

# ***I. THE EDGE OF THE KINGDOM***



Doleful,  
                  confine—  
          incision  
of despair:  
          margin,  
          precipice,  
          limbo,  
          you  
          slash  
the body  
into  
          bulges  
          and  
                  puncture  
                  the  
                  soul.

Shipwrecked  
in  
a disconsolate  
          country,  
                  in  
                  a  
          century  
built  
through  
resentment,  
for  
six  
days

(y  
sus  
noches),  
I,  
alone,  
unencumbered,  
traverse  
the  
land,  
like  
Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca,  
in  
search  
of  
ghosts:  
the  
mother  
whose  
love  
for  
her  
son  
has  
soured,  
the  
adopted  
child  
in  
search  
of  
genesis,  
the  
brother  
with  
a  
heart

condition  
looking  
    for  
        a  
            doctor  
            to  
                cure

him.  
I  
am  
an abstraction:  
my  
imagination,  
free,  
scans  
the emotional  
landscape.  
Places  
are  
sites  
where  
fantasy  
meets  
recognition.

Reality  
is  
such  
an  
aberration,  
it  
is okay  
to  
go  
crazy.

Nihil  
humanum

a  
me  
alienum  
puto.  
But  
humans  
are  
aliens  
to themselves.  
The  
happy  
socialize  
with  
the  
happy,  
the  
powerful  
with  
the  
powerful.  
And,  
far behind,  
in  
a  
ghetto,  
is  
poverty  
and  
misfortune.  
I  
survey  
in  
order  
to  
build  
a

cartography  
of  
what  
was  
and  
will  
be.  
Today

gives  
place  
to the past  
as  
the future  
is  
born.

Maps,  
Joseph Conrad  
said,  
were  
“blank spaces”  
that  
became  
“places  
of  
darkness.”

Maps  
are  
traps.  
The  
true  
world  
is  
outside,  
beyond,  
uncontained.  
Yo

soy  
el  
mapa  
de  
mí  
mismo.

A  
tumultuous wall  
keeps  
them  
asunder.

I  
start  
at  
the start:  
in the unbridled

clash  
of  
rivalries—  
howls  
and  
roars  
and  
whines  
and  
hollers—,

I  
come across,  
on  
the  
beach  
in  
Bagdad,  
Tamaulipas,



where  
caravans  
of  
    camels  
    carried  
    salt  
    during  
        the American Civil War,  
    a  
    town  
    that  
    ceased  
    to exist  
    in  
    1880.  
    The  
    floodplains  
    remain  
    but  
    not the dreams.  
    Yo  
    solo,  
    sin  
    alma,  
    surrounded  
    by  
    unexpected  
    calm.  
    Where  
    is  
    the  
    fury  
    I  
    see  
    on  
    TV?