

# **I LIVE MY LIFE WITHIN 300 YARDS**

*By Inmaculada Alvear*

**Honorable Mention for  
The María Teresa León Prize, 2004**

*Translated by Ellen C. Frye*

## Characters

MARÍA, 9 years old

CHIQUI

ANTONIO

MADRE

*\*Anything that appears in brackets [brackets] is added by the translator, for an enhanced understanding on the part of the reader, director, actor, or spectator.*

*In the park.*

**MARÍA.**- Come, Daddy, I'll time you.

**ANTONIO.**- Where do you want me to run to, huh?

**MARÍA.**- Far, but so that I can still see you.

**ANTONIO.**- To the tree that's next to the fence?

**MARÍA.**- And how far is that?

**ANTONIO.**- About 300 yards.

**MARÍA.**- And that, is it a little or a lot?

**ANTONIO.**- What do you think?

**MARÍA.**- To me it's a lot.

**ANTONIO.**- And to me it's a little, very little, my love.

**MARÍA.**- Really, it's only a little?

**ANTONIO.**- You will learn, honey, you will learn about distances.  
Distances are important.  
You will see when you begin to run with me.

**MARÍA.**- Ready, set, go.

*In the kitchen.*

**MARÍA.**- One minute and forty seconds.

**CHIQUI.**- One minute and forty seconds?!

**MARÍA.**- 300 yards, Mom.  
He looked like a bullet.

**ANTONIO.**- (*Playing with her ear*)  
Less than what it takes me to run my tongue around your ear.

**CHIQUI.**- Hush, the girl is here.

**ANTONIO.-** Less than what it takes me to run my tongue between your boobs.

**CHIQUI.-** Antonio...

Be quiet.

You're offensive, go take a shower, you're always the same.

**ANTONIO.-** Ever since you started working you don't pay attention to me.

Everything annoys you.

Do you want me to do nothing? Fine, I'll do nothing, I could give a shit.

*(Their hands touch, looks pass between them, she fumbles for her murmured words, stops what she's doing and attempts to grab him but he escapes, in bad manner.)*

**MARÍA.-** Mom, are you listening to me?

**CHIQUI.-** Yes...! one minute and forty seconds.

¡Antonio!

**MARÍA.-** It wasn't that. Mom, listen to me!

To me it seemed far, and when I looked at the stopwatch, he had already gotten there.

**MARÍA.-** You know what I'm saying, Dad.

That 300 yards are worthless.

Next time you'll run 300 yards twice.

No, better, three times 300 yards.

**ANTONIO.-** You are a darling

*(He presses her to him)*

But every day your Dad runs 300 yards 20 times.

*Darkness.*

*CHIQUI is ironing. ANTONIO is reading.*

**CHIQUI.-** Throw in the ingredients, press the button, wait, and it's ready.

It's expensive, but with my salary now...

Even María could cook.

**ANTONIO.-** What?

**CHIQUI.-** Nothing, that it's really simple, even you could cook.

We'll prepare a sponge-cake, pizzas, cannolis, and sorbets.

It was on sale and I gave a down payment, for lay-away.

**ANTONIO.-** What are talking about?  
I'm not getting a word you say.

**CHIQUI.-** A robot! I'm telling you about a robot that cooks.  
I went to a demonstration.  
Don't worry, four payments, no interest. It's second-hand.  
What do you think?

**ANTONIO.-** My Mother always cooked without that crap.  
I'm sure the food doesn't have the same flavor.

**CHIQUI.-** It's the same.  
Béchamel sauce without lumps.  
Gazpacho in seven minutes!  
And look at how small it is.

**ANTONIO.-** Why do you want me to press a button?  
I know how to fix cars.  
Are you missing out on something, that you need another machine?

**CHIQUI.-** Cooking without flames; it always scared me with María nearby.  
She sits in the kitchen with her homework.  
She likes to watch what I prepare.

**ANTONIO.-** I don't believe that it's because of María.

**CHIQUI.-** No, it's not only that.  
I'll have more time to be with her and with you.

**ANTONIO.-** Yeah right. To go out with your friends.  
Have fun in the stores.  
Go to the beauty salon and gossip, looking at love magazines.  
You don't fool me.

**CHIQUI.-** The things you say, Antonio.

*(She burns herself with the iron. She mutters)*

**ANTONIO.-** Fuck, Chiqui! That is my favorite shirt.

**CHIQUI.-** Tell me, when have I had fun at the beauty salon.  
When have I had one day of shopping without the girl.

**ANTONIO.-** Then it's that you want to see us less or stay longer at the nursery school.  
Well, buy it.

**CHIQUI.-** I'm not buying it if you don't want me to.

**ANTONIO.-** No! Then you'll throw it in my face.  
I am not up for it.

**CHIQUI.-** It cooks, all it does is cook fast, and that's it.  
It only takes up a little space and it saves time.  
*(Tears up the information)*

**ANTONIO.-** Who would put those ideas in your head?  
If now you want one of those robots, what will you want tomorrow, huh?

**CHIQUI.-** But have you been thinking, that I'm an idiot?

**ANTONIO.-** Don't talk to me like that.

**CHIQUI.-** That's fine. Leave it alone now.

**ANTONIO.-** I'm the one who decides when the conversation is over.  
Is that clear?  
And look at me.

**CHIQUI.-** Yes.

**ANTONIO.-** Today was a good day.  
Two new clients, they paid in cash.  
I closed the garage early.  
And finally I sit down to read the paper.  
Fuck, Chiqui, ever since you started working you only think about yourself!

**CHIQUI.-** Excuse me, Antonio.

**ANTONIO.-** But why do you have this fucking obsession about saying "excuse me" for everything?

*(Little punches on his head)*

Must have thought of it before, damn!

*(Against the wall)*

Let's see if we can think a little more about the rest.  
If it wasn't because you make me...  
For that you want a robot, too, huh?  
Should I buy you a robot to fuck, Chiqui?  
You are such a cunt.

**CHIQUI.-** The girl might walk in.  
Not now, not now!

**ANTONIO.-** I'm not a robot, Chiqui.  
You can't press a button on me.

**CHIQUI.-** It was on sale.  
That's why I gave it a try, but if you want,  
if you want...  
Not now, please, not now!

*(The iron falls on the shirt)*

*Darkness*

*Sweating and with her voice faltering from the effort.*

**MARÍA.-** I was three times slower than Dad in running the 300 yards.  
But I came in first.  
Dad applauded like crazy.  
Mom kissed me and dried my body with a perfumed towel.  
I almost couldn't breathe.  
On the loudspeaker they kept saying my name and I raised my hands in triumph.  
Like the singers on t.v.  
She's going to be a great runner, my Dad told the gym teacher.  
And Mom asked me if I liked running.  
Running?  
The gold medal shone on my chest.  
Running?  
I don't know, but distances are important, Mom.  
You don't understand it, but they are important.

*Darkness.*

*In the living room.*

**ANTONIO.-** María wanted those Happy Meal puppets.

**MARÍA.-** Why do you always put me in the middle of your talks?  
Yes, I wanted those hamburger puppets.  
But I told Daddy that I was pressing the button.  
I told you, Daddy, I'm pressing the button!

**ANTONIO.-** Shut up!

**CHIQUI.-** I left everything ready.

**ANTONIO.-** But why do I have to press a button? No, I am not pressing a damn button!

**CHIQUI.-** But if it was to warm up dinner!

**MARÍA.-** Mommy, please tell me a story.

I really like the one about the ant and cicada, I also have to think about my future.

**ANTONIO.-** It's done, not even one more favor, I am not staying with the girl again.

**MARÍA.-** Well, I love being with you, Daddy.

I don't like marbles, but I like you.

**CHIQUI.-** Don't be such a fool, it's been a while since I asked you to stay with her.

**ANTONIO.-** Don't even think about calling me a fool.

I take care of her and on top of that you complain!

