

## A Última Brasileira Viva - The Last Living Brazilian

### Chapter 1

He who is farsighted is provident. True, yes, but God forbid such an adage. We foresee because we believe it will happen, thus providing us with trivial answers. Therefore, something (supposedly) impossible to happen is what will allow us new quests, in a new, unpredictable, improvident field.

Exactly at six hours and twenty-six minutes and zero seconds, of any given day, in a month that doesn't matter, of a current year that was passing through us, an earthquake stroke Brazil, cracking it from the bottom to the top.

Of magnitude nine points eight, almost ten, a little more than the one in Chile, it had its epicentre in Brasília, its heart, as if Brazil suddenly had a heart attack. From the epicentre, it spread its cracks everywhere, miles and miles, without sparing a single part, because a heart that infarcts do not spare the other organs, and stops pumping them with blood, they gradually die.

Then everything shook, everything trembled, rocked in a way never seen before, at least in this late period, infesting the devastation, destruction of everything natural or built by human abilities, that is, it collapsed, opened the ground, spilled to the ground, suspended as if sprouting from the entrails of the earth, and thus all kinds of tortures were invented when nature resolves itself in its own fury, without measuring its consequences.

Natural process, we were the ones who were not used to it, we said we were blessed, here there were no earthquakes, no tsunamis, no hurricanes, no natural disasters, but we only suffered from one disaster (unnatural) which was the deplorable human corruption.

If we were to look at the map of Brazil from above, or even at those sites that, via satellite, in real-time, present in instants the perspective of what we want to circumscribe, we would see a large hole in the federal district, with the place entirely imploded.

From it, from the hole, thousands of informative trails ran, to all sides, in all directions, heading and ending the coastlines, also heading towards the other extremities, in the South American borders, stopping and ceasing destroying (exactly) the dividing lines with each country, that is, French Guyana, Suriname, going around counterclockwise, following until reaching Uruguay, proving that the problem was entirely ours and that those around us (unharmed) with our destruction had nothing to do with.

Some would say that earthquakes were impossible in our country, justifying that it was located in the middle of a large tectonic plate; others would speak of the existence of small, imperceptible tremors in isolated places. However, nothing would justify what we have narrated.

However, 6:26 p.m. was a different time, it contradicted all Brazilian certainties, or even more, it pulled out of the comfort zone of an entire nation that crossed their hearts that we were stable under the ground that sustained us.

So much so that Mrs. So-and-so lay her carcass pressed together with her washing machine, making it difficult for us to know what was one and who was the other, as they seemed to be fused, fused, as is the human being and his work.

For this woman, there was no way she could leave her work aside, when the earth trembled, she noticed it belatedly, concentrating on the dirty clothes she washed, remembering the customers who were waiting, worried about her son she was losing to the streets, about her husband who got drenched in the bar, about her daughter who didn't want to study, about all the thousands of problems that affected her life, overlapping what was destroying the structures of her house, which was collapsing into rubble.

In her family, two dead people in the wreckage of the bar, mixed and stirred together with the bottles, the broken glass, the chairs, the pool tables, the collapsed bricks, the number of drunks who spent their hours there, the playing cards, the dominoes, everything in a fuzzy that intoxicated the heads of those who looked at the depressing scene of human misery.

The corpse of the father is on the counter and the corpse of the son is in the bathroom. What they did, we thought at ease, was minor, they were dead, so different from the daughter. The young girl resistant to the studies survived and ran around stunned, dirty, muddy, desperate, soaking the streets she chased with her blood, unaware of what was happening, nothing had ever shaken so much in her life as the ground she was walking on, not even when she suffered from nausea that moved her in the pregnancy that was advancing in its eighth month.

Of the progenitor of her child, whose name the girl cried out in sudden despair, little did she know that was dead along with a bunch of other people, all of them trapped (in their cars) under the collapse of an overpass.

