



The eighteen letters

luis antonio freire

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... this is a translation

... for a collection of letters written in portuguese...
composing the e-book... "As dezoito cartas"...

... introduction to the series... "philosophising"...

...dear mother...

in the year of 2009...

I wrote a series of historical letters...

to my sons... taue... and peter...

actually... these are autobiographical letters...

where I tried to follow a certain chronological order...

which begins with the facts in boston...

... where my father used to study at MIT...

... and goes all the way... to jota-carlos-street...

after that... there was an interruption...

which still remains on "hold"... until today...

... but... for sure...

one day... I intend to continue with this project... again...

in the meantime...

I decided... to forward this collection-of-letters to you...

with the certainty that you will enjoy this reading...

... these memories...

I say a (temporary) good-bye to you...

with tenderness...

a big hug...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 1

... simply philosophising...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

there has been sometime already...
that my mind "spaces-out" through some memories...
recalling... several moments that we've been together...

now... I'm with my life all settled-down...
here in the farm... with maria...
enjoying a healthy life...
a life which I've always dreamed about...

I'm taking care of myself...
eating the good meals prepared by maria with all her love...
in short...
enjoying a life where there's nothing to complain about...

— — —

but... the sentiment of missing-you-guys is enormous...
but... that's ok...
I don't want to interfere in your lives...
I want you guys to move-on with your lives...
with courage... wisdom... tenderness...
and kindness towards everyone surrounding you...

being able to stand up for your rights...
calmly... with good-manners... and without aggressiveness...

— — —
since you are in the united-states...
and I'm in brasil...
then... the best way to diminish the distance between us...
is to write emails like this one...

emails where there's no predetermined subject...
simply an email where the conversation flows...
motivated by the pure pleasure of the conversation itself...

— — —
I'm willing now... to talk a little-bit about myself...
telling you a little-bit of the history-of-my-life...

as surprising as it can be... very often...
in spite of living together for a long time...
very often... we forget to stop... and talk about basic-facts of our
lives...

usually... we are so absorbed... in our daily worries...
that we forget to spare a little time...
to REVEAL to the dear ones that surround us...
such important issues which are the fundamental facts of our own
history...

when I was six-month-old... me... my sister ana emilia... my father
and my mother...
moved to boston...
my father got a scholarship from the brazilian-navy...
to study in the master's program...
at MIT... (massachusetts institute of technology)...

we stayed there for only three years...
so I can't recall anything from this period...
the only thing I can tell... from the stories my mother later told
me...
was that... at this time... when I was a very little baby...
I didn't want to eat at all..

then... she took me to the doctor... there... in boston...

the doctor told her to buy a funnel...

and... to make a soup...

and... to pour the soup down into my throat through the funnel...

and... can you imagine that she completely believed on the doctor's advice...

and she tried to do exactly what he told her to do...?

— — —

I'm stopping the story at this point.... today...

because I don't want to take too much time away from you...

later on... please... let me know if you're interested in knowing more...

about the continuation of these stories of my life...

if you tell me that you're interested...

I'll be happy to continue...

writing emails like this one...

otherwise...

I'm going to find something else to do...

please feel free to ask me any kind of questions...

doubts... any kind of doubts...

any subject...

from the past... present or future...

all the care that I've been giving during all my life... to you...

still remains valid...

and you know it...

you know that I'm always ready...

to do... the "possible" and the "impossible"... for you...

please... consider me always a friend...

never an enemy...

avoid listening to bad advices...
from people who... by some reason...
want to encourage a division between us

never let yourselves be deluded...
thinking that I don't deserve the trust from you...
it would be a waste...
to think that I don't deserve the trust from you...
and... as a consequence... to hide something from me...

I believe... that there are some people that keep trying to convince
you...
that your grand-mom is evil...
that I am evil...

I respect these people's opinions...

but... if we allow ourselves to listen to this kind of opinion...
we end up all "sinking"...
because one of the easiest way to weaken a person...
it's to convince this person to be against his own father...
... or his own mother...

in the popular wisdom... there's a saying which illustrates this fact
very well:

"the union makes the force"...

(I'm not sure if your keyboard deals with the latin-character "c-
cedilha"...

for the word "forca"... "forsa"... "fortaleza"... a strong-person...)

so... a divided family... is a weak family...
everybody loses...

— — —

so...

if we start practicing the exercise of communicating more
frequently...

this would make us stronger...

this would bring benefits to all of us...

a family where there's no habit of talking...
becomes a weak family...
a fragile family...
vulnerable to the adversities of life...

you attended a good school... the notre dame...
fortunately you have good moral principles...
but these good-principles should be constantly updated...
constantly improved
constantly being aware of...

the world is always spinning...
a person can be very healthy one day...
and... on a wheelchair... next day...

complete attention sometimes is not enough...

let's be even more united than we are right now...?
would you be willing to trust on me...
... the way we've always used to do...?

thankyou for reading this email...
see you soon...
a super-super-super hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 2

... philosophising part two...

greeeaaat... taue...
greeeaaat... peter...

all right !!!...
assuming that the idea of telling stories of my life...
was well accepted by you...
I'm going to "jump" into the project...
in other words... "let's get down to business"...
(I mean... to the keyboard...)...
and see if something fairly acceptable...
can come out of these stories...

in the last email... I was still in boston...
my father studying at MIT... (massachusetts institute of
technology...)...
my mother taking care of both: me and my sister ana emilia...
and... my mother was in company of a maid... (sebastiana)...
who came with us from brasil... to help her with the domestic
work...

we used to live in one of those calm residential neighborhoods...
where there was no fence between the houses...
on the road... there was rarely any cars...
and... my sister and I... used to spend a long time outside...
playing with the tricycle...
(those little bikes for children... with three wheels...)...

then... on a nice bright day... my sister and I...
got lost... by chance... on those neighborhood roads...

my mother... went "crazy"... she called the police...
and... the police finally found us...

(my father... later told me... that the police strategy... was to do
a search...

first " scanning " through a sort of a big circle along the outer
roads...

and then... through smaller circles...

until they could finally find us...)

unfortunately my father is not here on earth anymore...

so I cannot ask him to develop...

a little-bit more of this story... with me ...

anyway... after this episode... my parents decided to install...

two little necklace-dog-tags... on both of us...

with our name... address... and... telephone-number...

— — —

I lived in boston...

from... six-months-old...

until... three-years-old...

I don't remember anything...

except these two stories told by my parents...

the one of the funnel... and the one of the necklace-dog-tag...

from boston... we moved to recife...

where I lived... from three to six-years-old...

at those times...

I had nothing to do at all...

I used to spend all day...

just sitting on the front-yard-wall

watching the cars pass by...

which were not many... at those times...

amazing...

how a child... is an innocent being...

he is capable of staying hours and hours...
with no worries...
just enjoying the view...
without thinking on anything...

with no fears...
no ambitions...
just enjoying the moment...

when an ant passes by...
the child...
simply looks at the ant...
simply follows her movement

it's like a dog...
innocent...
as long as he is well fed...
without diseases...
sleeping well...

his life... is... simply... his life...
peaceful... without judgments...
without complexes...
without obligations...

(by the way... this resembles...
the yoga doctrine...
it says that all of us... even the adults...
can... (and... should...)... practice the exercise...
of staying... everyday at least fifteen-minutes...
without doing anything... only breathing...
without thinking on anything...
like that little child... with age four... (or five)...
sitting on the front-yard-wall...
watching the few cars pass by...)

briefly... living the moment...

— — —

should we stop now...?
we should stop now...

otherwise... you're going to be late for your fifteen-minute-yoga...

stay healthy...
see you soon...
a tight hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

...peter's reply...

I'm going to consider my fifteen minutes of doing nothing,
as filled by these fifteen minutes that I spend reading your emails
your journals.

That's it Dad, I'm waiting for the next chapter 3,
a hug

Peter

Chapter 3

... philosophising part three...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

well... after last week's interruption...
which... fortunately... had a happy-end...
I decided to continue with the stories of my life...
since last email was a little bit... too much scientific...
and... nothing like to listen to a story more human...
as opposed to the more scientific ones...

(it seems to me that the stories which are more human...
"get in" more easily... they are easier to "digest"...)

but this doesn't mean that the scientific-type-of-stories are
worthless...
they are important too...
it's like in life...
sometimes we are not too enthusiastic about doing a certain type
of activity...
(to clean the dust off the room... for instance...)
but we have to do it anyway...

because if we don't...
we would end-up breathing-in all that dust...
which obviously is not good for us...

(although I read once in a book... in a humoristic tone...
that... it's been scientifically proved that...
once the dust reaches three centimeters high...

we don't have to clean it anymore...
because... it's been proved...
that... beyond those three centimeters...
it's impossible to accumulate more dust...)

— — —

we had stopped our story... in recife...
at age four... (or five)...
sitting... all day long on the front-yard-wall...
watching the cars pass by...
thinking on nothing...
just savoring the moment...
without deep thoughts...
without deep worries...

it seems like my childhood was sectioned in a series of three-years-
periods:
the three first years of life... in boston...
the three next years... in recife...
and... the three next ones (from six to nine-years-old...)... in rio-
de-janeiro...

more precisely... in a neighborhood which is on the border of
jardim-botanico...
...and gavea...
with a road made of those little-rectangular-stone-blocks...

a place resembling "the vila"... in ipanema...
where you used to play with juninho... and the other kids at "the
vila"...

the aura was similar...
we used to play soccer...
on the sidewalk...
without much fussiness...
it wasn't necessary a soccer field...
in order to play soccer...

the sidewalk was just perfect...

I used to study in a public school by the "lagoa" area...
and take the trolley-bus to school...
I was eight-years-old... when my mother said that I could take my
sister clarice...
(who was four-years-old) to her kindergarten...
which was located right in front of my school...

and... that was the scene...
me at age eight... taking my sister (age four)... to her school...
and... from there... going to my classes on the other side of the
road...

good times... no violence... a life with no stress...

my mother used to give me the exact amount-of-money...
for the trolley-bus-ticket...
at the end-of-classes... I didn't have to pick up my sister
anymore...
because my mother had already done it...
since my sister's classes ended before mine...

so... at the end of classes...
since I had the exact amount-of-money for the trolley-bus-ticket...
I rather... instead of taking the trolley-bus...
I rather spend the money on a little-bag of pop-corn...
and... walk home...

arriving at my home-street... even before going home...
I used to "dive" into the soccer-game with my friends... on the
side-walk...
a very calm life... with no deep worries...

but... not everything in the garden was rosy...
in contrast to my life of a dreamer in recife... sitting on the front-
yard-wall...
thinking on nothing... just living...

there... on rio-de-janeiro...
at age eight...

I passed through an experience... that made me see the reality:
not everything in the garden is rosy...

one day... as I was coming home from school... on foot...
as I approached the street... with everybody playing soccer...
I started saying...
“you can throw me the ball...!!
like a “shower” throw...!!
so I can head it...!!... ”

and... at this moment... all my friends totally ignored me...
as if I wasn't existing at all...
they didn't pay any attention to my presence...
they wanted to make sure that I was being ignored by them...
in a way that I've never seen anything like that...
in my whole life...

at this point... I didn't understand anything...
I thought to myself... “what is going on...?”

I asked them...
they answered... saying that...
they were “giving me the cold shoulder”...

I didn't know what the expression “give the cold shoulder”
means...
they explained:
“ it's when somebody stops talking to another one...
for some reason...”

then I asked what was the reason...
they told me...
but even today... I still don't remember what was the reason...

(I think I was so shocked with the “cold-shoulder” episode itself...
that... when they explained me the reason...
my mind probably wasn't in conditions to understand what they
were saying...
and I didn't ask them to repeat the explanation... either...)

I became a little-bit disturbed with this first experience on my life...

of feeling that... the society... the group of friends...
has this capacity for rejecting someone...

and... life is a sequence of lessons of this type...
life keeps moving on...
episodes like this-one keep on happening...
regardless of the age...

we keep on knowing new people...
we start to feel relaxed and at home with them...
and... suddenly... something happens...
we hear something from them that suddenly surprises us...
and it does get us by surprise...

it's like receiving a big "punch" in the face...
life... often embarrasses us with something similar...

but this kind of thing doesn't happen only between two people...
sometimes such surprises... such disappointments...
show up between a person and an institution...
between a person and a government...
between a person and a school...
between a person and the corporation where he (she) works...

when I was in Hawaii... still on my first years there...
when I was studying for my master's in math...
working hard to be a "straight-A" student...
I used to do my homeworks in an exaggerated diligent way...

on the first semester I got an "A"...
on the second semester I got a "B"...
on the third semester I got a "B"...
on the fourth semester I got a "C"...

suddenly... I received a letter from school...
saying that I was in "probation"...
that is... if I didn't get an "A" on the next semester...
I would be "kicked-out" of school...

that was a kind of a "punch" in my face...
to realize that they had been so harsh on me...
yes... on me... who had tried to do my best...
as a "straight-A" student...

but... this time... in this case... I let myself get too much
depressed...
because of a simple little letter coming from school...

I should... (facing the problem brought by the letter...)
I should have tried to go there...
to get more information about what was going on...
I should have tried to listen to the opinion of my teachers...
who deeply knew me...

... instead of letting myself get so depressed by a letter...
that maybe was sent by an administrative-office of the university...
which... maybe... had nothing to do with the math-department
itself...

but... the world keeps spinning...
after that letter...
by coincidence... my sciatic nerve got worst to the point...
that I couldn't neither sit... nor stand up...
I really had to... quit the math program...
I ended up enrolling myself into the music department...
which... definitely... would add much more to myself...
as a human-being... than the math would do...

and... returning to my friends pals who used to play soccer with
me...
at the time I was eight-years-old...

after the "cold-shoulder" episode...
fortunately... in two or three days...
everything went back to normal...
my relationship with the group turned out to be the same...

children... in general... don't keep too much resentments...

they fight on one day... and on the next one everything is fine...

this capacity to forget the fight...

and to forgive...

the capacity of being able to say... "let's move on"...

this capacity of the human being...

I consider... a very good one...

see you next time...?

see you next time...

I want to give a very tight hug...

on you two... my sons...

with tenderness...

your father...

...luis antonio...

... taue's reply...

Hi dad:

Only you... really...

I found it very funny : “ it’s been scientifically proved that...
once the dust reaches three centimeters high...
we don’t have to clean it anymore...
because... it’s been proved...
that... beyond those three centimeters...
it’s impossible to accumulate more dust... ”

...you, and your philosophies. (hahaha)

But I love your stories keep sending them, and I’m going to keep
them all in a file
so that I can show to Evy thirty years later.

The text about the heart was pretty interesting too , but a little-bit
boring.

I was reading the newspaper today
(I read it everyday from monday to friday during my lunch-time
) , and since I don’t read everything (only the parts that interest me
most) , I saw an article of a person who was saying that everyday
in his life
is a good day... you wake up and see the daylight , this is already
a good day , you breathe the air , this is a good day...
at the end he says that we complain too much about life without
appreciating it , because life is too short. One day you are happily
here and next day you are dead... so enjoy it as much as
possible !

So that’s it dad, for sure I didn’t succeed you. I don’t have too
much patience to write.

Hugs... Taue.

... lunch-time readings...

dear son kaue...

yes... once you told me... sometime ago...
that you enjoy reading the newspaper while...
you are eating your little-nice-sandwich during lunch-time...

that's a very good habit... my son...
it's a moment... where you can relax...
disconnect yourself from the worries...
and... simply savor your lunch...
distracting yourself...
as you read the newspaper articles that you're interested on...

I found it very wise the text that you forwarded to me:

..." I saw an article of a person who was saying that
everyday in his life is a good day...
you wake up and see the daylight , this is already a good day ,
you breathe the air , this is a good day...
at the end he says that we complain too much about life without
appreciating it ,
because life is too short.
One day you are happily here and next day you are dead...
so enjoy it as much as possible!... "

— — —

I also like this kind of wisdom...
indeed... very often many of us forget to appreciate certain basic
things...
like... for instance the capacity to have a normal vision...
to be able to see the objects...

have we ever thought about a blind person...
who could suddenly be able to see normally...?
could we ever imagine a better reward than this one...?

or... if a person has serious chronic respiratory problems...
be able to... suddenly get better...
and... be able to breathe the pure air... normally...?

I really liked this newspaper article...

you write well...
it was thanks to your email...
that I've been thinking about what you wrote...

not only about the article itself...
(the beauty... the wisdom of the article)...
but also...
your sensibility...
to be able to realize... that the article was special...
that the article was bringing a message of wisdom...

and I... as I was reading your email...
I... became happy...
happy to confirm what I knew already...
that you... taue... is a good guy...
a calm guy...
simple...
who just want to be in peace...
to find your place in the world...
without disturbing anybody...
without being disturbed...

to be able to read your little-newspaper... at lunch-break-time...
to be able to savor an article from the newspaper...
where there exists a message which reveals a regard about life...
a pure regard... of peace... of wisdom...
of gratefulness... for being able to be healthy...
so we can see the colors...
and breathe the morning air...

yes... my son...
from this life... we don't take too much...
we only leave in the memory of these few people who really like
us...

we leave with them... only our tenderness...
our words of kindness and friendship...

and... not too much beyond that...

the sun... like all other stars in the universe...
will extinguish itself one day...
(since the fuel that it burns... is not infinite...)
(it's going to happen many billions of years in the future...
the scientists already calculated it...)

when this day comes...
our dear planet earth...
will become an ice ball...
(since there's no more sun to warm her up...)

and... so... there will be no living soul here...
not even to tell the history of mankind...

so... the newspaper article did make a lot of sense:
let's be thankful each day in the morning for being alive...
for being able to open our eyes and see the daylight...
for being able to take a deep breath... and feel the fresh morning
air...

and also... to relate with everyone who surrounds us...
in the most gentle and truthful possible way...
so that... whenever we go to the other dimension...
we can be sure that we left here on Earth...
only good memories...
with everyone who really wants us... truly well...

see you soon... my son...
keep being like that...
you're realizing what is really important in life...
it's the purity of spirit...
the peace of conscience...
to be aware that you are gentle and good towards everyone...

briefly... a good man...

a person with a good heart...

