

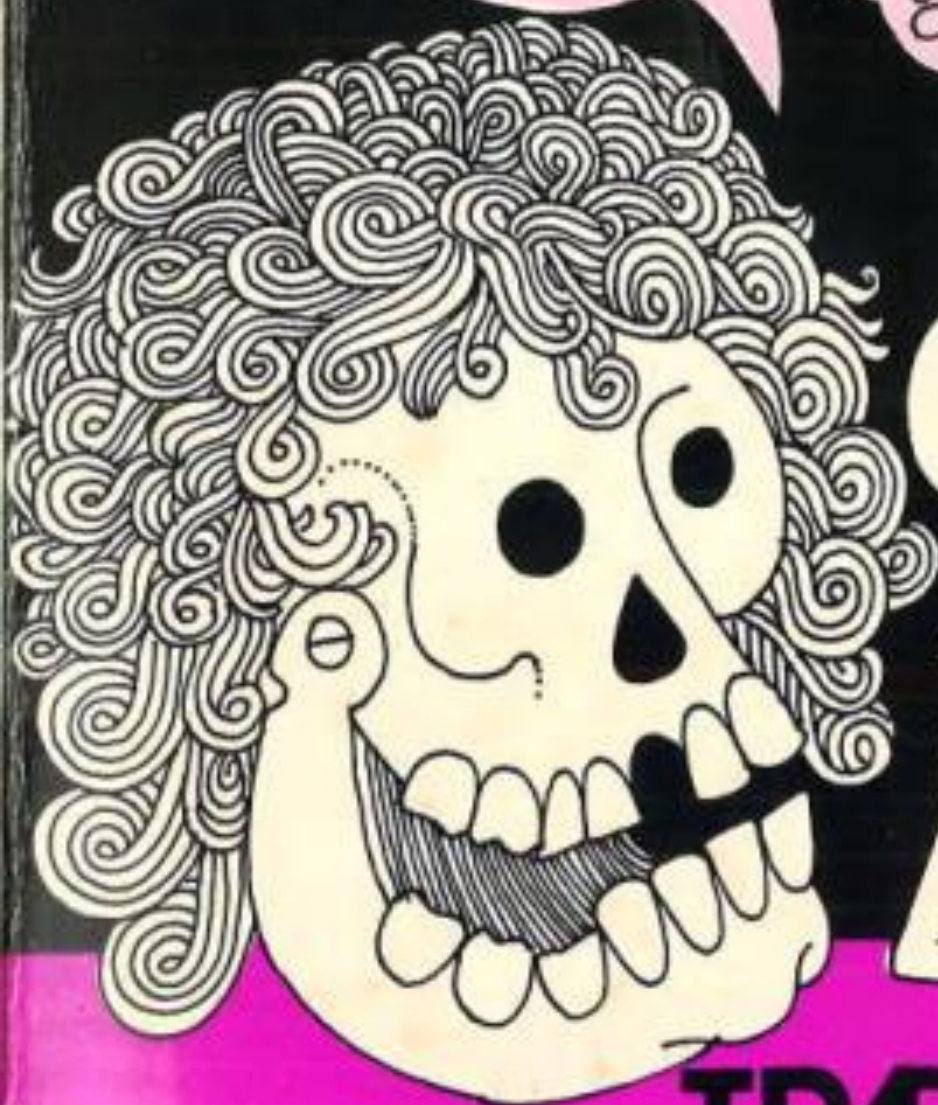
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CUANDO TU ESTUVE A TU LADO
TENÍAS PELO Y DINERO,
PERO AHORA QUE ESTÁS
PELADO
PARA QUÉ DIABLOS TE
QUIERO

AUNQUE MUY COLOCHAS
Y YO PELÓN, PELONETE,
LAS CALACAS COMO VOS
A MÍ ME PELAN...
LOS DIENTES



TRADICIONES D GUATEMALA

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TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA

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DEATH IN POPULAR TALES OF GUATEMALA: GENIOUS AND FIGURE

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Introduction:

Folklore tales in general are part of the spiritual-mental culture of a town therefore they carry a centuries-old tradition passed down over the years. That is why folklore is the receptacle where the most genuine and authentic values of a society are protected and recreated. With the specific purpose of knowing more about this values that reaffirm the national identity of the Guatemalan people here is an anthology of the tales where death is the main character.

In many regions of the world and different cultures death have been for people an enigma, concern, curiosity and an anguish. It has the same importance as life itself, that is why man has turned it into an object of worship and ritual. In the same way, the idea that a town have about death is reflected in the popular tales where death appears, in general it appears in two different forms: As an adversary or as a supernatural helper. Which means that alluded death in tales can have a benevolent nature or an evil nature, you will see all of this during de recompilation. In one way or another in tales, death is presented under a physical appearance and its relation with man is always open and direct.

1. Stith. Thompson. El cuento folklórico. (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, Ediclones de la Biblioteca. 1972), p.

With this recompilation we pretend to share between Guatemalan people the treasure of popular tales they have and at the same time they can appreciate and apply them in the educational field. Long story short children and adolescents are expected to learn and reflect at school about the content of the popular tales of Guatemala and as adults they can remember and retransmit a literature that they already knew from ancient times through oral tradition. In this way it is important to emphasize that the following anthology follows a specific goal: It is meant for casual readers not only meant for specialized readers of oral literature. That is why in the transcription of the tales have been removed the use of catchwords and other repetitions typical of the informant's own speech in order to make the reading of the texts easily and comfortable.

This following tales have been taken from the archive of literal folklore of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos* of the *Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala*, which is the holder of a wide range of popular tales recollected in the inside of the country. To date there are more than 1426 tales recorded in an oral way from different informants and therefore they are part of a traditional undeniable rich heritage and built an own patrimony of the Guatemalan people.

1. The rich buddy and the poor buddy

They were two buddies, one of them was poor and the other one was rich. They lived a little more or less than a mile away from each other. The poor buddy lived thanks to the rich buddy who gave him a job, he did not have enough money to makes ends meet because he had a lot of kids.

He kept working every day until one day he was very tormented because the money that the rich buddy was not enough for him so he talked to his wife:

- Look babe, prepare me a lunch because I am about to go where I earn my living, where I find God to see how we can keep our family up because as you see we are very poor. You will keep nothing no but God first I will do it well.

- But look babe -says his wife- you will have only *tortillas* because There is no more to eat.

- Just tell me, where are we supposed to get it if there is nothing?

His wife was sad because he was about to leave. She prepared his lunch but their poverty demanded.

He started walking to the city, walked that much that started to feel hungry. He arrived to a valley and there made a fireplace and started to heat up his *tortillas*, suddenly he heard a man coming. He got scared because his food was very humble and said:

- What are you doing here, son? – Said the man.

- Well, I am here, taking my lunch.

- Look, son give me a tortilla,

He stared at the man and said:

- Who are you?

- Son, I am God.

- Huh, Are you God?

- I am.

- Look sir, I will not give you anything.

- Why?

- Because you make some people rich and other people poor like me.

- I am glad son; I hope you do well. God bless you.

He went on his way. Arrived into a place where he was supposed to sleep, it was still daylight, about five o'clock in the afternoon, he started a fireplace and heated up some water and his *tortillas* when an old lady came from the way and said:

- Son, what are you doing here?

- For God's sake ma'am, I am walking over here looking where I can find a job because I am very poor.

- Oh God, son I am doing the same, I am hungry, in fact I am starving.

- And Who are you?

