

The Liberator Of The Cats



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Dedicated to Samuel Olazabal

When you are a child, you play, laugh, run and
Misbehave. These memorable moments you
Share with friends who will never forget.

When we do not have somebody to share these
Games, those laughs, our thoughts and emotions,
The gloomy feelings of loneliness sorrow our hearts
Making us cry.

If we do not have any support, if we do not find
A friend, we will continue crying; we will miss that
Hand that will lift us up, that voice that will convert
Us, that person that will help us.

When I was a child I found that friend.

A. Angel Olazabal,
My friend and brother

“ We need to forge our foundations such that in a few years we may know we were
the catalyst of a noble cause”.

Waldir Espinoza

The Vegetable Kingdom

Inside a soap bubble slowly descending, the air balances the crystal ball, swinging me from side to side. Suddenly I brush a surface, my crystal vessel disintegrates and finally I don't know where I am. But it is a charming place. I feel a strange energy in my body and I travel down the road with good feeling. I don't know where I'm going, I don't know, but the energy that surrounds my body takes me and I can't stop.

Into my supernatural voyage I start to feel a strange sensation, the earth covered with green leaves that seem to come out of the soil. Instead of stretching their limbs to grab me, they do not want to harm me; they even seem friendly. It's agreeable to see them smile; it seems they want to make me happy.

"Continue!" --- "Where did that voice come from?" ---

Turning around, I see a meadow full of colorful flowers and at the very end, a waterfall irrigating fertile land; here I won't miss anything, I tell myself. The light, the shadow, the choice fruits of trees, my friends offer everything for the taking. Turning around, I have some company: a young acacia, a eucalyptus, a balsam and a thin pine. With them I continue on the road and I will travel faster, accompanied by the soft and aromatic breeze that stimulates the energy transporting me.

Within the exuberant vegetation I get lost and further away from friends. Before I know it, I find myself at the foot of a great sequoia; the serpent-like twining branches with giant bells elevate me ever so gently.

From up here I can observe the entire kingdom, able to locate friends who are very far. They had been looking for me but could not find me.

Looking south, I see all that I had traversed. Lots of flowers, trees and plants are starting to wilt. Maybe winter is starting to settle in, or they might be sad

because I had left them. I turn around and look north, to the path where I must continue on, lined with oak trees. The noble trees will take care of me for the rest of this road.

I look east and see lots of trees, some thick and tall, others long and slim, some with knots, old from many years of existence and the rest just starting to grow.

I look west, not a good sight by contrast with all the beauty I had seen, and everything a dull green. An endless fence of thorns surrounds the land and within the heart of the fence, a huge nursery made of thick glass and inside, plants used for man's vices. There I can see narcotics, with barbiturates covered with cactus and ash.

Within this fatuous landscape, I start to wonder: Who could have built the glass nursery? I am able to adjust my sight through clear scenery surrounding me. Within one angle lies a square marble sculpted in low profile and the inscription: "made by man." Precisely at that moment, inadvertently, it would seem, the branches of the sequoias turn, as if folding an umbrella after a rainy day.

Like a drop of water I fall onto the newly formed toboggan, and descending my fragile body is caressed and held safely. Arriving to earth, I am welcomed by sunflower plants which, by mere chance, are passing by to an unknown destination. Happily they help me stand up and when I ask where they are headed, they tell me they will accompany me to the end of the road. We start our march, the sunflowers and I. I start to think of the strange sight of plants inside the nursery made by man.

As I continue walking, I see something coming in the distance. Somebody is coming toward us. He is getting closer. Of medium height, and thoughtful. At a slow, walking pace comes a massive tree trunk from which a few leaves protrude with dark green on the lower portion of the trunk and more light-colored growth above. Since I cannot back up or stop due to the energy surrounding my body--the sun energized with its brightness--I am bound to encounter him in some fashion. I feel he will not bring me any harm because there are lots of trees to

protect me. As I get closer, I yelled if he knew where the road led? Very calmly, with a heavy voice, he indicates to my companions, the sunflowers, and myself the route I must take, but since the divider in the road is far away, he decides to accompany us.

With his slow walk, heavy voice and leaves in his trunk, I conclude that it is an ancient tree. I ask his name.

“I am the oldest tree in the kingdom and I am a pine tree. Everybody treats me with a lot of respect and they come to me when they need advice. Within me I have more than one thousand years recorded.”

When I hear those words, I ask whether he can tell me something about the thick glass nursery I saw in the west. He meditates at length and breaks his silence with his scraping voice.

