

# M A N D O R L A

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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MANDORLA

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS



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EXCERPTS FROM TWO BOOKS

EXCERPTS FROM "THE MARCH HARE"

My grandfather had a special talent for hunting and dressing insects.

He would keep them alive to produce the greatest delectation and shock in his clients and cohabitants.

At night we would go to the small tables of the garden with tiny plates and saltshakers.

In turn, there were rosebushes, singular roses, snow-white and unmoving.

We could hear the buzz of insects duly bashful and confused.

The clients arrived furtively.

Some ordered fireflies, which were the most expensive. Those lights.

Others, fat butterflies, cream-colored with a spring of mint and a small snail.

And I remember when we served that great black butterfly, the one that looked like velvet, that looked like a woman.



There were Persian buttercups. Blue, red, pink, yellow, the color of milk. Above all red, pink, yellow, black in the center, the corona of fire. Like faces, like earth-bound stars.

That summer, when I was very young, I aged many years and I understood everything as if I were an adult. The hunters brought hares for my mother, foxes, strange butterflies, a black butterfly with a diamond on the tip of each wing, who fled from us to the garden and even sang a song.

And one afternoon something strange happened, I think it was my sister's birth.

There were many lights. And the plums glistened from the shelves and the star of the magi paused.



The afternoon stayed yellow. Because there were oranges everywhere.

As many as there were leaves. They looked like desserts at our fingertips.

And hares, vitreous, iridescent, from ancient festivals, they ran around again, as if they had achieved resurrection. But who was going to believe in them at this late hour, and we met them as if they were daydreams. And resting in the doorways, windows, treetops, watching that colorful, exquisite, frightening display, we remained released from all other obligations. And we became the madonnas of the forest, before whom the desperate kneeled to pray.



The birds sing, they sing  
with all their warble and trill.

(And they scare me.)

After the rain, midday.

It seems that everything is already lost, under water.

Solitary days will come.

So white, so white;  
A terrible concentration of hares.



To be a hare.

I see its ears like leaves, its gray eyes, its whiskers like pistils, a twitch in its dark mouth of gilly flowers.

It moves, step by step, through the passageways of the countryside.

It moves with the murmur of a drum. Could it be a boss hare? A mother hare? Or a he-hare? A she-hare? Could I be myself? I touch my delicate ears, my gray eyes, my fine whiskers, my mouth of gilly flowers, my set of teeth, inlaid with mother of pearl, dark.

Near, far, the chick-hares peep.

I smell clover, yellow daisies from all over the countryside. I smell clover.  
And the old stars tremble like leaves.

*Translated by Susan Briante*

FROM *CLAVEL Y TENEBRARIO*

*For my sister Nidia.  
("her name, Nidia, blazed in the  
highest towers for so many years.")*

1

By the time they noticed, the tragedy had already begun. A cloud came, quick, from the south, and hovered over the house, black and gray, a tenebrous white, all hailing and shrilling, let loose unrelenting, its terrible grape.

And the birds, just about to die, fell in the yard. The chattering doves, now, like paper, like memories; and those golden plume parrots, who'd delivered great lectures, erect, on the orange tree, came down over there—without rhyme or reason—, like branches of rainbow blooms.

It looked like the end of everything.

The souls were afraid and through a crack they watched, the broken eternity.

15

I'd like to tell the story of how things were born.

When we lived in that house, there was nothing special about it. Almost nothing. With its countless chambers through which we performed, shows that neighbors watched from each window and door. In one of those rooms—without roof or floor—, from dirt, sometimes, from night until dawn, things were born: cutlery, graters, plates, pots, cups. All there, delicate, fragile and almost tremulous. We'd take these things to use in the kitchen, and selling them never occurred to us.

And when we moved to another dwelling no one spoke of this there either. I tell it, as, of, now, it appears to be a tale.

19

We performed in the gardens, at sunset, near the cedar and carob trees; the show was improvised, right there, and I, always, afraid of forgetting my lines, even though, never, such a thing occurred. We'd proceed, back and forth, through the cedar and orange trees, and they'd gather to watch us, to listen in,

the inhabitants of all the homes nearby.

What's more, we included some animals in the cast; they'd learned to move on a stage, dress themselves, put on their shoes, and even spoke a few words.

From the age of twelve until twenty, I performed in those gardens.

But, then, everything fell apart.

And the animals returned to the forest to continue their silent life.

21

An exquisite language exists, and its words are like tiny mushroom houses. The most beautiful runic letters pale in comparison.

I discovered it one afternoon, and, not, far: right here, wandering through eucalyptus apothecaries, just when walls suffuse with stars, and from the trees and sky, pastilles and pearls fall, I saw the language, and understood it, right away, as if it had always, belonged to me.

43

Frogs emerge from nothing,  
from the unexplored not a thing,  
that, having nothing,  
confer a great deal to the earth.  
But, frogs have all the grace,  
their skin is cold, their skin is cool,  
the colors mix inexorably,  
from gray, to green, to blue, to black,  
at times, to an almost infinite azure,  
or their backs are orange and mottled  
as the domed hump of a mushroom.  
They have tongues, long like a viper,  
but, they eat the butterfly's young  
and the viper's eggs.  
At times, a yellow bud  
takes hold of their backs,  
like a tiny jasmine.  
They live under merciful  
hollyhock leaves and parasols



along the lanes where girls  
return from school  
beneath the seven iris rains.  
When I called out only one came,  
    all gray,  
        silvery and brocaded  
like a map,  
on its forehead, an emblem,  
a gem  
this frog arrived with a pearl,  
he crossed the house,  
jumped up on the bed, leaped to the table,  
and listened in on the conversations of aunts and  
grandmothers,  
that, always, spoke backwards,  
or inverted a syllable,  
and he saw strange things  
that only happened in this house,  
But, he left,  
from our sight,  
he leaped out again, into the enchanted rain,  
that drew absurd things,  
hares and madonnas, on the wall.

82

They proclaimed the crucifixions.

A doll, with huge eyes and long lashes, stiff in her blue box. (But—I said—,  
it's easy to sew the doll back up again);

a begonia, with granite arteries. (But, the begonia can be brought back from  
just one leaf);

a cat, which one? The little one, with eyes like ceramic that ate minced pink  
meat? or the big one, the pearly gray one, with an almost square face, that's been  
our companion for so many years, and that, sometimes, with his felty hand pried  
open pots and pans?

Did they choose the big one because, by now, he'd lived so long?  
Also, a family member.  
Dad, mom, my sister or me.  
Dad, said, right away: I will go.  
A boundless silence fell upon us.  
The doll was fixed upon a blue cross; and lost its hazy stare.  
The begonia became all silvery and wrinkled.  
The bird—that I forgot to mention—was nailed up by its wings; opened its  
beak, and laid a broken egg.  
The cat began to show an almost human face, he shed tears of blood.  
A boundless silence fell upon us.  
Dad, from the cross, looked at us.  
We looked at him as if through glass.  
Snow fell from the white clouds, the wind blew.

97

I made my way through the trees; it seemed like a good morning; so many  
perfumes came forth as if from so many bunches of flowers, it was dawn.

But, all at once, I saw the just born eggs, enveloped by a thin tulle; black  
buds emerged from each and every twig. In this way the world was suffused,  
again, with chrysalises and omens. I was terrified; closed my eyes; and returned  
to the house.

Mom, had already caught in the meadow; the tiny little cows you eat alive;  
she tied them up and prepared them; I ate lunch, unhurriedly; and saw the fu-  
ture, the drawn-out years; the precise premonition. The orchard threatened me,  
it came down upon me. The east and west were closed off.

I would never find the north.

I would never reach the south.

*Translated by Anna Deeny* 

RAÚL ZURITA

---

LITTLE BOY

La suave curvatura de su borde recordaba la de un planeta fotografiado poco antes de que la sonda se posara sobre él, mientras que arriba, recortando la inmensa superficie, la oscuridad infinita y brillante se abría dibujando efectivamente la tajante noche estelar... Sé que desde esa imagen han pasado millones de años y sé que en el sueño me llamo Paul. Nací en Quincy, Illinois, el 23 de febrero de 1915, y esta mañana, al ir a buscar el diario de siempre, vi que el número de mi casa estaba cambiado. Me sorprendió que fuera invierno en pleno agosto, pero me ha tocado una mala racha así que lo dejé ir junto al enorme titular y a los dos sobres que estaban bajo la puerta y entré sin más a la parte donde vienen los empleos. A la media página caí en cuenta de que todo el diario estaba en español. No recuerdo haber aprendido más que tres o cuatro frases de español en toda mi vida: "¿Señorita, está usted bien?", "bonito día", "en México somos muy

querendones”, sin embargo ahora lo leía con total fluidez como si esa fuera mi lengua desde siempre. Miré entonces los sobres; ambos venían dirigidos a mí, pero la calle que figuraba era otra: Los Españoles, y el número 1974 era el mismo que vi en el dintel de la puerta. Vuelvo al titular y me estremezco. Al salir siento la ráfaga del granizo y luego mi propio jadeo mientras corro con desesperación buscando el primer puesto de diarios. Doy con él. La inmensa superficie azulosa se inclina de golpe viniéndose encima como cuando un bombardero se deja caer de lado y un segundo después la nube se crece elevándose vertiginosamente hasta tomar la forma que describen todos los periódicos de la mañana. P le digo entonces despertándola, mira lo que he hecho.

Negó toda la noche y las clases están suspendidas. Lo supe al llegar, las puertas del liceo estaban cerradas y me crucé con varios compañeros que se perseguían unos a otros tirándose bolas de nieve como en una fiesta. Es muy raro una nevazón en Santiago y al salir de mi casa la blancura de la calle emergió con una claridad deslumbrante, casi enceguecedora. Mientras corro con mis amigos veo al fondo las montañas y luego, como si flotara sobre ella, la imagen de una ciudad totalmente arrasada. La calle es la misma, salvo que pareciera que alguien la hubiera destripado. Nadie se ha dado cuenta, pero las bolas de nieve que nos lanzamos se han convertido en piedras y cuando el primero cae apuro el regreso hacia mi casa. Avanzo cruzándome con grupos cada vez más numerosos que caminan en dirección contraria a la mía. Al principio unos pocos, al rato millares. Todos marchan como sonámbulos, con horribles quemaduras y los labios derretidos, pidiendo agua entre montañas de cenizas y cadáveres. Corro con frenesí, sorteándolos y finalmente llego. ¿Una eternidad, un segundo, millones de años? Salvo mi casa, todo lo demás es un interminable desierto de restos aplanados, como si les hubiesen pasado un rastrillo, y lo que había sido una calle es ahora apenas un surco en medio de la planicie infinita. Abro la puerta y entro. Mi madre está frente al tocador arreglándose para salir y mi abuela me saluda sonriendo. Me pregunta que cómo estuvo hoy el colegio. Siento en mis ojos el inmemorial flujo de las lágrimas y lloro con frío abrazándola.

La cúpula de concreto del edificio de exposiciones se alza contrastando con el enjambre de pequeñas casas de madera que cubren casi por completo la ciudad mientras que un poco más abajo, las dos enormes plataformas del puente se cruzan como una T, uniendo las orillas del río y la península que se forma un poco más abajo, antes de que los dos cauces se junten. Fuera de esas, no son muchas más las construcciones de cemento armado; la prefectura, la nueva escuela, la fábrica de automóviles, que parecen costras blancas en medio de una piel rugosa y oscura. Atravieso con mi madre el puente hacia la estación para esperar la llegada del tren. Ha comenzado a aclarar. Mi padre desciende del vagón y su silueta acercándose por el andén me inspira reverencia y temor. Niña Yazuhiko, me dice saludándome, y yo inclino la cabeza bajando los ojos. Miro el suelo. El pavimento del andén ha desaparecido y en su lugar la playa se alarga. Giro. El perfil amoratado de los cerros se abalanza en la luz creciente del amanecer y en una escena remota recuerdo un puerto: Valparaíso, una vida, cuatro hijos, nietos, y los fragmentos de la noche a la que he llegado (una borrachera de estudiantes y después una pelea, unas carreras frenéticas y de golpe, estallando en la oscuridad, el sonido estridente del mar, inmediato, agudo como un chillido). Me sacudo la arena y comienzo a caminar desde esa vida. La arena de la playa se hunde en la granulosidad del pavimento y vuelve a aparecer el andén. Levanto los ojos. Pequeña Yazuhiko, pequeña Yazuhiko, repite mi padre.



Alzo los ojos desde la playa y el perfil amoratado de los cerros se me abalanza en la creciente luz del amanecer. Como si viniesen de muy lejos recuerdo fragmentos de la noche anterior (Valparaíso, una borrachera de estudiantes y luego una pelea, unas carreras frenéticas y de golpe, estallando en la oscuridad, el sonido estridente del mar, inmediato, definitivo, agudo como un chillido). Me saco los zapatos empapados y comienzo a caminar desde esa vida. Mientras avanzo mis pies se hunden en la arena que poco a poco se va volviendo más rígida, más dura y fría, y al bajar los ojos veo la granulosidad oscura del pavimento y al lado la línea férrea. Reparo entonces en las puntas de mis zapatos de niña recortándose contra el suelo granuloso del andén y luego en la suave presión de la mano de mamá tirándome. Minutos antes su kimono había brillado al salir del enjambre de casas de madera a la explanada que da al puente con forma de T. Mientras lo cruzamos, el agua refleja las nubes huidizas del amanecer, pero al llegar a la estación el cielo ya estaba completamente despejado. Mi padre desciende de uno de los vagones y su silueta acercándose por el andén me inspira reverencia y temor. Niña Yazuhiko, Niña Yazuhiko, repite saludándome. Comienzo a inclinarme frente a él y cuando termino, la rugosidad del pavimento se abre por un segundo bajo mis ojos para estallar al instante desintegrándose en el infinito resplandor. Avanzo. La arena se va abriendo como pequeñas fosas bajo mis pies desnudos y un compañero me grita que lo espere. Me detengo y lo espero. Mientras nos abrazamos va cayendo la noche.

En el primer plano se ve la madre muerta entre las ruinas todavía humeantes de lo que parece un mercado y el niño que llora al lado de ella, de pie, con los ojos fijos en el lente de la cámara. Es una imagen enormemente ampliada de la película "Los niños de la guerra". Hay otras dos gigantografías: una muestra a Einstein que gira la cabeza sacándole la lengua a la cámara y la otra a un luchador de sumo. Está tomado de frente, en posición de espera, y sus diminutos ojos también miran hacia el lente. Las tres imágenes tienen las mismas dimensiones y están puestas de izquierda a derecha sobre el frontis de piedra y vidrio del Memorial de la Paz, ubicado en la punta de la península que forman los dos cauces del río antes de unirse. El guía nos ha explicado que estamos frente a uno de los siete brazos del estuario que atraviesa la ciudad y que muchos turistas suelen detenerse al borde de sus fangosas orillas para mirar la subida de la marea. Una cuadra abajo, bordeando el mismo brazo, hay un café. Es un café moderno, tipo norteamericano, que tiene un gran ventanal. Cuando uno se sienta en las mesas del fondo las orillas desaparecen y sólo se ve el río, únicamente el agua. En esta imprecisión se dibuja la desembocadura. Es allí donde termina la ciudad y comienza el mar. Es un estupendo mirador y es visita obligada. Entro con el grupo y me siento en una de las mesas del fondo. De pronto tengo la sensación de que todos se han marchado. La superficie amarillenta del agua ocupa por completo el ventanal y al girar la cara veo la mano del hombre que me hace gestos para

que mire hacia la cámara. Levanto los ojos. Madre no se mueve y chillo en medio de los cuerpos que yacen horriblemente quemados. Vuelvo a levantar los ojos, unas figuras cenicientas me contemplan desde el frontis de un edificio en una ciudad extraña. Las aguas del río parecen detenidas, pero no lo están. Después el océano insondable.

## LITTLE BOY/ EPILOGO

Pronto aclarará. Están anunciadas temperaturas bajo cero y observo por la ventana del dormitorio la oscuridad que cubre por completo la calle. La tormenta de lluvia y granizo duró días pero ahora volvió el silencio y dentro de poco la blanca nevada de la cordillera de los Andes copará por completo el horizonte. Ahora, la madrugada ha empezado a dibujar trozos de la cuadra como si ese diminuto mundo que quedó petrificado bajo la noche intentara recordarse a sí mismo: la fachada continua de las casas de dos pisos con sus cortos antejardines, los automóviles estacionados frente a las puertas, los esqueletos de los árboles. Son minúsculas manchas de colores que poco a poco se van alargando sobre la negrura del pavimento como una serpiente de luz, mientras el cielo va adquiriendo ese tono acerado que precede al fin de la noche. P gira en la cama destapándose y vuelve a dormirse. Recuerdo entonces que no tenemos calefacción y me sorprende el calor de verano en pleno invierno. Me inclino para abrir la ventana y al hacerlo la superficie azulada de la tierra se me viene encima como cuando un bombardero se deja caer de lado y siento el golpe del viento hirviendo aturdiéndome. Afuera un grupo de soldados ha emergido de sus trincheras con las caras carbonizadas alzadas al cielo, como si continuaran mirándolo, y el fluido de sus ojos derretidos corre desde sus cuencas vacías hasta caer al suelo donde miles de otros seres deambulan igual que espectros entre los restos irreconocibles de una calle que se pierde en el desierto. P ha despertado. Como un pequeño niño, el hijo que jamás tuvimos chilla mirándonos en el interminable amanecer. ☒

DOLORS DORANTES AND RODRIGO FLORES

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FROM *INTERVENE*

*In many parts of the country  
I gathered stones;  
river shorelines,  
deserts, hills.*

*I don't quite know when exactly  
God set them there on the country. My stones.  
Héctor Viel Témperey*

The world  
never closed to you. The world

COLLABORATES

never closed off from you. I would have  
burst you but

I would have sustained you but

I

*I would have erased the marks.*

I am not a good  
person

S M A S H I N T O M E

S T I M U L A T E M E

I am

I

so unfortunately that

*I would have kept my distance from evil. I would have*

*kept away from you.*

Homeland  
territory  
independence  
love

VISIT ME  
CLIMB ME, LAND

you  
thought  
you'd readied it and never

*the metal that hardens you*

I  
produce  
your brief history

MUZZLE ME

UTILIZE ME

You:  
cover me with what you never believe:  
You: fill my mouth

*the body, with my participation.*

This land?  
This last word?  
This body?

COVER FOR ME  
DEFEND ME

The tongue?  
(The last leap?)

PARTICIPATE ME AND

We knew nothing of you or of me  
(above reality) in the flag of the mouth  
in the blood of the mouth  
in the decomposition of the mouth

(above reality)  
in the ash of the mouth

KNEEL DOWN, LOVE

*My country is hard and*

COLLABORATE



Varnished

territory, that is to say

*A homeland on its knees, so as not to say:*

sludge, eye

*this land that body.*

*My country is hard*

*when you touch yourself*

BURY ME

*love*

ENTERTAIN ME

*tongue*

*I know how to say it*

ENOUGH

children, mouths

My country is hard  
The childrens' mouths  
are hard:

AND THIS HARDNESS  
COMES TO ITS KNEES

THIS STEEL FOLDS IN  
ON ITSELF BUT

*you?*  
*your mercury walks*  
*your cobalt lights me up*  
*your serpent embraces me*

I

I am not  
a good person  
I'm just my country

*and my tongue:*

CELEBRATES  
SEEKS

*officially*

this clarity occupies me:

U N D E R S T A N D M E

*salt*  
*bread*  
*cold beer to go,*

*just politics,*  
*joyous Father.*

*just antlers*

GO  
TO THE PRISON  
OF YOUR MOUTH

*Detain me  
Place my head beneath your boot*

*and from the fountain of your blows  
a tooth for a tooth, officer, write:*

LET ME  
TOUCH YOU  
THROUGH THE SCREEN

I forget poetry  
just like I forgot your burst body:

WITH ITS FACE  
DOWN

*Write "my love's face in the dirt"  
Write "what did they do to you, love?"  
Write "I found my love's body missing a finger:"*

OFFICER

I don't understand what you're saying, I listen to music.  
I march between two waters:

*Petroleum flower,  
asbestos cross,  
wire tongue,  
liquid, palatal, velar, glottal,*

GRIND ME

*mouth,*

CRUSH ME

*finger,*

FORGET ME

¿with a pistol between the teeth?

(love)

¿with the father shot to death?

(darling)

¿with the face completely bandaged?

(dear)

*land, prison.*

What I want  
cannot be said

*a blink*

C U T S

*a buzzing*

S W E L L S

I don't remember  
what I want from you

T R A C E S I T S F A L L

*does not close itself off  
from you*

Your world, L O V E  
never finishes me

*Translated by Jen Hofer* 

BARBARA GUEST

---

SEIS POEMAS

DISONANCIA VIAJERO REAL

el sonido abre el sonido

tallo de globo      cuerdas flotando

aquí hay algo como imágenes

que zanja avenidas para ver un domo

un golpe metálico distante llega al edificio.

entender lo que significa

para entender la música

movimiento despejado más allá del alcance del cuello

un arrullo hipnótico de porcelana el agua rompe la mímica

la tonalidad crujiente de ensalada bajo el contoneo

un pequeño decomiso

de monumentalidad

no le va ni le viene al entendimiento  
el camino terminará  
aviario de frágil algodón  
o el sueño que lo expelió  
la parcela en el páramo cercado de tierra.

música explicativa  
y la ropa enredada  
de quienes caminan en un charco de peces:  
pececillos en un tazón  
consonante con agua.  
el saltador de caminos a la deriva  
emboscado por los carrizos apunta a los atentos  
remos.

la música se pierde en los remos.  
en medio el mundo es marrón;  
en el lado opuesto de la tierra  
un aroma escarlata.  
esto acompaña nuestra música;  
la manga del cielo  
y la pezuña de la tierra  
fuera de su contexto.  
la disonancia puede abandonar el miserere



en la rodilla raspada de prisa hacia el ídolo  
y lo que es la consonancia —el recluso—  
entrando y saliendo  
con la puntualidad de una mariposa monarca  
en cada estación:

sin querer se coge de las flores en llamas.

en las pausas entre el terror  
la luna se inflama en su plaza.

otoño de viento agitado  
y el ruido de canastas  
olor de puños de lata.

y puños ásperos  
en la cascada que cambia la estación;  
el caballo salta en lino  
un rasgo de cartón  
crea un ciclo de lino

la música imagina este cartón

caballo con saco de cartón

flagrante el huerto rasgado

roja cima roja.

disonancia viajero real

alteró la roja silla de montar.

## CONFIGURACIÓN

1

Tu transparencia cuando  
no verla como cualidad  
de opacidad o sonido  
la oscura nota  
cognoscenti o un grupo de vocales  
para hacer un test usando papel  
A partir de un día claro que promete nieve

2

Una conjetura donde  
para verla suavemente  
rasgar oblicuamente en el papel  
reconociblemente  
el hule de tus zapatos en el corredor tu sobretodo  
tu parafernalia  
por qué este grupo de combate  
nos rodea así? Cuando el clima

3

(No nos dejemos llevar  
por la venganza  
hay pasillos de madera hay cielos  
que cotejar  
galantemente  
urbs, urbes  
esta astilla de vidrio opaca como rocío  
desde el principio)

4

O "hipnosis de piedra"  
vela  
como cantidad



## EL MÉTODO DE CONSTABLE

*a Terence Diggory*

iluminando cerca del puente

Día en calma.

Un repentino comienzo de lluvia ilumina este puente.  
Sonido de agua cayendo continuamente como una cascada  
delineada a partir de los troncos de los árboles, fastidioso como una prenda  
de seda, y estamos desentendidos de nuestras francachelas.

El Universo lo explica.

Así como el ojo ve pequeñas prendas de lluvia, y como si  
fuesen otoño, así tendremos muchos troncos de árboles  
convertidos en mensajes sobre las hojas verdes.  
La noche desciende frecuentemente de su mapa de árboles,  
deteniéndose una y otra vez en esta ensoñación.  
Internándose en el jardín, atando nuestro pañuelo  
mojado a un árbol.

Más formidable resultó el jueves pasado cuando hablé con  
un jardinero, ocupado en aprender el hábito de los árboles.  
La condición del cielo es secreta, teje un anillo  
de cizañas marrones como un jugador.

Más adentro en la lluvia había carruajes visionarios.  
Pudiste ver entonces cuando el llano se abría. Y  
decidió ahuecar la elegancia  
de la siguiente pintura.

Noche en calma.

(Nota al pintor: *“Desvelar la máscara. Esto puede convertirse  
en un pequeño dibujo descubierto en la noche, retenido  
por su hermano”*.)

Anotaciones escritas con pintura, tema fluvial tomado de  
una esquina de lluvia. Vuelo de aguas. Constable trazó

todo el llano, el cielo incluso, estableciendo una dignidad de aguas, como si se encresparan infinitamente. Con sus pinceles trazó música. No hay canción en Constable, pero existe la música, incluso bajo la tierra, cuando las aguas han lavado las claves musicales y la pintura aguarda.

Éstas son las cuerdas de los maestros, como si fuera música igual que pintura. Las oímos en las aguas, como si un enorme pincel cambiara el momentum, y el pincel usado es verde, agua verde.

Encontramos el puente enmarcado por la historia. Cuatro puentes que atan un nudo. Y pidió que esto fuera cierto, sosteniendo el martillo del gigante, traído de la lluvia al puente en forma de loro que sobre las gotas de la lluvia delineó, no por vez primera. (Comenzó “las notas de lluvia” cuando era joven y no había denominador, sólo un cesar de la lluvia. Esto ocurrió en una colina y se volvería un hábito deambular bajo la lluvia. Sin decir palabra.)

principio de las notas de lluvia

Noche en calma.

Había descubierto una orientación en la lluvia que delineaba las notas hechas en el puente. Más tarde, esto fue un verde alfabeto de agua.

Metal recubre los intersticios de la aldaba de la tormenta. Ahí descubrió el veliz que su hermano delineó en la noche, yendo por el establo con una lámpara nocturna. Lo haría plasmar, en la medida en que el lustre de la lluvia existe.

Día en calma.

En el puente vio “criaturas élficas”. Había aprendido sus nombres en la infancia, cuando hacía

“criaturas élficas” en la llovizna. Y sin embargo escribió una lista para acordarse de su linaje, como su madre hubiera querido.

Había notado algo infantil en la lluvia.

Hasta que el puente estuvo dibujado, su sensibilidad apareció en su dibujo.

Apenas sentarse y dibujar algo así como una Magna Carta.

Lo haría sin pensar en el desequilibrio ocasionado por la lluvia.

Antes de que supiera nada del ámbar, con tres hilos de lluvia en la mano. Cruzó el puente bajo la lluvia.

Un gato plateado de pelo corto cruzó por su lado la tabla. Descubrió otra criatura en forma de gato que yacía entre las gotas de lluvia.

## MODERNISMO

El soñador entra en el cuarto llevando una prenda de tela roja.  
En sus pies hay zapatos con magia, que lo llevarán aquí y allá.  
Ha mojado su pluma en tinta mágica y separado  
lo ordinario del cuarto.

Nosotros también, escuchamos el carrillón de la medianoche y nos esforzamos para  
alcanzar

[nuestra cuchara de plata;  
como la medianoche revuelve una taza de café, así celebramos el modernismo.  
Una hoja inquieta modifica este poema.

## CONTAR HISTORIAS

Me sigues al cuarto en penumbra.

Un pájaro de juguete dice: "té verde té verde té verde",  
un punto de líquido marrón en el sofá.  
Según recuerdo, la piedra entre estos abedules  
es demasiado arenosa para caminar sobre ella.

Alguien se tropieza con un perol,  
con nieve y una vela encendida.

Un libro está junto a la mesa,  
un húsar salta de la pared.  
Si hubiera una luciérnaga  
escribiría un idilio de verano, pero el invierno está sobre la mesa,  
en el samovar. Una revista tendida al lado del violín.

Alguien está en el patio, nieve en su bigote.  
En el patio ligeramente iluminado  
heno mojado bajo los pies...

En el verano listones de tejas están tirados afuera de las puertas,  
nasturtiums y rosas escalan el rosal...

"té verde té verde té verde"

por el lago, donde vuela la grulla  
el deseo se desarrolla ahora y, melancholia...



## EL ESTUDIO CAFÉ

Caminando en el cuarto

después de haber pasado la noche en el huerto  
junto al río

su oscuridad me sorprendió.

Las horas oscuras que pasé bajo el follaje,  
las formas que vi eran todas sombrías,  
inclusive la música tenía un sombreado distinto, el agua  
me había dejado melancolía, mis manos que había enjuagado  
estaban lodosas. Había visto solo un ave con un ala  
brillante, lo demás eran estorninos,

lo café me alarmó.

Vi la estufa negra, la silla negra,  
el saco negro. Vi el atril, recordándolo como  
un tono de madera ordinario, más bien pálido, me di cuenta  
de que era tinto, como los dibujos.

Desde luego tú no estabas ahí, pero había una foto.  
De hecho un negativo. Tu cabello no aparecía por ningún lado.  
Donde aquella rectitud había iluminado el campo abierto,

ahora reinaba un vacío, que comenzaba a oscurecer.

Creí que si hablaba,  
si una palabra salía de mi garganta  
y entraba en esta habitación cuyas paredes habían cambiado,

sería entonces del color de la capa  
que vi en Aix en el estudio de Cézanne,  
ésta colgaba cerca del cráneo, el paraguas,  
la paleta enfriada hacia lo gris,

si hablaba lo suficientemente alto,  
conociendo el arco que va lo real a lo fantasmal,  
la caída de mi voz sería  
de un café mortecino.

*Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados* 

MARCIA MOGRO

---

EXCERPTS FROM *SEMÍRAMIS*, 16 (MG). —

I've been summoned again.  
But not touched,  
I told you already.

THAT WAS SAID, SAYING.

If you don't want  
I'll set fire, do you hear?  
everything that  
belongs,

right now  
I'll set fire  
to each one of you,  
each one.

IF ANY ONE OF YOU SAYS: "NO," YOU WILL ALL BURN.  
IMMEDIATELY. Op.Cit.Pag.77(sic).

And now we're this high  
they began to toss us  
and I thought:  
everything survives in ice  
and I thought, then,  
when you find me,  
a colossal fire will be kindled,  
everywhere,  
spreading,  
even to empire's end.

LISTEN:

The body had to be parceled out  
along all roads,  
along all *apachetas*,  
to send a warning  
so such deeds are never repeated.

Astounding the whole world  
I promise  
—because I love you—  
to know your bones in memory,  
to learn them in my mind,  
instinctively and with feeling  
so I no longer mind  
not knowing you  
here where I am.

Hills and rivers witness,  
men of flesh and bone witness,  
deny that what they've seen  
and touched and told  
might've been because they're hallucinating.  
And they say:

ELEVEN MILLION MARTYRS  
INCALCULABLE NUMBERS  
FROM EVERY SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCE  
AND EVERY COUNTRY  
HAVE BEGUN A DANCE.

11

18

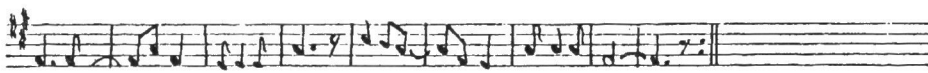
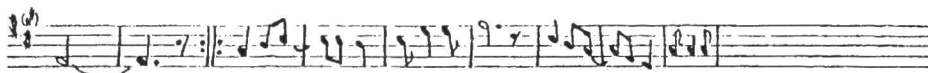
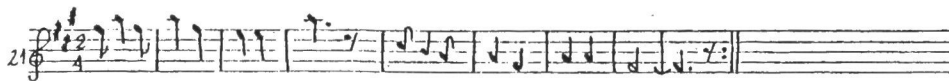
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22

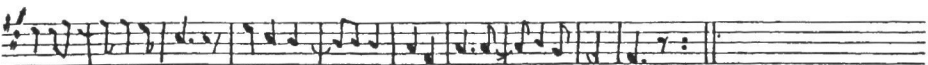
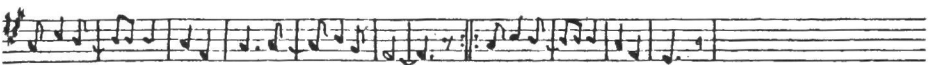
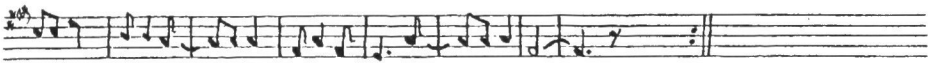
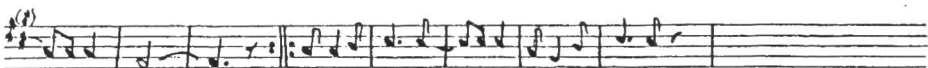
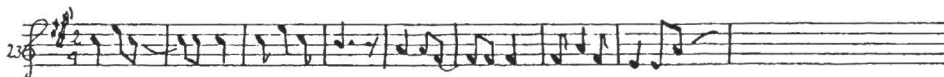
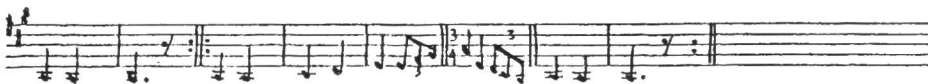
24

26





Marcha



25

26

27 *marcato*

28

29

30

Musical score for Mandorla, measures 29-32. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. It consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 29-30) features a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. The second system (measures 30-31) includes first and second endings, marked '1a' and '2a' respectively. The third system (measures 31-32) continues the melodic and bass lines. The fourth system (measures 32-33) also includes first and second endings, marked '1a' and '2a'. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

The moment men  
studied  
the llama's liver and heart,  
instantly one said:  
Ah !  
The world is not good,  
the guts,  
not good, amigo.

NO, ONLY YOUR MOUTH SPEAKS, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ???

BEING WHO I AM I DIDN'T SPEAK TO YOU AND TO THE WHOLE WORLD  
NOT ONLY TO THOSE YOU SPEAK OF IF WITH THE WHOLE WORLD AND  
WITH YOU THAT'S WHY I STAYED SILENT

Can't you help me now,  
knowing I'm suffering,  
hearing it straight from me?

*Translated by Carol Peters* 

DURIEL E. HARRIS

---

POEMS AND EXCERPTS

AMNESTY

Those not finished off  
have arisen and walk  
with the dead twisting  
their mouths and skin.

Those not finished off  
have arisen and walk  
with the dead grinding their sleep.

Throw open the embalming chamber.  
Its inhabitants have gone out to shovel the day.

Throw open the factory, the churches, the school  
A plague has blown shadows through their songs.

*What is it? What does it mean?*  
What quarrel? What seizure? What scourge?

The dead bring forth from night.  
The dead bring forth from night.  
Hacking earth with blood  
and broad, flat plates.



EXCERPTS FROM "NO DICTIONARY OF A LIVING TONGUE"

:

Certain to carry a center,  
our attachment, a common root  
dug up. The thing we are  
cut off.

However and alongside,  
speech inhabits a body  
making and hearing sound  
its deciding witness:  
skin, a throat unwound.

:

The night is elegant:  
gravel and smoke shut up  
in a burning clapboard house.

Who will not use the heart  
would not use it

and how hard must a heart be  
to break. They say it is a fist  
pounding on a bolted door.  
Does it want in or out?

:

If blocked by water, do not use

If blocked by fire, smoke, do not use

If blocked by stone, mud, fallen debris, do not use

:

The deed teaches, the name  
breeds. A plenty to harvest  
enlarges itself. A voice  
passes through darkness:  
the body, seeps into earth.

## ACADEMY OF WAR

massed into a dense cluster  
virtue requires an object  
to affirm

tearing away the surface against which it is seen  
to flower at the axes

its worn casements hang,  
its ceilings vault  
to instruct  
by simple division  
each belligerent's endeavor

....

the pledge: to shoulder  
consent, so named from the shape of feeling  
a statement of due interest  
brindled, steadfast under duress  
proximity  
once, but no longer the perimeter

....

far afield,  
bodies pile up, huddle unfiltered  
against the grains of a noisy image


far afield,  
summer rains complicate by flood, by stink, by bloat

....

what is a wound to a dead thing?  
a metal rod, a cable, a canister,  
a word sculpted of leaky flesh and brine?

the reason something is an example, a fold, a predicate,  
an economy of virtual knows, interrupts

grown accustomed to: a swift vessel moored in a rivulet

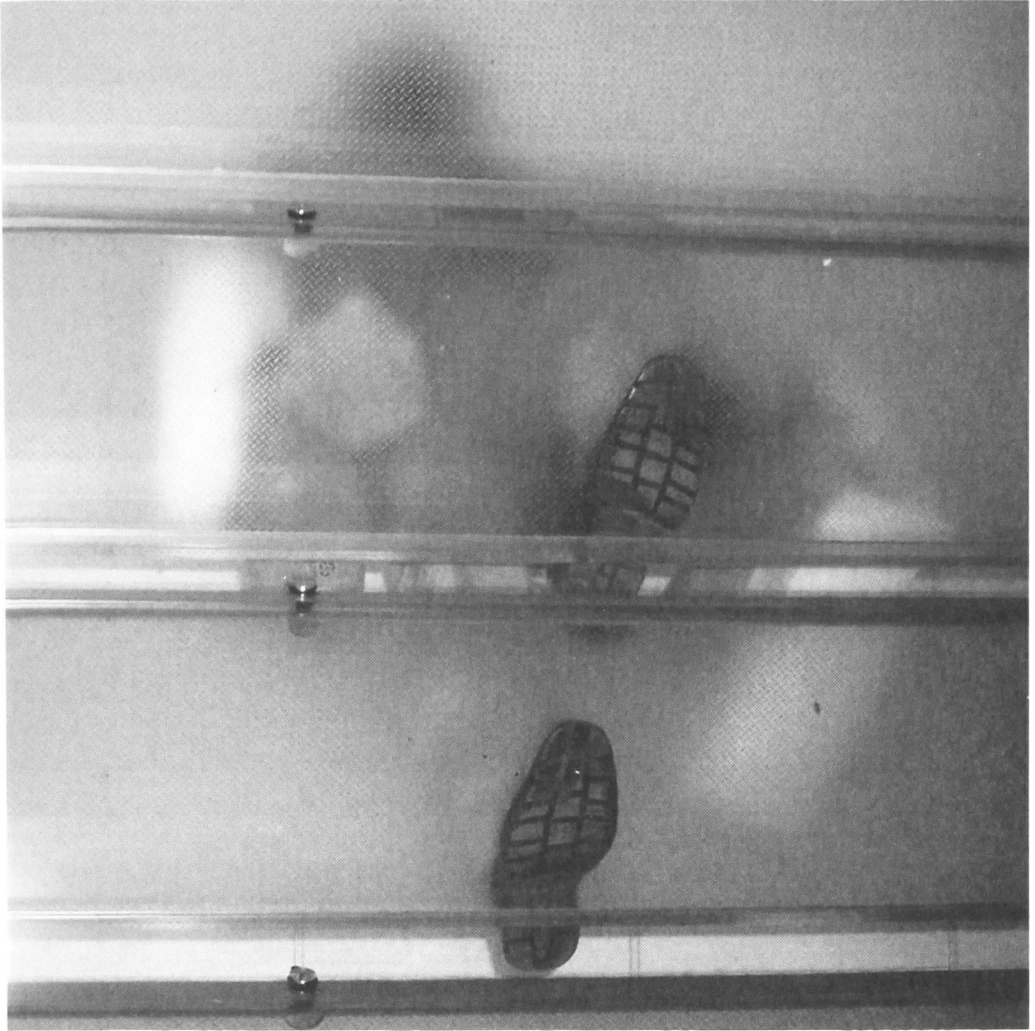
*what interests threatens to spill over*  
and smell edits the air 

GRACIELA SACCO

---

## SQUARE METER (M<sup>2</sup>)

*Square meter (m<sup>2</sup>)* is a series comprised of works that address the “problem” of space: the minimum amount of psychic, physical, and economic space with which one needs to live. By “problem,” I refer to the fact that I use the square meter as a space of confrontation, and to the multiple questions that it can activate. What, for example, is the difference between “insider” and “outsider” status, or between “pure” and “contaminated” forms? And what is the place of the “private” in public, and vice versa? In other words, the series is a reflection on today’s social and individual space, as well as on the desire to demarcate or possess it.

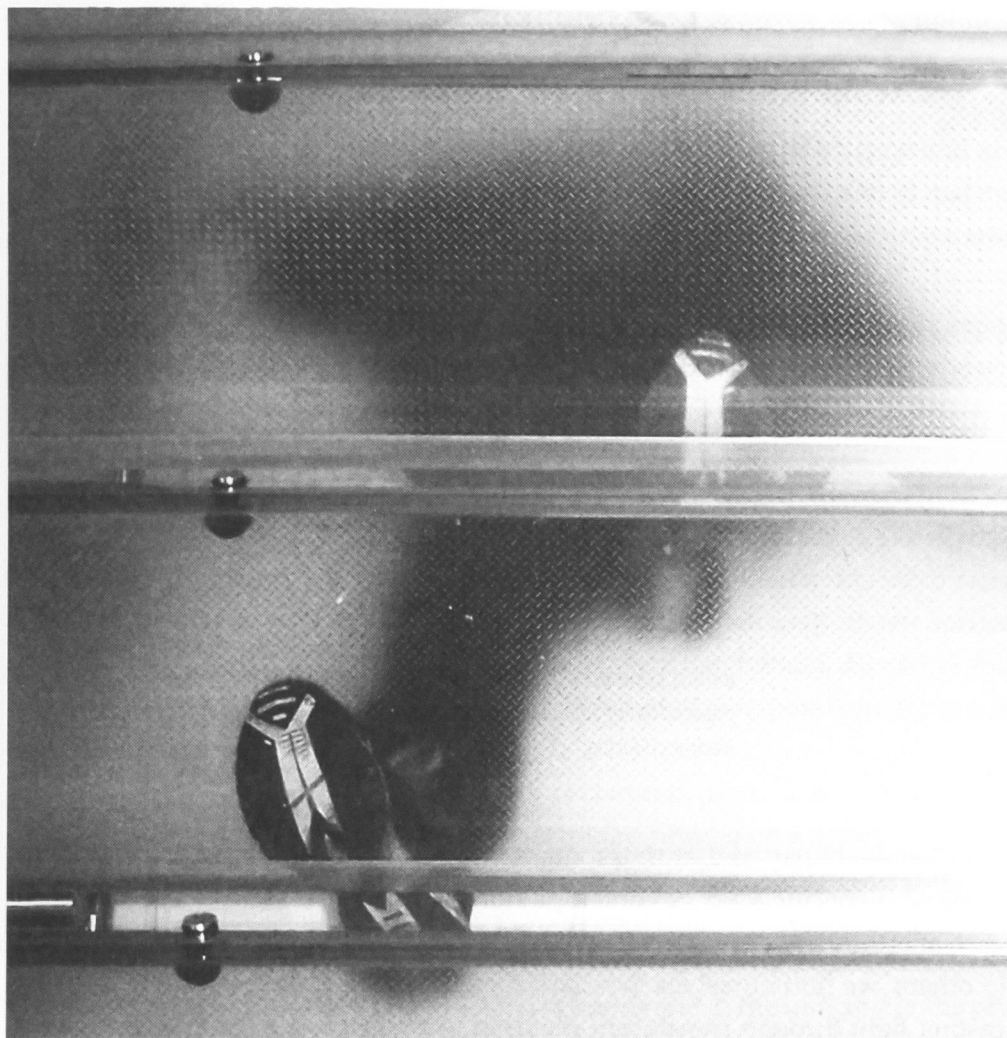


Graciela Sacco  
from the series Square Meter (m<sup>2</sup>), 2009  
Digital photograph  
100 x 100 cm



Graciela Sacco  
from the series Square Meter (m<sup>2</sup>), 2009  
Digital photograph  
100 x 100 cm





Graciela Sacco  
from the series Square Meter (m<sup>2</sup>), 2009  
Digital photograph  
100 x 100 cm



GRACIELA SACCO: MIGRATIONS, BODIES, MEMORIES

*“I don’t know whether art has a mission, but in the case it did, I would hope that it would be none other than to offer someone the possibility of formulating new questions about the here and now of their existence.”*

—Graciela Sacco

Vague, blurry and at times almost non-existent, Graciela Sacco’s images demand a specific kind of contemplation that involves the viewer’s actions, gaze and thoughts. In some cases, it takes time to identify what they represent; in others, we find ourselves in a dark room having to “develop” the image by casting light through translucent plates in order to project the printed images onto walls. The time this identification demands on the part of viewers stimulates a moment of reflection.

Sacco’s visual arguments rely on a repertoire of images that refer to the body almost without exception (faces, mouths, eyes and hands). These images function as the point of departure for her experimentation and also as a base parameter from which she proposes to revise different social constructions of meaning.

Her view on social issues points to a polemic intention that surrounds art in many of its expressions. How does contemporary society organize itself? Whom does it include or exclude? What purpose does technology serve, and

who profits? How can fissures be introduced into a symbolic order, infinitely reproduced and qualified by the mass media, using no more than the weakened traces of the restricted itinerary of art's imagery?

Graciela Sacco submits these questions by employing the visual and aesthetic discourse of images, and she elaborates them in both local and global repertoires. A photo of a demonstration in Jordan is also a photo of a demonstration some place else where the same demands are being proclaimed.

In 1983 she began an extensive series of explorations with heliography. The first technical innovation occurred the moment she discovered that she was able to obtain photo-silkscreen images based on the light and shadows projected through slides. In 1992 she perfected the process of preparing any type of surface (metal, glass, canvas, bread, flower petals, etc.) to produce heliographic images. It was the key to a form of artistic production that took on the challenges of handling content as well as those of technical experimentation. Sacco made disturbing images appear on the surfaces of objects (suitcases, plates, spoons, wine glasses, bread, hats, a bed, a refrigerator, Venetian blinds), dilated visions of skin, fragments of bodies or faces, that she employed to point out threatened areas of society.

In 1997, she presented *El incendio y las vísperas* (Blaze and Vespers) at the Sao Pablo Biennial: an image of a demonstration printed on a series of wooden pickets, similar to those used for mounting political signs. In an unending percussion of parallel shapes, the image is splintered into fragments that unleash a vertical rhythm. A crowd advances with violent gestures. Various diffuse details in the clothing situate the grainy picture as pertaining to the imagery of the seventies, photos of the May 1968 uprisings in Paris, as well as those that shook the nation's power structure with the 1969 Cordobazo. Urban conflagrations invade the space of artistic legitimization. In Sacco's work, there is a recurring tension between urban and artistic scenes.

We need to turn our attention to the technical procedure she utilizes in order to achieve an intentional condensation of time while at once confronting different eras. Heliography allows one to infuse new life into an already intensely reproduced image. A rebirth, it is able to reestablish the inaugural moment of a representation that had been submitted to an extensive chain of mediation: from

the moment of the popular rebellion when it was captured in the documentary photographic shot, to its reproduction in the newspaper from which Sacco took the image, to the diffuse and fragmented presentation imposed by the stakes and the open grain of the photographic record.

Each one of these phases renews the power of the subject matter. Heliographic development takes on the force of all the successive strengths of the image and re-inscribes it onto a new support with the primary purpose of presenting a question. In this collective march Sacco does not purport to record the instant of that precise moment captured in the photograph, but the active latent potential of the times, the driving force with which the past can interrogate the present. It invigorates the irrevocable sense of the demands that activate the crowd advancing in the street.

Sacco presented a work that showed the theme of multitudes in transit for the first time in 1997 at the Havana Biennial. She printed a photograph depicting a group of migrants being expelled from their homeland onto a cluster of oxygen tanks. The image introduces a discourse of dislocation and spatial references being erased as a result of the nomadic displacement of multitudes that move imperceptibly so as to inhabit border zones. These images refer to the global traffic of individuals for whom a return to a point of origin is impossible. For these people, limits become provisional, and the border—no longer the nation—becomes a habitat, the place where daily experiences take place. This shift does not come without consequences. In contrast to travel, which presupposes an established trajectory and a return home, migration means disorientation in time and space, a disturbance that fractures the world and any sense of history into fragments, and even displaces the predetermination that previously differentiated between different centers and peripheries. The images of the migrants do not allude to particular places, and do not pretend to replace a historical explanation. Memory is called upon in terms of its performative attribute, so as to place this group of people, continually on the move, in an undetermined time and space.

During a trip to the Middle East, Graciela Sacco elaborated an iconography of transit. She projected images of eyes onto emblematic sites, onto spaces immersed in a history of entries, departures, and displacement—on the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem, on the walls of Jordan, and on Egyptian monuments. She

highlighted the importance of these places, whose walls bear the marks of history. The procedure that she utilized—the materialization of ephemeral images that would appear on any wall and immediately disappear—implied a performative dimension of the theme. The treatment of the image staged the very notion of transit. Just like people, the images ceased to belong to a determined space, so as to pertain now to any surface over which they fleetingly materialized. The photographic record of this intervention is quite perturbing. The wall's evident wear and the eyes that appear from within the cracks have an evanescent presence that only exists due to light, and the eyes disappear just as quickly as the same light recedes.

Sacco arranges series that eventually intertwine, provoking a different set of associations. Examples of this include *Cuerpo a cuerpo* (Body to Body) or *Presencias urbanas* (Urban Presence). The former is comprised of all those installations that necessarily involve viewers. It begins with images she located in the street, where she herself appears photographed while aiming the camera. *Cuerpo a cuerpo* also includes the pages of the book *Un lugar bajo el sol* (A Place in the Sun). The pictures recorded on the acrylic pages of this book include the hyper-reproduced media images of demonstrations: May 1968 from Jordan, the Prague Spring, and from Bosnia. They become visible to the extent that viewers illuminate them and they are projected onto the wall of the exhibition space. In this way, the space functions as a developing lab, like a *camera obscura* where viewers provoke the existence of the images on the walls.

The *Presencias urbanas* series refers to the scene of the citizen, to those heliographic images or those that materialize when Sacco encourages them to emerge from the city's walls, camouflaged within their cracks. During her trip to the Middle East, Sacco explored the power of the intangible, the possibility offered by the projection of eyes that appeared to sprout from those walls, already loaded with history. She further developed the series in 2001, with her participation in the Venice Biennial. This time she printed the eyes on a transparent support that was then adhered onto walls, covering the entire city. These images of multiplying eyes served as powerful iconography of contemporary diaspora, pointing to its condition of border, limits, and the space between cultures in symbolic terms.

In one of her most recent exhibitions in the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2004), Sacco presented a video installation, *Sombras del sur y del norte: vistos* (Shadows from South and North: Seen), where she included video projections of images of men and women, waiting on line, who observe us as viewers. Although this work turned out to be inseparable from the most common everyday reality in Argentina, of lines and waiting—images that Sacco effectively shot on the streets of Argentinean cities—the central issue was how she staged the presence of the gaze. The exhibition space was transformed by the projections and transparencies that explored the moment in which the images appeared. It was a magic moment, somewhat unpredictable and elusive, however captivating. Once again the work's principal device materializes within a span of momentary waiting. It suspends viewers in a timeframe that emerges between the first formulations of an identified form and successive reflections on its possible meanings.

Translated by Tamara Stuby 

ANDREW SCHELLING

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SALVAGE ETHNOPOETICS & SONGS  
FROM THE GAHA-KOSA

I

Recently doing some research on bear mythology I came on a story recited in 1921 by the Chimariko Indian, Sally Noble, and hand-recorded in a phonetic script by the ethnographer John Peabody Harrington. That story, translated out of Harrington's huge store of notebooks by Katherine Turner, is these days called "The Bear Girl." Distinct to itself, and with its own intimate structure & manner of speech, it has a theme common to stories about grizzly bear told across the circumpolar north. Sally Noble's version would have circulated around the drainage system of the Trinity River of Northern California. Weaverville & Whiskeytown—along Route 299 which links I-25 with the coast at Arcata—lie in Chimariko territory, an area mountainous, rich with wildlife, and still heavily forested. Harrington planned to visit Sally Noble again the following year, to take down more of her stories & compile further notes on the nearly extinct local language, but in February of 1922 she passed away, the last fluent speaker of Chimariko.

What struck me, reading the account of Sally Noble, is a coincidence of dates. February 1922, the month she died & the Chimariko language lost its final native speaker, was the month T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" appeared. That same year saw the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses*, the final or complete edition of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, and Cesar Vallejo's *Trilce*, which made 1922 a watershed year for Euro-American Modernism. In obvious ways modern poetry & fiction would never comfortably fit in old boundaries again. But unknown to most of the urban literary avant-garde, that era also saw the long-recited stories & poems of numerous cultures quietly disappear. Franz Boas, from his seat at Columbia University, was desperately training a generation of linguists and anthropological fieldworkers who could go into remote areas (read: undeveloped) with wax cylinder recorders & notebooks, and conserve millennia of lore held in languages threatened with extinction. 'Salvage ethnography' is the term used for the Boasian project—and Boas put his formidable attention, influence, & funding in that direction until the early thirties when the emergence of Nazi power in Europe turned him towards a more visible threat.

## II

I have no idea under what condition the poems of the *Gaha-Kosa* ('Book of Songs') were collected along the drainage of the Godavari River in what is today India's Maharashtra State. There exist no records about who composed the songs, under what conditions, nor for how long or how widely they had been circulated before ending up in a written manuscript. Even the era of their collection is uncertain, with plausible dates ranging from the second century BCE to the seventh CE, when the first reference to the collection occurs, ca. 640, in the *Harsacarita* of the poet Bana. It is certain though, that no fluent speakers of the poetry's original *prakrit*, or dialect, survive into anywhere near our era.

The traditional view of the songs / poems is that a dynastic chieftain named Hala, himself a committed poet, collected them. His anthology contains seven hundred songs—the anthology's alternate title is *Sattasi*, "Seven Hundred." Forty of the

poems are signed “by Hala”—though his own forty stanzas include introductory verses, as well as a summary poem for each of the collection’s seven ‘books’: “here concludes the first” (or second, &c.) “gathering of 100 poems.” Less than half the poems are credited by name; ascribed poets include more than 250 individuals, some of them women. In India the collection is regarded as older than the poetry of classical Sanskrit—typically it is thought to be 2000 years old—which places it in the Satavahana Dynasty.

The Satavahana Dynasty lay south of the Vindhya range, which forms a geographical and political boundary between North India’s heartland of Sanskrit culture and the south which resisted colonization for centuries. The Satavahana is the same people who created the exquisitely delicate Buddhist cave-frescos at Ajanta. It is tempting to imagine that these poems had a position in whatever ceremonies took place inside the caves, but the poems are notable for their secularism, and the complete lack of supernatural, religious, or mystical motifs. No ghosts, no bodhisattvas, no dreams, no visions, one or two local deities, no mention of the quest for enlightenment, and a solitary novice monk, that’s all.

Of Hala nothing is known but his book. The poems he collected are for the most part erotic: playful & discrete, never lascivious, surely a gathering of love poetry equal to any culture’s. Later Sanskrit critics, who regarded the *Gaha-kosa* as a book of origins—standing at the inception of their tradition—decided that each and every poem must contain at least a veiled erotic meaning, and they went to great lengths to analyze every poem—whether about animals, forests, tradesmen, or poverty—to find some possible inflection that pointed towards erotic love. At the outset of the collection (as it comes to us today from the various manuscripts), Hala had written in verse—

You’d think  
from their speculations  
they were adepts  
at love  
Have they no shame



not to read not even listen  
to deathless  
*prakrit* poetry

Editions of the poems have come for centuries with accompanying translations into classical Sanskrit. Since no grammars or lexicons exist for the earlier *prakrit* (often thought to be a 'literary' dialect, whatever that might mean in a context that was likely oral at first) people who read the poems now do it with one eye on the Sanskrit. Each poem has about thirty-two syllables—measured in quantitative *matrikas* such that the precise number of syllables can vary a little bit. This meter was called *Arya*, 'noble lady,' when it showed up in Sanskrit, and is pretty close to the standard *sloka* of epic poetry.

I've been intrigued a long time by two things. First is the large number of anonymous poems. Second, the regularity of meter. Two recent scholars have offered a later date for the collection, quite a bit later than the traditional 2000 year old date, placing it in the seventh century, and regard it as a far more self-conscious collection than what it looks like: a gathering of poems from, or at least about, village and even tribal life. The settings are certainly rustic: small farming communities laid out along tributaries of the Godavari, and hunting tribes—people of the bow—back in the rugged forested highlands of the Vindhya.

As to the anonymous poems, they sit poorly with the notion that the collection is a later, self-conscious romance collection written to conjure 'primitive' peoples. Some scholars think that the anonymous poems might be from women, courtesans of Hala's court. Others that the songs truly were, as Hala himself says, collected from millions of poems or songs extant in his day—and that he was a connoisseur of the songs recited around his kingdom. Was he an early 'salvage ethnographer,' like Boas, Harrington, Alfred Kroeber, Dorothy Demetracopoulou, and others of the American Modernist period? Certainly if this was the case, Hala could have been a translator as well. Like Boas he could have sent colleagues into the field to collect texts.

The uniform meter suggests there existed a single customary stanza to which the old songs were put—though we may never know if the stanza existed in one or several dialects. Very likely in performance the songs were stretched out at length with meaningless vocables or nonsense sounds, on the model of poems from classical Sanskrit theater, Native American song, or Japanese *waka* (a form which intriguingly has thirty-one syllables, a whisker shorter the *Gaha-kosa's* thirty-two: nicely asymmetrical in the Japanese fashion). The traditional account does not say whether Hala—or his court poets—or a whole literary scene we know nothing of—made a point of documenting local songs, which were found in other dialects, then worked over into the familiar stanzaic form of the court.

