the cold store; in fact, he was the only one acquainted with the trick to prevent the door from closing, and he knew from bitter experience how important that was. One day, not long after starting working for the company, he entered the cold store to examine some carcasses of cows hanging in there and forgot to hold the door, which almost immediately closed. He despaired thinking the door could not be opened from inside and nobody could hear him screaming. His heart started beating faster and faster, he knew his temperature would fall drastically as a result of the exposure to cold and his metabolism would slow down and eventually collapse; he would die of hypothermia within a few hours if no one realized he was in there, he was terrified. Luckily, one of his fellow workers opened the door and saw him lying half conscious on the floor, without hesitation he wrapped Clyde in blankets and called an ambulance. Clyde saved his life. Maureen said the only reason he was alive was because the Lord had worked a miracle, and for the first time in his life he was willing to believe, to believe in miracles, to believe in God.

Maureen... Mau, she used to visit his work place from time to time to get some meat and he liked that. They had been married for fifteen years and they had been happy the first two or three of those years, until Mau had a miscarriage and, as a consequence, a nervous breakdown. Then, their marriage started falling apart. Clyde insisted therapy could help her but she joined a prayer group instead, religion became an emotional crutch for her and she was getting better. Clyde was very happy. About a year later she was pregnant again and then the twins were born. Clyde thought that because of motherhood she would spend more time at home, with her family, but Mau began getting more and more involved in the group's activities and she even took the twins with her.

Suddenly, religion was all she talked about, she said she had had a "life-changing experience", that she had found "the true love of God, the path of enlightenment", and it seemed that path did not lead to Clyde. He was a "Bible-hater", she had told him once when he refused to go to church with her and the twins. Their home looked like a sanctuary, full of "holy objects", as she called the crucifixes, holy pictures and religious

scriptures one bumped into everywhere in the house. There were religious chants, prayers, sacrifices, penance, the bowing of heads before meals; and everything was compulsory, if not, "the Lord, who is omniscient and omnipotent, will never show you the path that will deliver you from sins, immorality, ignorance and any other type of impurity", Maureen used to say.

Clyde was fed up with all her religious devotion, he had never been a committed believer and she would never accept the idea of getting divorced, so he just told her he was leaving her but he wanted to see the children on a regular basis. Maureen got mad, she said marriage was sacred and that the Supreme Being knew he was not being a good husband or father and he would be punished for that, anyway Clyde left. He used to go to the house daily, taking meat, groceries and other stuff he knew they needed; she always took the goods but she never let him see the kids. Once, he was so furious he seized her by her neck, he could have strangled her but he didn't; he thought he heard a voice saying "You shall not kill". How ironic all the "Bible-hater" could think of was a voice telling him one of the commandments!?

The following week Clyde phoned Maureen and told her to meet him at his job and pick up some meat, he would be waiting for her before closing time. When she arrived there all the workers had gone, she looked for him but she couldn't find him. As she was leaving her coat on a chair, she saw the door of the cold store was open and, thinking Clyde might be in there, she went into calling his name but nobody answered; instantly, the door closed behind her back. She panicked, but then she thought Clyde would see her coat and open the door; she sat on the cold floor waiting for him, he would not take long. Minutes, or hours, - she couldn't tell, she lost all sense of time- went by, she could feel her body temperature falling, the shutting off of the blood flow, she was freezing. She was weak but decided to get up and look for something to force the door open, all she found were carcasses of animals hanging from a rail system. She thought she saw a shape in a corner and she approached it slowly, it was covered with a piece of cloth, she uncovered it and almost fainted, her eyes were full of horror, she was terror-stricken; it was Clyde!, he was dead and a note was pinned on his chest, it read: "Bless me Father for I have sinned".-

Laura Rodríguez Zato

Once in a lifetime

She was walking furiously and quickly. She was determined. Her life had no meaning, her parents did not understand her, her career was a complete disaster (at least for her) and she hadn't even been able to find the love of her life. As a consequence, she was convinced that she had no reason to keep on living. "Yes, this is the end," she thought, "what purpose does my life have? None". She asked and answered herself. She kept on walking. Her steps were secure and her eyes were full of anger. There she saw the bridge. The beautiful bridge she had once dreamed about was now the means of her destruction. The iron railings appeared tall, shiny and dangerous. "At least I'll die with glory," she thought.

