I have always thought that stories that are told never die
and that untold stories are carried away on the wind.
to my ancestors
My trips to Pallars were becoming less and less frequent.
Meanwhile, my interest in finding out about my roots grew over time.
With the Pyrenees before me I felt I had arrived.
Last stop:
Espui.
My ancestors had never broken away from these mountains.
I'm part of the first generation that moved to the city.
My father was a shepherd and so were my grandparents.
They all lived off the land.
I can't grow crops.
I can't read the clouds or the moon
I can't whistle.
My father was born in this house, the Sastre house.
He herded sheep, goats and cows in these meadows.
He saw everything change.

This is where the shepherd slept.

It's called Pau's's shelter.

Nobody has slept here since.

-When was that?
-50 years ago.

There are no herds anymore,

so there are no shepherds now.

My grandmother, uncle, aunt and cousins now live in the Sastre house.

When my grandfather died, they sold all the livestock

and started renting a cottage to tourists.

In any case, my grandmother carried on raising her rabbits and chickens.

You see, these are the little ones.

She always worked in silence,

as if she made no noise when walking or being around.

She is the one holding the child.

The child is my dad.

Here is my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather.
My grandfather is behind, with his sister Encarna.

That is Benita, my great-grandmother.

I was lucky to have known her.

She died when I was about 12.

I remember she always dressed in black, with her hair up, and she was so full of energy.

I also remember her snake stew to ward off the flu and her little pots of herbs freshly picked from Filiu mountain.

Benita died of old age when she was 102.

On her 100th birthday the whole village threw her a party.

People from all around the valley came to celebrate.

She was not used to being the centre of attention and getting presents, but that day she received more than in her entire life.

My father loved her a lot.

She had taught him many secrets of the land.

A lot of houses became empty
as time went by.
52: 00:06:54:12 00:06:56:10 01:23
Some forever,
53: 00:06:57:20 00:07:00:00 02:05
others during the coldest months.
54: 00:07:48:00 00:07:52:11 04:11
Those who stayed were willing
to put up with the freezing cold,
55: 00:07:53:16 00:07:55:08 01:17
the silence
56: 00:07:56:10 00:07:58:06 01:21
and the solitude.
57: 00:08:47:18 00:08:49:24 02:06
Candida and her family
are leaving today.
58: 00:08:51:00 00:08:53:15 02:15
They are moving
to a larger village.
59: 00:08:55:09 00:08:59:01 03:17
It is Sant Julia's day,
the patron saint of Espui.
60: 00:09:20:16 00:09:23:03 02:12
They asked me to take
a leaving photo
61: 00:09:23:08 00:09:25:15 02:07
Look at them walking by.
62: 00:09:26:10 00:09:29:02 02:17
No need to hide!
You've already passed!
63: 00:09:29:21 00:09:32:18 02:22
-By the altar?
-Yes, a picture by the altar.
64: 00:09:33:04 00:09:34:17 01:13
Let's go inside.
65: 00:09:34:23 00:09:39:20 04:22
She and my grandmother are the oldest
in the village and have always lived here.
66: 00:09:42:18 00:09:44:15 01:22
Together. Like this.
67: 00:10:04:14 00:10:05:16 01:02
You see?
68: 00:10:06:01 00:10:07:09 01:08
How nice!
--Doesn't the world change fast?
--Yes, yes.

How pretty!

The Palleta family stayed.

Since Quim and Mercè retired,

their son Quimet has looked after the livestock.

What if we moved to Lleida...

or Barcelona?

What would we do with ourselves?

You'd get used to it.

-To what?
-To going to football matches...

-Football matches?
-To the cinema...

-To the beach...
-No way!

We were raised here and it shaped us. I'd die if I had to leave.

Where do you want to go to?
For a walk on this busy road?

It's like Barcelona!

You can't even walk on the roadside.

There's always two way traffic, and the other road is the same.
I live here. It's my right of way.