**MARÍA.-** Neither of you want to be with me?

**CHIQUI.-** But what does it cost you to tell me that you're craving a hamburger.

**ANTONIO.-** Now we all have to do whatever you feel like doing, huh?

Everything revolves around your job.

**MARÍA.-** Mommy, please tell me the story.

It's just that... I don't know, you're going to put your foot in it, and I don't want the same thing to happen, like it does every day.

**CHIQUI.-** You're talking crazy!

**ANTONIO.-** If you tell me that I am talking crazy one more time...

**CHIQUI.-** I only asked you...

**MARÍA.-** Mommy...!

**CHIQUI.-** Go to your room!

**ANTONIO.-** I said it because I felt like it.

It's clear.

**CHIQUI.-** Antonio, listen.



**MARÍA.**- ...I only wanted to help you.

**ANTONIO.**- Don't even think about touching me.

Now it turns out that I've become the neighborhood babysitter.

**CHIQUI.**- (*laughs*) But what craz...

**MARÍA.**- Mommy!

**ANTONIO.**- You cunt!

(*Darkness on ANTONIO and CHIQUI*)

(*Hits and kicks are heard*)

**MARÍA.**- (*Covering her ears*) Please, Daddy, no, don't hit her.

Then Mommy will want to go to the police station and the policeman will look at me with pity.

They always ask me the name of my doll and how old I am  
... and I'm never able to answer.

*Darkness.*

*In a park.*

**CHIQUI.**- The first time I turned him in, when I got to the corner where the police station is, I went back and revoked the accusation.

**MARÍA.**- And the next one, too; you always repent.

We've come by here a couple of times already.

**CHIQUI.**- (*beating herself on the chest*)

I withdraw it because I'm afraid.

I withdraw it because he won't do it again.

I withdraw it because he's my daughter's father.

I withdraw it because I love him.

I withdraw it for it's my biggest fault.

Amen.

**MARÍA.**- (*skipping and reciting in singsong*)

I withdraw it because I'm afraid.

I withdraw it because he won't do it again.

I withdraw it because he's my daughter's father.

I withdraw it because I love him.

I withdraw it, I don't revoke it.  
 I withdraw it, why do I revoke it?  
 (*A CHIQUI*) Why Mommy? Is Daddy going to be good now?  
 (*Silence*)  
 Will you buy me a lollipop and some gum?

*On a bench.*

**MARÍA.**- What did the police tell you, Mommy?

**CHIQUI.**- That this time they are not going to let me withdraw it.

**MARÍA.**- And what is going to happen to Daddy? Is he going to go to jail?

**CHIQUI.**- Nobody goes to jail for this.

**MARÍA.**- But you want him to go?

*(She lights a cigarette, MARÍA plays in the sand with a stick)*

**MARÍA.**- Mommy, smoking is bad.

**CHIQUI.**- Yes, honey, I know.

**MARÍA.**- I don't want him to go, Mommy, I don't want him to go.

*(Silence)*

And now, what're we doing?

**CHIQUI.**- I don't know, darling, let me think.

**MARÍA.**- Are we going to sleep in the park?

**CHIQUI.**- No ma'am.

**MARÍA.**- Don't cry.

You've said we can't go home.

*(Silence)*

Don't you have a kleenex?

*(Says no)*

Do you want me to ask the police to give me a few, the table had a lot of them.

**CHIQUI.**- If you go in, I don't know... no, stay with me.

What did the woman inside tell you?

**MARÍA.**- “Oh, child! They have left you with a Mommy that seems like Christ!”  
 And look at what she gave me. (*Shows her hands full of nuts. CHIQUI laughs, MARÍA laughs, they hug, CHIQUI cries*)

**MARÍA.**- Does it hurt a lot?

**CHIQUI.**- I’m sorry, honey, it’s just that I don’t know what’s happening to me.

**MARÍA.**- And Grandma?

**CHIQUI.**- Grandma, no. I already know what she’s going to tell me.

**MARÍA.**- Let’s go, Mommy, this time I’m inviting you to a lollipop.

*In the MOTHER’s home. In front of a mirror.*

**MADRE.**- You have to go back. Antonio loves you. He’s your husband.

**CHIQUI.**- Mom...  
 You want me to withdraw the accusation.

**MADRE.**- Well, withdraw it.  
 Nobody is going to find out about this.  
 It will stay between us.  
 But you have to go back.

**CHIQUI.**- If I withdraw it...  
 Everything will be the same.  
 If I don’t revoke it, I don’t know.

**MADRE.**- It will happen to him, darling.  
 It always happens to them.  
 See, if you spread your makeup well, it’s perfect.  
 You have to put it on little by little with teeny-tiny little circular touches.

**CHIQUI.**- Next time...  
 Do you think it’s good that I am staying by his side?

**MADRE.**- You should quit your job and take care of your daughter.

**CHIQUI.**- It’s all the same, you see?  
 He’ll do it again, it’s not the first time  
 He knows that he wins.

**MADRE.-** Don't be a fool.

Leave it to me, you have to do it slowly.

**CHIQUI.-** Whose side are you on?

**MADRE.-** Whose side am I on? Yours darling, you're my daughter.

That's why I think it's better that you revoke it.

What's the point of accusing him if you have him at home?

**CHIQUI.-** Then I don't understand you.

**MADRE.-** Busy yourself with the house and then you'll see how much better everything gets.

**CHIQUI.-** But, why does he think that working is bad?

**MADRE.-** And why do you need it.

Don't touch yourself!

**CHIQUI.-** Well, because I like it, I need it.

I like those children who arrive every morning crying and with boogers, and having my money at the end of the month.

**MADRE.-** You are such a stubborn girl. He doesn't ask that much of you.

**CHIQUI.-** No, you know what, no, I think that I am not going to stop working.

I can't, not now.

No.

**MADRE.-** And me? You know who I used to sew for, I've told you many times.

When I got married I had to give it up and nothing happened to me.

**CHIQUI.-** And you've never regretted it, no?

**MADRE.-** *(Silence)* You all were there... How could I be sorry (check that)!

**CHIQUI.-** Careful, you're hurting me!

**MADRE.-** Keep still!

**CHIQUI.-** Leave me alone!

*(A silent pause)*

**MADRE.-** If something happens to you, come back. My door is not shut.

But now I have told you what I think.

And your Father thinks the same thing as me.  
I have never had to work and I have been fine.  
My children have always come first.

**CHIQUI.**- I can't believe this...  
For me, María also comes first!

**MADRE.**- You work for other people and you take care of their children, while yours waits for you at home.

**CHIQUI.**- That has been two or three times!  
I pick her up every day, you understand? That's why I picked that job.

**MADRE.**- But, what are you doing?

**CHIQUI.**- I don't need your makeup, your foundation, or your advice, I'll just invent something else if that will calm you down.  
I'm leaving. I'm getting my things and leaving.

**MADRE.**- But Chiqui, how can you go outside looking like that?

**CHIQUI.**- Same as when I came in.

**MADRE.**- You can leave your daughter here if you want. She is not to blame at all.

**CHIQUI.**- My daughter is coming with me.

*Darkness.*

*Gazpacho in the blender.  
(With her favorite doll, which she brings everywhere)  
(An open book with the recipe and ingredients all around)  
(Climb to a bench)*

**MARÍA.**- It's very easy: you throw in all the ingredients, you press a button and it's ready.  
A kilo of tomatoes  
a piece of bread  
a dash of vinegar  
half a glass of oil  
... two garlic cloves  
For Daddy lots of garlic  
but for Mommy just a little, it says to follow.  
But Daddy likes it strong.

So if Daddy likes it, Mommy won't like it.  
 And should I throw in a cucumber? No, I think Mommy doesn't throw in a  
 cucumber.  
 Salt to taste, what does that mean "to taste"?  
 It's a surprise so that they smile and I don't know what to do.  
 And if they don't like it?  
 I don't want them to fight because of the gazpacho.  
 Fine, if they don't like it...  
 And this is the robot that makes gazpacho in seven minutes?  
 What shit!

