

IN THE LAND OF BALD DOLLS

EN LA TIERRA DE LAS MUÑECAS CALVAS

NA TERRA DOS BONECOS CARECAS

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- Damn crying!

One day it stops, there are so many tears, so much sound, that at the time everything mixes up and ends up becoming one: agony and despair.

When we play with dolls, we always think of a happy family, even if ours is not. I never had a hair doll, I had the bald doll, the one we got from church on Children's Day and Christmas. They always give, it's good for them and for us too, it makes us dream: dreaming of a hair doll, the one who braids, closes and opens her eyes.

When I received my bald doll, I thought that next year, what I asked for would come true: The hair doll.

Never came.

Here comes the crying, I can't control it...

- Damn crying!

I grew up with my brothers and parents, little with my father, who died early, they say it was the alcohol that took him, but I always say that he took it, he accepted the request of death. My mother and I stayed behind, because my four brothers left early to work, people don't need maintenance, right? For farm owners, it's better people who work until the end - hunger makes a harvester every second.

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If my brothers could choose, they would stay to grow up at the right time, but poor people don't have that, no! We are already set to grow from the moment we are born, for us all that remains is to survive and, for those who are lucky, it is enough to wake up every day.

Me, with my bald dolls and my brothers with their plastic cars...

I can't stand this cry...

- Damn crying!

I was 14 years old when I met Daniel, like me, like everyone else in our community, our childhood was about playing with what we were given, we lived the donated dream.

We started dating, I fell in love, I didn't really know what that was, but I think I was...

Can someone make this crying stop?

Please...

It didn't take long for everything between us to become more real and less cruel, as I, at 14, could no longer receive the bald dolls from donations. For me, time what is called childhood, had already passed, or perhaps it didn't even exist.

At school, each letter that the teacher put on the board appeared to me as a different figure, it's not that I didn't understand the letters, I just kept looking among them for an explanation of why, for us, only bald dolls came. For my brothers, plastic cars.

Why dreaming was so terrible?

Daniel and I believed that nothing could hit us, if we really didn't have anything, why worry? In the land of bald dolls, hope doesn't thrive, it just gets sick.

I turned 15 and Daniel was 17.

Daniel left me, took the bus to the farms in the East, went to work in the coffee harvest.

He said he will come back. One more bald doll for me to keep.

- Stop crying, girl!

A month after I started dating, I got pregnant.

- Stop crying, Marina, my girl...

I thought I would finally have the family of my dreams, I still keep my bald dolls, I will never give them to Marina, I will never let her see them, feel them, touch them - Dream about hair.

- Don't cry, Marina! Mom will breastfeed you.

It's been 6 months since Daniel left.

He didn't come.

My mother died. The doctors said it was heart. I'm sure it was starvation. If you have one disease for that, maybe the name is misery and not heart attack!

And I? I stayed. I could have gone...

I'm like this, like this - no rain, no plant, no root, just skin and bones, just silence and crying.

I feel numb.

Everything so stopped.

I want him back...

The sound.

The crying stopped.

Like my bald dolls, Marina, my girl, doesn't move, doesn't eat, doesn't have hair, doesn't close her eyes, she's stiff.

I put her there, curled up, along with my dolls.

And I, sitting on the doorstep, wait for the time to join them.

From the place where you cry, where hope only plays make-believe.

In the land of bald dolls.

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Abstract

The short story *Na terra dos Bonecos Carecas* addresses poverty and its experiences in the figure of the main character, the narrative unfolds somewhere in the Brazilian dry land. The metaphor of bald dolls is brought in, to produce the strangeness and also the familiarity with the most common toy objects of the poverty-stricken classes. Life is questioned, at the same time that death becomes something common and expected for those who feel without rain, without plants, without roots, only skin and bones, only silence and crying.

Keywords: Sertão; Poverty; Literature; Hunger; Arts.

**Resumen**

El cuento Na terra dos Bonecos Carecas aborda la pobreza y sus vivencias en la figura del personaje principal, la narración se desarrolla en algún lugar del interior brasileño. Se introduce la metáfora de las muñecas calvas, para producir la extrañeza y también la familiaridad con los objetos de juguete más comunes de las clases menos favorecidas. La vida es cuestionada, al mismo tiempo que la muerte se vuelve algo común y esperado para quienes se sienten sin lluvia, sin plantas, sin raíces, solo piel y huesos, solo silencio y llanto.

Palabras clave: Sertón; Pobreza; Literatura; Hambre; Arte.

Resumo

O conto Na terra dos Bonecos Carecas aborda a pobreza e suas vivencias na figura da personagem principal, a narrativa se desenrola em algum lugar do sertão brasileiro. A metáfora dos bonecos carecas é trazida, para produzir o estranhamento e também a familiaridade com os objetos de brincar mais comuns das classes menos favorecidas. A vida é questionada, ao mesmo tempo em que a morte se torna algo comum e esperado para quem se sente sem chuva, sem planta, sem raiz, só pele e osso, só silêncio e choro.

Palavras-chave: Sertão; Pobreza; Literatura; Fome; Artes.