
NO FIXED
ADDRESS

THRESHOLD 7

No Fixed Address

There is a moment in the life of some people when geography stops being a map and becomes an experience.

Until that day the world exists in books.

In photographs.

In the stories of others.

In the news broadcasts.

Then, suddenly, it stops being a piece of news and becomes a road to travel.

For me it happened slowly.

There was no special morning.

There was no epic phone call.

There was no announcement capable of dividing life into a before and an after.

There was simply a door that opened.

And behind that door was the world.

When you leave the place where you grew up, the first thing you lose is the illusion that your way of living is the natural way of living.

It is a healthy shock.

Until that moment you believe that what you saw around you represents normality.

Then you arrive elsewhere.

And you discover that other normalities exist.

Other rhythms.

Other values.

Other fears.

Other hopes.

And they all have the same dignity as yours.

At the beginning I observed.

I listened.

I tried to understand.

Every country seemed to tell a different version of the same human story.

The languages changed.

The faces changed.

The habits changed.

But the questions remained surprisingly identical.

How do you build a family?

How do you earn respect?

How do you protect what you love?

How do you face the future?

Every time the question was different only in its accent.

Never in its substance.

I remember the sense of wonder I felt entering cities that until the day before existed only on paper.

Airports.

Stations.

Hotels.

Meeting rooms.

Restaurants.

Streets.

Anonymous places that became chapters of my life.

Many think that traveling means moving.

It is not true.

Traveling means changing perspective.

You can cross a continent without learning anything.

Or you can cross a single street and come out of it transformed.

It depends on the eyes you look with.

For years I thought it was I who was observing the world.

Then I discovered that the world was observing me.

Every culture acts like a mirror.

It gives you back a different image of what you are.

In some countries I learned patience.

In others adaptability.

In still others discipline.

Every place handed me a lesson I did not know I had to learn.

And every time it left inside me something that had not existed before.

When you live abroad for a long time a curious thing happens.

The word "home" changes meaning.

It no longer coincides with an address.

It no longer coincides with a city.

Sometimes it does not even coincide with a country.

It becomes something more mobile.

Deeper.

Harder to define.

Home becomes what you manage to carry with you.

The principles.

The memories.

The people you love.

The stories you keep telling.

Everything else can change.

I have lived long enough in different countries to understand a simple truth.

Human beings resemble much more what they fear.

They fear being forgotten.

They fear losing those they love.

They fear failing.

They fear pain.

They fear time.

On these universal fears much of our existence is built.

And it is right there that the most authentic connections are also born.

Not in the differences.

In the shared fragilities.

Every time I changed country I left something.

Friends.

Habits.

Certainties.

Every time I gained something else.

New perspectives.

New relationships.

New questions.

The final balance was never economic.

It was human.

The more the years passed the more I understood that international experience does not consist of accumulating stamps on a passport.

It consists of widening the inner borders.

Of becoming less rigid.

Less sure of one's own certainties.

More curious.

More willing to listen.

The world often rewards those who speak.

Life, instead, rewards those who know how to listen.

And listening to different cultures is one of the most effective forms of education that exist.

At a certain point I stopped counting the countries.

I stopped counting the flights.

I stopped counting the miles traveled.

I understood that the most important distance was not the geographical one.

It was the mental one.

The distance that separates prejudice from understanding.

Ignorance from knowledge.

Fear from trust.

Every experience helped me reduce it.

Until it made me understand something I had not foreseen.

The world was not only changing around me.

It was changing inside me.

The person who had left years before no longer existed.

In his place was someone who had learned to look at things from different angles.

Someone less interested in being right and more interested in understanding.

Someone less drawn to differences and more attentive to similarities.

In the end I understood that the greatest change had not been moving from one nation to another.

It had been moving from a narrow vision to a wider vision.

As if my inner address had changed.

Forever.

This is why this threshold does not speak of countries.

It does not speak of maps.

It does not speak of borders.

It speaks of transformation.

Because there comes a moment when the world does not only change geography.

It changes meaning.

And when it happens, it is no longer you who seek the world.

It is the world that begins to live inside you.

The world had changed address.

And the new address was me.