I'm happy to know that you're like that...

because I'm also like that...

and... thanks to this...

I can feel that God protects me...

and... naturally will be protecting you too...

why...?

because you are a person with good heart...

see you soon...

thankyou for your email...

it was very good...

a hug...

tighted...

your father...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 4

... philosophising part four...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

we were in rio-de-janeiro at age eight...
going to school by trolley-bus...
together with my sister clarice who was four-years-old...
and... on the way back... I preferred to walk home...
since the money of the trolley-bus-ticket...
was spent on the pop-corn-little-bag...

my life together with the group of kids on the street...
was pretty good...

we used to live near the "jockey club do brasil"...
where the people who had money... used to go there and have
fun...
gambling on the horse-races...
one day... one of the kids of our group... had an idea...
he proposed that we could spend the whole sunday...
of the "grande premio brasil"...
each one of us... with a flannel duster...
taking care of the cars... of the people who went there to
gamble...

that was the first time I worked in my life...
although I'm not sure if we can call this... work...
the cars were coming around noon time...
they parked on the streets of the neighborhood...
we helped the drivers to maneuver their cars into the...

narrow slots parallel to the side-walk...

at the very end of the gambling section of the
"grande premio brasil"...

that was the time of our real activity...

we had to go from one car to another...

trying to get the tips...

they were so many... at the same time...

that... many of them... just went away...

it was like the end of a movie-section...

at a certain instant "X"...

everybody leaves at the same time...

well... after that...

we counted all the money collected...

and... we purchased a leather-soccer-ball "G-18"...

I still remember the model of the ball: "G-18"...

— — —

at age ten...

my family moves back to recife...

this time... we were living in the house of my grandfather...

the father of my father...

he had just passed away...

and... that was the first (and only) time that I saw my father
crying...

he was crying out loud...

saying...

"this is terrible..."

"this is terrible..."

and... my mother was at his side... comforting him...

a scene of tenderness...

of love between my father... and my mother...

something rare...

because... usually... they were fighting... almost all the time...

for some silly reason like...

“you left the window open...”
(my father complaining to my mother...
when he was coming home from work...
usually... tired and bad-tempered...)
“you were probably reading the "Time-magazine"...”
(he... complaining of the fact that she... (according to him...)...
used to spend all day reading the “Time-magazine”...)...

— — —

my grandfather had passed away recently...
and... soon after... my grandmother... also...

they used to live in recife...
in a big house...
with an enormous yard...
full of trees...
in a street called amelia...

since my grandparents had passed away...
the house became kind of empty...
and... a cousin of mine called mariana...
was living there together with one of my grandmother’s sisters...
whose name was tia lurdes...

so... my parents decided to move from rio-de-janeiro back to
recife...
because... since the house of my grandparents was... almost
empty...
we could live there...

at this point... something interesting happened...
I... had to go to recife... earlier than my family...
because I had an entrance exam...
(in order to be able to enroll myself at school)...
on a certain day... which was about two months earlier...
than the time my family was supposed to move...

and that was when... for the first time in my life... I travelled by
plane...

and... all by myself... with age ten... going from rio to recife...
(but my father knew a friend of him...
who was travelling on the same flight...
and so... my father asked him to accompany me during the
trip...)

arriving at the airport in recife...
I found... waiting for me:
my uncle marcos (my father's brother... who later became a
politician...
and... even later... a senator...)... and his wife carolina...

from that point on... a very new phase in my live just started...
me... at amelia street... in company of my cousin mariana...
and of tia lurdes...

they used to watch soap-opera in the evening...
and... for the first time in my life...
I "dove" into the world of "soap-operas"...
fictitious stories... virtual stories...
but they were able to put myself in contact with a certain "reality"
of life...
which I wasn't used to...

later on I could realize that...
many of these dramas from the soap-operas...
can indeed happen... in the real world...

should we stop here...?
we should stop here...

see you soon...
with tenderness...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 5

... philosophising part five...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

we were in recife at age 10...
watching soap-opera with my cousin mariana...
(who was 18 at that time...)
and my grandmother's sister... tia lurdes...
and my grandmother... mother of my father...
who was pretty well healthwise...
(she passed away two or three years later...)

they were my only companions there...
because... as I mentioned before...
I had travelled from rio to recife earlier than my parents and
brothers did...
so I could do the admission-exam to the middle-school...
which happened on a time earlier than the one scheduled by my
parents...
to move from rio to recife...

to me... those times... were interesting...
in the sense of finding myself... for the first time in my life...
distant from my brother... sisters... and parents...

I found myself in the companion of two nice old-ladies...
(my grandmother... and her sister... tia lurdes...)
in a house with a super-good mood... very calm...
with that kind of good-mood typical of the northeast-part-of-the-
country...

(different from rio-de-janeiro...)
a house... where everything functioned without stress...

there wasn't those eternal fighting between my father and my mother... anymore...
there wasn't that monotony typical of rio-de-janeiro...
... immersed in those environments full of concrete... of apartments...
... together with a total absence of dirt-ground... and trees...

in contrast... there... in my grandmother's house...
I felt like I was in paradise...
the house was inside a huge big yard... full of trees...
I used to spend all day doing nothing...
climbing and then sitting for a long time...
on the branches of certain trees...
specially the rose-apple-tree... (the "jambo" tree)...

at this age... (ten-years-old)...
all that a child used to live in an apartment... wants...
is to be able to enjoy nature... to climb the trees...
to walk barefoot...

and... the interesting part is... those weren't trees outside...
far in the neighborhood...
or... in a public place where everyone could pass by...
the trees were located inside my grandmother's yard...
in her property... it wasn't a public place...
it was like a private paradise immersed in the world...
but... at the same time... with a total privacy... protected by a
(short) wall...
which delineated the border between that private "sanctuary"...
and the confusion of the world outside...
where there was an already present... traffic... pollution... bad-
vibes... etc...
those things which... today... we are so used to deal with...

and the yard was simply... huge...
something really gigantic...
I used to climb each tree...

as if they were living things... (and... indeed... they are...)
I used to climb it's branches... conquering each region of its interior...
the goal was always to reach the highest branches...

but... as time passed by... I learned... that each tree had its own secrets:
it liked to be climbed...
but the process of climbing... had its own limits...
each tree had its ideal-point of climbing...
beyond that point... its branch would get thinner... and thinner...
and the fall would be... certainly... unavoidable...

— — —

I used to write to one of my friends in rio-de-janeiro...
telling him how good it is to climb the trees...
he replied to me... telling... in details...
how the goal of the flamengo-soccer-team did happen...
with illustrative sketches drawn by himself...
describing through a dotted line...
the trajectory of the ball towards the goal...

as I read his letter... I could start realizing...
how different our universes were...
in the sense of what I really liked...
and what my friend liked...

the world for him... was... soccer...
for me... I wasn't much caring...
to see how was the shape of the trajectory...
which conducted the ball...
to the goal of the flamengo-team...

what really did make me feel happy...
was to be able to enjoy the harmony I was experiencing...
inside an enormous tree... way up there...
feeling the wind to swing its branches...
feeling a happiness which I had never felt in my life...
the happiness of being able to play in an yard like that...

barefoot...
in the peaceful mood of my grandmother's house...

— — —

at night... after a nice-little-beans-soup with spaghetti strips...
and with a nice-little-taste of "coentro"...
(an herb typical from the northeast-part-of-the-country...)
it was time to watch television...
with my cousin... my grandmother... and her sister tia lurdes...

tia lurdes had broken her ankle...
it was at the bus-stop...
the bus took off... squeezing her ankle...
between the bus-wheel and the side-walk...
she used to spend all day sitting...
in front of the television...
with the leg in a plaster-cast...

sometimes she used to cry...
one day when she was crying...
my cousin mariana arrived closed to her...
and hugged her...
comforting her...

this scene was kept in my memory...
I found it very beautiful...
the scene of someone comforting the other one in her suffering...
I wasn't used to see scenes of this kind...
my parents didn't have the habit of hugging each other...
and... my brother and sisters... neither...
so... this scene was like something new to me...

— — —

I was ten years-old...
my cousin... eighteen...
one day she invited me to go out with her... and her boyfriend...
erick...
who had the habit of going out with her in a certain day...

once in a week... at night...

he came over to pick us up at home...
with his cool... neat... volkswagen-bug...
very shiny...
he also... all neat... and bathed...
really well-shaved... with a certain parfum...
ready to date...

as we got into his car...
him... on the driver's seat...
my cousin... on the passenger-seat...
and me... on the back-seat...

about thirty-seconds later...
after we were all accommodated on our respective places...
and the car already moving on the road...
erick says to my cousin...
... "it seems like you're acting differently tonight"...
at this point she comes closer and gives him... a true-love-kiss...
very slowly...

and I... who wasn't very used to see such scenes...
for me... it was like a sort of "shock"... in the good-sense of the
word...
then... I started thinking to myself...
that she didn't start kissing him from the very beginning... (as
usual...)
probably because of my presence...
but... as soon as he gave her the hint...
("it seems like you're acting differently tonight"...)
she let her shyness go away...
and acted normally... as usual...

I realized immediately... how pleasant it must be... to go on a
date...

— — —

a few days later... my family... my parents... my brothers...

arrived from rio-de-janeiro...
my old family...
in the new-paradise: in my grandmother's house...

full of trees...

but my family... wasn't paying too much attention to the trees...
my father's obsession was to be able to transform my sister
ana emilia...
into a new world-record-champion in the swimming-sport...

should we stop here...?
we should stop here...

a big hug on both of you...
with tenderness...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... peter's reply...

I received philosophising part 4..

I would like to know more about the training of your sister... to become a world record champion in swimming.

a hug,

Peter

Chapter 6

... philosophising part six...

dear son taue...
dear son pedro...

my family had just arrived in recife...
at the house of my grandparents in amelia street...
a house... full of trees...

along with the family... it came also... one of my father's
passions:
the adoration for the swimming-sport...

as soon as he arrived in recife...
the first thing he did...
was to enroll... me and ana emilia... in the swimming-team...
at the portugues-club...
a club which was located about one kilometer away from our
house...

thereafter... everything changed in my life...
the focus was not directed towards the trees anymore...
I had to go to school in the morning...
and... in the afternoon... to the portugues-club...
to practice swimming...

in spite of all these activities...
life remained calm...

to swim in the northeast-part-of-the-country...
was much more pleasant than to do it in rio-de-janeiro...

the water in rio... was much colder...
whereas in recife... the water was really nice...
and... on the warm days...
the swimming turned out to be a real pleasure...

my sister ana emilia... was already signaling that she had a good
potential...
to be a champion in swimming...
this passion for swimming which my father involved us... wasn't
something new...
way before we moved to recife... still living in rio...
ana emilia and I used to swim already at botafogo-club...
and... I remember well the first day that my father...
took us there... to introduce us to the swimming coach...

there were two coaches...
one... was the argentinian coach... called "Carranza"...
and... the other... was the coach for the beginner's team...
(a team which didn't have too much future... in terms of
championship...)
... his name was "Rui"...

so... my father took me and my sister there... to botafogo-club...
he talks with the coach Carranza...
my sister and I... jumped into the water...
we did a little swimming... so that he could evaluate us...

and then... Carranza speaks to my father...
... " it's obvious... she... (ana emilia) ... it's going to stay with me"
...

and... at this point... a doubt remained... naturally... in the air...
"... and... how about him...?" ... somebody asked...

then... Carranza responds...
he... (it's obvious...) goes to Rui...

— — —

a sort of an awkward mood floated in the air...

after all... what was the main difference between me and my sister...?

maybe... because I had a pair of legs too thin...?

I don't know...

things were handled in a way... as if there was no doubt...

"ana emilia... obviously... is going to be my athlete...

but him... (this little-mouse...)... it's obvious... he will go to Rui"...

nothing was said as above... of course...

but... the way he talked...

"him...?... he goes to Rui..."

the way he talked... did have this kind of meaning...

which is:

I obviously didn't have the necessary conditions to become a champion...

therefore it would be "foolish"... it would be a waste...

to consider that I could be someday a champion...

but... I didn't take anything of that... very seriously...

I went to Rui...

my sister went to Carranza...

we used to practice everyday...

still in rio... at the botafogo-club...

one or two years before we moved to recife...

in a super-cold weather...

it was like a torture to deal with such cold conditions...

specially during the time of the "speed-drills"...

when we used to swim the 25-meter-lap... at full-speed...

then we had to get out of the pool... to wait in line...

then... jump in the water again for another lap at full-speed...

get out of the water... wait in line... etc...

and... in this process of getting-out-of-the-water... and get-back-in-line...

that's when the cold really reached us... because of the wind...

so... re-focusing this story from the "frozen" swimming-pool...
of the botafogo-club in rio-de-janeiro...
to the swimming-pool of the portugues-club in recife...
with that super-nice and pleasant temperature...
which only could be found in a swimming-pool...
located in a region like the northeast-part-of-the-country...
so... in this case... oh boy... that was good...
the swimming-activity in recife was something good... something
pleasant...

— — —

my mother decides to buy an used piano...
she accommodates it in the house at amelia street...
she taught me how to play an italian song...
I enjoyed it... very much...

sometimes... on saturday afternoon...
there was a dance-party at the portugues-club...
we used to go there... we used to dance with other people...
from the swimming-team... it was nice...

one day... a girl started to kiss me...
my father saw it... and gave me a rebuke...
(I felt a little-bit embarrassed...)

years later... when my father was already doing psychotherapy...
he asked me to tell stories from the past between me and him...
when I told him the portugues-club episode...
in spite of not remembering it...
he became very surprised at himself...
without understanding why he would had given me such a
rebuke...
(feeling as if he had done something of great stupidity)...

my contacts with my father...
didn't occur very often...
this was due to the fact that he used to work a lot...
he was always working very much...
and... when he arrived home..

he was usually... very tired...

but... with respect to my mother... things were different...
during all my life...
we had always a lot of things to talk about...

besides the habit of being constantly telling me many stories...
she knew how to teach... in a way...
that I could rarely forget the subject of the lesson...

she taught me basic mathematics...
how to solve math problems...
portuguese... geography... english...
she used to sit with me in front of a record-player...
while we listened to some beatles songs...
she would translate them to me...

the record was the sargent pepper's lonely heart club band...
while I was reading the lyrics (in english) printed on the back-cov-
er of the
"long-play"...
she would explain to me... its meaning in portuguese...

in the song... "a day in the life..."
at the point where they sing...

"I read the news today oh boy
About a lucky man who made the grade
And though the news was rather sad
Well I just had to laugh "...

she explained to me that the expression "made the grade"...
was... in such context... meaning... "he was able to pass"...
in the sense of "he was able to pass to another dimension"...
in other words... "he died"...

and... so... I was always receiving from her... all these teachings...
in a natural and calm way...
learning... not only english...
but several other subjects...

after receiving this initial “jump-start” from her...
from that point on... I used to be able to do the learning... by
myself...

in this way... I started to feel pleasure studying...
I felt comfortable studying...

also... because... I realized...
that the studies... are like a key...
which gives us access to new horizons...

for instance...
nowadays... I know fairly well the portuguese-language... and
english...

but... if someday... I decide to go... for instance... to europe...
or to an island colonized by france...
if... I plan ahead... and start to study french...
this knowledge... would give me conditions...
to be able to communicate with people...
from the french-speaking countries...

in other words... knowledge allows us to have access to people...
places... etc...
in a fulfilled way... in a profound way...

but this doesn't mean...
that we have to know all the knowledge of the world...
this is... obviously... impossible...

but... with my mother's help...
I started to feel comfortable studying...
I started to feel... that I was able to get a book...
read it... understand it...
and enjoy the lessons apprehended from the book...

as time passed by... I realized... also... that not every book is
good...
it's important to be able to select... things which deserves our

attention...
from the ones that don't...

I'm stopping here...
with a huge... a very-huge...
super-tight... super-hug...
in both of you...

see you soon...
warm yourself up...
winter is coming...

a big hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... taue's reply...

Hi dad:

I liked your letter very much, keep sending them, you write very well... .

I think you have a lot of wisdom , a man with knowledge...
a fact that makes me very proud of...

I'm always making good comments of you to everybody...
I would like to be a father to Evy, like you are to me...

Hugs,

Taue.

... you are already...

dear son taue...

when you said...

“ I’m always making good comments of you to everybody...
I would like to be a father to Evy, like you are...”

... I should tell you that you are already an excellent father to
Evy...

in both of my trips to boston when I went there to visit you...
I saw... how such a good father you are...
how such a good husband you are...
how such a good friend you are...
how such a good worker you are...
how such an excellent person you are...
towards yourself...
and... towards everyone who is near you...

and... regarding Evy... you are a super-daddy...
super-good...
super-loving...
keep being like that... my son...

you are a good person...
with a good-heart...
and... Evy feels all that...
and... she probably adores you for being like that...

me too... I’m very proud of you...
I’m always thanking God...
for giving me this happiness...
to have a son like you...

thankyou very much for your letter...
it was very beautiful...
I was moved...

