

THE MISSION IN THE ENVELOPE

The mission was delivered to me upon a yellowed sheet of paper, folded with a precision whose insistence did not suggest care, but rather the persistence of a gesture repeated across time, as though that fold — exact, invariable, almost ritualistic — had passed through successive hands without alteration, awaiting intact the intrusion of my own, and within that very preservation, within that refusal to change, there already insinuated itself a foreign will, a form of permanence that did not depend upon whoever enacted it, but upon that which demanded it, as though its transmission were not an act but a continuity, a repetition that neither began nor ended, but simply insisted.

There was no signature, no seal, no mark whatsoever by which its origin might be reconstructed; only an instruction, stripped to the very limit of all human inflection, whose coldness did not reside in its brevity but in its absolute absence of origin:

to infiltrate,

to observe,

and to dissolve myself — not all at once, not abruptly, but with a sustained, repeated, almost devotional discipline — into the proximity of another existence, until every distinction ceased to remain discernible, until distinction itself ceased to possess meaning.

I was given a name that was not my own.

Adrián.

And with it, a meticulously articulated genealogy, a sequence of memories whose efficacy did not depend upon their truthfulness, but upon the insistence with which they were to be inhabited, as though repetition alone sufficed to establish, in the place of what had been lived, a form of beginning, a fiction persistent enough to replace that which, if it had ever existed, was no longer recoverable —

or worse still,

no longer necessary.

The target was Evangelina.

Not her elimination, nor her capture, nor her exposure, but something more imprecise, more prolonged, more unsettling in its formulation: a sustained approach, insistent, almost circular, until every distance — physical, psychological, identitarian — became not merely minimal, but unnecessary, superfluous, as though proximity were intended not to obtain something, but to annul every difference, every separation, every notion of two.

Evangelina did not entirely belong to the space she occupied, or more precisely, she seemed to do so with a slight displacement, as though her presence obeyed a logic subtly shifted from that surrounding her, and that minimal dissonance — imperceptible at first, nearly deniable — acquired, through sustained observation, an increasing density, insistent, difficult to ignore, as though within her there concentrated not an anomaly, but an earlier form of order, something that did not fit because it did not belong to the same moment.

Her skin, pale beyond nuance, did not reflect light but contained it, detained it, absorbed it without returning it; her dark hair descended with a heaviness that did not accompany movement but delayed it, as though every gesture traversed some prior layer before manifesting itself, as though everything within her occurred with a delay that was not clumsiness, but resistance.

And yet it was not within these features that the disturbing element resided, but within her way of looking, within that fixation that could not be reduced to attention nor curiosity, because within it there seemed to operate a silent calculation, a reading that did not exhaust itself upon the visible, but insisted — again and again, again and again — upon that which precedes, upon that which underlies, as though she did not observe what I am, but what, at some point, I should have been,

or what I never became.

To sustain that gaze was not difficult because of its intensity.

But because of its persistence.

Because it did not yield.

Because it did not withdraw.

Because it returned.

The approach unfolded with the expected gradualness, though that very predictability seemed itself part of some anterior structure, of a design that did not unfold forward but repeated itself, as though the steps we took — encountering one another, speaking, remaining — were not decisions but reiterations, as though we were not advancing, but remembering something we had never lived.

I spoke to her of a childhood that had never existed, of affections designed with precision, of losses whose intensity had been measured before being spoken, and yet, within the very act of narrating them, something within that fiction began to acquire an unexpected consistency, as though repetition — not content, not truth, but insistence — sufficed to render it real,

or at least indistinguishable from the real.

She listened.

She always listened.

But within that listening there was no surprise.

No discovery.

There was recognition.

A recognition without origin.

With time, proximity ceased to remain a strategy and became a condition, and yet, even in moments of greatest closeness — when contact seemed sufficient, when breathing seemed shared, when the illusion of synchrony appeared attainable — a minimal dissonance persisted, a vibration that did not disappear, did not yield, insisted, as though that which brought us nearer were, at the same time, that which separated us.

It was then that observation ceased to remain a means and became a necessity.

I began to register, to insist, to repeat: her gestures, her variations, her interruptions, her deviations, as though within that repetition there existed a key, a key that never fully appeared yet never ceased insinuating itself; and yet that same attention began to turn back upon me, to replicate itself, to return itself, and at certain moments — brief, but inevitable — the sensation of being observed, not as subject but as material, as something to be read, reconstructed, dismantled, acquired a consistency I could no longer ignore.

It was not surveillance.

It was reflection.

The night upon which I found the document was no different, and yet it was, as though every difference had awaited that precise point in order to manifest itself; the rain insisted, repeated, struck with a regularity that dissolved time, and it was within that context — almost without decision — that I noticed the sheet, the fold, the shape.

The same shape.

The same repetition.

Recognition was immediate.

And understanding,

inevitable.

Not because of what it said.

But because it existed.

From that moment onward, nothing changed.

And nothing was ever the same again.

We persisted.

Because there was no alternative.

Because to stop would have meant admitting there was nothing toward which to advance.

The final night did not begin.

It repeated itself.

We approached one another.

As though we had already done so.

As though we had always done so.

Contact occurred.

And within it there was no union, but imperfect superimposition, a fitting that did not fit, a coincidence that did not coincide.

The kiss did not resolve.

It confirmed.

And then—

the necessity.

The necessity to pass through.

To open.

To insist.

My hands descended, and that which had been contact — surface, boundary, form — transformed itself into pressure, into opening, into insistence, as though skin were nothing more than a provisional layer whose sole function had been delaying the inevitable, and when it finally yielded — irregular, fragmentary, insufficient — what appeared was not an interior, but another continuity, another surface, another repetition, and that repetition, far from stopping us, pushed us further.

Further.

Further.

My fingers sank, pulled, tore, separated, and the skin began peeling away in uneven fragments, in remnants that resisted only slightly before yielding, and it was then the first scream emerged.

Not as rejection.

But as affirmation.

Evangelina screamed.

She screamed and smiled.

She screamed and smiled.

And within that simultaneity — within that impossibility — something became irreversibly real.

Her hands did the same.

Repeated.

Insisted.

Tore away.

The blood appeared late, thick, dark, covering everything, though no longer as boundary, but as continuity, as part of the process, as another form of repetition.

We screamed.

Both of us.

Not to stop.

To continue.

Every tear did not distance.

It brought nearer.

Every fragment did not destroy.

It revealed.

Or promised to reveal.

But no—

There was nothing.

There was nothing.

There was nothing.

Only more surface.

More matter.

More repetition.

And yet we continued.

Smiling.

Screaming.

Tearing away.

As though within that insistence — within that repeated destruction — there might finally exist something that was not false.

Something that was not surface.

Something that was not repetition.

But no.

When we finally ceased, it was not by decision.

It was because there remained nothing left to repeat.

And at that point, in that instant wherein every difference had been abolished, I understood that what we had sought — that origin, that beginning, that first gesture — had never existed.

There had been no beginning.

And for that reason—

there could be no ending.

If anyone reviews the records, they will find only an interruption.

Nothing more.

And yet,

at the very limit of that exhausted insistence,

there persisted a certainty:

that that which might once have been called humanity

had never been anything more than a repetition

without origin

sustaining itself

until it tore

itself apart.