

## THE VISIT

In front of a window that, for the first time, open its curtains and reveals to me her virgin scenery full of maternal trees and planted bougainvillea, sipping a chicken soup and listening the Televisa channel, came in walking, unbalanced, The Word... (do not confuse it with the word of certain religion, this word is *non religious*, *non political*, it is any word of the any language in which you are reading this short story).

- What's up? - she said nonchalantly.
- What's up? – I answered, also nonchalantly, as if it hadn't been a year since she'd last appeared in my house.

The Word saw me with her smile on top. The truth is that I was just thinking of spending some time with you, I confessed, I feel you being born in my throat... One of those words that ends up being a piece of prose or a poem but are not translated precisely as they resonate in the voice and in the aorta vein.

She walked coquettishly around my room, she smiled condescendingly in front of the TV and turned it off. I am finally here, she said in the voice of an eager lover, as she lay down on the bed, posing like a transvestite diva. You know I hate poses, said my voice without my permission. Ach, you haven't changed, she said and though she didn't move, there was something about her that made her look like a sprawled out little girl about to hear a lecture. That was her, I know her, without poses.

- Hey, Word, I think you're imperfect, you're an incomplete drawing, a volute which doesn't fly, a sheaf of papers dispersed by the wind...
- All right stop it, What do you think I am if not a human invention? That's why you can't capture me as you feel me in your throat. I am The Word... The same since before you... a ball of wool with the soul of a sweater. Hahaha. So simple, so *non complicated*. No language has been the same

for more than three hundred years and yet you, the human being, you've had the same DNA, the same brain size, the same stock of ideas and the same lexicon for ten thousand years, always the same, the same, the same...

- What? Words don't change?

- Not the true ones, no. The ones used by those of your species, in speech, in labour, in the letter and the songs... Those, yes, those words are always changing. In Holland there are some who understand us... There they make dictionaries every year. In Spain, on the other hand, they want their Castillian to remain *ceteris paribus*, to keep English out, which is like saying I don't want my Causcasian daughters to marry an Arab, a black man or an Asian, and, of course they should mix, maybe then they would find The Exact Word.

- What would you say if I dared to draw you?... Would you pose naked for me?

- Begin – she said in a tired voice, lying down as La Maja – it's been you and so many others. You'll enjoying drawing me with the other words, the unfinished ones. You'll enjoy your piece of art, of course. And also the frustration, later, when you learn that my image, as you have seen it today in your bed, cannot be reproduced. I do not exist in your world. The others live there, the impostors. But I will be with you in all the drawings of human speech, in the songs and in poetry: in the song flowers, as the other *yous* used to call it over five hundred years ago.

And as I wrote as a short hand typist what she said, her silhouette began to disappear... She drew out her smile and at last that look between evil and know-it-all. The shapes disappeared through the bougainvilleas, her unsteady step, the cadence of the phantasmagoric wooden leg. I felt a fluttering of drums in the pectoral, it was her, that's how she filters through all the cells and charges of air, the socket of the eyes. Word, come, I want to draw you. And so many years have passed like this since we initiated this infamous relationship that I do not know if it is sado-masochism of schizoid fiction of what humans call of being human.

© Cristina Rascón Castro (México, 1976)

From the book “Cuentraficos ” (2006).

© Translated by Cristina Rascón and Amal Chatterjee.