

Criteria Estertor

Beans

A certain world has lost its sense of the natural. But another world lives under its sign. I once wrote *The Last Man*, as I wrote *Demopolis*, *Yesterday's World*, a science fiction essay that could well make it to the cinema, if only someone would take it.

In school, I was told that I knew more than I seemed to know. It is still like that now. But I persist, like others, inquiring about the nature of things, of life, of existence, let's say that I always looked for answers, because the questions, the question, were being asked day by day. Rome and Pavia were not made in a day.

Then, I saw Lisbon in those days as a so-called rural and at the same time cosmopolitan southern city (with all that this implies), where it was easy and tempting to "pull the wool over the eyes" or sweep the trash under the rug. For many years I did not believe this, but then I realized that this is how it is, that is, people in general think they are very important, they shy away from open dialogue with strangers, they fart in the subway, they refuse to serve us a simple coffee, as happened to me yesterday in the Corte Inglês...

I've seen tourists terrified by the smell of the subway, of snitching and droppings, that is, what one of my friends would have died of a stroke for...

This means that not everyone washes every day, or at least once a week. But in France it's worse, nobody cares, in other words, France has been in the sack since the eighties of the last century, when the Portuguese lost their influence, because they were the ones who put it in place...

On that day of waste and contingency, a friend of mine appeared to me at the conveniently priced steak restaurant, Justino, funny enough, had the same name as one of my characters in my books, yes, the ones that would never be *best-sellers* because I was too much of an anthropologist for philosophy provided...

I had a frank, almost philosophical conversation with him about friendship and the problems here in the borough, while a crowd of young Americans passed by, some secular, others servants of a beautiful church in the East of Lisbon. Those who call themselves "evangelists" invited me to the church in Chelas, because they already were in my grandmother's time, in the early eighties, in Pombais, on the edge of the Leiria pine forest.

So that day I was green enough to miss the macrobiotic dishes from the university cafeterias and the Spiral, I walked down Liberal Avenue with a certain sense of ownership, if only of my faculties, and the opportunity to come home, watch some TV and sleep, not without first feeding Farp, a black kitten that had been with me for some time, a few months, that I did not dare to neuter, because somehow I was also holding on, that is, I was not neutered nor was my desire of any consequence, being made and satiated almost always only by looking, because smelling did not achieve much, due essentially to the tobacco habit ...

Then I thought: it was still worth it, not everything was bad, after all I was in a city that I love, because I know it like the back of my hand, as the song says, not that it is a big village, which I already have one, accentuated by my theoretical look, but because it was both cosmopolitan and rural, with its vegetable gardens and maybe it had its *Lisbon State of Mind*...Yeah, I had even ordered a T-Shirt from the Angolan photocopy shop. I don't even know what would have become of it, maybe my nephew would have taken it from me, but it doesn't matter, it doesn't hurt, or if it hurts it feels good, and besides, I could make more, more elaborate and interesting ones, or just smoke a cigarette, watch

a little TV and shift my point of interest to the side, not in still point, but in point of reflection, which is always boiling when it is a *Thinker*...

Victor Mota