

**DIEGO
MAENZA**



**ALL LOVE LETTERS
ARE RIDICULOUS**

TRANSLATED BY GASTÓN JOFRE TORRES



Diego Maenza

All Love Letters Are Ridiculous

Аннотация

Eloisa, an old woman who in her youth was brutally sexually abused by three masked men, remembers on the last day of her life the stark story that marked her. She tells it to one of the nurses in the sanatorium in which she is dying while allowing her to scrutinize a ringed booklet that contains printed all the letters that she exchanged in his youth with Abelard, the only love of her life.

Maenza reflects on the psychological, ethical and philosophical aspects of western love and weaves a sweet and intelligent discourse where time, love rites and erotic presence are subtly addressed. It includes a singular vision of writing and a very particular and symbolic Theory of Affection that is used in its analysis of the metaphysics of colors, the zodiacs, the sensations coming from the senses, the imaginary of the alchemist beasts, the classic elements and the arcana of the Tarot. In an age where relationships are made with the dizzying modernity and liquid love swarms (according to Bauman), "All love letters are ridiculous" claims that secular ritual of love correspondences, increasingly in decline, and he apologizes for the slowness that Kundera claims for romances. "All love letters are ridiculous" is constructed as a parodic narration of romance novels, but at the same time it is a modern dissertation about love coupled

with a story of affection and an ending of tragedy that brings taboo themes like abuse, reification of women and contemporary violence.

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are ridiculous
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FOREWORD

Abelard looks up at the sky. Smiling, satisfied, as he hasn't been for days, as he hasn't been for weeks. The clouds crowd in a hazy gray, foreboding. His nervous and excited legs lead him down the sidewalk, but his mind is imagining the imminent encounter with Eloisa, the love of his life. Under his right armpit he has the manuscript, squeezing it as if protecting it in advance from the coming storm. He feels the breeze brush his face, ruffle his thick hair, caress his cheekbones. Abelard looks down at the ground. Look at the trash that vibrates with the wind. His feet go down to the road, carefree, like his dreamy instinct, like his restless eyes that go astray again in the shapes of the cloudscape. That is why he does not notice the car that crosses the avenue quickly, that is why he does not listen to the last and useless moment the desperate horn of the imprudent driver. The metal of the vehicle impacts Abelard's body. Her skin rustles, her flesh lacerates, its bones are destroyed, its beaten anatomy is ejected several meters in the same direction that the breeze carries. Certain splashes of his blood are confused, mixed, integrated, with the vermilion hood of the car. The boy's head hits the pavement and causes trauma. The rain begins to fall, very delicately. The most carefree pedestrian, whose inquisitive nature of the human being will be more focused on verifying the circumstantial details than on directing his attention to the center

of the incident (perhaps with the intention of materially taking advantage of the tragic situation), will be the only person who will notice the four words that head the manuscript that has ended up near a sewer, those four words that are already beginning to dissolve throughout the page due to the insipient drizzle, and that constitute the title of the work that yearns to publish the badly wounded young Abelard: Theory of affects.

CHAPTER ONE

To talk about her (I have always said and maintain it) is to talk about the least common creature. What could I say about her that does not sound like something hackneyed or an easy phrase, a hackneyed topic? The problem does not lie in the lack of anecdotes on which to speak. The complication turns out to be the opposite, because in fact there are too many things that I could comment on his life. The issue is that I will not do it because he will start telling this story. And I must take it easy. Detailing his life will be an interesting process, but it could be an inexcusable slip on my part to err for a moment. Perhaps some other more talkative interlocutor is the appropriate person to capture his essence with accuracy and objectivity; However, my claim is much more ambitious: I need, in this process, to reveal what she has meant to me. Where can I find the most crystalline source of truth if I can not find it in her? For her lips the lie is forbidden and this empowers her to do with me what she wants. Her struggle to be a woman has forged the most utopian animal that carries a desperate idolatry towards life. She likes loving... She likes loving me. To enter into details of her being would be to desecrate her. Have believers tried to describe their gods? But I must take the risk, even at the cost of not escaping the attempt unscathed. Her raw and stately character, the haughty breasts that draw curves in the air, the voice of sticky and sweet melody, the

mischievous gaze pinching me in indelible caresses, her practical intelligence and generous spirit, the invisible claw of her hips hitting the wind in her peculiar way of walking, her sense of humor, the skillful smile designing her picaresque profile. This is her. The prototype of the perfect woman. A fictional being transmuted into reality. Her name is Eloisa.

