**Transcription of Diary**

Pseudonym: Magnolia

Time during which the diary was held: 30 Nov, 2022 - 15 Mar, 2023

**Additional notes:** Magnolia had the diary with her for a long period of time, spanning from the beginning of December 2022 to March 2023. However, she did not write many days in the diary, only a few. She covers a wide range of the neighbourhood's history in her reflections. She kept the diary for this long because, for personal reasons, she did not have time to write as much as she would have liked at the beginning, and afterwards it was difficult for us to arrange a meeting.

TRANSCRIPTION

**December 3, 2023**

I can say that I feel very comfortable writing about this place for all that it means in my life, for all the moments lived throughout so many years that were building our destinies and personalities. Some people leaned towards one side or another, and we became witnesses of their triumphs or their failures. Some that hurt a lot and others that we wondered how they would do or what they did right or wrong to be there.

When we arrived, we saw them in a different way and in the present we observe them only to think about what was done right or wrong, which makes us sad or excited to see that even with everything against us, there is always something in this universe that helps us to get out of the mess and move forward.

At the beginning, I didn't worry about whether there was water or not, because we carried our water from Escandón to Santo Domingo and we didn't need much because we left bathed and eaten and we arrived at the same place here, but since we were already here permanently it seemed like a novelty to go out and "carry" water.

I experienced many things over time, like talking with people from different states of the Republic, knowing how they lived there, how they related, how they dressed, what they ate, and what they did. I even made friends with some of them and then I never saw them again and others that without talking to them or making friends with them, to this day I still see them in the street, in the store, etc.

To me, what I was living was like a fairy tale because everything was related to water. There were places where water gushed out, and we wondered where all that water came from. Time went by and many things happened, and many other things changed. Arrangements were made to open the streets, excavations, formation of the street layout, and light poles, and this was formed as a neighbourhood and from the beginning its name was the one it has today: Pedregal de Santo Domingo.

The names of the streets did change, personally, I liked the first ones better because they were of flowers; later they were Heroes of the Nation and finally the current ones that I don't like.

In the pits that were opened, the children played and made friends with the neighbours, I even remember some holidays where they bathed and threw a lot of water.

The children grew up and the ways also changed; those who could, studied, the others began to work, some got married and no longer lived here, the others emigrated to the United States or to other countries (the luckiest ones) and so, the older people who stayed to live in the colony were dying or their families took them to their towns.

In the meantime, a strong change began to take place in the neighbourhood, but when the original "invaders" left, the people who remained in their place began to rent the houses, dividing them into rooms that were only good for four, five or more people, and so there were changes that made it no longer a quiet neighbourhood, then robberies, rapes and more ugly things like gang fights began to happen, not only with their hands but also with stones, sticks and even with knives and guns, even people in bags began to appear and really bad things that we hope will never happen again.

At that time the construction of the CU subway station also began. It was something that made us feel very happy because it seemed that our neighborhood was resurging and there would be more surveillance, more services, jobs, better quality of life...

The water problem was also increasing, out of nowhere, big buildings, stores, private schools, multi-family buildings, businesses were built. It started to get out of control, ignoring any rules.

And then the water shortage. When did the water sources begin to disappear? When did the shortage begin? We didn't even realize it, only when large groups of neighbours began to complain and close the streets to demand an answer.

I must tell you that my father used a bathroom with a wood-burning boiler, a water tank that we always tried to have with water. I must clarify that my father and my five brothers were plumbers, we started bringing fuel from the Escandón neighbourhood, where we lived and from where we emigrated to come here.

I also remember that there were many fires in small rooms that were built with cardboard sheets, I never knew of any deaths in the ones that burned around here, although there were. One time a little room burned down on the corner of Fuerza and Llave, my sister and I were passing by and when we noticed it, we approached and saw that two little girls were wearing only a small blouse and a skirt, without shoes and wet, they were shivering and the few people who were there were carrying water and trying to suffocate the fire. So we took off the sweaters we were wearing and covered them. We were helping out there for a while until I felt someone pull me by the arm I turned around and it was a young boy about 14 years old, who was trying to say something but nothing but guttural sounds came out of his throat, and someone else explained to me that he was the older brother of the girls and he was trying to thank us for what we had done. I only managed to hug him at that moment because I felt very excited and tears came to my eyes I remember that he looked at me as if he was surprised.

In spite of living so close, I did not see or hear from them again until many years later when someone told me that a boy who was mute and whose house burned down when he was a child and who was a bus driver for one of the routes around here, had died and they showed me his house that was left in black construction but it is very big, it has several floors, it is a building and they say that he did not finish it and he had promised his mother.

That left me very pleasantly impressed, remembering those girls and especially him.

This came to my mind especially because of the water, since I remembered that we were all carrying the little water we had in our houses that day, and nobody cared about taking the little water they had for their own use, since in the house that had burned down there would only be a little. I learned later that the boy who "thanked me" was the one who died and who always helped his mother and sisters, and never married. The mother never arrived while we were there. Once someone showed her to me in the street, and that's as far as this story goes.