- Look son, I am the death

- Look ma'am, I will give you food, come eat here with me because you give equal. You take with you either poor or rich, in fact for you there are no rich and poor, if it is time you take them with you. That is why I love you; you are equal.

Then the death ate with the walker and said to him:

- Son, where are you going?

- I am looking for a job because I am very poor.
- What kind of jobs can you do?
- Oh ma'am, I only can work with hoe, pickaxe and cut firewood. That are the kind of work I can do.
- For God's sake, son! Those jobs are poorly paid.
- But what can I do? Those are the jobs that I can do.
- Look, as a reward for the food you gave me, I will give you the virtue to earn money.
- What kind of jobs I can make to earn money?
- There is a place where a rich man who is very sick lives, you will go to an old lady's house and ask her to stay over her place that night, then she will tell you that near her house lives a man who is very sick, you will tell her that you can cure him so she will notify the sick man that a man who really can cure anyone is there.

He went to the old lady's house. Asked to stay overnight and started talking, during the chat the lady said:

- Here is a very serious disease.
- What type of disease?
- Such and such diseases. Right now, so-and-so is very sick.
- Well look madame, I understand some things about medicine, I have cured some people before and it went well.

The death told the walker that when he arrived where a sick person is, if he looked from foot, the sick person will die but if he looked from the header the sick person will cure. That was the sign he had.

They called the walker very soon to the sick man's house as a healer, they said:

- Sir -said the man's daughters- My dad is very sick and we want you to see him and gave him some medicines.

Then he said:

- Excuse me, I will see him.

Then they let him get in. Since he came in, he looked at the header of the bed and told his family:

- Your father is healed; he will not die.
- Well look, if you rescue out father, we will give you all the money that you want.
- I do not charge any more that my job. You can give me whatever you want.

He started to work and, in a few hours, the sick man started to feel relief. Long story short the sick man got healed. When he got cured the family thanked lots and lots to the healer and told him:

- How much do we owe you?

- Whatever you want to give me, I will receive it.

- They kept asking about the price of healing their father was but he did not want to tell them. They paid him the right amount. That is how he kept healing sick people for months.

When he had a good amount of money he went back home and told his wife:

- I am back and I bring some money with me so go and call some builders and tell them to build me a good house. I will go back to work.

The next day he went back home, left the money in his house for the building of his pretty house and kept working and working.

When he was capable, he went back home. On the other hand, the rich buddy missed that the poor buddy was not with him but he did not visit the poor buddy. Once the poor buddy went home with money, good furniture and was not poor anymore goes and tells his wife:

- Look babe, God already blessed us, go and kill some chickens and let's invite our rich buddy who even if he was miserable helped us so we will correspond him.

They prepared a great feast, invited their rich buddy and his wife. The rich buddy was curious, the poor buddy sends a godchild to invite the rich buddy to the feast, he goes and said to his wife:

- Let's go, let's see what our buddy prepared us, I am sure that he got a job and that is why he have not come in a while.

The poor buddy already had a good corral with good cows and great beasts. When the rich buddy arrived, he did not see a farmhouse but instead he saw a pretty house, he got amazed by looking at his buddy house. The poor buddy walked to see his buddy and his wife but they did not recognize him anymore because that poor people now were wearing suits.

The rich buddy was curious and it was not a pleasure for him instead it was a displeasure for him to see that his buddy was not poor anymore. Even the feast did not go well for him because he was more worried about asking his buddy how he got all that money.

- Let's eat buddy -said the poor buddy- and I will tell you everything.

Then they ended their food:

- Well buddy, take me out of doubt, tell me what kind of job you found in order to get all that money, how did you get all that cash?

- Look buddy, it is a pretty simple thing that I learned.

- What did you learn buddy?

- Well, I had to look for a job and earn some money, my needs forced me to do it, I started as a healer with some things that I know using some herbs, I cured ill people and it worked. Now I can cure ill people buddy, I have the virtue of putting my hands on the people that can be cured but at the same time if they cannot be cured, I do not put my hands on them. That is the way I have cured people; I have this knowledge. God was the one who gave me this knowledge, I put my hands over the ones that can be healed and I tell the truth to the ones that cannot be healed because I know who will die and who will be healed.

- I am glad for you buddy.

The rich buddy gives him a handshake as a joke, they said goodbye to each other. The rich buddy went home but, in his way, he was talking to his wife about their buddy knowing about medicine:

- He does not know anything; God knows what he was doing out there and what he did to earn that money but I am so sure that he does not know anything about healing.

They kept walking and talking until they arrived home but the rich buddy was envious about his buddy so goes and tell his wife the next day:

- Look, you have to pretend to be sick and I will call my buddy and tell him to check that he is lying.

- Fine, I will pretend to be sick and you will go and call him.



111 : Ma ... a nos pios de la cania.

- Good, you just do not have to move when my buddy arrives, you only have to complain a lot.

And it was like that, the next day the rich buddy goes and call his poor buddy, telling him that his wife was very sick and he needed to see her. In that moment the poor buddy walked with his rich buddy to his house, they arrived where the rich buddy's wife was, she was covered with a blanket.

- Buddy, since last night she was complaining and now she is very sick.

- That is true buddy, your wife is very sick.

- I know, I want you to heal her.

- Look buddy, I am very sorry and I do not want to tell you this but your wife will die in a few minutes, now I will leave to call my wife so she can see her one last time, she only has a few minutes of life.

At the moment that the poor buddy left to call his wife, the rich buddy came in the room and started to moving his wife:

- Hear what this crazy man said, now can you see that he does not know anything?

He started to moving many times his wife but she did not wake up.

- You fell asleep, wake up and hear the lies of our buddy.

She did not wake up, he grabs her and realized that she was already death, he went out of the room and yells at his poor buddy:

- Buddy, buddy! Come back buddy, my wife died, your buddy is dead.

The poor buddy went back.

- What happened buddy?

- My wife is dead; she was healthy but now she is dead as I told you.

I tell you this tale because you never have to make fun of a buddy of yours.
(Inf. 1)

2. The godchild of death

Once upon a time there was a poor family, man and woman. This family had a child, a boy. But the husband of this woman was very poor and humble and

looking at “that time” and nowadays that all the people is incapable and he wanted a very fair godfather.

So, he told his wife how difficult is to find a good man in this world.

Then he told her that he will go to search one in other places until he found the one he wanted.

They were so poor but with the food they had she could prepare her husband some *memelitas* so he can go and find the buddy he wanted.

The next day he started walking that much he found the first person who can be his buddy, this man, possible new buddy asks him where he was going. He answered that he was looking for a buddy to take his godchildren to the church and baptism him but he needed a person who is fair and will give him anything and serve his buddy.

This person now replies him and told him:

- No one but me can be your buddy.
- Good but first I want to know your name and who you are.

This person replies:

- Well, I am Jesus, I can go with you.
- No.
- Why I cannot be your buddy?
- Because you are not a fair man.
- Why not? Give me your reasons.
- Because you created rich people and poor people, you were not fair.
- Well, I cannot go with you for that reason then.
- No.
- Keep looking then.

He kept looking. The next day found another person and that person ask him the same thing, who were you looking for?

Then he answered that he was looking for a buddy to take his child to the church and baptism him. This person replies to him too:

- I can take him, if you want to.

Then he replies:

- But you have to tell me who you are and what is your name.

Then he replies:

- I am Peter the fisherman.

Then he replied:

- You cannot take me either buddy.

- Why do you say that?

- Because you open hell's doors for ones and take others to the glory, you are not fair in that way.

- If you consider that I cannot take you, keep going.

