

Episode 14: **I know not what tomorrow will bring** \*

Location: **Prazeres Cemetery / Campo de Ourique**

*Prazeres Cemetery ambient sound*

**Sofia:** You should now be at Prazeres Cemetery. It was created in the nineteenth century after an outbreak of cholera. In 2016, the remains of Ofélia Queiroz were transferred here. Pessoa was here too.

*Music*

[00:00:23.06]

**Luís Miguel Rosa Dias:** My mother always said, "Fernando died of cirrus." Cirrus was cirrhosis, because he drunk, but no one had ever seen him drunk or anything.

**Manuela Nogueira:** His was the first death in my life, and so it was a horrible thing.

**Luís Miguel Rosa Dias:** At that time we were living in our house in São João do Estoril. He was still living in Campo de Ourique, but he used to visit the family. And my sister and I were always waiting for the little presents he used to bring and all that.

**Manuela Nogueira:** And then when my mother's birthday was about to come, it was on the 27th of November, Fernando sent a telegram.

**Luís Miguel Rosa Dias:** My mother had slipped in the garden and had broken a leg. And meanwhile there was a kind of a cyclone in our house in São João do Estoril and damages were such that the telephone lines were ripped out and had broken or something like that.

[00:01:26.16]

**Manuela Nogueira:** And my mother turned to my father and said, "Oh Chico," my father was Francisco, "Oh Chico, something has happened to Fernando, because he sent a telegram, he hasn't shown up." So my father got into the train and hurried to Lisbon. And he knocked at the door of Virginia Sena Pereira, who lived next door, and were related to Jorge de Sena, because no one answered Fernando's door. And Virginia said "Oh Fernando went to the hospital yesterday, because he wasn't feeling well" So my father

rushed to São Luís hospital and that was when he saw that he wasn't well. He was not well, but he wasn't so bad that you'd think he would die. And so my father left. He reassured my mother, said he was being well treated, he had just a little colic. And that was it, Uncle Fernando died soon after. It was very sudden, my mother's birthday was on the 27th and he died on the 30th.

**Luís Miguel Rosa Dias:** He must have had acute pancreatitis. Acute pancreatitis is something that even today with current tests and everything, is difficult to diagnose. And since no autopsy was done.

**Manuela Nogueira:** It was a huge sorrow for my mother, enormous sorrow. And I, when I realised that uncle Fernando had died. I was playing in the garden of our house in São João do Estoril, and I couldn't go in, I couldn't. And then the maid who was working there, I remember her perfectly, she was a very fat woman, called me several times, "Girl, come and have lunch, come and have lunch". And I didn't go in. Only later I realised why. I didn't want to face my mother's sadness. And then, like everything else, you have to accept it.

[00:03:41.01]

**Manuela Nogueira:** The funeral had quite a few people. Men, because at that time women didn't generally go to funerals. Women used to go to church to pray for the dead. And if you see the photograph of the coffin outside the church, it is only men you see.

**Sofia:** The coffin came out of the chapel of Prazeres Cemetery and went to the family grave. His grandmother Dionísia is still there.

### *Seagulls*

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** When we talk about Pessoa and talk about death, the first thing that that comes into my mind is that he was suicidal. He is among that race of Portuguese poets and poet thinkers who were suicidal. Many of them committed suicide. Manuel Larangeira, Florbela Espanca, Antero de Quental, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, many. Pessoa was one of them and he was a suicidal and a thinker poet, like his great master Antero de Quental. Just like some of his proto-heteronyms and semi-heteronyms, for example, the Baron of Teive. The Baron of Teive writes *A Educação do Estóico*, which is the only work by the Baron of Teive, supposedly, where he explains why there is no reason to continue living and why he decides to commit suicide. But at the same time, I also think that Pessoa wants to find a meaning in life. He does not find a meaning in love, or he does not try to find a meaning in love, with Ofélia, because he is set on completing an accomplished work, well finished, perfect, but he is unable to do that, because his

work is too fragmentary, as we've seen. So in a world, in a life where he finds no meaning, where he finds no comfort, death appears as liberating. And it is present in all his work, more deeply in the second part of his work.

*Prazeres Cemetery ambient sound; birds singing*

[00:05:50.24]

**Jerónimo Pizarro:** I don't know, I feel that he was never afraid of death, that he has always admitted that death could be a gateway to other worlds.

**Steffen Dix:** If we imagine or if we think that our life is not a reality, that it is a dream, our death is also a dream, it doesn't really exist. Or it can also continue in another life, after death, in another reincarnation. And this is an interesting thing in Pessoa, he knew all these theories and all these thoughts. And Pessoa was very interested in the topic.

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** And a time comes when he has no illusions, he has no desire to go on, and I think that's when he starts drinking a lot and when he is no longer afraid of death, I think he dies without fear and that he knows he is going to die, because he is a

slow and lucid suicidal case. Asking for his glasses before he dies, that's a great metaphor of lucidity. He is choosing how he wants to go into the other world.

**Steffen Dix:** On the last day, knowing perfectly well that he was going to die, that last sentence I think explains everything *I know not what tomorrow will bring*, that is, I do not know what will happen tomorrow, knowing perfectly well that he was going to die, I think that explains everything.

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** There are some of his statements, such as the one where he said, "If you want to do a biography there are only two dates, birth and death". Except that Pessoa had a life, he was a man. There is Pessoa the man, and Pessoa the author of books. There was the man who would go to the ironing services and ask for his very white shirts, very well-groomed. The man who had friends, who talked to people, who had a job, who usually typed his poems at night in the office.

*Typewriter*

[00:08:04.18]

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** Who goes to Abel, the bar, to refill.

*Tram; typewriter*

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** The man who goes by tram to accompany Ofélia to the door of her sister's house. And the Pessoa who is thinking, writing, reading, very exalted while people are sleeping, who looks out of the window and sees Lisbon outside.

*Street sounds; seagulls*

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** And there's also Pessoa as a resident of Lisbon, and because Lisbon is a city that still preserves its essence, in its streets, its places,

*Church bells*

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** and keeps the old things, the old-fashioned way, you can perceive and imagine Pessoa walking these streets today. And that's what I wanted to say, his work and his life are two separate things, but Pessoa was a man, that's what matters.

*Street sounds*

**Sofia:** Pessoa's body was in Prazeres Cemetery, in the family grave for 50 years. In 1985, on the 13th of June, he was transferred to the Jerónimos Monastery and, for now, he is still there. He is in the north wing of the lower cloister. We are almost at the end of our tour. The next and last episode does not have a location associated with it. So feel free to listen to it whenever and wherever you fancy.

**Credits:**

Voices:

Luís Miguel Nogueira Rosa Dias, Manuela Nogueira, Pablo Javier Pérez López, Jerónimo Pizarro, Steffen Dix and Sofia Saldanha.

Music:

Tout se transforme (réinterprété par johnny\_ripper) by julsy

Free Music Archive / License – Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Bibliography:

\* I know not what tomorrow will bring: last sentence written by Fernando Pessoa on 29 November 1935