The day was sunny and only a few clouds could be seen in the sky. Julia could enjoy neither the sun nor the clouds. She was wearing a tight white dress and sandals, and she was carrying nothing else but a little red book: "Guardian Angels appear once in a lifetime". She adored that book and used to believe strongly in its words. But not any longer. The book had proved to be fake and bogus. If guardian angels did appear... where was hers at this very moment? She couldn't answer that question and her fury grew bigger.

Finally she got to the bridge. Leaving the book at a side and taking her sandals off, she stood at the edge of the bridge and at the edge of her life too. She took a deep, deep breath: "Goodbye world!" she said in an extremely sad way... and when she was just about to jump a sudden shout was heard: "Excuse me... excuse me ...!" A very handsome, almost heavenly boy was shouting at her. She stepped backwards and turned around: "Yes?" she said with a broken voice. "Can you tell me the shortest way to Manchester?" he asked. "Oh, erm, you have to... erm... take... erm... the..." and she couldn't continue because she was at a loss for words. "Are you OK?" he asked curiously. "Oh... erm... sure... erm..." and tears started running all over her face. "No, you're not OK. Is something the matter? I know I can help you". His last words really called her attention. "Why are you that sure of your "helping" capacity?" she inquired ironically. "Well- he replied- because I was once in your place and, I can assure you, it is not worth it". "What do you know?" she asked angrily. "I have barely spoken to you and you're already trying to fix my life!" Silence reigned for a few minutes. But then, all of her anger disappeared when he took her hand softly and made her sit on the floor. The peace in his eyes seemed to cast a spell on Julia and she remained quiet waiting for him to speak. Instead of speaking, he took the book in his hand, examined the book for a while and then he said: "Guardian angels, eh?" Do you believe in this book? I really think you should" he added. "I used to, but not any longer. If angels exist, how come mine is not here?" she

complained. "Yes, how come?" he added and his face lit up in a mysterious manner. "What were you doing exactly?" "I think you already know- she said- and besides... it's none of your business!" But he ignored her words and added: "You're single, right?"

"Yes," she answered.

"But you've got lots of friends, right?"

"Yes," she said.

"Do you study or work?"

"Both, but I can't finish my career and I don't earn much," she replied.

"So... you're not homeless?"

"No," she claimed.

"So you have a home, money, friends, a career and a job..."

"Yes, but..." she mumbled.

"Do you have parents?" he interrupted her.

"Yes, unfortunately."

"Unfortunately!? Why? Do they love you?"

"Yes, I think."

"And you love them, right?" he continued.

"Yes, very much." She added with sadness.

"So, you have a home, money, friends, a career, a job and a family. What is, then, your real problem? Young and beautiful, this is the way I would describe you... and lucky I should say."

Staring at the river, Julia looked confused. At this very moment, her life seemed to have a meaning. "I'm being so selfish. My life is pretty fine. Now I know that I will be someone. How stupid I was to think of committing suicide!" She turned her eyes from the exquisite landscape trying to get a look at the boy's eyes which had given her such a moment of quietness but to her surprise... he was not there. She looked for him all over the place but she couldn't find him. "Who was he then?" she thought. "At least he could have said goodbye... and I couldn't even thank him!"

So she put her sandals on and took her book in her hand but, all of a sudden, the wind opened the book on the very first page. An inscription written in golden ink could be seen: "We do appear, Julia. Please, believe in us... and I know you appreciate my advice. I'll be watching you."

That night Julia slept peacefully and happily. A nice pair of warm wings were hugging her. From that day onwards, she started to believe in angels again... and so will you.