I'm at my wit's end.

I'd die if I had to leave.

Inevitably.

One day he stopped me and told me I had to walk on the left side.

One of those...

How are they called? The "Mossos", the local police.

I replied: "I've walked on the right for 70 years.

Walk on the left if you want to".

You've got a good job.

- Are you a journalist?
- And camerawoman!

I read once that this famous singer...

Lola Flores...

was very upset with the journalists.

Without realising, Quim became my guide

in my personal journey through time.

Are you ready?
What does Espui mean to you?
-It's my life.

I wouldn't change it for the world.

I had many opportunities elsewhere, but I chose to stay put here.

20 years ago there were 30 families living here.

And now...

Look, there used to be 12 or 13 families with livestock,

and now there are only four.

It has really changed.

Move!

Move!

Come on, that way!

That way!

Bastard!

Get down there!

Come on!

You're restless.

You're restless.

Listen, you're going to freak out with this song.

This is from my youth.
Wow, Titanic!

It's a techno version of the Titanic theme.

How cool is that?

I remember bedtime was hard, because it was so cold.

You were warm in the kitchen...

and going to bed was...

I've never made it with salt and pepper.

It's better that way.

-It's tastier.
-But it's worse for your health.

Done.

The inevitable passing of seasons was the only sign of the passage of time.

Here people still follow the rhythms of the rain, the sun and the night.

Some come and some go.

"What the hell
are you doing here?", I say to them.

140: 00:20:20:07:09 00:20:09:02 01:18
You could have stayed home.

141: 00:20:09:07 00:20:12:13 03:06
I understand going somewhere
to have fun, but cycling?

142: 00:20:12:21 00:20:15:17 02:21
Big races are different

143: 00:20:16:01 00:20:19:01 03:00
but, Holy Mary!
Why would you cycle up a mountain?

144: 00:20:19:09 00:20:20:24 01:15
He needs more steam!

145: 00:20:30:09 00:20:32:14 02:05
You need more steam!

146: 00:20:33:02 00:20:36:00 02:23
Ride faster or you'll never make it.

147: 00:20:53:11 00:20:56:17 03:06
How is it that they brought
this type of dog from France?

148: 00:21:02:12 00:21:04:24 02:12
There are so few sunny days.

149: 00:21:05:10 00:21:08:13 03:03
Before you even realise it
they have gone.

150: 00:21:25:24 00:21:31:00 05:01
When the families of Espui
brought the cows down to the village

151: 00:21:31:06 00:21:34:00 02:19
it meant it was autumn

152: 00:21:34:06 00:21:36:02 01:21
and winter was coming.

153: 00:22:07:17 00:22:09:17 02:00
The world has changed a lot!

154: 00:22:09:22 00:22:11:17 01:20
-Jesus!
-Holy shit!

155: 00:22:11:21 00:22:15:10 03:14
In past centuries
they can't have worked much.

156: 00:22:15:18 00:22:18:24 03:06
-Not much.
-The world has been around for ages.
Yes, a long time.
And not much changed.

I've always said...
you and I...

still used the wooden plough
invented by the Romans
2000 years ago.

That was such a lasting idea.

And now we've gone
from the wooden plough
to all these tractors.

-That's frigging unbelievable.
-Yes.

Do you remember
when the first trains came up here?

How the world has changed!

-And all those kids! Do you remember?
-Of course.

There were separate teachers
for boys and girls.

The school, the kids playing
between classes...

And now...

The last baby
was born around 20 years ago.
In some regions in the Pyrenees there's a big change underway. The businesses linked to winter sports and second homes are booming. There is lot of property speculation. In some regions, new developments are being planned, and that means more building. Some interest groups have organized to put a stop to this growth, that harms the traditional image of the Pyrenees.