“It hurts to talk about it,” he says in a spirit of melancholy, “but I will tell you everything so you know the truth, see reality and always be on guard...”

“A long time ago, more than a century, the kingdom was at peace, our land was more fertile; the air, the breeze and its fragrance always came together. Before you knew it, a group of men crossed our land--they had come from civilization. When they presented themselves to our noble rulers, they asked for the fertile land to the west of the empire in order to grow crops they could not grow on their land. After arriving at an agreement, our Excellency gave them the lands to the west for a period of twenty years in exchange for a fifth of the crop.

“After ten years of possession, greed and desire for power and money possessed their hearts and they stopped growing the crop from which bread is made and they replaced it with cocaine, opium, marijuana and hallucinogen mushrooms. When this happened the noble rulers intervened so the land would be returned to the kingdom. They would not return the land and a war started, lasting three years and ending in a treaty in which the men promised to build a glass nursery and lock up those plants that were the cause of discord between them and us. In exchange the kingdom gave them 120 hectares of fertile soil.

“Peace returned for twenty years, followed by greed and lust. The men started to plant seeds of hatred and discord, hurting their race and ours. Not happy with

the agreement, they declared war. The battles came, one after another, but they could not destroy us because we were stronger. Once they realized we were stronger they started chemical warfare, which helped them achieve their objective.

“Again, a peace treaty was forged in the City of the Magician, where the men unjustly took possession of the lands to the west, one-fourth of the empire. In exchange, they grew the thorny plants, that wall you saw. It is the cause of lots of pain to our inhabitants.

“From there, I have seen their sons pass and the sons of their sons, harvesting products that are sold in the great metropolis, but they have not taken care of the land: It is not as fertile because of their poor agricultural practices.

“We have arrived where the road divides; the sunflowers will continue to the right and you, my little one, to the left. Before you leave, I want to ask you a favor. When you arrive at the destination of your long voyage, join forces with men of good will so you can free our land and the hearts of those who destroy the fields with those plants and the processing centers.”

After our farewell, I am sad and feel alone. From the old pine tree I learned many things: He had been like a father to me.

The Animal Kingdom

Continuing down the road, a flock of swallows appears, circling above. Because they are many and I am alone, I get scared and frighten them away so not one remains. I meditate on what happened, start to think that the birds had just tried to welcome me and regret scaring them off.

“You should not have done that!” I get a reproach.

A butterfly says this as he appears alongside many other colorful butterflies. They whisper beautiful things into my ear as they accompany me the length of the path, making me feel as if I have wings and can fly. I certainly don't have any wings and since I am getting tired, a gorgeous horse approaches me, on which I mount. He carries me through exuberant vegetation while a cloud of mosquitoes shades me from above as I advance, galloping.

As I travel through the animal kingdom, a deer and an elk come to view my arrival. This is strange because all I have in mind is to bring a message of my exotic travels. There are lots of rabbits, squirrels and dogs from the prairie, and gophers and white mice that come out of their holes. Now and then, I observe a pair of ears protruding above the bushes, bears afraid something might put their lives in danger.

The skunks, bears and owls look at me thoughtfully as I pass, as if they want to talk but abstain from doing so. The monkeys hanging from their tails as they move, the fox with its light-footed walk also follow and the kangaroos, between leaps, want to find out about the visitor.

The canaries, linnets and cardinals whistle harmonious melodies to themselves; their sweet music causes me to meditate on what happened in the plant kingdom.

Suddenly I feel something on my shoulders, not a grazing motion but a force that picks me up ever so gently. My companions can't do anything about it and I try to get loose, but can't. As I raise my hands, I touch what has been grabbing me. It is a huge bird. As soon as he feels me he says: "Come up and sit between my wings, I am going to take you down the road and make sure you arrive safely at your destination." I respond, asking, "Who are you and what is your name?"

"I am a white eagle and a young one, the same that took the sailor and now is taking you. From up here you can see down the road, turn and look back. Can you see that deer running? Can you notice the others building their dens? The winter is approaching and they are getting ready for it."

"Yes," I answer.

"Look forward, now there is the road you will have to follow to the next kingdom. Soon I will leave you, very close, right before dusk."

Looking down, I distinguish animals I could not recognize from our height and I ask: "What are those animals down below?"

"Those are felines: lions, tigers, panthers, jaguars, pumas, lynxes and leopards. You can't go down there because they protect our Majesty, the lion, who has complete control of three-quarters of our territory."

"And where are the cats?" I ask.

