

The Place That Belongs

The place that belongs.

Roberto García G.

Author: Roberto García Gutiérrez

Cover design: Rufino García Díaz

ISBN: 9789403771663

© Roberto García.



To my brother
Yago...

...Please, wait me.
There are so many things
We have missed together '



I have chosen to write this narrative because I have come to realize that the most invaluable treasures in life are family, friends, and the memories we create.

Material possessions are fleeting, and perhaps I recognized this truth a bit too late; ultimately, nothing accompanies us when we depart from this world. What remains is the love we received during our time here and the love we shared with those who care for us.

Life, in its simplest form, enriches our souls and shapes our minds, moulding us into who we are meant to be. Even the individuals who have caused us pain play a role in our journey, yet it is wiser to let go of such burdens and forge ahead.

This book is dedicated to my mother and maternal grandparents, but I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of my loved father, the unwavering support of my siblings, and those individuals who have, in one way or another, shaped my identity.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my paternal grandparents, who endeavoured to preserve the essence of their lives while nurturing the next generation, despite the hardships brought on by poverty and war.

On the cover of this book lies an image that seeks to reflect the original photograph.

It was my father the very person who captured a moment in time back in 1980, where my essence first made its presence known. This journey is a celebration of life, love, and the indelible marks left on our hearts by those who matter most. May it inspire you to cherish your own experiences, embrace your loved ones, and recognize that the true wealth of life lies not in what we possess, but in the bonds, we forge and the memories we create together.

Embracing
The Flow
Of Consciousness.
My first pages.



Even if you never take anything they tell you for granted—and even more so if it’s written on paper—I hope you can at least entertain the idea that I’ve never been able to start a story before. And guess what? Today is no exception. It’s like my brain has a traffic jam of ideas, all vying for attention, and I’m just standing there, waving my hands, trying to direct the chaos like a very confused traffic cop. Oh, how rude of me! Allow me to introduce myself—my name is Bob, and today is Sunday. I’m sure I’ll give you delightful rundown of my life in just a few lines, but first, let me tell you that I’m perched on the edge of an exam that has me more frazzled than a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Concentration? What’s that? I spend my days drifting off into daydreams of enchanting places—lush valleys, sparkling rivers, meadows where the grass is greener than my hopes of passing this exam, and mountains that beckon like a Netflix binge. As I daydream, I watch the world around me transform into a serene oasis, far removed from the chaos of my life. I mean, let’s be honest: calm and I are like awkward strangers at a party—neither of us knows how to break the ice. My life resembles a roller coaster that’s lost its safety

bar, and when those idyllic thoughts bubble up, I suddenly forget about studying and the pressure of crafting a successful future. Those beautiful places become my mental lagoons—my very own escape routes from the stress of reality. So, here's to hoping that one day, I'll figure out how to channel all these swirling ideas into something coherent.

Until then, I'll just keep dreaming of peace and peacefulness, and maybe—just maybe—one day I'll tackle that exam without feeling like I'm about to jump off a cliff!

In the spirit of transparency and to dodge any potential misunderstandings, let's get one thing straight: all the characters in this tale are as fictional as a unicorn in a business suit. If you happen to stumble upon names that ring a bell, it's purely a coincidence. I mean, what are the odds, right? Now, let's talk about my adventures—

or lack thereof—in south America. I've had the good fortune to roam around those breathtaking rivers and mountains all the way down to the Patagonia, and honestly, they've left my soul feeling like a confused puppy in a room full of mirrors. You see, it's easier to find a sprinkle of happiness when we observe others basking in calmness, flashing smiles like they just won the

lottery. But here's my little secret: I'm not exactly brimming with confidence. In fact, I often feel like that kid in gym class who forgot his shorts. It's amusing, really—some of my friends are on a relentless quest for riches and romantic conquests. At first glance, this seems like a surefire route to happiness. I've dabbled in it myself, but alas, it only seems to stir up an annoying itch I can't scratch. Sometimes I find me wondering, if I'm on the right path, torn between the urge to become a free-spirited wanderer and the comfort of my cozy couch. My dreams are a wild ride, filled with lush greenery and frosty forests, were wildlife frolics as if auditioning for a nature documentary. But when I wake up, I can't help but shrug it off and mutter, "What does it matter?"

