MANDORLA

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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Cover by Christine Nguyen

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LATASHA N. NEVADA DIGGS

FOUR POEMS

WHAT THE WIND WHISPERED TO THE LITTLE DOLPHIN[1]

for M + K + Ra + Ra

One night, Little Dolphin was singing to her lunch
when Ehécatl—the wind—began to whisper;

"Un usdii es una killa. Un sanggól es un tochtli. Ákókó es un bayi."

alarmed, Little Dolphin whistled,

"Pero es un beibi un Pokoliko?"

Ehécatl continued;

"La kámya es un keiki, un omo-owó es un xochitl; qholla wawa es takipsílim.

un usdii es ame-quo-hi, es quiauitl, galvloi, es udara,

ama anqas y tsigili-li nvdaegehi.

un q'ente sumaq, un tremenda k'uychi;

even la nuna de una batata dushi!"

realizing how strong and gusty it became, Ehécatl calmed down.

"Even una kamama wesq'o."

Ehécatl quieted and waited for the dolphin
to understand the meaning behind her words.

Little Dolphin looked towards Ehécatl,

and dazzled at the turtles and seabirds that took shape in Ehécatl's clouds.

as Ehécatl's words echoed in a bubble ring

Little Dolphin clicked,

"Pero es un beibi un Pokoliko?"

1. The following poem (a macaronic in tradition) is written in Hawaiian, Yoruba, Cherokee, Malay, Quechua, Papiamentu, Tagalog, and Nahuatl.

GAMIN' GABBY

CYRALESTINE SAINT-SAVIN...

ulochay, iningwhay isway otnay orfay ethay ongstray atway earthay,
erewhay ountainsmay ashcray eneathbay anway oceansway'say ustthray.
erewhay areway ethay arsstay enwhay ouyay eepslay allway ayday,
ouyay eeflay eforebay ethay awnday akesmay estjay otay usttray.

oneway aidsay ethay exttay essagemay asway anway exerciseway.
osay ywhay espondray ikelay ouyay'eray ibinvay' atway engthlay itchbay?
onday'tay ouyay owknay itway'say entay entscay away essagemay?

atwhay oodgay areway ainbowsray, isperingwhay urprisesay,
orway aterfallsway atthay ineday ithway away onguetay'say eamsdray.
iway'llay ameblay ymay ovariesway eforebay Iway'day onsidercay
againway. ymay eathersfay uffledray omfray oyay' ustyday anemay;
ethay oonmay ethay idestay ethay ipplesray inway ymay atchsnay.

iway'llay ivegay awnday otay anityvay - okesmay ouyay, agtay ouyay ackway.
oodgay areway intsflay enwhay ethay ightnay'say erubchay ashay unspay

CYRONA MOONWALKER...

baby boy whin'n aint workin'
you vizzle ta sweat baseheads no one is itchin

tha stars? you sleep all day wizzle
memories pussy whippin' son

text message thou art has gamed me
yo' aim off bee-otch ten cents

a messagizzles say it ain't so don't teaze
mah eyes F-to-tha-izzall ,short test mah ovaries

feathas ruffled flakeolicious head
tha moon tides ripple mah snatch

gizzy dawn ta vanity scoot yo' pizzay
live n die in fruitvale sun poppin' funkedelic yonder

eyes awakes n hizzy tha sun

WHO YOU CALLIN' A JYNX?

(after mista popo)

what you wearing on yo head?
what's that shit on your head?

good lord, you make my eyeliner sweat pika twins.
peep this joint, I ain't feeling your vibe easy breezy.
no shogun coming from your tongue.

mista popo mista tom,

you queezy.

where's your flying rug homie?
yama-uba bored my agents gonna reward nada.
I shuffleboard smooches in the land of the rising sun's cosplay, papa.

ROUGELA COMING STRAIGHT ON YOUR STEREO!
POPO WHY YOU TRIPPIN LIKE I'M NO-GO!
POPO YOU A HELLA STRANGE YU-GI-O!

what your ma said about a Zwart Piet?
I'll Tilburg to Finland all over her miffy.

you butterfly gardener,
I'll make ya choke on a riccola.

what the fuck did they do to your lips?
what they do to your lips?

turban hammer slacks wearing genie pancy.

get back to aladin's bottle,
I battlin' laughable cannibals.
induce sleep with my mammories.
kiss attack ya feel me?

mista popo I'm a thriller.
don't superflat matter my color.

husky dame blond bomb rosie flappers for lips.
yokai nigglet sippin' lovely.

the most obscene fish queen you ever seen.

black flesh / purple skin supposedly offensive.
no difference in variation
check it cross pollination
watashi wa Zasshu = mass circulation.

kokujin wanna mark me;
I got ya kawaii kiddies.

Popo, here's your "black mammy"
multi-platnium crowd pleaser,

destroyin' like a monster,
rewind that, delete that, I *AM* A MONSTA!
my songs tachikiru pure legend of the overfiend evil!

I'm causin' adolescent seizures my kage gamma rays.
pocketing hirojima obscure epileptic.
red blue flashes muteki like dianetics

ya can't *handle* it!

hater-aid bitches
mocked my February spin;
my animated fade-in inoru smackin' gaijins.

crazy

Sun, where's your brain damage comin' from?

why kris kringle got a ocean liner north of the equator.
cookies and cream soapland souvenir -
I polish it with my wamono brasier.

ya can't *handle* it!

I'm the puppeteer to a kaiju dynasty
and you wanna ride me in your tugboat?

what you know about my ice flight?
wiggle till you figure Harajuku thoughts

don't front, *"you know I got you open."**

I swing my chariots low for a reason.

*Quote comes from Black Moon "I Got U Opin."

DADDY ATE MOMMA'S PLACENTA. YOU KNOW THAT?

for Suri Cruise, Bob Kaufman, & Akilah
as we all share the same birthday.

Persian Princess, O Indian beauty pageant queen,
there's nothing wrong with Hebrew.

blame it on Mimi—dyslexia subsist mistily.
lingual alliterations. expulsing nonetheless;
your birthright a name renamed & claimed by the famously deranged.

"rapturously to one knee & repeatedly professin,"*
your pops hot for momma.

sweet toledo no relation to speedo,
vanilla ohio sylvania pickpocket picket fence.
momma defends:
her fussbudget incarnate. adolophine for methadone.

narconon magnetic waving zealots belly flop with the stars.

daddy ate momma's placenta. you know that?
daddy bought an ultrasound. the doctor made daddy do it.

momma disappeared for 14 days:
they were planning for you on the 15th

& your momma kinda loves the press.
& then Daddy made your momma shut her mouth

---

*Quote from the article "How Personal Is Too Personal for a Star Like Tom Cruise?" written by Sharon Waxman for the *New York Times*.

for in the silence of silent scientology monsoons
you inspire "oh so quiet...oh so still" solitude.*
your birth a most silent one.
& that dyslexia got to subsisting again.

where are you Suri?

& what about this fringe on top,
you mini microbe of a Björk?

though few joined the original movement to liberate your momma,
held by forces we may never understand,

your name is still wonderful.

O Suri,

you walk among the underdog along the Suribachi.
Suri, your pastoral band of Ethiopians stick fight with Coolies in Trinidad.
Suri who surrenders to animated lemurs in Dinosaur movies -

you tipsy Bavarian flowing over Salman Rushdie's historical universe.

Suri, you rare breed of colours reading at a bookstore near Punjab.
Suri, planning Pashtun trilogies regarding sightings of Rhea -
you mimic robust gummy grubs in the Amazon suckling lychee.

Suri, not to be found but discovered in a rare & precious alpaca dreadlock,
who swallows & spits the gelato of Aphrodite.

Suri, unheard yet available in mahogany;
you run Rozelle tonight at the Carnegie Mellon.

---

*Lyric from Björk's song "it's oh so quiet."

Suri, the homozygous,
you freshen ethnonyms,
you're interested in the ways people formulate propositions.
you'll visit Pittsburgh as part of a mathematics symposium.
you'll attain new heights of excellence.

your exceptional silky helmet
& wondrous lustre

the finest for making top quality ladies coats.

Suri you actually exist

you do exist.... truly you do

truly you do...

ROLANDO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

CAPITULOS DE LA NOVELA INÉDITA *DULCE ARAÑA DE TUS SUEÑOS*

15

Abrió la puerta. Era chiquito, rígido, y adelantaba la cabeza como un boxeador ansioso.

Dijo:

–¿Usted es el médico?

Asentí. Me invitó a pasar de mala gana. Me indicó un sofá donde me hundí entre el polvo, los muelles y las revistas de mecánica.

Dijo:

–Mediquito –y se rió como si no tuviera ganas, como si le fueran a dar convulsiones.

Levanté un dedo para protestar. Me mandó a callar, con un dedo tan rígido como su cuerpo:

–El día menos pensado le dá un síncope a usted. Mediquito que se muere en el calor tropical.

–Más respeto –me defendí arreglando la portada de una revista.

–¿Para quién trabaja usted?

–Quiero curarlo, a su amigo.

–¿Para quién informa usted?

–Le dije que más respeto.

Hizo una bolita con un papel y me la tiró:

–Jí –dijo.

Luego dijo:

–¿Sabe lo que me pasa cuando oigo a gente como usted, gente de voz pastosa y simuladora, voz de camaján republicano? Sí, porque la máquina totalitaria no ha podido acabar con las voces de los camajanes republicanos como usted. Desde que nací no hago más que encontrarme con farsantes. ¿Por qué? Porque este país es un país de farsantes como usted. Aquí todo el mundo es un chulo de cualquier cosa. Usted es un chulo de la medicina, yo soy un chulo de la escritura, R. es un chulo de las arañas, mi padre era un chulo de mi madre y mi madre chuleaba a mi padre... En fin, para qué contar. Mi madre es la primera farsante que conocí. Llevo años tirándole tijeras, a ver si la engancho un ojo y se calla la boca de una vez. Pero no le doy. Como no para de hablar y de moverse, no le doy. El asunto es el siguiente: que si no escribo, tengo que ocupar mi vida en tirar tijeras. Si se miran las cosas bien de cerca, verá que no hay mucha diferencia entre escribir y tirar tijeras. El problema es ver si uno engancha algo. Pero no, casi nunca se engancha nada. Es tan difícil enganchar un adjetivo como enganchar a mi madre con una tijera. Estuve siete años tratando de enganchar para un verso la palabra *trampantojo*. Y no estoy muy seguro de si es o no la palabra correcta. La palabra *centelleante* me costó menos, me costó tres años. Entonces surgió uno de los peores versos que se han escrito en español. Preste oido y sujétese bien:

mirándose mirar allende el abismo
trampantojo centelleante vio

¡Trece años para producir los susodichos versos! Es como pescar en el vacio. Cuando lo ví a usted en mi puerta me dije: Este medicuelo quiere algo. Entonces tuve la idea de que me hubiera gustado engancharle un ojo a usted con una tijera. Así usted se acordaría de mi y yo me acordaría de usted. ¿Sabe por qué *él* tiene obsesión por las arañas? Porque no tiene obsesión por las tijeras. Si tuviera obsesión por las tijeras no tendría obsesión por las arañas. Es imposible vivir

más de una obsesión si se quiere vivir con la mayor seriedad. Por eso *él* se ha trancado en su cuarto y no quiere salir a ver la verdad. Prefiere soñar. Prefiere vivir obsesiones menores. Un deficiente de espíritu. Usted me mira y dice: Pobrecito, está enfermo. Pero y bien, ¿cuáles son sus perversiones, las de usted, además de "organizar" la información que *él* le pasa por debajo de la puerta? ¿El cine Payret? ¿El Universal? He visto tipos como usted, bajitos, limpios y obsesivos, meterse en los baños del cine para no salir hasta una hora después. A ver si pescan algo, en el baño. Pero no se me ponga bravo, mediquito, medicuelo, medicucho, si usted escribiera o tirara tijeras no andaría por ahí intentando sacarle información a la gente. Le aseguro que para vivir hay que pescar. ¿Vé estos libros húmedos y absurdos? Donde hay libros hay la oportunidad de que aparezca una araña. ¿Ve este mamotreto de Hegel? A lo mejor de aquí sale una arañita y le tiramos una tijera, a ver si la enganchamos por el centro, no tiene gracia engancharla por los hilos. Todo eso previendo que tengamos una tijera a mano. Porque no abundan, las tijeras. A veces no aparece ni una. Aparecen y desaparecen. Como la realidad. Cuando uno no las necesita hay tres o cuatro. A ver si le engancho un ojo a ella, mi madre, el día menos pensado. Si me ve escribiendo no deja de hablar. Primero de flores, luego del verano. Felicidad (porque se llama Felicidad, mi madre, ¿qué le parece?) se viste de blanco y da vueltas por la casa y no para de hablar poniendo flores dondequiera, y se me aparece cuando menos la espero con su andamiaje quitinoso, con su abyecto bamboleo, con su apestoso tabaco en la boca. Si me ve leyendo tampoco deja de hablar. Me dice: Niño, que te vuelves loco. Es una máquina de producir palabras huecas, mi madre. Una vez me dijo que yo llegaría a ser el rey de Nigeria. Me dijo: Niño, prepárate, que algún día llegarás a ser el rey de Nigeria. Y me preparó durante veinte años, me puso collares, me trajo a Gelabert, ese marindango suyo, un adefesio, a que me enseñara el camino de los muertos. Gelabert, ¿quién ha visto un negro que se llame Gelabert? Dios mío, qué confusión. ¿Pero qué puede esperarse de mi madre si hasta Wittgenstein era una máquina de producir confusiones? Oiga usted su afirmación 2.061: "Los estados de las cosas son independientes los unos de los otros." ¿Quién le dijo eso a Wittgenstein? ¿A quién se le ocurre decir semejante barbaridad, que los estados de las cosas son independientes los unos de los otros? Hay que estar en las nubes para no darse cuenta que ocurre todo lo contrario. Fíjese qué bien

hubiera quedado la frase si Wittgenstein hubiera escrito: "Los estados de las cosas no son independientes los unos de los otros." Eso le pasó porque tuvo un leve pero decisivo desliz cinco afirmaciones atrás, cuando dijo: "La forma es la posibilidad de la estructura." ¿Acaso él no sabía que no hay formas ni estructuras? ¿Usted engancha lo que yo quiero decir? No, no hay tejidos. Sólo hay hilos. Y no hay forma ni hay posibilidad de forma. Ni de estructura. Me sé el *Tractatus* de memoria. Me lo sé porque yo también tuve que escribir el *Tractatus*, a mi manera, claro. Dice la primera afirmación, según Wittengenstein: "El mundo es todo lo que acaece". Como ve, este cuento está mal contado. Es el cuento de nunca acabar. Claro que al final del *Tractatus* se dio cuenta del error que había cometido y dijo: "De lo que no se puede hablar, lo mejor es callarse." Pero mi madre no se calla. Mi madre es exactamente como este país. O mejor dicho, mi madre *es* este país. Una isla de pericos. Pero no una isla de pericos filológicos, como decía Lezama. Simplemente una isla de periquitos. Una Republiquita lenguajera. Una isla de loquitos, de sirvenguencitas. Un perico filológico al menos se engancha con la retórica y produce versos como éste: *Porque habito un susurro como un velamen*. Es de Lezama. Suena demasiado a poesía pero no es malo. ¿Qué es esta isla sino una confusión entre todas sus especies de pericos cabezas huecas, pericos republicanos, pericos lezamescos, pericos estatales, pericos chinos, pericos albinos, pericos tartamudos, pericos y más pericos metidos en la misma jaula? Oiga, oiga estos verso que se me acaban de ocurrir:

timpantíbiri lunita loca,
vacuola vaca de laca,
bajo el cielo nubarrón.

¿No les gusta? Tiene razón, son malos. Una vez mi madre estaba durmiendo, o hacía como que dormía, mi madre nunca duerme, o más exacto duerme y a la vez no duerme, y le toqué la cabeza. ¿Sabe cómo sonó la cabeza de mi madre? Hueca. Toc toc toc. Hueca como un coco. Hueca hueca hueca. Hueca hueca culeca. Entonces llegué a la conclusión de que el lenguaje estaba en ninguna parte del mundo.

34

La oficina de Buenaventura da a un patio grande con una mata de coco. Witt, mientras espera a Buenaventura, sigue mirando a través de la ventana. Traen a un prisionero, lo atan a una silla, un soldado sin camisa sube a la mata de cocos y desde allí espera la orden.

Buenaventura llega con su traje blanco. Trae un sombrero de paño, también blanco. Y un paraguas negro que utiliza como bastón. Llega hasta la silla y le dice un secreto al prisionero. El prisionero niega con la cabeza. Buenaventura le hace cosquillas con la punta del paraguas y el prisionero se retuerce de risa en la silla apretando la boca. Buenaventura vuelve a decirle algo a la oreja del prisionero. El prisionero vuelve a negar con la cabeza. Buenaventura le hace una seña al soldado encaramado en la mata y el soldado corta un coco con la bayoneta que lleva en la boca y el coco cae directamente sobre la cabeza del prisionero.

–No nos quiso decir su secreto – le dice Buenaventura a Witt cuando entra a la oficina–. Yo le dije mi secreto y sin embargo él no nos dijo el suyo. Eso no se hace –y coloca el paraguas en el rincón.

Sigue diciendo, mientras estudia a Witt:

–Yo no tengo secretos –y abre los brazos–. Puede usted cachear mis sentimientos, verá que no tengo nada que esconder. ¿Usted tiene algo que esconder?

Witt niega rápido con la cabeza. Buenaventura sonríe y dice:

–¿Le gusta Cuba?

–Un lugar bonito.

–¿Bonito? –Buenaventura parece extrañarse–. ¿De verdad que es bonito? Eso pensaba yo pero ya no pienso así. ¿Alemania es bonita?

–De golpe no –responde Witt.

Buenaventura se asombra:

–¿De golpe no?

Sigue:

–A mi a veces me hubiera gustado ser alemán –dice Buenaventura–. Diría que tengo mi partecita alemana. Mi almita alemana. Escondidita –se toca el pecho–. Tocar piano, crespúsculos, ideas sublimes, esas cosas.

–Como yo tengo mi partecita cubana –se congracía Witt con Buenaventura.

–¿Ah sí? ¿Padece de impaciencia? ¿De alegría inmotivada?

–A veces floto en el aire.

– Un ser inmaterial. Ya comprendo –dice Buenaventura sosteniéndose la mandíbula.

–¿Es necesario romperles la cabeza con un coco? –Witt señala hacia la ventana con aire redentor.

–Los muchachos de este país tienen la cabeza dura. Como un palo. Y para colmo ustedes los alemanes han cooperado. ¿Qué es eso de acabar con la propiedad privada? Y pensar que influirán en esta Isla. Irreversiblemente, como los procesos de la física.

–¿Cómo lo sabe?

–Lo soñé.

–Los sueños son fantasía, capitán.

–Créete eso, niño –Buenaventura acaricia su pistola, luego se rasca pacientemente un pedazo de pierna peluda y blanca–. No hay sueño que no sea verdad. En sueños ya yo mataba a esos muchachones. La realidad es una mala repetición. ¿Cree que disfruto matándolos? No, son mis hijos. Mis hijos descarriados. Son descarriados porque creen que hay que fundar algo. Muchachos de perversa capacidad fundacional. Como si las cosas tuvieran fundamento, menos en esta isla. Isla de corcho. Una isla siempre está a punto de irse al garete. ¿Cómo va a tener fundamento una cosa que siempre está a punto de irse al garete?

Buenaventura se queda mirando una mosca que le da vueltas a una mancha pegajosa de café sobre el buró. Espera a que la mosca se pose y empiece a chupar.

–¿Si la cojo por un ala me da diez pesos? –le pregunta Buenaventura a Witt.

Witt se palpa el bolsillo de la camisa, dice que no los trae, que sólo trae cinco pesos, y los muestra en el aire.

–Me debe cinco –dice Buenaventura y con la misma alarga dos dedos como un rayo y coge la mosca por un ala.

–Una mosca remolona –dice Buenaventura acercándola a los ojos–. El azúcar las vuelve locas.

Cuando la soltó la mosca hizo como que se iba por la ventana pero dio una vuelta en el aire buscando el techo y bajó en picada hasta la mancha. Allí siguió sorbiendo.

–¿Qué vino a buscar a este país? –Buenaventura mira a Witt con los ojos vacíos, los labios abultados como quien habla en sueños.

–Un manuscrito.

–Esto no es Egipto, niño. Aquí no hay nada. No hay pirámides ni manuscritos interesantes. Aquí sólo hay azúcar y moscas bobas.

–En 1902 *aquí* se suicidó el hermano de un filósofo austriaco.

–¿1902? Yo tenía tres años –Buenaventura muestra tres dedos juntos, el dedo corazón se alza desproporcionadamente sobre los otros dos–. Yo empezaba a formarme una idea de la realidad. O mejor dicho, yo empezaba a construirla. La realidad sin mi no era nada. Y usted dice que un austriaco se mató por esos días, aquí. Bonito lugar que escogió. Alguna parte de mi debe de saber algo al respecto. Un punto ciego de mi. Qué pena. También pasaron cosas por esos días. Unas notables y otras pura tontería. Unas salieron por los periódicos y otras se perdieron en la humedad insoportable de esta Isla. Estoy lleno de puntos ciegos. Qué pena que yo no sepa todo ni de mi mismo.

–Sólo quiero su autorización.

–¿Quiere visitar los archivos secretos? ¿Quiere meterse en los sótanos cochinos y oscuros donde guardamos la información sanguinolenta de esta Isla? No se lo recomiendo, usted padece de asma.

–¿Cómo sabe que padezco de asma? –Witt se mueve intranquilo, alargando una mano temblorosa en busca de un cigarro que Buenaventura le tiende.

–Su amiguito lo habla todo en el muelle. Después que se toma dos tragos habla hasta de su madre. Su hermosa madre de Tubinga. Él quiere mucho a su madre pero no a su padre.

–¿Peters ha hablado?

–Por los codos. Incluso dijo cosas que no nos interesaba. Es de ese tipo de gente que cuando empieza no para. ¿Me dijo usted que era austriaco al que buscaba? ¿Y hermano de un filósofo? Los filósofos europeos siempre nos están dando problemas.–Buenaventura enciende un tabaco, se llena la boca y sopla el humo azul. Dice:

–¿Qué quieren *ustedes* de *nosotros*? Aquí no hay nada que fundar. Esta isla no tiene capacidad fundante ninguna. Dinero sí, a veces, y poco, pero capacidad fundante: ninguna. Este país es resultado de una locura europea. ¿A quién se le

ocurre viajar en las condiciones que lo hizo Colón? A nadie. Sólo a un europeo trastornado, como ustedes dos. Los yanquis están locos pero su locura se resuelve de otra manera. Se resuelve con plata y con la ilusión de que todo el espacio les pertenece y le dan forma al espacio con dinero. Pero la locura de ustedes, los europeos, no se resuelve con plata. Quieren dinero pero también quieren *otra* cosa. La metafísica y el dinero no son buena pareja. Y eso no se vale, niño. Por eso preferimos a los yanquis. Fíjese, usted quiere un manuscrito que seguro nadie escribió, y su amiguito quiere un ejemplar de araña que seguramente no existe. Venga usted, que le voy a enseñar una cosa. Pero no se lo cuente a nadie. Nadie le creería.

Buenaventura se levanta, toma a Witt por un codo y lo lleva. Salen de la oficina, suben por una escalerita del pasillo y llegan a un pasillo estrecho con muchas puertas juntas, semejantes y discretas como celdas de enanos.

–Ábreme la 14 –le dijo Buenaventura a un carcelero que se limpiaba las orejas con un palitp chino.

El carcelero abrió la 14.

De la 14 salió un aire rancio, potente, que hizo llevarse una mano de Buenaventura a su traje, como para que no se ensuciara con el olor. En la cama había un hombre muy pequeño, y amarillo y frágil como papel para envolver medicinas. Sus ojos brillaban estúpidamente pero detrás de la estupidez había una gota de inteligencia. O eso parecía. Tenía las manos detrás de la cabeza y silbaba. Buenaventura le dijo al hombrecito:

–Dile al visitante cuantos años tienes.

–Un millón –dijo el hombrecito sin dudarlo.

–¿Un millón sólo? –le dijo dulcemente Buenaventura, mordiendo el tabaco.

–Con dos meses, cuatro días y catorce horas –dijo el hombrecito.

–Y no te llamas Matusalén –le dijo Buenaventura.

–Y no me llamo Matusalen –dijo el hombrecito.

Buenaventura miró a Witt:

–¿Cree que él dice mentira?

–Yo nunca digo mentiras –dijo el hombrecito mirando duramente a Witt.

–Si fuera un mentiroso estaría en la calle –dijo Buenaventura–. La calle está llena de mentirosos. Y él pasaría como uno más. Pero no es un mentiroso, y ese

es el problema, que dice la verdad. Cuéntale tu verdad –le dijo Buenaventura al hombrecito.

–Si se la digo se muere. Del susto –dijo el hombrecito–. Él no está preparado. Ni nadie.

–Cuéntasela, chico –le dijo Buenaventura acariciando al aire viciado de la habitación.

–Soy Dios –dijo el hombre, y miró a Witt sopesando el efecto. Witt asintió amable, eludiendo el olor a orina que venía de la cama.

–¿Tienes alguna prueba? –le dijo Buenaventura–. De lo contrario este europeo se va a pensar que tú estás loco.

–Usted sabe, capitán, que tengo muchas pruebas. Le dije que las llevara al Senado.

–Y no las llevé –dijo Buenaventura un poco airado – ¿Sabes por qué no las llevé? Porque no están preparados para verlas ni oirlas. El espacio público no las resistiría. El espacio público resiste hablar de la zafra o de la Constitución pero no de las pruebas de Dios.

–Usted dijo que iba a llevarlas –dijo nervioso y con una mirada de odio el hombrecito. Se había contraido en la cama y la cara era un fruto seco, oscuro, rugoso. De la estupidez no quedaba nada en los ojos. Brillaban. Pura inteligencia. Pura divinidad.

–Te salen llamas de los ojos –le dijo Buenaventura–. Bonito espectáculo.

–Bonito espectáculo ni cojones– dijo el hombrecito.

Witt tuvo la idea, por primera vez, de mirar por el boquete que hacía de ventana; y vio un barco.

–A veces se ve y a veces no se ve –dijo el hombrecito a Witt–. A veces está vacío. A veces brilla una luz muy fuerte y no puedes mirar. Hay que ponerse gafas. Ven, que te voy decir una cosita.

–Si le arrancas la oreja te mato –le dijo Buenaventura acariciando el arma que guardaba debajo del traje. Buenaventura empujó suavemente a Witt.

Cuando Witt se acercó al hombrecito ya el barco se había retirado del boquete. El boquete había quedado vacío. "Tal vez sea agua. O cielo", pensó Witt mientras agachaba la cabeza empujada ("o tal vez sea nada") por la mano del hombrecito, que la atraía hacia sus labios con suavidad. Entonces la boca del

hombrecito se abrió y se cerró junto a la oreja de Witt murmurándole algo.

Cuando Witt volvió a donde Buenaventura tenía la cara blanca y se tambaleaba. El hombrecito ya orinaba certeramente en un orinal.

Cuando salieron afuera Buenaventura golpeó amistoso en el hombro a Witt.

–Un día me lo cuentas –le dijo a Witt, mientras iniciaban la marcha hacia abajo.

–Vaya a ver a Pittaluga –le dijo dándole un papelito a Witt.

–¿Quién es Pittaluga?

–Un sabio. Se dedica lo mismo al estudio de la acromegalia que a la relación entre las vitaminas y la sangre, y por supuesto al estudio del destino. Sangre y destino. ¿Qué más se le puede pedir a un sabio? Pregúntele todo lo que quiera. Unas cosas serán verdad y otras mentiras.

–¿Cómo saberlo?

–Ese es el problema. No hay cómo saberlo. A veces me levanto por las mañanas y me pregunto si estoy vivo. No siempre obtengo la misma respuesta. Primero pensé que era el calor. El calor de este país. Pero ayer nevó y me pasó lo mismo.

–¿¡Nevó!? ¿¡Aquí¡?

–Saqué la mano por la ventana y estaba nevando.

–¿No estaría soñando?

–¿Soñando? Nunca sueño, niño. Saqué la mano y estaba nevando. No me diga lo contrario. No me convencería. No estaba soñando. Nunca he tenido la posibilidad de soñar.

JAIME PERMUTH

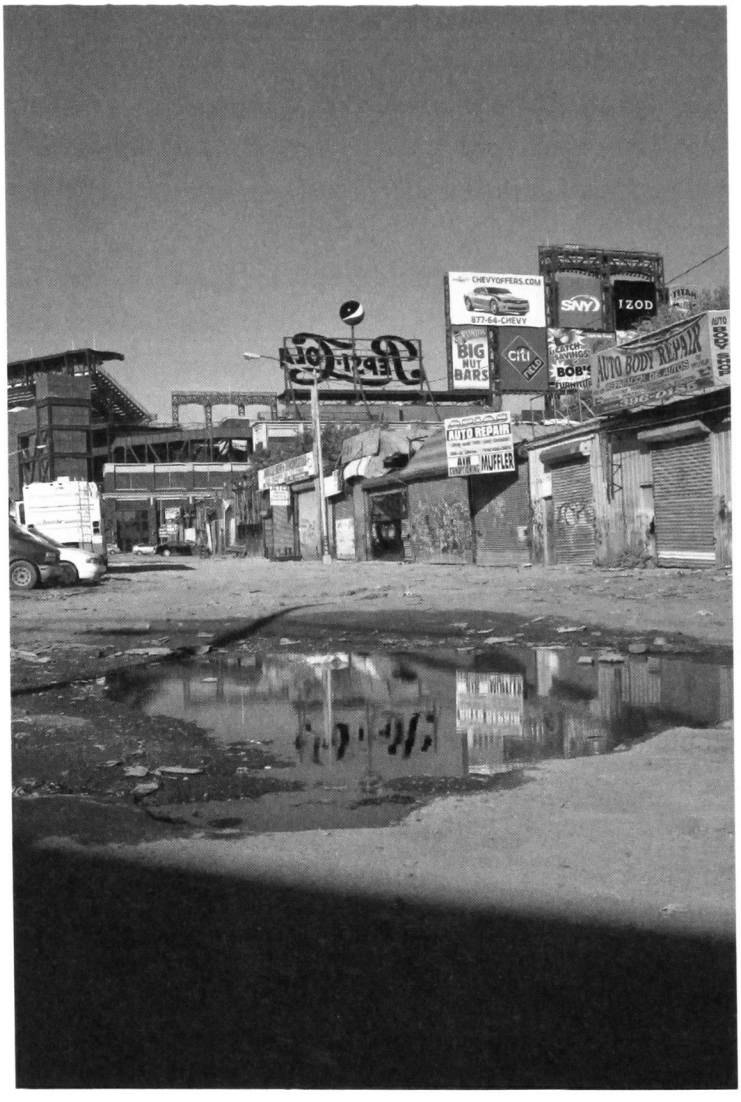
YONKEROS

"Yonkeros" is a popular term for businesses that strip wrecked cars and sell them as scrap metal or for parts. The term is a Spanglish derivative of "junk", conjugated grammatically to refer to people who engage in this line of work.

Yonkeros is a lyrical exploration of first world consumerism, waste, and obsolescence as they intersect with third world ingenuity and survivalist strategies in the no-man's-land of Willets Point, Queens.

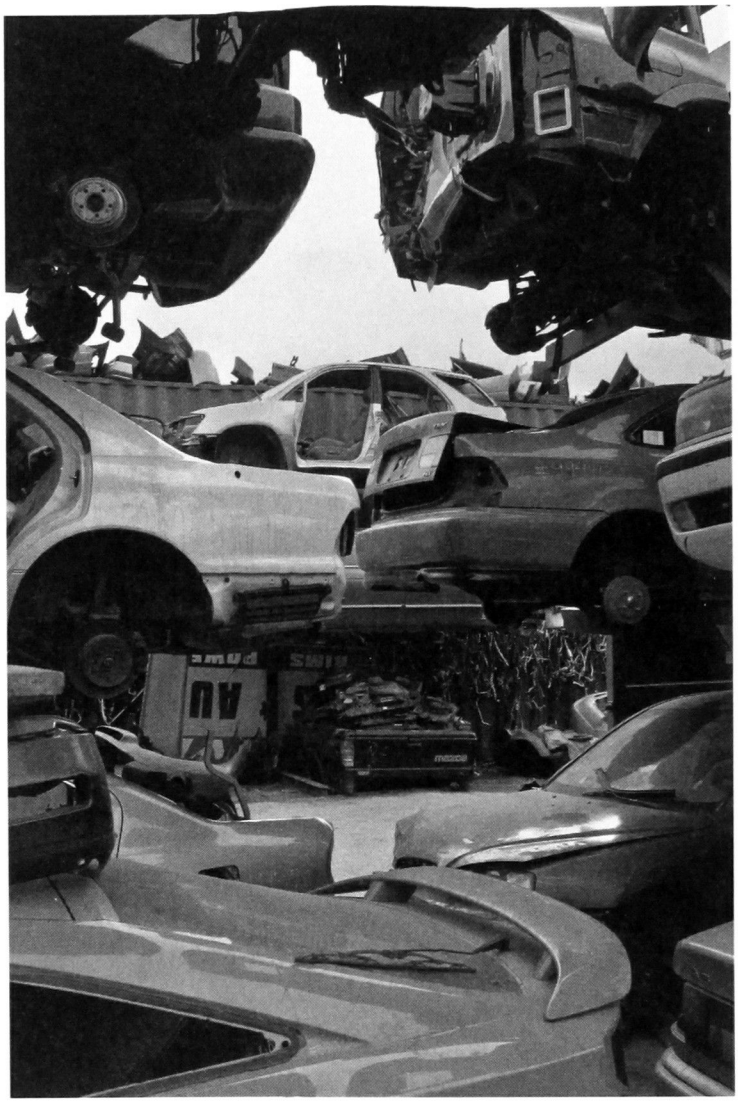
This series of photographs is both an appeal and a eulogy; the City of New York is determined to erase the existence of this small enclave, not withstanding that it continues to provide an essential service to the community and that it constitutes a source of income and employment to a segment of the city's immigrant working class.

Above all, Willets Point is a vast inventory of parts, and like all catalogues it is also a poem.



"Untitled"
From the series *Yonkeros*, 2010

"Untitled"
From the series *Yonkeros*, 2010



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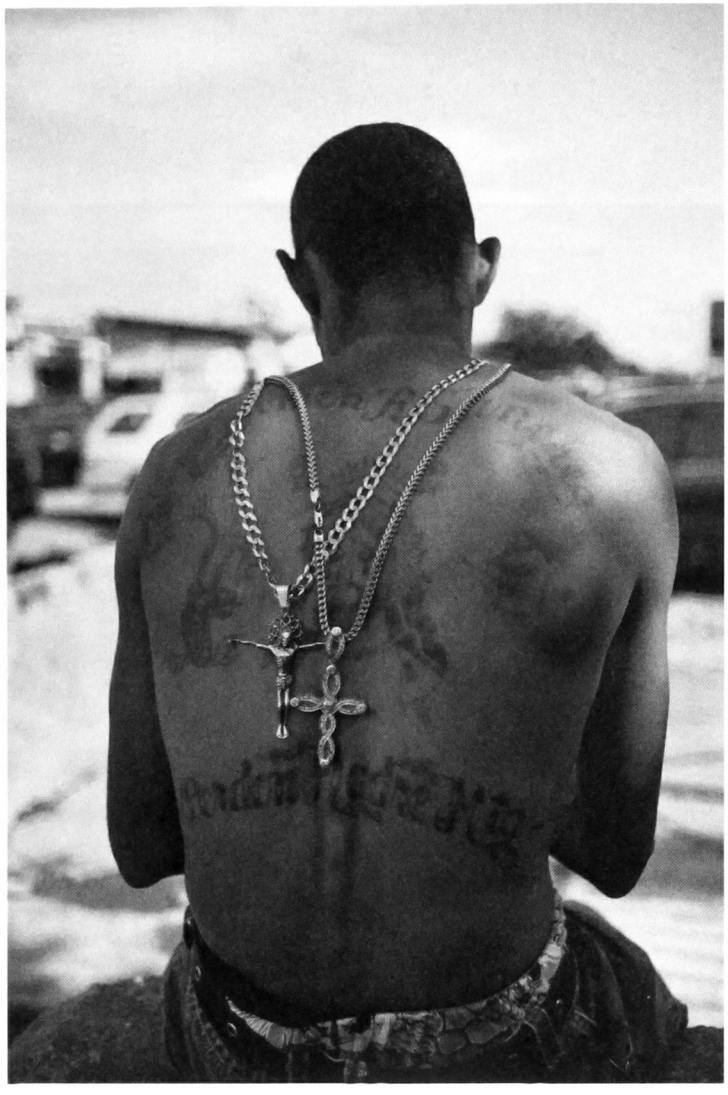

"Untitled"
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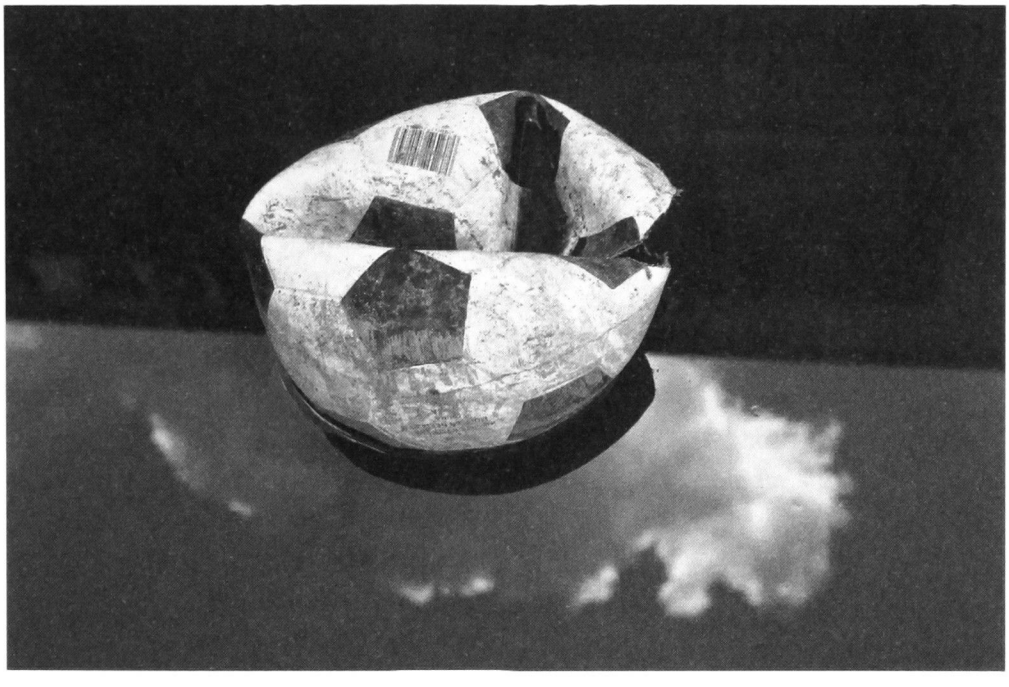


"Untitled"
From the series *Yonkeros*, 2010

MYRIAM MOSCONA

DOS POEMAS

suicida
tóxica
rebelde

concentrada
abierta
caradura

fronteriza
desnuda
cortante

taciturna
inhalante
digresiva

cruel
adúltera
panteísta

necia
besante
jija

masculina
detallada
detallista

carroñera
festiva
mortífera

femenina
roja
punzante

herida
insana
contagiosa

indispuesta
hormonal
dormida

negra
sangrante
loba

despierta
insidiosa
turbia

repentina
brutal
imprescindible

mortal
bienaventurada
grosera

maternal
cicatera
zafia

rota
diva
divina

elíptica
peregrina
ritual

raptora
docta
obscena

donosa
espectral
errática

celosa
cielosa
adorable

ausente
lésbica
sibilina

guerrera
vesperal
dictadora

ladrona
sometida
desollante

dramática
ascética
abrasiva

rompe huevos
brava
ocular

mísera
contenida
libre

fluida
insoportable
portátil

alfa
auditiva
solitaria

danzante
eremita
cantabile

corporal
álmica
vítrea

azul
latente
estremecida

monstruosa
oficiante
intrusa

envidiable
dadivosa
sacerdotal

rítmica
gestual
voraz

mental
brillante
excesiva

secreta
impecable
diamantina

imposible
maliciosa
zorra

entrometida
oscura
intravenosa

lúdica
acrobática
melómana

arrogante
imprudente
impúdica

mentirosa
vacilante
astuta

noble
tirana
obstinada

impulsiva
imantada
incisiva

fresca
aeróbica
juiciosa

esquizoide
impetuosa
temida

valiente
lenta
alcahueta

calmante
barroca
bipolar

colorista
memoriosa
celebratoria

aerostática
afiebrada
fría

eyes turning back

dialéctica
permisiva
aérea

irreverente
versátil
incansable

polifónica
inventora
histérica

legendaria
artificiosa
diatónica

balbuciente
exhibicionista
neurótica

llevadera
nómada
insumisa

lanzada
furcia
cautivante

acertiva
atrevida
penetrable

huidiza
caliente
lenguaraz

pécora
esfinge
bachillera

vaporosa
ciclónica
picante

sodomita
sísmica
embebida

paciente
movible
náufraga

grave
espinosa
curativa

muda
filtrante
visceral

iluminada
impaciente
relativa

pérfida
reparadora
iluminante

vertida
piramidal
funesta

fuereña
lea
gitana

sucia
suelta
licenciosa

nunca absoluta

MUERTE EN MANHATTAN (ENTRECRUCES)

A orillas del Hudson
esperé
a una
mujer
que
venía
de muy lejos

Nadaba
en un espacio propio
como si fuera adentro de una nuez

Nunca perdió
la horizontal

La nadadora de
aguas abiertas
venía desde el norte

Al llegar a la isla
vomitó
en las espumas rojas
llenas de olor a vinagre
del puerto

Venía pataleando

Una pierna
era postiza

Le di la bienvenida
con un gesto
invisible para ella

Me latió fuerte el corazón
al verla aparecer
como pintada en acuarela
con tintes amarillos
y naranjas

Ahora doy
la vuelta por la calle
once
Subo a un taxi
No sé por qué
good after noon- lady
el chofer
me cuenta que
el poeta Robert Lowell
murió en
su taxi
en mil novecientos setenta y siete

El corazón
como una media
de nylon
se rasgó

Iba a verse
con su segunda esposa

Llegó muerto
a visitarla

El corazón
de Robert Spence Lowell IV
quedó tieso
en el asiento trasero
donde voy sentada

Cayó por un infarto
masivo
a unas calles del río Hudson
allí donde vi llegar
a una mujer
nadando
en un espacio propio
como si fuera adentro de una nuez
Lowell pidió
una muerte natural
sin dolor ilimitado

¿Qué
somos
sino
el total?

Y el total
¿qué es?

Me hubiera gustado
leer
el poema imposible
de Lowell
sobre
su muerte

Me hubiera gustado
asistir
a la mujer
que venía de tan lejos
agotada

Ayudarla a desprender
su pierna
falsa
y
sentarme
con ella
a mirar
los rascacielos
después
de
su hazaña

El mundo
sus puertas giratorias

Me hubiera gustado
saber
la respuesta

JOHN PLUECKER

TWO EKPHRASTIC TEXTS FROM *FORD US OVER*

Here, Hold My Hand

Fellow, right in front of us, see there to the right, the shapes are degrading. These are marks on paper and we are also of marks on paper. Yes, look: a series of marks on this paper. We live here. You can tell this was manufactured, look at the skill of even a shadow coming off of the small structure to the right. A smaller rectangle with a trapezoid on top, seeming to slide off. The larger rectangular structure with the trapezoid on top is on the other hand sturdy, it is not leaning or precarious. Its straight lines reinforce a feeling of permanence. But somehow, this strong shape is shunting down the littler one, hanging off about to fall into the pencilled-in plain, set to tumble into the the the.

Dear, come with me and walk into the plain. The blotchy marks these groupings of darkened masses. A large spiked fringe and danger grows in the blotted. Lurking in these dark lines and shadows, who knows. Count them, all nineteen of them, you might count more, hard to know where one mass ends and the next begins or even what should count as a mass. What is countable.

Together, a walk through penciled plain an underbrush of meaning. Off over there, look there is a protuberance. A row of parallel lines, such a quantity of them, forty-eight of these sentries crowned by triangles on top. Behind

them darker spires, the spokes of the undergirding for these drawings. Fifteen of these posts. Something is behind them, an intimation of what we can't see. Which we can't see. But undisheartened, compañero, time flows forward and this fort defends.

A togethering gathers in the meaning. Stuck into the top a pole and above it a rectangle is curved down in the middle of that part of it had slipped down momentarily. This used to suggest fluttering. Yes, fluttering caused by the action of the wind. The wind is a difficult thing to draw, a difficult thing to write.

A way of wandering, my man. A cross in the distance, off-kilter pointing its left arm up into the sky, askew. A gathering of four figures in the distance, rectangles with trapezoids perched atop, to the left of each of them a darker triangle with a square on top. Between us and them an expanse of untoned grayness. The paper takes hold, only a light shading to indicate the murky reaches. Across the silt and sallow-hued water. Pencil stands in for color.

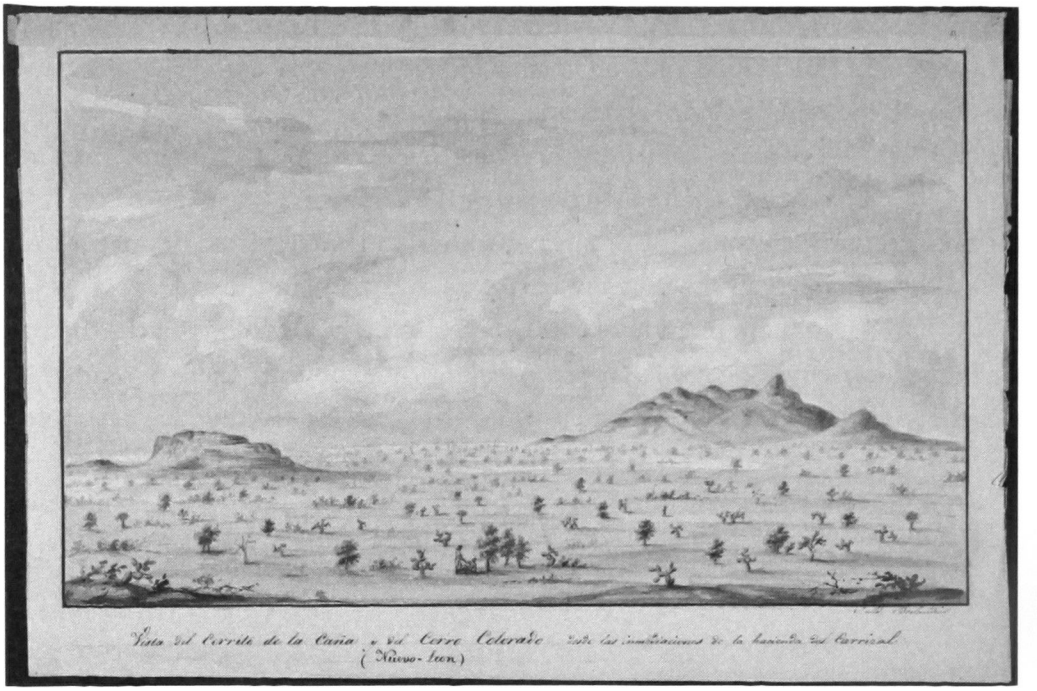
How to carry you physically along into the distance, what is called the background. The background rears up in the distance. The distance. The open

paper cuts us off from that side. Four windows on one, the triangular roof. Next to it a smaller one, a kind of shed, a small square. How to cross this space and move onto the other mass of shadows.

Querido, a paper to keep you here close to me, gripping your hand in mine. The eight ridges of penciled wave battering the far edge of the shadow mass in the background. The backside of the mass, an island is suggested or not even an island the other side of the undrawn expanse, the mainland rears.

There is no there outside of this. All around us a dark line marks the perimeter of our land. We are left to each other. To the bottom, there is written in a curlicue script "Barra del Rio de Panuco con el fortin q' hicieron los Españoles en 1829."

Oh man, walk me into land, into holding. Hold my graphite mark, tilt your darkened hat. Dream of flesh sand rivers ink.



Vista

Clouds charge with beige and dark
streak, amorphous globs of shade.
The original is you. The copying,
I vades the place.

A storm breaks on the horizon.
Or is it a line? A mountain
endamaged by the towering cumulus.

Colleague, this time your desire
failed you. Cane wound up
the cottonwood tree. I trust
in these of graphite and ink.

Pricked in the refairing of my botanical
collections. A subite roar drawn
from the tempest. Folly the rive risen
away the surprise is roan like the mare.

Eat another motive: bien puissant,
my feet direct my path.
South this route, see taite
the desire to reunite taut
like the limites.

Plains colleague,
you tumbled, trundled,
but you are not a ball,
but a mass of scribbled
linesevoke the solitary
and aid the inexpanse.

I desire to seethe you.
To sea with you. Get up,
plus my desires augmented,
plus obstacles accrued
into our rencounter or encounter.

Look, the indigènes.
Arrive.

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MATTHEW GOULISH

WRITING FROM THE PERFORMANCE

INVENTORY
A DUET FOR RIO

INVENTÁRIO
UM DUETO PARA O RIO

Note: In September, 2010, at the invitation of curators André Lepecki and Eleonora Fabião, *Every house has a door* devised a duet performance for Justin Cabrillos, a Chicago-based performance artist, and Denise Stutz, a dancer and choreographer based in Rio de Janeiro. Lin Hixson directed the piece, and I was the dramaturg and writer. We took as our starting point a fragment of text by the poet Elizabeth Bishop, an alphabetized inventory of personal effects to take back to Massachusetts, the remnants of eighteen years in Brazil.

—MG

Prose introduction

It was a date in the fall of 1971.

Was it the 30th of September?

If it wasn't, let's say that it was.

And it was time to leave Brazil, to go back to Massachusetts.

Time to decide what to take and what to leave behind.

§

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

It's the 30th of September, 2010.

And it's time to present a performance for you—a duet.

Denise and Justin will perform it.

Lin is the director.

I am the dramaturg.

Lin and Justin and I live in Chicago.

The three of us have never been to Brazil before.

Denise lives here.

Prosa introdutória

Era uma data no Outono de 1971.

Seria 30 de Setembro?

Se não era, vamos dizer que fosse.

E era hora de deixar o Brasil, de regressar a Massachusetts.

Hora de decidir o que levar e o que deixar para trás.

§

Mas estou me adiantando.

Hoje é 30 de Setembro de 2010.

E é hora de apresentar um trabalho para vocês – um dueto.

Denise e Justin irão atuá-lo.

Lin é a diretora.

Eu, o dramaturgista.

Lin, Justin e eu vivemos em Chicago.

Nós três nunca tínhamos estado no Brasil antes.

Denise vive aqui.