My name was Eloisa and I am no longer young. Not after everything that happened. Even over the years and despite the youth of my cells, I found myself eaten away by a spiritual old age that I have preserved until today and that never left my veins. The body is sometimes the reflection of the soul and other times its torture. Because we were born in a time and in a space where beauty is synonymous with misery, although they insist on saying the opposite.

I was slim and beautiful, graceful and fragile like the gazelle that shows its slenderness without realizing that hungry hyenas and starving wolves lurk from the shadows.

Today, telling you this, young friend, I may even know what each of them thought at the time of the incident. The first, the fat one had looked at my thin, brown legs that were appealing for their voracious prey. The second one, the strongest looked at my nascent breasts, small buttons that protruded from my blouse and prompted the man to bite them throughout the work. And the third one, the young man was awakened by the luminous showiness of my turned and firm buttocks based on aerobics and contemporary dances. They were all pigs.

LETTER ONE

I draw you, as if outlining in the soft thicket of the rain an imaginary and perfect face whose precise dimples balance in parallel with the cheeks. I make you smile, making your pains and your customary obligations sleep. They handle your face like puppeteers of your destiny. I make you live a dreamed longing implanted in the depths of you.

Starting a love letter is as difficult as starting a story that does not contain some deficient element that could reveal the writer's full satisfaction with his work. Complacency that, in my opinion, will never be filled, in the same way that it will not be in this love letter.

Transcribing feelings sometimes becomes an almost insurmountable difficulty. Protect the task of the sculptor who must make the fine nose of the model and its beautiful testicles sprout from the hard marble. Heroic is the task of the painter who, mixing his varnishes, achieves on the canvas the perfection of an ideal jaw, striking small breasts that contrast with the splendor of a vulva made up of hair. No less arduous and complex, if not impossible, is the work of the poet who, perched on his platform of lucidity, must bring to the ungraspable what is palpably comfortable, and in a paradoxically analogous case, return the thanks that without his intervention would be inaccessible.

I find myself with this wall at this moment, not as a painter, sculptor or poet, that I do not have so many faculties. I collide

with this wall not as an artist but as a human being. My soul (I name this way the set of my few qualities, do not think beyond that) is proud to belong to the side that praises the condition of being human above all artifice of the world, no matter how sublime it may be. First of all we are human beings and as a human I express myself.

Sometimes I ask myself why I waste time writing. The answer cannot be simple. To report the ills that concern society? No, definitely. To dismiss personal problems by turning literature into a great psychological masturbation? Neither. To achieve fame and wealth, or to rejuvenate the way we use language (not the organ but the verbal communication system)? No. And I explain: My role model in his attitude is the Shadow Writer. I only think about writing and the rest doesn't matter.

Perhaps the answers are less pragmatic than is generally believed. I try to answer: I write to understand better my surroundings. Perhaps the answer is the same one that I give myself every time I question why I am used to reading: To become more human.

Do I become more human by writing love letters to you? Does love grow because I write a letter? Can love grow as babies or toads or rivers grow? Or could it be that when I write a letter to you little by little I am detaching (as if it were an infinite fractal) the pieces that constitute whole love and in this way little by little you are running out of my love? Does love diminish as an old man or as roast meat or as rotten fruit? Perhaps the only valid answer

is this: Writing raises questions, irresolutions, in the same sense that trying to describe the marked smell of your hair makes me so confused, opaque compared to what my head spits on me. Or in the same way that your face becomes at this moment the word that escapes me, or like the praise towards your eyes that slips down my throat with the perplexity of someone who is ecstatic and no longer has pleasure for stories or poems.

No, it's not that either. I do not know. I'm not sure.

Yours, Abelard.

AFFECT

Affect arises from the pancreas and is diluted by our bloodstream until it returns to the hypothalamus. It is amber in color that symbolizes happiness and the search for well-being. It is manifested in infrasound and with a floral smell. In the universal symbology it is represented by the Moon. In the Tarot cards I identify it with The Strength, which provides control and security. In the western zodiac I personify it with the sign Virgo, attached to spirituality, order and intelligence. In the Chinese zodiac I find it in The Rabbit, full of prudence, tenderness and harmony. Affect is Liquid and it goes to the North riding a Unicorn because it is virginal.