The next day he found another person, this person makes him the same question:

- Who are you looking for?

- I am looking for a buddy, I have been looking for him for over three days and still cannot find him. Tell me now, who you are and if you want to take my child to the church.

- Good, he says.

- Who you are?

- I am the death.

- Well, that is good.

- So, you are looking for a fair person.

- Yes, that is why you can take my child.

- Really? Why do you say that I can take the godchild?

- Because you are completely fair, you do not look over faces, skin colors, poor and rich, you take with you all of them.

- Now I see.

- So, will you take him?

- Of course, but I want you to know where I live, the place where I stay. Close your eyes a little bit and you will see.

He closed his eyes and started to see big rooms with big lights on a row that shine with a big splendor while other ones were turning off.

He stared more in the inside and the Death told him:

- Buddy, let's see more in the inside, you have not saw the best yet.

He kept looking at the lights turning on and off, In the inside the death told him:

- You have to wait a little more until you dilate and you will see what will happen and then you will see where I live. So, meanwhile I will take lunch and you will wait for me.

It started, first they served him a big plate of rice, in that plate there was some pins, they also served food to his buddy, the death. They started eating, the death had to eat putting a pin on each rice grain until he finished that big plate of rice.

That was the sentence that the death gave him in order to be patient and do whatever he thinks.

The buddy replies to the death:

- Oh no! you will take a long time with that; thousands and thousands of years will pass and you will not finish that little bit of rice if you keep eating it putting a pin on each rice grain.

- Oh, you do not have to worry about that, everyone has to come with me, sooner or later they will pass with me.

At the time the death told him that he finished eating.

.- Well, you know what? One day this godchild will recognize his godfather that is me, the death, when the day comes you have to visit me as the buddy that you are to me and look for me to keep this conversation.

- Good.

- Well, close your eyes again.

And he closed his eyes again, suddenly they were once again in the place where they met.

The days passed, they took him to the baptistery and baptized the child.

Six years had passed when the death remembered his buddy and said:

- It is been a long time since I baptized my godchild and I have not seen him, he also has not come to see me and I did not as well but I will go and see him.

The death was approaching to the buddy, he had not many time left so his buddy the death had to tell him to get ready for that.

The death arrived and told his buddy:

- Buddy, since we baptized my godchild, you have not looked for me or visited me to make me any question.

- That is so true, I forgot the address I really cannot remember it.

- It is fine, let's do this instead, I will take you again and maybe you can remember it.



cyllau auz, rann can li ci a ci v. rann go 5 iardana mae

The death took him to the same room that they had been the first time, that room full of lights and oil candles. It was the same thing, a lot of lights in a row, ones turning on and the others turning off, ones apparently happy but the others being each time sadder. The death was waiting for his buddy to make any question.

The buddy kept staring at two lights that were shining and others that shine that loud that all the room got illuminated but also there was another light that seemed slept like it was completely sad.

Then he asked to the death:

- Buddy, what is inside of all these lights?
- Look, just to not let you with the doubt I will explain you:

All these lights that you are seeing, are you the humans who has to die. While you are alive these lights have to be shining but at the time that you die these lights have to turn off, each person is a light.

- Really? What about all that lights that look sad?
- Those have enough life; they have a lot of years until they die.

He kept making questions and looking to other lights and told the death:

- Come to see this, here is a light that seem sadder than the others and next to it other that shines brighter than the others. Who will be that light?

- Buddy, I do not want to tell you this but that light that is so big that reflects its light in all the room is your son, my godchild.

- Is he? -replied with a smile- My boy has enough life then.
- But what about the other that is next to it? That one who seems sadder.
- I do not want to tell you this but that light is yours, you only have one week left to visit me again and stay with me completely.

He got sad and grieved right after to hear that.

- Oh, I do not want this, I got really sad and regret to came here again with you because I did not want to know when I will die but look buddy, Is there a way to do something? A deal between you and me.

- Huh, what do you mean? -Replied the death.
- Taking out a little bit of oil from my son's candlestick in order to give me some more years in earth and taking some from him.

- Ungrateful! Why are you looking for a fair man to take your child? No, it is impossible, you cannot play with the law, it is made to be complied. You must enjoy buddy, go to dance, sing, jump and enjoy all your pleasures, make trips and spend all the money you have because in a week you are coming with me and my godchild will have a lot years to live, that is how life works, how lucky is your son but you for being evil that will be your reward.

That is how this tale ends. (Inf.2)

3. The poor man and the death

There was a man who was really poor and had a lot of children that cannot afford things. He was about to get crazy because of his poorness. He was thinking of go and ask God for help. He told his wife:

- Look, I am leaving. Prepare me a lunch, a pot of water and kill a chicken because I am traveling far from home.

His wife prepared his lunch and killed the chicken, he got ready and prepared his suitcase and left home. He walked a lot, some time after walking he felt hungry so he made a fireplace in order to heat up his chicken because it was already cold, his piece of chicken was pretty big and had a very good smell that a woman felt it and came close to him and told him:

- Look, I am very hungry, please give me a piece of chicken.
- If you tell me who you are I will give you a piece of chicken.
- I am the virgin.
- Well, I will not give you anything because you gave me a lot of children and did not gave me the money to afford them, that is why I will not give you anything.

- Fine, that is completely fine.

She turned around and left. A little later an old man came and told him:

- Oh, do you mind of giving me a piece of chicken?
- Who you are?
- I am your lord.
- I will not give you anything neither.
- Why you will not give me?
- Because you are not fair.
- Why?

- Because you know that I am very poor and I have many children and you do not give me anything to afford my necessities.

- It is fine.

He turned around and left. Sooner a woman came and told him:

- Oh! What a delicious chicken smell!

- Really? Did you feel the smell?

- Yeah, I felt the smell. Why don't you give a *tortilla* with a piece of chicken?

- If you tell me who you are I will give it to you.

- If I tell you, who am I? I am the death.

- Look, I will give you a tortilla with chicken.

- Fine.

He split a piece of chicken with a *tortilla*.

- Well, now you have to go back home.

- No! I am not going back, what am I supposed to do with my children? They are starving and there is no food to give them.

- You do not have to worry about them because since today I will help you with that. But first we have to do something so people will not suspect of you; I will give you this idea: you will start as a doctor.

- All right! How am I supposed to do that?