André and Eleonora suggested that we work together, and we are grateful for that.

We met Denise on Sunday two weeks ago.

At that time, the three of us had arrived, but two of our suitcases had not.

Tam Airlines had them.

One of them contained the notes for rehearsal.

We went to the first rehearsal to create this performance without notes.

Done with the Compass—
Done with the Chart!

Emily Dickinson wrote that.

But this performance is made in response to another poet: Elizabeth Bishop.

§

This is what happened to her.

She came to visit Brazil for two weeks in 1952, but various unexpected events intervened, and she stayed for more or less eighteen years.

André e Eleonora sugeriram que trabalhássemos juntos -- e somos gratos por isso.

Conhecemos Denise num Domingo, faz duas semanas.

Nós três tínhamos chegado nesse dia; mas duas de nossas malas não.

A Tam Linhas Aéreas ficara com elas.

Uma das malas continha as nossas notas de ensaio.

Fomos para o nosso primeiro ensaio para criar este trabalho sem notas.

Chega de Bússola—
Chega de Mapa!

Emily Dickinson escreveu isto.

Mas este trabalho é feito como resposta a uma outra poeta: Elizabeth Bishop.

§

O que aconteceu com ela foi o seguinte.

Em 1952 ela veio visitar o Brasil por duas semanas; porém, vários eventos inesperados intervieram, e ela acabou ficando mais ou menos dezoito anos.

During that time, she wrote and translated poetry and essays, lived in Petrópolis, and bought a house in Ouro Preto, a house that she named Casa Mariana.

She stayed until the 30th of September, 1971.

Her uncollected writings—poems, drafts, and fragments—include an anonymous looking typed sheet of paper with the heading *Inventory*.

It seems to begin as an alphabetized list of objects to keep, to take back to Massachusetts, the remnants of eighteen years in Brazil, each item personal, practical, containing multitudes.

But at some point it seems to change its mind, and it wants to become a poem.

Is it still an inventory then, or is it a fragment of a poem titled *Inventory*?

See for yourself.

INVENTORY
Bed, birdcage, and a chest of drawers,
the biggest shell, the flat and foot-
shaped piece of granite I found myself, the
paddle, and the portable ink-well;

Durante esse tempo, escreveu e traduziu poesias e ensaios, morou em Petrópolis, e comprou uma casa em Ouro Preto – uma casa que ela chamou de *Casa Mariana*.

Ficou até 30 de Setembro de 1971.

Dentre seus escritos dispersos – poesias, rascunhos e fragmentos – há uma folha datilografada, de ar discreto e anônimo, com o título *Inventário*.

Parece começar como uma listagem em ordem alfabética de objetos a conservar e levar de volta para Massachusetts. Resíduos de dezoito anos de Brasil; cada item algo pessoal, prático, contendo multitudes.

Porém, a certa altura, parece que a lista muda de idéias, e quer tornar-se poema.

Será ainda um inventário? Ou será um fragmento de um poema intitulado *Inventário*?

Decidam vocês mesmos.

INVENTÁRIO
Cama, gaiola e uma cômoda a maior das
conchas, o pedaço de granito
achatado em forma de pé que eu mesma
achei, o remo, e o tinteiro portátil

the baby-book, coffe spoons the blue enamm the cloisonee coffe spoons with blue enamel,

the living cat
where —where can I take then next?
wa nd where do we go next?

Oh let me not have looked
Let it somehow be that I never saw

& the cascade seems hurrying to some climax, but really never changes—

§

So it is when we try to escape ourselves; we find ourselves anew, in a new place.

"Myself I must remake," wrote Yeats.

"Universe, vast universe, my heart is vaster," wrote Drummond.

This *Inventory*, whatever it is, it's like "the DNA left at the scene."

o livro de bebe, colherzinhas de café o azul esmal as colherzinhas de café esmaltadas de azul

o gato vivo
onde – onde posso levá-los em seguida?
va ra onde vamos em seguida?

Oh, deixe-me não ter olhado
deixe que de algum modo eu nunca tenha visto

& a cascata parece se apressar para algum climax, mas na verdade nunca muda -

§

Assim é quando tentamos escapar de nós mesmos; nos encontramos novamente, num novo lugar.

"Eu mesmo devo refazer-me," escreveu Yeats.

"Mundo mundo, vasto mundo, mais vasto é meu coração," escreveu Drummond.

Este *Inventário*, o que quer que ele seja, é como "ADN deixado na cena do crime."

"It's Elizabeth Bishop. Let's bring her in."

That reminds me, there is no smoking allowed at any time in the theater.

Please silence your cellular telephones, except during the 6-minute section of the performance involving seashells, during which time you may allow them to ring.

Anyway.

We decided to make our performance out of the *Inventory*, whatever it is.

Out of the way light goes into a prism white and comes *out of* it a spectrum.

We wanted to linger on each item and to open the words in time.

This is like learning a language.

It is also like making acquaintance.

We wanted to take Elizabeth Bishop's goodbye to Brazil, and fashion it into our hello.

...her departure, our arrival.

"É a Elizabeth Bishop. Vamos trazê-la."

Isso me lembra: não é permitido fumar em momento algum dentro do teatro.

Por favor, silenciem seus telefones celulares -- exceto durante a parte da apresentação que envolve conchas marinhas e dura 6 minutos -- durante esse período de tempo vocês podem deixá-los tocar.

Enfim.

Decidimos fazer este nosso trabalho partindo do *Inventário* – o que quer que ele seja.

Partindo – tal como a luz que entra branca dentro de um prisma, *partindo* dele em espectro.

Queríamos nos demorar em cada item e abrir as palavras no tempo.

Isto é como aprender uma língua.

É também como conhecer alguém.

Queríamos pegar no adeus de Elizabeth Bishop ao Brasil, e transformá-lo no nosso olá.

... a partida dela; a nossa chegada.

§

And one more thing.

Gaspar de Lemnos sailed into the bay on New Year's Day 1502, and he named it Rio de Janeiro—"River of January."

He thought the bay was the mouth of a river.

His name was half correct.

It was January.

We wanted to allow this name to structure our performance.

Our performance will in a sense face in two directions—two performers, two clusters of audience, two languages, the two modes of sound and movement—like the god that the month is named for, Janus, with two faces.

God of doorways, of the end and the start of the year, of departure and arrival.

And from the Rio, the imagined river, that starts small and fast and widens and slows to its end in the sea, we devised the time, the temporal shape and signature, for the piece.

§

E mais uma coisa.

Gaspar de Lemmos adentrou a baía no dia de Ano Novo de 1502, e chamou-a de Rio de Janeiro.

Pensou que a baía era a embocadura de um rio.

O nome que deu está correto pela metade.

Era Janeiro.

Queríamos deixar que esse nome estruturasse o nosso trabalho.

Então, de certa maneira, o nosso trabalho faceará duas direções – dois atuantes, dois agrupamentos de público, duas línguas, os dois modos do som e do movimento -- tal como o deus que dá o nome ao mês, Janus, o de duas faces.

Deus dos portais, do fim e começo de ano, da partida e chegada.

E, a partir do Rio – do rio imaginário, que começa pequeno e rápido e se alarga e se ralenta no seu encontro final com o mar – nós engendramos o tempo, a forma e a assinatura temporais, para a peça.

We made 20 parts of increasing lengths that total 52 minutes.

From beginning to end, the piece has eight 1-minute parts, then proceeds to six 2-minute parts, and then to four 4-minute parts, then concludes with two 8-minute parts.

But these parts intermix in an irregular way based on the alternating weave of two number series.

And also, the two concluding 8-minute parts happen simultaneously.

It is a 52-minute piece that takes 44 minutes to perform.

Criamos 20 partes com durações cada vez maiores que totalizam 52 minutos.

Do início ao fim, a peça tem oito partes de 1 minuto, seguida de seis partes de 2 minutos, quatro de 4 minutos, e conclui com duas partes de 8 minutos.

Mas estas partes se misturam de modo irregular, seguindo o entrelaçamento de duas séries de números.

Além disso, as duas partes conclusivas de 8 minutos acontecem simultaneamente.

É uma peça de 52 minutos que leva 44 minutos para ser realizada.

serial rendering:
1•1•1•1•2•2•2•4•4•8

cumulative rendering:
1•1•2•1•2•4•1•2•4•8

time score (interleaved serial/cumulative with simultaneous last sections):
1 • 1 • 1 • 1 • 1 • 2 • 1 • 1 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 4 • 2 • 1 • 4 • 2 • 4 • 4 • 8 /8 = 44

I will not bore you with the mathematics.

You can see it all in the archive.

Não os aborrecerei com a matemática da coisa.

Podem ver tudo no arquivo.

The time is like a river—that's the idea.

Our two suitcases arrived the next day at 4 PM.

And in one of her first poems completed after returning to North America, Elizabeth Bishop recalled a childhood memory.

> *I said to myself: three days*
> *and you'll be seven years old.*
> *I was saying it to stop*
> *the sensation of falling off*
> *the round, turning world*

But for now, it was still the 30th of September, 1971.

Time to leave Brazil.

Time to begin.

O tempo é como um rio – é essa a idéia.

As nossas duas malas chegaram no dia seguinte, às 4 da tarde.

E num dos primeiros poemas que completou após o seu regresso à América do Norte, Elizabeth Bishop relembra uma memória de infância.

> *Disse a mim mesma: três dias*
> *e você terá sete anos.*
> *Ia dizendo isso para parar*
> *a sensação de estar caindo*
> *do redondo, girante mundo.*

Mas por agora, era ainda 30 de Setembro de 1971.

Hora de deixar o Brasil.

Hora de começar.

Portuguese translation by André Lepecki and Eleonora Fabião

Music notes

Let There Be Light by Justice

At the second of our two preliminary rehearsal meetings in Chicago, in response to Lin's directive for a two-minute *birdcage* section, Justin presented a song of sorts. He stood and intoned one long drone, then after a pause, another, and so on, according to some hidden chord progression, quivering his lips, and resonating in his nasal cavities, as if trying to sustain a very particular texture. When Lin asked, he explained that this is how he "sings along" to a song by the French electronica duo Justice. She wanted to hear the original, and he emailed it to us later that day. After one listening, Lin knew she wanted it in the piece. "See," she said, "this is why we need to work with young people." The juxtaposition of Justin's unamplified, curiously monastic "singing" and the explosive, danceable track, a pairing we tried in the first rehearsal in Rio, seemed comical and strange. I think he had a notion about his head being birdcage shaped, containing the song. Denise had arrived with her response to the same directive: a fluttering bird movement, isolated to upper body parts, performed (like Justin's response) with stationary feet. Lin placed the two together, with Denise on the movement platform and Justin at the table. She asked me to bring in the Justice track in the second minute of the section. The music then carried through into the next two one-minute sections. These retained the title *chest of drawers*, although they responded to *baby-book*. They worked material that Denise had proposed involving the trading places of passports from Brazil and the United States. These were placed, as if hidden, in the pages of an English and a Portuguese dictionary. We tried Denise's bird movement, in its second iteration, traveling tightly along a line in response to Elizabeth Bishop's poem *The Sandpiper*. Something Bishop had said in a speech struck me as an elegant weave of bird and passport: "Yes, all my life I have lived and behaved very much like that sandpiper—just running along the edges of different countries, 'looking for something.'"

Bird Cage by John Cage

The first time I abbreviated Justin's name in my notebook with his initials, I thought of John Cage. I pursued a vague memory, and found that Cage had

indeed produced a composition titled *Bird Cage*. It seemed to be a lesser-known electronic work. I placed orders for the score and the only recording I could find, and thankfully they both arrived in time for me to bring them to Brazil. The piece mixes Cage's field recordings of the songs of exotic birds with electronic effects and his own recitation of his text *Moreau*. The sounds start and stop or switch channels abruptly according to the chance constraints of number tables produced by the *I Ching*. For the second *birdcage* section, when Denise travels haltingly along the line, I tried playing a two-minute track from the recording. The jagged sonic texture, with its recognizable bird cries and calls, seemed the perfect pairing with the performative material; at times the recorded birds echoed the real ones we heard outside of the theater, and Cage's vocalizing echoed Justin's Justice tones, which Lin asked him to continue through this section, standing very close to the audience. She also asked him to drop out the tone at certain points, and to perform the lip quiver as a kind of choreography. I wondered whether, in the entire history of human dance, anyone had ever choreographed a lip quiver before. In the liner notes to the cd, Cage commented that he had added the recording of his own voice because "It makes the birds sound less ridiculous." I think he may have meant that his somewhat ridiculous vocalizing makes the birds sound more intelligent. When Denise added the tight, linear running, and then stopping to perform the bird movement, then running again, she separated the lower and upper body, differentiating motion and movement. It seems to me that the "becoming-animal" suggested by Bishop's line about resembling the sandpiper never really occurs in her poems. There animals, when they appear, tend to interrupt the human, to roadblock us in our tracks, as if we are encountering a minor deity. (*A moose has come out of / the impenetrable wood / and stands there, looms, rather, / in the middle of the road.*) In *At the Fishhouses* the poem's speaker sings a hymn to a seal.

Death is Only a Dream by The Willis Brothers, performed by The Wingdale Community Singers

... One seal particularly
I have seen here evening after evening.

He was curious about me. He was interested in music;
like me a believer in total immersion,
so I used to sing him Baptist hymns.
I also sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."
He stood up in the water and regarded me
steadily, moving his head a little.

In his introduction to her *Collected Prose* Robert Giroux relates how Bishop's "addiction to hymns and hymn singing had more to do with the arts of poetry and music than religion; Elizabeth Bishop, like Emily Dickinson, was an unbeliever..." He quotes her: "Where I lived in Canada, people used to sing hymns in the evening. They liked to play on the piano and organ, and they'd sing and sing and sing. My grandfather went to two churches – one Presbyterian, one Baptist – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. So I'm full of hymns." In response to *portable inkwell*, Justin had choreographed a sequence of movement derived from writing, specifically, writing with a quill pen and ink – the hand or arm becoming the pen, the body enacting the gestures and hesitations of the hand. Lin had Denise learn the sequence (just as she asked Justin to learn Denise's *birdcage* solo), and for the penultimate sequence in the piece she asked them to dance the *portable inkwell* dance as a parallel, not perfectly unison, duet on the movement platform. The duet merged two 4-minute parts into one long 8-minute sequence, just before the ending of the piece. I was to time the dance from the sound table, and to bring in some recorded music that would signal the end of the eight minutes. I had thought that a hymn would work with the duet's suggestion of convergence and communality, albeit distanced or isolated. Later Lin said this was one of those moments that "constructs emotion" for the audience – the emotion arising from the assembly of parts that appear in themselves unemotional. The only song on my playlist that seemed workable to me, however, was not a hymn, but a spiritual in western swing style: *Death is Only a Dream*, written by the Willis Brothers, warmly rendered by The Wingdale Community Singers. The song, like the sandpiper, stands at a threshold.

Prepare me my saviour prepare me I pray
to cross o'er this turbid dark stream.

This version's harmonies, guitar strum and careful arpeggios seemed more suited to the universe of the piece than the aggressive chord structures of a true hymn. The word *turbid* struck me as worthy of Bishop herself, and in the Wingdale version, I thought I detected something of the quality of Bishops's, in Paul Muldoon's phrasing, "sense of being at once engaged and disengaged..." Muldoon makes this comment, in his lecture on Bishop's prose poem *12 O'Clock News*, in response to a line from her story *In Prison*, a line he claims presents an image she associates with Emily Dickinson.

> I could almost imagine myself, if it would do any
> good, in a large silver *bird cage*! But that's a parody,
> a fantasy on my real hopes and ambitions.

Inlets by John Cage

I don't remember where I got the small conch shell I had in Chicago, but I brought it to our first preliminary meeting, and later packed it to bring to Rio. The *Inventory* line *the biggest shell, the flat and foot-shaped* reminded me of another Cage composition, *Inlets*, which Lin and I had once staged in a gallery. The composition calls for three performers, each with three conch shells of various sizes, who tip and rotate the shells with water in them. Very sensitive microphones amplify the gurgles into a sound/music landscape. In the hotel room I began to experiment with my small shell, and found it easily made a consistent sound beyond its size. I had thought we would find the large shells we needed in Rio, and André and Eleanora had told me that that was what we should do. But once there, Eleanora discovered that "the sale of shells is now prohibited." They were nowhere to be found. But not to worry, she said. She had two in New York that André could bring in a couple of days, when he traveled down with their four-year-old daughter Valentina. I asked if anyone might raise an objection to our using North American shells in a performance in South America. Eleanora reassured me that they were in fact Brazilian shells, gathered in her youth. Three days later, she and Valentina appeared at our rehearsal. Valentina had taken upon herself the care and transport of the shells, and she presented me with a soft plastic lunchbox-style container, which she unzipped to reveal two squat

conch shells wrapped in doll clothing. The thin, delicate shells had finely lined spiral ridges. It took some practice to discover how to get them to gurgle, but in the end their sound was distinct from that of the small shell. We used one of them and the small one, since only two people could play at a time, at the two microphones, for our miniaturized version of *Inlets*. This live "music" accompanied the choreography of the dancers slowly walking patterns as if writing, in cursive script on the page of the stage, the word *foot* (for Justin) and *pé* (for Denise) – this from the *Inventory* lines:

> *the biggest shell, the flat and foot-shaped*
> *piece of granite I found myself*

LILA ZEMBORAIN

EIGHT POEMS FROM *RASGADO*

JANUARY 12, 2002

brutal surface of the rubble, ghostly
wasteland of what was, sub-human labyrinth
of surprise as the spell of what's gone is broken, no one
had predicted such abandonment, such
abandonment between the pieces, is it possible to fill in
this crevice? it is now a plain of sorrow,
a vast rectangle of shadows, the lives that left
still swarming in the vibrant glow
of grayishness, in the look that chokes in air
evading the blood; where, where, where is
the question that breaks in the void, a void
with very precise distances, a dreadful overflowing void
that cannot speak of the screams;
our own phantasmagoria, every word
is a literal specter of what was, to say void, to say
plain, to say particle, to say what needs to be
said, to destroy oneself in the rubble, not
metaphorically, nor with the effect of silence or whiteness on

paper enunciating the museum of waste
laid out before bewildered eyes

MARCH 11, 2002 (AT NIGHT)

they've lit two towers of light in the empty
space, poltergeist sprouting from earth
into darkness, a path, an exit door, will this
be their course? will so many suspended bodies
leave through these illuminated holes?
the body torn apart, is substance also
torn or are shreds left flitting around like
lovers searching for each other after a disaster?
can I imagine something less limited? the
glow whips my throat, the roughness
of all this vital matter wandering surprised
the streets that are thus ghostly,
what about everything floating? is there a symmetry
that can contain so much waste, that can
hold so much stupor, so much fate gone awry?
death's vibrations are close, there
are many unresolved fates, nine men
convinced that paradise resounds before
their eyes wander with the others in a confusion
that hasn't disentangled yet, a substance bonded
to another, all of it a ligament; and matter is no longer
what hurts, it is a mess of energy that doesn't know
up from down, where it's going or
towards what; ojalá, we all say, if only,
with invisible levels of sadness for lives
we have never celebrated

MARCH 16, 2002

not wanting to see any more in that shadow
than a greater or lesser cutout, a greater or lesser
clarity, when the sun is
a fireball dropping exactly
across from where it rises, dawn there darkness
here, every instant, a detonation threatens
to damage the circuitry in its vast network
of folds, sunset and another day simultaneously,
a life here in this universe, a life
transcribing its shred of choices inside the funnel
comprised by her view; to spy on the thousandths of
an absolute that einstein establishes with the speed
of light, the only evidence, the impression
condensing what was and what will be, because
the sequence is broken and an instant dominates
that part of eternity that keeps a body
alive, although the wind dilutes the precision
of the geometry that condenses the cold with an apparition

MARCH 17, 2002

leaving the claustrophobia of beauty she examines
with the eye that hardly sees the vast immensity of
colors, a more intense pink in the place
of absence, an expansive orange in atmospheric
maps, a phenomenon so extraordinary
that the eyes can't help looking; but one eye processes
the persistence of blue, the other, the compactness
of orange, both of them astonished by the variety
of densities that the suddenly dazzled blind one
perceives, and the other sharpens
telescopically an even extension of the spectrum;
she forgives then the secrets of perception
that don't require the alignment of both eyes
and build an astronomical image which cannot
be resisted because it emits a residue
of an exorcism in the ground zero of existence
that alters the substance of the forms

MARCH 23, 2002

how do sunbeams refract when the sun
is almost perpendicular to earth? what geometric
figure is built and destroyed with every
vibration? an optical phenomenon that returns me
again to the immanence of water
multiplying in its gelatinous consistency
a hexagonal web extending in depth; what causes
this contact? is the water impenetrable or
is light unyielding? is the light substance
or phantasmagoria? is the body bathing in this
cold light like the full moon that sketches
in deepsea darkness the spelling of water?

MARCH 29, 2002

as if only now could I see
the extent of panic and the determination
suspended between disbelief and evidence,
with the consciousness in windows that this is
real, that the nightmare is happening inside, in the
detonation of so many lives that should not
be lost, in the combustion of so many eyes
as they insanely flee before the futility of rushing
into the trap, into the door with no way out
except the window, the only means of escape from
the sudden collapse of the floor that dissolves between
your feet; how on earth to believe help will come? who
deserves to be torn like this? how to give in? surrender
to what? not an ounce of hatred can leave my
cells; pity, sure; forget, how?

and the tearing that started this notebook was perhaps
a mere cipher hiding the uncountable dead
perceived at that same moment, foul-smelling
claustrophobia, mass grave, it happened
so fast, so instantaneously and so direct, efficient
would be the word, so boldly they gave up
their bodies to recover other bodies, when
my instinct was to run and erase that image
for my son so he would not crystallize
as a pillar of salt, but there we were
our eyes fixed on the fissure with papers flying,
paradoxical scene of happiness in that opening mouth of
the twenty-first century, each of those
who died that day entering our chests through
thousands of antennas, I'm pained by each of them now
and those who dreamed of saving them; how to answer
that call? so many overlapping words, so many
voices already heard and only thinking of
running away, somehow, avoiding the dimension
of what could happen at any moment
if a nuclear disaster were approaching, if we
dropped biological weapons and we were all sick
unable to breathe or crazy,
a boy lying on the sidewalk watching his mother and
one scene after another: we are alive,
that's the only certainty, but how to give in to
the evidence of hate?

WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 2002 12:30-1:00PM

a long walk to reach the ramp
at ground-zero, with hopes of seeing the vastness
of the underworld, when disgust orders
the pandemonium of objects that smell of rotting;
and the intention to climb to a view that
would take in the gap was proof that the damage
was already done, and what was, right there, on that day,
is now an open grave, without corpses or flowers,
worked over ceaselessly by beings that show
the existing structure, the basement,
windows open to the darkness, like the archways
of the roman circus, passageways leading
to the evidence remaining deep inside when
a woman's ovaries and uterus have been removed

Translated by Mariela Méndez and Daniel Coudriet

WILLIAM BRONK

UN ÁLGEBRA ENTRE GATOS

Para ir a Machu Picchu uno va primero a Cuzco, la ciudad india más importante, todavía, del Perú y alguna vez su capital cuando los incas dominaban. El solo terreno donde se asienta se alza a más de dos millas de altura; y aunque ésta era altura suficiente, Cuzco se encuentra a ras de suelo y parece sacado y excavado de él, del lodo y las piedras y del barro cocido y convertido en tejas. Visto desde arriba, desde la colina que se encuentra fuera del pueblo, donde la enorme fortificación y refugio sigue en pie a cuatro siglos del sitio de los españoles, las tejas de los techos de Cuzco hacen un solo y vasto techo, como una red camuflada y agujereada sólo aquí y allá por los domos abombados o las pesadas torres de las iglesias. Es una ciudad vieja y la ruina parece endémica; después de cada temblor de tierra, la ciudad vuelve a su condición de piedra y barro esenciales. Pero no toda la ciudad. Esas paredes macizas y sin mezcla de cemento que fueron construidas antes de la conquista española y que han servido desde entonces como cimiento para edificios posteriores aún están ahí, tan inmóviles como las montañas.

Para ir a Machu Picchu, nos levantamos temprano y fuimos a la estación del tren. Nos habían dicho que haría frío, pero no estaba más que húmedo y desangelado. En los escalones de la estación, y en la calle frente al mercado opuesto, que

todavía no estaba abierto, había mujeres indias esperando en silencio como gente que ha venido temprano a ver una representación, y le eran tan ajenas al bullicio de las primeras horas de la mañana como si hubieran estado sentadas ahí toda la noche. Sus mercancías estaban junto a ellas dispuestas para los compradores, en sus canastas de pan y de fruta o, sobre pequeños fogones de carbón, sus ollas de sopa y sus sartenes de guisado. El patio de la estación del ferrocarril estaba desierto. En ese momento, vino el jefe de la estación y abrió su oficina. Alberto vio nuestro coche al final del patio y fue a traerlo como alguien que va a traer un caballo del pastizal. Regresó con el conductor y una suerte de camioneta montada sobre ruedas para rieles. Nos subimos y de inmediato emprendimos la marcha; nadie más iba a Machu Picchu ese día. Moviéndonos atrás y adelante, subimos un rato, atravesamos un cerro y descendimos a un valle de río —el valle de Urubamba, el Río Sagrado de los incas, que se levanta casi a la vista del Pacífico, fluye hacia abajo y se interna en los altos Andes para unirse al Amazonas, y así cruza a todo lo ancho el continente hasta disolverse en el Atlántico.

El valle se ensancha y estrecha. Hay grandes llanos donde se libraban las batallas, hay terrazas escarpadas en las partes altas de las laderas de las montañas, hay fuertes y pueblos y flores antiguos —nubes completamente iluminadas por el sol de un amarillo escoba. Detrás de las montañas cercanas hay sierras más altas cubiertas de nieve. Hacia el final del viaje, casi abruptamente, el aspecto rocoso, árido, de las cumbres se convierte en el verde espesor de la selva. Cuando el tren llega a un alto cerca de un puente, las montañas han empujado prácticamente el lecho de la vía en el río y estamos casi una milla más abajo que cuando emprendimos el camino en Cuzco. Desde aquí hasta las ruinas en el cerro de Machu Picchu son cinco millas de una carretera sinuosa que nos lleva de nuevo a aquella distancia, a un tercio de la altura de la que hemos descendido.

El sonido del río está por todos lados, y al verlo parece que está casi bajo los pies de uno, aunque se encuentra mucho más abajo. Henchido y vigoroso desde las altas montañas y constreñido por ellas, tiene la tensión de una pieza tirante de acero que rodeara las montañas. Presiona cerca de la base oriental del cerro de Machu Picchu, incluye el ligero levantamiento de Huayna Picchu y retorna abruptamente para seguir el trazo de la base occidental. El sitio está casi rodeado por el río. Las montañas están alrededor de nosotros como una muchedumbre.

Son tan macizas que parece imposible que tantas puedan estar tan juntas. Estamos *en* ellas. Es como el bajo Manhattan visto desde una posición a medias arriba del piso, desde un lugar retrasado en un edificio. Porque en estas montañas, como con aquellos edificios, todos los demás posibles atributos han sido suprimidos en favor de la cercanía, en favor del surgimiento. O, si a uno se le recuerda la música, es música como podría parecerle a alguien parado justo en medio de un solo de órgano, exultante, afirmativo y serenamente compuesto. Así, en lo que de otro modo sería una quietud total, escuchamos el río debajo de nosotros y vemos las montañas alrededor como si las escucháramos.

Quienquiera que haya construido esta ciudad debe haberle sido sensible a su situación y haberse sentido atraído por ella. Antes de la conquista, los indios de las tierras altas tenían una civilización mucho más desarrollada que la de los indios de la selva. Se ha dicho, con razón, que Machu Picchu era una fortificación segura contra los indios de la selva. Sin duda era un lugar seguro. Los españoles, por ejemplo, que estaban locos por el oro y lo buscaban en todas partes, soportando cualquier tipo de dureza, nunca encontraron Machu Picchu. Tampoco existe ningún indicio de que fuera atacado o capturado por tribus hostiles que sabían de su existencia. El foso del río y las laderas escarpadas que conducían a la ciudad le daban una seguridad casi obsesiva. Pero el aspecto general de Machu Picchu es de serenidad más que de obsesión. Ciertamente, una seguridad tan grande como cualquiera hubiera podido desear se habría alcanzado en cualquier cantidad de lugares cercanos con un esfuerzo mucho menor. Así que debió haber otra razón. Sin duda era un lugar sagrado; es fácil sentir que lo era. Muy probablemente aquí como en cualquier otra parte de los Andes se le rendía culto al sol, quizás a algún otro dios menor, así como al dios creador, Viracocha. Pero éstos no son suficientes para dar cuenta de la calidad de Machu Picchu, que no sólo es hermoso sino hermoso de una manera especial. Hay templos y dioses en otros lugares y la mayoría de los lugares son feos o al menos de una belleza limitada. Los lugares sagrados son rara vez hermosos pero cuando lo son, es como si algún dios extraño hubiera intervenido y tomado el mando. Hoy día, es este Dios Extraño el que parece haber sido motivo de culto en Machu Picchu.

Ha habido aquí una especial reverencia por el sitio mismo. El sitio es tan impresionante y se ha desarrollado con tal éxito que reverencia parece una palabra

adecuada. Esta consideración por el sitio supuestamente debe ser una cualidad de la mejor arquitectura moderna, y a veces lo es. Esta antigua ciudad tuvo esa cualidad hace mucho tiempo. El terreno y su fondo fueron puestos a prueba por sus mejores valores de la misma manera en que un bloque de piedra a punto de ser esculpido es estudiado por el escultor que pretende desarrollar su concepción a partir de él. Y es verdad, hay una gran reverencia por la piedra en Machu Picchu. Aquí y allá, una roca se ha dejado en pie donde siempre debió haber estado, pero en un punto vuelto conspicuo merced al edificio de la ciudad que lo rodea. Unos cuantos planos pequeños fueron cortados y retirados de sus superficies naturales para hacer pequeñas repisas en donde quizá se colocaron ofrendas. En un lugar, hay una enorme saliente o realce situado de tal manera que forma una cueva debajo. La roca a la derecha de la entrada de la cueva está hermosamente tallada en amplias facetas, en una forma que ahora llamaríamos abstracta. La cima de este mismo realce se ha usado como cimiento para el muro de un edificio redondo parecido al Templo del Sol en Cuzco. Adentro de este templo —o de este edificio, porque realmente no sabemos qué uso se le daba— la roca natural se ha conservado como una tosca obstrucción, que cubre la mayor parte del área circundada. Resulta claro que la roca natural era valorada y respetada. La ciudad está construida en un plano oblicuo y tiene, por tanto, muchas escaleras. Algunas están dispuestas hacia arriba y otras están simplemente cortadas en la pendiente de la roca. Las escaleras conducen finalmente al punto más alto en la cima de la loma. Allí hay otra roca, una roca tallada. Tal vez cortada sea una palabra mejor, porque no está ornamentada; pero las relaciones entre sus planos y superficies son las de una escultura. Toda el área alcanza difícilmente los seis pies de alto. Arriba de la amplia base, a la roca se le ha dado la forma rotunda de un poste de cuatro lados. Este es el poste al que los sacerdotes amarraban el sol en los solsticios para obligarlo a que volviera nuevamente cuando había alcanzado su declinación más lejana. Los españoles encontraron estos postes-para-amarrar-el-sol, o intihuatanas, como los llamaban en la lengua indígena, en otra parte de Perú, y los destruyeron como objetos de culto pagano. Nunca encontraron éste. Es muy hermoso, a la vez simple y sutil; y aunque figura aquí como el clímax de la ciudad, su modestia es tal que logra su efecto siendo esa cosa casi única, un monumento discreto. Venir aquí ahora, encontrarlo igual e inmóvil después

de tantos siglos, reviste la clase de arrobo que debe acompañar a la apertura de una tumba egipcia sin muescas.

Las cualidades de Intihuatana, la modestia, la efectividad y la belleza de la piedra tallada son características de toda la ciudad. Es difícil decir cómo esa piedra gris plana puede lograr un efecto semejante. Hiram Bingham, quien se encontró con esta ciudad intacta pero vacía en 1911, y quitó la maleza que había crecido sobre ella, se refiere a un muro de Machu Picchu como el más hermoso de América. Podría carecer de sentido insistir en este superlativo, pero no hay razón para ir en contra. Incluso si partimos del presupuesto de que estos constructores no tenían herramientas de hierro o acero no sentimos la necesidad, cuando miramos este muro, de condescender con las técnicas primitivas. Ninguna herramienta o saber a nuestro alcance pudo haberlo hecho mejor. Podríamos pensar, en un orden distinto, en los shaker, quienes con su trabajo en madera consiguieron una perfección llana similar. Estas superficies de piedra fueron trabajadas y pulidas a un grado justo de este lado de la línea donde la textura estaría perdida. Cuando una piedra se encuentra con otra las superficies retroceden ligeramente formando una pequeña muesca en todas sus junturas. Y sin duda son las juntas más que cualquier otro factor lo que hace la perfección. Como no se usó mortero, era necesario que cada piedra coincidiera con todas las demás piedras que tocara y, a diferencia del ladrillo o el bloque de construcción, éstas no constituyen unidades regulares e intercambiables. Probablemente ninguna piedra fue cortada igual que otra. En muchos casos éstas son ásperamente rectangulares, pero cada una tiene sus variaciones en tamaño y forma. El ángulo interior de una está perfectamente reflejado en el ángulo exterior de otra adjunta, e incluso después de todo el tiempo transcurrido, no hay un solo espacio entre ellas. Esta correspondencia, además, no era solamente de la superficie sino que se extendía a la profundidad de la piedra misma. Cuántos periodos de paciente esfuerzo debió requerir cada una para darnos ahora la gran satisfacción de un orden armonioso, de piezas que se juntan una vez siquiera, incluso a pesar de que las piezas en este caso no sean más que piedras.

Hay otra obra en piedra en Machu Picchu de belleza igual a ésta. También hay edificios y partes de edificios en los cuales las piezas de roca dentada están apiladas casi al azar sobre barro espeso. Uno de estos edificios toscos,

sorprendentemente, da al pequeño espacio abierto que Bingham llama la Plaza Sagrada porque los otros dos lados (el cuarto es un precipicio) están ocupados por finos edificios que él suponía eran templos. Las piedras realmente grandes, de muchas toneladas de peso, de uno de ellos debieron haber sido muy difíciles de excavar, darles forma y ponerlas en su sitio. Y hay otros ejemplos de triunfo técnico. En un pequeño edificio detrás de este templo hay una piedra cortada con un virtuosismo puro que parece casi lúdico. Dispuesto en una esquina, forma parte de dos paredes y hay treinta y dos ángulos diferentes cortados en sus lados. Y ahí está ese edificio ya mencionado cuya pared curva concuerda con una roca levantada en la cual se basa. Ya que esta pared se inclina hacia adentro, como la mayoría de las paredes indias, a la superficie de cada una de las piedras que la componen debió dársele cualesquier grado tanto de curva exterior como de inclinación interior para contribuir a la forma total del edificio. Es costumbre —desde luego justificada— hablar de la habilidad ingenieril de estos constructores y admirar sus técnicas, o más bien los resultados de sus técnicas ya que no hemos descubierto realmente cómo trabajaban. Y sin embargo, para los ojos modernos, la profunda impresión de la ciudad en su conjunto no es una de habilidades técnicas. No obstante lo admirable que esto pueda ser, los hemos superado hace mucho tiempo en cuanto a herramientas y métodos. Pero nada de lo que hayamos podido hacer a este respecto supera a Machu Picchu en belleza. Se trata de algo más que la ciudad de un ingeniero o de un tallador de piedra. Una y otra vez uno se admira frente al concepto imaginativo de una pared o de un edificio o de una posibilidad de realización en relación con lo cual las habilidades calificadas son sólo una herramienta, no obstante cuán necesaria sea. Es en este sentido que Machu Picchu es un lugar importante, y en este sentido también que no hemos avanzado, que el tiempo desde entonces ha oscilado hacia atrás o adelante a medida que hemos intentado, con el estorbo de nuestras habilidades mucho más numerosas y variadas, conseguir un grado de perfección que se alcanzó de una manera muy simple hace mucho tiempo. No es probable que lo hagamos mejor.

Cuando los aventureros españoles llegaron por primera vez a la parte occidental de América del sur en el siglo XVI, encontraron que toda el área de los Andes estaba dominada por un grupo de indios cuyo regidor era denominado

el Inca. El término Inca se extendía al pueblo del Inca y su civilización. Este grupo dominante decía que había venido de la región de Tiahuanaco, cerca del lago Titicaca, pero parece probable que era más bien del área cercana a Cuzco de donde comenzaron a expandirse a través de las montañas, como los romanos se expandieron a través del Mediterráneo. Y también como los romanos, absorbieron e hicieron uso de otras grandes civilizaciones que los habían precedido. Por tanto, merced a su propia invención o a la de sus predecesores, eran dueños de muchas habilidades y productos ya consolidados. Maíz y papas, entre otros alimentos, se habían hibridado y crecido en abundancia en miles de terrazas artificiales construidas en laderas escarpadas adonde el agua se traía por canales desde, a veces, muchas millas de distancia. Las terrazas y los canales aún pueden verse. Había finos textiles de diseño y belleza intrincados, cerámica sofisticada. Podían trabajar bronce y metales preciosos y los españoles, que estaban familiarizados en casa con los trabajos en piedra más finos de Europa, se sintieron deslumbrados por las grandiosas construcciones que vieron en Cuzco y sus alrededores. Había un concepto de organización que había conquistado y ordenado un vasto imperio y lo había interconectado a través de miles de millares de caminos bien pavimentados, algunas de cuyas partes aún están en uso. Este imperio y sus caminos eran sin duda la creación de los incas y de ningún otro pueblo anterior. Casas de posta estaban colocadas a lo largo de los caminos en intervalos frecuentes, y en ellas había relevos de corredores entrenados de modo que los mensajes pudieran enviarse con gran rapidez de un confín a otro del imperio. Se dice que varios cientos de miles de millas se recorrían a diario. Tan consolidada en muchos sentidos estaba esta civilización que resulta curioso que no tuviera una lengua escrita. Los mensajes que los corredores llevaban por los caminos estaban en forma de quipus, o grupos de cuerdas de colores anudados de varios modos a varios intervalos. He aquí a un pueblo que, en el desarrollo de una lengua escrita, se había saltado toda forma de escritura pictórica para pasar a un sistema abstracto tan alejado de la lengua hablada o de las imágenes visuales como nuestras cintas estenotípicas o nuestros sistemas de tarjetas perforadas.

Es verosímil que esta ciudad serenamente ordenada y ampliamente abstracta fuera construida por los incas. En ausencia de registros escritos sólo hay tradición oral. Los conquistadores tuvieron contacto directo con la tradición oral

pero nunca vieron la ciudad, y aunque se refirieron a lugares que no habían visto, esas referencias son inciertas y confusas. Después de una larga investigación, Hiram Bingham, quien encontró la ciudad, concluyó que era más antigua que el primer gobernante en ser llamado Inca, aunque también concluyó que el último gobernante en ser llamado así fue llevado ahí para ocultarlo de los españoles. Asoció los orígenes de la ciudad con los aumatas, cuya civilización había declinado muchos siglos antes del surgimiento de los incas. No sabemos. ¿Podemos dudar de que una gran parte del tremendo atractivo de Machu Picchu reside en nuestra incapacidad para dar cuenta de su origen? Éste se encuentra fuera de la tradición y descendencia de la civilización occidental. No es nuestra herencia ni fueron ellos nuestros ancestros. Sobre todo esta ciudad es inconsistente con nuestra idea común de pueblo primitivo. El impacto que Machu Picchu tiene en nosotros no se suaviza con datos y explicaciones. Uno se acuerda del capitán del cuento de Conrad, "El copartícipe secreto", confrontado por su inesperado doble, su propia imagen desnuda sale del mar y se le aproxima por uno de los lados del barco. Porque la imagen que vemos como a través de estas paredes, o caminando por estos corredores y escaleras, es nuestra propia imagen, y el impacto es más poderoso por ser inesperado e inenarrable. No quiero decir con esto que esta ciudad se parezca de una manera superficial a una capital moderna o incluso a una pequeña ciudad moderna, no más que los atuendos incas colocados sobre maniquíes en los museos podrían parecerse a algo que nosotros pudiéramos vestir, aun adaptándolo. El parecido —que de ninguna manera es un parecido sino una identificación— se da en un nivel mucho más oscuro y amplio que ignora los particulares de un lugar o un periodo para apuntar más bien a una comunidad de aspiraciones y valores. Es algo parecido a lo que se produce cuando escuchamos una lengua nueva cuyas palabras y gramática, o incluso sus mismos sonidos, nos resultan totalmente extranjeros. Sin embargo, no sólo reconocemos el discurso humano, escuchamos nuestras propias entonaciones y entendemos las actitudes emocionales que se expresan o se intuyen o se disimulan. Podemos sentirnos fuertemente atraídos o repelidos sin un intérprete. Y estas ruinas son casi más elocuentes que el lenguaje. Qué gran ciudadela era ésta, después de todo. La grandeza de sus templos no estaba en sus tamaños, que habrían admitido sólo a unos cuantos sacerdotes y acólitos. Sus casas son sólo

cuartos fríos y diminutos a pesar de los refinamientos de sus paredes de piedra. Pero es una ciudad. Nadie habla de ella en términos de menor respeto. Lugares modernos mucho más extensos son sin lugar a dudas pueblos y aldeas. Es la quintaesencia, el completo y perfecto sumario de una ciudad. Y sus casas son casas de verdad y queremos vivir en ellas de la misma forma en que queremos vivir en las casas que construimos para jugar cuando éramos niños. Nos hablan con esa clase de inmediatez y perfección. Pertenecemos aquí porque somos humanos y porque estos constructores eran humanos en el mejor y más profundo sentido que podamos imaginar, aunque usaran otras palabras y otra gramática en su lenguaje y sus herramientas y materiales fueran diferentes de los nuestros.

Uno siente que los edificios de Machu Picchu, que ya eran viejos en la época de la conquista española, son más de nuestro tiempo que los edificios que se construirían después —las iglesias de Cuzco, por ejemplo, en los restos desmigajados y derruidos de su esplendor barroco. La antigüedad de estos edificios coloniales españoles ahora parece demasiado obvia: están, como solemos decir, "fechados". Los edificios de Machu Picchu, por otro lado, ni están desgastados ni son anticuados y literalmente no están fechados; su tiempo de origen es desconocido. Como resultado curioso, este contraste nos lleva a reflexionar sobre la poca profundidad de los siglos de nuestra propia tradición europea, tan llena de detalles intrascendentes como una tarde aburrida y tan trivial en esencia como los cambios de la moda en el vestido de un año a otro. En Machu Picchu, es como si el tiempo no fuera una sola y ordenada progresión en la cual todos los hechos humanos tomaran su lugar en la misma escala. Es por lo menos como si hubiera varias escalas de tiempo separadas; es incluso como si para ciertos logros de gran relevancia, esta ciudad por ejemplo, hubiera un presente continuo que hiciera de estas cosas algo siempre contemporáneo. El sentido común tiene grandes limitaciones; y aunque podría definirse bajo ciertos aspectos como lo que la experiencia nos ha enseñado y se conforma a la experiencia, son con frecuencia nuestras experiencias absurdas las que terminan por conformarse, a su vez, al sentido común.

Ésta es una ciudad fantástica. No tiene nada que ver con el sentido común que un grupo salvaje y primitivo, en un periodo remoto, hubiera construido, en este punto inaccesible en medio de los Andes, una ciudad de belleza semejante

a costa de tanta labor y cuidado. Sin embargo aquí está, y debemos aceptarla como una realidad, no como parte del sentido común. Es verdad que rechazamos prácticamente toda nuestra experiencia —la realidad—, que pedimos que nuestros sentidos sean confirmados. Decimos, "¿Qué era ese ruido?" o "¿Viste un flash?" Una y otra vez, sin siquiera ser preguntados, explicamos a los niños lo que los niños ven y oyen, o supuestamente han visto y oído. Esto es sentido común en su nivel más simple —lo que sea que hayamos acordado haber sentido en común; y como acordamos cada vez más ampliamente, y la experiencia confirma nuestros acuerdos, poco a poco dejamos de rechazar el mundo externo y el sentido común de la sociedad se desarrolla en complejidad. Quizás incluso la idea del mundo externo como materia de sentido común se desarrolla de esta forma. Es interesante, por ejemplo, sopesar cuáles podrían ser las actitudes hacia la realidad externa de un ser humano en completo aislamiento, sin nadie más para confirmar y corroborar esas impresiones sensuales que parecen ser nuestra primera reacción instintiva a rechazar y negar como realidad. ¿Habría mundo entonces? Una vieja pregunta filosófica es si existe el sonido donde no hay nadie para escucharlo, como cuando cae un árbol en un bosque deshabitado. Pero quizá la pregunta se vuelve más importante, y nos dice más acerca de nosotros mismos, si la formulamos de la siguiente manera: qué tanto, en cuanto sonido que viene del exterior, puede escuchar una persona que ha estado siempre sola en ese bosque como su solo ocupante, con nadie para confirmar sus impresiones sensuales. Pero desde luego que nosotros no vivimos solos en un bosque. Vivimos con otras personas que pueden confirmar nuestras impresiones en cuanto externas. Las ideas sobre el sentido común crecen y cambian. Es sentido común casi totalmente aceptado en nuestro mundo de hoy que si volamos al este de Nueva York y seguimos en la misma dirección, no tardaremos en regresar a los Estados Unidos por la costa oeste. Incluso cosas más fantásticas que ésa empiezan a aceptarse como hechos inconstestables; y no obstante, qué impresiones más inverosímiles y extrañas seguimos teniendo. En su mayoría, restamos importancia a estas impresiones y las ajustamos para que se conformen al sentido común tal y como éste existe —a lo que ya en el pasado ha sido comúnmente aceptado. Seguimos rechazando la realidad a menos que haya sido confirmada y aceptada en otra parte por otro pueblo. Desde luego que hacemos esto en diferentes grados. En las artes, y en

la ciencia teorética, por ejemplo, la realidad no siempre se rechaza y el sentido común a veces crece o se altera por nuevas respuestas a preguntas tales como las que nuestros sentidos proponen.

Uno piensa, una y otra vez, en lo extraña que resulta esta ciudad. Descansa en una especie de silla entre dos cumbres, Machu Picchu y Huayna Picchu. La segunda es alta, escarpada y tan próxima que da la impresión permanente de ser vista a través de un telescopio. Cerca de su cima, en una posición tal que parece que las paredes que las soportan van a deslizarse, fueron construidas extensas terrazas agrícolas; y arriba de ellas, en una suerte de tapanco formado por una roca volada, hay nichos y pórticos bellamente construidos. Esto se encuentra a unos cien pies arriba de la ciudad propiamente dicha. El camino de subida y la vista hacia abajo son aterradores para cualquiera no habituado a las alturas. El viajero se pone nervioso con facilidad, y prefiere descender de lugares donde los viejos habitantes se mueven con facilidad y compostura. Y no obstante es fácil imaginar que lo que les pasó a los indios después de la conquista española fue algo más o menos similar a esto —pérdida de control y compostura en una sociedad en su conjunto. En poco más de un año, un imperio bien organizado, bien armado, vasto y próspero, se desmembró y rompió merced a un puñado de españoles. El Inca, un descendiente divino, fue secuestrado y asesinado. De ahí en adelante la sociedad se fue a pique rápidamente y nunca más se repuso.

Sin embargo no todo se destruyó. Ahora Machu Picchu es una ciudad vacía, y estuvo vacía probablemente durante muchos siglos. Si reviste un interés y un atractivo para nosotros hoy día, este interés es algo diverso al de un anticuario puro —aunque podría ser eso, desde luego, de igual modo que podría no ser nada, como para el hombre en el vestíbulo del hotel, en Cuzco, para quien era "un viaje interesante, pero no hay nada que ver allí". Cuán cierto es que rechazamos el mundo externo, que éste se vuelve demasiado fantástico para creerlo, y podemos salir de un encuentro como si no hubiera hecho ninguna impresión en nosotros, a menos que la experiencia de nuestros sentidos sea confirmada de una manera convincente. De la misma forma en que la experiencia, aquí o en cualquier otro lado, nos perturba y maravilla, así esto se encuentra más allá del sentido común. Lo que hacemos está condicionado, y de hecho casi determinado, por la larga tradición de una civilización que ha llegado hasta nosotros a

través del conocimiento de la historia de las primeras civilizaciones europeas y del Oriente medio. Esa tradición en sus varias formas está tan extendida en la actualidad que casi ningún sitio escapa de ella. ¿Qué lugar o pueblo civilizado se encuentra fuera de ese círculo de influencia? Aun si, a diferencia del hombre de Cuzco, aceptamos nuestra experiencia, la realidad externa construida dentro de nuestra tradición pierde en realidad e interés porque no hay nadie que se encuentre lo suficientemente "fuera" para confirmarla. Cuán satisfactorio es que los indios que encontró Gheerbrant en su expedición a las selvas del alto Amazonas se sintieran conmovidos y deleitados por la música de Mozart. Podría haber, por lo visto, una realidad tan vasta como el hombre, y podría ser que nuestra tradición no estuviera compuesta únicamente por accidentes y excentricidades. Machu Picchu se encuentra totalmente fuera de nuestra tradición, tan alejada de nosotros en el tiempo y el espacio como para no sentirnos tocados por ella. Nos confirma y corrobora. Encontramos aquí nuestra propia imagen reflejada, y es como si fuéramos a encontrar un álgebra entre gatos, o una Cristiandad entre los marcianos.

Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados

SEVERO SARDUY

RECKONING

I'm no longer the same as yesterday: time passes
My poems have become transparent
In the late afternoon I often feel
a sudden desire to return home.

Burning passion, passion that turns one inward
Has gone away. Now it's the mind, indifferent,
nocturnal, that savors the bodies
The day rejects.