Celina Pérez

Once again

Days were going to be hard for her without Peter. She looked at their eldest son driving the car. Something her husband used to do "What a good job we have done," she thought. They had brought up two marvelous sons. Edward was about to get his degree at university and was planning to get married the following year. Thomas was finishing secondary school. "It's a pity that Edward won't have his father with him in his wedding," she thought as they drove away from the cemetery.

Some days passed and Sara couldn't stop thinking about her dead husband and her mother. Sara's father had died at 45, more or less the same age as Peter's, leaving a whole family alone. And indeed her mother felt very lonely in those days. Sara and his brothers got married and left their mother within two years after their father's death. Sara could not understand how she was able to cope with so much loneliness until she died. She really admired her for that and knew that she should have to do the same.

Her mother was a devout catholic and accepted the death of her husband quite naturally, or so it seemed. She never thought of getting married again, not even of giving herself the chance to meet other people. Sara thought the same way. How could she possibly have his eye on another man? That would mean being unfaithful to God and to Peter's memory. What would the people in church think if they saw her going in with another man? And the family? They could never accept a new husband for her. "If my mother did it, I can do it. God is the best company I can have for the rest of my life," she concluded.

Two years passed and her eldest son got married and the other moved to another city to go on to university. In her early forties, she knew that her job and her beloved friends would be enough for her.

Her job didn't prove to be such a good company. It was becoming more and more monotonous and every day there was more work to do. Some new staff was needed and one day three new men were taken. She was assigned the task of training one of them. As if she didn't have enough with her own work, now she was given more. Eventually this man in his mid thirties turned up to be nice and learned very quickly.

Some months passed and one morning she got to her job as early as usual. Max, her former apprentice, was standing by the door of her office. This time he didn't give her a smile, he could hardly look at her in the eye. He went up to her and confessed he was in love with her.

"How is that possible, you hardly know me," she said showing surprise.

"I've got to know you a lot during these months. From the first moment I saw you I knew that there was a lot in you. You probably don't know me because you didn't give yourself the chance to see me as a friend."

And he was right. Sara had been determined not to get close to any man. She was absolutely puzzled and told him that nothing serious could go on between them. However, this gentle and shy young man found the way to win her heart and eventually she doubted about her feelings.

She felt very guilty and asked God every night to allow her to get rid of that feeling. She kept with her a picture of her mother and from time to time she looked at it and said: "Make me as strong as you were so as not to let Peter down." But her heart was in love. She decided to ask her boss to transfer her to another section in the company and told Max not to phone her again.

She seemed to be strong, but everything was in ruins inside her. It was hard to avoid seeing him knowing that he was so near. She was determined to let the feeling die inside her heart and not say a word to anybody. She decided to take some time off her job and visit Thomas for a week. He needed help at this time of the year.

She started to prepare her suitcase. She had not used it for at least ten years. Peter wasn't the kind of person who enjoyed leaving home for a long time and dragged Sara into this idea. She dusted the suitcase and opened it. She found an old bag that had belonged to her mother. After her mother died, she had never opened it. She felt at that time that she was disappointing her mother and opened the bag probably to feel some relief. There were a lot of letters written from a man to her mother. She couldn't help reading them all.

As usual, that night she prayed, but this time it was different. She thanked God for giving her such a clear sign of what she had to do. And she was absolutely sure that it was a sign from Peter and her mother, too. She was going to see Marx at the company next morning and invite him to have dinner. There were a lot of things to talk about. She was also going to phone Thomas to tell him that there was a change of plans; she wouldn't be able to visit him. She felt absolutely excited about meeting her sons and telling them about the news, about her beautiful chance of a lifetime. Things for her now were a bit better than for her poor mother; thus she realized there was no need for her to keep it secret.

Germán Zárate

Proverbs of politicians of hell

Never judge a politician by his cover.

In God we trust, all politicians pay cash.

Never look a gift politician in the wallet.

A politician in need is no friend indeed.

The early politician catches the money.

