

THE CHERRIES OF OBLIVION

As children, in the midst of a war, as they were all very cruel, they had been taught that time was fleeting and that only those who tried their best were worthy of divinity. Of course, in those years, until the end of the conflict, female and child labour were necessary for the survival of the community. So they were considered compulsory and any attempt at non-compliance was severely punished in public, to the shame and dishonour of the offender.

Later, once the country had been rebuilt, when almost all workers considered themselves as middle class, i.e., in the boom times, there was a turn of the screw to the previous dogma on the part of the current economic system, together with the civilian and religious authorities. They warned that hard work left its mark on the future of the nation and involved an unavoidable commitment to the nation's progress, then qualified, for a better understanding of the arduous judicial and legislative language, that the fact that a person's socioeconomic position improved was, without a doubt, a clear omen that, when their life expired, they would reach the glory of eternity and escape the torment of the underworld. Thus, idleness became frowned upon, it was a cancer on society. The most widespread interpretation, which eventually prevailed, was that the richer you were on Earth, the better position you would occupy in Paradise. In a correlative way, with the inestimable help of the media and social networks, the idea that retirement was not something inherent to human nature and, therefore, should be abolished, began to penetrate people's minds.

Our main characters came to realise that the road was long and not without obstacles. Their children took longer and longer to visit them because they were very busy, as they had to fulfil their jobs and achieve the goals set by their respective companies. On the other hand, the strength of their muscles, so powerful in their youth, was wearing out like candle wax. Though they tried to extend their working life as long as possible, and really endured it with great fortitude, they were identified as low-productivity employees and had no choice but to surrender to the increasingly obvious evidence of their physical – and therefore, according to the bosses, also spiritual – decay.

For months, they witnessed the invisibility of their bodies on the front line, while they waited for one of the thousands of pedestrians who passed by them striding, running back and forth, jumping traffic lights, dropping all kinds of filth on the ground, to leave them a coin on the blanket that wrapped their legs on that sunny corner next to a tube station.

One sleepless, bitter moonlit, icy night, embraced under the same dirty, threadbare blanket, they reached the Nirvana of oblivion and nothingness.

** In classical paintings, the cherries in still lives stood for human beings' souls.*

“Stories without Mufflers” (2006 -)

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