"Can you see that huge wall of rock and concrete in the distance?"

"Yes," I answer.

"They are locked up and you can see them when you look through the barred windows."

"And why are they there and not with the rest of the animals?"

"I can't answer that question since we have to land. Hold on."

On the ground, the energy encircling me continues to guide me. Meanwhile, I can see the image of the eagle getting smaller as he heads up into the skies. After our farewell, I feel alone, start to cry and suddenly hear a voice: "Do not worry, I will help and guide you."

Between sobs, I cannot distinguish who it is and as I am able to adjust my sight I see a turtle walking so very slowly.

“Who are you?” I ask.

“I am the messenger that will take you to the next kingdom.”

We continue our voyage and it comes to mind to ask about the cats. After I ask him he meditates a good while and breaks silence with these words:

“A long time ago, almost a century, a group of men came from civilization to the sovereignty of our kingdom. Once they met with our Majesty, they asked for land so they could raise cattle they could not raise in their own land. The sovereign ruler of our kingdom, trusting their legitimacy, gave them land for a period of twenty years. The feed for the cattle came from the plant kingdom.

“Everything was at peace and running smoothly until we found out they were at war with the plant kingdom. After the conflict, they declared war on us for no apparent reason. This was a war they could not win because of the help we had from the insects, reptiles and batrachians. We fought for nine years until they won by using chemical warfare and fire weapons, thus conquering our territory a little at a time.

“After signing a treaty, it was agreed the men would keep a quarter of the kingdom so they could raise their cattle. The first thing they did was building a great wall to separate the land from ours and in it they would keep the cats as prisoners of war in case we would counter-attack someday. Each cell has one cat and each cat has a number on his or her prisoner’s uniform. Each cell, each cat and each number represents virtues men have lost and locked up inside those cells.

“Now, continue on this path but not without taking our message where you will be arriving soon. Join forces with those men of good will and free those cats, not through violence and destruction, since this is what has been happening. Free them with the use of dialogue, meetings and sincere language with emphasis on friendliness, harmony and peace.”

After we say good-bye, I promise my comrade to fulfill his wish. As I tell him this, two spider monkeys, a few koalas and three pandas say good-bye with their charming glances.

The Ocean Kingdom

I start to feel the ocean breeze; its humidity and the sound produced by waves breaking. As I contemplate the flight of the seagull and the splendor of a red-orange sunset, I realize that I am mounting a porpoise and starting to cross the finite blue ocean.

“Where are you taking me?” I ask.

“With me you will cross the ocean, rest for now and the sunrise will wake you up.”

And that’s how it happens. Awakening I realize with the first sun’s rays of the morning that the tide had gone down, permitting me a good view of a curtain of smoke at a far distance; not fog, no, but through it I can see tall chimneys protruding from huge buildings.

“What is it that I see?” I ask.

“Those structures you see in the distance are factories and refineries.”

“What for?”

“To produce and refine.”

“Take me there.”

“I can’t. Why didn’t you pass by the plant kingdom?”

“The thorny wall would not let me go through.” I answer.

“Then, why not through the animal kingdom too?”

“The wall that was built I could not go through.”

“If you could not go through over there, we can’t go through here either.”

“The smoke and the pollution would kill me; don’t worry that you will arrive to your destiny.”

We continue our course, swaying from side to side with the movement of the ocean waves until a strong current pulls us into a whirlpool that appears in the

middle of the ocean. Not wanting to die, I order the porpoise to turn back, but he can't. I feel the porpoise submerge as I fall.

I close my eyes so I will not see my end. Feeling an emptiness within this deep fall, slowly, maturely I can start to see my hometown, the park and its attractions, my house, my room, my bed and myself, and....

Waking Up

My diffusing fantasy has been consumed.

I go running to my parents' bedroom, thinking my dream might not be ended. Nervously, I ask, where are the sunflowers, old pine, the turtle, the porpoise and other animals.

"Calm down, son," they say.

"But the turtle, the pine tree and the porpoise each left me a message."

"Son, the animals and plants don't talk..."

Once I hear their response I turn around and disappointed, leave, dragging the length of my pajama; it is time to change, have breakfast and go to school. There I meet Juan and Pedro, my best friends who, after listening to me said:

"The message they gave you we need to abide by. Let's team up and start by gathering together the kids from school, we will take care of the plants, we will respect the animals and let's promote peace around the world."

Today many friends understood and unify their efforts for this great cause. There is still somebody missing:
That is you.

What are you waiting for?

The end