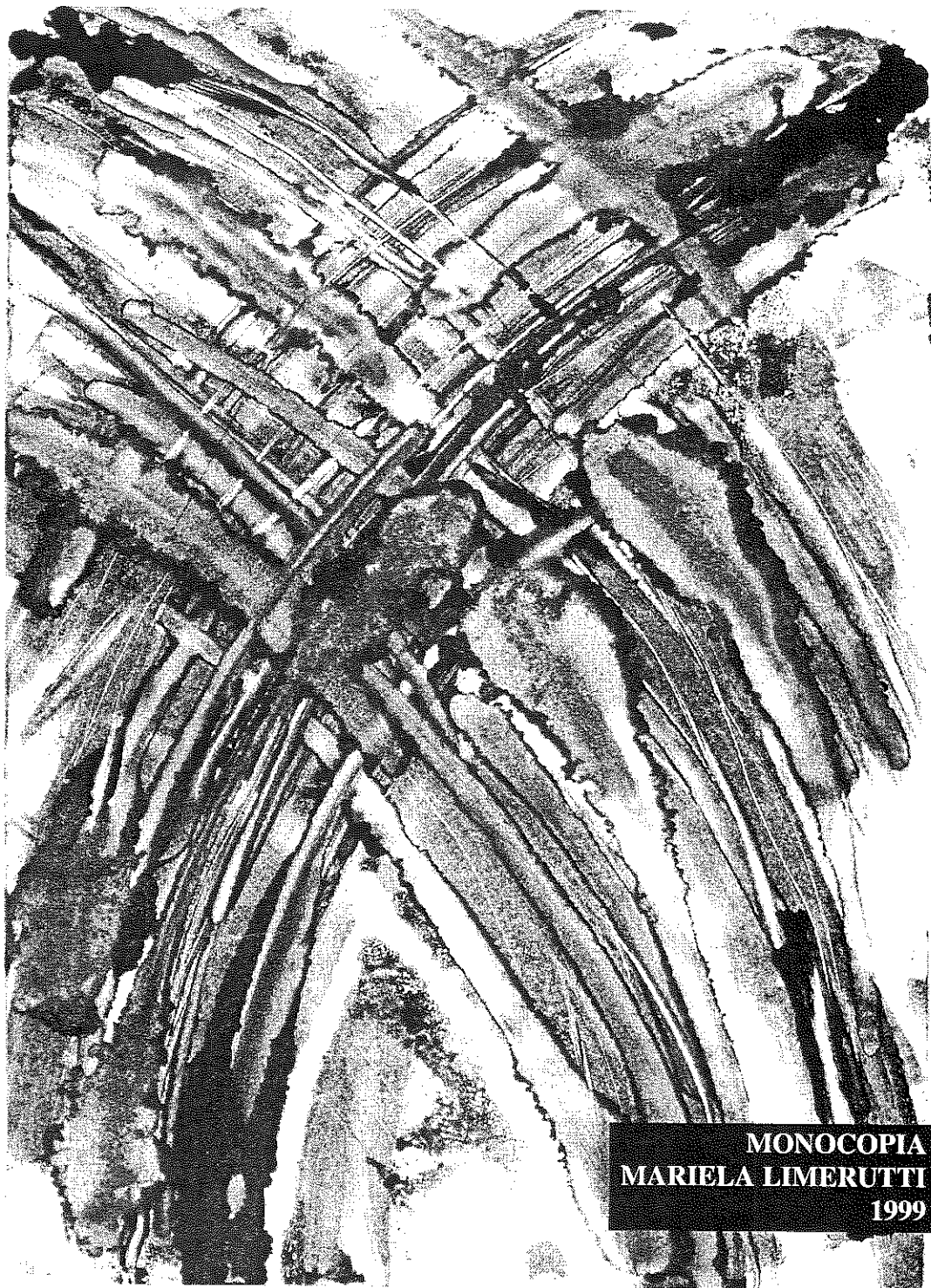
A burnt electorate dreads politicians.

Too many politicians spoil the country.

Late to bed, late to rise makes a politician wealthy, wealthy and wise.

If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up in politics.

Laura Rodriguez Zato



MONOCOPIA
MARIELA LIMERUTTI
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