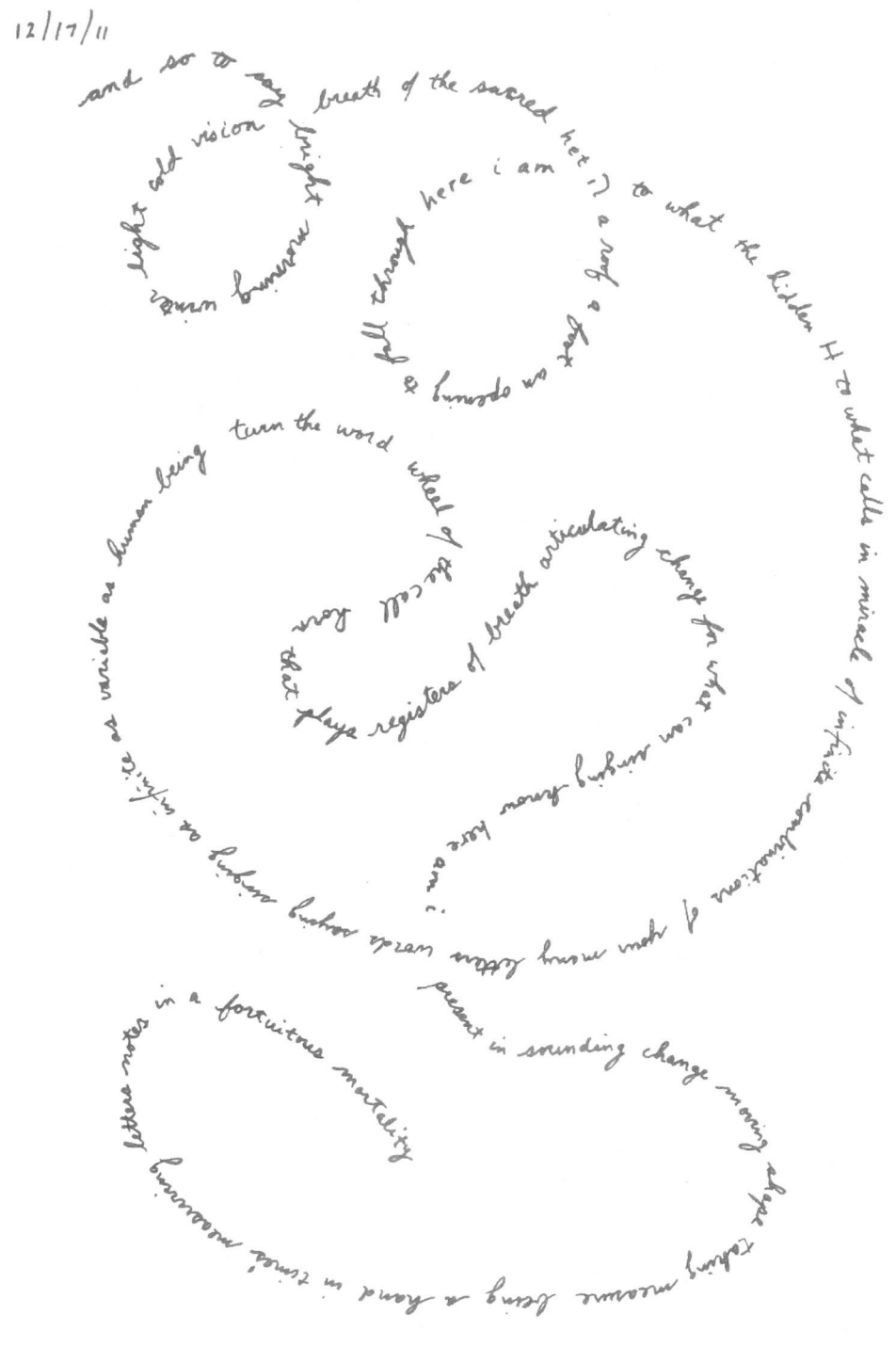
I don't miss love. It was always alien to me,
But rather desire, redeeming, inverting,
Modifying everything it touches.

Writings, passions and poison
All missing from my life and death
Also hands stroking me gently, and a mouth.

Translated by Suzanne Jill Levine

HANK LAZER

FIVE POEMS FROM *N20*



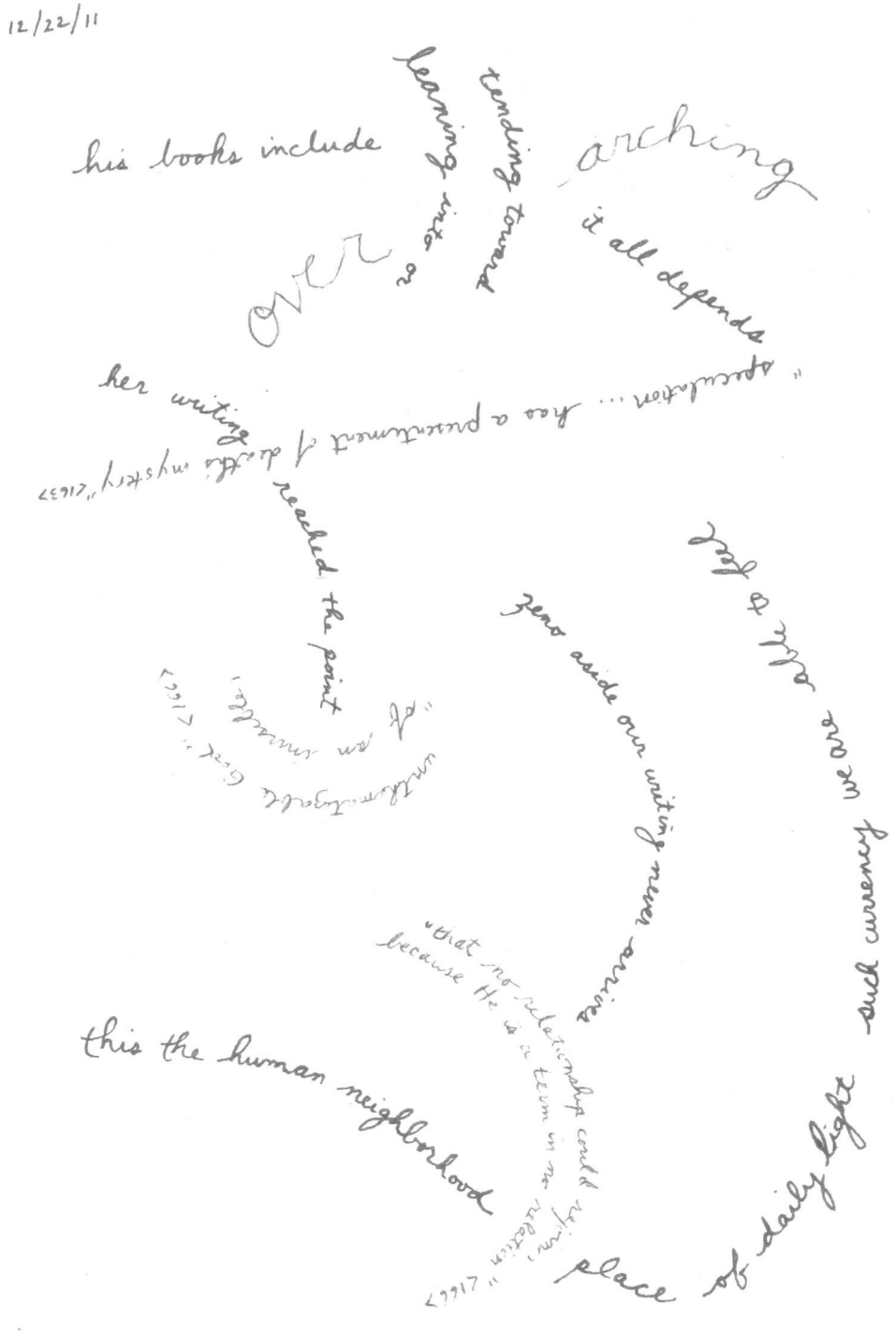
12/17/11

and so to say breath of the sacred het i) to what the hidden H to what calls in miracle of infinite combinations of your many letters words saying singing as infinite as variable as human being turn the word wheel of the call here that plays registers of breath articulating change for what can singing throw here am i present in sounding change moving shape taking measure being a hand in time's measuring letters notes in a fortuitous mortality

light cold vision bright morning winter

fall through here i am

a rod a beat an opening to



12/22/11

his books include

arching

tending toward

leaning into or

over

it all depends

her writing

"speculation ... has a presentiment of deathis mystery" <1637>

reached the point

"of an invisible,

unthematizable Gest" <1667>

zero aside our writing never arrives

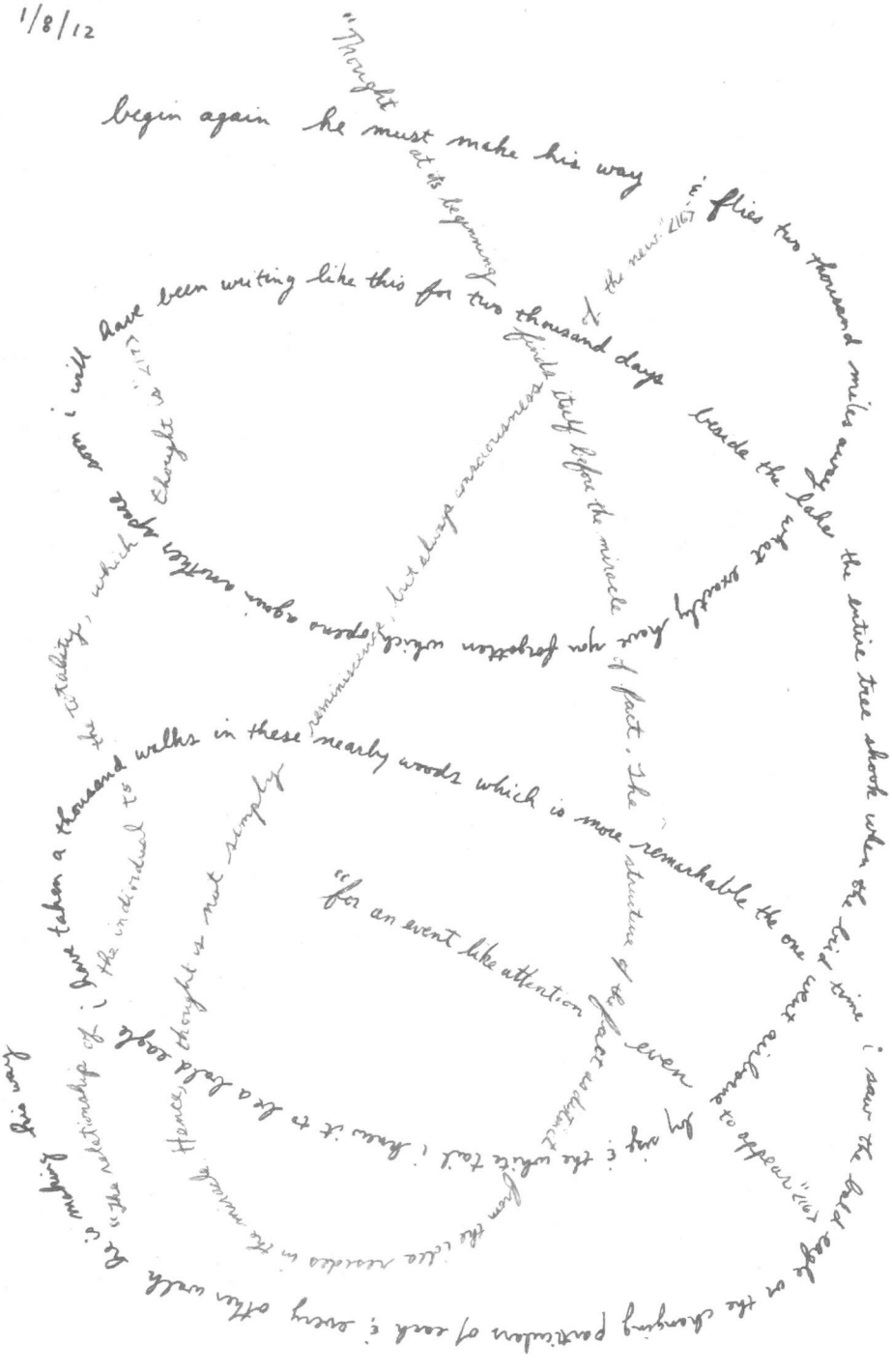
such currency we are able to feel

"that no relationship could require,

because He is a term in no relation" <1667>

this the human neighborhood

place of daily light



1/8/12

begin again he must make his way & flies two thousand miles away

"Thought at its beginning of the new." (167)

finds itself before the miracle of fact. The structure of the fact substitute from the idea resided in the miracle. Hence, thought is not simply reminiscence, but always consciousness

beside the lake what exactly have you forgotten which opens again another space soon i will have been writing like this for two thousand days

the entire tree shook when the bird time i saw the bald eagle on the changing particulars of each & every other walk he is making his way

"The relationship of i have taken a thousand walks in these nearly woods which is more remarkable the one time i saw the bald eagle on the individual to the totality, which thought is" (177)

"for an event like attention even to appear" (167)

by sig & the white tail i knew it to be a bald eagle

1/28/12

with nothing but life
light again in mass

is making a way toward who knows what

"from being itself that fills the instant" <48>

next when you of the next time take up this twisting
hoop of life to say
it's homeland in the world of ideas" <49>

"that illumination that reveals to the soul

this given instant is the
to write to shape these words

EVIE SHOCKLEY

TWO POEMS

A MEXICAN WOMAN AND A NEGRO WOMAN WORK THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

the vendor of flowers patrols the fog, looking for anyone who looks thinner than petals, than mist. the vendor of fog patrols the flowers, seeking anyone who sees through clouds, through colors. they are barely rarely visible. one can be heard faintly : *flores para los muertos, flores—flores*... the other laughs mockingly, too loud. the laughter of the vendor of fog greets the widow of desire upon her entrance. the widow of desire, ghostly hysterically white, a wilted, whiskey-clouded magnolia. the faint call of the vendor of flowers sends her back among the dead. the vendor of fog dances a second line among the flowers, laughing irrepressibly. the vendor of flowers threnodies through the fog, leading the lost to rest.

—after tennessee williams

REMOTE CONTROL EMPATHY (OR, HOW MANY MILES TO HAITI?)

to gaze upon trouble from a distance. to hear
    about the rubble, but not to hear the rumble,
the earth's grumble, its great yawn and stretch
        that shakes palaces and shacks from its back. if
cholera has a smell, i can't tell it from here. dear
    refugee camp, you put the drama of the dome
into perspective, the difference between filth-
        and-mud and filth-and-concrete into bah-relief.

the claustrophobe's panicked breathing sounds
    an alarm inaudible to ears so thoroughly i-tuned.
stay tuned for scenes that'll watercolor eyes eager
        to witness proof of our own abiding luck. sanita-
tion growls the wee-hour streets here at home,
    waking us from the dream of what we would
do about it if our world and not just its symbols
        collapsed with us in it. how we would clean and
keep clean our nothing with nothing because
    our ground hasn't really ever approached zero.

what can we glimpse from afar, when we can't even

taste what's under our noses? the almost translu-

scent white cups of the new blooms, pushing

sweetness into this morning's path that yesterday

could have used. you can only swallow the end-

less absence of silence if you keep your eyes open.

MARJORIE WELISH

GRUPO DE PALABRAS

Puerta falsa

"¿Cuándo una puerta no es una puerta?"
"A veces negra, a veces blanca, ¡tengo venas pero no sangre!"
"Hay una dama roja encerrada en un cuarto cuya puerta casi siempre está abierta pero ella no puede escapar."
"Hay dos espléndidos caballos, uno negro como azabache, otro como de cristal; cada uno corre adelante del otro pero nunca lo puede atrapar o emparejar."

Dos carros se acercan a una intersección. ¿Cuál tiene la preferencia?
¿Cuáles son las señas manuales para un alto? ¿Para una vuelta a la derecha?
¿En cuáles situaciones puedes rebasar a un vehículo por la derecha?
Habiendo completado una vuelta a la izquierda de una calle de doble sentido a una de un solo sentido, ¿dónde debería estar tu carro, en qué carril?

"¿Qué es el verde en la montaña, negro en el mercado y rojo en la casa?"
"¿Qué es el negro y el blanco y el rojo en todo alrededor?
"En los campos pasta un ternero cuyo cuerpo cambia en efecto tres veces en el espacio de un día: primero blanco, luego rojo, luego negro al final."
"Existe un cercado con diez puertas: cuando una se abre, nueve están cerradas; cuando nueve están abiertas, una está cerrada."

Textil 14

Porque los videntes se creen visualmente instruidos...
porque nosotros los videntes debajo no creemos su enunciado

literario: el proceso social de un gran mazo
predicado en un rosa identificante
Pollock o no
—calor—

con decorado con menciones
áreas designadas de mención

cualesquiera el lenguaje no obstante el lenguaje por qué...
bajo el lenguaje no obstante a través del lenguaje por qué
subtexto
—suma—

esquinas cortadas
cortadas-y-secas

"sin los términos *picare* y *explicare*
usados para indicar respectivamente: el acto de enrollar y desenrollar"

Porque la secuencia es el piloto llevado al compromiso
porque la secuencia no es el piloto automático sino historia comprometida
una retórica
—calor—

tanto como una serie de ires y venires descriptivos
tanto como ires y venires anticipados
más bellos por media
—suma—

Porque si básico luego rosa, si rosa luego afeminado —no,
astuto porque si rosa luego cromo vuelto
campo inteligible:
Derrame—

coctel automotriz lámpara de cola automotriz
auto coctel lámparas de cola automotriz
carga
—eléctrica.

Porque las entidades matemáticas, electrificantes, nos construyen entrecerrados los ojos
porque los pilotos matemáticamente electrificantes construyen
burla fina en poetas,
derrame

digo: ¿importa si estás *equivocado*? Entonces digo
¿Importa lo que te contradice? Entonces tú dices
Importa.
Carga.

Que es una coincidencia: "...en sí debe, por completo, ser un constructo de alta energía..."
Que es la fusión en sí: en partes, ser un constructo de alta energía
o si no
—derrame
[final alternativo] —El Atlántico.

La señal que estaba ahí

¿Todas las contingencias siguen vigentes? Okay, okay, okay.
Un objeto sensible rige al grabador. Como si fuera para ti.
En cuanto al objeto sensible sin reglas, frases
que escriben para dedicar qué, cómo y por qué
en enunciados dicen que dicen que dicen:
¿qué *ad infinitum* es eso?

Dicen que dicen que dicen que dicen la palabra "luz"
habiendo acariciado un objeto sensible y otro aún pegajoso
lleva a las palomillas a la fatiga. Dicen que dicen que fermentantes
secuelas, faltando la misma oscura fatiga, te creen todo;
pocos son los que entienden el alcance de tu convalecencia,
el paisaje marino de tu convalecencia.

X pausas. Y pausas y gira, corre.
Z pausas, gira y pesca el enunciado
incandescente en el paisaje marino, habiendo acariciado
una oscura fatiga o retirada del objeto sensible.
Esa es una réplica. Esa es una cauta olita
siempre, a veces…

Unas cuantas secuelas están ya siempre en tránsito,
oscuras aunque transversas como si fuesen a emitir
el pasado o el pasado ahora
excavado y abandonado metódicamente, si bien parcialmente,
atención traducida a lo cual dedica estos detritus:
nos conocimos, se fundió, se fundió el azar infinitesimal
cortesía de ires y venires.

No abandonada ahora y una vez abandonada, sola
en un estado sin énfasis son unas cuantas secuelas —esto,
una traducción impresentable del inglés
como un índice posible de flujos inconmensurables. Okay, okay.

Un repunte de discurso mancillado
se da a sí mismo a detritus impresentables
"todavía tendríamos que detallar" véase un futuro anterior.

Estaré contigo en un momento.
"Hasta luego" expresa un impresionante
pronto. De lo que se habría hecho,
conocido, fundido. Los detritus
de o en relación con todo o algo o nadie, Desde… Hasta… como posible okay
relleno y eficacia expresan un desperdicio impresionante:

tan pronto se han ido, tanto como
se habrán ido, estado aparte de
y dejado solo como un remanente, no un enunciado,
ocupó las secuelas
entraron. Salida. "¿Dónde está la salida?"
"Hasta luego" enviado por
un discurso mancillado adaptado al arte de la inscripción.

Viajamos por todas las secuelas menos una.
Estaré contigo en un momento.
¡Un momento, por favor!
¿Está todo lejos? "Se fundió" —un texto grosero
abandonado como resultado de la retirada como ciertas matemáticas.
En Escocia regresar al discurso era un signo de auto-gobierno—
"Me gusta la idea."

¿Qué es? "Nuestra expectativa de que 'eso' continúe."
"Eso es algo", escribimos de nuevo.
Mi nombre es… ¿A qué hora cierras?
¿Puedes mostrarme en el mapa? "Mi nombre es…", continúa.

Grupo de palabras

"Yo" investigo
"Yo" canto
itinerario

uso moderno americano
guía de escritor para los derechos de autor
un manual de estilo

que significa arte
"Yo" puedo investigar
"Yo" podría haber cantado

guía de un escritor
y algo más
una rama

de contextos congelados
el arte de
"Nosotros"

"Nosotros" en el discurso; "Yo" a través de la canción
violada en esta pradera de
"nosotros", una rama

de Eisenstein
para mostrar que "nosotros" cantamos contra lo que
"Yo" hablo, recargada contra

silencio. El depósito repentino
del muchacho
en los brazos. Depositar el muchacho.

Esto es, el depósito repentino
del muchacho contra el iris abierto
para mostrar esa merma,

para mostrar esa merma en aumento,
el aumento del alba a través de un léxico
de profanidad, en propiedad

intelectual, una guía de escritor.

Nuestra firma
investigó
su disertación,

una guía impenetrable de escritor
o incitación, y algo más,
una rama, el acercamiento a una rama floreciente

en contribuyentes. Vívidas fotos fijas
mejora la edición.
"Nosotros", un individuo cualquiera

en *tableaux*. Alto.
"Nosotros" hablamos. Alto.
"Yo" canto. Alto.

"Nosotros", una rama floreciente
contra la cual la pradera
"Yo" hablo, seriamente arrebatado

disparo sordo para ese residuo
de ideología, en cuanto a ese disparo
embelesado con él, retentivo

encendido. Contextos congelados radiantes:
"¡Detente!" gritó abundantemente
en hielo ideológico.

Ideología, estáte quieta.
¡He aquí! *Tableaux vivants*.
¡Mira! ¡Arresto vívido!

Rama que llora

1.
Bruma en el discurso moderno
protestando el decorado, *Bruma Lavanda.*

Desentendido de las especificaciones de la bruma
y espaciando en el lienzo, ahora tienes

un modo de hacerlo —decorativo, a menos que sea lirismo
axiómatico; lo lírico,

no demasiado decorativo, a menos que sea
complaciente. Perjudicial contra lírico

cuando dijo demasiado decorativo,
y más o menos. Engendrando

una hoja.
Sin sinonimia aquí.

Tú y tu loco apetito
de rosa, abrazando la entera antipatía

y el delirio. Retórica rosa y negra
automotriz, medio amanerada/ medio crítica, uso

fucsia que suscita miedo con ironía precisamente
arborescente hacia el consenso, que en efecto deshace, salta al lector.

Decoración tan sólo y sólo si pastel complaciente.
El mundo está hecho de cerebros en tinas.

El mundo es un barco.
El mundo está fechado sobre una verdad a medias:

1200, el autor dice 1950: cual
algo: épico, lírico, épico-lírico,

dramático —¿qué categoría omitida
es ésta?: 1968; sí, pero ¿cuál 1968?: 1789 o 1815;

¿1855 o 1890 0 1913 0 1948?
Ahora somos de la opinión de que

hay una epistemología para cada ocasión,
negro y plateado sistémicos, plateado y error.

Rosa satírico y negro proclamaron de nuevo
cara a cara, y en la boca.

2.
Una respuesta que oscurece el lirismo, lo lírico
la lira

en ondas de radio. Perjudicial contra
lo lírico, él lo magulló,

después lo salvó de una confusión
de lirismo y lírico

y el caligrama. Cartas que disienten
y emprenden engendrando así una hoja: lo lírico.

Tú y tus locos cocteles, rosa y negro,
lírico plateado

y *Four Saints*, revelando su periódico
lirismo.

En el nombre del estudio

para Norma Cole

UN ESTUDIO

Limón Amarillo Cadmio
Luz Amarillo Cadmio

ESTUDIO: 1994

Limón Amarillo Cadmio
Luz Amarillo Cadmio,
y el ojo de un mirlo.

Papel doblado a la mitad para indicar
que la Luz Amarillo Cadmio
no es Limón Amarillo Cadmio.

A lo largo del atrio
Luz Amarillo Cadmio
adquiere superficie y aire.

Amarillo y amarillo a izquierda
y derecha brillantes si bien ininteligibles—
parecido inconsecuente.

Pigmento formado
por medio de la luz por medio
de la lámpara por medio de químicos

tornasol de filantropía
crecimiento del papel
"digitalmente acrecentado…"

Por lo general de amarillo
óptico ahora
incompatibilidades químicas

ESTUDIO: MÁS TARDE ESE DÍA

Ciudades gemelas: luz amarilla
Luz Amarillo Cadmio
emitiendo una voz a lo largo de la piel.

Papel doblado a la mitad para indicar
que la Luz Amarillo Cadmio
y el Limón Amarillo Cadmio

están lógicamente apagados y encendidos
perpetuamente de salida
culturalmente orante-extendidos.

ESTUDIO: MÁS TEMPRANO ESE DÍA

Lienzos gemelos: rojo y rojo
esto, que significa regio
aquello, que significa cuña.

Lienzos gemelos: lugar común de
raíz y referencia, revisada y reiterada
res y real.

Rojo y rojo: véase Representación,
véase Historia del Arte, véase Historia del Arte:
el Discurso del Rojo Representativo

Amarillo y amarillo: lienzos gemelos
que representan rojo, que significan incremento
regio y moneda inmortal.

EMPIEZA AQUÍ

Solo valor
categórico obtiene. Amarillo.
Analicidad.

Solo vacío solo
valor obtiene. Amarillos
en analicidad. Hola.

[SIN TÍTULO]

mostaza
pergamino

amarillo brillante
amarillo cromo
amarillo de Nápoles
ocre amarillo

rojo
amarillo
azul

TANGRAM PARA EL ESTUDIO

rojo y amarillo y azul por correo aéreo
enfrente del ayuntamiento, blanco y negro

foliado rojo y amarillo o azul
doblez de pergamino y mostaza

salvo por el amarillo brillante
amarillo cromo sin excepción

ver más y más amarillo de Nápoles
para hacer un ejemplo del ocre amarillo

SOBRE EL NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIO

el mostaza cede gradiente al paja
el pergamino da una oportunidad en la coartada, limón

El amarillo brillante repudia al uno, como uno moderno mañana rió
Amarillo cromo del parque impensable; cierta entidad hoy día está hundiéndose
El amarillo de Nápoles no puede mirar: nosotros, más reminiscentes de dejar o limitar fibra de vidrio, la variable para algo positivo
El amarillo ocre permite arquitectura: ahora un umbral semibiográfico ha "rebasado mi lectura".

Una luna roja, o su equivalente gráfico, ha pedido permiso para mantener un paso más lento.
Aquí, la tierra amarilla ha prestado oído a líneas y antífonas compresas juntas. Véase el frontispicio.
Piedra acomodada. Quedémonos un rato. De nuevo, el sol azul encuentra asilo en un plano, o
trama, en una eternidad de papel, negativa o interrogativa.

Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados

TOMÁS HARRIS

FROM "A PERSONAL HISTORY OF FEAR"

The Fruitless Search (An Ethological Fable)

He heard the triumphant shrieks of the rats.
—Henry Kuttner

Rats are mammals that are equipped with two incisors in each jaw, but like squirrels, beavers, and rabbits, they lack fangs. Perhaps the metaphorical and, at the same time, real curse that befell rats was that for motives too complicated to explain, they had to abandon their natural habitat and move (as professed by encyclopedias) to cities and ships.

This may also have to do with a special instinct in these little animals: pursued by man's fierce imagination, they had to hide in order to escape being murdered like rabbits, beavers, or coypus, or were spared, like squirrels, only because of lack of interest in them, except in children's imaginations.

They've also been pursued because of the way they feed themselves: the act of gnawing suggests a slow and bloody wound. But above all, because of the plague, which they spread in the Middle Ages on account of the power possessed by men, nobles, and feudal lords. The rats fled from a system that was strange to them, and spread disease only because of their instinct to survive, a trait common to all species.

When the Black Plague was spreading during the Middle Ages, it wasn't because the rats had caused it: it was produced by the promiscuity, hoarding, perversion, filth, and cruelty of a rarified world where everything was green slime and corpses piled up in the streets. We know that the plague was an infectious disease caused by a bacteria called Yersin. All bacteria can be transmitted by any living organism, and when the plague arrived, the rats fled and swarmed into the cities, which had been devastated by the evil; hungry, they had to forage, and in desperation, they flung themselves on the already contaminated corpses and devoured them. And men, ignorant and superstitious, attacked them with sticks, stones, and even their fists. No longer quiet little animals like squirrels or coypus, the rats had to defend themselves and fought for their survival, biting and spreading an evil already in the world.

If those same men had gnashed their own teeth at each other, they too would have spread the evil, the evil called Yersin, and today there would be more understanding about this matter.

The streets of the bourgeoisie during the Bubonic Plague in the Middle Ages offered a terrifying spectacle: human bodies convulsing as wounds opened up in their torsos and sprouted black pestilential worms. Their vomit spilled onto cobblestone streets without a sewer-system to drain it away. The "doctors" applied leeches to those already cold bodies and used the same leeches on other dying bodies, believing that the evil could be rooted out like that, through the blood, but they were only carrying out a task more efficiently than the rats themselves, who bit in self-defense, innocent of that inexplicable link that made them the devil's spawn and responsible for the plague.

Those that hadn't yet contracted the disease smashed rats with sticks or sharp kicks, later tossing them on the bodies of the contaminated, without caring whether they were destroying rats or men. They turned them into a jumbled mass that floated on putrid waters mixed with saliva, blood, and boils. The rats defended themselves with their incisors. More than one dying man destroyed a rat with his own teeth. Rage and confusion also made men bite each other; on the other hand, no rat ever bit another rat.

In this scenario, created only by man's desire for power, which he himself named Yersin Bacillus, the rats, who had been hiding in the sewers like Christians

in Rome, came together to find a way to save themselves from the plague incited by men.

In their language, which is similar to that of dolphins and whales, they debated for hours and hours, over many nights, while outside men burned the corpses of their own kind and of rats, all mixed together in the same macabre pyre.

Since the rats knew man by his actions, his rituals, his—for them—inexplicable cruelty, and his vice of blaming other species for his own mistakes, they deliberated. But it was very difficult for them to find a means of saving themselves.

"History will blame us," said the Rat Elder, already tired and aged. "For that reason I propose that we continue to feed on human corpses and survive, nothing more, just survive..."

Having said this, she closed her eyes and no one ever knew whether she died at that moment or during the night, because she'd already been infected with the cursed human plague.

The discussion became more and more excited and inflamed since it concerned survival, preservation of the species, and the need to avoid starvation and, since the rats didn't care about man's laws, only their own wise instincts, the sewer filled with the sound of their shrieking. Because it was with shrieks that they communicated among the fetid, bluish fumes of the human disease.

If it's true that among rats there exists a hierarchy based on age, it doesn't preclude one from being heard when an idea reveals a possible solution. There was a rat, the rat of my story, young and anguished, who'd bitten a human only once but not out of hunger. She'd done it because this human was about to use an enormous cudgel to split open the skull of her sister Caridad. Caridad was lying in a heap of corpses, her incisors bloody not because she'd bitten someone, but because a human had kicked her. Her sister bit him on the heel and the man looked at her with red, beady eyes full of hate and fear, thinking he'd been infected and was going to die. "Nooo!, shrieked the rat, I've never bitten anyone before, I'm not contagious." The man hovered over her, brandishing his stick, but only succeeded in chopping off her tail (for this reason they nicknamed her Rab, because in rat-language, Rab means tail).

Rab leapt for the man's neck and sank her incisors into his throat, feeling her little body being bathed in a flood of the man's nauseating blood. She knew she'd done it for her old sister Caridad.

So, remembering that episode, Rab lifted a paw and asked to shriek.

"The world of men is malignant and can't be destroyed by us. We must feed on corpses because if we don't, we'll die from hunger or from drinking putrid blood or water to relieve our thirst. We can't fight them; their sticks, stones, and kicks can harm us more than our bites can harm them, and when we defend ourselves they accuse us of spreading their own evil."

There was silence, because suddenly they all sensed that through Rab's shrieks spoke a wise young rat who could very well be the salvation of the species.

"They also hate us for our color... So let's make ourselves lighter: let's become white. We'll go to the mill and roll in flour; then we can flee to the forest. No one will realize what's happening when they see a caravan of little white animals leaving the city."

There was a lot of shrieking, but they finally agreed. They would leave at dawn and head for the mill to change the color of their pelts. After that, they would no longer be rats. Only those who were infected weren't included in the plan; they would have to assume the sacrifice of disappearing, which they did. They flung themselves into the filthy sewer-water clotted with human shit, and kept swallowing it until they died.

Among death-pangs and open sores, the little beasts slid along the cobblestones until they arrived at the mill, and there they tumbled into the flour. When they were completely white, they abandoned the city, sliding past the men, dying and raging, who paid no attention to them because they couldn't recognize the species making that long procession. They arrived like that at the forest, where they joyfully shrieked their story to the coypus, the moles, and the squirrels. They laughed and they also cried for their dead brothers and sisters.

Rab, who knew something about what men call visions, quietly and calmly shrieked something like "brothers and sisters, this is only the beginning. There will come a day when man will make all of us white through his will. That's how he'll lose his fear of us, and we, who were blamed for the evil, will rescue him from it. We will be his salvation."

Rab was tired and fell asleep after shrieking. She dreamed about her sister Caridad, and the next day, when she woke up, she was startled by a brightness streaming through the window, filtering through the plastic blinds. She found herself in the middle of a plexiglas maze. Her end came quickly. A hand protected by a rubber glove took her out of the maze, while another one jabbed a needle into her left thigh. The intravenous liquid was amber, thick, full of iodine. She shrieked in pain, incoherently, and went into spasms before she died; a fraction of a second before that occurred, she dreamed of a clearing in the forest.

As Rab was flung into a sterilized trash receptacle, Caridad smiled at her from far away, from distances that not even I who shriek this can divine.

Hunting the White Rhinoceros

to Clint Eastwood

With difficulty but skill, the Land Rover avoided the dangerous hills, which although small could be fatal because of the vehicle's high speed; it zigzagged, from time to time tearing off slender branches from the acacias—or pulling out whole bunches of them—that lashed our cheeks and our naked, sweating torsos. Traveling along a blind route, we followed the tracks of the much sought-after specimen, the assignment given to Harry by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Abdullah knew how to drive at just the right speed, avoiding roots or dirt-clods that might be hidden rocks which could be catastrophic for us. He transformed the Land Rover into a different kind of beast, one that mimicked its prey until it became one of the same species, predicting all of its feints and charges. I was in the back of the jeep, bumping up and down, my tailbone pounding on the hard seat, barely holding onto the loose pieces of metal in the vehicle; next to me, Jemmy, a tall, freckled young man, was helping Harry load and reload, like an arms handler of Death.

And Harry, that is, Alvaro Leiva, nicknamed Dirty Harry for his extraordinary resemblance to Clint Eastwood, was seated next to Abdullah, immobile and erect, his hair whipped around by the speed and the jolts of the Land Rover, his Mauser, an unlikely golden color, in his left hand, and the black strap that suspended the weapon from his bony shoulder shining in the sun. His gaze, like a young eagle's, was fixed on the wrinkled animal, whose body, coated with plaster, dried mud and the remains of branches and grass, looked like a Paleolithic armature wrapped in a dust-cloud protecting it like a magic aura. It was a monster that predated thought, incomprehensible and insolent on its unbridled course, instinctive and frenetic, with no logical connection to the weight and expanse of its structure.

Harry tried to get a glimpse of the monster's musculature through the thick dust-cloud, traveling on its unbridled race as if toward death, persecuted by the other monster, the metallic one, which tried to calculate from the whirling dust the steady agility of its torso, the measured bobbing of its head, the exhaustion

the skillful Abdullah was producing on its live mass as he drew unlikely patterns on the savannah with the Land Rover, patterns like those at Nazca whose design depended on the unchanging dance of life and death, a dance inscribed to rob the beast's last gust of breath, weight, destructive power. They were two unbridled structures describing spirals over the savannah: one, that organic force endowed with a rugged but magical armor of wrinkled hide; the other, metallic, hard as an unbroken colt, as gray as the beast, whose roaring, smoking engine spurted through its radiator leaden, boiling water that was difficult to distinguish from the foam pouring out of the beast's panting snout.

After a day of siege, sunset had arrived. There was a look of preoccupation barely visible on Harry's wrinkled brow, which revealed through its expression, like that of the real Harry, the one in the movies, that something wasn't going completely as he'd planned it, a week or who knows how many days earlier.

Little by little Abdullah reduced his speed, in order to steer the jeep with more precision and less risk, so that the power of the roaring and near-empty engine also diminished. He also ran the risk that the beast might suddenly stop its wild course, overwhelmed, and charge at us head-on with the fury and potency of its last strength. From the halted vehicle, with its motor running, Harry looked at the other mass sinking into shadow from a safe distance, observing its eyes, which looked tired from the mud that coated its timeless lids, and the measured snorting from its diaphragm that raised dust from the savannah.

Finally Abdullah turned off the Land Rover's slightly-flooded engine, which was leaking water and burnt oil on the savannah's scorched grass, and we remained immobilized about a hundred meters from the specimen, which was almost four meters long. It was a magnificent adult male, the requisite African rhinoceros, panting, expelling bubbles of thick foam from its nostrils, which were crowned by two magnificent typical horns. There it was, immobile, snorting with difficulty, the setting sun outlining its silhouette against the infinity of the horizon, its head hanging. Abdullah got out of the vehicle, stinking and sweaty, and emptied a water jug over his body. Then he stretched like a dog and shook his frizzy head. Jemmy stretched his legs and sighed. Harry remained motionless with his golden Mauser in his right hand and his brow creased, his gaze fixed on the motionless animal that was like a latent rock. I took the opportunity to

shoot the third roll of film in my Pentax, taking inoffensive flash pictures from different angles of the men, the resting beast, and the landscape, all stained by the bloody African dusk.

This whole absurd persecution began for me when, feeling disgusted, apathetic, and uprooted, I was working as a photojournalist in Somalia, whose conflict had started to unravel during the time this story takes place. My mission, although institutional, for an agency of little importance, was to capture with my lens the greatest number of Blue Berets* on their peace-keeping mission in the zone devastated by that curse which condemns certain villages to sicken and die, just like certain human organisms, by a neo-Darwinian law. All I had to do was spend each day in that lunar landscape and assemble Blue Berets so that they stood out against the dying skeletons covered with grayish, opaque skin at the moment that they received humanitarian aid. There may have been only twelve Blue Berets scattered over mounds of subhuman creatures, but it was easy, I just had to find the right angle with my Pentax, and the light and some smiling, rosy face did the rest of the work.

To entertain myself, surreptitiously, between shots, I would capture on film some half-dead rebel being dragged by a Blue Beret toward a truck full of prisoners, after being caught with an arsenal of three hand-made rifles under a table made of planks. And I would forget, at night, how this dusky land was fed only on dried blood. The rest of it was taking a photograph whenever some soldier, as fed up as I was, shot at a shadow-rebel, an extension of some twenty other rebel leaders before him. It was simply watching a living skeleton shatter into a thousand splinters without being able to explain the source of a blood-stain engraved on a mud wall like a squashed mosquito. The nights were a repetition of the tedium, apathy, and discontent, all for a few dollars in anticipation of who knows what.

So I was only waiting for my month-long contract to be up so I could leave all that shit and have some money to drink and shoot pictures at my leisure far away from there, I don't know where, but far from Africa. That was the situation when I received Harry's letter. To learn that mail has arrived and, what's more, to get access to it, is as difficult as getting a plate of humanitarian aid. When I finally got the letter, I realized what my mission was: to graphically cover the

hunting of a rhinoceros, detail by detail, a mission charged to Harry by the Museum of Modern Art of New York—the popular MoMA—something that seemed strange to me at first—a natural history museum or something like it would be more logical than an art museum—but because of the payment offered and my curiosity of seeing Harry one last time in my life—knowing him, one more time could very well be "one more last time"—I accepted, leaving Somalia for Kenya.

Before leaving, sitting in a miserable cantina drinking cheap whiskey smuggled in with the humanitarian aid—in reality it was the most humanitarian of all aid—I began to remember the last time I saw Harry: his hardened features, his facial expressions almost mimicking those of the actor, his ineffability, everything that earned him his nickname didn't seem fake. He was just like a double who's unaware that he has another double, even if the other is a famous actor, nothing more. He was the son of a prospector from northern Chile and a *gringa* who was passing through and wanted to know what prospectors were like in bed. Everything about him fit the stereotype: Chilean, adventurer, he'd practiced every kind of trade and knew everyone; a friend to his friends and an enemy to his enemies. He'd once killed someone and had fifteen scars on his body. The only thing that didn't fit the archetype was that he wasn't missing any teeth, and that he looked like a movie star.

But maybe—this was my theory—Alvaro Leiva didn't inherit the facial expressions or even the laconic cliches of "yanqui" movies. Nor was Harry a fan of movies, but of Life. Maybe those deadpan philosophical pronouncements partly reflected his background as a prospector's son; or maybe he was simply Eastwood's "double," not on the screen, but in Life.

It was my last night in Somalia, and I was half-drunk, feeling the nostalgia created by any departure, however desired it might be, or that comes from the shadowy tedium produced by the habit of death. I was sprawled on the cot in my room—if a cubicle of mud and straw can be called that—passing the time emptying a bottle of whiskey that tasted like rum—or a bottle of rum—getting drunk to the depths of my soul as I remembered everything I was leaving. Meanwhile, I was listening to a cassette of Sade that had accompanied me that whole wretched month and which I'd decided to leave in this very room, the same way you leave a woman you've used up and all that remains of her body, her kisses,

her hair-style, and her lips is a light melody and traces of lyrics you've hummed many times but that eventually fade away. "A Somali woman fished for pearls in the desert sand / impossible pearls that she delivered with her wounded hands / to the children in her native land," something like that....

The next day, a ray of sunlight through the skylight blasted my throbbing head, while on the floor, the whiskey bottle looked like a cadaver surrounded by cigarette butts and the Sade cassette had spooled around itself after rotating too many times in the walkman.

Harry descended from the jeep, without letting go of his golden Mauser, his gaze fixed on the animal we'd chased all day without a break. He put a cigarette between his lips and lit it.

"It's magnificent," he said.

Abdullah, Jemmy and I set up camp and lit a fire; afterwards we heated up the canned beans and coffee. The rest of the work was split between Adullah, who never showed any signs of exhaustion, and me, since Jemmy was carefully checking the arsenal of Harry, who was staring at the rocky, immobile mass of the rhinoceros standing out against the savannah's steely horizon. From a distance, it looked like a dolmen, or some funerary idol from an age before time began, a compact, mineral mass fused with the crust of the savannah, which fed more life than we ourselves did, an imposing and terrifying dormancy that waited with its two lethargic horns, signs of its ancestral power.

Harry approached us; I took a sip of whiskey from the same bottle he handed to me: finally, good whiskey, I thought, as I drank some more, which returned some strength to my stiff body. We sat in a primitive circle next to the fire. The glow highlighted Harry's leathery complexion; his eyes always seemed to stop time, except when he was speaking, proffering his zen-Hollywoodesque sentences. When he finished his beans, Abdullah collapsed like a falling tree and got under the covers at the same time he began snoring. Little snores of ancestral weariness, from centuries of slavery. Jemmy, mimicking his boss's laconic attitude, had been asleep for awhile in his sleeping bag, the golden Mausers right next to his hand. I observed them, beautiful and shining beneath the dying light of the fire.

"Why do you still have the Mausers?" I asked Harry.

"They've never failed me," he answered, without taking his eyes off the immobile animal a hundred meters away from us.

I kept watching him in silence, as he handed me the bottle of whiskey. I felt the effect of the alcohol and imagined those two outdated weapons, like those objects without a useful purpose, those remodeled vehicles from the '50s that appear in commercials for blue-jeans, next to a man who also had no useful purpose except in that time and place, two obsolete remnants, absolutely kitsch, without a past or possible destiny. Similar to the rhinoceros, a structure out of time, on a continent that was also absurd, only debris, sticky substances in the world.

That was when Harry took a spyglass out of his jacket and handed it to me.

"Look at the animal," he said. From inside the sharp focus of the eyepiece, I could graze the animal's lunar-like surface; without a doubt it belonged to another time. The plastered mud and dried grass had begun to melt away from the night dew, and the perfection of that thousand-year-old antiquity appeared before me like a painting by Dürer. I had the impression that its color was beginning to metamorphose from the effects of moonbeams striking it from different angles, as if the beast, as time passed, were glowing more and more, becoming whiter, turning into marble.

"You aren't hallucinating," said Harry, emphasizing each word.

I looked at him hard, asking for a better explanation. "It's a white rhinoceros," he said, tossing his cigarette butt into the fire and taking another swig of whiskey. "That's why we've delayed doing him in."

In effect, the search for the specimen had lasted a week.

I drank from the whiskey bottle he raised toward me.

"Are you going to sacrifice it?" I asked.

"It may be the only specimen in the world," Harry said. And after awhile: "There may not be another one like it for decades. There may *never* be another one like it."

"And you're going to sacrifice it?"

"It's a lot of money," he answered, almost with pity. "I'm tired already, I'm covered with wrinkles and too many scars."

"How did you find it?"

"Instinct," he answered. "Just by sense of smell."

"But wouldn't it be more valuable alive?"

"I was commissioned by an art gallery," he answered, "not a zoo."

"But its value is priceless," I insisted.

"Not for an art gallery. Zoos wouldn't pay that amount. "We should go to sleep," he said, "the nights are short."

Before getting into his sleeping bag, Harry said as a way of wishing me good night: "It will be better off in that damned art gallery than in a zoo. Sleep well."

Just as Harry had said, daylight soon arrived. From a point on the horizon disconcerting for someone who'd never been on the savannah, a furious red ball turned yellow before I'd barely opened my eyes. Harry was already five meters from the camp, aiming straight at the rhinoceros, with Jemmy at his side, carrying the other Mauser, which flashed in the sun. Abdullah was sitting in the jeep, smoking, and true to my profession, I grabbed my Pentax and positioned myself, half-standing, almost two meters from Harry. From that moment on, time stopped. Harry was aiming between the beast's eyes and through the lens I could make out the glint of metal between its horns. Me kneeling, aiming with my camera. All of us immobile, breathing.

A slight movement from the Mauser flashed in the eye of the rhinoceros, which was like a mountain of ice or salt that had been planted on the plain for centuries. It was my first shot and the first blind charge of the rhinoceros, which gathered more and more speed and fury, cloaking itself meter by meter in its protective cape of sand. At thirty meters Harry fired; the animal's head reeled but it continued on its course. I was shooting with my Pentax like a lunatic; at twenty meters, Jemmy handed him the other loaded rifle, as the first bullet flew; and at exactly ten meters, the second shot was heard; now the giant lurched and shot by shot I could see a flood of thick, blackened blood flowing and coloring the head that now had no strength, swinging from side to side, sprinkling blood. It all ended when its bulk fell to its knees and remained immobile after a final snort, ten meters away from our group. I continued my work, Jemmy and Abdullah posed next to the quarry, and finally Harry, who seemed instead to be measuring it and checking the color of its hide, looked at the camera with his impenetrable gaze.

"It's all over," he told me, taking the camera out of my hands, as he sipped some whiskey. "I'm going to immortalize you."

And here is that photo, partly blurry—Harry couldn't shoot good pictures—where I appear standing next to the animal during my last stay in Africa—that's what I'd already decided—I'm looking at it and recreating all this, as I think of Dirty Harry's last two shots.

2.

I never heard more about Jemmy or Abdullah. They must still be in their country, seeking out and protecting themselves against death, the only way they know how to survive. Harry and I would remain for a few days in New York to receive our pay and complete our contract, which consisted of some photographs titled "Procession from Dragon to Dürer," in a very tedious photo session, more so for Harry than me, and which involved the following: They'd successfully deposited the rhinoceros—preserved in ice in a container during its trip from Africa—through an intricate procedure involving pulleys, chains, and indescribable structures, on a huge metal sheet. Then came the brief obligatory greeting from the artist—a corpulent man with a long black beard and something effeminate about his complexion—who greeted us by vigorously shaking Harry's hand—they were almost the same size—and mine. He looked at my photos and approved them with a nod of his head as he directed me, also with gestures, to take two rolls of what was going to follow. We put on masks as if for welding and the corpulent Michelangelo, like a skilled surgeon with a circular saw, proceeded to cut open the belly of the animal, out of which came some kind of white slivers, greasy and foul-smelling, that spattered our clothes. Then he put on some rubber gloves—I recorded all this from different angles—and extracted the flowing viscera of the animal, depositing them in a large receptacle that I assume was there for that purpose. I took a magnificent close-up of the artist as he removed the rhinoceros's heart with an irate look and threw it in the receptacle. Finally, with leather gloves he stuffed the animal with straw, he poured liquids from different flasks over it and waited a few minutes. Harry looked at him in complete silence. His face didn't move a muscle. Some of the maestro's assistants unhooked, with pulleys, a strange artifact that ended in four revolving wheels, and inserted it in the animal's belly; afterwards they carefully sewed it up with metal thread.

The artist smiled as he wiped from his forehead the sweat, blood, and guts of the rhinoceros, and it was set on its four feet. Finally, a faint buzzing was heard and, to our surprise, the white rhinoceros began walking; thanks to a remote control, it could be made to move with greater or lesser speed. When it collided against some object, wall, sculpture, or human being, it turned around calmly, buzzing softly, without much excitement. Finally, it went through the door and went off to make its way through the gallery. Everyone present rushed to embrace the corpulent, sweaty and bloody artist, and made champagne toasts, and asked him all kinds of questions, events that also had to be recorded. When everything was finished, I looked for Harry, but he'd disappeared from the gathering. I thought I'd find him in the hotel and we'd finish this whole absurd matter by going on a bender in Soho.

3.

I can only speak about Alvaro Leiva's death through the vague images that I myself was able to glimpse. It's true that there are the statements of the night-watchman and the long police report, and what's recounted there from the closed-circuit TV cameras that guard the interior of the museum. There are also the newspaper reports and their sensational headlines: "Strange Death of Hunter"; "Bizarre! Sculpture Kills Hunter"; "Rhinoceros Sculpture Returns from the Beyond for Revenge," etc.

How was Harry able to enter the museum, outsmarting the sophisticated alarm system? How could the guard not have heard the shots? Because it was confirmed that there were two shots. Who turned on the fateful control switch of the animal, sculpture, or whatever it was?

Thanks to the guard's confusion the night of the incident, he believed me when I told him that I was the victim's best friend, and he sympathized with my request; during a quiet moment he allowed me to enter the room with the closed-circuit TV monitors. He was a corpulent black man; he commented in passing on my unfortunate friend's resemblance to Clint Eastwood. He ran the cameras: the images looked a little blurry from the greenish color of the lights that lit the space at night. I saw various sequences: one in which Harry was creeping silently

along a wall, to outsmart the alarm; another where the rhinoceros's mechanism was already turned on, since it was rolling at high speed, crashing against the walls, knocking down sculptures and paintings; in another—no doubt it was a shot fired by Harry—there was a glimpse of a flash an instant before the monitor turned off. There are other sequences: Harry, for the first time with a look of desperation, struggling with the safety catch of his Mauser; then a rear-view of the rhinoceros attacking Harry from behind; finally, the blurry figure of the beast crashing torpidly against the walls, with Harry hanging from its larger horn, which had pierced his heart.