**December 05, 2022**

I also remember some times when we were without water for three days or more and even though we went to fetch it, there was none. That's how time went on, water trucks began to come to "sell" water, we had our drums lined up in the streets, the water truck from the delegation would arrive (they didn't charge) I don't remember when it began to arrive but I do remember that there were many fights over water, there were very abusive people who would put their hose and not let the others fill up or if one was connected, other people would arrive and disconnect it and connect theirs. There was also a neighbour who became the girlfriend of a "pipero", truck driver, and even at night, the water truck was parked outside my house; I remember how they installed some very large water tanks, several trucks would come to fill them and once they were full, then they would start filling our buckets, pots, pots... Long before the private trucks came in.

A neighbour was in charge of distributing the water, we would form and form our jugs too, sometimes the water tanks were not filled and we didn't even have enough to wash our faces, so we had to go where we knew there was water and even if it was far away, we would go and ask for it. In the next neighbourhood (Ajusco) there were some public washing places behind a church called "La Lupita" or that's how we know it and it's on Avenida Aztecas which is very well known and usually, that's where we went to get water because there was never a shortage but sometimes they would turn off the taps and it wouldn't run and many people would go to Santa Úrsula (another neighbouring neighbourhood further away). My mother and my older sisters did go there. I didnt have to do that, but as we had chickens and rabbits and pigs, as well as cats and dogs, we needed water and we had to bring it from wherever there was water.

My mother used to go to the house of a comadre she had in San Gabino Street, in Santa Ursula. This lady told us how in that neighbourhood they also suffered a lot because of the lack of water there, and she told us how they also had to carry water and all her adventures to get it, because she made tamales to sell them and she had a stall in the market where she also sold sopes and quesadillas and her husband was a butcher, and all her children started making food to support themselves, and that's how they made their lives and formed their families as well. Thanks to that lady, my sister and I were able to go to secondary school, because my father wouldn't let me study after primary school and I had to spend three years after leaving sixth grade to be able to study. I have come across many similar stories in this neighbourhood over the years.

**December 7, 2022**

Now, I don't have a water problem, because I built with a lot of effort a cistern that is mine alone and that, when I built my house, was built for me by the builder who came to put in the floors and walls of the bathroom.

I don't have to share it because my brothers share the cistern that my parents built many years ago. And since it's just me and now my son and daughter accompany me, the water lasts.

**January 16, 2023**

Memories of 2014

"In these neighbourhoods, there is always a lack of water".

They said that after five days they were going to restore it and it was already a month old and nothing. This is how groups of settlers closed off access to C.U. in 2014, but it wasn't just that year, we had been like this for several years, sometimes it would last a few days, a few weeks, and then they would put it back, but again we would wake up at dawn and nothing. This started to happen when buildings, public schools, shops, etc. started to be built. It was one of the first times I saw the scarcity of water up close, seeing people wetting towels to "clean" their faces and other important parts of their bodies due to the lack of this precious liquid. Having to buy bottles of water for 50 pesos, which was not enough for a whole day because of all the food, clothes and physical cleanliness. And from then on there have been struggles, especially in groups of complete streets that have formed Committees that, knowing about so many abuses, especially with the pipes, not only private ones, but also those of the Mayor's Office that ask for water for 200 pesos, and others that don't leave the whole pipe, because they have already made arrangements with other people to leave the other part for which they also charge. And those who pay directly are always the poor.

Where do the big shops, businesses, schools and housing units get their water from? They never lack water. How can we explain it? There is no explanation, no one has ever been able to give us one. The metro also uses a lot of water. Where do they get it from? Because they do say that government pipes supply them. From then on, there were more situations in which we saw abuses by "well-to-do" people who had angered us, such as washing their cars and patios with the hose, causing litres and litres of water to be thrown out, And so the moment came when it was discovered that in Aztecas 215 a lot of water was being dumped into the drainage system, having discovered that it was a spring (which many people had known about for a long time before and which was lost when they built a school there called "Hermanos Revueltas" which to this day has not stopped dumping water and continues to do so...).

**January 18, 2023**

We dare to believe that this is due to favours or political connections because even the head of government had promised that she would not allow the construction of the housing complex that was built there to continue and it turns out that when they wanted to, they went to open it again to finish it and that was the end of the story. The same thing happened in Xoco with Mitikah, a very luxurious plaza that regardless of the complaints, the bees, and the claims of the original neighbours affected, they even knocked down trees to modify the roadway of the main avenue and she came personally to say that she was not going to allow them to continue and they continued and they finished and there it is.

There are rumours that this is how they are going to throw us out of these neighbourhoods that were formed from the pedregales by building, opening, constructing enormous buildings and very elegant commercial plazas that are going to increase not only the prices of services but also the collection of taxes that we, the working class families, proletarians, street traders, domestic workers, etc., etc., will no longer be able to pay. And that is the new way of getting rid of the poor.

**March 13, 2023**

I am writing again because now it has happened to me, it turns out that due to various situations, I have my two children living here with me and also their two children, so it is a lot more water and the cistern was emptied and I had no water.

I thought about asking for a water truck but my brothers have just received one and I assumed that they would not send it to me but fortunately, it arrived and filled up again.

With this, I realise that it is very important to take care of water because it is true that right now there are many millions of people who are running out of water. But it is a worldwide problem.