

Bored in Bouveret

Mark Wetzler

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2012

Anthony Geist, Chair

Leigh Mercer

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Romance Languages and Literature

Introduction

Menos arte y más fitness: Una traducción de *Aburrida en Bouveret* de Alejandra

Maldonado

No quería analizar este libro. Este es un libro que, a primera lectura, no se presta al análisis profundo, y precisamente por eso me encantó. Estaba hojeando los libros de una librería de Oaxaca, México cuando en el estante más bajo vi un libro delgadito y con la imagen de una mujer joven con expresión diabólica en la portada, y el título *Aburrida en Bouveret*. Leí la primera oración, una bestia gramatical que sin mucha puntuación describía el paisaje de Londres y los efectos de unos cristales de ácido que la narradora había comido en una fiesta la noche anterior. Y ahí mismo me senté para leer el libro entero.

Este libro de Alejandra Maldonado no es otro libro sobre la identidad mexicana. Es un libro sobre el sexo, las drogas, y el rock 'n roll. Es un libro del “coming of age”, como si Holden Caulfield hubiera vivido 50 años más tarde, habitado la Ciudad de México, e ingerido grandes cantidades de cocaína. Este es un libro que se burla de la noción de que necesitas ser un hippie o un intelectual para apreciar el arte. Y mientras que hay temas más complejos también, éste es un libro, sobre todo, del aburrimiento. Una frase que encapsula el libro es “menos arte y más fitness”. Maldonado explica que, por lo menos en México, “hay una parte de personas que asocia la cultura con la izquierda, con ser contestarios, con ser contracultura, y si tú tienes algún signo de frivolidad estás descalificado” (entrevista personal, 7 octubre 2011). Es decir, “Si no eres un intelectual al 100% al que no le importe su apariencia” no te puede interesar el arte.

La autora escribió *Aburrida en Bouveret*, según ella, para “molestar a esa gente”, y creo que esa frase resume bien la esencia de estos relatos, y que también refuta la

tendencia en general a creer que el arte debe ser una cosa puramente intelectual, de la izquierda, de la gente de “contracultura”. Por lo contrario, el libro *Aburrida en Bouveret* se escribió para que la gente “saque la experiencia del momento, que lo disfrute emocionado mientras lo lea, porque yo lo hice con mucha intensidad y así me gustan las cosas, como honestas...y de golpe” (Maldonado, 2005). Los relatos de esta obra se leen rápido porque se escribieron rápido. Como confiesa la autora, en la época en la que escribía este libro tenía una política que era “si no lo escribo de principio a final no sirve”(entrevista personal, 7 octubre 2011). Esto se presta, por su parte, a un paso frenético, un ritmo que refleja perfectamente la vida frenética de la protagonista. Y como el libro se escribió rápidamente, así debe ser leído también. Este no es un libro en el que cada oración consiste en un enredo de símbolos que el lector tiene que descifrar. Al contrario, es un libro al que se puede sostener que perjudica el análisis minucioso, al que le quita algo de la experiencia visceral que provee, que disminuye el “golpe” que la autora quería que sus lectores sintieran.

Para los intelectuales a los que alude en su libro, es posible que esto no sea suficiente. No obstante, las estrellas de rock siempre han tenido cierto atractivo para nosotros y este libro trata, sobre todo, del sexo, las drogas y el rock ‘n roll. Viviendo al borde del abismo, las estrellas de rock llevan vidas de las que a mucha gente le gusta leer para experimentar indirectamente, pero que no de verdad, sea porque no nos apetecen las consecuencias o simplemente porque no tenemos las agallas. La protagonista de *Aburrida en Bouveret* es una de estas estrellas de rock, siempre jugando con el borde del abismo y el comportamiento que nos fascina, un Axl Rose o un Mick Jagger, sólo que no toca ningún instrumento y vive relativamente desconocida en la Ciudad de México. Sin

embargo, aun así hay cierto atractivo en leer sobre fumar marihuana debajo del Ángel de la Independencia en la calle Reforma, o comer cristales de ácido y vagar por un parque de Londres. Nos fascina leer de estas experiencias, pero no queremos necesariamente vivirlas.

Este libro también contiene temas más complejos, pero no están tan presentes como las series de disparates que componen una noche típica de la narradora. En la primera página del relato “Dulces podridos”, comenta como si no tuviera mucha importancia: “nunca sabré si la muerte de mis padres fue muy conveniente para mí” (51). El relato continúa para describir la relación con un padrastro al que le ha llamado “papá” durante 20 años pero a quien de una manera aborrece. Es decir, en la vida familiar de la narradora hay algunos asuntos que tal vez hayan contribuido a su vida de locura, pero que siempre yacen debajo de la superficie. También hay el asunto de su autoimagen y, como ella lo describe, su mediocridad. Como comenta: “no soy alta pero tampoco soy muy chaparra, no tengo la tez muy blanca pero tampoco muy morena, no soy fea pero tampoco muy bonita, no soy gorda pero tampoco soy flaca” (82). Lo único en que no es mediocre, afirma, es precisamente en su mediocridad. Por último, como si fuera necesario, comenta, aunque brevemente, sobre el estatus de los problemas de México como país y algunas frustraciones que esto genera. Llama a México “dirty hole” y “república bananera”, pero aunque estos comentarios son llamativos, nunca llegan a ser el enfoque central de ninguno de los relatos, algo que en sí es una ruptura con gran parte de la tradición literaria mexicana. Este libro, en cambio, se interesa por una experiencia simultáneamente más personal y más universal.

Al fin y al cabo todo *Aburrida en Bouveret* regresa al aburrimiento. Este es un concepto que encuadra con una experiencia común de muchos adultos jóvenes y adolescentes de la clase media/alta. Viniendo yo de una comunidad parecida, me puedo identificar con esta experiencia común, la experiencia de saber que hay algo más allá de la preparatoria, que hay algo más allá de los vecindarios con casas con jardines perfectamente mantenidos y gente jugando al golf en campos privados, saber que nosotros tenemos todo el potencial del mundo, todas las esperanzas de nuestros padres y nuestra comunidad, pero al mismo tiempo no tener la más mínima idea de qué hacer y, después de todo, aburriéndonos. De este aburrimiento, del miedo de seguir los pasos de nuestros padres, nace el deseo de rebelarse – contra qué, exactamente, no sabemos – y en esta rebelión se acude a las drogas y al alcohol. Andar en coche sin rumbo. Salir hasta las cuatro de la mañana destruyéndose. Esta experiencia la capta perfectamente el libro *Aburrida en Bouveret*, un logro no insignificante ya que se distancia de la tradición mexicana de escribir sobre la condición mexicana. Mientras muchos autores mexicanos parecen no poder poner pluma a papel sin enredarse en el “laberinto” que es la identidad mexicana o falta de ella, Maldonado ha logrado producir un libro que no conoce la nacionalidad. Este es un libro al que no le importa de dónde sea la autora, y por gran parte del libro, es algo que precisamente no se menciona. El logro de este libro es describir una experiencia común del aburrimiento y los hábitos autodestructivos de ciertos miembros de la clase media/alta. El logro de este libro es una experiencia visceral que nos permite experimentar el borde del abismo sin tener que ir ahí nosotros mismos. Y el logro de este libro es el lenguaje que refleja esto. ¿Debería ser esto suficiente para la

gente “intelectual” y “contracultura”? Esa es una cuestión por la que este libro no se preocupa.

La traducción

Siendo éste el primer libro que tenía intención de traducir, no sabía bien dónde empezar. Los primeros tres o cuatro borradores fueron bastante literales y, sobre todo, difíciles de leer, al contrario de la versión original, y al contrario de lo que quería capturar con la traducción. Al final tuve que volverme asesino, matando comas y quitando palabras donde me parecía necesario. Pero también me tocó darle vida a la versión inglesa, agregando conjunciones y puntos y unas palabritas donde encajaban bien. Me tuve que hacer una pregunta que debería haberme hecho desde el principio: si la autora fuera nativohablante del inglés, ¿cómo lo habría escrito? Esta es una pregunta que no se puede contestar con certeza, pero que el traductor debe por lo menos intentar contestar si quiere que la traducción tenga éxito.

Surgieron otros problemas también, palabras que simplemente no se traducían bien. Un ejemplo es el verbo “coger”, que se usa en México para referirse al acto sexual y que es el título de uno de los relatos del libro y, por lo tanto, bastante importante. Coger es una palabra difícil porque es más fuerte que el inglés “*to have sex*” pero menos fuerte que “*to fuck*”. Una traducción más exacta, que tal vez capte lo grosero de “coger” sin ser demasiado fuerte es el inglés “*to bang*” o “*to bone*”, pero el problema ahí es que estos son verbos usados en mayor parte por los adolescentes de los EEUU y no son tan ubicuos como “coger” en México. Para el título del relato, terminé usando la palabra

“*Sex*” en inglés, y aunque no quedé del todo satisfecho, me he dado cuenta de que hay palabras que simplemente no tienen una traducción exacta.