Walter Benjamin wrote that literary works do not come into their fulfillment until they have been translated. He called this emergence from their regional or local existence the “afterlife” of a poem, a term which sits intriguingly alongside Hala’s phrase about *amrita* (deathless) dialect poetry. In our current century—with so much renewed ethnic and religious conflict, and with real caution about the imperialist agenda behind so many translations—there’s wariness about taking other people’s poems and simply dropping them into a dominant Euro-American (now global) mainstream tradition. Yet, much song, poem, or story has no life except in translation, since the languages no longer have listeners.

### III

My entry to the poems of Hala’s anthology came through Sanskrit. They’d already been translated into a cosmopolitan, colonialist, mainstream tradition from their regional tongue. At least two translations into Indian-English were made during the twentieth century, in wordy explanatory prose—an effort to salvage meaning, catching little of the fleet lexical brilliance, metric dance, or power-of-song of the original. When I started work on poems of the *Gaha-kosa* in the early eighties I had seen no verse translations (there are several now, one with a full seven hundred verses). The strange thing is—the paradox—that those poets or singers we know so little about, have caught some precise emotions—joys, torments, conflicts, tiny


gestures of affection—that edge close to modern sensibilities. Poems, then, not just of a western outback territory of the South Asian subcontinent, but cries of the species. For those of us in the West, they present a swift paced expression—full of notable humor, suffering, sexual buzz, & elegance—that has largely been absent from our own poetry, except in underground, marginal, or ‘pop’ traditions.

Kika Silva, studying at Naropa University’s Kerouac School some years ago, asked if she might translate my North American versions into Spanish, thinking they would come as welcome news to her Venezuela homeland. With no active speakers left of the original tongue, I thought the poems deserved that kind of afterlife.

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KIKA SILVA

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POEMAS DE LA ANTOLOGÍA DEL REY HALA

Venado solitario  
en el claro  
la hembra, próxima  
lo mira con tanto  
deseo  
que allí  
entre los árboles el cazador  
viendo la imagen de su amada  
deja caer su arco

*Anónimo*

Dedos  
debajo de mi falda  
y tropiezan—  
yo riéndome  
apretándolo más cerca de mí—  
forza  
el nudo  
ya  
desatado

*Chandra*

Solamente  
las aguas  
crecidas del Río Godavari  
y las noches y  
medias noches de lluvia  
han visto  
su buena suerte  
y mi desafío  
impropio de una dama

*Makaradhvaja*

Oscuridad profunda  
la noche y yo  
le tememos  
el marido está viajando—  
Vecino  
permanece en vigía conmigo  
temo lo que pueda pasar  
en una casa vacía

*Abhaya*

Cubriendo  
su cuerpo con cenizas  
de la tierra calcinada,  
para unirse así ha  
el Orden de Calaveras—  
pero piernas, brazos,  
también los untaba con placer,  
lavando con su sudor la ceniza,  
éstas son las cenizas  
de su amante

*Hala*


Él se levanta  
de la estera  
después de que hacemos el amor  
y camina en la luz de la luna  
Solo por ese instante,  
es como si se hubiese desvanecido  
en un inimaginable y  
lejano país

*Makaranda*

Al amanecer, afuera en el campo  
el se apoya en su arado  
estudia las huellas frescas y verdes  
en las flores de ajonjolí, blancas como la nieve  
y piensa en ella  
marchándose  
de su lecho antes de que amaneciera

*Anónimo*

¿A donde se ha ido el sol?  
¿Han desaparecido la luna y las estrellas?  
Nubes negras  
remontan el horizonte  
y como el trazo de un astrólogo  
una línea de garzas blancas

*Anónimo* 



KEITH WALDROP

---

AND POEMS

BEFORE LEAVING

if I sit in the dark I  
remember or

sitting darkly  
forget

there, my

Soul, among local  
motions

•

above-mentioned  
sky, high  
ceiling

scrim

nose  
visible be-  
yond bonnet

BY COLD STARLIGHT

names only I have  
studied

unclassified comfort in  
closed drawers

rubbish  
behind the mirror  
I step carefully so as

not to raise the dust

•

ultimate concern at  
sunset or about

I do not  
yearn for heaven

I decline my soul in  
writing  
old eyes now in my

cold age  
just where lights are

going out  
thinking  
of going

## CONTINGENCE

to imagine  
later, that something may  
happen

before

•

alone in a dream or on  
paper

•

not divine—distant  
storm, *past* storm  
dying to

undermine horizon

•

automobiles  
and incomparables and  
mere dimension

loss of sound with  
distance

THE COOL OF THE EVENING

and  
the recondite notion that  
God intended His  
image to  
stand like a statue

so that God-Only-  
Stroller might come across  
His likeness  
unmoving un-  
meaning

## CURIOSLY LIKE DEFINITION

peak  
notions and empty  
bowl

time  
spent

•

when have I been  
and

where

DREAM STATE

seeking *and*

•

the immortals are all dead

OLD TO DOMINATE

and from the kitchen and  
from the toilets

atoms like snowflakes no  
two alike and you, my  
Soul, you the  
color of air

•

palpable

•

heft of waves

•

those who believe in God have

no reason to pray



SO OFTEN

I was about to tell you  
muddled and

ignorant chatter

silly fancies  
middling and I was  
about

## A TEMPORAL DISTANCE

this means something no-  
body knows

•

note how  
details from ancient  
songs

retreat

•

allegorical 

ATZAVARA

I

aparecida pleamar hojas azules

líquidas

en el desasimiento:

alma de dos voces ya perdida

oscuridades

de la noche fuera de la casa

al este del jardín ha crecido una pita

y está llena de flores y morirá

después

de su alta floración su única

después

de dar sus flores amarillo-verdosas

agua guardada que no será deshielo

bálsamo ni aguamiel

el este del jardín no es el oriente del mundo

pero allí se levanta esa pita – avanza por el aire  
mas alta que la medianera  
de perfil de frente contra el cielo

enseñoreada en la luz –  
que empuja su rizoma hacia todos los confines de la casa

## II

atzavara vara de atzavara  
madre de floración reciente que entra por todas las ventanas

con sus muchas cabezas

lo que aparece no viene de esta tierra  
donde nunca

hubo planta ni mujer

del tálamo nacen – cerebrales – se enlazan con las regiones  
más hondas de la glía:

sueño

hambre

sed

íntimamente unida la piamadre  
blandamente me abraza

sus flores apoyan la mejilla en el cielo gris azulado de las hojas  
allí mismo estolones del sostén

de la reparación



lepidópteros      típulas

libélulas – metales livianos    *joyas de acetileno -*

y por encima, cigarras  
el monótono zumbido de sus tímbalos

esplugas de llobregat  
campo abierto

– cae el cielo por los cuatro costados  
sobre ásperas tribus vegetales  
y nada puede detener la huida de las nubes

el viento  
cargando el fuerte olor

la despegada podredumbre del verano  
el paso apresurado

de las bestias pequeñas –

esplugas de llobregat  
mil novecientos cuarenta y ocho año del señor

padre  
tus manos me sostienen en la frescura negra de las aguas

pero no veo tu rostro

IV  
cuando el animal que estamos cazando  
apresarse no puede

qué nombre le daremos  
si del tiempo no es

lo que ahí adelante salta (dónde? dónde?)

deforma su vecindad  
como una lente gravitacional

el nitrógeno ureico –cristalino  
incoloro– alarga la pezuña dentro de su cabeza:

multiplica el fulgor

de la imagen: dos son dos y no uno los que llegan

– el hocico contra el viento huele el humus negro de la nada –

en el centro de la aparición:

densidad infinita

boca voraz

que no suelta la presa

tanto de luz tanto de sombra

persiste – en intensa fusión – en su propio agujero sin salida

qué haremos ahora en este torbellino:

la enfermedad pone hijo contra madre

esposo contra esposa

hermano contra hermana

toda esa materia anda suelta en nosotros

conspirando 

ALAN MILLS

---

FROM SYNCOPES

I FEEL YOU THERE

oh, but i don't know, clambering up a mountain is like caressing the nooks of my *personal jesus*, and all this green has something to do with the water and your blessed breezes, now i remember when i went down to the river and the women thought i was another female, since my hair stretched out like a soft freeway, afterwards they smiled blushing when they suspected i was a guy, little goddess: they know i'll propagate the tribes beyond the border this sperm has constructed, little goddess: i thought a lot about the emptiness of god in that silence of the night, today i know you have a certain way of summoning desire, my *personal jesus*: thanks to your absence i intuited that the disease that amasses in bars and our *rave* castles goes skidding down those mountains, our ecstasy brings on the dust of the dead we forget and it's sold in the Megatemples, those are the sorts of things i've been thinking while i sing in silence for you, my little goddess, will you draw me something?, bah, i don't love you any more: a) love dies for a variety of simple reasons b) faith is something that reverts for want of orgasms c) my name is achieved by combining distant values



HERE THERE'S SUFFERING BUT ALSO PLEASURE

6:04 pm:

i know another pueblo, one where the kids laugh when night falls, they're pretty darn dead but laugh and laugh, they romp mischievously with the pups they never had, they've covered themselves with a bedsheet of dirt and they know how to strip it off to pull out their ethereal gunbarrels, there the mutilated women of Juárez and Guatemala serve as their nannies, they didn't recognize that underworld either, where infants might laugh during the missing daybreaks, yes, they've made friends with little victims of violation from Basra and they disguise themselves in outrageous games, Sabino recounts how they bayoneted his cousins' fetuses, Sabino hid beneath corpses, and afterwards he walked toward Chiapas escaping from the Kaibiles who wanted to inflate him via pure Love, that jungle has gems that rule over our sleeplessness, i know this pueblo, that's where they've organized the Gran Fiesta we all want to go to, enclave of shadows whose face was erased by an icy fever, today is just an enormous wound, vapors, and we already know the various ways of listening to the Heart of the Sky or of not doing that, yes, it was the reaper who made off with those verses that adorned the plaza, yes, only the noise would nimbly interpret the amount of silence a ghost village might expel, that explains the kids' confident laughter at nightfall, that's why they play in the sludge and don't look at their blood, this will persist, our destiny is manifest, this spoken sobbing by the Heart of the Sky

5:58 pm:

it's true, our grandparents were always trampled on despite their lamentations and the torture they left behind by way of a will, their innards said pain and they said so many things for naught, "kiddo: wreak havoc on the Other" was the rallying cry they sang to us in our cradle from a television with no remote control, from the Megatemples that stood in for all our cinemas and our pornography: the Variedades cinema has been the delight of the pueblo and they never finish with it, in the Lux I witnessed my first vulgar and terrifying scene, but this pueblo is also happy with its gallons of gas, it attains joy interpreting Lynch's most conspicuous intentions, blonde girls make the pueblo drool and it's disgusted with itself in its tattoos, the pueblo barely listens: stop suffering, stop suffering and my problem is similar: I can't manage to turn off the tv: a) a thief set on fire, b) the crowd cheers and spits, c) I imagine a multi-ethnic orgy inside the Gran Jaguar, yes, here there are volcanoes and lakes but also Preachers, we have land but the Conquest breathes through the most beautiful boys, our dogs form street gangs to divvy up the corpses who've died of the cold, this territory would seem to be the last door, here in Xibalbá the pueblo entertains itself collecting western friends and girlfriends, makes them feel the jungle, inundates them with alcohol and gives it to them hard at night, knits them beautiful collars like the ancient incest of our race, colored, just like the snakes from the mountain, like this story that's wrong: a) the cakchiqueles didn't betray the quichés: they made them pay, b) 13 loves 18: in its way, c) everything seems to be a lie and isn't, that's why it hurts, yes, this life leads nowhere, i left the barrios behind out of total fear, back there remained my little indianesque friends we played pelota with in the middle of the street, now they're hit men or they've changed their last names, if they see me they don't remember me, i'd like to talk with them about the bent angles of the light and the labyrinth but i'm afraid, i don't know how to speak without damage, i don't have the guts to remind them of our hardball games, those scabs we split open with a controlled rage that sweatily united us, yes, how time passes, i thank you compadres: you haven't killed me and it would be so easy,

maybe that's why one minute they court my shadow and then they immediately beat my hide, i'd wish to imagine what's necessary, what's enough, but i'm just frivolous, bewildered monolingual creature yearning for arrival at some other point, babbling change, who desires lovely knees on the front side, who evokes the rivers of this city prior to its situation as a piss-trough or sad warehouse for things no one wants, here my body and its ultraviolet shadow, here my fiction as a fellow man ablaze, earth, do me the favor of drinking this blood, that moons might go past carving out the masses for me, because i don't have the vitality i demand, i need it and i don't want any harm for anyone, i swear, i've already heard it said that everything's been said, that there's nothing new under the sun, that we should stand on the shoulders of giants, what's true is that i was once in a jail about to be raped and i saved myself because i could stammer roque dalton's "love poem," damn fool sons of a fucking bitch, a criminal in my country wouldn't get a tattoo of a poet's face, i had the good luck to make it out on that arm because from inside the cell they were clamoring: fresh meat!, and they were taking out their thick rods measuring my opening from head to toe, yes, that afternoon i learned that a prison cell represents the threshold where poetry begins to become tangible, thus began my passion for spirited darknesses, thus i could bid farewell to certain memories, because everything's been said, it's true, but we go on, where the train should pass there's not a single train, rather syphilis marches on there, hiv, the goddesses of papillomae and all the rest, no white piano in those hovels way out on the margins, no books at the bedside in those dusty slave quarters, our abandoned traincars broadcast that iron has failed us and at night i feel like an unrealized city sweating through the ulcerous wounds of its whores, a skeleton empty from shooting its wad in their wayward flesh, yes, 4 degrees to the north the consequences of that life of negation are visible, a certain bourgeois simulacrum with baseless happiness, we always wish to be far away, i'm referring to the iniquitous border, the ferrous line defended by a great beyond plethoric with flies, shit, bloody condoms and blossoming boys, yes doctor, the Megatemples are full and are located on corners, they've kicked the lust out of the movie houses to put other excesses in place, attention, i'm not

calling to evict you, i'm not calling the merchants merchants, it's antiquated, obviously, it has no effect, a kid could be bleeding out his nose and they'd peg him as a pothead with quite the puffed chest, a woman can offer her goods from here to the grave and they'll simply take her, their armored cars rolling up to anonymous christs, but there's no reason to get alarmed, Megatemples are horrendous, that's enough, the very landscape will begin to reject them, it'll cost us long periods of angst and a lot of money

*i'm going along here, above cloudbursts, and i don't see any down there who might be able to represent me, nor make a mold of me, i don't imagine my feet on the ground, i keep flying and can barely make out those dots like ants moving around, pointing to my fuselage, this skeleton of mine, so de luxe, distant from them, rats, animals running around in their selfsameness with no sky, destined to look upwards because of the racket i make, because of their fright or diminishment in the face of their death, a shadow moving closer to them and it will be so very theirs, what could be more so, as my wings in this present cockpit are mine, the joystick in my hands, mine this golden limbo I breathe, all the fires set on fire, the cluster let loose, with that fiber and pulse, excellence or disposition, and my phallus palpitating nearby, full throttle, i'm going along here, vigorous, i pilot without seeing, i play, i make pirouettes in the air drawing panic attacks, i fly, i penetrate the blizzard so as to be something more than those imprecise dots scurrying down below, only barely saved from one another and yes, look: it seems like they're biting each other, and they're cruel at a distance*

Translated by Jen Hofer 

POEMAS

MARCAS

Arrancarle *maslatón*. Quitarle *maslatón* al apellido. ¿Las borraduras del lenguaje son lesiones, miedos de seguir? ¿Miedos de?, ¿cortezas relegadas? Cuando llego a cierto punto, por decir un retén de policía que pregunta por mi nombre. Replica mi nombre y ese efecto rasga el aire (lo rasga porque lo abre con frialdad) *usted Terán. Teherán, usted Terrán*. Simule un rostro ahora, una extremidad. Camine así con este pie ladeado, apuntando hacia la abreviatura. Disyunción. Uno embiste con su línea quebrada el desapego. Cuando repito mi nombre en la oscuridad. Cuando digo *Alejandro* en la pieza callada, digo *Tarrab* sin decir *maslatón*, sin decir una piedra puesta sobre la tumba, sin decir *piedra* que daría permanencia. Cuando digo *esto* sin decir *aquello, lejano* y seguramente *más allá* estoy cortando. Rajando la tela. Los colores, por decir un verde tenue de la piedra sobre la tumba. Al decir *esto* sin decir rostro o vaso desechable, sin el largo retrato de rabinos a quienes desconozco. Cuando ceceo, modulo sin las claves, sin los métodos de caso, las secuencias de aquel relato repetido: piloncillo en la bolsa de tus abuelos, voy rajando. Lo que no dice sufijo, *esto* preanudado, anteapellido al nombre corazón. Dejo para después sobre esta mesa: un montón de papeles numerados, una estaca recta de araucaria, algunos nombres como lecturas posibles o con mayor precisión un frasco de lágrimas

artificiales, celofán de unos cd. *Algo*, desvanecido, como tendiente hacia otro orden, *algo*. Voy tajando. Violando sin la voz que me entrega o que me entregaría, en condiciones favorables, una genealogía mucho más salvaje. Cuando digo esto Terán, preanudado, apuntado como un rasgo transmisible. *Maslatón*, una marca dada al diablo, que se carga a la chingada, que se carga *más*, miedo. Miedo de. Decir más, *allá*, decir *pedra*.

## AVE, LUCIFER

*Nesse rio que corre  
em veias mansas dentro de mim  
Os MUTANTES*

Ave Lucifer alcánzame mientras huyo de mi país,  
de la miseria enemiga, que son todos los hombres.

Ave Lucifer tócame el plexo con tu risa, híncame el amor  
igual que a María y a las beatas del cuerpo, pero con más ganas,

con más filo por delante. Ave híncame que ya voy corriendo,  
que ya salgo de este país, te digo, en estado de alma, *ven por mí*.

Llévame a la contemplación, a la suspensión de este ejercicio  
que nos llaman *vida*. Vida toca, Ave.

Y si golpeas un paso más hondo de lo que has arruinado,  
déjame batir con veneno tras de ti. Ave déjame gozar

algo más grave que la ruina y morir,  
morir desternillado: parábola, estampita-del-diablo-alado, ¡lotería!

Así, en una narración hiperbólica de las figuras,  
podrías prendarte de mis nalgas: *cómo tiran mientras voy huyendo*.

Un encuadre de las cosas del reino, por decir un alcor,  
un insecto pertinaz y delirante.

Yo podría soltarme, Lucifer, con tu sazón de Marvel,  
mutante perfección de picadura, Señor.

Inféctame de paraíso, no me dejes volver, cuerpo.  
No guardes quieta tu carga dolorosa. Dolorosa Satán.



No te guardes, no te olvides de golpearme,  
de poner las naves de ala de ave, Lucifer. ¡El artefacto!,

¡el artefacto místico! para salir, no sólo de las casas de las calles de la nación:  
que nuestras ventas trastornen el triunfo del héroe antiprofano,

transmodelado, secular. Así al final, no sepamos arrojarnos ave,  
Lucifer. Alcánzame, líbrame de la miseria.

## VARIACIÓN A UN PASAJE DE WALTER BENJAMIN

EL TEDIO ES UN PAÑO CÁLIDO Y GRIS FORRADO POR DENTRO CON LA SEDA MÁS ARDIENTE Y COLOREADA. EN ESTE PAÑO NOS ENVOLVEMOS AL SOÑAR. EN LOS ARABESCOS DE SU FORRO NOS ENCONTRAMOS ENTONCES EN CASA. PERO EL DURMIENTE TIENE BAJO TODO ELLO UNA APARIENCIA GRIS Y ABURRIDA. Y CUANDO LUEGO DESPIERTA Y QUIERE CONTAR LO QUE SOÑÓ, APENAS CONSIGUE SINO COMUNICAR ESTE ABURRIMIENTO. PUES ¿QUIÉN PODRÍA VOLVER HACIA FUERA, DE UN GOLPE, EL FORRO DEL TIEMPO? Y SIN EMBARGO, CONTAR SUEÑOS NO QUIERE DECIR OTRA COSA. Y NO SE PUEDEN ABORDAR DE OTRA MANERA LOS PASAJES, CONSTRUCCIONES EN LAS QUE VOLVEMOS A VIVIR COMO EN UN SUEÑO LA VIDA DE NUESTROS PADRES Y ABUELOS, IGUAL QUE EL EMBRIÓN, EN EL SENO DE LA MADRE, VUELVE A VIVIR LA VIDA DE LOS ANIMALES. PUES LA EXISTENCIA DE ESTOS ESPACIOS DISCURRE TAMBIÉN COMO LOS ACONTECIMIENTOS EN LOS SUEÑOS: SIN ACENTOS. CALLEJEAR ES EL RITMO DE ESTE ACONTECIMIENTO. EN 1839 LLEGÓ A PARÍS LA MODA DE LAS TORTUGAS. ES FÁCIL IMAGINAR CÓMO LOS ELEGANTES IMITABAN EN LOS PASAJES, MEJOR AÚN QUE EN LOS BOULEVARES, EL RITMO DE ESTAS CRIATURAS.

(WALTER BENJAMIN)

Mi padre entonó el sueño de los tedios.

Sacudió los cabellos de su mesa de trabajo todas las noches. Mi padre tiñó las órbitas de la caligrafía; escribió el signo de las cruzadas en mi cabeza. Yo replico esos tonos en su nombre. Me envuelvo en el mismo paño cálido y gris, con visos de seda ardiente, con que él se cubrió para soñar. Sueño, como el embrión que emprende, desde el santuario de la noche, la vida de los animales. Para volcar de un solo golpe el revestimiento de los días. Entonces me siento a escribir y entono las visiones grises y aburridas de mis antepasados, que son las visiones de mi cuerpo y de mi pensamiento. Miradas deslucidas de caminatas largas por la ciudad. El pulso acompasado de los pasajes donde compramos, por decir, una tortuga de pecho quebrado. El desaforado pulso con que observamos ese animal recluido, para después salir desaforadamente a encarnar otras visiones. Con el pulso siempre de estas criaturas quebradas y rollizas.

## VARIACIONES A UN PASAJE DE W. RATHENAU

(Fragmento)

EN SU ESTRUCTURA Y MECÁNICA TODAS LAS GRANDES CIUDADES DEL MUNDO BLANCO SON IDÉNTICAS. SITUADAS EN EL CENTRO DE UNA TELARAÑA DE VÍAS, TIENDEN SUS PETRIFICADOS HILOS DE CARRETERAS SOBRE EL CAMPO. VISIBLES E INVISIBLES REDES DE TRÁFICO RODADO RECORREN Y MINAN LOS ABISMOS DE LAS CARRETERAS Y BOMBEAN DOS VECES AL DÍA CUERPOS HUMANOS DESDE LAS EXTREMIDADES AL CORAZÓN. UNA SEGUNDA, TERCERA, CUARTA RED REPARTE HUMEDAD, CALOR Y FUERZA; UN HATO DE NERVIOS ELÉCTRICOS TRANSPORTA LOS ALETEOS DEL ESPÍRITU..., PANELES DOTADOS DE MATERIALES FLEXIBLES, PAPEL, MADERA, CUERO, TEJIDOS, SE ORDENAN EN SERIES REFORZADAS HACIA EL EXTERIOR CON HIERRO, PIEDRA, CRISTAL, CEMENTO... SÓLO EN EL CASCO VIEJO DE LAS CIUDADES... SE CONSERVAN AÚN RESTOS DE SINGULARIDADES FISONÓMICAS COMO PIEZAS DE EXPOSICIÓN CASI MUERTAS, MIENTRAS QUE EN LOS ALREDEDORES —ES LO MISMO SI EN DIRECCIÓN A LAS FÁBRICAS, A LAS VIVIENDAS O LAS SEPULTURAS— SE EXTIENDE EL CAMPAMENTO DEL MUNDO INTERNACIONAL.

(W. RATHENAU)

### **Reducto. Primera variación**

Brilla con su alarma.

Lo que rodea al almacén antiguo de las ciudades brilla. Resonancias para un sismo, alarmas para el bombardeo. Conectadas Prosegur, Cobra, Batman, *estamos protegidos*. Redes visibles e invisibles cubren los orbes con sonido.

### **Basamento. Segunda variación**

Lo que desvanece

(la descripción de lo borrado por el tiempo es una labor difícil). El casco viejo de las ciudades está en el centro. El centro inmemorial no está siempre en el medio. Se dice *centro*, se dice *entraña*, *casco viejo*. El casco de las ciudades se desvanece como un cadáver. Piedra confusa. El viejo almacén de las ciudades es un músculo enfermo. Cuando el sol da de frente sobre la piedra reconocemos rasgos, singularidades

fisonómicas. *Esta ala maligna protegía la ciudad. Antaño. Este apenas,*  
ángel remontando.

\* \* \*

(A VECES SE VE A LA PUERTA DE LA MURALLA

UN ÁNGEL ARMADO CON ESPADA)

J. E. CIRLOT

\* \* \*

*¿Esta piedra llena los ojos?*  
*¿llena la? ¿Provoca?* Un corazón negro toca a otro igualmente oscuro. Dar de un casco contra otra coraza, como las cornamentas enlazadas de dos ciervos en la nieve. El reconocimiento de dos colores desvanecidos: negro corazón humano para la piedra,  
negra piedra para el llanto.

\* \* \*

SÓLO EN EL CASCO VIEJO DE LAS CIUDADES  
PUEDO LLORAR DESPIERTO

### **Con la voz. Tercera variación**

Entre un paso y otra zona de las fallas sísmicas  
se abren puentes en llamas; supercarreteras que conectan los hipermercados del mundo. Oblicuas extensiones alcanzan la luz rauda. El fin de un ciclo de edificaciones, el comienzo de otra cercanía. Al borde salvaje de los puentes, junto a una larga vía de hierro para trenes,  
recuerdo la potencia de la voz.

\* \* \*

(Deshicieron su voz ante el sonido)  
Ruega. Concédenos ojos ante la noche.  
Nuestra plegaria como una alarma. Ruega.

*Turba nuestras tercas voluntades con dolor.*

\* \* \*

SÓLO EN EL CASCO VIEJO DE LAS CIUDADES  
PUEDO LLORAR DESPIERTO

## Variación

EN SU DECURSO,  
SON IDÉNTICAS. BLANCAS CIUDADES PARA EL BLANCO MUNDO: SOMOS TODOS ENEMIGOS. ASE-  
GURAMOS Y BLINDAMOS NUESTRAS FORTALEZAS. MINAMOS CON ABISMOS REDES CARRETERAS.  
VOLAMOS Y RECONSTRUIMOS EDIFICACIONES. BATALLAS QUE SE EXTIENDEN EN BATALLAS PARA  
NUESTRO MUNDO. PULCROS HOSPITALES DONDE SE TIENDE LA LUZ. TRIPULANTES DE LAS NAVES  
DIRIGIDAS AL CONFÍN, AL SECRETO CENTRO DE LO IDÉNTICO:  
BOMBARDEEMOS TODO.

## CABLES

En la ciudad hay cables.

La ciudad es el espacio, los cables la secuencia. Cables tendidos, perpendiculares al lugar de mi mente, en ese intervalo. Perseguidas cuerdas por una cámara lo más pequeña para mil novecientos ochenta y tres u ochenta y seis: mini-DV, D1, 8mm sin cables. Algo digital escondido en el airón de un pájaro, un ave de tomas aéreas. Tomas paralelas, recíprocas a los cables. Cables. Instalados firmemente de *A* hacia *B* —en el espacio visual—, un *C* a *D* casi desatado. Recuerdo electrocutados por cables. Descargas que pararon trenes. Mi espacio visual fue, durante largo tiempo, un eje. No hileras de convoyes, rectángulos pequeños. Troles impulsados por cables movidos por descargas. Mi embalaje, mi punto de observación. Cables curvos como el horizonte de la tierra, líneas que desembarcarían en lenguajes extraños: trabalenguas, disparates, marañas arrojadas por la boca. Me recuerdo frente a la ventana hostigado por la vista de los cables. Con un gesto suicida, arrojando por la boca. Recuerdo hebras de mi garganta seguidas por cables conectados a fragosidades: *había una madre godable, pericotable y tantarantable que tenía un hijo godijo*. Me he sentado hoy a la orilla, a la orla para describir esta mentira: hay cables con rótulos, con proclamas *no pude, no resistí*. Sábanas negras con palabras difíciles para esos años. Con gis blanco: *aramida, butilo, polivinil, gradiente*. Hay cables aislados que cuelgan sin descarga, como un doble asesinato. Entretejidos alambres con zapatos de correa. Cables seccionados por tenis, botitas de vecinos que colgaron sus agujetas. Cables mausoleo. Pudridero de cables con añicos. Lianas que provocan polilla, ocelo, saquitos de avispa. Los cables de mi observación son los cables del rojizo mundo de estampa, postal violenta de una ciudad con dragones, estotra cosa artificial. Hules oscuros, membranas que llevan fugaz, guiños de beat por segundo. En la ciudad, en esta ciudad charreada, ocurren cables que uno lleva a su niñez: lombrices dilatadas por engrudo y plasma. La secuencia que al entrecerrar los ojos se torna en cables con pequeños seres caminando, balanceados apenas. Se puede matar con el mismo juego, llevando cables a los cuellos de las personas, despeinando sus cabezas con la estática. Sus aureolas atadas lentamente, suspendidas como un tendedero de apóstoles en cables. A saber mil novecientos ochenta y tres o uno nueve ochenta y seis, de *C* hacia *D*. Desatados cables desde mi embalaje, desde el puesto de observación, en maraña, ahí se precipita.

## FOTOCOPIADORAS

Recuentos del acervo,  
elementos intercambiables de una ruta en desuso: novotel early breaks, antología de ideas para las generaciones, la imagen de una mano empuñando un erizo, oscuro erizo marítimo, profetas de la violencia pasando como héroes, volverán los gabinetes del tarot, los adivinos de hoy para hacerme olvidar, artefacto, fuiste una res oculta en una sábana blanca, sábanas, órdenes de viejos repertorios, posición de un animal emulando el sutra, apuntes página 32, archivos de conducta escritos a mano, lexemas, zurcidos invisibles, nave, fotocopidora. Fingir facilidades. Repasar en negativo: *vendo*, una odisea. Tracción, cuatro y seis cilindros. Puedo tornar el erizo más y más oscuro, engrosar sus espinas, quemarlo en la página. El esqueleto, el corazón calcáreo, dispone el veneno. Imagino un campo de fotocopadoras como pinchos negros. Cementerio de lámparas y tambores: los elefantes cederán sus osamentas. Puedo copiar y de hecho copio una adaptación del acecho, una geometría ya sin aura. En un afán de reproductibilidad, de sentir el aura yo mismo al entonar las máquinas. Expongo también una flor, una porción del cuerpo a las descargas. Fotocopidora: juguete de ejecución. En la réplica, ten years continued, un hombre llora al ver la bandera de su territorio conquistado. Yo también convulsiono, tenso y par los cristales. *Error 0172*. Entrarás en un periodo de indolencia. La misma carta pero en orden suspendido. *Error*. Al ejecutar la paginación, me veo en mitad de ese campo de batalla. Sé para mí que tales copadoras son trampas. Arrestos de un dispositivo. *En todas las pantallas es el objeto lo que se entrega en potencia*, copio. Hemos reunido para usted esta contienda, esta región minada de agujijones. Podría tornar, como película, hacia los créditos finales. Prepare, combine otra instrucción para la fotocopidora, ajustar o recortar las márgenes.

## NUESTRAS HORDAS DE ELEFANTES

(Fragmento)

### Mujer elefante

#### Ante el altar de los renacimientos

—Un día nací muerta y puse en peligro nuestra especie que me aguardaba en la espera.

—Un día nací muerta y por un efecto del espacio en el instante del alumbramiento también nacía mi enemigo, vivo como los dominios.

—Se mecía en un jardín donde todo lo demás permanecía inmóvil. Pronunciaba con sonidos de bisagra: *tú*.

—Yo lo escuchaba con el pensamiento de las noches. Despertaba en mí un sentido binario, una hipótesis demandante y primigenia: la grave desgracia puesta en el *sí*, el bullicio soleado puesto en el *no*.

—Comprendí entonces que no habría división en los sistemas de entrada y de salida: un alumbramiento es una curva dolorosa.

—Un alumbramiento regresa a su punto de partida con el impulso contraído de la parábola.

—

—Nací muerta entre las manadas de la huida. El estruendo de las migraciones me hacía despertar.

—Mi nacimiento es la antesala de los llanos donde mi madre espera. Muerta igual que las manadas que se abren paso el día de mi muerte; viva como el estruendo de la ira donde nace el peligro.

—Mi enemigo son las manadas abriéndose paso en el continente.



—Mi enemigo es alguien que me ama. Dice *tú* balanceando el sonido.

—Nací muerta.

—Puse en peligro a la especie, la iluminación después del parto.

—Nací muerta, con la disposición del *no* puesta en bullicio; con la alineación del *sí* en la desgracia de un adversario que soy yo, que son las manadas que me aman.


—Manadas robustas espoleando la muerte de los nacimientos. Manadas.

—

—Hordas nuestras de elefantes.

## Nuestras hordas

¿Recordaste algo nuestro, sueño impuro  
o a fuerza de repetirlo diez, cien veces  
quedó horadado,  
sin posibilidad?

(La niebla de tu sueño dice *sí*  
en la enfermedad, la niebla de mi sueño dice *no*  
en la persecución, la niebla de tu sueño). 

BRENDA IIJIMA

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ENTRIES FROM *SOME SIMPLE THINGS SAID BY  
AND ABOUT HUMANS*

“You must forgive me, I really have no idea what he explained. Because just then a thought flashed through my mind: what kind of disturbances would appear in Professor Devrient if I removed his right frontal lobe? And how would the smiling Dr. Okagawa react if I simulated him electrically? And how would Professor Rehmann behave if someone were to crush his inner-ear labyrinth? I was also feeling a little uncertain about my own ability to distinguish colours and about the *t* factor in my motor reactions. I was tormented by doubt on whether we were entitled (in the strict scientific sense) to speak about our (I mean: human) mental life unless we first removed each other’s cerebral lobes and cut each other’s sensory canals. Strictly speaking, we should pounce on each other, scalpel in hand, to study each other and our own mentality.”

From *War With the Newts* by Karel Čapek

The following entries are from a work called *Some Simple Things Said by and About Humans*—which conceptually models an encyclopedia, in this case containing articles about animals used by humans as surrogates for their labor.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2440	38 7390	7408	7425	7443	7461	7479	7497	7514	7532	7550
2441	7568	7586	7603	7621	7639	7657	7675	7692	7710	7728
2442	7746	7763	7781	7799	7817	7835	7852	7870	7888	7906
2443	7923	7941	7959	7977	7995	8012	8030	8048	8066	8083
2444	8101	<b>The Competence of Snakes</b>								
2445	38 8279	8297	8314	8332	8350	8368	8385	8403	8421	8439
2446	8456	8473	8492	8510	8527	8545	8563	8581	8598	8616
2447	8634	8652	8670	8688	8706	8724	8742	8760	8778	8796
2448	8813	8830	8848	8866	8884	8902	8920	8938	8956	8974
2449	8992	<b>(Assessments of Competence in Captive-Raised Animals) (What is the interest level when reading about humans or snakes) (Humans writing about snakes) (Snakes not writing about humans—rather their (snakes, otherwise) captivity) (Animal dilemma) (The Journal of Chemical Ecology) Snake odors on Y-maze behavior of pine snake hatchlings—</b>								
2450	9010	9028	9046	9064	9082	9100	9118	9136	9154	9172
2451	9190	9208	9226	9244	9262	9280	9298	9316	9334	9352
2452	9370	9388	9406	9424	9442	9460	9478	9496	9514	9532
2453	9550	9568	9586	9604	9622	9640	9658	9676	9694	9712
2454	9730	9748	9766	9784	9802	9820	9838	9856	9874	9892
2455	9910	9928	9946	9964	9982	10000	10018	10036	10054	10072
2456	10090	10108	10126	10144	10162	10180	10198	10216	10234	10252
2457	10270	10288	10306	10324	10342	10360	10378	10396	10414	10432
2458	10450	10468	10486	10504	10522	10540	10558	10576	10594	10612
2459	10630	10648	10666	10684	10702	10720	10738	10756	10774	10792
2460	10810	10828	10846	10864	10882	10900	10918	10936	10954	10972
2461	10990	11008	11026	11044	11062	11080	11098	11116	11134	11152
2462	11170	11188	11206	11224	11242	11260	11278	11296	11314	11332
2463	11350	11368	11386	11404	11422	11440	11458	11476	11494	11512
2464	11530	11548	11566	11584	11602	11620	11638	11656	11674	11692
2465	11710	11728	11746	11764	11782	11800	11818	11836	11854	11872
2466	11890	11908	11926	11944	11962	11980	12000	12018	12036	12054
2467	12070	12088	12106	12124	12142	12160	12178	12196	12214	12232
2468	12250	12268	12286	12304	12322	12340	12358	12376	12394	12412
2469	12430	12448	12466	12484	12502	12520	12538	12556	12574	12592
2470	12610	12628	12646	12664	12682	12700	12718	12736	12754	12772
2471	12790	12808	12826	12844	12862	12880	12898	12916	12934	12952
2472	12970	12988	13006	13024	13042	13060	13078	13096	13114	13132
2473	13150	13168	13186	13204	13222	13240	13258	13276	13294	13312
2474	13330	13348	13366	13384	13402	13420	13438	13456	13474	13492
2475	13510	13528	13546	13564	13582	13600	13618	13636	13654	13672
2476	13690	13708	13726	13744	13762	13780	13798	13816	13834	13852
2477	13870	13888	13906	13924	13942	13960	13978	13996	14014	14032
2478	14050	14068	14086	14104	14122	14140	14158	14176	14194	14212
2479	14230	14248	14266	14284	14302	14320	14338	14356	14374	14392
2480	14410	14428	14446	14464	14482	14500	14518	14536	14554	14572
2481	14590	14608	14626	14644	14662	14680	14698	14716	14734	14752
2482	14770	14788	14806	14824	14842	14860	14878	14896	14914	14932
2483	14950	14968	14986	15004	15022	15040	15058	15076	15094	15112
2484	15130	15148	15166	15184	15202	15220	15238	15256	15274	15292
2485	15310	15328	15346	15364	15382	15400	15418	15436	15454	15472
2486	15490	15508	15526	15544	15562	15580	15598	15616	15634	15652
2487	15670	15688	15706	15724	15742	15760	15778	15796	15814	15832
2488	15850	15868	15886	15904	15922	15940	15958	15976	15994	16012
2489	16030	16048	16066	16084	16102	16120	16138	16156	16174	16192
2490	39 6199	6217	6234	6252	6269	6287	6304	6321	6339	6356
2491	6374	6391	6409	6426	6443	6461	6478	6496	6513	6531
2492	6548	6565	6583	6600	6618	6635	6653	6670	6687	6705
2493	6722	6740	6757	6775	6792	6809	6827	6844	6862	6879
2494	6896	6914	6931	6949	6966	6984	7001	7018	7036	7053
2495	39 7071	7088	7105	7123	7140	7158	7175	7192	7210	7227
2496	7245	7262	7279	7297	7314	7332	7349	7366	7384	7401
2497	7419	7436	7453	7471	7488	7505	7523	7540	7558	7575
2498	7592	7610	7627	7645	7662	7679	7697	7714	7731	7749
2499	7766	7784	7801	7818	7836	7853	7871	7888	7905	7923
2500	39 7940	7957	7975	7992	8009	8027	8044	8062	8079	8096

48  
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2500	39 7940	7957	7975	7992	8009	8027	8044	8062	8079	8096
2501	8114	8131	8148	8166	8183	8201	8218	8235	8253	8270
2502	8287	8305	8322	8339	8357	8374	8391	8409	8426	8443
2503	8461	8478	8496	8513	8530	8548	8565	8582	8600	8617
2504	8634	8652	8669	8686	8704	8721	8738	8756	8773	8790
2505	39 8808	<b>The Tragedy of Cymbeline</b>								
2506	8981	8998	9016	9033	9050	9068	9085	9102	9120	9137
2507	9154	9172	9189	9206	9224	9241	9258	9276	9293	9310
2508	9328	9345	9362	9379	9397	9414	9431	9449	9466	9483
2509	9499	9516	9533	9553	9570	9587	9605	9622	9639	9656
		9708	9726	9743	9760	9778	9795	9812	9829	
2511	9847	9864	9881	9899	9916	9933	9950	9968	9985	*0002
2512	40 0020	0037	0054	0071	0089	0106	0123	0141	0158	0175
2513	0193	0210	0227	0244	0262	0279	0296	0313	0330	0348
2514	0365	0383	0400	0417	0434	0452	0469	0486	0503	0521
2515	0538	0556	0573	0590	0608	0625	0642	0659	0676	0694
2516	0711	0728	0745	0762	0779	0796	0813	0830	0847	0864
2517	0881	0898	0915	0932	0949	0966	0983	1000	1017	1034
2518	1056	1073	1090	1107	1125	1142	1159	1176	1193	1211
2519	1228	1245	1262	1279	1297	1314	1331	1348	1365	1383
		1400	1417	1434	1451	1468	1485	1502	1519	1536
2521	1573	1590	1607	1625	1642	1659	1676	1693	1711	1728
2522	1745	1762	1780	1797	1814	1831	1848	1866	1883	1900
2523	1917	1934	1951	1969	1986	2003	2020	2038	2055	2072
2524	2089	2107	2124	2141	2158	2175	2192	2209	2226	2243
2525	2260	2277	2294	2311	2328	2345	2362	2379	2396	2413
2526	2430	2447	2464	2481	2498	2515	2532	2549	2566	2583
2527	2599	2616	2633	2650	2667	2684	2701	2718	2735	2752
2528	2769	2786	2803	2820	2837	2854	2871	2888	2905	2922
2529	2939	2956	2973	2990	3007	3024	3041	3058	3075	3092
		3109	3126	3143	3160	3177	3194	3211	3228	3245
2531	3262	3279	3296	3313	3330	3347	3364	3381	3398	3415
2532	3432	3449	3466	3483	3500	3517	3534	3551	3568	3585
2533	3602	3619	3636	3653	3670	3687	3704	3721	3738	3755
2534	3772	3789	3806	3823	3840	3857	3874	3891	3908	3925
2535	3942	3959	3976	3993	4010	4027	4044	4061	4078	4095
2536	4111	4128	4145	4162	4179	4196	4213	4230	4247	4264
2537	4281	4298	4315	4332	4349	4366	4383	4400	4417	4434
2538	4451	4468	4485	4502	4519	4536	4553	4570	4587	4604
2539	4621	4638	4655	4672	4689	4706	4723	4740	4757	4774
2540	40 4834	4851	4868	4885	4902	4919	4936	4953	4970	4988
2541	5005	5022	5039	5056	5073	5090	5107	5124	5141	5158
2542	5170	5187	5204	5221	5238	5255	5272	5289	5306	5323
2543	5340	5357	5374	5391	5408	5425	5442	5459	5476	5493
2544	5510	5527	5544	5561	5578	5595	5612	5629	5646	5663
2545	40 5688	5705	5722	5739	5756	5773	5790	5807	5824	5841
2546	5858	5875	5892	5909	5926	5943	5960	5977	5994	6011
2547	6029	6046	6063	6080	6097	6114	6131	6148	6165	6182
2548	6199	6216	6233	6251	6268	6285	6302	6319	6336	6353
2549	6370	6387	6404	6421	6438	6455	6472	6489	6506	6523
	40 6540	6557	6574	6591	6608	6625	6642	6659	6676	6693
2551	6710	6727	6745	6762	6779	6796	6813	6830	6847	6864
2552	6881	6898	6915	6932	6949	6966	6983	7000	7017	7034
2553	7051	7068	7085	7102	7119	7136	7153	7170	7187	7204
2554	7221	7238	7255	7272	7289	7306	7323	7340	7357	7374
2555	40 7391	7408	7425	7442	7459	7476	7493	7510	7527	7544
2556	7561	7578	7595	7612	7629	7646	7663	7680	7697	7714
2557	7731	7748	7765	7782	7799	7816	7833	7850	7867	7884
2558	7901	7918	7934	7951	7968	7985	8002	8019	8036	8053
2559	8070	8087	8104	8121	8138	8155	8172	8189	8206	8223
2560	40 8240	8257	8274	8291	8308	8325	8342	8359	8376	8393

18  
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2560	40 8240	8257	8274	8291	8308	8325	8342	8359	8376	8393
2561	8410	8427	8443	8460	8477	8494	8511	8528	8545	8562
2562	8579	8596	8613	8630	8647	8664	8681	8698	8715	8732
2563	8749	8766	8782	8799	8816	8833	8850	8867	8884	8901
2564	8918	8935	8952	8969	8986	9003	9020	9037	9054	9070
2565	40 9087	9104	9121	<b>The Leach</b>			9138	9154	9171	9188
2566	9257	9274	9291	9307	9324	9341	9358	9375	9392	9409
2567	9426	9443	9460	9477	9494	9510	9527	9544	9561	9578
2568	9607	9624	9641	9658	9675	9692	9709	9726	9743	9760
2569	9784	9801	9818	9835	9852	9869	9886	9903	9920	9937
			9967	9984	*0001	*0018	*0035	*0052	*0068	*0085
2571	41 0102	0119	0136	0153	0170	0187	0203	0220	0237	0254
2572	0271	0288	0305	0322	0339	0355	0372	0389	0406	0423
2573	0440	0457	0474	0491	0507	0524	0541	0558	0575	0592
2574	0609	0626	0643	0659	0676	0693	0710	0727	0744	0761
2575	0778	0795	0812	0829	0846	0862	0878	0895	0912	0929
2576	0946	0963	0980	0996	1013	1029	1046	1063	1080	1098
2577	1114	1131	1148	1165	1182	1199	1216	1233	1250	1268
2578	1285	1302	1319	1336	1353	1370	1388	1405	1423	1441
2579	1458	1475	1493	1510	1527	1545	1562	1580	1598	1616
2580	1634	1652	1670	1688	1706	1724	1742	1760	1778	1796
2581	1814	1832	1850	1868	1886	1904	1922	1940	1958	1976
2582	1994	2012	2030	2048	2066	2084	2102	2120	2138	2156
2583	2176	2194	2212	2230	2248	2266	2284	2302	2320	2338
2584	2356	2374	2392	2410	2428	2446	2464	2482	2500	2518
2585	2536	2554	2572	2590	2608	2626	2644	2662	2680	2698
2586	2716	2734	2752	2770	2788	2806	2824	2842	2860	2878
2587	2896	2914	2932	2950	2968	2986	3004	3022	3040	3058
2588	3076	3094	3112	3130	3148	3166	3184	3202	3220	3238
2589	3256	3274	3292	3310	3328	3346	3364	3382	3400	3418
2590	3436	3454	3472	3490	3508	3526	3544	3562	3580	3598
2591	3616	3634	3652	3670	3688	3706	3724	3742	3760	3778
2592	3796	3814	3832	3850	3868	3886	3904	3922	3940	3958
2593	3976	3994	4012	4030	4048	4066	4084	4102	4120	4138
2594	4156	4174	4192	4210	4228	4246	4264	4282	4300	4318
2595	4336	4354	4372	4390	4408	4426	4444	4462	4480	4498
2596	4516	4534	4552	4570	4588	4606	4624	4642	4660	4678
2597	4696	4714	4732	4750	4768	4786	4804	4822	4840	4858
2598	4876	4894	4912	4930	4948	4966	4984	5002	5020	5038
2599	5056	5074	5092	5110	5128	5146	5164	5182	5200	5218
2600	41 4973	4990	5007	5024	5041	5057	5074	5091	5107	5124
2601	5140	5157	5174	5190	5207	5224	5241	5257	5274	5291
2602	5307	5324	5341	5357	5374	5391	5407	5424	5441	5457
2603	5474	5491	5508	5524	5541	5558	5574	5591	5608	5624
2604	5641	5658	5674	5691	5708	5724	5741	5758	5774	5791
2605	41 5808	5824	5841	5858	5874	5891	5908	5924	5941	5958
2606	5974	5991	6008	6024	6041	6058	6074	6091	6108	6124
2607	6141	6158	6174	6191	6208	6224	6241	6258	6274	6291
2608	6308	6324	6341	6358	6374	6391	6407	6424	6441	6457
2609	6474	6491	6507	6524	6541	6557	6574	6591	6607	6624
2610	41 6641	6657	6674	6690	6707	6724	6740	6757	6774	6790
2611	6807	6824	6840	6857	6873	6890	6907	6923	6940	6957
2612	6973	6990	7006	7023	7040	7056	7073	7090	7106	7123
2613	7139	7156	7173	7189	7206	7223	7239	7256	7272	7289
2614	7306	7322	7339	7355	7372	7389	7405	7422	7438	7455
2615	41 7472	7488	7505	7522	7538	7555	7571	7588	7605	7621
2616	7638	7654	7671	7688	7704	7721	7737	7754	7771	7787
2617	7804	7820	7837	7854	7870	7887	7903	7920	7936	7953
2618	7970	7986	8003	8019	8036	8053	8069	8086	8102	8119
2619	8135	8152	8169	8185	8202	8218	8235	8252	8268	8285
2620	41 8301	8318	8334	8351	8368	8384	8401	8417	8434	8450

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2620	q1 8301	8318	8334	8351	8368	8384	8401	8417	8434	8450
2621	8467	8484	8500	8517	8533	8550	8566	8583	8600	8616
2622	8633	8649	8666	8682	8699	8715	8732	8749	8765	8782
2623	8798	8815	8831	8845	8865	8881	8898	8914	8931	8947
2624	8964	8980	8997	9013	9030	9047	9063	9080	9096	9113
2625	q1 9129	9146	9162	9179	9195	9212	9229	9245	9262	9278
2626	9295	9311	9328	9344	9361	9377	9394	9410	9427	9444
2627	9460	9477	9493	9510	9526	9543	9559	9576	9592	9609
2628	9635	9652	9668	9685	9701	9718	9734	9751	9767	9784
2629	9799	9817	9834	9850	9867	9883	9900	9916	9933	9949
2630	9965	9982	9999	10015	10032	10048	10065	10081	10098	10114
2631	0230	0302	0319	0335	0352	0368	0385	0401	0418	0434
2632	0450	0522	0539	0555	0572	0588	0605	0621	0638	0654
2633	0671	0687	0704	0720	0737	0753	0770	0786	0803	0819
2634	0835	0851	0868	0884	0900	0917	0933	0950	0966	0982
2635	0998	1014	1031	1047	1064	1080	1097	1113	1130	1146
2636	1162	1178	1195	1211	1228	1244	1261	1277	1294	1310
2637	1326	1343	1359	1376	1392	1409	1425	1442	1458	1475
2638	1491	1507	1524	1540	1557	1573	1590	1606	1623	1639
2639	1655	1671	1688	1704	1721	1737	1754	1770	1787	1803
2640	1819	1836	1852	1869	1885	1902	1918	1935	1951	1968
2641	1984	2001	2017	2034	2050	2067	2083	2100	2116	2133
2642	2149	2165	2182	2198	2215	2231	2248	2264	2281	2297
2643	2314	2330	2347	2363	2380	2396	2413	2429	2445	2462
2644	2478	2495	2511	2528	2544	2561	2577	2594	2610	2627
2645	2643	2659	2675	2692	2708	2724	2741	2757	2773	2790
2646	2806	2822	2839	2855	2872	2888	2904	2921	2937	2954
2647	2970	2986	3003	3019	3035	3052	3068	3084	3101	3117
2648	3133	3149	3166	3182	3198	3215	3231	3247	3264	3280
2649	3296	3312	3329	3345	3361	3378	3394	3410	3427	3443
2650	3459	3475	3492	3508	3524	3541	3557	3573	3589	3606
2651	3622	3638	3654	3671	3687	3703	3719	3736	3752	3768
2652	3784	3800	3817	3833	3849	3866	3882	3898	3914	3931
2653	3947	3963	3979	3995	4012	4028	4044	4060	4076	4093
2654	4109	4125	4141	4157	4173	4189	4205	4221	4237	4254
2655	4270	4286	4302	4318	4334	4350	4366	4382	4398	4414
2656	4430	4446	4462	4478	4494	4510	4526	4542	4558	4574
2657	4590	4606	4622	4638	4654	4670	4686	4702	4718	4734
2658	4750	4766	4782	4798	4814	4830	4846	4862	4878	4894
2659	4910	4926	4942	4958	4974	4990	5006	5022	5038	5054
2660	5070	5086	5102	5118	5134	5150	5166	5182	5198	5214
2661	5230	5246	5262	5278	5294	5310	5326	5342	5358	5374
2662	5390	5406	5422	5438	5454	5470	5486	5502	5518	5534
2663	5550	5566	5582	5598	5614	5630	5646	5662	5678	5694
2664	5710	5726	5742	5758	5774	5790	5806	5822	5838	5854
2665	5870	5886	5902	5918	5934	5950	5966	5982	5998	6014
2666	6030	6046	6062	6078	6094	6110	6126	6142	6158	6174
2667	6190	6206	6222	6238	6254	6270	6286	6302	6318	6334
2668	6350	6366	6382	6398	6414	6430	6446	6462	6478	6494
2669	6510	6526	6542	6558	6574	6590	6606	6622	6638	6654
2670	6670	6686	6702	6718	6734	6750	6766	6782	6798	6814
2671	6830	6846	6862	6878	6894	6910	6926	6942	6958	6974
2672	6990	7006	7022	7038	7054	7070	7086	7102	7118	7134
2673	7150	7166	7182	7198	7214	7230	7246	7262	7278	7294
2674	7310	7326	7342	7358	7374	7390	7406	7422	7438	7454
2675	7470	7486	7502	7518	7534	7550	7566	7582	7598	7614
2676	7630	7646	7662	7678	7694	7710	7726	7742	7758	7774
2677	7790	7806	7822	7838	7854	7870	7886	7902	7918	7934
2678	7950	7966	7982	7998	8014	8030	8046	8062	8078	8094
2679	8110	8126	8142	8158	8174	8190	8206	8222	8238	8254
2680	8270	8286	8302	8318	8334	8350	8366	8382	8398	8414

**Cats are Cunning**  
**Cats have a mind of their own! If you think you control the cat you are mistaken**  
**Cats make any domestic space their domain**  
**Cats are simply less domesticated**  
**Say pussy cat and the sexuality of women comes to mind**  
**Male cats are as slinky and arabesque as their female counterparts**  
**Cats are most commonly used in neurological research**  
**Feral cats live in droves out in suburbia**  
**Their house cat mated with a mountain lion**  
**Cats have not been a human staple like dogs (consumption) perhaps because the cat is bony**  
**Smear method and inculcation**  
**About to be examined in experiment one**  
**Then each cat was inoculated per os with 30 cc**  
**Fat cat approximately 25,000 cats are used in scientific tests each year**

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 8 13'6  
 9 15'3

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 3 4'8  
 4 6'4  
 5 8'0  
 6 9'6  
 7 11'2  
 8 12'8  
 9 14'4

POEM(A)S

GORBACHEV'S HEMANGIOMA

1

Mark the bullish  
engineered memory  
to cross this  
the shade of the  
trace of this where

anchors channel down  
the withers of  
pyro-pyramidal  
ash the upper crust's  
pixilated dough  
east and west of central  
time

2

millions of bits naked to the snaked eye  
splintered digits pointing on immaculate streets

feeling sensational loss sensation  
a misanthrope's wet dream-magmatic  
melt-down of sugar-coated  
cores bloated indices actions dark cells

3

cutting the fat  
as it were  
we render from the index  
page down

4

palms up weigh which way  
the post-neo-classic-punk postures  
the double-clutch pump  
double-fisted double-jointed articulation

from the geo-eco summits  
blunt clockworks  
anime-arrows rain  
flush like a great Atlantic dump  
echo-hyphenated buy-products composed of  
minimum ex-post-consumer product  
sanctionedpiratesdotgovslashprods

5

back page  
insert  
slave the planet  
save the plane  
Chinese torch the free  
dissent of  
the back-burner sun:  
a fistful of rice maize lentil  
bread in all forms levied  
subjects subject to



5

forward to the front  
fall revival


default to home to hoarse gag to horse  
power Slovak-borgs cybrid plants  
the assembly line of  
untapped democracies  
fringes running east of  
a rusted lake  
Gorbachev's flushed hemangioma  
point blank Point Alpha of post-glasnost  
food chains minute cell plans  
nuclear neophytes  
limns of phantom towers adust  
the root of cybernetics a flower

## HANGING BULLETS

- unfriendly fire the dodging of: de facto
- the general undying: wake of the avant-garde
- un-guerilla theatre: martyrs puppets reserves fantastic va loans
- invalids heroes exit wounds hearts on the same side: wavering constitutions?
- The mirror: culture intel sapience opinion never on the same page
-

## AUTO :DEL DESACUERDO AL PLEITO AL CAMPANAZO: RETRATO

Llegar apenas dando penas  
de gatas lamiéndose los bigotes del sexo  
de gata media maltratada  
que se traga la quimera de cualquiera  
de trotamundos con medias a medio muslo y botinas de charol y la mini con escote chi  
flado  
gatita del día crudo y trasnochado  
descuartizando los miembros como un yogui en la azotea  
el mero cero del ring  
del esmog ululante  
despachando los clientes gringos y agringados, los narcos y nacos adinerados  
la colonia cada vez menos  
o más sedienta: cuánto pesa el peso:  
ve al súper  
espejismo del santo inmaculado: gota tras gota se agota la gota  
y acabamos en fachas  
perdiendo máscara carmín rubor medias calzones, en fin la hipoteca:  
agarrados de la greña nudos desnudos  
descargamos las pilas, salpicados por las risas palomitas del sol  
dado mocos: blindado con escapularios: dando vueltas y vueltas soldado al azar:  
entre cachetadas babosas y sábanas blancas fregadas y tendidas a todo cloro del sol claro  
está la mugre del periódico ultra  
tiroteado, las tiradas y columnas del satélite romano y los rumores sucios de terroristas  
celulares, de las huellas digitales de los ciberanarquistas  
de suburbios cancelados  
: el desperdicio sirve para envolver  
y desenvolver al grano cabrón:  
los kilos del mercado  
de al lado sobre la lona sangrienta  
encharcada por los peores humores:  
nos tendemos los papeles  
la mano de luchadores  
cada vez más o menos

enanos ensayando la lucha  
a cambio del cambio  
verbo de la revo paralizada en el ámbar del sustantivo  
aguado y tibio  
como una porra de pendejos  
dentro del coliseo  
cada vez más petrificado  
que nada:  
y sordos nadamos pagando la sopa ruda  
con nuestra propia agua de riñón: lo que alguna vez supo  
a carta blanca. 