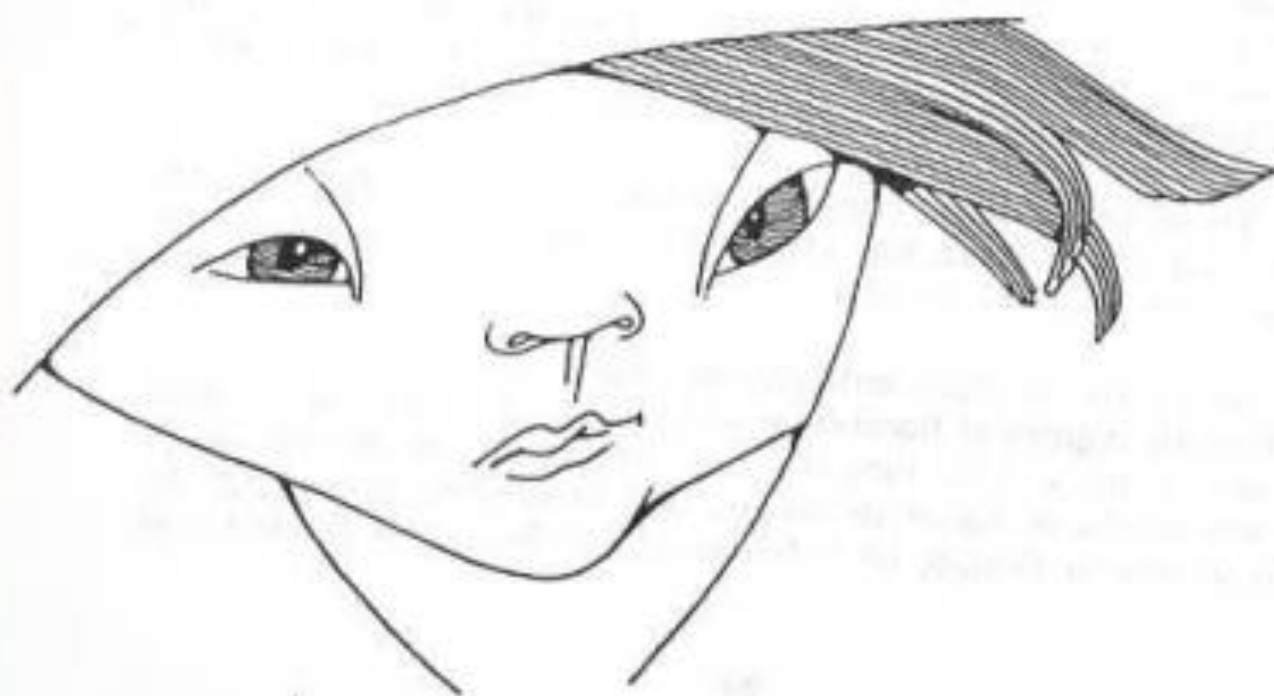
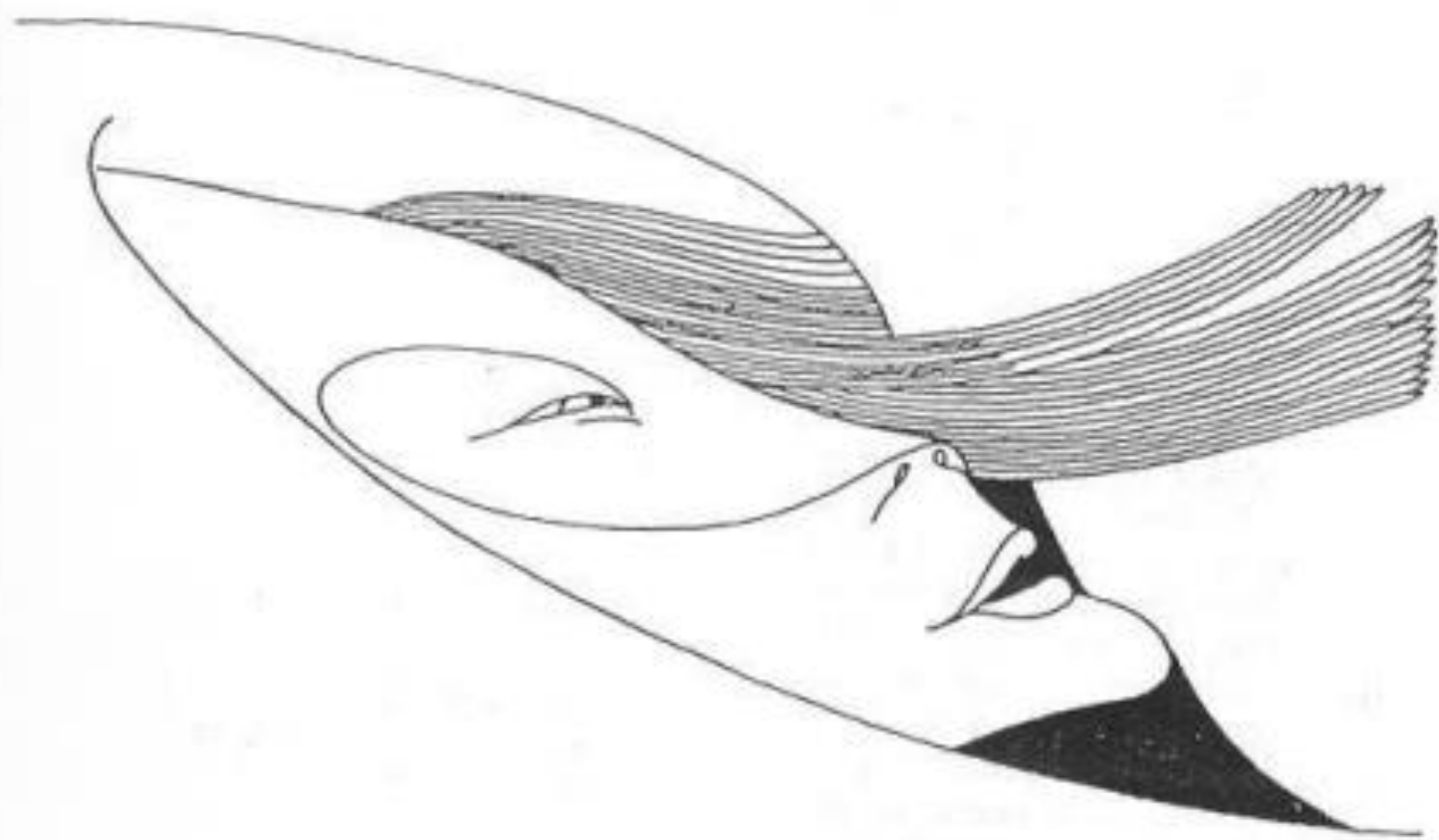
- I will tell you how to be a doctor but you have to go back home tomorrow. When the sun rises go to a corner in your house, I will leave you a bag with money, but in order to people will not find out about your richness I will tell you how to be a doctor and you will be that.

- How I will do that?

- I will tell you now: When they call you to see a sick person, look at me, if I am in the header, it means that there is a hope to that person be healthy again but if I am in the foot, you must tell them that the person is leaving because that person will die.

- Fine - he replies – Now I will go back home.

Back home the man did not say a thing about his deal with the death. The next day when the sun raised, he was sleeping in his house and in that corner, there was the bag with money. He felt happy about it and at the same time they called him to see a very sick person.



He already knew so he asks for permission to see the sick person.

- Come in – they told him – Please come in.

He came in the room and saw the death in the header. The family of the sick person were already crying because they thought he will die.

- Done – He says to the family – You do not have to worry; he will not die. If you want to, I can make something to help him.

Oh, it is fine, do something to help him maybe a remedy, at the end of the day he will die.

They say that he went for some leaves.

- Boil this water.

He knew that even if he did not do anything he will not die but he gave him the medicine.

- I will see you later.

They called him once again because the sick person started to feel well and wanted something to eat.

- You do not have to worry – he told them – He is already healthy, there is no more to do about it.

That is how he kept healing more and more people. Someone who had the death on his foot and was about to be gone was a very rich man who also was a buddy of him.

- Look, so-and-so was so poor, my buddy was very poor but now he is so rich and everyone can notice that.

- Of course! – Replies the woman - He knows how to heal people, that is why he is so rich.

- Look we are going to this; I already know that he does not know anything about medicine so I will pretend to be sick and you will look for him.

- Fine, I got it.

So the man pretended to be sick, very sick and his daughters were faking tears because he apparently was very sick.

They went to bring him to see their dad.

- What happened? – he said.

- Shut up and look how sick is so-and-so.

Him, of course was pretending to be sick. But his buddy came and saw the death on his foot.

- Oh, my dear! You must prepare because the death is walking for him.
- How is that possible? Replies the woman – Is not possible that so-and-so will die.