Everything feels so fleeting, like my thoughts are on roller-coaster that just can't keep its seatbelt fastened. My projects? They vanish faster than a magician's rabbit. I often ponder if my awkward relationship with language is the culprit—

like a bad game of charades where I keep confusing "cat" with "platypus." I mean, come on! With a university education, I should be able to articulate my feelings without sounding like a toddler trying to explain his favourite dinosaur.

The harsh truth always reveals itself in my grades—let's just say they resemble a rollercoaster after a particularly wild ride. I'm the king of starting projects and leaving them halfway, which has left me feeling tired, frustrated, and just a tad different. What really grinds my gears is that I've seen very little recognition for the tiny victories I've managed to snag over the years. It's like throwing a party for one and realizing no one showed up, not even the balloons. So here I am, navigating this quirky journey of life, armed with a sense of humour and a sprinkle of self-reflection, hoping to find my way through this undefined chaos. If nothing else, at least the ride is entertaining! My father, bless his heart, often assures me that everything I am today the magnificent result of his economic investment.

But let's be real—if that were true, I wouldn't be slinging drinks behind a bar, enduring the endless stream of self-pitying drunks who seem to think their life story is worthy of an Oscar. My dad loves to tell me how hard he works to provide me with a stable future, which is the classic fatherly mantra, right? It's like they come with a built-in script!

The kicker is that I can't help but roll my eyes at it. Sure, my parents might be financially comfortable and have showered me with material goodies, but let's just say their education levels could be generously described as "not exactly Ivy League."

They've got money, but they seem to have skipped the whole "spark of interest in education" part. Like, who needs that when you can have a fancy car instead? My childhood was a wild ride of indifference towards grades—my brother and my sister and I could have been failing spectacularly, and it barely raised an eyebrow. But I do have to give my mom some credit; she cared a smidge more than Dad when it came to report cards.

Thanks to her, my sister managed to become a teacher. So, there's hope for the family yet! Who knew that a little bit of concern could lead to actual accomplishments? But hey, maybe one day I'll find that undefined spark of genius in the bottom of a whiskey glass. Cheers to that! My parents never had the luxury of plopping down at a desk and soaking up knowledge from some well-spoken sage on literary, philosophical, mathematical, or historical matters. I can't even

picture my father, with his notoriously short fuse, sitting still long enough to absorb a lesson from someone else. If there's one thing that drives him up the wall, it's the prospect of being outshone by anyone, even if that someone is well-meaning teacher. Sure, financially they've done remarkably well and have gone above and beyond to give us the best of everything. They are genuinely good people, but let's just say the spark that ignites a thirst for education was never lit. It's a fact that the things of the soul are not bought with cash, and throughout my childhood, my brothers and I never felt the pressure to ace our grades or even scrape by—we were simply not on their radar. For them, the key to success lay in knowing how to hustle and navigate the daily grind, a survival course laden with deceptions and experiences that, frankly, I think a child shouldn't have to tackle so early on. Now, my mother was a tad more interested in academics and our report cards, but even her enthusiasm had its limit. When I ponder all of this, I find myself with an overwhelming urge to just throw caution to the wind and escape the Canary Islands. I dream of exploring other corners of the world, or even other worlds entirely, because let's face it, the grass always

looks greener on the other side of the fence. It's a common belief that distance brings wisdom and culture, and almost everyone here seems to be under the illusion that life beyond this island is a bed of roses. I mean, traveling too far-off lands are as simple as diving into a good book, right? But let's be real: I'd be lying if I said the thought of living elsewhere doesn't tantalize me. Yet, for some inexplicable reason, I haven't quite mustered the courage to break free from my cozy little shell. Perhaps it's the delightful climate that keeps me snugly anchored here; this place has a way of wrapping you in a warm embrace. For the moment I will stay here and maybe one fine day,

