



SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY
MADRID

LIBRARY

*Collaborative
Writing Project*

As part of the International Book Day (April 23), the Library launched the first-ever SLU-Madrid Collaborative Short Story project during the country-wide confinement in Spain last spring.

Students, faculty, and staff were invited to add a line or a few sentences to the shared document.

"Strange... the vivid feelings I felt just a moment ago have vanished and now everything is so ambiguous to me. I barely feel the existence of anything. And today, which hasn't even ended yet, already feels like ancient history, like some long-forgotten day from my childhood. All the days seem like Sunday, too, as if only Sunday exists," he mumbles...

The afternoon was falling and the night took the moon by the hand, to enjoy the dark walk until dawn.

"Perhaps when I woke up tomorrow everything would start to take on a new meaning. I had been locked up at home for too long after what happened." As he thought this, he fell asleep soundly. Every morning when I wake up, I open my window to enjoy the beautiful sky that looks clean and bright blue. I have so many people to get in contact with that I don't have much time to enjoy that "cielo velazqueño," so I get ready to start hearing the different voices of my loved ones: "How did you sleep? Did you dream something nice or strange? Ready for another day at home."

He knew that the voices wove together into a quilt which, when draped across his underfed shoulders, kept the looming, unseen horror at bay: the empty ennui that did not care how blue the sky was, or how numerous the birds were, or how bright the sun. But how did he walk the line between drinking up their assurance and giving them his own? Did he dream something nice or strange? Certainly strange. When the only thing capable of going outside was his mind at rest, strange was an understatement.

I can tell you with some certainty of whom I was dreaming about, however, and that of course is Miss Rona. Robbed us of two weeks of freedom, mind you, and almost certainly longer. I don't know, she was pretty chill though at first and then stuff just got whack.

You see it all started at that bar on Calle Malasaña. I met her there. She insisted I call her Rona (or even Miss Rona when she was being sassy). At first I didn't know how she would affect me. It was only a drink and a short conversation, but we hit it off and I went home that night with her. What a night!

That is, until the police crashed through her front door.

As the police questioned him, he instinctively knew all the answers to their questions about her, though he did not know why. See, he had all these memories. They were all so vivid and real, but he had no idea where they came from. While he could recall everything about her, he could not remember the first time they met, for in fact it was that night.

The only memory that appeared fleetingly was the moment when he was driving home his mind repeated the phrase "be careful" over and over ...

He did not want to ruin the moment. He wanted everything to be perfect. He thought: golden opportunities like this one only knock once in a lifetime. So he wanted this to be the perfect night. So many thoughts filled his mind that he didn't realize what really was going on. This was surely going to be an unforgettable moment in his life.

They started talking again while enjoying a drink. I was looking around us because I didn't know where we were at the time. I imagined that it was

his house, but my surprise was when I commented on how beautiful his house was and he told me that it was the first time that he was in that house and thought that we were in my house...

Maybe we were in my house after all. I looked into the mirror and knew that the unfamiliar face glaring back was my own. I could see myself reflected in his irises and the two semblances despite the divergence in age and gender seemed to traverse the space between us in an endless relay that left me dizzy. The invitation he had extended was merely some sort of self-preservation. Here we were. Safe inside again. Just like every night. The dreams couldn't hurt her.

He couldn't hurt her. He was trapped behind the glass. I pressed my lips against his never relenting my grip on his gaze until it was as if there was no glass, no lips, no eyes, no house... Only sleep.

THE END...