I'll see you soon...
a tight hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 7

... philosophising part seven...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

as I described.... on my previous email...
how much thankful I am to my mother...
for being so kind and careful... to the point of motivating me...
to be a person who loves to study ...

as I was describing that... I forgot to say...
that during the process of "becoming a person who loves to study"...
there exists a fase-of-transition... a fase in which...
there's a kind of "pain-feeling"...
a fase where the child suffers...
as he realizes how difficult it is... to conform himself...
with the idea of letting-go the innocent life of a child...
and to move on towards an acceptance of the discomfort...
typical of the earliest stages of a process-of-learning...

such transition happened exactly at the time we are talking about...
at age ten... on amelia street...
where I was enjoying so much the opportunity...
to walk barefoot on the dirt... among all those trees...
of my grandmother's house...
(as opposed to a life inside an apartment...
...where we used to live in rio-de-janeiro...)

my parents and my brothers had arrived from rio to
amelia street...

in recife... right in the middle of the big-summer-vacation...
(that is:... december, january, february...
since summer here on the south-hemisphere happens...
in an opposite-period of the north-hemisphere-summer...)

my family had arrived right in the middle of summer vacation...
and... since my mother realized that I used to stay all day...
doing nothing...
she decided to put me to study... on summer-time-vacation...

she told me to sit on the living-room table...
she gave me a note-book... pencil... and an eraser...
and told me that I was supposed to... everyday...
do about fifty or seventy math exercises...
from a book of math... called "Ary Quintella"...
(which was the author's name...)

I couldn't believe on what was happening...
me...?... would I have to spend my vacations studying...
... all these boring exercises...?
oh... what a torture... what a crazy idea...

I sat on that chair in front of that notebook... of that book...
I felt so bad...
I felt like complaining...
why... it has to be me...?
why... I have to study...?
right on vacation...?

my mother noted my anguish...
and... calmly... got a scratch-paper...
and... started to explain to me... how to do the exercises...
and... from those explanations...
I realized that I would be able to do them by myself...

so... what seemed first... to be a torture...
turned out to be something good... to be a pleasure...

I found myself doing the other exercises...
like I was doing something fun...

a game... an amusement...

in short... that is the magic of the pleasure-of-studying...
once the student gets a “jump-start” from somebody...
after that... the student realizes that he’s capable...
of standing- on- his- own- two- feet...

and... this feeling of independency...
makes him feel good...
gives him a desire to keep moving on...
to keep developing himself...

— — —

in those days the structure of the brazilian- school- system was:
1... the primary-school... from age 6 to 10...
2... the gymnasium-school... from age 11 to 14...
3... the scientific-school... from age 15 to 17...

usually... at age 18... the student was making an effort to pass...
the “vestibular” exam... in order to get into college...

since it was a very hard exam...
usually... the students used to enroll themselves...
in the famous “little-schools”... which offered preparatory
courses...
specialized on getting everybody “in shape” for the “vestibular”...

— — —

well...
but... why am I talking about all that...?

because on those days... since I was ten-years-old...
I was right on the border between the primary and gymnasium
schools...

well... depending on the educational-prestige of the gymnasium-
school...
where the student was intending to apply...

if... the school was good... with a high educational level...
then... the interested student was required to take an entrance-exam...
which was... usually... very hard...

(it was like a sort of a... “little- vestibular”...
but... in this case... from the primary-school to the gymnasium-school...
instead of... from the scientific-school to college)...

so...
one day I saw some kids passing by on the street wearing an uniform...
it seemed like they were masqueraded as little-soldiers...
in a light-brown uniform...
... two red-vertical-stripes along the outer-vertical-line of the trousers...
... a little red hat... (the famous “cap” of the stewardesses...)
matching with the red stripes of the trousers...

I found it... superb...
children...
masqueraded as true little soldiers...

I asked my mother which uniform was that...
she explained to me that they were students from the “colegio-militar”...
a good school... with an good educational-system...

she asked me if I would like to apply there...
and to try to take the entrance-exam to this school...

I said... yes...
very happy to know... that I was about to enroll myself...
in a school... where the uniforms of the students...
looked like the little-soldiers of the real-world...

and from this point on...
a new trajectory in my life... just initiated...
where... later on... I begin to feel an enormous regret...

for having this (unfortunate) idea of enrolling myself...
in a school... where the students masquerade themselves...
as little-tin-soldiers...

... with the red cap...

we stop here...
my dear sons...

stay with God...
all-the-best...
super-hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... peter's reply...

I received part 7. I didn't know that it was you who got involved into this military school. I had always thought that it was your father who forced you to get in there.
We will talk soon,
a hug,
Peter

Chapter 8

... philosophising part eight...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

you're perfectly right...
as I found their uniforms pretty...
who got in trouble... was me...

I was the one who led myself be fooled...
this was one of the most senseless thing I've done in my whole
life...

but I only realized it... when I was...
near the end of the second year of the gymnasium-school... (at
age 12...)
and specially... at the beginning of the third-year... (at age 13...)

when I got into the "colegio-militar"...
I was still living in recife... (amelia street)...
I've been studying there for only the first-semester of the first-
year...

in july... (our winter-vacation...)
we moved back to rio-de-janeiro...
more precisely... to ipanema...
into an apartment on prudente-de-morais street...
(the first street parallel to the street of the beach...)
an apartment... which my father had just bought...

as we arrived in rio...

they could accept me at “colegio militar do rio de janeiro”...
since I was transferred from “colégio militar do recife”...
and this transfer was of the type “automatic”...
meaning that I wouldn’t have to take another entrance-exam...
which were... usually... very hard... specially for the “colegios-militares”...

the reason for this waiver was because.
I had already passed the entrance-exam in recife...
six months ago...

this entrance-exam used to be so hard...
that... when we were still in recife...
my mother had enrolled myself into a preparatory-little-school..
specialized in entrance-exams to the “colegio-militar”...

in other words...
since I was very young...
I found myself inside an environment of too much responsibility...
of too much discipline... of too much study...
of too much worry...

nowadays... as I reflect about all that...
I see that... what happened to me...
(the fact that... since very young... I used to carry too much...
responsibility on my “shoulders”...)
has its advantages and also its disadvantages...

the advantage is that... (in spite of being too early)...
I was preparing myself academically...
studying a lot...
which... obviously... has its advantages...

the disadvantage is that... if a ten-years-old child...
doesn’t play...
he ends up compensating this lack...
years later...
much older...

and... probably... this... maybe... did happen to me...

when at age forty-four...
in hawaii...
I used to spend hours and hours playing guitar...
on the stairs which lead us to the cafeteria...
of the university of hawaii at manoa...

(no problem... let's move on...)

— — —

july 1965... eleven-years-old...
the first semester of "colegio militar do recife"... all done...
everything ready to move ourselves...
from recife back to rio-de-janeiro...

in order to say "good-bye" to recife...
my uncle marcos... (my father's brother...)... carolina... and sons...
invited me to stay a week with them...
in a little fisherman's house... that they've rented at rio-doce...
(a beach far away from the city...
so we could enjoy a week on the beach...
in a fisherman's village... (rio-doce)...
which nowadays has nothing to do...
with that little-fisherman's village from the old-times...
nowadays it is a super-populated neighborhood of olinda...
which in turn... is considered as an uninterrupted continuation...
of recife... becoming everything a sort of a megalopolis...)

anyway... they rented this little beach cabin...
and invited me to stay with them... at rio-doce beach...
in my last week of recife...
there I went...
calmly...
in a very nice environment...
a family very united...
very harmonious...
they've always treated me very well...

at night... that marvelous sky...
my uncle... (always on the hammock)...

chatting with me how beautiful those stars are...
there was no electricity in rio-doce in those days...
so... the stars used to be even more beautiful...
since there were no lights on the street-poles...

early in the morning...
I liked to wake up early...
and go to swim in the ocean...
alone... in such infinite northeast sea...

I used to take with me a sort of a morey-boogie...
which I had gotten recently...
but hadn't used it yet...
(I had never caught any wave in my life...)
(I didn't even know the meaning of such expression...)

since the waves... here in the northeast... are usually... very
small...
I used to go... very early in the morning...
paddling with the board...
laying down over the board...
I used to paddle... in that cool water of the morning-time...
exploring those natural reef pools... etc...

on the last two days...
the sea decided to gift me...
with some nice little waves...
which could push us... (me and the board)... for about twenty
meters...

the first wave was unbelievable...
how wonderful...
it was the feeling of the wave pushing me... laying down over the
board...
for about twenty meters... or even more...
what a divine sensation...
what a pleasure...
I had never felt anything so good...

thereafter I had so much fun...

I caught many other waves...
I used to catch them already on the foamy stage...
it was easier this way...
specially for someone who was doing it for the first time...

back on the sand... I talked to a man...
(maybe he was one of my uncle's relatives or friends...)
as I chatted with him that I had a lot of fun catching the
"jacare"...
(which was the name everyone used to call the "body-surfing"...
or else... today's "boogie-boarding"...)
the man told me that in rio-de-janeiro they do it...
but there... in rio... they do it... standing up on the board...

I replied:...

"standing up... on the board...?"

he answered...

"... yes... as if they were skiing...
and they have a long board...
and they slide together with the wave all the way to the sand..."

I was fascinated...

this would probably be really very good...
no doubt... I would like to go to rio-de-janeiro...

I would like to see closely...
people sliding on the waves...
standing up...
on a very long board...

— — —

should we stop here...?
I guess so...
otherwise... there will be nothing left to tell...

a very tight hug...
in both of you...

I hope you're doing well... healthwise...
stay with God...

see you soon...

a big hug...

your father...

...luis antonio...

... I've been re-reading it...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

I've been doing a quick re-reading on "philosophising... part eight..."
and... I realized that I had written "moco"...
but this is because I'm assuming that your computer...
cannot interpret the "c-cedilha"...

so... actually... the "moco" which I wrote...
should be pronounced as "mosso"... (a young man)...
aeromosso... aeromossa... with c-cedilha... of course...
instead of double "s"...

— — —

but... maybe... all this preventive-care... is unnecessary...
because... maybe... your computer does accept...
the latin characters... with accents... c-cedilha... etc...

please... let me know if that's the case... or not...

— — —

this time... I just sent you two chapters in a row...
the philosophising-part-seven... and... right after... the part-eight...

that was because... the part-seven... besides being too small...
it was kind of "in-a-bad-mood"...
since it talked about something which traumatized me a lot...
(the colegio-militar...)...
and... so... I felt a visceral necessity... to "dive" right away... into
part-eight...
in order to be able to talk about my first encounter...
with the sensation of being pushed by a wave...
during my two last days of recife...

(a encounter which wasn't planned at all...
it just happened very "accidentally"...
I wasn't expecting it...
it was something like magic...)

— — —

and... how about your lives... overall...
how are things going there...?... is everything fine...?

see you soon...
a super-super-super hug...
in both of you...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 9

... philosophising part nine...

dear son tauê...
dear son peter...

life is full of up's and down's...

there are moments... in our lives..
where everything seems to be "going-down-the-hill"...

on the other hand... there are other phases... in our lives...
where things begin to show some nice feed-back...
we feel good... we feel that we are producing something...
we feel that we are relating well with people around us...

in short... it's like we've finally found... the formula...
the recipe of how to live a life (reasonably) happy... etc...

sometimes these good phases last only one month...
thereafter... it could happen another bad-phase...
which could last a few months...

but these duration-times are not fixed...

they may vary from times to times...
they may vary... depending on several factors...

if the person had just passed...
through a suffering phase which lasted too long...
usually... the tendency is that... on the next phase...
this person is going to experiment...

a period of calmness... of tranquility... of peace and harmony...

at least in my case... during my life...

things happened... nearly this way...

sometimes... I used to be sick for a long period of time...

I had to take care of myself...

I felt pain...

I suffered...

but... after this period...

it was like I was receiving a sort of compensation...

after this period of suffering...

usually... I was blessed by a period of peace...

tranquility... health...

peace with myself...

with my own consciousness...

one of the “tough” phases that happened to me...

was when I arrived in rio-de-janeiro...

coming from recife...

at age 11...

it was the month of july...

right in the middle of the year...

when we were living in an apartment...

at prudente-de-morais street... in ipanema...

I was attending a very crazy school...

the colegio-militar of rio-de-janeiro...

in the tijuca area...

I had to set my lunch-time to 10:15 am...

take the bus number 433... barao de drummond – leblon...

which passed at 11 am...

at the bus-stop on visconde-de-piraja avenue...

I arrived at school at about noon-time...

and I had to be in formation at 12:20 precisely...

“to-be-in-formation” means to be in line...

in crescent order... from the smaller to the highest person...
each class used to have about three rows...
the distance from one person to the other...
was measured by the length of a straightened arm...

whenever the sergeant screamed... "squad... cover !!... "
we... (the "little-tin-soldiers")... obeyed his order instantaneously...
as if we were a kind of a robotized-human-machine...
whose only function is to obey orders... without hesitation...

squad attention !!...
forward march...!!

the class... (already in line... aligned in a way close to
perfection...)
as we listened to the order...
all of us together... in a robotized perfection...
launched our left leg forward...
and... started marching...
towards the classroom...

all of us synchronized...
like the movies we watch... about true little-soldiers...

this was the environment I found in rio-de-janeiro...
suddenly... I found myself included in a school...
which was the craziest thing in the world...
the class of students used to go marching from on classroom to
the other...

the bottom line is that... this is the methodology of the military
philosophy...
very antique... this methodology...
probably... much earlier than the christian era...

men realized that... as a group of people is conditioned to
march...
as if they were robots...
these people would become automata...
they wouldn't think too much...

they would be ready to obey any kind of order...
even if these orders were completely absurd...
and... non-sense...

but... there... at colegio-militar...
this philosophy of "blind-obedience"...
was in contradicton to another characteristic of the school...

the educational system of the school was good...
it did have a high-level standard...
the teachers were good...

specially the ones related to math... portuguese... geography...
english... french... etc...

so it was a school where there was this incredible contradiction...
if... on one hand... the educational system was good...
on the other hand... the military methodology...
the military discipline...
the displacement of the class...
marching as if we were little-tin-soldiers...
created a scene kind of pathetic...
where we could see a bunch of kids age 11 to 17...
studying in a sort of a "fake-barrack"...

— — —

in contrast to the colegio-militar...
there was... nothing more... nothing less... than a place named...
"arpoador'...

such a wonderful beach...
very near our house...

and... in those days...
the water of the ocean was still clean...
the urban development wasn't being capable yet to pollute the
ocean...
the way it does nowadays...

the surf mania was still beginning in brasil...
more precisely... at arpoador beach...

certain american boys...
used to ride their bikes...
from leblon... towards arpoador...

they used to tow a sort of a bike-trailer...
attached behind their bikes...
with those surfboards...
beautiful...
made of fiberglass...
coming directly from california...

the boards were of the brand...
"hobbie"... "hanzen"... "gordon-smith"... "greg-noll surfboards"...
"surfboard hawaii"... among others...

there at arpoador...
in the crowded days...
we could see... at most... some... twenty boards in the water...

there weren't only americans in the water...
the brazilians were also... already... ripping the waves...

when the swell showed up...
and... the waves covered the last rock...
it was awesome...
a crowd of people used to come over to see the guys ripping...

and I... on the weekends...
with my head filled of so much math...
... so much portuguese... so much geography...
used to rest my eyes...
seeing all that beauty...
seeing in reality... the materialization of what the man had told
me...
in recife... at "rio-doce" beach...

"the guys slide along the waves...

standing up...
on really long boards...
as if they were skiing...

...and... go all the way down to the sand..."

— — —

see you soon...
stay with God...
I miss you guys...
I'm sure you will be ok...

a very tight hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... peter's reply...

philosophising part 9 was received.
you always end the stories in the best part...
at arpoador...
but that's all right. See you soon...
a hug,
Peter

... chat with peter...

11:03 AM peter: hi dad

everything's all right?

me: greaaat peter...

peter: what are u doing

me: I've just turned the computer on...

11:04 AM peter: ahh ok

do you have something important to do on the computer?

me: not really...

peter: so why did you turn the computer on?

11:05 AM me: to check my email...

peter: I see

me: are you at work...?

11:06 AM peter: yes

11:07 AM me: when I use the latin characters in the emails...

do they arrive there correctly...?

or do they look like a bunch of crazy symbols...?

peter: they come all right

11:08 AM me: ah... so... from now on... I'm going to use the accents... normally...

peter: you can do it

this week it's going to arrive the Eddie Aikau swell

11:09 AM I think they are going to set the contest on tuesday or even today

me: it's true... that's how the month of december is...

peter: yes

me: are you going to watch it on the internet...?

11:10 AM peter: probably not live. But I can see the photos later

me: kelly slate is going to participate...?

peter: yes

11:11 AM me: at waimea...?

peter: of course

me: ah... awesome...

peter: that's the only place where the Eddie happens

11:12 AM which more good news are you going to tell me?

me: well...

things here... don't change too much...

it's always been that pleasant routine...

11:13 AM peter: why the email about the philosophy about the up's and down's of life?

11:14 AM me: because of the period in which I was back to rio... in the colegio-militar... there was a lot of suffering in the process of adaptation to that crazy school...

11:15 AM peter: ah I thought you were trying to refer to our lives (mine and of taue)

11:18 AM Dad I gotta go
are you still there?

11:19 AM me: I was referring to life.. in general... of all of us... human beings... in general... and... as a particular (specific) example... I had attached into the exposition... my particular case... that is... my difficulties... my suffering during the period of transition from the calm life which I used to have in recife... to rio-de-janeiro... but my comment about the up's and down's of life... was a generalized comment... which applies to all of us... human beings...

peter: right

let's going to talk later?