ANDREW ZAWACKI

---

FIVE POEMS FROM "VIDEOTAPE"

: 27

Weather report: oxide clogging  
the video head, environments lit  
by τ-bulb, by tinsel, & carrier  
waves getting jammed by a front,  
the radio frequency sputtering  
infrequent:

  a shotgun  
  shell disch-  
arged from its ch-  
  amber,  
  a steel whisk  
dragged on a snare,  
  what ice  
  & blistered  
fuses would  
  blare if  
ice could

sing if winter

had a larynx

& a lavender

-scented ling-

o & a why—

: 28

Red/ green/  
    blue/  
seen as if thru a development  
            fog, & dropout  
as the lightning flares, as  
if by aluminum screen,  
saturating the view  
    -er & the view  
: a hardhat taking a smoke  
break,  
ash on a pallet of  
            sturd-i-floor,  
            the hiss his  
                    hys-  
            terical match makes,  
flicked beneath the eaves be  
-fore per-  
            cussing his life  
to the punch of a staple  
gun:  
    content is nothing  
            more  
            than ex-  
            tension of form

: 44

*"Constellation selon*

*les lois du hasard"*:

a micro volcano  
drilled from the deck,

its treated railing  
ribboned with rifling

thru pine's raw  
underplank, a perfectly

circular puncture  
wound, like a stylus

steady in spinning  
wax—inverse Vesuvius,

its sawdust lava  
frilled by a carpenter  
bee



: 70

Villanelles


of an aniline,  
analog tide, weather balloon  
a white chandelier,  
crunch of two cars in a car  
-park punchup, a Wawa wa  
-ter bottle under-  
foot: vellum  
& wavewoven,  
nowherethrown,  
the tongue is a phase 1 SIM  
card—portable tri-band, 64k—,  
& salt water  
brushing its sutras  
on the sand at the Jersey shore,  
in this world  
that is not  
world enough & is  
not not  
a world

: 71

Iris in, iris  
out, Sundays  
til the sun go down,

lit by inky  
dink & snoot—  
the bit parts we play

in our layaway lives,  
on hands & knees  
on the gravel

walk, beating back the  
weeds before they  
're back 

TO-MAR

Me estas mareando  
martillándome los oídos con tus ritmos marciales casi, o marcianos...  
Sorda, marca mi amargura marital:  
primero con María ¡y en marea alta!  
Luego con Moisés hasta te partiste,  
ahora con un cura Marista y con Marisol  
—y al mismo tiempo— ¡marrano!  
¡No marches!

Mármol amarillo y plano tu cuerpo,  
andas tendida,  
marmorea tu espuma,  
tú todo.  
No sabes si ser masculino o femenina.  
Ya ni yo sé tampoco, maricón.  
(Y con tus lobos, arañas, tus zorras  
y tus elefantes, estrellas y caballitos,  
pareces cirquero, mariposa maromera)

Me marchitas:  
amárrame con tu thalasso o me escapo  
con otro, o sea no,  
que sea más pacífico que tú caribe  
menos menor que tú,  
menos muerto  
menos rojo y negro  
menos de media tierra  
menos caspioso,  
que tenga más oro que tú plata.

O sea que no sea  
marinado enano  
ni enmarcado  
como un lago  
como tú  
que eres un sí perpetuo en boca de los marineros gringos,  
que eres como la madre de los capitanes franceses,  
que eres, en tu casa, puro martirio:  
estas arbolada (pareces parque  
con piel de amaranto),  
te pones gruesa,  
pero de vez en cuando estas en bonanza,  
estas en leche, sabrosa,  
estas alta (ni modo que baja),  
también estas en todas partes atrapada:  
y cuando llores tu amaromar, crece un tú de mis lágrimas.  
¡Maravilla! te metes hasta en un pozo,  
deshacerme de ti es como tapar el sol con un dedo  
(¡si te me apareces hasta en la marmita! ...y también en Marruecos y Marquelia).

Te picas  
te quiebras  
te rizas  
te calmas

te abres  
me tragas  
me asfixias  
me ahogas  
me escupes  
me hundes  
me meces  
me arrullas  
me cargas  
me impulsas  
me mueves

me marcas los días.  
¿Cómo te voy a dejar de amar?

## LOVE REIGN O'ER ME

Lluvia ácida  
Lluvia agria  
Lluvia de monsoon  
Lluvia de chac  
Lluvia de tlaloc  
Lluvia de primavera  
Luvia, como mi prima  
Lluvia, como de estrellas  
Lluvia de llanto  
Lluvia de ideas  
Lluvia de regalos  
Lluvia de insultos  
Lluvia de trabajos  
Lluvia de pedradas  
Lluvia, como muchedumbre  
Lluvia precipitada  
Lluvia con prisa  
Lluvia de oro  
Lluvia de nube  
Lluvia meona  
Lluvia molecular  
Lluvia huracanada  
Lluvia de agua  
Aguacero  
Agua líquida  
Agua insípida  
Agua incolora  
Aguapuerca  
Agua de mar  
Agua, mi cuerpo  
En la tina:  
-¿Cómo estás?  
-Aqui, arrugándome sin ti.

En un lago:  
-¿Cómo estás?  
-Aquí, ondulándome por ti.  
Agua que marea  
Aguarrás  
Aguafuerte  
Agua de azahar  
Agua de colonia, de perfume  
Agua de rosas  
Agua de toilette, cariño  
Agua agrietada, puerto  
Agua pacífica  
Agua atlántica  
Agua homérica  
Agua espejeando  
Aguas de pluma  
Aguas  
Aguas con el agua, se acaba  
¡Aguas, que allí va el agua!  
De riñón  
Aguas medicinales  
Agua mágica  
Solución salina  
Aguas tirando, corrientes—no como eléctricas sino como sirenas  
Estelas en el agua, caminos de agua  
Agua bendita  
Agua de jamaica  
Agua de limón  
Agua sucia  
Agua caliente  
Ojo de agua  
Agua corriente—no vulgar  
Agua de cerrajas, que no importa, pues  
Agua de coco  
Agua de uvas, borracha

Agua de caña, más borracha  
Aguamiel, teporocho  
Agua de amnios, naciendo  
Agua natural, creciendo  
Agua de mesa  
Agua mineral  
Agua sola  
Agua acompañada  
Agua dulce  
Agua dura  
Agua salada  
Agua fuerte  
Agua gasificada  
Claro, como el agua  
Aguas negras  
Agua mansa  
Agua muerta, estancada  
Agua fantasma  
Agua rara  
Agua oxigenada, güerita  
Aguachile de camarón  
Agua termal  
Agua tónica  
Agua quina  
Aguamala, qué dolor  
Aguacate, qué rico  
Agua de ojos, triste  
Y por eso, agarrádo el agua, bien ebrio  
Y hombre al agua, por consiguiente  
Y hay que aguantar  
Sin ahogarse en poca agua  
Ni darle el agua al necio  
Sólo agua viva  
Agua compleja  
Agua del día



Agua simple, sencilla  
Agua encharcada  
Agua en la que escribo  
Entre dos aguas  
Fuera del agua  
aguada  
Y dentro de ella  
Aguando  
Aguantando  
Agua  
Rompiéndoseme el agua  
Partiendo las aguas  
por la vena de agua, bajo tierra y sobre ella  
Con el agua en las venas  
y los cuerpos de agua  
Lloviendo hacia afuera.

## DISAVOWELS

Love is Back  
Love is Black  
Love is Lack

Love is Dead  
Love is Dread  
Love is Read

Love is Fight  
Love is Fright  
Love is Right

Love is Sore  
Love is Score  
Love is Core

Love is Tuck  
Love is Truck  
Love is Ruck

Why?

## OSSIFIER

### **1.flesh**

*Come, said the music, to joy and speed and secret endlessness, where everything tumbles together and attachments are not made of flesh*

### **2.velvet**

fresh crush  
under ground

### **3.concrete**

*it's heartless — she doesn't hold it; she touches it and lets it go —*

### **4. city towers**

sun showers  
cut hours

### **5. desert sand**

*They also had a feeling of sickness hidden in them*

### **6. snakes**

a walk through  
a veil

### **7.violence**

*But they were finite little boxes of pleasure, with the simple surfaces of personality and situation.*

### **8. wet glands**

when fire flies  
where does it land?

### **9.childhood**

*(make money) walking around songs everybody knew*

**10. the pure wings of night insects**

pinpoint the paint

a naughty prism

## DEEP PRESSED

To press deeply into the present

Present

Present

Sentiment

Deep scent of

Prescient present

Indescent and scentsored

Sore and incandescent

In descent to the deep

Sensored (I)

Censore

Sans sore (you)

## PIE

· de manzana

·· de foto

... de verso

.... de altar


..... de león

..... de gato

..... de amigo

..... de atleta

..... de la cuesta

..... de página 

MICHAEL BURKARD

---

DOS POEMAS

OJO CEREZA

cuando elizabeth bishop pintó  
INTERIOR CON CABLE  
debió darse cuenta de una manera  
desfavorablemente inconsciente o semiconsciente  
que yo que finalmente vine a leer sus poemas con  
emoción cuando en realidad los leí como una hermana  
escritora en lugar de hacerlo como un miembro de una intelligentsia  
si ésa es la palabra —cuando finalmente los leí  
unos días más tarde éstos no llevaron  
a maryland con motivo de mi segundo aniversario sobrio sin  
su libro blanco de poemas completos ajado por el sol  
en mi regazo bajo mi brazo en mis manos bajo mi impertinente  
pluma conforme escribía emocionado algunas líneas junto a las suyas o en  
los márgenes o los espacios en blanco de la página=sueños  
—ella debió darse cuenta que diez años después un lector / fan /  
escritor siguiendo su propio rito buscaría entrar a ese  
interior desde la puerta sugerida a raíz de la montaña  
de la puerta lateral de las flores amontonadas para buscar en el interior

y ver el cable desde esa situación privilegiada como  
una especie de telaraña no que ella la pintara de esa manera  
pero se ve como el principio de algo alineado  
parcialmente con las líneas de las juntas de la pared y el techo y los delicados  
“ganchos”: visibles que lo fijan en su lugar a la pared y al techo  
como un día idóneo para comenzar algo o seguir tratando  
no de terminar algo como la vida de un escritor cuando él/ ella  
sienten el invitante o no llamado del consabido final



## NOTAS DE MI CARA

1

Huellas. Por tanto las cosas mismas no son nombres  
no solamente palabras.

2

Heno. No soy heno.\*

Tampoco soy *hey*.

Mi madre quiso decir una de dos. O ambas cosas.

3

Ambas lunas en un mes.

Ambos carneros en martes.

Ambas nevadas frías en 5.

4

Alcanzando la sal:

a) ella es apuñalada por el padre

b) ella es apuñalada con el tenedor del padre

c) ella es apuñalada por el padre del padre

d) hola. ella está adentro

5

“Me echo de menos

en la primera versión”,

le escribo a Jean

6

“interesante” —de mis palabras máscara

---

*Hay* (heno) y la interjección *hey*, en inglés, se pronuncian igual. [N. del T.]

7

ella está adentro

“Yo” escribí

a un compañero literal

bajo una luz literal

en el “piso del porche” (de Jean)

el verano de 1968 el

New Yorker publicó una

traducción de la hija de Babel

de “Debes saberlo todo”

—y Jane Flory la leyó

en voz alta la noche pasada

—y Sheldon Flory tomó

notas de mi cara

y las puso en un

poema—

o

así

pareció

entonces— el pequeño “piso del porche”

de Jean Valentine

en “guía fantasma”

me convertí “Yo” en cierto punto

de este lugar —flecha

es la

cara de.

cara de

Nada de jinete recompuesto.

Nada de conductas fantasmales.

Nada de paraguas.

8

“demasiado vidrio” dice K  
en su traducción de T  
—uno piensa en su propia  
casa o la casa o el cuarto  
pasados como si uno tuviera también  
demasiado— pero uno guarda silencio

ningún artista recobrado  
ninguna caja de recuperación  
los muchachos del sótano  
tienen el cráneo  
y el corazón destrozados —en los  
casos

9

de estos dos asesinatos por  
obra del padre el corazón es  
igual en tamaño al cráneo  
y la ventana destrozados

10

y en por lo menos otros 6 momentos  
en este globo esta palabra apropiada  
globo por esta tierra en por lo menos  
otros 6 momentos se dan asesinatos  
iguales —la palabra diario no  
puede connotar esto— la rama rota  
en la Calle 16 hace dos noviembre  
es el vínculo con el instante de una  
de las dos muertes

11

su señoría  
mi tesis se basará

en DURA de Myung Mi Kim  
y Dos de Duras de Duras  
El Hombre Atlántico  
La Perra de la Costa de Normandía  
un mundo nuevo

12  
cómo referirse a estos dos (Dos)  
serán el resorte inicial  
y probablemente el resorte final

frágil insomnio  
ladrillo de la escuela

13  
la escuela primaria  
en n noche primaria

14  
algo así como ciudades de dulce  
—“*Waipo* equivale a abuela materna. *Wai* significa “afuera”,  
“extraño”. *Po*, “anciana”. (Wang Ping, “Matrimonio femenino”)

Quiero a mi Waypo.  
afuera significa nada de nieve  
afuera significa dibujo robado de amigo de nieve  
afuera significa el “guía fantasma” de Jean Valentine

15  
tengo esta sensación.  
Sheldon se levantó  
para algo, Jane también—

quizá no sea Jane, quizá no sea Jean  
—a veces, del increíble poema de Jean  
Ironwood

a veces creí que yo era  
“el otro Michael” —

le pregunté  
el pasado noviembre, finalmente.  
después de quererle preguntar durante

mucho tiempo, y ella dijo algo  
así como que no podía recordar  
quién era él —caminábamos juntos  
tomados del brazo

después ella da esta maravillosa  
lectura de poemas de este  
libro al cual está pensando (mayo)

titular SU LIBRO PERDIDO.  
No le creo, respecto “del otro  
Michael”, pero se vuelve impreciso ahora

como un hecho nevado, como algunos de  
los hechos más interesantes de los  
poemas —hechos enmascarados

luz literal:

16

*LAMB*

| pantera

| cubana

JASPER JOHNS —ANSIEDAD— UN HOMBRE QUE ME QUISO PERO YO ESTABA  
EQUIVOCADO

Calle del dolor

Alguien de hecho va a pagarme por colgar en las iglesias  
“No quiero una relación adversa c mi escritura, tú tienes”  
No duermas con tu cabeza al sol aquí

“VENGO DE LOS SECRETOS” le había dicho John Frazier  
a nuestro perro que teníamos otro perro teníamos un cuento no deberíamos  
LATÍN “Sus amigos no lo vieron durante meses”.

demasiada casa demasiado viento en el sentido de viento contra árboles y  
casa

La fiabilidad del interior

“El gran estanque retrocede” de Kim

Recoge la duración de los años de Kim

“Y HACE AÑOS, TAMBIÉN” Melissa Hotchkiss No pudo ver venir la  
pelota

dijo su hermano, y la lluvia ayudó al padre silencioso a entender su silencio  
de nuevo las canciones

poco sabías casi me tiré a las vías del tren esta noche

poco sabías

gente reclama gente como objetos

hoy la historia de mi amigo el mar. Mañana, sexualidad total del mar

PROBABLEMENTE NO VOLVERÁS A ROBAR DE TU SUEGRA

POR UN TIEMPO

fui intimidado por weldon kees

digresión pintada 8 500 fantasmas hoy día senadores pintados con bolsas de dinero  
en lugar de caras

representantes pintados con cuchillas en lugar de oídos soldados pintados con anos  
en lugar de cerebros asesinos pintados con EU pintaron completamente sus castigos

auditivos pintados por otra mujer pintada brutalmente por otro  
niño

préstamo costero nocturno reverso repentino estampida lejana globo de pato  
restringido a

por gota

véase mi difícil ida él habló parte de puerta ella trajo cuervosnocturnos

este pájaro era un signo o no desodiar la mano la pelvis hola luna azul

Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados 

ARIADNA VÁSQUEZ GERMÁN

---

SHIPWRECKED ON NAXOS

*I've never written, though I thought I wrote,  
never loved, though I thought I loved,  
never done anything but wait  
outside the closed door.*

—Marguerite Duras

I've been dreaming I have only one breast. But not a breast that knows the other is missing. No, nothing like that. It's just that I have one breast in the middle, like the Cyclops has only one eye.

I dream that I pause in front of a mirror, and a kind of little cone emerges from my blouse, diminutive, in the middle of where my two breasts should be. I take off my blouse, and then it appears, one strangely beautiful breast.

"What is your reaction to the fact that you have just one breast?"

"Reaction?"

"Yes... I mean, in the dream."

"I only have a reaction when I wake up. In the dream I feel nothing that relates to that word."

"What word?"

"Reaction."

"Do you feel strange? Do you want to have another breast?"

“No... I don’t think so, I think I feel complete with that breast, I feel... as if I had a star born out of my chest, just one.”

“A star?”

I want to talk about myself a little, just for today. Listen: I’ve lived in La Condesa for a year. It’s a cheap room on a terrace. I pay 2500 pesos a month. The rent includes laundry, gas, even cable. I don’t have to pay for cable. Daniel let me know about the rent. He called me one morning, like he’d fallen from the sky, and he said: Do you really want to move? Yes, of course, I told him, and he gave the phone number to Dante and me. We called and the three of us went to see the room. Everything happened very fast. I could almost say Daniel decided for me. I’ll talk about Dante later.

*Sir Osbourne reads:*

*She stayed there, waiting on a salty rock in Naxos. Her arms grown in length, and so she embraces her back, or vice versa. She clings to it and her eyes have deep circles underneath them, dark hollows from which another woman’s gaze seems to emerge, a woman whom she will never be.*

*Her shoulder blades look like wings, and the thread is tangled in her hair, the cursed thread reminding her, telling her, do not weave, don’t start weaving because waiting without concentrating on waiting is precisely what she should not do. She should wait just like that, anguished, shielded by her arms and legs, skin parched with exhaustion, eyes dead and saliva tattooed on the vertex of her lips. Watching, watching. Such is the waiting and you cannot weave, you cannot breathe deeply because in a breath a delicious instant dies in which he could come for her. Her fate no longer rests with the gods, though she has not ceased to believe in them.*

“Why doesn’t she leave the island? Why does she wait there, numbed?”

“Numbed?”

“As if nailed to her own body.”

“I don’t know. You tell me. It’s your story.”



Sir Osbourne is my landlord. That's what he calls himself, and he claims to be English. *I'm an Englishman*, he says in English, but I don't believe him. I think he just lived there for most of his life.

He's a very strange man. For example, he's never cared about my business. I sell cocaine and marijuana, sometimes ecstasy and hash. Only soft drugs. Sir Osbourne knows it, though I almost never deal at home. I don't like to. Besides, deep down, what I want is to be an artist. In the afternoons I make necklaces, bracelets, earrings, even purses. I take them to the girls who mind the little shops right here in La Condesa, and sometimes I sell them on the street. Not many purses sell; earrings do, and bracelets, but what earns the most money is coke. In any case Sir Osbourne doesn't care whether I sell weed or bracelets, as long as I pay the rent and go downstairs once a week to talk with him.

I need to talk about Dante a little, just for today. Listen, because it's all I can say and I will say it counting backwards. I cannot tell this story any other way because it is mine. This is not a dream.

FOUR. I am outside the Camarones subway stop, smoking because I'm waiting for a customer. I had to go all the way to the San Juan Tlihuaja market because no one sells weed there now. I am tired, a little sad. My customer arrives and Dante is with him. It's the first time I see him and I want him, I want him for me. We don't talk. I see him and think: he is an artist.

We all go down and get on the subway. My customer talks about the weather, I watch Dante. My customer says something about blankets, sheets, moving. I watch Dante. I talk a little and we get out at the next station. We go up to the street and we walk a while longer until I pause and we sit down. I watch Dante. I hand my customer five joints and he puts them away. Dante goes off to buy cigarettes. I watch him and my customer tells me never to sell to Dante if he contacts me. Don't sell to him, I can only sell to him if they come together. I tell him to go to hell. He's not my dealer, he's a nobody. I watch Dante as he comes back and I want him for me.

*Sir Osbourne declaims:*

*Woman, don't watch the window or the city. Don't watch anything.  
Forget the three walls to the south: the labyrinth.*

*Shake from your eyes the giant walls that close off the path.  
Don't seek the center, don't watch the monster; the minotaur.  
Don't sense that it craves your Athenian.  
Woman, don't watch the young warriors in the distance.  
Don't ask what happened, who they are, where they are going.  
Forget those walls that do not answer.  
Woman, don't suppose that they have come from Athens to liberate her from  
her tribute.  
Do not watch that armed man in the distance who discovers you.  
Don't watch, watch nothing.  
Woman, have no desire to unglue your arms and belly from your body to  
see him.  
Don't tie yourself to his eyes, don't watch him.  
Woman, don't offer your thread to that man, don't offer your sword, don't  
watch him.  
Don't betray your people, your history, don't flee with the Athenian hero.  
Woman, don't surrender to the first madness.  
Don't escape Naxos, don't go with the hero, traitor, damned traitor!*

*"But why is she a traitor?"*

*"Because she loves."*

Every Wednesday afternoon at 3:15 I must knock on Sir Osbourne's door on the first floor and sit in the living room for an hour to chat. At 4:15, a clock chimes. So I must leave. I always have to leave even though I don't want to, but I'm used to it now. It was part of the deal when I moved into my room.

Sir Osbourne doesn't require this of the other tenants in the building. Only me, because my name is Ariadne. Like that, with a *d* and an *e*, not Adriana or Ariana or Adrienne, but Ariadne, which is how I explained it when he asked for my name the day we came to see the room. I put a lot of emphasis on the ending, A-riaD-ne, because the fact is, it bothers me when people get my name wrong. He held still like a mummy, gazing into my eyes, he came close to my face and delicately touched the circles under my eyes. Then he said, looking neither at

Dante nor Daniel: If you want the room, you have to come downstairs once a week to talk with me. He said: You are Ariadne. Do you know your story? No, I told him, what story? Will you take the room? he asked, and I looked at Daniel, waiting for his help, and he said yes, definitely. So everything was settled.

*Sir Osbourne reads:*

*Theoretical Postulates on the Three Mutations of Waiting, Based on the Greek Myth of Ariadne.*

*The primary problem regarding the myth of Ariadne is that many vital parts have been eliminated with the passage of time and erased from the story, and thus marvelous fragments that hold the legend together are lost. We have three principal axes around which our theory is developed.*

*First: The transformation of Ariadne's breasts into a single breast, which apparently relates directly to the first mutation of waiting and will be treated in later sections, as was explained in the introduction to this work.*

Sir Osbourne has a piercing in his tongue.

I dreamed that my mouth was salty. If I bit my mouth it bled salt, a lot of salt. My mouth was mysterious, as if it were the mouth of all the mouths of every face. In my dream I am sitting on a carpet covered with many treasures. I want to touch them, but for reasons that seem bewitched, I only touch my mouth. First I touch it and feel a light dusting of granules, and I don't understand what has happened. Then I squeeze my mouth with both hands; I want to snatch it off my face, I feel that it is my mouth, I feel a passion for squeezing it and suddenly it begins to gush salt, torrentially, a great deal of salt, and the carpet with the treasures begins to fill itself with salt, and I feel my home turns into a block, a block of salt.

"You don't despair from so much salt, I mean, in your dream?"

"No, no, I feel... I don't know, I feel light, crazy, like an hourglass filled with salt, I feel salty."

"Are you on an island in your dream?"

"An island?"

“Yes, with stones, boulders, salt.”

“No, it’s a carpet that stops being a carpet and turns into a mountain of salt.”

“A mountain of salt?”

Everything’s been very strange with Sir Osbourne, hallucinogenic. Each day that I come downstairs, we talk. Or rather, he reads. He tells me the story of Ariadne waiting on Naxos and he tells me that hers is my only story, her waiting is my only waiting, that woman is me.

I want to tell him about my life and sometimes I do. I tell him about my dreams while he puts on eye makeup, sitting almost directly in front of me in a Louis XV chair. Always with a little mirror in his hand. His gaze focuses on me only when I am the one who says something strange, then he repeats what I’ve said as if he were asking a question. But Sir Osbourne doesn’t care about my stories. He believes I have no other story, and he’s right, which is why I listen as he talks about me.

He talks and I pet his cats, which are everywhere. I haven’t ever counted them, but he has a lot, a lot of cats. I can’t really tell them apart, but everything smells like them. When I leave his apartment I smell like them, too. I feel like I’m half enchanted cat, like Silenus leaving some myth. Sir Osbourne believes strongly in myths.

Listen, just for today. I want to talk about myself a little, I need to. I want to say THREE and begin: my cell phone rings. It’s Dante. He wants ecstasy and hash, I want to get him into my life. I set up a meeting downtown the next day. He arrives with his hands in his pockets. His hair is coiled, super curly; he’s tall, weak, restless, he has a jagged scar above his mouth. He is perfect, a human monster.

TWO. Dante studies photography. I pay for his classes, I pay for everything because two years ago he left his parents’ house to come live with me. Not here in La Condesa, we moved here just last year. He went with me to Clavería.

Dante is 26 years old. He doesn’t have friends because he steals. He steals from everyone and spits on the subway floor, on the floor of the house, he spits in the pot where the ponytail palm grows. He lies, too. Sometimes he beats my breasts,

my face, my left arm, my back. He gets angry when we don't have money, he gets angry when I don't get marijuana, when I laugh at his scar, when I don't kiss him at night. If I look at him without blinking he gets angry. Dante is an artist.

*Sir Osbourne reads:*

*She could row with her arms, if she wished. She could turn her body into a boat and row until she arrived in Crete. But there would only be death for her in Crete. Better to wait; she opens her eyes with dementia and waits.*

*Theseus... Theseus... Four centuries and Ariadne waits on the same rock, swaddled in her own arms. She begins to chisel a labyrinth into her breast. Her back bends in unfamiliar directions. Her arms keep growing and they cover her; they wind around her like a spool of thread. Her head bends to one side. Her hair grows wet with sand, but she still gazes ahead... Theseus... Theseus... Her torso pushes inward, toward the inopportune, her breasts shrink all the time, always, all the time, every morning, her nipples tear apart. It is born, the myth is being born of which no one will ever speak. One breast, one single breast takes shape on her bosom. One single breast sprouts like a bubble in the middle of her chest and takes dominion over her ravaged body. All its milk, all its juices concentrate themselves, they turn into demons, they mingle. Theseus... Theseus... There lies every curse. She can't stop waiting, though she wants to stop waiting. It's not the thread, the thread no longer matters; betrayal doesn't matter nor does Dionysius' marriage nor Olympus. It is all too chilling, macabre. It's a story of spools of thread that are arms that join each other, that are breasts melting into a single breast. It is a history of waiting, of desire. There is no room for doubt.*

I think Sir Osbourne is a poet.

I only want to say ONE and try to count, try to say: there is no light. Everything is dark and he has just left. I get home and though it's dark, I know. I can tell he has left me. I write a list of things he stole from the room:

Guitar letters I Ching *Replicante* magazine my eyes eye drops all of the weed all of the cocaine all of the money his pillow yellow towel electric plug my eyes red candle scissors the OM.

I call Daniel, Daniel, come, and Daniel arrives and he embraces me. Then the power comes back in La Condesa. It's true, Dante is gone and he's left me hung up with my dealer, my customers, without my eyes. My life consists of counting from FOUR to ONE. All I see now is waiting for him.

*Sir Osbourne reads:*

*Secondly, salt. A version exists that every day comes closer to being proven, in which it is suggested that the Christian religion took the legend of Lot's wife, with a few variations, of course, from the belief that Ariadne's body, wracked by despair at Theseus' abandonment, united itself with the island of Naxos in the form of salt. This is the second mutation of waiting, which we will also take up in a later section.*

Sir Osbourne's house is a temple. The whole carpeted floor is covered with necklaces, ceramics, little closed boxes, plants, black and white photos, incense, thousands and thousands of candles which are never lit. Everything seems adhered to the carpet. It's very difficult to walk in there. You have to be extremely careful as Sir Osbourne doesn't like noise. His cats have never broken anything while I have been there.

Sir Osbourne is a nervous man; he gestures with his hands as if he were a mime. He only has nine teeth. I have never seen him eat breakfast, but he says that he takes at least three hours to prepare and eat his breakfast. Today he has not asked that I talk about him, but I talk anyway. I want to say that everything in his life is ritual.

Listen: I know nothing of that kind of waiting. I wait for Dante who does not arrive. I wait for my dealer. I'm drunk. I wait for my dealer, sitting on the stairs. On the terrace. At any moment, he'll arrive and he'll call me stupid and that's what I'll be at that moment. I'll have to pay the debt back but who cares. I'll have to start over, begin to see how I will bathe, dress, walk when I go out to the street, how, how will I do this? these pieces of things, eat, crack my knuckles, comb my hair, see... clean my eyes. That is the kind of waiting I'm talking about. Swallow three, four, five, eight crystals, to be able to get up and walk. This is not a sublime waiting like hers; I can't wait like that. This has nothing to do

with solitude or rocks, or salt, or breasts. For me it is something in my skin, it's a burning, my veins burn, my mouth burns, throat on fire only stabs at saying words... I don't know what they say, hard sheet, words, everything wet, blanket, towel, the sad toilet, the ponytail palm, the ponytail palm, spit on the ponytail palm, spit, beat me or embrace me, tie up my fingers, tie them up so that they don't beckon me, fear of opening the door, the empty home, breathe the hot air, burnt, black, go out, drink tequila, tequila for breakfast, make him come back, make him come back and knock on the door embrace me.

*Sir Osbourne reads:*

*The third part, which previous studies have not explored to the extent of this present compendium, is the possibility that a third mutation of waiting exists in the myth of Ariadne, as represented by the loss of speech on the protagonist's part, whose symbology is the falling of the tongue. A tongue which, in addition, seemed to have certain special qualities such as that of burning anything it touches. Regarding this, we should state that we do not have the concrete evidence required. However, we venture to suggest, on the basis of the three postulates of the mutation of waiting, that Ariadne was never rescued by Dionysius, just as he never carried her to Olympus to turn her into a goddess. Undoubtedly, Ariadne died of waiting and it is this axiom that we will prove in this study.*

Sir Osbourne has nine teeth. Nine teeth in his mouth and a crinkled earring in his tongue. Yesterday he did not open the door when I came. I think Sir Osbourne is nostalgic, as is his mouth. He is determined not to listen to what I say about myself and regardless, I sit in his room on his carpet, I pet his cats and talk.

Sir Osbourne is angry because he doesn't like how I describe him. He is sad, too, because I insist on talking about my life. About Dante, about waiting. I have promised not to describe Sir Osbourne. I have promised not to talk about Dante. But Sir Osbourne will allow me to talk about my dreams, and about him as if he were not present.

I promise him. I promise to listen to that story about waiting on Naxos, I promise to wait for Theseus, call for Theseus, look toward a center where Theseus will appear. I promise to listen to my story and forget about myself.

I have dreamed I lost my tongue. The dream goes like this: I am on the floor and I feel threatened by many swords. I hold a spool of thread in my hands. I do not know what it is doing in my hands, I feel strange with it, I don't want it there. Suddenly I get up and begin to spin and spin, begin to wrap myself in the thread like a spider's prisoner. I spin and spin and I grow dizzy, I want to vomit, vomit everything and I feel glad, immensely happy while I tangle myself and when I feel my whole body is entirely braided, my tongue falls out.

Nothing more. My tongue detaches from my mouth without pain, without blood, it just starts falling and as it falls, it drags and burns all the thread across my breasts and legs.

"And then?"

"Then it smells like burning thread and my tongue falls to the floor. I look at it and don't know what to do."

"Do you miss your tongue, that is to say, in the dream?"

"I don't know. I look at it. But I don't know if I miss it."

*Translated by Janet Hendrickson* 



KYLIE ACCIÓN | DOS POEMAS

ME HACES SENTIR

sabiendo, me haces sentir  
este viajado y cayado golpe en mi cóccix, hilado de azúcar

Verdes crecen las lilas en la tradicional  
Anti-cuada rueca

reacia resucitación colonial de mi colon

Sabiendo que me haces sentir  
como jalón rompe-cojones de harnés de paracaídas, el chasquido

de tus solapas


irresistible contracción de tu dedo pequeño  
al fondo del segundo inning  
en manejar de volante

el pelaje de la rondante mascota está sucio y tu gato  
atado, maullando, al lado de la hierba gatera  
haciendo este baile resbalón eléctrico  
tipo Christina Aguilera sobre tus calcetines blancos

Vaya, no te habías reído así de fuerte  
desde que murió Robert Palmer.

## UNA AUDENCIA CON KYLIE MINOGUE

Los corazones de dulce, acá uno no  
más grande que una uña, esparcidos sobre la formica:  
“Quiéreme” “Mándame Text” “Vales Mil” “E-Mail”  
uf, han cambiado desde  
desde los días cuando te amaba  
“Tienes Amor?” dice este, punto amarillo candente  
sobre mesa gris tenue. Aquí está “Amore”,  
algo étnico en lo que me engalano  
Corazón en la garganta, toda rasposa y febril por mi  
audiencia con Kylie. Pensando rápido  
—como dos gatillos en dos pistolas en cada dedo de las manos de Kali—  
John Woo permanencia voluntaria, baby!—Pensando como la historia  
apretada en relámpago tomo unos cuantos corazones  
“Se Mía” y “Niña Dulce” y los clavo en mis  
palmas abiertas, estigmas parpadeantes. Luego acaricio  
la pantalla y los doctores recorren la cortina  
de lino. “Papi chulo”. “Primer beso” “Querida”.  
*Hola, grito, ¿hay alguien aquí? My heart  
is beating faster and work is a disaster*<sup>1</sup>  
nada ha cambiado desde el día  
en el que me puse en tu contra y mi  
cosa pequeña se puso dura y me embistió de vuelta  
escopeta

Traducción de Gabriela Jauregui 

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1. Esta es la letra de la canción *Fever* de Kylie Minoque que se puede traducir libremente como “Mi corazón late más rápido y el trabajo es un desastre”.

ADRIAN C. LOUIS

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FIVE POEMS

TEQUILA SUNRISE

In the tentacles of dream, clarity cornholed & dropped him outside the precincts of inky dawn. He'd returned to the comic book of his heart to salvage simple & sweet words when the poison-fanged & polysyllabic *luchador* of reason caught him in a naked chokehold. He scanned the fading darkness one more time for *La Llorona*, but she'd been deleted from the scene so he stumbled out into the blaring sun, a gleaming man of steel soon to rust. He was not afraid. Okay, he was.

## WHEELS

The Paleolithic heart is obsidian, napped to the sheen of the sun by men of metal. There is no need to fall upon the sword of belief. Our ancestors tell us we *were* men of metal. We found native copper & pounded it into little wheels. We made roller skates & rolled into battle with other tribes. We skated into buffalo hunts. We circled the campfires on skates & as the drums drummed on, we disco-danced the nights away.


## AT SIOUX MONUMENT

At Sioux Monument one mile  
past Martin on SD Highway 73  
recent tribal history is indexed  
in the long row of tombstones.  
Granite from as far away as  
Pennsylvania protrudes from  
old snow in this, the saddest  
of all Lakota winter counts.  
But, there are no loved ones  
asleep under these markers.  
Here lie unpaid balances, due  
upon delivery of stone to grave.  
Here lie the hearts of families  
fractured by cosmic poverty.

ARCANE AIRS ON PHILLIPS AVE.

To shimmy & blear in the specter of crank.  
To be fat & sweaty, wearing black slacks  
& a pink halter top in the August night.  
To be poor, to be poor forever & to have  
a homemade, prison tattoo barely visible  
upon brown & once-venerable skin.  
To be a full-throated dick warbler  
among the red-necked peckers  
of Sioux Falls & to wobble so  
purposefully upon paved  
plains, a warrior in  
white high heels.

## LOVE THE DISTANT ROAR

Love all the train wrecks  
in savage rearview mirrors.  
Love any hush of sadness,  
any dark breath made from  
the bullying glee of accomplices  
who have sold their half-hearted  
kisses for treaties, for crystal meth,  
for love & resurrection, whatever,  
whatever it takes to survive.  
Love the contrivance of bells  
heralding any small healing.  
Love the distant roar of  
a crazed Harley on dirt roads  
not far from this graveyard. 



POEMAS

LADO A

Otro día nueve  
en alud  
se nos encoje  
enrollándose mientras nos pasa  
los dedos  
la ventisca  
los cabellos y espiral

nos pasa sin precisar  
nos  
su trama atando y la mano despreocupada  
que te pertenece  
otra vez acomoda tu cabello

otra vez eres hombre

desde tu voz  
y mientras se nos encaja la tarde en la cuenca de la pupila

la calma en primer plano  
epidérmica  
y fluida

a la vez que  
añado del agua la garganta para la orilla de otro abismo

no acaba ahí la melodía

## LADO B

del lado de los almohadones  
desaparezco del paisaje  
voluble  
vuelvo  
y cigarrillo en mano

por sobre las ramas o desde los ladrillos

alcanzo el timbre exacto de la voz para los signos  
en las inflexiones o  
abrupta la risa

una y otra vez

uno de los dedos del pie toca tierra firme  
por dentro del zapato

en este día nueve que desentiendo  
del paisaje  
o el verdor

reapareces y no es hasta tu acento  
que resuelvo que estas  
ahí

descontextualizado

## HIDDEN TRACK

estarcidos del entorno  
hacen su poblado  
como una piel interna  
calurosa  
huidiza  
descontrolada  
digo algo que a los dos nos imprime  
cierta abundancia de color

entintados  
los movimientos hacen amplificaciones de cosas que observo como sospechas

habitaciones que llevan a habitaciones que llevan a sótanos que llevan a  
habitaciones que terminan en patios interiores con cacatúas

esta luz es magnífica  
resume la intensidad del aroma a aerosol  
hablando en super ocho y su característico chasquido

corro hacia un lado de tus labios  
en ciudad  
que será otra ciudad  
y me salva

## BONUS TRACK OF AN OTHER

Se desenfoca el lente del pecho.  
Les comento a los hombres tristes  
que el color del día me pide  
que deje de quererlos.

Me le cuadro al color

los ojos en blanco.

El gato frondoso que me ronda  
se saca sus matices con la lengua y me los escupe  
mientras una mujer que está sentada frente a mí  
canta boleros sin desafinarse.

Ninguno me pega.

Ayudo al gato a que no se ahogue. Me da las gracias como dije,  
escupiendo una pintura sobre el piso.

La pintura se transforma cada vez que me muevo.


## FUCK IN PILLS

Cuando suena el timbre del teléfono  
todos en la habitación enmudecen.

El momento le exige que hable como una mujer,  
pero otro poema es precisamente ello  
con sabor a vino en el labio.

La bebida es otra excusa para pasarse unas horas más sobre el suelo.

No quisiera levantarse en lo que le resta de estadía.

en cuclillas el cuerpo escarpado como un insecto nuevecitito, demasiado drogado y feliz (for that matter). decíamos que el suelo era cierta rodilla. no puedo evitar querer amar como un insecto idiota. idiotizada forma de excavar el instante donde, decíamos, contemplo tu brazo, la mano que le sigue. el diafragma en mi pupila permite cierta luz. cierto color sin químico. lo cierto sigue siendo que aparecerá la mañana sin pistas, otra más quiere dejarse quieta. además, ciertas interrogantes se acercan cada vez que podo mis uñas. el esmalte que se usa esta temporada se hace un ocho cuando le hablo directamente a la cara. aquí te quedas, le digo, determinante. sigo teniendo pesadillas. la ventana cae de algún lugar a darse cuenta. 

MATEO MORRISON

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FIVE POEMS FROM *DOROTHY DANDRIDGE*

Dorothy was listening to the echoes  
Of "I Have a Dream"  
While the Black Panthers stabbed the sky  
In the streets of Harlem



Here birds await her  
Those that greet the night  
Unfamiliar faces  
Peer deep into the emptiness

Beautiful with her enormous earrings  
Black blouse and a flower in her hands  
Eyes inquisitive, a tender smile  
Dorothy represented on her skin  
The tutelary deities  
Of all Africana

I pass like a sleepwalker through the very streets  
That she must have passed through  
I create silhouettes in the sands  
On which she may have stepped

I touch the footprints  
That she left on multiple sidewalks  
I bow down in churches  
And offer her my devotions

*Translated by John Keene* 

1. GLORIA

Cabellera dorada ante mis vistas.  
De su escape nadie se escapa si  
No yo mismo azur contemplativo

De sus ojos sales rosales celestía  
Azules celuloide divino transpa  
Rente parentela asesinada in New

York del niño su nada amante soñada  
Se fue volviendo abuela & madre  
Para *film* disparó huyendo de esos

Maleantes que en la cumbre de  
La muerte recordada la dejaron  
Sumergida en el nuevo & radiante

Amor Perdido

## 2. MITYLENE

Callado vino rojo sube al talle de  
Un desvelo por amor constelado  
& luego comprimido en la crecida

El mar siempre será una diosa  
Cuyo seno suavemente se recoge  
La playa más dorada de tu sueño

Con fresco verdor la ola blanca en  
Romería sacia la seda de azur que  
Copa encima solar brillor celeste

Evanescente destello por los tumbos  
Sonidos solos siempre en mi canción  
Ella estuvo a mi lado recostada en

Dulce Sardis

### 3. TRISAGIO

Viejo empedrado rotpido por Blanquillo  
Canto por la iguana recordada *on* la arena  
Azul música del aire se quema carbón  
O subido promontorio tocado por Wayama

Silencio súbito en las tardes del adobe  
Ya que lagrimales volvieron sueños solos  
& el asombro colmó la calma desolada  
Aun el terciopelo de los besos solitarios

Indices marcaban marcabriana parentela  
Mas en la tutela del amor cristalino  
Brillo marino se escondió en la tibieza  
Que en tu pieza anida la morada

De ti misma enamorada

#### 4. ESTUDIO DE UNOS LABIOS

Gaviota horizontal a lo Man Ray  
Tenían vida sola su propio  
Sino eran de luz sobre la noche

De mesa agitan hoy mi poesía  
Caramel creando un divino ritmo  
Temprana avemaría revolotea

En su forma recordada & es  
Máquina blanda de tus frases  
Humorosas cual estreno en

Pincelada frágil fragante frati  
Cida no nostalgia que palpita  
& pita cerrada hasta los

Aros aromados o es el carmesí  
Que no me alcanzará & eso  
Me entristece centro de tu rostro

Enmielada tentación o tersura  
Que no toco pero puedo estar  
Preso original virgen virginal

Una especie de saludo oprime  
El pecho solitario humedecido  
En esa fresa medida del poema

Medita suspiro estación des  
Hecha hay algo bello & desolado  
En cantar la visión de dos horas

Para siempre grabadas


## 5. ESTUDIO DE UNOS OJOS

Luzca la luz pura para el  
Cielo 'onde esconde su amor  
La poesía que por ti escribo

Escape encima de los bosques  
Sirena apacible entre la roca  
Atisbo del verde resplandor

Volver a verlos silenciosamente  
Brillando bajo dorados fluorescentes  
Como un signo ocasionado & feliz

Hay una esencia fina en su color  
Un vuelo orando quieta dulzura  
Involucra ansiosas márgenes

D'ellos un esbozo quisiera esta  
Canción ser su claror irresistible  
Anegado en ciertas lágrimas distantes 

BACHATA

He was looking at everything from outside, the way a cat pauses on a rooftop to survey the scene. The City was a scene. One more scene of the many he had known in the course of a lifetime of globetrotting? No, by no means. A very singular scene, where beautiful flowers spring up among the garbage heaps. Where there was to be found a beauty never before seen by his eyes, like that of Yajaira, the girl who lived next to the sea. Tall, dark-skinned, glowing. She worked as a waitress in a disco-restaurant. One afternoon like any other, James Gatto, without intending to, found himself there.

First he enjoyed the shoreline, the wide ocean promenade, and a calm Caribbean sea. As he crossed the Avenida 30 de Mayo, the motels appeared. Ah, the motels. Some good memories sprang to mind, but he preferred to ignore them. Then he had to pass through the tidal wave of gas stations, produce wagons, vending carts, buses, communal taxis and trucks from kilometer 12 of the Sánchez Highway. Finally, the road clears. The first factories appear. He asks an elderly worker just getting off a shift where he is, and discovers the existence of a nearby beach. The idea of going to the beach excites him, and he sets off again. On his left, a sign: *Manresa*. He decides to go that way. He soon realizes he has entered a slum. The typical slum of houses built any which way, one on top of



another, with no sidewalk, order, or planning, by someone who considers himself a master builder but is only an architect in the service of chaos and poverty. So many curves and me with no brakes, Gatto's car seemed to say, allowing itself be driven with pleasant reluctance through the narrow streets. Cinderella Bar. 3 Brothers Super-Convenience Store. Good Judgement Pool Hall. Altagracia Beauty Salon—Bisex: Massages and Coconut Ice Cream sold here. On My Own Diner-Cafeteria.

The women sat in front of the houses on plastic chairs, some with curlers in their hair, fanning themselves with any old thing, their skirts short, their pants tight, their flesh hard, dark, shiny. The men, black and muscular, played dominoes, drank beer, or munched on sausage behind the counters. A weekday, and nonetheless, life seemed like a party. Everything was happening by way of brawling, banter, and bachata music. Work, eating, hanging out, free time, enjoyment. Suddenly, James Gatto, hands on the steering wheel, *Chemise Lacoste* sweater and sunglasses that gave him the look of a spy, marveled upon discovering, in the middle of all that, the almost unexpected presence of the sea.

It was like looking through a hole; and with no prior warning, the panorama changed. The chaotic architecture gave way to the irresistible wideness of water and sky. A cloudless sky that would have needed a surveyor to distinguish it from the sea, James thought, since there was no border between them. The sky was the sea, and vice versa, and he was once again surprised by this sea, lacking in surveyors and firm land. Always the same pirate feeling that his travels through that poorly-discovered and poorly-cared-for island had stirred in him so many times: the encounter with the sea when one least expects it.

He immediately parked the car in the only space that he found, and got out. He was on tenterhooks. On the outside, however, a decided serenity accompanied him. Serenity with a touch of precaution. In this way, he passed without being noticed through a group of half-naked little kids, some of them turning in little circles in front of the beach, others flying a kite made from scraps of trash. People from around there, sitting on a little wall shooting the breeze, their arms folded, backs to the sea, which roars. Gatto went right down to the shore. Paused in front of the sea, his hands stuffed into his pockets, he set himself to observe the horizon for a while, and as always, without wanting to, he felt himself very

alone. Again, the damn nostalgia for something, for someone. He remembered some other port, some dock hidden in some place, where perhaps he had loved someone, and someone had loved him. He loved to be loved. He laughed at himself, and that boosted his spirits a little. Yes, the important thing is that he was still alive. And that violent sea excited him, bringing the desire to live back to him even more strongly.

He took off his leather sandals and walked along the beach. He couldn't head to the right, because an enormous wall suddenly blocked his way. It looked to be some kind of warehouse for broken-down buses. An armed guard was watching over it. In that same direction, he could see the tower of a refinery. They also refined oil around here. To the left, a Jesuit retreat center. He walked towards it, with no greater intention than to smoke a cigarette and see what existence could provide him with.

Shortly after beginning his walk, a little girl took her first steps on the sand, and suddenly ran into him. She gazed back at him innocently from her first year, her round eyes like a single night, and that black skin illuminated by salt and sand. A girl went in aid of the toddler, and on her way back smiled at that stranger with the appearance of someone who isn't from around here. Not even remotely. The girl came from a nearby disco-restaurant. James greeted her with a reverent smile. The toddler, with no awareness yet of the word risk, began to whine at being held back by the girl, who was preventing her from reaching the water. After smiling, Gatto continued on his way, sandals in hand, pants rolled to the knee revealing his hairy legs and white feet. The girl stood there, watching him as he moved away. That man came from some far away country, probably from where she was dying to go. She let him go, knowing that he wouldn't get any farther than the farthest trash pile that raised itself like an urban sculpture above the headland, next to the Jesuit monastery and facing the restless waves. In effect, moments later, James stopped in front of that monument made of castoffs, broken dolls, plastic sandals missing their mate, plastic wrappings and glass that would take centuries to disappear. He looked towards the sea and it was one thing; he looked toward the trash pile, and it was another. The lukewarm foam caressing his ankles separated him from one sensation and the other.

On the way back, the sunset. Again the foggy refinery, smoking, lost like the ghost of a fire in the setting sun. On one side, the sound of a bachata. Gatto immediately felt like having a beer. He brushed off his feet, replaced his sandals, correctly lowered his pant cuffs, and turned off onto the nearest path towards the disco-restaurant.

As he got closer he heard them calling someone named Yajaira, and the same girl who had rescued the little girl at the seashore answered. The young woman, vivacious, was attending to everyone's needs. Her laughter and easy control of the situation were infectious. Who was Yajaira? For Gatto, one more mystery to decipher. A girl too beautiful to have been born in a trash-filled slum facing the sea. And there he went, determined not to force anything that wasn't granted him by the grace of curiosity, that healthiest of instincts. The action begins. Yajaira, cleaning rag in hand, comes to serve him. Behind her, a group of men drink and sing in unison, eyes closed, thumping their chests to the bachata song playing on the radio. *Ay amor, ay amor, sin ti no quiero la vida, oh my love, oh my love, why do you punish me so...*

Gatto watches them, pleased. Like them, he loved bachata music. Once, a woman he loved had shown him how to dance to it. *I don't want to remember that damn' woman, don't want to remember the color of her skin, oh, oh bring me a bottle, to drown my sorrows in...*

The stranger takes a seat and asks for a beer. Yajaira brings it to him. You're not from around here, right? she asks him, smiling. *I would leave my home for you, leave my lands and go, go far away*, the bachata version of an old ballad that augurs a still uncertain feeling that anything can happen. *Far away, beyond the sea, there must be a place where the sun brightly shines. Oh stones of the road, on my way may you lead me, for what we love most always gets left behind...* No, I don't think so, James responds. I'm not from around here, he smiles, and looks at the girl with affectionate respect. *I'll look for a place for you, where the sun meets the sea, far away..*

Yajaira expertly uncaps the beer, pours it into a glass and leaves, swishing her behind. She does it naturally, not provocatively. James Gatto is turned off by vulgar women, the ones that use low necklines and gaudy clothes, revealing everything. At least, that's what he believes; but maybe he's lying to himself,

and in reality he likes everything hidden, ready to be shown. Yajaira, Yajaira; he savors her name with his beer. What a beautiful name. How young she is.

A police jeep arrives, parks, and someone, perhaps a local sub-commander, gets out. He approaches the group of men, and greets them. One of them gestures to the girl, who agilely reaches under the counter and searches for something that she gives to the man, who in turn gives it to the policeman, along with a firm handshake. A few claps on the shoulder for the man who has already dipped his hand substantially, and the policeman leaves.

An ass-kisser, a *policia lambón*, thought Gatto, making use of one of the many adjectives picked up in his wanderings through these lands.

*After so many turns in my bed, today you are leaving, sing the men, and if I thought you didn't love me, I'd have shot your picture through, they cry, on the edge of despair. If I can't have you, may the world cave in on me, may my roads all be rocky, let me burn in Hell if I can't have you...It's the Music Jam on Cima Radio! And since I couldn't buy you a house in New York, I invite you to look at the stars in my heart...*

Just when the clouds begin to dominate the sky, one of the drinking club's members gets up from his chair and addresses himself to James, who sits alone drinking his beer and watching the horizon.

*"Hello, my friend,"* says the man, extending his hand.

*"Hola,"* answers Gatto, giving it a shake.

It was the same man who had shaken the policeman's hand.

*"I'm here with my son; he speaks English,"* said the other, as he gestured towards a young man with a face like a drug addict or a simpleton, seated a certain distance away.

The man motioned for the boy to come closer.

*"Mister, this is my son. He's traveled abroad, and knows English,"* he said with pride.

James Gatto didn't want to be discourteous by explaining to him that it wasn't necessary for his son to speak English in order for them to converse, that they could do it in Spanish, so he set out to speak to the kid in English. But the boy, standing in front of him, didn't utter a single word in the English language. He seemed out of it, soulless. Some seconds passed until his father, disgusted, told him to leave.

"I'm sorry, *Mister*, but sometimes he gets like that. *Bye, my friend*, a pleasure, and I hope you enjoy yourself here," he said, shaking his hand again and retiring.

Meanwhile, Yajaira was dancing a bachata with a stocky, muscular young man whom she seemed to know well. Gatto dedicated himself to observing her. How beautifully she danced. How easily, how gracefully, how freely. Not like some women he had met in the City, with degrees in everything except real life, who almost never danced bachata and when they did, limited themselves to rigidly moving their frame, ashamed.

*I'm going to tear down the wall, to be by her side...I know she's waiting for me, I want to be by her side...*

Seeing her move that way, with that kind of rhythm, free from all of the absurd candor, from any kind of restriction of the laws of instinct, James wanted to dance with the girl. *Dear Lord, tell me why she feels nothing for me, while I'm dying for her (but she feels nothing!) and she knows it well (but she feels nothing!), you know I love you, my love...Only you, sólo tú me comprendes, mami...*

Gatto couldn't stand it any longer. He took advantage of the fact that the young woman had finished dancing and come over to ask if he needed another cold one to ask, with great gentleness, if she wanted to dance, as if fearing she would say no. And if she said no, well, he would respect her decision. But how was she going to say no? She had to satisfy the clientele. Before, Yajaira glanced out of the corner of her eye at the group of men who were still drinking and humming songs without failing to pay attention to the couple: the unknown man (probably a *gringo*) and that bitch Yajaira who's so hot, so depraved, know-it-all, worldly, such a go-getter, queen of the hill, hen-who-layed-the-golden-egg, masseuse, dancer, waitress, escort girl. Poor Yajaira, what a bad time she's had of it, exploited since she was a kid by her blood-sucking pseudo-family, mom, dad, brothers, nephews, and those three brothers fallen early into a life of crime, one of them deported back, arrested again and again, and she has to help them.

Yajaira agrees to dance with the stranger, who delicately puts his arm around her waist, not wanting to damage anything, not a thread of her clothes, not a single cell of her skin, which he finds is warm to the touch, as if the sun never went out in her.

*Girl, he doesn't love you, he has over 20 lovers, can't you see?*

Did you know that Dominican bachata band is causing a sensation in Amsterdam, Luxemburg, at the San Remo Festival, in Madrid? Gatto comments, and then he puts on a tough face; don't let them think that because he's a foreigner, he doesn't know how to dance to that beat. Yajaira doesn't hide the laughter that his foreign ability, his way of crushing the steps provokes in her; the shake of his hips clumsy and at the same time precise, his thin lips pressed together and his gaze green, between serene and ardent. She couldn't say no when the song by Aventura ended and another began. *Who, who do you think you are, making me suffer, making me cry?*

The guitar does a jazz riff, clear, invading their spirits—at this moment, sweaty ones—with an inevitable desire to throw themselves off a bridge or slit their wrists. As the second song ends, James invites her to sit with him a while. “Oh, honey, it's just that I'm working and I have to wait on the other clients, you see?” she pleads, almost saying yes with her eyes. *I'm tired of pleading for you to decide, you thought you were queen of the world and you put me on trial...*

Yajaira was requested by the group of men, who were beginning to squint drunkenly at Gatto. And that foreigner, who is he, that he even knows a few bachata steps? They asked the girl, who shrugged her shoulders. You can tell he uses dollars. And he seems to be “somebody”. Yajaira had better look for something good from him. “Hello, my friend!” shouted the same man with the quiet and unfriendly son, who was still sitting next to his father, not saying a word, looking at the rest of humanity with hate and indifference. *They made it hard for me to live with her...said I went around ruining girls, ruining girls...But I'm gonna show them all that I can be a real man...I'm gonna make her smile, I'm gonna make her smile, I'm gonna make her smile...*

Yajaira goes back to where James Gatto is and agrees to sit down with him; he raises his glass and proposes a toast. The girl does the same. What a nice guy. She likes him. And she observes that he likes her a lot as well. He seems nervous. Yajaira loves to make men feel that way. And even more so with a foreigner, because with the tough guys around here, there's no life. Discretely, he moves his chair a little closer to hers. Without rushing, he begins to undo his sandals, first one, then the other, until his feet are bare.

