Notebook

Olinda

1958

A. L. P.

8 January

The street ends at the reef. My mother calls what lies beyond, without poetry, the open. My father does not call it anything. He counts hooks. The notebook is not for him, and he does not ask.

3 March

Nine days until I turn twenty-seven. I did not note this in order to remember my age. I noted it because the line, from here on the pavement, ends in a coconut palm on one side and a boat on the other. It is not the end of the world. It is the end of what I see.

12 March

Twenty-seven. My father did not interrupt the count. I did not ask him to. I stood a while at the door, barefoot, watching the water change color without changing place. Whoever leaves this year to study elsewhere speaks of it as someone who is changing lives. I am still on the street from which the reef can be seen.

2 April

It rained in the morning and the slope turned slippery. There was no tide inside the house. There were people passing with the newspaper on their heads and the bread under their arms. I wanted to write that the whole city bowed to the water. It did not bow. It was buying bread.

19 May

I wrote: the sea is a mirror of the soul. I crossed it out. The sentence turned out pretty and did not get wet. The mirror stays in the house, still. The water does not stay. If I repeat the crossed-out sentence, it is so as not to pretend I did not write it.

7 July

I climbed the hill and the line drew back. I came down and it came forward. It was not the sea that moved. It was I. I do not yet have a name for that. I have the tiredness in my legs and the certainty that infinity, said from here, is too large a word for a thing a coconut palm cuts.

18 August

I wanted to write that the sea had been left to me, as if my father could bequeath a water. I crossed it out. I did not inherit the sea. I inherited the stubbornness of looking at it until it answered me with precision, not with comfort.

30 September

In the newspaper, the country speaks of a capital that does not yet exist, in the interior. I read standing, at the counter. When I finished, the reef was still in the same place. I have nothing against those who look toward the sertão. Today I could not look the other way.

14 November

At night the line disappears and the ear is left with the eye's job. A motor far off, a voice on the slope, the water on the reef. It is not thought. It is what remains when the eye resigns. I put out the lamp early. The open did not need me awake.

2 December

I have nothing more to note this year. The notebook stays in the drawer, under the fishing line my father did not sell. If someone opens it, let him not look for a book. There was no book. There were days, and some stayed out because they had no sentence.

COLLECTION NOTE

Amadeu Lacerda Pessanha is a fictional literary persona created with Grok, and Olinda Notebooks, 1958, is a note produced from that persona. It is not a book. He was twenty-seven.

Margem 37 — For stories in search of a margin.