She ran, stumbled, fell, got up, and ran even more, with no direction, there were no paths in this hecatomb, she would go anyway, anywhere, until she bumped into a man, a (once) well-dressed gentleman, there torn and ripped.

He was the Cyclan. He noticed the girl but made no attempt to help her. He was concerned about his business, his company, and his possessions. Aware that it was an earthquake, yes, it was possible in Brazil, however, it could only be, he reasoned that his company, a construction company, and real estate developer, was totally destroyed, wrecked, and broken.

He looked at his right arm which, the way it was, could only be broken. Then he remembered that he had a body, fragile, squalid, wounded, bruised, a body that a company could not fix, neither when whole nor when fucked.

He remembered that, just like him, his employees could also be injured. Not that this caused him any grief, he only imagined how much (in expenses) he would have to compensate for the damages to his workers, or to their families.

Little did he know of the catastrophe. Little did he know that his money was no longer worth anything. Paper is an organic substance, yes, and in the latest emergencies, it can even be used as food. But not dirty paper money carries ferocious chemicals to the human organism and is at most useful to wipe one's ass.

And let's not try to create logical relationships between those spared and those not spared in this disaster, maybe they exist, and perhaps they have their reasons, but for the time being, they escape our intelligence.

In truth, the girl and the businessman were mixed up with many other people who, like the living dead, were running in despair, crawling, sneaking around, and wandering as they could, because they were unaware of whatever happened to them.

Beltrano, amid these desperate people, was also running. He saw the girl, he saw the businessman, he saw the crowd, he saw the doom of his own destiny. He was in charge of a shelter for abandoned children.

A religious man who looked up to the heavens trying to understand what God (this time) wanted with all that.

He had heard (too much) about the end of the world, about the final judgment, about the day when they would separate the wheat from the chaff, however, he did not expect it to be in his time, with him, who had a lot to worry about.

As he glanced back, he saw that his religious temple had become a press for human flesh, the roof had collapsed crushing all those inside who were steadfastly begging to god, desperately, god knows what, human desires are so inexplicable.

Beltrano had not left the religious ceremony earlier because of an appointment with the children, whom he hardly knew if they were alive or dead. He ran to save his own skin.

Our self-love is just like that, selfish.

In the statistics of this earthquake, they were not the only ones who lost someone or some, or who survived alone, from an entire family, a company or a charity.

When they had a greater perspective of the situation, of what had happened, and found out that all those they loved, or those who gave them burdens, or bonuses, or those who, in a way, they were responsible for, had passed away, they hated their own luck, they questioned why they had survived.

This book would become several others if we were to tell all the scenes of mortification that took place, at the same time, during the earthquake. However, since we are not one of those who, in their lack of literary depth, aesthetic profusion, or poetic force, are writers without the criteria to be so, since they insist more on the special effects of the work, on the quality of the images than on the stories, we will limit ourselves to ensuring that we take as a basis the case of Mrs. Fulana and her family, of Mr. Ciclano and his company, of Mr. Beltran and his church, to imagine the infinite variables of what happened to those in the shattered federative republic of Brazil during the cataclysmic devastation.

However, even with the most gruesome imaginations, we will understand nothing of earthquakes, much less of the fancies of Mother Nature herself when in her murderous version.

We only understand that, in the same way, that these very few to whom we turned our attention in their stories, when we are caught by surprise in front of any unexpected situation, most of the time, we don't know how to act.

This is not exclusive to us, Brazilians. We are not the only victims of the world's bad weather.

On the twenty-second day of May in the year thousand nine hundred and sixty, in the city of Valdivia, in the country of Chile, the biggest earthquake in history (until this Brazilian of ours appeared) measured nine and a half points on the Richter scale.

A devastating force that, from one hour to the next, directly affected everything that was imposed under its limits.

Logically, the human being, and all the other living beings that depended on the environment, as fragile as their finitude and (except for the development of their own races) limited to a lifetime of a few years compared to geological eras, suffered quickly with what, instantaneously, came to pass.