CHAPTER TWO

As it usually happend in the mating process of the human race, our lives were brought together by an arbitrary fate. She is fifteen years old and in the splendor of menstruation; I am fourteen and in the delusions of masturbation. It sufficed as a pretext an occasional encounter, a fair of the village and five of the most scandalous friends to start our relationship.

She was the most beautiful girl of the school and I was an aspiring suitor who began to stop studying because of the new philosophy of love.

For me, the beginning of our relationship was sweet. For her, not so much. The motivation of her approach was encouraged in an effort to maintain a romance not with me but with a relative. The irony (and why not say it, romantic) is that in the process she ended up falling in love with me. I conquered her or we conquered each other.

Perhaps she intends to explain the facts by resorting to complicated abstractions, which a fool would venture to specify in a couple of words. But I point this out, my goal keeps ambition.

Her overflowing joy against my constant battle with melancholy; her charisma and intelligence reflected in the contours of her brooding and vivacious eyes every time an idea addressed her or every occasion fumbling evasions by the depths of the imagination to excuse herself in front of her parents

for our furtive dates, in front of my philosophical pretensions; her mania for dancing and my mania for writing. Everything was unjustifiable and yet, dear reader, beloved reader, you will understand that for us has been the most intense relationship that have sustained people in the world and I hope to communicate that impression properly.

Night fell with surprise at the end of the summer. I left the dance class that a young and beautiful European instructor had begun to deliver in the village and took place in evening hours on the premises of the institute where I studied. I remember that that day we had rehearsed a Turkish dance that I would never dance after the event. The mother of one of my mates offered to take me home in her car. I refused. I wanted to walk and clarify certain ideas of youth.

I took the longest alley that borders the teak trees and wraps the road in darkness. The stars protruded without timidity and a large moon made the stones shine like magic static fireflies.

Fate wanted the three birds of prey to emerge from the gloom. The big man approached me with the mask of an archangel. He did not say words and he would never do so during that anguish night, but stood in the middle of the road and opened his horizontal arms to stop me and I realized he was the head of the group. The other two silhouettes appeared. A young, thin man and not so tall, with an adolescent complexion, wore a skull mask. He said You can't pass, and the sound of his voice confirmed his youth. The tall individual was covered by the mask of a goat. His

voice was thick as his stomach and he also chided me by ordering me not to scream.

My body felt the paleness of fear. My thoughts as well as my body were paralyzed. My hair stood on end when feeling the forced contact with those three beasts. As if that fat goat had been a witch and his threat had been a spell, no matter how hard I tried I couldn't scream.

LETTER TWO

The morning I woke up with that kind of revelation that told me that I was really in love with you, I found myself startled. Perhaps I do not have the precise image and I am unable to describe the exact sensation, but the memory emerges almost clear, like a *déjà vu* waiting to be captured. At that moment she was just a friend to you, a circumstantial mate who you visited in your free time as the more adequate distraction to any teenager.

The other revealing morning, in which I suffered your epiphany, was when you gave me that innocent kiss. When I came home I fell down in the hammock and while the short wind touched my happy face, the memory of your touch evoked my almost epileptic feelings, in internal shocks like insects flitting my chest or candy worms poking my bowels.

Mornings... Maybe they are foreboding, or something like signs. The mornings at the institute were not pleasant if I did not find your presence at recess, even if it had only been for the occasional babble that emerged from your mouth, because I had to (as I once told you) take out your words with a scoop. Adequate

metaphor to define your reality at that time when you were a pale boy and very quiet. The important thing was to perceive our figures sitting on the sidewalk, with my legs together and my hands on my lap, and capture the lifting of my hairs interacting with the rhythm of your movements, as two magnetos strangers, who wanting to attract, only rub each other in a sway of tension. Those days I began to fall in love with you, with your long pauses of silence, with your gaze projected to the horizon in search of ideas and that encouraged me to explore the enigma of your prudence.

It was one morning when you waited for me in the pouring rain. You insisted on going to the meeting, without realizing that it was better to escape the flood and postpone our meeting until the rainbow exit. It was the morning which gathered us in the park of the village, in the corner christened with a fancy name and we'd use as a key on subsequent occasions, having always kept in mind that each couple has dubbed it with a name according to their relationship. It was one morning when you brushed my breasts with the impudence of your hormones. It was one morning (I want to dream it like this) when you caressed my buttocks over the fabric of my hateful denim pants.

