



“In the prayer of the Hail Mary, men ask me to pray for them at the hour of their death. I pray [...] João Grilo was a poor man like us, my son, and he had to endure the greatest hardships of a dry and impoverished land like ours. He passed through childhood without feeling it. He became accustomed to few bread and a lot of sweat [...] and when he could no longer go on, he prayed; when prayer didn't help, he would join a group of migrants trying to survive on the coast, humiliated, defeated, and filled with longing. And as soon as he heard news of the rain, he took the road back, reinvigorated, as if hope were a plant that grew with the rain, and when he saw his land again, he gave thanks to God for being a poor man, but courageous and full of faith.”

This excerpt from “A Dog's Will”, written by Ariano Suassuna, portrays many people from my homeland who leave their homes to try their luck elsewhere. This is a harsh reality, but one also marked by hope and the pursuit of a better future.

I believe in proactivity, boldness, and questioning as forces capable of transforming the Northeastern backlands. But it wasn't always like this. I spent much of my childhood thinking that my destiny was written even before I learned to spell my own name, which, for a Brazilian, is too hard to pronounce. I was born from poor parents, I grew up with fragile self-esteem, surrounded by a reality where hope seemed like a distant luxury. The backland was dry, barren, and often seemed to echo the same lack of perspective that I felt within myself.

But at 16, I made a decision that would change everything: I left the backlands and set off to adventure in Recife. It wasn't easy. I was just a young guy full of uncertainties, carrying a light suitcase on my back, but an enormous weight of doubts and fears. Still, I went. Because something deep inside me told me that staying still would never be an option.

It was during this time that I understood that waiting for changes to come to me would be like waiting for rain in times of drought. Action was required. I learned that proactivity isn't just about moving, but about taking the lead in your own story. I realized that boldness is not a trait reserved for the fearless, but a necessary leap for those who refuse to accept what is imposed on them. And questioning is the tool that transforms conformity into possibility.

Today I see that the backlands where I grew up are not just a dry land. It is also a land of resilient people, of stories that defy statistics, of dreams that insist on blossoming despite the drought. I believe that the transformation of the backlands will not come solely from policies or investments, but also from the courage of each person who refuses to wait.

I refuse.

And I still refuse.

This I believe.



Wellber Drayton Braga Galdino
From the backland to the world

Virgin Mary, portrayed by Fernanda Montenegro in A Dog's Will