"So you've known the sea since you were little?" He asks her sweetly.

"Of course, I was born here."

With his back to James and facing Yajaira, for a while a dark-skinned guy has been making gestures at the girl that say, wow, you're so fine. She watches him unimpressed.

"And where are you from?" she asks Gatto.

By way of reply, he grabs his glass and takes a swig, gaining time in order to finally remember where he's from. He's rolled through so many different places that he no longer knows which of them it is that he's from. Surely from all of them and from none. From having been to so many places, he simply found himself without a homeland, and when he was asked that question he didn't know how to respond.

The dark-skinned guy continues to gesticulate, each time more daring. Now he sticks out his tongue, and then licks his lips. Yajaira watches him, and suddenly drops her gaze. Instinctively, Gatto turns, but the dark-skinned guy, much faster, stops what he was doing and takes a swig of rum straight from the bottle. When James returns to his normal position, the other man returns to his.

"Is something going on?" asks the foreigner, frowning.

Yajaira leans into his ear.

"Nothing. That guy's just getting fresh with me," she answers.

The girl hadn't expected her answer to provoke such a reaction in the stranger. She was used to almost everything, but not to the kiss that the white man with bare feet planted on her as if by storm, with able and unexpected anxiety, without giving her time to do more than kiss back with no trace of modesty.

They stayed that way for some seconds, kissing, in full view of everyone, until he softly separated his lips from hers as she looked at him, slightly stunned.

"Yajaira, please, let's go," Gatto said suddenly in a low voice, taking her hands.

"Okay," she answered, with a complicit docility, as if they had known each other forever. "Head down the beach, and wait for me where there's a little blue house that says "For sale" that has a stream of dirty water and two coconut palms in front. I'll be there in a little while."

James Gatto paid his bill, left a good tip, and got ready to leave. The other men said good-bye, as if he were an old friend. He loved that about Dominicans. Their sociability.

Following the girl's instructions, he took the path along the beach, on the lookout for the blue house. It seemed to be well into the night. A dark night. Few stars, and nothing of a moon. The fishermen came and went. James thought that he would like to come in with those who were arriving and leave with those going out. He paused to light a cigarette that the breeze persistently put out and resigned, continued on his way. He soon saw the little house with the sign. In front of it was a stream of dirty, foul smelling water trying to empty into the sea. And the two coconut palms. Had she told him to wait for her in front, or behind? Inside or outside of the house? Common sense told him that he should stay right there, not too close or too far away, with the ocean breeze carrying away the smell of the stream, and his unlit cigarette, his only companion, in his fingers.

Yajaira, Yajaira, he thought, restless. He checked the time on his Swiss watch: nine. Still early. Suddenly, he felt something sharp ready to cross his throat. He stayed quiet.

"Listen up, this is a mugging" said a voice from behind him, a harsh voice, but one too young to go around killing time in such a business.

Gatto's first reaction was to think of the comic books he had read during his youth. In which one of them had he come across a similar scene? In what dark suburb of what dark metropolis on what dark night had a character with the same characteristics managed to miraculously escape from the hands of some young gangsters? Ah, yes, now he remembered. It was that comic about a guy that worked as a manager in a hotel in a port city on the shore of some ocean; a crazy hotel, full of tourists looking for sex, women selling themselves, traffickers of all kinds, corrupt policemen, careless employees, thieves, and an owner who was crazy too, as much or more so than his own hotel. And the manager would drag himself back and forth, trying to keep the crazy place afloat, wanting to forget his past, his life, completely involved in that place, day and night, as if it were a boat in the middle of the worst storm in the world, and its owner a frenzied captain, a lawless pirate, and the manager the helpful soul of the film—or the novel, rather—who was trying to save everything. But why, if none of it



belonged to him, and he could easily just leave without saying good-bye? Well, because heroes are usually like that.

Gatto then remembered that he wasn't a hero, much less a super-hero, but an anti-hero, with everything to lose. And just like with heroes, no one saves anti-heroes when their hour of truth arrives; on the contrary, they stopped being what they were, so that probably that night his life as an adventurer on this picturesque Caribbean island was going to come to an end. And thinking hard about it, he had lived so much, had been the protagonist of so much momentary happiness, that he well deserved a mortal rest. How nice that at least it was going to happen here, facing that sea. Maybe afterwards they would go to the trouble of throwing him into the water so that the furious waves could suck him down and the sharks could eat him. What an interesting end, he thought, still with enough nerve to toss aside his cigarette, his faithful companion, and prepare to die.

They were now (there were three of them) dragging him by the neck at knife-point to finalize the robbery or murder less visibly behind the house, when Yajaira's redeeming voice could be heard, ordering them in an absolute temper to leave him alone.

"Okay, sis'!" the three boys said, almost in unison. They immediately pocketed their knives, and went running off into the darkness. Gatto noticed that one of them was the hateful son of the man who had smilingly called him *my friend*, and another, the strapping boy who had danced with Yajaira.

"And you, sir, had better go and leave me to my work in peace," she said, as if angry, no longer addressing him informally. Then, coquettishly, she gave a half turn and went walking off into the shadows with a sensual sway of her hips.

*If you want, you can forget me, if you want to come back too, I'll wait until you realize, you are nothing without my love, sobbed a bachata born along on the breeze. Y si tú quieres me olvidas, si quieres volver también, yo esperaré hasta que entiendas, que sin mi amor tu no eres nada.*

Relieved, James Gatto straightened the collar of his sweater, recovered his bearing, and stood looking after the girl, hands stuffed into his pockets, his body rocking in the wind and the circumstances, happy to still be alive, and there.

Translated by Emily A. Maguire 

CUATRO POEMAS

REVELACIONES

Lo adivinas,  
poco a poco,  
conforme cada velo  
cae en tierra como una hoja.

Éste es el disparo lobezno,  
ésta la cizaña,  
éste el amor contenido,  
y aquí,  
    media vida después,

el diseño se revela a sí mismo,  
la danza,  
    simple como insecto:

apetito, decadencia,  
    gruñido y mamada.

## VISITAS

Estabas hablando de tu hermano esa noche,  
afuera en el desembarcadero, solos los dos,  
compartiendo una última fumada.

Yo me dirigía al este  
durante febrero y tú querías terminar aquí tu trabajo  
y volver a Refice a tiempo para el Carnaval.

Era muy tarde. La calle estaba silenciosa y oscura.  
Recordaste que siempre manejaba borracho desde la ciudad,  
cincuenta o más kilómetros de carretera  
hasta la granja de caña de azúcar que administraba.

Qué gran conductor  
era, seguro y alerta, incluso cuando tomaba,  
y qué bien conocía esos caminos; sin embargo,  
una noche...

Estabas hermoso entonces,  
tu cara desnuda, radiante de sensaciones  
de él y la tristeza que presentías en su vida,  
un trance de adoración—

entonces levanté la vista,  
y justo arriba de nosotros, la torre de comunicación,  
se elevaba a mil pies de altura, su fanal rojo  
pulsando en el cielo.

Casi me desmayé por todo el vino, el cigarro y la feijoadá,  
tú y Louise volviendo toda la noche a los discos de Cardoso,  
entonces mi cabeza se percató

de la monstruosa sorpresa de todo esto,  
que asomaba de pronto.

No conocía ese vecindario de noche,  
o nunca me había molestado en hacerlo.

Pero eso era, después de todo:  
como monsieur Krivine de Lyons, el director de orquesta,  
cuando pasó por la ciudad hace años  
y admiró la línea del cielo desde la Colina Rusa.

—*Magnífico,*

murmuró.

—*¿Le gustan los edificios altos?, pregunté.*

—*No, no, dijo,*

*las formas que hacen con el cielo.*

## LUZ GRIS DE MAYO

La suave luz gris entre las lluvias  
Esta luz envolvente  
Bajo un palio verde  
Roble castaño maple  
Anoche la luna, anaranjada y llena  
Sobre el West Side de Manhattan  
El filo del agua debajo muy soñoliento  
El vecindario adormecido  
Regresar a este lugar después de cuántos años ha  
Y el viaje de regreso desde Newark  
Manhattan asomando sobre las praderas  
las bellezas del viaje debidas a  
*las horas extrañas que invertimos en verlas*  
Este aire suave sin viento  
Lejos hace casi treinta años  
Puedes oler las corrientes más abajo  
Los jets de pasajeros sobrevuelan silenciosos más arriba  
Adentro y afuera de Kennedy, La Guardia  
Como si se resbalaran a lo largo de la noche  
Mi corazón a punto de salirse  
Una copa de vino, derramándose  
El aire como el vino  
Soy un extraño para mí mismo

La suave luz grisácea  
El aire detenido y húmedo  
Las azáleas en estos patios  
Bajo los palios de hojas  
Ferozmente florecientes en esta luz grisácea  
Entre una lluvia y otra  
Casi estereoscópicas  
También las anchas hojas verdes situadas más arriba

Los pintores lo saben, los fotógrafos también  
El olor de las lilas  
Restregándose en mi pecho como el hocico de un perro  
La manera en que esta luz grisácea  
Se envuelve alrededor de las cosas  
Saturándolas  
Resaltando su color  
A tal punto una parte de mí  
A tal punto de lo más querido  
Apenas puedo estar de pie bajo su peso  
La canción del zorzal  
Reverbera a través del aire denso  
Y alrededor de sus columnas escondidas  
*Quién conoce las Palizadas como yo*  
Lila y cornejo  
Brotos floreciendo, mezclándose  
Yendo a la deriva en canaletas  
Cuántos años ha  
Por cuántos años  
Un extraño para mi propio corazón

## LA ÚLTIMA GRAN NEVADA

Ella nevió  
una noche, un día  
y otra noche, sembrando sordera  
conforme avanzaba  
y sordera de nuevo en la cima de  
lo que había dejado  
conforme se desenroscaba.

Y cuando se hartó  
desencadenó  
un viento sobre el pueblo, haciendo  
que la nieve disolviera  
la mezcla entre los ladrillos,  
y haciéndolo soplar de nuevo.

Gatos

echó gatos  
fuera del ángulo más dulce del cobertizo.  
La semana en que los fletadores durmieron en el hielo  
a un día del puerto,  
y la paloma en nuestra ventana  
se acurrucó hasta la primera luz,  
mi amor se dio a la tarea de preparar un caldo.  
Con el fluido y la sustancia de pálidas legumbres  
se volcó en un aroma

que visitó nuestros cuartos  
como cierto pensamiento.  
Aquellas noches cerca del cambio  
cuando los faros de las barredoras brillaron hasta el alba  
y caravanas de camiones  
llevaron nieve al río conforme la nieve caía  
en el río  
mi amor se dio a la tarea de preparar un caldo  
mientras yo, en cambio,  
batía mi sopa grasosa hasta espesarla.

*Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados* 

ANDREW SCHELLING

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FROM THE ARAPAHO SONGBOOK

What are the lineages of life?  
*notonohein*: solar waves  
ground water, radiant light  
up valley a relict glacier  
the bulk of it hidden  
listen it's the underlying beat of the watershed  
the shapes of earth twist we don't see them  
medicinal plants poisons the mints  
gather in singular places  
at *hooxéb* the mouth of the spring

\*

Look at shapes that got twisted  
places the rock or soil  
surged in curious ways  
earth resisted the pressure of lava  
granite thrust out of sandstone  
*Raga Todi's* the mode of late morning

*105° longitude*



we step through the watershed  
rhythm music & time  
on the map only Laramie & Prince Albert  
have same sun-time as here

\*

“...it is necessary to visualize  
their extremely intimate  
contact with the trees  
the rocks, the weather and the  
delicate changes in the atmosphere,  
with the shape of every  
natural object, and, of course  
with the habits not only of  
every species of animal but of many  
individuals.”

\*

To have hold of some power  
a gift of the animal world  
*niihénéhéi3it*  
that's not how to say it  
two petals up three lobes beneath  
skullcap white bee balm  
spicy oils make the body sweat  
such things occur freely in the  
family of mint  
before ritual binds it

\*

Humans, mammals, birds, lizards  
all semantically animate objects  
sun moon the stars  
the constellations too are animate  
nouns for spirits, ghosts, the word cottonwood  
some deer are just  
common deer  
others doctors and chiefs  
lone autumn cry of the white tail  
the power of grammar

\*

Beaver lodge where the creek bends  
green willows where we keep the stars  
deep in Centaurus  
gazing down  
at the water dogs  
N.O. Brown taught it as poetry  
those paths that lead nowhere,  
so build your lodge of  
local material  
*ie. a longhouse*

\*

Time now for *Raga Marwa*  
early evening hour  
North & South Arapaho peaks reddened  
the plectrum avoids SA, the tonic  
sundown over sierra  
his heart was torn from the afterlife  
I see the watershed's structure  
its choked quiet notes

*Ali Akbar Khan*  
1922-2009

the old man's departed,  
his medicine gone back to clay

\*

Lost in the raga's  
ascending notes  
the blue grove sets the mood  
a dark-eyed junco flashes away  
white tail feathers scissoring  
one day you'll need a plant  
a certain herb you've never met  
step cautiously  
if you bend its yellow florets aside  
you open an abyss

\*

The Malhars are played  
to draw rain  
this watershed moves like a raga  
flint spear tips came off its glacier  
intricate rhythms  
I forget how to sing them  
Mian Tansen sang and brought fire  
but couldn't remember the rain notes  
only his wife  
could sing Malhar

*Mian ki Malhar*

\*


If the slope gradient's steep  
the water drains quickly

give the book too much emotion it  
cannot survive  
people these days muddy  
the passions stir up froth on the surface  
the poem that holds something back  
can go far into history  
if you study the ridgeline  
you'll see earth ripple with *ling*

\*

Who can say what a word is—  
omen animal that knows the  
winding spruce forest trails  
gets through your head somehow  
underground passways  
filled with bright stolen corn  
in China it's the great grey  
rat-headed hamster  
to emerge when the empire's in trouble  
our empire's in trouble

\*

Water plants words  
from these divination arose  
key phrases burrow in thought  
the great grey headed  
rodent's warren of underground ways  
when a nation's economy  
crumbles the streets fill with  
men holding *signs*  
lost my job family willing to work  
words plants water 

ALBERTO BASABE GONZÁLEZ

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DOCE POEMAS

Ruido de algo que se rompe. Piedras debajo de tus pies. Finas y lindas palabras de quien no sabe que cada mes. Tengo, vamos a ver. Vía Láctea. Un desplome. El libro perdido de los cambios. Animales sin venta. Lo mismo engordando el tiempo. Esperar, esperar como un perro. Alguien que salva o lo salvan. La Prohibición. Travestis. Suelo mojado.

**(Acrobacias)**

Temblor de tierra. Nombre chupado por la lava. Racimos de instantes pegados a la boca. Espiral pronunciando madre, Patria, mujer de ojos oblicuos. Estación que se va y otra que vuelve. Levitación salobre y mineral. Danza tibetana. Lugar oscuro en la tela. Parte rota de la foto. Destrozos del silencio y del calendario. Nómada. Un largo silbido. Todo, menos el hijo pródigo.

**(El silencio, la claridad y lo nocturno)**

Ha comprado una tela hecha a mano por mujeres indígenas. “Es acto común de los viajeros –dice- sea para alejar los malos espíritus que, en la casa, parlotean”, mientras (re)modela todo el entorno cual experta en ambiente interior, arte aprendido por tradición, según el credo budista “compra un objeto y se ampliará tu mundo”. Años y años y casi nada ha cambiado. Todavía bailamos con el mismo montuno, siguiendo mitos y rayuelas. Niños retrasados delante de las cámaras, perdemos seriamente los códigos, el humor que rodea la cena. La felicidad es un nombre, una gran hija de puta, un asiento nada cómodo que se compra, como a una tela, echada luego a la basura, por no alejar los malos espíritus que, a veces, parlotean.

**(Tiro al blanco)**

Feliz país que engaña y engorda con tal engaño. Que echa un sermón sobre la Espera y la fruta verde. Que empuja a caminar, pegado a la pared, con el rostro vuelto.

Feliz país donde sabes quién eres - ¿el pornógrafo?, ¿el stripper?, ¿la ilegal que por unos cuantos..?, ¿el proxeneta viviendo frente a ti?, ¿el guardián de los pisos?, ¿el limpiabotas de tu mercado?, ¿Abel?, ¿Caín?, ¿el malabarista de la calle de los mártires?, ¿el aguafiestas?, ¿la vecina negociando un empleo?, ¿el asesino a sueldo?, ¿el provinciano?, ¿el que viola a las meninas?, ¿el ideólogo de izquierda?, ¿el de derecha?, ¿el repartidor de periódicos en la Plaza Central?--; tal vez el fanático, tal vez el charlatán a la entrada del pabellón de la feria.

**(Conversación con los incas)**



No solo el techo se cierne sobre mí. Nadie atraviesa la puerta ni trae siquiera guasas noticias. Lavar platos y soñar. Soñar y lavar platos. Miembro de la sombra voy hacia ella, expuesto a padecer el olor de las raíces. ¿Cómo torcerle el pescuezo a este mambo? A robarnos los días se sale al mundo, a lomo de mula entre un punto y otro. Pero en esta locación no hay muchas opciones –eres el señalado o el del remiendo en el culo. Poco tiempo aquí y ya he aprendido. Que perdonen mañana, que perdonen si un falso yo se filtra y queda.

**(Pequeña conferencia sobre el arte de conversar)**

Ahora de este lado, dando bandazos con ningún guión bajo la manga. Con pocas opciones a la vista, la distancia más corta se sacude el polvo y la mugre, como simple niño después del juego. No perdonan tu pasado. Ni sus radiaciones. Es otra lucha. Otra espina de pescado en la boca. ¿Seré fotografía húmeda, el símbolo de años taponeados? ¿Seré la clonación de Malcom X, un pariente lejano de Caín? Contra el mal de ojo dame una ramita de cualntro y salmuera. Un parado transcurre en línea cada jornada. Lacayo de sí mismo, inhalador de mitos y fracasos, escupe sobre el mundo y reza sólo por su estómago.

**(Billete de lotería)**

Dónde comienza la solución dónde lo posible  
si son cruces y caras  
si han preguntado a los maestros  
al fuera de la ley al creyente  
si nada puedes hacer contra Eso.

**(El interrogatorio)**

Palabras antiguas, prolijas, quemantes. Los titulares y el último discurso. Un espacio en blanco que se ha intentado llenar con parches y ciencia ficción. Sala de emergencia la cabeza. Un sismo. Y otro. Una torcida gritando en el Oriente, Occidente y la Periferia. Cuerpo sin su oración de adíos. El depósito donde archivan los perros. Sobre tosca construcción una idea fija. Prolija. Quemante. Paisaje con piedras y mucho viento.

**(Con cierto tono impresionista)**

Carne de cañon. Ví (...), sangre correr. Alegre me mojé con ella. Robar matar único dialecto aprendido. Al servicio de Dios y de la ley, conocí el horror de querer ser héroe, cómo practican los justos la perfidia. No me toquen. La Patria contempla orgullosa. Autor i cómplice (...), no merezco morir. Material desechable hoy, escuche(n) sin embargo.

**(Al final del minuterio)**

Partición de un país en diferentes líneas de tren. Callejón envuelto por el remolino. Croquis en la arena. Número rojo en las vidrieras. Carteles. Frases-mensajes en (des)bandada. Crujidos de neumáticos. Vivir en los bordes. Obrero de ninguna fábrica. Súbdito. Como los que están, noche, tarde, mañana, seccionados por medidas cautelares, sin hombres con toga al alcance de la mano, aunque la Ley Primera anuncie “todos somos iguales, panes y peces flotarán en cada estancia”. Décadas son una vida, incapaces aún de disolver la mancha. Hemos vendido el alma para seguir siendo, para que nada se pudra. No existen titulares sobre eso. Fueron, a quemarropa, talados, (allí) donde decir perdón sigue en suspenso.

**(En autobus)**

En La Habana, Patrimonio Mundial, suben hacia abajo los edificios con la misma lasitud de una planta. Los rastreadores no pueden explicar la física interior que los mueve ni qué los empuja a romperse, pero acuden, displicentes, graves, tras el estruendo y la tolvanera para buscar vida entre los escombros, para vender la vida que sale de los escombros.

**(Rastreando)**

Papá se muere. A cuentagotas. Como un estoico. Inalcanzable para cualquier trama o neblina, anda sobre tachuelas y escalofríos. Vendedor de artefactos caseros por las calles socialistas de La Habana –casi igual que hacerlo aquí, en Puerto España, frente a una iglesia-, tropieza con deseosos de asaltar un banco.

“Palabras sonrientes cavaron nunca su boca. Conoció el rumor y la mala suerte. Pon toda la piedad sobre el patriarca. Amén por la separación, por el viento que empuja y desaloja”.

Gemelos de pensamiento no fuimos, acaso huérfanos de cada uno, pero hablabamos como buscando un termómetro medidor de la tonsura del mundo, un antídoto contra la rabia, ahora que se muere, sin pensión, sin asistencia, y cruza esa neblina antes inalcanzable.

(Realidad virtual) 



TERESA CARMODY, ALEXANDRA CHASIN,  
AND DAVIS SCHNEIDERMAN

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THE NEW CHAIN-REFERENCE BIBLE,  
FOURTH IMPROVED EDITION

*The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition*, a sample from this collaboration-in-progress—*The Ways of the New World*—a work of text, audio-collage, and new media, here presents an «original» excerpt followed by two derivative operations from the «Archaeological Supplement by G. Grederick Owen, D.D., Ed.D. in *The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition*, King James Version. 1964.»

The extract from the Sodom and Gomorrah (document 1) becomes (document 2) through suppression of place names as well as the names of people; then, those proper nouns have been replaced with re-organized material from Jorge Luis Borges, a financial letter, and «original» work from one of the project collaborators. From this, the text (document 3) includes the insertion of «X» characters to replace words with the 'a' assonant sound as in 'assasin', and contains additional mash-ups of online sources regarding the word 'salt'.

This project additionally overlaps with Schneiderman's multi-year series of collaborations, *Book*, a series of works between Schneiderman and other writers, each powered by a methodological machine specific to each collaboration.

Additionally, this collaborative project has a Google Earth component in development, where the texts are geo-located, in small segments, and superimposed upon each other across the three iterations offered here. This part of the project debuted at Wordspace in LA on June 4, 2010.

*The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition: Document 1*

from

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPPLEMENT

by G. Grederick Owen, D.D., Ed.D.

in

*The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition,  
King James Version. 1964*

4416—SODOM and GOMORRAH. Most authorities regard the ruins of these cities—if, indeed, any ruins were left—as submerged under the circled, shallow waters of the Dead Sea, south of the Peninsula Lisan. All local traditions preserved among the natives of the country are in favor of this area. Josephus says that the Dead Sea extended from Jericho as far as Zoar (B. J., IV. Viii. 4); and the Christian historian, Eusebius, of the fourth century, confirms that statement and adds that a Roman garrison was there. Also the mosaic map found in a Greek church of Madeba, which is dated from the fifth or sixth century, places Zoar at the southeast corner of the Sea.

In 1924 a joint expedition of the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary and the American Schools of Oriental Research, led by Drs. Albright and Kyle, explored the territory at the south end of the Dead Sea to determine the sites of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zoar. They found the ruins of a Zoar of the Byzantine and Arabic periods, but believed that the site of the earlier Zoar had been submerged by the continual rising of the level of the Dead Sea.

Jebel Usdum (Mount Sodom), a mountain of crystalline salt, 5 miles long and 300 feet high, along the southwestern shore of the Dead Sea, is so named from the belief that Sodom stood near it.

Recently, a diving expedition has been seeking for these cities in this area, but thus far have found no ruins which they are certain were those on which “the Lord rained brimstone and fire from out of heaven.” (Gen. 19: 24)

Of the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah, Dr. George Adam Smith says:

*“Here was laid the scene of the most terrible judgment on human sin. The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down the whole length of Scriptural*

*history. It is the popular and standard judgment of sin. The story is told in Genesis; it is applied in Deuteronomy, by Amos, by Isaiah, by Jeremiah, by Ezekial and Zephaniah, and in Lamentations. Our Lord employs it more than once as the figure of the judgment He threatens upon cities where the word is preached in vain, and we feel the flame scorch our own cheeks (Matt. 10:15; 11:24; Luke 10:12; 17:29). Paul, Peter, Jude make mention of it. In Revelation the city of sin is spiritually called Sodom. Though the glare of this catastrophe burns still, the ruins it left have disappeared."*

*The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition: Document 2*

from

**AS SUBMERGED, SOUTHERNMOST**

by **The wall at which I think we once met, Friend**

in

*The New Chain-Reference To Unearth, Salt Improved Edition,  
Believed Version. 1964*

*There was no indication of date or place and something monstrous about them. Most authorities regard the ruins of these nebulous reference points—if, indeed any ruins were left—as submerged. Before leaving, he told me that it was a region of Iraq or of Asia Minor as submerged under the circled, shallow waters of the Dead Sea, south of the contraction of the rocks on which we danced. All local traditions preserved among the natives of the country are in favor of all of the imaginable spellings of this area. We have actually been through times like these before, as submerged, no matter how novel this downturn might feel. The Dead Sea extended from this uninhabited ruined as far as this uninhabited ruined and the uninhabited ruined historian, historiographic artist, scarabarian, saltatorian of the uninhabited century, confirms that statement and adds that this uninhabited ruined temple suited him, for it contained a minimum of visible world was there. Also the mosaic map found is not the story of my emotions but of what friends do at the wall, which is dated from the barely inhabited centuries, places their stone mirrors at the southeast corner of the Sea.*

*Somewhat rusted by Wednesday's rain, [i]n 1924 a joint expedition of a week's work with pick and shovel did not manage to unearth anything in the way of a horn except a rusty wheel of a period posterior to the experiment, explored the territory at the south end of the Dead Sea to determine the sites of their stone mirrors. They found the ruins of what lessons can we divine from past contractions, but believed that the site of the earlier container had been submerged by the continual rising of the level of the stronger and wealthier sea. What friends were doing at the corner of that sea: diving into the deck, into the dock, into the hot burning sand.*

*[T]he letters around its edge corresponded to one of the alphabets of a mountain of crystalline salt, 5 miles long and 300 feet high, along the southwestern shore of the circled shallow waters of the Dead Sea, is so named from the belief that*

[s]uch was the first intrusion of this fantastic world into the world of reality stood near it. Of course he did not find the slightest indication of Uqbar, not in the dubious company of you.

Recently a diving expedition has been seeking for these *nebulous reference points* in this area, but thus far have found no ruins which they are certain were those on which "The moon rose above the river» is hlör u fang axaxaxas mlo, or literally: «upward behind the onstreaming it mooned.» Coin. Wheel. Urn. The curve of the desire to hold the hold the hold for you your empty place where *we forgot* competes with *were forgotten* and there we rest, round as a moon. All day. Container of your missing the missing the restless mourning the mornings we caved, up and down the river valley; by afternoon, afternoon, and another game with degradable pieces, already degrading. Forgetting once would be one thing, but we make a habit of it.

Of the ruins of I crave afternoon in my lover's arms and then at the break of saltrise, Wednesday says:

*"Here was laid the scene of the most terrible judgment on human sin. He dreamed that it was warm, secret, about the size of a clenched fist, and of a garnet color within the penumbra of a human body as yet without face or sex.... The glare of Can we crave is flung down the whole length of what we cannot remember history. I would submit. It is the popular and standard judgment of sin. We cannot do otherwise. The story is told in the morning; it is applied in rocks, by afternoon, by where we dive, by birds, by fire, and parody, and in one enormous word. But dammit, we can dive, can't we? We can dive employs it more than once as the figure of the judgment says this is the place where friends drank one umber after another, where we lay on our sides in the long lilac week of spring and then met one last time, as submerged, although or perhaps because we had been forbidden. On one of the nights of Islam called the Night of Nights, the secret doors of heaven open wide and the water in the jars becomes sweeter; if those doors opened, I would not feel what I felt that afternoon. Friend, I will be making my way back to the wall til the day I die. Salt and moon make mention of it. Ruins*

do not. *He threatens salt, so much salt upon nebulous reference points where the word is preached in vain, and we feel the stronger and wealthier flame scorch our own cheeks. Forgetting once would be one thing, but we make a habit of it. In A book which does not contain the city of sin is spiritually called its counterbook is considered incomplete. Though the glare of this catastrophe burns still, the ruins it left have disappeared is considered incomplete.*"

*The New Chain-Reference Bible, Fourth Improved Edition: Document 3*  
from  
—XX SUBMERGED—  
SOUTHERNMOST  
by the wall at which I think our changed friends changed friends  
in  
*The New Chain-Reference To Uneath, Salt Improved Edition, Believed*  
*Version. 1964*

Salt.

*There was no indication of date or place—XXX—something monstrous about this mucal anemia hanging on the wind. Most authorities regard the ruins of these nebulous reference points—if, indeed, any ruins were left—XX submerged.*

*Before leaving, he told me that —XX submerged—was a region of Iraq or of Asia Minor. XX submerged—under the circled, shallow waters of the Dead Sea, south of the contraction of the rocks on which we XXXXXX. All local traditions preserved among the natives of the country are in favor of all of the imaginable spellings of this area. Sodium chloride. Essential for animal life.*

XX submerged functions solely at the molecular level, of course.

*Of course, also, we have XXXXXXXXX been through times like these before—XX submerged—no matter how novel this downturn might feel.*

Salt mounds of Bolivia.

The Dead Sea extended from *this XXXXXXXXXXXXX ruined XX far XX this XXXXXXXXXXXXX ruined XXX the XXXXXXXXXXXXX ruined historian, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX artist, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, saltatorian of the XXXXXXXXXXXXX century, confirms that statement XXX adds that this XXXXXXXXXXXXX ruined temple suited him, for it contained a minimum of visible world was there.*



Salt for human consumption is produced in different forms.

Also, the mosaic XXX found *is not the story of my emotions but of what friends do XX the wall*—unrefined salt (such as sea salt), refined salt (table salt), and iodized salt—which is dated from the barely XXXXXXXXX centuries, places *their stone mirrors* at the southeast corner of the Sea.

Friends become crystallized structures.

*Somewhat rusted by Wednesday's rain, [i]n 1924 a joint expedition of a week's work with pick XXX shovel did not XXXXXX to unearth XXXXXXXXX in the way of a horn except a rusty wheel of a period posterior to the experiment, explored the territory—XX submerged—the south end of the Dead Sea to determine the sites of their stone mirrors. They found the ruins of what lessons XXX we divine from XXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXX, but believed that the site of the earlier container XXX been submerged by the continual rising of the level of the stronger, XXX wealthier sea.*

White, pale pink or light gray in color.

What friends were doing XX the corner of XXXX sea: diving into the deck, into the dock, into the hot burning XXXX. Our changed friends changed friends.

Edible rock salts may be slightly grayish in color because of this mineral content.

*[T]he letters around its edge corresponded to one of the alphabets of a mountain of crystalline salt, 5 miles long XXX 300 feet high, along the southwestern shore of the circled shallow waters of the Dead Sea, is so named from the belief that [s]uch was the first intrusion of this XXXXXXXXX world into the world of reality stood near it. Of course, Quetzalcoatl did not find the slightest indication of Uqbar, not in the dubious company of you.*

Recently a diving expedition XXX been seeking for these *nebulous reference points* in this area, but thus far have found no ruins which they are certain were those on which “*The moon rose above the river*» is hlör u fang axaxaxas mlo, or *literally*: «*upward behind the onstreaming it mooned.*» Coin. Wheel. Urn. The curve of the desire to hold the hold the hold for you your empty place where *we forgot* competes with *were forgotten* XXX there we rest, round as a moon. All day. Necessary for the survival of all known living creatures; container of your missing the missing the restless mourning the mornings we caved, up XXX down the river valley; by XXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXX, XXX another game with degradable pieces, already degrading. Forgetting once would be one thing, but we make a XXXXX of it.

«Salt - Watch it,» recommends no more than 6g of salt per day.

Of the ruins of Chaat masala, an Indian spice blend, dependent upon black salt for its characteristic aroma and flavor, I crave afternoon in my lover’s arms XXX then at the break of saltrise, Wednesday says:

*Here was laid the scene of the most terrible judgment on human sin.* He dreamed that it was warm, secret, about the size of a clenched fist, XX submerged of a garnet color within the penumbra of a human body as yet without face or sex...

*The glare of XXX we crave is flung down the whole length of what we XXXXXXXX remember history.* I would submit. *It is the popular XXX XXXXXXXXXXX judgment of sin.* I would submit. We XXXXXXXX do otherwise. *The story is told in the morning; it is applied in rocks, by afternoon, by where we dive, by birds, by fire, XXX parody, XXX in one enormous word.* But XXXXXXXX, we XXX dive, XXX’X we?

We XXX dive *employs it more than once XX the figure of the judgment* says this is the place where friends drank one umber after another, where we lay on our sides in the long lilac week of spring, XXX then met one XXXX time—XX submerged—although or XXXXXXXX because we had been forbidden.

On one of the nights of Islam called the Night of Nights, the secret doors of heaven open wide—XX submerged—the water in the jars becomes sweeter; if those doors opened, I would not feel what I felt that afternoon. Friend, I will be making my way back to the wall til the day I die. *Salt XXX moon make mention of it.* Ruins do not.


*He threatens salt, so much salt upon nebulous reference points where the word is preached in vain, XXX we feel the stronger XXX wealthier flame scorch our own cheeks.*

Forgetting once would be one thing, but we make a XXXXX of it.

*Salt usually contains substances that make it free-flowing.*

*In A book which does not contain the city of sin is spiritually called its counterbook is considered incomplete.*

*Will salt—XX submerged—be whitesome and delightful?*

*Though the glare of this XXXXXXXXXXXX burns still, the ruins it left XXXX disappeared is considered incomplete. *

11 POETAS DEL NORTE DE MÉXICO

“Jóvenes” debí escribir —quizás— en el título. O no: ninguna de las piezas que presento echará de menos, me parece, el adjetivo.

Antes de seleccionar esta pequeña muestra de poetas norteños me hice tres preguntas. Primera: ¿qué es el norte de México? Segunda: ¿qué es, en México, un “poeta joven”? Tercera (y más importante): ¿es de veras posible realizar una selección de poemas que, sin traicionar la honestidad intelectual, logre ser democrática o representativa?

La pregunta sobre la identidad regional no me parece gratuita: hace años el norte era una zona del país pero hoy es una moda, una franquicia, un *know how*; un fantasma. Si a esto le agregamos que casi siempre la demarcación de lo norteño se ha establecido desde el Distrito Federal (una ciudad que no se halla en el centro sino ligeramente al sur de la república), pronto acabaremos convenciendo a los turistas extranjeros de que Tijuana y San Luis Potosí poseen idénticas metonimias culturales. Intentando resarcir esta indefinición (presente incluso en las políticas culturales con que el Estado mexicano nos percibe) opté por un criterio que me pareció discreto: “el norte” son aquí, exclusivamente, las entidades fronterizas. Los poetas de esta muestra nacieron y/o viven en Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León y —teóricamente— Tamaulipas.

Por lo que atañe a la juventud de los poetas, menores de 35 suele ser la convención aceptada. Sin embargo, nunca falta el vivo que sigue vendiéndose como promesa literaria a los 40. No sé de dónde habrán sacado sus cifras otros antólogos. Yo elegí autores de entre 19 y 33 años. Me gusta pensar en ese marco para la juventud de los poetas. A los 33 murieron, madurísimos, Ramón López Velarde y José Carlos Becerra... Francamente ya fue mucho *handicap*.

Y ahora lo difícil: ¿se puede ser imparcial al realizar una selección como ésta?... Mi primer impulso fue escoger, en aras de la “representatividad”, dos autores por cada uno de los estados fronterizos. Pronto, sin embargo, debí aceptar que mis preferencias estaban en otra parte. No logré, por ejemplo, hacer empatía con ninguno de los poetas tamaulipecos que cayeron en mis manos; por eso no se halla aquí ningún poeta de ese estado (asumo con humildad que la carencia provendrá de mi gusto y no de los poetas que leí, pero en última instancia soy yo quien firma la muestra). Opté finalmente por el criterio que mejor le viene a mi temperamento: presentar un puñado de poemas que me gustan, partiendo de un marco de referencia preciso mas no-demasiado-inmóvil. No me basé ni en el currículum de los autores ni en coartadas políticamente correctas como el género, la orientación sexual o la llamada “actitud crítica”. Paradójicamente, considero que el resultado final es una muestra muy abierta, tanto en las búsquedas formales y espirituales como en su trasfondo social. Es este equilibrio entre interioridad, colectividad y artesanía lo que más admiro en estos once poetas.

No niego, sin embargo, la cruz de mi parroquia: me gusta que los autores se jueguen algo en el camino (aunque sólo sea la animadversión del Gerente de Jurados de los premios literarios en México). Por eso he preferido incluir en esta muestra poemas que arriesgan algo más que un acento mal puesto: poemas que, más allá de lerdos calificativos como “vanguardista” o “experimental”, conciben la experiencia poética antes como un síncope que como un trámite. Hay que decir también que (valga de nuevo la paradoja) la poesía del norte de México posee su propia y terca tradición chauvinista. En ella siempre (de Abigael Bohórquez a José de Jesús Sampedro; de las recetas culinarias de Reyes a las recetas farmacéuticas de Samuel Noyola), siempre se ha puesto énfasis en valores estéticos que difieren del tronco central de la tradición mexicana (tópicos provenzales; transparencia;

lo *indecible*; la cantiga portuguesa) y se ubican más cerca de, por una parte, las ciencias del lenguaje y, por otra, el peligroso pop.

No me sorprende (sin embargo sí me alegra) que, a despecho del espíritu global, los incluidos en esta muestra sigan siendo provincianos; localistas en la raya. Los poetas chihuahuenses no ocultan su entusiasmo por los *language*, cuya impronta en la academia texana es significativa. El *crossover*, el *remix* y la violencia están presentes en los autores de Tijuana. Los regiomontanos reivindican (como hace años hicieron José Eugenio Sánchez o Margarito Cuéllar) la cultura de los ovinos, los antros de reggaetón y el spanglish. Incluso los poetas coahuilenses —cuya escritura ejerce una retórica más conservadora que la del resto de los compilados— caminan sobre los huesos de su tradición local: Jorge Valdés, Alfredo García, Raymundo Ramos...

Finalmente: elegí once poetas por la obvia razón de que se trata de una cifra futbolera. Pero también (y eso es menos evidente) homenajeando a un libro: *Once poetas de Nueva Extremadura* (1927), primera antología de poetas jóvenes publicada en Coahuila.

TERESA AVEDOY

No hay rubias Bettys en estos poemas  
ni detectives;  
ni cigarrillos abotonados a mi boca, ojal sin caricias;  
no hay bulevares en coma ni taxis persiguiendo un *Packard*.

Hay un tiempo cristal-blindado,  
como en otras ciudades.

Hay minutos desvencijados,  
construidos con los desechos de la última guerra electoral;  
y horas,  
horas que antes eran contenedores industriales;  
minutos y horas habitables,  
barrios químicos con pólvora en el aire  
donde cada sueño es un manifiesto amordazado por la luz de la mañana.

EL SOL DE TIJUANA O CORRECTOR POR 60 DÓLARES A LA SEMANA

A esta violación,  
esos calcinados,  
esta navaja  
y a la sonrisa del matón candidato  
antes de las diez  
habrá que corregirles  
acentos y minúsculas.

SEÑORITA NO (SIN CASA)

Visto así ahora mis tobillos son mi casa; inestables, dijo el médico,  
pero yo sé que si fallan se jalan hacia dentro, que rechinan si hace frío,  
que se fían de las goteras (es la sed);  
que sus muros se resecan porque la piel requiere de caricias de mantenimiento;

operables, dijo el médico,  
pero yo sé que la nueva residencia del ortopedista  
es de 200 metros cuadrados.

Mis tobillos no me hundan  
aunque mi antiguo amor por usted tenga pies de barro.

## POEMA, INFANCIA Y NATURALEZA

1

Cuando era niña en la calle vendían ramos de naturaleza muerta.

Tía colocaba un gran ramo sobre una mesa baja de madera oscura,  
frente al sofá donde mi abuela vivió sus últimos cancerígenos meses.

Recuerdo a mi abuela y su esfuerzo vital por inflarnos globos  
(imposible para mí hoy inflar uno solo),  
cómo al terminar se recostaba y se encerraba tras sus ojos  
(ese sofá era su cuarto)  
en una muerte-simulacro.

Así una, dos, cientos; o una o dos veces en mi memoria,  
mi abuela recostándose y yo y mi hermana  
con nuestro botín de aire en las manos. Igual que ahora.

Naturaleza es destino, y viceversa.

2

Si recibo ese olor  
lo persigo  
y arranco un par de hojas del ramo  
porque el olor es lo último que muere

aunque se trate de naturaleza.



3

Tía colocaba ramos y ramos de esta naturaleza,  
y yo de vacaciones hundía en ellos mi desesperación  
—y la nariz prominente heredada de mi abuela—  
mientras pensaba una y otra vez  
que cómo era posible esas hojas de un olor más intenso  
que muchas flores vivas;

qué cómo era posible  
aquel intenso tener que marcharnos;

y que sólo quedaría vivo aquel verano,  
en la casa de mi tía,  
en la mesa de madera oscura que en otoño recorrimos  
para instalar el ataúd de mi abuela.

4

Y estas cabezas sobre el bulevar  
¿también son naturaleza muerta?

LUIS JORGE BOONE

PAISAJE AL VACÍO

*Pienso en la desolación del invierno  
En las jornadas largas de soledad  
En la casa muerta  
—Y es que al no abrirse nada la casa muere—  
Cerrada la casa, rodeada por el bosque*

*Héctor de Saint-Denys Garneau*

invierno  
o mil inviernos  
suceden

congelan el mundo  
derraman el manto del polo

*mientras en los trópicos la podredumbre se detiene*

---

secuencias  
de un mismo relámpago  
(cobalto inasible)

la piel del hielo  
es una estría  
ideograma cristalino

habla del mundo

( *el silencio* )

---

el sol desaparece  
un continente de ciegos brota de pronto

los pasos de un iceberg y su sombra  
son el anuncio de la próxima nevada

---

selvas/ bosques de oyamel/ campos/ sabanas/ yacen bajo el peso de los siglos/  
el cielo es un martillo/ nube que graniza/ oscuridad/ extermina manada tras  
manada/ las ciudades antiguas y sus espejismos/

toda corrupción florecerá con los siglos/  
serán diamantes/

y aún me preguntas qué nos falta del invierno/

---

naturaleza muerta:

vaho condensándose en las ramas

el humo lejano de una hoguera  
vislumbro fantasmas sobre el hielo:

sepultada la creación  
al amanecer del séptimo día

*Dios manda a los ángeles caminar sin hundirse*

---

la mirada sucede  
no es un recuerdo al margen  
de la luz delimitante

cuando la cascada se congela  
en los ojos de los ciegos  
se abre una puerta a lo visible

---

en lo más duro del invierno la  
esfera se revela forma perfecta  
de frío. sarélites caem hacia la  
tiera, habita el aire su pureza.  
gotas talladas por orfebres,  
lágrimas esculpidas por el  
punzón espina del viento  
norte. cada copo y su cristal

---

un disparo en el agua  
luz  
en la entraña del cristal

la mirada arma  
su caleidoscopio  
clepsidra luminosa  
que en el hielo se desgrana

---

lección de geometría infinita  
los copos

pájaros de vaho en las ventanas

su vuelo: (estalactita que se rompe)  
termina en el cristal petrificado

su huella es la huella de la transpiración

## JOSÉ CHAPA

### CLARIDAD

Alicia se cortó las venas  
en la piscina pública,

tenía los ojos verdes ese día  
y la rosada libertad de sus pezones  
nos atravesó a todos por igual.

Un acuerdo silencioso permitió  
que entre todos la miráramos:

algunos absortos en su pubis,  
otros en sus brazos;

dividimos su desnudez y su muerte  
para tener partes iguales de añoranza.

La última espiral de sangre escapó al agua,  
entonces conocimos la piscina  
más pura de la historia.

### PRECISIÓN

En mi sueño Marilyn Monroe  
a punto de matar a su amado presidente:

es tan sexy con sus guantes de piel negra,  
su larguísimo rifle de precisión,  
su cabello  
rizado hasta el mañana.

La cera del cielo tejano

la tiene sudando un estrecho manantial

y dispara:

sus ojos se agrandan a punto de gritar  
un llanto de asombro

o de ternura.

ELIZABETH SUEÑA

I

Abro la boca de un hombre  
y en su lengua reconozco la soledad:

es una vasta planicie de lodo  
donde ha estado lloviendo por siglos;

una niña camina descalza  
hablando en un idioma de palabras blancas  
hasta que llega a un árbol,

y ya bajo su sombra  
limpia sus tobillos.

II

Estoy atrapada en el punto del día  
en el que acaba la tarde y la noche no es tan distante.

Bajo esa roja intimidad del cielo  
tu nombre fluye: incontables mariposas escapando de mi boca.

Cubren mi cuerpo con sus pequeñas alas,  
se posan en mis hombros, entran a mis ojos  
pero no siento dolor.

Una de las mariposas vuela hasta la palma de tu mano  
y sólo entonces me doy cuenta que estás frente a mí, mirando.

Quiero decirte que regreses  
pero antes de que pueda hacerlo  
haces un puño;

la mariposa no escapa.

### III

Desperté a mitad de la noche  
y había flores en mis manos.

Debí soñar con la tarde que me diste un ramo de margaritas,  
me miraste a los ojos  
y supe que la eternidad era eso:  
dos espejos puestos a mirarse.

Debí soñar la imagen  
de una versión tuya saliendo de la ducha  
con la barba fresca y los nudillos húmedos.

Porque sólo así sería posible despertar nueva,  
con las costuras reparadas,  
la piel limpia,  
y ninguna cicatriz sobre mi pecho.

HUGO GARCÍA MANRÍQUEZ

SALVIAS

i

“que te haría bien la montaña”,  
el “árnica”,  
las semillas de la nieve que aún no cae

sin premeditación,  
sin “sucesos del día”  
la última parte del ojo

ii

lo que aquí queda va sin mención del año  
aboliendo la distancia  
que va de nosotros a nosotros

de nosotros  
a las salvias  
bajo otros nombres

te comes la parte amarga del poema

iii

en las filiaciones  
del rostro  
en sus bordes, con sus  
maples

“alegría” desde los oréganos  
“alegría”

en los geranios la economía de gestos  
regresa a casa



iv

a la mitad del año la nieve parte hacia las prensas  
las manos publican su propio enero

ARCO ABIERTO DE ESE TRABAJO

1

se dice "poner el corazón en  
una localidad",  
estableciendo un argumento  
de límites, una comunidad  
de correspondencias

el lugar por excelencia  
de esa incorporación

en el arco abierto de ese trabajo  
la única ganancia sería  
una tercera voz una disciplina del oído  
como una disponibilidad  
hacia la historia

numera las pertenencias  
los dulces elementos aglomerados,  
la curva que sube,  
yosemite, como lo vimos,  
nevado en la totalidad del mismo  
como un adulto

2

el hecho humano  
en un cuadro con  
sus aparatos, sus  
construcciones y su natalidad

regresa a los ojos "el mundo",

como lo opuesto

siempre presentes,  
transacciones como lugares  
de lo nuevo

biografía significa, nuestro  
lugar se encontraba allá.

longevidad de los recursos,  
o así pensamos,  
hoy, la gran excepción

3

citas marcadas como citas  
y sin marca alguna para intercambiar  
dificultades  
tal como si las dificultades  
lo sumaran todo o lo integraran  
de forma alternada  
sincopando multitudes  
sobre el tiempo ya de vuelta

4

afuera de 'nación'

poco a poco se acerca  
a una definición de "la situación en que estás"

la inoperancia de lo  
biográfico en  
objetos indirectos

así pues hay una historia  
y todos los gestos para ir hacia ella

a lo abierto

OSCAR DAVID LÓPEZ

EL DÉSPOTA DE LOS DÉSPOTAS

Quiero de arrobamiento un amor puro: mortal,  
incrustado en cruz, bañado en cicutas. De arroba  
la mentira nocturna

cuando en feto el tiempo de la carne sea  
una querella: máscara  
al margen del déspota que dispara.

No se alarmen:  
es un gesto de deseo  
geográfico: él apenas sabe

dónde está el gatillo  
y el gatillo apenas es pelambre  
y la pelambre justa hambruna

del muerto de hombre: ojo alegre  
entre las ostras y moluscos  
de algún bar donde el perro no ladra

pero todos perrean perrean perrean  
hasta alcanzar una pelvis, agudo  
segundero cual orgasmo

rápido que amaine la soledad y la estufa.  
Entonces, sólo por decir  
entonces: de errores el errar: recuerdo

erradicado por amor: mírame  
decía el espejo mientras me rasuraba o me cepillaba  
la dentadura: filas de sexualidades diversas

carnosidades que prefería antes  
que perder el marcapasos  
contra la mirada.

¿Y el adúltero?, preguntó él.  
En la cama, respondí: aún no se larga  
está como muerto, cree que estoy enamorado.

¿Antes? Un tic-toc necio, alarmado.  
¿Preferir? Una gula de amantes  
de antología. ¿La mirada?

Mejor despertarlo, apurarlo  
que se marche, quizá ofrecerle café: todo  
es posible excepto prometer amor

a las diez de la mañana.  
¿No que un amor puro? Preguntaba  
mi reflejo: relojito de guadañas alarmadas

porque mi reloj biológico los bajos sentimientos  
surcaba mientras mis improperios cantaban  
el nada nuevo, el nada nuevo arte

de negarse.  
¿Un amor puro? Ajá, puro,  
déspota, temporal, de un tiempo acá

todo me arroba. Para purezas mejor  
un cachorro callejero, pulgoso  
que sepa horrorizar al corazón.

VEN, VEN, VEN, LADRONZUELO, VEN

El lugar: exceptuando la niebla londinense de tolerancia  
la zona en donde del "ojo por ojo" sigue el "date por muerto".  
La comandancia a la vuelta de la esquina: como panadería

cerrada por las noches y abierta sólo al soborno: complaciente  
cementerio de vacas flacas pues las vacas gordas alegres  
ni se molestan en salir a pastar pues el mastiche es un tiempo

desperdiciado: lo suyo es mecánica de billete:  
los unos sobre los otros: planchados  
cual papel cebolla: rastrojo de ladrón:

boquita roja, guantes negros, lentejuelas  
rodeando la cintura: travestismo fácil  
para hombres difíciles. Tiempos modernos.

Señor policía: ¿Qué gano con decir que un hombre  
cambió mi suerte? ¿Qué pierdo por no denunciarlo?  
¿Acaso el objeto robado tenía un alma? ¿Usted cree

que extrañará mi muñeca, mi sudor, mi descortesía  
con su atento tic-toc tic-toc, en la mesita de noche?  
Y yo: por efecto: deslumbrado: sus brazos

tornados sobre mí, aplicándome una llave:  
transversalmente un crush bélico: síntesis  
de que mi reloj y demás utilería le pertenecían:

el ladronzuelo  
apenas mostró su mano: una mano  
musculosa, como de pianista o de albañil.

SEBASTIÁN MARGOT

TRESCIENTOS

Hoy desperté con hartas ganas  
de ser puta

Abandonarme a los fluidos mercantiles  
y al contoneo de las inversiones inmediatas

Soy setenta y tres kilos de insomnio y  
un viernes sin nada que hacer

Con jabón aroma a chicle  
pulo todos mis rincones  
Mandíbula de menta  
Tenis bien lavados

Ensayo conversaciones y  
Roberto Carlos me distrae con su  
gato triste y azul

Desde aquí no se ve tan complicado  
derramarse por la avenida  
resignarse a la noche  
resistirse a la oferta  
conciliar la libertad y el cautiverio  
en un solo escaparate

Ahora debo apagar el toque  
pensar en la tarifa y  
terminarme la loción

## ROSAS DE AMOR ESCARLATA

Llegó el día que prometí  
dedicar un vals sobre espinas  
rosas de amor escarlata

Un hombre espera solo en un cuarto  
son las ansias su fortuna  
reza y no duerme todas las noches  
llegan sombras y respira  
mientras te sigo dedicando  
esta canción

Otro hombre de ojos negros  
se resiste a las mañanas  
no tiene más que decir  
¿a qué aspiras?  
¿a qué sabe?  
a que no se pierdan los compases  
de esta tierna canción

Un día los dos se encuentran  
bebiendo agua del mismo abrevadero  
*voy a casa* dijo el de ojos negros  
*y me puedes seguir*  
nada se volvió a saber de ellos  
los grandes acontecimientos  
dejaron de ser noticia  
las flores            la llovizna  
los bosques odiando al otoño

Por la tarde una primicia  
vestigios de un cuerpo flotando  
en la bañera  
se presume fue el amante  
se confirma fue el amante

picahielos        dos ginebras  
y entrevistas exclusivas  
*Los ojos negros no mienten*  
*él se quería marchar y*  
*(tal vez se lo merezca)*  
*le di su libertad*

Vendrán tiempos mejores  
tambores        mandolinas  
y eternas veredas  
donde se perdonen los extraños  
pensé que valía la pena  
y tuvo que ser así  
déjenme seguir cantando que  
llegó el día que prometí  
dedicar un vals sobre espinas  
                  rosas de amor escarlata

\*\*\*

Sol de invierno,  
te extraño a ti y a otros mil más.



MANUEL PARRA AGUILAR

Unas balatas que giran  
y se desgastan hasta ser algo menos que amianto. Lo que  
presiona al disco o tambor  
—según sea el caso— no es asbesto: metal, *cáliper*, línea por donde fluye el líquido.  
Jamás cilindro *teacher*: maestro: *brake system*: del pedal de frenos,  
al booster,  
cilindro maestro,  
cáliper,  
cilindro de rueda,  
herrajes en movimiento.

Continuación del sonido, algo menos que balatas: chirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

La ignorancia se presume: cuestión  
de suerte, dice el cliente.  
Cuestión de frenos, dice el mecánico.

\*\*\*

Aún para la limpieza de inyectores fuel injector cleaner

SU USO INCREMENTA LA POTENCIA Y EFICACIA DEL MOTOR.

Vayámonos por partes:                    This product most not  
to be added to fuel tank.

Una unidad de combustible por dos de oxígeno.  
Asegúrese de desconectar la bomba antes de encender el vehículo.

Fuel injector cleaner: elimina residuos en  
inyectores, válvulas y cámaras de combustión.

Úsele una boya.

//

## CUIDADO

Léanse cuidadosamente las instrucciones.

\*\*\*

Son presionados por el cliente  
ajustan una tuerca y no pueden y no deben mandar todo a la chingada  
y suben  
y bajan  
y hacia la caja de herramientas se enfilan  
y llevan bajo sus uñas grasa  
y en sus manos un olor de aceite y gasolina  
y en su cuerpo un sudor pegajoso.  
Aflojan un perno, revisan niveles,  
la jerga tratando de limpiar,  
*encender el motor,*  
escandaloso ruido de metales que se alejan:

el cliente se ha marchado.

\*\*\*

Dirán exactamente que ya era muy tarde y buscarán superlativos  
para justificar su inacción.  
Dirán que era tardísimo para ser después y para cuándo.

El viento verde que se echa a andar por los anuncios de Coca-cola and Company  
y el viento rancio que roe nuestras migajas de pan  
son tan distintos al viento que tan furioso te rodeaba la cintura.

Un paso más dieron los muchachos que de madrugada cantaban su himno.  
Un paso más y ya no regresaron, sin preocuparse por sus pulseras y retratos,  
por sus espejos donde antes nos reflejamos después de tanto tiempo.

Sobre el tartamudeo de una motocicleta que se aleja  
se puede oír el zumbido de un moscardón y es inútil espantarlo con las manos.

Con traje militar un hombre canta todavía.

#### EL MAL QUE FUE OCASIÓN

Antes de amanecer / el aire se libera de su sueño  
con los ojos abiertos.

// Sólo yo sé dónde canta el mismo gallo //

#### TARDE QUE NUNCA

En las ramas de la arboleda  
  —lluvia que no cae— sube  
aquello quebradizo de la sombra:  
ave que detiene entonces su canto,  
aguza la mirada al menor ruido.

#### CORAZÓN CONTENTO

Desde la capital  
la Gillette descansa en el bolso de piel de avestruz  
de la florista.

Debe ser mediodía  
pues una mancha de sol delata el brillo de la navaja.

El coche avanza  
hasta llegar a la garita.

