

Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo
**Castroneirics: A
Dreamitaph for
Fidel (The
Exquisite
Cadaver)**

01/06

Dreaming of Fidel. Cubans, though none have yet to admit it, have begun to dream of Fidel. It is a posthumous dream, one that bodes ill. A premonition. A sleepless fear. A final humiliation of the Premier by his fellow countrymen – technically his troops.

And there is also the sense that we are doing away with Fidel: the timely nightmare that, by force of nature – and of violence – we Cubans now need a lingering Fidel, half-mummified, hoarse, his skin petrified or putrefied, fecalphobic, senile or whatnot, but still Fidel.

Lacking icons, we now depend on that dreamed-up image – unwillingly, even – in order to continue being who we were, after half a century of despotic dictatorship with an angelic twist. *I, who am not quite sure how to say it: Revolution ...*

We dream of this, both within and outside the Island. In Havana's socialist torpor, or in the hyper-Havana that is the Mephistophelean malls of Miami, we dream it. In the ever more cosmopolitan Cuban ghettos, and in the cemeteries filled with bones of an ever lessening local color, we dream.

We fall asleep in the middle of the day and dream of it. Like zombies on a bus bound for home, nodding off without realizing we've already missed our stop, dreaming of it. Chewing the gum of victory as we drive down a Florida expressway or march in a militaristic parody right across Revolution Square, dreaming, ever dreaming of it.

Children and the elderly. Men and women. White and Black. All of them mixed, and yet immiscible. Like water and vinegar. Like the Revolution and the future which was ever coming to pass. Like Fidel and the collective dream that Cubans now conjure of him, both outside and within the Island: how do we diagnose geographies after

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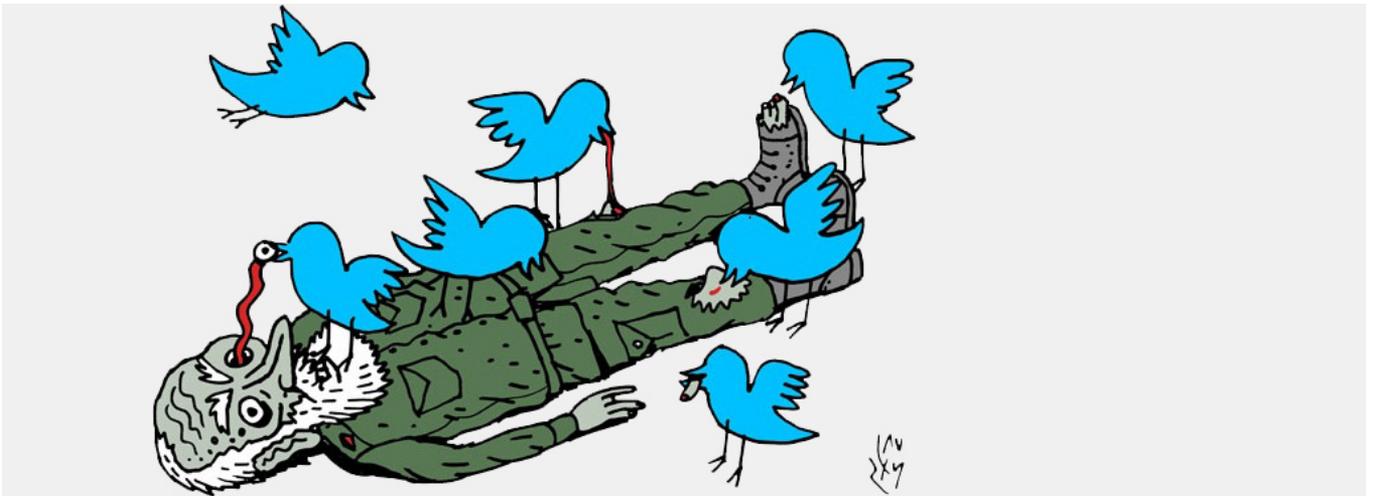


Illustration by Alen Lauzán Falcón.

a cancerous century of geopolitics?

Dreaming that we dream of Fidel. One after another,
all of us together, dreaming this same, shameful dream in harmony. The Revolution is a sounding board,
a watch that now has just a bit of residual tension in the springs. A zigzagging, pessimistic-tock:
reading oneiromantically between the lines.

It's best just to lie to our psychoanalyst in Brickell,
Barcelona, Santiago de Chile, or West New York. When being interrogated by officials, it's best to pretend
in exchange for pesos issued by the Minister of the Interior.
And it's best not to confess anything to Cuba's Catholic Cardinal,
a profane pastor who would later confess everything to Fidel in another dream.