11:20 AM me: perfect...

peter: I have to go now
a big hug

me: stay with God... my son...

peter: bye

you too

tchau!!!!

me: bye... see you soon...

tchau...

peter: bye

11:21 AM me: bye...

Chapter 10

... philosophising part 10...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

I've just finished interchanging a couple of emails with an old friend of mine...
called... paranauinha...

I used to go out very often with paranauinha...
when I was... about... let's say... from 21 to 23 years old...
in those days... he was a professional photographer...
we used to travel through the country-side of brasil...
and... he was always taking spectacular photos...

recently... I've just received a little note from him...
telling me that he's just got a job in a TV-network...
... one of those TV's which are like an internal network...
within a big corporation...

and... motivated by this new job...
he decided to do a "clean up" in his house...
where he had to organize... (or throw away)...
a bunch of things he had accumulated...
during all those thirty years he's been working...
as a professional photographer...

I imagine... that a professional photographer...
has to be... necessarily... an organized guy...
otherwise...
how would he be able to retrieve a good picture...

taken some years ago...?

and... how about those others ones... that weren't so good...?

he must be always... asking himself:...

"should I throw this one away...? ...or not...?"

if he is a practical guy...

he would probably know already...

what really needs to be preserved... or not...

because he would have a certain sense of judgment...

in this case... it shouldn't be so hard for him to judge...

a certain particular photo...

but... depending on the person...

this kind of judgment could be a little bit difficult...

such person could be of the type... excessively cautioned...

that is... he could be one of these persons who has... usually...

a certain difficulty in throwing things away...

since he would be thinking:...

"well... I'm not sure if I should throw this thing away... or not...

I'm not sure... I'm in doubt...

just in case... I'm going to keep it...

who knows... someday I might need it..."

and... this kind of person... ends up... after a while...

keeping a lot of useless things...

on the other hand... there's a kind of person... who is the opposite...

he doesn't accumulate anything...

everything is thrown away...

the problem is that... acting like this...

the guy might end-up in trouble...

he might need a paper... a receipt...

or even a telephone number...

the name of the person who talked to him on a certain day "X"...

when he called to do a business-transaction "Y"...

the super-organized guy... has... in his (endless) archives...

taken note on a paper the name of the person "X"...
(an information which will... most likely... never be used...)

so... the conclusion that we are arriving at... is :
the ideal situation... would be...
to have the organization and care...
of the super-organized-guy...
but...
periodically... from time to time...
try to do a "clean-up" on the archives...
and select what is useful... from what is not...

— — —

now...
we were talking about an archive of photos (physical... concrete...)
but... we could also think on something even more interesting...
than a simple archive of photos...

we could think of a collection of photos...
a collection of images...
as being a collection of mental images...
which we have "accumulated" during our whole history of life...

just as the photographer needs... once in a while...
to do an "organizing" on his collection of photos... and...
separate what is useful from what is not...

likewise...
we... should also... once in a while...
do an "organizing" on our collection of mental-images...
... on our collection of memories...
accumulated during our lives...

separate what is useful from what is not...
... select certain facts of our lives...
and classify them as being special memories...
we could put them in a frame...
make a "poster" out of them...

and... hang them on our mental "wall"...

being able to select these mental "photos"...

means to be able to "travel" through the history of our lives...

to recognize the good moments...

to recognize the persons who made us feel all right...

it means also... to be able to recognize the bad moments...

and... the persons who didn't do us too much good... either...

in this way... we would be doing our "clean-up"...

we would be organizing...

this huge archive of mental-images which all of us carry with us...

whatever is good...

we keep them with us...

whatever is bad...

we throw them away...

(or at least... we can keep them on a separate file...

in order to be an example of something...

which we don't want for our lives...)

this mental "organizing"...

helps us to direct ourselves...

it helps us to know ourselves better...

it helps us to be aware of what we want...

and what we don't want for our lives...

it gives us better conditions...

to be able to evaluate a person...

through the observation...

we have better conditions to judge...

if a particular aptitude of a certain person "X"...

has something to do with our philosophy-of-life... or not...

and... in case this person is too close to us...

like a wife... son... father... mother... brother... sister...

relative... close friend... etc... etc...
(or anybody... we've just met... a few days ago...)

in short... as we are conscious of what is good...
and what is not so much that good for us...
this gives us conditions to be able to... gently...
disagree with people.. who may present ideas...
which are not coincident with the ones we are having...

because... as... we gently disagree...
we would have arguments... to present...
(since... we already have the habit of... being... frequently...
thinking... analyzing... evaluating the "endless" "mental-pho-
tos"...
the "endless" memories of our lives...)

in other words...
we develop the ability of letting ourselves to agree...
or disagree...
because we have... internally... a referential of what is good...
and... of what it's not...
for our lives...

and... once this capacity is developed...
it would be a lot more difficult...
to let ourselves to be convinced by a proposal of an idea...
which wouldn't match with what we really want to ourselves...

and so... we would become less vulnerable to the external
influences...
we would (figuratively) be holding the steering wheel of the
boat...
we could drive the boat...
having the humbleness of asking for help...
to the persons who really could help us...
so that the boat could navigate safely...

but... in order to ask for help to trustable persons...
it is necessary to be attentive...
to observe...

to observe the people...
to see who is who...

observing what a person is saying...
it's possible... very often... to see his soul...
to see his heart...
to feel if a person has good principles or not...

(most of the times... what happens... it's a kind of mixture:
certain persons have... inside themselves...
a certain mixture of good and bad intentions...)

(but... very often... based on a certain set of criteria...
which we consider essential...
we can... sometimes... feel the person...
and we can "risk" a certain little categorization...
like for instance:
"person with good-manners"...
"person-with-not-so-good-manners-as-we-would-expect"...
"person with ethical and moral principles"...
"person (kind of) without-principles"... etc... etc...)

but... what I want to say... is...
although nobody is perfect...
it's always good to be attentive...
it's always good to be observing...
who is who...

and... to invest our friendship on those who deserve it...
... avoiding companions who are too "ruffian"...

... trying to develop friendships with whoever is good...

and... since nobody is perfect...
even with the persons considered "good"...
... try to see in them...
the points which are not coincident with your world-view...
and... gently...
try to demonstrate... through the speech...
(or any other type of communication)...

that your world-view differs a little-bit...
because of such and such reasons...

— — —

what I'm going to do now...?
a clean-up on my archive of useless little-papers...
and this time...
it won't be the virtual archive of images located in my memory...

but rather the real archive of the millions of little-papers...
which I've been accumulating...
(like the name of the person "X" who talked to me...
on day "Y" when I called to do a business-transaction "Z"...))

now... there's a technical detail there...
if the little-paper is recent...
then I keep saving it for one more year...

but if it is a little-paper which really has nothing to do...
then... yes... I would throw it away with pleasure...
because this will organize my life...
it will make my life lighter...

but... (I'm aware I'm repeating myself)...
the true "archive"...
which must always be "organized"...
is our dear mental archive...

it is dealing with it... that we should be very kind...

a super-giant-hug to both of you...?
a super-giant-hug to both of you...

see you soon...
take a deep breath...
everything will be all right...

a very-big-hug...

your father...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 11

... philosophising part eleven...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

“part-ten” was a little-bit out of context...
(sometimes... I start digressing about other issues...)

but... that’s ok...
life goes on...
I’m going to try to continue the story...
from the point where we had stopped... (in part-nine...)

in part-nine we were at arpoador beach...
at age 11...
watching.... fascinated... the big novelty...
the surf... recently arrived in brasil...
(and... in a certain way... in the world...)

people... simply... astonished...
by the invention... by the enchantment...
which is to see somebody ride a wave...
standing... on a board... which in those days...
used to be about three meters long...

but... this opportunity to go there at arpoador... and... see the
surf...
was a rare one...
my life was too busy with the homework from colegio-militar...
and... it wasn’t only the homework that made me so busy...

in order to displace myself daily from monday through friday...
from ipanema to tijuca...
I had to spend one hour inside a bus...
one hour which was an eternity...

I used to take the bus at visconde-de-piraja avenue...
then we had to cross the entire copacabana...
passing through the tunel-novo...
going out of the tunel-novo... where today is rio-sul...
passing along botafogo-beach...
flamengo...
(without taking the aterro-option...
(which would have made the trip a lot faster))...
then... lapa...
estacio-de-sa...
getting into those streets of rio-comprido...
one thousand turns...
an endless trip...
a suffocating heat...

and... worst of all...
we were forced to be dressed with a ridiculous uniform...
inside a super-hot jacket...
called "jaqueta"...
with buttons all the way to the neck...
and... above the last button...
there were still two little hook-and-eye clasps
which... theoretically... had to be attached...

but nobody followed such a rule...
because it would be impossible to stand such a heat...
and... to make things worst...
with those little clasps suffocating us even more...

before getting out of the bus...
finally... in tijuca...
after a (endless) trip of one hour...
we never forgot a fundamental detail:

to attach the two hook-and-eye clasps...

because... if a sergeant or an officer...
did catch us with those clasps unattached...
they could be capable of writing our names down...
and... to denounce us...
and... in this case... the punishment would be severe:
at least two days of detention...
that is... we would have to go to school on saturday and
sunday...
from 8 am to noon...
and... stay there... doing nothing... inside a classroom...
as if we were prisoners...

this was the environment of the “colegio-militar”...

all this repression...
resultant of a methodology based on an excess of discipline...
was reinforced by the requirements (also exaggerated)...
demanded by the teachers...
who instructed homeworks... often... very hard and strenuous...
not to mention the exams...
the grades...
the constant fear of receiving a low-grade...
or being punished because of a silly reason...

in short...
a generalized stress...
a generalized fearful environment...

so... as I arrived from recife... at age 11...
in july 1965...
my life was immersed into a huge environment of worries...

I was living in ipanema...
but the surf...
was still a concept very far from me...
my life was focused on being able to survive...
to such a huge pressure...
imposed by the colegio-militar...

after a lot of work...

during the august-to-december semester...
I was able to... finally... pass the final-exams...

the battle was over...
finally... time for a well-deserved vacation...

yes...
I could... finally...
breathe...
I could enjoy the peace... the tranquility...
which was to live in ipanema...
at prudente-de-moraes street...
near arpoador-beach...

in a period of time...
which was still pleasant...
to live in ipanema...

— — —

1965...
the beatles at the top of the hit-parade...
long hair...
the acclaimed and immortal “kings” of rock and pop music of the
sixties...

the beatles in london...
... touring in the united states...
the girls screaming...
a generalized hysteria...

here in brasil... as in many other parts of the world...
most of the young people...
influenced by the beatles and the rolling stones...
let their hair to grow...

the latest trend was freedom...
sex... drugs and... rock-and-roll...

however... in the previous year...

in march 1964...
something happened that marked the history of brasil...

a group of the brazilian-military...
supported by the united states...
after several secret meetings...
decided to do a coup d'état...

they put the tanks in the street of the main brazilian cities...
and... in a coordinated action...
forced the president (joao goulart)...
to step-down from the presidency...

and... the military decided themselves to appoint a new
president...
another military man called Marechal Castelo Branco...
who was granted the presidential-powers
without passing through the normal process of elections...
that is... without being elected by the people...

thereafter... the military... now in power...
began to rule the country...
the way they wanted...
(or rather... the way the united states wanted...
since it was the united states who supported the brazilian-milit-
ary...
on the military-coup of 64...)

they began to use the barracks as prison-jails...
inside the barracks...
there were some little rooms...
which were the famous "torture-rooms"...
where they tortured common citizens...
whose only "crime" was... for instance... to discord from the
government...
or talk against the government...

that was the terrible phase of the "military-dictatorship"...

which lasted 20 years... in brasil...

from 1964 to 1984...

if... on those days... in 1965... or 66... or 67 or 68...

(which were the years where the repression was the most violent one...)

if... in one of those years...

I would be writing a letter like this one... to you...

(criticizing the military of those days...)

and... if this letter was intercepted by the secret agents...

of the post-office of those days...

and... handled to the politic-police of those days...

I would probably be arrested and tortured...

just because I was writing a little letter to my own sons...

explaining what was happening with the brazilian government of those days...

a letter which... clearly...

would show that my ideas were contrary to the government...

this was the environment on those days...

while the beatles... the rolling-stones...

were on the hit-parades...

the military were "beating-with-batons"...

on whoever dared to talk against the government...

a government... conducted by the military themselves...

and... it was a political situation...

entirely supported by the united states...

in short...

here in brasil...

whoever was in favor of the military...

all right... nothing would happen to this person...

but whoever was against the military...

in this case... it would be better to watch-out...

because at any moment he (she) could be caught...

and... tortured...

— — —
this environment...
in a certain way...
divided the country...
there were the ones who were in favor of the military...
another ones who were against them...
and... the great majority who weren't neither "pro"... nor...
"con"...
they were simply neutral...

but... in 1965...
I... at age 11...
hadn't seen on the news anything about tortures...
or any other similar barbarities committed by certain military
people...

my life was focused on my super-worries...
on my homeworks... often super-heavy...

and... on the good moments...
on the blessed months of vacation...
the happiness to be able to enjoy my little-beach at ipanema...

— — —
see you later...
I hope everything is going all-right there...
take good care of your health...

a huge hug to both of you...
with tenderness...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 12

... philosophising part twelve...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

yes... indeed... the colegio-militar brought me too much suffering...

but... on the other hand... during vacation...
I began naturally getting along at the beach with the other kids...
who lived in the neighborhood...

before learning how to surf...
I had spent much time on the beach...
enjoying it with this group of kids... friends of mine...
the latest trend was to catch the waves with a pair of fins...
and a wooden small board about one-meter-long...
it wasn't the surf yet...
it was just the very-short-board practice of the "jacare"...

but it was really fun...
the little-board being made of wood...
used to glissade along the wave in a fast speed...

it was like a sort of morey-boogie...
with the difference that... in this case...
it was made of wood...

as I stayed on the beach during the months of vacation...
catching a lot of waves with my friends...
(even being on the beginners-level of the learning-process...

through the “jacare-style-of-body-surfing”...
with those short-wooden little-boards...)
this fact... gave me much familiarity with the sea...

sometimes the sea was rough...

but... even so...

we enjoyed our “jacare” with the wooden-little-boards...

(they were interesting... because when the wave was a closed-out...

we were able to dive back into the wave...

performing a sort of “take off”... out into the ocean...

and... that was possible... because the board... being made of wood...

could easily... dive backwards through the wave...)

in short... the way I learned how to surf...

was a very natural one...

it wasn't something like... suddenly... in a bright day...

buying a surfboard... and jumping into the sea...

without too much preparation...

... no...

the way it actually was...

was through a natural process... a slow process...

with this experience of catching a lot of “jacare”...

with my little-group of friends...

we learned... together... to respect the sea...

we used to talk to each other:

“ there's a strong-current... over there...

do you think we can make it...? “

there was a learning-development as a team...

where the sea itself was our main teacher...

— — —

all this was happening during summer- vacation from 1965 to 1966...

and... because my birthday is in january...

I had just turned 12...
I was enjoying a very well-deserved vacation...
after receiving so much craziness in the head...
for an eleven-years-old boy...
finding myself face to face... to a regime so rigid...
presented by the school... I've just begun to attend...

but... this well-deserved-vacation...
was not enjoyed only on the sands-and-the-ocean of ipanema...

at prudente-de-moraes street...
in a building almost in front of the one we lived...
also lived there... the family of an old friend of mine...
the vitorino...
who used to sit next to me...
at the school during my childhood...
the same one... from the period in which I was still living in
gavea...
near the jockey club... right next to the botanic-garden...
when I was from 7 to 10 years old...
in that same period when I used to take my little sister to
school...
by trolley-bus...

very well...
to my surprise...
one day... on the side-walk... right next to our buildings...
vitorino and I... just bumped into each other...

I asked...
vitorino...?

and him...
luis...?

where do you live...?
right next door...?
I can't believe it...
is it true...?

all set...
two friends from childhood had just realized that... now...
they are neighbors...

as soon as we re-met...
he already invites me to spend the vacation with him...
in the country-house of his family...
in teresopolis...

I asked my mother... if she would let me go...
and... she... promptly agrees...
because since the years of the elementary-school...
my mother knew already that vitorino belonged to a good family...
so... it would be no problem for me...
to spend the vacations with him...
in his country-house in teresopolis...

I packed a small suitcase...
and... there we went...
me... vitorino... his cousin mario...
his father... his mother...
in the car aero-willis...
gray color...
driven by the chauffeur... (their private-driver...)

we arrived there...
a nice little-house... relatively simple...
but cozy...
those little houses typical of teresopolis...
where... at that time...
it was still a pretty good place to spend vacations...

such a mellow place... typical of the little villages...
where we could still see... horses... walking freely on the dirt-
roads...
a tranquility...

next day we went to the club where vitorino was a member...
arriving there... we went to the swimming-pool...

but... to my surprise...
the swimming-pool... wasn't being used as a place...
where people go to swim...

the swimming-pool was a meeting-place...
of vitorino and all his friends...

a very united group...
everybody already knew each other...
there should be about twenty... overall... approximately...
boys... girls...
most of them ages 11... 12... or... at most... 13 years-old...

they were the group of jews of vitorino...
very interesting people...

as we arrived at the swimming-pool...
nobody was interested in swimming...
we were... sitting on the ground... exchanging great chats...

