

H O M E B O U N D

by Juan del Cerro

Miami, FL 2007

(a)

H O M E B O U N D

For any reason,
the weather,
the bones,

old age,
forced isolation,
what can we do to feel well?
juan del cerro

(b)

Books published by
Juan del Cerro with
Trafford.com in Canada:

Havana Recalled I – Killer Kin
(crime fiction)

Havana Recalled II – The Secret Comparsa
(historical fiction)

A Cuban in the White House
(political satire)

Green Sex in the Pink Twilight

(outer space comedy)
Short Tales by Juan del Cerro
(stories, Cuban chit-chat, opinions)

Miami, Fl. 2007

(c)

Dedicated to:

Martha Stewart

The Model Home Maker

(d)

PROLOGUE

Homebound may be the result of -

old age

sickness

physical handicap

feelings

low income

no family or friends

more...

Some may think that boredom and loneliness

(e)

are symptoms of old age, no, I can tell you otherwise.

Back in the seventies I had a friend who had a good job in an important business concern, her family loved her, she had friends, yet she did not allow herself to be happy. She would say ‘Sundays are the worst, I die of boredom, I have nothing to do. I tried to

help her ‘you just sit there, what about your brain? what do you think?’ Her answer: “Blank”. That was it, while I wanted more time to be able to do other things. ‘why don’t you control your brain, think of how to fix something or improve anything?’

(f)

‘not interested’. ‘you used to paint, to play the guitar?’ ‘not interested any more.’” She kept getting worse, feeling miserable. She was suddenly struck by a fatal illness and I went to the hospital. She said ‘you know how I am, please help me, the doctor says I may die, tell me what you would do in my place?’ It was awful ‘you are not in

pain, you have always wanted to see Paris,
if I were you I would get out of here to get
on the first plane going there, you have
money, do it.'

'no, I cannot do it.'

and she died.

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CHAPTER ONE

Living homebound is difficult, and I can tell
you about it due to my years of isolation
after an accident, two hip replacements, a
weak spine, a broken knee, and a torn ankle.

Plus old age, I am now 83.

If television kept me entertained all day long, but it does not...

If I had been a diligent homemaker, knew more about housekeeping, but... this is coming from a terrible cook and a no-good

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cleaning maid. After years as an invalid, some in a wheelchair, I can now walk and drive.

I was an office employee all my life until retirement at 65, and the change to staying indoors, suffering with nothing to do, no job awaiting, no duty...

What were – when alone – the most

important issues, sitting there all by myself,
with no hope of improvement, of life
changing...

(3)

CHAPTER TWO

When you are not able to do much
physically – the priorities –

- a) do not worry, do not worry, bis, bis.
- b) keeping your mind sane, trying to
help yourself as much as possible,

staying alert...

- c) Reject, give up, bad thoughts, unhappy feelings, dwelling on sick ideas can make you miserable, look at something constructive, listen to music, bring back from the past (4)

funny memories that made you laugh.

- c) Depression will damage the brain, you cannot allow yourself to feel low, help yourself, sit up, get paper and pencil to write list of things that can make you happy (a crazy example – throw water on the floor, kick your shoes off and waddle in it, wiggle

your toes, and laugh!). Less crazy examples are (1) go and wash your hair (2) take some paint and add a flower to a window or the door. The crazy idea makes you jump out of a bad feeling.

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- (d) Important, very important, try to keep clean all day, forget the house, forget the floor, I mean Yourself. When one has physical problems, it is difficult, but necessary for your mind. There are many things I cannot do at present, which I have given up, I work around them, I have learned to

live with my disabilities!

(e) The upkeep of the home, impossible former daily routines – do not worry, give it all up, remember (a) do not worry!

(f) Exercise! The same way I do the

(6)

crossword puzzle to keep mentally alert, I must walk every day, and do some small stretching moves, not too much. When in a wheelchair, or dragging myself around, I developed a few simple exercises in the kitchen, holding on to the fridge, that used to give me a sense of strength. Getting

back lost muscle is impossible in old age, but making the effort, for me is a great help.

