

Tea Time

by Juan Carlos Pareja

- Ah bonjour my young friend! I must warn you that no kindness has come out of me today! I've only been able to harm any person willing to come close to me. Don't look at me that way, it is no surprise what I am saying. My fits of rage are increasing over time, but let us come back to the topic that brings us here, my friend. After breakfast I sat next to the window watching the stillness of the city under the rain as if a spell were cast over the entire town. The grey skies produced in me the most subtle of yearnings. No colours, nor melodies nor shapes nor words can interpret my feelings, my salvation lied in the eyes of someone out there. Oh but I am tired of searching my good friend, I feel as lost as Dante. I wish I could rest my whole life in front of this window, watching Salvatore play with his moustache while he awaits for the families to arrive at his funerary parlour. Maybe it was the lack of tobacco that sent me into this state of frenzy. Look at my hands! They can't even hold my tea, they can't stop shaking. The doctor never mentioned this sudden loss of composure. How shall the great Andreas Weisheit appear in public in this state? Or maybe it's something much more obscure and terrible that has taken me through this path of inevitability. I hope you can forgive me, no, no, please stay, it is still too early and your presence makes it so much easier to be, my patient friend. Surely it is a great coincidence, my trembling body and you, I mean. It all seems like a dream, come closer lad, let me hold your hand, closer I say! I am petrified and I fear it may never drift away. Behind that door where you have appeared, there is nothing for me, nothing that is real. What obscure secret do you bring to me from outside lad? Why are you smiling? Have we always been this frivolous? Today I confirmed my suspicions, ah, rather I must say it was good old Kirilov. Such a curious character If I might say so. He would not stop blabbering about the pain and terror that invades him, he kept insisting that our liberation comes with self inflicted death. Bullocks! Plain bullocks! Of course I can live without fear, but it is so beautiful

to feel its weight over my eye lids. This afternoon I sat in the drawing room facing my great grandfathers mirror. I laughed like a madman observing the reflection of a coward and a hoax. So I've launched my own personal rebellion, with nothing more than a whisper so that I do not awake our envious Gods. Listen well to my words: I shall not die tonight, young lad. I laugh into the night because no blackmail will make me change my mind. If dying means living with no pain than I shall fight to extend this frivolous and meaningless life. Ah, good old Kirilov! But I sense a tremor in your soul as well, young friend, a yearning of some sorts.

The lad suddenly lowered his eyes, unable to face Andreas' powerful eyes. He concentrated on his hands that fiddled nervously with the porcelain. Whenever there was a pause in his voice, his hands would dance clumsily as if trying to track the melody of his thoughts.

He preferred to rest silent that night, understanding that whatever he said would be of no importance. He let his old friend continue his rant until he fell asleep on the sofa. Afterwards, he covered him with an alpaca blanket and kissed him goodbye on the forehead. On his way out, something appeared in the corner of his eye. It was the grand mirror.

He stayed still for quite some time analysing his dark reflection. His eyes said nothing or maybe too much. There was certainly ambiguity in them, within his ice cold expression there was some sort of yearning buried by a life full of nonsense. What questions could emerge in this silent dialogue and at this point of his life?

The sudden shattering of glass woke Andreas from a deep and meaningful dream. He caught the shadow of his friend disappearing into the night. He swiggled slightly under the blanket until falling asleep once again.