In Espui the bells still ring twice a day to call the villagers to prayer. Espui has around 80 inhabitants but only 20 live there all year long. In its grazing lands there will be ski slopes and there are plans to build apartments, hotels and a golf course. The 30,000 m² complex would accommodate 5,000 people and would include a mall, a leisure and sport area and underground car park. The apartments are already on the market for 220,000–300,000 euros.
A ski lift would take skiers up the slopes in the Filia mountain.

The local residents sold the land for less than €6 per square metre.

Look, look!

In a way we have made sacrifices for better living standards in the valley.

People decided to welcome the ski slopes and all the related services and people.

Are we wrong?

Maybe, but there was a decision to take, and we took it.

It would be nice to fast forward five years and look at the valley and push a button to go back if we don't like it.

We'd like that but it's not possible.

We can't tell the future. I can't, at least.

I can only live in the present, and it is what it is.

I think this might be a good thing for the region,
if it is done properly...
with common sense.

206: 00:27:29:17 00:27:32:15 02:23
But I'm no expert

207: 00:27:33:01 00:27:35:13 02:12
so I shouldn't voice my opinion.

208: 00:27:35:24 00:27:38:04 02:05
What I do know

209: 00:27:39:00 00:27:42:01 03:01
is that we are social animals,

210: 00:27:42:13 00:27:44:15 02:02
we like being with other people...

211: 00:27:46:10 00:27:50:07 03:22
and there are not many people
in these villages at the moment.

212: 00:27:51:08 00:27:55:01 03:18
Jobs and money create a future.

213: 00:27:55:21 00:27:59:16 03:20
Hopes don't.
They aren't useful.

214: 00:27:59:22 00:28:03:19 03:22
We have a really beautiful
environment here, but what for?

215: 00:28:03:23 00:28:07:16 03:18
-What did you mean by hopes?
-You can't live on hope.

216: 00:28:08:14 00:28:09:21 01:07
You need cash.

217: 00:28:12:17 00:28:15:06 02:14
[[the square]]

218: 00:28:59:09 00:29:04:10 05:01
The nature is so beautiful
in Espui, Aguir, and all these
villages.

219: 00:29:04:16 00:29:08:06 03:15
Tell me that again
when there are 50 cm of snow.

220: 00:29:08:22 00:29:11:11 02:14
I disagree.
I'm in love with this place.

221: 00:29:11:17 00:29:13:03 01:11
What more can I say?

222: 00:29:13:22 00:29:19:09 05:12
The first week that I came,
and my car broke down.

223: 00:29:19:24 00:29:24:24 05:00
I didn't know anybody,
but they welcomed me in their homes.

224: 00:29:26:08 00:29:28:11 02:03
Today is fruit delivery day.

225: 00:29:38:12 00:29:43:00 04:13
The fried eggs here are
the most delicious I've ever tasted.

226: 00:29:43:17 00:29:49:13 05:21
I could eat the same eggs in Lleida
and they wouldn't taste as good.

227: 00:29:49:24 00:29:54:05 04:06
-Everything will change, eventually.
-I wouldn't like that.

228: 00:29:56:07 00:30:01:00 04:18
But your relatives from Lleida
could buy second homes here.

229: 00:30:01:18 00:30:04:17 02:24
It's like Montcortés,
it's beautiful, I love it too.

230: 00:30:05:15 00:30:08:12 02:22
I don't know how this will be
when the works start,

231: 00:30:08:17 00:30:13:23 05:06
but now you look at the nature,
the houses, and it's amazing.

232: 00:30:14:06 00:30:15:14 01:08
Ok, Mercès.

233: 00:30:15:21 00:30:18:04 02:08
-Has everyone been served?
-Yes, everyone.

234: 00:30:19:00 00:30:22:12 03:12
-You want pomegranates? Apples?
-Six bananas.

235: 00:30:22:17 00:30:25:05 02:13
Hold this, please.
They were in cold storage.

236: 00:30:25:10 00:30:27:18 02:08
-This bunch?
-Yes, lovely.