Había otras palabras que no conocía, y la mayoría de los casos eran referencias a las drogas o comportamientos culturales. Hay muchas referencias a las drogas pero la que más confusión me causó fue “el bote de Baileys (sic)” que aparece en el relato “Peter Knives”: “En fin, que el bote al que me refiero era de esos de Baileys (sic) ahí tenía guardada la mercancía: muchos papeles, muchos....” (13). En casos como éste normalmente buscaba en los foros de wordreference.com o acudía a una amiga chilanga, pero en este caso tuve que acudir a la autora misma, quien me explicó que no era una botella como yo me había imaginado sino más bien una cosa cilíndrica de cartón, un “*canister*” de los que se usan para el alcohol caro en las tiendas. Entonces el personaje de Peter Knives no metía su mercancía en una botella sino en un bote, lo cual, entendido bien, resulta mucho más lógico que lo que yo pensaba.

Al final el mayor descubrimiento de este proyecto fue que la traducción no puede ser literal. Es decir: la mejor traducción no es la que refleje las palabras individuales sino la que mejor capture la esencia; la traducción que deje al lector con los mismos sentimientos que el original. Por lo tanto, aprendí que la buena traducción es una obra efectivamente nueva, una obra que se basa en la versión original pero que cobra su propia vida, y si esta vida se parece a la de la versión original el traductor ha cumplido con su deber. Capturar la esencia del libro, al fin y al cabo, es lo que yo quería, ya que cuando encontré este libro no quería analizarlo, quería experimentarlo. Y a los angloparlantes espero darles esa misma oportunidad.

Bored in Bouveret

by Alejandra Maldonado

Translated by Mark Wetzler

London Eye

We're on the roof of a building in Kentish Town in London with a good view of the city and the Thames in the background and I can't stop watching the London Eye as it moves in circles but at the same time can't pay attention to it because the effect of the acid crystals we ate yesterday at a party is not wearing off but rather increasing exponentially and rapidly and everything's going up and up and not down, even after more than 16 hours.

I'm having a bad trip.

In just over three hours I have a flight to Berlin. I start to think about my day's itinerary: Kevin still needs to get his car and also needs to grab the last container of this kind of acid from the lady who prepared it for him. I need to get myself home via public transportation and pack my bags: plus, I need to shower and be ready when he comes to take me to Luton airport. The anxiety that creeps over me in these moments when I need to be practical gives me an uncontrollable urge to vomit and I have the feeling I'm leaving my own body, something that absolutely cannot happen right now.

If I don't control myself my current state will start to snowball downhill. However, this sort of self-administered, haphazard advice is a cycle I need to break: my brain needs to be strong and I need to be strong. I command myself to concentrate and breathe or vomit or do whatever it is I have to do as long as I control

myself. Kev looks at me and brings me a cold chocolate Lucozade and I watch him while I attempt to recognize the bottle, then take it in my hands and drink its contents like it's some magic potion that could bring me back to reality.

Kevin's usually chill but now he's worried about me and I can see it in his face: translucent veins beneath his skin. His eyes are huge and I watch them and think how I could just slip away off into their blueness, but at the same time I find his expression disconcerting.

I'm going to vomit.

We've decided I can't go out like this alone in the city. Kev forgets about his acid deal for the time being and we decide to get his car together. We leave the room and outside the atmosphere is burnt red and we're sitting under a tree in the middle of a huge park because when we were walking across the grass we couldn't hold out any longer and without either of us saying anything we sat down across from each other so we could be face to face. The freezing autumn wind turns our cheeks red after a few minutes and Kevin stares into the horizon behind me with tears in his eyes. I don't want to look at anything that's not his face right now because it's the only thing keeping me calm and I don't really feel like going to that place where I can't come back from, but Kev wants me to turn around so he can tell me about the time in that one pub down the street, the place his gaze was just drifting to, where there was a horrible fight right after he moved to London from Birmingham eight years ago and from what he tells me I think that what gets him now is not the night his friend was killed but more the sudden realization that so much time has passed since then.

We've been in the park for hours -- actually it's only been 20 minutes. We get up

after remembering that we came here for the car and should be walking towards it. In one of his more psychedelic moments Kevin takes a notebook from the back seat and instead of starting the car draws a circle and then six more circles whose circumferences all touch the first circle twice, and then for each circumference he draws six more in succession the same way. He tells me this is the way to escape to another universe and I look at him skeptically as if to say they're just circles, man, calm down.

Kevin ate five crystals, me barely one and a half; he can read a city map perfectly after smoking scong, so now I'm on a controlled trip. We get to the Luton airport 45 minutes after takeoff but I head to the check-in counter anyway. After a few months I feel it's time to move myself to a new place where basically the same things will happen to me there that happen here, so I still don't know exactly why I'm leaving. I spot the line for Buzz Air, a no-frills budget airline. I ask a German guy dressed like a cowboy about the flight to Berlin and he tells me it's been delayed two hours.

Peter Knives

I mean, what do you call some piece of shit black dude who tries to rape you over a few grams of coke? Noooo, Carlos, what do you mean, "uncool colored guy"? He's a black piece of shit, here and in China....No wait, it'd be like if you...well not you because you don't like girls, but say you liked girls and tried to rape a black girl, it'd be OK for her to call you "Spic" or "piece of shit Mexican rapist". I mean, yeah, going to a black neighborhood full of hookers and dealers, then getting drunk in a bar with a Finnish girl I'd just met that afternoon in a bar in Soho, then later accepting a stranger's invitation to snort Charlie in his house....Oh yeah! It's just that that's what they call coke these days,

Charlie, anyway, with how naive and childish I was acting that day I was like some little kid with Santa Claus, only in this case Santa was black and loaded with little white baggies from South America...I'm just saying that if you say "uncool colored guy" again I'm hanging up, besides I don't know which is worse: being condescendingly hypocritical, like you, or talking about things as objectively as possible. See, sometimes I get these ideas: What happened was he said his house was only a few yards from the bar but when we got out it wasn't 20 yards but 20 blocks and it wasn't even a "house" but actually a disgusting shared apartment....But anyway there we were: Jennie, the Finnish chick, Jeffrey, and me...Jeffrey, yeah, that's the guy from Jamaica's name, but don't interrupt, the thing is when we got to his house, Jeffrey pulls out his canister...No! Chill out, it wasn't for crack, you know how bad I get when I free base plus it seems kind of ghetto to me. Lines, however, have their charm: you call the dealer, check to make sure it's powder, take out your whole kit: mirror, razor, straw, and then you lay it out a nice uniform line, putting a note in your nostril and....When you're doing lines it's best to hang out with a bunch of bums on the corner. Anyway, the canister I'm talking about was one of those containers Bailey's and other liquor sometimes come in and inside he had all his paraphernalia: tons of papers, tons....and we started to rail a few, you know....No, no, wait, I better mention that it wasn't that good because I was railing and railing and getting a bit anxious after eight lines, it's just the thing with coke is...Well for me it's like an orange, I mean, obviously it's better fresh squeezed than from concentrate, just like how coke is better in South America than in the UK, but either way the juice from concentrate gets the job done and even if you have the purest, freshest oranges they're still messed up from all the genetic engineering, right? Huh? You didn't get that? Anyway, the thing is

we were having a good time even though Jennie was keeping it under control because she said the day before she went to a bar with another Finnish girl and in one of the booths found a bag full of Charlie...Yeah, I know it's hard to believe but give her the benefit of the doubt because in the same way horrible things happen to people great things happen too, right? So after a bit we decided that since it was only 2am the plan was to go club hopping, because according to the "colored guy" he had all sorts of connections and knew everything that went on in the area and we were in Brixton so it sounded reasonable and even more so because by that time the guy had started with his sweet talk, touching us with his stories about being sooooooo good with women because in Jamaica where he was born he'd left his mother and 11 sisters and that that was exactly the reason he started to deal....Don't make fun! You would have fallen for it, too....But yeah he was nice and also *nice*, you know, all muscly...Exactly! A body with signs of physical labor and a hard life and with all these gold chains and bracelets he had sort of an authoritative vibe, like, I'm telling you he even had his canine teeth on top capped in gold....Just like Pedro Navajas, but we'll call him "Peter Knives"...Exactly, that's what the law enforcement community and the black community have in common around here: their taste in super-flashy gold chains...OK I'm going to try to not use the word "black" to not damage the solidarity you've learned through "Azteca Foundation" commercials...anyway, I confess that at that moment I found him almost attractive, like exotic, and it's just that in Mexico there almost aren't any blac....people of ebony skin, and I don't remember if it was on the Discovery Channel or Selecciones where I heard that the conquistadores didn't need to bring many slaves from Africa because there were already enough natives there to put to work...Oh, don't get mad, I'm still telling you what happened: After a while of being in