- (g) Eating and Drinking. For those who love food and drink All The Way – Big, being homebound must be a

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real torture. I eat to survive and now drink only orange juice and water.

- (g) Since I worked all my life, in stores, insurance claims, inventories, banks, business, I need to be busy, working. I enjoyed painting until my disability prevented too much movement. It was the internet that kept me alive,

gave me renewed interest in life,
kept me in the know of the whole
world. It was not a computer, only
a browser on top of the television.
An internet connection is The Gift
for a Homebound Person!

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CHAPTER THREE

How can one be happy Inside Alone?

It means fighting for survival. Waking up
and looking at yourself in the bathroom
mirror, and, instead of cringing at the
wrinkles, the dark spots, open your mouth

wide, smile at yourself, and tell your image
“you don’t look so bad my dear, you are
getting better.”

The next step – the morning newspaper:
discard all sickening description of blood
and death. Study the television schedule,
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select only funny shows to watch. Or good
musicals.

Self-preservation and the intention to be
happy must always be at one’s side. What
do you enjoy doing? In the available space,
in a limited way?

Painting

Writing

Collecting

Sewing

Listening to Music

Reading

Cooking

Photography

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Crafts

Religion

Sports

Designs

Make lists and more lists, then choose one,
or two,
that you believe will keep you busy,
study hard to develop its usefulness

for your own enjoyment
to last as much as possible.

Doing RESEARCH was the best idea I ever
chose. There are so many things one knows
nothing about, or never studied, or have
forgotten...

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CHAPTER FOUR

Historical Research. You hear once in a
while that the Government has declassified
information kept secret for years. What
about? Fabulous information, The War, The
Roosevelt Era, The U.S. Emissaries to
Latin America, The Mafia, and more.
Taking a look means getting facts, some
historical truths, for me fascinating.
Besides History, the internet is a big source

of information, you can view the cities, monuments, famous sites, in the world that you had wanted to visit and could not. You can enjoy those marvelous sights right now!

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CHAPTER FIVE

Laughing is good. It is of benefit for one's well being. We do not all laugh at the same jokes, nor find the same situations funny... I write short stories, and sometimes laugh when making them up. Here is a new one:

A Gambler and a Drunkard

Two friends meet by chance at the racetrack.

Max Had not seen you in a long time,
how are you?

Tom I was in Brasil on business, how
about your illness?

Max I almost died, was in the hospital
time and again, tests, treatments,,,

Tom I remember your wife saying you
would not last one year!

Max The doctor finally sent me home,
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with a terrible diet, no drink, no
smoking, no gambling, no horses,
no football – watch TV and drink
fruit juice. A killing proposition.

Tom And yet, here you are, perfectly
well!

Max Yes, and you know what, it was
Laura who died...

Tom Whaaat !

Max She hated wrinkles and ugliness,
was always on a diet, buying
beauty products, getting stitches
here and there... Her doctor may

have stretched her a bit much to keep her thin, but he denies it... She was successful though, she did look beautiful at the funeral, just like a movie star!

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CHAPTER SIX

It is common knowledge, with age, people claim their years back then were much better than what we see today. Better in manners, in dress, in education, in music, even the movies had a superior quality.

We are now the seniors hearing the same story, the same comments. Were we, in

general, much better than today's youth?
Or is it our egos propping us up?

Well, perhaps the damage perceived is due to fast communications, instant news, flash TV, helicopters persecuting runaways...

But...in politics, for instance, I don't remember the public proffering such insults
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against the candidates,
nor...in historical references, so many nations demeaning their former rulers, banishing heroes from school books... and...the worst – a woman used to be a symbol of goodness, respect, humble behavior, sanity, faith and love! Now, all of that is seen walking down the street in a Red Bikini with a Green Bra, think of it, not even matching colors!

There was also an apparent belief that the elders knew better, their knowledge given

due respect, their official standing accepted by the next generation. What about it today? Social Security may be going one way, but the young want retirement advanced, their mentors out, open space ahead, ending all competition! Is this Point of View a repetition of our Ancestors's Complaints?