*Darkness.*

*Living room of the house.*

**ANTONIO.-** Where were you?

**CHIQUI.-** I told you I was going to the movies.

I jot it down on a piece of paper and I leave it on top of the table.  
 If I tell her the night before, we discuss it and I have to call Rosa to tell her no:  
 No, Rosa, I can't go to the movies, no, nothing is wrong.  
 I just have things to do.

**ANTONIO.-** Written on a piece of paper on top of the kitchen table.  
 That's telling me something, that's telling me something!  
 Answer me.

**CHIQUI.-** [Aside] If I look down, that's bad.  
 If I answer, that's bad, too.  
 [Aloud] Excuse me, it's that it came up at the last minute.

**ANTONIO.-** I would have stayed longer at the bar with the guys.  
 I have never said that to you!  
 And María?

**CHIQUI.-** She's at a birthday party. They're bringing her home at 10.

**ANTONIO.-** This is a joke.  
 Who's bringing her at 10?

**CHIQUI.-** Sofía's mother.

**ANTONIO.-** You know I don't like anyone else bringing her home but you.  
 You, so I can fuck you.

You, so I can control you.  
 You, because I feel like it.  
 I could go, but I'm staying right here.

**CHIQUI.-** Last time I brought Sofia home and now it's her mother's turn.  
 Nothing is going to happen.

**ANTONIO.-** And who did you go to the movies with?  
 That girlfriend of yours, huh?

*(Silence)*

**ANTONIO.-** [Aside] She shakes like a leaf when I talk to her, but I could care less.  
 I look at her and I don't know if I love her.  
 I want to caress her and I don't dare.

**CHIQUI.-** Her name is Rosa, you know only too well.

**ANTONIO.-** And what have you two gone to see?, something stupid, I'm sure.

**CHIQUI.-** ...

**ANTONIO.-** [Aside] Something stupid.  
 I repeat it to insult her and at the same time I think that I'm a fool for saying it to her.  
 When certain things are said, why don't you know how to take them back?  
 I regret it, but I don't know how to stop.

**CHIQUI.-** Why do you say that?  
 [Aside] He annoys me and I let him.  
 I don't know how to put him in his place.  
 I tremble and he sees it.  
 I feel so insecure by his side.  
 If I were to come home, caress him, and give him a kiss...  
 But before arriving, I already know what is waiting for me.  
 I have been preparing my excuse since the movie ended,  
 no, what am I saying, since I left the house,  
 no, since I wrote the note and left it on top of the table.  
 I would have wanted to call him and say:  
 Antonio, I'm going to the movies, then we let's have a few beers when you're  
 done working,  
 but I don't dare.  
 I want him to realize that I'm pretty,  
 that I take care of myself for him, but he doesn't even think about it.

**ANTONIO.-** And you went out looking like that?

**CHIQUI.-** Looking like what?

**ANTONIO.-** I don't think you need to go like that to the movies, it looks like you're going to a party.

[Aside] If she had called me and said:

I'm going to the movies, then let's have a few beers?

When she goes to the bar everyone tells me how pretty my Chiqui is.

What a good couple we make.

I love looking at her in the bar.

**CHIQUI.-** Well, Rosa says that I was very pretty.

**ANTONIO.-** Well, Rosa says, Rosa says.

And you have to put on so many layers of makeup?

**CHIQUI.-** I don't go out almost all made-up.

**ANTONIO.-** You look like a slut.

You were looking for trouble or something.

[Aside] Those words come out and I don't know why,

why do I want to hurt her if deep down I love her.

She looks really pretty, I wish she had made herself up like that for me.

I want to touch her and I can't.

**CHIQUI.-** But Antonio, if I went to the movies and came home.

**ANTONIO.-** You want us to go to the mirror together, shit!

**CHIQUI.-** [Aside] But if only I had put on a little mascara and rouge.

I took off the lipstick in the elevator like a little girl.

I feel so ridiculous.

The bad thing is that I already know how all this is going to end.

We are throwing ourselves into a well that we don't know how to escape from.

And if I were to tell him? But I never tell him it.

**ANTONIO.-** Fuck, you are saying that I am blind!

**CHIQUI.-** Look, nothing comes off.

**ANTONIO.-** Are you calling me a liar?

Fuck, I don't like it when you paint your lips or when you wear such high heels.

Now you'll see how I take off your makeup.

Go, come on, go to the bathroom.

**CHIQUI.-** That's it, it's over.



*(He pushes her)*  
*(They leave the room, towards the bathroom)*  
*(He pushes her again)*  
 Darkness.

MARÍA with her mother's makeup bag, talking to her dolls which are lined up in a row and with a paper and pen in front.

**MARÍA.**- Today we have a practice class, we are going to learn how to put on makeup, but a special makeup for when your husband or boyfriend hits you. First a good base, I don't know what this is, I've heard my Grandma say it but I haven't found it in Mommy's makeup, then the compact, this I did find. You spread it like this, in circles, you all see, and we let it absorb a little so that we put on another layer. Your face has to be well-hydrated, that means, have water, because if not it won't take so much make up and it-will-crack.  
 And the water, how do you put it on?  
 Grandma says that no one is free from a slap, my teacher says that's not true, that men normally don't hit and that there is no reason to put up with it.  
 Is she talking about having to turn it back in? Well, Mommy never gives it back. I don't know what I am going to do if my boyfriend hits me.  
 I like Jaime but I wouldn't dare be his girlfriend.  
 I also like my teacher even though she doesn't know how to put makeup on like my Grandma.  
 Then little touches, little touches, so that the skin looks good and finally and very important, very important, the rouge and the sunglasses.  
 The glasses are very useful because, according to Grandma, slaps always go to the eyes, or if you have cried so much that your eyes are nasty and you have to cover them and also so that the neighbors don't ask you what happened.  
 I would put a Barbie tattoo on her.  
 Let's see! I look stupendous.  
 Do you all understand?

*Darkness.*

*While they wind a skein of wool.*

**MARÍA.**- Mommy, I've heard you talking with Grandma about what the judge said.  
 Everything in our life is 300 yards?

**CHIQUI.**- Why are you saying that?

**MARÍA.**- The subway is 300 yards.  
It's on a new poster at the end of the street.

**CHIQUI.**- Yes? What a coincidence.

**MARÍA.**- Yes, Mommy, but it's my school, my school is also 300 yards.

**CHIQUI.**- You're right, but that doesn't mean anything.

**MARÍA.**- And also the bar where Daddy goes with his friends is within 300 yards, he told  
me the other day.  
It's still a coincidence?

**CHIQUI.**- Of course.

**MARÍA.**- And each ball of wool has 300 yards.  
The sweater you made me has three times 300 yards.  
And Daddy ran 300 yards in one minute and 40 seconds!

**CHIQUI.**- It's true, your Father ran 300 yards in only one minute and 40 seconds.

**MARÍA.**- Daddy has always been really fast.

**CHIQUI.**- I didn't remember.

**MARÍA.**- Tell me again the story of your wedding.

**CHIQUI.**- And what does it have to do with anything! Besides, you know it by heart.  
Your Grandfather's car left us stranded and I had to run... 300 yards!! to the church.

**MARÍA.**- Look at what I told you!

**CHIQUI.**- I was wearing a gown with a train and some really high heels  
and a bouquet of flowers that was the envy of my friends.

**MARÍA.**- And me, remember? I also ran 300 yards.

**CHIQUI.**- Of course! You came in first.  
But I think the 300 yards don't have much importance.  
These are just things in life.

**MARÍA.**- What do you mean no!  
And now Daddy...  
Life revolves around 300 yards.

**CHIQUI.-** Where did you get that phrase?

**MARÍA.-** It's the title of a poem that I want to write for you.

*Darkness.*

*In the country, a springtime dusk, with a ball of yarn.*

**CHIQUI.-** Mom, don't move. You're calm here, huh?  
Are you catching the scent of the grass?  
And the breeze? I really like this soft breeze that's blowing in my face.

