

In the 2000s, I moved to Sollies-Toucas. My wife at the time was a liberal nurse. Being a caregiver myself, I sometimes helped him for patients who were difficult to mobilize, often bedridden or with significant motor deficits. It was in these circumstances that I met Blasco Mentor. Clinging to the terraces of Sollies-Toucas, this remarkable place where I was entering for the first time, seemed to me in complete decay. On the left, crossing the gate, the "CasaNieves" surrounded by its terraces, must have been a very beautiful house and still had an old-fashioned charm despite its shutters beaten by the mistral and its decrepit facade. Weeds grew through the mosaics of the large basin and mythological sculptures revealed their rusty metal frames. In the painter's studio hung huge paintings, representing circus scenes, bullfights, or voluptuous women dancing. But what amazed me was the flamboyant colors of these paintings: yellow, orange, gold. In the garden, assemblies of tools, metal parts, mattress springs represented a mythical bestiary and attested to Mentor's creativity and eclecticism. All the rooms were decorated with paintings, statues, casts of the painter. In his room, a multitude of books were stored on shelves or perhaps a library. On the bed lay Mentor. I was intimidated by his stature. Lying down, it seemed immense. His black eyes were topped with thick eyebrows, his white hair contrasted with that distorted and closed face by illness. Communication, like care, was difficult. Little by little we got to grips and our relationship became more friendly. One day when I was accompanying my ex-wife, Blasco, with great difficulty, with her able-bodied arm, drew the portrait of her nurse. That was his way of thanking us. After his death, I went back to visit Neige several times, who was also being cared for by the same nurses. I took the opportunity to walk in this garden that fascinated me and each time I was sorry to see this property that was deteriorating, and I did not understand the lack of interest of the municipal and departmental authorities for this heritage.

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