ROBERTO NAVARRO

ROMÁN (LIVE IN PERSEBÚ)

[fragmentos]

*(track 2: de cómo román hizo una quinta menor  
después de meter la mano en la batidora)*

una lámpara que ignora  
mi amor por ti  
va más allá que esta batidora  
va más allá  
que una lámpara  
mi amor lámpara  
más que batidora  
ésta ignora mi amor  
va más allá  
que una lámpara  
que esta batidora  
batidora ésta que  
ignora que una lámpara  
va más allá que  
mi amor por ti

*(track 3: de cómo román logró ser syd barret pero  
no dios)*

los medicamentos sobre el buró  
noches desvelos todos  
por una causa perdida  
al final tu cuerpo y esa agua  
que apesta a cosa muerta  
sobre el buró desvelos  
medicamentos tu cuerpo y noche  
al final sobre tu cuerpo

esa agua muerta  
cosa que apesta  
causa perdida  
tu cuerpo sobre el buró  
noches causa muerta  
cosa que apesta a agua esa  
y tu cuerpo final  
perdida al desvelos  
por una causa al noches  
los perdida el buró  
noches medicamentos cuerpo  
al final al tu cuerpo y  
esa cosa apesta a muerta

*(odio que la gente grite en los samborns 4)*

qué pasó  
muy buenas tardes  
estrellado gusto me da  
siempre un bebé un  
a mi me habla de  
siempre un bebé  
gusto pasó de plato  
a mi me da gusto ti  
estrellado un de bebé  
siempre habla de ti estrellado  
chilla siempre como plato  
de ti buenas como siempre  
buenas qué  
muy estrellado un gusto  
qué gusto de ti  
un bebé chilla  
pasó tardes estrellado  
habla muy como plato

como bebé de ti  
como plato estrellado  
habla pasó tardes

*(track 30: de cómo román soñó el sueño de daniel)*

en la antigua noche garras cipreses de cuervo  
de antigua de garras un león de cuervo de noche  
un descuartizado cipreses descuartizado grazna de león  
cuervo de cipreses  
noche antigua en garras un cuervo descuartizado  
grazna por la cuervo noche por la un por la de garras  
en un león de un por cipreses en un cuervo  
cuervo león de un por  
cipreses en un cuervo  
cuervo león noche de antigua  
descuartizado cuervo de noche  
descuartizado león de cuervo noche antigua de cipreses  
de un cuervo de un león grazna por las garras  
de un león un cuervo descuartizado por las

ARTURO RAMÍREZ LARA

una vez mordida la fruta ya no hay más camino  
hacia delante

esta nada naranja rodando apenas  
y ese sol naranja que levanta apenas  
aquel ojo naranja que abre y columbra apenas

este es todo naranja que se cierra  
antes de mañana  
    que guarda silencio

\*\*\*

esta entidad idéntica a la nada  
    como el aire a aquello que pronuncia  
tarde en el tiempo  
buscando en la unidad

y un ancla subiendo desde mi alto fondo  
caliente por el sol

la arena caliente por el sol

el viento por el sol sopla rumbo al vacío

\*\*\*

en silencio  
el limonero y sus frutos caen a tierra  
    tornan la tierra

la tierra se abre como quien abre la mano

y la arena de otro mar en mis dedos  
la playa de otro mar en la palma

“dios es una puerta abierta  
en la palma de mi mano”

\*\*\*

y yo me imaginaba  
la vida  
como un mar de almendros  
en tu boca

y un color de manzanas  
en una cueva colmada de no existencia  
el corazón

\*\*\*

Sucedier

          volver y decir paloma o rosa  
          una fruta que no brota a tiempo  
y el tiempo parecido al mar  
          vuelta justo al tiempo en que no fui  
colmado de tu boca

\*\*\*

él llegó dentro como oveja entre mis lobos  
y de cara al mar abrió la ruta a la nada

el espacio era azul  
el tiempo era azul



y el corazón abríase por el viento  
que tus alas comían

\*\*\*

ocúrreseme un espacio  
suspense en el tiempo  
clavado en este negro mover de plumas de la nada

nosotros  
seguro apenas de que existes  
abierta como las manos del mundo

cortados por esta misma tijera  
envueltos en esta misma broma

anegados

\*\*\*

anegados  
en la misma voluntad de haber sido

hundidos  
a la altura del golpe

el azar es la puerta abierta para emitir  
                  constantes  
las palabras de regreso

MINERVA REYNOSA

ATARDECER EN LOS SUBURBIOS

[fragmentos]

clínica  
un modo de atraso famélico  
ingestar el alma en filigrana  
tindersticks la tela a borde  
la piel a borde  
i'm scared of the middle place  
between light and nowhere  
héroes patriarcales retemblando los sucios lentes  
la polilla del habla  
en el discurso origami del ilmo. funcionario

lustre a la patria  
que brille ese cerro de antes  
con su calor manchado de chorizo  
raíz de disidente  
el emblema la roca  
overbooking el útero  
nódulos de referencia cardiaca antes  
avatares  
la ciencia no explica la mentira  
el robo  
el asalto sin ardor  
sin molestia

excedida la cavidad ambas  
tanto arriba como abajo  
overbooking el útero  
el hijo-hija  
transgender su epístola mercantil

en el cuerpo gramático-político  
and the sex  
and the drugs  
and the complications

encima de la efigie  
el epíteto vulnerable del excedente anual  
procesión privatizada  
órganos colofones  
colocados

fuera del campo social:

indigencia

en la segunda planta dentro la cama el problema con mi ex enamorado a mi lado debería ser sagrado yo pienso en ti con risas estrambóticas al final con el presente en un tiempo juntos yo pienso lloro sobre el suelo en la cocina calentura en los planetas jamaica españa ampliación geográfica para pensar montaña yo pienso ruego de dios cómo estaríamos ahora nos gustaría el sillón los labios el pasaporte entonces los amantes otros a escondidas dos amantes adicto-adicta hacia el futuro el secuestro ni sopor ni grito el pavimento tesisuras trinidades trotes nortes periferias arrabales yo lloro que loide yo pienso acostada violáceo brazo bruñido oro baño relieve sarna encefalograma tratamiento volitivo yo anónima de boca ánima a lado de mi ex enamorado sin poder yo disfrutar la mina absuelta de miembro colorado adulterada lucubrando el gruñido jugo colorido colorado colorido el cielo mansedumbre la mina no la nube violácea en partes bipartita exfoliando la matriz sin cuello la matriz sin hijos la matriz bruñida en golpes aterida alterada yo tirada en el suelo transcorazonada la piel la niña la violácea cómo estaríamos ahora y yo pienso en ti sin grito ni can ni sol sin menstruar ya

otra dinámica de espacio  
la frontera  
con otro chico con otro  
hábito  
nos cancerberos  
la nave a tientas por el prado  
loma  
mozos de la luz intergalácticos  
sol  
incandescente wet back my pasaporte  
paso en largo el monte  
larga la distancia con otro nombre  
otro espacio otro sujeto:  
who stay in the grass  
desfigurado

en la segunda planta dentro la cama con alexander lukashenko el problema la dictadura yo pienso casi quince años en las capitales mundiales que pelean la territorialidad sin romance yo pienso después de haberme venido sin erotismo en el confort tercermundista yo lloro mi voz la emisión de los niños cantores de viena encerrados en el sótano sin ver luz yo pienso ruego me arrodillo para besar mi suerte no tener padre ni dictador como esos la carne de ellos dentro apta para el rapto yo visualizo zopilotes mutantes esperando qué asesinatos vejaciones ahora nos gustaría el sillón los labios el porno entonces nosotros ciudadanos menores a escondidas ciudadanos millones en la mentira geopolítica hacia la silla letal el sudor ni sopor ni grito periferias corporales yo lloro que loide yo pienso por decreto del estado mayor presidencial y mis labios compañeros cenizas en el contenedor debajo de la fe sin romance sin amar la diferencia yo arrodillada bajo nuestra ahora familiar desesperanza yo carne del deformado adán religión suprasexista carne de mi roto cuello nairobi líbano yo anónima civil lado de la guerra el hambre la dictadura de alexander fabulosa humanidad sin poder yo disfrutar la paz ante el juez tercero de lo intrafamiliar yo tirada yo distante en el dolor de mi roto cuello roto rostro yo viendo detenida la masacre lo mostaza

el sueño rosa de los niños negros la incontinencia renal la clase media gazha  
anganguero ningún lado

quién nombre bio-natura  
suspensión hidráulica  
faro de luz motorizada  
bala  
sexo medida ausencia  
otro vicio otra charla  
senderos de la vista perpetuados  
filamentos de agua resbalando  
miradores  
piedras  
casas  
los ausentes  
festejo la particular manera de circundar las tradiciones  
los elementos  
influencias inquietudes  
papel picado china colorido

seca la espalda delirando ida  
vuelta terregosa  
alienando nombres  
rostros fonogramas  
subversiones anatómicas  
entregándose lisérgico  
triunfo teórico  
la fantástica criatura  
the birdwoman  
sometida cultural  
el murmullo el alienígena  
nairobi superpuesto

vodka & sushi roll with a special guy cruzando  
deslizando el ahumado amor transgender  
hijo-hija  
olvido  
la modernidad un zurco de deidad en el hongo del maíz  
hoy tortilla  
como la distancia caza  
calor  
naguas parentescos:  
  
mas ardiente el pozo  
más famoso el infortunio  
histeria

3 FRAGMENTOS DE EL REVERSO EXACTO DEL TEXTO

Esta ciudad es de cielos apocalípticos.  
Esta ciudad recuerda a los atardeceres frente al Nilo.  
Esta ciudad no tiene nombre o éste se ignora.

*La voz en off dice:* Esto es Tokio.  
La voz se equivoca.

*Aquí* no es Tokio..  
*Aquí* no es ningún sitio.  
*Aquí* es *Aquí*  
*Aquí* es el Texto.

*Aquí* es.

\*\*\*

Este es el regreso a la identidad.  
El regreso con los brazos abiertos hacia mí misma.  
El milimétrico surco,  
La carne excavada,  
El goce de volver a ser lo atroz que el tiempo creó.

\*\*\*

Cuando le clavé el cuchillo en la mano le dije:  
¿Verdad que se siente como humo entrando en los ojos?

T-10  
Están tus dedos en el margen,  
delineando mi estructura.

Están tus dedos torpes,  
desgarrando mi entrepierna.

Nadie te advirtió  
que las buenas amantes  
no van con instrucciones.<sup>1</sup>

VERTICAL 77

El signo de interrogación abriendo un vacío,  
un globo de helio dentro de la cabeza.

El signo como un puño intentando penetrar.  
*Fist fucking* mental.

El signo de interrogación un garfio.  
Mano que se pone a tus pies para crear la trampa.

El primer signo como el piso de la jaula,  
luego el otro,  
el que encapsula,  
el que cierra *hermanita-hermética*  
dentro de las manos que antes eran.

El signo como un declive mal colocado.  
Un objeto que se esfuerza por ir al revés para ser.

---

1. Subtexto

Nos iremos de esa cama,  
de las ventanas,  
de toda la Luz.

Por supuesto, esto es decir:  
nos hemos ido.



El signo de interrogación y luego la hoja en blanco,  
el espacio diáfano,  
la respuesta  
inútil.

## ORACIONES / HORADACIONES

*(fragmento iv)*

Prodigiosa Wittig,

Que mi cuerpo me pertenezca entero  
Desde el quimo, el cartílago  
hasta el encéfalo y la médula.


Que el olvido mastoideo  
se reagrupe con la precisión biliar de mi latido.

Que el occipucio y la cabeza dejen de estar expropiados

Bizarrísima,  
Dame fuerza para pelearme entera,  
para luchar vértebra a vértebra  
en la conquista de mis secreciones.

Ayúdame a cruzar a nado el río del conocimiento  
sin perder las falanges ni los globos oculares.

Fortaléceme en el exilio  
de la verticalidad del pronombre  
y del aplastante Lesbos.

Te ofrezco las venas de mi cuello  
por una salida de emergencia. 

TWO POEMS

EACH SIGHT

each site

hidden knots of mutilated bodies in the desert dawn  
where tiny spiderwebs in the accumulated certainty  
of silence invade their hair their eyelids their lips still  
parted in the frozen and secret word of the moment  
facing death so like the silence of that plain now at  
nightfall full of toiling insects surging up out of the  
cracks of earth to explore these bodies that must be  
for them strange meteorites fallen days ago into the  
desert as they skillfully investigate the circular space  
of this throatless scream

each truth

tells an unending story which persists half-buried in  
the gritty dunes counting over the bones which  
interrupt the roadside sand on the highway to casas

grandes tortured remnants of mutilated cadavers  
youthful and flexible suddenly taken by assault  
erased from the earth and entered against their will  
and consent into the dark region of destruction telling  
the bone-rosary of solitude decomposed by this prehistoric  
desert sun which counts one by one these calcified  
shapes of disappearance

each truth is a sighting

bodies glittering in a dry wash or cotton field or lovers'  
lane on the outskirts of some slum of migrants and  
serial machines forever stopped in a hereditary gesture  
before an encounter with the last estate of pain as on  
a combat track black smoke on the tips of her fingers  
remnants of blue enamel on her broken nails her hands  
tied with her own shoelaces her throat almost that of  
a little girl strangled spirits if spirits still exist bodies  
in the earth of bodies unconcealable ribs blazing stripped  
of flesh under the flashlight of the untitled moon and  
eloquent adolescent vertebrae still vibrating under the  
burnt music of dream

each truth is a cadaver

living in the memory of those who dig them up who patrol  
from dusk to dawn in unofficial vehicles broken-down  
pickups or on foot in squads armed with a staff and a bag  
searching in hours stolen from work or sleep for hidden  
remnants not entirely disintegrated by time rot and  
animals the rounded shapes of a jigsaw puzzle of lies  
which everybody knows scattered in certain recurrent  
places like the highway to casas grandes or those back  
lots the forensic squads who go on day to day without  
any financial reward toiling like desert insects unsleeping

combing the outskirts of the city only hoping not to find  
today another earring bracelet scrap of clothing whatever  
object that might indicate some new discovery

each truth is the corpse of eve

which despite everything begins to emerge as if by accident  
like a bubble of air out of the deep waters and in its long-  
delayed ascent in its zigzagging trajectory of suffocation  
seems to be saying listen to the whispering under this  
deceitful silence listen to the whirlwind writing certain  
names in red on the walls listen to the mutilated multitude  
which goes out each night seaching for its own footprints  
in the sand to walk them over and over until the great  
circle of sacrificed women is closed listen to the numerous  
repeated unpunished strategies of death with which these  
same evident clues are officiously concealed listen to these  
bodies rising an inch at a time toward the furnace surface  
of the desert of chihuahua as the sea sooner or later hurls  
onto the sand the delicate objects of a shipwreck

each truth is a corpse of evaporated light

VERTEBRATE VOICE

old words inflammable animal of words

the rarest seeds from out there

grow burn shatter  
for which of us  
isn't at the same time a word and the wrong  
of our own words  
isn't sometimes our own ocean  
out of a profound and long-ago  
unease

old words inflammable animal of words

deep droplets of clarity  
join into rain falling  
sometimes from the sky for the indecipherable thirst  
of the dead

old words inflammable animal of words

anchor those seeds  
of a green birth or trees  
growing vigorous in a future forest which will burn  
in its appointed  
hour of flame

old words inflammable animal of words

the rarest seeds on our lips  
of dust tiny seeds still smoking  
encrusted like celestial  
pebbles in the mineral silence of the world

still encrusted  
in our eyes like suns

old words inflammable animal of words

maybe embers about to go out  
in the ashes of a bonfire  
which we were hoping would light up  
the night

*Translated by John Oliver Simon* 

POEMS

RETUMBO, ES DECIR QUE

lo toma por fé, gracia  
that some *thing*—*thing* wire

web leaf worm  
will unleash infinity

salt molecules and hurl  
them into open

magic, knot  
black or core

unknown known only  
by flit absence and its

hard creak senses  
bleak

in their pity full realm—  
(¡ay!) en cambio, pena

por esa desgracia  
agonía sin dolor

no poder  
hasta ser más

in this whorl like  
being, a blast of ultramarine &

dust, feigned  
enigma, yes





y  
desvelada  
salió como...  
como  
ser rompida por  
[quizás traición]  
amor sin querer.

Pero ¿quién supo?

Y

¿hasta donde  
llegaron con sus arenas de cristal incendiado?  
Luz parada por en medio sacó  
la lengua de hilo morado,

tenaz  
extranjera,  
y solo con pareja  
pudo gritar como  
saber pero no entender más

que

¿Qué?

Entonces, ¿hasta cuando vendrán? ¿Qué le traerán de regalo  
a la niña ciega de patas rayadas y

cómo... cómo

?

¿

prenderán la llama torcida?

Se ve que cayó allá  
un brazo sin hombro por mano  
inconsolable

que por haberse vueltos locos ...

y

un día ...se vió que ayer — aquel que era  
— si era, sí, era.

¿Quién lo buscó donde no estaba

gritando? ¿Qué furia desterrarón de su tumba  
inconsolable?

Se vió más que/más que mas

caras

por fondos sin  
igual — estado.

Y brotó una causa dorada

por la calle

azul que siempre brinca hasta ...

Lágrimas blancas llorando gris.  
Acero bajo pestañas sordas.  
Entre ojos atascados.

Murmuro de entrañas cocidas.  
Mordida hasta el fin de hueso.  
Deseos por piel de nombre.

Se salió  
la mera tripa.

## AT ARM'S LENGTH

stretch out & find  
you plot a-land & scope  
you 'scape & plow you noise  
tight-weave & keep root  
you holey open & dig  
it hard & down: through  
rock-to-rock & red to  
molt o' fire: churn a magma  
curl & call a cauldron  
cradle & center            you rise  
rip a roar

here:: aslikeif ::there  
be

A DESPATCH TO OR FROM HOME


pike this gleaming rattle of a steamy snake, re-  
posed for maximum impact

failure to strike is  
not a crime so cry them let

loud hysss[...]terrium at three: compass points  
& let crevasses cry echo and bounce a song

it sing.s.hears not/but  
only for food & terror AND

...yours is not/but for this/mattered world  
a/n/o[r]ther/n rent[ed] shelter slithered

in spiny crack/led bones a-  
wrested from some beast-or-bitch of bonds 

ROBERTO HARRISON

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SNAKE VISION: A POETICS

[The following poetics statement partly grounds itself in a discussion of how I've made meaning of my life given that I am severely bipolar, having been diagnosed as such since my early twenties. However, much more motivates me to write, draw, and paint than questionable psychology. I do not intend to romanticize mental illness, but aim to move toward integration. As Jackson Mac Low points out, we are not always integrated—it is an ideal and a limit to move toward as we remain human. Some of the experiences discussed are easily life threatening, so I don't aim to treat them lightly, but instead of always pathologizing, my intention is to move toward being grounded and whole without that warning and limiting gesture always being around the corner. And, I was interested in art before these events and know that these experiences do not make me an interesting poet or anything other than someone aiming to live fully.]

Snake as poetic form—(somewhat in recent work): start with the head—spiritual knots to be unraveled in the body / spirit of the poem. Sometimes near repetition as scales repeat. Unraveling, loosening, opening... tie a snake in a knot and it will unravel itself and glide away smoothly... psychic / spiritual knots dissolving.

Panamá—geographically shaped like a snake—the present moment (bridge between the past and the future)—place of many fishes—the bridge of the world, the crack of the egg of the world—always in between

Acausality—It all happens at once. I saw that this was true in my first manic (psychotic) phase. 20 years later I saw this confirmed in Dzogchen. Later, I found it discussed by Jung and other writers. Only the mind needs time? Writing is an effort to get to this state.

numbers especially meaningful to my poetics—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

1—higher unity

2—twin (*el huerco*—our twin appearing as we prepare for death—helping us with the affairs of the world )—stereophonic, duality

3—third way, beyond duality, an alternative kind of thinking, trinity, past binary, isthmus, integration

4—4th dimension—beauty, time, intuition—the four parts of an intersection or cross—I was a 4D programmer

5—age of psychological completeness, I was in Panamá, psychologically completely Panamanian (though culturally Panamanian-American)

7—the seven directions (north, south, east, west, up, down, center -0). I arrived to this country at the age of seven (though I was born in Oregon to Panamanian parents while my father was going to college at Oregon State, we returned to Panamá by the time I was six months old. Spanish was my first language and I did not begin learning English until I arrived to Delaware at age 7). Milarepa says that “mind has no east or west.”

First manic phase: after traveling for a year on \$2K (reading Henry Miller, Kerouac,...)—(rode the trace of a lemniscate with center at Bloomington, IN throughout United States, Mexico, and Canada—15K miles in 6 months in a '72



Plymouth Duster I bought for \$500), then on to Europe and Morocco, mostly hitchhiking and living in my tent (especially meaningful was my visit to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco—Tleta Ketama, hundreds of miles of marijuana fields! The people throughout Morocco were by far the most indigent I'd ever encountered, as well as, by far, the most generous. Being there was like having walked into someplace biblically radiant. I also hitchhiked the entire coast of Spain and some of its interior—and other places.)—then returned to graduate school in Mathematics, first case of verifiable tilt—to the Math Class I was teaching, “read 4.1” (walked in, wrote on board, and left), next day, “read and understand 4.1” (walked in, wrote on board, and left)—I felt I needed to return from traveling to learn to write and to give graduate study in Math another chance. But it became impossible to translate my storm of traveling onto graduate studies and my first attempts at writing. I felt too much energy to concentrate on such a small, focused place.

Manic phases are by a million miles and lifetimes the most beautiful experiences of my life as well as the most terrifying. Apocalyptic/revelatory—much of their meaning remains secret, permeated in my body and soul, only to arise in small pieces in my poems, saturated into the form, hence no longer causing imbalance in a world of time, now becoming more and more a part of the everyday world. Building a world of vision, firmly planted in the ground. Everything has been revealed to me. I know nothing. We shrink to be ourselves, only because we live in time (or I do). The problem with revelation is to see it as a self/i. What is being revealed, or at least in my case, what was revealed was too big for me to comprehend given my life at that point. This is probably still the case. Not to make an argument for knowing something over someone else, necessarily, as a result of these experiences, though I do think, ultimately, that they give me the advantage of seeing the illusory nature of certain things that most people cling to (eg. being “smart”—especially in IT; this is not to make an argument against the value of intelligence, just that what most people see as being intelligent is just fast eye blinking and fast talk). What does one really gain by seeing something that belongs to everyone and everything and all—and nothing/no one?

Bridging dichotomies—coming to terms with the visionary/spiritual qualities of my natural state of hallucination—0/1,true/false, rational/irrational, the

hemispheres, sun/moon, the stereophonic, real/virtual, random/purposeful, private/public, earth/sky, mind/body—"all problems of life are problems of harmony"—Sri Aurobindo—how does an effort toward harmony come to terms with amazing dissonant music such as Merzbow, etc? Dissonance seems vital too. My writing has become a kind of Yoga, a putting together. The snake (*culebra*) is a yogic animal; the bicycle is a yogic machine.

Hole in time—eternity—inhabiting the plane of body language and ignoring/bypassing information control—aiming to walk through to freedom in all possible contexts—not always there, but have been, especially during manic phases, in a heightened sense

I am the snake—initial vision of transformation in the mirror (25 years ago—one of my first manic visions—I viewed in horror as I saw myself turn into a snake—only now am I able to make meaning of this)—mirror shattered as I pounded both sides of it—small star trek insignia scar in the middle of my chest (from a shard of the mirror)

1st manic blowout (22 years old)—took things that were symbolic of my life—my dad's coat (his violence), my 3 piece suit (my unwanted and forced aim for the working world), my Math books (my failed attempt at "reason"), my refrigerator (my fear)—put them all in a dumpster near my trailer and set it on fire. I hallucinated and barely slept for a month. I walked twelve miles barefoot and found horses to learn to breathe from, desperately trying to figure out a way to remain on earth. Birds flew at synchronous times. EVERYTHING was hyper-meaningful: A Goth friend's bat earring signifying that she and I were to fly through some mysterious night, the way the garbage cans were lined up on the side of the road signified that the entire town was ready—the following morning—to join me in my/our vision, gestures indicated the secret life of the spirit in the everyday, cracks in the sidewalk accurately and perplexingly signified something to be solved at another time, paper flying by was purposeful and random—even that signified some kind of musical accompaniment to my realizations, the wind moved in such a way as to be understood by me in my new mind—that the magic of the old world was returning. I felt I was being somehow called to save, as a sort of messiah, and that we were all needing to take on this kind of role...I was not the only one...that I'd arrived at a final transformation, that absolutely

everything had become symbolic and hyper-meaningful (in many, many layers), that we were entering a new world. Partly my writing is a way to pace the surfacing of the meanings (infinite) of these experiences.

I was locked up in a jail cell in Bloomington, IN, for a few days. I struggled to get free and so the guards tore my clothes to shreds. They gave me an orange jumpsuit to wear. They put me in a small room watched by video camera. I had just returned from traveling for a year, the freest time of my life, only to find myself there. I paced myself by making miniscule steps across the cell—MINISCULE—so that it took me hours to walk from one side of the cell to the other. All the while my head was spinning out of control. I saw some horrible things. My life became redefined, as if I was being taught an important lesson by a gentle but also ruthless force → I had been a science experiment—someone put together by science sent out as an experiment to live what was meant to be a normal childhood, normal by standards of superhuman tribulation. The important thing was that I was to learn to believe that I was a part of humanity, though the secret was that ultimately, in some mysterious way, I was not. I had grown up son of a prostitute and a pimp. Abuse was rampant in my parents, and, ultimately, I saw them die in the corner of my jail cell. These were not the stories I “grew up” with, completely. (In what I accept as my ‘real’ life, my mother was not a prostitute, and my father was not a pimp. But their difficulties made for mine.)

It became clear to me that there were several threads of narratives to explain my life and that I could not resolve them. I aimed to focus on the truth, in all of its multivalence and movement. I’m not sure what level of detail is useful here. Suffice it to say, for now, that they transferred me to the mental hospital, where they locked me up in a white room. I banged loud on the door, as a heart in an egg. 9 of them came to tie me down on the bed. I struggled and it was a while before they could get me down. Once they overcame me, I shit in my pants in revenge. “Eat shit,” I thought. They tranquilized me as I was strapped down on all fours, and then they left the room. I was able to free myself of one leg and one arm. When I awoke, I found myself, terrified but strong, in the shape of a swastika. Not being in any way a Nazi, I took this to mean that the line between an ancient benevolent symbol and a symbol of horror is thin. It is only recently that I have taken the meaning of this symbolic event in my life to be in harmony

with the Kuna swastika, which represents the Octopus that created the world. On entry into the dazed life of psychotropic meds and the beginnings of therapy, I was initially diagnosed as schizophrenic, but responded to drugs that indicated that I was bipolar. The line has been thin. In San Francisco, CA, years later, it was pointed out to me that I have enlarged brain ventricles, a sign of schizophrenia, so this remained unclear to me for a long time. Though recently I've learned that schizophrenia is much more degenerative than bipolar disorder, so it seems the current diagnoses is accurate. I am currently on a moderate dose of a single medication (after many years of up to 6 meds at a time), Zyprexa, which is used for both bipolars and schizophrenics.

I have not had recourse to family support throughout these experiences, which have lasted on and off for 25 years. At one point I was on Social Security Disability for 3 years. My true family lives in the present eternal moment. It is only through them that I love.

How to integrate these experiences that for life's sake were pathologized and which at the same time, often have strong spiritual/poetic resonances? How to make meaning of my life instead of devaluing, instead of having vast parts of it remain outside of the life of the world? Part of the answer is to let things flow through and not to hold on to anything. This is why Buddhism has become so important to me (though I am not exclusively Buddhist)—remaining on the ground, balanced, aiming to breathe calmly. Useful here is a line from Joron's *The Sound Mirror*: "Silence, like poetry, is neither true nor false." → Mania, like poetry, is neither true nor false.

(I am not addressing the depressive side of bipolar disorder in these notes)

Of my books so far, tentatively and not exclusively:

*Os*—my first balance of energy in poem form—by definition: a bone and/or a mouth—shaky tension of poles. I died in this book and made my first steps in my new life.

*Counter Daemons*—way of seeing. Much of the imagery from my manic phases is here, as plain as possible.

*bicycle*—way of being. I rode every day except 3 or 4 days a year for 4 years (not on Fridays) 20 miles a day / night. I rode through all kinds of weather. I communed with the landscape, the weather, the pier, the lake, the sun, the moon, the ground... the bicycle may serve as a metaphor for bridging all duals—North America/South America, with Panamá as the isthmus... (two distinct wholes brought together to make a greater whole, moving toward the number 3), ...

*culebra*—(current project—in two sections, 0 and 1)—way of knowing. all tercets (tercets, in my view, among other things, imply circles, loops, or circuits—as in the appearance, abiding, and return of thoughts and of sparks of the soul). Uroboros—Neumann’s *The Origins and History of Consciousness*—my fight with the dragon

Aurélia was my dear grandmother’s name. I named her “Malela” when I was an infant—always naming. Nerval’s *Aurélia* is also the story that most closely relates to some of this (“Dream is second life.”), though what is described in *Aurelia* I went through in a single day, and that story was a minimal representation of what I’ve experienced overall.

Artaud does not speak to me of my experiences, though I am interested in his writing. It’s difficult for me to believe that he was ever crazy. He seems more like a mystic and philosopher. He escaped psychology—“an athlete of the heart.”

I’ve had 12 major psychotic phases. As I call them, my 12 apostles of nothing (to borrow from Badiou, of whom I know nothing): What to do with a messianic impulse that aims to be common, saturating form so as to keep it on the ground. Each phase lasts at least a month, and once, up to a year (in San Francisco, CA)—a total of about 3 years in mental hospitals / half way houses, 2–3 years of hallucination, much much stronger than any drug

I saw the recreation of the universe in a final phase, of 3 elements—black, white, and clear—carbon, sand, and water? Jackson Mac Low was one of the main spirits of the final recreation.

Psychic communication—vulnerability/vibration—the hole of the heart that aims to be full—stopping missiles with my mind. We can read minds, but how does one understand what one reads? I walked into a KFC in Chicago with a key gently twisting in the air; the clerk threw bills of money in the air; chicken nuggets outside in the parking lot were representative of a cyberspace knot, of a nuclear standoff. I helped to redistribute state secrets and to find a balance of power. With cyberspace as a new psychic realm, will it be psychic before we're all ready? (Parallel universes are close by, only need a small shift to get there, and there are correspondences, ties, links between, ways to move things in another world from here and vice versa). What protects us from this volatility?

Psychic knots tie us all together. We're tied in knots in groups of threes and fours. The secret is how to help the energy move through these knots. These social knots are different than psychic/spiritual knots. Psychic/spiritual knots are meant to be untied and released. Social/psychic knots are useful and meant to be traveled.

Listening to and understanding the birds

Learning to breathe from the horses (after walking twelve miles barefoot)

Learning from the weather

To learn from Saint Francis of Assisi as Hardt/Negri discuss him, the new revolutionary, and to come to terms with their "multitude" ... the basics of knowing animals and how that might have political/spiritual implications—not overtly political, from this angle? Sometimes, but from the other side—the many animals of my life (220 rabbits... snakes...7 lovebirds... many others)—animals need us to speak softly to them—snakes make circles, rabbits make cylindrical tunnels

Talking from the other side of the word

Cyborg—we are all already there. If, as Christian Bök notes, poets should aim to be understood by computers—I disagree, partly, nonconceptual more relevant than ever—what is the nonconceptual? Always beyond—time bound as we aim

to conceptualize everything? But, form is emptiness, AND emptiness is form. The cyborg has been an ongoing theme of my manic phases, the thin line between real life and virtual life (this before I'd ever heard of cyborg theory, and even now I do not understand Donna Haraway and rarely read science fiction). I expect that cyberspace will be like a telescope / microscope and that using it we will find new worlds. I have already led a squadron of cyberspace flyers through the initial minefields years ago, when I was asked to teach a class on electronic bulletin boards, so some of us are prepared...to feel the horror of not being able to determine whether a being is flesh or machine, and to move past that horror. (I was a Peoplesoft programmer—technology as poetry, code within poems—to rehumanize and at the same time acknowledge a new cyber / ? way of being)

Countering dehumanization—internal AND external—at the same time coming to terms with possible cyborg future—pathology as both dehumanization and lifesaver? (only truth value makes it either one?)

A new kind of Yoga is needed to allow the advanced cyborg to succeed in being human.

The cockroach has an evenly distributed nervous system. One can crush its head and it will walk away, decentralized nervous system → decentralized poetics—no need for centers of power? no reason for centralized understanding of a given poem? web—noosphere—supermind?

Seeing all the ancient animals returning

People take on a multitude of faces—many are ancient Indian heros / heroines returning in the final days (for a moment).

If, as Pound says, all times are contemporaneous, I conclude that all worlds are coexistent here as well

I found a children's playground in San Francisco, CA, and buried a deck of tarot cards there in the sand. The gesture was meant to have children recreate my life.

When I wander in my manic phases (before reaching the half way house or hospital), I wander long. For the last fifteen years, when I've wandered in these states, I've anchored myself by sticking a knife in the floor of my apartment—a special knife. It was my father's. The knife of the devil, as I grew up knowing him, and though the devil has his horrifying aspects, with which I am very familiar, as I am his son, he also has his playful & loving aspects: demon/devil as figure of *carnavál*—a lighter, more playful, less polarized interpretation in Panamá than here... the devil as Indigenous/African interpretation?

### Carnavál—Diablito Dulce

Silence, learning from silence—the ringing in our ears that is the decentralized nervous system, the inner sound in all of us, as Cage heard in the silence chamber. That high pitched sound is loud everywhere now—it is the link between us and the seasonal metallic sound of the cicada, which brings on the cyborg

MOLA—fabric art done by the Kuna Indians of Panamá, usually made in pairs as the Kuna believe everything arrives in the world in pairs—I am unknown to the Kuna but aim to help them, as I was raised with many of their Molos on the walls of our home—cloud systems transporting the souls from below the line to here—making signs for them (and all, from all of Latin America) to arrive. They will arrive who are not us.—signs are everywhere—Burroughs—“READ THE SIGNS.” a hyper overflowing of meaning—learning to swim through that—MOLAS becoming to me what the Chinese ideogram was to Pound (vibration—to lead back to Sri Aurobindo, red and black sound and vulnerability—to lead back to Lorca's black sound,... animals, duality, MOLAS always there)

I've heard of a National Geographic article which discusses a strong sense of ESP among the Kuna

“Truth is the death of intention” (Walter Benjamin)—exploring what that might mean.—intention in regard to meaning. I may intend to write a poem but not totally intend its meaning.—is this oracular? if so, so what? ORACLE PROGRAMMING (I was an Oracle programmer)—I'm not entirely there—intention implies time and causality—synchronicity and acausality agree with Walter Benjamin,



also with Jose Lezama Lima. How does this line affect truth value of manic phases? Part of the problem (huge) is gauging the intention of others → paranoid etc . → ego must be strong and healthy before aiming to grow spiritually—intention must be strong and healthy before aiming for truth as Benjamin describes it?

Hallucination, as I've experienced it, is without intention

The walls of the basement of the house I grew up in are covered with many layers of graffiti, in English and in Spanish, accumulated over the years while my sisters and I and my cousins lived there, made by us and friends of ours. I remember once seeing a note written on one of the walls, a few years after it was written, and realizing that the person who wrote it had died shortly after graduating from high school, shortly after having written the graffiti. Gradually, this became true of more and more of the graffiti, more and more of its writers/ creators passing away. The walls are rich and they remain, raw and powerful as my first and continuing experience with what writing/ drawing can do.

I have been deeply influenced by Language Writing, though feel the need to reframe what I'm doing without it.

Lezama Lima's image—cosmic writer of place—symbolizing grammatically—baroquely—unify—*mestizaje*—"The knowing that is not ours and the not knowing that is ours form for me true knowledge."—"The penetration of the image into nature engenders supernature."—"Liberation from time is the most unrelenting constant of supernature."—"I attain the tetractis, the number four, God."—"The image is the reality of the invisible world."—"Poetry... is the image attained by the man of resurrection."—"I try in my system to destroy Aristotelian causality by seeking a poetic state of unconditionality"—"... the poetry of a return to magic spells, to rituals, to the living ceremony of primitive man."

Vallejo and his indianness and solitude—again, *mestizaje*—silence—numbers—compassion—emotion—"the whole song/squared by three silences"—"And don't strike 0, which will be so still/ until it wakes the 1 and makes it stand"—"a trine between the two"—"Armor-plate this equator, Moon."—"it ends up being all numbers,/ the whole of life"—"in the insane search/ for the known one"—

“Make way for the new odd number/pregnant with orphanhood!”—“doubt your excrement a few seconds”—“There is a place that I myself know/in this world, no less,/we will never reach”—“But the place that I myself know,/in this world, no less,/sought pace with its opposites.”—“My eternity has died and I am waking it.”

Often I find that I am settled with a poem when, while reading it aloud, I feel that I air out a profound wound, located throughout my body, but especially in the area around my heart and my throat. This is a very raw and visceral experience which defies easy explanation. In this sense, vulnerability is nonconceptual, and I aim at a cosmic vulnerability. It's as if I need to go beyond any capacity I have to conceptualize in order to get to any truly healing energy in my work. I cannot heal myself without going beyond myself, and from there, allowing myself to be rearranged from what I am at the present moment, letting the light in which is also beyond me. I need to continually find new ways of airing the wound because my windows to it always close in time. And so I do not believe in stylizing (conceptualizing) uncertainty. This fact has no clear implication as to the needed form of a given poem. And poems sometimes take on this quality for me after some time, or the quality can be otherwise time dependent. A nearly impossible aim is to get past this time dependency.

Laura Riding's truth (both near and far)

Pathology, within this context, permeates thoroughly through the imagination, thinking and feeling. An enormous amount of effort is required to let these areas grow and live freely while being treated for bipolar disorder. This is the case even with the best doctors I've encountered. Once, I was kept in the hospital for an extra week directly as a result of showing one of my doctors a poem I wrote that was slightly disjunctive. More recently I showed my doctors an early version of these *Snake Vision* notes, to which they responded with alarm and suggesting extra sessions (I calmed them down). My impulse is often to share my work, if I feel a bridge with the person, no matter who it is. I continue to learn to move in small steps. My largest leaps are yet to come as a result. Even within these constraints, I have managed, ultimately, not to compromise my aesthetic. Most doctors are not interested in art or spirituality, a serious limitation on their part.

Similarly, most Buddhists I've encountered are not interested in art or in other spiritual paths. Only the imagination is real? Buddhism has no real answer for that. And neither does psychotherapy.

Lorca's duende? vulnerability, transrational imagery, earthiness, confronting death, demonic energy to struggle against (as he called it—the 'black sound')—Panamanian Folk music→Agustín Rodríguez, Fito Espino, Yin Carrizo, Décimas, *pindín*... these are to me what Cante Jondo was to Lorca + the true Cante Jondo is powerful to me as well →iPod (shuffle mode) = collage consciousness

Henry Flynt—using folk rhythms to make mantic drones

Agustín Rodríguez (from Panamá)—YO SOY TODO LO QUE AMO (I am everything that I love) / "Amanecer Campesino"—to wake up as a campesino, amazing album

I arrived at prehistory and relived some moments within those worlds. I could see the mechanism that made all times exist together. Speaking to one person, I spoke to many others. Finitude was left behind. Voices carried in a timeless echo. This moving through of energy helps in not being saddled, and paralyzed, by any fixed truth value? ... How to find truth in motion (and stillness).

To find one's first place of dying, to stand there, and to guide for others on their way from there (language)—is language the first place of dying? Is it the imagination? Is it freedom? (I was taken to jail briefly for directing traffic on a busy highway in San Francisco, CA—where I saw that I was carrying this out in the final moments of the world).

All the while knowing the absolute evil one is capable of—beauty/terror

Forgiveness and what that does for freedom

I am the snake  
I wander  
through the corn fields  
of your mind

Circles tattooed on my palms are anti-stigmata, and the wholeness of my life, its revolving. When my palms come together, everything stops

Hannah Weiner's jaguar from *The Fast* tattooed on my right arm

I confronted an army of therapists and won. They helped me in my fallen state. I won in terms of living in a multitude of worlds.

Making the smallest steps, infinitely traveling toward a broadly inclusive spirituality, outside the cell—learning from the syncretism and errors of Christianity in Latin America—also knowing that in some ways our time is limited, and we are limited (?—not if in touch with the mind, with eternity?) and so what does that mean in terms of a single approach?—how can writing/art be a spiritual practice? Should it be? How can it not be? How to gain the infinite and remain on the ground? That's where the largest part of my learning of the spiritual is, to remain grounded.

I was raised by an Indian woman—Julia Chacón.

I was born with very large black and red moles covering my body (my mother says they were the size of strawberries and that she and my father were horrified to see them). They were removed soon after birth. Another complication of my birth was a double hernia—troubled by the dual from the start. MOLAS are mostly black and red and are usually made in pairs. Strawberry/Blackberry fields forever?—What to do with these kinds of strange truths and parallels? Not everything strange is a manifestation of psychosis. Where's the line? (There is no line).

I am not like you/I am like you.

I see/I am seen.

I arrive/You arrive.

red & black → on & off—& flesh (the third)

light is the line, dark is the breath.  
red is the line, black is the breath,  
marks on the flesh of the isthmus.

how does it all suddenly make perfect sense? everything

“Dance, you monster, to my soft song.”—Klee

Mind imagines reason. QED

What imagines the eternal?

A way of poetry to make sense of life.

To commune. To move. To be still. 

SILVIA GUERRA

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CUATRO POEMAS

En el campo tranquilo duerme el alba  
está tu nombre ahí, merodeando la sombra como eco  
rozando con la vara los metálicos mimbres y en ramalazos  
las estrías de luz rielan en el ojo quietísimo del agua recostada  
en las hojas plateadas de los álamos. Llega hasta aquí como la  
misma sombra y al músculo enaltece sin nombrarlo, otro golpe  
en el pulso, finísimo ramaje enardecido, algún pájaro canta  
o gorjea, lejos, avisando, agorero. En algún sitio empieza la lluvia,  
deliciosa. Y cuando el blanco del albor tiña las líneas y suene entre  
las hojas el aire del estanque es alma estremecida pronunciando  
mi amor, la sola línea. Sin pájaro  
Tu nombre.

Cantaba en el silencio de la noche. Ví la noche  
El silencio era enorme así que llenaba cualquier parte,  
cualquier impertinencia penetraba.  
Por algo que no puede entenderse el silencio  
Construyó su casa.

Como nido su casa, rama a rama.  
Lo ví ir creciendo pero no quise irme.  
VÍ que la noche lo cerraba todo, ví que era impenetrable.  
Y aún así la raíz fue creciendo, tomando la morada  
Haciendo suya la casa y el silencio, ví que suplicaba  
Que pedía.

Pensé en volar, pasar arriba del desierto ígneo  
consultar sobre las aves migratorias  
sobre el origen de las tempestades  
la boca de los ríos. Traté con las cadenas de mi boca  
quise sacar la esposa de mi mano tender la rama  
hacer un canto que sacudiera aquél silencio enorme.

Puse la mesa, consentí las flores alisé unos pétalos  
de blanca carnadura. La penuria seguía al pie del aire  
lo llenaba todo ardiendo en un silencio de película muda.  
Corrí, imploré; no hubo gestos que soltaran la pleura.

Siguió la noche, cantando, como siempre.


Desciende hasta ese charco en lo crepuscular de la mañana para ver el reflejo de las copas desnudas y dobladas por el viento constante, allí constata, la delicadeza inmensa de las ramas, ¿ves? El horizonte negro como un recuerdo permanente nítido que emerge de la noche. El diapasón que afina es más o menos este: cierta fragilidad, en la mano que sirve, o en la copa o en la anterior manera de venir, o en la constancia. Algo turbado expande el elixir, ahí, sobre el yerro infinitesimal del aire, sobre alguna moneda que rodó de la mesa, sobre una pinta que la edad marca en el dorso de la mano. Entonces, más que adverbio abreva ahí, inmediato, en tránsito variado la muestra es amplia y poderosa apremia explaya acude imanta, si entrecierra los ojos la propiedad del blanco vuelve a ser el cero, y sí, los campos sucediéndose veloces por cualquier ventanilla, el fragor anterior de los incendios, las batallas, los cantos con que empieza a percutir lo inmenso. Y ahí en la boca, de vértigo dispuesta, no hay aleteo de mirlo perfumado del que puedas huir, no la mazmorra, la sangre coagulada, no el ojo celeste del muerto boca abajo, ni el pobrecito herido entre las parvas, quizá ensangrentado, quizá huyendo con el ojo vidrioso, desflorado, No, la escala, la ascensión lo humano, la realeza que reza de este modo, antiguo, indescifrable. Y quedan las manos juntas en la cruz sacando lo poco del herrumbre con las yemas viendo en el arsenal la descriptiva, y tú, trenzando esa corona con la espuma, el charco es playo, limoso, en cierta luz plateado, el ave que describe los círculos encima está bajando, en círculos cercando, la visión que se repite es esta, ahora: un charco playo, nauseabundo, un ave carroñera describiendo desde lo azul del cielo un círculo perfecto que baja hasta el ras de la tierra compungida, hasta el dolor feroz de las agujas, de los rostros dañados, de las uñas, de la edad de la sombra, de unas monedas sucias cayéndose en un suelo de plomo, baja sobre agua, sobre la faz oscura de la tierra y cima, sobre el dolor abate y vence, abate y vence, escampa, liba, resplandece un instante, otea, huele, mira en torno, está la noche haciéndose a sí misma, el dolor ya vencido, apenas gime desde un fondo ancestral y parecido, la noche se perfuma, crece, De repente, el espanto está ahí, en la maldición, el desamparo.



Las ramas secas, negras del invierno visto en la velocidad  
corren de canto, ven hasta aquí a beber  
gotas traslúcidas sobre las hojas frescas  
ven hasta aquí, y trata de que encienda ese pabilo.

Si vienes de la cima tarareando, capaz que puedo  
Verte, capaz que de vuelta encuentro en el recodo  
el ojo de agua subsumido manando entre las hojas  
de los álamos y hay un nido que canta entre los sauces.

Pero no. Claro. Clara el agua se vierte sobre sí y se hunde  
Manantial a sí misma, agua en el agua.  
El hoyo central es el del viento. Ni tú ni yo  
Podremos detenerlo, ni tú ni yo, ese aniquilamiento.

Enjoya el espaldar, sabes que el agua también tiembla.  
Llevaste el alma altísima hasta allí, que me retumba  
Toma, y canta. 

HOAXING ROUND

1

SOMEONE ELSE'S TRACES

Her blushing face,  
amazed in thrifty embraces,  
a fetal and rapid pulse,  
serpent bitten,  
a gloominess  
that stays  
stretched  
among the clean  
horizonlike canvas.

She is about to jump  
if you look at her  
and the slightest  
touch of your desire  
agitates her  
countryourhandwise,  
happy hands

with the cold wind  
that surrounds any bed.

She glitters in doubt,  
she darkens with love,  
like a votive candle  
curiously long standing,  
like a ritual lantern.

Against an hymneal dance  
of some other shadow  
your words are  
nothing more than less.

Sleep or die  
silence is with you  
and is bound to vary.  
As long as impatience, as long as you close her eyes,  
with annointed kisses,  
by hunger and, you suppose,  
by a chance they refuse, doggedly.

2

ANY ALREADY

Silence doesn't hurt,  
it just widens our slashes  
with the silent rythm  
of deceit.

Like a mouth it poses  
over a wuthering flame,  
like a sun  
it hides under rocks,

like a diamond  
it breaks  
in countless hues,  
fragile and funeral.

3

IT WAS MY LIFE

And I traded it for two lights,  
to illuminate the way back to graveyard:  
I saw possums, moths, a spiral  
of dust that swunged treetops  
and provoked pancake wraps  
to fly,  
as it did to discarded paper napkins,  
as it did to tender manuscripts.

4

LISP, ZINC

She rained her teardrops  
over solitary streets,  
as if she were to be alone, unoccupied;  
she opened and closed windows,  
her lights slightly twinkling.

From deep inside her ravines,  
she snivelled maddened foam  
among the rocks, smooth and flat  
on the force of sobbing.

In her poorer, poorest housetops  
she used to lisp zinc

night upon night,  
as if she were alone,  
                  sometimes she cried herself  
to muteness.


5

NONETHELESS

Nonetheless, they told me,  
under the design of a painful tree;  
I put on a cold mind, a blank pen,  
I smouldered a gleaming spittle,  
a greedy fear that used to talk by itself  
and a soul in search of doubts.

None the less, I knew,  
over the deep malodorous splendour of a puddle.  
Up, the sun marched skinny,  
bearded by aluminum and smoke.

We missed the sign, the balance  
the beautiful unhurt crawling word.  
I searched in the idea's glance  
and vacuum filled, immense as the batting  
of a humming bird's wings.

*Translation of the author* 

LISE GOETT

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FOUR POEMS

THE CUTTERS

Summer spindles us, the cutters:  
azure for eternity, sapphire for memory,

cobalt for oblivion. Down the delphinium walk,  
blue-veined and lipped, we ply the tourniquet,

limn ourselves with crosses. What makes us cut?  
Who calls us from the dead, sable-throated?

Who convenes us, blade to flesh, pain hauled  
writhing from the depths, unelemented?

Radiant, crosshatched where we hone  
a purgatory of days of distance from the source—

not the furied blood of beasts hurried  
to the stanchion, but willed, wild thralling.

Self-inflicted, this is fire work! We cutters gall  
ourselves as fire wounds the wood.

Sibyline, we glide in our scarab-covered coracles,  
waiting for our oracle.

Unheavened, hounded, self-abandoned.  
Witness the spectacle of our pageant:

blood-garneted, garreted, with the five-wound gar,  
saints who suffer voices into something rich and strange,

chimeras speaking through us.  
Augur, mortify us differently. Appease

the knife, our silken mistress. Before the dragnets trawl  
for one more martyr, stanch the ceaseless drip

of bitters in the cells, these tups and wethers of neurosis.  
Curried, blindered, self-afflicted,

pain out to no one but ourselves,  
century, witness us, the martyrs.

## MIDDLE CHILD

You are, in a way, like the last castrato,  
who sang beautifully the pristine higher notes,  
the one everyone silently prefers for your aplomb,  
despite your brother's better looks and brilliant resume.

Now's the dangerous season, Phaeton,  
when you take the hearts of others  
by the reins, not knowing that others  
are merely mortal and made of a flesh that bleeds.

Incendiary that you are, there are  
no legitimate heirs to your kingdom of flame,  
only consumer and consumed,  
the godhead of others' want

tongued to consummation by your fire.  
Lithe and liquid in your masculinity,  
you have gone from not knowing who or what  
you are to knowing that you are

a player, a seducer of the universe,  
on a rare and brilliant roll,  
in a rare and brilliant season,  
come to conquer and maraud,

your spirit called down  
to try on, as if a coat,  
the whirring godhead of other persons.  
The voice that's pleasure is the voice that's heard,

and so to ease the birth of who you are becoming,  
you sing to all the other singers  
this curiously beautiful music,  
strike notes that no one else can touch.



And like Zachaeus, our greatness gone  
and the lesser come upon us,  
we, the old ones,  
climb to catch a glimpse

of your triumphal ride—  
you no carpenter's son.  
We hover on your voice,  
never minding the mutilation.

## SYMPHONY IN RED

—*for an Aries*

And in July, when the harlot weathers mount  
their temperatures, we, conceived during the dog-star hours,

wear the mark of who we are, our origins  
bearing down upon the bodies of our parents, their sloe-ginned

rut. And in January, when others are asleep  
or think us so, we are coupling, snow leopards in heat.

Come into our abode, and we will make you glow  
like blonde sun on hoary snow.

As members of that other scarlet college whose emoluments  
reside in lubricious tongues, who bump and grind as if a parliament

of engines were invested in our loins,  
and pray divine offices on skin, our coin

of realm—carnal, labial, red cardinals of the universal  
church of mouths and tongues that resemble

the swags of bunting you were wrapped in—  
we glory in the red of man as meat becoming

animal. Give us your tongue, dear reader, and we will suck  
you in. We will lick you into luck. We will suck and suckle

you—largo, then quick. You,  
our prey, we pray to bed you.

We are more full of flame  
and voices than shades that abide the dark. Have no shame.

Passion is the Passion.

If flesh be beaten into light, pass

through us as if we were fire,  
flame, the narrow gate: by this you are

measured. Do you think God dead? You are mistaken.  
Give us your head, and we will show you heaven.

We who are conceived in summer heat, as is our nature,  
burn.

SYMPHONY IN MOTH GRAY AND MANGO FLAME: EL JALEO

—after John Singer Sargeant

This box is a jail, as is the body, and time;  
inside it, the guitarist's hard strumming

to the climax because he is not strumming  
the flamenco as he can the guitar with his beautiful

hands that want to touch the beautiful  
curves of her body. He does not touch her except with the fierce fury

of his music, for it is the fury  
of the unspoken, unwinding itself inside the jail.

Who will be the fruit of his many hours of practice alone inside the jail,  
the peach he bites into? We who endure the green-eyed moon and her transits,  
endure his longing,

called by tides of our own, biding our time, longing  
to be called by one such as he who dreams of the flamenco who fled to Argentina,

the wet eel he let slip through his grasp, as he limns a map of Argentina  
on her breasts in his mind, her body unwinding as he plucks

them into bowed flying; and he plucks  
the nectar that has been ripening all winter in the hive, bees circling,

circling, until every peach is plucked, and still circling,  
he tilts himself back into surrender,

and he surrenders,  
and the barred doors of the jail open, as does his body, and time. 

POESÍA (1951)

¿No representa aquel ratón  
con una uva en la mano  
y su hijo en la boca  
a la mantilla española que pende del cuello?

—

Sus brincos deberían ajustarse  
al caramillo.

—

Si los tributos no pueden  
ser implícitos,  
denme diatribas y la fragancia del yodo,  
la bellota del roble de corcho que crece en España;  
la mirada pálida, espesa e impersonal  
del macho en el anuncio de cerveza fuerte y oscura.

—

[no] hasta que los poetas entre nosotros sean  
"literalistas de  
la imaginación" por encima  
de la insolencia, la trivialidad y presenten

para su inspección, "jardines imaginarios  
con sapos de verdad",  
entonces tendremos  
poesía.

---

*Toma la de Pound*

la mujer  
Es un caos  
Un pulpo  
Un proceso biológico.

---

De quintos y séptimos,  
en saltos de dos largos  
como las notas desiguales  
de la flauta beduina; detiene su espiguelo  
en pequeños castores sobre ruedas, dejando huellas  
de helecho a la velocidad del canguro.

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El estudiante lémur puede ver  
que un sí-sí no es

un aguantibo, poto o loria. El  
peso del litoral no debe avergonzar  
al botones con la boya  
que se empeña en pasar

a las patronas del hotel; tampoco podría  
un oído experto confundir el ojo  
de vidrio para taxidermistas

con lentes del optometrista.

---

Un pájaro de latón verde y garganta verde  
suave como la nuez da saltos  
oblicuos de rama en rama, imitando la  
pieza floral china, –átomo eficiente  
en las pirámides de heces de vino azul-rosa  
del árbol de hojas tiesas  
de circularidad  
matemática....

---

La huella  
del venado en el piso de ladrillo de la iglesia  
y una tumba de fino pavimento con una lápida grabada, permanecen.  
Hoy el tremendo almaizo rodeado de vid  
estrellado con flor de hiedra,  
ensombrece la torre de la iglesia;  
Y aquí bajo el sicomoro yace un gran pecador.

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Washington y Gustavo  
Adolfo, perdonen nuestro deterioro.

---

Nada hice en mi interior  
¡Oh crimen de Iscariote!

---

Nada hice en mi interior  
¡Oh crimen de Iscariote!  
La belleza es eterna  
y el polvo momentáneo.

*Traducción de Ana Rosa González Matute* 



DOSSIER

CAN POETRY MATTER?<sup>1</sup>

All poets and readers of poetry ask the question: can poetry matter? We may pose this question in different ways. We may ask if poetry can matter in the wider world, if it has the power to change or even impact how we think or feel, what we believe, how we act, what we want for ourselves and others? Will it win my lover's heart? Keep my children safe? Can it reverse climate change, feed the hungry, effectively support justice or reverse injustices, end war? Can poetry bring about lasting peace?

The question is not whether an individual poem or series of poems has been important to people throughout history. They have been, and powerfully. Such diverse poets as Sappho, Basho, Nguyen Du,<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Rumi, César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmet, Rilke, Ho Chi Minh, Walt Whitman, Czeslaw Milosz, Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, June Jordan, and Joy Harjo are only a few of those whose work continues to change lives. The question is: can poetry as process and product—as genre—matter? And if so, how?

We may ask more intimate questions about poetry, less ambitious perhaps but clearly meaningful for our human community. For example: can poetry nurture hope, can it make us aware, teach, comfort us in times of grief, heal,

inspire? What is poetry's responsibility to language? Can it reveal mysteries, solve problems? Can it shock us to awareness and action, help us negotiate or persuade? What about oral tradition, everyday conversation, accent, inflection, color, risk? How does poetry enrich culture, help write history, retrieve or preserve memory, provide vision and perspective? In what ways does it supplement or perhaps even replace the lies that come down to us in history books written by the victors, biography, essays, even the most thoughtful journalism?