**MADRE.-** What are you doing, Chiqui, that we've come all the way here?

**CHIQUI.-** Stretch, stretch out the wool.

**MADRE.-** Isn't this the ball of yarn that was left over from María's little jacket?

**CHIQUI.-** Yes.

**MADRE.-** And what are you stretching it for.

**CHIQUI.-** To see what 300 yards are.

**MADRE.-** Chiqui, please, let's not start that again. I don't like these games.  
Let's go home.

**CHIQUI.-** I have to see the distance, I don't have any idea.  
Everything around me is 300 yards and I don't have a clue what that means.

**MADRE.-** What?

**CHIQUI.-** Continue, please, Mom.

**MADRE.-** Are we ever going to finish?  
I'm tired of holding my hands like this.

**CHIQUI.-** There's only a little left.

*(Silence)*

There. Don't move from there, don't move.  
You see, Mom, the judge was talking about this with the restraining order.  
What do you think?  
One minute and 40 seconds.

**MADRE.-** (*Shouts*) What are you saying? I can't hear you.

**CHIQUI.-** (*Shouts*) That this is 300 yards.

Only this.

Less than what it takes me to... My God!

(*Pause*)

**MADRE.-** (*Shouts*) Are you okay?

But what are you doing?

**CHIQUI.-** (*Shouts*) Trying to see what 300 yards are around my body.

**MADRE.-** Don't make me laugh.

**CHIQUI.-** That's not my intention.

I want to know how the 300 yards of wool feel around my body.

Look how pretty the sun is on the horizon.

**MADRE.-** Why don't we leave this foolishness and look at the sunset?

It's going to be marvelous.

**CHIQUI.-** I'm getting nauseous.

**MADRE.-** Then stop.

The wool is leaving marks on you.

I don't like this game, Chiqui.

Are you okay?

**CHIQUI.-** Please, go around me.

The light at dusk has always been my favorite.

**MADRE.-** Look at how your face is, and your arms.

**CHIQUI.-** Go on, go on, don't stop now, there's only a little left.

**MADRE.-** But you will be hurting yourself a lot.

**CHIQUI.-** Keep going, keep going.

Keep going until you finish the wool.

**MADRE.-** Honey, what are we doing!

**CHIQUI.-** Constructing my chrysalis!

I am transforming into a butterfly or else I will continue being a worm.

**MADRE.**- You made me come all the way out here for this?  
 So that you could feel like a silkworm?  
 You're acting like a fool, honey.  
 And besides we missed the sunset.

**CHIQUI.**- Wait, Mom.  
 Mom!  
 I can't move, Mom, Mom!  
 Now you have to unwind me.

*In front of a mirror, trying on a sweater, with her doll*

**MARÍA.**- How horrible! A sweater for a little girl.  
 I'm bigger than that!  
 Mommy wants me to put it on all the time.  
 Three balls of 300 yards each, it's not a coincidence?  
 I ran the length of one ball of yarn of the sweater.  
 Haven't they realized that I already have a chest?  
 Next year maybe I'll run the length of the entire wool of the sweater.  
 Even though Daddy said that I was very pretty when I put it on for the first time.  
 He looked at me as if I were older.

*(She tries on some of her mother's high heels)*

That's even better.

*(A bra filled with cotton beneath the sweater)*

And like that, much better.

*(She looks at herself, walks imitating models' swaying hips)*

Now Daddy will like me a whole lot more.

*Darkness.*

*In front of the subway.*

**MARÍA.**- Daddy! It's Daddy.  
 Can I say hi to him?

**CHIQUI.**- *(From afar)* What are you doing here?

**ANTONIO.**- It's what the judge marked.  
 300 yards.

**CHIQUI.-** Well, beat it and let me enter.

**ANTONIO.-** I got here first.

**MARÍA.-** Hi, Daddy.  
I got a plus in language.

**ANTONIO.-** Are you coming to give me a kiss?

**CHIQUI.-** Leave the child alone.  
Go into the subway and we'll wait a few minutes.

**MARÍA.-** Let me give him a kiss.

**CHIQUI.-** Be quiet.  
Don't let go of my hand.

**MARÍA.-** It's just a kiss.

**CHIQUI.-** Yes... I know what a kiss is.

**MARÍA.-** And I'll run back.

**CHIQUI.-** Darling...!

**ANTONIO.-** Let the little girl come here.  
I've never done anything to the girl.

**CHIQUI.-** But...

**ANTONIO.-** But what.

*(Pause)*

**CHIQUI.-** Are you going in or are we?

**ANTONIO.-** Just a kiss.

**CHIQUI.-** Should have thought of that before.

**MARÍA.-** And a hug?

**CHIQUI.-** Darling, why do you want to give him a hug?

**ANTONIO.-** Look at what I bought for you.

**MARÍA.**- I can go to get the lollipops.

**CHIQUI.**- I have already told you no.

**MARÍA.**- But, why?

**CHIQUI.**- Fine, are you going in or not?

**ANTONIO.**- I'm staying right here. I am not moving until I can kiss my daughter.  
300 yards to the front of the house.  
You approached.

**CHIQUI.**- We're going.

**ANTONIO.**- Wait!

**MARÍA.**- Wait!

**CHIQUI.**- We're going and I'll buy you a lollipop or whatever you want.

**MARÍA.**- I want Daddy's, I want Daddy's.  
Please, don't be mean, I want Daddy's, Daddy, Daddy.

**CHIQUI.**- Look at what you started.

**ANTONIO.**- Me?

**CHIQUI.**- You knew that we were going by subway to my Mother's house, no?

**ANTONIO.**- If you weren't such a...

**CHIQUI.**- We're going, we're going, we're going.

*(Dragging María along)*

**MARÍA.**- I'm going on strike, Daddy.  
Hunger strike until they let me give you a kiss.  
I'll go on t.v. and they'll let me get near you.  
Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!

*(Dragging María along) Darkness.*

*In the street*

**CHIQUI.**- 300 yards.

I have marked the distance.

Blood and red earth.

Blood from my sex so that it smells like me.

Blood that carries my pain, my existence, my desire.

An animal marking, like he is, like I am.

The first marking on the entrance to the subway one Sunday at dawn.

North.

The second, in the bar where he has beers with his friends.

South.

The third, at the door of María's school.

East.

The fourth, on the corner where he spies on me when I pass by with my purchases.

West.

Sometimes from a distance, I watch.

I look out the corner of my eye, I look again and again to see if he's there, and when I see him I feel ashamed.

I think: oh, he's still thinking about me!

And a pleasant sigh runs through me.

And then I hate myself, I hate myself for my thoughts because I feel like running towards him and telling him that everything is going to be different.

*(To ANTONIO who's passing through)* Yes, everything is going to be different.

*(They hug)*

And he catches and hugs me, and all around there is only a brilliant light.

A very brilliant light that always... that disappears.

I'm an idiot!

*In the bedroom.*

**MARÍA.**- And this?

**CHIQUI.**- A bracelet.

**MARÍA.**- For?

**CHIQUI.**- To eat you whole and get you to ask me.

**MARÍA.**- It has a button.

**CHIQUI.**- But what a gossip this girl is, I am going to kill her with tickles.

**MARÍA.**- No, no, no, I don't want you to tickle me anymore.

Do you wear it because of Daddy?



**CHIQUI.-** It is just that this girl is not going to stop asking questions.

**MARÍA.-** Should we press it?

**CHIQUI.-** No! No, we can't, darling.

**MARÍA.-** And why do you wear it?

**CHIQUI.-** Just in case.

**MARÍA.-** Just in case what.  
Just in case Daddy comes?

**CHIQUI.-** Don't say that.

**MARÍA.-** It's just that that's why.  
You cover your ears and that's that.  
Underneath the bed you can't hear anything.  
Are you going to forgive him?  
The lady says that you have to forgive.