Blame gelds us all as Cubans. Guilt has trained us
to be a submissive breed. The shame of feeling sorry
for our perpetual dependence on a Founding Father.
We don't want to be accomplices to Fidel's eternity,
just as we are about to show off our best clothes at his wake.

But we cannot walk through the world without Him. We
lose our way if we cannot count on His center of mass –
comfort for the masses. This is why we are surprised and
not surprised by these unfathomable dreams of Him.

Too many decades trapped in too much country. Cuba is a scaffold, a conspiracy theory on a cerebral level. We float on Fidel, on a raft of barbarism.
Castro is a hell of a cork who won't allow the Island to sink, preventing we Cubans from drowning in peace.

It seeps out of us, not just from every nook and cranny, but also from our dreams. It leaves us. We exude Fidels through every pore, we savor them in every bite of Creole food, we rhyme them in each bit of bad poetry and in every perfect piece of plagiarism: *here the oneiric yearning, the*

long lost transparency remains ...

On and even deeper within the Island.
Fidel directing
the firing squads from the La Cabaña fortress;
Fidel designing the underground trenches that have turned
the Cuban capital into Swiss cheese. Outside and far beyond
the Island. Fidel infiltrating the capitalist studios of
Radio y Televisión Martí; Fidel applauding from the runway
while Cuban-American supermodels like Vida Guerra,
whose name is a spontaneous metaphor for our unepic little epoch.

Fidel on the cover of *Playboy* for his sixtieth birthday,
Wednesday the 13th of August, 1986.
Fidel as the official shield on the red passports for deserting the proletarian paradise – and the paracivilian police.
Fidel swindling the other post-paradise exiles that are
the bills, the taxes, and the online goodwill of Obamacare.
Fidel with no aspirations and now with no animus,
while we Cubans dream of ourselves, even confounding the image and the likeness of the shapeless specter of a Morpheus called Fidel.

Perhaps we are those dreamers of an uncivilized Bertolucci, a race of New Men who then dreamt up
Ernesto Guevara – AKA Ché. In the left hand, the AKM rifle of virtue. With the right, depositing the tribute of a dark-penny-party-parted-down-the-middle in the juke box in the last nationalized bar.
*The Power of the People: that indeed was power ... Not
one drop of water in the sea ... Only the crystals crack, while
the men sleep standing up ...*

We are happy here, feeling one hundred percent Cubano.
We have fallen ill, true, but we have yet to be evicted. We have a fistful of pills that are ineffective
when it comes to stopping this dream, and droves of
free doctors conferred by the State in a clinical, cyclical referendum from which we can't even manage

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to centrifugate ourselves.

Sleeping while standing up. Or with the neck resting on a pillow stuffed with op-eds from *Granma*, the political pamphlet from the only political party that has no expiration date. Standing up or in choirs committed to an organic – though never orgasmic – intellect: *I have been a Communist, all throughout my life, goodbye my darling, goodbye my darling, goodbye my darling, bye bye, and Communists all must sleep ...*

Cubans have become the orphans of Icarus, not unlike Odysseus without his Ithaca. With no wings to fly, and a Cuba to which we cannot return. A carnival of siren songs beneath a baton-wielding Cerberus with 1959 heads, beneath the boot-trodden palindrome of 9591 bodies.

From orgiastic to an ergastulum. From moral indolence to material indigence. From tribal enthusiasm to the skeptical stampede. From semiotic solidarity to the tobacco knife that nicks your face, papi, or your ass, mami, so that you learn some respect.

From the museum of historical anniversaries to the mausoleum of the Retrovolution. From the marvels of Marxism to the miracles of marketing. From History with the capital H of a nuclear Holocaust to the lowercase h of a humorous history of molecular hirony. Wunderkammer, Wunderkafka. *We shall overcuba, we shall overcuba, we shall overcuba one day ...*

Erotic schizophrenics from dream to dream. From lucidity to libido. Onanistic oneirics, executing the most faithful fellation on the seminal speeches of "El Caballo" Fidel, Stud in Chief of a streetcar named, at times, "duty" and otherwise known as "pain" –

a puppet theater without puppeteers, the last act of intrigue, hypothalamus of the vigilant watching the vigil. Oh, not anymore ...

There can be no more awakening on the Island. Or we awake only to realize we are awash in another sea of delirium. And within someone else's delirious dream. Swimming in a liquid nothingness covered by a milky skin created not so much by tears but by rheumy sleep. Bailing buckets of Cuban tears evaporated by the unbearable insularity of being, each of them bearing a tattoo of NaCl on their cheeks.