Jeffrey's hole of an apartment doing coke we went to a reggae bar, all dark, and with me already pretty high and feeling sociable I start talking to some guy, maybe Italian who was real nice, I think, and I was putting the moves on him when all of the sudden the Guido says...OK fine I don't remember his name but we'll call him Guido, he starts freaking out because he claimed some guy was giving us the eye and I, still all friendly, go into National Geographic mode and tell Guido that the guy is cool and that there's nothing wrong and I even introduce them which doesn't work at all because at that exact moment Jennie flips shit and goes up to Jeffrey and screams "Fuck you, fuck you!" and then the three of us go into the street....Well, to be honest I don't know exactly what happened, I just remember Jenny got in a taxi and asked me to go with her and I, unable to think of anything that wasn't the contents of the Bailey's canister, stayed with Jeffrey who was complaining to me that my friend was a racist fascist Scandinavian bitch and, although Peter Knives and I didn't have much in common -- you know how I like to act out different roles and star in my own movie -- I took advantage of the occasion and played the role of poor helpless immigrant girl and told him that I needed help too and that my family was hoping for me to find work and in light of what had happened it was better to go back home, forget about the rampant racism in the British Isles and continue enjoying what the generous continent of South America had provided....Anyway, we went back to the room and to take my new role completely to the extreme I told him...No! Well, yeah the role of the coke, too, but I'm talking about the role of the poor helpless immigrant girl. So then I told him that a few days ago some girls had yelled "Hey you brownie girl, nasty girl, put some clothes on!" at me in the street, which he said was pure jealousy, that I was like his J Lo and...Because, yeah, people like to fall down so they can

be helped back up and everything was going fine with the flattery until Jeffrey showed his copper...OK yeah you're right, gold, because when I was starting to feel like going back out to another club Jeffrey smiled creepily at me and said it was time to start settling up for all the lines I'd sniffed with the my Hoover bodyvac and that I better start getting in the mood because, altogether, if each shitty little bag cost 50 pounds then at this point I owed him like 500 pounds. In his eyes I'd now changed from the poor helpless immigrant girl to the "fucking addict Latin bitch"...So yeah, the situation got pretty ugly with me not having any way to turn things around and all my coke gone for good.

Playing innocent was no longer an option after he realized that as far as Charly went I was like a goddamn anteater and at that point I did start to freak out a bit and I couldn't think of anything except an opportunity I jumped on when he wasn't looking where I grabbed corkscrew that was lying between the bed sheets...Of course it was a bad idea because when I told him to let go or I'd scream like hell the asshole told me that no one would hear and even if they the did that they wouldn't care...before I knew it he'd taken the weapon from me, pulled a knife and broke out laughing, which is when I saw the gold tooth gleaming again...Now it makes me laugh but at the time I was scared shitless so I decided it'd be better to just pretend to be all relaxed and cooperative. By that time we'd been bickering back and forth for a few hours and it was almost 10 in the morning. The next step for me was to tell him to let me go to the bathroom to change into something more "comfortable," you know...Yeah, he wasn't all that smart...So I was already to the door of his apartment, free from captivity, when I remember I'd left my Discman and a couple of CDs in his room, so I went back to get my belongings from him, at which point he performed more or less an airport security type pat down on me, took the 30 pounds I

had in my purse and kept all my other stuff....No, it wasn't over yet, he was this close to punching me in the face so I headed full speed for the door...The guy followed me for a few blocks in the street, screaming expletives at me...can you imagine? That was nothing though, for me the worst was already over and my brain was a painful blob; in my ears there was an intense and continuous beeping: my stomach wanted to kick out all the alcohol I'd put in it; my lungs barely gave me enough air to keep walking and the only thing I could see was a glaring white spot in which I could barely make out some kind of red-brick construction and a bus stop at the end of the street...Sure, of course I wasn't going to let things end there, so I went home to sleep it off for a bit and as soon as I woke up I found the closest police station and reported him. I cried and everything in front of inspector Williams, who treated me wonderfully and was furious to learn that a tourist had suffered that sort of nightmare in his district. He chatted with me and even asked if I had a boyfriend here or back home in Mexico and we even made a date to have a drink before I left...No! Of course I didn't tell him about the coke, and the inspector was so moved by my story that when I recovered from the drama he called two other people in uniform over and we went to the apartment of my affable host who, of course wasn't there..But just know that no, inspector Williams wasn't married, was 31 years old, had let a bit of a beer belly grow, but nothing out of the ordinary -- anyway, he said the would have the guy checked out and not to worry because within a few weeks he'd be on his way back to the country he came from...And too bad, because actually Jeffrey was very kind, ate least in the beginning, and had a great body and if I had condoms I would've gladly done any sort of filthiness....obviously it wasn't the skin color, Carlos! You know variety is the spice of life and I wouldn't have even cared that he was illiterate, God! what

ruined everything was the teeth thing, you know I have an obsession about that, the lack or neglect of any dental related body part freaks me out, plus people's teeth speak about the care and attention you had growing up and what habits you take with you once you leave home. The jaw, the gums and all the other parts of the mouth constitute an entire biography! OK we'll forget about the gold teeth, when you've done enough coke, good or bad, the last thing you want is sex, right? I mean I get the urge to talk and talk as if possessed, or drink or dance or do more...or I don't know. But yeah? You want sex?

Rock

No, no, no, no! This I CAN'T believe, well I mean yes I believe it because I did it and because I'm high as fuck and want more, but I mean I'd just barely left that house of worthless assholes. It's already happened a few times: I mooch drugs off people and then they want a piece of ass. The bad part is like an idiot I gave them my address. I'm waiting for them to show up, if not today, then one of these days. Since I got home I've been glued to the window worrying about the drugs I stole from them, but I don't think they're quite man enough to come after me here.

Now that I think about it what happened wasn't so bad. I mean I earned the coke I did and also what I brought home, I did my part: did a little table dancing for them, and if there's one thing I'm good at it's that: dancing. And I'm not bragging, I just enjoy it. For me it's pure pleasure even if it's in some dive or on some dance floor that's improvised or imagined, I have the illusion of being completely free.

What happened was I didn't have a penny to my name and I was bored, it was cloudy and before going out I'd cried for hours after watching some special on Christina Aguilera.

She's 20 and in all likelihood I won't have what she has she has even by the time I'm 70, and even then I won't be able to enjoy it because I'll be 70! Fuck! I'm a fucking publicity slave but in the end just a slave to drugs and work -- functional, mind you -- who's got to get up at the same time as the rest of the plebes and go into the street with them, breathe in their horrible stench of soap and shampoo and cheap cologne every morning and in the afternoon look at their sweaty faces. They can't even afford some goddamn cream to get rid of the excess oil in their face, and even if they could it'd be the same. When it comes to nutrition this country's horrible eating habits are going to sink us forever. So to forget I sell 3/4 of my time to a fucking agency and barely have enough to maintain this mediocre lifestyle I get the idea to take a walk through the *Zona Rosa* where I see some kids who look like druggies and don't hesitate to talk to them and ask them straight out if they like coke and where people sell it and they tell me no problem in a bit they're going to go buy some and why don't I go with them to their house, they have a little there. Oh my God I swear it smells horrible! But hey! What am I supposed to do? Before long they get the bag out and even when they're no lines I just want to feel the sweet dizziness of the drops sliding down my throat, so I stay, I don't have anything better to do. But I hate it when someone comes up and tries to cop a feel, but in order to keep the drugs coming I let it happen a little, either way I've let people touch me a bunch of times, supposedly for pleasure and sometimes I don't even get *that* in return.

Back to the scene in my house: the phone is ringing, I lift up the receiver, I just smoked another rock and the only desire I notice in myself before picking up the phone is the desire to grab a knife and cut my wrists; I don't have the balls, so I burn myself with a cigarette in places that can be covered by a long-sleeved blouse, I hate when people at work ask questions. The person on the other line is my grandma, "Are you eating well? You're getting paler and paler every day, I'm worried...." Most of the time when I talk to her the impulse to hurt myself increases. Those douchebags are finally here, they're ringing the buzzer and part of me wants wants to let them in just to see what would happen, but that is something you guys will never know.

Sex

All of the sudden finding a good fuck in this city has become a huge hassle. My digital clock says it's just before 1am. The remote is lying on the floor and I grab it but don't even feel like turning on the TV. I go out for a walk, maybe even hoping to get mugged. In the end I go to a bar and take a shot of tequila and then another and then dance and then take another and Charly shows up and offers me a hit and I say not today; what happens is I spot some chick and bring her home and get her into bed. To talk. I regret it already, in the natural light, well, artificial, but I mean not dark like the club, she's super ugly and kind of trashy and she puts her hand on my waist and we're both lying next to each other, face to face....Anyway, I turn off the light and try to get in the mood, I mean I'm not that despicable, sometimes I give them a consolation prize and other times I just punish myself for making bad decisions. So I try to get in the mood and give her her fifteen minutes of fun and turn off the lights. But it's not enough, it doesn't

work so I ask her to leave. It's really not happening now and I call a taxi service and when she leaves I change the sheets. I don't know why I keep doing these things, it's actually been a long time since I've had sex with anyone. I don't even like sex that much, at least it's not what motivates me, it's more of a power struggle. What I like is the feeling of superiority you get when you flirt, feeling like you've got them eating out of the palm of your hand. The little glances, making the small talk, basic food for my poor ego, a quick kiss and everyone's vulnerable, at least for a few minutes. To me, the rest is a hassle.