- It is possible, prepare yourself because he is about to die.
The surprise was that huge that the woman got surprised as well. That man died! Just for trying to know if everything his buddy was doing was a lie, that is how this tale ends. (Inf. 3)

4. The man and the death

There was a family very poor, the owner of this house, the husband of this poor wife had a lot of children but did not have a job or any money, shoes or clothing. Life was not going well for him, one day he goes and tell his wife:

- Well babe, I am leaving, trust me I am leaving.

This poor man was that disappointed, sad and desperate that kept telling his wife:

- Look, trust me that if I find the death, I would punch him in the face and if the death tells me to go with him, I would go with him.

Well, the man went out and walked and walked and walked asking for a job on this way, asking for a job on that way, asking for this and asking for that, asking for help and no one would provide him with help but no one would help him.

Well, when it was nightfall and he was already tired, he arrived home and his wife, well, she was a very supportive woman, a woman with the kind of character that, -there are many women that instead of disappointing a man, they encourage him to go on-. Well, this woman was one of them. Well, she asked him:

- How are you doing dear, how have you been doing?

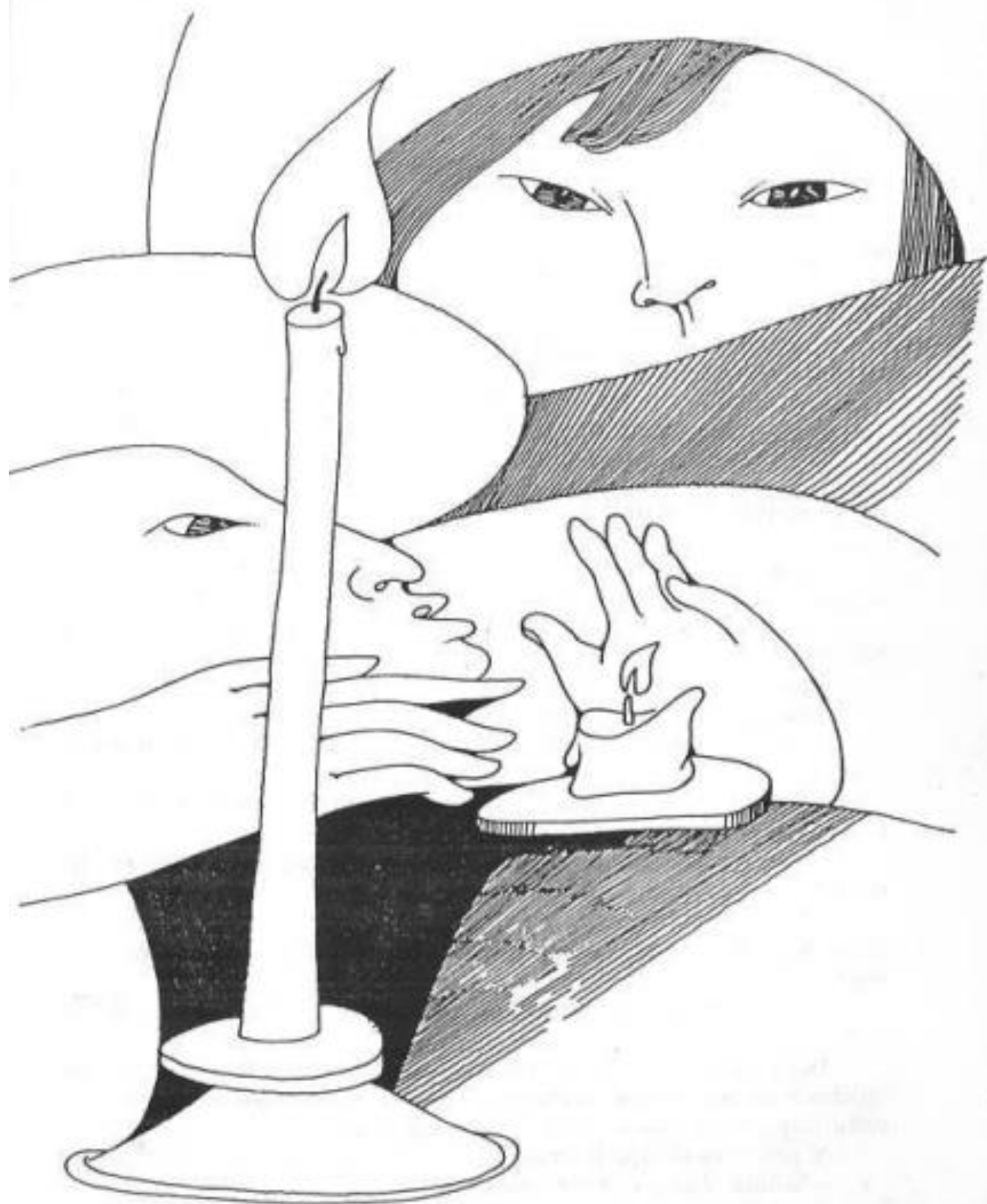
- Oh God, if I told you. No, I would rather not tell you.

- But how did it go, dear, if you did not get a job, maybe you will get one tomorrow, if you do not get one the day after tomorrow, and so on. Well, someday you have to get a job.

Well, actually, I did not find a job, I did not find anything, and now my children are barefoot, they have nothing, well, I do not even know what to do.

Well, the night came and the man was tired of walking so much, he decided to go to bed and then he was sleeping when he heard the door creaking and “rchchch, rchhhh”. The door opens, Holly crap, he yells and opens his eyes and suddenly he sees a skeleton there.

- Son of a bitch, what is this?



como el fuego de la vida, que se enciende
en el momento de la vida.

And death starts and says to him:

- Give me your ass and I'll give you your basket, give me your ass and I'll give you your basket.

And as death was singing and was getting closer to the bed and the man could no longer take it anymore and said to the death:

- Fuck you, I can't even joke with you anymore!

And the fucking bastard of death sat down.

- Yes, I told you that as a joke, but not seriously.

I ride on a horse so you can tell me another one." (Inf. 4)

5. The godson of death

A lady had her son and she was very poor, she didn't dare to go out, so, she said to her little son, the oldest she had:

- Come on, son, go out into the street and the first one who passes by, whether it is a man or a woman, the first one who passes by, tell him to come here with me, to come here and have a little chat, here with me.

- Well, said the little boy.

And he went out to wait there and a woman was coming, and she was the first one...

- Good morning, ma'am. My mother said that you should be so kind as to go to hear a little thing there in the house.

- Hail Mary, son, said death, and why did she tell me to do it?

- Because she told me that the first one to pass by, whether it was a woman or a man, and since you are the first one to pass by, I tell you.....

- Well, son, that is the way I like it when you do your errands the way you are told to do them:

The lady (death) entered the house, there was the lady with her little boy who wanted to baptize him, but she did not dare to go out because they were very poor, she had no clothes to go out.

And then she (death) said to her:

- Madam, what do you need me for?

- Well, look, ma'am, I want to baptize my little boy, but I cannot go out, I am very poor.

- Oh, well.

- And since you... do me a favor.

- With pleasure, I will baptize him, do not be embarrassed.

I am going to talk to the priest right now, and in a little while I will bring him back.



And she went to talk to the priest and in little later:

- I am going to bring the child, I am going to baptize him.

So, he took him with him. Well, they did the baptism, he came to leave him with his mother, the little boy and he grew and grew. Death went to see him every two, three days, she went to see him, she brought her little gifts to the boy, to the little boy. He grew and grew. Well, when he was a big boy, a man, death said to him (to the boy's mother):

- Look, madam, I want your son to learn a job.