I'll achieve the elusive mastery of writing, and I'll finally crack the code to reading between the lines—like a literary ninja! By that time, I envision having journeyed far and wide enough to fill an entire library with my misadventures and tales of wonder. Now, don't get me wrong; I harbour no grandiose dreams of becoming the next literary titan. I'm just a quirky character trying to untangle the delightful mess of emotions and experiences that swirl around me like confetti at a parade. The hilarity of the situation is that you, dear reader, might find yourself scratching your head in confusion,

pondering whether this is heartfelt biography or simply a whimsical rant from a young soul bobbing along the same choppy waters as countless others. My frustrations may not metamorphose into wisdom overnight, but I consider it a monumental achievement to sit here, pen in hand, reflecting on my many blunders. And what better way to face my flaws than to write about them in a way that might just make you chuckle? In a sense, I'm like a puppet dancing on strings, and if you happened to be born in the '80s, I bet many of the antics I share will strike a chord with your own youthful escapades. So, buckle up and join me on this whimsical ride as I navigate the undefined waters of life, armed with my trusty pen and a sense of humour! My parents toiled away day in and day out at a small bar—a bar that has somehow survived for nearly fifty years. Who would've guessed that they began their entrepreneurial journey selling sandwiches and soft drinks from a tiny kiosk? Over time, that humble little stall blossomed into a full-fledged restaurant, and more recently, into a bustling café.

My mother was pregnant with me when she decided to launch her culinary career from the

cramped confines of our kitchen. Imagine it: there she was juggling pots and pans like a circus performer, while my father—the love of her life and part-time barista extraordinaire held down the fort at the bar. Let's be real, my dad had a flair for cooking that could rival any chef on TV, but during those days, rest was as elusive as a unicorn. By the time I made my grand entrance (cue the dramatic music), things hadn't changed much. My mother would often tuck me into a makeshift bassinet—a basket in the storage room, swaddled in sheets like a little burrito—while she hustled like a kitchen ninja. Whenever the chaos settled, she'd sneak a peek at her tiny sous-chef, ensuring I was either in a blissful slumber or staring wide-eyed at the colourful crates of soda and beer or perhaps contemplating the mysteries of the stockroom ceiling.

Now, let's paint a picture of our urban landscape back then: a disaster zone that looked like it had just survived a zombie apocalypse. There were no asphalt roads; instead, we had potholes big enough to swallow a small car, rusty iron pedestrian bridges that swayed like they were auditioning for a role in a horror flick, and a sewer system that barely functioned—if it could even be called a "system."

If someone were to pull out a snapshot from that time, they might mistake it for a village in Africa, complete with a charming ambiance of chaos and a hint of adventure! Ah, the good old days!

Undefined

charm and all!



So, here's the deal: my parents kicked off their work at that bar in 1974, and I made my debut a year later. Three

years later, my brother followed suit, and soon after, my sister Guacimara joined the family. My sister Sara, she came from my own father but different mum. She is the youngest one and the cleverest girl I have ever seen in my life.

My brother was taller and handsomer than me. With his sleek hair and angelic face that seemed to have fallen straight from the heavens, he stood out wherever he went. Practically anything he set his mind to; he excelled at. Super smart, he aced everything with flying colours. He lived in Ireland and loved playing cowboys and Indians with me using our American West action figures. The plot was always the same—he'd take out my dad and my brother, and I'd go on a quest

for revenge. Our rooftop would end up looking like a miniature battlefield, littered with our toy soldiers after our epic playtime battles. We shared a room, often pulling pranks on each other. I vividly remember him sleepwalking one night, wandering down three flights of stairs to the front door. The bizarre part? He was wide awake but completely asleep. One time, he woke up and peed on me.

Seriously! That really ticked me off! But overall, we got along famously; I love him dearly and always will. I can still picture us having milk for dinner, drowning it in heaps of gofio and cocoa powder. We'd sometimes choke, erupting in laughter, spitting milk all over the table. When my brother and I were causing mayhem, my mom would get furious, but she'd eventually succumb to our charms and end up laughing with us—though she always made us clean up the mess.