And it's not that I don't like sex, I'm just bored of the whole scene around here, and having sex is great, I mean, the sex part itself but everything that comes with it is a bit of a drag: it's just going through the whole routine of do you like them and then it turns out you do but then when they take off their clothes you realize their skin is all pale or some other stupid thing that turns you off and let's say they have nice skin but they go too fast or too slow or their saliva is cold or they have too little or too much or let's say up until this point things were perfect but then after sex they light a cigarette or get dressed and leave, or just the opposite: they want to stay for a while in the bedside -- I say bedside because the talks seem a lot like what happens tableside -- and you're simply not in the mood and later you want them to leave and if it's someone you really don't like much it's like after what just happened you'd rather have them gone so you don't have feel all uncomfortable saying no to them when they ask if they can stay over again. Argh!

It's so complicated! The whole thing with taking the condom out of its package, having to be careful...sex is a drag!

Bored and Lonely

Lately we've been cruising the streets of the *Zona Rosa* every day. We look for a place to eat and when it starts to get dark we drop Fernando off at his work at the bar El Almacén. Alejandro and I share a joint under the statue of the Angel of Independence on Reforma. We like looking up at the sky and feeling the night because it's soothing: it makes us feel safe knowing we won't get old anytime soon, won't have kids or be sad or be paying off mortgages...

Before coming out Alejandro asked me if his blue Mets baeball shirt along with the stud in his left ear and his extremely short hair weren't too gay. I tell him no. I like how he looks.

In Cineplex Latino they're showing Batman 4 and we finish our joint and go back to the bar. It's packed and not even 10 'o clock. Fer and Alejandro start kissing and I feel alone and go sit alone at the bar. I order a beer and put on my best "bored" face while the latest Depeche Mode concert plays on the TV hanging from ceiling next to me. The Chiqui Leather guy tries to convince a girl from Cancun to come into his sado club. He's got on leather chaps today and they do not look good on him.

Not five minutes go by and Fernando comes up to me and tells me that 10 minutes ago he was sitting with a 40-something woman who was eating dinner with a man in his 50's and now she wants me to sit with her. Alejandro thinks she looked like a porn star. She's super tan and her dress is tiny white and lycra. The woman tells me her name is Lulu and that the guy with her is her husband Manuel who's down in the club part where they don't let women in, "which is why I told them to get you over here, since I get so bored and lonely by myself."

She asks if I'm a lesbian. She and Manuel are part of a bisexual swingers club and they invite me to go with them. Come on, we'll keep it hush hush, they say. Nevermind, though because the DJ puts on "Life's too short" and the beat makes Alejandro go crazy and start dancing and just then a really sexy girl with long hair looks at me and smiles.

The trucker-looking girl she's with puts her on her lap and grunts like a real bull dyke so I look at her coquettishly and she asks me to come sit with them. I find out her name is Marisol and she's seventeen and that the cute skinny girl who's her girlfriend is 19 and named Fabiana and they've been together for a year. Every once in a while she grabs my hand under the table and I don't even want to imagine what the bull-dyke would do to us if she caught us.

I want a line and when I come out of the bathroom I run into a gay guy from Monterrey and we talk forever about our respective workplaces, he sings me Vogue by Madonna and is so fun I bring him over to our table. Manuel and Lulu have joined up with the lesbian girls. The flamer and I do the same. My new friend sings Vogue again and all of the sudden a girl walks into the bar who's gorgeous, innocent-looking and blond with blue eyes. Super skinny. I like it.

Manuel complains that the crowds are preventing him from going to the darkroom. He wipes sweat from his forehead and keeps buying shots. The blond girl's gone to the bathroom. I tell the girls to come with me and we act like idiots in front of the mirror and when Chantal comes out I ask her her name and her sexual preference and

instead of answering the question she just kisses me. We all come out of the bathroom laughing.

Alejandro comes up to me and asks me what my plan is because he and Fer and some other friends are going to a club. I run the idea by the people sitting at our table. It's imperative the swingers go because they're the ones with all the money. Everyone says "yes."

It's four in the morning. Since we're celebrating for Fernando, he's deciding where we go and he wants to go to Catorce. So he hands out the last of the shots, pays the last bill and we go to Garibaldi in two cars. I would have preferred coke in someone's house since at this point in the night a minimally refined place doesn't really do it for me and the idea of the drag queens and sleezy Italians and winos of La Merced does not make me happy. But we go anyway.

The guy at the door gives us a table right next to the front of the dance floor. More shots, more lines and women in their Paloma San Basilio and Thalia threads do their little numbers. Afterward a few meatheads come out and jerk off in front of the auditorium and finally a group of men and women have sex with Juan Gabriel music in the background. Fabiana, the trucker girl and I look at each other, alarmed, wondering if they used a condom.

The show ends. The swingers and the lesbians leave, paying the check and leaving us some extra funds to keep drinking. I go to the bathroom and now I'm really drunk. I dance by myself and Alejandro chews me out for acting like I'm too good for Fernando's heterosexual brother. He hugs me while speaking to me cruelly. I whimper and we leave the dance floor and I tell him I wasn't in the mood for guys tonight and even

less for that guy, that I'm sick of this shithole and want to leave. He tells me to fuck off and goes back to the dance floor where someone requests a song by Monica Naranjo.

I dance for a bit kissing my own image in the mirror on one of the columns on the far side of the dance floor. I look back at Alejandro, you can tell he's 18 and even though I'm only three years older than him I wonder if he's so cruel because he's so young.

I leave the place and it's already light outside. It's cold as fuck and I'm hungry. I sit and cry in the entryway of a club on Eje Central. A hooker comes out and tries to console me but I push her away and go back to Catorce.

Finally we leave and I'm still crying. I can't stop. Alejandro wants me to shut up, but the more he tells me to shut up the harder I cry. The sun starts to warm up the streets and we stop off in the Guerrero district to buy more blow.

I'm still crying when we make it home. I sleep. Crying is exhausting. For the first time I don't want to snort more coke. I wake up sad. In the living room some guys are sitting around and it looks like they ran out of rock because they're looking for bits of it on the hardwood floor.

Fer and Ale call me and I go to the bedroom where Fer is still drunk and offers me tequila; I gulp it down and we start talking about some touchy subjects. Fernando confesses that he's had HIV for the past 11 years. I hope he uses condoms with Alejandro. Now I want to get more blow and, under a baking sun, we head out once more to the *Zona Rosa*.

Tibetan Yogurt

I don't know how but all of the sudden I was lying there on the beach, at 4am in

the morning, freezing despite the fact I had my white nylon jacket on.

But I get up and go to a cabaña and I don't remember if the owner of the cabaña picked me up, but what I am sure of is they said I was shivering so they covered me with a blanket and put me in another cabin that only had one bed but was nice from what little I remember.

And of course I fell asleep and woke up the next day and tracked down the owner of the beach hostel place and asked him how much I owed him and he filled me in on what had happened the night before and how they'd rescued me -- he and his friend, though there might've been someone else -- and later he added that I didn't owe him anything and suggested I take better care of myself.

Ah! But when I had just woken up what I did do was check my blouse to see if it was fastened properly, because it was one of those leotard kinds you fasten in the ass and if you or some person tries to drunkenly take it off to have sex or attempt to have sex the next day there's a high probability of finding it poorly fastened: But on this occasion it wasn't and I was relieved to see only my black pants, some linen ones I bought off a local and I like a lot since they're loose and cut is very "in" and plus they adjust with a string in the waist and also because they allow you to check to see if you did something stupid the night before.

I calmed down when I saw they were tied perfectly, although after a night like last night you can never be sure of anything, like if the guy you were hanging out with was extremely methodical and when you were good and drunk and passed out he had sex with you and gave you AIDS and dressed you up again exactly how you were. What I am sure of is that I don't dress myself that well when I'm how I think I was yesterday....

Anyway I don't feel like doing anything because when I went to see Ilaria I got even more depressed: her lying in her cabaña, at the end of the beach where the only people go are the ones who have bad taste or are super old or have bad bodies or who don't have enough money, but anyway, I'm there with Ilaria in her cabaña, which apart from being a pigsty, is dark, and she's stretched out on a pile of stinking clothes and tells me she doesn't feel like talking. Whatever, I think, but the way the puddle of her dog's vomit in the doorway makes me feel makes me want to get out of there as soon as possible.

It's winter and the sun is more intense than other seasons. I walk along the beach getting my feet wet and staring at the foam barely touching my toes, leaving footprints in the sand that the tiny waves come up and erase, and I don't know if it's the joint I smoked with Ilaria but suddenly I remember what I didn't remember before, what happened in the bar when we were dancing, Leila, Ilaria and me. Ilaria barely ever drinks and I don't give a shit about anything when I do; and Leila's been an alcoholic ever since she stopped shooting up in Rome, but she does well with alcohol and yesterday the three of us drank and Ilaria started hugging me and saying I was her Mexican girlfriend, but the thing is I don't like her, she's cool and smart and all that shit we think about our friends, but I don't like her like that and she kissed me and I kissed her and I only remember laughing and Leila saying that today we'd have a wedding on the beach -- she's got a sort of priestess complex -- and lose myself again in the feeling of my feet from the part of the sand that's still wet, the border between the sand that burns your feet during the hottest part of the day; and then I remember getting up today and seeing Victor, who was still a little hungover, and telling him that my stomach felt bad while he was waiting for orange juice

in the restaurant of the hostel. He said it was from going around kissing nasty Italian girls who have infections, which surprised me coming from a guy with disgusting dreadlocks who I've never once seen step in the shower.