It was one morning the first time we made love, although our love had already been made long before. Perhaps because at that time we only had those spaces in the early hours of the day, when the dawn was breaking and we woke up eager for the moment of meeting again. And then the afternoons would come, which

may not be so premonitory, but very special. When noon was approaching and I was jubilantly getting ready for meetings in the city.

Our love was maturing, and we matured together with it, these sad lives and remorseful for the distance, but happy because despite everything we felt close.

I remember the time when we did not have a phone and we sent messages thanks to a notebook and a momentary accomplice. And after all this happy remembrance, our contemporary situations come to my mind, these ones which we are building and destroying. A Russian man says that even the great reformers of the society have been criminals, because when they enacted new laws, they abolished the old ones preserved as sacred. For this I say that to keep on building, we demolish some things, exorcising our shortcomings, practicing a debugging in our relation to not let her die.

Maybe I can't fully understand you, it's most likely. But here I am, trying to tell you that I want to interpret the codes of your brokenness and take a path holding our hands. Perhaps not a radical, immediate solution, but one that serves to adjust the balance of this relationship that is teetering like a castle of cards on the seat of a full-fledged locomotive.

This letter is a symbol of my engagement. I feel bewildered because I warn that I have demanded too much to you and in your circumstances you have not been able to satisfy my whims, not because you did not want it but because the nature of your

sadness has absorbed you and I have not been able to warn you until now when the day is breaking, after this dawn of anguish.

Maybe the mornings are foreboding. Because just now the image of a hypothetical future arrives, with your warm body resting next to mine in a morning hug, in an awakening that is very dreamy, when the dew has distilled the sweat on the nearby herbs and the first twilight of the day bring out the warmth of the sun that is not from the sun but from our awakening.

Yours today, tomorrow and forever.

CHAPTER THREE

Our story started in high school. An exalted girl with her thunderous voice who complained to the rector. It was the graceful Eloisa. Thin, with her waist made of porcelain and her angelic face, his bow at rear and her charisma embroidered by the youthful energy. When we met, little by little, a closeness disguised of friendship brought us together. The most important moment of the breaks was being able to see her and greet her with my glance. The mornings insisted on turning me next to her. Gradually my illusions flickered; sometimes, exalted, it did not fit me, because she chose me to talk at break; other times I was sad, because she spent her minutes in the hubbub of her group of friends.

One morning, after leaving the institute and after having participated in some games of a fair that had been installed in the town, I walked through an alley not so common in my tours with the intention of heading home. I heard shouts behind me. In the distance, a gang of girls in scruffy uniforms were beckoning me to approach them. A park smudged with sand offered us its ground as the only seat. The comments full of puerilities (of which I was oblivious) of those nymphets prevented me from participating in the chat. I shone in my silence and they directed their glances at me. Tell her, a freckled girl told me, looking at Eloisa. Nerves took over my skin. I remembered that a week ago I

had awakened with the clairvoyance of being in love. I pretended to repeat a lovely speech that I had prepared some days ago, but the words flew to a dimension impossible to cross. I laughed demurely. It was when I heard the expression: Talk to her now. Eloisa's closest friend had said it and this stimulated me to speak. I looked at her. She sat cross-legged on the position of a lotus.

I did not have to spend more than a minute for a short kiss (short in terms of body but substantial within us) to be present under the expectant eyes of the girls. The youth crying of the companions who had been suspended in front of my declaration of love rumbled rhythmically, mysteriously unanimous, as prepared with priority, unveiling the consummation of the ritual when touching her mouth with mine and extinguish finally the lip virginity of her dear friend.

I was once a virgin. I always thought that he would be the first man I would give my purity. That tingling sensation came to me every time I finished reading his love letters, smart, passionate and ridiculous, as all love letters should be. After all we've had a relation for few years.

But I have strayed from the subject, dear friend, and since you insist on knowing my story I will proceed to try to finish it.

If there's anything it does not erase from my memory, rather than the visual record, it is the smell of his body. If someday they asked me to identify any of them for the nature of their build, I am sure that I would be wrong in my exploration than if I did because of their smells.

