

## PAPER 2(C): LITERATURE

Nobody would come to find me, it had been necessary that nobody knew about my trip, not even the most trustworthy among the survivors, nor the man who organized to have a pistol placed in the cloakroom of Atocha station and had left the key in a bar, whose name he confided on a piece of paper with instructions and times which after reading I ripped up, from habit, with obedience to the fiction that was guiding me, impulsively, suspending the laws of gravity and of authenticity. Since I had agreed to move to Madrid I was a slow moving ghost who was pretending that I was going to kill a man and had entered into the lie like I was in a forest of mirages.

The plane lost altitude with brusque catastrophic spasms and the white fog alternately surrounded us and then whipped away letting us see, far below, a landscape of ochre desert. I heard the seat belts cracking, the safety warnings set on fire, the right plane wing dipped, almost touching the citrus trees on the hilltops, and I felt an emptiness in my stomach, a feeling that something irreparable was going to happen to me, the rapid agony that you imagine occurs in those who die trapped inside a plane, the claustrophobia of the smoke-saturated air and the pain of needles penetrating your eardrums. Those sensations that one night, many years ago, had paralyzed me and almost driven me mad when I was flying over the darkness of French woodlands and the pilot took off his headphones to turn and tell me we had been hit by gunshot from an anti aircraft vehicle.

Looking at the fog that obliterated the other side of the oval windows from space and the time of the living, I recalled the oblique rays from the reflectors, the irregular racket coming from the rotors, the urgent sensation of being at the point of death, in the middle of nowhere, about to vanish without a trace in the red trail of a burning plane. But the plane bounced off the runway and shook itself as if snatched by an uncontrollable speed and where the fog was before now appeared dizzying waste grounds of tarmac crossed by glimmering blue. Brief gusts of misty rain and hail settled on the horizontal spaces of the airport. No one was there, I knew that no one was going to come and I was being enveloped by an intoxication of voices, steps and faces, a sensation of abandon and danger. But I carried on thinking to myself, that it wasn't true that I had come here to kill a man, whilst at the same time calculating each step towards the execution of the man who was waiting for me, dying of loneliness and fear, shivering from the cold and waiting for the arrival of a messenger, his salvation, his executioner.