"we were..." would be just a way of saying it...
it wasn't exactly like that...

it would be more correct to say:
vitorino was exchanging great chats with the girls...
in the bikinis...
they talked about everything...
politics... arts... cinemas...
gossips about the last relationships...
who was dating who... etc...

and I ... completely out-of-place...
was... kind of perplexed... without knowing...
what was... exactly... going on...

still dazed by the sergeant's order...
"forward... march...!!..."
I stayed there... staring at the novelty...
as I used to do... at age five...
when I passed the days sitting on the wall...

seeing the few cars pass by...

suddenly vitorino wakes me up... there... at the swimming pool...
hey... luis... come over...
are you going to stay there isolated...?

as I listened to his friendly "hint"...
then... that's when my complex turned out to be even more
intense...
I realized that... unfortunately...
something wrong was going on... with me...

first... almost nobody was interested on me...
second... I ... simply... wasn't very used to that type of social
gathering...
my family... had never encouraged me...
had never introduced me...
had never created conditions...
so that I could have the habit of chatting in a social-gathering like
this one...

my childhood was on the streets...
playing soccer with my friends...
(or else... in a classroom... studying a lot of math... or something
like that...)
I wasn't prepared to handle such a sophistication of that kind...

vitorino's group...
(maybe because it was a group entirely of jews)...
was used to have those social-gatherings...
(perhaps... since they were very young...)

and... they soon realized...
that I ... was a sort of "cowboy"...
(in the sense of someone who is not very used to the norms-of-
etiquette...)

but... if they weren't too interested in trying to initiate a
conversation with me...
on the other hand... they wouldn't treat me badly either...

they respected me...
after all... I was vitorino's friend...

— — —

but... as I was sitting on the ground... by the swimming pool...
near vitorino...
diana... sueli...
all in bikinis...
and the chat going on...
and I just watching...
and talking almost nothing...

this wasn't bothering neither vitorino... nor diana... nor
sueli...
but... it was bothering me... deeply... to realize...
that I didn't know how to chat...

nowadays... I try to understand the reasons :
(the history-of-my-life from zero to twelve-years-old...
didn't prepare myself for that...)
but... at that moment... there... at the swimming-pool...
when people asked me to communicate a little-bit more...
... to try to talk a little-bit more...
at those moments... that's when the torment got even higher...
it was like a had a very serious defect :
not to be able to speak...
not to be able to talk...

I felt bad...
I felt... as I was a being-with-defect...
not a physical defect...
but the defect... of... not to be able to talk...

in spite of this bad-sensation...
life was moving on...

in the morning... swimming-pool...
in the afternoon... little-parties...

every afternoon there was a little-party in the house of one of them...

music of roberto carlos :

" I'm loving crazily...

the girl-friend of a friend of mine...

I know I'm wrong...

but I don't even know how this all happened..."

we used to dance together...

the boy used to ask the girl if she wanted to dance with him...

(usually... they accepted...)

we danced in closed-position... embracing each other...

when the girl was interested in the young-gentleman...

the body-contact adjusted better...

and so... from that point on...

the chances towards a romantic-relationship...

were high...

and I ... even filled with my complex of not being able to talk normally...

allowed myself... to get into the mood...

I asked the girls to dance...

I danced with them...

I tried to practice the exercise of "how to know how to talk..."

I used to observe...

I was optimistic... I could learn it...

I tried to do whatever was reachable...

I tried to fit in...

who knows...

maybe one day... I could have a girl-friend...

the same way vitorino had...

— — —

a big hug...?

a big hug...

see you soon...
a super-hug... to both of you...
with much tenderness...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... taue's reply...

Hi Dad:

I've just finished reading your last "philosophising parts" 10, 11, 12.

Reading them, it seemed like a book of history of Brasil, Ipanema, Rio..
culture in general, cool.

In your last letter you talked about Teresopolis, that you were shy, etc...
very similar to myself. Me too I had this paranoia of thinking that there was
something wrong with me, due to the fact that I wasn't able to know how to talk
with people, as I thought they were not very interested in the things
I would like to say. Sometimes I used to think ten times before I'd say something, for being afraid that I might not be accepted
by the "group".

But I've improved a lot, and nowadays, I'm not as good as peter, who easily gets along with everybody, but I am more confident towards myself.

Regarding Evy, I've noticed that she is also very shy, specially when she is with
people that she doesn't know. I should, maybe, try to do something so that
she doesn't become a person like you and me, but rather, like peter.

What do you think?

Hugs, Taue.

... responding to your letter...

dear son taue...

I liked your letter very much...

this issue of my shyness...
relative to vitorino's group of friends...
on those days when I was 12 years old...
was something very intense...
even today... I can't explain very well...
the reasons that caused me to be so shy...

I think that... in my case... on those days... in teresopolis...
many factors contributed to it...
I'm going to try to describe at least... one of them...

that group of vitorino's friends...
consisted of a kind of people... with whom...
I wasn't very used to interact...

they were people with a certain level of sophistication...
which... for me... represented something very new...

it was like... as if... suddenly... I had found myself...
facing an entirely new world...

and... this feeling of being in a world different from the one...
we are used to... somehow... represents a threat to us...

often... we feel threatened...
because we are afraid that the group finds us ridiculous...
we fear that the group may judge us...
we fear that the group makes fun of us...

the group threatens us...
and... this threat... in a certain way... terrifies us...
instinctively... we shy away...
we avoid exposing ourselves...

we choose not to talk too much...
which is a way to reduce the chances of... accidentally...
committing a social blunder... an "indiscretion"... a "slip-up"... a
"gaffe"...
and then... find everybody laughing at us...

a "laughter" which can be explicit... or not...
it can be an invisible "laughter"...

and... this invisible "laughter" is what frightens us the most...
because... precisely because it is invisible...
we have no control over it...
we don't know if it is... really there... or not...

we become submitted to things our imagination is creating...
(which some people call... "paranoia")...

— — —

but... my dear son taue...
as time goes by...
as we are growing up...
becoming older...
more mature...

we realize that all this scare...
all this fear...
is unnecessary...

we realize that such group-of-people...
we thought was formed by people very refined...
very cultured... very sophisticated...

they are nothing but normal people...
like us...
with our qualities and defects...

human beings... like everybody else...
who take-a-shit... sleep...
get sick...

happy...
sad...
etc... etc...

then... we realize... that all the affliction...
we used to have towards that group-of-people...
was just something our imagination had created...

we thought we were "inferior-beings"...
but... if we think a little-bit... we can see that...
nobody is neither better nor worst than the other...

we're just different...

— — —

and as we become aware
that we are not worst than anybody else..
this awareness helps us to improve our self-esteem...

historically... in my life... I had passed by several moments...
where my self-esteem was a kind of low...

in other moments... my self-esteem was pretty high...

fortunately... nowadays... it is doing fine...

I've never thought about what I'm going to write at this exact
moment...

but... talking with you... right now... through this email...
there's an idea that just came up to my mind...
the idea that... maybe... the self-esteem of people... in general...
could be a consequence of several factors...

for instance... if the person is well... materially...
if this person is passing through a moment in life...
where everything is fine health-wise...
if this person has an interior-peace...
if the body is clean...
a body which hasn't received not a single drop of alcohol...

a lung which hasn't received not even a little-bit of smoke...
(since two-and-a-half years ago...)
then... all this care that I'm taking with myself...
helps my self-esteem to become even more stable...
even more tranquil...

I could find some more examples from the history of my life...
for instance... when I was 20-years-old...
I interrupted college...
but still kept my job as a teacher at colegio-anglo-americano...
on mondays... tuesdays... and wednesdays...
every wednesday-afternoon... I used to go to saquarema...
and stayed there surfing until sunday...

it was a pretty-healthy life-style...
and... on those days... I believe my self-esteem was also pretty-
well...

— — —

but... all these examples are just physical examples...
material examples... related to health...

and... how about... when we are in the difficult times...

well... in the difficult times... what can we do...?

dear son...
in those moments... that's when I think...
all the attention must be doubled...

it's exactly on those moments... that...
if we want to be able to win the battle...
we should try to take all the care needed...
to avoid to become even weaker...

it is on those hard-times that we must try to do everything...
to keep our body as much healthy as possible...
each millimeter of inattention could be fateful...

— — —
I'm going to give an example of what happened today...
one friend of us came over to visit us... this morning...
she brought a "joint"... so we could smoke...

at that moment... I felt a little desire to smoke a little-bit...
but then I thought to myself...
"I'm feeling so well without smoking anything since two-and-a-half
years ago...
that I feel like keeping my body... clean... and healthy...
therefore... I'm not going to smoke "...

ok...
if I had smoked...
I wouldn't be now... writing this letter to you...
I would be tired...
I would probably be sleeping...

but this letter is very important...
I want to be by your side... through this email...
I know that you and peter are the persons who I care the most...
in this world...
so... I'm glad I didn't smoke...
otherwise... I would probably be with no physical-energy...
to be writing right now...

— — —
I'm becoming more and more convinced...
that the alcoholic-drink is one of the most foolish things in this
life...
at that moment we enjoy that sensation of a "mental-pleasure"...
but afterwards... we are a trash... with no energy...
it's not worth it...

here in recife... people have the habit of drinking a lot...
as soon as I arrived from hawaii...
I already arrived here pretty educated in relation to this issue...

I had already learned in hawaii... that alcohol and smoke deplete the kidneys...
and... according to chinese medicine...
the kidneys are one of the most responsible organs...
for the well-functioning of the organism...
if the kidneys get depleted...
bye... bye...
the whole organism gets depleted...

but... returning to our earlier talk about how people here in hawaii... drink a lot...
as soon as I arrived here... (from hawaii)...
I realized that the people here has the habit of drinking a lot...

they think that... if they drink... they would become more sensible...
the chatting would flow better... etc...

I soon realized that this kind of thought is like a fallacy...
a delusion...
people think that they are "ripping"...
but they are digging their own grave...

I soon realized that... this was not the way to go...
I thought to myself:
"if they want to drink... then... let them drink...
I'm not going to get into that...
because I know... it would lead me to an abyss...
it would be a temporary delusion...
which would ruin people's health really fast..."...

now... let's see what the result was :
two-and-a-half-years had just passed...
the fellows who were "fans" of the drinks...
are realizing little-by-little... that I was the one who was right...

for instance... whenever I go to these little-kids-birthday-parties...
I feel that they are beginning to realize that I am pretty right...
...(in relation to this matter...)...

if I am in those little-kids-birthdays-parties...
and... while everybody is drinking too much...
I'm just drinking my glass-of-water... (with no ice)...
(since they already know that I don't like soft-drinks)...

I talk with everybody sharing good-vibrations with all of them...
I am super-caring and friendly towards everyone... in a wonderful mood...
when I leave the party... I am tranquil...
happy with myself... full of health... tranquil...
with the certainty that I am going to have a good-night's sleep...
with no headaches...
and... on next day... with no headaches either...

in the meantime... there they are... completely stoned... all fucked up...
regretting to have drunk...

the thing is... I can feel... that many of them... are already realizing...
through my example... that I am right in my viewpoint...
since some of them are beginning to follow me...

there are some occasions that they decide not to drink... etc...

— — —

so... my son...
all these cases that I've just talked about...
are related to the main theme of this letter...

that is :.. the self-esteem...

through this story...

(of me insisting on my philosophy...

of drinking my glass-of-water through these little-kids-parties...

here in recife...)

I would never had the "courage" of following my own conscience...

if I wouldn't know from start...

that drinking is foolish...
it's an unwise thing...

this conscience... I acquired... in hawaii...
thanks to that serious health-problem that I had...
in my sciatic-nerve...

thanks to the good-influences of an acupuncturist-girl who healed
me...
I was introduced to the basic-knowledge of chinese medicine...

this knowledge educated me to such an extend... that...
... when I was arriving here in recife...
I was fully aware that the habits here...
"to drink... to drink... and to drink"...
were simply... of an ignorance... very extreme...

but... I only could have this assurance...
this self-determination... this self-confidence...
because... in hawaii... I was lucky enough to meet...
this girl that introduced me to the wisdoms of chinese medicine...

wisdoms that proved themselves to be good... in the practical
sense...
as I was gradually becoming healed...

— — —

so... in the case that I was finding myself I kind of lost...
in the group of vitorino's friends...
that was because I hadn't had any experience of life... yet...
I was within a social-group...
where everything... for me... was an unknown...
I was feeling insecure...
afraid...
exactly because I wasn't knowing...
... how to master the language...
... how to master the specific language of that social group...

but... as we grow up...

new experiences come to us...
and... so... we are more prepared to communicate ourselves...
with the several social-groups that are always showing up...
in our lives...

maybe that could be one of the explanations...
for what you observed in your letter...
when you said that this shyness was a characteristic of the past...
but... nowadays... you feel much more secure...

regarding evy... I think... she too... like all of us... sometimes...
passes through moments of insecurity towards certain
environments...
where she might feel... probably insecure...
due to the fact that she feels that...
within that social-group (of her little-friends)...
there could be some kids who... maybe... could represent for her...
a certain kind of "danger"...
(either in the physical sense... (punch her... etc)...
or in the moral sense... (make fun of her... laugh at her...
regard her as someone who "doesn't fit there"...
these kinds of things...))...

we should never forget that... unfortunately... we human beings...
like all the other animals...
we find ourselves... sometimes... in situations...
where there is the "law-of-the-jungle"...
that is: sometimes there are situations...
where a human-being wants to "eat" the other...

and this destruction has many faces...
sometimes... the attempt to destroy is physical...
(to punch the other-one... etc...)
sometimes... the attempt is in the moral-dimension...
(to make intrigues... gossips... to talk bad things about the
person...
... to ridicule... to mock... etc...))...

and... so... since all of us had already received... at least once in
our lives...

this kind of “punch”... (either a physical one... or a moral one...)...

so... whenever we are in a social-group...

whose habits and languages are new for us...

it is understandable that we might feel insecure...

since our main tool for interacting... are the words...

but if we don't master very well the language of such social-group...

how can we be self-assured...

in the sense of being able to communicate ourselves...

in a way that everybody can respect us...?

in order to accomplish that... we need to know:

1... which group is that... (which we are interacting to...)...

2... how to communicate ourselves... (with them...)...

3... how to listen...

4... how to behave ourselves in a gentle way... etc... etc...

all this practical knowledge... we usually learn it... as time goes on...

in our experiences through the real world...

and... if... by the way... we find ourselves in a group...

where we feel completely awkward...

that's all right...

if we are aware that all of us... human-beings...

are limited and imperfect...

then... in this case... who cares...?

there's no reason for us... to feel awkward... at all...

at these moments... the best we can do... is to assume who we are...

to chat naturally...

and... since the very start... level with them...

showing them our true face...

respecting them...

but... also knowing that the group is going to respect us...

otherwise... if the group thinks that it is so much better than us...

in this case...
bye... bye...

life keeps on moving...
I wish you (from the group)... the best...
be happy...
and I'm going to look for my place in this world...
see you later... bye... bye...

because life is short... I'm not going to spend my whole life...
begging crumbs from your table...
if you want to relate with me in a respectful way... that would be
great...

otherwise... bye... bye...

— — —

that's the story...
my dear son taue...
this theme is very interesting...
it deals with a lot of psychology...
I'm glad you mentioned this subject... in your letter...
because it's a theme that it's worthwhile to take a careful look at...

this theme of the shyness is so important...
that it is worthwhile to take a little-look at the following
question...
whose answer is obviously related to the concept of shyness :

" what is the reason why people... usually... drink at the
parties...?... "

— — —
— — —

a big big hug...?
a big big hug...

I just loved your letter... my son...
keep being always like that...

see you soon...
a hug...
with tenderness...
your father...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 13

... philosophising part thirteen...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

the summer vacations in teresopolis...
in spite of revealing... (for the first time in my life...)...
my difficulties to relate myself with a sophisticated group-of-people...
(like the one vitorino belonged to...)
in spite of that...
those vacations brought... in a certain way...
new horizons for me...

if I felt awkward when I first arrived in teresopolis...
feeling as if people were regarding me as a kind of a...
let's say... "cowboy"...
(in the sense of a person who is not very used to the...
"sophistication" of a "refined-group-of-people"...)...
if... on one hand... I was feeling like that...
(at the beginning of such vacations...)
on the other hand... near the end of these vacations...
I was feeling a little bit more relaxed and "at home"...

there was one great thing about this group...
(among many other good things...):
whenever a boy asked a girl to dance...
I never saw anyone of them refusing the request...

(they would always accept...
even if they didn't "like" the guy too much...)

I think this was part of their education...
it was a group where almost everybody was jew...
the only exception was me...

so... during the chatting...
they... often... were referring to the fact that...
sooner or later... they would be going to be married...
among themselves...

so... that was the occasion where I learned (from them)...
that the jew only marries another jew...

I realized that... maybe... this could explain... (in part)...
the reason why it was so difficult for me to relate with them...

it could be happening that... maybe...
they weren't too much interested in knowing me deeper...
because... after all... I... was not a jew...

a delicate way to ask me if I was a jew or not...
was... simply... to ask me... what was my last name...
as I responded... "freire"... they realized that I wasn't a jew...

but... that's all right...
as I mentioned in a previous email...
this fact didn't stop me to participate in the group's activities...
... to go to the parties... etc...
(always with vitorino... of course...)

actually... vitorino was my "passport"...
to all this internal world of the jews...

I... used to go there... just because he used to stop by my house...
... and call me to go with him...
but... if he didn't call me...
I would still be happy...
after all... there was always the option of going to the beach...
... to enjoy the "jacare" (boogie boarding)...

there at the sea...

I was free...

at arpoador beach...

with a pair of swimming fins...