237: 00:30:32:06 00:30:33:15 01:09
Anything else?

238: 00:30:55:10 00:30:59:09 03:24
This was one of the busiest squares in the Fosca Valley.

239: 00:31:02:10 00:31:04:18 02:08
The square is the village's face.

240: 00:31:05:01 00:31:10:02 05:01
It shows you what is here and what is not, what is available and what is missing.

241: 00:31:57:04 00:32:00:06 03:02
For the third time

242: 00:32:01:05 00:32:04:18 03:13
[[the heavens and the sky]]
Jesus fell down exhausted.

243: 00:32:04:24 00:32:09:08 04:09
How dearly has he paid

244: 00:32:09:16 00:32:12:12 02:21
for my ungratefulness.

245: 00:32:14:08 00:32:18:11 04:03
For your Holy Passion,

246: 00:32:19:01 00:32:22:15 03:14
gracious Redeemer,

247: 00:32:23:02 00:32:28:07 05:05
forgive once more

248: 00:32:29:03 00:32:33:07 04:04
this poor sinner.

249: 00:32:40:04 00:32:42:23 02:19
Hail Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

250: 00:32:43:03 00:32:45:16 02:13
now and at the hour of our death.

251: 00:32:50:03 00:32:54:13 04:10
Hail Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners...

252: 00:33:19:00 00:33:21:18 02:18
Hail Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners...

253: 00:33:21:22 00:33:24:13 02:16
now and at the hour of our death.

254: 00:35:06:16 00:35:08:21 02:05
Think about this:

255: 00:35:10:06 00:35:12:24 02:18
If we don't do anything,
there will be nothing left
of this place.

257:       00:35:16:00 00:35:19:23 03:23
Only weeds and bushes
and maybe a bit of the road,

258:       00:35:20:05 00:35:24:20 04:15
but it'll look like a tunnel,
because the plants will grow over.

259:       00:35:28:00 00:35:33:10 05:10
-Do you agree with the plans?
-I do. And here in Espui...

260:       00:35:34:17 00:35:39:02 04:10
maybe not everybody agrees
but I think most do.

261:       00:35:39:07 00:35:42:04 02:22
We all see
that if nothing is done

262:       00:35:42:09 00:35:44:06 01:22
this place will die out.

263:       00:35:44:23 00:35:46:06 01:08
It will.

264:       00:36:01:22 00:36:04:09 02:12
-In 2007.
-2007...

265:       00:36:05:01 00:36:08:10 03:09
-Two years.
-Will everything be finished by then?

266:       00:36:08:22 00:36:13:06 04:09
They say the ski slopes will be done
and the hotels and all of that.

267:       00:36:16:14 00:36:18:13 01:24
It will be beautiful, right?

268:       00:36:19:04 00:36:22:18 03:14
They say this golf thing
is for the rich.

269:       00:36:23:08 00:36:27:10 04:02
And there will be ski lifts too,
there by the lakes.

270:       00:36:52:23 00:36:56:11 03:13
Six years had passed since I first
came to Espui with a camera.

271:       00:36:57:02 00:37:00:12 03:10
And it was 40 years
since my father and his aunt
272: 00:37:00:16 00:37:03:20 03:04 filmed the village with their new Super 8 camera.

273: 00:37:10:13 00:37:12:12 01:24 Today when I left the valley

274: 00:37:12:16 00:37:16:22 04:06 I realised the point of gathering images for such a long time.

275: 00:37:43:18 00:37:46:17 02:24
[[Pyrene]]

276: 00:37:47:11 00:37:51:05 03:19
According to a Greek legend, the nymph Pyrene

277: 00:37:51:14 00:37:54:06 02:17 fled the three-headed monster Geryon,

278: 00:37:54:14 00:37:57:11 02:22 and hid somewhere in northeast Iberia.

279: 00:37:59:23 00:38:03:09 03:11
As the monster could not find her, he lit a fire.

