

INSIDE!
(ADENTRO!)

By Miguel de Unamuno

...May your past never be a tyrant that controls your future; it's not in other people's hopes that you have to fulfill yourself. Do they count on you? Let them learn how to count only on themselves. So they tell you not to go somewhere? Wherever you go is up to you, and not where they want you to go. You say they don't understand you? Well, let them find out about you, or just leave you alone; you don't have to lower your soul to their opinions. And true life lies in loving ourselves whether we understand ourselves or not, and not in understanding ourselves without loving ourselves. If sometimes the water that flows from your spirit quenches their thirst, why this insistence to swallow the source? If the profile of your individuality is complicated, don't try to simplify it so that it is part of their algebra. It's better for you to be an irrational sum, than a numeral in their account...

Do they say you contradict yourself? Always be sincere and have peace in your heart, and don't worry about it, because if you were sincere and have a peaceful heart, the contradiction is in their mind, and not in you.

Do they say you're puffed up? Well, let them be puffed up too, because if we were all puffed up, the world would grow. Ambition, ambition, not greed!

I tell you again that you must be ready to put up with a great deal, because the unspoken things we do to others are those that in reality hurt them the most. They criticize you for what you think, but you hurt them by what you do. Wound them, wound them with love. Be ready for everything and, for that, use time as an ally. To die like Icarus is better than living without making an effort to fly, even if it was with wax wings. Rise, rise up then so you will sprout wings, because if you want to fly, they will sprout. Rise up; but don't try to throw yourself from the highest part of the temple just to impress others, trusting that angels will carry you on their hands, because God should never be tempted. Rise up without fear, and without recklessness. Ambition, and never greed!

And then, resignation, active resignation that does not consist of suffering without struggling, and don't feel sorry for what happened, or become distressed by things that are unchangeable, but always look toward the future. Because, bear in mind that only the future is the realm of freedom; so if something occupies your time, keep holding on to the cord. The past can never be different from what it was, nor can the present be more than what it is; what can be is always in the future. Don't let your regret for what you have done be anything but a reason for future improvement; any other form of regret is only destructive, only destructive. One can believe in the past; but one has faith only in the future, only in freedom. And being free is ideal, and nothing more than ideal, which is precisely its strength. It is ideal and internal, and when we internalize it, it becomes the very essence of our connection with the world. Ignore those who believe in the apocalypse and ancients who wait for the ideal to lower them from the clouds and take shape before their eyes so they can feel it. But you must believe it is truly ideal, always in the future, and always utopian, that is, not from any particular place, and then hope. Hope, because only those who hope really live; but fear the day when your hopes are

limited to memories that leave out the future. And in order to avoid that, use your memories to create hope. Since you have lived, you will live...

Don't believe that you are more, or less, equal to anyone else, because we are not quantities. Each person is unique and irreplaceable. And make your effort to believe that consistently your main goal...

Don't worry about the number of those who are around you, because all of the benefit you do for just one person is done for all of them. And be what you do for that Person. You will earn your effectiveness to the extent that you give it away. Good works never rest; they pass from some spirits to others, resting for a moment in each of them, and then they go on to restore themselves and recover their strength. Do enough every day to deserve rest, and let the rest for your mind be the preparation for when your heart stops; do enough to deserve death.

Establish relations with society. But know that only what you receive from society will be society in you, and for you, in the same way that only what you give to it will be you in society, and for it. Aspire to receive all that society has to offer, but without being chained to it, and without giving yourself to it entirely. But now, for now at least, I'm telling you again: get out of that poorhouse and look for Nature which is also society, the same as society is also Nature. In yourself you are society, and since that applies to everyone, it leads to what we call the path to individuation, because no one gives what they don't have. Even physically we do not come from a single ancestor, but from a legion, a legion we also join; each one of us is a link in the nexus of generations.

All of your friends will try to give you advice: "look right here," "look over there," "don't scatter yourself," "group your actions," "orient yourself" "don't get lost in ambiguity." Don't pay any attention, and give them the part of yourself that bothers them most, which is what is best for them. I told you once before: they will not accept you the way you are; they will want ideas from you, which are not really yours.