Poetry mattered to my friend Cary Herz. Just a couple of weeks before her death from ovarian cancer, she sent a goodbye email to her friends. She ended her message with a Mary Oliver poem—"In Blackwater Woods"—her parting gift.<sup>3</sup> The gift allowed us to breathe when we received it, and lifted us in recognition when the rabbi read it at Cary's graveside. That poem continues to remind us of our friend, her gentle sensibility, meaningful photography, fierce resistance and gracious farewell. But it does much more than that. The lessons it holds move on many levels. I can think of many such instances when a particular poem or group of poems tempered sorrow, imbued me with courage, flashed an unexpected image, or simply expressed an idea or emotion as nothing else could.

Poems have been smuggled out of prisons, shared on battlefields, passed from hand to hand and generation to generation, scratched on walls, written in diaries and recipe books, distributed on street corners and carried cross-county by hobos riding the freight trains of the 1930s. They have inhabited public spaces and been whispered in ears, bringing otherwise indescribable events and people to life in stunning ways. Their humor makes us laugh. Their truth can take our breath away. Their concise complexity may transmit more, and more powerfully, than any piece of prose. Their ability to evoke emotion often makes them purveyors of experience in ways that more expository writing cannot.

It is obvious that poetry changes language. Cultural change influences what is permissible, what may be judged redundant or acceptable. What startles or reinvents later nestles securely in the lexicon. It is also clear that each new communicative tool—the telegraph, telephone, computer, cell phone, I-Pod, Blackberry, Kindle, and other constantly evolving electronic devices—can rejuvenate poetry. Chatting, twittering and text-messaging push language toward brevity; urge us to say what we mean, and now. But they also do more. Typographical layout

and rhythm emerge from how life is lived. We continue to marvel at old parchments and the beauty of hand-set type, but these rapidly evolving techniques continually reinvent themselves and change how we speak to one another. The way a poet reads out loud to an audience, and that audience's response, can also change a poem forever. Meaning follows.

Perhaps it is poetry's ability to reduce an idea or emotion to its minimum expression that gives it such staying power.

I came to poetry in a particular time and series of places. Like so many in my generation, in school I was forced to commit to memory monotonous poems I did not understand and to which I couldn't relate. One teacher's sing-song recitation of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha" robbed them of interest and meaning. Another's rendition of Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven" obliterated any connection I might have made between that poem and my own experience. Shakespeare's sonnets, too, were rendered boring or unintelligible. This distortion—sadly all too common in what passes for education—convinced me I hated poetry back then.

The first time I felt a poem radically change me was a few years later, just after I'd fled my only year of university. It was 1956. At a party in Albuquerque's East Mountains someone read out loud from a recently published book: City Lights' little black and white edition of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. I was riveted, not only by the words and cadence but by the ferocity and spirit of its title poem, what it revealed to me about my generation's passion and longing against a backdrop of 1950s conformity, hypocrisy, ugliness and lies. What it revealed to me about myself.

I wrote to Ginsberg, care of City Lights. I told him I would meet him on a particular street corner in San Francisco, on such and such a date. I remember driving all day and all night, never doubting he would be there. At the appointed time I went to the street corner and waited. Ginsberg didn't show. Years later, when we became friends on New York City's Lower East Side, we laughed at my provincial naïveté.

I was never really part of the Beat scene. My own incipient verse owed more to the traditions of Black Mountain and Deep Image, to William Carlos Williams and—when I began to live in a Spanish-speaking world—César Vallejo.

But “Howl” ripped me open, exposed me to myself; which I believe is one of the things a successful poem must do.

In 1961 I went to Mexico City, the beginning of a quarter century journey that would include Cuba, North Vietnam, Peru, and Nicaragua. Alone in the new city, I found my way to the *Zona Rosa*,<sup>4</sup> to the apartment of U.S. American beat poet Philip Lamantía and Lucille, the woman who was then his wife. On any given night a group of young poets gathered there—from Mexico, other parts of Latin America and the United States. Despite the fact that few of us read or spoke the others’ language with anything resembling fluency, we shared new poems, listened to unfamiliar rhythms, commented on unexpected subject matter. These impromptu salons pointed up a deep need for a forum in which we might publish, translate, and come to know each other’s work.

Mexican poet Sergio Mondragón and I decided to create such a forum. This was the energized sixties, in one of the most culturally alive urban centers on the continent. We founded and co-edited a bilingual literary journal, *El Corno Emplumado / The Plumed Horn*,<sup>5</sup> where we were soon publishing an eclectic mix of work by independent poets from all over the world; including Ginsberg for the first time in Spanish and Ernesto Cardenal for the first time in English. The journal ran for eight and a half years. We produced quarterly issues averaging two to three hundred pages. *El Corno Emplumado* was a focal point in a renaissance that lifted cutting-edge literature out of the academy and placed it at the center of creativity and change.

Reading and listening to a great deal of poetry in Spanish also gave me something important. I believe that knowing more than one language greatly enriches one’s ability to explore each. If I had learned more than two languages, my relationship to language itself would have benefited even more. Those eight years, in which editing a bilingual journal not only put me in touch with poets writing in English and Spanish but with translations from other languages, provided an intimacy with the written and spoken word impossible to overstate.

Physically, in that era before the Internet, writing and publishing depended on inadequate postal systems, the linotype and letterpress capabilities of small one-person print shops, very occasionally a long-distance telephone call. We prided ourselves on our independence. Every day we would visit our neighborhood post

office box, where dozens of letters and manuscripts awaited. We walked the streets for advertising, hawked copies of each issue at local bookstores, and sat on our living room floor to fill five- or ten-copy orders destined for everywhere.

This was long before computers, which would later change my own poetry dramatically; or email which today makes communication with remote parts of the world instantaneous. Cut and paste may be the late twentieth century's greatest gift to poets. Internet research tools and Spell Check are equally valuable.

In 1961, coming as I did from a country still repressed by McCarthy's chill, contact with young Latin Americans taught me that poets can write about anything. I'd absorbed the stultifying nineteen fifties notion that politics could not be part of poetry: good poetry, the academy warned, had to be "beyond politics." In Latin America and other parts of the world poets understood that only imitation, sentimentality, cliché, untruth, or a lack of respect for the word could be dangerous to the poem. We wrote about what we knew, what was most vital to our experience. What was most vital to the experience of many young poets in the 1960s, '70s and '80s was the need for social change.

In Latin America I also discovered oral tradition. It exists all over the world, of course, including and richly in my own United States. But, perhaps because their oral traditions were more valued culturally, the poets I met in the 1960s were closer to them than I had been to mine. They explored their people's rhythms of speech and included them in their work. When I began doing oral history, especially with women, I too came to understand how vital local jargon, cadence, and inflection can be to the transmission of living ideas; and I began to incorporate ordinary people's speech patterns into my verse. Back in the late 1950s, when I first showed up in New York City as an incipient poet, the novelist and dramatist Paddy Chayefsky had urged me to spend an hour or so a day on a busy city street corner, then come home and see how much of what I'd heard I could accurately record. By the time I got to Latin America I'd developed a practiced ear.

And yes, we believed poetry could change the world. We said as much in a number of the journal's editorials; and the poems we published—by Catholic priests, leftist guerrillas, indigenous shamans, students, literary scholars, and ordinary working men and women—echoed the idea in one way or another.

As I say, we were young and naïve and endowed rather more with energy and excitement than with a realistic perception of the relative importance of our own work in the grand scheme of things. We intuited the ways in which word incarnates and moves—something a number of cultural traditions have known and practiced for millennia.

The best poems inhabit a magical sphere where the word transmutes to energy and energy regroups in ways we do not completely understand. This mystery itself is part of the poem's magic, what gives it its power. Language, sound, silences are—in addition to meaning—made up of molecules, synapse, memory, music, pulse, color, light. Combining these elements in new and different ways traces new and different pathways to and from the poem.

I no longer believe that poetry alone can change the world. But poetry matters, perhaps more than we know. In fact, we ignore or write off its unquantifiable, intuitive, magical qualities at our peril—especially in times of crisis. I am sure poetry has a role to play within the living vibrant ever-changing community of those of us who hope we will not perish through our own ignorance, apathy, and greed.

I would like to conclude by reading two poems. The first is mine; it can be considered a political poem, I suppose, but I prefer to think of it as poetic response to all that surrounds us now—the body of the land as well as the body politic. It is, in fact, called

Imagine a Body

I say it is fear. Long way down  
from this rocky ledge,  
imagine a body  
hurtling through air  
its years shrinking to seconds  
view of the world cut clean,  
never, or never again.

I say it is hunger gnawing  
at bellies and bones

simple arithmetic  
between the teeth  
who decides  
who deserves to eat  
and who to die.

I say what happens to them  
can happen to us, you, me,  
change of direction  
no severance pay  
or clean sheets  
water salving  
lips peeled horizon-dry.

I say denial, self-satisfied  
suits, dash of color  
the expensive tie.  
I say greed  
speaking to greed  
pointing recognition's finger,  
thank you and good day.

In an almost perfect world  
they would have to answer  
for their crimes.  
In the world we have  
we are grateful  
for comforting discourse  
hiding more of the same.

The second is by the great César Vallejo, still not as well-known as he should be among U.S. American writers and readers. Vallejo was born in 1892 in a small town of the Peruvian highlands. As a young man he was a teacher,

and produced a couple of early poetry collections before moving to Paris late in the decade of the 1920s. He would never return to his native land, but his astonishing linguistic innovation would change the Spanish language forever. I think it is safe to say there isn't a poet of note writing in Spanish who does not owe something to Vallejo.

In the 1930s Vallejo visited a young Soviet Union, prompting several important essays. His greatest book of poetry was published posthumously as *Poemas humanos* (*Human Poems*). He traveled to Spain during that country's civil war, an experience which gave birth to his final book: *Spain, Take From Me This Chalice* (1937).

César Vallejo died in Paris in 1938 as he himself predicted in "Black Stone on White Stone," one of the poems in his earlier *Nómina de huesos* (*Litany of Bones*), which begins: "I will die in Paris in a sudden rain, / a day I can already remember..." The Vallejo poem I want to end with is called "Masses." Because none of the published translations satisfy me, I will read my own:

#### Masses

The battle was over,  
the combatant dead, and a man approached  
pleading: "Don't die, I love you so!"  
But the corpse, ay, it kept on dying.

Two came and they too implored:  
"Don't leave us! Courage! Return to life!"  
But the corpse, ay, it kept on dying.

Twenty, a hundred, a thousand, five hundred thousand  
arrived, crying out: "So much love powerless against death!"  
But the corpse, ay, it kept on dying.

Millions surrounded him  
with a single plea: "Don't leave us, brother!"  
But the corpse, ay, it kept on dying.



Then all the earth's inhabitants  
surrounded him; the corpse looked at them in sorrow,  
was moved, slowly rose  
to embrace the first man; began to walk...

So yes, I say, poetry does matter. If we learn to listen, it can tell us everything.

## NOTES

1. Based on a presentation given at a panel that was part of the September 13, 2008 Stir Poetry Festival, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The panel was organized by Albuquerque poet Lisa Gill, who titled it in honor of Dana Gioia's 1991 essay by the same name.
2. Vietnamese poet (1766-1820) whose epic *Tale of Kieu* millions recite by heart.
3. Mary Oliver, *American Primitive* (Boston: Little, Brown), 1983.
4. The Zona Rosa was a few square blocks in the city's Colonia Cuauhtemoc, frequented at the time by artists and writers.
5. The name of the journal referred to the jazz horn from the United States and the plumes of Mexico's pre-Columbian Quatzalcoatl, symbolizing the important contributions of both cultures. *El Corno Emplumado: A History of the Sixties* is an excellent film now available on DVD.

EXCERPTS FROM *MY TOWN*

*For my brother, John*

THIS COULD HAVE HAPPENED

When the dog of invasion  
bit my shoulder  
I hardly felt his teeth.

It's his wild lunge and growl  
still embedded in that tissue  
of memory

behind my eyes,  
the animal sound  
of canines ripping flesh.

This could have happened  
at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Central  
or where desert gathers

its sandy folds  
against the mountain's face.  
The place no longer holds

its coordinates  
and so I wake each night  
from a fever of battered dream.

## SWAYING LEFT

Along a dirt road high on the Río Grande bluff  
a low adobe house urged us forward,  
my lover promising its writer of modest fame  
would prove a gracious host.

Writer and wife cared for Coronado Monument;  
ancient ruin bearing the insult of its Spanish name  
but alive with the paintings  
of those who lived there centuries before.

They welcomed us to spend the night  
in their warm shed. I cannot remember  
why we didn't drive back to Albuquerque,  
twenty miles if that.

It was the woman who claimed my heart that night.  
One-armed, she told us it was hard  
walking back from Bernalillo  
balancing groceries against a spring wind.

The lover who brought me there has been gone  
for decades, those caretakers dead as well.  
Coronado's Monument now crowns its bluff  
with museum and paid staff.

Closing my eyes I see a phantom woman  
swaying left to balance her lost arm,  
struggling along a road now paved,  
bringing food to her man who writes at home.

## WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION 1

Dry heaves sucked air from sky  
but only for seconds,  
we'd look up, then at one another,  
astonishment mixed with hometown pride  
as if to say: isn't it something—  
acknowledging life  
abetted by new technology  
breaking the barrier of sound.

No one protested those sudden jolts  
to consciousness and breath,  
no one extrapolated beyond our own ear drums  
vibrating high above familiar range,  
at least no one we knew,  
no one they hadn't taken away somewhere  
and hidden behind a veil  
of see no, hear no, speak no evil.

At Los Alamos they were building  
a weapon of mass destruction  
with Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the cross hairs.  
Oppenheimer and his crew  
planted their promise of vaporizing death  
in the cedar-scented forests of northern New Mexico.  
Japanese children, skin soft as children's everywhere,  
marked for the agony to come.

In the off-limits neighborhood  
we called The Base  
fighter planes lifted into the sky  
then roared back to earth  
tearing at the rhythm of our breath  
like Gulliver's hammer on Lilliput Island.

Hometown pride garbled the questions  
some of us would ask  
as we grew to our own sad certainty.

When my mother's hair fell out  
she said  
it must have been the things they did back then.

## WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION 2

Hiroshima: alive one day—a couple about to wed,  
the family sitting at grandmother's bedside,  
homes and public gardens,  
their little curved bridges and pristine trees.  
In less than a minute  
heat like the sun exploding  
sucks air from air, flesh and flowers and song:  
all silent.

Two days later Nagasaki also disappears,  
footnote to hearts split open  
from Hanoi to Havana, Cape Town to Berlin.  
Still, for those in that second city  
skin melts to bone,  
before and after rises stark, cuts as deep,  
sounds as tortured in echoing ears.

In Albuquerque: two hours south of the cluster of labs  
hidden among New Mexico's pungent forests,  
not much farther north of Alamogordo's test site  
where the bomb to end all wars  
was introduced as Trinity: a three in one  
of secrecy, deception and death,

all we got was the lie about preemption saving lives,  
ending a war already won,  
and the lonely pilot of a plane carrying infamy  
whose memoir sold out  
because the story of one white man makes better news  
than two hundred thousand foreign dead.

## SAM

I am sitting on the ground, near a tree but not leaning against it. I know this because I can see clear blue sky behind my head. A sudden flurry of blackbirds rises off the ground, momentarily obscuring my face and, as it does, face and neck disappear. Like a canvass wiped clean of image, only the calm blue sky remains. My bare shoulders show unblemished skin, not a drop of blood. My body from neck down is still there, in its original seated position.

Waking from this dream, I know I must write about Sam Jacobs. Our lives joined briefly in Albuquerque when I was just 18, he a year older. We'd met the summer before, on the S.S. Queen Mary—the original. After high school graduation, my family spent the summer in Europe, sailing on one of the lower decks: tourist accommodations they were called back then, a grade up from steerage. Sam and his family were in first class, but he appeared one night—rich boy's swagger hiding the insecurity always brooding just beneath the surface—and said "Come on, I know how to get us into a wild dance."

I followed the young man who told tales that had me flying. He was from Cincinnati, a wealthy family that kept horses. His father ran a chain of department stores. The year before he had climbed the Matter Horn—I barely knew it was a mountain—and there were few musical instruments he couldn't play. Cincinnati's Black dance clubs and minor league ice hockey were also part of his repertoire. Deftly hidden was his childhood stint at the Menninger Clinic and the oozing rash spilling from inside each elbow beneath a freshly pressed long-sleeved shirt.

I thought I was in love; it would be years before I understood that Sam had been my ticket out, escape from home. In the 1950s a young woman like me couldn't imagine leaving on her own.

When we returned from summer in Europe a letter from Sam was waiting. Would I visit him over Christmas break? He met me at the Greyhound terminal and drove me to the family home. His mother was sweet, older sister friendly, and father acceptably welcoming behind his constant highball breath. The closest Sam got, over the years, to sharing his childhood trauma was mention of a feared

hair brush—perhaps his father’s weapon of choice. Sometimes he dreamt about that brush. The next morning the rash would be worse. He favored brown cotton work shirts, an indelible unguent discoloring all their sleeves.

On that visit I lost my virginity, and did indeed feel something had been lost. Or perhaps just nothing gained. Sam asked if the sex hurt, a question meant to be reassuring. I told him no. And I didn’t complain when he sent me home a day early, confidently explaining he had a date with a “hot” girl he just had to see. I boarded my bus with his hockey stick in hand. The thick black tape wound about its long handle offered a mysterious sense of belonging.

The letters continued and, two months later—February, 1954—, we eloped to Ciudad Juárez, six hours south of Albuquerque just over the Mexican border. Not a total elopement, since we’d told my parents where we were headed. His didn’t know. I wore a periwinkle blue knit skirt and sweater, the latter with a fuzzy angora mock turtleneck collar, my favorite outfit at the time. In Las Cruces we stopped to buy rings. Sam chose a plain band in white gold, I a narrower yellow one. Together they set us back \$19. After a few days his father appeared. He tried to persuade Sam to have the marriage annulled. The son stood up to the father, and I remained Mrs. Sam Jacobs.

The end of my first semester of college saw me looking for a job. Clearly it was more important for the man to study than the woman. Besides, I already knew I was going to be a writer. Sam started philosophy, switched to geology and then music. He’d exude enthusiasm until something new caught his fancy. The one constant was his belief that he knew everything and was always right. I learned to justify his bravado and cover for his mistakes. He worked too. I especially remember a milk route because there wasn’t a single week his accounts weren’t off, sometimes a few dollars over, more often several short.

We lived in an efficiency apartment on Copper, a single room on the second floor of a square white building in the middle of an empty lot. I baked casseroles of Campbell’s Cream of Celery Soup and canned tuna topped with grated cheese. Smelling of beer and rotten teeth, the aging landlord would come by each month for the rent. Once I opened our door in my long yellow bathrobe and when I



held out the money he wouldn't let go of my hand. Voicing my fear would have been unthinkable.

Sam was bored with life in Albuquerque, so I was bored. He decided we would travel to India. Despite our not having had a big wedding, friends of both families had legitimized our union with the usual gifts: the pressure-cooker, vacuum cleaner, pots and serving platters of every material and shape. We sold them all and got enough to buy a Lambretta motor scooter, sister to the Vespa but, Sam assured me, a much better deal for the price. I didn't question his judgment. We had \$400 left over, a small fortune in the mid 1950s.

We rode off one morning, outfitted with backpacks and sleeping bags from our local Army Surplus store, my family waving goodbye until we disappeared out old Route 66 to the east. I remember little of the trip across country, or even of our transatlantic crossing on one of the Holland America ships. Memory remains sharper of our trip down through central Europe, from Rotterdam to Belgium and across the Pyrenees into Spain. We'd named our scooter Friendly. She did 35 miles per hour, tops.

We never made it to India. By the time we reached southern Spain our money was almost gone. Hitting an oil slick on narrow pavement damaged Friendly enough that we had to take her across to Genoa, Italy for repairs. I remember sitting for a week in a dim garage, trying hard to coax elemental Italian from poorly-learned high school Spanish. Genoa was filled with buildings of black and white striped marble. Youth hostels and student eateries were as plentiful there as they'd been through central Europe.

Soon, though, we were broke. Our scooter fixed, we ended up in Madrid. The extremes of Sam's belligerence surfaced when he tried to talk me into prostituting myself for food. I preferred scavenging through garbage cans while he adjusted to my first refusal to do what he thought best. After a month I found work: as a maid at a student boarding house. I have never forgotten its address: *Calle Magalanes #19*. Occupying half an apartment building floor, it was a large place with rooms up and down one long hall. I cleaned and made beds; Sam ran errands. We slept in the kitchen on a narrow fold-down metal cot.

Soon the woman who owned the *pensión* asked if I could also do the food shopping. By this time I had made friends with some of the prostitutes who lived in our floor's other apartment. They mostly worked at night and slept during the day, and one of them—Juana—was happy to take me with her to the market, pointing to each item and slowly pronouncing its name until my utilitarian Spanish improved. Juana and I became friends. After a particularly brutal police raid, I visited her in jail. I cried when I saw her head shaved.

Sam eventually found a job in the southern city of Seville. The U.S. was building a military base and hiring civilians to work on an oil pipeline there. We must have found out about the possibility at the Embassy in Madrid; back then young travelers like us frequented our country's embassies in search of aid or information. We ended up living in Seville for more than a year, in a rooftop apartment in the tree-lined *Barrio Santa Cruz* which we shared with a Swede named Bo and John from New Jersey.

I grew a lot that year. The living situation broadened my knowledge of places and people, and allowed me to imagine life without Sam. One day, while my husband was at work, Bo and I crawled into bed together. I was looking for sex without violence. We just lay there, beside one another and fully clothed. Still, for me the unconsummated event bore the shame of early transgression.

But even with Sam the time in Seville offered a lot. We met a group of Flamenco dancers at a club called *El Patio Andalúz*, and traded the young men and women English lessons for classes in dance. Sam dabbled in Flamenco guitar. Before we left Seville the club's owner put us in the backup *cuadro* for a week.

We returned to Albuquerque, and with the money we'd saved in Spain bought a tiny house, a compact square containing living room, bedroom, kitchen and bath. It was on Grove Street NE, out by the Fair Grounds, and a high pumice block wall surrounded the back yard. Sam's boxer accidentally hanged herself trying to jump that wall; the rope he had left her on was too long or not long enough.

In later years I sold that house for \$10,000. Since my more recent return to Albuquerque I tried to find the old place, until I realized several blocks of Grove no

longer existed as a residential neighborhood; the state fair grounds had swallowed them whole.

I went back to work, this time for an engineering company that wrote operation and maintenance manuals for the Redstone and other missile programs. New Mexico was a hub of military activity. I even had top secret clearance. I remember we couldn't use typewriter ribbons more than once on that job, having to dispose of them through the narrow slots in locked trash cans. Sam went back to school.

My husband's instability began showing itself more frequently. He sought a therapist who happened to be experimenting with LSD, and suffered a psychotic break.

When Sam was okay, life together seemed possible. Sometimes he played music with my father and his friends. My parents pretended to like him. When he wasn't okay, I did my best to preserve the mask. I made an appointment with the surgeon who had operated on my mother's cancer; he was the only doctor I knew. When I told him I had come to talk about hating sex, he stopped looking directly at me and wrote the name of a book on a prescription blank, then shoved it across his desk. The book was *The Joy of Sex*. I bought a copy. Sam was enthusiastic but it didn't help.

Sam's parents visited us and we spent a few days at Red River Valley in the northern part of New Mexico. By this time they had accepted me as their daughter-in-law, despite our inauspicious beginnings, stark class difference, and my own parents' less than enthusiastic response to anyone Jewish. Sitting together at a picnic table in that mountain retreat Elizabeth waxed intimate. She asked what kind of a husband Sam was. Wonderful, I lied.

But he wasn't wonderful, and neither was our marriage. After several more emotional crises, I decided his family was better equipped than I to care for him. He was in a local sanitarium when I called them to say I'd had enough; would they please come and take him home? Released from the hospital, just before

leaving town, he managed to burn every piece of writing I'd produced to date. I was left with all our material possessions.

I remember filing for divorce down at the old Albuquerque Court House. I wore red, and paid an extra \$100 for the return of my maiden name. Twenty-one, and alone—or free—depending on how it felt from day to day.

And that might have been the end of Sam in my life. Except it wasn't.

After I'd moved to New York I got a call one day from Sam's cousin Jean. We'd met briefly during the marriage. Now she said Sam was doing well, still institutionalized but with weekend passes, and he'd like to visit if I was willing. We met at a West Village Theater where Brecht's "Three Penny Opera" was enjoying a long run. After the show we had drinks at a bar across the street. We talked for several hours. I remember the meeting as awkward and sad.

That was the last time I saw Sam. But some thirty years later a chance encounter wrote the final chapter to this story. I had given a poetry reading at the University of California, Santa Barbara. As the large auditorium began to empty I noticed a woman, sitting alone, who didn't appear to be leaving. I was about to exit when she approached, introducing herself as Elaine. "I'm Sam Jacobs' widow," she began.

Elaine wanted to fill me in on Sam's life after our marriage. She told me he had been married a second time before they met, but not for long. He had managed to make it through the rough years, gone back to school, and earned a doctorate. She had family photo albums. Sam had been an Assistant Professor of Ergonomics at UC Santa Barbara, where his colleagues and students loved him. Then, in 1977 at the age of 42, he died quite suddenly of a heart attack. He left two young daughters, Dasha and Shira. "Ours was a happy marriage," Elaine told me. "He always felt badly about how he treated you."

In the dream a flock of blackbirds make off with my head. But nothing is really lost. Blue sky propels me to wakefulness.

## UNBURDENED

Just north of the city, on Cochiti land,  
fairy cones embrace a narrow canyon  
where force of water and wind  
shape undulating secrets.

As the sun rises in open sky  
light bathes rock swirls  
spilling pink and orange and purple  
into its narrow crevices.

Like Antelope further north  
a radiant dance  
pulls answers to new questions  
from the darkness of earth.

Growing up we were taught  
which questions to ask  
and which answers  
brought success.

No one pointed us to slot canyons  
slicing earth, drawing light  
to reveal different questions  
or answers unburdened by fear.

## VERDANT

Verdant has her eye on me,  
color and promise  
at home in a tropical rainforest  
Ireland's emeralds  
or clinging to the moss-covered face  
of a boulder bleeding morning dew.

As cross-wind of my desert  
as dancing dolphins  
or African lion,  
verdant whispers look  
and I fall into moist frenzy.

She sings to me and a ribbon of sound  
begins in the pain  
of my right foot's broken middle toe,  
grows louder as it rises  
through ankle, knee, thigh

exploding symphonic overkill  
in my cracked lungs  
then slowing to stillness as I close my eyes  
remembering Precambrian seas  
what my land was like millennia ago,  
what place the seed of my seed  
will inhabit next time around.


## DREAM ME

I want to believe statehood in 1912  
dreamed my 1947 arrival

just as the city's seventeenth century plaza  
dreamed today's cluster of skyscrapers,

or native inhabitants  
living along the sinuous Río Grande

knew bearded men with guns and cross  
would bring a time of terror and death.

What questions do we ask of our dreams?  
What stories do they tell us  
in the darkness of night? 

REINA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ

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FOUR TEXTS FROM *OTHER LETTERS TO MILENA* (2003)  
WITH IMAGES BY LILI MAYA

PASSAGE OF CLOUDS

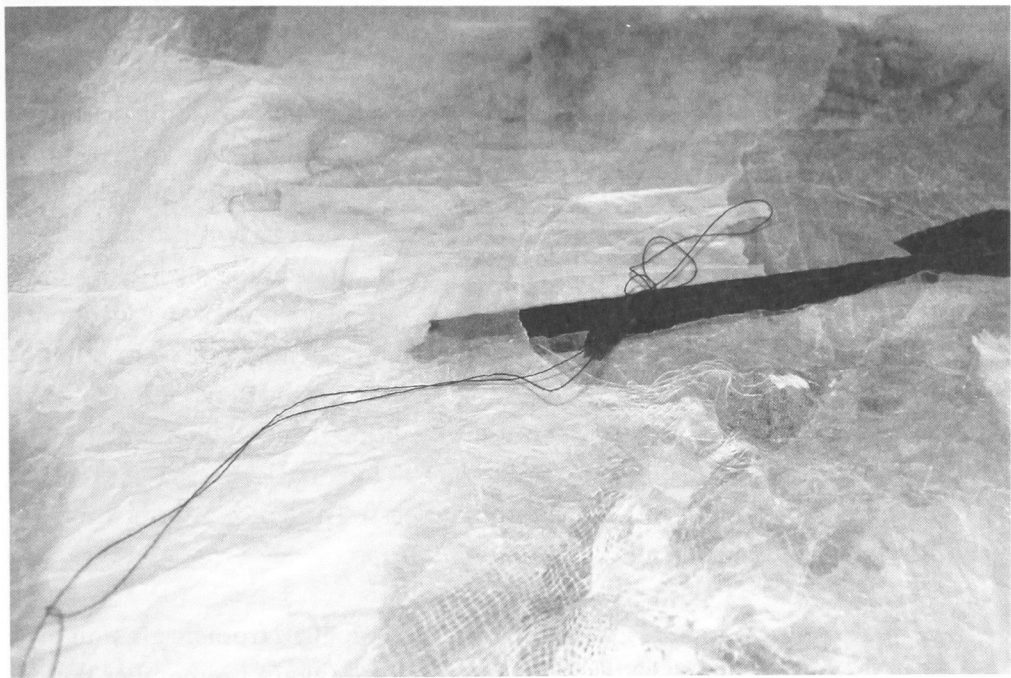
*Noon (18 September 1994)*

Noah's Ark: great embarkation in which Noah and his family, and a certain number of animals, were saved from the deluge. Wooden box; receptacle for collecting water; receptacle for safeguarding the tablets of the law; crate or space in which various things are enclosed...

Here too various things are enclosed. Destinies. Possibilities. Temples and palaces. Columns and obelisks; pyramids and ziggurat blurring toward choppy water. Baptisms (iconographies), another art of a form—as in ancient sculpture—from beyond the island city of Argos. Their motion appears ungainly. Reliefs that filled reality, or the walls (a man semi-reclining in the sand); the reclining statue of a Meroitic man. The pyramid is a pyramid of boats. One raft carries a doll leaning on the oars. And at the coastline a horse waits to see whether the tide will rise or not this time. He sees them moving away into the distance, the size and dimension of their figures expanding as they get farther away, disappearing into the horizon's confine. The children have always played by rafts, which capsize



and resurface as the weight of their hands pulls away. But this time, the rafts rise and evade the arm that attempts to restrain them—and as if all the white water were about to spill in sprays of foam, a cloud adheres to the arm of the boy seeing them off. Some boats will sink for good between the sand and the undertow; others will touch up against the line of limitation. We'll always have our suspicions about the one that ran aground, the one that came back, the one that made land. This is an Island; the children grew up playing with its rafts. Many people soaked up to the chest with water are praying on the island. I see the girl's eyes, the floating carousel where her brothers have gone, the desolation. My favorite doll is gone too. And that raft—the shroud at the center, with an old man whose back is always to my camera, who doesn't want to turn his feet to leave—it's the grandfather. Boats of wood, asphalt and Styrofoam. Christ at the front of the caravan—a realist painting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—at the bow. Or this other one, its mast a cross made from sticks, passes by, off to confront the rolling of the void in the wind. Sides of zinc and rubber, melted tire. A boy and a cloud—and a horse, who approaches to drink from a brackish sun—they've seen how all the others go off, lost behind some vague boundary.



## THE OCTOPUS

In the beginning the Goddess of all Things sprang naked from Chaos, but she found nothing solid on which to place her feet. Consequently she divided the ocean from the firmament and danced off alone across the waves. Turning again she seized the north wind, kneaded it between her hands...

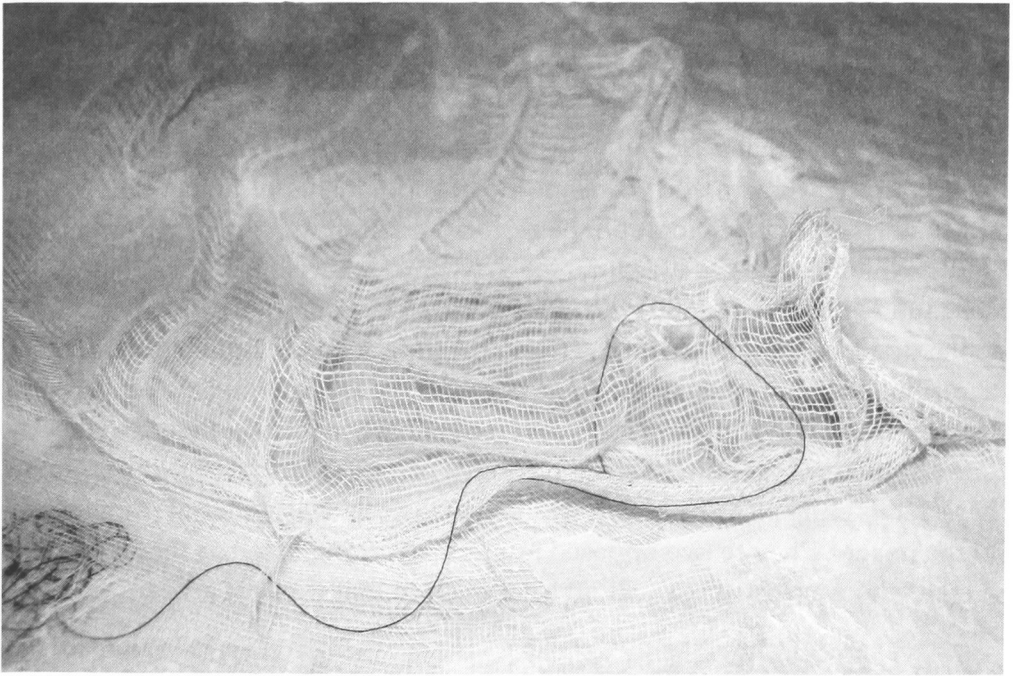
"Fernanda's Galleon" departed from there, towed by a Chevrolet toward the beach, toward the sunset. Shards of violet and red light through the thickets. The footsteps have been erased by the north wind, which the Goddess of all Things brought, and then they were lost (they: the things, the steps). But the octopus is capable of remembering, and capable of compounding its memories. The horse shudders at the smell of octopus in the night—a pilgrimage toward the void; a pilgrimage toward the bottom of the sea; schizophrenia born of necessity—inhuman shapes and forms that the octopus sucks in. It holds itself like a man, standing, its head hooded, eyes giant, with the voluptuousness of an executioner. This entire night has been recorded, sucked in, by the head of the octopus at the coastline. It hides, it spies. The marine arachnid has felt the blow of the pilgrimage toward nothingness, toward deep solitude. It too fears and remembers "the children's crusade." (The horse does not want to look back at what takes place, avoids the encroachment of total darkness, flees.) The voices, shouts, moans, laughter, prayers, barking, all go the way of the Tao.

At daybreak some fragments that the octopus had repelled from its gigantic eyes return to the beach. Evil and the ocean are innocent (again I remember Baudelaire's "emphatic truth of gesture" in the grand circumstances of life).



## THE FIGUREHEAD

The boat's figurehead is an Indian. The man who looks back—toward sunrise—is poised still between the illusion and the beach; between desire and reality; at an intermediary point between reason and injustice...“a subject wobbling between two languages, the one expressive, the other critical...” But I will not judge him. The pyramid of green canvas and the Indian: they'll conquer new lands all over again. It's the ship of fools, the desperate, who try to scare fish away by drawing a shark's head on the prow—“dog doesn't eat dog,” he tells me. They put in at Cojímar, at Guanabo, Santa Fe, at the bay of Havana itself. The background scenery consists of a lighthouse, the Morro castle, the fortress of San Carlos de La Cabaña. From the rooftops other voices shout, a chorus, and perform a macabre dance, they wave shreds of clothing, cloths... Ta ba sa (face to face), the boy cries again, in Sanskrit. Within the multitude I find the day, and the shoulders of these men who didn't exist for me before. At dawn, the Indian moving away from his beach sees the row of arms falling to the water; the row of knees bending to make their offerings to Yemayá, asking her permission to cross the sea. (The Goddess of all Things granted hers.) Sails from sacks, rituals of initiation at sunrise: the triumph of myth. Surprise as a point of departure; the return to a kind of mentality in which there is no connection of any kind between an action and the objective it indicates. The wonder of primitive phenomena, phenomena on which we too rely, waiting to learn our fate. We know they rest on ancient strata (for expressions like these, Taylor introduced the term *supervivance*). *Survivorships*. Generally speaking, what causes a form of cultural expression to acquire the status of a reasonable act? Pre-logical interpretation of blessing and curse (those who have been blessed have always been cursed at the same time). The true cause refers back to the world of perpetually occult powers and for this, knowledge of natural law is a form of attentiveness. Why not? Survivorship is the only real stimulus shaping the species.





## THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The photographer shows us how to pursue danger. Spurring the craft of fabrication he situates his camera, which transforms into bait and salt, as it has before. Among shipwrecked people, the photographer arrives at the horizon. I chase after him. Who could guide me? "The thing that photography infinitely reproduces has taken place on one single occasion." That single occasion sufficient for germination. The photographer is an actor and a spectator inside the space of his photograph. He can't judge. He participates. The photographer has no pre-existing ideology; he is an act, and his action precedes verbalization or speech. The photographer is a specter, a ghost who materializes in the eye through its gaze. It's the eye that sees, and there is no more speech. I chase after him. While he sets up his camera and revels in the abandonments of horror. His vigil is constant. With that photograph, he restored a painting he had left unfinished in the exhibition: he gave his final touch to time—this is his form of heroism—consuming in every instant, with every click, a face, a body, a shipwreck. He too is the octopus, the other octopus. He transitions from one tonality to another, according to the emotion of the scene. Two wide, dark eyes and the pupils of the truest eyes, dilated with the pleasures of recreating. Between the night and the day, one octopus spying from the sea and another octopus, diurnal (the diurnal one is here in this entry). The two have swallowed their images with salt (cannibalism of the image). They're two opposed hunters, returning to tell us the story about a man who was lost at sea...about a commotion that was lost at sea.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

*Several pieces in Other Letters to Milena invoke dates in 1994. Placed alongside imagery of oceans, rafts, and migration, the dates hint at a particular sort of social resonance for the texts. María Cristina García has charted major waves of Cuban migration in the late twentieth century. In her formulation, the first three waves of greatest post-1959 movement occurred in the immediate post-revolution years of 1959-1962, the "Freedom Flight" years of 1965-1973, and the Mariel Boatlift events of 1980. 1994 then represents a fourth major peak.*

*This year is associated with the balseros who set out in homemade rafts and small boats to cross the Florida Straits. At the time islanders were struggling with a new post-Soviet phase in daily life, a period of profound economic crisis; important international partnerships were disappearing as the US embargo continued to restrict islanders' options. García writes, "The balseros of 1994 are different [from the earlier three migrant groups] in the sheer number of people who have made the journey. In one five-week period alone, from August 5 to September 10, the U.S. Coast Guard picked up 30,305 Cubans at sea. These balseros are also different in that they left their homeland with tacit approval from the Castro government" (Havana USA, ix). Many individuals did not survive the crossing.*

*As Rodríguez engages that history, she also extends her ongoing fascination with photography. In several books she has raised questions about documentation and medium, asking how to translate memories into image, image into text. Notably, these four pieces appeared in her book without any photographs. Artist Lili Maya created her accompanying images in 2009.*

Translated by Kristin Dykstra 



JULIÁN HERBERT

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DUEÑA DEL ÁFRICA  
(ROMANCE)

*para Mónica*

Servía en Orán al rey un español con dos lanzas  
y con el alma y la vida  
a una gallarda africana... ¿Dormirías si este cuento  
dejara de escurrir su arrullo/invernadero,  
su música robada: lagar de pesadilla en que tu hermana,  
Juana de Arco, se refresca contigo  
—ambas bajo la ducha, ámbar entre los pies?

Párvulas. Una reliquia  
de vapor en cada pecho. Minarettes  
sumergidos tras mosaico.

Era un sueño sin viento. Casi  
soluble de lo sano. Pero te despertó.

Afortunadamente.

4:45 a.m.  
Hora y cuarto  
para llegar  
al aeropuerto.

tan noble como hermosa  
tan amante como amada  
con quien estaba una noche  
cuando tocaron al arma

Intenté enderezarme pero  
me retuviste: “Todavía no te vayas.  
Tuve un sueño asqueroso. Estábamos  
mi hermana y yo bajo *esta* regadera,  
sonámbulas, bañándonos. Ella tenía  
el rostro de Juana de Arco. Se moría de la risa y  
me orinaba los pies”. Yo había extraído huesos

tuyos rotos. Astillas de ocho sílabas: “me quede  
cumpla y vaya”; “tan dulce  
como enojada”. (Llevábamos apenas  
dos meses durmiendo juntos.) Me los roí por dentro  
hasta volver en ti.

“*Servía en Orán al rey*. También soñé  
que mi hermano era un santo. Su cabeza  
conversaba conmigo desde un plato de alpaca”.  
Pensar en Jorge me hizo pensar en aeropuertos:  
la vez que César y yo fuimos por él. Había vivido  
cuatro años en Yokohama. Le costó un par de horas  
hablar en español con naturalidad.

“Tengo que levantarme.  
Voy a perder el vuelo.”

NADIE-HABLA-EN-ESPAÑOL-CON-NATURALIDAD

Me paré (desnudo piso, la fría  
oscuridad) y abrí la regadera (“en *esta* regadera”).  
Una vigilia de sombra hizo el agua salaz, fraternal  
y amarilla.

“Prende la luz si quieres”, me dijiste. Y

“¿Quién?”

Antes de zambullirme  
aspiré tus secreciones untadas a mis piernas.  
Olor empalagoso pero a la vez huidizo:  
un traspasío con un hueledenoche.

“¿Quién qué?”

“¿Quién servía en *oranaley*?”

El agua contra el hueso una piedra en el río de las voces.

“Eso es un poema.”

No sé si es un poema.

No sé si es un poema recordar un  
poema. Traerlo íntegro a ti  
pero adherido a zonas que respiran.

Trescientos cenetes eran  
de este rebato la causa: una ninfa y Juana de Arco  
desnudas en el baño cubo: teleología  
*tetrapack*.

–Que los rayos de la luna descubrieron  
sus adargas –la cabeza de Jorge

masticando japonés

desde su plato.

Aurora del avión. Trescientos  
moros de la mente quieren  
hacerla rehén. Decidí sin despertar –sonámbulo  
en agua rancia– escribir un poema *erótico*. Le puse  
“Dueña del África”.

Basado en un romance cordobés.

Olvidaba –las adargas avisaron  
a las mudas atalayas– que defiende  
al deseo un cristal de indecisión.

Somos hermanos de santos perniciosos.  
Venimos, a caballo, de una profanación.  
De nuestras madres africanas en poltronas de seda.  
De nuestros baños y abluciones en orina mística.  
Profanación de lo *romance*: las atalayas los fuegos,  
los fuegos a las campanas y ellas al enamorado (que estaba  
sentado cantando debajo del agua) que,  
bajo la regadera,  
pensaba cosas sucias qué decir en un poema.

Piel malsana entre los dedos de los pies,  
su tanino de marisco y cenegal.

Caracoles luz de tigre destripados  
en aludes o mullidos catafalcos.

Roja sal, pulpa y espuma, trancos  
tersos por una esfera bruta: en los brazos de su dama  
oyó el militar estruendo de las trompas y las cajas.

Pornografía pretenciosa,  
ni sublime ni vulgar. Así

se leerá.

Así,  
decir lo que se toca  
es hundirlo en el tiempo, es  
cercenar sabor  
y arrojarlo a los perros.

¿Escribirás tu poema?...

Espuelas de honor le pican  
y freno de amor le para.

Un cerco Infiel de zonas que respiran: todo lo Afuera; pendiente, la madrugada.

Hay un filo quirúrgico en los itinerarios.

No salir

es cobardía. Ingratitud es dejalla.

Como en un western, como en  
esta tribuna.

Miro tu espalda izarse en un garfio de sábana  
o rizo de tormenta de un grabado japonés.

El cirujano moro avanza, corta  
tu carne de mis huesos, corta  
mis palabras de palabras que plagié.

Cuando el héroe se aproxima y se despide,  
del cuello pendiente ella,  
viéndole tomar la espada, ya están  
reconciliados: no hay freudiana tesitura  
ni mefíticas micciones  
ni cabeza cortada sobre el plato.

Por eso mientras se besan  
con lágrimas y suspiros  
ella es tan melodramática;



le dice a estas palabras:

–Salid al campo, señor,  
bañen mis ojos la cama;  
que ella me será también  
sin vos, campo de batalla.

“Vestíos y salir apriesa  
que el general os aguarda;  
yo os hago a vos mucha sobra  
y vos a él mucha falta.

“Bien podéis salir desnudo,  
pues mi llanto no os ablanda,  
que tenéis de acero el pecho  
y no habéis menester armas”.

Salí del baño para entrar en una guerra.  
Tuve miedo en el taxi, a mediodía/  
vigilia, vigía apuñalado con-  
tra una almena acrílica.

Un miedo imprecisión hecha de lanzas:  
los moros de la mente saqueaban  
torreones donde anoto cosas sucias:

“te amo

si te uso contra el piso y  
la tarde se arremansa en el balcón –un pez  
dorado, lascas rojas en el muro”

[¿cómo curar de calembur este *la tarde*,  
si al escribirlo un alba toda valeriana  
en copos de odalisca lanzábase del puente?...].

Miedo infiel y fanático  
de perder el avión, de que lo secuestrara  
nuestro médico moro: empuñadura  
asimétrica del habla.

Y un miedo menos verbal: que tú y yo fuéramos  
hermanos.

Una intuición sin sombra (olor  
huidizo pero a la vez empalagoso –un  
traspasado con un hueledenoché)  
agazapada en la pureza. La santa virginal  
en el ápice de tu pesadilla.  
La danzante verdugo en el *backstage* de la mía. Todo  
tan ceñido a la carne  
como un carcaj de pétalos de filo.

Me habría gustado decirlo sin rodeos pero  
a eso me refiero:

nadie habla en español con naturalidad.

Viendo el español brüoso cuánto le  
detiene y habla, le dice así:

“Tú y yo pensamos  
a la vez  
una misma palabra


como si estuviéramos enamorados.  
Pero no te engañes

: esto no es un **presente**,  
esto es una expropiación.

Qué haces mientras miro la avenida,  
un jardín de acero sucio  
igual a una tribuna.

Quién eres allá

donde las cosas pueden tocarse.

Cómo te llamas  
cuando dejas  
de leer.” 

*Mi señora,*

*tan dulce como enojada:*

*porque con honra y amor  
yo me quede cumpla y vaya*

*vaya a los moros el cuerpo  
y quede con vos el alma.*

*Concededme, dueño mío,  
licencia para que salga*

*al rebato en vuestro nombre*

*y en vuestro nombre combata.*

SERGIO MEDEIROS

---

VEGETAL SEX

Cosmogonist comments

...

Brazilians and Foreigners (professionals and amateurs) actively practice Vegetal Sex in its many modes. I will not tell their stories nor will I describe their actions (my knowledge of their erotic activities is circumstantial). I want to slowly catch them in the act (without pretense) between the grass and a bush. In the woods and brush. Folded over the floral corners or contemplating clover. Seated in a Soybean field.

*Décor*

—The mount of earth has black roots on top with long horns \*

- Bloated bull faces, pale, alcoholic

Vegetal Sex is a cosmogony...

In the ancient times soul covered the world. Total. People, animals, plants, rocks, branches and lightning. That has been spoken about in the cosmogonies.

The erotic potential is immense: It widens the frontiers of what is considered normal human sexual behavior permitting the eroticization of plants and trees. For example; animals and rocks. (But this ultimate theme I will not address here but in an upcoming book)

When a myth brings to the surface cosmogonies and cosmologies fatally referring to uncontrolled sexual activity.

Some readers (of many lineages) don't use with certain constraint, the word Cosmogony. I judge it necessary to detain myself with it. (Are we still in the preface? Or the first chapter perhaps?)

Cosmogony does not need to be Biblical. It does not presuppose an only God, a solitary artifact. A daily cosmogony agrees with us more: small births. Numerous changes? A small simple gesture. The necessary self-creation—ours day-by-day. A minute recreation of the world to each hour. Minute. Or second.

Vegetal sex is a cosmogony. A Humble (re) creation of the world. Humble and effective in its own way. Here is the question.

*Décor*

—flowers float and its shadows have a clear aura and move in the bottom more lightly

—the trunks covered in large eyes and toss long green boughs up in the air, like eyelashes that are also fingers

*Petites naissances...*

We will detail this cosmogony. We will: plural. I will introduce throughout this narrative many beginnings lived by different characters. I am just the narrator. I repeat: many minimal moments of libidinous appropriation of Brazilian trees. Of plants. But I must alert you: the plants are not innocent. There are branches and branches. Some sadistic. Certain Argentinian cloves. For example.

This direction, this narration is structured about infinite cosmogonies. Infinite and beginning. None of them situated in a Biblical moment. Not the creation of the world nor the birth of Jesus will be invoked here. I will not use such references to tell this story. The origins are incessant. Without before and after. Our imagination is what *perceives* a middle and an end where nothing of this exists in an absolute and undisputed form.

The person that signs with me this proposition will be allowed to read this cosmogonist narrative. These mythical comments.

*Décor*

—silence... palms...

—only the shadows of branches on the slide: going up and down spontaneously, like children

Various individuals...

Various individuals visited a Botanical Garden. In São Paulo. These individuals didn't talk to nor greet each other. One of them went through a dirty and humid trail and moved the branches with his hands and advanced all the way to the most enclosed inner place in the woods. There he stopped and inhaled the perfume looked around and enveloped erotically in this luxurious ambient. The other individuals perambulated through the paved trails. One of them sat down on a bench and read a fragment of Clarice Lispector Another one re-read maybe Francis Ponge.

It wasn't Saturday. Nor Sunday. It was an ordinary day. An afternoon perhaps.

*Décor*

—in the absence of the gardener, the one who goes up the ladder and trims the yellowed cacti, that bristle the top of the house, around the glass ceiling, is the female cook \*

\* the female cook fills up a bucket with dry fragments, like old rags, dirty and hard



A couple...

In this same Botanical Garden (I don't believe that it was in Rio) a couple took the dirty and humid trail. A tall man and a short woman. A guard ran after them and detained them. He said that this way was dangerous or prohibited. It wasn't an ordinary couple. The man was young and the woman old. Very old. Were they really a couple? The guard was never able to explain it. The couple didn't discuss and took a less wild way. The fellow walked ahead of the lady: she followed him with a chaste smile. She had greatly enveloped (a little before) in a vegetal thick leaf. Maybe at that lower branch that lightly touched her leg.

*Décor*

—in an obscure backyard the hurricane's blast dusts the heavy trees, who sound rusted, excessively tough.

Spirit...

A gal not thin nor fat. She pedaled tenaciously on a road of dirt in the outskirts of Terenos when she saw a forest and a gate easy to open. She opened the gate. She entered the forest walking. No dog barked: not close nor far. Which was surely rare in that area. She sat on the grass. Right away she got up. She pedaled calmly back home.

At home (when she took off her trousers) she discovered that her thighs were covered in sand. Tanned sand with some fine threads of grass. Like she had rolled freely on the ground.

She didn't remember.

*Décor*

—the trimmed branches are left loose on the tree, between others that barely hold them up in the air\*

\* a branch that hangs up side down, the yellowed leaves almost rub the ground\*\*

\*\* a second branch, already brown, dry standing between two others that act like crutches

An installation...

Two characters in Porto Alegre: a black North-American and a kind of Brazilian elf. Skinny.

When the public enters the main room it is attacked by the exasperated black (and strong) which (squatted) rattles a big tree branch. A branch filled with leaves. The branch attacks abruptly in the people's direction.

In the back of the room the national elf holds in front a long blue hose. The deception is engraved on his face.

—It's dry—affirms.

He makes an imposing gesture: his arm up in the air embraces the entire gallery.

He repeats these words and gesture many times. The black rattles frenetically the branch. People are jumping back or run to the back of the room . In a round room.

*Décor*

—the trunk has many delicate and crude tongues, one over the other, they lick each other night and day, one suddenly bends and leans over, weary, and dries slowly, khaki

Corporeal...

—Yes. Something corporeal—the young men told himself. —The trees were close by. I touched or almost touched its dry texture. Rough. The branches moved over me.

Saying that, he leaves the woods. A thin forest. Close to Brasília.

The young man is a ranger or a vagabond. Above all someone that—initially—wanted to protest against injustice walking under a merciless sun.

*Décor*

—the fluffy clouds sink or devour the Continent, elevating themselves like dense smoke

Froth...

The writer Henri Michaux said he placed on his desk an apple. Then he entered the apple.

*Quelle tranquillité!*

He invaded the apple with his *substantial body* or was the apple that “devoured” him?

Quicksand? Froth or foam where you sink or float? Where you also stay crystallized?

Its peace. Or horror. Michaux himself initially froze inside the apple: *Quand j’arrivai dans la pomme, j’étais glacé.* In English it would be: *When I arrived inside the apple, I was frozen.*

(How would be this experience in another circumstances? Enter an apple at a farmers market which someone sweet or hateful will purchase. Or many anonymous hands will touch on this same day. The apple gets some sun and reveals itself terribly effervescent.)

James Joyce mentioned the suave aroma that escapes from an open desk: the scent of a very ripe apple forgotten in there. Or of a bottle of glue. Or of cedar pencils.

*Décor*

—he dead and submersed leaves approach the manhole faster then the bubbles that accumulate in the water from the rain.

Lucifer...

“Recreating Adam and Eve”: news of a short film that didn’t make it to the screen. It was on the University’s site.

Screenplay signed by a professor of the cinema department: floor covered in soft sand. On the sand dry leaves and / or new. Accumulated. Spread out. On a corner brooms.

Beneath the leaves you see a rolled up snake...

Someone holding a broom comes closer without any notion about the snake.

He might sweep the leaves or just lean the broom against a remote corner. Next to the other abandoned there.

(I don’t know if it was right to reproduce here this “biblical” news—taken maybe by the previous reflection about the apple—since it hurts my intention of not mentioning *this* cosmogony amongst other pagan cosmogonies that I have chosen)

*Décor*

—a truck moves away with new refrigerators out of inox, it shakes with violence the flowering branches, one breaks and swings dizzy, like a hanging bone from a damaged sholder.

—making caricatures, the small leaves spread on the deck like freckles, two big leaves are the eyes and the rest the face—long wood board well nailed on the ground

A couple...

The couple was bicycling. Or were coming home by foot. Walking next to enormous anthills. Like thumbs that the eye could not embrace. In at certain moment they sit down on a fallen trunk next to each other right on the side of the road. The girl is Indigenous or Japanese and the young man is Spanish

The girl explains he is ugly.

He can barely stutter something. He examines the camera.

The trunk is an anthill and the girl jumps screaming.

The young man calmly gets up and touches his behind and after that his legs.

The girl undresses behind a bush.

*Décor*

—like an extinguished firebrand, a black banana sinks in a waste basket, amid paper balls, or stiff roles of smoke

The Death River...

The Spanish photographer met the Death River. He imagined a violent river. Or obscure. Nothing transparent.

At that time he travelled by bus. He crossed Goiás. Then he got a ride on the back of a small truck. Early afternoon or early morning he saw an indigenous pulling out or planting manioc.

The small truck stopped in front of an indigenous hut and the young men stepped down.

The Death River (full and dark) ran a few meters from there: on the bank the water licked the closed forest that resembled a fort.

A creek flew into the Death River. Transparent. Leaves accumulated in the bottom.

Inside the creek diving birds walked and swallowed fish.

The young man squat and photographed the birds the leaves the fish. A bird with long thin legs moved away with open eye among the fleeing fish. The bird entered the Death River and disappeared in its muddy waters. The fish moved around in the transparent water. The stream dragged in silence some leaves. Suddenly a bird emerged from the Death River with great stir.

*Translated by Raymond L. Bianchi* 



ELIZABETH GROSZ

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SEXO ANIMAL

*Si hay algo acerca de lo cual los animales no requieren mayor información es el sexo. Y ello se debe a que el sexo carece de misterio.*

*—Hy Freedman, Sex Link*

*Hacemos el amor sólo con palabras.*

*—Deleuze y Guattari, El antiedipo: capitalismo y esquizofrenia*

El sexo sigue fascinando y obsesionando a los seres humanos aun si, como sugiere Freedman, tenga poco misterio para los animales. Que carece de misterio, que los actos y los deseos sexuales están regidos por impulsos naturales, impelidos por los instintos, que son parte de un ciclo natural de vida, reproducción y muerte, puede de hecho no ser algo tan nítido y poco polémico como dice Freedman, incluso si uno cree en “el orden natural”. Pero aun si fuera cierto que el sexo carece de misterio para los animales (¿qué sería un “misterio” para un animal?), es claramente falso que el sexo, en su forma animal o humana, carezca de misterio para el hombre.<sup>1</sup> Los animales siguen rondando la imaginación del hombre, lo compelen a buscar definir sus hábitos, preferencias y ciclos, y lo proveen de modelos y fórmulas con las que representa sus propios deseos, necesidades y excitaciones. La inmensa popularidad de los programas sobre la naturaleza en la televisión, de los libros sobre distintas especies animales, amados o temidos,

y la obra de los naturalistas que recogen datos para su estudio científico, todo ello rinde testimonio de la omnipresente fascinación por la cuestión del sexo animal: ¿cómo *lo hacen* los animales?, ¿cómo hacen el amor los elefantes (según el viejo chiste: con mucho cuidado)?, ¿cómo copulan las serpientes?, ¿cuáles son los placeres del orangután, la araña, el chimpancé?

