

## LAURIE, LIFE OF MY LIFE

“What if it hadn’t been raining that afternoon in Granada?” I have asked myself many times, knowing full well that there is no possible answer: our lives are governed by fate, which sometimes is auspicious and other times, tragic. Yet always, always, inscrutable.

I have been a lucky man since that September afternoon in 1973 when, after my classes at the university, I saw you walking through the downpour and made my approach. You were from New York and had come to Spain to continue your studies in Spanish language and literature. We took refuge from the rain in a cafeteria at the Plaza de Bibarrambla. When you told me you were reading Jorge Manrique in class, I responded by reciting a few stanzas from his Coplas by heart. And as that seemed to impress you, I said to myself: “I’ve conquered her.” And I, in turn, was vanquished by your smile and your intelligence. You already spoke a rich, singsong Spanish of impeccable syntax, more Hispanic American than peninsular. I have to admit that my broken English didn’t impress you much.

That year of 1973 was, for both of us, an *annus mirabilis*: visits to the Alhambra, the Generalife, the Campo de los Mártires, the Albaicín, the Sierra Nevada, the villages of the Alpujarras... Do you remember, my love, that Herbert Von Karajan concert in the Palacio of Carlos V, during the Granada Festival of Music and Dance? Many were the evenings we spent chatting in the Café Suizo. You spoke to me of your mother, Rose Anne, of your father William, your sister Wendy, your brother Mitchell, your grandmother and uncles; your friends: Vicki, Harriet, Sandy, Fay; of your piano and Spanish language studies. And I told you about my life in Tangier and about my mother, my father, my sister, my friends, my passion for literature and photography, for flamenco and the guitar.

And so, day by day we began to get to know one another, to love each other. By Christmastime I knew, that at the end of the academic year, I would follow you to New York.

And so it was. At the end of the summer, in Algeciras, I embarked on the Michelangelo, a transatlantic that had made its way there from Genoa. And on October 19, I arrived at the port of New York. On May 25, 1974, we got married. You were 20 and I was 24 years of age.

We lived seven years in Queens. Very soon you found a job as a translator in an export company; meanwhile, thanks to your job, I was able to continue my studies at Queens College. And all those years you were there, encouraging me, helping me with everything. I remember seeing you one afternoon from the bus that was taking me to the Graduate Center; I saw you walking down the street, graceful and charming, to your office on 34th Street. Your hair, long and wavy, flashing flames of fire. I was moved to tears of joy, of pride, of love. At that moment I felt that I would never forget that image.

And I have not forgotten it.

The heart treasures moments that memory forgets.

In 1985 our daughter Mariel was born. That was one of the happiest days of our lives. What a pity your father passed away soon after. Joy and sadness. To be born and to die. Destiny, ever-mysterious destiny.

That same year I completed my doctorate degree program. Seeing our daughter grow up filled us with even more joy. How could we ever forget that house in Monsey, surrounded by cedars, firs and beeches, that house –our home, our refuge–, with our cats and our books, where we lived for thirty years.

With what enthusiasm you followed Mariel's academic and sports achievements! How you rushed to her High School to give her the news that she had been accepted to study at Wesleyan University, no less. And how delighted and proud we felt when she graduated!

And then life gave us another daughter, Eva, Mariel's companion, her wife, whom you loved so much. Sow love and you will harvest love multiplied.

Three years ago, we moved to Valley Cottage, to a beautiful house among large maples and centenarian elms, blackberries and heathers, next to a stream where deer and squirrels come to drink. For our 45th anniversary, I gave you a silver box with the following

inscription: “There is no greater happiness in the world than aging together.” But fate, blind, brutal, merciless had a different plan.

For me (and for everyone who knew her), to say Laurie is to say goodness; for me, to say Laurie is to say tenderness; for me, to say Laurie is to say generosity; for me, to say Laurie is to say honesty; for me, to say Laurie is to say intelligence; for me, to say Laurie is to say love.

As I said at the beginning: I am a lucky man! Thank you, thank you, my love, thank you for sharing your life with me, for having supported me in everything, for giving me every day the candor and beauty of your smile.

My life, now a shadow of what it was, will be devoted to you, to your memory.

You will live in me, in my spirit, in my blood, until my very last breath.

Gerard