My brother was a voracious reader; he completed a higher education cycle in marketing and international trade and moved to Dublin for a few years. He also endured the torment of working at my dad's bar. There was nothing worse for him than having to work there. His asthma made things even tougher, especially

since smoking was allowed inside, and he had to endure clouds of smoke while he served drinks or washed glasses. I'll never forget my brother. If there's anything beyond this world, I hope he's there, loving me. I have always loved him. We were different, though; I was a bit more disorganized, and he absolutely loathed it when someone touched his things or left them messy. But at the end of the day, everyone is who they are, and honestly, I think he was a better person than I am. I once visited him in Ireland. I was three years older, but he seemed like a wise old man with how organized he was in life. He loved salsa dancing and dated gorgeous women from all over the world. I was left in awe watching him with stunning tall girls, even more mesmerized seeing them dance together. You never truly realize what you have until it's gone. I remember one incident in our bathroom. We had a bit of a cockroach problem that would come and go, and when it was bad, they'd pop out of the toilet. We absolutely detested those critters. The bathroom door was never locked from the inside—that was strict rule from our parents, probably for safety reasons in case we slipped in the shower. So, there I was, minding my own business on the toilet, when my brother barged in, yelling, "A

cockroach!" I jumped so suddenly that I had terrible luck; at that exact moment, I was... well, you know. Let's just say my "business" splattered everywhere! In that moment, I wanted to kill him, but he pulled off the prank so well that we spent months laughing at the dinner table about my flying excrement. I think about my brother every day as if he's still right here with me.

I still can't process it. We live in a world in which the present is all that matters, and we often overlook the value of our memories, especially the love from a brother, the care of a mother, and the protection of a father.

In the past, loved ones lingered longer in the memories of families and friends.

Nowadays, everything feels superficial, fading into the vastness of individuality. It's been said it takes three generations to forget someone.

Everyone will forget you six months after you pass. And after three generations, all who knew you will be gone. After about eight generations, you've got genetic material from fewer ancestors. After sixteen generations, you've only got about 2% DNA from your ancestors, and it keeps dwindling. Oblivion is loneliness.

Forgetfulness creeps so close that people don't realize how unimportant they are. Some folks claim they can still feel their departed loved ones.

I've seen on the internet that "some people report feeling the presence of their deceased loved ones around them." This can manifest as a gentle breeze, a familiar scent, or even objects moving inexplicably.

My sister can see my brother, and I feel his touch, but it scares me so much that I wake up and bury myself under the blankets. They say that when you die, hearing is the last sense to go. Even when the rest of your body shuts down, your brain retains what your ears hear in those final moments. Now I understand why mothers cling to their children until the very last instant. So, here's to brothers, unforgettable memories, and the hilariously embarrassing moments that keep us all laughing—even when we're not sure if we're crying or laughing. Undefined, right? The first buildings in our neighbourhood sprang up to accommodate the workers migrating from the countryside to the industrial hub that was emerging.

La Disa, a sprawling network of hangars brimming with gas and oil, provided fuel to the capital through long pipelines. Today, it remains a vital point for receiving butane and crude oil—just don't get too close when there's a leak; the smell is enough to make anyone's hair stand on end! That little bar where it

all began was conveniently located near the only road connecting the island's south, which made it an instant goldmine. After Franco's death in 1975, glimmers of hope began to appear. Trade flourished, and the tourist influx skyrocketed, fuelling a construction boom in the hospitality sector. Before that, folks were just scraping by, growing tomatoes, bananas, and flowers—my grandmother's specialty was carnations, bless her heart! People lived in cramped quarters, passing the time by tossing stones because, back then, the gadgets we rely on today were nowhere to be found—no mobile phones or digital distractions.

As I mentioned, the bar became a haven of profits as workers flocked to the booming area, stopping by for coffee, breakfast, and the occasional snack. My father hails from the northern side of 'Gran Canaria', near a quaint little mountain called Caideros in the well-known municipality 'Gáldar', where he grew up alongside twelve brothers and sisters, all under the watchful eye of Mother Nature. Clearly no Netflix by then. They had to rely solely on their own labour to survive. My father occasionally reminisces about his childhood during gatherings with friends,