RAÚL ZURITA

FROM SONG OF THE SOLITARY CHILDREN

TRANSLATED BY DANIEL BORZUTZKY
I AM YORKA SALINAS MARTÍN

HIS SISTER

Isidro was born in Santiago on February 12, 1968. We were five siblings. Our parents were Margarita and Benedicto. He was a very quiet kid, and we were always together. He was like a little old man, only two years older than me, and very protective. Our father was a musician and when he went out on tour Isidro would be the man of the house.

We lived in different parts of Santiago. He was very smart. He absorbed everything he studied without much effort. Our grandmother Elba lived on Gran Avenue. He would pick me up at school and we would spend weekends with her.

He was dark, skinny and tall, with hair like our father’s. When he was around sixteen he started to go to parties with his friends from church, the Parroquia La Estampa, on Independencia Avenue. He liked disco and the rock band Soda Stereo. His best friend was our cousin Ulises. They spent a lot of time together, and they would dress to impress. Ulises would defend him, because my brother was a lot smaller.

We had a good time when we lived on 5 de abril Street. He went to high school at the Liceo Pedro Aguirre Cerda, and he always won the prize for best student. Later, the school would name it the Isidro Salinas Award for the best students.

In our house we always believed in leftist ideas. When he was eighteen-years old he became a militant in The Front: after our Uncle Camilo died (he was also in The Front), our mother joined and Isidro went with her. He understood things then that I could not.

When they murdered him, he was with our mother and our aunt at the house in Mamiña. Isidro was eighteen-years old, in his third year of high school. Yes, Isidro Hernán Salinas was executed on June 30, 1986. I am his sister, Yorka Salinas Martín and I remember him.

//You too should remember them
Remember that once I was and now I am not
Remember the hate, remind me
in the demolished offices of the mornings
I AM CARLOS URRÁ LÓPEZ
HIS GRANDSON

Grandpa Bernardo was born on December 1, 1911 in Tocopilla and he grew up in a working-class family. My grandfather lost his father at a young age. He trained as a metalworker and I imagine that the harshness of life on the Pampas did not allow him to be indifferent. He found the strength that marked his life as a politician, as a communist social activist.

He was dark-skinned, large and sturdy, he enjoyed meals and family parties. He married María Olga Flores and had four kids. When I was young my mother would tell me that on Christmas he would go out very early and spend the entire day in the streets looking for gifts for his grandkids, that he would come home in the last hours of the day to eat and distribute the gifts.

My grandfather was a man who was very dedicated to my family. We remember him always trying to make us smile, bringing his grandkids together and making sure the people around him were having a good time. He loved the ballet, the opera, and on his trips to Cuba or the Soviet Union he would escape to the theatre as often as he could. He was a caring man, freethinking and a lover of culture: he learned French by reading the dictionary and he would walk around the house repeating the words he read.

I was born in ’83. I never got to know him but his memory has always been with me. My mother even says that he dreamt of having a grandson who was an artist.

On April 2, 1976, he was arrested in his house in Quintero along with wife, María Olga Flores and we never heard from them again. My grandfather was named Bernardo Araya Zuleta. He was arrested and made to disappear in April 1976. I am Carlos Urra López, his great-grandson. I don’t have his name, but I have his blood and I remember him.

///You too should remember them
Remember then

Remember the double-face of love and hate
and its one-of-a-kind skull
Remember the scream-crossed winters and
remember the arrows of summer
Remember the black felt of the weeks
and atrocity number 509
But above all remember
poor memory of mine
that here nothing, no one nor nobody is forgotten