Don't try to have an influence in what they call the forward march of culture, nor in the social environment, nor in your town, nor in your time period, and even less in the progress of ideas that advance on their own. No, not in the progress of ideas, but in the growth of souls, in each soul, or in a single soul, which is enough. One thing is to live in History, but another to live in eternity. Before searching for twenty places in the history of centuries, look for the silent blessing of poor souls scattered here and there. Or better, look for the former, and you will be given the latter. Don't try to bring change in what surrounds you, nor in what they call the paths of society. The needs of the individual are the most universal, because they are the same for everyone. Take each one and separate them if you can so it is alone in its little space, and then disturb it inside, because one who is never disturbed will never feel rest. Be a confessor more than a preacher. Try to make contact with the soul of each person, and not with the group.

How happy you would be, and what great happiness your soul would feel, when you travel alone, alone among the entire group, against the advice of your friends who want you to form a political economy, a philosophical psychology, or do literary criticism. The thing is, you should not give them your spirit so they can smother it because you upset them. You should give them your intelligence, which is not yours, you should give them the crystallized surface of the social environment around you, without stirring up a small corner of eternal uneasiness; you don't have to agree with three or four of your brothers, but convey coherent and logical ideas to three or four hundred, or to thirty or

forty thousand of those who cannot, or do not want to, or do not know how, to confront the main problem. Those suggestions indicate the path you follow. Move away from them. Don't worry about influencing the collective. Try to find your basic greatness, the most profound, the most enduring, and the least dependent on your country and your time, the one that is universal and age-old, and that will be the best way you can serve your contemporary countrymen.

Look for society, but first, for a start, delve into Human Nature, which makes a man serious. Be serious. Have seriousness, solemn seriousness about your life, even though the heathen say this casts a shadow over it and you are making it grim and depressing. By doing this, something that seems grimly depressing to the heathen is where one finds the most pleasant enjoyment. Take life seriously without letting yourself be carried away by it; be its master and not its slave, because your life passes on and you remain/your life ends and your soul survives. And don't listen to the heathen that tell you that you pass on, and life remains... Life? What is life? What is a life that is not mine, or yours, or anyone else's? Life! A heathen idol that they want each of us to sacrifice *our* life to. Dive right into sorrow in order to cure yourself from it's curse. Be serious; and also happy; but seriously happy. Seriousness is the good fortune of living *your* life sitting on the sorrow of living it, and wedded to this sorrow. With the seriousness that merges them and nourishes them, once they are joined, happiness and sadness lose their meaning.

One more time: now explore the country and then come back to society and live in it, but detached and uninfluenced by the world. He who flees from the world is still a slave of the world, because he carries it inside him. Learn to live with it, because that is the only way that you can share it with your brothers in humanity. Live with others without trying to stand out, because standing out on the outside smothers you on the inside. Live like others, but feel like yourself, and that way you will share with everyone, and they with you. Do what everyone does, putting all your spirit into it, and all of what you do will be original, no matter how common it is.

Only in society will you find yourself; if you shut yourself off from it, you will show no more than a shadow of your real self. Only in society do you acquire your full meaning, but are detached from it.

You tell me in your letter that if until now your motto has been "forward!", from now on it will be "upward!" Don't care about forward and backward, upward and downward, progressives and retrogrades, ascenders and descenders, who only move in exterior space. And look for the other, your inner realm, the ideal one, the realm of your soul. Make an effort to include the entire universe in it, since that is the best way to pour yourself into it. Understand that in God there is no more than you and the world, and if you are part of it because it maintains you, it is also part of you, because you know it in yourself. So instead of saying forward!, or upward!, say: "inside!" Be totally absorbed in yourself in order to emanate; don't try to fill yourself so that you can then surpass yourself while preserving the source. Gather yourself inside yourself, so that you can give others your whole undivided self. "I give all that I have," the generous person says; "I give all I am worth," says the self-denying person; "I give all I am," says the hero; "I give myself to myself," says the saint; so say that with him and, as you give yourself say also: "With me I give the entire universe." And in order to do that you have to become the universe, looking for it within yourself. Inside!