

*To be educated is to be free*

That year, many things started that had started long before. Other things ended too. Because nothing arrives or disappears suddenly, and things neither appear nor vanish out of thin air.

We were emerging from the *longa noite de pedra*, fleeing from the single, imperial Spain. Almost as soon as we left Bécquer and Baroja we arrived at Sartre, Camus and Machado. Then came Jaime Gil de Biedma, Ángel González and, all of a sudden, a hasty farewell to the social novel, hello to the *Novisimos* and to Latin American boom of authors, books and publishers: Sudamericana, Cortázar, Vargas Losa, Ediciones Joaquín Mortiz, Losada, Siglo XXI, Borges, Rulfo, García Márquez, Ediciones de la Flor. The Benet versus Montero showdown, goodbye Galdos and long live Arrabal and Marat-Sade. The primitive accumulation of literature and pleasures: *Critica del gusto* by Della Volpe, *Pour lire Le Capital*, *L'Érotism* by Bataille. From the illegal purchase of banned works to a publishing culture that was either censored or under surveillance: Zyx, Ciencia Nueva, Siglo XXI, Ariel, Cuadernos para el Diálogo, Seix Barral. Back then, the accumulation of symbolic capital was also an accumulation of political capital. Reading as a form of breaking down class distinctions, of sharing and fighting: *Últimas tardes con Teresa*, *La reivindicación del conde don Julián*, *El gran momento de Mary Tribune*, books of poetry by Visor and El Bardo. When reading Rilke was a rebellious gesture, reading Bertold Brecht was a joyful act, reading Gramsci a way in to an intellectual cartography. And the corresponding devices of high-level cultural agitation and propaganda: Triunfo, Camp del Arpa, Por favor, Hermano lobo. The *Suplemento de las Artes y las Letras* cultural supplement in the newspaper *Informaciones*, always ready to prove to us that the only possible revolution is the literary revolution. Obviously there was no lack of shadows, closures, jail, uncertainties, and deaths, but on the whole it felt as if everything was about to arrive. The attack on culture and words.

*Évame si tú me amas me transito.* Carlos Oroza.

And all of a sudden, only death snatched power from the General – a fact still constitutes us today – and history came to our shore. The heirs of Francoism, with Juan Carlos at the head, prepared to win the civil post-war that never ends and with the consent of the USA, Germany and Carrillo's Eurocommunism – oh, you, Santiago, the little Great Helmsman! – the normalisation of the country began: a king, a market, coffee for all, a new newspaper of reference, and a culture that was thrilled to feel pretty and European. Somewhat but not overly bewildered, we watched as the political, symbolic and common capital was sold for a (succulent) plate of lentils: Jorge Semprún, Premio Planeta 1977; Juan Marsé Premio Planeta 1978, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán Premio Planeta 1979, Juan Benet, Premio Planeta finalist 1980. Money as freedom. The boat of the revolution, crashing against daily routine and literature as a pleasant while away the hours. Although at first the generational change – Mendoza's *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*, Antonio Prometeo Moya's *Retrato del fascista adolescente* – appeared to maintain a certain civic engagement, a new cultural and literary pact soon came to light – culture as entertainment: *Belver Yim* by Jesús Ferrero, *Un invierno en Lisboa* by Muñoz Molina, *Todos mienten* by Soledad Puértolas – adjusted to the new circumstances. The Market initially didn't. Culture as resistance to dogmatic scepticism: the class war was over. The market was the vanguard, and the Madrid *Movida* its prophet. Barcelona and the sinking of the Titanic, although Anagrama and Tusquets managed to reinvent themselves as fiction publishers. Alfaguara and the three hundred thousand new novelists that barely reluctant literary critics greeted with pride. Narrativity at the service of the customer. *Tigres de papel*, *La conjura de los necios*, *Juegos de la edad tardía*, *Corazón tan blanco*, *La ley del deseo*. The culture of inequality to safeguard the new individual rights. *What's a girl like you doing in a place like this?* sang Burning, and Solchaga answered: growing rich. All those years of culture and breaking down class barriers only to discover that the only thing under the paving stones was money.

Constantino Bértolo