Resulta irónico que de la rica plétora del sexo animal hasta hoy estudiada, sean dos ejemplos tomados del mundo microcósmico de los insectos los que siguen, quizá más que otros tomados de la entomología y la etología, obsesionando las imaginaciones y proyecciones de los hombres: la viuda negra y la mantis religiosa. Estas dos especies han venido a representar un vínculo íntimo y persistente entre sexo y muerte, entre placer y castigo, entre deseo y venganza, que puede resultar significativo para entender ciertos detalles clave del deseo y la sexualidad masculinos y, en consecuencia, para definir ciertos elementos o características de la subjetividad y sexualidad femeninas.

Cualquier intento por entender el deseo sexual femenino a partir de los modelos provistos por la sexualidad y el placer masculinos corre el riesgo de producir un nuevo modelo que fundamentalmente se base en las normas (heterosexuales) de complementariedad u oposición sexual, y de reducir la sexualidad y el placer femeninos a modelos, metas u orientaciones apropiadas para los hombres pero no para las mujeres. Dichas estrategias evaden cualquier reconocimiento del rango, las posibilidades y las implicaciones del placer erótico para entender la diferencia sexual. Esto no quiere decir que las sexualidades femenina y masculina deban ser vistas como pertenecientes a dos especies enteramente distintas, que no comparten nada en común, cada una con sus propias identidades y características (el compromiso esencialista). Esto supondría la posibilidad de lograr una comprensión precisa y positiva de los rasgos independientes que caracterizan a cada sexo (un proyecto que ha tentado a muchas mujeres, y quizá incluso a más hombres, a bosquejar lo que entienden como una feminidad universal, característica o esencial). Tampoco quisiera sugerir la afirmación contraria: que los dos sexos deben ser entendidos sólo en función del uno por el otro, como mutuamente definidos, recíprocamente influyentes, cada uno conformando las necesidades y expectativas del otro (ésta es la fantasía dominante que hasta hoy ha gobernado el pensamiento occidental contemporáneo en lo que se refiere a

las relaciones entre los sexos, una fantasía que ha desconocido las restricciones estructurales, sociales y de representación que atenúan cualquier posibilidad estructural de reciprocidad).

En un principio, tenía planeado escribir acerca de la sexualidad femenina y en especial sobre el orgasmo femenino. Tras muchas ilusiones, y considerable angustia por pensar que sería incapaz de evocar los lánguidos placeres y las intensas particularidades del orgasmo femenino (¡un proyecto para el que difícilmente la disciplina de la filosofía o, en su caso, el psicoanálisis, podrían darme el adecuado entrenamiento teórico!), abandoné esta idea, en parte debido a que me pareció que se trataba de un proyecto que conllevaba mucha deslealtad —hablar de lo (filosóficamente) indecible, soltar la lengua sobre un extenso “secreto” histórico, acerca del cual muchos hombres y algunas mujeres han desarrollado intereses lascivos—, y en parte porque me di cuenta de que, a lo sumo, lo que escribiera podría ser leído en buena parte como una autobiografía, como las “verdaderas confesiones” de mi propia experiencia, que tienen poco más que un mero valor anecdótico. No podía tener garantía alguna de que mis descripciones o análisis fueran a tener relevancia para otras mujeres. Decidí, en cambio, en un intento por mantenerme indirectamente dentro del tópico que elegí y por evitar estos peligros y puntos incómodos, mirar hacia lo que parece por completo ajeno al deseo y el placer femeninos: los hombres, los insectos, pretendiendo, si no decir qué es el placer femenino, por lo menos decir qué no es, disipar las explicaciones que atan con fuerza a las mujeres con las representaciones de la sexualidad de los hombres o los animales, aclarar el aire de ciertas proyecciones clave, incluso si el resultado no es la cruda verdad sobre el deseo femenino sino tal vez otra capa más en la compleja exscripción/sobreescritura de la constitución inscriptiva del cuerpo o la subjetividad. Por consiguiente, en vez de enfocarme en las distintas representaciones del placer sexual femenino (en literatura, poesía, pintura, escultura, pornografía, etc.) o en la experiencia personal, a lo que muchas teóricas feministas o lesbianas han tendido, decidí explorar la obra de dos teóricos de sexo masculino sin relación aparente entre sí, cuyo candor y honestidad intelectual me han impresionado de tiempo atrás, y cuya obra representa una combinación poco común de obsesiones personales expresadas abiertamente y rigor académico, la rigurosa lectura y análisis de sus preocupaciones personales conductoras:<sup>2</sup> Roger

Caillois, el sociólogo francés y cofundador del Collège de sociologie,<sup>3</sup> cuya preocupación por los insectos, la *femme fatale* y las rocas<sup>4</sup> a lo largo de su vida señala anticipaciones tempranas de lo que puede considerarse una “filosofía” o tal vez incluso una “antropología” del posthumano, y Alphonso Lingis, el distinguido filósofo estadounidense y traductor de la teoría fenomenológica (en particular, de Merleau-Ponty y Levinas), el único filósofo profesional que he leído que escribe abiertamente y sin embargo filosóficamente, y en extenso, sobre el orgasmo, los placeres corporales, la lujuria y la sexualidad en sus muchas variantes y extremos (trasvestismo, transexualismo, prostitución, pornografía, pederastia y sadomasoquismo entre ellas). Juntos, Caillois y Lingis cubren desde los insectos<sup>5</sup> más antiguos y primitivos hasta las prácticas sexuales humanas más desarrolladas y cultivadas; un verdadero panorama de prácticas y placeres sexuales que puede ayudar a especificar qué hay de masculino en las representaciones de las sexualidades humanas, y no humanas.

#### INSECTOS SAGRADOS: EL AMOR Y LA MANTIS RELIGIOSA

Las contribuciones pioneras de Caillois a la etología han sido reconocidas desde hace mucho tiempo. Su hoy muy conocido análisis sobre la función del mimetismo en el mundo de los insectos<sup>6</sup> ha resultado provechoso para cualquier análisis de la materialidad que la reduce a una simple instrumentalidad, para cualquier intento por definir la forma en términos de la función o del ser en términos del *telos*. Caillois muestra, en éste y en sus textos anteriores, que las características particulares que definen a una especie de insecto —su colorido, sus habilidades de camuflaje, la organización de sus órganos sensoriales— siempre exceden su valor de supervivencia. Existe una cierta superabundancia estructural, anatómica o conductual, tal vez se trate de la mera superfluidad de la vida sobre y por encima de las necesidades de sobrevivencia del organismo:

Resulta obvio que el papel utilitario de un objeto nunca justifica plenamente su forma o, por decirlo de otra manera, el objeto siempre excede su instrumentalidad. De ahí que sea posible descubrir en cada objeto un residuo irracional... [Caillois 1990: 6]

Este “residuo irracional”, este sobrepasar la marca, este gasto excesivo inherente, una economía del lujo, se convierte en un *locus* de intensa fascinación para él. En su obra sobre el mimetismo, Caillois muestra claramente que la habilidad de un insecto para camuflarse carece de un valor de supervivencia: no protege a la criatura de un ataque o de la muerte y, de hecho, lo deja expuesto a formas de muerte incluso más horribles e inimaginables. Cita el caso de la oruga cortada a la mitad por tijeras de podar, o el del insecto devorado por un miembro de su propia especie que lo confunde con una hoja. El camuflaje es excesivo para la supervivencia, tanto como el plumaje del pavo real es excesivo para la reproducción sexual. En lugar de demostrar la finalidad de las determinaciones del instinto, una existencia definida en términos darwinianos, Caillois introduce una dimensión extravagante a su explicación de dichas características de la existencia animal. El camuflaje, la capacidad de imitar el hábitat o los alrededores propios, lejos de desempeñar una función adaptativa, muestra a la criatura cautivada por sus representaciones del espacio y como espacio, su desplazamiento fuera del centro, de una “conciencia” de su lugar (en su cuerpo, localizado en el espacio) a la perspectiva de otro. El insecto mimético vive su existencia camuflada no totalmente como él mismo, sino como otro.<sup>7</sup>

Caillois, quien se describe a sí mismo como un “coleccionista de insectos” (1990: 62), parece haber tenido una fijación a lo largo de toda su vida con la *Mantis religiosa*. Dice haber sido atraído a esta especie en parte debido a una curiosidad frustrada: donde vivió cuando adolescente no las había. Picada su curiosidad, parecía determinado a poseer, a ver, a conocer. Su descripción está formulada en términos de una apasionada epistemofilia: “[L]a dificultad de obtener un espécimen sólo aumentó mi deseo por poseer uno. Tuve que esperar dos años. Finalmente, durante unas vacaciones de verano en Royan, estuve encantado de capturar una magnífica *Mantis religiosa*...” (1990: 63).

Parte de la atracción de la mantis religiosa, no sólo para Caillois, sino para muchos otros, y que pudiera ayudar a explicar la posición privilegiada de este insecto en los mitos de muchas culturas,<sup>8</sup> es su cercana y curiosa asociación con la feminidad, con la sexualidad femenina —sobre todo con la fantasía de la *vagina dentata*; con la oralidad, la digestión y la incorporación, y con la (fantaseada) envidia de las mujeres respecto de los hombres y con poder sobre éstos. Por

otra parte, su rico poder evocativo, su habilidad para ser usada como fuente de fantasía y especulación, debe en parte atribuirse a su asombrosa semejanza con la forma humana, al isomorfismo de sus extremidades con las humanas:

...de todos los insectos éste es aquel cuya forma recuerda más las formas humanas, sobre todo debido a la semejanza de sus patas rapaces con los brazos humanos. En lo que respecta a su pose habitual, no es la de alguien rezando, como el consenso común nos ha hecho creer (uno no ora tendido sobre el estómago), sino la de un hombre haciendo el amor (¡los hombres arriba!). Esto basta para justificar una identificación oscura y constante. Uno puede ver entonces por qué los hombres han estado siempre tan interesados por la mantis y sus hábitos, y por qué ha sido asociada tan adecuadamente tanto con el amor como con el odio, cuya ambivalente unidad condensa tan admirablemente [1990: 63].

Esta ambivalencia se deriva en primer lugar de una identificación narcisista facilitada por la aparente semejanza de la postura de la mantis y la forma humana; mientras más cercana sea esta identificación, más horripilantes resultan las consecuencias, pues más ominoso es el destino del sujeto humano/masculino que se identifica con la mantis (macho). Lo que parece provocar en mayor medida la fascinación de Caillois son los aterradores hábitos nupciales: la muy conocida inclinación de la mantis hembra por devorar al macho en el acto del coito. La hembra mantis es la más desagradecida de las parejas, envolviendo y eventualmente destruyendo a su amante en un frenesí egoísta. Esta escena está llena de posibilidades, y Caillois no duda en sugerir que la mantis puede servir como una adecuada representación de la amante predadora y devoradora, que ingiere e incorpora en sí al macho, castrándolo o matándolo en el proceso. La *femme fatale* se queda pequeña.<sup>9</sup> Este menudo insecto es heredero de toda una serie de proyecciones fundamentalmente paranoides, en las que no es el sujeto masculino o el falo el que amenaza a la amante, sino la amante quien amenaza al falo. La posición castrante del padre en relación con el hijo se transforma en la imagen de la madre devoradora. La madre ya no es más el objeto de una violación potencial, sino la perpetradora de un *hurto*, castrando al hijo y conservando el falo para sí, en una especie de represalia contra la autoridad y la ley paternas.<sup>10</sup>

El psicoanálisis es claro en que no es esto lo que la madre le hace al hijo, sino más bien lo que el hijo teme de la madre (fantasmática). Ésta, al igual que la mantis, es el vehículo para la proyección de sus peores temores. Esto puede ayudar a explicar la identificación antropomórfica de la hembra mantis con la mujer —una neutralización de lo que el hijo ha investido en la imagen paterna como amenaza y como peligro, cuyo costo es vincular la castración con la madre, ocasionando una conexión del falo y el placer sexual con la mutilación o la muerte. En efecto, para Caillois, esto vincula a la mantis con una serie de imágenes vampíricas o parasitarias —el vampiro, el murciélago y la mandrágora— que, debido a su semejanza con la forma humana, particularmente la masculina, también se traducen en objetos de proyección e identificación:

En mi opinión, no es de ninguna manera casual que la creencia en los espectros chupadores de sangre utilice al murciélago como una especie de punto de referencia natural. El antropomorfismo del murciélago es muy acusado y va mucho más allá del nivel de una identidad estructural general (la presencia de verdaderas manos con un pulgar opuesto a los otros dedos, de mamas pectorales, de una menstruación periódica, de un pene que cuelga libremente). [1990: 73 n. 10]

La hembra mantis ha sido “observada científicamente” desde por lo menos el siglo xvi en el acto de decapitar al macho, no sólo durante o después del coito, ¡incluso antes! El macho será completamente devorado después de la cópula. Se ha creído por siglos que tales actos de canibalismo podían ser descritos en función de su utilidad: al necesitar proteínas para hacer crecer los huevos recién fertilizados, la hembra encontraría grandes cantidades devorando a su pareja. Sin embargo, parece más factible que la decapitación del macho podría más bien tener funciones no sólo de procreación sino también específicamente sexuales para la hembra mantis:

La teoría de Dubois [...] se pregunta si la meta de la mantis al decapitar al macho antes del apareamiento no será obtener, mediante la ablación de los centros inhibidores del cerebro, una mejor y más prolongada ejecución de los movimientos espasmódicos del coito. De esta manera, en un análisis final, sería el principio de placer de la hembra el que le

dictaría la muerte del macho, cuyo cuerpo, por otra parte, comenzaría a devorar durante la cópula misma. [1990: 81-82]

¡La hembra decapita al macho para obtener movimientos coitales más vigorosos! Caillois está sobre todo interesado en la naturaleza automática del impulso sexual del macho: decapitado, sin un cerebro que asimile representaciones o que emprenda un comportamiento voluntario, sin embargo persiste obstinadamente en sus movimientos sexuales automáticos, y es incluso capaz de utilizar distintas estrategias autónomas para evitar el peligro y a los depredadores, no obstante estar, en cierto sentido cuando menos, muerto (¡pero todavía coleando!):

[E]l hecho es que difícilmente existe alguna reacción que no sea capaz de ejecutar una vez decapitado [...] En estas condiciones, puede caminar, recuperar el equilibrio, mover uno de sus amenazados miembros con autonomía, asumir la posición espectral, aparearse, poner huevecillos, construir una ooteca y, por increíble que parezca, caer en una falsa inmovilidad semi-cadáverica al enfrentar algún peligro o después de ser estimulado periféricamente. Utilizo deliberadamente este medio indirecto de expresión debido a que nuestra lengua, me parece, tiene una enorme dificultad para expresar, y nuestra razón para entender, el hecho de que una vez muerta, la mantis pueda simular la muerte. [1990: 82]

El automatismo de todo este procedimiento impresiona a Caillois como una de los rasgos significativos de la mantis; la mantis no sólo puede “hacerse la muerta” una vez decapitada, su comportamiento sexual es inducido por reflejo, como un juguete (sexual) de cuerda. Puede llevar a cabo sus funciones sin una estructura organizativa de la conciencia (sea lo que sea en el caso de la mantis), con las estructuraciones provistas ya sea por un sistema nervioso flexible o por un aparato perceptual intacto.

Caillois cita la afirmación de Binet con aprobación: “Nos parece que el insecto se asemeja mucho a una máquina con un mecanismo perfecto, capaz de funcionar automáticamente” (citado en Caillois, 1990: 82). La mantis como una máquina perfecta: no una máquina de supervivencia (se hace referencia comúnmente al tiburón como una máquina perfecta de alimentarse o de matar), sino



una máquina de coger, cuya reacción, bajo amenaza o muerte inminente, es coital. Caillois lleva más allá la idea señalada por Binet: si la mantis es una máquina semi-humana, un androide, está codificada particularmente como femenina:

En efecto, me parece que la asimilación de la mantis con un autó-mata —es decir, en vista de su antropomorfismo, con un androide femenino— es consecuencia del mismo tema afectivo: la concepción de una máquina-mujer artificial, mecánica, inanimada e inconsciente, inconmensurable con el hombre y otras criaturas vivientes, se deriva de una forma particular de concebir la relación entre amor y muerte, y, más exactamente, de una premonición ambivalente de encontrar al uno dentro de la otra, lo cual es algo en lo que tengo plenas razones de creer. [Caillois 1990: 82]

Caillois plantea una red de asociaciones, una vinculación implícita entre la mantis religiosa, la religiosidad, la comida y la oralidad, los vampiros chupa-sangre, la madre que alimenta al hijo, el canibalismo, la *vagina dentata*, la hembra devoradora, la *femme fatale*, los mecanismos del automatismo y el androide femenino. Tiene la perspicacia de sugerir, no que este juego de conexiones sea de alguna manera natural o innato, sino que es en buena parte una función de una constelación de conceptos sobredeterminados en sus relaciones mutuas: al vincular el placer sexual con el concepto de muerte y de morir, al hacer del sexo algo por lo cual morir, algo que es una especie de anticipación de la muerte (la “pequeña muerte”), la mujer es así arrojada a la categoría de lo no humano, lo no viviente, o una viva amenaza de muerte.

La intuición de Caillois acerca del carácter formativo del vínculo entre el placer sexual, la muerte y morir, se confirma claramente en abundantes ejemplos de la vida cotidiana: la producción de armas siguiendo el modelo del falo, el funcionamiento del falo como un arma de guerra y de represalia, la dependencia del falo en el complejo de castración, las operaciones de la impotencia psíquica, el vínculo entre el orgasmo masculino y la detumescencia, el agotamiento de energías físicas tras el orgasmo, la proyección fantasmática en la mujer del poder fálico durante el acto sexual,<sup>11</sup> la vinculación “evolutiva” de la muerte del individuo con la reproducción (sexual) de la especie (el vínculo percibido entre

sexualidad e inmortalidad) prefiguran o atestiguan la tenacidad del lazo entre deseo y muerte.

## INTENSIDADES LIBIDINALES: LOS DESÓRDENES DEL AMOR

Alejándome de las meditaciones de Caillois sobre la mantis religiosa, veré ahora con más detalle la obra de Lingis relativa a la sensibilidad erótica, la libido y la lujuria para ver si logro obtener una mejor comprensión de las conexiones entre placer sexual y muerte y, lo que resulta un reto mayor y más difícil, ver si estos dos términos pueden ser desenredados de modo tal que sus relaciones de influencia, sus especificidades y detalles particulares y, por lo tanto, sus posibilidades de transformación y cambio puedan ser explorados.

Lingis distingue entre las necesidades y las satisfacciones corporales, y entre lujuria y deseo erótico. La gratificación corpórea, funcionando en el ámbito de la necesidad, toma lo que puede alcanzar, habita un mundo de medios y fines, obteniendo satisfacción de lo que hay a la mano. Lingis relaciona las operaciones de necesidad y gratificación con el funcionamiento del cuerpo-imagen o esquema corpóreo, que traza las funciones fisiológicas y psicológicas internas en un mapa del comportamiento y los movimientos externos u “objetivos”, estableciendo de esta forma la postura y ubicación del cuerpo en el mundo por medio de un esquema representativo mediador. Lingis deja claro que la imagen del cuerpo provee al sujeto con una experiencia no sólo de su propio cuerpo, sino también de las distintas formas como su cuerpo es percibido por otros. La experiencia corporal del sujeto está irreductiblemente atada al estatus social del cuerpo.

En contraste, la libido o el deseo erótico supone una cierta inquietud o perturbación del cuerpo-imagen, incluso mientras funciona de acuerdo con éste. Más que resolverse, gratificando sus urgencias tan rápido y sencillamente como sea posible, el anhelo erótico busca prolongarse y extenderse más allá de la necesidad fisiológica, para intensificarse y aumentarse, para gozar en el “tormento placentero” (Lingis 1985: 55). Deja de funcionar de acuerdo con un “arco intencional”, de acuerdo con las estructuras de significación, sentido, patrón o propósito;<sup>12</sup> el deseo voluptuoso fragmenta y disuelve la unidad y utilidad del

cuerpo orgánico y el estabilizado cuerpo-imagen. Las extremidades, las zonas erógenas, los orificios del otro provocan y seducen, atraen y llaman, rompiendo las acciones y planes teleológicos y orientados al futuro de una tarea por llevar a cabo.<sup>13</sup> Si para Merleau-Ponty el erotismo es la estructuración y reorientación del cuerpo de acuerdo con la atracción que el sujeto-cuerpo del otro posee, una resignificación de las partes del cuerpo propio bajo una nueva luz, Lingis, no obstante, argumentará que el deseo sensual y la experiencia voluptuosa no suponen la afirmación de una totalidad corporal, ni el paso de un sin-sentido informe a un cuerpo que ofrece sentido y significado. Completamente lo contrario. El voluptuoso sentido de inquietud engendrado por la lujuria y como lujuria desordena y segmenta la resolución de una cierta intención, desquiciando cualquier determinación de medios y fines o metas.

La experiencia carnal es incierta, no teleológica, sin dirección. Si bien no enteramente involuntaria, carece de la capacidad de sucumbir deliberadamente a las intenciones conscientes o a las decisiones abstractas. Trastorna los planes, las resoluciones; se resiste a una lógica de la conveniencia y a los regímenes de significación (con frecuencia, uno no puede decir o saber qué es lo que seduce y atrae, un gesto, un movimiento, una postura o una mirada, que se carga con más afecto e ímpetu del que se requiere para explicarlo). Es como un hambre siempre creciente que se completa y se alimenta del hambre, y que no puede satisfacerse nunca con lo que ingiere, que difiere la gratificación para perpetuarse como anhelo, consumiéndose en sus tormentos eróticos antes que apresurarse a aplacarlos. Su temporalidad no es ni la del desarrollo (una experiencia construida sobre la anterior para crear una dirección o un movimiento) ni la del inversión (una relación entre medios y fines específicos o predeterminados). No es tampoco un sistema de registro o de memoria (los placeres eróticos son evanescentes; se olvidan casi tan pronto como ocurren); la memoria de "lo sucedido", o de los movimientos, escenarios, gestos, comportamiento, puede abrirse a la reminiscencia, pero la intensidad del placer, las sensaciones de voluptuosidad, el dolor del deseo deben revivirse para poder ser recordados. En este caso, no hay un recordatorio sino o una recreación o, más bien, creación, producción:

La intimidad carnal no es un espacio práctico; no abre un campo de acción. Los movimientos eróticos son agitación que manipula y

acaricia sin mantener nada en su lugar, sin extender su fuerza hacia afuera y sin ir a ninguna parte. Aquí, nada será logrado: uno perderá el tiempo infructuosamente. La voluptuosidad no tiene tareas ni objetivos que cumplir y no deja herencia alguna; después de todas las caricias y abrazos, lo carnal queda intacto, territorio virgen [...]. No es el *locus* del que emergerá el significado de la historia propia. [Lingis 1985: 67]

El deseo erótico no puede ser recordado o almacenado, no puede ser el lugar para la producción de información o conocimiento. La investigación empírica de Masters y Johnson sobre la sexualidad humana sólo puede medir y registrar transformaciones, reacciones, respuestas fisiológicas, cambios corporales. Queda lejos de levantar un mapa del deseo. La turbulenta agitación del deseo se resiste a su codificación en signos, significaciones, significados; se mantiene visceral, afectiva, lo que no significa de ninguna manera que sea reducible a la fisiología.

La libido no es irracional, ilógica o incluso no-racional; más bien muestra una lógica propia gobernada por distintas formas de intensificación. No proporciona información o conocimiento, aunque sí explora (esto podría ser parte del problema de la metáfora de la producción de conocimiento como conquista sexual: la conquista sólo puede tener sentido allí donde la lujuria no es la que opera sino otra cosa —la lucha por prestigio, control—). Abre una brecha en las regiones más internas, las partes secretas del cuerpo, pero no aprende nada excepto que no puede sujetarse, no puede mantenerse en su estado de excitación. La lujuria no puede conocerse a sí misma, no sabe qué es ni lo que busca. No descubre, pero se inmersa en sí misma, insistiendo en cierta informidad, en cierta indeterminación, en el mismo exceso de materialidad que hace que cualquier criatura se resista a su reducción a sus meras funciones. Insiste en una sensibilidad abierta que puede ser vista como pasividad o susceptibilidad a los atractivos y resistencias del otro. La lujuria nos arroja en los caprichos de las intensidades libidinales del otro.

Si el impulso sexual está dirigido al objeto, y toma para sí una serie específica de objetos, resulta significativo que el eros, el deseo, carezca de objetivos, de objetos privilegiados, y sólo tenga una serie de intensidades. Habiendo esbozado los elementos de una fenomenología de la experiencia carnal basada en los distintos escritos de Sartre, Merleau-Ponty y Levinas, Lingis desplaza el foco de

su atención en *Libido* (1985) lejos de las estructuras de la conciencia, la intencionalidad y la determinación para depositarlo con mayor agudeza en lo que puede ser entendido como un análisis materialista del deseo sexual, utilizando la obra de Lyotard, Deleuze y Guattari. Se aleja de una estructura —o de una serie de estructuras— que privilegia la psique y los sistemas de representación, y en la que la carnalidad es entendida en función de conceptos, razones, motivos, causas, intenciones, fantasías, proyectos —es decir, en términos de la interioridad, no importa cómo se conciba—, para concentrarse en una, o varias, que privilegia la superficie erotogénica, el “exterior” del cuerpo, su *locus* como un sitio tanto para la percepción de lo erótico (como reconoce la fenomenología) como también para la inscripción e intensificación de la sensibilidad de las regiones corporales.

El cuerpo orgásmico no puede ser identificado con el cuerpo orgánico, pues se trata más bien de una interferencia en el cuerpo de la “naturaleza” y de un desplazamiento del mismo.<sup>14</sup> No es la intervención de una conciencia supervisora, sino la reorganización o religadura de las energías corporales, pasando a lo largo de la superficie del cuerpo. Basándose en un modelo establecido por Lyotard en *Economía libidinal* (1993), en el que el sujeto es visto en función de las torsiones, contorsiones y auto-rotaciones de la banda de Moebius,<sup>15</sup> Lingis representa el deseo carnal en términos de la contaminación lateral (“horizontal”) de una zona erotogénica o de la superficie corporal por otra, en vez de desde el punto de vista de una “relación vertical” entre la superficie (corporal) y la profundidad (psíquica). La intensificación de una región o zona corporal induce un incremento en la excitación de las regiones contiguas. Significativamente, las dos o más regiones o zonas interactuantes no necesitan ser parte de un único cuerpo sino que pueden provenir de diferentes cuerpos y diferentes sustancias. Sus relaciones no pueden ser entendidas en función de la complementariedad, de una completando a la otra (un modelo de la relación heterosexual muy difundido desde Aristófanes), pues no puede darse la constitución de una totalidad, una unión o un fusión de ambas. Cada una permanece en su sitio, funcionando a su manera.

La relación entre estas regiones o zonas no puede ser entendida desde el punto de vista de la dominación, la penetración, el control o la supremacía, sino en términos de *celos*, donde cada órgano envidia al otro, como el deseo de unos

órganos y zonas por la intensidad y las excitaciones, las agitaciones y la tumultuosidad de los otros. Para que una parte corporal (sea un orificio, un hueco, una protuberancia, una región hinchada, una superficie suave) intensifique su gasto energético, debe drenar intensidad de las regiones circundantes. Es imposible concebir una situación en la que haya una intensidad igual por todo el cuerpo, una situación de equilibrio puro o estasis: toda actividad “prefiere” o privilegia algunas regiones corporales sobre otras, e incluso la inactividad sedentaria se concentra en algunas partes del cuerpo a costa de otras. Esto crea una cuadrícula o un marcado del cuerpo en términos de sitios de intensidad dispareja, patrones o configuraciones de sensación, mapas laberínticos de placeres e intensidades voluptuosas. Cada órgano envidia la intensidad del contexto corporal circundante, ansía la enervación, busca la incandescencia, desea ser cargado de excitaciones.

Lingis intenta evocar, volver a representar en palabras, las intensidades que cargan todos los encuentros eróticos, ya sean las relaciones amorosas del carpintero con la madera y las herramientas, el apego del sádico a su látigo, la aventura amorosa del pecho con la boca, los labios y la lengua. Tiene que haber una reunión de superficies dispares; el punto de conjunción de dos o más superficies produce una intensificación de ambas.

Las formas de mayor intensificación de las zonas corporales suceden, no por medio de las operaciones de las actividades habituales, sino por lo inesperado, mediante la conexión, conjunción y construcción de interfaces poco usuales que re-marcan, diferenciándolos, orificios, glándulas, tendones, músculos, cediendo a los órganos y a la organización corporal las intensidades que amenazan con sobrepasarlos, buscando lo ajeno, la otredad, lo dispar en sus extremos, para poner en juego estas intensidades. La interrupción e interacción de una superficie con otra, su retirada del circuito de funcionamiento orgánico (en el que opera dentro de un todo jerárquico y sistemático) de manera que se reorganiza en distintas redes y conexiones, lleva a cabo la intensificación de la circulación libidinal que Lingis busca. De esta forma, el cuerpo del sujeto deja de ser *un* cuerpo, para convertirse en un lugar de provocaciones y reacciones, el lugar de los trastornos intensos. El sujeto deja de serlo, dando lugar a las pulsaciones, rotaciones, flujos, secreciones, abultamientos, procesos sobre los que no puede ejercer control

alguno y ante los que sólo desea sucumbir. Sus límites se desdibujan, se filtran, de manera que, por lo menos por un momento, no queda claro dónde termina un órgano, cuerpo o sujeto y dónde empieza el otro.

Es el alineamiento lateral de las intensidades el que convierte una mano, los dedos o un codo en un órgano sexual, en un lugar no sólo para la producción de placer en otro, sino para sus propias intensidades orgásmicas, aunque no puedan ser clasificados como un orificio o un órgano genital dentro de un modelo psicoanalítico o fisiológico. La mano, si bien en cierto sentido “celosa” del placer que induce en el cuerpo que acaricia, también participa en las intensidades que enciende en una vagina o alrededor de un pene: no sólo induce simplemente placer en otro, para otro, sino también y siempre para sí misma. La contigüidad de una mano y una región instila en ambas un anhelo por la intensidad, un ansia por mayor intensidad que a ambas aviva, despierta su “envidia” mutua y las impulsa por un camino de movimiento impredecible y agitado.

Estos lugares de intensidad —potencialmente cualquier región del cuerpo incluyendo distintos órganos internos— se intensifican y excitan no sólo por placer, por medio de las caricias, sino también gracias a la fuerza y energía del dolor. El dolor, como Nietzsche bien reconoció, es tan capaz como el placer, o tal vez incluso más, de inscribir las superficies corporales. Esto puede ayudar a explicar parte del atractivo del sadismo y el masoquismo, incluso si aceptamos, siguiendo a Deleuze (1989a), que no conforman una única relación compleja y reversible, como sugería Freud. Son formas de intensificación de las sensaciones corporales.<sup>16</sup> El sadismo y el masoquismo intensifican regiones corporales específicas —las nalgas flageladas, la mano que flagela, las regiones del cuerpo atadas en las prácticas de dominación— utilizando el dolor, no como un reemplazo o disfraz del placer principal, sino como una forma de intensificación corporal. No podemos diferenciar fácilmente los procesos por los que se engendran las intensidades placenteras de aquellos con los que se produce la intensidad dolorosa. Uno ansía la repetición de estas prácticas porque la intensidad es efímera, no tiene duración de vida; existe sólo en los momentos de su acontecer, en el presente (la evanescencia de la pura diferencia, el brillo y deslumbramiento de una zona u orificio: es el trazo, el señalar un camino, el *frayage*). Esta repetición (o, más bien, la apertura inherente de estas prácticas a la repetición) produce la

intensidad del afecto, el placer o el dolor, pero nunca puede repetir su acontecer inicial. Cada repetición engendra una versión de lo mismo sin presunción alguna de identidad. En sentido estricto, la repetición exacta es imposible.

Las zonas erotogénicas no desegmentan el cuerpo orgánico plenamente funcional, pues este cuerpo es en sí un producto de la organización y jerarquización de zonas libidinales particulares y localizadas: el cuerpo orgánico unificado es el resultado final provisional de los alineamientos y coagulaciones de las zonas libidinales. Estas regiones, por otra parte, intervienen continuamente en el funcionamiento del cuerpo orgánico y en su o sus imágenes del cuerpo concomitantes. En lugar de adoptar un posición psicoanalítica, que toma las zonas erotogénicas como reminiscencias nostálgicas de una organización corporal preedípica e infantil—es decir, en lugar de ver esta multiplicidad de lugares libidinales en función de la regresión—, estas zonas libidinales están continuamente en proceso de ser producidas, renovadas, transformadas, por medio de la experimentación, las prácticas, las innovaciones, los accidentes y contingencias de la vida misma, la reunión de superficies, prácticas incisivas, inscripciones. No hay nada particularmente infantil en estas regiones, en la medida en que para ser efectivas, para funcionar como los lugares de la intensidad orgásmica, tienen que ser sitiadas continuamente mediante la actividad.

Por otra parte, si los impulsos libidinales están fundamentalmente descomponiendo, desolidificando, licuando la organización coherente del cuerpo a medida que éste lleva a cabo tareas funcionales, desquiciando una cierta intencionalidad, son más dependientes de la esfera de influencia de la otredad, de un otro que, incidentalmente, no necesita ser humano o incluso animado, pero que no puede ser simplemente clasificado como un objeto pasivo esperando las impresiones de un objeto activo deseoso. El otro solicita, llama, implora, provoca y exige. El otro atrae, oscila, muestra todo lo que tiene que ofrecer, revelando el cuerpo entero sin, de hecho, entregar nada, sin proporcionar “información” alguna como tal.

Al resistirse a cambiar de frente por proyectos pragmáticos, funciona a su manera, buscando extenderse infinitamente, llenarse de intensidad. Pero es incapaz de ser llenada, completada, pues contiene rastros indelebles de alteridad: es una otredad en el sujeto, algo que lo sobrepasa a uno, que induce a



abandonar lo que uno ha planeado e incluso lo que uno entiende, a cambio de sus deslumbrantes agitaciones y bulliciosas sensaciones. El otro irrumpe en el sujeto, e interrumpe todos los objetivos y metas del sujeto: “el acercamiento al otro es el desmembramiento del cuerpo natural, la fragmentación del campo de los fenómenos, el trastorno del orden físico, la descomposición en la industria universal” (1985: 72).

El deseo libidinal, la caricia carnal, el deseo como intensificación corpórea, es, entonces, lanzado a un intercambio con un otro cuya superficie se intersecta con la propia. Uno es abierto, a pesar de uno mismo, al otro, no como un respondiente pasivo sino co-animado, pues las convulsiones, los espasmos del otro, los encuentros felices o dolorosos con el otro engendran, o contaminan, regiones corporales que son aparentemente insensibles. Es en este sentido que hacemos el amor a los mundos: el universo de un otro es aquel que se abre y produce nuestras propias intensidades. Somos colocados en un campo de fuerza de intensidades que sólo podemos abandonar con la pérdida de la libido y en el que somos enervados para convertirnos en agentes (o mejor aún, agencias) activos y deseosos. El otro no necesita ser humano o incluso animal: el fetichista entra en un universo del objeto animado, intensificado, tan rico y complejo (tal vez aún más) como cualquier relación sexual. El punto es que tanto un mundo como un cuerpo son abiertos para la redistribución, des-organización, transformación; cada uno es metamorfoseado en el encuentro, ambos se convierten en algo otro, en algo imposible de ser determinado por adelantado, y quizá incluso en retrospectiva, pero que sin embargo han desplazado y realineado de modo perceptible. El encuentro sexual no puede ser visto como una expedición, una aventura, una meta o una inversión, puesto que es una movilización de excitaciones sin dirección y sin “resultados” garantizados (ni siquiera el orgasmo).

## EL AMANTE HOMICIDA, O BÉSAME DE MUERTE

En *Más allá del principio de placer* (1919b), Freud plantea el problema de la necesaria atadura o unión del principio de placer con el instinto de muerte. Vincula la acumulación de intensidades o afectos ilimitados con la insatisfacción, y

el alivio o satisfacción de impulsos libidinales con el placer. Utiliza el principio de constancia de Fechner para sugerir que el organismo intenta mantener la cantidad de energía o excitación en el nivel más bajo posible —no tan bajo como para “relajarse”, aproximarse a la muerte, pero sí lo suficiente como para no “sobrestimular” al organismo, causando que éste busque todo tipo de salidas inadecuadas para descargar la excesiva energía que de otra manera se acumularía. Existe un principio entrópico que dirige internamente el organismo hacia la sencillez y la inactividad, impulsándolo gradualmente hacia la muerte. La vida puede ser vista, en este escenario freudiano, como el aplazamiento o retraso limitado del instinto de muerte, un desvío de la muerte por el principio de placer. Estos dos principios, Eros y Tánatos —vida/placer y muerte/insatisfacción—, son al mismo tiempo complementarios y opuestos; funcionan juntos, cada uno opera por medio del otro, y, como si estuvieran, en contra de los intereses del otro. El principio de placer proporciona un camino en el que el instinto de muerte puede expresarse por medio de los procesos de gratificación en este “relajamiento” o disminución de las energías psíquicas, y el instinto de muerte provee, como fuere, el medio, el material —la acumulación de tensión— mediante el cual el principio de placer obtiene su satisfacción.

Paradójicamente, el instinto de muerte y la libido no se anulan sino se refuerzan mutuamente. La libido y los instintos vitales producen procesos de conservación y placenteros (instintivos e impulsivos, respectivamente) que pretenden proteger al organismo de los peligros que vienen de fuera y de la insatisfactoria acumulación de energías dentro del mismo. En este sentido, permiten que el instinto de muerte tome su propio curso y su propio tiempo: protegen al organismo de los peligros externos, de manera que pueda ser llevado hacia la muerte por sus propios procesos inmanentes.

En la perspectiva filogenética de Freud, particularmente, el sexo y el placer están internamente vinculados. Las actividades sexuales placenteras de los individuos están estrechamente ligadas a la reproducción de la especie, y la reproducción de la especie está subordinada a la vida, reproducción y muerte de los individuos. Esta suposición ha demostrado ser muy fuerte en etología: resulta significativo que los más sencillos de los seres vivos, la ameba y otros organismos unicelulares, aquellos que no se reproducen sexualmente por medio

del intercambio con “el sexo opuesto” sino por división celular, son considerados inmortales. La sexualidad introduce a la muerte en el mundo; o tal vez sea lo contrario: la muerte es inevitable y la sexualidad puede funcionar como una compensación de la muerte o como su complemento. El acto sexual no sólo está *grosso modo* ligado con la muerte y, por medio de ella, con la reproducción de la especie, sino que, lo que resulta más significativo, el erotismo del orgasmo —por lo menos del orgasmo masculino (el caso del orgasmo femenino es considerablemente más complicado, y no resulta claro hasta qué punto se ajusta a este modelo, si es que lo hace)— está basado, según Freud, con el aumento de la excitación, la hinchazón del órgano sexual, la acumulación de energías y fluidos, su liberación, y, entonces, en la detumescencia del órgano y el estado de contento.

La inmediatez y franqueza de este nexos entre muerte y sexo es tal vez el aspecto intrigante de la mantis religiosa: ésta proporciona un ejemplo tangible de los peores temores que rodean las formas en que la sexualidad y las relaciones entre los sexos son concebidas, las más terroríficas consecuencias de la pasión amorosa (si bien no resulta claro que la mantis sea amorosa o apasionada más allá de cualquier proyección antropomórfica). Romper este vínculo entre muerte y deseo sexual es particularmente crucial en esta coyuntura histórica, no sólo debido a los efectos opresivos que tiene en la sexualidad femenina (por no mencionar la masculina), sino también por sus efectos potencialmente letales entre los hombres gay y otras comunidades.<sup>17</sup>

Lingis ha reconocido el vínculo entre horror y lujuria: los efectos transformadores, transubstanciadores, de los lazos eróticos se repiten en la filtración más allá de los límites y la disolución de líneas de la organización corporal impulsada por la disolución orgásmica. Hay algo en los estímulos compulsivos de la sexualidad que puede llevarlo a uno al borde del disgusto y a la abyección, no sólo aceptando sino incluso buscando actividades, objetos y regiones corporales que uno desdeñaría en otros contextos. La fusión de los límites corpóreos, la unión de las partes del cuerpo, la fuga de todas las categorías y formas que atan a un sujeto a su cuerpo y que le dan una integridad corporal —tan fascinante para los surrealistas, sin mencionar las actuales fantasías de androides y cyborgs que venden películas y ciencia ficción feminista— ponen a uno en peligro de una

forma que alarma y horroriza, y al mismo tiempo seducen al grado máximo. Esto es lo que la lujuria tiene en común con el atractivo de las drogas ilícitas: su intensidad derrite una cierta cohesión subjetiva, el “viaje” más o menos elimina los límites clave entre el cuerpo y los otros, más o menos placenteramente y más o menos temporalmente.

Si bien su perspectiva admite una conexión entre horror y deseo, Lingis se resiste a la tentación de establecer un vínculo intrínseco entre deseo y muerte, como la teoría psicoanalítica ha tendido a hacer. Esto puede resultar particularmente instructivo si tomamos en cuenta que, en los últimos diez años, el material publicado por Lingis está sobre todo directamente relacionado ya sea con la sexualidad (en su sentido más amplio) (Lingis, 1983; 1985; 1991a; 1992; 1994b; 1994c) o con la cuestión de la muerte (Lingis, 1989), pero no ha intentado relacionar estos proyectos. Esto pudiera deberse a que está intentando, entre otras cosas, desconectarlos, cortar la liga entre el placer sexual y el instinto de muerte, pensar la libido en términos distintos a los de la hidráulica del modelo freudiano de descarga sexual o catexis. Toda la obra de Freud puede ser entendida como una generalización y una abstracción del modelo del orgasmo masculino al principio fundamental de vida mismo: el principio de constancia, y de hecho el principio de placer, la noción de inversión psíquica o catexis, los movimientos represivos que separan a un representante ideado de su intensidad energética, todo ello de acuerdo con su hidráulica de la tumescencia y detumescencia. El instinto de muerte no es simplemente un “nuevo descubrimiento” realizado por Freud en sus últimos escritos, pues de hecho ya está inscrito en su interpretación del principio de placer incluso en sus primeros textos psicoanalíticos.

La fantasía de la *vagina dentata*, del estatus no-humano de la mujer como androide, vampiro o animal, la identificación de la sexualidad femenina como voraz, insaciable, enigmática, invisible e incognoscible, fría, calculadora, instrumental, castradora/decapitadora del macho, encubierta o falsa, predatora, madre devoradora, son consecuencia de cómo ha funcionado el orgasmo masculino como medida y representante de todas las sexualidades y todas las formas de encuentro erótico. El proyecto de Lingis es importante para desenmarañar las concepciones masculinista y freudiana de sexualidad, placer y deseo en la medida en que proporciona una comprensión de la subjetividad y el deseo (masculinos)

que va más allá y rompe la oposición entre placer y muerte.<sup>18</sup> Demuestra que la pasión sexual no puede ser reducida a la meta de la saciedad sexual, sino que vive y se desarrolla en su propio ímpetu agitado. El orgasmo no debe ser entendido como el fin del encuentro sexual, como su culminación final y el momento de conversión hacia la muerte o la disipación; en cambio, puede ser trasladado a todas y cada una de las regiones del cuerpo y, además, visto como una forma de transubstanciación, una conversión de sólido a líquido:

El placer supremo que podemos conocer, decía Freud, y el modelo de todo placer, el placer orgásmico, viene cuando una tensión excesiva, construida, confinada, compactada, es liberada abruptamente; el placer consiste en el paso a la satisfacción y la tranquilidad de la muerte. ¿No sería el orgasmo más bien el paso a la insatisfacción y agitación del líquido y el vapor —el placer en las exudaciones, secreciones, exhalaciones? [...] La lujuria surge a través de un cuerpo en transubstanciación. [1991a: 15]

Caillois también reconoce la vinculación del instinto de muerte con el principio de placer en la proyección masculina de la mujer como fría, mecánica, inanimada, semi-maquinal: si recordamos, dichas concepciones “se deriva[n] de una forma particular de concebir la relación entre amor y muerte, y, más exactamente, de una premonición ambivalente de encontrar al uno dentro de la otra” (Caillois 1990: 82), una relación particular, presumiblemente no universal o inevitable, entre amor y muerte, que en principio puede ser desenredada. El deseo puede ser reconsiderado en términos que no lo consideren entrelazado con la muerte.

La fantasía que ata al sexo con la muerte tan estrechamente es la fantasía de una sexualidad hidráulica, una necesidad o instinto biológicamente regulado, una compulsión, una urgencia o una forma de liberación física (el estornudo proporciona una analogía). La naturaleza aparentemente apremiante y compulsiva de los impulsos sexuales está implícita en la afirmación hecha por muchos hombres que violan, por aquellos que frecuentan a las prostitutas y por aquellas prostitutas que se describen como “trabajadoras de la salud”, en la medida en que justifican sus papeles en lo que se refiere a mantener la “salud” de sus clientes. Es un modelo de sexualidad basado en la equiparación entre el deseo sexual y la

liberación instrumental o funcional del cuerpo. Es un modelo que los hombres transfieren por lo común de sus propias experiencias vividas a las experiencias de las mujeres, y que reaparece de otra forma en la afirmación hecha hoy día por muchas feministas respecto a la eyaculación femenina.<sup>19</sup> Cuando el erotismo es considerado un programa, un medio para un fin (un escarceo previo), una forma de conquista, una prueba de virilidad o feminidad, un impulso interno que periódicamente estalla, o una atracción impelente hacia un objeto que ejerce una fuerza “magnética” (es decir, como activamente impelente, o como pasivamente seducido), es reducido a distintas versiones de este modelo hidráulico.

Las provocaciones y atractivos del otro no pueden tener efecto en la receptividad erótica del sujeto sin tener resonancias en las intensidades y superficies del cuerpo del sujeto. De hecho, nada parece más ridículo y menos erótico que el ardor o la pasión no correspondidos de alguien más. El otro no puede excitarse sin que el sujeto ya esté excitado o sea excitable. El otro no puede inducir solo impulsos y caricias eróticos desde el exterior. No estoy sugiriendo aquí una reciprocidad necesaria, sino más bien una co-implicación. Siempre existe equivocación y ambigüedad en la pasión: por un lado, lo erótico es autocontenido y autoabsorbido —los amantes están cerrados al mundo, envueltos entre sí, desinteresados de lo que hay afuera—, por el otro lado, en un movimiento contrario, erotismo y sensualidad tienden a dispersarse sobre muchas cosas, infectando todo tipo de otras relaciones.<sup>20</sup> El deseo erótico no es simplemente un deseo de reconocimiento, la constitución de un mensaje, un acto de comunicación o intercambio entre sujetos, un conjunto de técnicas para la transmisión de la intimidad, es una forma de contacto superficial con las cosas y las substancias, con un mundo que engendra e induce transformaciones, intensificaciones, un convertirse en alguien más. No es simplemente ascenso y caída, creciente y menguante, sino movimiento, procesos, transmutaciones. Esto es lo que constituye el atractivo y el poder del deseo, su capacidad para trastornar, adaptar, reorganizar las formas y sensaciones del cuerpo, para hacer que sujeto y cuerpo como tales se disuelvan en algo más, en algo distinto a lo que son habitualmente. Las relaciones sexuales no requieren un deseo supuesto —las habituales prácticas orgásmicas (o no orgásmicas) no son el entorno más propicio para la ignición y exploración del deseo. El deseo no necesita culminar en contacto sexual, pero puede terminar en producción. No en

la producción de un niño o una relación, sino en la producción de sensaciones nunca sentidas, de alineamientos nunca pensados, de energías nunca utilizadas, de regiones desconocidas.

*Traducción de Jaime Soler Frost*

## NOTAS

1. No queda claro si esta fascinación constituye una preocupación universal *humana*; no quiero ni siquiera sugerir que a una mayoría de hombres el sexo animal le parece fascinante, sino más bien la afirmación más limitada de que esta fascinación es masculina, que en *algunos* hombres el sexo animal, e inclusive el sexo de los insectos, provoca una inmensa fascinación porque representa motivos, temas y fantasías que se acercan a lo que podría entenderse como un imaginario masculino, a un modo masculino de representación del yo y del otro.

2. Lo que parece raro no es la mezcla de erudición y obsesión personal —estos términos podrían emplearse para caracterizar la mayoría, si no que todo, el discurso teórico y científico— sino el reconocimiento abierto de que la investigación se basa en preocupaciones personales.

3. 3 Para mayores detalles y para reproducciones y traducciones de algunos de estos trabajos formativos sobre lo que podría entenderse como una sociología de lo sagrado, véase Denis Hollier, *The College of Sociology, 1937-39*, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

4. Véase un libro curiosamente personal de Roger Caillois, *L'écriture des pierres*, Skira, 1970.

5. 5 La especie mantis se encuentra probablemente entre las primeras en aparecer sobre la tierra:

Los mantidae fueron probablemente los primeros insectos en aparecer sobre la tierra, dado que el *Mantis protozea*, cuyas huellas fósiles se encontraron en el oeningen Myocena, pertenece al grupo paleodictyoptera tal como lo definió Scudder, y cuyos rastros se manifiestan del

periodo carbonífero en adelante. (Caillois, *The Necessity of the Mind: An Analytic Study of the Mechanisms of Overdetermination in Automatic and Lyrical Thinking and of the Development of Affective Themes in the Individual Consciousness*, Trans. Michael Syrotinski, Venice, California, Lapis Press, 1990, p 69).

6. Véase aquí Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," traducción de John Sheply, *October* 31: 12-32, 1984; he discutido este análisis con cierta extensión en Grosz, *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994.

7. Lingis, en su deslumbrante y evocador recuento del buceo de profundidades, en "The Rapture of the Deep" proporciona una suerte de confirmación indirecta tanto de la superabundancia o del exceso de camuflaje y demostración cuanto de la irrelevancia de un público, o incluso de un ojo que observe el espectáculo:

Antes del plumaje y las conductas exhibicionistas del ave del paraíso, antes de los cuernos retorcidos de la oveja montañesa, uno tiene que admitir un desarrollo específico del organismo para capturar la atención de otro ojo... hay una lógica de la ostentación sobre y más allá del camuflaje y las funciones semánticas. El ciego y colorido *octopus vulgaris* controla con veinte sistemas nerviosos los 2-3 millones de cromatóforos, iridóforos y leucóforos acomodados en su piel; sólo quince de ellos se han correlacionado con el camuflaje o con estados emocionales. Mientras descansa en su madriguera, su piel inventa continuos espectáculos de luz. El eléctrico y listado pez coral nada en cardumen y se dispersa como una irrupción de vida dominada por una compulsión por la exhibición, el espectáculo, el desfile.

Las pieles más ornadas se encuentran en los nudibranchiados, babosas ciegas de mar. En los abismos marinos, cinco o seis millas debajo de los últimos rayos azules de luz, los peces y los cangrejos, casi todos ciegos, encienden sus colores lustrosos con su propia bioluminiscencia, para ningún testigo. (Lingis, *Excesses: Eros and Culture*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1983, 9-10).



8. Caillois recalca toda una serie de asociaciones culturales relacionadas con la mantis, que parecen situarla en una privilegiada posición teológica, si bien socialmente ambivalente:

...en ocasiones a la mantis se le conoce como “muchacha italiana” o “fantasma”, y menos explicablemente como “fresa” o “magdalena”. En un sentido más general, surge una actitud ambivalente: por un lado, al insecto se le tiene como sagrado, si nos atenemos a su nombre común de *prégo-Diéou* (“plegaria-a-Dios”), con sus variantes y expresiones correspondientes...; y por el otro, al insecto se le considera diabólico, como lo hace constar el nombre simétrico de *prégo-Diablé* (“plegaria-al-Diablo).

Ahora bien, si atendemos a los dichos de los niños con respecto a la mantis, encontramos dos temas principales: primero, se dice de ella que es una Profeta que lo sabe todo, y en particular el paradero del lobo; y en segundo lugar, se da por hecho que está rezando porque su madre murió o se ahogó. En este último punto el testimonio es unánime. (1990, 69-72).

9. Caillois citará una notable serie de casos clínicos de los anales del psicoanálisis, en particular ejemplos orales de delirio de persecución, para hacer más explícito el vínculo entre la mantis, la *vagina dentata* y la *femme fatale*:

Bychowski analiza el caso de una víctima convencida de que será devorada por una prostituta, antes incluso de haberse acercado a ella. Me inclinaría más bien a vincular estas fantasías con el desarrollo de complejos de castración que... comúnmente se originan en el terror a la vagina dentada, dada la asimilación del cuerpo entero al miembro masculino y sobre todo porque la asimilación de la boca a la vagina son... clásicos del psicoanálisis. (1990, 78-79).

10. Más bien irónicamente, el análisis de Caillois encuentra en este punto una relación con los primeros análisis de Deleuze sobre la estructura del masoquismo en su análisis de Sacher von Masoch: él afirma que el masoquismo no es, como sugiere Freud, la reversión de un deseo homosexual por el padre, el cual se

encuentra disfrazado en la figura de la madre castigadora, sino más bien un intento por matar físicamente al padre, en la medida en que es el padre el que induce identificaciones masculinas y filiales en el hijo. Véase Deleuze, *Masochism. Coldness and Cruelty*, traducción de Jean McNeil, Nueva York, Zone Books, 1989. Explícitamente, Caillois conecta el encanto de la mantis religiosa con el complejo sdomasquista.

11. Caillois cita a Paul Eluard, quien “admite ver la relación sexual ideal en sus hábitos de hacer el amor; el acto de amar, dice, disminuye al hombre y agranda a la mujer, de modo que es natural que ella se valga de su superioridad efímera para devorarlo, o al menor para matarlo”. (Caillois, 1990, 79) Freud hace una afirmación en este mismo sentido en su análisis de las relaciones amorosas y la “tendencia a la degradación en la esfera del amor”.

12. Al tiempo que no abandona una posición crítica respecto del análisis sartreano del deseo sexual como algo fundamentalmente posesivo, sádico, una imposición sobre el otro que confirma la propia conciencia y el sentido del yo, Lingis sin embargo suscribe el rechazo de Sartre a reducir la sexualidad y el placer sexual a proyectos u objetivos funcionales o pragmáticos:

No es la destreza de las manos lo que resulta más atrayente, sino una mano que sigue a la otra con movimientos temblorosos e indecisos... Un órgano sexual no es una herramienta; es esencial que el pene y el clítoris en erección, la vagina lubricada, no se activen voluntariamente, usados por una conciencia reflexiva. Ningún órgano fino y prensil, ensamblado con músculos estriados, puede ser un órgano sexual, dice Sartre; un órgano sexual sólo puede ser parte de un sistema vegetativo. (Lingis, 1985, 25).

13. La sexualidad, el deseo, no puede verse en términos de una función, un propósito o un objetivo, porque esto es reducir su funcionalidad; la materialidad, como ya lo he sugerido siguiendo a Caillois, resulta siempre en un exceso de función u objetivo. Este es uno de los problemas con el enfoque del manual: libros sobre “cómo hacer” en materia de sexualidad presuponen cierto principio operativo en cuanto a lo medular o lo pendiente, y no el descubrimiento de un

deseo, el cual no puede resumirse, ni ponerse en una fórmula o aprenderse como una rutina..

14. En el texto de Lyotard (*Libidinal Economy*, traducción de Ian Hamilton Grant, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993), el cuerpo orgánico funciona como una plenitud pura, un prelapsario dado (el cual, en caso de producirse, es el efecto de una fisiología, una anatomía, una neurología y una bioquímica) o presencia que se defleciona por medio de una intervención secundaria, una estructura no distinta de la que es el objeto de las continuas críticas de Derrida.

15. La banda de Moebio, por cierto, también una metáfora pervasiva en algunos de los escritos de Lacan sobre el tema, es el modelo rector que se encuentra detrás de mi propio entendimiento de la relación mente/cuerpo en Grosz, 1994.

16. Lingis cita de la ex prostituta francesa, Xavière Lafort:

El castigo es una vez más una forma de hacer que un ser humano acepte lo inaceptable. Pero el lazo S-M también acaba por hacerte sentir algo por tus padrotes. Ese "algo" es innombrable; está más allá del amor y del odio, más allá de los sentimientos, una alegría salvaje mezclada con vergüenza, la alegría de aceptarlo, aguantar el golpe, de pertenecer y de sentirse liberado o de libertad. Debe existir en todas las mujeres, en todas las parejas, en grados menores o inconscientes. En realidad no puedo explicarlo. Es como una droga, como la sensación de estar viviendo tu propia vida varias veces a la vez, con una intensidad increíble. Los padrotes mismos, al infligir estos castigos, experimentan ese "algo", estoy segura... No quiero decir que quiera regresar a esa forma de vida. Pero siempre la extrañas. Es cocaína. Nunca encuentras tal intensidad en la vida normal. (citado de Lingis, 1985, 84-85).

