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[Chronicle] Santiago after the pandemic: Misery and the ghosts that flee My sad Santiago



You have become ugly and nauseating, Sant Yago austral: you have chased away the illustrious beodos and the smiling women behind the glass of wine, I do not know if it is the fault of savage capitalism or of the poets who have not known how to reinvent your friendly corners.



Triste Santiago, full of bars and tents in Alameda de las Delicias, extending to the east - who would say it- in the very heart of Providencia, once an exclusive and quiet commune, a dwelling of well-to-do bourgeois, today with its park flooded with shops of homeless nomads.



Mayor Mathei, distraught and pathetic, sings a song by Serrat to her beloved co-religionist, Sebastián Piñera, standing on the lawn of the Japanese Park: *[Excuse the lord,](#)the hall was filled with poor people/ and they do not stop arriving,/ from the rear, by land and by sea./ And as the lord says he left / and being an emergency,/ they have asked me to tell them / where he is going to the pantry ...*

The groves have not yet opened to the passage of free man and woman, while you were transformed into an irremediable souk... (yesterday I bought socks for diabetic, two lucas the pair and a phone charger by luca quina). And no one stopped me for reception. It is that it becomes impossible to control a street trade that seems to exhibit more sellers than buyers, in a desperate paradox that would have puzzled Mr. Adam Smith.

I have walked from the east to the west, from Pedro Valdivia Street, down Providencia, stopping at the old bookstores, where two booksellers play a game of chess, while waiting

for the miracle of a client who takes a literary jewel for two thousand pesos, to buy the bread of the day and not get home empty-handed. A few words chained between friends, between vicious of the printed book, a leaf eager for possible findings, so difficult to run under rumas of publications that leave and enter the andeles, every day.

In your streets, squares, fairs and markets; in your stadiums once turned extermination camps; in your hospitals and barracks; in minimal twists and rounds and wide cemeteries; in landscapes without sunsets or windy sunrises, we were the decimated generation, or [the "veterans of the 70s"](#), as we were baptized by Pepe Cuevas and Mono Olivares, to mitigate with irony the dark pathos of those gray days like your face brisk with spikes under the harsh fog of the Huelén valley.

(José Ángel Cuevas no longer writes to you; [the crowds](#) in the abstinence diet and the preventions of the pandemic were lost... Hernán Miranda Casanova daydreams of [Doralisa](#) and has hung up his pen).

The danger of going through your bowels



You, city, have your own anonymous laments and it is not necessary here to count the evils of the walking scribe, but the House of the Writer, our "written house", is now closed to its frequent inhabitants, since shortly after the "social outbreak" of 2019 and during the worst days of Covid, under the plague of the Chinese bats and its fierce state capitalism that never foresaw the good of Confucius, the one that has filled us with more or less useless trinkets, with its ordinary and recurrent "made in China", ominously engraved next to the signs of respectable firms, German or English, of brands that we believed eternal,

like the happiness of the one who discovered his first love in the seat of a flowery and friendly park.

You do not repair, City, in proper names or in other identities than the eponyms of always, by pigeons that do not discern prestige or parchments. It would be good to remove them, placing on their pedestals successful footballers or fashionable singers, changing them from generation to generation, because each era has its conspicuous characters and to remember old yellow memories are your museums, those strange crypts where cultures that no longer throb die, clinging to the dates of boring teachers and children who refuse to memorize them, because that's what the Google Illustration is for. General Baquedano is a paradigmatic example and I feel his forced departure from the plinth and the removal of the bones of the unknown soldier, in which we are going to become this forgetful city, on the way to the anonymity of all forgetfulness.

And it is that so much hating this sullen and heterogeneous city, of gross inequalities and brutal boasts of injustice, you end up loving it, as if it were an old dear that you had despised a lot, and that rediscovers one afternoon, after the half-emptied glasses, as a jewel found on a beach without geography. Then, I begin to see you with different eyes, a sad and dirty city, but finally full of the charms that were stolen from you, five decades ago, at the point of iniquitous decrees that closed the eyelashes of your most precious bars, taverns and slums where pains were sheltered like wines of hope. And the new closures. for reasons of the killer virus, without having realized the effective immunity of alcoholics.

Ahora es peligroso recorrer tus entrañas en estos trenes atiborrados de individuos apáticos y anodinos, que olvidaron el paisaje y la vieja hospitalidad de los andenes, en cuyos rincones alguien esperaba por un amor extraviado en minúsculas estaciones del Sur, muchacha de negras trenzas que trae un canasto de primores olorosos y un poema de Teillier entre los pechos, acompasado en la métrica de rieles sonoros, con una carta de la abuela dibujada en lentas caligrafías. Hay un miedo latente en esta rara topografía de túneles negros donde acecha la muerte.

Los poetas no han sabido reinventar tus rincones amables

Camino hacia el sur, por la calle de los Ahumada, hermanos de Teresa de Ávila que dieron su epónimo a este paseo de imposible reposo. Pasada la rúa Moneda, donde se alza la Casa otrora derribada por bandidos con aviones y sin moros, enfilo por la diagonal Nueva York hacia uno de los últimos bares dignos que te quedan, con ancha barra color caoba, donde

el vino derramado da un lustre más perdurable que todos los pergaminos y barnices –los que a ti te faltan, Nueva Extremadura-, porque tus amantes fundadores eran unos desarrapados, con más prontuario que todos los inmigrantes del siglo XXI que nos recuerdan a diario, en las grescas por apoderarse de tus calles, la miseria humana y la impotencia de sus dioses hechos de cartón piedra.

Bar Unión Chica, New York 11, looking at the eastern flank of the Club de la Unión, that mazacote of high columns, of style II Empire, ill-defined and worse executed, den of rich sapphies that sent the Great Violet to eat in the kitchen ... For more than a year, the Unión Chica bar was without opening its doors of saloon of the Farwest, which we beat in the 80s with Jorge Teillier, Rolando Cárdenas, the Tote España, Álvaro Ruiz, and others that I remember I did not achieve.

I realize that it is useless to look for you – also to describe you – Santiago, if I have lived in your wide lap for eight decades and it is very likely that I will rest in it at the end of my days. For now, I will continue to walk through you, so that I may be conjured up by other findings or the rediscovery of those you gave me, even those that I may have forgotten in the coming and going through your arteries, either manifesting my hatred or declaring my inevitable love to you.

You have become ugly and nauseating, Sant Yago austral; you have chased away the illustrious beodos and the smiling women behind the glass of wine. I don't know if it's the fault of savage capitalism or poets who haven't been able to reinvent your friendly corners. Santiago bitter and dear, you lost forever the sweet hospitality that Machado sang but I make my own the question evocation of [Neruda](#): *What did I forget in your streets that I return / from everywhere to your streets? / As if I go wherever I go / suddenly remember an appointment / and I hurry and fly and run / until I touch your pavement! / And then I know that I know I am,/ then I know you were waiting for me/ and finally I meet me.*

Edmundo Moure for La Pluma, November 21, 2021

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