



ORPHANS

ALÊ MOTTA

TRANSLATED BY NARA VIDAL

Valério's dad died of cancer. Silvio's dad died of a heart attack. Celeste's dad was run over in Copacabana. Joca's dad threw himself off a bridge. Milton's dad died of old age. Maria's dad out of shock – mugged at Avenida Brasil. Guilherme's dad of a stray bullet in Andaraí. Gloria's dad was crushed to death by a truck at a shopping centre building site. Soares' dad died in a car crash at Dutra motorway. Lenice's dad was stabbed at a bar in Campo Grande. My dad went out to buy cigarettes and came back.



THE CLOSED DOOR

ALÊ MOTTA

TRANSLATED BY GABRIELA RUIVO TRINDADE

Me and all my cousins used to spend every holiday at our grandmother's. She lived in a very small town. The house started with a long porch and finished with a messy backyard.

We played all the time. In every corner of the place. Everywhere. But we never managed to find out what went on at the bottom of the backyard. Inside the little stone house with the closed door.

“Get away from there, kid.”

I kept asking. No one said a thing. My cousins kept asking. No one said a thing.

We tried to get in and never managed to.

When I got back from holiday I would forget about the door. I went back on holiday and could only think of the door. The mystery of my childhood.

I grew up. There were no more holidays with my cousins. I graduated. Got married. Had kids. Separated. A good job. My grandmother died. I was left with the task of selling the house and split the money between her grandchildren. I went back to her town. Walked up to her house. Unsettled. Unease.

I walked across the long porch, through the house and was out of breath when I got to the backyard. The stone house. The closed door. I touched the doorknob. The door opened easily. My whole body shivered. I got into the little house. Everything got blurry. A pain that came from God knows where spread through my arms, legs, back. I slumped to the ground.

If I'd been alive, I would have heard the murmur from my cousins at my funeral. All excited about the unveiled mystery.