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VISIÓN ELECTRÓNICA

Algo más que un estado sólido

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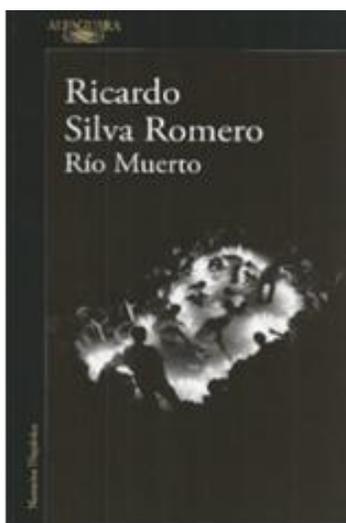


VISIÓN ELECTRÓNICA

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL VISION

Ricardo Silva Romero, Río Muerto. Bogotá: Alfaguara. Penguin Random House. 2020, 156 pages.

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Salomón Palacios, one of the characters in the last novel by Ricardo Silva Romero a Bogota writer, liked to listen to accordion music. The day of his murder he was listening to "A big storm cloud is rising in the sky, a strong storm is approaching, the woman I love the most is coming, the one I despair for, I even lose my head". The previous composition called La Creciente, was

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created by the guajiro Hernando Marín Lacouture and recorded by the Binomio de Oro, with the voice of Rafael Orozco and the accordion of Israel Romero.

Salomón, who among other things was mute since he was a child, upon hearing the melody sung by Rafael Orozco portrays in his mind several things: the first, his beloved Hipólita: the woman he loved the most and who made him desperate; the second, the rising of the Chamí river, called by some the Muerto river. This was the river where part of the bodies destroyed by the war machine in Solomon's hometown of Belén de Chamí were thrown.

The village of Belén de Chamí, located in the southwest of Colombia, was at the time the fodder for a sandwich whose two slices of bread were, on the one hand, the Fénix Bloc of the paramilitaries and, on the other, the 99th Front of the guerrillas. Those who killed Salomón, before shooting him in the dark, told him: "Tome por sapo, bobo hijueputa" [1, p. 10].

The slaughterers of the Fénix Bloc were engaged in their social cleansing against the accomplices and toadies of the 99th Front; the mute Salomón, meanwhile, was doing odd jobs in his ramshackle car, without suspecting that his work could be the cause of his death. Thus, the favors he always did for everyone, regardless of whether they were with one or the other, were the reason for his atrocious death. A police agent, an accomplice of one of the sides, warned Salomón of the danger he would run if he did the "trasteo" to the friends of the friends of the 99 Front, but the mute Salomón "continued doing the "trasteos" to everyone because what else was he going to do if that was his job" [1, p. 19].

The writer Silva, current columnist of *El Tiempo*, draws as if with a magic brush the particular circumstances of the spilling of innocent blood in Colombia; a dramatic but accurate situation for these realities. The complicated thing is that nobody is disturbed by these facts anymore. The Cuban José Martí, in the XIX century, in a writing titled "El presidio político en Cuba", in front of the realities of the political violence in his country writes with love and pain: "The pen

writes with blood when writing what I saw; but the bloody truth is also truth". Río Muerto is a bloody truth.

The novel *Río Muerto* is divided, unnumbered, into 20 chapters or parts plus an initial note where the author explains some of the motivations for writing his funny and fluid book. In the first chapter, Silva states "I am telling what I was told as it was told to me: "that Salomón Palacios was shot a few steps from his house and died..." [1, p. 10].

For the narrator Silva Romero, death is the true present, "because certain murdered people do not leave" [1, p. 11]. And Salomón Palacios, or rather his ghost, returns from the dead and observes the unraveling of his brave wife and his two orphaned children. In that instant Belén de Chamí takes on the appearance of Juan Rulfo's mysterious Comala, and Salomón Palacios a resemblance to Pedro Páramo; both return from the dead.

Despite the realism of the story, but above all its relevance to the current political situation - there are many towns where the story narrated by the author is often repeated - the novel is supported by a fictional prose crossed by terror and jocularly that mark a milestone for its form and content in terms of the story; Death is painted on the faces of humans, corpses as factual facts and the ghosts of death return as they recover their memory and continue to watch over Solomon's family and in general all the inhabitants of the town. Recurrent terror in Colombia and sung, in past times, in a loud voice by the poet Juan Manuel Roca (1979) in *Señal de Cuervos* (Signal of Crows):

The sign of the crows
Announces the new hour of terror
The bodies again down the river.

The terror is interwoven with a very fine and detailed humor, for example in the episode in which Hippolyta approaches Solomon-just murdered and his corpse still warm-Silva writes: "She

kissed his forehead and closed his eyes and shut his mouth so that no one would see the poor man's silver tights" [1, p. 11].

This review comes to an end. It should be emphasized that this is a beautiful novel, very well told, of incalculable finesse; therefore, I recommend its reading. My fellow readers, please do not miss it. There is not a single intention of the author to make politics out of this delicate subject that occurs at every moment and clouds Colombian families with mourning; the most frequent victims are social leaders; although in recent years, due to the signing of the peace agreements between guerrillas and the government, hitmen have taken to assassinating amnestied ex-guerrillas.

References

- [1] R. Silva, "Río muerto", Bogotá: Alfaguara. Penguin Random House, 2020.