280: 00:38:05:02 00:38:09:07 04:05 Pyrene’s cry of pain made the whole planet shake.

281: 00:38:12:19 00:38:16:21 04:02 Before she died, her tears formed pools.

282: 00:38:20:18 00:38:24:17 03:24 Heracles, her lover, did not arrive in time to save her.

283: 00:38:24:24 00:38:30:01 05:02 Possessed with rage, he started piling up rocks on her body.

284: 00:38:31:18 00:38:35:01 03:08 The Pyrenees are her mausoleum.

285: 00:38:46:07 00:38:49:22 03:15 The history of this place remained the same for centuries.

286: 00:38:51:18 00:38:55:00 03:07 People in the Fosca Valley lived like their ancestors

287: 00:38:55:10 00:38:57:20 02:10 until well into the 20th century.

288: 00:39:01:23 00:39:06:08 04:10
The world before oil, cars and television.

But like in thousands of other places around the globe, change eventually arrived.

What would you bring back from that time? The joy.

Now we have many more things, but there was more joy back then.

We have more things now, we live much more comfortably, and we don't work as much.

The work was harder back then. But there was more joy.

What caused that joy? -I don't know. I think maybe...

Prosperity changes you...

I don't know...

[[returning]]

Under the stones, the memory.

But there was nothing in the air to signal so many sudden changes.
I don't remember anything.

307: 00:40:54:00 00:40:57:02 03:02
I've lost my memory.

308: 00:40:57:14 00:40:59:08 01:19
I don't know....

309: 00:40:59:24 00:41:01:16 01:17
In a short time a

310: 00:41:02:05 00:41:04:22 02:17
I've lost all the good things.

311: 00:41:05:10 00:41:06:24 01:14
Now I don't know.

312: 00:41:07:22 00:41:12:03 04:06
I do something in the morning
and by the afternoon I've forgotten it.

313: 00:41:13:18 00:41:16:19 03:01
Really, the memory,
and the sight too...

314: 00:41:18:16 00:41:23:06 04:15
My grandmother always says the water
of Font del Com is good for your eyes.

315: 00:41:24:06 00:41:26:22 02:16
She goes there every single day.

316: 00:41:36:12 00:41:38:16 02:04
Oh, look at that machine.

317: 00:42:27:09 00:42:30:20 03:11
At that time, Juli was employed
as works supervisor.

318: 00:42:31:04 00:42:33:06 02:02
and foreman of the golf course.

319: 00:45:07:10 00:45:09:16 02:06
Look, there comes another one.

320: 00:45:10:09 00:45:12:08 01:24
It will stir up dust.

321: 00:45:13:16 00:45:16:17 03:01
I don't understand
these building works.

322: 00:45:16:24 00:45:19:16 02:17
Moving earth up and down
and all that crap.

323: 00:45:20:15 00:45:22:08 01:18
Look at the dust.

324: 00:45:24:20 00:45:28:02 03:07
Don't go there
if you have asthma.

325:     00:45:29:09 00:45:31:00 01:16
And the other day they said:

326:     00:45:31:09 00:45:33:19 02:10
"You can't go through, Madam."

327:     00:45:34:01 00:45:36:06 02:05
The same thing day after day!

328:     00:45:36:24 00:45:41:24 05:00
I said: "This is taking longer
than the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona."

329:     00:46:52:20 00:46:55:18 02:23
I didn't know everything
would change so fast.

330:     00:46:59:09 00:47:01:15 02:06
I didn't know it would change.

331:     00:47:04:24 00:47:08:19 03:20
I didn't know that I would grow up
and they would pass away.

332:     00:47:15:23 00:47:18:03 02:05
I didn't understand what time was.

333:     00:47:22:20 00:47:25:11 02:16
Now I know that everything changes,

334:     00:47:25:24 00:47:27:06 01:07
that we all change,

335:     00:47:28:16 00:47:30:12 01:21
that everything passes away.