- But, oh madam, in what way, if I, with what am I going to pay for a teacher to teach him, if I am very poor?

- No, no, I just want your will, I am going to take your opinion and I am the one who will get along with him.

- Well, if that is the way it is, it's good.

- Well son, she said (death to the young man), you are going to learn how to cure the sick, you are going to learn that job. Now there is a sick person here in town, there is a sick person and he is seriously ill.

Go and see him and when you go to see a sick person, only you will be allowed to look at me, when I am in my head, you put your hand on the sick person. And then, you look for herbs and boil the herbs and give them to the sick person to drink "and with that you will feel relief"; but when you see that I am in the feet, untie them, no, do not touch him, he will die, he will die in a few days, he will die in a few days. That is it.

Well, it was him, the young boy, the little boy, he was still a little boy, he went to see the sick man, death told him where he was, he went to see him. Ah, he began to cut the herbs, he made some water with them and gave it to the sick person to drink.

Listener: Does that mean that death was in the head?

Informant: In the head, yes, yes, yes, in the head.

Oh, then the little boy felt relieved, after a while he was well.

They began to trust him, to believe in him, and then, wherever there was a sick person, they would call him.

But suddenly, he was healing and when he looked at the godmother (death) in the feet, he was telling them that the person was going to die, that was hopeless, when he looked at her head, at the godmother (death), he was healing her.

Suddenly, a man was trying to make a fool of her:

- And what he is supposed to know (the child) - he said - And what is that child going to know about healing? -He repeated, "Go on, get sick," he said to one of his daughters, "pretend to be sick and let's go and see him, to see if he knows.

And the daughter got sick and they forced her to go to bed and she moaned and moaned and moaned and moaned and moaned and moaned and the boy came to see her and went to look at her and went to feel her pulses and everything.

- But she wasn't sick," he said," but for teasing me, I came to see her and now she is going to die and she is going to die in an hour.

Listener: Where was the death?

Informant: Death was there. He only looked at the godmother (death) who She only looked at the godmother (death) who was on her feet.

-The girl was not sick, but now she looked sick and she is going to die, so she is going to die.

And the girl died, because the godmother was there.

Then he looked... as soon as he came to see the sick person, he would look to see where the godmother was.

the godmother was. If it was on the head, ah, then he would put his hand on it, he would say: If it was on the head, ah, then he would put his hand, he would say:

- This person is not going to die and he would cure her with some water, there with some herbs.

And when he looked at the godmother's feet:

- No, he said, it is hopeless, this person is going to die.

Even the time that the person was going to die he gave, as there was the godmother.

That is the story of the godson of death (Inf. 5).

6. The godmother

As the old stories say, that this was a very poor man, but God helped him by having a son. When the child was of a certain age, he said:

- Who will be my son's godfather, for I have no friends here.

And taking the child, he went walking, walking, walking, to look for the godfather that corresponded to his son. After walking for some time, a venerable man appeared, with a good beard, dressed in white, with a very noble look, and asked him:

- Where are you going? -said the old man.

The man answered:

- To find a godfather for my son.

And the one he found said to him:

- If you want, it is me.

The man answered:

- And who are you?

- I, I am God.

- Ah, you are God.

Thinking for a moment, he said to him:

- No, you are not suitable for me to be my son's godfather, because you are not fair, you have poor, you have rich, you have lame, you have blind, you have one-armed, and no, you are not complete, you are not fair. You do not suit me, so I will see you later.

And he continued on his way with his son in his back.

After walking for some time, another man appeared, very well groomed, dressed in black and asked him:

- Where are you going?

And he gave him the same answer again.

- To look for a godfather for my son.

- If you want, that is me.

He asked him the question again:

- And who are you?

- I am the devil.

- Oh," he said, thinking about it," no, it does not work for me. With you, everyone who makes a deal loses, you are very clever, you are full of traps and I do not think it would be in any way favorable for you to be the godfather of my son. So, I will definitely not accept you as my son's godfather. See you later!

And he continued walking. After walking for a long time, an old lady appeared and asked him the same question:

- Where are you going?

The man answered:

- To find a godfather for my son.

- Too bad, I am a woman, but if you want, I am his godmother.

-Well, whether you are a woman or a man does not make any difference to me, what I need is for my son to have a godmother or a godfather.

-Well, if you want, I am his godmother, as I keep telling you.



" " - valej - m. sera: m. compadre

- And who are you? - he asked, - wondering about what he had found before.
Then he said to her:
- I am death.
- Ah, you are death. It suits me and I accept you as godmother of my son.
- But why do you accept me and you did not accept God or the devil?
- Because you are just, you with traps and without traps, good, bad, lame, blind, you do not respect, you grasp equally and if the moment you are just, you suit me so that you are just also with the life of my son.” (Inf, 6)

7. The grape vine and death

“Once upon a time there was an old man who was about ninety years old. This old man was too poor and he had, well, twelve cents. And he was going to buy three loaves of bread, one of those white loaves that used to be sold in the old days.

When he was about to eat the first loaf, a little boy came along and said to him:

- Sir, will you give me one of the three loaves of bread that you have?
- Yes, with pleasure, the old man said and gave him the loaf.
- Thank you very much, sir, said the boy and went away.

Later on, a little old lady came along and saw him eating, She asked him for another loaf of bread, and asked him if he would give her a piece of bread:

- I will give it to you whole, even if I stay hungry, but I will give it to you.

And he gave the old lady another loaf of bread. The old lady went away very happy eating the bread.

When he was about to take a bite of the other bread, a little old man came along and asked him if he could give him a piece of bread too; so, the old man said yes:

- Now I am about to go and eat roots because I have nothing to eat.

And the old man became reflective. At that moment a little old man and said to him:

- What is the matter with you?
- He said, look, I had three loaves of bread and I just gave them to three people.
- And you do not recognize me? -said the old man, I am one of those people

which you gave a loaf of bread, what do you want me to give you?

- Oh, I am very hungry.

- Well, I am going to give you a bag, the bag of desires, and in that bag will go everything you ask for, so that it will take away your hunger.

- Oh, thank you.

After a while, a lady was passing by with a big basket of quezadillas, then the old man said:

- Let that basket of quezadillas come to the bag.

Then the bag swallowed the quezadillas and there they stayed. And well, he made up for it, he ate that day. Another day he came to one of those public piles where there were those colorful fish, red fish, blue fish, all kinds of colors, and he said, "Let those fish come and fry:

- Let those fish come to the sack already fried.

So, in that way, that is how he was living. But then he became generous, and a boy arrived and asked him what he wanted, because the boy had also been favored with bread.

- I, instead of bread, can give you something.

- Is that true?

-Then what do you want me to give you (said the boy to him)?

- I want you to give me a grape vine, so that only the one I want can climb it and the one I want can climb down.

At that moment a grape vine began to grow, and all the time it was loaded with grapes. After a while, the old man arrived and said to him:

- Do you not remember that you also gave me a loaf of bread? What do you want me to give you or to give you?

- I want to have eternal life or to die when I want to.

- Well, you have it granted to you.

After a while, St. Peter was fighting with the devil because this man was an impertinent man on earth, because the old man would not die, and it was time, because he was already over ninety years old and they wanted him to die, and St. Peter and the devil were fighting because, one because he was defending him, the other because he wanted to take him away. Then the devil said to St. Peter:

- Look, why not let me go to earth to try to bring him to me.

- It is good.

