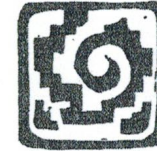


crashes in a single day. On camp beds, the only beds we'd know from now on, and lying beside La Poderosa, our snail-like dwelling, we still looked into the future with impatient joy. We seemed to breathe more freely, a lighter air, an air of adventure. Distant countries, heroic deeds and beautiful women spun around and around in our turbulent imaginations.

My tired eyes refused to sleep and in them a pair of green spots swirled, representing the world I had left for dead behind me and mocking the so-called liberation I sought. They harnessed their image to my extraordinary flight across the lands and seas of the world.



PARA LAS GRIPES, CAMA for the flu, bed

The bike exhaled with boredom along the long accident-free road and we exhaled with fatigue. Driving on a gravel-covered road had transformed a pleasant jaunt into a heavy job. By nightfall, after an entire day of alternating turns at the controls, we were left with more desire to sleep than to continue with the effort to reach Choele Choel, a largish town where we had a chance at free lodging. So we stopped in Benjamín Zorrilla, settling down comfortably in a room at the railroad station. We slept, dead to the world.

We woke early the next morning, but when I went to collect water for our *mate* a weird sensation darted through my body, followed by a long shiver. Ten minutes later I was shaking uncontrollably like someone possessed. My quinine tablets made no difference, my