

# Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities

---

Volume 2 | Issue 1

Article 20

---

2019

## Where did the time go?

Wanda Little

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/rwc>

---

### Recommended Citation

Little, Wanda (2019) "Where did the time go?," *Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 20.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/rwc/vol2/iss1/20>

This Poetry Informational/Argument is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. For more information, please contact [kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu](mailto:kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu).

# Where did the time go?

**By: Wanda Little**

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is about a man investigating the murder of Santiago Nasar. Gabriel Garcia Marquez creates a narrator whose identity is unknown. He weaves a complicated web of characters that the reason meets throughout the book. Marquez uses repetition to introduce new characters and show their perspectives of what happened on the day of the murder. The new perspectives add to the information that the reader has about the murder, and contributes to the final wrap up at the end of the story. The timeline that Marquez gives is scattered which creates confusion about what happened in what order. The confusion surrounding the order of events makes each plot twist more exaggerated, and the story more interesting. Marquez crafts a unique version of a mystery novel that gets the reader hooked.

Part of the confusion that Marquez creates is with the timeline he gives. Marquez starts the story by talking about the day that Santiago Nasar was murdered. However, after about three sentences he creates a quick transition to twenty-seven years later, and then back to a week before the murder.

On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. He'd dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit. "He was always dreaming about trees," Placida Liner, his mother told me twenty-seven years later, recalling the details of that distressing Monday.

“The week before, he’d dreamed that he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything,” she said to me, (4).

The first move that Marquez makes and how he begins the book, introduces the reader to time shifts and proves to be very important throughout the book. Marquez uses Santiago’s dream to transition between three different time periods. However, he does not introduce the details from the past first and go to the present, he gives the details of events in a non-linear fashion. By doing this Marquez gives the reader some information about the narrator. He shows that the narrator isn’t a detective who is trying to investigate the murder in a logical way. Instead, the narrator is wandering around giving the reader details of what he sees. The quote, even though this is one of the more drastic jumps in time, continues to change every so often to throw off the reader. By jumping around the narrator causes a lot of confusion. The confusion he creates causes the reader to lose some small details which lead them from one event to another. Overall the confusion that Marquez spins gets the reader hooked on the story, and to pay attention to even the smallest details.

The confusion in the book also causes shocking moments to become more drastic. One of the major plot twists in the story is when the reader finds out when the Vicario twins want to murder Santiago Nasar. Without the confusing timeline this event might have been less dramatic, however, the readers’ confusion causes it to be a much more shattering moment.

She only took the time necessary to say the name. She looked for it in the shadows, she found it at first sight among the many, many easily confused names from this world and the other, and she nailed it to the wall with her well-aimed dart, like

a butterfly with no will whose sentence has always been written.  
“Santiago Nasar,” she said, (47).

This drastic discovery that the reader figures out represents a shattering moment in the book. It's like the reader has been riding a roller coaster to get to this moment, with this scenario as the top of the mountain. Then this moment brings the reader crashing down to the grave reality of why the murder happened. This is caused by the reader not completely understanding what is going on in the book. Their misinterpretation of events, based on the scattered timeline, makes it so they don't fully understand how one event led to another, causing a major plot twist when Angela Vicario tells her brothers it was Santiago Nasar. The plot twist is caused by the lack of logic in her saying the name. When her brothers ask her who did it they are asking her who hurt her, and the reader knows it was Angela's mom. When she says it was Santiago Nasar the reader is confused and shocked because there is no connection between her and Santiago so far. The shock from the lack of logic is created by Marquez through the way he provides the details of the murder. The confusion he creates, which makes events hard to keep track of, causes suspense, getting the reader hooked.

Another thing that Marquez does that adds to the confusion of the story is repeat the scenario where it is announced that Santiago Nasar has been killed. Chapter one ends with Santiago Nasar's death being announced as someone runs down the street. “Don't bother yourself, Luisa Santiaga,” he shouted as he went by. “They've already killed him,” (24). Chapter three ends with the narrator's sister, Margot, finding out that he died and announcing it to her household. The

final place his death is announced is in the end of the book where, “he went in to his house through the back door that had been open since six and fell on his face in the kitchen,” (120). These instances are important because it shows the cycles of the story. Marquez goes back in time after each repeat to explain events that happened before Santiago Nasar’s death. However, each cycle shows events from a different character’s perspective. In this way, Marquez adds more detail to the story but also causes more confusion.

Marquez also creates repetitions in the middle of chapters. These shifts are harder for the reader to catch and sometimes the reader may not even see them coming. In the beginning of the last chapter Marquez explains what happened to the characters after Santiago Nasar died, and what the investigator on the case found out in the past. However in the middle of the chapter he transitions back to before Santiago Nasar is murdered.

Besides, when he finally learned at the last moment that the Vicario brothers were awaiting to kill him, his reaction was not one of panic, as has so often been said, but rather the bewilderment of innocence. My personal impression is that he died without understanding his death. After he’d promised my sister Margo that he would come and have breakfast at our house...” (101)

This abrupt transition is in the middle of the chapter and difficult for the reader to catch. When reading it over again the reader can tell he is making a transition from after his death to the before. However, when reading it for the first time it is hard to completely understand the time shift. The way that Marquez writes his story the transitions he makes are harder to catch, even if they are more

abrupt than the others. He creates complications that confuses the reader and cause them to lose track of certain aspects of the story, making the novel more interesting. The story becomes more interesting because when losing certain aspects of the story, specific details become more drastic than they really are.

The lack of logic and organization in the book requires the reader to pay attention to what is going on in the story. However, because of all the scattered details it makes it hard for the reader to catch every detail. This causes some confusion surrounding how one event led to the next, making that small plot twist then become exaggerated. Marquez uses repeats of the murder to add more details to the story. Each repeat shows how the murder happened based on a different character's perspective. The repeats and turns in time that Marquez creates in his story make the story more interesting. Subtle transitions throughout the book add to the mystery in the story. Marquez creates an interesting story with his spin on a mystery novel.