So thousands of human beings left their bags and their gourds, being satisfied simply and purely to save their own lives and, when appropriate, the lives of others, migrating to unaffected regions, safe in the attempt to start over elsewhere.

This was not our case, because no part of our country was left unharmed, the destruction was proportionally well distributed, and equal, affecting all types of social classes.

We also know, in the Chilean episode, that people remained inert in the place of devastation, stuck to the rubble, dusty, wounded, torn, amputated, dead, or crying under their lifeless loved ones.

They hoped for help, that, as we know, would never come. Several specialists, separated by time and space from the disastrous Chilean incident, started to conclude which spirits had plagued those surviving souls, risking to theorize.

They affirmed that, in the face of despair, los hermanos supposed that the most primordial good would be to save their own existence, as a survival instinct.

Nothing different from us, Brazilians, when faced with situations in which we come close to saving our own skin. However, they affirmed that that earthquake brought them an opportunity to reflect on their own existence, recovering that everything that is solid crumbles in impermanent substance and that whatever is subject to time is destined to fade, to disappear, and that which comes from the substance is at the mercy of the fury of an earthquake. How fragile is human existence, and we pass (only) to the knowledge of this inevitable reality when, for example, an earthquake rocks the globe, hitting a country and, in the end, boasting millions, in a frightful sum of dead and wounded? This was the scene that took place (also) in Brazil, a consequence of what shook under the soles of our shoes. What was over was impossible to retake.

In truth, to retake it is to take something again. However, we can't take back time, it is something that escapes us, second after second, this very relative time, invented by us, sustained by our belief that it exists and that we are submitted to it. Time is inexorable when it comes to escape us.

Although we strive to resume it, what makes a book sustain the driving force of the imagination, both of the writer and the reader, is the attempt to imprison time on paper pages, through words.

Yet we move forward, we move backward, and yet we limit ourselves only to reminiscences, both real and imaginative.

Let us remember not those six hours and twenty-six minutes and zero seconds that, up to now, we have left watertight, but one second behind, that is, six hours and twenty-five minutes and fifty-nine seconds.

A very important time if we imagine it to be one second before the earthquake that destroyed our country. It makes all the difference. Another facet of time, which also escapes us, since it redundantly passes all the time, is the fact that it is just something until something relevant happens, tainting the instant with its importance.

For example, at six hours and twenty-six minutes, on any given day, in a month that makes no difference, in a year, an earthquake struck Brazil, cracking it open.

But the virtue of something important that happened is what makes these six hours and twenty-five minutes and fifty-nine seconds more important than the instant of six hours and twenty-six minutes and zero seconds. It preceded the earthquake that nobody expected, because waiting for an earthquake is, to say the least, something for the paranoid, for people with persecutory ideas, for people who firmly believe in everything that is said about the supposed apocalypses that will gradually, stealthily, and rightly come to devastate us.

Now, what makes the six hours and twenty-six minutes and one second different from everything that has happened before is what proves the ability of time to escape us, in any and every kind of control that we object against it.

It is from this instant that the earthquake-ravaged, destroyed, devastated, struck down, vexed, razed, ruined, demolished, overthrew, afflicted, annihilated, swept away, instantaneously, and, suddenly, calmed down.

From now on, and to hell with the hour, the minutes, or the seconds, in this fateful event, the counting of time has become unimportant.

What was the point of knowing what time it was, if the six twenty-six, lasted for fuck all? However, these certainties and uncertainties would be discussed in the future, what was being experienced after the catastrophe was a hellish silence, as devastating as the destruction itself.

An imperious silence, everywhere one could hear it, in deafness that reaffirmed the doubt of whether we were alive or dead. A silence only interrupted by an imperious storm, when it seemed impossible to tell if it was day or night because the sky was darkened, the clouds closed in on themselves, and collided wildly, from where their powerful rays fell, exploded, and broke through the agitated air, blowing hither, thither, and yon.