**CHIQUI.-** I know, darling.  
But it's too late. Late.

**MARÍA.-** Then, then, then...  
Aren't you going to let him give you a kiss?  
*(Jumping and singing on the bed)*  
They're going to kiss, they're going to kiss, they're going to kiss.

**CHIQUI.-** Will you stop jumping on the bed for one damn time!  
You are a pest.  
Always saying stupid things.

**MARÍA.-** Mommy, you hurt me!

**CHIQUI.-** Well, stop jumping right now.  
You always have to spoil everything.

**MARÍA.-** If we were playing.

**CHIQUI.-** Well the game is over.  
Do you hear me?

**MARÍA.-** It's my bed and I do what I want.

**CHIQUI.-** *(Spanking on her bottom)* Don't talk to me like that.  
And look at me.

**MARÍA.-** What are you doing to me, Mommy?  
I hate you.

*(Silence)*

**CHIQUI.-** I'm sorry, darling, please forgive me, please forgive me.

**MARÍA.-** Leave me alone.  
I am angry, like Daddy when he doesn't talk to you.

*(Silence)*

**CHIQUI.-** Let's play like before with tickles.  
Make me laugh again. I need it.  
Come here, small girl, I have a surprise for you.

**MARÍA.-** A chocolate from one of the ones with white paper!  
Mommy, you aren't going to leave, right?

**CHIQUI.-** Never.

**MARÍA.-** And Daddy?

**CHIQUI.-** Perhaps he has to go far for a little while.

**MARÍA.-** Even though he asks you to forgive him.

**CHIQUI.-** Even though he asks me a thousand times to forgive him.

**MARÍA.-** Then, I won't be able to have a little brother?  
Huh? Tell me: I won't be able to have a little brother?

*Darkness.*

*On the street, near the house.*

*(MARÍA with her back to ANTONIO and her hands covering her ears, from time to time, she looks at him)*

**ANTONIO.-** One minute 40 seconds to cover 300 yards.  
I always liked to run.

Before opening the garage I ran 5 miles a day.  
 Do you know what I would have time to do in 15 minutes?  
 You can't even imagine!  
 It would give me time, yes, yes, it would give me time, it would give me time.  
 To go up running.  
 What do you think I would do?  
 Tell her that I love her and give her this ring, it's pretty, right?  
 Wait for her answer and leave running again.  
 Less than 15 minutes, less than that I'm sure.  
 You can time it if you want.  
 Those judges are so pampered: would they really know what 300 yards are?

*School's exit.*

**MARÍA.**- Why are you running? You know I'll wait for you.

**CHIQUI.**- I thought I was getting here late.

**MARÍA.**- It's because of Daddy. You're running because of Daddy.

**CHIQUI.**- What do you mean I am running because of your Father.

**MARÍA.**- You don't want him to see you with that Rumanian.

**CHIQUI.**- Don't be a fool.

**MARÍA.**- Why? Why don't you want him to see you with that man?

**CHIQUI.**- I don't care if he sees me.

**MARÍA.**- Has he given you more cuttings?

**CHIQUI.**- Yes.

**MARÍA.**- And why do we want so many?

**CHIQUI.**- I don't know.  
 To plant them, I suppose.

**MARÍA.**- But, are we going to plant them?

**CHIQUI.**- Would you like to?

**MARÍA.**- I don't know.

Is he a poet?

**CHIQUI.**- Who? The Rumanian? No, I don't think so.  
I already told you that he's the gardener at the park in front of the nursery school.

**MARÍA.**- He also told you that the geranium is red like blood.  
My book says that poets say that.

**CHIQUI.**- No, of course not, anyone can say that.

**MARÍA.**- I want to be a poet.  
I don't like how the Rumanian talks.

**CHIQUI.**- He doesn't know how to speak Spanish well.

**MARÍA.**- Is he your boyfriend?

**CHIQUI.**- No. He just invited me out for coffee.  
He is married with two daughters.  
He wants them to come.

**MARÍA.**- That thing on your eye is noticeable, you don't put on your makeup well.

**CHIQUI.**- This morning it ran a little bit.

**MARÍA.**- And what did he say to you?

**CHIQUI.**- Nothing.

**MARÍA.**- Hasn't he asked you how you did it?

**CHIQUI.**- I told him that I fell down the stairs.

**MARÍA.**- Mommy, no one is going to believe that.

**CHIQUI.**- No?

**MARÍA.**- Tell him the truth.  
You always say that you have to tell the truth.  
Mommy, next time don't run.  
You know that I play with my friends until you come and it doesn't bother me.

*Darkness.*

*At the entrance to the house.*

**CHIQUI.-** What are you doing here?  
You follow me all the time!

**ANTONIO.-** I needed to see you.  
See your wounds. Know how you were.

**CHIQUI.-** Better.

**ANTONIO.-** Forgive me.

**CHIQUI.-** Antonio, get out of here right now.

**ANTONIO.-** Won't you let me see María?

**CHIQUI.-** The judge said it.

**ANTONIO.-** But to see her, just to see her.

**CHIQUI.-** Don't come near the school or my mother's house.  
Do you hear me?

**ANTONIO.-** Say hi to her, go out for ice cream.

**CHIQUI.-** You already know what 300 yards are.

**ANTONIO.-** I wanted to tell you I'm sorry.  
Look at me, I'm sorry.

**CHIQUI.-** Don't come any closer.  
Don't come any closer!

**ANTONIO.-** Chiqui.  
You look so pretty.  
Let me see the girl.

**CHIQUI.-** I know how long it takes you to go that distance running.  
I know how long it takes you to cover it at night.  
Without anyone in the street.  
With the ground wet.  
With a shining sun.

**ANTONIO.-** Chiqui, listen.  
I am not crazy.  
Just blind.

Confused.  
 You and the girl are all that I have.  
 I walk around the street to see you both.  
 To feel you both.  
 To smell you both.

**CHIQUI.-** I have put a mark in each direction of the 300 yards.  
 If you cross it, if you cross it again...

**ANTONIO.-** What are you going to do to me if I cross it...  
*(He rubs himself on top of his pants)*

I like you so much.  
 I like you in that sweater.  
 My favorite one.  
 I close my eyes and I smell you and I go crazy.  
 Let me kiss those bruises.  
*(He slowly approaches. CHIQUI sobs in a corner.  
 He touches her breasts, she seems to surrender)*

**CHIQUI.-** Antonio!

**ANTONIO.-** I like you so much.

**CHIQUI.-** *(Very quietly)* Please...  
*(Pause)*

If you cross... I'll report you.  
*(ANTONIO moves away, heated)*

*(Silence)*

**ANTONIO.-** We used to be able to talk.  
 I looked you in the eye and I knew you were listening to me.  
 What happened to us?  
 I miss you so, so much.  
 So you want to work, then work, I only wanted you to understand.  
 Work, but forgive me.

**CHIQUI.-** If only you always talked to me that way.  
 If your words were always so sweet.  
 Antonio.  
 No, no, there you are fine.  
 Don't come any closer, please.

**ANTONIO.-** But if...  
 You look precious.  
 Weren't you just saying that my words...?

I have thought about it, believe me.

**CHIQUI.-** I see, Antonio, but I need time.  
Time, time, time. I don't know how much time.  
I want to think and understand.

**ANTONIO.-** What do you have to understand?  
I see, that's why some fellow brings you home every day, no?  
Because you need to think.  
And what do you think.  
I am the only one who can fuck you, do you hear me, I am still your husband.

**CHIQUI.-** He lives nearby, that's all.

**ANTONIO.-** What happens is that you like him, you like him more than me.  
Fuck!  
*(He grabs her by the hair. Almost mouth to mouth. Breath to breath. A solid look without dread, without fear. It chews desire, competition. CHIQUI's heart jumps from her chest. Then the look explodes.)*  
If I see you with him again! If I see you with him again!  
I swear to you.  
I swear to you.  
*(A punch anywhere, as long as it's not her)*

**CHIQUI.-** *(Very quietly)* What?

**ANTONIO.-** My God!

*(ANTONIO leaves running. CHIQUI follows him with her body, with her voice, with her desire)*

**CHIQUI.-** What, what, what?  
You bastard, dirty bastard.  
Don't come back here.  
*(Crying)*  
Don't come back here or I'll report you.

