

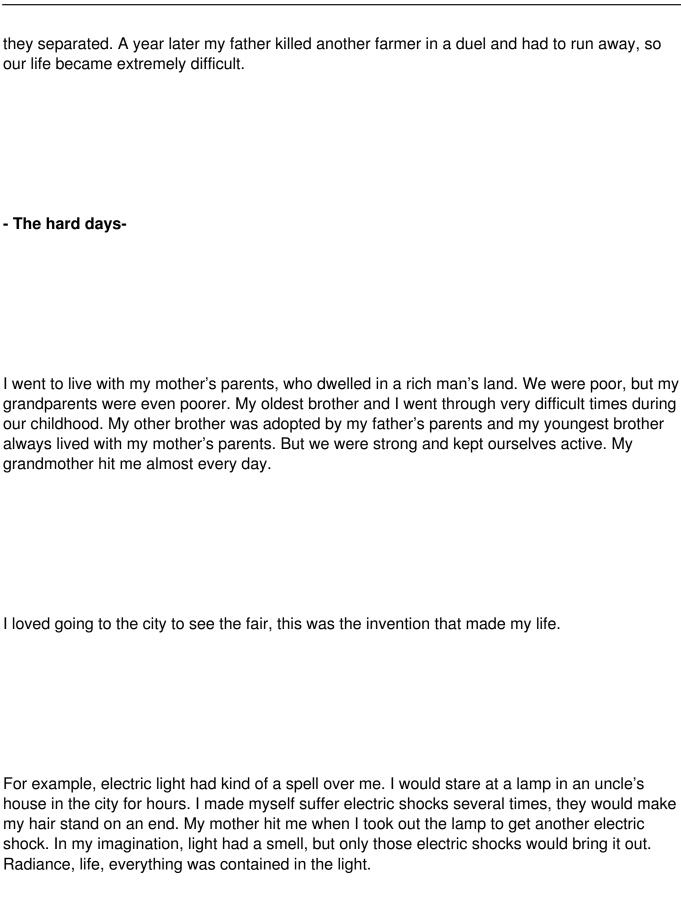
When I was a kid, I was fascinated by the traveling photographers that went to far away towns to shoot portraits either on donkeys or on foot. They returned weeks later with the picture and got the rest of their pay. They were always welcome, except by my grandfather, who kept his distance, thinking they scammed money out of people. I can't remember being photographed by any of them. I don't have any pictures of my childhood. My oldest picture was shot when I was 16.

My name is Numo Rama and I am a photographer. I live in a poor neighborhood of Natal, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, with my wife and my two children. Even though we are financially stable now, I don't feel better off than everyone else here. What I have is the feeling of having great social responsibilities towards the rest of the community.

I come from an underprivileged background, I lived in a small provincial town. My father still lives of farming and raising live stock. My mother worked as a maid. I was five years old when

## The Planet is a Favela: Numo Rama





Written	by	Miguel	Angel	Ceballos
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When I was 13, I went to live with my father and worked with him in the farm. My father slaughtered the livestock and my brother cleaned off the meat to sell it on the local market the next day.

(I am currently working on a project called "Meat Eaters", which is a 100% autobiographical. The images are very disturbing and since I began I haven't been able to eat meat.)

Three years later I went to look for new experiences in the North, I went to the state of Acre near the Bolivian border. Eight years later, I reunited with my mother in the outskirts of Brasilia, where she still lives. From that point on, my life changed pace dramatically. That place left deep marks on me. Since I couldn't change the past, I decided to learn from it. I got good lessons out of it. That was my true school, and those are my real assets.

To be honest, I don't even know if I am a real photographer. Everything started out in Portugal in 1991. I arrived there as an economic refugee, escaping from Fernando Collor de Melo's government, which had shattered Brazil's economy. But in 1994, photography crossed my path. My girlfriend, who is now my wife, gave me my first book about photographic techniques.

## - Discovering the World -

## The Planet is a Favela: Numo Rama Written by Miguel Angel Ceballos All started out to explore the universe of the photographic image. It was all so vast and far from my comprehension, that several times, I tried to do anything but photograph. Everything became more clear when I read the biographies of the greatest photographers of the different epochs. I was thrilled when I read about Manuel Alvarez Bravo and the Mexico of his time, about the immigrant Tina Modotti and the American Edward Weston. About the political uproar and the active participation of the artists, the extreme, genius mural painters. Mexico was in turmoil and artists played a major role. When I came across the work of Pedro Meyer in Sweden, it was easy to understand him because he was Mexican. Later on I identified with his boldness. I really enjoyed looking at a Mexican re-invent his work in the digital age. With Meyer, I truly conquered more space and

flew higher.



When I think about photography, I don't think about photo in newspapers —which has great importance and should be governed by ethics, like everything we do in life-, what interests me about it is not just the habit of documenting. I don't photograph everyday or every week or every month. I just do it when I've got something to say, and that only happens after a long reflection. The images become a graphic interpretation of reality that I want to transmit.



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