Today I didn't go to my yoga class and instead took a walk with Gabriela and her son who's only three months old...to be honest I don't like her body, I mean, it'll be nice to be a mom and be able to get tattoos and pick at them and never eat, but walking around naked with scars like that and stretch marks and small misshapen belly when you're what? Eighteen? That doesn't seem so nice....

Gabriela's a bit mad at Ernesto despite the fact that he takes care of her and is always asking if she's eaten and she answers yes, staring into the distance with her baby in her arms. She insists on being annoyed because she's fed up with this place, because they've been here for six months and she's tired of it. She says the atmosphere isn't what it used to be and, in drug-dealer slang adds that "everything's all hot now," and "I'm getting bad vibes" and I butt in, "It's so cool your son was born on the beach" but she goes on and says that this beach is a bummer and brings up Jessie, a cute American guy from California who sells weed cut with other stuff who's got a hot girlfriend with a horrible face, a Canadian girl named Suko who I saw drunk off her ass three nights ago in the bar; and Gabriela says Jessie and Suko are going to wind up dead on the beach one day for invading the national market. Which is why Ernesto doesn't sell anything right now, because he's already started detecting some bad omens in the business.

But now we go back to the hostel and I sit at one of the tables with a thatched umbrella that's in a sort of indoor porch where, like everywhere around here, the floor is sand; and I tell Gabriela I got invited to a mescaline party on the next beach over, where there aren't any hotels. I confess I have no idea how much mescaline to take, because this time it'll be in powder form that we add water to make to little balls. She says one time she ate a ball about the size of a lemon and it got her high. I go up to my cabaña and pack a backpack for the trip: a blanket, some shoes, a sweatshirt, a gallon of water and some fruit.

When I got to the beach the South Africans started waving at me and dancing around me, but the sun was setting and I couldn't respond, I could only look at the ocean and stare.

Later it got dark and Marita, standing naked on a rock, screamed that she liked my haircut because it was a lot like hers and I had a burst of energy and ran up to her and screamed and then came the voice, a voice inside my head that told me what sounds to emit...And it whispered oooooooooooh and I said oooooooooooh and it whispered lirurirurururu and I said lirurirururururu and when the little noise-making session ended and I was trying to talk to Luz and Durón, I heard a group people who, like us, were sitting there talking in the dark, but there wasn't anybody else around.

The rest of the group took advantage of the moon coming out to walk back into town and eat vegetarian crepes.

And though I don't believe in mystical experiences, in that moment I felt, I swear, that all of a sudden everything was totally cool, that my body was a perfect creation

connected with all things of the universe and I saw phosphorescence in the waves and also the sand, which at that moment was a sparkling purple color I'd never seen before.

And then in the morning we went back after laughing like idiots around the bonfire and listening to trance.

When we got back we wanted to eat and I ordered an orange juice and Durón too. He always eats the same thing ever since attending military school in his native Israel; he says if he doesn't eat like that he gets sick. I didn't go to yoga again today and we started watching TV and a French guy who was finishing his transcendental meditation right in front of us, in front of the ocean and in front of the restaurant, asked why I hadn't gone to class, that it was a daily discipline, and that I wouldn't chase away my "bad vibes" like that, and I stopped paying attention to him when they announced on TV that the night before NATO had attacked some country in Eastern Europe in a military offensive consisting of thousands of American, French and English troops causing immense devastation, similar to what my mood suffered when the 525 lines of high definition on the screen collided with my retinas. Then I started crying and didn't eat anything and got in bed with Durón and we fucked all day until it got dark.

The Sicilian

And why shouldn't I have gone with him? Sure, he's horrible and somewhat small in stature and has that kind of Italian waiter look from all the mob movies, but actually he's Sicilian and has to go to Switzerland to find work since on his island there's nothing for him.

I was eating a raw mushroom filet in a trattoria in Florence and two hours later we were in the hotel and I had his bloody face between my legs. I can't help it, when I'm on the rag I get really horny. I came and he invited me to Geneva with him, and the next morning we grabbed my things and took off in his car.

Now that I think about it that was the only way we could've met: eating, but at the time I didn't realize he'd be doing it all the time. From the moment he gets off work until he falls asleep with some kind of food in his hands, he's like a pig: every afternoon he buys bread, brie and prosciutto in a place across the street from where we're staying.

I try not to let all that I've just mentioned get to me and, in a sort of effort to get to know myself better, submit to all his desires. For example: When he's just gotten off work he doesn't even say "hi", he just walks up to me and starts with his filthiness.

Though in a way we're the same: both of us were deeply infused with catholic morals and so he, despite being disgusting in almost all he does, insists on being clean even if he's just going to get dirty again. You'd have to see it: after his sex games he goes into the bathroom to shower and shit. Then, just after the little guy has finished cleaning himself he comes to the bed where I'm still lying. He likes to talk while he fucks me, spewing these cheesy lines that don't turn me on in the least and smoothing it all over with his ridiculous "Ah, tu sei bellissima, ti amo tanto! But I'm really trying to get better at this self-control thing so I just close my ears and focus on getting the most pleasure out of it possible while we look into each others' eyes and he says, "Ti piace? Ti piace?"

He's invited me here to this hotel but doesn't even bother to tell the receptionist that there are now two people in the room. The Swiss company he works for pays for the room so why should he spend any of his own money on some piece of shit third world

whore? He can't imagine that I've led a more privileged life than someone like him from the South of Italy and for my purposes it's better it stays that way.

It scares me sometimes I'm capable of all this. We don't even use protection. It also terrifies me knowing that the worst things, the realest things, are the ones left unsaid.

Bored in Bouveret

What a massive mountain this is. It takes us 10 minutes just to cross under it a super high-tech tunnel. But now it's dark, I'm lying in a garden at the bottom of the mountain and I look at the peak from upside-down which looks like it's going to tumble over on top of me and, for the first time on this trip, I feel good.

Fortunately it's summer, which means instead of bundled up I can be outside like this, away from the hotel where he hangs out all day drunk, uttering nonsense, making himself into the victim of some tragic life story, knocking on my door to talk. Doesn't he realize that the same way he lost all his friends from his childhood my sister and I can't stand him either and if we do put up with his nonsensical rants about the world it's just because that with his economic protection we're able to lead these lives of lazy freeloaders? And also because we're his daughters.

Tonight was especially disastrous: he started up again with his tale of how he suffered as a young man to be able to give us the lives we lead now. Such bullshit! I don't know where he gets it when we all know perfectly well that grandma's money is about to run out. I couldn't take it any longer and using all the cheap philosophy I learned in college I explained to him, in the most neutral tone possible, where he fit in this situation as far as I'm concerned. And then he started crying like the eternal adolescent

idiot he is. Nothing had gotten out of control until he started screaming and threw a fit, banging his head against the wall, and he was this close to throwing himself off the third floor balcony when hotel security came and I left them to his drunken self and now I'm lying here, where the cold air hits my face and makes me feel alive.

Now the night's over and we're sitting at a restaurant table in a sterile hotel in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. There can't be more than a 1,000 people in this town. Once again across from me is the guy I've called "Dad" for 20 years, it's 6 pm and we're drunk in the foothills of Mont Blanc and from the window we see a lake so clean the swans and seagulls that sit on the shores looking for food don't find any trash or other shit left behind by tourists.

Despite knowing his face perfectly, I have no idea who the man across from me is. It's the first time we've spent more than 12 hours together since I was a girl and the only way we're able to tolerate each other is by consuming large quantities of alcohol. What I hate most is not being able to avoid feeling bad when he starts gazing into the distance and we're suddenly transported to a time when he was a tiger and I ask myself, How did everything turn to shit? Why does everyone in this family have to sabotage themselves? It's this fucking bad seed, the more I try to escape it I'll never be able to get it out of me and it'll be stuck inside me until I die. And I make a promise to myself to do everything in my power to not let that happen, to never be like him, to not let this energy turn to shit and become some horrible thing when I'm older, but I still suspect I'm doomed to repeat his failures.

When I take the train to Monthey, a bigger town that has a mall I shop at almost every day with a horrendous hangover, I see all the teenagers returning from home from school to their respective villages. And though almost all of them are beautiful, without a single trace of acne and bodies that indicate a healthy diet and daily exercise, there are some I'm sure would kill their classmates and parents the first opportunity they got: usually the ones with some kind of orthodontic headgear and ignored by the prettier members of the school. I'd be one of them. The others, the freaks: they piss me off and at the same time I feel bad for them. I've been a bitter old lady since I was a kid. Beautiful people deserve to die: how can we go through life like that, hurting every loser we come across with our beauty and good luck?

We'll be here for another month, making asses of ourselves while we try to learn how to ski until my half sister finishes 7th grade in middle school. We're here to pick her up and take her back to the banana republic we've come from, but I'm not sure I can take it much longer. Is it possibly to die from sheer boredom? One can only hope.

Spoiled Candy

I'll never know if the death of my parents was a good thing for me. It's not like they tormented me. I suffered and enjoyed like most people suffer and enjoy because of their parents, and could even say we shared some excellent moments together. I'd be a hypocrite if I said the memory of our relationship was extensive, it's more like one of those grainy videos from the 80s or possibly a montage conveniently stitched together over the course of time. They got divorced two years after they met. Not too bad! I've always thought a relationship shouldn't last more than three years.