*Looking at his watch/stopwatch. Out of breath.*

**ANTONIO.-** My God! I'll be damned.  
I did it all wrong.  
I did it all wrong.  
Less than 15 minutes and I didn't even give her the ring.

*(He collapses.) Darkness.*

*Corner of the fence at MARÍA's school.*

**MARÍA.**- The marbles are cool, Daddy.  
Come a little bit closer.

**ANTONIO.**- Your Mother is coming.  
Don't make her mad.

**MARÍA.**- Just a little bit more.

**ANTONIO.**- No, it's better that I stay here.  
If she comes to find out.

**MARÍA.**- I won't say anything.  
I'll be quiet. She told me to tell her.  
To tell her if you approach me.  
That if I stretch out my arm and I can touch you you are doing something bad.  
Why, why, why? I don't understand.  
I stretch it out and I touch you, but I touch you because you're my Daddy.

**ANTONIO.**- I know, darling.

**MARÍA.**- You aren't going to hit *me*, right?

**ANTONIO.**- The things you say, honey.

**MARÍA.**- And Mommy?

**ANTONIO.**- I didn't want to hit her... I pushed her... yes, I pushed her so that she  
would let me pass by and... I don't remember.  
It's that I'm very strong, you see?  
I didn't want to hurt her.

**MARÍA.**- But you hurt her a lot.

**ANTONIO.**- And that's why I want to ask her to forgive me.

**MARÍA.**- Then I'll tell her that.

**ANTONIO.**- No, don't say anything to her. I'll tell her myself.

**MARÍA.**- Then you can come back.



**ANTONIO.-** No. Not yet.

**MARÍA.-** Why?

**ANTONIO.-** You wouldn't understand, you're little.

**MARÍA.-** I understand everything.

I'm older.

Don't you see me?

Come back with us.

Mommy misses you.

She spends the day looking out the window and sometimes she cries, she cries a lot.

**ANTONIO.-** You're going to promise me that you're going to take care of her.

**MARÍA.-** Mario's parents also separated and now he has two houses, two bedrooms, and two televisions.

The same thing is going to happen to me, I am going to have two bedrooms and two televisions.

**ANTONIO.-** I don't know, darling.

**MARÍA.-** Next time remember that the sweets that I like are the red mulberries, not the black ones, and that I like the Snow Barbie better than marbles.

Will you remember?

**ANTONIO.-** Of course, I'll buy you that Barbie and you'll tell me things.

Do you have a boyfriend?

**MARÍA.-** I don't like boyfriends.

**ANTONIO.-** And your Mother, does she have a boyfriend?

**MARÍA.-** No, he's not her boyfriend. He's just a friend that walks her home.

He gives her flowers.

I have to go.

I'm blowing you a kiss and that way I don't lie, right, Daddy, right?

*(To CHIQUI)*

I put myself like that and I didn't touch anybody, I was spinning like that and Daddy wasn't here.

**CHIQUI.-** That's okay.

**MARÍA.-** Don't you believe me?

**CHIQUI.-** It's that from far away it seemed to me...

**MARÍA.-** Don't you believe me?  
Are you calling me a liar?

**CHIQUI.-** No, but I am telling you that from far away it seemed...

**MARÍA.-** You told me that if I stretched out my arm like that and Daddy was there to tell you.  
Don't you trust me?

**CHIQUI.-** And from far, you have seen him, on the other side of the sidewalk or in front, at the cafeteria.  
He has circled the school, right?

**MARÍA.-** You told me that if...

**CHIQUI.-** I know, darling, but I need to know if you have seen him, if he has been near you although you stretch your arm and you don't touch him.

**MARÍA.-** And what if he has been.

**CHIQUI.-** Then, you have seen him?

**MARÍA.-** I haven't said that.

**CHIQUI.-** Tell me immediately, tell me.

**MARÍA.-** You're hurting me.

**CHIQUI.-** Darling, it's important, if something happened to you.

**MARÍA.-** But what is going to happen to me.  
He was only bringing sweets in his pocket.

**CHIQUI.-** You have seen him, you have seen him and you haven't said anything!  
Have you seen him?  
How many days have you been lying to me.  
How many?  
My God, darling, you have lied to me. Up to where has he approached.  
Something could have happened to you!  
To your room without snacking, without juice, without cookies, with nothing, without blackberries.  
You are bad, very bad.  
You lied to me and that is horrible.

Come on, get out of my sight.  
Get out, get out, get out!

**MARÍA.**- I wasn't thinking, I didn't feel like it.  
Let go of me! I don't want to know anything about you.

**CHIQUI.**- Honey!

**MARÍA.**- I hate you, you are very bad.  
Daddy has never hit me.  
He has never hit me.

*Darkness.*

*With her doll*

**MARÍA.**- My mother made the red marks that are in the neighborhood. Keep my secret, please, don't tell anybody.  
She made the marks with the blood that came from her body. I'll have that blood, too, one day.  
Today a mark appeared in the entrance to the school, and another on that side where I was talking to Daddy. I swallowed a lot of saliva when I saw them. All the girls stopped and looked at it, I also stopped and called idiot and sow and pig to the person that had done it and I insulted her like the teacher did: those people don't deserve our consideration or our respect.

**CHIQUI.**- You also insulted him?

*(Throwing ingredients into the blender)*

**MARÍA.**- All my friends did it, Mommy.

**CHIQUI.**- It is very bad to paint the walls, after all, but I don't know...  
Promise me you'll never do it.

**MARÍA.**- Some say it is Mario's Father who writes graffiti asking his Mother to let him come home.

**CHIQUI.**- Poor Mario, it must be bad for him.

**MARÍA.**- It's been days since he's come to school.  
Others say that that graffiti doesn't smell like the rest.

**CHIQUI.**- What do you mean that it doesn't smell like the rest?

**MARÍA.**- They say it smells like a dead animal's blood or something like that.  
It smelled terrible.

**CHIQUI.**- You smelled it?  
Don't tell me that you all smelled a stain!

**MARÍA.**- Everyone was doing it.  
Elena got nauseous and hurred. I almost threw up, too.

**CHIQUI.**- I don't like that you do those things, it seems horrible to me.

**MARÍA.**- What happens is that Mario's father paints them with spray.

**CHIQUI.**- And?

**MARÍA.**- Well then it can't be Mario's father, understand?  
It can't be Mario's father!  
What do you think, Mommy?

**CHIQUI.**- Why are you asking me?

**MARÍA.**- I don't know.  
The principal told us that she was going to find out who it was.

*(Silence)*

**CHIQUI.**- Darling...  
I don't think the principal is going to waste time on such foolishness.

**MARÍA.**- Mommy, can I miss school this afternoon?

*(Silence)*

*(Sound of the blender preparing the food)*

*Darkness.*

*In the kitchen*

**CHIQUI.**- What are you doing here?  
How did you get in here?

**ANTONIO.**- You are torturing me with your marks.  
I came to ask you to take them away. Take them away!  
I am begging you.

**CHIQUI.-** No. They give me security.  
 One mark in each place where you have looked at me from.  
 From where you have spied on me.  
 One mark for each step that you take and approach this house.

**ANTONIO.-** I implore you.  
 I rely on them because they hold your scent.  
 Your marks make me horny.  
 Where you put that painting smells like you.  
*(Turns around the kitchen)*  
 I'd like to paint one on my chest.  
*(Throws things)*  
 So that when I masturbate, I'll feel that you are with me.