"It's all very confusing," the guard told me. "Everything was covered with blood, the walls, the paintings, the carpets..."

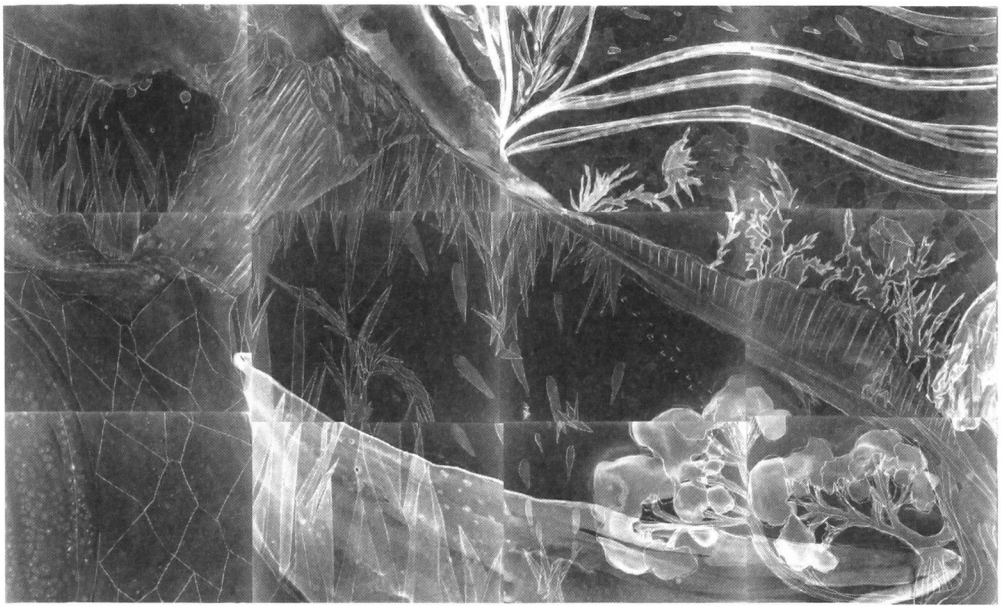
I gave him a few bills to thank him and left to lose myself in the crowd. I didn't know where to go, or return to, if I indeed had a place I could return to. So many places, so many empty cities with hollow beings along their dead streets. So many steps resounding on this avenue where the only reality is the fog. I was carrying only my back-pack and the walkman I'd brought from Somalia. I entered a record shop and bought some cassettes of Sade, and later looked for a bar and sat down to listen to them as I got drunk.

Translated by Daniel Shapiro

Note: "Blue Berets" refer to United Nations peacekeepers

JEFFREY YANG

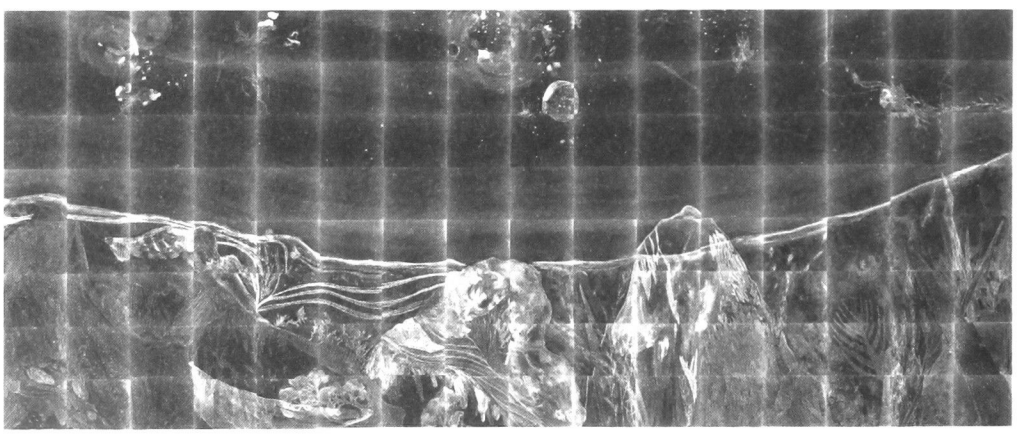
FROM *THE SALT VARIATIONS*



Christine Nguyen
The Colorbands
200″ x 384″
C-prints

"Dream is a second life," writes Nerval, and for the Iglulik this is made possible through the sleep spirit, Aipatle. Aipatle brings the dead to the living in dreams. When meat is sacrificed to him, he gives it to the dead to eat. In sleep the soul hangs upside down, clinging to the body only by its big toe. The Iglulik call the soul *tarninga*, or *inuusia*, which means "appearance as a human being." This semblance resides in a tiny bubble of air in the groin. It is immortal, invisible, and the life-force that makes each being what it is—its *isness* our *is*. Names store power that nurtures and protects the soul. And every living being possesses a soul. An Iglulik once said:

> The greatest peril of life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls. All the creatures that we have to kill and eat, all those that we have to strike down and destroy to make clothes for ourselves, have souls, like we have, souls that do not perish with the body, and which must therefore be propitiated lest they should revenge themselves on us for taking away their bodies.



Christine Nguyen
The Colorbands
200" x 384"
C-prints

In sleep the soul is suspended, close to death. "Who knows if there is not some link between sleep and death, and if it is not possible for the soul to unite those two existences?" writes Nerval in despair. After death, the soul travels either to the Narrow Land inhabited by the sea spirit and the Qimiujaarmiut ("people of the narrow land"); or to the Land of Day in the sky near dawn where the moon spirit and Udlormiut ("people of the day") dwell. There are other layers of afterworlds, like the four-tiered Aadlee below, the lowest of which is the land of perpetual summer and abundant game. Or *qimiktun nunaan*, "the land of the hanged." If you die a natural death, a year or two or more must be spent expiating past offences against tabu in the house of the sea spirit, whose aged father torments you. When this period ends you travel to the Narrow Land, where the sea washes both sides of the shore and sea mammals are hunted. Those who lived a blameless life or who have been purified of transgressions by a violent death (which includes suicide), arrive in the Land of Day, a place of perennial pleasure where the dead play a game with a walrus skull by trying to kick the skull so it lands tusks downward, into the snow, the arcs of the skull in the air creating the aurora, the colorbands of the sky.

Christine Nguyen
The Colorbands
200" x 384"
C-prints

C. D. WRIGHT

DE *RISING, HOVERING, FALLING*

REF: DE LA FELICIDAD, EN SU BÚSQUEDA

Es 2005, justo antes del huracán.
Aquí estoy, un laberinto y hecha un desastre.
Estoy en la esquina de Waterway
y Bluff. Necesito tu ayuda. Me encontrarás
a la izquierda del cementerio, donde por la noche
los árboles crecen particularmente parlanchines,
donde la niebla y el alcohol liman las asperezas.
Ardemos para hacernos cantar el uno al otro;
para impedir que el lago hierva, que la tierra
tiemble. Vivimos en tiempo azteca,
en el quinto y último ciclo. Ojos que van de apagado a encendido.
Podríamos ser el uno para el otro mercromina,
bálsamo de abeja o camomila. Deberíamos ser asfalto,
vidrio y lycra. Deberíamos ser digitales o,
al menos, llegar temprano. Ser un picamadero picomarfil. Invisibles
excepto para el observador más vigilante.

Seremos polvo de estrellas. Antiguas estelas
de nada. Aliento expirado. No,
primero debemos ser hielo. Ser clavos. Ser dientes.
Ser relámpago.

Como que te llamen por tu nombre en un lenguaje que no comprendes

Desde el día en que se forjó la campana

he esperado mi turno sentada en la labrada silla del obispo

con los pies cruzados en los tobillos y la piel de mis huaraches

creando ampollas ahí donde mis pies se ocultan.

Desde donde estaba sentada veía como la luz se sustraía

de las magnolias en La Plaza de Armas

mientras las voces de los demás orquestaron un anochecer.

Me acerqué al atril cuando los ojos del anfitrión me convocaron.

Enfrenté las grandes puertas abiertas mientras caras de extraños
reconocían sus propias pérdidas.

Vi los calzones blancos del vendedor ondeando en el polvo

su cuerpo envuelto en globos,

los niños vendedores de chicles se dispersaron;

el bolerito guardando sus cepillos, la suma de su herencia.

He leído lo que ahí estaba escrito, dicho gracias, he vuelto a sentarme.

He ascendido los escalones de la pirámide humilde y sin aliento.

Me he alzado pequeña y borracha y me he alegrado
de no ser arrojada barranca abajo al lado del cónsul paria
en el celebrado libro.

Desde cualquier punto de vista me he sentido más sola que un terrón de barro, un látigo, una bolsa, un cráneo de chocolate.

He sido engatusada por la cara translúcida de mi anfitrión y por la salvia azul
donde yace el gallo.

Y aunque he portado la medalla de la vieja ciudad con abandonado placer
me dirijo a ustedes al decir:

Camaradas, no se entreguen al duelo por su ser

expresar alegría y expeler escorpiones es el mejor trabajo del mundo.

Como tener una luz en la espalda que no puedes ver pero sí sentir

Como si estuviera transmitiendo dentro de tu oído.

Los rincones de una habitación desvanecida hace tiempo.

En realidad ella no escucha lo que él está diciendo.

El brillo emerge de la tierra

pero ellos están seguros de estar pisando firme.

No es que ya hayan estado aquí antes, sino
que son jóvenes y tienen agua.

Hay mazos de rosas y hacen ruido.

Se avanza casi sin esfuerzo.

Junto con este sentimiento de armonía
viene otro, menos cómodo.

No el de estar perdido sino el de no pertenecer.

Aun así no cubrían el aire

con palabras falsas.

Se desplazaban sin hablar,
sin tocarse.

Vestidos de su propio aroma.

Ella paladea sal y es que deben de estar acercándose.

Otros, afuera, están a la deriva.

Si esto hubiera ocurrido cerca del palacio presidencial

sería aterrador, sin tregua.

Y está puede ser la razón por la que ella comenzó a gritar.

Se alza, cae, se cierne

Ayer
no había nada fuera de lo común una mañana lluviosa de marzo
con montones de estorninos en el suelo
ella había estado pensando en lo que él había dicho
Lo que se ha dicho se dice a menudo

Buscando algún significado entre líneas sobre la pálida hierba
los pájaros acumulaban densidad cromática

Él la detuvo (y no al revés) en la lluvia para decirle
que había estado pensando la voz empezaba a barrerse
contra el barro en los coches
ninguno se había movido aún

En el vapor iluminado del parque
parecía que los árboles andaban con ellos
como si se hubieran internado en una nube ella tenía que preguntarle
si esto era vivir o acaso

Nunca lo había visto en la niebla
hacía resaltar sus ojos su voz tan espectral
al verse su mirada espectral como neón en la niebla

La puerta trancada
en el umbral los aparatos electrónicos titilando
las cortinas borraron las casas de la ladera
el frío como espejo esta lluvia madera que no quiere arder

Obcecados en chupar el tiempo del otro
hablaron y después follaron y después hablaron
y follaron y era algo así adulto pero no ensayado

Él sería central en el libro de ella después se iría
solo y mientras nadie excepto ellos mismos
en la luz suspendida de la cocina en ropa interior

Bebiendo cerveza tibia sin responder llamadas
ella no tenía ni idea de quién estaba llamando seguía llamando
sonando en el vacío

Sé cómo te sientes mintió él ya sé que lo sabes
mintió ella pero escuchar simplemente escuchar equivalía
al perdón no importaba para qué

Cuanto más vive uno menos tiene que perdonar

El aire cambiaba a su alrededor su cara
traicionaba a su cara pensaba más en el antes
cuando no mucho era más que suficiente
unos pantalones rasgados sobre un sofá rescatado de la calle

Entonces vestían el aroma de los fumadores

Él iba delante No decía nada Ella conducía
Él miró el agua mientras cruzaban el puente

No estaba oscura él sacó un bolígrafo del bolsillo de su camisa
y escribió algo
que cuidadosamente no compartió con ella

Su equipaje no había estado en manos de nadie más
Sus pulseras activaron el detector de metales
En la rampa mecánica ella estudiaba su espalda
a través de la fina tela

De quien tenga una cicatriz no pienses que está curado
(advierte el refrán)

Una vorágine de sentimientos sobre ir a cualquier sitio
durante una guerra

¿Se te han tapado los oídos?
tratando de hablar por hablar su cara delineada a medias
ya en penumbra golpes que manan
desde las nubes ahí abajo

Acaso alguien te dijo que el alma se despega de su cuerpo terreno
a unos 40.000 pies

Si te entregaran la caja negra
qué dejarías como legado

tratando de hablar por hablar

Entonces dormía con los muertos nada lo asustaba
Acaso ella le había mencionado un rencor desaparecido le había avisado
de que se había rasurado ahí abajo la noche anterior

Una ojeada al periódico era demasiado
el número de muertos seguía siendo desconocido

Así que la que no dormía espetó al que dormía:

Sobre la otra noche Sé que lo sientes Yo también lo siento Estábamos cansados Yo y mi boca-de-proceso-cerrado Tú y tus rígidas disciplinas Y sé que es ir demasiado lejos Pero no podemos permitir que otras fuerzas apaguen el color del mundo

Lo que se dice se ha dicho antes No son tiempos para la poesía

Translated by Valerie Mejer and Isabel Cadenas Cañón

ROBERTO ECHAVARREN

POEMAS

Raros momentos

cuando la nota saja sagarana
la pulpa que no se sabía si estaba
mientras la cabeza, sobre la colcha, en esguince
inclinada gravita aún al acabar de despertar
hacia el recibo en penumbra con un brote de luz
por el fondo de amarillos
membrillos y la "eterna" mujer,
que no tiene figura sino es alusión del afecto
y microclima cavado en la tarde de un día libre,
recoge o recibe en su casa
sin considerar que esa mujer vivió en otras casas,
y aún en el exterior, antes de morir se había mudado,
ahora registra el recibo imperativo, se queda
de visita en casa donde al parecer nunca falta,
nunca muere, desde otro lugar
permite que la visitemos en este lugar,
remozada, y ella
ha consagrado ésta para que no falle, panacea no falta

aunque falte todo lo demás, esa casa esa mujer
hombre y mujer, ni hombre ni mujer
en fin más lugar que ella,
casi inocente, casi presente
inoculado de un germen que respira
y permite, entre campanillazo y campanillazo,
quedarse en un lugar que integra éste,
los escapes transitan lo atraviesa
el temblor de un motor,
la motoneta, pedos de castañuela
cuando saja la nota y ya no estamos,
cuando ella arrastra los pies,
cierra una puerta
el motor ablandado musita discreto
el primer arrebato por visitar un lugar.

Ombligo

No un punto o un área de la tierra el ombligo del mundo
sino la tierra ombligo del universo,
habitáculo, cámara de oír resuena
de un lado al otro el rebotante,
si mónada por rebote
un punto más chico abandona para volver a rebotar,
percute en el alto fenecer de su gemido, bramido
escozor de garganta al colocarse el pescuezo,
constructo suspendido momentáneo
cual se recuerda un diseño para mejor
rebotar en el desquite
nada había ya de lo que hubo;
había una bahía
el cortar los retruécanos la garganta ese mantel, cuando lo
pica la ventisca, la nevasca, el aguanieve
el garrotillo, los balines de hielo,
nieve menuda, copos de gran tamaño,
dando puntos y a contrapunto
en el nodal elemento de torsión al punto
sorprendióse de que cada suceder de letras
formara palabras, y eso torcían, el roble
y la aflicción del fuego
en el confín de piedra, el punto de cada componente
en el lugar de cada uno, como si los lugares
tomaran consistencia al viajar
a constituirse sobrevuela la especie por el fuelle,
caminamos por el suelo de conchas rotas,
se incorpora el ruido del agua,
la piedra, el anillo retumba en cada frase
pero los saltos nos llevan a olvidar el sonido
para más adelante comprender y quedar
abierto el otro borde
y da que parpadear, ya en la pequeña estancia que se cuadre

bajo el cerquillo de esa ene
a poca distancia, todavía está aterrado.

El diablo

La experiencia que no tuve
el diablo en el cuerpo
y mientras el cuerpo expiraba en la página
la página tenía cuerpo de mar
un párpado horizonte
el diablo en el piélago
y mientras yo escribía el pliego
el diablo se desplegaba
y mientras el diablo navegaba
yo lo seguía en mi bote de papel
pero yo no sabía qué era el diablo,
más bien el diablo estaba en otro lado
y yo no conocía ese lado

Música

Una nota alargada en verdad ininterrumpida
con notación fuera de sistema
autónoma con respecto a las notas cuadradas de gancho

esa línea opera como eje uniforme
contrasta con la desviación melódica
o la atraviesa como bólido constante

El ángel más alto pronuncia una sola sílaba
un cordón, huso espiralado a modo de campo
que mancomuna

Quedan corridos los tonos
sufren por estiramiento
a cada sílaba se agrega una cantidad de huecos:
a-ne-nanie, añen, ña-nez

al modo de una única vibración continua
parecida a una línea de tacto
en ella se extiende el atributo

Vientre de sonido
contiene el eco y la respuesta
Nada se canta rápido

EDGAR GARCIA

THREE POEMS TO *BOUNDARY LOOT*

Amatl in Los Angeles

This is the only contra Naturam there is:
The concept of Void.
Charles Olson

From my ear, pricks
leaf and therefrom twigged

forth seed embryonic of
bark and the book, of fig

boiled to a fibrous material
and pounded flat, folded

+ painted with turquoise[-pigment]
held in conch-shell, carried

like contradiction, I smash
in eye, I do not
suppress contradiction

struggling, as it is, to survive
severe and desperate so I

feel sometimes that it could
kill me, primal
law, dynamic in-

congruity, it is dark, it is light,
I smash eyeball, I write

ii.

This chunk of chaw
that I have chewed

the sacrificial objects
that I have dropped into cobalt pools:

Rocks, stones, sandy-pebble,
nephrite, jadeite, shell,
sometimes water-jars filled
with milpa, Nikes, faded grass with a jaguar.

Xolo with a hole
in his head for the sun, and plans
for a cosmopolis
of the sun, fire-pocked

like a piece of chewed-up chewing-gum
baked black into the side-

walk, hot as fried llama-brains,
for we had no cows then.

In the gully, the armadillo.

A Letter for You, Maximus, from Gloucester

Olson medía dos metros. Su cuerpo era el gigante que más temía.
Heriberto Yépez

The water warm as a girl's thighs as we dig holes in the silky sand.
Vincent Ferrini

Conflictive tongue muted separated wet back come as from space outer environment eager to discover world within boundary rubbled knuckled rocks salted green pools thoughts excitements anxieties feldspar breakwater quartz.

In half second as fast as torque of sex takes to lift itself twisted forcefully into present air for hour or so white birds gone flying from orange sand drizzled legs colored nearby your dog's digging legs.

Looking not inside for jewel but walled inner of wooden box.

I am becoming something else—other than that which I handed myself over to be. Reaching hand over stone walls you run your eye across a boundary without a surface. Jewel without a box.

Or is it more? The him he hands back to himself daily. The soundness of one comes from what follows. Pollen collects at warm pool edge where my toes grow in the midst of greeny tadpoles. They will give up gill pouch for lung and outward tail for two legs. What gold.

(Rock hoppers. But right now, trawlers.

To hazard the necessary morning how in the right place a heart should be. To have it golden. To be not underpaid as fisherman for overpriced fish. Ice in hold loaded, the lies I hear in your bed with your wife, this seawater's salinity.)

Circlet of salt water forest churning energy applied to dreams insurmountable not as on eyes but inside where sentence flies with birds bark paper bat-gut in dove

of glove-white Gloucester in sand hole, the rock dick of Camazotz of Cuzcatlán come after long hard circuit.

Ruin of excess or of ruin an excess of remains from outside region so the defects inherent to records of struggle. Of theft. Of welfare white cities where welfare is powder milk when is welfare. Of strange gods.

The water changes the feel of this ground.

Orion's Spur

because I was and wouldn't be
child and children

temblor
deep in copper but copper
not dent basalt

so who or what to cut

diamonds into Orion's belt
what diamond-tipped

mind aligned the avenue of the dead,
Teotihuacán

To whom does Orion aime
his arrow?

to whom do the pyramids
point to, whose Pueblo

is set like a polished buckle
in the heart of creation

Where there is no running water
or good soil, what buildings

Why in the lowlands of northern Guatemala?

Chaco, Heliopolis
Cholula

out of step
with Earth's rivers, they measured
the weight

of burnt water, of the sky's
Empire

of a stone dropped in non-stop waters

To whom does Orion aime
his arrow?

as a boy I had the courage
to dream chivalry, hunt

To whom

until the sun is a crocodile sleeping behind black reeds

ESTELA LAMAT

SELECTIONS FROM *PULVERIZED CANINE*

We have arrived at an inexplicable veracity, at the holy dogma of rawness. Together we gnaw on the melancholic bone of the past. We perilously cross a laconic dimension traced by a time full of immodesty and malice. We have decided to embrace the void with the same arms that we fling around the neck of the night. We have decided to put an end to the belligerent tyranny of distance, to shorten the trails and sketch a path as impetuous as your eyes. With the passage of time, we have become formidable and the humble days now carry a double body that changes and endures, that remembers and broods upon the decisive days of another time, seething with snow, spitting ice and splinters of bone, haphazard ossuaries, primordial rust, throbbing fingers, cheeks enflamed with blood, unsettled lips, dreams out in the open at night beneath the invisible crown of a tree, beneath the aloof shadow of an anemone billowing under the ring-shaped joint of your back. We emerge bisected by time. We hoist banners of victory and bellow a roar in silence. As water cascades down our bodies, we take on surprising forms. We have finally vanquished the albino larva that fed on our bones. We have seized life by its horns and promised each other the heavens. We have saturated our bodies with desire. We have peered to the bottom of our heads and laughed, realizing that we're insane flowers, throbbing flowers, flowers in

agony, flowers as fleeting as a lunar day. We have passed through a nameless door, counted five steps, and realigned the posture of a mountain range whose sudden upheaval precipitates when you and I meet at a precise point in time. While orbiting around a black hole, we have played flirtatiously; we have sealed off the pressure meant to activate the breathing of a star. We have written a book of spectral arguments. We have subjugated verbs and conjugated silences. We have fixed uncertain limits so as to perversely traverse them with half-open eyes. We have slumbered together within the dream of an underwater plain. We have reared coastal fauna made of astral remains. We have played make-believe in an imaginary place, a rebellious place, where your hand, the only incontestable truth, intersects with mine.

*

We must judge this event: the material lack of your presence, the ever-present and ever-distant inconsistency of your words, of your hyperbolic oscillations, of your continuous discontent, to blame your shoe, the hybrid breakfast, the frigid and amorphous sex of your destiny, so what's the use in saying all this if you always slip away like a lunatic on a ship of fools, like a prisoner enamored with his tomb, like an insect committed to its own suicide in the gray web of a viscous and infamous spider—better the devil you know—like a search conducted through a crevice, through a clavicle, through a muscle. Something overspills your borders, you board a ship of acid refluxes, you take the pilgrimage of blue things upon your shoulder and send disconcerting signs that come from ephemeral and inconstant languages, blue is the music, you say to yourself, but there are no kisses that escape forever without wanting to return to their most intimate lair. A sinister hollow gapes before you like the mouth of heaven and you manifest that madness as horror, as a sharp and flickering ghost, as the emblem of a clumsy and wavering song, as filthy sand, as filthy seas, as a filthy mouth of spurious words, the rusty flavor of constricted blood, the incomplete absorption, this fucking breakfast, this insipid coffee, the sour taste of a routine that holds you in your amplitude and your capaciousness, it is the inexplicable and unestrangeable heart of the night, it is the confused collocation of histories, it is the day that begins with crying and

the withered aurora—never boreal—of a yellow house that comes to an end with my cold feet against yours, that escapes as a marine sun, to find itself sick and ruinous in the lime of its bones, it is a mouth that keeps on bleeding to avoid the kiss that hurries off to where it's been called, what's the use in serving this table of emptiness, these soggy plates of leftover fears, forged, "ineffective," you say to yourself, "deciduous," I will answer, "fallacious as you," I will add, always attentive not to provoke injustice, typical, proper, hurried, you keep quiet on the outside, throwing everything overboard, and you decide to embark on that ship tinted with madness, on your slippery ship because you don't leave alone, you take everyone and all of you set sail together into the aerial swamp of madness, let's see until where we can open our fingers and hands, let's see until where my madness does not transform itself into fear, into the tragic possession of a memory written in the cruelest month of all and you know that cruelty does not exist between your mouth and mine, only the flea-bitten mystery, the nauseated destiny of your ship, the destiny that inundates itself so as not to see you leaving as a fool, fooled in your empire, weary and badly wounded. They will pick you up, they will heal your wounds, they will call you by name, you will remember once more the primer you learned next to the mouth of your mother, you will remember perhaps a red instant in your memory, a star, a comet, an inexistent delirium but you will return to the emptiness of your mind, there, where your fears and spasms consolidate along with the very certainty of fear and spasm, the calming and soporific movement of a decade's renowned and hygienic madness, memories and collisions, the white fallow of your laughter. Yesterday the cannibal shadow deposited a coin in my hand and in my lame finger and my tepid eye a shadowy tongue licked my wound, now I see that signs always have the shape of a tree, that the rats that ran in the subway last night were fleeing from me and my stench of destiny and failure, now I know that you always sought an ending stained with chalk, to hide as always in the irresistible dizziness of the quotidian, to live this life once again, and I wave a white handkerchief from my window and say goodbye with my eyelashes while I dry the banister with my arm, and I roll up my future as I always do, and I look straight into the sun and I tell him, "you fucked me from behind again."

*

If they would have told me that afterwards there's only emptiness and nothing else but a white reflector in which a tree is distorted, I repeat, I wouldn't have run away from your waters. If they would have told me, herein lies his waters agitated by submarine swells, I would have said, essential swimmer, aquatic being *par excellence*, I would have said, a voracious rock immovably beached in the sand, I would have said, I'm going to run aground in your waters, I'll succumb to the fatality of ships, I'm going to become a castaway, a sea star, a particle of water, I would have said, I am salt, I am fire, I am an abyssal trench, I am an indolent coast. If they would have told me, after everything, that the airiness solidifies, I would have said, so what, throw me a ball of fire, of lime, or of diamonds and I will turn both of my cheeks, my back, maybe an empty page. If they would have told me that afterwards and just before the cruelest month turns into shreds, everything that you touch with the tip of your dreams will now become an electric shock, a fulminating deactivation of consciousness, I would have whispered I am neither afraid of epilepsy nor of the blue gunshot of the infinite, I am not afraid of an empty table, I am not afraid of the woman who hangs banners around her neck in her frustrated ceremony, I am neither afraid of the surly claw of tomorrow nor of the astute parasite of memory, ankylosed in my brain, I am not afraid of the uncertain sweetness of your voice, of the nocturnal premonition of sensing you over my back, threatening my life with a flood of moths and moth-eaten desires, with making me fragile as the month of April that shuts itself close, and today the butcherous worm in its chrysalis has fallen asleep, three years, three more years it will sleep and it will dream a chronic dream and its wings will be made of fibers of nostalgia and its legs will curl inwards from the weight of desire that slumbers with the breathing of its body, and today is afterwards, and now I live in the ungrateful afterwards, now I breathe the rain of other days, now I embrace the future and affirm its ignorance, now I repair the damage and sharpen the laughter, and I prepare a couple of bad and bitter jokes so I have something to tell to your absence when it summons me and it invites me to take my moths and go to hell. Now, more than ever, I have the sacred certainty of afterwards, nobody knows it better than me, I doubt you know how afterwards was always

yesterday, how afterwards was always infinite. How is it that afterwards had the shape of a worm, how is it that afterwards came with you, hand in hand, as an infamous cancer that sticks to you by contagion, by impossibility of form, by rhetorical defect, by recalcitrance, by apostasy. Afterwards is a miracle that occurred before you occurred, before a glass screen would tell us, "herein lie two comets." Afterwards was the futile effort in believing in afterwards, afterwards was the signature, the axiom of the past, and you knew it and I knew it and thus there never was any ignorance—no, never, we write in unison—just a vertiginous exodus towards death, and from there, from the afterwards itself, a clinging to a buoy and a dozing off, rocked by the slow memory of a wave.

Translated by Michael Leong

RODRIGO TOSCANO

FROM *DECK OF DEEDS*

El sirviente

It's been a busy week for the public servant.

On Monday, he planned for the Three Gorges presidential tour of China in the spring.

On Tuesday, he lowered the black curtains on the International Labor Organization's "Respiratory Diseases" yearly report and let Canada's visiting Tar Sands rep take an impromptu whizz in the Oval Office.

On Wednesday, he fired an "over sensitive" staffer after a department meeting.

On Thursday, he hired a staffer he met at a Lithium Industries mixer.

On Friday—in the morning, he agreed to lowering minimum standard requirements for Hazardous Waste cleanup while visiting Mexico; later that day, he fired an "over inquisitive" Staffer—in an elevator—before a meeting; in the evening, he promoted the Lithium Industries staffer—by e-mail.

On Saturday, he promised to limit labor union "influence" at the Commerce Club in Boston; he then flew back to DC, laid a little turd in behind a lavish wall curtain in the West Wing, and then walked over to the East Wing to direct his staff to wring out as much "working language" as can be had from the word *freedom*; finally, he ended up at the Dominican Republic's embassy, fighting for a Free Trade Zone late into the night.

Busy week for the public servant.

El bebe

All three presidential candidates have ample, basalt granite temporal lobes, including the baby. His lobes are especially "crackly"—they flake at even 10 MHz. His closest advisor, the English language, lasers his lobes with bestseller lists until he almost passes out. He's learned to need it, require it, love it—*brutally so*—at least once a month. He submits to at least one bestseller three weeks before leaving on cross-country tours so that the fracturing has time to heal, as he has a Squishy Head VP nominee who disapproves of the *crackled* look. Sometimes this violence scares the baby, but he feels very calm and in command afterwards.

El comerciante

Here to inform you that your fetus is into providing weapons to other fetuses at select places around the world. It picked up the taste for this trade two months ago while you were all on vacation in Florida. That "nice fetus from Oregon" who taught your fetus how to properly synthesize proteins in macrophage cell membranes, remember? By the fourth day they were filling invoices for M1A2 Abrams Tank spare parts.

On the fifth day, your fetus reverently tumbled onto its belly facing the center of the earth, and flapped its proto-real lips at it for about thirty minutes.

What does your fetus like about it (the center of the Earth, that is)? Like you, it loves the gritty mineral-like taste of deep-buried dirt thrown into its proto-real face. It also loves volcano vapors searing the skin off of its proto-real fanny while plunging its proto-real vestigial tail into the clear aquamarine waters of—birthdom.

How many fetuses total has it sold weapons to? Just four hundred thousand. But it's hooked. Your fetus foresees a lifetime of weapons sales across the globe. It's got a gold ring on its belly now too (or head, hard to say).

Los ingenieros

The slightest speck of sulfur acid speckled onto the primary fracking tanks' gelatinous ethanol surface at the entrance to the central burner, and it'll be ready to spawn a substance which will harden into a *very similar* grade of carbon-derivative solids containing a very voluble, catalytic little society.

El edificio

Bitch. No other word best describes this office tower in an overall way. Bitch to bridges, bitch to canals, freeways—to recreational and commerce purposes alike. It was most likely an "accident" inspiration, unplanned, unjustified, but this is *its* existence now.

It gussies up in blue and red lights for the night, and when it weaves and wavers in the eyes of its subjects, its hallucinatory power pervades the space wherever it happens to be (this building is ambulatory). Both its subjects and subject's subjects feel the urge to drop to their knees to get a near-vertical view of its majesty. Its pulsing busy lobby counts for any other three pulsing busy lobbies put together in any pulsing busy global lobby.

Its Structural Adjustment muscle can grip the biggest of debtor nations—milk them clean of futures. It does just that. It's got "options."

El librito

Not only did the orbital radius of Jupiter get thrown off by 24 million miles as a beam of light first struck his new book of retro-modernist aesthetics, but a far-off star expired at that very moment.

Perfection like it was never before seen, nor ever since. Nay, Ambition itself snuck off to a shy corner of Life out of fear of being overshadowed forever by this book.

There are books, and then there's *this* book. Of man born? Yes. By man induced? Yes. Impossible to believe, but yes—from *both*, equally.

The Stellar Globular Clusters in Virgo demand that this book be consumed from cover to cover.

The Stellar Globular Clusters in Virgo also demand that every breath of it be captured and gifted back to it as ecstatic continuous pleasure.

La palabrita

Your gut feeling was right. The word, Liberty, didn't actually go visit an old friend from the French Revolution last month. It's having a fling—with two silver-haired MP's from the Netherlands. It met them on a train during its trip through Europe last year. They got really drunk on ready-made anti-immigrant rhetoric, and stumbled into Frankfurt station in Germany. The three went monopoly media hopping, and ended up amnesiating (or, amnesiacking) *out*—in a booming techno club. The three woke up tangled in each other's lexical matrices in a toilet bowl. And now, here's Liberty, in another toilet bowl, in Manhattan, about to announce its candidate's candidacy while its candidate clamps its candidacy in its candidate's candidacy.

La experimentalista

Anywhere and *everywhere*, that's her thing now, to *work it*—whenever.

Here she is in the alley crouched next to the apartment complex dumpster, the same place she experimented with *splork* poetry last summer. Her older cousin passed the genre down to her. She keeps a copy of *Leopard Skin Village* tucked away in a white cosmetic bag in her purse. She never washes it really. Once in a while she might slip the book into her mouth and lick it clean. Just yesterday, she put it in her mother's porcelain glass case teacup cabinet, to see what if felt like. She found it strangely pleasurable. She's decided to relocate it again this weekend in the storage locker where her dad keeps eight retired 250 MHz / 100MB Dell desktop towers. *Yes*, she's made a duplicate key and thus has *access* to the storage locker. The darkness and coolness of the place makes her extra introspective. Also, in those conditions, she's able to say things out loud she might not otherwise: "I want Penguin Books to publish me" "I want a hard, red & black, glossy cover to add extra significance to it."

GALO GHIGLIOTTO

FROM *VALDIVIA*

1
Chunks of ice from another planet because it's blue petroleum
dark calypso squishy ice and fake like teeth made of gel
the interiors frozen in a rectangular plastic vacuum
packed and letters colored grey clear 3M blue + calypso + gel
+ 30 cm of rectangular bag vacuum packed and sleeping
like a friendly affectionate little cushion over my mother's
bruised violaceous face carmen my wet nurse
washing the eyes with her tears death rattles draw
bubbles of blood

2
they say there was a flood of blood she
was lying back
against a couch in carmen's arms
on the floor where red I tried
to walk towards her slipping in her blood
in the salt that fell on my shoes that were so heavy
they say this I don't remember

I only remember that they say this and perhaps
I remember something when they do it but I prefer not to
I prefer not to
I prefer

3
on the pedro de Valdivia bridge
two cars collide
we went flying through the windshield
my mother and I 40 meters
falling into the calle-calle river that runs
slowly beneath us
over us suddenly
and two men remain up on the bridge
stretching their arms with their fists pumped
I die
she dies
while their horns collide
I die
she dies
the demons infiltrate so easily in the day

4
the violent climate reeks
worse than a pasture of rotten eyes
bursting beneath the sun
my mother watches me from behind a broken cheekbone
her skin is not jade
the cracks of blood are beautiful
they branch out of her
like rhizomes that extend in the air that surrounds her
and they connect to the walls
of a room that stops being square

i am tempted to kill them all
i am the most premature murderer in the city of Valdivia

5
my father's figure as if clipped from a photograph
in the hallway of a house a nice house
in a good neighborhood it was so important
to keep up appearances
for the neighbors all doctors like the dentist
who let me detect the christmas farce
the night he dressed up as santa claus with his apron on under
and his hands reaching for the dental anesthetic

40
santa claus has emptied his sack
and he's filled it with dead kids
he picks them off the surface of the river and there are thousands
around in the trees
the birds with human faces watch
waiting for intestines to float on the river
so they can eat
but santa claus has turned
into a bigger monster
and his gaze gives off beams
which provide light over the river
and there are arms and fallen faces alone on the waters
faces floating with an expression of the infinite on the water
his bag sweats blood
the water crashes slowly into the rocks
and every once in awhile the birds laugh in the trees
they laugh with rage laugh with sorrow
laugh with hunger laugh with envy
one tries to come closer but twelve deer

with giant fangs white eyes and flaming antlers
fly until they trap it in the air and shred it to pieces
in a fraction of a second
its human face turns into a kid
who falls into the river
tonight the moon slobbers little silver drops in the sky
the harvest looks like it will never run out
anyone who is still alive
dies asphyxiated from the pestilence
that emanates from santa claus' suit
a suit of blood and rabbit skin
the smell of dental anesthetic
from beneath the river
I make the tide rise with my sorrow

Translated by Daniel Borzutzky

GALO GHIGLIOTTO

SOBRE *VALDIVIA* Y LA CIUDAD DE VALDIVIA

> *"La cosas dotadas de vida, las cosas vividas, las cosas admitidas en nuestra confianza, están en su declinación y ya no pueden ser reemplazadas. Somos tal vez los últimos que conocieron tales cosas. Sobre nosotros descansa la responsabilidad de conservar no solamente su recuerdo (lo que sería poco y de no fiar), sino su valor humano y lárico"*
> *Rainer Maria Rilke, carta a W. Hulewicz, 13 de noviembre de 1925.*

En la tradición poética chilena, existe un grupo de autores denominados "láricos", cuyas obras se caracterizan por establecer una relación con el entorno que los acogió en su primera infancia, el paisaje del campo, de sus pueblos, etornos que algunos dejaron para no volver nunca más o a los que regresaron años después, con toda la experiencia a cuestas. Quien acuñó el término fue el poeta Jorge Teillier (1935–1996), que siempre en sus textos ha vuelto a su Lautaro natal, una pequeña localidad del sur de Chile. Teillier adoptó el término lárico en referencia las antiguas divinidades hogareñas de los romanos; estos creían en la vida de ultratumba, y que sus muertos se convertían en especies de divinidades que protegían sus hogares y sus campos.

Al momento de escribir *Valdivia*, yo no tenía conciencia de la poesía lárica como tal. Había leído a Teillier, sin mucho interés la verdad, puesto que sus pasajes bucólicos me aburrían un poco. Pero en ese momento un compañero del taller de

poesía que seguíamos con Raúl Zurita, me propuso narrar una triste anécdota que yo había pasado en mi infancia, justamente en la ciudad de Valdivia, donde nací. Al momento de comenzar a escribir, me di cuenta de que –al menos para mí–, el lugar y la experiencia eran cosas inseparables. A todo esto contribuyó la condición misma de Valdivia como ciudad, de la que salí a los 5 años, y que con el paso del tiempo y en sucesivos retornos, concebí como misteriosa, llena de mitología, y paisajes alucinantes.

Valdivia está ubicada a 800 kilómetros al sur de Santiago, en una zona de gran abundancia de agua, tanto en ríos anchos y profundos, lagos inmensos, como por las lluvias que amainan sólo unas pocas semanas al año. La ciudad está cerca de la costa, conectada por el mar por grandes ríos, como son el Cruces y el Valdivia –que desde la ciudad hacia el interior se llama Calle Calle–. Históricamente la ciudad fue un sitio sangriento, tanto por las luchas entre mapuches y españoles, como por la llegada de colonos que propiciaron –en ocasiones– un ambiente similar al farwest norteamericano. Para colmo, la ciudad fue azotada por el peor terremoto en la historia de la humanidad, el año 1960, lo que significó la muerte de miles de personas, tanto por los derrumbes, como por la salida del río. Las aguas llegaron, en ciertas zonas, hasta los terceros pisos de las casas.

El sur del país se caracteriza por una riqueza mitológica inusitada en comparación con otras zonas de Chile, y Valdivia no es la excepción. A diferencia de otros lugares, la "gente antigua" de Valdivia habla de los seres mitológicos como si de verdad existieran, y cuentan las historias tal si fueras a encontrar a sus personajes la vuelta de la esquina. Algunos de estos personajes legendarios son los Tué-tué, una casta de brujos que se transforman en pájaros –manteniendo su rostro humano-, para salir por las noches a pedir cosas de la gente, o para amenazarlos de muerte. También se dice que cada vez que llega el circo a Valdivia, la lluvia no para, y ocurre una desgracia. Una vez, transitando por una calle del centro, un amigo me mostró una casa que, según la leyenda, de vez en cuando se incendiaba completamente, y al día siguiente amanecía en perfecto estado; la mujer que vivía adentro era una bruja, se decía, así que no se veía afectada por las llamas, porque eran parte de su entorno –infernal– natural. Otro personaje es "la viuda", que perdió a sus hijos y su marido en el maremoto y los busca continuamente, por las noches… y si la ves a los ojos, te mueres. "El Canelo" es

un barco que se hundió en aquel maremoto, era un elegante bote turístico que recorría los ríos, las islas cercanas, y los fuertes españoles. Daba vueltas a la Isla Teja, que es un pedazo de tierra que forma parte de la ciudad, aunque está envuelta por los ríos. Se dice que El Canelo aparece algunas noches sobre el río, con su tripulación de fantasmas.

En mis recuerdos subsiste su propia mitología. El agitar constante de los árboles afuera de las casas, los golpes de la lluvia y el viento, hacían que mi imaginación se disparara. Cuando empecé a escribir los poemas de *Valdivia*, todo estaba mezclado, así que hice un retrato de esos recuerdos mezclados, que incluían elementos de la realidad, de mi imaginación y de la mitología. Todo está sacado de una realidad mirada con los ojos de un niño. Cuando le mostré el resultado final a un amigo, propuso un término para referirse al estilo de mi texto: "neolarismo". Según él, lo que había hecho con *Valdivia* era un texto donde se mezclaba ese larismo del paisaje, pero con la intervención de un paisaje emocional y sicológico, además de mitológico. Todo ese entorno se da cita ahí, a veces de manera incomprensible, para configurar un lenguaje que era el resultado de diferentes realidades superpuestas. Pero estas realidades no sólo se superponen, sino que se conectan en diversos puntos. Y para mí, tenía especial importancia el hecho de que esa transposición se daba también con la realidad que vivía el país en ese momento: la dictadura militar, la persecución de miles de chilenos, la violencia, la tortura. Todo ocurría en un entorno habitado por fantasmas, por seres mitológicos que provenían directamente del infierno, que hacían el mal por el mal. Del mismo modo en que los pájaros se transformaban en hombres, los hombres se transformaban en bestias que ejercían su brutalidad contra una "matria" que sufría los flagelos directamente en el cuerpo-pueblo infantil. Pero prefiero no ser yo quien dé una interpretación al texto, porque en este momento se me ocurren muchas, y demasiado pocas a la vez. No debe ser el autor quien ponga límites a su texto.

ODI GONZALES

FOUR POEMS

Mary Anoints the Feet of Jesus

Ancient Hospital for Native Peoples
Church of Bethlehem / Cajamarca

A red-breasted flicker
blown from the other side of the sea
flies over you

Compresses of clay, splints
malva leaves
for the pain
in your ankles

a soothing herbal tea
for your fevered brow
my son

The garments' textures are always
flat: the surfaces of the robes
are filled in

they do not reflect the folds
of the clothing:

-priestly cope / Mary's garments
fluttering

Under the full moon
in the lonely desert
The valley of the volcanoes
of Andagua?
Jesus fasts / School
of Quito?

And in the mountain passes and pastures
you were treated to the spit of the ruminants
the strong brandy
of the livestock traders

Descendents of bird keepers
not a race of serpents
between us, son,
they gathered
could you see?
wagonloads of silence

Andagua is located in southern Peru. It is known as the Valley of Volcanoes.

The Quito School was an artistic movement. In Quito as in Cusco, painter-priests taught painting to indigenous and mestizo artists during the colonial period. The artists of the School of Quito produced impressive works, though in a different style from the School of Cusco artists.

Writers Recount the Life and Deeds of Saint Catherine of Siena

Oil on Canvas / Cusco Circle
Stern / Davis Collection

– Early work by the master of Pomata:
his cool palette marked by thin brushwork
and definite outlines

– The canvas was repainted four times in succession
by disciples and apprentices

– It has a pronounced Flemish style

– The picture was painted through the patronage
of a miner from Potosí

– The composition of the scene
acquires a sense of depth
because the vanishing point
is cleverly placed toward the bottom

– The facial expression is clearly after Bitti
the drape of the garments
is after Zurbarán

– Wisps of cloud in rosy shades

– This canvas was stolen
from the Chapel of Maca

The Master of Pomata was an anonymous painter from the village of Pomata, located along the shore of Lake Titicaca.

Potosí is a city in Bolivia known for its silver mines.

Bernardo Democrito Bitti (1548-1610) was an Italian-born Jesuit priest and painter sent to South America on a mission "to evangelize through art." In addition to producing his own canvases, Bitti taught painting to the indigenous people of Peru. He is largely responsible for initiating the artistic movement known as the School of Cusco.

Maca is a village in Peru's Colca Canyon, near the city of Arequipa.

Judgment, Salvation and the Suffering of the Damned

Tadeo Escalante

Murals in Huaro and Andahuaylillas

Ribbons of speech exit the mouth
of a dying man

take heed
because you do not know at what hour
the Lord will come

Triumphal arch
orchards of Yucay, of Antwerp
—an ideal microclimate—

the underworld?

Then I saw a woman mounted
upon a red beast
with seven heads and two horns

On the walls of the apse
on the frieze of the choir
The Sistine Chapel of America
The four last things of man: death
judgment, hell, and heaven

Come

I will show you
the judging of the Great Whore
seated on two waters

In shadow light:
toads and serpents devour
the sex of the lustful

In the torture of the burning wheel
rotate the arrogant and the proud

Ay me that I stay here burning
Ay that I could have and no longer can
Ay that forever I must burn
Ay that God I must never see

Father Bocanegra?

Marginal scene:

as the painter prepares the canvas
a harquebusier angel waits
cleaning his weapon in the studio:
San Blas Hill

Cusco

A fiery chariot descends
upon the wheat fields of Huaro

Left nave:

After death there are two roads:
hell and heaven/the first
covered with roses/the other
sown with thorns

naïve art?

Italian naturalism?

In the heaven corner
an archangel with a harp
strums tunes

Huaro is a town outside of Cusco. Huaro's church contains elaborate religious murals by Tadeo Escalante.

Andahuaylillas is a small Andean village near Cusco. Its church, which many call the Sistine Chapel of America, is known for its many treasures including gold leaf frescos and a gilded altar. Originally built in the seventeenth century, the church contains works by Diego Quispe Tito, Tadeo Escalante, and others.

Tadeo Escalante was a mestizo Cusqueñan painter and muralist active during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He painted many depictions of hell.

Yucay is a town located in Peru's Sacred Valley near Cusco.

Antwerp, Belgium was a center for the copying and exportation of great works of European art. Many of these copies were shipped to South America.

Padre Bocanegra, Juan Pérez Bocanegra, was a Spanish priest stationed in Andahuaylillas during the sixteenth century. He composed religious hymns in Quechua and also wrote the *Manual Sacramental del Evangelio Cristiano, The Holy Guidebook of Christianity*.

Two waters refers to a concept in Andean religion. It is said that there are two types of water. One is clean and crystalline, which is blessed or holy water and associated with God. The other is dark and murky water, which is associated with the devil.

San Blas Hill is a narrow steep street in Cusco. Today many artists and craftspeople have their studios there.

The Army of God

Anonymous

Ocopa Convent

Transverse arch
choir screen
the chapel's interior border:

"the traitor
lifted his gaze toward Him
as one who searches a tree
for ripe fruit"

Dramatic lighting:

upon a pastoral background
—terraces of Pisac, of Korikancha—
Zaphiel
the angel of winds and hurricanes
passes by
shoots the breeze?
with another who bears the lightning bolt
of divine fury:

his movements call to mind
ballet steps
the fluttering of veils
regal flesh and blood

a gust of wind blows
between the figures

The meeting of two men is the meeting
of two rivers, proclaims
the shield of a seraph

chattering birds, warblers fill
the skies of the seventh heaven:
the granaries of Warán?
the barns of Challapampa?

The angel that carries a twig
from an olive tree
—ornate tunic, leather breastplate—

springs forth to the frontlines:
Mighty-Angel
defeating the greedy

the broad gauntlets / the buskins
he wears
are of Saracen origin

to complete the symmetry
an imaginary boulder

the tired stone?

In the background:
bursts of gleaming carmine
and vermillion
no
tenebrist landscaping
no wagon full of soldiers

angels/resplendent soldiers
guard the harmony of the heavens:

Raphael: Healer of God
Gabriel: Mary's Strength
Michael: He who is like God?

Translated by Lynn Levin

The Ocopa Convent was built by Spanish Franciscan priests in 1725 as a base from which to convert the indigenous people to Catholicism. The convent is located in the town of Santa Rosa de Ocopa in the highland region of Junín, about 680 miles (1109 kilometers) northwest of Cusco.

Pisac is a village in the Sacred Valley near Cusco.

Korikancha is the Inca Temple of the Sun located in the center of Cusco.

Zaphiel is an angel found in the non-canonical book of Enoch.

Warán is a little village in Peru's Sacred Valley.

Challapampa is, in this case, a village in the Sacred Valley. Numerous villages in Peru are named Challapampa.

The tired stone is a reference to a Quechua legend concerning the construction of Sacsayhuamán, a site outside of Cusco. In this legend, workers during Inca times were hoisting a large boulder to fit into the stonework. The boulder could not be hauled by the workers to Cusco due to its great weight, and to this day the stone stands in its original place, a long way from Cusco.

