



IN MEMORIAM

To Julio Ponce[☆]

Para Julio Ponce

The Uruguayan playwright Horacio Quiroga said that you should not think about your friends when writing, nor about the impression that your story will leave. He said that you should tell your story as if you had no interest beyond the intimate setting of your characters, of which you could have been one. It is in this context that we are going to try to talk about Julio now that he is no longer with us, having been so close to him.

Julio had a charming personality and always said the right thing at the right time. He liked constructive criticism and gauging intelligence. If he called you his friend, he must have been 100% sure that you were an open and loyal friend. Julio was honest yet at the same time possessed the gift of burning and truthful irony. These highly prized qualities drew you in and attracted you from the first contact. For those lucky enough to be his friends, Julio's vitality was unforgettable, deep and very fulfilling. And we also learned and looked for the best wherever conversation and life took us.

In his work he was innovative, creative, strict and completely focussed on his patients, with whom he maintained deep relationships, working tirelessly to resolve their problems and to make their stay in hospital as positive as possible. Julio was a clinician. His scientific curiosity also led him to develop highly interesting research projects applicable to the healthcare setting, collaborating with colleagues from a variety of different disciplines. He made you see things from a critical perspective rather than following the crowd. Sharing these experiences with him was extremely rewarding. His clear and concise ideas infected you with an intellectual curiosity, showing us, with a mind that was always open to learning something new, that a problem can

only be truly and deeply understood when studied from different angles. He always looked to integrate to understand and was intolerant of empty premises, inconsistent reasoning, a lack of relevant and corroborated data and analysis bias.

Author of a large number of articles, book chapters and monographs, his greatest pride was contributing to the advance of his speciality and the dissemination of evidence. He founded the Functional Gastrointestinal Tests Unit at Hospital Universitario y Politécnico La Fe, without a doubt one of the most active and outstanding in the whole of Spain, accruing more experience in oesophageal and bile duct motor disorders than any other hospital in the country.

He left his family and his friends far too early, at the age of 73, when his intellectual brilliance and his vision of the world from a new and more mature perspective drew us to him at those unforgettable meetings around the dinner table. An extraordinary reader and a lover of classical music, you could not help but be infected by his intellectual curiosity during those unforgettable encounters where debate was key and friendship a requirement.

One does not make friends: you recognise them as you find them. We had the enormous fortune to know, share and, now, with these sad words, remember Julio with respect, affection and admiration for a job well done.

Rest in peace, Julio.

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