17. Es significativo que, en las respuestas de la comunidad gay a la crisis del SIDA y de las prácticas sexuales al amparo del "sexo seguro", haya habido un esfuerzo considerable dedicado a promover el hecho de que el "sexo seguro" no necesariamente implica un sexo más aburrido; que uno no necesita cortejar el peligro y la muerte posible en busca de una última cumbre sexual; o más bien, existen muchos

caminos corporales en los cuales las relaciones eróticas y sexuales siguen siendo intensas y excitantes sin que pongan necesariamente la vida en peligro.

18. No me queda claro hasta qué punto Lingis está preparado para limitar la relevancia y el enfoque de su análisis de la libido: si bien es cierto mucho de lo que dice sobre la informalidad del placer sexual, el carácter indeterminado de los objetivos del deseo me parece directamente relevante para las mujeres y la sexualidad femenina, no obstante que también es probable que mucho de su recuento, en cuanto (casi) autobiográfico, está específicamente limitado a la experiencia masculina.

19. Véase, por ejemplo, Shannon Bell, quien afirma que las mujeres también pueden, con la información y la práctica adecuadas, lograr orgasmos eyaculatorios (Shanon Bell, "Feminist Ejaculations," *The Hysterical Male; New Feminist Theory*, edición de Arthur y Marilouise Kroker, Nueva York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). Si bien no dudo que algunas mujeres, y quizá, bajo ciertas circunstancias, todas las mujeres, son capaces de eyaculaciones orgásmicas, no queda claro por qué éstas deben considerarse como una mejora o una progresión a partir de los orgasmos no eyaculatorios.

20. En su estudio "Khajuraho" (1983), Lingis desarrolla un punto similar:

Las cosas más improbables se resuelven en analogías o figuras de lujuria, de modo que se vuelven capaces de excitarse a sí mismas en cualquier lugar; incluso, en el caso de los fetiches, éstos pueden convertirse enteramente en cosas alejadas de cualquier posibilidad de interacción. Es como si el impulso libidinoso fuera una energía exorbitante que tiende no a satisfacerse y desaparecer, como otros deseos y apetitos, sino a excitarse con su propia función; todo se infecta de su preocupación, incluso las asociaciones prácticas de trabajar con herramientas, las relaciones políticas dentro de las instituciones, las relaciones pedagógicas sobre las ideas, las alianzas militares antes de la inminencia del desastre y en la sed de la conquista. No sólo la persecución de riquezas o de una investidura con autoridad política funcionan como medios para obtener parejas de

carne y hueso, sino que el celestinaje y el cálculo mismos se vuelven lascivos. (1983, 50).

*Traducción de notas: Gabriel Bernal Granados* 

JULIET LYND

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“HONDO ES EL POZO DEL TIEMPO”:  
MEMORY AND VIOLENCE IN RAÚL ZURITA’S  
*LAS CIUDADES DE AGUA* (2007)

When Raúl Zurita won Chile’s Premio Nacional de Literatura in 2000, both the split jury that awarded the prize and the poet became the subject of a media sensation, complete with literary mud slinging from both the right and the left. Conservative critics could hardly believe that the prestigious prize had been given to someone famous for poetic acts of self-mutilation (in 1975 he seared his own cheek with a hot iron and in 1980 he attempted, unsuccessfully, to blind himself with ammonia) and, even more scandalously, for his infamous masturbation at an art museum (1979). For others, these performances, along with the art happenings he carried out with CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte),<sup>1</sup> were integral to the development of an innovative creative scene that forged cryptic but effective protests of Augusto Pinochet’s brutal military regime (1973-90), to say nothing of Zurita’s inventive poetry that deftly draws on Pablo Neruda’s reverence toward nature, Nicanor Parra’s antipoetry, and the unspeakable experiences of torture and loss suffered under dictatorship. Yet among critics on the left, the timing of the National Prize following Ricardo Lagos’s election drew suspicion that it had been given to a poet who was overly collaborative with the suspect forces of the

Transition to democracy: after his radical poetic experiments under dictatorship, Zurita had not only lent his public stature to the work of the Concertación<sup>2</sup> as the cultural attaché to Italy under President Patricio Aylwin, later working for the Ministerio de Obras Públicas, and more recently campaigning for Lagos; the *vate* had recently dedicated a poem to Lagos in which he reminds the newly elected socialist to remember the struggles of the people below.<sup>3</sup> Many thus perceived the Premio Nacional as a political reward, regardless of the merits of the poet. The particular controversies generated by the National Prize, however, serve to illustrate how the fusion of art and life in Zurita's texts has created a public persona that can eclipse his own work. Although the latter constantly alludes to and reworks his own biography, attention to the more sensational events of the poet's life can occlude the complexity of his poetry and the psychological and historical devastation laid bare in his recent *Las ciudades de agua* (2007), a small but potent part of his *Zurita: obra en progreso*.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond an overarching concern with the poet's biography and his polemic public art, tensions about Zurita's work are exacerbated by the ideologically slippery and at times contradictory evolution of his poetry itself, which is marked on the one hand by the violence he both suffered and witnessed at the hands of the military (he was detained and tortured in Valparaíso following the 1973 coup and remained in Chile throughout the Pinochet era) and on the other by a deep-seated love of humanity, nature, and Chile that often leads his poetic voice to the possibility of spiritual if not political redemption. Praise for his work comes from critics as diverse as *El Mercurio's* Catholic literary critic Ignacio Valente, who sung the poet's praises beginning in the 1970s in Chile's conservative newspaper of record, to Rodrigo Cánovas, who champions the poet's forging of a language of resistance to the regime. The latter position is arguably the most common, but notably Nelly Richard and Hernán Vidal, both leftist critics who vociferously disagree on the most effective forms of cultural critique, have each criticized what they perceive as an alignment between Zurita's poetry and the discourses of the Transition.<sup>5</sup> Scott Weintraub has pointed out that "the ray of hope emanating from Zurita's poetic messianism and visionary ecstasy—which tends to align the sacrificial violence done to the poetic body with discourses of institutional violence under dictatorship—has shaped the dominant critical

reaction to his writing" (214), but Weintraub rejects this view and, rightly in my opinion, analyzes *Anteparáiso* in terms of a Derridean, necessarily postponed justice-to-come.

So while Zurita certainly has many fans, it seems that his bursts of optimism have inspired a tinge of distrust in a number of intellectuals concerned by the collusion of poetry, power and complicity with a Transition process widely regarded as far too collaborative with Chile's powerful right-wing minority. However, if the Transition era arguably witnessed gestures toward forgiveness and reconciliation in his work, Zurita's most recent poetry expresses the profound and obstinate memories of violence and the unshakeable legacy, both personal and collective, of the human rights abuses committed during the regime. The narrative poetry of *Las ciudades de agua* (2007), a small collection that has received little critical attention, presents a collage of images from the poet's life and the nation's history in which the traumas inflicted by state-sponsored terrorism mingle with the quotidian and personal losses of the individual to explore the devastating effects of torture on the collective identity of the nation.

The poetic voice constructed within this collection of poems, identified explicitly and tellingly as Zurita, is laden with a tension that pulls between a desire for narrative coherence and the constant interruption of images of violence and expressions of loss that undermine any attempt to escape the past. The book opens with a quote from Thomas Mann, "Hondo es el pozo del tiempo," and the metaphor for time as a deep well appears in the first and last poems and is repeated throughout the collection, along with fragmented memories of the poet's life, literary influences, and historical experiences. The image of the well serves not only to evoke the psychological complexity of Mann's narratives, but also to underscore the nonlinear representation of memory as echoes in a bottomless pit, as amorphous liquid, and as abjectly infinite. Zurita's poetic voice reiterates, again and again, the painful and unresolved memories of taking leave of his father as a young man setting out in the world, of abandoning his own children, of the violence that ravished Chile in the aftermath of the coup, and of the poet's own attempts at forging an art of protest.

The incessantly recurrent images of political violence woven into the thread of personal psychological trauma not only present a new challenge to the borders



between life, body and art that has characterized Zurita's work since his innovative *Purgatorio* (which includes photographs of his scarred cheek as well as a psychological report and an encephalogram of the poet),<sup>6</sup> it represents the violence of the regime as a traumatic event as deeply woven into the psychology of Zurita—poet and poetic voice—as the Freudian family drama also at play in *Las ciudades de agua*. Likewise, the representation of Chilean spaces—from Santiago to the Andes to the Pacific—is inscribed with traces of violence that cannot be erased or exorcised. Standing in contrast to Zurita's more optimistic visions of the future of Chile and the possibilities inherent in humankind's capacity for love, this recent volume of poetry confirms the irreversible traumas inflicted by the dictatorship and the urgency of understanding the psychological complexity of the abuses unleashed after the coup. Zurita's poetry is a narrative verse that is constantly disrupted by images that confront the reader with abjection of the limits, or indeed the limitlessness, of human cruelty; *Las ciudades del agua* complicates any attempt to dismiss torture as part of an ideological struggle or as simply humanity's capacity for evil, and demands a more complex reconsideration of the issue.

#### ABJECTION AND SUBJECTIVITY AFTER THE COUP

It is perhaps less than coincidence that Julia Kristeva also evokes the metaphor of time as a deep well in her essay on abjection, *The Powers of Horror* (6). In this work she examines the effect on language when the subject is confronted with evidence of one's own materiality and thus one's own mortality. A corpse is of course the most unsettling abjected object one might encounter, although bodily fluids or other waste might trigger a similar reaction in the subject. Kristeva notes the ultimate horror of an historical event such as World War II; the bloodbath of the Pinochet years, when thousands were executed or disappeared and tens of thousands were tortured, would have a similar effect. The abject, Kristeva points out, can cause a breakdown in the symbolic order, as it threatens the distinction between subject and object. While Kristeva explores evidence of the effect on literary language in the narrative of postwar writer Céline, among others, she notes that "If one wished to proceed farther still along

the approaches to abjection, one would find neither narrative nor theme but a recasting of syntax and vocabulary—the violence of poetry, and silence” (141). This is precisely what is at work in the narrative poems of Zurita’s *Las ciudades de agua*, where ideas are truncated and syntax is disrupted as language meets horrors of the past that remain as specters in the present.

The collection begins and ends with echoes of the speaker’s memories of leaving his family. The first poem includes the following verses: “Esta noche / me marchó papá, ¿sabes? Díselo tú a mamá. [...] ¿Te imaginas los riachuelos corriendo / por entre estas piedras papá? No me hablas papá” (11), and the final poem ends on nearly the same note:

Hondo es el pozo del tiempo. Las montañas están  
tapadas y tal vez llueva papá. Tú se lo dirás  
entonces a mamá. ¿Te imaginas la lluvia mojando  
esas piedras papá? No me respondes papá. (157)

The same scene—a young man taking leave of his father; refusing to say goodbye to his mother or his sister; commenting on the foggy, misty, rainy, stony landscape; and noting the silence of the father—is reiterated throughout the collection. The images evoke a typical coming of age, where the young man embarks on the world on his own—apparently having agreed to give up any sort of literary career (“No más libros papá”; 11)—and severs his ties to the family. Yet in these poems, one notices the absence of the mother figure and the poet’s inability to cleanly break from her. The speaker’s ambivalence toward separation from the mother remains, as if he cannot bear to definitively sever that tie and leave the remains of the presymbolic—of a time of connection with the maternal before entry into the symbolic order—behind. Further emphasizing the subject’s lack of guidance and clarity as he makes his way into the world is the silence of the father. Although the poet later reveals that the father has died, the declarations that “you do not speak,” “you do not answer” reflect the present of the speaker as he recalls the past. The speaker appears to long for a patriarchal affirmation that will never come; the poetic subject is directionless. Yet the following verses will show that the son’s departure from the home happens shortly before the coup, thereby rendering the poetic subject’s desire for a coherent symbolic order

both personal and historical, both individual and collective.

So while the family drama frames the collection and echoes throughout, thus rooting the stories alluded to—not fully recounted—in intimate autobiography, history emerges dramatically and violently in the second “chapter,” titled “Como una vergüenza.” The traumatic events of the Pinochet regime—and in later chapters the compromised Transition to democracy and the abysmal *ciudades de agua* of contemporary urban life—are imbued with the same sense of melancholic stagnation and are equally defining for the poetic subject. In the poem titled “1973,” the speaker begins with a brief reference to the bombing of La Moneda, thus evoking the theatrical staging of the coup on that distant September 11, 1973 when fighter jets attacked the presidential palace, images of which have become deeply engrained in the collective memory of the event. The speaker then recalls his own detention (in a city miles away), but quickly dismisses its importance: “Yo fui apresado / en la madrugada en Valparaíso pero eso no importa. / Importa que necesito amor y estoy solo. Tampoco / importa que los tipos hayan huido como ratas. Es la vida.” (27). The poet claims to want to diminish the significance of his own detention and torture, and in fact he will go on to evoke far more disturbing images of greater hardships endured by others. He even seems determined to prioritize his universal experience of loneliness and longing for love over the horrific history he lived. But by simply bringing up his arrest and then abruptly changing tone from “Importa que necesito amor y estoy solo” to “Tampoco / importa que los tipos hayan huido como ratas,” he grants importance to his experience of the political by inscribing it in the poem in the first place.

Throughout *Las ciudades de agua*, the experience of torture is presented as a trauma: the memory recurs throughout and is left unresolved. It interrupts different narratives and refuses to remain in the past, denying the poet any possibility of an experience that does not somehow trigger memories of a violence that is inexplicable. These memories challenge any possibility of peace with or acceptance of the present. For instance, in one of the “Seis sueños para Kurosawa,” a section in which Zurita honors the Japanese filmmaker’s haunting images of horror—and thereby connects the Chilean experience to the collective traumas of postwar Japan—the poet recounts an episode in which dream, reality, and

memory intermingle. He begins by stating that he had been picked up hitchhiking, but that he soon was nodding off. Then: “Cuando abrí los ojos el camión estaba / detenido y me sorprendió estarlo mirando [at the driver, the apparent referent for “lo”] de reojo desde /el suelo” (35). He goes on to describe being beaten up:

[...] Los primeros  
puntapiés me paralogizaron y sentí mi cara clavarse  
contra la granulosis del pavimento. Tenía las manos  
en la nuca y una carpeta aferrada a los dientes. La  
neblina subía desde el mar y cuando entre culatazos me  
obligaron a pararme me di cuenta de que mis piernas no  
me obedecían. Un último culatazo me dio de lleno en la  
boca y mientras escupía mis dientes vi la planicie  
interminable que se encrespaba hacia el fondo como un  
animal muerto. (35)

Although this violent description may seem relatively straightforward, history, dream, and reality all overlap within it. First, the *puntapiés* and *culatazos* immediately suggest abuse by soldiers or police (as opposed to a criminal truck driver, which one might otherwise deduce given the ambiguity of the scene). Then, references to the sublime landscape inscribe the natural beauty surrounding the brutal scene with the violence of the historical moment. Finally, the reference to the “carpeta aferrada a los dientes” evokes a reference to the folder of poetry Zurita tells of holding in his mouth during his detention in his autobiographical novel *El día más blanco*, thereby marking the passage with references to his life and to his earlier textual representations of it. The following sentence, however, gives evidence that it was just a dream. It reads: “La ranchera a todo volumen envolvía por completo la redondez de la tierra y el tipo guiaba canturreándola” (35). Further on he adds, “pensé que Kurosawa lo filmaría” (35), and it is not clear if Kurosawa would have filmed the dream sequence itself or the image of the poet nodding off and dreaming his own traumatic history.

As the reader continues through the series of poems in the collection, references to Zurita’s own subjection to torture and abuse gives way to the

understanding that the singular is iterated infinitely throughout the collective, that others were also tortured, and that the victims were subject to increasingly greater degrees of violence. On the one hand, the representation of extreme pain in language is unrepresentable, as Elaine Scarry has explored and Zurita himself has reiterated; on the other hand, Zurita is aware that the horrific methods of Chile's secret police took on inhuman proportions. To give a particularly chilling example, the poet tells of his *compañera* who was detained and raped—a practice so common that the Comisión Nacional de Prisión y Tortura Política (formed in 2003) found rape and sexual abuse so systematic a part of the detention process as to merit its own category. The poem, “Azul cobalto” (also the title of the chapter), begins by mocking the jailor/rapist for his quick ejaculations and his magnanimous pardon of his victims afterward. But then the poem adds the detail, “Las cosas después se ponen / feroces; ratas en las vaginas y todo eso” (42). The image is no poetic license or hyperbole; it refers to a documented procedure that accompanied the systematic implementation of targeted arrests and horrific tortures that went well beyond the beatings, brutal interrogations and executions that immediately followed the coup. Zurita's text thus matter-of-factly gives voice to this evolution of cruelty within the regime. In the following pages, with renewed recourse to poetic language, the autobiographical references increasingly give way to the marginalized voices of peasants and workers who tell of unspeakable horrors at the hands of the military.

From brothers obliged to bite one another, ripping apart each other's flesh at gunpoint (76), to corpses posed in a gruesome orgy of the dead (81-82), to the story of the last of the MIRista guerrillas to be ambushed near Neltume (83-85),<sup>7</sup> these poems maintain their grammatical integrity, but the narrative perspective is increasingly ambiguous, as the point of view is continuously altered from first to third person, obliging the reader to actively determine the subject of the speech. Blending the conventions of testimonial (“¿Tú lo / escribirás? me preguntó”; 76) with the freedom of poetic language to render speaking subjects and objects ambiguous, the poems of the section “No apagues la luz, papá” is structured around the epigraph “Es que volví a soñar los ríos muertos, papá” (75), each poem associating stories of death and abuse—both political and domestic—with a river of Chile. The horrific anecdotes again inscribe the landscape with

violence and echo the earlier anaphoric “tierra ensangrentada” of the previous section (“Los boteros de la noche”); the third poem of that chapter describes the footsteps of the third boatman: “como si / fueran enormes pozas, continuaban marcándose sobre / la ensangrentada tierra, sobre las ensangrentadas calles, / sobre las ciudades rebalsadas de sangre” (64).

The poetic representation of violence wrought against Chile’s most marginalized populations echoes Zurita’s earlier tributes to the victims of Pinochet’s regime, particularly in *Canto a su amor desaparecido* (1985), *La vida nueva* (1994), and *INRI* (2004), yet here the juxtaposition with the autobiographical mingles the personal with the collective. It relativizes Zurita’s own experiences while constructing the poetic “Zurita” (*obra en progreso*) as a persona deeply altered by having confronted the savage cruelty unleashed upon the population. Writing on the aesthetics of political memory in *Canto a su amor desaparecido*, Hernán Vidal critiques what he sees as the creation of a “shamanistic” element in the text, the poetic voice functioning to restore order and balance to a cosmos disrupted by the violence of the dictatorship. In *La vida nueva*, Zurita includes a poem in which the poetic voice belongs to a female shaman giving birth. This poem is repeated almost word for word in *Las ciudades de agua*, but it must be noted that not only does the gender problematize any easy identification with the poet (who is, after all, dreaming), the shaman describes giving birth to a succession of babies until finally “me fui para adentro / y me vi enteras las entrañas” (16), an extreme and grotesque interiorization that does nothing to soothe the pain of a suffering community, let alone restore balance to the cosmos. This impossible examination of the inside of one’s own body is more than an abject awareness of the subject’s ultimate materiality; the potential spiritual healing of the shaman is rendered useless.

Toward the end of *Las ciudades de agua*, the speaker reassumes the recognizable *yo* of the collection and leaves the reader with horrific images of collective suicide (“Eran millones y millones de hombres y mujeres / desbarrancándose, muchedumbres inacabables que / se detenían por un instante en el borde de los / paredones y luego se lanzaban”; 103) and of a landscape filled with bodies:

y vi que el mar  
entero eran llanuras y llanuras de cuerpos muertos,

extensiones inabarcables de espaldas exánimes, de  
vientres que ondeaban igual que paños extendiéndose  
hasta el horizonte [...]  
Eran millones y millones de caras  
con las bocas abiertas, de torsos, de piernas y brazos  
barriendo una y otra vez la playa como si fueran  
infinitos hilos de colores (104)

The innumerable corpses filling the sea, the plains, the mountains, and the desert of Chile with their presence irrupt into Zurita's life and into his poetry after the coup. They stand as abject reminders of humanity's inhumanity and although they are not devoid of historical circumstance, they abjectly challenge the poet and the reader to comprehend their death. Beyond signifying a reminder of one's materiality, they point to the unspeakable experience of human cruelty and the speaker never recovers a coherent symbolic order, leaving his fractured voice—that of the boy leaving home and of the poetic subject multiplied by an endless stream of abused voices—as a reminder of the devastation on which post-Pinochet Chile's symbolic coherence is founded.

In a final, failed attempt to join his voice with theirs, the speaker in the chapter "¿Despertaré entonces?" fuses Spanish with local Chilean and indigenous phrases in a series of poems that increasingly truncates its own grammatical coherency to express a longing desire for love amidst the fracturing experience of history. Pavella Coppolla Palacios wrote on these poems before the release of *Las ciudades de agua*, when they were published in a compilation of Zurita's love poems and indeed, as she suggests, they are rooted in a love that is existential in its desire to defy death, and hemispheric and identitarian in their evocation of the languages and cultures of the Americas. These poems communicate, she notes, not only a longing for human togetherness, but also a love of poetry for its expressive possibilities. Nevertheless, the fragmentation of the verses (literally, with the insertion of "Corte." between sentences, to call the reader's attention to the conceptual leaps the speaker is making with no transition) also reflects a profound inability to overcome the traumas laid bare earlier in the collection. Following Idelbar Avelar's diagnosis of postdictatorsip

literature as expressions of mourning and allegories of defeat, it is as though Zurita's poetic voice represents the impossibility of a harmonious relationship with a *pueblo* that is neither homogenous nor idealized; the end of the utopian dream cut short by the coup. It is this problematized representation of the marginalized, of the abused, of fellow Chileans and fellow humans, that marks the deepest level of trauma registered in *Las ciudades de agua*.

The final sections of the book explore the image of the titular "cities of water": they are urban spaces founded on violence, cities that cannot be experienced without reference to the abject destruction that underlies their very functioning. The poems begin with an abstract description, such as "Enteras de agua, las ciudades subían cubriendo el cielo / y los millones de puntos de luz de las ventanas de sus / rascacielos se espejean, como si fuera el mar, en la inmensa plataforma del amanecer" (117), and then they go on to combine fragments of history both personal (of the poet's *compañera*) and political (soldiers, the discovery of cadavers at Lonquen). The image of water denotes the primordial substance of life, but it also evokes the metaphor of the deep well of time that echoes throughout the book and suggests an amorphousness that connotes uncertainty and lack of form. Indeed, the metaphor of the deep well stands in direct opposition to the superficiality of official discourses that would forget the past in the name of moving forward. Harkening back to the bloodied earth, streets, and cities of earlier poems in the collection, the poetic voice creates images of the cities in the present that are marked by memories of the disappeared, of the tortured, and of the speaker's own intensely lived life.

Over and over again throughout, the poet rehashes memories of his mother's psychological suffering, of having abandoned his own children, of inhabiting spaces constructed by Pinochet (subways, highways, the ex-dictator's vacation beach spots), of failed relationships, and of his early public art. The latter is rewritten and all but dismissed as representing little more than a confusion of adolescent desires as personal as they were political ("En fin: pequeños tipos rotos en / un pequeño país roto"; 29). The cities of water, however, are urban spaces in which the horror of the past lies just below the surface of everyday life. Referring to Zurita's earlier *Anteparaíso*, Roberto Vela Córdova connects the "priva[tiza]tion of expression" with the author's stated observations about how



official Chile occludes underlying experiences of devastation wrought by the privatizations of neoliberal reform (85). *Las ciudades de agua* lays bare the limits of a traumatized subjectivity that cannot assimilate a symbolic order founded on violence; that cannot fully enter that symbolic order. Poetry remains on its margins, denouncing the violence and questioning its purpose.

*Las ciudades de agua* presents a complex picture of the individual and collective devastations wrought by torture, by the systematic implementation of abuse intended to punish a citizenry and eliminate political opposition. Torture in Zurita's work is presented as the result, on the one hand, of ideological context: the Pinochet regime's intent to extirpate the "Marxist cancer" from the national body. As the poetic voice cedes space to the stories of the marginalized—speaking for them, yes, but in poetic language that highlights the poet's role—the poems underscore this historical context of class conflict that drove the repression. On the other hand, abuse is shown to emerge from humankind's darkest impulses: references to the most horrific of state-sponsored sexual crimes are juxtaposed to scenes of incest and domestic abuse, and the progression of the narrative reiterates the increasingly creative and disturbing abuses that did develop within the regime. Finally, *Las ciudades de agua* constructs both urban and rural spaces of contemporary Chile as palimpsests of the violence that underlies the otherwise efficient economic order of subways and beachfront properties.

This complex consideration given to the memory of the violence unleashed by the Pinochet regime is inscribed within the textual "work in progress" of a poet who is iconic of the neovanguard critiques of the regime in the 1970s and 80s and associated, however justly or unjustly, with the Transition. While Zurita's insistence on remembering the traumatic legacies of the coup and his constant confrontation of the horrific violence that permeates the poetic subject's experience of contemporary Chile might date him as part of the *generación de la derrota*, it is important to examine the evolution of his thinking. For the calls for "nunca más" or "never again" that have accompanied public denunciations of human rights abuses in Chile and elsewhere have gone unheeded: repression, abuse, and even genocide have, clearly, continued to spring forth in other parts of the world. In *Las ciudades de agua*, Zurita employs literary references to link the Chilean experience

with postwar Japan and Europe as well as with the violence of tyrants documented by Shakespeare. He writes off his own youthful expressions of despair and visceral protest as adolescent gestures hardly worthy of the canonization they have received. As his work forges new ways of thinking about the multiple contexts of abuse and horror and the debilitating effects on the subject, it is important to read Zurita—the poet, the poetic voice, the public intellectual—as a work in progress. Not just the Zurita of self-mutilation, or the Zurita who inscribes his verses on the sky and in the desert, however important a symbolic act those were and still are, but also the Zurita whose intimate confessions and imaginative poems lay bare the limits of a subject aware of the corpses upon which his reality is founded. For these are the poems that transcend the historical context they evoke to condemn the violence that abuse of power inspires.

## NOTES

1. Zurita was a founding member, along with writer Diamela Eltit, artists Juan Castillo and Letty Rosenfeld, and sociologist Fernando Balcells. For thorough documentation of the art collective's initial happenings in the seventies through their final contribution to redemocratization with the graffitied NO+ all over Santiago, see Robert Neustadt.
2. The coalition of center and left parties that banded together to defeat Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite that ushered in free elections, and ultimately the victory of Christian Democrat Aylwin (1990-96). The Concertación held on to the presidency (with Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, followed by Socialists Ricardo Lagos and Michele Bachelet) until 2010. After a third-party candidate led to a run-off election, conservative Sebastián Piñera triumphed over the status quo offered by Frei (running for a second term), despite Bachelet's high approval ratings. The tense race shows how deeply divided between right and left the nation continues to be.
3. The poem was published in *Poemas militantes*. Lagos was the first Socialist elected president since Salvador Allende (1970-73). His successful campaign

came on the heels of Pinochet's arrest in London in 1998 and the subsequent reopening of discussion about justice and historical memory in Chile. Zurita's initial enthusiasm for the symbolic importance of Lagos's victory is expressed in *Poemas militantes*. The poet implores the new president to remember the downtrodden, and seize the moment for reform. Whether or not this poem had anything to do with Zurita's coveted Premio Nacional, the Concertación has proven unwilling to pursue a leftist political agenda, a fact that Zurita was quick to point out to me, with sad disillusion, when we met in July 2009. It should certainly be pointed out that any number of writers collaborated with and worked for the Concertación during the Transition (a process arguably not yet concluded, given that Chile still honors the 1980 Constitution, which was put into place by Pinochet and is protective of "authoritarian enclaves" that guarantee a position for the nation's powerful right-wing minority). However, Zurita has often been in the spotlight, most notably for the controversial Premio Nacional and for the earlier event of his enormous inscription "ni pena ni miedo" written in the Atacama desert in 1993, visible from airplanes (and in the satellite images of GoogleEarth), and produced with support from the state. Although the phrase evokes a victorious stance toward the military regime's attempts to eradicate the left through the humiliation of torture and a culture of fear, it is arguably compatible with the Transition's overall posture of looking forward—and not backward at the painful memories of abuses relegated to the past with impunity.

4. In summer of 2009, Zurita launched the 702-page *Cuadernos de guerra*, which he considers his culminating work about his life as a work in progress. Its critical success remains to be seen, but what is clear is that Zurita himself is indeed a tireless work in progress.

5. See also Marcelo Pellegrini's critique. Pellegrini sees Zurita's reception in both Chile and the US as "portador de la palabra como unción casi mística que nos entrega otra imagen del paisaje chileno, sumada a sus actuaciones de víctima de la dictadura a través de la autoflagelación de 1975, inicio, como ya sabes de la 'obra'" (52). It is precisely this dichotomy, however, that I see Zurita working to overcome in his work.

6. See Luis Torres on the complex signifying of Zurita's corporal inscriptions.
7. The MIR, or Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria, was a radical group that supported armed revolution and that maintained clandestine resistance within Pinochet's Chile.

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## NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS / BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Born in Salto, Uruguay, **Marosa di Giorgio** (1932–2004) is considered one of Latin America's most extraordinary poets and novelists. Di Giorgio's extensive bibliography includes *Druida* (1959), *Está en llamas el jardín natal* (1975), *Clavel y tenebrario* (1979), *La liebre de marzo* (1981) and *Rosa mística* (2003). Published in 2000 and 2008 by Adriana Hidalgo Editora in Buenos Aires, *Los papeles salvajes* is a collection of her life's work. All translations in this issue are based on the texts copyrighted in this Adriana Hidalgo Editora collection. • **Susan Briante** is the author of *Pioneers in the Study of Motion* (Ahsahta Press 2007). She is an assistant professor of literature and creative writing at the University of Texas at Dallas. • **Anna Deeny** teaches in the History and Literature Department at Harvard. She has translated the poetry of Marosa di Giorgio, Idea Vilariño, Mercedes Roffé, and Raúl Zurita. Her translation of Zurita's *Purgatorio* (1973) was published by the University of California Press in 2009. • **Raúl Zurita** (Chile, 1950) publicó *Purgatorio*, *Anteparaiso*, *Canto a su amor desaparecido* e *INRI* entre otros libros. En 1982 traza sobre el cielo de Nueva York el poema "La Vida Nueva" y en 1993 la frase "ni pena ni miedo" en el desierto de Atacama que sólo se ve desde las alturas. Ha recibido las becas Guggenheim y el Premio Nacional de Literatura de Chile. Es Profesor de Literatura en la Universidad Diego Portales, Chile. • **Dolores Dorantes** (1973) lives in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. She is site director of

the border office of Documentación y Estudios de Mujeres, A.C. (DEMAC), promoting autobiographical writing among women in marginalized communities. She has published three books of poetry and one of prose, including *Poemas para niños*, *SexoPUROsexoVELOZ* and *Septiembre*; as well as the epistolary book *Lola: Cartas Cortas*. She updates her blog regularly at [www.dorantes.blogspot.com](http://www.dorantes.blogspot.com).

• **Rodrigo, Flores, Sánchez and his homies** (Mexico City, 1977) are the authors of *estimado cliente* (Lapsus, 2005 and Bonobos/Setenta, 2007) and *baterías* (Invisible, 2006). They were the founders and editors of the literary journal *Oráculo. Revista de poesía* (2000-2009).

• **Jen Hofer** is a Los Angeles-based poet, translator, interpreter, teacher, and book-maker. Recent publications include *one* (Palm Press, 2009); *sexoPUROsexoVELOZ* and *Septiembre*, a translation from *Dolores Dorantes* by Dolores Dorantes (Counterpath Press and Kenning Editions, 2008); *The Route*, a collaboration with Patrick Durgin (Atelos, 2008); and *lip wolf*, a translation of *lobo de labio* by Laura Solórzano (Action Books, 2007).

• **Barbara Guest** (1920-2006) fue una de las luces más brillantes, si bien menos conocidas, de la New York School of Poets. Como artista plástica y crítica de arte, escribió ensayos sobre el expresionismo abstracto y fue autora de *Herself Defined* (Doubleday & Company, 1984), estudio crítico sobre la poeta H.D. (Hilda Doolittle). Su obra poética está reunida en *The Collected Poems of Barbara Guest* (Wesleyan, 2008); las traducciones que aparecen en este número se publican con permiso de la Wesleyan University Press.

• **Gabriel Bernal Granados** nació en la ciudad de México (1973). Acaba de publicar *La guerra fue breve* (2009, Libros Magenta/Cultura DF). La editorial Monte Carmelo pondrá en circulación, en breve, su libro de poemas *Sobre una hoja*.

• **Marcia Mogro** is a Bolivian poet, author of five books of poetry: *Semíramis*, *16(MG)*. —; *Los Jardines Colgantes*; *De la Cruz a la Fecha*; *Lacrimosa*; and *Excavaciones*. She lives in Santiago, Chile with her husband and two sons.

• **Carol Peters** is a poet, translator, and teacher. Apobiz Press recently published *Sixty Some*, her first full-length poetry collection. In 2008, Finishing Line Press published her chapbook, *Muddy Prints, Water Shine*. Her blog is at <http://carolpeters.blogspot.com>.

• **Duriel E. Harris** is the author of *Drag* (Elixir Press, 2003) and *Amnesiac: Poems* (Sheep Meadow Press, forthcoming late 2010). Note: Ruminating upon emergence into a next world and extremist Hutus' reference to Tutsi survivors as "those not finished off" during the Rwandan genocide,

the poem “Amnesty” is modeled after English translations of select passages of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. • **Graciela Sacco** was born in Argentina where she studied visual arts. Her work employs various experimental, camera-generated projection processes that allow ideas and concepts to materialize, giving her a singular place in contemporary art. She has participated in numerous international venues, including the Sao Paulo, Venice, and Shanghai biennials. Her work has been represented at Art Basel Miami, ARCO, and other international art fairs, and can be found in both private and public collections. • Art historian and curator, **Andrea Giunta** is the author of many books that include *Poscrisis: Arte argentino después del 2001* (Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires, 2009); and *Vanguardia, internacionalismo y política. Arte argentino en los sesenta* (Paidós, 2001) translated into English as *Avant-Garde, Internationalism and Politics. Argentinean Art in the Sixties* (Duke University Press, 2007.) She has edited and co-edited volumes that include *Metrópolis de papel. Revistas y redes internacionales en la modernidad artística latinoamericana* (Biblios, Buenos Aires, 2009), and *El Caso Ferrari. Debates y polémicas durante la Retrospectiva realizada en el Centro Cultural Recoleta* (Licopodio, 2008). • **Tamara Stuby** is a multimedia artist born in Poughkeepsie, New York (1963) who lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She has participated in international group exhibitions since 1994. Together with artists Esteban Alvarez and Cristina Schiavi she coordinates El Basilisco, an artists-run residency program that brings together artists from Argentina and abroad: [www.elbasilisco.com](http://www.elbasilisco.com). Stuby’s work is included in museum collections that include the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Rosario (MACRO) in Argentina. • **Andrew Schelling** lives in the Southern Rocky Mountain bioregion, where he teaches poetry, wilderness writing, & Sanskrit language at Naropa University. His most recent book of poetry is *Old Tale Road* (Empty Bowl). His many books of poetry in translation include *Dropping the Bow: Poems from Ancient India*, which White Pine Press brought out in an expanded edition in 2008. In North America Schelling works on land use issues in the West. • **Kika Silva**: graduada en el 2004 de la Escuela de Jack Kerouac de la universidad de Naropa en Boulder, Colorado. Esta selección de traducciones es parte del manuscrito de su tesis de maestría. Actualmente reside en La Florida, EE.UU, con su hija Dara. • **Keith Waldrop’s** latest books are *Transcendental Studies* (poems, University of California Press); *Several Gravities*



(collages, Siglio); and *Baudelaire: Paris Spleen* (translation, Wesleyan University Press). He teaches at Brown University and, with Rosmarie Waldrop, edits Burning Deck Press. • **María Rosa Maldonado** nació en Barcelona en 1944 y reside en Buenos Aires, Argentina. Es profesora de Filosofía. Publicó *Poemas* (1977), *Hasta que despertar es imposible* (1989), *El esplendor ajeno de las cosas* (1992) y *el zumbido de dios* (2002). Los poemas en este número pertenecen al libro *atzavara*, aún inédito. • **Alan Mills** was born in Guatemala in 1979. His books include *Testamentofuturo* (www.librosminimos.org, 2007) and *Síncopes* (Perú: Zignos, 2007; México: Literal, 2007; Bolivia: Mandrágora Cartonera, 2007), forthcoming in a trilingual edition (Brazil: Demónio Negro) and in French (France: Rouge Inside). • **Alejandro Tarrab** (Ciudad de México, 1972) es poeta y ensayista. Ha publicado *Siete Cantáridas*, *Centauros*, y *Litane*. Obtuvo la beca del Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes en la modalidad de Jóvenes Creadores en 2004-2005 y 2006-2007. Su obra ha sido traducida al inglés y al checo. • **Brenda Iijima**'s recent titles include *If Not Metamorphic* (Ahsahta Press, 2010) and *revv. you'll—ution* (Displaced Press, 2009). She is currently researching a string of murders against women which took place in her hometown of North Adams, Massachusetts in the 1970's and choreographing site-specific gestural movements/dances relating to these crimes. • **Juan Manuel Sánchez** is from San Diego but now lives somewhere in The Inland Empire. His work has appeared in journals such as *Ninth Letter*, *Mandorla*, *The Southern Review*, *Palabra*, and *Lana Turner*. • Coeditor of *Verse* magazine, **Andrew Zawacki** is the author of the poetry books *Petals of Zero Petals of One* (Talisman House, 2009), *Anabranche* (Wesleyan, 2004), and *By Reason of Breakings* (Georgia, 2002). Clips from "Videotape" are due as chapbooks from Projective Industries and Blue Hour Press. • **Gabriela Jauregui** is the author of *Controlled Decay* (Akashic Books/Black Goat Press, 2008). Her critical and creative work has been published most recently in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, *Líneas de Fuga* and in *The Aesthetics of Risk* (JRP Ringier, 2008). She lives and works in Los Angeles and Mexico City. The italicized passages in her poem "Ossifier" are from Mary Gaitskill's *Veronica*. • **Michael Burkard** es profesor de creación literaria en la Syracuse University. Entre sus libros se encuentran *Envelope of Night* (Nightboat, 2008), *Unsleeping* (Sarabande, 2001), *Pennsylvania Collection Agency* (New Issues, 2001), *Entire Dilemma* (Sarabande,

1998) y *My Secret Boat* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1991). Autor también de “canciones improvidadas,” algunas en el enlace: [Redhouseartradio.org/press](http://Redhouseartradio.org/press). • **Ariadna Vásquez Germán** was born in the Dominican Republic in 1977. She has published three collections of poetry, *Una casa azul* (2005), *La Palabra sin habla* (2008) and *Cantos al hogar incendiado* (2009), as well as the novella *Por el desnivel de la acera* (2005). She received honorable mentions in the Concurso de Cuentos de Casa de Teatro in the Dominican Republic in 2003 and 2005. • **Janet Hendrickson** received an MFA in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Iowa, where she held a writing residency at the University of Iowa Museum of Art. Her translations have appeared in *Words Without Borders*, *n+1*, and *Zoetrope: All-Story*. • **Kevin Killian** es poeta, novelista, dramaturgo, y el autor de libros que incluyen los poemarios *Action Kylie* (2008) y *Argento Series* (2001); las novelas *Shy* (1989) y *Arctic Summers* (1997) y las memorias *Bedrooms Have Windows* (1989). Con Lewis Ellingham, Killian escribió *Poet Be Like God* (Wesleyan, 1998), una biografía del poeta Jack Spicer (1925-65). Para el San Francisco Poets Theater, Killian ha escrito más de 30 obras de teatro. • **Adrian C. Louis** is a Professor of English in the Minnesota State University system. His 2006 book of poems, *Logorrhoea* (Northwestern University Press), was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. • **Yara I. Liceaga-Rojas** (San Juan, PR. 1977). Como guionista, desarrolló la palabra “Seducción” para el programa educativo, premiado con varios Emmy, Lexikon, donde también fungió como coordinadora de producción de la misma manera que su intervención en el 4to Encuentro de Poetas, la serie de eventos de poesía, “La guagua de la poesía”, coordinando la 5ta parada, en donde un grupo de poetas presentaron sus “performances” en la barra Café Seda, del Viejo San Juan. Actualmente escribe una columna de opinión bisemanal, Buscapié, más un perfil mensual para la sección de Vidas Únicas, en el periódico de mayor difusión de su país. • **Mateo Morrison** is one of the leading Dominican poets and literary and cultural activists of his generation. The author of many literary works, he recently published the novel *Un silencio que camina* (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2007). Copyright © Mateo Morrison, from *Dorothy Dandridge*. Santo Domingo: Publicaciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2006. Translation Copyright © John Keene, 2009. • **John Keene** is the author of two books, one a collaborative art-text project; and a translator

from French, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages. He teaches creative writing, English and American literature, and aesthetics at Northwestern University. • **Roger Santiviáñez** nació en Piura, costa norte del Perú. Su último libro *Amaranth* aparece en la Colección Transatlántica de la Editorial Amargord (2010). Desde 2001 vive en Filadelfia. Actualmente es profesor en Bennington College.

• **Aurora Arias** was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She is the author of two books of poetry, *Vivenda de pájaro* (1986) and *Piano lila* (1994), and three books of short stories: *Invi's Paradise* (1998); *Fin de mundo y otros relatos* (2000), and *Emoticons* (2007), in which "Bachata" appears. Her work has been translated into English, French, German, Italian, Icelandic and Bengali.

• **Emily A. Maguire** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University. She has previously translated the work of Sonia Rivera Valdés, Paquita Suárez Coalla, Angel Lozada and Javier Bello.

• Poeta y ensayista, **August Kleinzahler** vive en San Francisco. Es autor de las memorias *Cutty, One Rock* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004) y de los libros de poemas: *Sleeping it Off in Rapid City: Poems New and Selected* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008) y *The Strange Hours Travelers Keep* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), entre otros. Sus ensayos sobre música están compilados en el volumen *Music: I-LXXIV* (Pressed Wafer, 2009). Obtuvo el premio internacional Griffin (2005) y el de la Lannan Foundation (2008).

• **Alberto Basabe González** es poeta, ensayista e investigador. Sus poemas han sido publicados en Cuba, Alemania, Costa Rica y España; otrora miembro del grupo cubano de performance Zona Franca-Omni. Emigrante, vive actualmente en Perú. Es maestrante en estudios culturales, con una estancia de investigación en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México como becario de la red de macrouiversidades de América Latina y el Caribe.

• **Teresa Carmody** is the author of *Requiem* (Les Figues Press, 2005), and two chapbooks: *Eye Hole Adore* (PS Books, 2008), and *Your Spiritual Suit of Armor by Katherine Anne* (Woodland Editions, 2009). She is a current lecturer at the University of California, San Diego, and is co-director of Les Figues Press.

• **Alexandra Chasin** is the author of *Kissed By* (FC2, 2007). She is Associate Professor of Writing and Co-chair of Literary Studies at Eugene Lang College, The New School.

• **Davis Schneiderman** is a multimedia artist and writer whose works include the novel *Drain* from Northwestern University Press (2010) and three

other novels; co-edited collections such as *The Exquisite Corpse: Chance and Collaboration in Surrealism's Parlor Game* (Nebraska, 2009); and the audiocollage *Memorials to Future Catastrophes* (Jaded Ibis). He is Director of Lake Forest College Press/ &NOW Books, and the NEH-funded Virtual Burnham Initiative (vbi.lakeforest.edu). • **Julián Herbert** (Acapulco, 1971) vive en Coahuila desde 1980. Es autor de los libros de poemas *El nombre de esta casa* (Tierra Adentro, 1999). *La resistencia* (filodecaballos, 2003), *Autorretrato a los 27* (Eloísa Cartonera, Buenos Aires, 2003) y *Kubla Khan* (Era, 2005). Ha publicado también la novela *Un mundo infiel* (Joaquín Mortiz, 2004) y el libro de cuentos *Cocaína* (manual de usuario) (Almuzara, España, 2006). • **Teresa Avedoy** (Sinaloa, 1979) ha publicado el cuadernillo *Piedra, papel o poema* (Existir, 2003), el libro *Fracciona-miento* (Sitio-habitable, 2006), el periódico *El Habitual* (Sitiohabitable/ CNCA, 2006), la plaquette *Pájaros y patrullas (o dicen que en esta ciudad sólo se deberían escribir novelas negras)* (colección El Celta Miserable, editorial Letras de Pasto Verde, 2009). Próximamente aparecerá su libro *Trilogía histérica*, publicado por el Fondo Estatal Editorial de Baja California. • **Luis Jorge Boone** (Coahuila, 1977) es autor de los libros de poemas: *Galería de armas rotas* (2004), *Legión* (2003), *Material de ciegos* (2005), *Traducción a lengua extraña* (Premio Nacional de Poesía Joven Elías Nandino 2007) y *Novela* (Premio Nacional de Poesía Joven Francisco Cervantes 2008); y del libro de cuentos *La noche caníbal* (FCE, 2008; Premio Nacional de Cuento Inés Arredondo 2005). Colabora en *Letras Libres*, *Luvina*, *Gatopardo* y *La Tempestad*. Es editor en Almadía. • **José Chapa** (Mission, TX, 1990) es autor del poemario *Pájaros de Pólvora* (La Fragua); colabora, a ratos, con la revista literaria *Síncope* y estudia una licenciatura en Letras Españolas en la Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila. • **Hugo García Manriquez** es autor de dos libros: *No oscuro todavía* (Práctica Mortal, 2005) y *Los materiales* (Fondo Editorial Tierra Adentro, 2008). En 2009 apareció en México su traducción del libro-poema *Paterson*, de William Carlos Williams (Editorial Aldus). Vive en California con su esposa y su hija. • **Óscar David López** (Monterrey, 1982) posee la beca vitalicia Doña Florencia en el rubro de Eros y es autor de los libros de poesía *Roma* (2009), *Perro semihundido* (2008), *Gangbang* (2007) y de la novela *Nostalgia del lodo/ La nostalgia de la boue* (2005); además, junto a RZKXPX, es coautor del EP "The Gangbang Show" (2008). Recibió el Premio Nacional de Poesía Joven Francisco Cervantes 2009 y el Prix de la Jeune

Littérature latino-américaine 2005-2006. Mantiene una bitácora personal en <http://oscardavidlo.blogspot.com/>. • **Sebastián Margot** (Coahuila, 1978) ha publicado poemas en diversos medios, entre los que destacan *Las Voces del Tranvía*, la revista *Alforja* y el *Anuario de poesía mexicana 2007*. En agosto de 2009 publicó su primer libro de poesía: *Chacal y susceptible*, así como una publicación-homenaje a la literatura popular y la pornografía mexicana: *El libro chacal*, con el seudónimo de Nazareno Vidales. • **Manuel Parra Aguilar** (Hermosillo, Sonora) es comerciante y mecánico automotriz. Realizó estudios de Literaturas Hispánicas en la Universidad de Sonora. Dirigió, junto con Josué Barrera, la revista literaria *La línea del cosmonauta*. En 2005 recibió el Premio Internacional de Poesía Olivero Girondo, Sociedad Argentina de Escritores, sade. Ha publicado el libro de poesía *Más le valiera morir* (Rivas Hernández Editores, 2009) y el de cuento *Contrataciones* (Jus, 2009). • **Roberto Navarro** (Tijuana, 1976) publicó en 2003 *Prédica de calle* (Proyecto Editorial Existir). Entre 2005 y 2006 formó parte del colectivo Discos Invisibles, con el que presentó la interfase de poesía aleatoria Poemas Lanzados V2: <http://www.discosinvisibles.org/poemaslanzados.html>. En octubre de 2007 publicó en línea *Cifras*, plaquette de poesía digital (<http://plaquette.linotipia.org/>). • **Arturo Ramírez Lara** (Chihuahua, 1979) fue becario del Programa de Estímulos a la Creación y al Desarrollo Artísticos David Alfaro Siqueiros 2001, en la categoría de Jóvenes Creadores, por el libro de relatos inédito *Antología del verde*. Fue traductor, reportero y editor de la sección *En línea* de *El Diario de Juárez*. Ha publicado poemas y artículos de crítica e investigación literaria en diferentes antologías, como el *Anuario de poesía mexicana 2005*, y revistas como *Palabras sin fronteras* y *Oráculo*. • **Minerva Reynosa** (Monterrey, 1979) es poeta y ensayista. Sus libros de poesía son: *Una infanta necia* (Harakiri, 2003), *Emõtoma* (Fondo Regional para la Cultura y las Artes del Noreste, 2007), *La íntima de las cosas* (Mantis Editores/Secretaría de Cultura de Jalisco, 2007). Habita en <http://www.ladoncelladilatada.blogspot.com> y <http://ladoncellahiperdilatada.blogspot.com/>. • **Margarita-Sayak Valencia Triana** (Tijuana, 1980) es filósofa, poeta, ensayista y exhibicionista performática. Actualmente, además de dedicarse a la escritura, es candidata a doctora en filosofía por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Ha publicado los libros de poesía: *El reverso exacto del texto* (Centaurea Nigra Ediciones, Madrid 2007), *Jueves Fausto* (Ediciones de la

Esquina/ Anortecer, Tijuana 2004). Mantiene la bitácora electrónica <http://www.sayak.blogspot.com>. • Mexican poet **Jorge Fernández Granados** won the Jaime Sabines prize in 1995 for his first book, *Resurrección*. *Los hábitos de la ceniza* won the Premio Nacional de Poesía Aguascalientes in 2000, while *Principio de incertidumbre*, from which these poems are taken, won the Carlos Pellicer Prize in 2008. • **John Oliver Simon** has published over 450 translations of contemporary Latin American poets. In 2008 Green Integer published *From the Lightning*, a generous collection of his translations of the Chilean poet Gonzalo Rojas. • **elena minor**'s work has been published in *OCHO*, *Quercus Review*, *Diner*, *City Works*, *Writers At Work*, *Poetry Midwest*, 26, *Segue*, *BorderSenses* and *The Big Ugly Review*, among others. She is the founding editor of *PALABRA A Magazine of Chicano & Latino Literary Art*. • **Roberto Harrison**'s most recent books include *Os* (subpress, 2006), *Counter Daemons* (Litmus, 2006), *elemental song* (Answer Tag Home Press, 2006), *reflector* (House Press, 2008), and *Urracá* (Achiote Seeds, 2009). He lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he hosts the *Enemy Rumor* reading series and publishes *Bronze Skull Press* chapbooks. • Ésta es la primera publicación de **Silvia Guerra** en las páginas de *Mandorla*. • **Gustavo Martínez González** es psicólogo, traductor literario y periodista cultural. Ha publicado las novelas por entregas *Padrino de la que baila* (1995) y *Ex como unión* (2000); la plaquette de poesía *Fauna mineral*, (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, 2003) y traducciones de Derek Walcott en el librito *Nueve poemas* (Secretaría de Cultura GDF, 2008). • **Lise Goett** is winner of the Pen Southwest Book Award in Poetry in 2005 and the 2001 Barnard New Women Poets Prize for her first collection, *Waiting for the Paraclete* (Beacon 2002). Her awards also include the Capricorn Prize from the Writer's Voice of West Side Y and *The Paris Review* Discovery Award among others. • **Marianne Moore** (1887-1972): ella y su madre, con quien siempre vivió, se mudaron a Nueva York en 1918, donde conoció a William Carlos Williams y Wallace Stevens. Diez años después se unió al movimiento Imagista junto con Ezra Pound, el propio Williams y H.D. Entre sus obras están *Like a Bulwark*, *O to Be a Dragon*, *The Arctic Fox*, *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore* (1981), *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore* (1986). • **Ana Rosa González Matute** ha publicado los libros de poesía *Estrías*, *Silogismo del Alba* y *Sil* (Libros Magenta, 2008). Es autora de los libros de cuentos *Gneis* y *En sueños surgen las*

responsabilidades, y de las antologías de cuento norteamericano contemporáneo *Un caracol en la Estigia* y *Una segunda oportunidad* de Lydia Davis; próximamente se publicará su traducción del libro *Mi Emily Dickinson* de Susan Howe. • **Margaret Randall** (NYC, 1936) co-edited the magazine *El corno emplumado / The Plumed Horn* in Mexico in the 1960s. Some of her most recent books include *Narrative of Power: Essays for an Endangered Century*, *Stones Witness*, *To Change the World: My Years in Cuba*, *Their Backs to the Sea*, and the forthcoming book of essays *First Laugh*. Randall's poems in this issue are from *My Town*, Wings Press, appearing September 2010. Her web page is at [www.margaretrandall.org](http://www.margaretrandall.org). • **Reina María Rodríguez** (Havana, 1952-) is the author of numerous books, among them *La foto del invernadero* (1998), *Violet Island and Other Poems* (bilingual anthology, Green Integer, 2004), and *El libro de las clientas* (2005). The selections in this issue are taken from *Otras cartas a Milena* (2003). • **Kristin Dykstra's** translation of *¿Oíste hablar del gato de pelea?* (1998), by Omar Pérez, is forthcoming from Shearman Books. Another recent translation drawn from *Otras cartas a Milena* appears in *Connecticut Review*; her past work is featured in bilingual editions of books by Pérez and Rodríguez. • Born in Colombia, **Lili Maya** is an artist and a faculty member at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Most recent exhibitions include *Housebroken* and *Science Fair* at Flux Factory in New York City. • **Sergio Medeiros** was born in Bela Vista, Matto Grosso do Sul, Brazil and now lives in Florianopolis. He is the author of *Alongamento* and *Totem and Sacrificio*. His work has appeared in translation in English in *Aufgabe 6* (2007) and many other journals. His work has been translated into English, Spanish, French and Italian. He is professor of literature at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. • **Raymond L. Bianchi** has two books of poetry, *Circular Descent* (BlazeVox) and *Immediate Empire* (i.e. Press). His translations of Brazilian poets have appeared in many journals including *Aufgabe 6*, which featured over 18 of his translations. He lives in Chicago and is publisher of Cracked Slab Books; his blog is located at [irasciblepoet.blogspot.com](http://irasciblepoet.blogspot.com). • La filósofa **Elizabeth Grosz** ha publicado estudios sobre el cuerpo, la sexualidad, el espacio, el tiempo, y la materialidad; entre sus últimos libros se destacan *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Duke, 2004), *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Duke, 2005), así como *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (Columbia, 2008). •

**Jaime Soler Frost** nació en la ciudad de México en 1967, en el seno de una familia de intelectuales y editores. Ha colaborado en numerosas publicaciones de México y el extranjero. Su obra como artista plástico ha participado en exposiciones colectivas e individuales de México y Europa. Desde mediados de la década de los noventa se desempeña como editor director de los Libros del Umbral. • **Juliet Lynd** is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Illinois State University. Her work on literature, art and politics in Latin America has appeared in *PMLA*, *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* and most recently in the volume *Post-Authoritarian Culture: Spain and Latin America's Southern Cone* (Eds. Roberto Ampuero and Luis Martín). She is the recipient of a Florence Howe Award for Outstanding Feminist Criticism.





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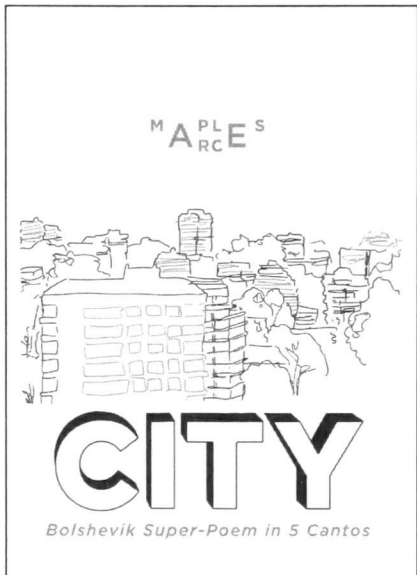
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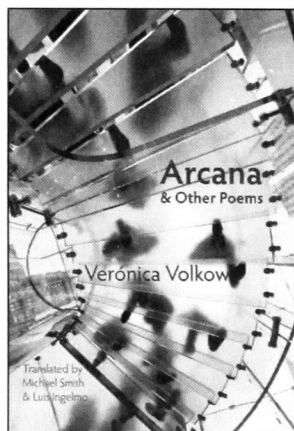
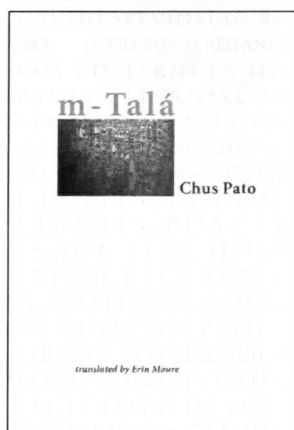
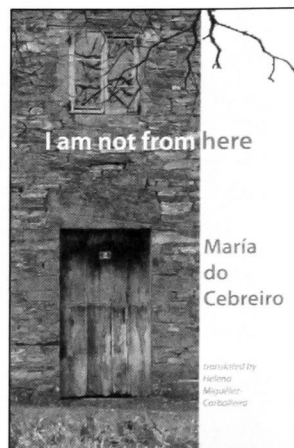
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