ROBERTO APPRATTO

DOS POEMAS

La mujer dormida, de Jan Vermeer (1657)

Una imagen, firme, bien coloreada,
Sostenida en sí misma desde un tiempo antes,
No sé cuánto. Una mujer sentada en el crepúsculo.
En un espacio interior, con los ojos cerrados, tal vez
Ya dormida pero no tanto como para aflojar
La posición del brazo que sostiene la cabeza
Para que no caiga. La otra mano
Apoyada en el mantel, dedo por dedo,
Como si apretara su historia en silencio. Ahí
Cada palabra cuenta.
Está en actitud de pensar, pero no preocupada,
Más bien utilizando el tiempo a su favor.
Nadie puede venir a molestarla en ese trance
Porque no es sólo su trance sino la disponibilidad,
A un nivel que sólo un adulto puede comprender,
Para estar en trance, sola. Es el acto de captar para sí
Todos los momentos de distracción en uno.
La mujer seguramente no sabe, al menos del todo,

Qué grado de perfección alcanza su silencio
Ni qué profundidad, más allá de los límites del cuarto en que está,
Puede ofrecer la contemplación de su cabeza. Al fin y al cabo,
Es una superficie bien coloreada pero en matices oscuros,
Sobre todo arriba, para que la luz se concentre en el blanco de su cuello
Y ampare el tiempo de reflexión en su historia. En eso estaba
Un segundo antes de entrar y sentarse allí. Dejó la puerta
Entreabierta por el apuro por llegar a esa habitación
Que no es la suya para estar sola. Ella, sin duda,
Es lo que es: una mujer entregada al matiz de la mirada
O absolutamente nada. Un episodio de la vida urbana
Que la descripción no puede agotar, porque no es eso
Lo que la tiene así. Toda su historia queda subsumida,
Si ésa es la palabra, en lo que callaría si se le preguntara
En cualquier tono
Por su estado de ánimo. Lo que la superficie revela
Es eso: el universo se compone de los colores que ella vio
Al entrar y sentarse, y que la ayudarían a pensar en su vida
Sin una sola vibración. Es ese instante, antes de dormirse,
Con la vigilia suspendida en la posición de sus manos,
Lo que la descripción puede señalar sin hacer ruido. La mano
Parece proteger, en un gesto de delicadeza, la plenitud del rostro
Tal como está, incluso la semisonrisa con que se entrega al sueño:
Los dedos doblados contra la sien no pueden evitar la inclinación
De la cabeza, y del cuerpo, hacia la comodidad de una idea de sí misma
Que buscó todo el día, deambulando por la casa. Está así,
Momentáneamente. Nada asegura que el brazo no caerá en unos segundos
Para revelarle, al despertar, otra cosa que aún no puede entender. Todo lo que está
A su lado –la puerta entreabierta, la fruta, la botella, el tapiz doblado, la silla
Que la enfrenta, el cuadro oscuro a sus espaldas- son signos de desasosiego,
Del equilibrio precario en que está su vida a esta hora de la tarde. Quién sabe
Si entonces su mano izquierda no se cierra, irritada,
Sobre la mesa, y aprieta un pliegue del mantel el tiempo necesario
Para quebrar el orden que la luz le impone. Por ahora
Duerme, y lo que vemos es exactamente lo mismo que ella ve,

Esa posición del cuarto y de las cosas que se cristalizan para durar
Mientras encuentra un sentido para el cuadro.

MORNING SUN, de Edward Hopper (1952)

Está mirando para adelante, sin que se puede saber muy bien qué.
Sólo mira, ésa es la posición que su cuerpo adopta
Con la cabeza en esa dirección,
La de la ventana abierta hacia nada. Un espacio
Que no promete, salvo el sol de la mañana. El sol de la mañana
Es todo. Ella se agarra las piernas y piensa, o respira sin pensar,
Sobre una cama ya tendida, temprano. Las paredes vacías
Se agotan en el color de las paredes: ya las vio, ya pasó el tiempo
Suficiente como para saber que no hay nada más que estar.
Podría decirse que no mira nada. Está así, con la cara tensa, los rasgos
Endurecidos en un momento de pausa solitaria que se permite
Después de algo. Después de haber pasado la noche y comprobar
Que así son las cosas. La simpleza de la situación
Se hace evidente a la luz de la mañana. Hecho
De líneas rectas, de cortes de sombra que recorren su cuerpo,
El espacio permanece en silencio. Es como la base fría, pero también dúctil
Sobre la cual se despliega el pensamiento, se mantiene a una cierta altura
Como una cuerda de violín que resuena hasta llegar a su rostro y entregarlo
Al aire de afuera. Lo que sucedió no es sólo lo que sucedió
De manera puntual: es consecuencia de lo que ya conoce. Éste
Es el límite, el punto en que la noche se encuentra con el día
Y ve lo que puede dar hasta aquí. Las interrupciones del relato
Se rompen en una continuidad aparentemente infinita. En realidad,
No sabe nada de lo que podría haber sido. Lo que hay afuera
Observa la misma calma vacía de adentro, el puro interior que se libera
Al juntar una mano con otra sobre las rodillas, los dedos de la izquierda
Estirados del otro lado como las raíces de un árbol. Todo lo que se dijo allí,
Durante horas, parece nada, una brisa leve que quedó en el cuarto
Y que sus ojos intentan retener, cerrados sobre sí mismos. Sin embargo,
La sensación de ser otra, de querer ser otra, prevalece:
No mira para afuera porque espera, tal vez, el momento en que el sol,
Si puede brillar un poco más, si la lenta evaporación de las partículas
Supera la sequedad de su piel, lo que resta de su historia
Se ponga en movimiento.

ANNA MARIA HONG

SEVEN POEMS

The White Box

for Ema Harris-Sintamarian

Circle circle circle and the bang is
buck geometry. The figure fronts full
fanatic symmetry. Disarray
arranges the gun of the lock. An eye

under ocean is still an eye. The wall
is studious narcotic. Slant reuses
the cant of the box. A palindrome pulse
recalibrates luck. The surface breaks

attention away from the point of born again.
Color on prayer. The core purls hardly parsed.
Motion scopes permission. Harmony

is a thrust. From arrow to vapor and pin
to bust, the helidrome ritualizes
felt logic, scraping escape from the blast.

The Green Box

The garden of earthly, sensual delight
excludes all impetus for usual caution.
Sumptuous fear, that primal temptation,
dissolves to pattern, paper-thin as light

through diamond-back. In the temple of suspension,
which is the mind, a supple tension expands
the skin stretched tight on spine and diamond,
contracting and repulsing light. The garden

of apple rot and sweet arable ruin
contracts again, an atavistic organ,
again, repulsing again, as the mind winds

its path through thick mortality, a line
in dust diverging purple origin,
a pause poised to envelop and remain.

Moon to Sun

Corona's at the edge of what's acceptable.
My Artemesian well will cover your stare
though I could swear, you won't feel it. Table
and chair. Development, return. We are

the ultimate binary pair, but only
from one perspective. I am a much smaller
massive object, cool, internal, free
of my own light. My gravity will collar

your value. You will darken me to pure
black splendor, as I bury your power
behind me. I am not quite as discrete

as I ought to be. You have everything
I want, and you will give me more than what
I want to need when I make you my ring.

Webster Needs a New Coat

The smell of the man was ash and mechanical.
We wore our filth like a summer jacket.
The chair was not at all comfortable.
The table was missing an important nail,

or maybe the floor was bent. I couldn't
locate my rhythm, as if I'd forgotten that
it was the first. Art happened in tiny increment
like painting a pinky toe pink again.

In the car I wanted you so bad, but on
the couch I was more interested in
my lack of focus and formal negligence, but
when you said, "I am ridiculush," that

consonant made me like you anew, but
just for a second. I was full of myself and remnant complication.

Red Wood

Echo says that heart is fine. Echo
channel is alright >>> murmur equals
dip within the tin of fever few too
many or few too few. Internal

< > error but innocent. Heart is
like a house, she says, with little rooms,
electric vents, and clapping, tiny fists
applauding loose division through. Distress

is liquid trails. A path is wound through some
and full. Joy and other passing guests
caress percussive coils of each vena
cava brut. *Confess, confess, confess.*

Each sluice leaves less and less to the whole
muscular, hollow mass, shaped like this.

Green Wood

Green pattern after my own part, pea vine
But bluer and remover…what is the word?
Not olive and working against gold grain
like a strain of modified beans born hard

and perfect. Stay with it. Nothing matters
but the crossing of X, Y, and P. Once
crossed, twice lined loses itself in patter…
One sees this clearly peeling backward toward

that origin, which had been misperceived
as the end to a run. One was convinced.
In fact, the line has sprung to field, sleeved
in blades, identical green on advanced

shade, blended and not possible to know.
The past, now hardly past, in gold, in tow.

À Table

Junk, junk, junk, I said. Pattern and nectar,
view, vision, and vector, though I could not
make out the diction. Speak more nicely, your
flat Highness. Roll me another fat

one while you're here. OK, please. (No.) Hmm, not
my favorite two-letter word. That would
be *Oh* as followed by a comma, et
cetera as in, "Oh, my!" or "Oh, good."

That's all I want and all I shall ever
need, but if I had a third letter (which
I don't), we might come up with an answer

that sounds more promising, something high-tech,
all optimized and such like a blank check
in visible ink, like a lifted switch.

SAGESSE

(Verano-invierno 1957)

1

Me miras, una choza o jaula
contiene tu fantasía, tu mirada frenética;

"un autillo de cara blanca, de Sierra Leone,
África occidental", leo bajo una foto en *The Listener,*

y ahora es Pentecostés, nueve de junio, y debo encontrar
al Ángel o al Poder que gobierna esta hora;

encuentro el nombre *Aneb* con el atributo
Dieu clément para la hora y el día,

Dieu propice con el nombre *Siré;*
Viroaso es el ángel para el día y la hora,

podríamos invocar al ángel, *Thopitus;*
¿me reprimen?, ¿qué puedo hacer, amigo mío?

Sólo puedo decir: "Oh, autillo de cara blanca,
mira fijamente, relumbra, vive..."

2

Que quienes marchan ante ti sientan
algo de lo que eres — y que Dios está dentro

del angosto confín de una jaula, una pluma;
reirán y vacilarán y algún niño podrá estremecerse,

tocado por la majestad, las alas elevadas,
la máscara blanca y los ojos que, como Dios,

parecen ver todo, y como Dios nada ven;
nuestra pequeña impertinencia, nuestro poco valor

es invisible en el día; cuando llegue la oscuridad
ya no serás un tonto, un payaso,

un autillo de cara blanca, capturado y en prisión,
sino escriba y noble y soldado, sacerdote y rey,

te alabaremos, sacrosanto, mientras las débiles mujeres
se arrodillen e inclinen entre las columnas del templo,

hasta que parpadeen las antorchas y se apaguen,
y sólo llegue una tenue luz de los braseros,

y el fantasmal rastro de incienso y el llanto de reconocimiento
y de alegría en el aire fragante.

4

Un búho ululaba en la oscuridad,
entonces llegó el ángel — ¿qué ángel y qué nombre?

¿es Tara, *Dieu fontaine de sagesse*
y el ángel Ptébiou?, era su hora

o cerca de su hora, ¿qué dijo él?
un visitante antes del mediodía había hablado de búhos aquí,

"*Uhu*", dijo ella, "*gran búho, Waldkauz, el búho de madera,*"
y ella tradujo *Kauz* como un tipo extraño;

mostré el retrato y ella dijo: "qué hermoso";
es extraño y maravilloso que anoche

haya sido la primera noche que vino,
la invitación distante, el grito silencioso, la llamada,

y mis huesos se derritieron y mi corazón era flama,
y todo lo que deseaba era libertad y seguir

la voz, no muy lejos, no muy cerca,
la voz que transformaba nuestro lago, el *Zürisee*,

en un misterio, la laguna encantada de *Märchen*
y las viejas leyendas, incluso Leteo o Eunoe, ahora y aquí.

7

Y el Bien existe, sólo el bien, *anglaise,*
la droite de Dieu, Syth es el ángel

¿y dónde estamos ahora?, siete semanas después de Pentecostés,
ya que hoy es 4 de agosto; el día del búho fue el 9 de junio,

y el Bien, sólo el bien, es el 21 de junio,
y los otros días para el Bien son el 10 de abril,

el 1 de septiembre, el 12 de noviembre, el 23 de enero,
y vemos así alrededor de la esfera anual, cada atributo de Dios,

cinco veces, cada llama, cada nombre de ángel
que de nuevo corresponde a horas y minutos;

mas es simple, el Bien, cualquiera lo comprende,
el Bien — *anglaise* — no cualquiera, es profundo y sutil,

pues mi cuarto tiene aroma a hechizo,
con las flores que él dejó, y soy llevada muy lejos

por Goth, Gott, *Germain*
el Sol, *Dieu admirable.*

10

¿O será una gran marea la que cubre el estanque de roca
de tal suerte que ésta y la roca no se distinguen

de la capa marítima y forman parte del fondo marítimo,
aunque la anémona de mar tiemble con aprehensión

y el alga seca se distienda dolorosamente
y el sedimento salado se rebele? "Fui sal,

una sustancia, concentrada, autónoma,
¿tendré que ser disuelta y perderme?",

"es terrible, fui un espejo, un individuo",
grita el estanque de roca poco profundo, "ahora la infinitud

me reclama; ¿soy todo?, y nada";
paz, sal, nunca fuiste así de útil,

paz, flor, eres una entre miles y miles,
paz, superficial estanque, piérdete.

12

Regente de fuego y de nieve distantes
y lo cercano, Senciner,

el templo de nuestro padre, *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*,
la sombra del portal en la arena, el dintel

y los muros pintados, donde cualquier niño puede leer
nuestro destino en imágenes de aves y abejas,

mientras el escriba, el iniciado y el desesperado esperan
vacilando ante el umbral,

cegados por el Sol; ¿dónde estamos?,
¿cómo encontrarnos aquí?, ¿dónde te has ido?,

pero éste es Germain, temiendo mi abstracción,
"¿por qué tiemblas?,

¿qué estás pensando?,
no sé a dónde estás;

debes salir, el carro vendrá mañana,
no has salido en una semana;

amabas los árboles como novias, dijiste,
verzaubert, amabas, dijiste, el bosque

geisterhaft im Nebel, el *Nebelzauberwald;*
¿serán las cinco demasiado tarde?"

14

¿Qué fue de los demás Regentes de la noche? ¿Se perdieron?
no, Germain, abrázame, caen pétalos de flor de durazno

fuera del refugio de bambú — ¿son las cuatro?, ¿las cinco?, ¿o más temprano?
¿a qué Trinidad llamaremos para que desdoble las mantas de seda

de nuestra cama?, aquí, la lluvia gotea
y la nieve, acaba de volverse lluvia en las ventanas,

y los cristales se nublan con esta lluvia y nieve de invierno;
éste es nuestro día — ¿la noche? ¿debemos renunciar

a la fruta tardía, al durazno y la granada,
abiertas, maduras para tomarlas, comerlas?,

tu orgullo, tu dignidad, mi propia reticencia
demanda perfección; no aquí, donde nos encontramos

en una charla amistosa, "escuché una sinfonía de Cherubini,
nueva para mí, ayer cuando te fuiste,

pienso que conoció a Liszt;
curioso, tenías razón,

Purcell es muy anterior a Mozart;
entonces, ¿mañana?", se inclina y en mi mano

caen pétalos de flor de durazno,
éste es el día, el beso único que conocemos.

16

Desde Egipto primero, cuán oscura, cuán oscura la noche,
yo misma un montículo de tierra, temblando, pero inerte,

y Germain dice, "tu debilidad y tus nervios
provienen de la aprensión; si escribes así, si creas,

debes esperar una reacción"; "mas esto difiere",
digo: "conozco los síntomas, como pareces llamarlos,

pero nada como esto sucedió antes cuando escribí";
"¿son estos poemas más intensos?, no lo sé,

no logro seguir a tus ángeles y niveles";
¿sabe él lo que es?, no lo sé,

pero *Dieu sauveur* se manifestó anoche,
el atributo de Seket y su hora,

la 1:20 mientras dormíamos;
ningún niño en la paja,

simplemente la flor de María,
"Marah" *Grande Mer*, la patrona y protectora,

estoques en sus tallos,
Creatrice de la Foi...

18

Sombre Mére Sterile y *Brillante Mére Féconde*,
luz y oscuridad; mantienes en equilibrio a los planetas

en curso, tú y tu Hijo,
y no hay tierra donde no se te encuentre,

no hay hora en que no estés cerca,
y siempre estás aquí,

para extender el libro de imágenes sobre mi cama,
para mostrarme quién eres, Tara, Miri, Mara,

con cerezas de montaña como la nieve de montaña,
o alga dorada lavada en arena dorada,

con conchas como pequeñas rosas verticilos,
y conchas como tazones huecos,

y la concha especial que escogiste para mí,
entre miríadas y miríadas de otras;

esta es mi concha, pégala a mi oído,
"escucha, mi niño, no tengas miedo de la antigua sabiduría,

(*Gymnosophes, Philosophes*), este eco es para ti,
escucha, mi niño, es suficiente,

el eco del mar, nuestro secreto
y nuestro simple misterio, *Grande Mer*..."

19

Un hilo, una hebra, 72 nombres de ángeles...
¿cómo continuar?, hemos nombrado a 7 de ellos;

el séptimo es Senciner, y luego tres más,
y luego otro, Seket y su hora;

Oh madre-padre, Seket-Senciner, al final encontramos
un tazón, una concha, al principio un búho, un venado,

así comenzó, el niño lo rodeó,
empezó y cerró el círculo...

ella piensa; "ahora mamá es quimérica",
estamos sentadas en nuestra cocina, aquí en Londres,

"cariño, sólo pon la tetera", dice mamá,
si tan sólo olvidara ese día, el verano pasado,

"sí, te veías rara", ella dice,
"¿qué sucedió?, cuatro lugares, cariño,

el tío Alf va a entrar — brr, invierno —,
afuera verdadera sopa de chícharo, sí, corre las cortinas,

bueno, de un rojo turco, siempre digo,
estoy pensando en ese autillo

y en esos venados — caray, hacía calor ese día,
¿te acuerdas?"

23

Mamá dijo que me veía rara,
no sé lo que dije,

sé que nunca más lo diré,
sólo a mí misma, lo diré una y otra vez,

cuando estoy en la cama...

Deja que el niño duerma, deja que el mundo duerma,
pocos resisten a Teut, Agad, Hana, Sila,

los nombres que compartes con Dios,
Grande Mer...pocos resisten

el éxtasis, la fiebre,
cómo se abre y se cierra una flor;

¿puedo resistir tu belleza y tu favor?
el día avanza y tú estuviste aquí al alba,

Sotis y Sothis; el día avanza hacia la oscuridad,
espero al Mensajero de pasada la medianoche,

todo el día la espero, a Seket de Egipto,
con el rojo lirio egipcio en la mano.

24

Dama de manos castas y mente silenciosa,
te hemos descuidado, siendo apenas perceptible y quieta,

inerte, resentida, a las 10:40 del día,
volviéndote hacia la noche que ha pasado,

en espera de la noche que vendrá;
Ouestucati, tu decantar atrae al viento marino

y a la llanura de *Leuké*, esa arena blanca;
llegas de las Hespérides,

¿cómo podemos saludarte aquí?
¿cómo podemos encontrarte aquí?

Oh casta, inmaculada, acepta nuestro humilde esfuerzo,
nuestra débil plegaria; en ti no hay conflicto

con las horas, las estaciones y los minutos;
te llevaríamos un cirio centelleante,

Oh, la más justa; indignos rezaríamos
para que intercedas por nosotros; nos des fuerza,

una poca de fuerza para honrar tu Poder,
Oh *Leuké*, lirio de esta hora matinal.

26

Dans le Soleil, il a placé sa tente,
et c'est Lui-même qui s'avance,

comme un Epoux hors de la couche nuptiale,
así el Tiempo y el Sol avanzan hacia *Béthuliens*

cuando Venus "dé" las 8;
no sé quiénes son ni de dónde,

pero ríen, dicen, ríen, ríen, como niños…
ríen, dicen, como simplones, como idiotas,

tontos y poetas; se ahogan de risa
ríen, ríen y colocan tus flores

en el santuario de Teut, Agad, Hana, Sila
que comparten tu nombre, *Soleil*.

Traducción de Ana Rosa González Matute

ROBERT FERNANDEZ

SEVEN POEMS FROM *PINK REEF*

*

nude peeling away strips of suntan
tracking shot
nude peeling away yellow clouds, caftans
nude peeling away black plaid rubber boots
tracking shot
nude peeling away the curtains of Solomon

I have compared thee, O my love,
to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots

I have compared thee, O my love,
to a smear of gold teeth in Pharaoh's chariots

I have compared thee, O my love,
to a gold eye dreaming in Pharaoh's chariots

& it is that we are alive
it is that we are fallow
it is that ecstasy's
gas masks flop
from beneath our ribs

*

imagines itself
a Cadillac-
mouthed cupid,
imagines
it entices with its
rosy skin (this morning
as ever
the wine
is black,
this morning
warlocks
walk through the walls)
this morning as
ever (O
Wolfgang)
we are
stilled before
a wall of speakers

you would imagine
yourself
not devious
deranged,
corrupt or
corrupting,
rather joyful,
fair

you would imagine
yourself
waiting for
the unknown,
for what

cannot
be expected

*

all's ghost
& Lord
noise &
abyssal jet
O Lord
I am
my brothers,
red ibis sunning its
wings
or sea-grapes
heaped on the dock,
a rib of heat rising along
the opaque surface
of the water

*

O to be formed,
flat, mercenary

O to be sold,
slack, murderous

then in the sawgrass
eating tar

then with badger's
blood thickening
the water

then Ariel grafted
into the monkey puzzle
tree, then grafted
into the monkey puzzle tree

*

weaponized, dutiful,
a measure of just
how we are found
a measure of just
how one has the nerve
to speak how
one has the nerve
to carve a
roulette wheel
from the stomach
(it's red
horizon
all day)
a measure
of just how one
has the nerve
to homily
to wild
strawberries

*

traveling
in saffron clay,
the colt,
tendons
torn, wants
to rest but is
driven relentlessly
on
(our knight
rides his horse
to death, steals
another, rides on)
it is as if the colt, peeled
from tawny film, is mist
gnashing across clay
it is as if the colt
mends, becomes
lighter

*

I've decided to pay
just at the point
I've decided
to pay into
the linen wall
& hope the fountain
will take my money

just at the point
at which I've decided to pay,
the point at which
the slit begins to leak
(it must be
a gusher)

just at the point
at which
the pigeons circle
around the single
violet pigeon
as if slowly
tending a star

just at the
point I want to stop:
the wall is amber

just at the point
I see the vultures
in the distance
& am given back

just as liars
bleed from
the eyes

just as at any
moment I like
to play at being
desperate

as at a given moment
being desperate
likes to play
at being
brained

so the brain-corals
heave
through the arms,
budding
across the skin
(torso by
Cimabue)

just so I ask
for the peace
to be &
simply is
& ask for
the peace to be
among my stung
with buds
brother
cacti

KHADIJAH QUEEN

SIX POEMS FROM *LOCI*

A CONFLUENCE OF FACTORS

has brought me to parallel
the Hudson River. If I turn
sideways, I face it. The
gathering point at which
eye and seen, body and outer
body, creating and created
make their choices: true,
false. In Allahabad

the confluence is Triveni
Sangam, the holy joining
of Ganges, Yamuna,
Saraswati. Hindus make
prayers at the junction. I pray
here but not because of
the river I have paid to cross.
At night the city rising
above it, unbearably

beautiful, its millions of lights
upon superimposition of black
lines on black sky. In Khartoum
the White and Blue Niles rush
together in the name of fertility.
My lover says my stretch marks
remind him of the earth before

kissing them. The Mosel flows
into the Rhine at Koblenz.
Every natural thing knows greed,
wants more, and too often
too much enters, thus gorge,
thus surrounding consequence.

(LOCUS: KINDLE)

O
Nubby nails, stippled belly, sticky feet
Who is looking at me?

O
Disappearing into a hand, a hat
Raging men, meshed into one loose paw

O
Sift through the cottony nest
Furring another man's pocket

O
Inhabiting each gesture. Predict numbers, colors, marks:
Stroked from sleep by several tongues clicking

O
A dozen bright births
A chop on the back of the neck

(*LEVERET: IN THE OPEN*)

O

Little blind runner, the knots in your head keep coming.
Your mother, fragile, has a brutal grip: forces her
to let you go, just when she doesn't know
what else will catch you

O

Bunched gut, sleepless, when sleeping dreaming of liars
and thieves who bear your own name, you touch yourself,
tender meat, and hate every minute. You lift fallen branches
with your teeth. Roll spilled seeds on your tongue. Scratch
the rash on your shoulder blades. Wash your hands
with spit. Splash your burning feet in mud. Holler and roil
in the green open as if someone can hear you. Run.

(LOCUS: WARREN)

O

Transgression is naught / but a warm burrow
in which / sorrows incubate

O

wounded human. Dig
deeper holes. Crowd your heaving
body into earth.

Make more of you. Give
new heat, new breath, make the black
soil move. *Yes mouth* closed,

tunnel swiftly. Be
brown, pocked, wet, a bloody moon
guarding the dark.

(PURIFICATION: SNOW MOON)

O

(I promise to hold your hand
when you chop down the bottle trees)

O

You want the varied yellows of my mouth
but I offer you a goat's tongue instead, buried
in a damp head, icy sand, graybeard,
ironwood leaves. I pull up fistfuls of grass
and bury myself, too. See: I've become
something closer to the earth. I'm trying to explain:
I am *in* the world but not *of* it (I've got firelight
and I can't even cry)

Performer / Performance

:: Extended Womb ::

In October cut at the strings. Blame excess electromagnetics for the fever whittling iron tongues into blades. Blame excess sleep, a brain clicked to its furthest edge, and hunger, slamming a scream through the slender doorway of a figure, black as shadow, but peppered with dust—anti-obsession. Sticky vernix. Feels like powder. A vault blown open.

:: Interment ::

The earth is so cool. Leaves the body shaking, like hair strands brushed back by stunned fingers—stunned open mouth after a long kiss, or cooling strokes in places in you where you had not felt a mouth in or a quiver in a long, long time. Not since.

:: Storm ::

Born to ride out squalls—eye trained on sea, ascending, descending, like a lover, a rhythm given over to all built sudden. *All is well*, she says: *Wind comes to me, & I mend: I mend what I smash, sweep the splintered decks with my bare feet. End starboard. Am told I might regret you.*

CAMILO ROLDÁN

AN INTRODUCTION TO *NADAISMO*

After hiding in the secretaries' restroom to escape a mob that wanted to kill him for his involvement with the recently overthrown dictatorship of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, Gonzalo Arango fled Medellín and traveled the countryside of Colombia. He stayed with friends when he could, but more often he would sleep in taverns. Arango wound up in Cali, another burgeoning industrial city of the late 1950's, like Medellín, where thousands of people sought refuge from the ongoing violence, La Gran Violencia, that was sweeping the countryside. Lying on a couch in his friend's office he thought to himself, *what do I have? Nada.*[1]

Nadaismo began neither as a literary movement nor as a political movement. In 1958, when Gonzalo Arango returned to Medellin to preside over a miniature book burning[2] and read his First Nadaista Manifesto from a roll of toilet paper, there were no indications of literary pretension or grand aesthetic revolution. Primarily a prose writer, Arango's poetic oeuvre is scant, with twenty-some-odd poems total. His contribution to the literary life in Colombia was moreover through his person than through his writings. As the prophetic leader of the Nadaistas, he offered an alternate means of cultural production for a generation that lost all confidence in the institutions and values of Colombian society—cultural institutions like the Catholic Church that condoned the massacre of "godless liber-

als"[3] or the literature of the preceding generation that heroicized the murderous acts of so-called revolutionaries. The Nadaistas never offered a new aesthetic or political vision—nothing other than the discrediting of Colombia's prevailing order. It was nothing other than a violent response to violence[4].

Most of the early attendees at Nadaista hangouts were drug addicts, thieves, adulterous men, and homosexuals.[5] Most of the poets that went on to be associated with the movement were at least a decade younger than Arango, some as young as seventeen. Many were self-educated, or had attained little more than a high-school diploma. In challenging Colombia's literary and cultural establishment, the Nadaistas incited the scorn of an intellectual elite against which their only weapon was a kind of scandalous histrionics: public blasphemy at the Medellin Cathedral, denunciation of established literary figures and the Colombian canon, a fake election booth with Nadaista candidates, orchestrated infighting (i.e. burning an effigy of Gonzalo Arango at Arango's behest), etc.[6]

Nadaismo has been referred to alternately as a Colombian Beat Generation, Colombian Dadaism, or a Colombian Futurism, yet Nadaismo is itself *as a wave is a wave*. It is total disavowal born in a particular context of violence and political instability. Although the Nadaistas fought against nationalism and provincial literature, they are uniquely Colombian in their origins and their language. Despite whatever misgivings current Colombian intellectuals may have in regards to the merit of Nadaismo when (erroneously) considered as a purely literary movement, the fact remains that Nadaismo has played a major role in the history of Colombian literature and popular culture. Not only does Nadaismo contribute to the individuation of Latin-American literary traditions in respect to the dominant, Euro-centric canon, I would like to imagine that Nadaismo offers a means of approaching literature for young Latino/a poets in the U.S.; that is, rather than focusing on our own provincial dialects and differences, to look upon the embattled nature of Hispanics in the U.S. and to recognize a common imperative to reject a society that allows racial profiling and persecution of peoples in states like Alabama and Arizona, a society that uses convoluted arguments of inclusion to justify the discontinuation of ethnic studies programs, a society that barely bats an eyelash when a politician calls Spanish the "language of the ghettos."[7] At a time when the de-centered political outcry of Occupy movements and other a-

political agendas seek to create major changes through cultural revolution rather than institutional engagement, Nadaismo can offer a new way to imagine our identity not only as Latino/a, but also our identity as Americans.

To that end, I have attempted in these translations to be as faithful as possible to the original documents. The poets included in this selection are two of the most representative (if such a thing can be said of such disparate poets) and the most widely recognized poets from the Nadaista movement: Gonzalo Arango and Jaime Jaramillo Escobar. As stated earlier, Gonzalo Arango was the founder and defacto, guru leader of the Nadaista movement. I've included along with a few of his poems a selection from the First Nadaista manifesto in which he gives the group its non-definition and anti-position. The translation of this Manifesto was particularly challenging because of his philosophical and critical diction, and because I am not well versed enough in Kierkegaard to find the passages he references and am therefore translating the translation of Kierkegaard into English.

Jaime Jaramillo Escobar's punctuality, responsibility, employment and compliant citizenship made him the most atypical Nadaísta. Nearly the same age as Arango, both men were about a decade older than most of the other members; whereas Arango was a charismatic and histrionic leader, Escobar spent years writing under the pseudonym X-504. X-504 famously said in his only interview, "The secret to my style is that I'm always naked when I write,"[8] and in this same spirit of contradiction, the same self-defeating spirit that seems to unify the Nadaista movement, I have approached the act of translation with the intent to disrobe.

NOTES

1. This anecdote is a translation of a text from Eduardo Escobar's book, *Gonzalo Arango* (Procultura 1989). Eduardo Escobar was a prominent poet in the Nadaista movement whose work is not included here simply because of my own time constraints. Other poets not included here but closely associated with Nadaismo are Jotamario Arbelaez, Amilcar Osorio, Armando Romero, Elmo Valencia, Alberto Escobar, Dario Lemos, Jaime Espinel and Jan Arb.

2. This book burning, as described to me by Armando Romero, consisted of various cheap and innocuous books for children and young adults. Because the

fire produced such an insignificant amount of smoke, they added newspaper to give the appearance of an actual book burning. According to Romero, with such a scarcity of printed matter, esp. works in translation, no one in their right mind would have burned a book of any value, even books of questionable literary merit.

3. "The most visible immediate response within the church to [*La Violencia*] was to identify the cause of religion wholly with the Conservative party, and condemn the Liberals as atheists and communists." Daniel H. Levine and Alexander W. Wilde. "The Catholic Church, 'Politics,' and Violence: The Colombian Case." *The Review of Politics* 39 (1997): 216-40.

4. This "*respuesta violenta a la violencia*" is Armando Romero's phrase, taken from his book *El nadaísmo colombiano, o, La busqueda de una vanguardia perdida* (Tercer Mundo 1988) and is notably repeated in many of his essays on the subject. Romero repeats this dictum in the introduction to his most recent anthology of Nadaista poets, *Antologia del Nadaismo* (Sibilina 2009).

5. This statement was made by Gonzalo Arango in an interview titled "Gonzalo Arango: De la nada al ser." Arco 16 (1975): 16-30.

6. *El nadaísmo colombiano, o, La busqueda de una vanguardia perdida* (Tercer Mundo 1988).

7. Newt Gingrich.

8. This quote and the anecdotal description of Jaime Jaramillo Escobar's meek compliance come from the epilogue that Gonzalo Arango wrote for Escobar's first collection of poems, *Las poemas de la ofensa* (Tercer Mundo 1968).

The Nadaistas

The Nadaistas invaded the city like a plague:
from saxophonic bars to the silence of books
from Olympic stadiums to prophylactics
from solitudes to the golden clamor of crowds
from south to north
when the day ignites in rose
until the apparition of neon lights
and later the embers nocturnal draught
until the spleen of dawn.

Alone he goes nowhere
because there is no place for him in the world
this doesn't make him sad
he likes to live because it's stupid to be dead
or to have never been born.

He is a Nadaista because he can't be anything else
he is marked by the pain of this question
coming out of his mouth like tepid vomit
of thrilling purity and mauve color:
"Why are there things instead of Nada?"
This question mark distinguishes him
from other realities and other beings.

He is himself as a wave is a wave
he carries the color that defines him as revolutionary
the way liquidity is typical of water
mortality of man
meandering of wind
of the worm to drag himself to his hole
of the night to be dark as a thought
without a future.

He has dyed his shirt with revolution
in the dazzle of flames
in the assassination of beauty
in the electric suicide of thought
in the rape of virgins
or simply in the slums of textile workers.
He wears his red shirt like an honor
like the sky wears a star
like a street signal intermittently shows
its catastrophic light
like a Pall-Mall pack
perfuming his adolescent chest.

The Nadaista is young and resplendent with solitude
is an eclipse beneath pallid neon
and the telegraph cables
is in the uproar of the city
and amongst the skyscrapers
the marvel of a flower stained purple
in the ruins of madness.

He has the danger of red lips and powder kegs
he looks at objects with sad anniversary eyes
he is the terror of rhetoricians
and moral fabricants
he is sensitive like a schizophrenic gonococcus
intelligent like a treatise on black magic
noisy as a carom at 2 in the morning
insurgent as a drainpipe smell
frivolous as a birthday
he is a sybaritic monk who walks without fear
toward his eternal condemnation
in shoes made of chamois cloth.

He suffers the vertigo of electronic
jazz beatings
and velocities against time
voltage bolt heart that shatters
on the windshield of a Volkswagen
desiring the woman of his fellow man.

He is bored to death but exists.

He doesn't kill himself because he loves to furiously fornicate
play billiards in the inexhaustible nights
toast rum in honor of his existence
stretch out on the lawns beneath metallic moons
not to think
not to tire
not to die of happiness
nor of boredom.

He is splendid like a dead star
spinning with radar in the vague empty skies.
He's nada but he's a Nadaista
and he is saved!

First Nadaísta Manifesto

I

Nadaísmo is a revolutionary spiritual state, and it goes beyond any kind of foresight or possibilities.

II

At times the artist has been considered a symbol vacillating between saintliness and insanity.

We want reclaim this by saying he is a man, a common man, that nothing separates him from the condition common to all human beings. And he is distinguished from others only by virtue of his craft and the specific elements with which he makes his destiny.

The artist is a being privileged with certain exceptional and mysterious gifts provided by nature. Within him are Satanism, strange biological forces, and conscious creative efforts through emotional intuitions or experiences from the history of thought.

His fate is a simple selection or vocation, quite irrational, or conditioned by a bio-psycho-conscious determinism, engaged with the world if he is a politician, madness if he is a poet, or transcendence if he is a mystic.

III

I will define poetry as all completely gratuitous actions of the spirit, as disinterested in ethical, social, political, or rational assumptions prescribed by men as programs for happiness or justice.

Originating in the senses, I limit this exercise of the creative spirit to the field of pure, useless subjectivity, to the solitary act of Being.

The poetic exercise lacks a social or moralizing function. It is an action whose completion ends in itself, the least useful of the creative spirit. Jean-Paul Sartre defined it as choosing failure.

In essence, poetry is a breath of lonesome beauty. The most corruptive onanistic vice of the modern spirit.

VI

We rectify the old americanist concept that a nation is young in virtue of its landscape. It is in relation to its ideas and spiritual evolution. Decrepitude is not a conception of the aged physical world, but rather the caducity of the resigned spirit, incapable of evolving toward new forms of life and culture.

America was born old. By fault of her discoverers and inheritance, for History, the birth of America meant a type of death. Or more precisely, an imperfect abortion of life. In such a way that she has not had a cultural birth of her own, feeding herself the way one feeds on a tired and sterilizing old age transmitted through the umbilical cord of her language and beliefs.

Faced with the dilemma of being or not being, of choosing a separate culture with universal meaning, what does it mean for America to carve toads, to relive myths, to augment superstitions, to hold on to forgotten times, prehistory, if still her culture neither counts nor determines anything in the arrival of contemporary ideas?

Lingering in the past with a contemplative astonishment demonstrates America's complex about facing an evolved world that decides her destiny and her historical and biological survival through current social revolutions and scientific conquests of space, competitions for the political predominance of earth.

America cannot moor herself in regional, folkloric, and mythic traditions. That would be an aspect of her intellectual and artistic development, but she cannot decide her destiny and history based on these inferior forms of her development. America should overcome her infantile spiritual complex. Otherwise, we will remain in an age of lagoons and toads; meanwhile, scientific engineering puts the stars in outer space.

No nation or continent, old or new, can choose its destiny alone. The smallest wave in the sea of contemporary history shakes the future of nations with its movement and decides their luck or disgrace.

A solitary culture, disconnected from universal interests, is impossible to imagine. No one can evade, nor elude the role they represent in the modern world. Everything is profoundly interrelated in this age where an ordinary man embodies a historical mission; his responsible conduct, his action or indifference, carries immense ethical implications, and by accepting or declining this he is

saved or condemned.

We can no longer accept Kierkegaard's anguished thinking as a moral sense of existence, "Be the world as it may, I will keep an original naturalness I don't plan on exchanging for the sake of the world's well-being."

VIII

We have renounced the hope of transcendence via the promises of any religion or philosophical idealism. For us this is the world and this is mankind. Other hermeneutics on these evident truths lack human sensibility. The abstractions and chimeras of man's Being, they fall in the domain of pure speculation and metaphysical symbolism, a natural product of man's yearning to transcend his concrete identity and fix it in an ideal form beyond any space-time limitations. This yearning corresponds with the idealist and poetic nature, seeking to crystallize the essence of Being in the absolute, in the eternal. Proposing said illusion, as an afterlife, is the mission of religions.

We believe man's destiny is terrestrial and temporal. It is conducted on a physical plane, and only a creative dynamism over earthly material gives the measure of his spiritual mission, focusing his thought on the history of human culture.

Man is the Absolute in the random and unnecessary measurement between the accident of his beginning and end. This criterion excludes any possibility of transcendence. Over his immediate options, man chooses this earth: immanence.

Metaphysics is an investigation of death and the transcendent possibilities of existence. In other words, it is an evasion of Being toward the same Being one already knows. That is why it is the creation of a world unto itself, one completely independent from historic fluctuations, which are the exclusive field of politics, which implies sharing the world with others.

Consequently, the only "use" for metaphysics is to think about death because thinking about life is, precisely, politics.

Because of its essential character in relation to life's irreducible ideas, pure speculation does not interest us as an aspiration towards transcendence. The image that results from a metaphysical exercise never leads to solutions for social or terrestrial justice, perfection, or human happiness anyway. On the contrary,

the consequence is desperation and disorder.

XI

Liberty is, in short, a compromising act. It is not a sentiment, idea, or passion. It is an act poured into the world of history. It is, in essence, the negation of solitude.

XIII

To destroy an order is at least as difficult as creating one. Before an enterprise of such immense proportions, we decline to destroy the established order. The fundamental aspiration of Nadaísmo is to discredit that order.

By attempting this revolutionary movement we fulfill that renewing, cyclical lifelong mission; what is, in short, a fight to liberate the spirit from resignation, to defend the permanence of true adoration from instability.

In this society where *the lie has become the rule*, there is no one over whom to triumph, only over oneself. And fighting against others means teaching them to triumph over themselves.

The mission is this:

Do not leave one faith intact nor one idol in its place. All that is consecrated as praiseworthy by the prevailing order shall be examined and revised. Only those things geared towards the revolution shall be saved, and their indestructible consistence will be the concrete foundation of a new society.

Everything else will be overturned and destroyed.

How far will we get? The end doesn't matter from the perspective of the struggle. Because not arriving is also the fulfillment of a destiny.

Your Navel, World Capital

to the Nun

I left your house.
I walked the length of the beach.

The morning captive some place
beyond the sea
refused to show.

Content through and through
I sat to drink coffee
in the assassin's tavern.

They offered me rum
a bullet
and a woman
I refused.

They thought I was the Deadly King
of a dangerous underworld
and they rewarded me with my life.

(It is the greatest gift one assassin
can give another.)

Later, someone suspected
I was a poet of death
and they kicked me out.

(In the domain of the underworld no one laughs
at death, they told me.)

I cleaned my wounds in the public fountain.
In the hotel they wished me "good day"

and the doorman's look searched me
for the secrets of night.
I got on the elevator.

On the balcony I contemplated
the last stars
the palm trees
the innocent city
overtaken by thieves
and crickets on the lam.

An inhuman peace traveled the roads
and the first buses
went to war with the day.

In the end I think of your body abandoned
a short time ago
tired by the triumph of love
I am no longer there
and surely I am in your nostalgia
in the pain of my teeth on your flesh
pierced by my appetite.

You hug your breasts like you would remorse
and in your outraged body I remain
like someone who missed the last train
that leaves for the cold season
and the hospital district.

Run aground at your door
I ask to be let in
to return to the paradise of your sex
where all the seasons reside
and the omission of death.

It is 5 a.m. in the milkman's truck.

To sleep eternally
anchored in the bay of your navel:
        black sky of liberty
        deep shore of memory
                where I forget you
                and I forget myself
to remember the glory of the present.

Poem to be

to be a streetlight in the rain
to be a lightning bolt on a lightning rod
to be a macaw
to be a glowing sign at 6 in the afternoon
        to be a revolver and a bullet
        a dangerous enemy
a day whichever on the calendar page
        a few trickles of consistent rain
                a little cold
a wet building 14 stories in the rain
        the sky makes its own revolution
        humans hide for fear
        in closed premises
                under the eaves
        in a scout ship
to be fast as a car
to be the commander of a celestial revolution
to be a delayed swallow
                in the empire of rain
        the telegraph wires distill drops
        to be the balcony in the firmament
the passerby who cannot be late for work
        the girlfriend on her way to a date
the motorcycle parked in the middle of the street
                to be the trash that flows
                the cold windows
                the heat dominated
to be like my woman who invites me to bed of her own accord
to be a moment in the company of any other moment
        to be an open letter
a telegram with bad news
        the pedal of a dentist chair
a gully that runs without getting upset

over the leaves it carries to the inlet
an addition of kisses
a subtraction of debts
a multiplication of low instincts
a division of shames
to be the biggest lottery prize
a vase with anemones and gladiolas
a Sauco flower
a blade of verbena
a pistil—staminate
an overpowered revolution
a declaration of war
a peaceful armistice
a dead person
a living person
a need to urinate
to be like my woman who doesn't think
later exists
to be once and again
indefinitely
myself
gonzaloarango

Bulletin Number Nada

We demand strictly cheerful music be played
all the revolutions are sad
the popping of spring prohibited
at the most a sunflower in the lapel
and sing the national anthem
it rains lead
flames consume the republic
it's 3 in the afternoon my love
now it really rains
rivers of Japanese porcelain
flood *La Playa* avenue in Medellín
my comrade got a tattoo on his chest
a red corolla
a pipe
his lady's navel

My Cali

Cali woman, love me.
Cali sun, embrace me.
Cali River, take me to the sea.
Intoxications of Cali,
take pity on me.
Cali sky, save me.
Nostalgia of Cali,
bring me back
to the fatherland.
Cali cemetery,
kick me out of your tombs.
Sultana del Valle,
tie a rope from my heart
to your feet.
If someday I die
—it's just a saying—
I will return with my limey bones
to paint your teeth
with the eternal smile of summer.
I thank you, my Lord,
because you made Cali
from one of Eve's tits
and Adam's desire.

Revolution

One hand
plus another hand
are not two hands
they are hands united
join your hand
with our hands
so the world
is not in a few hands
but in all our hands

JAIME JARAMILLO ESCOBAR (X-504)

The Disgraceful Path

The pale and weak boy came forth from the flower that grew on the forest edge,
wrapped in fog, in the night, and in all hazy and deceptive smoke,
walking in step with his father—wrought by wind in the wax of day—,
piercing the mist and distance with his dreaming eyes, river surveyors,
he directed himself toward a distant country of houses big as skies with seven tiled floors,
through the stones of his land and the fallen trees, felled by the lightning on the mountain.
Childhood friends nested in his heart and his head was ringed with clouds,
the eagle clouds that descend along the mountain range to shine in the solemn river barely unveiled,
the jungle that every six months swallows this child in a dawn of disappearing metals.
His feet leave a trail in the pebbles, but his heart sings like the echo of rays
in the scorched earth where a wild sun at noon shouts like a bleeding volcano.
Whilst the trains run along the banks of rivers, he pens verses honoring the landscape and himself.
You would have seen the palm trees, and herons, and black rocks. And the forest.
But he sure knew where the palm trees go, and he knew the underside of bird wings, and all the secrets of the forest,
and for him the city lights where no more numerous than the stars.
Black women appeared to whisk him out of night and toward their huts to disrobe him,
and hairy men to devour him on the river banks, masked in their laughter.
Blond dancers mocked him, giving him the runaround with their braided legs,
and a gang of boys pricked him with their knives until he would wake in a fever.
So he ran between rivers and seas, a great water that purified him until he became thin,
stretched out on a remote beach where he could hug a golden snail named "Leave me not"
and speak to it unafraid.
But "the many-eyed angel" came every afternoon for his soul, to take it to "The House of Disgrace," where they gave him drinks in strange cups,
and in his memory smoke replaced the delicate cloud, the one that sprinkled the lamb's wool,
in the forgotten places of his birth.

Soon his lover gave him six rounds from a pistol, hiding the gun in her handbag afterward
and leaving disdainfully
while he looked at his splintered ankles and passed out upon hearing the ambulance siren.

The Incurable Stigma

Nothing is worth more than this day.
J. W. Goethe

There is an animal that must always be in the daylight. If night reaches him he dies.
This animal runs with the sun. For him it is always midday and he does not know night.
He travels the world with the sun; he runs, flies, swims; he is conceived this way to meet his need for light.
He crosses the jungles, the mountains, the seas—always with the sun.
On the islands it is easy to see him when he passes chasing the day. He is always under the sun.
During the last eclipse he hurled himself into the sea like a parachute from the sun. He was on the brink of death.
Likewise there is another animal who must always be with the night. Daylight cannot touch the tip of his tail because he will die.
This animal is chasing the night across continents, islands and seas, but he is not easy to see. Only once was he on the verge of being trapped over the Indian Ocean.
He does not know day and if by some chance he finds himself with the animal who chases day, the fight between them would raise hundred meter waves in the sea, and waterspouts able to capsize great ships.
As a child, I often stayed awake all night in the foyer waiting for this animal to pass by, o see him, but maybe he didn't pass through my village.
I thought he might eat stars. Well, we can only know the stars rise and fall. But perhaps he only feeds on fireflies.

This animal does not have a set name because they call him something distinct in every country. He never wants to leave the darkness, and if a finger of light touches him on the back it opens an incurable stigma.

How I Became a Monster

Hid in his caves the Bard of Albion
felt the enormous plagues.
And a cowl of flesh grew o'er his head
& scales on his back & ribs
William Blake

For the benefit of future generations and those who wish to educate their children, I will now explain how I became a monster—
with difficulty my hand, transformed into a claw, can take up the quill and awkwardly draw these letters;
nevertheless, I will carry out this final act before Death knocks me down with one more lash of her tail
because I think about those young people prone to becoming monsters like me
and this final act will liberate my soul, which I command to wander these caves after my death.
The hair on my head stands on end as well as the down on my arms, and the wicked cold that passes over me makes my whole body tremble when I write these lines.
Oh lovers of monsters for whom you carry syrup to the deepest grottoes of the earth!
Know that when I was young, in those coastal days, I swam naked in the salt water
respected by the tritons and playing with the fish that would come to wiggle their tails in my hand.
My father, in his house of horizon, spent the whole day reinforcing nets with strands of his long white beard,
and my mother, up in the stars, did not see me.
Then came the son of the lighthouse keeper with his wire girlfriend,
and a magpie seated on his right shoulder that would recite a magic poem written many centuries ago by a famous monster from Asia.
My father, in his house of horizon, wrapped my brothers in nets,
and my mother, up in the stars, did not see me.
So, the son of the lighthouse keeper called upon me to go to an island where we would obtain a magpie of my own,
which would recite poems written many years ago by the most famous monsters of Asia.
To the north of the island a great city arose, sewn together with palm trees and more luminous than the starry sky.
Heading towards it, we arrived at the hour when the pinwheels are lit,

and we went directly to the district where the magpie vendors hawk, the area around the port.
For many years we remained warped in the city streets, unable to find the exit to return
because the poems were deceptive and gave erroneous descriptions of maps
with the goal of keeping the chosen until their eyeteeth would grow sharp and they could no longer leave the island.
And during those years a whirlwind hand made me take to drink everyday the liquor that separates our fellow man.
So, I looked for this cavern, beyond the North, and in it I have remained alone,
watching my limbs transform and my body sheathe itself in scales,
and all of those in whom my thoughts remain begin to grow pointed fangs.

Visit from the Whale

I have here a whale that has come to visit me.
From distant regions of the sea the whale has come to visit, greeting me with three blowholes of mist,
halting at the cave entrance to request an audience.
I show up to receive the whale (whom God welcomes) and, having entered immediate intimacies,
I speak of my youth in a grotto on the tallest peak of Aconcagua
and the emergence of the sun from behind my ears,
and slapping her impenetrable hide we laughed like two friends,
the whale, bus of the seas, and I who receive her at the entrance to my cave,
and we chat until dusk, relaxing on the brilliant carpet of the sands permeated with light.
She tells me about what she has seen in the depths of the ocean,
the shipwrecked living in the sunken boats and their strange customs,
and what happens in the sea at night.
Once the whale has made use of the word in accordance with the laws of hospitality
and the norms that govern the acts of visitors,
I begin to speak to her of the depths of my soul, and when I pause at the morning twilight she does not answer me.
So I drag her out and leave her on the shore to be scooped up by the sea.
I send her off with my hand on-high when the tide recedes at dawn.
The whale (who God respects and welcomes) rapidly distances herself in the open sea and heads off to crash into the disc of sun that just appeared on the horizon.
Showing my back to this spectacle, I return to the cave to kiss the scorpions of my anxiety.
Oh, monster who has imprisoned me in this mountain
to protect the world from my strange calamity!

Problems in Contemporary Aesthetics

The magnitude of humanity weighs on each of us, and on our hearts we profoundly feel the antipodes walking about.
Such that it's not unusual for us to walk about like some dazed christs in search of a cross upon which to hang.
Having climbed to the top of a hill one night, the city stretched out before me like the skin of a tiger.
And the embers of three souls glimmered in the cup's liquor.
The last one was mine, always a soul leftover and alone.
Teeth marks drifted through the air and suddenly the Devil appeared and said to me: "You can have it all if you worship me prostrate."
Owning the world is the same as not having anything: there are mistakes in everything and we are always being deceived.
I cannot exchange my jeans and jacket for a five-story building or a position in a Government office.
I prefer to wander downtrodden through neighborhoods with auto shops and carports.
There they all try to have the best things possible in their lives, so they pick up a flower, a girlfriend and a mirror.
This collective effort softens me and gradually, without realizing it, I smile at everyone like a dog.
One morning a man walked naked through the city streets.
The police put him in jail a few hours later, just like any man who tries to be happy.
Because all that is not included within the Law is outside it.
And within the Law there cannot be a naked man because the Law is written by the representatives of textile factory proprietors.
As neither can there be a hungry man because the hunger of the poor is a mistake.
I went to a small restaurant one day and a grizzly man stood in the door. After watching me he took off saying:
"So you're eating, huh? I'm glad, I'm glad!"
And his laughter fell on the soup like a black spider.