**CHIQUI.-** Get out of here.  
 Leave my things.  
 My sewing basket.

**ANTONIO.-** Last time you didn't let me explain myself.

**CHIQUI.-** You already did that in front of a judge.

**ANTONIO.-** But it's to you that I want to explain.

**CHIQUI.-** You have approached the girl without permission.  
 You have told her to lie.  
 And now you present yourself here again without permission and you touch everything.

**ANTONIO.-** She is my daughter, too.

**CHIQUI.-** Don't go near her again.  
 Don't talk to her, don't give her things.  
 Don't circle her school.  
 I am going to mark each corner where you are.

**ANTONIO.-** You're afraid of me, huh?  
 If you slap the girl's butt again...

**CHIQUI.-** She lied to me.  
 Leave and I won't say anything.

**ANTONIO.-** Why, I am your husband, I love you.  
 For better and for worse, you have already forgotten.

**CHIQUI.-** I have to inform if I see you.

They come and ask, they know that you aren't keeping the distance.  
The other times I haven't done it, but now...

*(By the bracelet)*

**ANTONIO.-** Wait.

I am not going to do anything to you.  
I just want to hear that you forgive me.

**CHIQUI.-** That I cannot do.

**ANTONIO.-** You won't forgive me?

*(Silence)*

Don't you have anything to eat?

**CHIQUI.-** No.

**ANTONIO.-** It's been three days since I've had a bite.

Three days thinking about you and the girl.  
How foolish things become without thinking.  
A little bit of bread and a little bit of cheese.  
That cheese that you spread on me when you came home from work.

**CHIQUI.-** No, no, no.

**ANTONIO.-** You always had cheese in the refrigerator.

Look, here it is.

**CHIQUI.-** Don't grab that cheese, don't touch it, leave my things, go, go.

**ANTONIO.-** Let me stay one little moment.

Here I feel good.  
How rich! You used to call me pig when I ate it with my finger.

**CHIQUI.-** Leave all at once, please.

**ANTONIO.-** Go on, tell me it one more time. Call me pig with that voice you used to make.

**CHIQUI.-** No, I don't think so.

**ANTONIO.-** Call me it one more time, Christ! *(Hit)*

*(Silence)*

Now, now, now, I'm not going to do anything. Forgive me, forgive me.

**CHIQUI.-** All I want is for you to leave us in peace.  
You just don't understand it.

**ANTONIO.-** You just don't understand it.  
You haven't repented not even for a moment.  
You haven't been sorry for leaving me.  
You haven't cried not even one day.  
Me, everyday.  
Everyday.

**CHIQUI.-** And if I have cried, what.  
I don't want to repent, not now, now I can't.  
Go, María is going to return in a moment or two and I don't want her to see you here.

**ANTONIO.-** I'm sure you're waiting for María.  
Or you're waiting for someone else, the one who gives you those things you have here.  
Do you think I didn't paid attention to that shit?  
I don't know why you're trembling and why you're not looking at me.  
Look at me, Christ, I don't bite.  
Don worry, I'm not going to throw things at you.  
I have promised you the same things other times.  
But this time it's serious.  
Believe me.

**CHIQUI.-** They were all serious.  
Each time you got down on your knees, you kissed me, and I always believed you.

**ANTONIO.-** I am not going to touch you, I am not going to touch you.  
This is different.

**CHIQUI.-** Please, leave me in peace.  
I'm wearing a bracelet, one of those that you press and they come.  
Five minutes.  
It's no joke.

**ANTONIO.-** Shhhh  
Shhhh  
Quiet, quiet.  
Beautiful.  
I smell you and I feel alive.  
Chiqui...  
You... if you smell me.  
I wouldn't be able to stand it to let anyone else smell you.

*(Glued to one another)*

What have you done?  
 But what have you done to me?  
 Chiqui, my God.  
 You've peed on me!  
 You are disgusting, Christ!  
 You've drenched me!  
 You are crazy!  
 Crazy.

*Darkness.*

*She's mixing soil and blood in an earthenware tub with her hand, while she paints a mark on the door of her house.*

**CHIQUI.**- 300 yards.

Pray for us.  
 300 yards.  
 Save us.  
 300 yards.  
 Sanctify us.  
 300 yards.  
 Protect us.  
 300 yards.  
 Don't abandon us now nor in the hour of our death.  
 Amen.  
 I have woven a net of marks. Like the wool around my body.  
 A chrysalis.  
 Now there is no remedy.  
 Maybe I should not have done it.  
 Isn't this how I dig my grave?  
 I am Antigone, she also marked her own grave with soil.  
 I paint this mark and I feel liberated, each mark is like winning a battle, but at the same time it's having lost it, what's left to be marked now?  
 you've been here, too, bastard!

*(She paints a mark at the entrance to the house)*

*MARÍA making a wooden construction.  
 (With her doll)*

**MARÍA.**- The religion teacher told us the story of Moses the other day in class.  
 It's a very nice story filled with symbols.



He said that the Jews' houses were being marked with blood to save someone, the first-born he said, which means the oldest.

My house is also marked.

Mommy says it's to save us.

I told my teacher that I should be a Jew.

That my Mother had put a mark of blood on the front door and in the kitchen.

He didn't believe me.

He told me that for a while I have been inventing things, that I have a lot of imagination.

I have to tell Mommy to talk to the teacher and have her tell him it, surely he will believe Mommy.

Could it be that it bothers the teacher that I'm a relative of Moses?

*Between the kitchen and the school fence.*

**MARÍA.**- How many flowerpots did you buy?

**CHIQUI.**- Four.

**ANTONIO.**- Four flowerpots?

Why so many.

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* That's what I said.

What do we want so many flowerpots for, Mommy?

**CHIQUI.**- Look at all the cuttings that we have.

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* In every corner there's a glass with cuttings.

**ANTONIO.**- In every corner?

What do you mean in every corner.

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* Multiply five cuttings a day by ten days.

That's 50 cuttings and ten glasses.

A kitchen filled with life.

**ANTONIO.**- Filled with shit, you should say.

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* She put them in the window.

Four cute flowerpots with geraniums.

**ANTONIO.**- Geraniums?

Geraniums become lovely in the spring.

**MARÍA.**- That's what he told her.  
With a little bit of water.

**ANTONIO.**- Why does he give her cuttings?  
Why?

**MARÍA.**- Well, because he's a gardener, Daddy, why else would he?

**CHIQUI.**- And soil, we need a bag of soil.  
These are red geraniums.  
Red like blood.  
Like fire.

**MARÍA.**- (*To ANTONIO*) There were red ones like blood, red ones like fire.

**ANTONIO.**- Why do you say those things, do you like to?  
Maybe your Mother likes those things said to her.  
I never said anything like that to her.  
Red like blood.  
Like fire.

**MARÍA.**- Maybe he's a poet.

**ANTONIO.**- Does he touch her? Kiss her?  
My God, I'm sure. I'm an idiot.

**MARÍA.**- Oh, Daddy. Be quiet.  
Mommy laughs with him.  
She says that he speaks badly and she laughs at how he pronounces words.  
She's going to teach him how to write.  
And he gives her cuttings.

**ANTONIO.**- But what are you saying, where does she teach him, what does she teach him.  
Forget it, forget it... don't tell me.

**MARÍA.**- (*To CHIQUI*) I don't like that man.

**CHIQUI.**- He's just a friend.

**MARÍA.**- I don't like his moustache.  
Or his face. He doesn't speak well.

**CHIQUI.**- He's from another country and he doesn't speak Spanish well.  
This one's for you.  
It's white.

**MARÍA.**- I don't want it.  
*(To ANTONIO.)* There was one for me.  
 A white one.

**ANTONIO.**- And she lets you plant the cuttings from a stranger?

**MARÍA.**- Daddy, it's only a plant.  
 Geraniums are pretty.  
 We saw them in a book, now that we're studying the parts of plants.  
 Everyone has geraniums in their window.  
 Mommy brought some to the nursery school, too.

