

SUNLIGHT LOST

Mónica Cristina Muñiz Pedrogo

Literatura en Inglés

Facultad de Humanidades

I could see the guards looking around the shopping mall with hesitation, taking small cautious steps through the halls. They try to point their flashlights at every dark corner they find in their way, but they all know that that will not assure them of their definite safety. Those creatures always linger around, from the floor to the roof, under every couch and over every clothing rack. The guards attempt to stare at it all, but the ghosts will not leave them at peace, not until they had no choice but to move on.

These beings, such as I, always wander through this palace of social contact, with me being one of the few unable to leave it, for it was here that I perished. How I died and became a spirit of old camping ghost stories is of no concern. My life was insignificant, such as is my death. When others linger in the mortal realm in an attempt to right their wrongs, I remain for the sole reason of having no purpose to exist.

I am not miserable or downtrodden, so there is no need to worry about my emotional and spiritual well-being. I simply do not see the stages of life and death as that significant, for we all will vanish into the void when our ghostly composition breaks away.

If you will allow me the right of using a simile for the understanding of my perspective, think of the sun and moon. One shines brightly, giving light to all of its subjects, while the other is a mere reflection of clarity, and would appear and disappear as the days passed, vanishing from sight on a dark night. Souls are like that, with the living having an aura around them that projected bright colorful rays, while the dead had no such light; just an emptiness that would never be filled, pretending to be the image of a humanity long gone. Either way, it does not matter when and how they appear. At the end of it all, the sun and moon are just suspended in the black void that is space. From the beginning to the very end, the blackness beyond the soul is what is left behind and within it, there is nothing. And

thus, with that in mind, I see life and death as pointless stages of existence that will fall into emptiness and make all that was felt and thought useless.

As I move around the dark hallways and observe the guards shaking in fear of what they have been told in rumors that lingers an inch from their breath, I see the ghosts wander aimlessly. Ghosts stay within the mortal realm because of their refusal to move on, as is already known among the myths of the living. They cannot resign themselves to just leaving the existence they once had behind, especially if they had died so suddenly and unexpectedly. However, I am not like that. I do not need any excuse to justify my presence in this realm. I am here simply because I have no reason to leave. For me, life and death are existential planes that you eventually find yourself in and nothing more. It is ridiculous to perceive them as a journey of identity or any of the sorts. You remain exactly the same in all of them with no sudden change of personality or enlightenment. *And beyond?* That is just where you vanished, all of your thoughts, feelings and dreams turned to ashes and lifted away in the wind.

I admit that there was an initial grotesque feeling when I saw ghosts with half mutilated bodies, crying for help and salvation while a group of teenage girls drank piña coladas and joked around with large smiles. Other times, I would see an infant ghost on the floor as all kinds of living humans stepped over him, ignoring his teary pleas. Some years ago, I remember, a mother was handing out flyers all over the mall, trying to find her missing son. She had spent a decade on that endeavor and the people had already begun to see her as a mental case. All the while, the boy stood by her, hidden away from her vision.

To die in a shopping mall was both a blessing and a curse, for I had to witness the living growing up from being children to becoming old senile men and women. For years, I have had no choice but to be the observer at the edge; the eyes overlooking the rise and fall of life, from the good to the bad to the inevitable. When to many it would have been sad to see people have the opportunity to live life to the fullest, for me it eventually became absolutely boring after its function of entertainment had run its use. Life seemed to just be this *phase* instead of the significant and amazing journey of the body and soul. You lived and then you died and humanity would just keep on running until it obliterates itself at some point in the future.

The ghosts tried to have their own version of “living and dying” by experiencing some kind of metaphorical adventure where they would find the true meaning of life, love or whatever they felt like at the moment. However, they

would all disappear eventually, breaking away as they realized that they no longer had a reason to remain in this realm.

Over by the fountain, I see a young boy with his skin in shambles and blind beyond relief, wandering alone, looking for the way to save the one he loves. He had once clung to my legs, sobbing and begging for me to help him. He still needed to save his sister from the bad man and he was the only one who knew where she was. He looked up at me with red rimmed eyes, tears smearing his face as the living walked past us. And I told him with a sadistic smile how he needed to find the doorway to the Spirit Kingdom and request the King's help for his wish to be fulfilled. The boy became so happy at that statement, practically jumping up and down in joy. He thanked me and ran away, anxious to find the doorway that would lead to his sister's salvation.