... the little-board-made-of-wood...

riding big- beautiful- waves...

which were coming from the "pontao"...

there at the sea...

it wasn't necessary to worry about...

the "superficialities" of some social conventions...

it wasn't necessary to be dressed with those clothes...

especially made for the parties...

it wasn't necessary to be dressed with trousers and a shirt...

which had to pass through the ironing process...

it wasn't necessary to be worried about superficialities of the kind:

"do you think my clothes are wrinkled..?.."

it wasn't necessary to be worried about...

if someone was observing me... in the parties...

observing...

if I knew how to dance or not...

if I knew how to talk or not...

if I was or wasn't...

behaving myself in accordance with the rules of good-etiquette...

there at the sea...

all that was needed...

was a bathing suit...

without prissiness...

me... and the sea...

and the waves from the "pontao"...

— — —

end of vacations...

month of march...

time to go back to school...

back to "colegio-militar"...
the first thing we had to do...
was to go to the barbershop...
to get a haircut...
buzzing it on the sides...

leaving only that little-hair on the top...

and for me... this was... like a torture...
nowadays... to buzz the hair... is something normal...
but... at that time...
at the time of the beatles and rolling-stones...
at a time where everybody was using long-hair...
the fact of having no choice other then side-buzz our hair...
... within the military standards...
this was a torture for all of us... students of that school...

in spite of all these feelings...
at that age...
we end up doing things without thinking too much...
without too much questioning...

vacations are over...
back to school...
normal life...
no need for further discussions...

we simply re-adapt ourselves to the old routine...
to side-buzz our hair every week...
to catch the bus 433... barao-de-drummond__leblon...
to face the super-stressful traffic of copacabana...
botafoogo... flamengo... lapa... riachuelo-street... etc...
cooped up inside that super-warm jacket...
buttoned to the neck...
ahh... yes... let it be...

— — —

second year of middle-school...

now... I was feeling more comfortable at school...
the "colegio" was not scaring me that much...

the previous year was when things were really "tough"...
I had to struggle a lot in order to be able to overcome...

...the difficulties of adaptation...
...the contrasts between the school in recife to the one in rio...
the educational-system in rio was of a much higher level of
difficulty...
...than the one in recife...

but now... attending the second-year "ginasial"...
I was feeling much more comfortable...
those "ghosts" of the previous year...
had practically disappeared...

I was much more prepared to follow the rhythm of the classes...
the high standard typical of schools like...
"colegio militar"... "colegio santo inacio"... etc...
wasn't scaring me anymore...
because... as I struggled like crazy to survive...
to the challenges imposed by the sudden change...
on the difficulty-level from recife to rio...
I became... naturally... prepared to follow the rhythm-of-the-les-
sons...
in a more normal way... without too many "traumas"...

in short...
the lessons... the studies... weren't belonging anymore...
to the list of my main worries...

but... since I was only 12 years old...
and since... at those days... parents didn't have the habit...
of talking too much with their children...
about things like sex... etc...
... we had no other choice than to learn it...
in the streets...
through the chatting with my friends...

and... one of the main themes was... naturally...

sex...
that woman who got on the bus...
with such skirt... with such cleavage...

this was the type of "chat" which was often happening...
among us...
during the trip inside the 433...barao-de-drummond_leblon...

— — —

rafael jose rocha pinto... or simply... rocha-pinto...
was one of my main friends...
who... at 11 a.m... together with me...
used to walk up the three steps...
of the bus: 433...barao-de-drummond_leblon....

later on... another friend showed up:
jorge peredia... or rather... peredia...
who enrolled himself in the middle of the school-year...
because his family was coming from rio-grande-do-sul...

my mind was still under the good influences...
of the tranquil environment of the little parties...
organized by vitorino's group of friends...
a group which had... in a certain way... very good-manners...
high-standards... an educated... nice people...

by contrast... there... on the bus... heading to "colegio militar"...
in the company of peredia and rocha-pinto...
the chatting used to belong to another kind of "universe"...

the two were planning...
to go out on saturday-night... to one of those motels...
in downtown-area...
and pay prostitutes to make sex with them...

next monday...
the chatting going on inside the bus...
was about their adventure...
I listened... kind of distantly... to their stories...

despite the novelty of the chatting...
I didn't feel too much attracted to that kind of adventure...

I was hoping...
they wouldn't invite me to go with them next time...
because I wouldn't feel much comfortable...
paying to a prostitute to have sex with me...

and... indeed... at this point... they realized...
that I was focused on other things... and so...
they didn't even bother to invite me to go with them...
on saturday-night...
to the whore-houses in downtown area...

— — —

if... on one hand... there was the super-refined and elegant...
group of vitorino's friends...
and... if... on the other hand... there was the little-tough-guys...
from the bus barao-de-drummond__leblon...

there was also... as if in the middle-ground...
my friend ronaldo...

he used to live at vieira-souto avenue...
on the fourth floor...
in the living-room there was a panoramic-view-window...
... made of smoked-glass...
where we could see the whole view all the way...
from leblon to arpoador...

ronaldo's family was pretty much alike mine...
his father was an engineer... like my father...
ronaldo's mother... was also pretty much alike my mother...
both of them... very "extrovert"...
they were among the first ones to adopt the fashion of the mini-skirt...
which was emerging at that time...
(after all... it was the era of the beatles...)

a family... which... like mine...
was always carefully concerned about giving the best...
to their children... in terms of education...
(ronaldo was studying at colegio-santo-inacio...)...
moreover... some tastes of the two families were nearly
coincident...
I remember that... when they were still living at visconde-de-
piraja...
I used to go there to visit and play with ronaldo...
assembling... airplanes of revell...
which was a brand of educational toys...
where we used to assemble those miniature models...
of little airplanes made of plastic...

moreover... the ages of their children...
were almost like ours...
marisa was the same age as ana emilia...
ronaldo... same age as mine...
andrea... same age as clarice...
and... romeu... same age as tuipe...

two families very alike...
they matched each other almost perfectly...
we had been together for a week during easter holidays...
in maua...
in a time when nobody knew maua...
in one of those fairy-tale little-lodgings...
by the cold waters of some rivers with crystal-clear-waters...
in a time when maua existed...
as if it was some sort of a brazilian swiss...
lost in those mountains of the border...
between the states of rio and minas...

this tour to maua happened some years before...
when I was still nine years old...
even before the period I spent in recife when I was ten years
old...
immersed in the trees of my grand-mother's yard...

this tour was something of the past...
the assemblage of the little airplanes with ronaldo... too...

now... I was a 12 years-old "young-man"...
already with the mind starting to be filled...
with the perplexities of life...

the huge-sea at arpoador-beach...
the craziness of the discipline of "colegio-militar"...
the new-world... revealed by vitorino's sophisticated-group-of-
friends...
the "underground" universe... (also new)...
from the "little-tough-guys" of the bus...

sunday afternoon...
I have nothing to do...
I'm going to "stop-by" ronaldo's house...
chat a little bit with him...
ask if he wants to do something...
ask him if he wants to play...
(in spite of being already 12 years-old...)

I cross prudente-de-moraes street...
I keep walking through farne-de-amoedo...
as I reach the corner of farne with vieira-souto...
I turn right towards the recently-constructed building...
which his father... now...
...in the very-important position of superintendent of public-
works...
had just built...

a brand-new-building...
with blue tiles...
coating its exterior walls...

I arrive there...
catch the elevator...
fourth floor...

as I get out of the elevator...

there's no doubt...
the door of the apartment is just across the elevator door...
there's no doubt...
(because the building is one of those...
...which has only one apartment per floor...)

I ring the bell...
a few seconds later marisa shows up...
ronaldo's older sister...
13 years old...

I ask...
is ronaldo there...?

no...
but you may come in...
come in...

and I... on sunday afternoon...
with nothing else to do...
searching for ronaldo to play...
I just... step inside...

I go straight to the panoramic-view-window in the living-room...
... made of smoked-glass...
with the view from leblon all the way to arpoador...

I walk to the big window...
I watch the sea...
and... marisa...
starts talking to me...
a little bit laughing...
finding... a little bit funny... my haircut from "colegio militar"...

we guys from "colegio militar" had the "trauma" of side-buzzing
our hair...
so... in order to balance things out...
we had the habit of letting the top to be very long...
(since there was no rule forcing us to cut the top part of the
hair...)

so... what happened was that...
we used to have the side... zero-buzzed...
and... in contrast... the top used to remain really long...

in short... we had that thing kind of out-of-proportion...
the side of the hair... totally buzzed...
and the top... like a big wig...

despite the disproportionality...
we chose to let the top grow...
since it was the only way we could enjoy the little "freedom"...
of letting it grow... at least the top...
(after all... it was the era of the beatles...
...and the rolling stones...)

— — —

so... there we were... me and marisa...
by the big-window of the living room...
and... she... totally "crazy" to do something with me...

anything...
she didn't know where to begin with...
she wanted to touch me...
anything...

she started to comb my hair...
she told me... my hair was funny...

she invited me to watch television...
in a small room... specially made for the television...
we sat there to watch television...

we stayed there for a little while...
suddenly... I stand up and say:
"well... since ronaldo is not here...
I should go now..."

then... she says:

stay a little bit more...

then... I say:

"but ronaldo is not here...
so I'd better go..."

so... she takes me to the door...
and... in order to see if I could still change my mind...
before she closes the door...
she looks at me... with that seduction expression...

but... while I wasn't exactly realizing what was going on...
I press the elevator button...
(even under her regard through the semi-open door...)
I say "good-bye"... and... I... go away...

at the street...
realizing my falter...
I feel like going back there...
but... then... I think...
no... I already left...
so... let it go...

— — —

about one year later...
(when I had already a fiberglass-long-surfboard...)
on the super-crowded beach of ipanema...
right in front of her building...
the sea almost flat...
with some tiny-little-waves about 10 centimeters high...

she swims towards me... (and the surfboard...)
and asks me to give her a ride...

we go paddling... way outside...
she goes in the front...
I go behind...
paddling...
feeling her thighs...

her perfect buttocks...
in that bikini...

at the moments when we were waiting for the waves...
(which didn't exist on that day...)
we both sat on the board...
she... sitting in front of me...
and I... sitting behind her...
as if we were both... on a saddle of a horse...

but... even so...
my shyness...
my blockage...
didn't allow me to sit in a way so that my body could touch
hers...

but at the time of the paddling...
both laying down...
with her in front of me...
it was impossible...
to avoid my arms sliding through her thighs...
opened...
my nose...
inevitably touching her butt...
in a position sort of uncomfortable for the neck...
which had no other option other than to surrender...
to the irresistible desire of using her buttocks...
as a perfect pillow...

where... about twice...
I yielded to the temptation of... finally...
laying down my head... sideways...
on that buttocks so sensual...
followed by her thighs...
volume-wise perfect...
goldenly tanned through the cream "rayto-de-sol"...
directly imported from argentina...

— — —

a very rare episode...
in that phase of my life...

like someone who is dying of thirst on the desert...
our lives were a total absence of women...
we used to be most of the time in the "colegio militar"...
where the enrollment for girls were not allowed...
(nowadays... the school has evolved... in this sense...
nowadays... it's a school opened to both boys and girls...)

those two episodes that happened... (or rather... that didn't
happen...)
with marisa...
were two episodes... which...
days later... (or months later...)
produced in myself... a deep feeling of regret...

(..."oh... what an idiot... what a fool...
didn't I realized that she wanted to enjoy...
some sensual touches with me...?
especially in that episode when she was alone...
in the apartment crazy of desire...
to do some playful touches with me...?... "...)

I couldn't forgive myself...
fool...
fool...
vacillant...

the lack of a sexual life...
the lack of a girl friend...
this... permeated my life...
throughout my adolescence...

I used to crave sex...
I used to long for having a girlfriend...
but I didn't have anybody...

until the day that fabiana appeared...
when I was 18...

my first girlfriend...
(a true one... with sex... and all that...)

fabiana...
with whom a had a good relationship...
very tranquil...
very healthy...

but... this only happened when I was already 18 years old...

from 12 to 18... was that huge lack...
in terms of relationships... in terms of dating...

but... a lot of other things happened at that time...
a lot of study...
a lot of surf...
a lot of novelty...
a lot of others discoveries happened in that phase...

my piano teacher...

the sudden move from "colegio militar" to the school-of-bourgeois
"andrews"...
(at age 14...)

the influences of my friend richard and his mother...
as they were introducing me to gandhi's philosophy...

the group-of-friends of my sister clarice...
with her classmates whose ages were 12... while I was 16...
(the group which... caroline used to belong to...)

my trip of 7 months to the united states...
in order to study one semester in a high school...
as a sophomore..
at age 15...
studying a lot of physics...
and... learning a lot of english...
in a way that I never forgot...

— — —

see you next time...?
see you next time...

a super-hug in you two...?
a super-hug in you two...

see you soon...
a big hug...
your father...

...luis antonio...

... peter's reply...

I received part 13. What a vacillation with Marisa, huh ?
But that's it !! It's good to read these stories,
because now I can see how different our childhoods were.
Especially after age 12.
hugs,
Peter

... about forwarding...

dear son peter...

it's been a while ago...

at the beginning of this sequence of emails about the history of my life...

taue and I... had been talking about the possibility of "forwarding"...

some of these stories to friends and relatives...

but... the conclusion taue and I reached... at that time...

was that it would be better... if we keep these stories...

among only the three of us...

since they are intimate stories...

it would be interesting... at the moment... to keep these stories...

among only the three of us...

what do you think...?

a big hug...

your father...

...luis antonio...

... peter's reply...

I think we should keep these stories among only the three of us.
After all, who else would be interested in reading
these personal stories of yours?

Peter

Chapter 14

... philosophising part fourteen...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

life... at that time... in ipanema...
was a mixture of things...
a mixture of different environments...
and... contrasting ones...

my friends... were of very different backgrounds...

I used to connect with friends...
whose backgrounds were super-refined...
and... also... with some other ones...
who... in spite of belonging to middle-class families...
even so... they used to have moral principles kind of suspicious...
... life-values pretty different than mines...

but... that's all right...
in the midst of all this diversity of influences...
I was learning from all of them...
and... on my part...
also contributing to their learning...

— — —

when I arrived at rio-de-janeiro... from recife...
in july of 65...
at age eleven...

and... as I got amazed to see...
for the first time...
the surfers riding the waves at arpoador-beach...

my number-one-dream...
was... to be able to surf...

as I said in previous emails...
the learning-process happened in a gradual way...

my first experiments...
were accompanied by a little board made of styrofoam...

later on... when I was already belonging to the group...
which used to ride the waves with the little-wooden-board-and-a-
pair-of-fins...
the technique of the “jacare” evolved a lot...
because the problem with the styrofoam-little-board was that...
as we “duck-dive” the wave...
the probability to “loose” the board was enormous...

on those days there were no leashes...
(nobody had thought yet...
about this idea simultaneously simple... and brilliant...
which is to attach the board to the person...
using an elastic cord...)
so... when we were practicing the “jacare” with the little-
styrofoam-board...
the chances of losing the board were enormous...

but with the “little-wooden-board-and-pair-of-fins” equipment...
things were different...
the little wooden-board wouldn't float...
and so it would be much easier to “duck-dive” the wave...
without losing the board...
moreover... the pair-of-fins offered a fantastic impulse...
an initial-velocity indispensable...
for the success of the drop...

the phase of the little-wooden-board...

was an important one... for me...
not only because my "jacare" had evolved a lot...
but also because I suddenly found myself...
belonging to the group of "kids" from ipanema... who... like me...
couldn't afford to buy a longboard made of fiberglass...

— — —

but... it's interesting to see...
how this process of rescuing facts from memory...
develops itself in such a way...
that... as I keep gradually writing...
new observations which were kind of abandoned...
there... deep inside the memory...
end up emerging back to the surface again...

and... if I weren't writing these stories...
maybe... certain details... which were very deep down in the
memory...
maybe... they would never re-appear again...

one of these details...
was that... it was thanks to peredia...
(mentioned in a previous email...
the one in the bus... from "colegio militar"...
who was together with rocha-pinto...
proudly talking about their adventures... on saturday...
with the prostitutes of downtown area...)
and... as I was saying... it was thanks to peredia...
that I was introduced to the group of the "jacare"...
that is... to the people of the little-wooden-boards...

— — —

this little-wooden-board...
was a product made with some amount of work...

first... we had to go to a little store in copacabana...
to buy the little-wooden-board which was only available...
in that specific store...

second... we had to cut the tail of the board...
in order to shorten its length...
if the original-board had... let's say... about six palms in length...
then... after the cut... it would have about five palms in length...

with the leftover...
that is... with the remainder of the wood that had been cut...
we saved it... to make the fin...

next... it was the time for the painting...
new drawings were painting on the board...
and... in this way... each one of us ended up with his own little-board...
super-well-made... painted by hand...
with its length reduced...
and... the most charming of all...
with a fin...
which was constructed and installed by ourselves...

everything hand-made... by ourselves...
on a very-small concrete space...
which was still available...
between cid's building... and the side-walk...
at prudente-de-moraes street...

we spent a whole afternoon...
manufacturing two new boards...
mine...
(since I had already been introduced to the group by peredia...)
... and also mario-tro-lon-lon's board...

cid...
ze-carlos...
and joao...
had already their boards...
they were only helping us to build ours...
since they were the ones that knew the technique of sawing-the-tail...
... of the construction of the fin...

and... of the final-art of the painting...

— — —

and I... over there... working with them... on the board...
had no idea of how good it was to my life...
the fact that I... accidentally... find myself... completely well-ac-
companied...
to the group of the “jacare”...

as time went on... each one of us followed different directions in
life...
but cid... and ze-carlos...
kept being my friends during a long time...

shifting the story a little bit to the future...
to the time that I had already the long surfboard made of
fiberglass...
I should anticipate that...
cid... ze-carlos... and... I...
were (already in this future-time...)
everyday... (during vacation...)
all of us three... always together...
in the continuous mission of...
having to carry that extremely heavy surfboard...
three meters long...