The silent man, who with the passage of time I preferred to give the name of dumb, had a particular smell of machine oil, as if his work had been to lubricate all day gears of complicated mechanisms. The rotund reeked of stale onions, a stench emanated from his armpits and intensified as drops of sweat fall from his forehead over my face. The young smelled of cinnamon, but at times marked in the environment a nauseating fragrance of marinated seafood.

The onslaught of the fat vermin was the most egregious. Supporting the weight of his gross and repulsive corpulence was the least compared to feeling it in my guts.

LETTER THREE

Does it suffer more who waits for the caress of its love, or that sadness that does not have anyone to wait for?

The poet

A Frenchman claimed that love letters are written starting without knowing what is going to be said and ending without knowing what has been said.

Whenever I write to you, I try to do it with a fixed idea that I am gradually developing. This is not something I invented, but I've extrapolated from a theory of the story, according to which the first three lines have almost the same importance that the last three. I have understood this formula as the definition of writing, in any field.

But let's get into the matter. An African philosopher has delved into the theme of love, and in her work which is entitled

Depth of the amatory arts she draws us showing the passive side of the desire which reaches its climax when it is satisfied and the diligent character of love as source activity. She condensed it into one powerful phrase: Love is infinite dissatisfaction. There is no more irrefutable truth.

This is the thesis that she develops throughout her work, sometimes a little hyperbolic, it is true, but never without charm. The interesting part is that phrase. Desire, according to her, culminates when it is satisfied. We wish something and when we get it, it is the end of the story.

But when the desire is linked to love, it is different: It is possible that the desire can route to love; the beloved, irrefutably we wish it, adds the philosopher.

Today I want you to feel that through my words I can caress you, and not with the prosaic friction that the delights of modesty pay us, but, but with these indelible caresses.

As the bards immortalize their loved ones, this humble practitioner would wish to glorify yourself with songs that refresh your youthful thirst and with poems that lull your afternoon. Say how much I am in love with you, virginal goddess, almighty, the owner of my love, the slave of my love, as the slave women of the Old Testament, with a candor of cosmos as Proserpina, infernal queen, or some pagan goddess. You are the Musa of poetry. You: a thousand women in one. A thousand goddesses in one. My Pandora, my Eva, my Mary Magdalena so purified for the kisses of Jesus.

You, who knows how to dominate my spirit, are my owner. And you are at every moment. Because your affable memory cures me of my melancholy: your words whispered in the wind and your face illuminating the space that could be empty unless you love this crazy man who lives only for you.

Your being is more hypnotic than a fantastic tale, as shrouded in mystery as a thriller, but at the same time so real and deep as a novel of realistic rawness. And there is no contradiction because sometimes you seem to me to be accurate and paradoxical.

With a vision that goes beyond the everyday, I try to reach you and delve into the depths of your love. And I get to see through your eyes (which are infinite receptacles of clairvoyance, as a crystal ball would be for an old woman versed in crystalomancy, but as delicate and pure as the Delphic oracle) that depth of mature woman, that indomitable strength that you carry deep, and makes me think of the strength of a god. Sometimes you seem to be too divine to proceed from earthly transcendence. Your ancestors can only be the same as those of Ariadne, divine caste of goddesses.

And meanwhile, I only have a dark minotaur that spins and spins in a circular maze of my brain, hoping that Theseus (divine love that professes me) breaks with his thread this brutal loneliness.

That is why I ask, along with the poet: Does it suffer more who expects the caress of its love, or that sadness that does not have anyone to wait for? Although the answer is obvious, the

pain, when it is the product of waiting for love, is not bitter, and my promise appears that even having you close I will never stop writing love letters to you. Because you love me and because I love you, because I wait for you, and because you wait for me too, but mostly because our love will always be an infinite dissatisfaction.

Yours, wherever.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude comes from hands and goes through our arms toward the spinal nerve. It is violet that personifies temperance and reflection. It is offered with a sweet taste and a woody perfume. Its symbolic effigy is Wood and it will always be carved in this material. In the Tarot cards I mold it with The Hung Man, who hangs on a tree branch and exemplifies dedication and sacrifice. In the western zodiac imagine I associate it with Capricorn, parent of all generosity. In the Chinese zodiac I reveal it in The Boar, who never keeps resentment and it has an altruistic spirit. Gratitude is Condensed and it goes to the west behind a Wolf that feeds on the old and praises the new.