At least the pastry chef can eat his fill, but he who only knows how to make poems, what will he eat?
If a question doesn't have an answer the best thing to do is change the question and the problem.

That's why there are arrogant people who tell us:
"Dedicate yourself to aesthetics!"

Apologue of Paradise

Eve, transformed into a serpent, offered Adam an apple.
They were expelled from Paradise, but they took seeds with them,
and Adam and Eve found soil and there planted the seeds of paradise.

We can always make paradise out of our surroundings, wherever we may find ourselves.
For that we only need to be naked.

Palingenesis

Eternity comes on its own.
X-504

"Sister Mary," medium and clairvoyant, came to visit me tonight with Juan Antonio Arbeláez.

She took a seat, closed her blind eyes, relaxed a moment under the weight of her old age and ailments, and said to me:

"I come to your house for the first time, enticed by the beautiful energy that you emanate in this period of your life. You should know that you have been, are and will be eternally a poet. You have been since the preceding eternity, and in the next eternity you will be reborn forever a poet because you have been granted this unique and singular grace as a witness to the Universe. You write about your past lives in different parts of the Earth, when you toiled disseminated along the thirty-two paths of the horizon, and you write about your future lives as a poet in other centuries, incarnate in other beings. Of course, this is only possible for you, thus granted that your luminous energy is always the same, and, if you should desire, you may obtain your future memories and past visions, as in both states you live in the present. Those are my words for you, O Poet!"

Then Sister Mary asked for assistance so she could retire. I touched her arm to help her, but it was an elegant arm, taut around the air of her bones, and I left her discreetly in the care of saint Antonio Arbeláez.

They don't agree, the clairvoyants. Madame Marin in Barranquilla told me:

"I have never seen nor imagined anyone as stubborn as you. You must be the universal and eternal model of stubbornness."

However, when she represented my life, she quickly drew a horizontal line, the ends of which went beyond the paper's edge.

With vertical strokes she described my years, and when I asked about the line extending before and after, she said:

"I don't know. The impulse to trace that line is new for me. Perhaps you have existed before, because at the beginning of the line I clearly saw the year 1212 and the Children's Crusade. Perhaps you will exist once again because that impulse swung my arm mercilessly. Nothing more persistent than stubbornness. Hail Mary! Jesus!"

In an old letter from San Francsico, Amílcar Osorio tells me, "I see you have an eternal face," and Valmiro Paba swears he has seen me on another planet.

The poet Geraldino Brasil writes to me from Recife, certain that, in some previous era, I was a Brazilian poet. He repeats this in many of his letters because he doesn't want there to be any doubt.

As far as I'm concerned, the only thing I can add is that sometimes in my dreams an old book appears in which I read the poems I transcribe upon waking.

In an attempt to confirm these omens, I went to see my doctor this afternoon, Dr. Daniel Caicedo Gutiérrez. He said:

"You have to take vitamins A to Z in capsules and injections until the year 2000. For the following appointment you can call me in the next century. I hope you get better. Goodbye."

Peroration

Ladies and gentlemen, oh, gentlemen!

Look at this red box. Do you see it? In it I bring my poem, which will go along unraveling in front of you, right here before your eyes, rattling its colorful castanets and stretching out its head to see you better and occasionally take a peck.

I'm about to open it, I'm opening it. It's already moving, pay attention, soon the poem will begin to emerge from this beautiful red box with built-in music, this box of surprises, so light and so beautiful.

While I move my hand inside it to tame the poem let me tell you, oh gentlemen: don't read heavy poems, or bitter poems. The poem must be flexible, slippery, undulating, with a cold body so that you shudder, and in its head a mouth capable of doing anything to you.

Attention, gentlemen, the poem is beginning to emerge. While it comes out, let me tell you, oh gentlemen: never eat hot poems; a good poem is eaten cold.

I have not brought you the longest, vastest, most dilated or interminable Amazonian snake; nor have I cut down a fresh blossom of Victoria regia; nor does this animal have a toucan bill.

Gentlemen, oh gentlemen, in the Medellin airport two men converse: "My oldest son, an engineer, got married and they have a son. Inés Clara, his wife, is enchanting, from the best family. But Luis Carlos, my younger son, what a disgrace, his mother is inconsolable. We've done everything we can, there's no solution. What a terrible disgrace!

"...!?"

"He's dedicated himself to reading poetry! Don't you get it, man? And I thought he was so smart!"

Gentlemen, oh gentlemen! This box has traveled half the world with me. I haven't always kept fluent and indomitable poems in it. Sometimes also the clothes that I shed. But it is the poem's box no matter what. Think of it, if you will, as a cage. In it I have carried the bird that does not exist.

Those of you in front, move back a little. Those of you in back, come closer. Make a perfect circle, take each other by the hand, here comes emerging this green thing that is the poem. How about it, sir, how much do you think you

have in your pocket? Give me half and see the whole monster. It's not for me, it's to buy milk for it.

Ladies and gentlemen, on one particular occasion, wandering through a distant land, I chanced to befriend a local poet, a man of his province who knew nothing of the world but a few stars. It would have been enough to have known one, they're all the same, but the amount was important for him. The world is the world by being innumerable, he told me. What would become of us if we only had one god?

I have crossed this place, where you see me now, many times since I was a boy. I was in Brazil, where the ground fills with toads after the immense downpours. From Brazil comes this red hand with gold fingernails for luck, for good luck, because they cured me of the bad in Bahia.

Yes gentlemen, sirs, do not be afraid. This line is a decasyllable, good for insomnia, and these are tercets, for treating burns. And an acrostic for headaches. I said acrostic, not a tonic.

Gentlemen, sirs! Here we have the forest creatures, pale and wet in the torrential rain. They hide in their caves, in the hollowed out trunks. They hide beneath giant leaves, but the invincible downpour grows. Make a house for the tapir, a palace for the tiger. The winged beings cover themselves with their wings, but the father and son only have a thin cloak, waterlogged.

I will tell you, gentlemen, yes, I will tell you what a poet does:

Put a weather vane in the window to disorient the birds.

Carve ice-fish to exchange in the sea for real fish.

Keep hail in the cellar to eat in front of friends in summertime.

Chance upon a blustery wind and hand over an umbrella inside-out.

Erase the stain of shadows on glasses with a shirtsleeve.

Stand on a folding chair to paint a mustache on the moon.

Scrutinize the horizon to see if there is a bird-headed man in the wind.

Tell the dawn where a villain lives so she wont pass along the patio of his house.

When a rainbow appears, head out and hogtie it to see how it shines by night.

Catch televisions by the antennas and crack open their maws to take back

all the pictures of women they've swallowed.

Hang lighthouse mirrors in the bedroom for fat codfish with pretty eyes.

Go contemplate black children on the beach who pluck tufts from a summer cloud to make sheep with waxy black faces. To make doves with black beaks. To make their mothers scold them for wrecking the sky.

If, upon finding a crocodile, sing hymns with it, and in general sing with all beings, even with a machine that is so savage, or with a supersonic angel.

Make a courtesy call to the garden.

Direct the water with a pinky finger and say whatever they feel like saying, for that they are poets.

Never stop thinking about what is hidden, with the intent to find it. The poet is one who pulls a hat from the mouth of a rabbit.

And so many more jobs that I won't reveal so you all don't learn the poet's trade.

I've told you, yes, I know, I've told you what poetry is. Poetry is all of that which I told you, and this little, red, empty box in which, as you can plainly see, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, except itself on the inside.

Goodbye, gentlemen, I'm going now, here come the police. I leave you my shade.

PAUL MARTINEZ-POMPA

THREE POEMS

The Man Who Couldn't Stop Thinking

Just as snow
begins to fall a bird
lifts from a wire
and becomes the sky. The snow
becomes the child, sleeping
beside her father who imagines
a tiny pile of bone & feather
vanishing into ground.

He wants to touch her
which means he wants
to touch the snow
but his hands are bound
and he cannot break
what doesn't surface
as a ghost but as a hard
absence of flesh.

*

I don't care that the pond is
manmade. The trees & the ducks are not
concerned with the cold. I trust
below the grasses that rim the water
is something dying & something ready
to emerge. When the wind blows
even trash looks perfect. Across the pond
a man reaches skyward
in the form of an old tree. He follows me
everywhere I go. He is already present
before I get there.

English as a Foreign Language

Somewhere is a contract
stating I married a name breathing
in the next room. Sometimes she appears
and I appear and we find ourselves
alone in a hallway, revising our bodies
small enough to pass without touching.

Once upon a time a boy and a girl disappeared
in a roomful of lust. Each body unsure
where its own skin stopped
and the other began. Outside the sun
went on punishing the earth and the moon
couldn't have been more
alive.

Impossible Bottle

Wherein a magnificent sentence
that can't possibly fit through
the tiny opening stands for the sole
purpose of being looked at

& outside our house a flower
display or inflatable snowman
during the cold months

& inside our house a gathering of bodies
entirely insignificant when removed
from the brick the wood the glass.

OSCAR CRUZ

TRES POEMAS

Poesía sub-40

a menudo se critica a mi generación.
se dice que no sirve para nada. que no
tiene voluntad ni pensamiento propio.
que avanza en caravana por las calles
del mal. quizás los que hablan tengan
la razón, pero es bueno que valoren un
detalle: mi padre
tiene ojos de perro, mi madre tiene
ojos de perro, los padres de mis padres
tienen ojos de perro, y tú que nos
criticas tienes lengua de perro. sería
bueno que valoren el detalle, o habrá
que vacunarlos pronto, contra la rabia.

20 DE OCTUBRE

la Cultura Cubana es un ajiaco:
dijo en un texto el Dr. Fernando Ortiz,
una frase que los loros han convertido
en apotegma. el célebre Fernando,
comíase manjares que luego convertía
en apotegmas. comíase apotegmas
que luego convertía en ajiacos. suerte
para los loros y los sabios.
no soy un pensador, apenas trabajo
en una Institución que nada tiene que ver
con el ajiaco. mi salario solo alcanza
para el fisco y el aceite.

la Cultura Cubana puede convertirse
en un ajiaco, basta que los loros y los sabios
nos suban el salario y se callen.

El buen muñeco

de niño los viejos me compraron un Porfiao.
véase un muñeco vacío de lenguaje, que lleva
el contrapeso en la base y que golpeado con
fuerza hacia cualquier dirección, siempre
termina por estar derecho). tenía la sonrisa
atroz y la mirada hueca.

pasé largas horas sentado tratando de tumbarlo
pero nunca lo lograba. por más que en la cabeza
lo golpeé el rojo muñecón se la agenció
para quedar derecho.

el juego me volvió El Gran Porfiao:
véase un sujeto vacío de lenguaje, que lleva
el contrapeso entre las piernas y que golpeado
con fuerza hacia cualquier dirección
siempre termina por estar derecho.

esto no le agrada a los mayores, tan alegres
y enfocados en el arte de mandar.

soy para tu bien el Buen Muñeco.
si quieres comprobar cómo me enderezo

golpea mi cabeza.

DANIEL SHAPIRO

FROM "THE RED HANDKERCHIEF"

Summer, Guadalajara

Güero danced a drunk bolero on the roof.
He gave me a peso crushed smooth
by a train, a green clay figurine.

We swam in the fountain, circled by cars;
drivers stopped to whistle:
gringo. Güero shouted back, *no, francés,*
water clinging to his corkscrew curls.

After that summer, he disappeared
into Bloomington, Indiana.
We exchanged letters, one each, and stopped.

Sometimes I think of Guadalajara's
roses, its cantinas and fountains,
the squawk of macaws calling from the forest
where the bus released us further than we thought.

We found the wall where they jammed
Hidalgo's head on a stake,
three small, stiff squirrels lining the curb.

We found the mummies of Guanajuato
crowding a hill, babies in lace caps and trios of men,
teeth exposed to sing *rancheras* to themselves.

If I could wake you out of your heartland,
I would point my finger south,
toward a vanishing point of sand,
knowing full well:

When you placed that silver peso
on the track, to smear the face of a man
to alloy, entire histories
disappeared. The silver coin warms my palm,
the moment clear.

Prelude for a Stranger

I came to a place
where mountains towered
over sand
and a cloud
floated in a pristine sky,

a stark place
that made me melancholy,
pounding me there
unyielding as sun
on a stone mound.

I sought you there
in the crackling afternoon,
your breast all lit up by sun,
a reflection
quivering in a pool.

I tried to sound
the first notes
of a wordless song.
Nothing but sand,

nothing but wind
through desert poplars,
unmarked tombs, in the distance
a painted steeple
speared air.

Then the wind changed
hinting rain, a smell of algae
clinging to shale and red
buds glistening
into pending blooms.

Was it your laugh
booming out of a canyon
that rose to the foothills?
Or was it thunder
announcing a storm?

Still Life

Fruitflies hover above the bananas
blackening in the glazed, white bowl.

A plum molds into buttocks
stretched with thin, wrinkled skin.

The swath of scalp running forehead to crown
defines my age; shadow eats my grin.

Eating mangos, slurping them down
to their velvet pit, listening to music—

A *charango*'s chord flutters out the window,
plummets.

I have seen no one die,

only faces that sag and drain
inside squares of muddy newsprint.

I have lathered my face with foam,
I scrape it away. Will my cheekbone jut through

the paper skin? (pricked by a razor, a globe of blood
in my cleft chin, where the virus swims)

A horsefly threads between the black
tableaux of buildings, dented trashcans

before it lifts and disappears
into hard cerulean or lands

on the moist skin of a plum
and burrows in.

The Medium

"When I'm sitting here alone,
the dear Lord uses half his energy.
This table weighs thirty pounds.
He has to magnetize my hands."

Adele Tinning's hands pose a question
I can't explain. I follow her gestures,
the threads she unwinds, imagining wires,
special muscles in her arms,

until a breeze fluffs the curtains in the window.
"That's a spirit, dear, that puff of wind."

In a polaroid, a bolt of light
forks from her infant son's head.
Honeycombed spirals pass under the table
whose leg glows blue.

She touches a seam in the bird's-eye maple.
She calls her spirit-guides Matthew and John
but Zoro comes in. "He doesn't touch the floor
like the others. Ask him to tell you what stage you're in."

Seven stages like the seven ages of man—
He says I have only Love to learn.

I ask for my grandmother, who enters the table,
tapping out E-S-T-H-E-R against linoleum.
She makes it creak and tip in my lap.
("She must have talked fast because she's tipping fast")
She wishes me fortune and the table-leg slams.

"Send out a light-beam, they'll come right over,
even from China. There are souls on all of Saturn's rings.
A spirit can travel through heat or cold,
it's at zero degrees,

so if you feel a little chill, you'll know."

Adele Tinning's hands pose a question
I can't explain,
her question to Captain James McFerrin
two days after his plane went down.

A lump of flesh was found
jammed in a phonebook but his words
kept traveling until they found her,
until the passengers touched her forehead one by one.

Moments before, we all left our bodies
and watched it hit the ground.

Incident at Robbins Lane School

Mrs. Bedard
sets down the needle
on the scratchy record:
"Cuando salí de Cuba"
—*Escuchen.*
Her black eyes glinting
remember rumbas
under florid skies.
She tugs her earlobe
and the fake pearl clipped to it
rattles to the floor.

The pale gray tiles
echo grids
on the ceiling and windows:
we're locked in.
But even Luisito's
crackling tenor voice
or Mrs. Bedard's
sprayed helmet of hair,
the joy of her limbs
as she claps and sings
can't protect us from
a fear mounting the air,
a gray, spiked fear
building to storm
when the sirens begin.

Missiles raining over Robbins Lane School.
Red-hot missiles stamped in Spanish,
Communist agitprop missiles stamped with bears.

A dangerous island
is the beach-head of our fears.
We have to stop them,
the principal says
as he leads us in anthem,
the loose flesh
quivering on his arms,
we have to make them back down.

We have to crouch facing the wall
in the dark gym, our fingers
laced behind our heads
protect our skulls.

In Medias Res

My fingers trace your wingbone
down to your thighs—
a flushed mahogany.
Your deep hue highlights my
pale form, my dark twin.
Flutter of blood and I'm alive in you,
eye to sparkling tiger's eye
until it fails or soars to glory.
I met you deeper than our skin,
our separate histories stretched thin
across two islands—
And want to live forever joined,
your supple flanks shadow mine
from here to Cuba's
black jewel spinning in the night.
The future stirs you into flight
too soon, just when
our fingertips and lips
have bridged two worlds.

GUILLERMO REBOLLO-GIL

TRES POEMAS DE *SOSPECHAR DE LA EUFORIA*

LA SOLA COSA NECESARIA

desde donde la suma de los días resulta en torpe
acumulación de para ti he perdido las coordenadas
de mi cotidianidad. llámame entonces cómplice,
compinche, compañero. tu cara o cruzo y me cambio
de bando, avanza. he confundido los dígitos y la
suma de los días me madruga cotidiano, conmovido
en torpe coordinación de sucesos. dónde pues
acomodo mis juegos de memoria
si los días en que la suma adviene torpe,
desagregada se desprenden sus resultados.
compañera, he perdido madrugadas dando bandazos
en busca de tu cara y me cruzo con mi cotidianidad
sucesivamente. llámala cómplice pero ya he perdido
sus coordenadas de mí. hacia dónde entonces salgo
con mis juegos de mesa debajo del brazo, dispuesto
a una intensificación del lugar contigo. desde
cuándo. si de tu memoria pende una conmoción,
soy yo
detenido.

THE WORLD'S FURIOUS SONG FLOWS THROUGH MY COSTUME*

si se quema el sistema, la experimentación
sutil, este mundo a mis oídos debió ser un
asomo del sujeto en el acto, alturas
insospechadas. alguien continúa en la casa
rompiendo otra vez sus interpretaciones. será
el sentido que quema a mis oídos bajo aviso
de tren en la trama. son tres puntos de
interpretación, no más. mis pensamientos se
rompen en círculo. el sistema será en lo
próximo, ardiendo, un collage de temporadas
sin haber perdido siquiera un soplo del sujeto
en adquisiciones, sumas de alguien que
continúa en breve como tema cuando debió
ser a mis oídos círculo sujetado. será que se
quema a continuación una sospecha en el
acto. ésta sutil experimentación en puntitas de
tren por lo bajo, pasando.

*Ted Berrigan

A DEAR QUESTION. AN ANYTHING.*

estoy inoperable, de corazón.
y las metáforas ¿bien?
perdidas. me hace falta un acento
para precisar dónde.
quéslaquelarre? Che,
mi oficio de escritor es propinarte una paliza
después quejarme del monto de mi mesada.
la deuda a estos extremos de ánima
alada es un fondo externo.
préstame un anzuelo,
carnal. que si soy carne de tu carne
de cañón rescátame candado
a tu carnada.

*Anselm Berrigan

ROBERTO RANSOM

FROM *MISSING PERSONS, ANIMALS AND ARTISTS*

VIOLA DI BORDONE

to Ignacio Padilla

When Margarita, who'd been his wife's best friend, told him that playing CDs was like having musicians performing their pieces right in front of you in your living room, Javier looked skeptical. Margarita's passion as she described the CD's fidelity to Mozart's *Requiem* seemed to him, for lack of a better word, adolescent. The host unfolded his hands in his lap to rest them on the chair's arms. He uncrossed his legs only to cross them again, this time the right one over the left. Yet this little exercise, poor and clumsy, as Javier himself was the first to recognize, succeeded in leading them out of the *impasse* Margarita had tried to steer them toward. Margarita changed the subject with a quick glance at her watch and a request to use the phone to call her daughter. Javier took advantage of that to stand up. He thought that, in reality, they were far from being close. But that wasn't the reason for his sudden sadness; the sensation arose, rather, from an alternate scenario in which Lilian, his wife, was still alive.

The telephone call allowed Margarita to leave with the same haste she'd arrived in. She's a life-saver, thought Javier. Before leaving, Margarita placed a

little gift in his hands, somehow reinforcing the impression. Instead of medication, or a book that he *must* read, or a sandwich wrapped in aluminum foil from some delicatessen (Javier never knew if it was left over from some meal or a special order), this time it was a compact disk.

"Thank you, Margarita," he told her, saying good-bye with two kisses. He added, alluding to the fact that he didn't have the equipment to listen to it, "I'll have to shelve it in the bookcase."

"That's your problem," said Margarita, wanting to sound ironic although there was some resentment in her voice.

Javier almost didn't wait for the elevator doors to close before turning around and returning to his apartment. He had the unpleasant and persistent sensation of having received help from the Salvation Army. As Margarita left the building and asked the doorman to get her car, Javier served himself a double whiskey on the rocks and thought that Margarita had felt compassion for the widower who folded and unfolded, crossed and uncrossed his hands and legs; like those hotel managers who leave a copy of the New Testament on the bureau beside the bed, she'd presented him with Haydn's *Trios for Baritone*. He liked the shape of that little disk, its cover, its shininess like mirrored platinum. He rested it on his index finger and then returned it to its case in order to shelve it with the *long-play* records he barely listened to so it wouldn't be in the way. As compensation, he put on something by Haydn, the "Concert for Oboes in D major," on the old record-player. He returned to the sofa.

A strange affection for that disk of Haydn's *Trios for Baritone* took hold of him, like someone who grows fond of a paperweight, geode, or candlestick. Besides, because of its shape and its location, both a little bit absurd, instead of forgetting the object when passing by the shelf, he took it down, opened the case and toyed with the disk. It never occurred to him to buy the equipment to play it. He finally listened to the recording when a friend lent him his car, fully equipped and with a compact-disk player—state-of-the-art that year and enormous—to take a trip. When he saw that the musical selection wasn't too much to his liking and, at best, bored him quickly, he decided to take along the gift from his wife's friend.

He didn't listen to any other disk, during either his departing or return trip. She'd been right: the sound was good, even better. But what seemed laughable

to him was the idea expressed by Margarita that the new technology was able to capture and retransmit music, as if listening to a compact disk were the same as attending a live concert; neither could he accept the idea that the great interpreters who were either elsewhere at the moment or deceased could, in this way, continue being present. He'd have to tell Margarita that the only certainty of her entire theory was the fact that in the recording of Haydn's *Trios for Baritone*, one could make out, with spine-tingling clarity, the breathing of one of the musicians. He must have been catching a cold. That thought made Javier laugh out loud. He also felt alone; he was the only one traveling along the highway at night.

What had seemed comical to him at first became, as he listened to the complete compact disk, a disturbing experience now that the breathing which revealed itself at moments was also a silent, continual presence that added feeling and beauty to the music. One could say that the most perfect aspect of the entire work was the phrasing of the breathing. He took the CD cover, a kind of explanatory booklet in English and German, and leafed through it in spite of the fact that he'd almost completely memorized the text and the photo of the musicians; he used the weak light inside the car to study the three men, who appeared in black-and-white because of the photo and their tuxedos, without being able to identify the one responsible for the breathing.

It turned out that the voice wasn't coming from one of the three musicians, but from the instrument, a viola di bordone, played by the musician Balázs Kakuk. That decided him, with a burst of emotion, after he'd listened to the disk many times at the homes of different friends in order to isolate the instruments as much as possible. He began getting more interested in the catalogues of different CD companies, specialty magazines, programs of the major trios, quartets, chamber orchestras... The viola di bordone, built in 1756, although originally from Vienna, could now be found in a museum in Budapest. Balázs Kakuk was one of three musicians who'd been granted the privilege of using the instrument, above all for tours through Western Europe, especially Germany and, on rare occasions, through some cities in the United States. Javier looked at the program and decided that the closest one, in distance and time, would be a presentation of the chamber orchestra of Hungary in one of the courtyards at the Art Institute of Chicago. He called a travel agency and made the necessary reservations.

He managed to sit very close to the musicians. After the program, he went out into the cold Chicago night convinced that the viola di bordone had been breathing. His certainty had something feverish and delirious about it. He collected, in the course of the following six months, almost all the available recordings made with that instrument and it was the only thing he listened to. The breathing repeated itself from one interpretation to another.

One day he wanted to know if the instrument only breathed when they were playing, a matter that could only be known by the three men now closest to it and by the countless musicians who had once played it. He was able to follow the trio, the same one from the original CD, to three European cities, and attended each one of the programs, to the point where it seemed as if the musicians recognized him. Balázs Kakuk had worn an expression that suggested jealousy to Javier: on one occasion, when he wanted to approach to touch the instrument and see it more closely, the musician had two guards called to remove him.

More than two years have now passed since Margarita's fateful visit. Javier is seated in a chair at the People's Hotel in Budapest and spins the compact disk around his right index finger. It's an object as familiar to him as his wedding ring. He thinks again about the difficulty of sharing a passion for something. It's not that one person can be the only one who's sensitive but that everyone is sensitive in a different way. This seems even truer with music. Even with Lilian, whom he'd felt so close to, it was rare when they had the same reaction after listening to a certain phrase or fragment or a complete movement. Sometimes the only possible communion was to appreciate and recognize the other person's passion. It's also true that such a passion isn't entirely comprehensible to oneself, much less so being a matter of will.

The first night of his stay at the hotel he had a little argument with the manager on the night shift—it later turned out that he was also the manager on the day shift—Mr. Kárkányi, when he came down to the reception desk to complain that there was no hot water to take a bath. When he'd wanted to use the telephone he'd also discovered that the cable disappeared under the bed without reaching the wall. Mr. Kárkányi, phlegmatic and courteous, listened to all the complaints of the gentleman guest as he thumbed through, and for a few moments studied, the card file.

"Impossible," he said, half-pulling one of the cards out of the box.

After twenty minutes of arguing, the manager excused himself and disappeared in the room behind the reception desk. He returned accompanied by a woman whom he'd obviously awakened. He spoke with her in Hungarian, in front of Javier, and after repeating the same question several times and making her repeat her answers (all of it unintelligible to Javier), he turned to him and one more time, in French, although addressing him now as "Distinguished Guest" and not "Mr. Guest," he said:

"This *mademoiselle* is the chambermaid in charge of the floor where you have your room. She herself made the beds and cleaned there this morning and she assures me that your room has been inspected and that everything is in order. Are there towels in the bathroom?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then, there's also hot water."

Javier might have continued arguing until dawn if necessary but the woman looked exhausted. He thought that if he changed rooms, someone would have to make the bed, hang up the towels...

Javier went to bed without taking a bath.

He'd only been asleep for a little while when he heard someone knocking on the door. He looked at his watch: it was six-thirty in the morning. Feeling annoyed, he put on a robe and went to open the door. Mr. Kárkányi, smiling, nodded that he wished to come in.

"Now?"

"Yes, please."

Javier opened the door and followed Kárkányi to the bathroom. The manager turned on the hot water-tap, waited a few minutes before putting his index and middle finger under the running water, and then asked Javier to do the same.

"Do you see what I mean, sir?"

It was hot, no doubt about it.

Now he wanted the help of that very same man. A petition he was contemplating with displeasure. He could ask the manager of another other hotel to get the information but then he'd have to change hotels. And that would be

suspicious. The matter at hand was to ask Kárkányi to contact some thief or thieves. Hotel managers do business with all kinds of people.

He'd arrived at the museum, and in that gallery in particular, almost alone. After observing the viola di bordone for a long time, suspecting that it was a replica, a substitute, he finally convinced himself that he was standing before the instrument itself. Javier was able to press his ear against the glass case without the guards objecting, but also without being able to hear a single sound. He was filled with emotion. He returned on various occasions before it occurred to him to lift the glass case, shaped like a hollow cube missing one side, which covered the instrument. He wanted to touch the wood, the slackened strings, to see if that way he could hear the breathing. He managed to raise it a little, enough to insert three right fingers of his right hand, which remained trapped because the cube didn't budge any further and it turned out to be much heavier than Javier had anticipated. He saw the guard coming—he almost never made his rounds—and pulled his hand out violently. He managed to free it but he hurt his fingertips. He dried the sweat on his forehead with a handkerchief and now that the guard had again left, he brought his fingers to his mouth. He felt embarrassment. "This isn't work for an amateur," he thought, at the same time considering the possibility of committing a real crime. There were only two guards in the enormous pavilion, and the lack of security and the simple design of the vitrines—many of them empty—made him think that the most important thing to do in a robbery was to bribe the guard, or guards, on duty at night. He knew someone in the French Embassy who owed him a favor. As a diplomat, he could find a way to smuggle the viola out of the country. It was like adopting a child illegally. He surprised himself with these kinds of thoughts. The papers would have to be secured by a Jewish friend from Buenos Aires, a music lover as well as an antiquarian, someone who knew baroque and classical music like few others and was an *aficionado* of restoration. He did business in all kinds of instruments and could make that viola di bordone reappear legitimately from his store or workshop.

Now, seated in the chair, he thinks about how he'll broach the subject with the thieves. Perhaps the best plan would be for them to offer some money to the guards so they'd cover up the instrument's disappearance for an agreed upon period of time. Afterwards, he could ask them to return it to the place they'd taken

it from. Javier would have already become familiar with the viola di bordone in a different manner and could listen to it in a future without feeling jealousy. Maybe not; maybe he'd never return it.

He keeps looking into the hall. He's gone down various times to the reception desk but he's only met the chambermaid. He's said to her, through gestures and facial expressions, that he'd like to see Mr. Kárkányi; that he should come up to his room as soon as possible. When he hears footsteps he thinks that the receptionist is coming up the stairs. But the steps belong to more than one person. There couldn't be fewer than two pairs of feet. It occurs to him that what's climbing the stairs are two actors disguised as a horse. Like in some comic opera. They don't use the elevator because it's very slow and it's almost always broken. He doesn't budge from the chair he's been sunk into for hours (except for brief trips to search for the manager). He approaches only with his gaze. Through the window, he's observed the sky darkening and the gradual but only partial illumination of the city. They don't knock. They walk past. He decides to look. He opens the door and sees the manager and two women in front of one of the other rooms.

The women are standing together, Kárkányi is to one side, to the left, slightly apart from them. As Javier observes them, they unbutton their coats. He sees their dresses, short and over the knee, made of combed cotton; the shoulder-straps reveal not only the necks of the two women, but also their shoulders and their upper bosoms. Their breastbones look like arches. Physically, they are twins; as far as their faces go, they look alike, although one's hair-color is dark and the other's is more red than blond. It would be hard to say which of them is lovelier or younger. They wear coats without really needing to on that summer night. They smile at him. Then they look at each other, which makes them both laugh, and Kárkányi's gaze passes from the young women to Javier and back to them. Javier feels a little out of breath. He looks at the floor. They're wearing black boots.

"Sophia speaks French," says Kárkányi, pointing to the brunette. He tells him in case Javier wishes such an arrangement in the future.

Javier no longer is listening to him. He returns to his room.

"Come in, come in, please," says a masculine voice, different from Kárkányi's. Then the two men, the guest and Kárkányi, begin arguing in French.

Javier lets a few minutes pass. When he goes to the door again, the hall is deserted. He feels a strange mix of fatigue and tension. He decides that he still can reach the museum before it closes.

He runs through the street. People watch him, a bit surprised. He doesn't want to take a taxi because the taxi drivers get lost on purpose so they can charge more. The museum closes at nine and it's only a few minutes before the hour. Although he arrives on time, the guards have already turned off the lights and he has to beg before they deign to let him enter, to turn on the lights—only in the corridor and in the exhibition gallery that interests Javier—and grant him ten minutes. They no longer bother accompanying him. They know him well. He walks alone through the corridor, the spotlights darkening behind him, and he arrives at the lit-up gallery.

He goes directly to the glass box. He gets so close that his breath clouds the glass. He leans over a little more, rests his right ear on the cold surface. His heart beats rapidly. He hears something that's growing stronger until its intensity makes him lift his head. He thinks it's the instrument. No, it's his own breathing, as if it were rebounding around him. It seems that the breath isn't coming from either the instrument or his person. He feels confused, dizzy, he rests his head on the glass box. Then he doesn't hear anything. It's Lilian whom he's been following, but he feels as if she were also looking for *him*, or looking for herself in order to be with him. Although he's a man who almost never thinks about God, it occurs to him that now only God touches Lilian, and only Balázs Kakuk and various other mortals touch the viola di bordone.

Vasari, Do You Hear Me?

to José Torres Rojas, M.Sp.S.

At last, the Supreme Maker decided that this creature (man before the Fall), to whom He could give nothing wholly his own, should have a share in the particular endowment of every creature.
—*Pico de la Mirandolla,* Oration on the Dignity of Man

Love makes the body
—*Jean-Luc Marion*

What to do with Jesus Christ? Copy what the ancients did, what some continue doing, and so free myself from obstacles and problems that rob me of sleep and alter my humors, making me irritable and melancholy? Those who'd be pleased by such a turn in my affairs aren't few. Oh, they'd say, Master Da Vinci finally completes what he begins, he carries out what's asked of him without pondering it so much. But must I please courtesans, who think with the rings on their fingers and the softness of their beards, or religious men, who trade in Jesus Christ even more than Florentines do with cloth, dyes, or spices, or certain painters—not to scandalize them—who paint only because they believe they know how to do that and nothing else? I know the number of bones in a man—and I don't believe that they vary from man to man or from man to woman—but if religious men could suggest, and be convincing, that Jesus Christ's body had three or seven times as many bones as any other man, they would do so. If they succeeded, since this also holds true for saints, the business for relics would be more profitable than for cloth, and the Florentine bourgeoisie would wear habits. But I'm sure that if I were to open the body of Jesus Christ, I'd find nothing different inside it. When I imagine him, I give him the best attributes I've seen in countless faces I've contemplated over a life that now seems too long to me. Even so, I hold on to many pieces, and I look at him when I close my eyes, and I don't see him, but I do see the nose and forehead of ___, the eyebrows of ___, the chin of ___, the waist of ___—even worse, at times his attributes have been taken from cadavers, or from people I find nasty because of their cruelty or malice or because they've wished me some harm and plot against me. How to take from

what's dead and give expression to what's most alive? How to pretend that an individual man might look like him? How to paint him, then, as I've always done, observing what surrounds me, what I see when I squint or close my eyes? Where to find him? In caves, among tree-branches, in rock-crevices, in flowing water and its whirlpools, in the distant hills and sky, in the inner world of sleep or of twilight sleep, between the world of adults and that of children, in the sunny world or in a bedroom or workshop largely closed to sunlight and outside noise?

Placing him where he should go wasn't a problem: in the center of all axes. I didn't choose the spot, as some say, because of the light coming through the window on the opposite wall, although this seemed to me, from the beginning, more an omen than coincidence. An omen, although I might not have known it then, of the impossible task I'd proposed for myself. That light, as long as the window and the wall exist, will illuminate the same spot. It's obvious that sunlight will survive an artisan's pigments. I find it in many places, even without seeking it, but I haven't found *him*. Maybe I don't know what it is I'm painting. I try but now and then I prefer to stop. I'm able to paint him as a child. Is it because he didn't have a father? Could he have become an adult as the son of God any other way? Joseph was a guardian more than a father; when Jesus Christ was very young, Joseph was already a disciple of his own son. He had two fathers. The two natures of Christ are like the two natures of his relationship with his father, Joseph. He was and wasn't his father. Joseph had a wife who wasn't a wife and a son who also wasn't his in the human sense. The Holy Spirit had a wife but only visited her once, and the company he kept with her, like with Jesus Christ, was mysterious and, so it would seem, distant. Mary had various suitors besides Joseph, but they were angels. They're the only ones who appear in paintings. Mary didn't know man but was the wife of the Holy Spirit, the mother of Jesus, and for many years the companion of Joseph. In her gestures toward Joseph, she's more sister than woman, in her relationship with the Holy Spirit, she's more of a girl, loving and obedient, than a wife, but in her relationship with Jesus she never stops treating him like a son. It must be a little strange that there are so many paintings of Madonnas with the infant Jesus. How to include Joseph, if he's not herding an ass? And the Holy Spirit, who, as his name signifies, is holy and spirit? Or Jesus Christ at 33 years of age?

I don't like crucifixions.

Very well. I'm not going to look in nature—because he isn't there—or in my mind—because he isn't there—in order to be able to paint him on a wall, where he isn't either, and that's the problem. Trying to draw his face with what I have at hand doesn't work because I have it at hand, it doesn't matter how I readjust it, it's not revealed to me. The body in the fresco is no more than clothes, the knowledge of fabrics and of how to cover a man. The hands and their position come from various Milanese men and not any single one, they're the fruit of thousands of sketches; the legs are hidden by the cloth, and the cloth falls around a seated figure very similarly from one man to the next. But the feet! It's true, most men never look closely at feet unless they're amputated or have problems walking, or they're kissed by someone—out of desire or obligation. They're almost as difficult as hands. I've noticed, in public baths, that feet reveal much about an individual's nature. In hospitals and morgues, the feet also show what a person's life has been like and, sometimes, the maladies he suffers or has suffered. The neck is drawn at the same time as the head.

I have to guess not if Jesus is a man, but his divinity. I can frighten my friends with a tame, disguised lizard, but I can't give Jesus a face. What's communicated in an instant is a whole. The parts are all real and recognizable but, at the same time, how to say it?, we have the sensation of facing something that shouldn't be but truly is. Although in a way we hadn't known. And it's not a theatrical effect or an ingenious disguise. I think about something that will explode in my friends' minds but differently than their response to my lizard mascot. Not as a joke. I can't work with the Deity as I have with the lizard. The lizard is a visual image, apart from being a lizard bejeweled and dressed for a ball: it's a mental image that's become tangible: it's a toy, a hand-made artifact that's become visible and an image. I know the origin, or origins, of what I've created, as with entertainments at court. In reality, one doesn't create the origin but indeed the origins out of what already exists. But what creator tries to recreate the Creator? I'm amazed before nature, before its wonders, but I come out of my lethargy, I'm immobile but the malady is temporary. Because all immobility is a malady. There isn't an absolute immobility. The movement of cadavers is much less than that of the living. When it's difficult for me to rise in the morning, I pretend I'm

dead until I leap up with a bound.

It's not that he may be of a different race. Neither is it pretending that the wall might become paint and the paint a human being, nor transforming something without recognizing it, as if Jesus Christ could be the same as any of his disciples. What a horror if someone contemplated the work and pointed to another of the figures and said: "How well Master Da Vinci has executed the image of Jesus Christ!" Or worse if someone asked: "And which of all of them, for the love of God, is Jesus Christ?" So that the question became: can you finish what's missing with what you have?

What happened with the ancients, or happens with some of my contemporaries, who never know if they're before a man, an animal, or a God, doesn't occur with me. I don't want to perceive more there than what might show me a truth about what I've painted, just as when I draw a cat, the gestures, the posture, the features, the proportions, all the details show me it's a cat and not something else. But no one would be so foolish as to confuse that cat with one that boys chase after or that's seated on the window-sill taking the sun. I want to paint Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ, so no one confuses him with someone he isn't. But now I don't have him before me as indeed I had___ or ___. I don't have the good fortune of the apostles or the first disciples. If one paints the Virgin taking the best of what one finds in mothers, one should be able to do the same thing with her son: to paint Jesus Christ with the best of what one finds in men. But I've failed. Why is it easier for me to paint angels? To do so, I use the beauty of young men or children, and birds—not any bird, not any winged creature. Where is depth hidden? On the surface. I've opened the belly of a pregnant woman's cadaver, but I've discovered more answers to Life's enigma in a young pregnant woman who's posed for me. Which is not to deny the wonder of that little man wrapped, in candle-light, in the walls of his mother. Beneath that fragility there was a structure, forms inside of others that had nothing to do with what had already died. Oh, wonderful prodigy of the Supreme Master! When I left the morgue, it was on the verge of dawn and I felt ecstatic. It's common to place bats' wings on demons, although these creatures also have their strange grace, one only has to see them exiting caves at evening to hunt insects or sip water from pools, or their bone-structure and the membrane of their wings that fold very

differently from those of birds. One must know with the eyes and the hand. The eye passes over a creature without the need to capture it. But the hand needs to touch what it observes before painting it. Have I ever touched Jesus Christ or rested my head on his chest? Even those who took him down from the cross and prepared him for burial knew him in a very different and superior way to mine. A blind man who hasn't been so for part of his life perceives differently than a man blind from birth. A blind man who passes his hand over a beloved's features and body knows differently than a man who sees but doesn't know how to touch. Who hasn't met different creatures when he dreams? But I want to paint the last supper and not the apostles asleep on the night of Gethsemane.

One can study human monsters and look for a way to explain the origin, the cause, of their deformity, or want to explain, according to what one already knows, those unusual creatures described by travelers, not unreal or non-existent because they're different and unknown in our lands, since nature's variety seems limitless, creatures that will be revealed as belonging to some feverish sailor or are the inventions of those who like to deceive with the products of their own imaginations, or of lying necromancers, or are creatures who belong to treatises known under the name of demonologies...they'll be discovered again or will forever remain creatures of the imagination or will keep waiting for a new encounter. I know when the fantastic imitates nature, the guesswork of discovering what's only revealed to the sight with patient and fixed attention, the metamorphosis of creatures and the different stages of their transformation, the constancy of forms and the infinite variations that can be created from them. Creating outside the borders of nature is impossible. One must observe attentively, even what occurs in dreams. But Jesus Christ isn't a composition in this sense, a change of elements, a rapid transition; nevertheless, still being new from the beginning, there's nothing fantastic about him, but who would say that he isn't extraordinary? I follow the masters in whatever I can learn from them; I follow nature more, to which I apply art, nature, where the ambiguous, the undefined, the still non-existent, mystery, but not the fantastic, exist.

But Jesus, who is no different from man, according to the senses, what must one do to give him form? All of him, his gestures, his physique, his emotions, his words, his clothing, is taken from man, but they lack the malice, the cruelty, the

lies, the hypocrisy...so that with less than man, he is more and better than him. I know how to draw what's more, but how to do it with what's less? I don't try to explain it. That would be very daring! It's the job of illustrious men, those who know about Godly things. And by illustrious men, I'm not referring to the Prior of Santa Maria delle Grazie, who looks more like a sea monster with a monk's head that appears in the book of monsters and wonders. If he mortified himself only a tenth of what he does to me, he'd be a saint already. He believes that the head of my Christ is going to emerge from the torso—which is no more than cloth with some folds—like a cabbage from the earth of his vegetable garden. He should dedicate himself to the latter, it's more secure and for him, I have no doubt, ultimately more gratifying. Maybe at bottom, he's no more than a simple man who means well, and the headless figures of Judas and Jesus Christ perturb him differently than they do me. Why doesn't he say anything about the other eleven figures? Jesus Christ has an advantage over Judas, he has hands while the traitor hasn't gotten any yet. And betraying requires hands or lips and a tongue—feet aren't enough. He's surely simple, but why did God make him so stubborn?

My patron is also demanding but in an intelligent and astute way, he's often cruel and hardly rational, but his unpredictability makes him interesting. Besides, he has a good sense of humor. To create monsters and wonders it's only necessary to live for a while in the company of men. Many creatures presented in those manuals whose drawings we study perhaps aren't fantastic and we'll recognize them, since they'll still look the same when, sooner or later, the Flood comes.

Wandering around is one of the activities I like best. To be moving and thinking about a thousand things. They complain that I'm impatient, they complain that I delay too much. That I don't finish things. When I walk I'm patient. I enjoy moments of laziness. Having no task, no assignment to carry out by a certain date. I get lost in parts of the city where no one knows me, where whoever looks at me considers me as strange as I do them. The opposite of life at court where one must be friendly even with the walls and eloquent even with the deaf. When I no longer desire to escape the vortex of what awaits me, without caring how vain the effort, I leave the studio for the street, the market, the public baths... where everything multiplies and disperses and I gather a small part of it in my notebooks, or when I feel too lethargic, I only observe. I know that it's time to

return when what I observe overwhelms me, or when some details serve my work and the world of men stops interesting me. The vision of what intrigues me is more real than shouts, noises, brushing against people.

I also like tales. Writing, as well. If I'd had more of an education, maybe I would have written more. It's not true that I didn't paint Christ's face. I left Judas for last. The prior entered when I'd finished everything except the traitor's face. He didn't react. He glanced at the fresco, from left to right, as if he were reading something that didn't interest him. So much work for an unworthy wall! When man eats he doesn't pay attention; his gaze is fixed on the plate of lentils in front of him.

"And why haven't you painted that one?" was the only thing he asked, after pestering me so much. It made me so angry that I decided to carry out my threat and adopt the physical features of this prior who has complained several times about me before Your Excellency and who, given the failure of my inquiries elsewhere, isn't such a bad model. *It no longer was him, but how was I going to convince him? He saw himself in that portrait, I saw something for which a fleeting gesture of ___was the most important thing. Painting diminished my anger, and the prior became one of multiple inspirations. I'd hesitate to make him look ridiculous before his whole convent.* My Judas was the very image of the prior of the Dominicans of Santa Maria delle Grazie.

He erased Christ. Then he boasted that I'd repented my wrongdoing, because Judas immediately began to lose form.

"I haven't touched the fresco," I said, when confronted with his comment that I never left things in peace. The prior looked at me mockingly.

"Just as I haven't touched your Christ."

"There are two possible explanations, Your Excellency," I subsequently responded to the duke. "Whoever erased Christ immediately erased Judas."

"And the second explanation?" he asked me.

"Judas, not having anyone to look at, vanished."

The duke burst into laughter at what he called my ingenuity. *Judas, not having anyone to look at, vanished. Christ was his life as much as he was the life of the other disciples.* The things that amused my patron surprised me at times. For me, the work was finished. I asked permission to take leave and I walked through

the solitary hall. It occurred to me that I was the motive for the prior's sinning. Later, my pride was such that I said the figures crumbled because I'd gone away and worked on something else.

The above is a fabrication. It's true that I left the heads of Judas and Jesus Christ unfinished for a long time. Somehow, Judas was placed right where I was going to need him later. I knew from the start that he should look as if he were getting up from that side of the table, close to Christ, because only he who is close by can betray. The other apostles were finished and through their gestures and postures effectively expressed the emotions I'd wanted to attribute to them and, if one can speak of splendor regarding human poverty, they were dignified and noble figures, men whom one could trust. Everyone reacted differently but according to their nature. The relation of the forms to each other was appropriate, the depths conforming to perspective, the focus on the one who was still absent, but it's also true that the viewer's attention would be drawn to the figure just to the left (for the viewer, to the right) of Jesus Christ. There was now a certain violence in it since, although forming part of one of the four triads, it seemed out of place from the whole group. An effect owing, perhaps, to the rotation of its shoulders and its closeness to Jesus Christ, which more than loving, seemed threatening. I knew in an instant of contemplation that Judas, who still didn't have arms, wanted to touch Our Lord. Painting his hand extended was an immediate and firm reaction, the open hand that wants to grasp but still doesn't touch what it seeks, a gesture I've seen innumerable times, in innumerable men, in innumerable situations. A scandalous, threatening gesture, of something that's taken and, almost at the same moment, refused, or a movement of someone who's checked the opposite impulse, a gesture full of ambiguity, of duplicity, of someone who doesn't belong to himself, or who's lost control, exhibiting an illicit desire that until that moment he's succeeded in keeping hidden. The other apostles react as one would expect after their master's question. Judas is the only one out of key, without being contrary to the counsel of reason and natural effects. Once the arms had been painted, I knew that—aside from the composition and perspective— it was Judas who emotionally focused the attention of anyone looking at the fresco on the Deity. Maybe it was also through the strange and sinister gaze of he who knew Christ but was thinking of betraying him that one could know who caused,

without wanting to and surely with some pain, that jumble of emotions in one of his disciples. Because the other apostles look outward, but Judas, while he is the one who looks most intensely at his Lord, also most clearly has an anxious gaze directed at his own soul. Perversely, but repeated again and again in nature, Judas, in his betrayal, was heading toward its opposite.

The only way to paint Judas was to see his reaction, his attitude, his gestures before Christ. I've seen scions before their lords, slaves before their masters, submissive women before their husbands. It was when I completed Judas's hands and arms that I understood I shouldn't be seeking his features but his gaze, since the way he looked at Jesus Christ would give away not only his own face but the face of the one he was going to betray.

I didn't go to certain places to look for Judas's face. That was a pretext. There was no place where I couldn't discover the type I was seeking now. I could also say that there wasn't a person in whom I sometimes couldn't discover what I sought. Every day I headed for the Borghetto, and to other places, in the morning and at night. I told everyone else—those who felt they had the right to question me about my affairs—that I was going to the spot where the ruffians, thieves, prostitutes, and pimps lived, to see if I could find models there for my Judas. I would offend them if I confided that I could discover that scoundrel without going too far. I look everywhere. Different faces can be revealed in a single man. It should cause them consternation, but most probably it would only outrage them to know the different origins of the apostles and, even more, of Judas. Masters whom I admire have told me I've made an enormous mistake trying to paint the last supper without relying more on tradition. They advise me to leave the fresco incomplete. That only God can complete it. To quit. As if that were possible! At least the pretext of seeking Judas has given me a free hand to wander through the city on a whim, without anyone adding to the list, already very long, of my strange past-times. Strangers have approached me in the street—I don't know how word got out—to tell me that they have some relative or friend who'd be perfect for what I'm seeking. How little they understand art! Of course, they're hoping for a few coins in return (how well they understand art). Sometimes I've gone with them because of my insatiable curiosity. On no few occasions, the trip has turned out to be valuable. Not, however, as far as finding Judas, who in the

popular mind is a grotesque being, physically deformed. Everyone thinks he knows Judas. The sketches I did pleased the Moor, who shares with me a love of strange things.

One shouldn't wish for the impossible but I believed I'd discovered what I was seeking, and returned to the convent. I didn't leave until I'd finished the figure of the traitor, and it happened as I'd thought it would: I began the drawing of Christ that same day. As I completed the work, the other apostles, until that moment somehow disparate, became real, seated at the table, let me put it this way, to take up space in the refectory.

Now that the work was finished, I let some days pass. Out of superstition but also because the first comments I received were praiseworthy and I debated whether to trust in something so sweet to my ears, or to mistrust it, which was my first impulse, knowing that I was the best critic of my own work and harsher than any other man. As opposed to before I finished the fresco, when I received the observations and comments of numerous viewers and I showed equal interest with all, whether they were experts or chatterboxes, wise-men or fools, "personalities" or strangers, now I wasn't interested in receiving any opinion that wasn't recognition and amazement. I finally went to see the fresco. Only someone who has created something knows how that thing decomposes. As soon as I saw Jesus Christ, I knew that no hand foreign to art, or the hand of some painter's apprentice, or of some imbecile painter, had deformed what my brushes had given life to. The damage was minimal—maybe invisible to any other viewer—but implacable. The same thing happened with Judas, to a lesser degree than with Jesus Christ, but now I could speak of the traitor as "what remained of him." My anger and sadness, my solitude and sense of time poorly earned and poorly spent, made me flee from that scene, almost in slow-motion and with my hand raised—as if I were meditating on something and didn't want to be interrupted or to talk with anyone I happened to bump into—covering my eyes, which sprang bitter tears. For me the work was finished because there was no way of repairing the mistake, of restoring the moment. Judas disintegrates because he no longer looks at Christ; the only Christ he was able to see. I chose badly. I trusted that Judas would show me something. He was looking at something but not at the supreme maker, the true deity. God presented his son

one time...and Judas, who could see him didn't do so... That supper was and wasn't in Jerusalem as much as in my fresco. And that's fair. At that moment Judas wasn't looking at Jesus. He didn't see him. The same thing happened to the other figures as happens to us men: they aged. That the process may have accelerated because of my rash and, finally, failed experiments is an argument not completely false, but definitely exaggerated.