(but these are facts belonging to the future...)
at this moment... we were still on that little concrete-side-walk...
sandwiched between cid’s house... and the side-walk...
building the little-wooden-board...

— — —

nowadays...
as I write these lines...
I realized that...
the fact that I was able to be introduced...
 into the group of cid and ze-carlos...
... was thanks to peredia...

if... on one hand... I wasn't feeling too much comfortable...
knowing someone so different from me...
capable of amusing himself with the prostitutes of downtown...
(in company of our friend rocha-pinto...)
on the other hand... nowadays... as I recall...
as I retrieve... from the very deep-regions of memory...
that it was thanks to peredia...
that I was able to get into the group of cid and ze-carlos...

this demonstrates why... sometimes...
the "colegio militar" wasn't something (totally) 100% bad...
if... the school had its flaws... fortunately...
it also offered some advantages...
one of them... was the fact of being able to know all kinds of
people...
as peredia introduced me to the group...
I was able to develop friendship with a group of kids in
ipanema...
who were more free... more used to live in the streets...
and... consequently... more prepared to deal with the difficulties...
of the world...

in contrast to ronaldo and vitorino...
the group of cid and ze-carlos used to live...
in a kind of world where most of population was living...
with its stories of dramas...
where the financial struggles were considerable...

after the famous vacations with vitorino's group-of-friends in
teresopolis...
vitorino and I... seldom were seeing each other...

this was because he was attending his school...
a refined one... a private one...
which wasn't coincident with my trajectory at "colegio militar"...

my new group-of-friends was rocha-pinto and peredia...
inside de bus...
but... right after peredia had introduced me to the group of the

“jacare”...
he just disappeared...
(he traveled... or something like that... he went away...)

it remained only... rocha-pinto...
and the group-of-the-beach based on cid and ze-carlos...

but rocha-pinto... was rarely at the beach...
what he really liked was to stay with his group at “lagoa”...
talking about women and similar issues...

— — —

in the meantime...
the sea could turn itself pretty rough...
especially after the southwest wind begins to blow...

a wind that used to blow from leblon to arpoador...
a strong wind...
which produced those little-wind-waves throughout the whole
ocean...
looking like little “sheeps”...

cid and I... looking at the sea...
cid used to say...
“usually when the southwest wind blows...
it rains next day...”

that was trully precise...
the next day... a huge storm shows up...

and with the storm... the big swell shows up too...
and when the big-swell decided to come...
it surely comes with huge waves...

nobody dared to go out...
not even the most experienced ones...

on the days of the swell...
usually under a cloudy weather...

the sandy part of the beach seemed like a desert...

but even so...

moved by curiosity...

enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts of surfing...

used to walk all the way to arpodor...

in order to see the furious ocean...

to exhibit... with all its exuberance...

its immense power...

the giant waves slamming against the "pontao"...

literally "sweeping" the "pontao"...

the crowd...

astonished... used to see...

such beauty...

such manifestation of nature...

it was the day of the swell...

on the day after...

already under the east wind...

the sea calmed down just a tiny little bit...

now... without the southwest wind to disturb...

the sea had no wind at all...

near the horizon... the ocean was flat... like a mirror...

but... near the beach... the waves were just perfect...

waves... three to four meters high...

coming with perfection from the "pontao"...

generating that super "wall" to the left...

it was simply...

... the greatest spectacle on earth...

— — —

see you soon my sons...

in the meantime we keep exchanging emails about other issues...

about your daily life...

see you soon...
see you next time...
a super-super hug...
very tight...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 15

... philosophising part fifteen...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

so far... I've been trying to follow a chronological order...
in the narrative which tells the history of my life...

but I'm not sure if it is necessary to follow a order...
strictly chronological...

instead of telling everything that happened when I was 11 years-
old...
then... at age 12...
then at 13... etc... etc...

maybe... it could be more interesting...
to try to do some little jumps...
which didn't have to follow...
necessarily...
the chronological order of the facts...

we could suddenly adopt a narrative...
where from age 12...
we could jump to 18...
from there... to 24...
then... back to 16...

in this way... we would free ourselves...
from the obligation of having to follow... strictly...
a rigid scheme for narrating the events...

we wouldn't have to follow the same order in which such events...
had happened in the real life...

the advantage of this "liberation" from the order...
is that...
if... by chance... in the real life...
a sequence of three years...
was such that... its phase was kind of... monotonous...
then... naturally...
the narrative would become also... monotonous...

and... varying on time...
this would make the narrative more varied...
and therefore... less monotonous...

— — —

but... regarding certain "jumps" in time...
we shouldn't worry about certain interesting facts...
that may have been omitted...
because... if... while narrating a story happened at age 24...
we feel the necessity of going back to 16...
we can... easily... make a movement like an accordion...
we can swing back and forth...
we can move forward in time...
and then come back...

in this manner... we free ourselves from the straitjacket...
of a linear narrative...
... of a chronological narrative...

— — —

so... shall we inaugurate our new liberty...?
all ready... let's go...

(this time... the jump is going to be a small one...
I'm going to do a little-tiny-jump...
from 12 to 14 years old...)

so... let's go...
fourteen years old...

at this age...
good-bye ipanema...
we had already moved from ipanema to jardim-botanico...
near parque-lage...
between parque-lage and humaita...
at the foot of the mountain which leads to the christ-statue...
at corcovado-hill...

it was like we were living right beneath christ's right arm...
on a little street called "j. carlos"...
... we used to say: "I live on "jota-carlos" street..."

jota-carlos was a designer... cartoonist... journalist...
from the decade of 1940... or 50 or 60...
something like that... (I'm not sure...)
and... since he used to sign his cartoons...
published in the newspapers...
abbreviating his first name...
the street... to honor him...
adopted the name "j. carlos"...
in order to be in accordance with his known signature...

but... all this "bla-bla-bla" about jota-carlos...
has no importance at all...
I mentioned... in details... the origin of the name of the street...
because... whenever... (nowadays)...
my mother... my sisters... and tuípe...
are recalling facts from that time...
we mention them as the days at jota-carlos...
which happened... in my case...
during the time from ages 14 to 22...

— — —

fourteen years old...
recently arrived at jota-carlos street...

my mother... super-happy...
showing the enormous house that she had just bought...

she and my father... sold the ipanema's apartment...
and... bought this two-story-house...
but if we include the rooftop deck...
and a little tiny room that tuipe had adopted as his room...
... if we consider this third floor...
then the house could be classified as a three-story one...

and... since the first floor was located...
about two meters above the street-level...
(... the garage was also at that street-level...)
and... since the garage was functioning as a sort of mini-studio...
the house... according to this new "approach"...
could be considered as a four-story-house...

but... obviously... both the garage and the top levels...
were not very important ones...
(we couldn't compare them to the two main-levels...)

this was the house at "jota-carlos" street...

— — —

my mother... very proud... full of happiness...
as she showed the new house to a couple-friends of hers...
she was telling them...
what another couple-friends had commented :
"... lea... did you think twice before you closed the deal...?
... how marvelous... what a spectacle this house is..."...

indeed... one thing we couldn't deny :
one thing the house had to offer :
much comfort...
it was spacious...
it was big...
it had many rooms...
to the point that each one of us had a room...
and... still another mini-room for my grandmother...

zenaide grandma...
my mother's mother...

my grandmother... used to spend the day in her little-room...
watching television...

on the days of jota-carlos street...
I had already... (fortunately...)
freed myself from that torturing school...
... the "colegio militar"...

my parents had the common-sense of taking me out of there...
and to enroll me at andrews...
a school of the high society of rio...
where... by coincidence...
imagine who...?

exactly... (you guessed it)...
where... by coincidence... vitorino was studying at...

— — —

I got out of that rude and gross school...
where nothing was fine... nothing was delicate...
and... suddenly...
I found myself in a school of bourgeois...
where the cream of the society of rio used to attend...

and... this contrast... at the beginning...
made me feel a little bit dazed...

but... that's all right...
long live andrews...
down with colegio-militar...

but... I don't want to be ungrateful either...
the colegio-militar brought me... good things too...
the educational level was good...
I learned a mathematics of high quality...

— — —
moreover... (as it was observed in a previous email...)
the colegio-militar gave me the opportunity to know...
various kinds of people...
people with good-manners...
and people with other types of education...
which were far from being too refined...

and... this is good...
I think that... in order for us to be able to survive in this world...
it's good to have passed through the opportunity...
of knowing the diverse "spectrum"...
of the various kinds of people that exist in this world...

with the experience... with the passing of the years...
and... with the opportunity to have coexisted...
with various kinds of people...
this should help us in our perception of who is who...

this helps us to be able to identify the rogue...
... to identify the person who is not-so-well-intentioned...
since the roguery wouldn't be something so new for us...
since... we would have passed already through the opportunity...
 of seeing them closely...
 of coexisting with them...
 of knowing how they think...
 ... how they act...

and... finally... to be able to compare their world-view with ours...
and... to be able to decide...
what is the best direction for us to go...

— — —
but this doesn't mean that...
the fact of having coexisted with the roguery...
is... by itself... something good...

it is also necessary... to have coexisted with refined people...

with people with good-manners...

it is necessary to have had contact with all the levels...
because... otherwise... we find ourselves with no options...
... with no choices...

in this matter... I consider myself lucky...
I knew many kinds of people...
the good ones... and the bad ones...

vitorino... was smart...
he knew that... for that matter...
the education my parents were trying to give me... was really
good...

since childhood... my parents let me play in the streets...
they knew the streets had lots of things to teach me...
(in a similar way I did with respect to you...
when I let you play at vila-street...
... in the group of junino... grissa... diogenes...)

vitorino was smart...
he knew that... for that matter...
my life-style was... perhaps... healthier than the one he used to
have:
I was used to live in the streets...
... or... to face the big swells at arpoador...
with my friends... "urchins"...

later on...
when I was already living at jota-carlos street...
when I had already... (fortunately)... dropped out
"colegio militar"...
and started to study at andrews...
I continued to cruise along with the group of rocha-pinto's
friends...
... at lagoa...

now... living at jota-carlos street...
while my group-of-friends were living at lagoa...

I couldn't visit them on foot... anymore...
I had to take the bus...

but... even having to take the bus...
it was worthwhile to go there...
there... I continued feeling comfortably at home...
without having to "fit" myself into the "priggishness"...
imposed by the new style...
of my new bourgeois-school...
the andrews...

in short :
my life was... basically...
an eternal struggle for adaptation...

adaptation to the "scare" of having entered...
into a super-neurotic school of the kind colegio-militar....
adaptation to the new bourgeois-school... the andrews...
filled with its new priggishness...
... its new little-social-rules...
... its etiquettes dictated by the cream of the society of rio...

but... this type of "scare"...
... this time...
didn't "scared" me that much...

I had already passed through a similar experience...
at age 11 during the vacations in teresopolis...
with vitorino's group of friends...

this time...
while I began to attend andrews...
right in the middle of the academic-year...
as a new student...
this time...
I didn't feel so bad as usual...

this time...
I had already learned the basic lessons...
of the etiquette-rules...

during the period of teresopolis...

this time...

things were more under control...

but... still...

the tension... (perfectly understandable)...

resulting from the sensation of being a new-student...

in an new-environment...

completely different from colegio-militar...

was intense...

but... as I had observed before...

the shock this time... was more tranquil...

... fairly smooth...

I adapted myself more quickly...

— — —

see you soon...

I will wait for emails from you...

telling me details of how things are doing there...

see you soon...

a super-super hug...

on this first day of the year...

a big hug...

your father...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 16

... philosophising part sixteen...

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

at colegio andrews...
struggling... (psychologically)... with myself...
to get adapted to this environment... (let's say...)"bourgeois"...
(so different from colegio-militar ...)
I was... slowly... being able to get the "hints"...
as I was observing what would be the new-social-values...
linked to this new environment where I was...

but... very often... I was still feeling uncomfortable...
in countless situations...
since the contrast... (the difference)... between these two schools...
were... (let's say)...
almost infinite...

this uneasiness of mine...
manifested itself... on the day...
that I received... suddenly... a phone-call...
from two girls... from the school...

I was relaxed... at home...
when the telephone rang...

it was bebel...
she just wanted to chat a little-bit...
... just wanted to talk about daily things...

maybe... to see... what I was up to...
you know what I mean...?
these things typical of a girl of 14 years old...
calling a friend from the same school...

that was all... (nothing to be wondered about...)

and I... completely unused to a situation like that...
completely unused to receive a phone-call from a girl...
fully used to live with my "urchins" friends...
from rocha-pinto's group...
talking about women all day long...
(... but never being in contact with any women...)

I... as I received the phone-call from bebel...
... I became... as if... sort of... let's say... paralyzed...

I didn't know what to do...
I didn't know what to say...

it caught me by surprise...

she... trying to start a chat...
relaxed... wanting to know what I was up to...

and I... kind of seeing myself in a situation...
kind of desperate...
without knowing where to start...

suddenly...
feeling that I should say something...
feeling that the "timing" of the dialogue...
was such that it was my turn to speak...

the infinitesimal point of the precise instant...
imposed itself:... "the ball is in your court (luis)"...
"... it is now or never..."
"... the moment is this one... you have to speak... now... go..."

I felt myself as being on the verge of a diving-board...

(a very high one)...

where the circumstances were obligating me to make a decision...

or... perhaps... I couldn't make any decision at all...

the circumstances themselves would "push" me out of the diving-board...

towards the swimming-pool...

in short... I had to say something...

in that precise moment...

— — —

then I said...

" go to hell..."

(... and hung-up...)

— — —

I was perplexed myself with the events...

at that moment... right after hanging up the phone...

I wasn't feeling anything...

I didn't feel regret...

I didn't feel that I had done something wrong...

but also... I didn't feel that I had done something good either...

I didn't feel anything...

I was simply... perplexed...

without knowing exactly what was going on...

five minutes later...

the phone rings...

it was her friend... (I forgot her name...)

(bebel's friend... who was with her...)

I answered the phone...

she said...

“ thank you for your grossness “...
(and hung-up...)

— — —

then... yes...
then... I was... slowly...
becoming “aware” of the foolishness I had just done...

but... in spite of everything...
at that age... whenever we do a blunder...

... at the beginning... we feel kind of bad...
but... a few days later...
the “episode” goes away from our minds...
and everything comes back to a normal mood again...

but... even so...
once in a while...
I asked to myself...
“ what happened...?...
... why did I act like that...?... ”

— — —

nowadays...
maybe... I can risk myself...
towards an the attempt of giving an explanation...
or... at least... try to understand what happened...

maybe... what did happen...
was an excess of fear...

maybe... I was terrified at the possibility of making a mistake...
within the possibility of not having a good “performance”...
in relation to... the act of knowing how to talk...
with a girl on the phone...

and... this fright...
maybe... had taken me to commit this kind of “suicide”...

that is :.. to tell her to go to hell...

...followed by the "hanging-up" of the phone...

— — —

we... at colegio-militar...

used to dream about being in a situation like that...

like for instance... to be able to study in a school...

where girls and boys could be classmates...

and... we also used to dream about...

being able to have a normal life...

...to be able to have a girl-friend... etc...

— — —

so...

the fact that I had succeeded...

in moving to a school of boys-and-girls... like andrews...

this fact by itself... carried already... much expectation...

all the repressed desire (originated at colegio-militar)...

manifested itself... in a very abrupt way... (very sudden)...

into this move... (also sudden...)

from colegio-militar to andrews...

this move from colegio-militar to andrews...

wasn't something that I had intentionally engendered...

it wasn't a result of any action done by myself...

one day...

my parents received a telegram from colegio-militar...

asking them to go there...

and to talk with the captain-psychologist-of-the-school...

they went...

my father... and my mother... went there...

to see what the captain-psychologist had to say...

he explained... that it was the school's regulation...

to expel students whose behavior-grade...
was below 3.0...

my behavior was already... 3.2...

if I got... let's say... two more days of detention...
my behavior-grade would go down to 2.8...
(since each day of detention corresponds to a drop of...
0.2 points on the behavior-grade...)

on these days I used to get detentions one after another...
caused by silly-little-things like... for instance...
not having the haircut done on time... etc...

then the captain told my parents :..
“look... I would advise you to take him out of school...
by “free-and-spontaneous-will”... instead of taking the risk...
of an expulsion... and this would not be good for him...
since it would appear in his records...
as being expelled out of colegio-militar...

— — —

I think that... deep inside... my mother liked it...
she liked to see what was happening...

because she knew that I hated the colegio-militar...

since she is a very practical person...
and... since she knew already that vitorino was attending
andrews...

she didn't waste time...
she went quickly to andrews...
talked to the secretary... (or to the director... I'm not sure...)
and... quickly arranged my transfer...
from colegio-militar to andrews...

— — —

when... back home...
she told me the news...
I became... simply... astonished...

“wow... I can't believe...
... this is too good to be true...

she told me nicely...
without giving me any kind of “lecture”...

on the contrary...
I felt that she was very happy...
to be witnessing such a historical moment in my life...
to be switching from a school so antiquated...
so oppressive...
so repressive...
... to another level-of-school :
... the colegio andrews...
which housed the cream of the society of rio...
sons-and-daughters of diplomats...
sons-and-daughters of magnates...
sons-and-daughters of people from the high-society...
(... but also normal people...
... as anyone else...)

— — —

about one month after the famous phone-call from bebel...
where an invisible-force made me act like that...
in that horrible manner...

my friend charles-sekino asked me on the bus...
“well... what happened...?... ” (referring to the phone-call)...

I told him all the truth :
she called me...
and I told her to go to hell...

then he said...
“... well... I just didn't get it...”