CHAPTER FOUR

They marched during nine days so that my humanity entered the limpid portal of her house in the fifteen years party. I arrived early, with my bloody innocent gift (at that time my mother worked as a dressmaker and the present I brought her was a cut from a cheap cloth) and with a smile that camouflaged nervousness. Half an hour later I was sitting in the main room orchestrating the way not to go dancing. At the bottom, in the anteroom, angry voices of experts talks were intensified in the same proportion which increased the force of music. Surely there were their parents, relatives and close people, people of Saturday dinners, all enjoying the pleasures of the coexistence of the moment (or at least that's how I imagined it, because I was not approached by the curiosity of observing who they were and I venture to say that even if I had, it is likely that I would not have recognized any of them). Most of my high school classmates surrounded me. My ineptitude to interact flourished at every moment and I did not know how to respond to the moment: the cave animal was facing for the first time the jungle world of the wild beasts.

It was time for the dance. My legs stuttered and implored me to rest and not because they were tired but because they were ashamed of their crudeness. She was the expert and she took my hands as if she wanted to teach me the dances that I

might not learn in a lifetime. I don't remember if I danced with someone else. The most possible thing is that I did not. I left with the anticipation imposed by my watch and when I left the party she said goodbye with a kiss on my cheek. Dessert, unattained by my urgency, appeared a couple of hours later on my porch. Her delicate arms extending the disposable plate constituted one more step towards falling in love.

Although the fat man was the roughest, the dumb was the strongest. They squeezed me outside and inside while they silenced my despair by covering my mouth that moaned with dismay and helplessness, and my tears hit the pavement.

The young man was the most impetuous and contrary to what you might think. He never showed indecision and lashed out at me with the same predisposition as his elders.

Surely some scary soul must have seen the atrocity. I am sure of it. In the distance I noticed a light, some vehicle that focused the debauchery and then escaped. You may think, dear friend, that it was a hallucination of my own despair, as those refuges of water that the pilgrims of the desert imagine in the aridity of their exiles. It could have been a vision or a memory invented by my aging memory, but I'm sure it's not. It was real, so real with the three-headed beast that possessed my body that night.

LETTER FOUR

The means of communication that we have today bring people closer each day. Telecommunications of image and audio can be obtained only by pressing a button. The Network is a medium

that has cut distances. If an ancient painter had observed such a prodigy, surely he would have thought that it was some powerful alchemy. If it had been some holy woman of the medioeval who had contemplated it, undoubtedly I would have believed that it was an artifice of the evil.

Technology depends on time, and advances with it. Since the first hominid captured the first cave painting in a forgotten cave until this moment somewhere in the world, the least experienced of the prepubescent girls writes a text message on her phone, the intention of communicating has not changed. Only the means have varied.

When human beings were able to form an articulated language (oral and written), their wish of expression was strengthened. One of the most used means of all time has been the letter.

Letters from writers, politicians and roman speakers are still studied for their literary value, and the ancient Greek for its philosophical value.

The Holy Scriptures are full of these manifestations. The Saints justified the current theology based on epistles. And the great book contains the epistles to the Colossians, the Philippians, the Galatians, the Hebrews, the Romans, as well as the Corinthians and the Thessalonians, where the apostles continued to propagate their ideas.

It is known that Anastasia Dross, renowned Latin American philosopher, wrote, apart from novels, essays, poems, plays and more than twenty thousand letters. On average, Dross had to

write one letter per day.

At the other extreme is Alessandra Zimbardo, an Italian philosopher who died the same year as Dross, for whom writing a letter was an exhausting process and a real torment. Zimbardo confessed it in his memoirs: I cannot write any letter, whose importance is variable, that does not demand hours of frustration.

The letters have been taken as a powerful literary resource.

A French writer, author of the famous novel *Persian Letters*, achieved through epistles that the two characters issue, make a criticism to the strong society of his time. In this work, the bourgeois society, the political and religious institutions and even the literature of his time were strongly criticized.

One case that most struck me some years ago was the work of an Icelandic author entitled *The tribulations of the young student Dögg*, which is about a young passionate who talks to her friend about the writings of her misadventures because she could not say that she loved a boy, despair that ends with suicide. This novel seems greatly influenced the youth. Girls, who were exalted when they finished reading the story, sparked a wave of suicides. This prompted me to read it. A encyclopedia tells us: *The tribulations of the young student Dögg* was imitated by not only young people in the locker room, but also its tragic end: it is said that it caused more suicides than words inside its pages.

