

Their Days Are Numbered IV

written by Gabino Iglesias | January 27, 2015



Their Days Are Numbered is a new year-long project authored by the collective *Entropy* community. It is a collaborative online novel written by the *Entropy* community on a weekly basis. A different author will write the next “chapter” each week, to be posted every Tuesday, following the previous post from the previous week, and following a very limited set of guidelines (that each author has one week to write the next piece after the previous week’s installment goes up, that installments should range between 150-1500 words, and that pieces should somehow incorporate a real-life occurrence, current event, news item, or other happening from that week).

Follow the entire “novel” here: [Their Days Are Numbered](#).

The fourth installment is presented this week by Gabino Iglesias.

IV.

The water in the bathtub had gone cold eons ago, but she didn’t move. When everything hurt and solutions had migrated to the realm of the impossible, the only thing left to do was nothing.

On the floor, a notebook full of words, open like a dead bird. The words had been placed there during her time in Colombia. They were frantic and bizarre, a feverish amalgamation of fantasy, pain, longing, and nonsense that was far superior to anything she had known in real life. In those words, she was a different woman, a woman with a simple past who sold hot drinks in a market. Panela water. Coffee. Yerbabuena water.

Inside that notebook was a woman with strong legs who could work for ten hours a day and still watch the sunset with a smile. In the bathtub, she was only a residue of something she wasn’t sure had ever been. Her life in words was something mysterious and malleable, but her real life was agonizing litany of empty days and dreams of escape.

She moved her eyes away from the notebook and remembered the man who had given her the dreams about horses. He was dead now. He’d allegedly sat down to meditate and somehow turned into a tree. She was sure the tree that scratched desperately at her bedroom window was a friend of his, a messenger. The thought of a wooden man with a raw, red core scared her, so she grabbed the notebook and looked for a page with only one line. The quote was from a novel by Mario Mendoza she had read while on a plane. Her Spanish wasn’t good enough to fully understand what the author was saying about the face of God in a Massacio painting, but she knew it wasn’t positive:

“No es el rostro de un padre adolorido y compungido, sino la cara de un

abuelo altanero, soberbio y presuntuoso que propicia el sacrificio de su vástago desprotegido.”

Then she imagined an invisible tree scratching against a window that wasn't there.