Then the devil arrived, Knock - knock! with the door:

- Who is it? - (asked the old man)

- I have come to bring you (said the devil).

- Go ahead.



A morte grande atropada por la planta de car

Then:

- Let the devil come to the bag!

Then the devil went to the bag, the old man tied his mouth to the bag and grabbed him by the handful.

- Let me go! Let me go! Let me go! - said the devil to him.

Well, the devil ran out of there in a panic, because of the big beating the old man gave him. When he got to hell, he went to tell St. Peter about the beating the old man had given him.

- Now I am going to leave him to you," said the devil, I do not want that man here.

- I am going to send for him (said St. Peter).

Then St. Peter came and sent for death. And death came knocking at the door:

- Sir, sir, sir, he said to him.

- What do you want?

- I came here to...

- Who are you?

- I am death. Well, I've come to bring you.

- That is good, come in. -Come in. Look, do you want to eat grapes? They are delicious. Come up, come up (to the vine).

Then Death climbed up on the grapevine.

- Now you cannot get down from there.

And death stayed on the grape vine. That is why there was a time when people did not die, because no one could get down from there, because no one could get down from the grape vine, and St. Peter went about calling death and apologizing to the man, asking him to let death go. At last, he granted, then, that death should go away.

Eventually the old man said:

- I want to die, I am already old, and here suffering, no one wants me on earth, because it is trouble for me, to live so long.

Then he went to hell, there he arrived in hell and touched the door:

- Knock - knock!

- Who is it? It is the old man who beat me up on earth, said the king of devils, let him go away from here!

- Oh, they do not want me anywhere. Then I am going to Glory.

He arrived at the Glory and St. Peter was there, he said to him:

- What do you want?
- I came from the earth.
- Ah, then you cannot enter here, because you remember that you brought me up to death on the grapevine.
- What is going on there, Peter? -The Eternal Father said to him.
- The Lord wants to come to Glory, and I will not let him enter here.
- Well, he does come in, because he was the man who fed us on earth. (Inf. 7)

8. The vain rich man

There was a very rich man, but rich, rich, rich, rich. One time he called his engineers, four of them, to draw up plans for a new building he was thinking of constructing. The engineers were drawing measurements and lines to make a plan, when one of the employees came in.

- Sir, sir, sir! the operator across the street who was working on that building has been killed.

- What a fool, what a jerk, for not paying attention to where they stand, these things happen, you idiot, imbecile Oh what fool, this boy!

- Sir, said one of the engineers, no, it's not like that, death puts an obstacle in our way, without a doubt death, the little bony woman came to him, moved the scaffolding and boom, he went down to the ground because it was his turn.

- Engineer, what a pity that you are an intellectually advanced man, and pardon the expression, but you are too stupid, a brute, how can you think that it was death, engineer? - (said the rich man)

- Sir, you called me a brute, stupid, whatever you want, but that is the way it is, nobody dies the day before, they die when God wants them to. Death came and shook those (scaffolds), more or less what I think.

- Ah, it is an absurd thought, silly. What do you engineers say about that?

- Well, we believe the same thing, that when the time comes, one can no longer escape, it came, the big hairy one came, it says: I am taking you because I want you to go.

Well, at that time they rang the bell.

- Go, go and see, he says to the employee.

The employee runs out, and when she opens the door, she sees a tall, tall, ugly, dry, pale woman standing at the door, she is surprised:

and says to her:

- Madam, what do you want?

- Is the gentleman in?

- Yes.

- May I come in? I need to talk to him.

- Just a moment, I will announce you. - Sir, at the door is a tall, thin woman, she does not seem to be a friend of mankind.

- It must be some starving woman, one of these wretched women who only roam the streets starving for a penny. Tell her that I have no time to attend to her; I am too busy.

The employee went and told her:

- Madam, the gentleman says that he cannot wait on you, he is very busy.

- Tell him to attend to me, I am not here to wait for me, he should attend to me because if he wants to wait for me, and if he does not want to wait for me, he will wait for me.

She comes back and says:

- Sir, says the lady, that if you want to attend her and if not, you will always attend her anyway.

- What an idiot, what a brute, how daring this wretch is. Go to the door and hit her with your own door, throw her out into the street.

The employee ran out, there was the lady, she came and closed the door with force and she felt very well that she had hit her with the door and that she had blown her to the street. She came in laughing her head off and said:

- Poor lady, I think she must have fallen to where the dead man was.

Liar, she said, carrying it on her back.

When that voice shouted at her like that, the employee fell down dead, the engineers got up and ran to pick her up, and the woman said to them, she ordered them:

- Leave that lady alone, nothing has happened to her, I want to talk to the gentleman.

- But what are you doing? Go away, you have already killed my employee from fright.

- No, she will be back, do not touch her, sit down and relax. Go and talk to this man; can you see that this worker has just died?



me lo llevé al cesto y le dió una apretada:

- Yes.
- That worker?
- Yes, for being a fool, for being a fool, who does not pay attention to where his feet are.
- No, no, let those thoughts go away. You think that with money you can remedy things, you are wrong, remember that we have a death, and that death comes to us sooner or later. Money should not deify us for anything in the world, we should always be ordinary, condescending, be good, help those who are in need, you said I was a hungry person who went around begging. No, you are wrong, I never beg, I do beg, but I beg for souls and now I come to beg for yours, your time has come.
- Who are you to dare to say that to me?
- I am death.
- Death! But what do you want with me? You cannot see that I am a wealthy man, that I do not even know what money I have.
- I am not interested in money. The Lord has sent me to send you to go with that worker I just took with me, he's already on his way. So, get ready, you are going with me.
- But are you threatening me or what?
- I do not threaten anyone, I only know that when it touches me, I just give a tap, a blow or whatever I want and it goes away.
- Gentlemen, are you hearing the threat of this skeletal? This is a skeletal wretch who dares to threaten me in my own house.
- Tell me whatever you want, speak as you wish. As I told you before, you think that with money you can remedy everything, and you are wrong. Money is a deception, it is necessary because it is needed to live life, but we should not feel great when we have a lot of money, even if we do not have enough, we should always be consistent, kind, because you see, look, you are making a plan, you are making big buildings, but you forget that I was coming for you, right? you did not think about it.
- Look, I give you two million dollars or quetzales to distribute among the poorest, but let me live.
- No, I am not used to sell myself for nothing, the Lord has sent me to take you, and go, you have wasted my time, you have ten minutes left to die.
- Gentlemen, you are witnesses of this woman's threat.

Those engineers were completely mute, no one dare

Nobody dared to look up, they were completely frightened, the woman who had fallen dead was already completely recovered, just watching the dialogue between death and the rich man.

- Well, look, look at your watch, five minutes have passed.
 - Listen, I want to ask you a favor, now I am not going to offer you money, I am beginning to believe in you.
 - I do not care if you believe in me.
 - Give me thirty days to fix my things.
 - The life you have lived has been enough to fix them, how is it possible that now you are asking me for a deadline? I do not give anyone a deadline, and you have three minutes left.
 - Listen, are you really threatening me?
 - I am not threatening, I am here to tell you the truth, you have two minutes left.
 - Gentlemen, you are witnesses.
 - Do not give me witnesses, I do not accept them, you have one minute left.
- Moments later, the man fell completely dead. The engineers stood up and death disappeared instantly. (Inf. 8)

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE AUTHORS

1. Francisco Javier De la Rosa García

He was born in the Correlabaj hamlet of Chiticoy village, municipality of Rabinal, department of Baja Verapaz. He lived 20 years in Correlabaj and then moved to Chiticoy.