OK, I'll say it one more time at the risk of sounding repetitive throughout this book: I was by myself in my apartment doing coke, when the phone rang. It was someone from the American school I used to go to inviting me to a party even though we had graduated a decade earlier; I needed to get out of the house and, of course, I brought my drugs.

In the conversation someone brought up the subject of parents. A girl I barely used to talk to thinks to ask if I miss them and I take a second to respond. I don't want her to think I'm heartless, I'm a sociable person and I know it hurts to get rejected. I rummage through my brain for explanations and try to piece together one of those cheesy montages from the 80's so I can put her at ease and end up giving her the most readily available memory I have of my mom: a time when I was four and she wanted to go to the beach.

"My grandma didn't like me spending lots of time with my mom because she considered her irresponsible and an overall bad influence; she was right. My mom could never support herself economically so she stole some cash from my grandma and some tins of food and we loaded into her little car and I just remember a beach, which I didn't like at all, in Veracruz, and I didn't like it because it was a public beach with no resort and it was dirty and horrible."

Someone gave me a dirty look but I kept talking.

"It was cold, the middle of the night and I was hungry so I left the tent and my mom was wearing a bikini and dancing around a bonfire in the middle of a group of people I didn't know. On the way home we didn't have enough for gas but my mom's

skimpy dress and a few tins of food were enough to convince the attendant to fill up our tank so we could get back to the city."

"What about your dad?" someone asked who I didn't recognize.

"I have fewer memories of him, the most recurring one is one I hate: every time I went with him to the newsstand to pick out an Archie or Heidi or Parchis, he'd say no and instead buy me a *Young Scientist*, which was awful since it was full of science experiments for nerds. My dad's argument (fucking hippie) was fairly naive and totalitarian: he claimed it would awaken a scientific vocation in me and to be honest the only more or less sophisticated science experiment I do with any kind of regularity is free-base cocaine. Which of course I didn't learn in any *Young Scientist*."

Just then I sensed a disapproving look but I was so inspired talking about myself. For me there's nothing better to me than a group attentive listeners. So I kept going.

"The thing is I was always more interested in the maid's gossip magazines, romance rags and also the magazines in which, by the way, I learned how to read. My grandma claims no one knew I could do it till one day when I was three they found me lying down, snuggled in, reading a trashy romance magazine that featured Rene Casados" -- actually I still masturbate thinking of any busty girl like that -- "but even then they thought I just looked at the pictures, so they interrogated me and I showed them that yes, I was reading, and then they raided the trunk I had in my room and along with bald Barbies and spoiled candies they found a stack of novels that were basically soft-core porn". (Here nothing could stop me. I'd just snorted a couple more lines two minutes before I started talking). "Anyway, to be honest my dad was like any young guy of his generation, one of those idealists who think you need to earn everything and that even

a candy bar has to be paid for with some kind of favor or silly task; I never liked his games, the kind dogs usually play with their masters, but I went along with them to get what I wanted. Proof of his belief in meritocracy is that the greatest thing Santa Claus ever brought me in his apartment was a pair of roller skates and a watch with Mickey Mouse on the dial, despite the fact that with his financial resources he could've filled my entire room with presents. Though I did love his weakness for expensive haircuts and once a month we'd go to the barber together to be doted on by a professional stylist, but that didn't make my mom happy because that haircut she called a Prince Valiant. She thought it made my face look round, and since then I've felt like a pig: the media along with my mother have taken care of making this quite clear, and to them I owe the urge to kill myself every time I look at myself in the mirror without clothes on."

I'm worried I've made my old high school classmates a little too uncomfortable. I don't think I'll get invited back. On the way home I start thinking how that wasn't what I wanted to say about my dad and for the hundredth time, as has happened to me a lot in the past few years, I don't remember what I wanted to say and it deeply pisses me off.

Save Me!

I always thought Piporro¹ was kind of trashy and that the Catholic Saints were a bunch of hippies, which is worse than being trashy, whose aesthetics are vulgar and for quite a while now vulgar has been in.. I knew almost nothing about this character, just a few blurry images from the movies played on public television when I was a kid that I was never very fond of. So for me Piporro was from the north, and he was a cowboy.

¹ Translators note: "Piporro" was a Mexican film actor, singer, screenwriter, and director usually portraying comical "norteño"-type characters from Nuevo León (wikipedia.com).

That night I'd done a lot of coke. It was Monday and it was one of those binges you can only start on Monday, which is to say if you've already decided everything is going to shit at the beginning of the week it means you're really trying to hit rock bottom. I'm too lazy to go into details about the night since in the end it was what always happens -- friends (party friends), every kind of alcohol and, of course, coke. The only thing more or less unusual was that one of our party friends had just broken up with his girlfriend from Monterrey and spent the whole time being annoying and playing every Piporro song he could find on the jukebox.

Then it was 10am the next morning and I left the cantina where we had made our last stop, stoned out of our minds. I was supposed to go to work and yet the only thing I wanted with every fiber of my existence was another line; when it comes to coke I always say "be prepared" and at midnight I had hid a half gram in my wallet, though I knew in my current state it'd barely be enough to get me home and cleaned up and off to work, so I decided to call my dealer, and the phone was ringing just as I got out of the shower.

I got to work super wired and went into a project room to look over some layouts I'd been putting aside due to the fact that they bored the shit out of me. With a kind of enthusiasm rarely seen in me at work I dragged the creative director into the room to give him my thoughts on the drafting and arrangement of the copy in said ads. I had the nerve to pull him out of a production meeting and then when he wanted to interject I, of course, didn't let him get in a word. I really felt like a hot shot.

When I finally sat in front of the purple iMac at my desk in this pretentious shithole of an office where I work; when I was, or so I thought, ready to begin the work

day and pretend I'm cooking up the most bitching commercial the masses have ever seen, when I'm getting up and rooting through my little plastic baggy of full of white powder and helping myself to a key full of coke, it's in that moment that my coworker comes to ask if the header they're putting on some newspaper ad that sells toys for kids is ready and catches me inserting the key into my right nostril.

"Oh, Alejandra, what are we going to do with you?" I look at her and my heart rate skyrockets and I'm tempted to answer with the first stupid thing my drug-addled brain can produce: "It's just that we took some pills and it's not that I'm doing coke but that I needed to wake up so I bought this gram and it's my first in two weeks and..." but not a word comes out because the only thing I feel is my heart in my stomach. Right then I wished I believed in miracles and since the only thing that comes to mind is the cowboy in black and white on TV I start imploring him in my mind, opening my mouth but not saying anything, hyperventilating.

My coworker's eyes, which I've never seen so wide and full of confusion are staring right at me. In my head I scream: I don't care who, someone save me! I swear if you save me I'll say Mexican Golden Age cinema is the greatest every time it's brought up. I swear I'll even take a course on Mexican cinema with some gross graduate from the CC whose breath stinks of tobacco -- amongst other things -- due to his bad dental hygiene and three packs of cigarettes a day, and even if the teeth of said man are yellow with nicotine. What's more, I swear to you, mythical Piporro, that I'll quit this job where I write pure drivel to sell imported bullshit to the Mexican middle class, the foundation of our society, and instead try to give literature classes at a public high school while at the same time praising your good name, but please, just save me!

Well, if I'm telling you this now it's because someone did save me, and of course I didn't deliver on all I promised to do but come on! when someone promises to do something in return for something else they're obviously not going to do it, I firmly believe that what counts is how fervently you swear to do things and not the actual fulfilling of the promises. After all the saints don't benefit in the least from any self-improvement made by the person making the promises.

69 Things I Like

The heavens are completely obscured by a thick layer of gray clouds (1) and the city (2) awakes beneath a sky that doesn't look at all healthy (3).

I have a half-finished chocolate (4) bar on my nightstand. Thinking how a large dose of sugar first thing in the morning might be bad for my health makes me feel very post-modern, very contemporary; at some point or another you have to go down the tubes along with everything else, it's just a question of when -- more of an aesthetic issue.

I stay in bed doing nothing and don't want to cut short this period of absolute inactivity (5). In the sheets I find an almost whole joint (6) that even has a filter (7), one of the ones I rolled last night while smoking so much weed (8) before falling asleep with the joint in my hand and despite all this my brain feels fresh today and in the ideal mood to keep smoking weed and avoiding the life (9) that happens outside my room for as long as possible. Everything's fine as long I keep earning enough to maintain this semi-sedentary lifestyle (10).

I'm a little horny (11) which might be because I'm on my period and since I'm super stoned it's the ideal time to masturbate (12). At these times any kind of stimulus my mind can generate is useful, even imagining the most traditional position (13) with the most boring guy (14) from work: a semi-overweight Colombian who's about 6'6" and makes a shit load of money (15). The thing is I have a theory about large, stupid men (16) and I can't wait to test it out. What I'm thinking is that they must have huge ones (17) and be able to get hard for hours (18) even after they've already come. What I'd do is test out my two times two strategy, in other words, the idiot's just come and sitting there with drool on his mouth and a massive boner and at that moment I crack my knuckles (19) or clap my hands two inches from his face (20) and say, "All right, man, quick: What's two times two?" In order to answer his brain would have to syphon blood up from his erection which would cause it to go down. While I'm thinking about all this stupid shit I've had multiple orgasms (21) and also a pretty good laugh (22).

