

The Following Address Is About Hope

[para Andrés Ajens y Alberto Allard]

I don't suffer this hurt as César Vallejo. I don't suffer dolor as an artista, as hombre, or even simply as a living being. I don't sufro this dolor as a Catholic, as a Muslim, or as an atheist. Today I only sufro. If mi nombre weren't César Vallejo, I'd sufriría the same dolor. If I weren't an artista, I'd still suffer it. If I weren't hombre, or a living being, even, I'd still suffer it. If I weren't a católico, an ateo, or a mahometano, I'd also sufriría lo. Today I sufro from much deeper down. Hoy I just plain sufro.

I hurt now without any explicación. My pain goes so far down that it never had any causa, nor any want of causa. What causa could it have? Where is that thing so exalted that it might *cease* being its causa? Nada is its cause; nada is able to cease causing it. How has this dolor been birthed as if from itself? Mi dolor es from the north wind and the south wind, como those sexless eggs laid by rare birds fertilized by the viento. If a lover had died, my pain would be completamente igual. If they'd cut my throat to the root, mi dolor sería the same. If life—in short—were otherwise, my pain would be igual. Today I suffer from much further up. Today I sufro solamente.

Miro the dolor of the hungry one, and I see that her hunger is so far from my sufrimiento, that I could keep fasting until muerte-death and at least one blade of grass would always spring from mi tumba-tomb. The same with lovers. How much more thrilled is their sangre-blood compared to mine, which has neither productive source nor use value!

Until now, I'd thought that everything en el universo was inevitably either parent or child. But look: Hoy my dolor es neither parent nor child. It lacks a backbone for twilight, no less than it bears plenty breast for dawn, and if they put it in a shuttered room it would not give luz-light; if they put lo in a fluorescent room it would not cast shade. Today yo sufro no matter what happens. Hoy simplemente sufro.

--César Vallejo (translation by Kent Johnson)