336:     00:47:55:17 00:47:59:04 03:12
[[default]]

337:     00:48:57:10 00:49:00:19 03:09
No entrance allowed
for unauthorized personnel

338:     00:49:27:06 00:49:30:21 03:15
At the Filiα mountains
the chair lift structures

339:     00:49:31:01 00:49:32:14 01:13
and the ski slope markings

340:     00:49:32:19 00:49:36:03 03:09
are the only signs
of the unfinished resort.

341:     00:49:36:13 00:49:38:22 02:09
In Espui, construction
on the new complex
of 800 houses, 8 hotels and a golf course

remains at a stand-still.

The housing development is abandoned.

There is only a security guard and the occasional tourist.

I don't know if the planned project was too big for the valley.

They sold it as a sustainable project that would respect the environment,

and we believed them.

Then the project changed hands

and I guess they were looking for a way to finish it any way they could.

At least we can use the apartment.

Maybe others were not so lucky.

But we feel short changed

because we paid a premium price for this apartment

on the promise that there would be ski slopes, ski lifts, and all of that.

And we cannot enjoy that, so we are disappointed.

I think the future of this area is in finishing this project, right?
There should be a major road to FC Barcelona's stadium.

That's all I'd ask of the government, because it takes three hours now.

Everything is green here.

The mountains in our area have been logged.

This is another world.

The project is so varied that everybody can choose to do what they like best.

And it's great that in the Pyrenees you can do other things besides skiing.

The strength of this project is that up a 2000 m mountain you can have a disco, a spa or a golf course.

I'd love to play winter golf, with a blue ball over the white ground...

That must be quite something.

But really, I think the nice thing about this project is that there are many options.

A spa... The ladies will enjoy that...

When we go to the disco we're 24 hour party people.

Espui can't keep up.

See, this is Escriba's land.
Really?
And this is ours.

See the Prat del Rei?
Yes.

They are skiing here, this must be the Filita mountain.

It says: "Get information about this exclusive year round location".

This what they were supposed to do in Espui, but it's only half done.

Look how it is now and how they show it here.

Here it looks really pretty!

They will get it done. Don't be like that.

Are you kidding me?

Who's this guy?
I don't know.

Maybe we won't see it, but they'll finish it for sure.

They've already spent lots of money here.

That was going to be an ice rink?

Who are these two?

Who?
This couple here.

Oh, that's only a picture.
Do you know them?
- No, no... I thought you did.

"A new vision of high-end leisure"

What does that mean?

They'll place a sauna, or some other dumb thing like that there.

"An investment with immediate returns".

"Because exclusiveness also means taking advantage of opportunities before anybody else."

Lots of advertising!

As politicians say:

It's theatre, pure theatre!

What do you think when you see this?

When I see it like this I feel sad,

because this used to be very beautiful.

They have made a mess, to put it bluntly.

Here right, next to the apartments there are mounds of earth everywhere,

because they moved earth all around the place and...

I don't know.
I don't know...
I'm no expert.

I don't know how these things work,
but I can see that they spent
lots of money here.

I don't know how many spirits
live in these woods,
or why they came here one day.

All I know is they are here.

When the construction work stopped,

Juli went back to working full-time
with the livestock.

Quim still spends a lot of time
at the entrance to the village,

watching who comes and goes.

But he no longer herds
the cows up the mountain.

Oh, Jesus!

I'm still well

but...

Mother of God!

Poor Quim, old age
is catching up with you!
And Chin? Is he gone?

My grandmother hardly leaves the house. She doesn't go to the garden or the fountain. She doesn't remember her name, or ours.

She barely remembers her life. Every spring, his son, my father, still visits his old haunts,

the same places he went to as a child.

One day, coming down from Filiα, he found an inscription on a rock made by a friend who was a shepherd.

There it was, amongst the cement and iron frames.

The leisure and residential complex remains just as they left it in July 2008.