Finally I do feel like getting out of bed to pee (23) but decide to hold it (24) so I can make a phone call (25). I have an 8-dollar phone card this weekend with two hours of international calls on it, and I'll talk to my friends (26) about all the stuff that's happened lately so I can compare my situation (27) to theirs and feel even better about myself. I'm really in the perfect mood for it. The truth is things have been better lately in my life than theirs and I want to brag (28) about my trip to LA in two weeks. However, it turns out they're so happy to hear from me in Madrid (29) and New York (30) that they end up telling me how great I am (31) instead of, in the typical bitch defense, reminding me how beautiful and wonderful their boyfriends (32) are.

Though I'm dwelling on my current status of "single" (33) and "bitter" (34) it doesn't make me feel bad because my iPod is playing the song I've been listening to for the past few weeks and it still gets me pumped.. So I put my headphones on (35) and listen to it for the thousandth time, getting sick of something (36), as usual, that once brought me so much joy. Now I definitely can't hold it anymore, I might pee my pants, so I run to the bathroom and since the cleaning lady came yesterday there's an intense artificial aroma (37) in the air as my bladder slowly empties out everything that was inside (38).

Now that I think about it it's Saturday and as if by some miracle the neighbors haven't started making a racket and I'm not hungover: everything just flows. An anxiety (39) which leads to a fear that all this pleasure will soon end takes over even though I don't admit it to myself. God, no! I'm so paranoid; I keep freaking myself out (40).

Since the sun hasn't come out today (41) and doesn't seem like it will I almost feel up to going out. I'll walk as fast as possible to Chapultepec, go through Juarez (42) and the *Zona Rosa* (43) and end in Reforma (44); in 25 minutes I'll be there, a weird thing I have about calculating the time (45) it takes me to complete my goals. I'll even have time to stop off for a bowl of yogurt parfait with diced apples, celery, a bit of honey and nuts (46), and an espresso (47) at Gaby's (48) would be excellent since it's the only place that's packed with old people (49) at all times and their drinks always give my heart a good jolt.

It seems everyone has disappeared (51). I'm walking on the median and the leaves (52) look so green, all the colors so intense. After daydreaming (53) a while my cell phone rings and No! It's Willy! he invites me to the bar where he's with a friend I haven't seen in a while along with a few other guys (54) including an Australian I like but

who hadn't said a word to me until the moment he caresses my neck a little too eagerly when we meet.

It turns out the Australian guy's a surfer with an incredible body I make out under his clothes and I'm never surprised when Australians are cute: they're all super athletic. Besides having an enviable body he also possesses hydroponic marijuana and wants to take me to his apartment, so after a few shots (55) and reminding myself that I don't want to ruin everything with coke (56), I go with him. His place is nice and he loves Madonna (57), he's got all her CDs and videos and he's not cheesy but just nice (58) and turns out to be a good conversationalist (59), on top of being fascinated by drugs. He's got a few MDMA (60) pills stashed away but before taking them he rolls a huge spliff. He warns me that if I smoke too much and don't eat any sugar my blood pressure could drop...So I smoke as much as I can and don't ingest any glucose. After a few hours, just when we're watching the video for the song "Bed Time Stories" (61) I get an insane head rush (62) and faint (63). I wake from the sound of thunder (64). A storm is coming (65) and the Aussie is splayed out on the futon next to me tripping balls watching "Pink Flamingos" (66) so I grab the remote and stop the video since I wouldn't want to finish this story, based on a list by John Waters (67), by having us watch a movie (68) about the same guy.. Nor am I going to end this story saying we 69'd because to be honest I hate that position. What I do like though is sex on pills (69).

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT!

This morning I'm joined once more by a penetrating noise in my head and a terrible cigarette hangover. The weird thing is I didn't go out yesterday, I stayed put in

my house, just like the day before, and before, and the day before that and it feels like today will be the same. I don't know why I say "will be" when it's already past 11am and I've been up since three: tossing and turning, thinking stupid thoughts and biting my nails trying to fall back to sleep.

A few times I get to sleep but at the same time don't. It's very strange because I'm dreaming but I'm aware that I'm not asleep. The dreams never last long and I even timed them: the longest one I had lasted twenty minutes or slightly less. They're horrible, they mostly just make me anxious and prevent me from really resting, and I just wake up more anxious and not wanting to do anything. The last one left me with a frightening buzzing in my ears and throughout my head. Plus it took me back to my childhood.

I was with my cousin outside our house where we lived as kids until both of us moved away with our respective parents. In the afternoon we'd play and ride our bikes, but sometimes riding bikes gets boring when you've already been everywhere in your neighborhood and to go any farther you'd either have to be an athlete or exceedingly daring. So there we were, like always, looking for ways to entertain ourselves in the empty lot next door. Nowadays there's something built there but when we were little it was great: there were spiders, lizards and ants to play with, things I still find more interesting than most of my neighbors.

My cousin had one of his brilliant ideas and in the dream I knew very well what would happen, what I was about to witness, but either way I went along with it and tried my best not to wake up. I took the hose and stuck it in the entrance to an ant hill in the empty lot. Then my cousin gave the signal: he'd found the other entrance. We put another hose in the other entrance and then together we turned on the water. I wanted to

witness the massacre but he grabbed me hard by the arm. He always wanted to be first. His rule was if he'd been the brains of the operation he got to be the first to investigate the scene of the crime so he took his position in the middle of the lot and, when he judged it prudent, gave me the sign to join him. What at the time sounded almost like music in the dream made me anxious and prickly all over. My cousin grabbed me by the hair and shoved me down so my ear was against the ground, forcing me to listen to the sound our slaughter made and the buzzing was the same buzzing that at this very moment I'm unable to get out of my head: BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT!

Random Thoughts

I just want to ask artists one thing:: that they bathe.

I'm not a fan of breaking rules, but certain drugs remain illegal.

Envy is a beautiful feeling when others experience it on my behalf.

It's not that I'm making a fool of myself, it's that everyone else needs to drink more.

Every morning I'm despicable and I believe in the future.

There are some people so rich they lose their grip on reality. I want to be one of those people.

I'm at the same time such a hick and so petty, sometimes my own thoughts scare me.

I tried to kill myself and Oh no! almost scared myself to death.

I love my job, but hate everything that goes with it.

I'm a smart girl: this means I'll get everything I want and never be happy.

The man of my life is my dealer.

All men bring complications except for the ones I'm not interested in.

I want a wedding, not a marriage.

Homosexuality needs to take back all the territory it's gained and stop showing up in ours.

The only thing I have in life are things to do.

What is most punk is most conservative and vice versa.

A good party can mend or destroy the world.

Less art, more fitness.

For what?

Upon descending the stairs that take me from where I live on the third floor to the bottom floor I turn off the hall light -- one of the acts my bad conscious permits my good conscious in the first hour I'm awake. Today, like every other day, I thought I'd do something useful with my life; I walk hurriedly down the street and even start singing a song that was playing on my discman.

When these good thoughts make me feel happy and powerful I forget about the stinking bags of garbage I see every morning a few steps from my building door. And with this positive energy I'm not bothered either by the stench of the 50 cats the witch in apartment one keeps. I don't plan on protesting the trash or the smell: In the first case because I don't know who to go to and also because I too, like my neighbors, take down a huge black plastic trash bag full of smaller bags with the logos of the supermarkets I frequent who in turn contain even more trash, which, of course, is unsorted: this isn't Switzerland. In the second case, the one about the cats, I'm simply too lazy: I'm not going to make it a personal cause to get the old lady thrown out since I'd have to get all the tenants' signatures, which would mean I'd have to get on their good side when we all consider each other equally bland. In any case, I like the old woman better ever since I observed an aspect of her personality that fascinates me: the other day I saw her in a park full of homeless people nearby having wildly animated conversations with members of this community.

So I keep walking. I imagine that within a few months I'll have rounded up a generous amount of pesos, but the truth is if I go to the ATM right now and get a statement it will tell me my balance is zero.

In the morning I'm despicable and I believe in the future. But it's not my fault, everything in the street gives me new energy. When I walk to the metro two guys who sell tacos on the corner are pouring a bag of reddish grease into a huge, worn-down plastic vat, I walk a block more and there's a long line waiting for one of the Monte Piedad bank branches to open, and ahead on the sidewalk some freshly showered customers and employers of a phone company are ducking into their offices and a few others are eating something foul-smelling for breakfast in the street.

Every morning I sort out my life and walk with my head held high and for a second truly believe that it's just a question of focusing, of setting small goals that I can go about fulfilling, little by little, and that when I'm 40 I'll be the owner of a handful of properties and thus have enough to live on, like what I'm doing right now but with a higher standard of living. The bad thing is the day has more or less 16 usable hours in which you have to drag your own existence around like a cart full of useless junk you just can't get rid of. And of those 16 hours I can only utilize about five or six because by the seventh I've smoked enough daily drudgery and consumed enough daily reality, and the sun at this time of year in this part of the world is high in the sky and gives the scenery a cheap texture that makes the well-defined shadows contrasting with the tall street lights make all the goddamn people, who invade the streets in mass, look much worse than they normally would.