**ANTONIO.**- But that doesn't stop him from being a stranger.

**CHIQUI.**- Plant it here.  
 First a little bit of soil.  
 You make a hole and you place the cutting.  
 It's simple.  
 Now more soil.  
 All the way up.  
 Slowly.  
 Oh! Careful!

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* We laughed a lot.  
 A little bit of soil fell out.  
*(To CHIQUI)* I don't want to plant it.  
 I don't think so.  
 I don't want anything from that man.

**CHIQUI.**- It's just a flower.  
 And now water, a little at a time.  
 So that it's well-saturated.  
 So that the first flower grows.

**MARÍA.**- *(To ANTONIO)* I pressed the soil tight so that the cutting wouldn't move.  
 My fingernails got filled with dirt.  
 I was excited.  
 It was nice.

**ANTONIO.**- Nice?  
 It never would have occurred to me.  
 My God! It never would have occurred to me that you both liked planting cuttings.

**MARÍA.**- It was like a new life.

**ANTONIO.-** Did she say that it was a new life?  
Or did you say it.

**MARÍA.-** Her or me.  
It was a new life, right?  
It was being born.  
I'm sure I said it.  
No, it was Mommy, she wants a new life.

**ANTONIO.-** A new life? A new life?

**CHIQUI.-** Go on, take it, didn't you say that you wanted to take one to school?

**MARÍA.-** I'm not going to plant a Rumanian cutting.  
I don't want a new flower to sprout.  
I don't want a new life.  
I wanted a little brother.

**ANTONIO.-** So?  
Without me?

**CHIQUI.-** Look, this one already has a bud.  
Soon the flower will open

**MARÍA.-** *(To ANTONIO)* It was nice, yes, very nice.  
When you come by, look, they're in the kitchen window.

*Darkness.*

*CHIQUI puts on a jacket that has a red stain on the upper part.*

**CHIQUI.-** María!  
But, what did you do, María?

*(MARÍA, wearing the jacket her mother made her, appears with her doll, both also marked)*

**MARÍA.-** *(Reciting)* 300 yards.  
Save us.  
300 yards.  
Sanctify us.  
300 yards.  
Protect us.  
300 yards.

Don't abandon us now nor in the hour of our death.  
Amen.

**CHIQUI.**- What have you done?, what have you done?

**MARÍA.**- It's the poem, the poem that I told you.  
You made the stain and I have made a poem with it.

**CHIQUI.**- How can you say that you have made a poem?!  
You have ruined it! I don't have another jacket like this one.  
And look at you!

**MARÍA.**- We are us, us!  
If you stretch out the stain it's 300 yards.  
I live my life within 300 yards.

**CHIQUI.**- How can I go out with this stain?  
If everyone looks at me now with this...

**MARÍA.**- Put on it one of the geraniums that sprouted, they're red  
red like blood.

**CHIQUI.**- Do you realize that you have ruined it, that I am going to have to throw it  
away?

**MARÍA.**- You don't understand anything, Mommy.  
It's our flower on top of our 300 yards.  
The one that you and I planted, a new life.  
Do you understand now?

*Darkness.*

*In the kitchen.*

*(MARÍA writes)*

**MARÍA.**- Spring composition:  
The other day Mommy and I planted geraniums at home and they already have  
flowers. My geranium has white flowers and my Mommy's has red. Her's is  
named: A New Life. And mine, too. I thought that those names didn't exist, but  
Mommy told me that there is a flower that's called forget-me-not. I have touched  
the soil of the flowerpots and it is dry, so now I'm going to water them. Mommy  
doesn't let me climb up to the sink to water the plants, but I like to. All the

windows have flowers and the house is dressed in lots of colors, as Mommy says. Some flowers are budding and others have opened the flowers a little bit. I sang to them Chenoa's song, "when you go, I return from there," Mommy says that if we sing, the plants will grow faster. I really like Chenoa. When I looked down, that was when I saw Mommy. She was coming with the shopping bags and I called out hello to her, I think she saw me because she looked at me, mad. The geranium on top of my poem looked good. Then I saw Daddy going towards her. Mommy dropped the bags. Were they going to hug? Would they kiss and make peace like me and Jaime? My heart skipped a beat. I was happy for them. That was when I shrieked, I heard a deep shout coming out from inside me, shattering the window. I saved my face because I covered it up with my hands. I refused to look. I thought: surely I would have gotten a ten if I can turn in the spring composition that they asked us for at school. But she can't turn it in.

*Walking in the street with a screwdriver and in his work overalls.*

**ANTONIO.-** That morning I hadn't thought about seeing her.  
I had made a new resolution.  
A resolution to do better, the priest who called told me.  
"Your sins are forgiven you."  
I doubted it but I needed to believe him.  
I went to look for a few spare parts in front of our house.  
The ring in my pocket, just like every other day.

**MARÍA.-** Mommy!

**CHIQUI.-** María, what are you doing? Don't lean out!

**MARÍA.-** Do the geraniums look pretty from there?

**ANTONIO.-** The geraniums?  
I looked up and I saw the flowerpots. Four.  
I looked at María.

**CHIQUI.-** María, please, get inside.

**MARÍA.-** Lots of flowers are spouting.

**ANTONIO.**- Four flowerpots with geraniums.  
Red like blood, that phrase came into my head.  
And one white one, in the kitchen window.  
María, my dear!

**CHIQUI.**- Antonio!

**MARÍA.**- Daddy!

**ANTONIO.**- Then I saw the mark.  
The mark was on her.  
She was wearing it on her clothing and above it, a flower, one of those flowers,  
I'm sure!  
A Rumanian geranium!  
But what have you done?  
I squeezed the screwdriver to give myself courage.  
I was feeling insecure and I wanted to give her the ring.

**CHIQUI.**- I am marked, too, Antonio!  
I live my life within 300 yards.

**ANTONIO.**- Take this... I have wanted to give you it...  
What are you looking at?  
She looked at the screwdriver, I'm an idiot! I don't know why I brought the  
screwdriver with me.  
Then she dropped the bag and pressed the bracelet, she pressed it without a doubt!  
I saw in her face the fear and in mine I felt surprise.  
The ring rolled to her feet.  
She looked at me.  
I looked at her and this time I hated her.  
I hated her for not believing me  
I hated her for not giving me another chance.  
I hated her for going out marked.  
I hated her for making a fool of me.

**CHIQUI.**- (*Picks up the ring*) Antonio, what is this? Did you buy it...?

**ANTONIO.**- Chiqui!  
And now I don't remember anything else.  
When I felt the heat of her blood on my hands.  
I noticed that Chiqui gave me the geranium that she was wearing.

**CHIQUI.**- Put it on top of our 300 yards.

**ANTONIO.**- I looked towards our kitchen and now there were no red geraniums.  
There was nothing.

Nothing.  
Nothing

**POLICÍA.**- That's okay. Sign the statement.  
*Darkness.*

*At the door to the school.*

**MARÍA.**- Are we going to see Mommy?

**MADRE.**- Yes.

Why are you bringing her geraniums? They are not the most appropriate flowers.

**MARÍA.**- And why not?

**MADRE.**- Because where we are going you have to bring another type of flower.

**MARÍA.**- I like these.

**MADRE.**- That's fine.

What did they say about your poem?

**MARÍA.**- The teacher said that a poem is written, that mine was a picture because it didn't have letters.

I told her that it had many, that it had many letters, but she didn't understand it.

**MADRE.**- I don't know much about that, but it is possible that your teacher is right.

**MARÍA.**- But it's that, yes, it has letters, what happens is that you can't see them.

**MADRE.**- But, dear, if your teacher has told you.

**MARÍA.**- Grandma, the other day she explained to us that in one drop of blood is practically written our entire history.

Our illnesses, what we're like.

Everything.

Then why can't my stain have many hidden words?

Like blood

Why?

**MADRE.**- I don't know, darling.

What did you say your poem is called?

**MARÍA.**- Grandma, don't you remember?



I live my life within 300 yards.

*Final darkness.*