Nationalism as insurmountable mountains of salt. Eons of Iberian ions. What power does the sun have against a people who enjoy the rhetorical rhythms of their own narcolepsy? *Hear the bugles bang ... Uno, dos y tres ... Uno, dos, y tres ... What a cool way ... What a cool way ... My conga bangs like Che ...*

Sleepiness as an anesthetic. Ah, if Fidel were to escape at the precise moment in which he has reached his greatest definition. Amnesia, amnion. Amateur shit from the multimillion dollar grants from the leftist academy. Morbid morality from the rotting right. Unethical ethnography, lifeless biographies. Cremating the Dantesque concept of the "comandante." Serialized editorials in the *Old York Times*. The Rockefeller Foundation. Who puts the bell in the Cubans' castroristic catalepsy?

We appear as Poe characters. A Ravenlution of atonic, catatonic little beings. The catcher in the Ryevolution. But in the end we're just children dreaming about their dad: millions of Sleeping Beauties, virgins poisoned by the fruit of the moringa tree with the thorns like a marabú bush.

Peter Pans with Stockholm

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syndrome. Passengers on the
Mariel boat lift, seasick from the surf.
Scarfaces from an
antiestablishment Oliver Stoned.
Naive northalgia. Rites
broken to reconcile the Cuban nation with itself,
at least
as long as this REM sleep continues, this
symphony playing
Do-Re-Mi in D sharp major, this Oedipus Rev,
this sinister
siesta of the Rewindvolution.

The strange thing is that dreams of Fidel
are always
silent, fairly unfocused, filmed with a high-speed
slow-motion
lens, and our retinas are blinded by
the high-contrast
atmosphere. Intimate and intimidating
neorealism. And
that massive muteness, that vocal void, that
hollow echo is
our untimely revenge against the fifty-year
monologue
with which Fidel mesmerized us.

What no Cuban knows is that everything is
happening
to every other Cuban in the exact same way.
That the curse of utopias is never personal,
but rather collective. And that this daily dozing
is not announcing the fall of Fidel, but rather that
of his faithful: we, the sleepwalkers,
to which Castro
do we owe our survival?

Suddenly we find ourselves neither inside or
outside the game,
but rather with nothing to play. The dominos are
stuck.
The genie with the tuft of hair extinguished
Aladdin's lamp.
From *siá cará* to San Finishin. Santero-socialist
spoils mixed
with bitter escuba shrubs and cursed water.
The courage, the
discouragement: the fountain of faith has ceased
to flow. There is
no game, but then again, nor are there any
moves. Being in
Zugzwang, the beginning and end of the Cuban
dreamverse.
Cubaom ...

The Cuban who moves now does not appear in
the photo
of self-transition: from dictatorship to
dictocracy. For the
Cuban who moves now, it is better to die before

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he is killed
like Laura Pollán and Oswaldo Payá: Christs of
Democracy with
the criminal Cubansummatum est of the Cuban
Catholic Cardenal.
From biopolitics to necropolitics, *and for the
cruel one who
tears out the heart which beats inside of me,
I nurture Castro and Ortega ...*

May the muted dreams not impede the dreams
in English.
The language in league with the
enemy. Everything tempts
the United States to reach out and touch down,
with that
extra force, upon our Latin American lands
where fidelism
is the most fertile. The carrion Caribbean.
The fideloma that
ultimately metastasizes into ballots rather
than bullets.

May being silent never prevent a dream
from being
deafening. The whisper of a totalitarian
Tatlin: the
cry that catapults Cubans generation after
degeneration, like little sleepwalking
animals. *We had
two homelands: Cuba and the night. Or were they
one and the same?*

Dreaming of Fidel. Cubans, though none have yet
to admit it, will never stop dreaming about
Fidel. That
murderous dream constitutes us as
an impossible people.
We gesticulate with the same rudeness as
him. We think
with his same impoverished perversion. We
repeat his
argot of war, both in the tribune and in
the tribunal,
applauding our out-of-fashion supermodel,
Muerte Guerra,
whose name is more familiar to us in dreams
than that of
our own mother: Satán María de
la Sierra Maestra,
ora pro nobis.

Or perhaps the idea of us no longer
exists. Absolutely
apocryphal, faced with the false fossil of Fidel,
we are now
all a bit of him. A crust of Castro covering
the soul,
our castrated spirituality. And yet we
also have the

sense that we are aborting Fidel. The intuition that, by force of habit – and by vileness – we, the Cuban people, are for the first time what is undreamable for Fidel: we have finally become the fetus of a future of which the Caudillo could never conceive.

Thus, our dreams of Fidel are neither a tribute nor an interment, but rather a cenotaph: a crypt without its exquisite cadaver. A stateless palindrome. A crossword puzzle without a clue. A tongue twister for the illiterate. A communion at the boundaries of the State and of God. A vaudevillian verity: that every Revolution is both sleep and dreams, which are themselves merely the dreams of dreams.

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