Some said that (perhaps) god, creator, superior to the human race, had been merciless to the point of making the earth shake violently, and then, to finish off, sent rain to flood the holes that he had created.

Others answered that this god, or these, or she, or those, did what he wanted and what he wished, after all, they understood little of the beyond designs, of the superhuman bits of intelligence, of the esoteric mysteries, of what escaped comprehension.

However, in the face of countless days and days of flooding from the heavens, destruction added by hurricanes and tornadoes, dragging everything that came their way, they forgot to mention that, if there is any kind of creator, it can only be if it is the creator of lives and deaths.

From galaxies to other existences (that don't even go beyond our very limited understanding), even the infinite and tiny forms of lives that we don't understand (simply because we limit ourselves to our own), being god a creator, the rupture of tectonic plates that devastates an entire country, the storm that floods devastatingly, or even the wind that drags for endless kilometers, are attributed to him.

The globe, with its approximately four and a half billion years of age, has taken millions of shapes, regardless of whether this or that race has become extinct or endemic.

How much it hasn't rained in the history of this little planet, managing a whole cabal of chemical compounds that make up everything all around.

Build and destroy, destroy and build, the praxis of nature itself, the triviality of life itself. Perishable, our only certainty is that if there is life, there is death.

So, regardless of if they asked, begged, prostrated themselves, or exposed all their vile and puerile desires, even those they believed to be most loaded with reason, regardless, it made no difference whatsoever what had to happen.

It rained, it was windy, and it shook. Not that it was a soothing rain that put out the various arsonists, nefarious legacies of the seismic tremor, but a fucking torrential flood that did in less than ten what it did there in forty, not to mention (here) with hailstones the size of soccer balls, the weight of lead, so that, if there were any Noah with a little bow, it would end up as dust.

And to further prove the human incapacity and smallness in the face of such natural events, and why not banal, when the calmness of the skies came, behold, the sea, all along the Brazilian coast, wanted to show its gracefulness, standing static like a swimming pool, even in those turbulent places like Lage de Jaguá, Ilha dos Lobos, Cacimba do Padre, or Praia do Diabo.

Who knows how long it remained like that, stunned, choking, however, it is known that, suddenly, it was in the mood to retreat as never before, leaving corals and everything else from its bowels on display, fishes, mollusks, and all its fauna and flora drowning out of the water, as if it were contracting in the colic of its own belly, to later regurgitate its excrement onto the land.

It gushed fiercely, advanced in an avalanche that swept everything that stood in its way, not giving a fuck if it put an end to what was left of villages, forests, metropolises, of farms, of anything, mixing it all in a soup of water and salt and the bitter spice of debauchery.

Then, like all good tsunamis, it returned to where it came from, escaping into the ocean, closing its insane eyes, sleeping the sound sleep of those who have worked hard to destroy everything that guaranteed to be resistant to any storm, whatever it might be.

The sea was once again the sea, however, the continent, or rather, the continent that our country covered, was never again what it was. The landscape that could be seen, if anyone could see it, was like any other war scene, Nazi concentration camp, the remains of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or Chornobyl.

Amidst the debris and more debris, that defined nothing of what they (once) were, if buildings or trees, if rocks or asphalt, if animals or people, all piled up in amorphous, rotten, smelly masses, together they formed gigantic mountains of extermination.

But the birds, who belong nowhere but to their own world, who do not possess the borders imagined by humans, were able to have their meals.

In the time since these unusual subsequent disasters, dormant for a future, with days in a row of the scorching sun, the first sprouts of plants appeared. Coming out of the holes and cracks, they settled under the rubble and climbed on what was still (hardly) standing.

After all, plants need water, sun, openings, soil stirred up, fertilized with decomposition, and where they can sneak around. What we can call the rest of civilization also appeared, since the human being is something that survives anything, adapting to the most inhospitable ways of living.

Here, the Brazilian history, after the natural disaster, when, in face of the fact, its population (completely) went crazy.

Incredibly, the Brazilians did survive and, of those that remained, one can say that they truly went mad.

