

Clouds & Clouds

It was night, I was very tired. I could really not sleep on a night like that one! Not after such a day: we had all got together, at the university, and we were holding our freedom in our own hands. We could not afford to go to sleep, for fear of letting our freedom slip between our fingers.

We lit some fires, to face the night out in the open, in Tien An Men Square, but I was cold all the same, so I got closer to him, so that he might warm me up.

Under his blanket and with his arm around my shoulders I felt better.

There was no need for words on that magic night, but after a quarter of an hour of silence I felt the need to whisper: "We are free!" It was the final moment in which the illusion of freedom found a place inside me.

He said what I already knew, but did not want to admit, and I returned to hit reality.

"The tanks are going to arrive".

Unconsciously I pressed myself against him, as if to ask him for protection.

To distract me he began to speak. At first I didn't take any notice of what he was saying, I restricted myself to listening to the soft, sweet sound of his voice. Only later did I understand the significance of the words. Words which with the passing of time have assumed a great importance in my life, and still today are with me and give me strength.

I know that I won't succeed in repeating them exactly, and that I shall forget something, but what's important is the significance.

"Every time you see a cloud playing in the sky, changing its shape, or flying away making you believe that it's not moving, but the stars are, remember that inside yourself, in your heart, you will always be free.

Your ideas, your thoughts and your love will always be able to fly like the clouds: free and without limits, because your heart is much bigger than any sky!"

He stopped for a moment, maybe only to think about how to continue, but the silence returned, that silence which was forcing me to think about the tanks. I could not help pressing myself against him even more tightly, until he began to

Speak again.

"Whatever you are forced to do, no one will ever be able to control your smile: as long as your eyes and your face are smiling, you will be like a cloud, free and happy!"

I smiled at him, I don't know whether with my lips or my eyes. He noticed and caressed my cheek, saying: "That's right!" Then, letting his finger slide over my smiling lips, he said: "This is only the second time in my whole life that I am caressing a cloud!"

How things change in a day!

Up till the day before he had been a friend like any other, well, you can't define a person so original and such an idealist as 'like any other', but for me he had only been one among the many. On that evening, however, he had the power to keep fear at a distance, to make me feel calm, happy and free, like a cloud.

He was becoming important for me.

Perhaps to remove the oppressive silence, perhaps out of curiosity, I asked him to tell me about when he caressed a cloud for the first time.

"It happened by magic, the most powerful that I know: music. Do you remember the first time I came to your home? When I saw the piano and I asked you to play for me? That was the only time anyone has played for me. I don't remember anything, not even what you played. I only know that it was a most beautiful tune, on its wings my spirit flew away into the sky. Probably, if at that moment you had asked me something, I would not have replied. I wasn't there. I didn't just caress the clouds, I played with them . . . it's beautiful to fly . . ."

His final words were more and more hesitant, so much so that at the end he no longer managed to speak.

It's incredible how a man can be courageous faced with tanks and then start trembling when two green eyes are looking at him! Once again the silence returned, but it didn't last long. I looked into his eyes, put my face close to his, my mouth close to his and said: "Have you ever kissed a cloud?", and our lips began to caress one another. This time I didn't notice the silence, I didn't

even notice the time which was passing by. All that existed were the sweetness of his lips, of his tongue, and of his caresses.

That kiss had the power to take away my fears and to make my stress slip away.

The tiredness built up during that very long day got the better of me.

When our lips parted I just had time to hear: "I love you". Then I rested my face on his chest and I fell asleep.

He didn't sleep. I know because I would not have been able to dream such beautiful dreams, that night, if he hadn't kept watch over me.

At dawn a tear woke me up, then another and yet another, then so many. I opened my eyes and I realised that it was rain.

With my voice still drowsy I said: "The tanks weren't enough, the rain had to come too!"

"No, don't worry, it's the clouds who are coming down to give us courage!"

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