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Writing. I do not claim to be good at it, nor do I dare get into silly comparisons...but, I like writing and it makes me feel good.

I was in my wheelchair, cruising around in the electronic space, and found out that self-publishing on-demand was inexpensive. I was homebound, with no computer, only a browser, but the idea was tempting. I told

myself, we are not all Shakespeares, and if I pay for it, who cares if no one reads me? Slowly convincing myself that grammar, spelling, and typos, could not deter me from a writing career.

Also, reviewing the books published for sale on line, by housewives, retired army men, and plenty of amateurs, to be read
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by their families and friends, gave me an added push. It was a fact that I knew nothing about my ancestors. It would have been so nice to hold a few pages in my hands now written by one of my Cuban grandmothers, describing her school, her friends, her hobbies, anything!

A small book, memories of olden times, can be a treasured family gift for a girl of fifteen. Or for anyone else.

I have written five books with Trafford.com

in Canada, take a look at Page (b)...

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Pets.

I do not have a pet, different events may have influenced me against it, who knows? At first the building code did not allow children or pets, now they are seen everywhere. Pets are expensive, if you want to really take care of them well. You cannot go off for a day or a week-end forgetting their existence. They need training, good food, love.

I had some friends, a married couple, who acquired a dog, and it became the object of a daily guerrilla fight between them, a bone of contention. Neither one trained the dog, claiming no time, and the little pet would pee all over the livingroom rug. Their life became a sequence of fights, screams, and forced clean-ups. Then, one day, the husband hid the water recipients, (19)

and when the couple returned home from work at 6 p.m., the poor dog was panting and emitting dry heaves in thirsty desperation. A pure criminal act, depriving the pet of water so that he could not pee. They separated and filed for divorce, but later on got back together again, the three of them, plus the prevailing smell.

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CHAPTER NINE

Cooking. Six beautiful cook books, family recipes, world notebooks, vegetarian notes, notes, notes... nothing will make a good cook out of me. Sometimes I plan meals and then forget one ingredient. Other times I substitute this for that, bad taste... The way to survive is to keep it simple –

sandwich

salad
omelet
salmon
chicken breast
white rice
pasta
vegetables
dessert. dessert. dessert...
I love dessert.

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I have developed allergies to some items,
have been forced to give them up-

chocolate, cheese, peanuts, pork, hot spice,
milk, milk, milk...

Because of my cooking ignorance, and the
allergies, I have developed a few recipes that
are not harmful, easy to make, and a fast
pick-me-up in no time. This one is called
Get-Well Heartsick Chicken Salad.

One big bowl

One can Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup

(placed in colander and all liquid
strained out)

One chicken breast (roasted or boiled)

(cut up into tiny squares)

One red apple (peeled and cut up into tiny
squares)

One spoonful Mustard

One+1/2 spoonful Mayo

TOSS, TOSS, TOSS, CHILL, CHILL.

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CHAPTER TEN

Religion.

Why are intense religious people so cruel to
Others?

Faith, belief, in a superior being, cannot
include evil thoughts and feelings. How can
anyone follow or obey a creed or method
that is alien to –

truth

goodness

charity
trust
pity
friendship
love
that does not
reject - cruelty
arrogance
physical aggression
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overbearance
lies

How can a human being condemn or punish someone else, without consideration for the other one's right to live his life?

Is meditation, or prayer, an answer to the troubled minds of the faithful? Why are so many religious persons at present acting in highly confused ways, giving up their humility, their vows to help, to assist, to cure – fellowmen?

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In closing, I want to repeat how important it is for a homebound person to keep the mind alert, to selfishly ignore all other problems, to try to invent a sense of happiness for the closed-in life. Help yourself, treat yourself with care. It will improve your days.

And a very private thought, never, never, feel pity for yourself, it pulls you down, leads nowhere, reject it.

Best wishes for a sense of wellness.

Juan del Cerro
Miami, Florida
2007