They took a long time to come out of the tiny holes in which they hid, or the pile of carrion and rubble that buried them.



First, by the (justified) doubt of whether they were really alive, and then by the, secondly, the doubt of knowing if nature really wouldn't do any more damage.

After these two uncertainties, they found daylight and the confusion of the new landscape, not only in appearance but imagining that everything that we have always held as absolute truth in our lives suddenly disappeared.

There were no more family ties (in the face of so many dead and disa homes (in the face of destruction), there were no more places to work, the where to work, professions disappeared, money was no longer worth a damn, after all, nothing could be bought anymore, daily routines no longer existed, the daily routines, commitment, just an emptiness.

Nothing to turn to, churches collapsed, no institution standing, no direction to follow, no reference, a memory erased from everything, from things and people.

There was an idea, implode Brazil. Okay, but what now? What will become of Brazilians without their country?

Posthumous questions, unimportant, that could come from any writer, one of those trivial ones, trying to write a macabre little novel, a short story, a little macabre novel, a horror tale, one of these best-sellers that the publishers make you write, so that you can sell it, and in a few years no one will remember it a few years from now no one will remember.

In the meantime, what did you know about Jane, John, Peter, or any of the sons of a whore? Nothing! Not if they were alive, nor if they were dead. Whatever, because it didn't even matter (anymore) the names, the last names, the titles, the positions, the attributes of notoriety, or any positions in the (depressing) Brazilian social status. The people who survived had to start all over again, or more, we don't even know if starting is the ideal word, many had continued to live that little bit of life flooded with rottenness, of the struggle for the day to drink or eat anything, to not succumb to the deadly lightness of the diseases that jumped maniacally against their meager health.

Many times, for the survival of some, the suffering of others is necessary, an artifice of nature itself, when, for example a simple sting of a black-winged stilt to feed itself; it hurts in the skin, and so does the extermination of its existence, in a quick and reflexive slap.

The state of calamity spread, aggravated by the war of living, when fighting over leftover "food" with wild animals made the chance to become the beast's own food, or to flee, wounded, to die from the plagues.

The Brazilian became just one more in the wheel of a food chain that had only two things in mind: survival and reproduction of the species.

However, we know as far as the evolution of the species is concerned that it doesn't end there, otherwise we would still be in the caves. As the most harrowing path in the history of mankind has always been solitude, and isolation, once again, in its ascension the Brazilian human being, perhaps the only sign left from the past, decided to gather in small groups, possible future societies, communities, or whatever name one would like to give them.

It was not from such a time that we fought for space against the environment itself. In truth, for a long time, we took it in its space, however, much more taken by it, we were left to survive and reproduce, using the animality that never left us and, sometimes, only sublimated, when awakened, awakened the human animal.

Many Brazilian human beings, without their laws, their rules, without someone to watch over them, without their paradigms, with only their internal resources to possibly guide them, literally lay down and rolled with what was put in front of them.

Mainly the males, not being able to see the females on the loose, would attack them and ravish them on whatever they had between their legs, regardless of their ages, as if they were objects of their enjoyment, and after using them, they would abandon their crying carcasses, which didn't even consider themselves human anymore, just depositories of sperm and humiliation.

Not only abuses and violence colored the new Brazilian landscape, of course looting what other people gathered was also part of it, like enslaving, murdering, torturing, threatening, taking advantage of the Brazilians did it to take advantage of the little that was being gathered of resources, to usurp the fearful, to rule them like tyrannical leaders, to impose false ideas to alienate, and all the other ways to grind down even more what was already ground down.

In the face of this, groups of people isolated themselves more and more, to protect themselves. It was just impossible for them not to share the same territory, this destroyed one, Brazil. There was nowhere to run.

But just at this time, the Virgo moon set in the Piscean rays and, from its effects, this lunatic narrative was born, germinated in the ground of Artemis, its own ground to step on, showing its dark side, the West, which is an accident, in need of orientation.