That was twenty-five years ago and he still wanders throughout the shopping mall, looking for that non-existent doorway. He has known from the moment that he saw the report on his sister's death on a television set that there was never a doorway, a Spirit Kingdom or a King. It was all a lie, but one that has helped him remain in this realm, for if he gives up in his little adventure, then he would have to accept that he has no reason to stay anymore and has to move on. He would have to confront the eternal ending of his useless life.

At the other side of the mall, a woman is sobbing on a bench, as she has done for the past century. She had died thousand of years ago and had hoped for the concept of reincarnation to be real. The woman had followed all of her loved ones, memorized their aura, and attempted to find them again after they passed away. But she never found them in those years, nor of any person she begins to follow too. She had asked ghosts if they had seen a reincarnation or if they were themselves part of a cycle, but it was all for naught. And now she sits there, on a bench in the middle of a shopping mall where the living intermingles and laughs in the face of death until it is their turn. Her body is already crumbling and her hair has fallen off completely. She tries to wipe away the black blood from her eyes, but it just keeps spilling without remorse. One day, as it inevitably seems, she will break into pieces and vanish, forgotten forevermore. Such a pathetic existence.

Their misery comes from their failure at finding a purpose for their wanderings, a reason to still remain among the mortals. However, it was all just fear of the unknown, fear of vanishing into a darkness where time and reality stop eternally. When they started realizing this, the fact that if they have no purpose and an empty aura, that there is only one answer to the question *what exactly comes next?*, they will start to crumble, their body cracking up like stone and their eyes

spilling that dark bloody trail that obscures their sense of being. They slowly, and painfully, become blind, unable to move anywhere anymore, screaming for help even in death, but unavoidably left alone until they become ashes and dust.

And as these foolish souls cling to life as if it was their only source of salvation, I wander around with the clear truth within me. As I see life and death meaningless, for they all disappear into oblivion, I remain as a ghost for I have nothing to fear. I have lost nor gained anything of worth, thus making me, in a strange sort of way, invulnerable against the calling of the beyond. The acceptance of a purposeless existence is what has, ironically, given me a reason to remain.

And on this starry night, as I wander between the ghosts and the living guards, I hear a barely audible scream coming from outside of the front doors.

A girl, of maybe fourteen or fifteen years, is trying to yell for help, dragging a useless leg through the ground as she tries to reach the doors. She is completely painted with blood, a deep cut running through her abdomen, with her entrails being held in with her hands. The young girl had been stabbed dozens of times all over her body, her right eye almost being indistinguishable among the disheveled hair, blood and tears. I could see the muscles beneath her skin, the bone within the flesh, shining in the moonlight of that last night.

She has no hope of surviving.

I cannot go beyond the doors of the shopping mall, for I had died within these walls and unheard rules dictated my station to be here. Trust me, I have tried multiple times over the years, but all of my efforts have been futile. I even tried observing other ghosts try to do the same, but they all failed. All of us are stuck here forever, or at least me.

The girl is pounding on the doors, her blood tainting the glass. She keeps on screaming, but her voice cannot be heard. The guards are too far away to hear her pleas.

She is sobbing, her tears intermingling with the blood running down her face, as her voice and hands made no discernible noise. The girl slowly begins to fall towards the floor, sliding against the glass as she loses her energy. I can see the aura that encompasses her frame slowly fading, the colors of life vanishing into the void. This is admittedly the first time I have seen someone die in front of me, and the first time I have witnessed the death of a life lost.

“P-Please...”

Slower, less frantic, and on the ground she is. It isn't a pounding anymore, but more like a clapping against the glass, a grotesque celebration of the coming end. Another among us; another pointless wandering spirit, if she so desired.

I could have gone and alerted the guards by throwing objects around, leading them towards the front doors. I could have dragged them towards her, but I didn't. I just stood there, next to the doors as she lay on the ground, the blood forming a pool around her. As her aura fades, she looks up at me, right at my deathly frame, and stretches out her hand with the last vestiges of life force she has towards the glass again, placing it upon the surface.

“Please... h-help me...”

The emptiness is coming and there is nothing that can stop it. The darkness sucks in her color, from the inside and out, as her hand falls to the ground and her body stills. When there was once color, life, energy, the sun, now there is the flickering flames of ashes. The final tears of life spill from her eyes as they lose their light and submerge themselves into the eternal blackness of the rest of her existence. It has all been lost and never to be recovered. *Gone*.

And I stay next to her until the very end. Whatever will come after, be it remaining in the mortal realm or moving on, I will be there to see it. I shall stay because there is nothing else to do and her existence is worthless.

The lost aura makes a silent plea, somewhere in oblivion.

I don't mind.

I don't... mind.