

Distances

by Otto Rene Castillo

- 1. The irony**
- 2. The understanding**
- 3. The cowardly nation**
- 4. Local logic**
- 5. The question**
- 6. Light and shadow**
- 7. The lesson of the assassinated**

1.

In 1935 Hitler said
"The Third Reich
will last a thousand years."

What did Hitler say
ten years later
under the ruins of Berlin?

A few years later
Mister Dulles, snoring
like a caterpillar
said "This decade will see the end
of the slavery of communism."

What did Yuri Gagarin
do a few years later,
sending his greetings to men
over the wide oceans
and vast territories of America?

Thomas Mann was right
when he said
"Anti-communism
is the most ridiculous mode
of the twentieth century."
Still

the interests
the profit
continue their fanfare
continue killing
still.

Fifteen years at best.
Fifteen years of misery, I bet on that.
And from his hoarse throat,
like a Greek god well fed,
emerges the National Anthem of Guatemala.
If I hadn't seen it, surely
I'd have said: "A soldier singing."

5.
Recently returned from Europe
one of my nephews asks me
if I know Madrid.

I say no, brusquely,
and continue talking about Paris.

But my story goes pale.
The blood, hitting hard
and sudden in my heart,
the horrible bleeding.

6.
In the days of Ubico the tyrant,
end of '42, as the story goes,
there was a mason in the parish
who dared paint "*Liberty,
Down with th bloody jenral*"
on the city walls.
The mason was caught,
questioned,
—why was he so crazy
as to hate the General
if the General had complete military support
and his power was invincible.

And the mason said: Ubico will fall.
And everyone laughed. This is a crazy man,
they said. The General will rule forever
in Guatemala. Until he dies. Like God,
he is all powerful.
No one will lift a finger against him.
His power is infinite
and the people are cowardly, resigned,
afraid of his granite strength.

But the stubborn mason said: Ubico will fall.
He will not rule forever in Guatemala.
The people will rise against him.

And they shot him, in the morning,

