

Casa Branca

It Was A Voice

When I got home, you weren't there. I sat on the couch, on the verge of tears. I called your grandparents. It was the least plausible option, but I didn't know what to do. My mother answered; I asked whether you, by some miraculous chance, were there; she found the question so strange that she did not even answer and began to talk about her bronchitis. I tried school, but there was nobody. I thought I'd call the police, but it was too early; they'd tell me to wait, that teenagers usually come back after a few hours.

So I put on my coat and ran outside. The cold road, the cork oaks, the straw fields, the telegraph poles, then Cano, again the road. A lost weeping horse, in the opposite direction. I took off my coat; it takes time and sweat to travel distances. I saw three girls sitting on a bench with their backpacks. None of them were you. The primary school, the public garden. In desperation, I asked an old lady if she had seen a cheerful girl. Oh, she must be there, and pointed to the low white house, caramel around the bottom, a bird with shoes, green windows. I knocked on the door. It was opened by a small, skinny lady, with pretty eyes and dark hair. Oh, she's in here, yeah. I found you reading a book. I sat next to you and I didn't even shout at you.

João Tordo