Excerpt from "Coastal Navigation"

JORGE AMADO

CAN I CLAIM TO HAVE KNOWN ALBERT CAMUS? I only saw him once, almost in passing; he was leaving Claude Gallimard's office at the publishing house as I was going in. We were introduced, I looked at him in awe, he smiled at me, we shook hands, and I never saw him again. This was at the end of 1949.

I did not even thank him for the article that ten years earlier had greeted the French publication of *Jubiabá* [*Bahia de tous les saints*]. I probably seemed pretentious or discourteous, but how could I thank him when I did not even know the text existed? It was only in 1989 that I heard about it, that I was able to read it and to feel grateful for it. I can imagine how much it would have flattered my vanity if I had read it when it was first published in 1939.

Roger Grenier, a Camus scholar who honors me with his esteem, mentioned it during one of his visits and was astonished to discover that I did not know about it. He sent me a photocopy, and it was only then that I fully understood Albert Camus's smile when we briefly glanced at each other in front of Claude Gallimard's office.

Translation by Alain-Philippe Durand and Ralph Schoolcraft III



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ACERVO ZÉLIA GATTAI / FUNDAÇÃO CASA DE JORGE AMADO

Albert Camus (left) and Jorge Amado

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