He has worked in Petén in the gum industry. He currently works in agriculture on rented land, where he grows corn and beans “for expenses” and “the little that is left over” for sale.

He is married to María Atonia Vásquez, with whom he has 11 children. There are currently 5 people living in his house.

Mr. De la Rosa García never went to school and does not know how to read.

He heard the story 25 years ago in Petén.

2. Manuel Esquivel

He was born in Zacapa. He is 72 years old. He has lived for 22 years in Cabañas, municipality of Zacapa. He has lived in other municipalities



Manuel Esquivel, from the village of San Vicente, Cabañas, department of Zacapa.



Augusto Garnido García, storyteller from the village of El Florido, Municipality of Sanarate. Department of El Progreso.

from the same department of Zacapa.

He studied two years in school. He is a bricklayer. His family is composed of 8 people. He was president of the pro-reconstruction committee of the church of San Vicente Cabañas.

3. Augusto Garrido Garcia

He is 58 years old. He was born in the village of El Florido, Sanarate, El Progreso. He works only in agriculture and has very little land of his own. He attended school for 7 years and therefore knows how to read and write. Four people live in his house.

The informant explained that the story he told is “very old”.

4. Oscar Alvarado

At the time of the investigation, he was 38 years old. He is He is originally from Antigua Guatemala, department of Sacatepéquez, but now lives in the capital of Guatemala City, He knows many trades: painter, shoemaker, bricklayer and carpenter. He currently works as a messenger. Many of the stories he knows were taught to him by his father, Porfirio Quintanilla.

5. Eulogio Martínez Ríos

He is 82 years old. He was born in La Reforma, municipality of La Democracia in the department of Huehuetenango. He currently lives in Rancho San Antonio Bella Vista or “Los Amoladeros” in the municipality of Comalapa, state of Chiapas, Mexico.

He worked as a tailor, but now works exclusively in agriculture, where he grows corn and beans, mainly for consumption. He is a widower and has 3 children. He never went to school, although he does know how to read and write.

He heard the story many years ago in Comalapa, where he lives. where he lives.

6. Carlos Humberto Anquer Sánchez

He is 52 years old. He was born in the capital city. He has dedicated himself to several trades. He belonged to the aeronautics in times of the presidency of General Don Jorge Ubico. He is currently



Bernabé de Paz, Narrator of Sansare, department of El Progreso.



Oscar Alvarado, in a folk tale session in Colonia San José El Esfuerzo, zona cinco, Guatemala City (photo credits: Mauro Calanchina)

deprived of liberty at the Granja Penal Canadá, in the department of Escuintla. Escuintla.

He told the story of La Madrina that he learned many years ago.

7. José Gilberto Orellana Rosal

He is a high school teacher and teaches at the Institute of Basic Education in the Zacapa Extension. Six people live in his house: he, his wife and his children, who study.

8. Bernabé De Paz Manrique

He is 55 years old. He was born in the municipality of Sansare in the department of El Progreso. He lived approximately 35 years in Puerto Barrios, Izabal. He studied up to the 3rd year of primary education.

Currently he is dedicated to business, agriculture and cattle raising.

farming and cattle raising. For many years he was an employee of the railroad. In his house live 6 people: he, his wife and his four children.

TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH TRAINING OF THE TALES

1. THE RICH BUDDY AND THE POOR BUDDY

Place of research: Chiticoy Village, municipality of Rabinal, department of Baja Verapaz.

Date of research: April 16, 1980

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R.

Phonogram No. 1274. Cassette N. 289 and 290, sides 2 and 1.

Transcription: Claudia Dary Fuentes.

2. THE GODSON OF DEATH

Place of the investigation: San Vicente Cabaras village, municipality of Ca-baños, department of Zacapa.

Date of investigation: September 25, 1977

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R.

Phonogram N. 411. Cassette N. 99, side 2.

Transcription: Vilma Fialko

Proofreading: Claudia Dary Fuentes.

3. THE POOR MAN AND DEATH

Place of research: El Florido village, municipality of Sanarate, El Progreso.

Date of investigation: July 1977

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R.

Phonogram N. 335, Cassette N. 80, side 1

Transcription: Paulina Marambio

Correction: Claudia Dary Fuentes

4. THE MAN AND DEATH

Location of the investigation: Colonia El Esfuerzo, zone 5, capital city.

Date of investigation: September 30, 1975

Compiler: Celso A. Lara F.

Phonogram N. 28. Cassette N. 10, side 1

Transcription: Claudia Dary Fuentes

5. THE GODSON OF DEATH

Place of the investigation: Rancho San Antonio Bella Vista or “Los Amoladeros”, municipality of Comalapa, state of Chiapas, Mexico.

Date of investigation: October 16, 1979

Compiler: José Ernesto Manzón

Phonogram No. 1220. Cassette 273, side 1

Transcription: Claudia Dary Fuentes

6. THE GODMOTHER

Place of research: Granja Penal Canadá, Escuintia

Date of investigation: August 22, 1978

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R

Phonogram N. 785. Cassette N. 174, side 1

Transcription: Anantonia Reyes Prado

Correction: Claudia Dary Fuentes

7. THE GRAPE VINE AND DEATH

Place of research: El Jícaro, El Progreso

Date of investigation: November 23, 1977

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R.

Phonogram N. 489. Cassette N. 120, side 1

Transcription: Anantonia Reyes Prado

Correction: Claudia Dary Fuentes

8. THE VAIN RICH MAN

Place of research: Sansare, El Progreso

Date of research: January 1977

Compiler: José Ernesto Monzón R.

Phonogram N. 312, Cassette N. 71, side 2

Transcription: Paulina Marambio

Correction: Claudia Dary Fuentes

VOCABULARY

Bastimento: provision of food that the peasant, especially the indigenous, takes to work or when traveling, the indigenous, carries to work or when traveling.

Caite: coarse leather sandal worn by the peasants.

Chamaco: name given to children or young people in the neighboring republic of Mexico.

Dilatar(se): to delay.

Guacal: utensil used to pour water. It differs from the palangana because of its smaller size and shape.

Hacer la cache: to try, try or be able to do something.

Jalar la pita: to treat someone, consider or sympathize with someone.

Jodido: Used in several senses: a) annoyed and b) naughty, demanding, or bad person, c) very capable or intelligent individual, and d) as an expression of affection.

Example: "Este jodido es buena gente.

Memela: Large, thick corn tortilla. -

Menear: to move.

Nene or nenito: child, creature.

Palo: tree

Pelona: death

Pirona: abusive, shameless or pedigreed

Pisto: money

Quezadilla: sweet cake, prepared with rice and wheat flour, butter, sugar, eggs and cheese. The dough is put in oblong pans and once baked, it is sprinkled with sugar and flour."

Ser parejo: to be fair, just and equitable.

Tecomate: Legendaria leucantha (Lam) Rusby. Creeping Cucurbitaceae.

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1. Daniel Armas. Diccionario de la expresión popular guatemalteca. (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1971), p. 37.
 2. Ibid.. p. 45.
 3. J. Francisco Rubio. Diccionario de voces usadas en Guatemala, (Guatemala: Editorial Piedra Santa, 1982), p. 106.
 4. Ibid., p. 123.
 5. Ibid., p. 145.
 6. Ibid., p. 193

whose fruit has the shape of an eight and when emptied it is used to carry liquids to the field, generally covered with a piece of olote. Simply dried, they are used as floats for those who cannot swim. (...)

Zacate: grass, bush or plant.

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7. Ibld., p. 222.

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