

Elegy to Alceo Rafael Barrios



When death occurs in a brutal, unexpected and malicious way, she establishes an uncertain limit with real existence. Alceo...this small and phantasmagoric geography... makes it possible to talk to you. It seemed that we could meet at any moment, just by chance; today I may be imagining this is just another meet. I still cannot

accept a last image of yours; however I can tell you these words – words we have never thought so sad. You were an insatiable server to fate, tearing your armor to the permanent- should we say insignificant? - sacrifices of life. You went deeper into that overbearing and tireless impetus, looking for your being and warning about your presence. Now, with the distance escaping between us, I would like to wake you up. And withdraw you from the fight you submitted yourself with no limitations. You were a daily gladiator. Honest and deeply convinced of honoring the existence. Why have you never given up being the tenacious walker, anxious of the offerings? You did not know how to escape from fate. From that cheating and captivating fake. That pretender tortured by his own ending. Guilty of boring the feeling, dispelling our requests of just being the present.

If we had no "self"! If we could go by like the most elementary matter or like creatures with no predetermined consciousness of destiny! Then I would give myself up to this sun and to the grey delusion of men without being afraid of carrying out my passions. I would not need to dream or to escape from reality. I would be capable of walking through history without tombstones and would arrive at the future without fraud.

I run away and this world belongs to me. It comes from my sight and from my skin. From the

intransigency of believing I am unique to put up with myself. This indefinite cosmos watches men fluctuating between faults and comprehension. Only pride will make us stay unhurt knowing we will be undoubtedly condemned to the authentic indifference of the old executioner.

It is impossible not to extend the calmness of the unconsciousness towards the turbulence of mundanity! Enraptured by that indifferent quiescence. Free from restrictions to places and people. Teared only by the breeze of forgetfulness that time declines over our bodies when it brings light back to us. We remain free from earth and its circumstances to become something from that foundational nothing the world should possess before being.

I know we are escaping from our own destination towards lands as strange as these ones. The road is full of us with the same emotions and feelings. Men without memory are imaginary. Only genesis and death are real. Then, we wrongly build our hopes in life trying to perpetuate ourselves. That is why death moves us to tears. We already knew it. We have talked about it a midday with the sun right above us making the summits of Luján more prominent. Under an infinite and lucid sphere. Enormous. A dome that locks its meaning in intrigue. We also asked ourselves about the sense. I now know that you could never give up being an astral warrior. Climbing every dawn the dream of conquering the next sunrise. I can still remember the day you tilted your tanned skin and, mumbling two or three words, accepted the coincidence. Then I lost your sight among the narrow streets along the Basilica. As always...although we did not know that time, the executor that sometimes goes ahead of our own shadow, was also leaving along those lanes.

Jorge C. Trainini

In behalf of the Editor Committee of the
Revista Argentina de Cardiología

Farewell to Rafael

Death took flight early...

Nothing better than these pages, my dear friend, for this last good bye. They belong to the cardiology community and, thus, they are the deepest and most suitable field for these hurt words. I would like to go beyond the intimate space of our personal friendship and embrace all the cardiology community to cry for your departure. Everybody is going to miss you, those who knew you and those who have never met, as you have been a paradigm of the Argentinean cardiologist.

I had the privilege of meeting you a long time ago, when you started rushing about the corridors of the old *Hospital Italiano* as a resident in Cardiology.

From the beginning you appeared to have a strong personality, an acute intelligence and an eager and avid spirit, with the enthusiasm of those who do not follow pre-established patterns.

We all know that a resident is a student with a degree who, after a few years of learning, becomes a trained cardiologist with an imprint he will carry on along his whole life. You left hospital with much more than a diploma; you left hospital with the maturity a man and a physician needs to develop the project you had previously outlined.

It is not easy to leave the womb of the residency to build a life on your own. During our meetings with friends, you had always told us that your future life had two objectives: no matter how hard you had to work as a physician, you would continue with systematic reading and medical education. You always fulfilled those objectives. You took part in congresses in

Argentina and in foreign countries; you generated your own communications, and amazed us with your knowledge of the most updated data.

Then, you became the great cardiologist in Luján, and you kept on coming to Buenos Aires frequently; everybody reminds you with affection and admiration at the Sanatorio Mitre, Hospital Italiano and Sanatorio Güemes. I personally enjoyed our rounds at the Coronary Care Unit, and your help, as part of the “alma mater”, in the organization and in the philosophy of the meetings of the Alumni of Cardiology.

I shall not omit your generous and devoted participation in body and soul at the Argentine Society of Cardiology.

Finally, as I had the privilege of belonging to your intimate circle of friends, I shall talk about you as a human being. This is the most difficult aspect to mention, as words are not enough as this issue belongs to the deepest feelings, to the essence of the soul.

Rafael, you have been a good man, with a unique sensitivity, fully devoted to your ideals and to those things you loved. You have always been a loyal friend, a necessary mediator in the unavoidable conflicts of life. Your moral had no concessions; this led to rough—though honest—confrontations which left scars you assumed with nobility.

Farewell, my beloved friend, you have left indelible trace in this world; your life has not been in vane.

You may rest in peace.

We shall never forget you...

José Luis Navarro Estrada