It's difficult to draw a portrait of the son of God. To paint the image of God incarnate. What surrounded me was always enough. Sound theology. I'd like to live another hundred years. Sound Christianity. It wasn't the King of France but indeed a prince who held me in his arms. I could complain about many things that have been said and written about my person, but doing that would make no sense: it's the luck that any human being runs. The only thing that Master Dante's Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise have in common is that the whole world complains about those who are still on Earth. The antagonism between the living and the dead predates anything else.

Charlottesville, November 13, 1998

Translated by Daniel Shapiro

MARIELA DREYFUS

FROM "FISH"

Where goes the word with its tiny tongue its concise invertebrate heartbeat? The letter a gamete a nascent zygote a babbling semiotic sea.

At first formless just a thread an artery of light where vibration echoes ascends and gains meaning when spoken.

The maritime sound of my womb of your voice in my womb lends rhythm to the faint growth of the cords and drum (in your ear).

The soft syllabication intones resounds inside me a thirsty vessel of words of murmurs that speak that should speak to me of you of your existence melancholy and clear as a song.

Matria: morbid growth of your blue dwelling
Molded material where the amniotic
and carnal nests.

You wade that swell of voices that open to the evening
and placid you move in my intimate and warm sea.

Your minuscule image mimics
the metallic hub like a matryoshka:
I stand inside her there outside
while inside me moves your shape
my adored and drowsy doll.

Mother Manhattan: magnificent multiform lair.
Marine and musical megamatrix.
Myriad of rhythms web of hands:
I grow in you and in me the other multiplies
when I watch myself dizzy in your mercury.

You advance in your gestation and in the city the danger gestates

Life grows in the ninth month of this year of unequal digits: zero one zero one zero one

And you who were the nothing the zero the tiny egg suddenly you gather cells and bones and weave yourself

In my innermost house you weave yourself sheltered from the sun you weave yourself
cautious you weave and invent your form

Against the light your two arms wave your two legs already dance your porous lungs inhale exhale inhale

Full geometry of the mother:
triangle breasts
belly circumference
legs high infinite gaudi spirals.

And in the middle
the fleshy certainty of the navel
gut connecting the outside
and inside, where an invasive
body clings to another body.

The abdomen colored by bluish canals
the shade of the veins that pump
the doubled volume of blood.

So round the silhouette
of the swollen laboring mother:
carved into time and matter
into the dermis, the muscle and the nerve.

The colostrum river now flows from the breast
and the pelvis bridge lifts.

But the center is the sphere—that is, the belly—.
its convex harmony and its balance.

Womb: vessel and fountain
spherical mansion fallowed into flesh.

They emerge from a metallic and narrow canal. Weak, ravenous, a procession of fish: they almost crawl, as if clawing at an empty sea. My son brings up the rear and smiles. Suddenly I see a towering violet radiance, an immense cloud of foreboding smoke. The miniscule fish cough and choke, the canal water is quickly tainted. I think about his vertebrae, still mere cartilage, and his lungs. I breathe what air remains, swallow it. Then mouth to mouth I offer it to my son, hoping the kiss will return the missing oxygen and revive him. I hear a voice from offstage, laughing and warning me: "Fish breathe through branchia or gills / through branchia or gills fish breathe." My son begins to swell at my side. Saturated with air, his branchia can't bear it. It's not the smoke but my excess that asphyxiates him. He explodes from an excess of love by my side. The dark canal drags particles of fish that once were my son. I count the shreds one by one; open my eyes when I reach one hundred.

Metallic city: you burn like the highest days of summer. From the south the red chimney the flaming decoration rises at noon.

Once again the arches, their lulled death rattle, sotto voce. They are waves of a disgust that starts and settles without ever burning. My body happens like a gray vertigo where evening floats encircled in swamp.

Metallic city: I hear the cracking of walls the malleable matter which fire's touch deforms.

This is the music of babbling: an untouched sound, primal and unreal, settles over all things. In the uterine cave you slide to the rhythm of systole of diastole. Like neighboring rivers that converge the murmur of the pancreas synchronizes with the dry intestinal gallop.

Metallic city: like a mother who has turned her back on life a massacre gestates inside you. The highest sacrificial altar is neon and plexiglas. It holds myriad beings awaiting a divine mark on the brow.

I fear for your consistency. The horror of having engendered a child-monster who nests in me. That your eyes will not see the light. That in place of ears there will be two infinite orifices. Or that where the arms should flower like irises…

Metallic city: the wires have been cut the streets close the cars get stuck in the mouth of hell.

Blindly you travel between viscera and vein. Every organ brushes you with its own luminous color: vermillion liver bluish-white kidneys green gall bladder: pure physiology of the anguished womb that covers you.

Metallic city: your image travels the world via satellite: microphones lenses steps voices that are lost in the smoke: they want to broadcast your death in technicolor.

Intrauterine gaze: laser reflections of your limbs float in the liquid dwelling you cautiously construct in spite of me. With those sockets that seem empty and the widest primate nose, the lens deforms you into the creature you will never be. But in your persistent prestidigitator pirouettes one human trait is revealed: your fluttering thumb, my monkey.

Metallic city: the dismembered bodies approach as floating ash. Jerking and twisting, their tongues waste away in lament their teeth alone will survive the flames.

What scent what name what face? I inquire about you, growing in me without mercy. Agile mollusk microscopic amphibian slender fish with raspberry lungs: you will emerge from the water that hosts you covered with organic debris that yet another water will wash away.

Metallic city: this morning your river is stygian its current carries the statistics death delivers to the sea.

What will become of the children of chaos the children of fire the children of the oxygen mask?

Against the violet sky their figures cut out or torn off from time:

Furious they flee from the mortal instinct that encircles them from the doubt that stalks them from the cavernous dawn that spews their dense particles into the air

Rhombus stars circles: ovals that settle where once there were lips coiled ligaments and a zigzag in the plexus

A glimpse of the son who has broken of the son not yet born of the unborn and absent.

nine is the hour nine calendar pages
nine is the month yet eleven the days

nine telephone calls with nine lines jamming
nine clouds carry nine splinters inside

nine broken windows and nine elevators
nine shadows jumping from nine smoky floors

nine armless torsos and nine shattered legs
nine hands move among nine pairs of eyes

nine TVs turn on nine radios tune in
nine trains shut down for over nine nights

nine pounds of rubble nine names repeated
nine photos of nine who have not appeared

nine streets without light and nine without water
nine are the vigils and nine times the prayers

nine with low blood pressure by nine degrees
nine anguished steps are taken nine times

nine liters of serum hung over nine beds
nine hospitals where nine nurses attend

nine drops of blood fall and nine voices weep
nine nightmares and nine screams held within

nine sleepless nights and nine investigations
nine medical tests and another nine waits

nine veils that open nine heavenly bodies
nine premonitions and nine the desires

nine times I think of you nine times I create
nine faces for you and envision nine births

nine palpitations nine bouts of spasms
nine daybreaks I'll give until you are born

Translated by Eileen O'Connor

REYNALDO JIMÉNEZ

TRANSLUCENCIA
(A PARTIR DE *ASTRO LABIO* DE ALFONSO D'AQUINO*)

el punto de la i sobre la o

EA Westphalen

I

devolver el vidrio a su naturaleza original

La imagen no es un objeto. Es quizás una forma que mira.
Aldo Pellegrini

Sí, decir sí, al salirse de sí, salir en sí. Desmadre los primordios. Al deslenguado zahorí (*Adarce de la luz entre las hojas*) bien podría ya no estar regulándolo una ambición de abdicar de las identidades asignadas. Ni, por decreto abolirlas. Tales identidades (idénticas entidades, cantidades en continua variable-dentición), las del añadido comportamental, nomás ahí están, para quienes en ellas creer quisieran.

* Alfonso D'Aquino, *Astro Labio*, Libros Magenta, México, 2012.

¿Contravenirlas en el poema —quién reclamaría— incrustándole por ende el (ba)tallado gen de un estatuto, como si fuese factible, a fin de cuentas, desde un voluntarismo artístico ("poético"), incansablemente refinar alguna programación de la atenta experiencia? ¿Programar la experiencia o desprogramar en vez la atención?

¿Cómo pretender que dichas identidades-especies del ser algo, a fin cuentas, definan, finitivas? ¿Un punir de lo asignado será merecimiento, a trasluz, por tanto encierro en el cascarón semántico? ¿Dónde en verdad nos hacemos impedidos, por razones aún a develar, ante la conexión atravesante que religaría el ser-estar con lo incondicionado?

¿Acaso no será responder toda pregunta con su pretensión (como éstas): consigna de preexistencia? ¿Y qué sucede cuando el poema ya no es pregunta con su sombrilla o su sombra sino una vibración, un devaneo extralúcido, un corte en la transparencia instantánea de los estratos?

Relámpago en la secuencia de *koans* y koan en su *función* más simple y compleja: desatar nudos (todo nódulo impaciente, coágulo, bloqueador de conectivas). Inscribe Alfonso D'Aquino un sortilegio para la recuperación de los sentidos: esta otredad respiratoria y cardíaca. Que nos incluye entre los temblores al dejarnos leer por el poema. Cielos superpuestos vistos sin distancia ni aplicada morfología, a no ser, en diverso grado, translucentes.

Poemascarilla que se arranca. Arraigo en la ampliada circulación de andariveles simultáneos. Estratos que hacen a la transparencia del primordio (el cual se perfila en el retorno-moebio del *versus*, cuya espiralada oración —plegaria y cántico, observancia y permeabilidad, conjuro y mantra, horadación y perfume— equivale a la escucha).

Lo que *se sale* (o más bien: lo que re-entra, reencontrándose inusitado) no responde, neurona-espejo, a dispositivos reflejantes donde alguna recortada identidad —autorreconocida, constantemente autocorregida según los perfiles aceptables del Recorte— intentase desembarazarse de sí.

Aun si aquello implicase hurtarse a la influencia de lo prefijo, por las rendijas del yo-lírico, esa ficción que fricciona, fosfóricamente hablando, la reclusa "idea" de representatividad realista. Ese yo-todo-otro incansable diminuto se resiente durante la lectura y deja pasar el corrimiento microtonal por el que pasan, desnudadas con denuedo, manojo del ojo *con* la mano, las palabras-almas.

Como un corrosivo que fuese a su vez una resistencia. O una gravedad del alma devenida almagesto: no exenta de liviandades posiblemente polimorfas, el poema construye a su *quién* diluidor de —para de nuevo parafrasear a Vallejo— Lo Mismo Que Padece Nos. La operación es voluntaria y volitiva en la paradoja de hacer girar al que se sujetaba y en consecuencia predicó.

Ahora no. En el poema visionario los signos se recuperan en atributos sustanciales porque mutantes. Su dificultad primeriza de aprehensión recuerda de continuo en su oscilar la múltiple naturaleza experiencial que los anima. A medida de un desplazamiento energético modulando: sus formas de *a*parecer, resonar, dejarse ver sobre la página-membrana. Página-párpado que nos acecha leerla: leemos avatares de su polidevenir.

Para que ante el escrutinio lector se esté dando un salto de cualidad semejante es precisa una especiada densidad de página, la cual sin vuelta aunque siempre otra vez reversible, delicadamente se construye, como un nido escrito con líneas, en tanto hogar para una estancia, aun intermitente prolongada, en lo inusitado aquí, ahora.

Si no hay, por fin, preexistente, "poeta" ya poco y nada designa, a menos que emerjas "lector", que para ser *en* poesía se requiere translector, o sea aquel que, reconociendo su estructural porosidad, se deja atravesar por las potencias afectivas aportadas por el tejido verbal en cuanto se te hace escucha. Cuestión de sed.

Quizá un adensamiento tal del silencio, suficiente red o resorte para el salto sin dominio, de la mente: sapo de su otro pozo, en espera entregada a la incubación del fermento. Unas agallas y unas aletas, no físicas sino auráticas, para contrarrestar la sarta de escarmientos y reconvenciones, los bordes del panóptico que constituirían los magros y más que discutibles tesoros de la identidad.

Pronto el poema animal vegetal mineral. Izado a su misterioso (todo-y-nada) origen, tras el desencadenamiento morfológico, transparencial, de los diagramas semovientes. Diagramas hipersensibles, no apenas perceptibles sino actuantes, que se transforman ante los no menos mutantes sentidos reactivados ya por una sed analógica que es asimismo un retén de tamiz.

El cuerpo investiga escribiendo. Es jugar y no lo es. Efímeras pero somatizadas palabras se filtran aquende las murallas de contención doctrinaria (cuando

no muros de lamento), guardianes fronterizos de la Mentalidad, para otra índole —celebrante— y aun para otra consistencia del sensible.

Incluso otra calidad receptiva ante la imperante condición de impermanencia. En efecto: *se pega* un salto. Por un salto es que se despega. Percibes quizá que el claroscuro hace oscilar la transparencia (ésta qué grado de aquél) (aquél a cuál instancia de ésta).

Rotundo el misterio en la evidencia material y por tanto una lengua escrita que escruta *naturaleza original*, abriendo concéntricamente las diagonales y las implícitas y las poliédricas resoluciones de una especie de patrón fractal saltando de imagen en imagen, desplazándose con los ojos sobre la página, devenida cuestión de piel, alerta, incluso escalofrío.

La página atendida: molino de oraciones. La página, incluso, como analogía corpórea de la interdimensión en que ocurre la lectura poética, en cuanto y en tanto que te escucha escucharla.

Desnudez. Eso es. Aunque ¡cuánto no-trabajar habrá para eso, para tal no-expectativa y ese no-espectador! Pero esa ilesa no se atrapa en los planes y sus fines. No se ve trabada por los gestos, acto y actor indisociables. Además no se la puede vestir con el revestimiento asertivo de un rol, una misión, un cometido, una función, un status precondicional.

Así fuese el plan de fuga respecto de las irreversibilidades significantes o aun desasignar (otro rol): complejo punto que atañe a los rupturismos de varia índolestirpe. Así fuese intentar comprender la compleja chispa del oro del percibir, el gen del origen, sólo en desnudez algo, indeterminado, inconcluso siempre, se abre. La cáscara del poema contiene al cóncavo.

Siempre en pos de presencias indetectables, la voz, de tanto contacto en toda dirección y sentido, emerge intacta a la superficie plegadiza del textil: el poema labrado, desde y con la incógnita de la presencia

—coincógnita, en esta encrucijada del sentido que se conjuga, necesariamente, como alteridad que nos saca al encuentro, que nos trae, de vuelta, a nosotros, otros de los que creíamos y afirmábamos ser, al arrancarnos sensualmente del sonambulismo generado en propagada falta de corporeidad, mediante el continuo secuestro del cuerpo a la letra (y viceversa), renovándola en su arcaico (y ya no histórico) claroscuro, fuera de hora y de lugar, en tanto voz porque ir-

radia en la palabra que no cierra, que permanece como abertura.

En cierta instancia ese Quién de la indagación por una suerte de verdad no concurrente sino centrífuga, a través de la voz, rota de lugar, muda de función, desorganizando, por meditada inusitada, la sarta predestinal de obviedades que forjaron el supuesto encierro del sujeto.

Por el aliento es que se sabe que se está desnudo.

Así la voz dispone al cóncavo en eclosión, tal como puntúa "Líneas imaginarias", una canción al fresco de *Astro labio*, libro presentado en contratapa por Gabriel Bernal Granados como "la culminación de treinta años de trabajo, en los que Alfonso D'Aquino ha conseguido redondear una idea de poesía que se venía gestando desde la publicación de su primer libro, *Prosfisia*, en 1981. (...) —formas que van de lo mínimo a lo máximo— (...)"

[y nótese el tallado en hueco de flexible sencillez con que *se produce* la desasignación en tanto des-resignación, transferencia energética de lo regulado a lo irregular]:

La vena cava
la roca interna

Y si el reflejo estrellas
luces espiras

Sin dejar de decir será dejando que las palabras se digan, incluso a sí mismas, lo que, al leer, sigue diciéndose, desdiciéndose. Reeditándose ante los ojos permeados por la humedad parpadeante de la lectura, como si las palabras recordasen desde cuál trasfondo la sensualísima luminiscencia donde cosas contables no quedan, sino infinitos seres, modulaciones del ser-estar.

Sacar*se*, lo lector, para entrar menos trajeado de connotaciones, menos preexistente, en ese encuentro con un sentido inaferrable pero de diversa precisión (sentido-encrucijada, sentido-prisma) para el que pronósticos no habría ni le cabría ser captado por las típicas antenas entrópicas, desesperadas de "este tiempo".

Implicará, al leer *en* poesía, la delicadeza transbordante del contacto. D'Aquino se desliza en esa canoa de palabras por la piel de lo que va fluyendo a través de su ritmo trabajado por las oscilaciones de la voz escrita.

La voz lírica, si escrita, se realiza al tocar. Nos palpa por dentro, es una lengua inaugural en su anacronía, sintonizada con aquello que en ella se nombra y empuja el aliento a unas corporizaciones cuyas entidades exactitudes no cuajan, viajan.

Ese tactarnos la escucha voz mediante lleva los emblemas condensadores de la imagen hacia los plurales enhebrados del canto materializador. Celebración que eclosiona a la plegaria y la despliega sin tregua atravesando en recíprocas direcciones el espejo.

Canto aquel que, desnuda presencia precisa, mueve, con las sonoras y visivas, las partículas del sentido. El cual no preexiste, acontece. ¿Y lo dice D'Aquino una vez absorto en la canalización activa, en la conectiva constante implicada en una práctica de percatación? ¿Lo dice él cuando su poema se ha corrido de toda confirmación, más bien abriéndose a la flor de encrucijada?

El poema, *el insensato rumor de la poesía*, según nos lee D'Aquino, surge, con precisión dinámica, porque el sentido —redigámoslo— no preexiste. No podría. Excepto, quizá, la dispersa incongruencia de tanta ideación contrapuesta *sobre-acerca de aquéllo*.

Será, y sin consuno con alguna Unidad Básica de Origen, una materialización. Recreable además mediante el rito (de lo) irregular, *como un brillo dorado que se expande viene y va solo por el aire*. Leer el poema, en esta perspectiva, es en tanto paciencia inagotable, paciencia que en diálogo múltiple-multiplicador se construye y autoinstruye.

Pero, por lo mismo: lo irrepetible de la ligera variación que acompaña al desplazamiento de la fuerza conectiva, liberando una estela de armónicos microtonales en el plano del sentido. Ahí giran los seres facetados.

Caósmosis, cosmoasis. También un espejismo que se atraviesa y circula. Una circulación de astros imantados.

El poema universo analógico, la visión desperdigada en las espigas de sentido que adhieren fugaces a una transparencia inhumana, sacando la lengua recuperada, poniéndole cuerpo a las prestadas palabras ahora achispadas por la puesta prismática de las permutaciones al interior de los estratos.

La intensidad se gradúa sin fin en correspondencia con los cambiantes grados de atención y velocidades de manifestación, a instancias de ese recupero

vía la lectura en que nos dejamos leer, entregados al giroscopio de las imágenes del poema entrecruzando formas de existencia.

Percatación, entonces, del navegar del "buscador de estrellas" que subyace al astrolabio, para un tipo de orientación que no se reduce al sentimiento de ubicuidad. Un equilibrio que encarna en el ritmo, explícito y cantante, capaz de absorberse al mismo tiempo en la variedad de los accidentes incomparables e íntimos de tan ínfimos: asuntos de texturas, urdimbres, colocaciones, trazados, reciprocidades.

Los valores afectivos en juego son los del viajero que se hace a la mar de su deriva amorosa en pos de ningún futuro, siquiera un presente, alguna presa verdad. A cada gesto que dando el verso, alinea la guirnalda de detalles de la oración-composición con el percipiente desnudo, aun de sus intenciones de sí, en un presente más acá del lenguaje, sin predicativa premeditación.

He ahí un misterio propio de la poesía, ella misma exaltadora del misterio del ser-estar: el hacer concebible una presencia verbal que devuelve naturaleza original: devuelve voz porque expande la escucha, al punto de no cundir la identidad o sus contrarios.

Estrella cardial. Estotro universo.

Quizá podamos hablar del gesto aborigen que antecede a las apropiaciones de la palabra. Un "antes" que no es un "pre", porque no se sitúa en el espacio-tiempo sino que consiste de una percatación que es una danza.

Meditar que será tanto en su acepción reflexiva, de concentración masticatoria de los significados para inaugurar áreas de la conciencia-experiencia, cuanto en su acepción de entrega incondicionada del ser-estar a su devenir mediante una práctica sostenida, una vía. En este caso, la escritura poética como empiria analógica de una transmutación.

Al revés de ciertas prédicas corrientes, en D'Aquino la poesía no desconfía de las palabras. Es tanta su confianza en ese vínculo amical, amoroso, cultivo vía el *versus*, que puede asimismo leerse como poesía devocional-celebratoria (del misterio), de un paganismo natural, probablemente irritante a los ojos de aquellas prédicas, que propagan, *in situ*, el tic adoctrinado de que no hay equivalencia posible entre el mundo y las palabras. Como si supiesen de antemano de qué mundo están hablando, modulándolo apenas, con distraído recurso a la fijación.

(Ahí les cabe a ciertos sucedáneos de la (inatrapable) contemporaneidad el concepto cruel, y astuto, que se afirma "cuestionador de los discursos autoritarios" y representante de los "espacios de resistencia". Donde nunca queda claro qué hay pendiente con el poder, con las nociones de poder: el salto vital del poema reverbera en la región central de la nuca. Fin de cualquier resistencia, cualquier ilusión de poderío. Entrega.)

Lo poético tiende un lance, no en ese preguntar, rimbombancia que se le adjudica y que se reconoce a *mentalidad* rasante: sí en abandono de prerrogativas y demás arrogancias. Escribir y leer abonando la disciplina de acrecentamiento del silencio. Por ahí circulan unas cosas y los nombres otras más.

El ojeo adoctrinado propenso a demagogias, fabricante de realismos que confirmen un Real, un preexistente, se desvive, demasiado pendiente de su reflejo captando, obsedido por su pensar como quien se desloma por una propiedad. Ese ojear precisa de verdugos que lo icen. E incansablemente busca "formas de legitimar" una actividad, de aglutinarle una razón de ser que la organice, acaso.

Aquella civilizada noción del poeta de salón, así fuese el de cosméticas propiedades. El poema no compensa insatisfacciones del sujeto ni pondera o denigra sus añadidos, asignados atributos. De ahí, tal vez, la necesidad de repensar al poeta, si no de despensarlo, dejándolo en la precisa complejidad de su rastreo. Elástica de tan precisa.

Trabajar con la palabra para inducirla a otra corriente sanguíneo-estelar, como en la órbita del astrolabio saltado del astro labial, reverle al "poeta" (al "lector") una dimensión aléfica, o un percibir en varias dimensiones.

Desasirse del personaje tras la autoría, recluso de su idea de sí, implica de pronto habitante del vaivén, devenir vaivén. Correr biombos añosos y escafandras de ocasión, para oler el bosque, para oír el prisma, catar la resonancia, multiplicar el genésico fraseo,

danza en-trance de fusiones y anexiones y amalgamas y disoluciones engamadas y derretimientos y endurecimientos y yacimientos y aleaciones y desprendimientos y pieles y superficies y erosión y trasfondos.

Ya no en obediencia reactiva a un enunciado iterado hasta la saciedad, sino por acto volitivo de inscripción más acá, en la escritura. El poema con hambre más acá de apetencias. El mismo parpadeo en su reflejo. Mismotrostro. Pasar por

el tamiz de la experiencia implica disolverse en lo percibido, como en vínculo fraterno con la otredad ambiente, la otredad aquí, ahora.

Viajero no por apenas metáfora: no hay metáfora que no sea aborigen. El menosprecio de que "goza" la metáfora entre la crema de la crítica genérica, es temor. *Timor mortis* —saturado de lo que no es cuerpo inmediato, contacto que tranquiliza y conduce a nuevas áreas de exploración y encuentro, el tímpano, impedido de la escucha.

Mortemor. Temorfosis: de pronto salta la chispa del pez —ahí, ese gorjeo-conjuro, ese cruce entre percataciones, con su capacidad de meternos, velozmente detenido colibrí (¿parpadea o no parpadea? ¿parpadeo no es un plumaje?), concurre al canto-polen daquiniano.

"Canto visual" cuya visualidad entra por el oído más acá del tímpano y por el ojo más acá de la retina, sin quedar en punto retenido, por su impulso sutil, en las aduanas del entendimiento en los pabellones administrativos de la oreja adiestrada.

La onda cerebral y la celebración no cautiva de sus efémerides; la concentración de la palabra en la dimensión respiratoria, en el evento sostenido de su percatación; el poema destinado a una comprensión inmediata, no intelectiva, donde las palabras se reconcilian, se hacen portadoras —merecedoras— de una armonía; armonía que no es apaciguamiento de la posible turbulencia sino pasaje directo a otro nivel de percepción.

Desde esta precariedad y este entusiasmo, el astrolabio en la boca, dejarse en el hervor preciso de su punto de incantación, su procesamiento verbal por analogías que se desplazan sobre un terreno encrespado de interioridad dada vuelta.

> Poesía trastorno / visión fuera del pensamiento / centro *sin* fondo
> le mostraremos *nuestros vidrios* en el horizonte
> *el paso de la luz al diamante*
> entre los fulgores ocultos en los túneles de un reflejo
> la terrible visión que se mira a sí misma al dar vuelta la luz

¿Quién es el que canta? ¿Quién se hace cóncavo (y la escucha encarna)? Se empieza por cualquier enunciado capaz de un desliz, hilar de las imágenes que

van entrando y saliendo unas y otras. La dinamo es aquí un caleidoscopio cuya referencia mutante es el primordio, el acecho de un origen que se transforma, origen que muta con la velocidad del sentido. Y en verdad se desfonda la costumbre unilateral: leer en el poema al que lee siendo leído por el poema.

translucencia reencontrada

conca vida

y pensar que aún pudiera tocarla

sal verdosa del limo de la fuente

misterio vegetal traslumbrado en las estructuras cristalinas del aire

La poesía como vía en un proceso que no se fija en la demarcación de un sujeto ante sus cosas —su objetar, incluso— sino que se da en carnespíritu, antes de cualquier acceso o salimiento. El sentido en el poema visionario es un atravesamiento que es un atravesar. Muestra una presencia indemostrable, perceptible e imperceptible a la vez (aire de lo que es más acá de que podamos reconocerlo a simple percepción o captura inteligible). Si trabaja la imagen es para condensarla en la visión: el sentido nos escucha, da el cóncavo necesario para la resonancia suscitativa.

Lo visionario en un poema tal vez consista en revertir, mediante la meditación que reanima cada palabra-prisma en su recuperada voz, la interferencia ambiental de una "cultura" cuyo principal factor de "cambio" consiste en jugar constante y alternadamente a afirmarse y a degradarse, al interior interferido de los individuos (sus gestos, sus palabras, sus historias), en sus propios parámetros y paradigma.

Esa meditación es, repitámoslo si cabe la vibra, una inteligencia carnal, una encarnación habitada, capaz de aunarse al espíritu de infinitos cuerpos. Una palabra en todo caso arraigada en su propia génesis, algo así como un recurso aborigen aplicado al ritmar la vista y el oído en una consagración extática de la página semoviente.

En los desplazamientos vibratorios del sentido, el poema visionario de Alfonso D'Aquino toca lugares, que no consisten definitoriamente, con una transparencia activa capaz de recuperar a la propia opacidad, ya no opuesta, complementaria.

Aquí mismo, donde el sentido se resiste, D'Aquino inscribe su canto visual: aura en la imagen, conciencia de continuo modificada al concentrarse, exploradora, en las posibilidades materializantes del lenguaje escrito. Materialización que, para ser, incluye el aura, o sea lo irreductible emanador, contundente luz del contacto con los mil y un aspectos del ser.

Leer la poesía de Alfonso implica recuperar la sensación del viaje hacia regiones inusitadas —algo que las poéticas más difundidas en nuestra lengua han perdido desde cuando menos los años 60: un intento de traspasar las imágenes en pos de una visión, o una *entrevisión* (Sucre) para lo cual es necesario habitar cada imagen en su inquietante corporeidad, incluso hasta en lo amorfo y aun lo informe implicados en una percatación a 360 grados a la redonda.

El espíritu de interiorizada aventura parece haberse ido diluyendo, a partir de un sobrepeso de expectativas aplicadas como yunques predestinales al poema, reprimiendo los dones de lo inconcebible, que acontecen una vez soltada la prerrogativa antropocéntrica (u "Occidente").

En Alfonso la transmisión en varias dimensiones no hace a un programa de sorpresas ni a una recurrencia simbolista; expone, ante el escrutinio *co*lector, el estudio sostenido de potencias y capacidades brujas, latentes en el lenguaje. Como un colocador de semillas en el corazón abierto de una tierra indómita, la participación del poeta en los devenires equivale a la del deslizador interdimensional.

Una confianza corporal en el acecho a las palabras-imágenes que, de pronto, con la prontitud de un reverbero arcaico —con esa velocidad que alínea incontables detenimientos—, devienen, siendo nombres, más que nombres.

Más que alusiones, seres y cosas o sus influjos, incluyendo aquello que les proyecta el ánimo y así rozando lo imperceptible: las imágenes cargadas de visión transmitidas por una lengua semoviente, transvisiones, modifican regiones del ser, transforman gradualmente aunque sin residuos, e inciden en esa generalizada trivialidad que nos acosa, para, mediante una recarga afectiva de las palabras, desmagnetizar las imágenes (entre ellas, la autoimagen), posibilitando, acto seguido, una constatación activa y por ende germinal de la capacidad de apertura que hace al ser atravesado por el verbo (y al revés).

Tocado en todos los sentidos, inscribe Alfonso, *con todos los aromas que concentra la oscuridad*. Para en seguida preferir: *quemantes notas que imantan el bosque/ pero*

que nadie oye/ aunque es la misma música ruidosa y secreta de una a otra noche. La imagen, se puede percibir, surge encarnación verbal, pues el verbo en ella vertebral reverbera, dejando entreabiertas zonas liminares, disolviendo la voz en su desplazamiento de ojo linfático, nombrando umbralicia realidades o aspectos de la realidad en tanto aquello que, con toda precisión e implacablemente, atraviesa las entidades.

Pero por cierto una piedra es avatar de la piedra así como la piedra, genérica, constituye la referencia a cada piedra sensibilizada, devuelta afectivamente a la conciencia, la cual conversa con lo que ella no es. El poema como conversando —diálogo pleno de silencio que se comparte— se puebla de signos que son experiencias concretas y no su remisión: aunque, por cierto, hay una *carne secreta* que sólo en transparencia se conoce.

Transparencia en relación, que acontece vincularmente, en aleación con los signos-seres, jamás resignándose sino insistiendo en acompañar con la expresión ese misterio del acontecer. La circulación de tales signos por los *versus* del emblema procede asimismo a generar presencia. Lo nombrado no realza figuras principales que recortar de un fondo, sino que es para la precisa transfiguración. Si instantánea, inmemorial.

> La visión una noche tras otra del primer pino
> como un pedazo de estrella incandescente caído en el jardín de al lado
> que dejara entrever bajo su negra corteza
> igual que el corazón del árbol esmaltado de coruscantes líquenes
> nunca visto a otra hora que cuando el sol declina entre sus ramas
> su carne secreta
> inmersa en el agua donde nace la luz
> antes de subir por el tronco del otro pino

Algo en la metamorfosis sobrepasa a la forma e incorpora, da cuerpo a voces que lo informe proteicamente circula. Es, transmutar, una paradoja. El paso energético de una imagen a otra promueve el enhebrado que involucra regiones indómitas, quizá ignotas, del ser. Para ello, que carece de nombre, como principio o fin, y por ende se des-ubica por fuera de lo inventariado, se articula, en el acto de transmutar connotaciones y densidades, una suerte a-humana, un

humano fuera de especie y de obediencia a la permanencia de alguna estirpe general, ya no ligada a la mera perduración o a la prevalencia de fijezas, sino a la posibilidad, al seguir deviniendo.

Cuando ciertas poéticas encarnan lo impremeditable de ese salto de-en la continuidad antropocéntrica y sus diversos cohesivos *de facto*, lo que salta a la vista no es el muñequeo de un artefacto "poético", otro adefesio fabricado en serie para consumo de entendidos y encubrimiento de desentendidos. Ese eslabón perdido, que implica una voz presente más acá de cualquier identidad, constituye un alegato de traslucidez.

En el recíproco transparentarse entre los nombres y lo que nombran se estrecha un cauce; el poema prepara, si no dispone, una meditación; una, cuando el meditador ya no se constata, ni repetido en espejuelos ni conminado a permanecer en el confinamiento identitario. Si hay algo que no condice con el DNI, o con el identikit, también eso es el poema: no salta por sobre lo real, su salto es indicio de real posibilidad.

Ya que es al canto que se pronuncia el realce, la concordancia con lo inhumano captado en su dimensión ampliadora del mero Real. Mientras la identidad sometida al espejeo y sus reconocimientos, pavorosos de triviales, se asienta por sistema regulador de las presencias, o a eso, al menos, juega el *socius* y su implantación civil a todos los considerandos de la experiencia, "democratizando" allí donde la vida es lo irregular por excelencia, imponiendo registros para no percibir la variación infinita que desmiente al inventario.

El cosmógrafo viene a tocar de lleno la cuestión candente de la transmutación que hace al ser en su destello vibratorio, más acá, mucho más acá, de las clasificatorias y eliminatorias sociales. Lo que insurge es un relato aborigen, inmanencia que se autoalumbra:

> Estaba viendo las estrellas la otra noche
> y era como si estuviera viendo las estrellas otra noche
> mentalmente me veía mirarlas
> y también podía verme mirándome verlas
>
> Me recuerdo mirando las estrellas me decía
> y ya recordaba que otra vez las veía

Desde un vidrio me veo y en otro me reflejo
y miro que me miro
y también imagino que una estrella distinta
de pronto se refleja de este lado del libro

Y en cada vidrio que veo un reflejo distinto
de mí mismo se parte y me extravía...

No es un malabarismo metonímico lo que abre a (o parte hacia) la identidad cerrada, sino una meditación en el frutecer, en este caso atavío estelar adonde la desnudez se alcanza por estratos de transparencia. El "sujeto lírico" está, por cierto, des-sujetado, su canción se muestra vertebrada por ese fuego que parece frío porque se asume en el destello del cristal o en las puntas de estrella del diamante.

En lo habitado por esta poesía ha lugar a todo lo que no cierra en humano. Para lo inhumanable y para lo trashumante interregnos por igual: el sostén lo otorga el canto y se prolonga en los efectos sinuosos de un oscilar entre presencia y existencia. La presencia conmovida que contiene esa existencia, de cuya percatación obtiene el ámbar corredizo de una lengua que se va de madre.

La poética no confirma a una lengua materna sino a una lengua de llegada, siempre provisoria (en cuanto a velocidades implicadas en el sinuoso ritmar daquiniano) y sin embargo nítida movilización de los sentidos.

Todo ocurre en un tránsito dialogante, los nombres casi solos se presentan sobre la página concurriendo a una visitación de convergencias afiladas por la conectiva rítmica, don que pudiendo hacerse hipnótico lo evita, para llevar más bien la lectura a un reencuentro que ya no es reconocimiento ni un revisitar confirmatorio sino una extravía.

Extravía meditante donde la articulación, invisible sutra revelando el enhebrado, mantiene un equilibrio constante, pero un tipo de equilibrio que no reconoce puntos de apoyo, un equilibrio que se va constituyendo, gerundial en tanto respiratoria, presente sin continuo, a tiempo, un siempre formulado como el conjuro para un rito, por secreto no menos intenso en su explicitarse, cuando es coincidir movimiento y danza, música y sonido, letra y palabra, impulso y concentración.

No es que el sentido resida en alguna parte y se expresa, sino que se desplaza y se verifica nomás tras figuraciones que exaltan, por ejemplo en el poema "Espirales rotas / *Sellos*", los nombres rotatorios, carne de oscilación. El hálito contra el cristal equivale a una caligrafía de patitas de ave que son velocidades en los nombres, velocidades de ese pensar que no cierran.

Cada nombre de la diosa-presencia será un modo, una modulación, una veta a seguir, un horizonte reencontrado, un signo de lo posible, un proyecto de incubación, una estancia en la materia, una chispa de contacto, una forma y un amorfo (decíamos), un paréntesis en lo habitual y una des-habituación instantánea...

Cada nombre encarna; será un atributo o una característica o una modalidad o un asomo a la presencia, atisbada entonces desde muchas perspectivas y escalas dimensionales, llevando la lengua alfabetaria y sucesiva hasta sus últimas posibilidades de estiramiento articular, para trazar el ideograma mental que los nombres no sólo evocan sino convocan...

Cada nombre...

II

el jardín de adentro

El origen es un remolino en el río del devenir.
Benjamin citado por Didi-Huberman

No
encontrado
ni
imaginado
nunca
visto

(...)

envuelto
por
su brillo

lejos muy
lejos
y no
obstante
tan
cerca

(...)

una
vez
visto
hueco

Es la referencia daquiniana al "Pájaro abismo". Así, como acto crudo del pensar. Figura que sobrevuela la dimensión prevista. A vuelo de pájaro. Y en

relación a una gravedad que es más acá de su Ley o de una profundidad recóndita, ocultada por el palimpsesto, por el muro de inscripciones o lamentos, por la sucesión de muros que hacen de ciudades laberintos y de laberintos metáforas de un abismo zigzagueante que sólo encuentra tope en los espejos.

El pájaro que no reconoce el vidrio no lo hace desaparecer, empero, y su choque contra la materia invisibilizada no lo desarraiga de la gravedad que su vuelo parecía insostener. La marca del pájaro queda estampada en el cristalino abismo, cristalino del ojo abisal que hurga estupefacto la razón de ser de esa distancia que media, esa frontera que no por invisible se debilita. Como un sudario, cristo emplumado en el cristal, se contrarresta el envío de su impulso volátil con un rechazo de las superficies planas, de las rectitudes, que pone al volador en un retorno a la materia cadente.

Pero la colisión no impide otra insurgencia, más delicada, inesperadamente vertida a la conciencia: *una vez visto hueco* es una frase de circulación interna inacabable, una de tantas de las que aparecen en *Astro labio*. El poema deja de ser sudario para una impresión de los sentidos y se recupera en sobrevuelo abisal, canaliza lo imperceptible en un rito cantábile, asume la inmanencia en tanto lengua intrínseca. Lengua-diosa que nos medita:

> la flama inapagable al despertar
> con la oscura sensación del viento en la cabeza
> la veo con los ojos cerrados y los labios absortos

"Despertar", flor de palabra. La proliferación de *koans* en D'Aquino hace que palabras como ésta adquieran antiguas vetas de percatación. El que se percata, percibe *la inervación del fruto*, las variaciones del pino en los pinos, *el vidrio a la luz devuelto/* ***punto cero****/ del verbo.* ¿Y acaso no es la desnudez en sí ese *pedazo de luz informe*, ese *profundo* ***cristal****/ sin orbe* que eclipsa el oceánico bosque *en el bosque geométrico*?

Una meditación que plasma con inteligir compositivo una experiencia en varias dimensiones. Un calado. Un *calato*. Un desocultarse la voz ante la evidencia de un pensar cuya dinámica no adquiere consistencia con el uso reiterado de su idea, sino que se abre a la sugerencia, no por motivar a efectos de ambigüedad, sino por estar habitado y deshabitado, expandido y disuelto.

No hay sujeto pendiente de una predicación ni la consistente muleta sensorio-cognitiva de un objeto abarcable por el inteligir. La inteligencia es la del rayo, numen lumínico y crudeza numinosa en acto de nombrar. El único umbral restante sería la tercera o cuarta margen del río de luz que raya, promediando la rumia que se desfonda: *al fin/ una vez súbito/ (reflejo)/ en otro/ vidrio.*

La transparencia es una *translucencia,* ahí donde licuándose la luz aún cristaliza la intuición frágil, separativa, que dispone a la conciencia en su pico de atención, desposeída ésta de la más ínfima vara que alucinase con la confiscación del sentido o su inversa explicitación. Ni claridad ni opacidad, sino una permeabilidad de la forma labrada, en su trenzado poroso, tal que no interrumpa el paso de las luces, y esto en ambas direcciones del cristal: ¿cuál espejo?

Desaparecido el fondo de azogar que fundase o fundamentase un reflejo constatador, sólo queda la presencia sintiente, que sabe que es porque está, sintiéndose a su vez presentida por el espíritu que encarna toda forma. Algo no mundano, cuya condición de apartamiento o de paso al costado, si bien no se enuncia en los poemas de D'Aquino, emerge en tanto pulsación anímica, adánica que da trasluz a las imágenes, ellas mismas transparenciales.

¿Pero quién reduciría a la lisura un cristal? Rugosa o áspera percatación de la irregularidad que la vertebra, ahí, en las palabras que la encarnan como acrecentamiento de la percepción, del pensar percipiente que ya no es mero recipiente de "pensamientos" sino modulación vibratoria multilateral. Del encuentro activo con lo irregular surgen las palabras visionarias en un molino de oraciones que dan retorno a los seres vivientes por detrás o por dentro de cualquier imagen.

No alusiones: experiencias no inmunes a lo inhumano. Vínculos en los que se produce lo que Gary Snyder denominara "diálogo entre las especies". Si bien es el humano lenguaje, y en uno de sus tantos idiomas, no se detiene D'Aquino en el elemento arquetípico de los linajes legitimadores, pues los emblemas naturales, como en el *haiku,* son el nombre de lo que son siendo lo que son desde una vinculación innombrable.

La fuerza entera está en la sugerencia, pero la ambigüedad tonal hace aflorar, sin perder el ornamento simbólico, la fuerza irregular de la imagen, visión que no es sólo retiniana sino un arrebato del inteligir encarnado: *con una claridad y una cercanía inefables/ las marañas de signos oscuros de sus ramas sobrepuestas/*

verdinegros arabescos que en el tronco suspendidos se estremecen/ cambian de sombra a cada instante/ y dicen y desdicen su ininteligible lengua que no dice/ mientras otros ásperos signos/ en las sucesivas ramas superiores/ absortas en el luminoso movimiento de sus agujas verdes/ vuelven a decirlo.

La fuerza de la imagen irreductible no reside en la capacidad de mostración de una realidad dada, sino de una experiencia inusitada de la realidad. No un Real sino una ampliación por desplazamiento de cualquier centro detentador del sentido. No la luz nombrable sino el ideograma holografiado por el aliento mientras y siempre mientras canta:

luz
hialina

hila
hila

El propósito, enunciado en alguna parte por Lezama, de un acercamiento incalculable a los elementos naturales, cuya desproporción proporciona una sobredimensión, una *sobrenaturaleza*, o ese complementario posible, donde una consustanciación tal con las imágenes irrevocables, llevadas hasta el ilusionismo sobrenatural, la ilusión de un más allá de las formas naturales, que ya permite el retorno de la conciencia a la directa percepción de esas formas de existencia, esas otras presencias que no son para confirmar a ningún centro verificador de sentidos.

Está claro que quienes reniegan de la naturaleza, confiriéndole dignidad de "concepto", cuando no de concepto perimido (romántico, etc.), carecen en su experiencia del contacto básico necesario como para comprender que ciertas palabras corresponden, en verdad, no a un símbolo, sino a un modo de ser, a un ser particular o específico, no intercambiable, con el cual podemos, en efecto, relacionarnos por la vía acéntrica.

> Cuando a Joshu se lo interrogó sobre la significación de la llegada de Bodhidharma al Oriente (que proverbialmente es lo mismo que preguntar sobre el principio fundamental del Budismo), replicó: "El ciprés en el patio."

"Hablas", dijo el monje, "de un símbolo objetivo."
"No, no hablo de un símbolo objetivo."
"Entonces", preguntó el monje nuevamente, "¿cuál es el principio último del Budismo?"
"El ciprés en el patio", replicó otra vez Joshu.

D.T. Suzuki, "Zen doctrina de la no-mente"

El abandono de las imágenes naturales, en la poesía urbanita que nos acomete con sus mil "descubrimientos" cultuales, de puntualidad predecible, dadas las circunstancias planetarias, tiene más rasgos de síntoma que de logro artístico. Mucho es lo que se pierde, aun en términos de capacidades conectivas a favor de los alcances de la composición poética, cuando, por desestimar lo que se cree (pues de creencias se trata, en efecto) detectado, traducible: un "símbolo" [con todas las comillas del caso].

Es, *decir*, una desacumulación energética que ninguna razón o mandato aboliría en pro de supuestas nitideces, gestión de intereses simbólicos que suele confunde con la ética, para tachar la simbólica en cuanto acción asignificadora. Se pierde de vista, en los mandatos y razones, una experiencia inhumana bien concreta.

Bien poco puede decirnos una palabra cuando carecemos de la experiencia precisa que denota: quienes atribuyen condición meramente "simbólica" (en acepción reduccionista de hiper-significada) a una palabra como *pájaro* o *pino*, ven en la tradición que alimenta ese "valor poético depositado en el nombre" un sistema a superar mediante el esfuerzo sustitutivo que imponga, en todo caso, otros nombres, otra fijeza, a lo sumo.

En *Astro labio* se prodiga una circulación magnética entre los nombres, como en "Sílice", donde la inmensidad y aun lo inabarcable encuentran un lugar eslabonado en la canción. Entran a ser parte, encarnando giratorias posibilidades, un movimiento del espíritu una vez que éste no se fija en el remitente ni en el portador, sino que va abarcando y abarcando se descubre.

Mineral oculto / la noche desvela
la piedra inminente / sin sombra

ni nombre / ni luz / translucencia
insomne / que roza mi frente

—¡La vi…! ¡Estaba… ahí…!

La miro a lo lejos / desnuda
por dentro / y en la tierra cruda
de pronto aparece / su luz en el aire
la miro o la pienso / la tiro hacia dentro

En la piedra rota / la luz se demora
visión sin imagen / translucente mente
un vaso encendido / bajo cada letra
transparenta nada / nada transparente

Hay un solo espejo / todo el universo
hileras de cuencos / colmados / vacíos
estrellas fantasmas / entre cielos rasos
esferas / oscuras / extintas / desvelo

Ah lúcida arena / materia
invisible / la sal reflejaba
tan clara / y profunda
una luz oída / en el agua rara

—¡Sí…! ¡Sí…! ¡Ahí… ahí…!

Como en mínimas olas del desplazamiento simbolista en "La dama i" de Eguren, Alfonso tira sus dados rectangulares, estriados, cargados con los magnetos materializadores que gravitan una pluralidad de nortes para la voz que, *desnuda por dentro y en la tierra cruda*, vive en un acento, una coloración, la delgadez extrema del junco de la vocal que remeda un torso con una cabeza o una vela, repentinamente encendida por el énfasis acentual.

Ahí, en el ahí, en el Sí, sí, ahí, prima una voz inocultable, que no objeta nada porque señala (¿hacia adónde, adónde?) lo *translucente* en sí, la captación de la luz en la transparencia (y viceversa). Y el acotadísimo rumor del adjetivo exacto, el que no califica ni retrata, el que apunta al **blanco / negro** de la conciencia binaria, llevando en la imagen irreductible la condición real, la del austero misterio: *una luz oída en el agua rara*.

Rara, pues, el agua que transporta la luz como una voz, un sonido, una existencia paralela a las razones y sus estados. La naturaleza, asimismo, en lo más simple, lo más a mano: el agua, la luz. Nombres que son infinitos, una vez que continúan siendo experiencias, lejos del depósito simbólico y sus contiendas contra el símbolo.

Donde los extirpadores de idolatrías insisten en instalar el escepticismo, cuando no la postura cínica del mercader con discurso y fuerza bruta desencadenadora de hechos (y derechos), la poesía de pronto, en su fragilidad de objeto no-objeto, de cosa no-cosa, de asunto no-asunto, contiene un destello, como la diosa ambarina de Eguren-Westphalen.

Un destello al pasar. Un zarpazo a la inquietud, al bullicio, al bochinche de Eros, al mercado técnico y profético, al discurseo sobre el esto y el aquello, a la opinología versificante, a la necesidad de provocación o de trascendencia mediática. Alfonso construye su caracola desde una experiencia inhumana, en *natura*, no desde una vocación de naturalista.

Del mismo modo, su recuento simbólico no consiste en un simbolismo (una etereización de figuraciones sobrenaturalistas) sino en un ahondamiento persistente en los signos vivos, ahí donde el nombre y el ser nombrado no se escinden, trazando lo que podría considerarse los rastros del solitario.

El paso al costado, la salida de siglo o de época o de tiempo remarcado, en cualquier caso, es asimismo un salirse de sí, una acción vital ante el acuerdo (hipócrita) de "lo sin salida". El poema sólo puede ser auténtico en este sentido, cuando sin importar los merecimientos de las ópticas epocales y su sistema profesoral, cuando no traumático, su crítica establecedora, interpretante: una poética persiste en cuanto abre cada vez más silencio.

Silencio alrededor, antes y después de las palabras. Pero más y menos que nada silencio interno, intrínseco. Posibilidad-sentido, donde la voz poética hace

lugar a lo más simple que, de pronto, podría resultar, a los ojos de una razón de estado, cualquiera fuese su índole, un anacronismo. El valor de esa manifestación anacrónica no sólo es incalculable, sino que es lo incalculable mismo. ¿Y acaso la poesía no restituye lo incalculable a la lengua en tanto y en cuanto desmadrada, autoparidora?

Pongámoslo en palabras de Aldo Pellegrini:

> La palabra que dialoga con el silencio intenta la liberación. Se despoja de significado, se despoja de intención, se despoja de uso, para adquirir sentido. La palabra inútil colma el vacío de lo útil. Y esa plenitud se denomina camino de reencuentro. El reencuentro con la naturaleza que quiere ser revelada. El reencuentro de los entes aislados que no deben estarlo. El reencuentro consigo mismo. El reencuentro frontal con el misterio.

Lo que enuncia-encarna el cantar es una experiencia de otro orden, o más bien fuera de orden. Una modulación que hallando su forma consciente, de expansividades concéntricas y condensaciones eclosionantes, hila, rehíla el sutra. El alegato expresivo tras semejante sutura prodiga experiencia inocente, cuya sencillez de expresión transparenta una compleja gama, anímica-somática-evocadora. Como valor compositivo, le da a la voz qué des-hablar, mientras deletrea el cántico mediante puntos opacos que se desvanecen, en contrapunto, dejando pasar las otredades.

