

Letter to Liz Taylor

(or Egyptian emeralds for AZT)

Así, dear Liz, without knowing if this letter will ever be read by the calypso of your eyes. And, further, knowing your very busy schedule, please allow me to join the throngs of AIDS sufferers writing to ask you for something. Perhaps a lock of your hair, an autograph, a bit of lace from your slip. I don't know, anything to die knowing you received the message. The thing is, I don't want to die, or receive a printed autograph, or even a photo of you with Montgomery Cliff in Raintree County. None of that, just an emerald from your Cleopatra crown, the one you wore in the film, I hear the emeralds are real. So genuine, just one would allow me to live a few more years, on pure AZT.

I don't want to pressure you with the tears of a dying queer crocodile or strip you of something dear. Maybe I'll even be rescuing you from those gems, cursed by the Pharaohs; in the end they'd only bring bad luck, inciting thieves to ransack your house. Oh, it's no joke, remember that thing with Sharon Tate, it was hardly funny. Plus the gay bar gossips, the vipers, say you lost the jewels in your wrinkles. That you don't have any neck left under so many trinkets. That a queen should be more temperate, that at your age the glitter of rubies competes with cellulite. That while so many starve, you float from one gem to the other. That Julio Iglesias went cross-eyed from all that sparkle. That the checks for the AIDS cause, which you send with such devotion, remain tangled up in the fingers that traffic in the plague. They say, get this, your piety's just lip service, pure self-promotion, you know, like the campaign badge. That little red ribbon the poor queers buy in plastic no doubt made in Taiwan. And the rich, in rubies and gold, it looks more like a noose, that little bow. A device for detecting who has the prize, you know, people love to talk. I've even heard them say you're infected, that's how you lost the weight. Just look at the photos from a few years ago, there wasn't a designer who would have you. And now so much love for homosexuals with AIDS? So much love for that Jackson, Christ of pop, singing: "Let the children come to me." Listen, where did all this endorsement come from? So much gay adoration, just like Liza Minelli, Barbara Streisand, and María Félix. And all the stars who suckle las locas like spoiled little dogs. As if queers were fashion accessories. As if we're the treasure of the Nile or the last glimmer of a submerged Atlantis. While, what, not a peep for the lesbians? When it should be the reverse, they say. First, home team solidarity, then love for las locas. In New York, they even turned your name into a nickname for the rich and famous who run back and forth with their courtiers and stylists.

Liz, personally, I think that it's pure sour grapes, nothing but jealousy. Besides, us queers, we're known to have a star for a heart and a soul of silver, hence our mutual attachment. Hence our closeness, which allows me to ask this favor. If it's alright with you, if it isn't too much of a bother? I'll be eternally grateful for your aid(s). Remember, an itty bitty, little, not-too-many-carat, emerald, they won't even notice it's missing once you pop it from your crown. After all, you'll still have your turquoise to eclipse any other radiance. I'm from Chile, send it to the return address. You don't know this country, they say there's a lot of silver here, but I've never seen it.

Tu admirador, forever.