

## Words For A Dead Daughter

By Jorge Salavert

Yes, my darling one, today I came  
here to whisper away  
my fatherly tears into this cold westerly,  
the scourge of the flowers I have been  
trying—hopelessly—to grow for you.  
Nothing seems to grow the way it should,  
as I search for the words I might  
choose to use to tell you that every breath  
of these years I still have to live  
seems to stitch in but a painful stab  
into my lungs.

And being but a foreigner  
everywhere—yet still your father—  
I wonder which language I should speak,  
in this perfect intimacy we share.  
What mix of your favourite colours  
would you have picked for today's sunset?  
Yet I'm afraid the great poet was right:  
    for we are never given  
    second chances  
    and you were not given  
    a second chance  
    at six years and nine months.

Yes, I still recall your giggles  
while you were chasing my gigantic footprints  
on an edge of gold,  
skipping and laughing, the five of us happily unaware  
we were just seconds away  
from a whirling mountain of ocean,  
that a horrible beast was coming to drown us all.

And so from faraway lands they kindly advise me  
to hang on to the happy memories  
I have of you. Which may be many,  
    yet their inventory shall never  
    be enlarged.

Never is a very long time: too long to live; too short to wait for.  
And I must confess to you,  
it has come to this:  
one day is a day too many

of this life I do not wish to live.

It's the line of a horizon that I do not see,  
it's a landscape I do not wish to even contemplate.

And so I came to you again on a Sunday – it's so quiet –  
to this neat, orderly arrangement  
of green lawns,  
vases and plaques on  
rows of concrete,  
plastic flowers by  
colourful windmills and flapping flags  
to whisper over this peculiar greenery  
how each and every sunrise  
has been but a jab of poison  
since that last day  
of September 2009.

I came here to yell this silence away;  
it has viciously plundered my heart.  
I came to offer you all I now have left:  
words, tears, pain—they all make it  
into these raw, haphazard poems I write for you,  
to stop the wound from bleeding me to despair,  
to counter the insanity  
hurled at me by the dust that has been  
gathering on your pink bike.

And as I leave once more,  
I notice my eyes  
have been shedding rose petals on this lawn  
beneath which you must be asleep, my little one, *mi babita*  
for ever and never.

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