— — —

he spoke without expressing any implicit judgments...
he spoke without any criticism...

he simply commented in a neutral tone :
“ ... well... I just didn't get it...”

— — —

thereafter... based on his comment...
I began to better reflect about the blunder I had done...

— — —

and I... immersed in my usual distracted-mood...
continued my life...
without paying too much attention to the episode...

but... the unconscious... will often be revealing messages...
at moments... we are not always expecting...

— — —

weeks after the famous phone-call...
I propose to vitorino...
to help me organize a super-party...
in the house of jota-carlos...

we invited a rock-band formed by rocha-pinto's friends...
not to play alive...
but to install the super-sound equipment...
with its huge amplifiers and speakers...

we invited... of course...
all the group of vitorino's friends from teresopolis...
the group of rocha-pinto... (from lagoa)...
and... some people from andrews...

among these... I was very attentive... to include...
bebel-and-her-friends...

— — —

when I was chatting with vitorino...
about my concerns in delivering the invitation to bebel...

vitorino said :
“ I’m noticing that you are doing this party...
... for bebel...”

— — —

...(I think she didn’t even go...
... I’m not sure.....)

— — —

life is like that...
phd in blunders...?
that’s me...

but... life is like that...
thanks to the blunders...
we end up becoming each time less...
“ uncivilized ”...

— — —

I stop here...
wishing that you...
keep taking good care of your health...
(... physical... mental... and... spiritual...)

I hope everything is fine there...
I will wait for your letters...
with tenderness...

a big hug...

your father...

...luis antonio...

Chapter 17

... preoccupations and preoccupations.... what for..?..

dear son taue...
dear son peter...

...there are periods in my life...
where my mind is filled of preoccupations...

recently... I don't know why...
I've been too much worried...

a few minutes ago... I was lying down on bed...
supine position... ready to do my daily exercises...

...and... what happened was that... instead of doing the exercises...
I realized that I began to "daydream" immersed in my thoughts...

I recalled the period when I was 11 years old...
attending colegio-militar...

my mind... at that time...
was... also... immersed in preoccupations...

I was always worried about my homework...
which the teachers were always assigning to us...

I couldn't relax... until my homework...
was completely well-done...
organized inside my "backpack"...
(which at that time... wasn't a backpack...
...it was a kind of briefcase... made of a brown-leather...)

— — —
there was a teacher of portuguese...
that used to require us to bring to class...
every thursdays... an “aurelio” dictionary...
(which probably weighted a ton... (at least...)...)...

to make things worse... this teacher...
rarely asked us to use such dictionary...

and we... had to carry that weight... for nothing...

— — —
on a certain day... at the bus-stop...
a classmate of mine...
who... wisely... realized the incoherence of such requirement...
began to ignore the “orders” from this teacher...
so he decided to bring with him...
just a little-tiny-mini-briefcase with one pencil and a notebook...

so... at this bus-stop... at the end of classes...
this friend of mine...
as he saw me with that huge briefcase...
full of books... dictionaries... gym-class-clothes... etc...
he said to me :

“ wow... freire... (there... at colegio-militar...
...they used to call me “freire”...) ”

“ wow... freire... what a big “briefcase”...
... I’m surprised at you... (freire)... a fellow so advanced...
... and at the same time... carrying such a huge
“briefcase”...?... ”

— — —
nowadays...
I can understand the criticism (well-intentioned)... from him...

basically... he was trying to tell me...
that I was taking the "regulations" too seriously...

nowadays...
thinking... lying down on bed... before the work-outs...
I can see that...
if on one hand... it is good that the guy is very diligent...
 worried about doing all his homework...
 ... about not forgetting to take...
 the dictionary-of-one-thousand-tons to school...
 (just because the teacher said so...)...

... on the other hand...
it would be important... also... to try to be...
conscious that...
 sometimes... none of this is very important...
 ... that life is constantly challenging us...
and that we are... usually... trying to handle such challenges...
the best way we can...

but this is not always... possible...

we are humans...
and... therefore... limited...

fortunately... we are not any kind of super-man...

so... maybe...
my classmate from the bus-stop... was right...

as he said :
" wow... freire...
 ... I'm surprise at you... (who are a smart guy...)...
 ... carrying such a huge briefcase...?... "

yes...
I think that... in this case...
my friend was right...

why take certain “regulations” so seriously...?

sometimes it's not worth it...

— — —

but... on the other hand...

life is not a “mathematical-equation”...

we have to be careful with any kind of thought...

that has the tendency of being always... trying to...
“generalize”...

it would be good if we are careful with “generalizations”...

sometimes... yes... the guy who is excessively diligent...

he is the one who can reach some basic “success”...

oftentimes... he is a “winner”...

the diligent guy...

the straight “A” guy...

has many chances to be a “winner” in this life...

— — —

me... for instance...

I am the typical example of the... diligent-guy...

... the straight “A” guy...

but... sometimes I suffer for being like that...

sometimes I ask myself...

if it's worthwhile... to be always so diligent...

... so straight “A” type-of-person...

and then... suddenly be caught by... for instance...

a cancer... and die...

— — —

my aunt celina...
professor-of-history...
with phd... postdoctoral degree in france...
spending all her life studying...

I used to visit her at her apartment in leblon...
there was a room... with bookshelves...
from the floor all the way up to the ceiling...
on the four walls...

I... who also love books...
used to be... simply... astonished...

as I was browsing her books...
she would be talking very fast... as usual...
explaining their summaries to me...

— — —

about two years ago...
she had a stroke...

her health has been very weak during all this time...
being fed only liquids...
... she lost the capability to articulate the words...

— — —

at those moments... I ask myself...

what do we accomplish after so much study...?

— — —

actually... this email...
is about reflections... from me... to myself...

I wrote them to you...
because I like to share my thoughts with you...

fortunately... the three of us... always had much conversation...
...much dialogue... among us...

but... such reflections are important...
because they make us think...
that everything in life... is relative...

there are situations where being the straight "A" student...
it's a great politic-posture...
a great deal...

especially if the course-of-study is a good one...
and... if it's going to be useful...
either in a near future... or a distant one...

— — —

... on the other hand...
there are some situations... where it would be good to be...
... "attentive" ... "watchful"...
in order to be able to realize to what extent it is worthwhile...
to take certain "regulations"... so seriously...
(see the example of the "dictionary-of-one-thousand-tons...)...

— — —

In short...

I would like to emphasize that... obviously... I am always...
hoping that you seek to be always within-the-law...
this is very important...
since it leaves us with a clean conscience...
that we are not doing anything wrong...

but... it is also... always good to be able to realize...
that there are certain "regulations"...
which are... kind of... "absurd"...
(see again my story related to the "super-heavy-briefcase"...)

in this story...

I let myself have the “luxury”...
of being alienated with respect to reality...

... of letting me... simply...
get involved by a “regulation”...
without enough questioning...

... without even making a little effort in realizing...
that this teacher...
rarely asked us to use such dictionary in class...

I... simply...
used to adopt... (in relation to myself)...
a posture of total conformation... to the established rules...

for me...
this was comfortable...
in the sense of...
as I adopted such a conformist-aptitude...
my mind was always in peace with itself...
from the standpoint of being sure...
that I wasn’t doing anything wrong...

but... I wasn’t realizing that...
such conformist-aptitude...
could cause some back-problems in the future...

(fortunately... it is doing fine... during these last years...
... thanks to the preventive-maintenance...
I’ve being doing... almost daily... through the workouts...)

(... whenever my “musings”... don’t steal the time...
that were supposed to be dedicated...
to my little exercises...) ...

— — —

in short...

it is good to be a diligent guy...

... as long as we have a political-conscience of the context...
in which such "regulation" belongs to...

(in this particular story we were just talking about...
my classmate-of-the-bus-stop... had an...
"insight"... a perception... healthier than mine :
he realized that such "rule" imposed by the teacher...
was a "joke"...
that his comfort... would be much more worthwhile...
than having to carry such a huge weight... unnecessarily...)

— — —

there was... certainly... a kind of "risk" he faced...
(he could have been "punished"... or something like that...)

but... as he observed the personality of the teacher...
he... probably... concluded...
(and he guessed right)... that... probably...
the risk of a "punishment" would be... minimum...

— — —

actually... all this blah-blah-blah...
serves to illustrate... a world-view :

the world is full of rules...

if we can follow them... that's just great...

however... it is good to be able to distinguish...
what is important...
from what is "not-so-important-as-we-thought-it-was"...

— — —

for example...
taking care of our health...

this is indeed... a very important... rule...

because we are not going to be trying to satisfy...
an absurd-rule...
imposed by some little-crazy-teacher...

because the rules linked to “taking-care-of-our-own-health”...
are rules that humanity itself has been observing...
for thousands of years...

not to drink...
not to smoke...
eat a balanced meal... with...
carbohydrates... (rice... pasta... potatoes... etc...)
vegetables... (roots... green-leaves... beets... etc...)
and protein... (meat...)

exercise... if possible... daily... (in moderation)...

— — —

in short :

the “rules”... related to my health-maintenance... are clear...

but the “rules” to satisfy some requirement coming from...
some crazy-teacher...
... are not always... very clear...

— — —

I stop here...
(otherwise... the “crazy-teacher”...
... is going to “castigate” you...
... because you didn’t have time to do your “homework”...
... (“homework” from school... or... from work...)...)...

a huge-super-big hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

Chapter 18

... my grandmother zenaide...

dear son taue...

dear son peter...

my grandmother zenaide... (my mother's mother)...

I think you... probably don't remember too much about her...

because when she passed away...

you... (peter)... was only a newborn baby...

and you... (taue) was about three-years-old...

since the age-difference between you two...

is two-and-a-half years...

that means that if at this time... you (peter) was...

let's say... 6 month-old...

(that is : half-year-old...) ...

then... consequently... you (taue) would be...

precisely... 3 years-old...

(since... two-and-a-half... plus... half... equals... three...)

but... leaving aside the math...

and... returning to the "main-menu"... (my grandmother...)...

... she was a person...

who I have... fond memories of...

— — —

when I was... about 13 years-old...

and... my family had just moved from ipanema...
to this huge-two-story house...
at jardim-botanico...

I had my room...
clarice had her room...
ana emilia had her room...
tuipe used to sleep in a very-tiny-little room...
all the way up on the third floor...
(where... there was nearly nothing...
 ...only the roof-of-the-house...
 ...and an area where I used to study... on a little table...
 ...which I placed there...
 ...so I could study and "bask-under-the-sun"...
simultaneously...

...besides a tiny place...
 where tuipe accommodated himself there... just to sleep...)

(that's why I had said before...
 ...that the house was... a two-story house...
 ...but if we consider the two extra-levels...
 ...the rooftop deck...
 ...and the garage...
 ...in this case... the house could be considered...
 ...as being something like... a four-level one...)...

but none of this has any importance at all...

my mother... loved the fact that she found such house...
when... still living in ipanema...
my parents decided to move... to a quieter place...
(jardim botanico)...
since my father... couldn't sleep...
with that infernal noise from the buses...
at prudente-de-moraes street...

I... (being only 13 years-old)...
simply moved myself...
together with the family...

the family moves itself...
the child age 13... doesn't argue...
he just goes together...
he follows its movement...
without thinking too much...
...about anything...

...he simply... accompanies...

— — —

only after we moved...
I realized that...
I was in a "sticky wicket"...
caused (unintentionally) by the move...

— — —

at this time...
I was surfing intensively...

I was in a phase...
where the surf was... let's say... "the reason of my life"...

my muscles were already developed to a point...
where I could ride the big waves of arpoador...

when the southwest wind showed up...
the posto-cinco point... at copacabana...
used to be... just "perfect"...

— — —

before the move... from ipanema to jardim-botanico...
all that I had to do...
was to grab the surfboard...
cross prudente-de-moraes street... then vieira-souto avenue...
and... that's it... I was already at the beach...

now... after the move...
it was an enormous difficulty... to be able to reach the beach...

I had to wait for the bus...
in order to transport me from jardim-botanico... to ipanema...

I had to leave the surfboard in my friend ronaldo's house...
who allowed me to leave the board in his building's garage...

the surfboard had to be chained with an special padlock...
around the fins...

in short :
I had to pass through a series-of-obstacles...
which didn't exist before...

but the worst of them...
was the dependency on the bus...
in order to reach the beach...

— — —

nowadays...
I realize... as I write these lines...
how... all this "misfortune"... that I used to feel... at that time...
is nothing but a "misfortune" of a pampered boy...

"pampered" in the sense of being used to have everything...
and... simply by the fact of...
"suffering" the experience of moving...
to a place a little bit farther away from the beach...
in a neighborhood... where it was necessary to "take-the-bus"...
to go to the beach...

the fact that this small "loss-of-quality-of-life"...
made me feel...
like the "unhappiest-guy-in-the-world"...

...makes me reflect...
nowadays... how my personality...

in a certain way... hasn't changed too much...

even today...

being 57 years-old...

I... in a certain way...

keep... preserving... such characteristics...

of a pampered-boy...

as I felt... so sensitively...

the contrast between the quality-of-life...

that I had in hawaii...

and the one that I met in our (dear (?))...

brasil...

— — —

so...

if we think... carefully...

we can see that... deep inside...

life is always... bringing us...

...changes...

and... obviously... we feel...

the consequences...

(the good... or the bad ones...)

perhaps... one of the "secrets" of the art-of-good-living...

could be... to try to see the good-aspects...

that this change could offer...

and... consequently...

be able to explore...

... and... develop... these good-aspects...

that we were able to see...

— — —

and... returning to my grandmother zenaide...

she used to live in a little-room...

in that house-which-my-mother-loved...

and... the same one which I suffered... (just a little-bit...)...
with the loss of the sea-of-ipanema...
there... right at the corner...

my little grandma... zenaide...

a very sweet person...
with a very good... heart...

she used to spend hours...
trying to untie... patiently...
the knots in my hair...
which reached my shoulders...

after all... we were living in the era of... the beatles...
rolling stones... jimi hendrix... etc...

I... with my hair on my shoulders...
after the shower...
only my grandma...
with that endless patience...
could untangle them...

as she was unraveling the knots...
she was... at the same time...
talking...

talking...
endless stories...
telling stories...

I... used to listen to her stories...
and... simultaneously...
feel in my hair...
her caressing...
through the comb...

I was feeling happy...
to have a grandmother... like her...
so good...

who wish me... so well...

— — —

when she passed away...
I wasn't living with her anymore...

we were all living...
already in ipanema...

you (taue)...
were three years-old...

you (peter)...
only half-year-old...

I...
studying at impa...
(institute of mathematics pure and applied)...

was in a good phase in my life...
where I was... very satisfied...
professionally...

because I was doing my master's...
earning a salary from the government...
just to study...

and... this... was what I had always wanted...
to be paid by the government... to study...
(which is what I... really... like to do...
... from the professional standpoint...)

— — —

well...

I was... at impa...
focused on my studies...

when...
the librarian... called me...
saying she had a message to tell me :
“ my grandmother... had passed away “...

I went to the funeral...
at the cemetery in botafogo...

a small crowd was there...

friends of my father...
of my mother...

relatives of my mother...
...of my grandmother...

relatives of relatives...
friends of friends...

— — —

when I arrived there...
I didn't have the courage to see her...
in the coffin...

I stayed outside...

as I found my mother...
I hugged her...
and... I fell into tears...

a compulsive cry...
out of control...

I was crying out loud...
I couldn't control myself...

I left the place...
I went home...

when I got home...
I picked-up a little-bench...
I sat leaning on the cradle...
where... you (peter)...
were sleeping...

... an innocent sleep...
without knowing what was going on...

— — —

suddenly...
my parents arrived... to visit me...

they came closer...
and found me leaning
on the cradle...

they stayed a few minutes...
... and... went away...

I liked their visit...

they rarely went there to visit me...

it was good... their visit...

— — —

I say a (temporary) good bye...
with tenderness...

a big hug...
your father...
...luis antonio...

... end of the "package"... from 1 to 18...

dear mother...

that's how it ends this sequence of letters... from 1 to 18...

a lot of things... would still have to be told...

I'm not sure... when... this project will be continued...

I stop here...

wishing you... the best...

and... a good health... with tranquility...

I say a (temporary) good-bye...

with tenderness...

a big hug...

your son...

...luis antonio...

From the same author on Feedbacks

As dezoito cartas (2012)

Há uns dois anos atrás, escrevi uma série de cartas para meus filhos, contando detalhes da história-de-minha-vida anterior ao nascimento deles. Como essas cartas contêm uma série de reflexões sobre diversos assuntos, achei que poderiam, talvez, interessar a outras pessoas. Por isso, resolvi colocá-las em um "e-book"...

Tal decisão, foi difícil de ser tomada, pois é uma decisão de sentir até que ponto o privado deve ser privado, e o público deve ser público, ou seja, até que ponto o privado deve ser exposto ao público.

Isso é uma reflexão delicada. Existe, por um lado, algo bom que é a revelação-de-si-próprio... mas, por outro lado, existe também a possibilidade de interpretações dissonantes com a intenção original. Estamos torcendo, obviamente, pela primeira dessas duas hipóteses.

Agradecidamente...

...luis antonio freire...

Além das dezoito cartas (2012)

Em "As dezoito cartas" conto de uma forma natural e sem maiores preocupações, certos episódios da história da minha vida... Essa tranquilidade era decorrente do fato de eu estar escrevendo apenas para meus filhos... Agora, a situação muda radicalmente, pois, desde o início dos relatos, estou plenamente consciente de que estou escrevendo para um "universo" bem maior do que o do caso anterior... O que deve ter gerado talvez, uma certa tensão, um certo "tempero" que, espero não ter sido aplicado numa dosagem excessiva.



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