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Lo que más me sorprende, aunque si me pongo a pensarlo bien (cosa que me cuesta más y más cada día), fue nuestra reacción colectiva como nación en contra de Semis. Mi intención no es separarme de la muchedumbre de este país, que justamente es el problema: la división, perdón no, la ruptura entre opinión popular, la grieta entre hermana y hermano, la separación y su mal aliento. “Vos perdiste, na na na,” eso, la burla, el “a mí no me salió bien, pues espero que a ti te salga mal.” Eso es lo que me sorprende. En el caso del mundial 2014, no tanto lo que dijeron nuestros enemigos (los deulandeses) de nosotros, sino lo que dijeron nuestros compadres de nosotros. “¡Sabía que Semis lo iba a cagar!” (¿Cómo?) “¡Nosotros siempre perdemos!” gritó un llorón descamisado en la tele a pocos minutos de los penales; sacado, por su puesto, su camiseta negruzquiblanco. “¿Qué vamos a hacer?” La esquizofrenia psíquico de nuestro país, el tirar para abajo nuestro equipo y su líder a pocos minutos de cantar el himno nacional, jamás lo comprenderé. Desde luego, como quiera usted lector calificarlo, Semis “la cago.” No vale referir de qué lado pateó, ni como el arquero jovencito deulandes atajo ni no atajo, ni nada. Solamente que al fallar, Semis se arrodilló, por decir, y hasta su reciente regreso, permaneció arrodillado.

Tengo escrito sobre un *estiquí* (en este momento no lo hallo, entonces parafraseo): “Si hubiera no metido el Diego su segundo gol de la semifinal contra los ingleses en el ’86—y más si hubiera terminado el partido en un empate—nadie se hubiera ni enterado de que el primer gol fuese una “mano de dios.” Simplemente hubiera sido “otro gol” del Diego, como han dicho en el ’14 sobre el tiro libre de Semis a veinte metros del arco fuera de tiempo oficial de un sobretiempo en la final de un mundial (un golazo, che, ¡la puta que te parió!). Desde luego, en la historia sólo hubo un barrilete cósmico. Pero me intriga el siguiente pensamiento: ¿Cuántos barriletes flotaron sobre la metafórica cancha de Fútbol, para después terminar bocabajo en la arena de la mismísima Miseria, en la del menosprecio, en la del olvido, de la amnesia, y hasta, finalmente, de la indiferencia?”

“Se-mis, Se-mis, Se-mis!” That’s how they chant his name across the world. I love Semis. Not in a fangirl kind of way (yes in a fangirl kind of way), but in a “he is my hero” kind of way. Heroes are different, right? I don’t think I know any heroes in real life. I remember an essay my home room teacher back in Houston asked the students to write one day. The prompt was: “Write about a hero in your life.” Most of us wrote about our mothers or father, great for them. I wrote about Superman. My teacher gave me a failing grade. I never showed my parents the grade. They would have asked me, “Why must you lie so much?”

I don’t lie. And I don’t have a particularly active imagination. All I want to do is become a soccer star. Is that so hard to ask? No!

“Can I be a soccer star, oh great soccer lords above?”

Semis got his big break at sixteen, that’s when FC Barcelona picked him up and began primping him to be the beloved superstar he was (and still is in my opinion) four

years before the infamous penalty kick. I am not even sixteen yet and already I feel like I am as good as he was (if not better) at this age. No one believes me when I claim I can kick the soccer ball really far. That sounds silly. But for me, being a girl and all, that means a lot. Really. From center field I land the ball inside the goal net. I have been practicing to make goals farther and farther away even, the goal always shrinking in my sight, and so far I haven't reached a distance far back enough so as to be unable to make it eventually with a little practice. The ability to make a goal as far back as your own half of the soccer field might not sound that impressive during a real game—with live midfielders trying to tackle you and a goalie blocking the door of his precious goal—but the way I see it is this: If I can make a goal farther and farther back, which implies my target getting smaller and smaller from my point of view, then should I ever be played as a forward 8 or 9 player then I will have trained myself to aim for a more accurate shot, which really, is all making a goal takes: Accuracy. Aim for the smallest point possible, between a jungle of elbows and a storm of cleats, through furious defenders and a jealous goal keeper, and kick the ball at just the right time, at just the right angle, with just the right force, and watch it shoot straight (or bent) for your target, your goal, never losing sight of the ball, never losing sight of the spot you marked until it all lines up. And that's how you make a goal. That's how you attack in soccer. And, yes, that is why I am training to aim for smaller and smaller goals by going farther and farther away. I will play for Barcelona in no time. My name will be chanted across the biggest stadiums in Europe: "Zulema, Zulema, Zulema!" And by then people will know how to say my name, because news anchors across every channel will have pronounced it correctly on television.

"Zulema, Zulema, Zulema!"

Just like they chant it for my new superman, my new hero.