

LIDIA CANGEOPOL

Shapes of Absence

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Editor: Costel POSTOLACHE

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Lidia Cangeopol

Shapes of Absence

Second edition,
reviewed and completed



INTEGRAL

*For Liviu, Ioana, Laura, Georgia, and Chris.
And for all those who loved them –
as they were,
and as they never got the chance to be.*

Foreword

About pain, faith, and writing as survival

There are books that try to explain the world and others that let it burn before our eyes, without repairing it, but giving it meaning. Lidia Cangeopol's book is one of the latter: a chronicle of a pain impossible to understand through reason, but borne with a dignity that paradoxically becomes a source of hope. It is not a work of literature in the strict sense, but a spiritual document. It does not seek to impress through style, but to direct a vertical gaze toward what, humanly, is unbearable.

At the center of the testimony is Chris, an only son, whose sudden departure from this world tears apart not only from family but the very fabric of reality itself. In one of the most stirring passages, Lidia notes: "After my child was gone, I could no longer return to my old body. It was no longer there." This sentence transcends the confession of a grieving

mother; it becomes a psalm torn from the flesh of reality.

What does it mean to live beyond such a wound? Here the book reveals its strength. Not through rhetoric, but through clarity. Lidia writes not to free herself, but to make room for a reader who, perhaps, will go through a similar suffering. Writing is not healing but participating. “Writing became the only way to ask God without leaving Him”, she notes. And in a world that demands immediate answers, this silent question carries something of the tragic nobility of an ancient prayer.

Simone Weil said: “There is room in the soul for only one—for God or for suffering.” Lidia’s book refuses the false choice between them. Suffering does not displace faith but strengthens it. Not through proof, but through absence. Not through dogma, but through waiting. It is a faith that weeps but does not abandon.

Lidia does not try to explain God, nor excuse Him. She remains beside Him. And this obstinacy has a profound theological dimension. Like in *Psalm 22*, which begins with “My God, why have you forsaken me?” but ends in the merging of understanding: “You brought me forth from the womb; You made me hope.”

Entire pages breathe a rare form of mystical sobriety. We learn, for example, how in the midst of

pain, Lidia feels a presence: “I knew I was not alone. It was not a vision, but a certainty. He was there. He said nothing. But that was enough.” Memory plays a crucial role in this narrative. Not as a simple reservoir of the past, but as a sacred place of presence. Chris is not recalled being mourned, but to be found: “I felt him like when you enter a room and know someone has been there, even though no one is there now.

That warm air that remains.” This evocation of the presence of absence has something of Rilke’s tone, who wrote: “Death is not the opposite of life, but a part of it.”

In this saga of suffering, death is never trivialized, but neither is it absolutized. It is an interruption, not a disappearance. A passage, not an end. “Maybe he is waiting for me somewhere. Maybe the road continues”, the author writes toward the end, with a serenity that does not come from psychology but from revelation.

Existential philosophers have often intuited the secret connection between suffering and becoming. Kierkegaard noted: “Suffering is the supreme educator.” But here, in Lidia’s book, suffering does not educate in a moralizing sense, but shapes in a mystical sense. It is a transfiguration, not a lesson. A crucified life is not a failed life, but a life carried to the end of its truth.

C.S. Lewis, in a volume written after his wife's death, said: "Pain is God's megaphone in a deaf world." In Lidia's book, the megaphone does not shout... it whispers... And only broken hearts can hear.

This work is not a confession. It does not ask for compassion. At a time when contemporary culture prefers to debunk any reverence, Lidia Cangeopol compels us to bow. Not before pain, but before a deeper truth: that there is something stronger than death. "I cannot understand God, but neither can I live without Him", she confesses, as if to prove Tillich's theories. In this sentence, the entire tension of a living faith is concentrated.

Augustine noted in *Confessions*: "My soul is restless until it rests in You." Lidia's confessions are written from this unrest, but they end in closeness. What remains after such a reading? Perhaps a void. Perhaps a wound. Or perhaps, in each person's silence, a reminder that love does not die. And writing, when it springs from such love, becomes a form of real presence. A bridge between earth and heaven. A small, but endless light in the darkness that would otherwise overwhelm us.

Dr. Emil Antrim

Beneath the Same Sky

You came like lightning through my skies, With
gentle hands and emerald eyes.

A heart so kind, a spirit wide,
You lived with truth; you couldn't hide.

Though storms and shadows dimmed your light,
You shone with grace through darkest night.

You gave your best, you gave your all, You rose
with love and took the fall.

Now stars above hold you so near, Yet here below,
I feel you clear.

In whispered winds and dreams that stay, Your
memory paces beside me every day.

We're bound by more than time and space Still
joined by love and Heaven's face.

So till we meet, I lift my eye –
From down here, beneath the same sky.