When reading it, the magic ran out. I realized it was a novel of that time and that, under any circumstance, it could influence the present.

Letters have served a purpose: to express situations, ideas, feelings and the thoughts of those who write. Technology gives us now electronic letters, which performs the work in a faster way. Texting has been another means that similarly shortens distances. The unquestionable predecessor of the cell phone text message is the telegraph.

Despite the positive side, I would also like to raise some objection. Although these polished technologies shorten space and time, they suffer from the defect of the ephemeral, while a royal letter immortalizes the moment.

This is a good reason to consider the value of a letter (in the traditional sense) as irreplaceable in a demonstration and exaltation of the bond we have formed around our love. So I like that we write. I consider that the letters (which have been written since the time of ancient Greek philosophers) have a much greater degree of permanence and significance than any other means.

Perhaps there are people who still hanker, in romantic imaginations, to wait for answers that took days or weeks to arrive. Imagine how it would be to write a letter expressing what it's felt or known, as our good philosophers did. But it is likely that nowadays it is totally exceptional that people think that the exclusive use of traditional letters is the best form of communication. On the other hand, each era has its options and people acclimatize to its resources.

A few centuries ago, the first chronicles began to be published,

what a century later was called news (and that today they can be read every day, precisely in the newspapers), and people had another means of communicating them. The nineteenth century had the telegraph to unite people and continents. The twentieth century has the radio, the telephone, the television. Now, the twenty-first century has some powerful resources such as network and wireless media such as mobile cellular technology. Resources that had been implausible for our ancestors are, however, very possible and daily for us. And here comes the most amazing and interesting part. Resources that for our future generations will be feasible and common. Today, there is nothing more than science fiction to us. The most probable thing is that our children and grandchildren enjoy the nearby illusion of a loved one through holograms. But I am convinced that science would not stop there. It will conceive of means that these days for our little imaginative capacity are inconceivable. Means that are so impressive that today we would call them “pretty imaginations”, or in more superstitious cases we would cross them out for being curses or miracles. Some saint of the Middle Ages would have thought that it was a heavenly wonder the fact of writing a message saying where she had been, and after a few seconds would have appeared written in another very distant place. Or a former painter would have thought that it was marvellous to observe the image in a real moment on a single screen.

In any case, it is you who will finally decide the value that each

letter that I write to you should have, because they are written for you, and they will be yours as long as I keep writing.

Yours, with or without letters (although preferably with them).

CHAPTER FIVE

The days began to pass with an increased desire to feel together. The custom of being near each other became so imperative as her desire to go to the bathroom during the recess. And there we were, talking about trivialities, sitting on the farthest benches. They were sublime moments, dosed by a sensation that played in our stomachs. Her smile captivated me and maddened me that loud and vivacious laugh which made be attentive to the most lackaidisical person.

The most representative thing at this stage was my timidity. She was outgoing and talkative, and I was a shy guy with words crossed in my throat. I'm still impressed by the fact that we could relate each other. I would throw out jerky and witty phrases and she would feed them with a fluid and exuberant conversation.

Over time, an old almond tree became a serene accomplice. He wrapped us up with its shyness and did a good third intoning the violin of silence. He kept us the secrets of our clandestine kisses that we rarely gave each other and that were prohibited in the institution.

At the exit, I had the idea of walking with her and started waiting for her every noon. Over time, this rite became an everyday thing and a seven-block talk enveloped us daily.

The school of my youth was private and it was one kilometer away from the main town. To get there, you had to walk through

a short bridge of just five meters that was suspended over one of the stream's flows.

Then there were two forks.

The first one was the shortest path through a tiny hamlet of just a hundred buildings.

The second one was covered by asphalt and although the tour was longer in the amplitude of the way, it bordered the town in the form of the letter “u”, crossing the area of teak forests that belonged to the rector's family.

He was the one who preferred to walk through them in several moments of loneliness, without fear of isolation on his journey for lacking lights or houses settled on its edges.

This partly explains why my intense groans never had a distress response.

That night, lying and staring into the sky I could see, in the short moments when I opened my eyes during several occasions, how the wind of the beginning of winter was rocking the leaves of teak. Some of them will have impacted my face while I observed the clouds that crowded and covered the luminosity of the moon. The gloom was more intense.

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