

(Oda al Segundo Libertador)

i.

Today the sky is the colour of hope

Blue penetrating to the depths of the universe

Did you see it, Hugo?

Did you see it?

ii.

You under the sky in your bright red shirt

Life blood meeting hope

Blending to the green of Pachamama

Madre Tierra who is also your mother

iii.

You of the mixed bloods of so many peoples

A world of peoples in your being

Indigenous, African, Gallego

Your very self a symbol of unity

Did you know this, Hugo?

Did you know this?

iv.

You the singing head of state

The praying head of state

The hero of the poor

You saw the previously faceless

You heard their silenced voices

The Constitution in one hand

And the Bible in the other

You, uniting heaven and earth

In your vision

In your dream that was born

A mere 58 years ago.

v.

So quickly you have gone

From life not to death

But from life to legend

A legend that inspires

In the footprints of Bolívar

But with your own unique steps.

vi.

You were reborn

While still living

You, the President on foot

Your seeds you scattered well

Multiplying ideas among the people

Many hands creating your works

Millions and millions of chavistas

vii.

At your mother's knees you learned

The beauty of teaching elders to read

You also wanted to be a painter

To catch the world in the colours of the rainbow

The colours of your banner

Blue your independence from Spain

To match the colour of the sky

Red your courage to dream

Larger than life - and to turn those dreams

Into schools and clinics and homes

Yellow the riches of the land

The riches that are the people

Did you always know this, Hugo?

Did you always know this?

viii.

We weep while the red wave embraces you

A tsunami of love for the love you gave

We weep while we turn our pain into words

Words that can guide our actions

“You are more alive than ever”

Says Evo the wise man

From his ancient knowledge

“Those who die for life cannot be called dead”

Says Nicolas, speaking of your death

“You gave your life to give life to your people”

Says Adolfo, the sculptor of human rights.

ix.

You built more than schools and clinics

Taught more than just to read

You also built hope

For Venezuela and the continent

x.

Of Maduro you spoke like a poet

When you said "If I'm unable to,

With his firm hand,

With his gaze,

With his heart of a man of the people,

With his gift for people,

With his intelligence

God knows what he does,

If I'm unable to continue

Maduro will know the way."

Did you know even then, Hugo?

Did you know even then?

xi.

We will miss your ready smile

Your all-embracing laughter

The way you crossed your chest

To show your love

We will miss your fiery passion

Your eternal optimism

Your complete surrender

To the Bolivarian dream.

xii.

You could recite at will

The words of Bolívar

Of San Martín, of Martí

History was your guide

While you made your own way

And helped create a new history

For your beloved Venezuela.

xiii.

And just as Violeta Parra sang

“Gracias a la vida”

We want to sing to you, Hugo

To sing the song of you, Hugo

“Gracias a tú vida”

Susana Hurlich
Havana
5 March 2013