That's why I don't go out into the street or do anything or fight it or get a phone line installed and instead just go to sleep at 9pm every night, forgetting all these things for 9 or 10 hours so I can then wake up at 7am in a positive frame of mind and walk to the metro that takes me to the place where I spend three hours a day exercising just so I can ask myself again four hours later: And all this, for what?

If Only

Not a moment goes by in which I feel at peace with myself, and lately everything done well bothers me. I'm annoyed by good music, good literature and above all, good people.

As I walk down the street I find myself inspecting each and every angle of my body in the store display windows and examining all the features that set me apart from the today's prototypical image of the ideal body. Fortunately I live in Mexico, where almost no one fits in with the western hemisphere's current concept of conventional beauty, a feeling of relief for which I'd never move away from here for anything in the world.. I'd be willing to give up, say, a year of my life to not experience the inhibition that creeps into me when others with better-looking bodies take off their clothes in one of those parties where part of the supposed fun is donning a swim suit.

I'm annoyed by things done well because my mediocrity in all its forms has no limits and the only place in which I'm not mediocre is my own mediocrity: I majored in something where you never have to study; I worked two years as a TV production assistant for a network that's on the verge of going under. Apart from that I'm not ugly or

even very pretty, not light or dark-skinned, not short or very tall and what most pisses me off is that I'm not fat but I'm not skinny either and fuck it: if at least my appearance was repulsive maybe I take could take refuge in that and better focus on becoming a more successful person. Because surely in that case no one would want to have sex with me but with the income from my life as a workaholic bitch I'd have the option to buy myself the company of good-looking men and women and I would've even finished my thesis in school. In my monstrous state no one would invite me to parties and I could shut myself away in my apartment writing nonsense disguised as intellectual ramblings.

But no: God doesn't give wings to scorpions nor more money to the middle class. Even in that regard I'm average: I'm not poor; I get by without working from the rent from a few measly apartments which I haven't had the balls to sell, and I just want to get the hell out of here and spend it all or even just get fucked up every day until I die. No, no, that's a bad idea. It's just that throwing your life down the shitter without taking anyone else down with you takes courage, a certain kind of courage not everyone has. We live in a world of rules and you've got to abide by them, Yes sir! You even have to travel and see the world, though after traveling even a bit I get the feeling that's it all the same shit just with different scenery.

If I'd had a dad like the Williams sisters my life would've been a success. I heard that one day he was in the living room watching TV and flipped to a tennis match and after hearing of the enormous sums of money John MacEnroe makes he decided his daughters would have to play tennis. In a recent interview he said that Venus is a very good tennis player but undereducated, so he enrolled her in a general culture class and told her that if she didn't pass she'd have to give up tennis. Now that's discipline.

They don't teach anyone how to live anymore these days. I spend my time fantasizing about a life full of productive activities and looking for pretexts to explain why I don't stick with things. The last excuse was a lack of computer, now I have an expensive one with a CD burner and DVD player. I have no idea how it works and I think it's worse having it around, I already hate it, just seeing it turned on when I'm stoned and I leave my room to go to the bathroom, standing there all proud and looking perfectly white on the dining room table, I get more frustrated knowing it's there, waiting to see what I'll do with it when actually I'm scared of it, not because of what *it's* capable of, but because of what I'm not.

Rant

Fuck street vendors and their carts: they make the streets look miserable, get in the way and give tourists a bad impression of the city.

Fuck common people: they're all just repressed tyrants and when they get even a shred of power they don't hesitate to crush their fellow common people or those once above them.

Fuck my family: for bombarding me with their problems and giving me shit and being volatile and infecting me with their diseased sentimentalism, and also for making me share their shitty genes.

Fuck foreigners: the ones from rich countries come here and screw everything up or even worse try to "save" us, and the ones from poor countries come here to be

criminals or make it harder to get work, and also because I'm a xenophobe and my ideology has no logic.

Fuck men: because they have dicks and don't share them and also because some are ugly and horrible and rude and sometimes they smell like shit, but I guess there are also some women like that so fuck women too.

Fuck this country: it stinks, Mexico sucks, dirty hole! With all of its fucking contrasts and old surrealist movies and new surrealist movies and I mean sure, why the fuck not? Fuck this whole entire shithole with all of its subspecies: juridical, artistical, stay-at-home-wife-istical, indigenous-istical, prudistical, liberalistical, starving-istical, politicalistical...

Fuck drugs; fucking drugs, just when you think they're your friend -- oh these ones will definitely work and then nothing; coke gets jealous and annoying and won't let you talk to anyone. Come on lady your vagina is filling up with cobwebs! And supposedly with pills everything is peachy and wonderful. Fucking chemicals that don't affect you the same way anymore and you either stop taking them or your brain stops making its own chemical happiness., And peyote, what a hassle having to go all the way there to get it! And mushrooms? Same thing! Plus, there aren't even good drugs in this city, it's not like you call your dealer and he shows up at your house like a pizza delivery guy except with coke or opium or heroine or some other kind of chemical curiosity....and because of that once again fuck Mexico! And the acid? Well, it's an option, but in keeping with the spirit: fuck acid!

Fuck my friends, who wouldn't die for me nor me for them -- all the better!

They're not even around when I need them, like tonight, when I'm freezing cold and have the flu and my head hurts but I couldn't stand being inside and went out to see if it would make me want to cry less and not say fuck everything, which I usually do most days with my indifference towards any productive activity and my proclivity towards destructive habits. Sometimes my friends are like my family: assholes, talking shit behind people's backs and who'd better not play innocent since they know exactly what I'm talking about.

And fuck me, too: Fuck me above everyone else, for embodying all these things I hate.

And also because I wrote this.

33 Things I Despise

It's getting light out and I can't sleep. It's rained for the last three hours and that's why there's fog covering the whole landscape making it so I can't see the ocean a few steps from the bungalow (1) of the eco-resort (2) I'm staying at this vacation (3).

I venture forth from my chambers and sit in a thatched chair hanging from the ceiling. A dog comes up to me and licks (4) my elbow as a way of saying "good morning" (5). I automatically start to envision in my head all the germs (6) from her slobbery muzzle moving from her tongue to my skin and then working themselves into the microscopic cavities of my epidermis to make a new home (7). I give the animal a good kick in the ribs with my bare foot and the only thing I get in return is an injured big toe and a downtrodden look (8) from the dog, but the wretched thing doesn't leave, she curls up on the ground next to me (9) and commences to lick her private parts vigorously.

Pig. Goddamn domestic animals.

Oh, no! You can already see the sun (11) behind the rock outcrops on the east side of the beach and the first beachgoers (12) make their way lethargically out of their cabins. The sound of "No Woman No Cry" (13), original version, begins to waft from the cabin next door, Bob Marley (14) sings his little "Everything is gonna be alright" (15) line and I swear it makes me nauseous. This is my vacation, for fuck's sake, can't I get a moment's peace (16)? Apparently not. The precise cabin from which the song is emanating is occupied by a bunch of Italian (17) dirtbags who insist on calling themselves "street artists" (18), friends of the "White Monkey" (19) or whatever bullshit they're into (20). The foul smelling one with what looks like a jester's hat (21) on, who I'm sure in his country is some kind of redneck truck driver (22), is now outside his cabaña doing stretches that don't last more than two minutes.

"There you go, douche bag! That'll make up for the 25 liters of beer you drank last night before falling asleep outside my room", I yell from my window.

The idiot smiles at me (23) and blows me a kiss. Ugh! I imagine him played by the actor from that movie that was so horrible...ummm...."Life is Beautiful" (24)...with Roberto Benigni! (25) what a bunch of horse shit!

I feel horrible and there's no one else to pay for it! I have decided to punish myself in exemplary fashion since I could've easily gone to any big city and gotten drunk without any kind of big production or treated myself to an all-inclusive hotel (26) where the scenery is just as beautiful but also sufficiently sterile and separated from me by a large pane of glass. But no: here I am each year trying to live out my shitty dreams (27).

But you earned it, sister! So now it's off to meditation class! (28)

I'm getting ready to go outside (29) and shit! I try to grab my iPod but like a klutz drop it! I pick it up and when I try to turn it on realize it's fucked. The two kilometer walk on the beach is the only good part about this. I'm wearing some Gap pants especially suited for these kinds of activities but instead take shower and say to hell with the meditation classes, I'd rather ease some of my pain (31) so I masturbate a few times and the only thing I achieve is that feeling you get when you missed your chance and you only half came (32), or maybe you didn't come at all, like one of those half-sneezes. Someone's knocking on the door. It's that fucking Italian hippie. Because of him my orgasm got screwed and since I'm already over all this I'm going to cut the story off here, because one of the things I despise the most are short stories.

Bibliography

“Eulalio González.” wikipedia.com. Wikipedia, 11 March 2011. Web. 30 Nov. 2011

Maldonado, Alejandra. *Aburrida En Bouveret*. Ciudad de México: Editorial Moho, 2005.

Print.

---. Entrevista personal. 7 octubre 2011.