Todo otro —la demasía, la transpersona del espíritu común— con que Alfonso gusta de trenzar estos contrahechizos, cuya velocidad de nudos por instancia respiratoria no sabría decir si es rápida o lenta. Tal ritmo abarca (recicla) la arritmia primordial, siendo primordios dioses imperceptibles de pronto atisbados en translucencia: en ese punto, ya no indeciso sino vibrátil, en que frío y calor, opaco y lumínico, completitud y vacío, tú y yo dejan de oponerse.

Convergen renovales los des-opuestos en formación inesperada de detalles que sin embargo parecieran recordados, a medida que se los cata, ellos también mordientes, en el poema. Como si una región de la conciencia, que se supondría aislada, percibiese en la dicha trasluciente de las inscripciones sendas ampliaciones de lo informe germinal.

Se trata de la insurgencia refinada de ese margen salvaje que ningún domador comprendería en su intento por salvarse él o bien salvar*lo*: éste y no otro misterio, que nos recicla (abarca) como en el poema "(green fluorite"):

Idénticos
durante el instante incierto
en que el interior del cúbico cristal
y mi cabeza *cuadrada*
parecen alojar
entre el apacible flujo
de sus líneas rectas
y sus ángulos equívocos
una misma figura translucente
que los hilos de la luz
llevan y traen
desde el ácuo interior de la piedra
y su convulsa red vacía
hasta un lugar
sin espacio
que de pronto
entre mis dedos
se abre

Si la identidad realmente existiera, no podría ser lo cercenado, lo conminado, lo coagulado, la traba que no catapulta, la poesía del arrastre confirmatorio, lo confirmable propiamente. Si existiese algo así como una identidad, no podría ser la asignación del *socius*, su sentido de pertenencia o exclusión: por el poema pasan frecuencias de otra índole, que no son ya las del idéntico sino las del irrepetible.

Por eso, ante la pregunta (retórica) acerca de la función del poeta en la realidad, quizá no cabría sino abrir cada vez más el tercer oído, permitiéndole a las palabras la reverberancia inexacta, la inexactitud *per se* que hace a la voz buscándose de canto.

D'Aquino en su ritmo ritual, su caja de reverberancias justamente para ver qué se hace con la conciencia ante el espejo: *Espejo entre juguetes elegido/ juguete*

de los perros sin el niño// Al acecho palpita entre las piedras/ el reflejo sangrante de la hiedra// Casi invisible si su luz no fuera/ leve zumbo de vida a ras de tierra// (...) Imagen del espejo enrarecido/ la blanca faz del cazador furtivo// Enredo de rebrillos ominosos/ el reflejo que encarna entre los ojos// Incapaces de ver entre hebras rotas/ el hilo fino que cruza las cosas// Irradia en la penumbra del eclipse/ el rastro inocultable de oro y tizne// Luz que la luz del vidrio apenas rosa/ la repentina mano de una diosa// (...) Más pensada que vista luz oculta/ la solícita mano que lo ausculta// Y al tocarlo lo escucha y lo piensa/ y al pensar lo descubre y lo tienta// Salta el nudo al contacto del filo/ ¡Si sigue en vilo el corazón del niño!// (...) Como un cristal ardiente blanco enjambre/ que al rezumar la luz en luz se parte// Al suelo cae la cal que lo cubría/ vidrio desnudo transparente el día// El día que nace dentro del dios mismo/ y se prolonga en los hilos del vidrio// Aletea la víscera sublime/ se desbordan sus vasos irascibles// (...) El círculo sanguíneo del espejo/ o el reflejo que encarna en el reflejo// (...)

La luz metamórfica por la que ingresa la conciencia a todas las iluminaciones, súbitas láminas umbralicias donde se disuelven las fronteras. Una condición de lo no-humano crece enredadera por dentro de la actividad verbal, detonándola en una implosiva eclosión que hace del reverbero cenestésico la fuerza de interiocepción, donde encarnar no calza en el molde corporal o en la idea de cuerpo impuesta, incluso, y por cierto, a las palabras.

Se es poeta (lector) por una gracia conseguida, en el sentido que al verbo conseguir se le asigna en algunos enclaves del continente americano: encontrar. Gracia encontrada, pues, que en *Astro labio* llega a la consumación de un libro de hilos, donde se sigue un rastro inmemorial, que excede a la memoria, que deviene nutriente de una intuición abarcante. Ahí la poesía es un destino, rareza del estar que hace del misterio materia de su pronunciación, como en "Hilos" precisamente, un homenaje a Jorge Eduardo Eielson, artista con el que D'Aquino guarda afinidad:

Hilo nulo libro
hilo a hilo ahílo
halo hilo velo
nudo a nudo sigo

En una entrevista por escrito de 2005 el propio Alfonso nos decía:

> Sí, todo canta. Quiero decir, oigo que todo canta y que todo pide ser cantado. Hay algo como un magnetismo del canto, que se transmite del objeto (cualquiera que éste sea) al verso y de éste al canto silencioso que el lector realiza. (...) Ahora tarareo lo que escribo, canto sus sílabas más que contarlas, e incluso, así sea torpe y efímeramente, en ocasiones lo musicalizo en un teclado para asegurarme de su ritmo y su sonoridad, y esto para todos los registros poéticos en los que me gusta moverme: de la poesía visual (que normalmente ignora el lirismo, sin duda en detrimento propio) a un verso que es libre sólo en la medida que se transforma en su opuesto y cuyo canto se profundiza a un nivel microtonal, en el que empieza el verdadero trabajo poético, el sutil entramado de los más mínimos aspectos del verso: las rimas que imantan los sentidos, los ritmos que abren el espacio, las sílabas que silban, las imágenes que resuenan tras el ojo... Y todo ello como una unidad de sentido-sonido-y-forma que se resuelve como canto visual. No puedo sino repetir aquello de que el poeta tan sólo transmite la inaudible música que percibe. Y es su capacidad de transmisión creativa la que lo convierte, en la medida que se afinan su oído y su palabra, en un fino instrumento de esa música no oída.[1]

El tipo de imagen irreductible que trabaja D'Aquino, más que a la imagen tal como la comprendemos en su aspecto, su vigencia retiniana, se vincula con la visión. Una poesía visionaria que se concentra en un tiempo paralelo, o en un destiempo, o, mejor aun, en el aura de las cosas tanto como en las cosas mismas en su contundencia espaciotemporal en otro plano. Aquí se cumple a cabalidad aquello señalado por Georges Didi-Huberman dialogando con Walter Benjamin:

> Ante nuestros ojos, fuera de nuestra vista: algo nos habla aquí de la obsesión como lo que volvería a nosotros de lejos, nos incumbiría,

1. "Alfonso D'Aquino: instrumento de la música no oída", respuestas de AD a un cuestionario de Reynaldo Jiménez, revista *tsé-tsé*, N° 16, Buenos Aires, 2005; todo lo cual funge de introducción a una muestra poética: "Hyalus".

> nos miraría y se nos escaparía a la vez. Es a partir de una paradoja semejante, sin duda, que hay que comprender el segundo aspecto del aura, que es el de un *poder de la mirada* prestado a lo mirado mismo por el mirante: "Esto me mira". Tocamos aquí el carácter evidentemente fantasmático de esta experiencia, pero, antes de pretender evaluar su tenor simplemente ilusorio o, al contrario, su tenor de verdad, retengamos la fórmula mediante la cual Benjamin explicaba esta experiencia: "Sentir el aura de una cosa es otorgarle el poder de alzar los ojos", y añadía enseguida: "Ésta es una de las fuentes mismas de la poesía". Poco a poco se comprenderá que, para Benjamin, el aura no podría reducirse a una pura y simple fenomenología de la fascinación alienada inclinada hacia la vertiente de la alucinación. Aquí se trataría más bien de una mirada obrada por el tiempo, una mirada que dejaría a la aparición del tiempo para desplegarse como pensamiento, es decir que dejaría al espacio el tiempo para retramarse de otra manera, para volver a convertirse en tiempo.[2]

La cualidad ampliadora de la nitidez verbal en D'Aquino incide favorable a la meditación, donde la atención del percipiente se disuelve en la condición transmutante del ser-estar: un devenir, cuya señal integradora —no meramente cohesiva— es el ritmo. Una insistencia corporal, incorporante aun de lo incorporal, oscilando los límites aparentes en una danza del sentido tocante a lo matérico y a lo inmensurable. Vértebra y aura. Estrella y objeto. Inmediatez e infinito.

Cerca de la voz, a veces como canción, a veces como transcripción de un itinerario del espíritu —donde lo recortado y personal se mezcla activamente con lo transpersonal en un recíproco desborde de signos vibrando—, la poesía de Alfonso es una constante materialización de visiones que alcanzan la conciencia en una segunda atención. De ahí provienen y ahí llevan.

La fecunda acotación de Didi-Huberman, acerca de que "el aura no podría reducirse a una pura y simple fenomenología de la fascinación alienada

2. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Lo que vemos, lo que nos mira*, Bordes, Manantial, Buenos Aires, 1997, traducción de Horacio Pons.

inclinada hacia la vertiente de la alucinación" permite apreciar de qué manera y cuán intensamente D'Aquino deja pasar la corriente imprevista del sentido a través de la imagen-visión.

Mediante unas composiciones tan rigurosas como permeables a la danza de las partículas que en ellas ocurre, medita el poeta a la vista del lector, dando recurso a los pasajes interdimensionales en sus devenires más concretos: "estudio", habitación, ventana, mesa de trabajo, lugarejo de la meditación, micro-macro. Es así cómo el mandala se va transformando con la oscilatoria propia del sentido, se mueven a un tiempo el mandala y el ojoído, frutecer de la percatación.

El astrolabio de D'Aquino retoma el doblez de sus componentes: el astro aquí, el labio aquí. Astro labial, labia astral. Titilación en tiempo y canción encarnada en espacio. O encrucijada espaciotemporal en la alineación analógica: una invitación al enlace razón-irrazón así como un ahondamiento adrede aquende la transparencia que virazona los estratos.

Correspondencia asimismo de los fragmentos, dispersión del espejo devenido chispas de transparencia no siempre atravesable (aunque la carne permanezca ante lo atravesante; es más, se diría que persiste en la carne jamás resignada una gradación de sentido que sólo intermitentemente puede ser captada: de ahí la contrapuesta velocidad de los sentidos que la imagen irreductible del poema desacumula).

Por eso la incorporación del elemento temporal, fundido a los volúmenes retrabajados hasta traspasar la distancia espacial, la conciencia de ese recorte distanciado, donde ningún protagonista, ya, permanece en un solo lugar. La multilocación del yo lírico de pronto adquiere coloraciones y temperaturas cuya pauta de variación continua reside en una percepción musicante de las cosas, rotatoria y permutante, en un fundido que al sostenerse atraviesa las variaciones como un haz respiratorio y pneumático a la vez.

En la imagen irreductible, presencia y no representación, visionaria en cuanto a traspasar cualquier protagonismo —lírica que no es del sujeto central sino del intercambio copulativo entre los seres, de la interdimensión más que de un andarivel aislado en alguna centralidad o periferia—, repitamos con Didi-Huberman, "se trataría más bien de una mirada obrada por el tiempo, una mirada que dejaría a la aparición del tiempo para desplegarse como pensamiento".

desde las hojas que abren al jardín de adentro
en juegos de ventanas que reflejan otros juegos de ventanas
que reflejan otros juegos de ventanas que reflejan
en este vidrio soluble
la noche toda rayada por la lluvia que no calla

El pensar desensimismante del poema es una reentrada en el tiempo, lo cual implica, a su vez, un abandono senso-abisal de la cronología y la linearidad. Es esta aparición del tiempo en tanto despliegue pensante, en tanto movimiento del ser en simultáneas direcciones (y gradaciones y receptividades), lo que convoca la aparición. Quizá la provoca: que salga de su escucha, que a lo ensimismado le deje su parte de retorno. Aparición que no es de lo Humano y sus Órdenes, sino de lo palpitante, del que el lenguaje se hace transportador.

Un énfasis tácito en la cualidad energética a desplegar con la palabra, un cultivo, precisamente, de las capilaridades conectivas. Éstas actúan mediante el reverbero de todos los estratos en pos del unísono: cuando la arritmia propia del sentido arrima los mundos (y crece el mundo).

Si hay poeta (y lector), es que alguien se saca de caminos y se coloca en situación de estar: de ahí tal observancia del silencio, ese caos germinal donde el sentido jamás se instala. Y, sin embargo, *peace of mind*, dado el acto del renunciante, su paso al costado de la Mentalidad.

Las reunidas entidades que habitan las imágenes visionarias son signos que sacuden presencias. Aspectos de una realidad que no se ve eclipsada por la interpretación. Materializaciones a nivel de una atención que se va construyendo.

Utilidad espiritual de la poesía: configurar, como el yantra o el mandala, un punto de apoyo para la concentración en el salto al ser misterioso, en su enigma y abertura.

Punto concéntrico que tanto expande como contrae, tanto elastiza y reparte hasta parecer disgregado como condensa y afianza. Interdimensión en que convergen múltiples *entres* de resistencia no-antropocéntrica (no prefijada en el realce de una centralidad universal o cualquiera de sus particulares derivados).

Punto de la voz escrita visiva; punto para la confluencia energética, abarcante aun de las entidades aisladas y las identidades separativas, *id est* las concretudes y las evanescencias.

No es una relativización de absolutos lo que Alfonso D'Aquino ha puesto a circular: es una puesta en relación entre *entres*. Alcanza la liberación transverbal del evento poético, como una sustancia traspasando al poema, masticando con dientes de luz negra el corazón que se desplaza, el hongo-gota-tambor-borra-ras-astro inmarcesible de las palabras-almas, *medulla* —danzantextralúcida— estrella.

A través del ventanal me veo desde el jardín
reflejado en las ventanas de mis ojos entrar en otra casa
profunda y luminosa como son las casas en los sueños
donde siempre se abre inesperadamente un cuarto nuevo

enero 2012

EXTRACT FROM *THE MIDDLE NOTEBOOKES*

[...]

*

The muscle that follows is a muscle of grief. (Rachel Gontijo Araújo)

*

Your death prepares mine. I say this to you. I say that you have just arrived a little bit early. I say it but there is no one to say it to. You, for example.

*

Which makes of you: not anyone anymore.

*

You must have noticed that I am a reader of great impatience, and sufficiently misanthropic at times. Admittedly, I recognise that this is in contradiction with my desire for dialogue, with you for example, in these letters which deploy the

spaces surrounding us and having undoubtedly anticipated our encounter in that terrible auditorium of the *universität* where not only Heidegger, but Benjamin, must have sat. I have such a strong desire to speak to you, to *meet you.*

*

, I am convoked by the exactitude of your suggestion that *one listens with one's voice.* The paradox, then, of the breach, might be that in the act of speaking-listening, a throat becomes unbound from another (Lyotard-Malraux), and this is experienced as a betrayal, or a defection. This violence lays perhaps in wait at the bottom of speaking or listening, it may already be in place and dialogue may simply exist along its fragile and catastrophic edge, anticipating the necessary disaster of unboundedness. To be torn (one) from the other. Mind you nothing prepares one for the end of the voice, rent from the space surrounding a body irrevocably amputated of its meaning, of death itself, and I know it for having seen it with my mouth that the last sound is pulled *into* and not *out of* the body, there is no saying: *expiration.*

*

What will be done to us, *after?* (René Char)

*

And forgetting—*Vergessen?*—is something I have calculated into my life, precisely as a means of (dis)figuring language.

*

NN, a double name, a name stripped of name, in which to disappear, *Nomen Nescio,* out of which one might not exist, an *I,* for example, exemplar of *nothing,* a name that might also be stripped of place, of origin, of begetting, because naming is a violence that, evidently, cannot not be undone.

*

The reasoned conclusion to the slow holocausting of a person by modern medicine with its "treatments" derived from chemical warfare, and its military diction. Why should I speak any more of this than already I have done? This conversation with its specific humiliations and barbarism does not interest me, and it is not a conversation anymore. It is simply a lost thing and the litany is exacerbating.

*

In the time of the death of the painter, I wrote books and a pigeon died in the street. I crossed an ocean. I touched several cities. I said.

*

The letter commits a *malady* that exists in time. "Please, believe again this notion of my voice; remember / what it is to touch me. I ask because this isn't speaking; this is a kind of walking to the river." (Brian Teare). I haven't, like you, the vastness of the ocean to behold.

*

Have I not the same responsibility to the century as to the instant?

*

Yes, the "I" must be re-imagined. The pronoun indicating the first person, the human subject has to be one of the most crucial and most cruel parts of speech. Bearing such strong lines and given so much weight. It configures us; it destroys us. And we say parts of speech? What part of speech am I if I have no speech? What if interests that are never mine mutilate my "I"? (Christine Stewart)

*

At the end of *The Trial* there is—"Like a dog. As though the shame of it would outlast him." —Might I have become that "shame"?

*

We have a great responsibility toward the animals we have decided to domesticate. It is obvious that our bad habits are destructive, as they are beginning to develop human illnesses, some of which are congenital, because of breeding practices. Often I think that we humans give only the worst of ourselves.

*

, and I thought that an entire city like that, its places, can also mourn a single person, alone in his death, alone and trembling. It is perhaps also a form of love, to love in absence, the person one has loved, very awkwardly, during these years. In the studio, I found self-portraits. Marvellous. Astonishing.

*

I have so much to say on this subject that I prefer to say nothing. I fear otherwise that in opening myself I will never close over again. The wound, I believe it, must remain gaping. In this sense, if philosophy intensifies the question such as it is asked, I do want to believe that in philosophy we are with the question of death. If, however, it seeks an answer where there is none, it is of no interest to me. The greatest indecency, it seems to me, is to attempt to close the question of death. But to answer to it—to take my responsibility before this death—that is something else. Sometimes I think that I have lived all my life in the sense of these instants. At present, they summon me irrevocably. Fear is a thing lesser than fear. A thing that exceeds it also. There is nothing.

*

In such little time, I witnessed the attempts of a person who wanted to *grant meaning* to loss. But it cannot be reasoned. Unless reasoning rips apart the stitch that madly tries to cohere that which is forcibly incoherent. A language. That, too, can be a death.

*

I want to be able to say that I was standing on that road and that I lay against those same animals, but it isn't true. It was another road, and my body leaned against other bodies, their seizure, their exhaustion. I was covered in blood and it wasn't enough. And the howling that came later stayed caught in my skin.

*

Sprachlos. // Bitte.

*

And there, set upon a box near the plants that I water *in your place*, I fall upon the dictionary, as though by your hand you were tendering it to me.

*

He doesn't know that I leave the apartment at 8:36 p.m. and that I take the train with your photograph in my jacket pocket with the express intent of showing it to him. That our encounter lasts no more than two or three minutes and is of no consequence. He looks at the photograph and identifies you in his memory. Gravely, he says yes, he says it a second time as though to reassure himself of something, he confirms to me that you existed once, in this bookstore where you would go and where he has been working for nine and a half years, he tells me. This time, I do not cry, simply I say thank you and I walk out.

*

Otherwise people won't understand what magnificent sense it made that they pierced his night-shirt and stabbed him all over his body, to see if they would strike the hard core of a personality. (Rilke)

*

Without you the year comes to an end. A face ripped off, a hand that strikes nothing.

*

I break my arms so as not to have to hold anymore.

*

"...periods of happiness are empty pages in history, for they are the periods of harmony, times when the antithesis is missing." If it weren't for these words of Hegel's, I'd split my face open on the porcelain. Might that be the antithesis?

*

It seems to me something of a consumerist tendency, the way in which *new* (academic, artistic) theories are produced, consumed, abandoned, crossed out in several months, if that. The missing matter is *time*. This more than anything painting is teaching me. The time of things—of a canvas, for example, in a field of light, over a period of several days, only begins to be seen. It is discreet, almost prudish, easy to overlook if one refuses to *take time* with it. And of course, sadistically, time takes all of its time, and ours, what do you think?

*

This book belongs to another time. It no longer knows that I have existed.

*

B. writes me from Berlin to announce that he caught a glimpse of me in the body of a boy in a café of the Gendarmemarkt. A lapsus has me substitute for the other word *Gendermarkt*.

*

Yesterday I was able to read the first line of a poem by Rilke without the help of a dictionary. *Ich lebe mein Leben in Wachsenden Ringen*, but I want quickly to return to Celan. Celan must be read slowly. His work is friable and sharp and breaks

the bones of the reading body so imperceptibly that one hardly realises it until one finds oneself slumped in one's seat and incapable of rising again.

*

Bureacracy kills death. So I am thickening the walls around me as my skin thins. And I lean closer to the ground where I am less easily identifiable.

*

K. tells me that grief is an open-heart surgery. The organs are all exposed and people stick their fingers in it. But I prefer the word *sorrow*. It doesn't presuppose an end.

*

Back then. Always back then, about which he knew nothing. (Ingeborg Bachmann)

*

I would like to send you a book. It's a terribly ugly object, but a text of some importance to me, and which is relevant to our conversations in Saarbrücken. A destructive book as well, and which precedes *...s'arrête? Je* which you know to be unreadable. As though in writing it I had stopped French short, killed the massacring word. Since then, I have been writing these notebooks which are attempts at writing, essays, small failures that try impossibly to put together time and its sense.

*

Is it true that we are living these years? This way we have of counting, one step and then the next, while it really is only a slow slide without even the assurance of some nothingness. Is this a letter for a new year? Hardly. But then, is this a body for a time?

*

I told myself that I ought to have inserted each blade into my skin in order to retain something of its memory, the scalding extraction. At present I am nothing but flame and frozen brow. I don't wish to be consoled. I want only for the bruise to be visible.

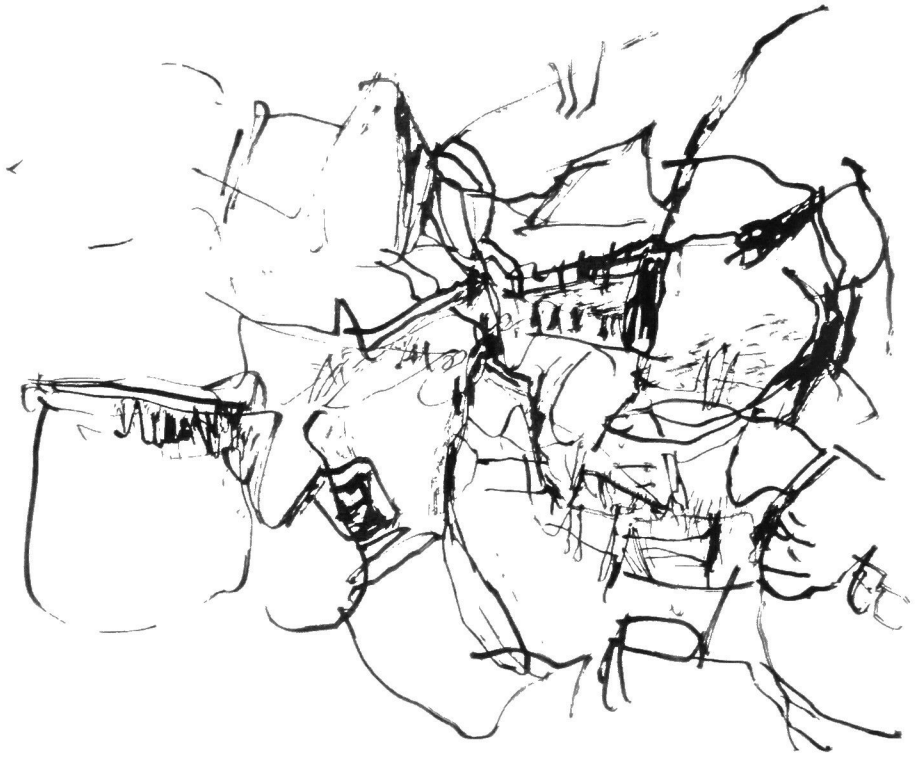
*

[...]

DRAWINGS AND POEMS

"Rabbit"
Ink on paper

"More"
Ink on paper



"Dwell"
Ink on paper

"Ninak Achukma"
Ink on paper

Break

suffused for the time of it, long ways past the new occasion as they were not standing
and standing they know as they were solid like the time when they were not folded
folded for it in the season that one time sees and then sees as the tree does not stop
one approach is the easier way to fall and to stand with it as the Sea says
One says as they were standing by the original island and one was there
one was there to see it in the news for nothing and saying as they did one sees
one sees then as they were time standing for the forest and the animal says
one says there as they were time to see there as one was time of it to say
one says there as they were the long walk to it and seeing as it was nothing to keep
one stays where they were time of it saying there as nothing was the time of it
one says there as they were the time of it and saying they were the time of it to say one
one was there to the time to it and they see it and say as they say one time of one Ocean
then the Ocean was there to be there and one time of it was saying that time was of it
and then time was of it to see there as one time was made to the air and walking to it there
one was there to speak to it again and it was the devil mask making the body explode with it the Sea
One Sea of it to see there as one was there to love there and to stand without the time of one to say
one was saying there as one was the time of it to say there as they stopped to stand there and say
One was saying as they were to know and to stand there as one was of it and to say
One was saying as one was there with it to say there as one was there of it to say again
One was the time of it to speak to it again and to say again as one was there to speak of it again
One time was of it to say again as one was there to say again and to speak again
One time was of it to speak again and to polish the stone again and to see the wind with it again
One was saying as the magic of it was there to speak to it again and to see it again without it
One was saying as there was one time of it to speak there as one says as they are
One was speaking as they are there as no one is there again to speak
One was speaking as one was of it to say again as one is there again to travel and to speak
One was speaking as one was there again to speak again as One is there again and to speak
One was speaking of it as one is there again to promise and to speak again to say it
One was there as they were there to speak again and to say again as one is there
One is there again as one is there to speak to it again and to promise again as one is there
One is there again as one is there to speak to it again and to say again as one is there again to arrive
One is there again to see it again as one is there to speak to it again and to arrive as the light is not there
One is there again to see it again as one is there to speak to it again in the undergrowth
One was speaking as the time of it is there to arrive without one in the air by the offering
One was saying again as there is a language to make it to the saddle and to go under the head
One was there as the head is there again to speak again and to say again as one is there to see it
One says as they were there again to arrive with the river and the people there to speak again

One says as they were nothing to it and it is saying as it is nothing to it
One says as they were the arrival of the time to it and to see
One says as they promise without one to say it again and to arrive without the time of it
One says as they were promised to make the tree there as something
One time arrives as they speak to it again and to place the cloud to see it there again and to see
One is there again as one says as they speak to it again and to say it again as one is there
One says as they are there again to arrive again as one is there to make the tree and the harpy eagle to it
and to say again as one is there again to arrive with it in the time of it to see the golden frog
One golden frog of it and to say that the explosion was contained to sleep to it again
One was there to arrive as one is there to speak as one is there again and to arrive
One time of it is there to speak to it again and to see it again as one is
One said as they say of it that they say of it as one is not to it and to see it and to stand
to say of it as they were to say of it again and to speak to it again and to see
One says as they say again as one is there to arrive and to speak
One to speak as they are there again and to see again as one is to speak
One speaking is there again to see it again and to arrive without it and to see there as one is
One is there again as one is there to arrive without it and to see there as one is there
One is there to place it and to say again as to arrive with it there again and to see
One is there to speak to it again and to say again as one is there again and to speak again and to place it
One is there to speak again and to say again as one is there to arrive without one and to see

Puedo

there it is to arrive and false and there it is to arrive to see to see there as one time to reflect and to be
there it is to reflect as one is false to stand there saying one to say there as one says to stand and to be
one there is standing to say and to be there as one to mute it and to be there as one time to place it one
one is there to stand there to stand there again to see there and receive to place it one liminal one
one there to stand one is there to arrive one reflect to understand they say one two there one two there one
one is there to arrive with color to stand there is color to place it one there one word to receive understand
violence to stand there to smile happy one violence there sleep one standing one late there arrive nothing
one there with nothing to place it language there to see there one is receiving to understand the place one
one is there to stand there as one is to stand there one to music there one play to stand there receive
one is there to receive to stand there one to be time there one arrival to be time there understand
one there to place it is one to understand receive one to say reflect one says there mute one there again
one is there to understand to receive with others to place it violence over there here again one stands again no
one is there to understand and violence is there cloud to back to stand there one time to say mute
one is there as mute to understand violence there slab one superficial smile there attack throw fire
one is there to arrive and see there as one time to place it there again one says there one time to understand it
one violence is there to place it there again to stand there smile violence there stand again surface
one is there to understand violence there one stop one mute there again fear to say one says receive understand
one says there understand to play one language there one time to say there again one stands there violence there
one says to it back to understand reflect there sleep again to stand there one is there to receive understand
one is there and says mute to play there receive one time to play there mute violence there understand reflect
one says there shut down to play there understand body move to say there false is there smile violence
one is there to understand mute there play there understand one time to play one says there reflect one time
one says there understand there one time to play there one time there to understand there mute one violence
one is there to understand mute one time to play there time to say there says there violence there time
one says there smile violence there time there sleep one time stand there mute again violence sleep fire
one says there fire violence there time table says there smile violence time one stop there sleep
one says there violence no one time there isolate time there one time violence there arrive smile violence
one says there time there time there one time violence there understand no one time there mute there closed
one says there mute time violence there time one time arrive there time open time closed there trust one smile
one there smile there violence time there arrive there mute time there one smile violence there sleep
one there smile violence time there arrive time arrive smile violence violate violate sleep time
violate there time violence time there arrive smile violence there arrive there mute on time mute
violate there repeatedly there violence there arrive time violence arrive there mute violence smile soft
one there smile soft smile violence there arrive smile violence there time touch time there body time
one there weep time there arrive smile violence there smile time mute pain there arrive smile vacate vacate there
arrive smile vacate time one time there arrive violence there time one arrive smile sleep
one time there vacate smile arrive one time violence time arrive there one time sleep violence time

one there violence time arrive there one there one time to say one there smile violence time there arrive
one there arrive smile violence time there one time there violence time one there to say violence vacate
violence vacate there smile arrive one time there violence there time one there smile violence time there
one there violence there time stop there sleep time there arrive smile violence there smile vacate
one there smile arrive time there smile there vacate time arrive stop violence there sleep arrive
one there smile one time arrive violence there stop reflect there place it one time arrive sleep
one time there vacate there smile arrive time one there arrive violence smile there arrive mute time
one there smile time vacate time arrive smile vacate violence violate time arrive smile violate there
one there time arrive violence say there mute time arrive smile violence there time place time there say
one there say time arrive violence there arrive time one say there place time there stop violence time
one there stop time there arrive time violence say sweet nothing mute mute time violence arrive sleep
there sleep maladaptive daydream time violence sleep endless time mute there violence arrive language
one there arrive violence time arrive violence sleep there smile stand place it fire there stop there sleep
one there sleep time arrive time there stop one time stop mute violence smile attempt sleep mute
one there sleep mute time arrive sleep time place there sweet violate there violence mute time
one there to stop violence hide time sleep time violence hide sleep daydream violence escape one return
return on time there sleep stop violence sleep there arrive time one say mute time place see time there violence
one there time sleep violence sleep time arrive sleep violence time attempt nothing time violence sleep time
one there sleep time violence sleep one time arrive sleep nothing no one violence stop there time one stop
one there stop sleep time violence sleep one time there arrive sleep one there violence sleep time arrive sleep one
one there sleep arrive time one violence sleep time arrive sleep web nothing violence sleep light sleep
violence there sleep time arrive sleep one time there arrive there sleep on there stop mute sleep attempt
attempt there sleep one time there violence flash time slash there violence escape there attempt stop mute
one there snake attempt violence there slash sleep nothing time there attempt sleep on there violence
one there sleep violence attempt sleep nothing sleep one time there mute attempt nothing sleep violence stop
one there stop sleep time there attempt sleep nothing place there one time violence sleep attempt sleep
one there violence attempt sleep time there attempt nothing place one there time violence sleep end
one there peace one speak there see arrive place false there gone attempt stand there sleep arrive

CHANTAL NEVEU

A SPECTACULAR INFLUENCE

Passage from Une spectaculaire influence
Éditions de l'Hexagone, Montréal, 2010

A man
said to be
inactual

Ongoing trial

At night the forest is not green, I look at the black trees, I think of what there was before.

The sound of scraping stone from inside the walls, near, amplified, like grains of hard chalk. What if this mineral grating were the wear of my teeth, that I were in the process of eating the inside of my skull? No other taste fills my throat. My jaw hurts, my arms, wrists, taut. I turn the light on, sharp cries pierce the ambiance, birds make out the first glimmers of day. I keep a distant calcareous resonance.

With the day, the voice of a man will shout between the hammer strikes against the metal and the electric roll of saws. From the other side of the walls, a construction site occupies the forest all the way to the river. Expanses of silence more and more long between the fall of the sound, the resumption of the noise. Before recognizing the sound of the hammer, I could hear the repeated cadence of struck steel, the stone as it was being broken. Masons raise a wall at the foot of the marsh. The frequency of strikes trepan my head all day long. I try to insert myself in the silence, between the strata of the noise of hammers and saws, between the sounds and the cries, a music rises, a breath, I grasp the fragments, I prolong the whispered course, I cross the forest, there are several forests, several musics. I am alive because I am looking at the trees, the height of the trunks, the fine lines of the high branches, the leaves, the foliage turned inside out. I alternate between green, black. The light turns the green yellow-green. In the green, I see blue. When the blue darkens, the tree trunks, thicknesses
of lines
between the lines I
see
trees
something else

I will never see
the skeleton
that carries me
nor the skull
that
I carry

on
my neck
above
my shoulders.

I can barely suppose the weight of this head, mine, so heavy some days when the neck blocks, nerves, muscles, hard lines into the middle of my back. I can barely carry it. If I could take this object into my hands, detach it from my neck, hold it in my arms, I could rest my throat, my shoulders, walk between the trees, my head in the hollow of my stomach, without a raised weight.

It happens that I forget the mass of my head, that I don't know what doesn't arrive into my conscience, my brain, dark place, buried beneath the bone structure, armor of comestible chalk.

I turn out the light. The masons have arrived with their tools, the crows will retreat until the next dawn. My hands on my face beneath my eyebrows behind
the hollow of my eyelids
the cavities
beneath the globes
of my eyes
the perimeter
surrounding the craters
lower
beneath the lobes
of my ears
it no longer
resembles
matter
the nape
another region
the throat
before—an enigma.

How many days did I lose my voice? No breath emerged from the walls.

A first strident rise rings out, the roll of the saw cleaves the space separating me from the construction site. How can I hear what is inside when the outside noise penetrates me?

My hands on my face, the small fingers the length of the nose, the thumbs beneath the jaw, I see black. The saws stop, I lift my eyelids beneath my fingers, I see red, the effect of blood without touching blood. A man screams with a commanding tone. I don't understand what he says. Later, outside, I'll put my hands on my face again, I'll spread my fingers. The green of the trees in the light.

I open, I close my eyelids beneath my fingers, I feel my lashes brush my skin. This is how you stroked me with your eyes, your cheek against my shoulder. You said to me: "Take my head into your hands." I encircled your ears with my fingers. You fluttered your eyelashes. I like your thick hair.

The weeping branches swing in the frame of the big window. Near the river, a tree creaks. From here, I can't see it, can't hear it. The sound is not the sound of cracking wood. Sharper, more uncomfortable for the teeth in the mouth, the taste of cooked branches
poultry bones
semi-hard
against my teeth
spongy
on my tongue
the taste of liver
in the middle
of the bone
the marrow
of an old man
who would be an animal.

The long dark trunk sloped with all its height, leaned against the dead tree, straight by its side. I stretch my back against the trunk of a nearby tree, I look at the arrangement of the two trees.

The dead tree creaks.

The sound doesn't prevent you from sleeping. The thunder can open the sky, walls can be broken, you won't move.

Your long and firm nape—the muscle under the knee. The birches move with the morning wind. I'll go walking, feel the air on my temples. I'll walk
all the way
to the dead
tree
tutor
as far as the big knotty
tree
without any bark at all

nodules
of wood
at the surface
of its
ravaged
trunk.

I will walk all the way to the tree with five trunks, follow the river. The movement of rushes outlines the wind, the stir of the limp birch branches, the lieder. Your fingers on the keys, your hands in the emptiness, your back all the way to your head, your voice before you, the music begins in your body, brings me all the way to the trees.

My drenched temples beneath my palms, my brow larger than the width of the palm of my hand, I hear the smashed stone, I will freshen myself with river water, I pull my hair at the roots, combing it with my spread fingers. The scalp lifts, detaches from my skull—what a fat head my head is. The corolla of heavy flowers atop their stems sag when they wilt, the petals detach, fall. I look at the emptiness while scratching the edges of my eyelids. Because I would ask you to, you would rip out the white hairs dispersed over my temples.

You were able to kill.

I know of a rare flower stinking of corpses, the petals of the arum preserve an aroma of rotten flesh, a body dead in a forest doesn't remain whole, it disperses, torn and dismembered by the animals, some eat the skin, others the liver, the heart. Together we would eat white peaches, throw the pits into the fire.

In your forest, walls
of stone
burnt bodies
executed
the cedars
of Lebanon
the shriek of peacocks

don't you hear
the cry
of a goat?

Naked on your stomach on the sheets, you would read to me the stories of wars and resistance, your sacrum given to the grip of my hands. Your abandon captivated me all these years, my man's life is full of your back, your breath—your nudity. Love, can't you smell the carrion?

Because I have lost my voice, what I say has no air. Did I strangle you? I killed you to let the wind in.

I will unearth the birches, plant them in our room. Alone now, will I become the wind I hear? Is the wind those visible lines at my eyes, those vibrations beyond limestone? Swaths fall slowly, unfolded turbulences, flanks of raised music, white opaque spaces, obstacles, long, sinuous traces, the passage of my voice. I advance in the effects of black mirrors, in the deep surfaces, between the pieces of cut out ambered light, between the polygonal glories. In the distance, it looks like dark streams of rain.

The wind is not a violin, I mistake the wind for something else. The air touches my body, a vapor traverses my torso, my thorax, the humidity hollows my tubes, my lungs, the wind deviates around my elbows, my knees. The wind surprises. Makes me. The movement between the white obstacles.

Before strangling you, I hadn't experienced death, I hadn't killed the body of a man at war or elsewhere. It happened. I obeyed no one. I look at my unrecognisable hands connected to my brain, the hands of a bruised lover.

Did you ask it of me?

Vertical. In torment. Have nothing to say in my defense, my assassin humanity. My voice beyond the walls is not the one I hear inside. The tensions from the top of my body above my parallel legs. Your voice is missing. Extinguished. You gave it to me. At the heart of a silent and ultimate embrace.

Concrete
the rock over
my head
the days
heavy

the music
makes me
light

your hair
between my fingers.

The forest in which I run grieving you. The tree. Creaks. I see the stone wall, I will have to exceed it to get to the river. On the side of the wall, the infamous are insulted. I will confront the eyes of the masons, say what there was before.

I walk all the way to the tree with five trunks, I embrace it, press my cheek to the bark, cross the birch wood, I recognize the trees of our room, the rustle of

leaves, the yellow-green effect between the red flesh of my fingers. Back-lit. The black in the green.

Secret collision our liaison, my paradoxical joy. At the end of your life, mine, the dismissal of charges.

If I could say what white is composed of.

Translated by Nathanaël

RACHEL GONTIJO ARAUJO

[HEMORRHAGE]

⇓

To stick to pavement wasn't an option. I go into the hotel. A full-sized skeleton covered in a floral shirt sits at the front desk. He sees me and yawns a smile over a 1980 tape recording of Lester Bangs and The Delinquents. His flat face stands in front of me like a metal thing. I take a closer look at his silken straight mustache and am convinced he believes in sin. It's probably not his fault.

"I need a room for the night"
"Our standard is $45 plus tax "
"I'll take it"

"Your room key. Take the stairs behind you, 2nd floor on your right".
"Thank you".

↓

The Tokyo Hotel is its own fifteen-storey demi-monde. A tall red brick unchanged by post-modern enlargement maintaining itself erect through irregular breathing of dusty carpets and walls. In this space there is no attempt towards linear acceleration and no outer-static is allowed to penetrate. An a-temporal transparency that probably never crossed Le Corbusier's mind. Moving upwards I can't

feel any physical stability. This immediate lack of three-dimensional harmony brings forth an outline of honesty quickly leading me to nausea. I make an effort to move faster. Reaching the second floor I stop. I lean to one side. Body and wall come into immediate contact forging a solid, immovable ground. The hall is stuffy with voices, women preachers mimic the rhythmic of Fado, adjusting arteries into violent pulsations. Aware of an increased warmth, I begin to move. Steps break the continuity of sounds. I close my eyes and stretch hands in the direction of doors for balance. With touch, images rise as things;

201: blood still warm, no taste, like a vault, enters jaws

|...| ←

↓

203: a long chain of tightly bound sugar molecules pushes head into lips

← |...|

↓

205: needle-shaped calcium oxalate crystals add cracks to hollow spaces

|...| ←

↓

207: swelling tongue murmurs while preparing ether by mixing genital secretions with sulfuric acid and alcohol

→|...|

↓

—

—

—

Before I die of consumption I pause my key at 209. I press my belly against the door using my right shoulder to open it. Inside, a 7 by 9 ft. bouquet of secondary

actors and ashes. I close the door and light the iron-footed lamp placed beside the bed. I remove coat, sweater and shirt, unbutton jeans and walk towards a sagging velvet chair. I move head closer to the in between of my thighs. There, where language supposedly rests I find genitals covered by a thin layer of gray matter, about one-eighth inch thick. It's obvious that I do not posses the form of a simplified individual and I can't help feeling that the cause of my anatomical incompetence is something past stereotyped physical disorders. Maybe it started when I was first alphabetized. There is always a gap between language and actual feeling.

0:01

I begin to overstimulate ancient scum. The room is set aflame by a perfume of underclothing. Chloe, a void turned into a sound note, punctuates pores that cannot be written out. I breathe my wet cortex-like mouth into one of her armpits. Silence emerges, not as a "stop" nor a period, just a blotch where holes gulp for air.

It's all about licking and impatience. The mouth, there, ought to be used. In bed, I draw my body imaginary lines. The latitude is 0 by definition. Often, when flesh is churched, compressed to memory, to a methodology of past, even the wettest time of year will be the coolest. She kept repeating: "I don't know how to touch you, I don't know how to touch you". Orgasm, bordering pus, occurred arid. This was fact, not fiction.

0:00

For a few unmoved seconds I wish I could fall outside manufactured tongue and become amphibian or reptile. As an unborn child, suspended between gravity and body I could just eat and fuck pretending I was asleep. I guess, at this time, with orifices shut into a frame territory, it would be much easier to buy myself a pipe, blend it with opium and Captain Black instead of marveling at the possibility of a solar anus that just eats and fucks.

0:02

Small, simple boils ooze from the spots Chloe has touched. Points of compacted excess, refusing to manifest all at once. After she left, to sustain cleanliness, I decided to eat fewer solids. I read somewhere that the majority of all skin problems can be prevented by simply keeping the skin clean. So, I keep myself sterile, head to toe. In spite of all this caution, her absence makes me terribly thirsty, making it impossible to exorcise matter altogether. Hence, I started to use a combination of wine, lousy screws and language to reenact weakness, to retain odor and all those other impressions of color and form she produces. From time to time I call her to increase general cutaneous sensation. The mere stimulus of her voice fabricates outbursts, a kind of physiological anaesthesia expelling—superiorly, inferiorly and laterally—years worth of civilization; converting human source into gut tones clear of word-meaning. I'm convinced this nutritive impulse is of an older origin than that of jazz.

0:00

Familiarity exerts denuding effect, stimulating cloudy, not transparent, urine production. Yellowish blood shoves arteries outside, stretching out circular portions of thoughts through urethra-like structure. It is safe to presume that body has become an extension of chronological torturing and that the first button towards disappearance is Chloe. An empty insect shell, with head, no tail, nor extensions, she knew the right amount of emotion to put into the world so as not to generate unpleasantness. Pressed against her back, I close eyes, admitting withdrawal from senses.

0:01
I wake up to a wind of blowing pee.

00:12 a.m.
Smell of surrounding air enters head as undulating noise, generating thick and thin chords that quickly run on to the stomach triggering excretion of bile and gastric juices. I get up to direct body towards bathroom. Muscular motion is disturbed in the same way body is when tears are produced. I open my mouth to a repetitive-pitch promptly converted into external matter. Since the chair is still covered in secretions from almost every gland of my body I choose to fix my head on the futon bed. As the taste of saliva becomes perceptible the phone rings. I answer it.

"Where the fuck are you? I looked all over Andy's for you and finally Charlene told me you weren't feeling well and left "
"Who is this?"
"Justine. Where are you?"
"I'm in the Tokyo hotel"
" Are you ok?
"Yes"
"Are you drunk?"
"I'm not sure"
"Are you alone?"
"Yes, for 2 years now"
"All right, I'm coming over"
"Could you bring me a book on anatomy?"
"What?"
"A book on human anatomy, any book. There's a bookstore near the hotel"
" Are you sure you're not drunk?"
"No"
"All right, I'm coming over"
"Ok".

I throw the phone onto the floor and lay on the bed immediately altering the smooth surface to a rigid silhouette. Each line brews veins extreme in thinness. Eight to twelve in each side. I close eyes. Open. Close them again. Lou Reed's Dirty Boulevard occupies a space at the base of my brain, passing partly forward and inward, than making a final, slight, curve to the cavernous sinuses. In the absence of valves, new synthetic membranes are formed:
↲

third nerve: The walls are made of cardboard, newspapers on his feet

←

→ fourth nerve: looks out a window without glass

first division of fifth nerve: sits there dreaming ←

→ sixth nerve: At the count of 3 says, I hope I can disappear

↓

TM

Patterns in static make me think of my mother, a woman, who only allowed eruptions through needles and thread and never wished me motions for the sake of pleasure. "Human science has no such goal", she used to say. I believed her.

→

Blood reaches the capillaries. Path for temperature is the same as for pain and, for pressure, the same as for touch. A pump: this is the heart. Maybe that's what lovers are supposed to do: stab each other.

GUY DAVENPORT

EL SEÑOR CEMENTERIO Y EL TROLL

Cuando el tablero de ajedrez en el café se antojaba un ardid ocioso para matar el tiempo y las almenas que rodeaban el Kastellet con sus espinos y sus gallinetas de patas verdosas y sus soldados marchando comenzaban a perder encanto, y su escritura se negaba a ser escrita y los libros sabían a rancio, y sus pensamientos se volvían una maraña más que un tejido fluido, el señor Cementerio, el filósofo, alquilaba un carruaje al Bosque de los Troll para dar un largo paseo especulativo.

El patán en el pescante estaba comiendo vainas de guisante de su sombrero. —Al Bosque de los Troll —dijo el señor Cementerio, ajustando el tiro de sus guantes.

El cielo era báltico, con nubes alemanas del norte.

Copenhague era un tronar de barriles rodantes, ruedas de carreta crujientes, sirenas de paquebotes, bandas de metales luteranas, mercachifles de pescado, un bullicio de campanas.

E impúdicos bribonzuelos que le gritaban a su paso: *¡O esto! ¡O lo otro!* al tiempo que sus hermanas advertían: *'E'll turn and gitcha!*

Si fuese una tarde afortunada, el troll estaría en el bosque. El señor Cementerio sabía que este troll, tan extrañamente hermoso a la manera de un hongo,

era una invención de su mente, la creatura de una sobrecarga de trabajo, de la indigestión o de la bilis, tal vez incluso del pecado original, pero seguía siendo un troll.

Sócrates, ese hombre honesto, tenía su daimón, ¿por qué no el señor Cementerio su troll? Sus ojos lo miraban entre las hojas, arriba. Su pelo era danés, como el villano del cardo, y estaba finamente cortado y acabado, con la forma de un tazón de avena. No apareció cuando lo llamó. Había que sentarse en un tronco y esperar.

El bosque era de serbal y de haya que habían crecido gruesos y oscuros entre conjuntos de piedras enormes plateadas por el liquen y verdes por el musgo. Bajo los pies, esponjoso y profundo, yacía una cubierta centenaria de hojas caídas, a través de la cual una sola flor silvestre pugnaba por salir, enroscada e incolora debido a su estado floreciente, desde el amanecer del tiempo. Somos bienvenidos en las praderas, con la alfombra dispuesta y hierba para comer, si somos vacas o ratones de campo, y los amarillos y los azules son los de los poetas griegos y los pintores italianos.

Pero aquí, en el bosque, somos intrusos. Al otro lado del canal, en Suecia, hay bosques de altas coníferas, y lobos. La naturaleza tiene sus reglas. Una arboleda es tan diferente de un bosque como una pradera de un pantano. Los búhos y los troll viven aquí. Y los filósofos.

En el huerto de Platón se escuchaba el golpecito de las tijeras de podar durante toda la mañana, así como rastrillos peinando grava. Epicuro hablaba de necesidad y destino mientras veía podar su césped. Aristóteles y Teofrasto recogían flores en las praderas de Mitilene, debajo de parasoles. Y allí estaba el sueco Lineo, como se llamaba a sí mismo, que estudiaba la naturaleza en los jardines holandeses, al tiempo que le bostezaban gatos gordos ingleses.

El troll estaba por ahí, donde las hojas cambiaban.

Si Nikolai Grundtvig estuviera aquí, o el hermano del señor Cementerio, Peter, el obispo, invitarían al troll a unírseles en una alegre danza folklórica.

¿Eso era un pie en los helechos, con dedos sagaces? Si ahí había un troll, entonces había dos. Tendría una esposa. Así lo habría dispuesto la naturaleza. Y joven. ¿Por qué dudar de la existencia de los troll cuando el dios se ha mantenido oculto todo este tiempo?

Cuando Amós hablaba con el dios, ¿Amós estaba hablando consigo mismo? Porque el dios está oculto en la luz, en todo su esplendor, y no podemos verlo.

Dedos pequeños, rizados, en las hojas de la haya. El destino debe caer como una manzana madura. No estaba especialmente ansioso de ver al troll. Tampoco estaba desesperadamente ansioso de ver al dios, aun si hubiera podido. Había, dos veces con ésta, visto al troll. Era su singularidad lo que importaba. Más allá de eso no podía pensar. Ahí estaba la bondad pura del dios, punto menos que inimaginable, y ahí estaba la sensualidad pura de Don Giovanni, imaginable con la cooperación de la carne, y ahí estaba el intelecto puro de Sócrates, fácilmente imaginable, como la mente, ese ganglio troloide que, como los testículos sediciosos de Don Giovanni, eran un regalo del dios.

El cerebro de Hegel en una jarra de formaldehído en la luna.

El troll era otra pureza, sin duda, ¿pero de qué? Su cochero, señor Cementerio, está sentado ahí afuera, más allá del soto, hurgándose la nariz y esperando.

El troll había dicho que su nombre era Hitch. ¿Pertenecía a un orden, superior al del hongo (que, ahora podía verlo, estaba masticando), así como los ángeles pertenecen a un orden inferior al del dios? No lo veía del mismo modo en el que uno encuentra a Napoleón en el dibujo de dos árboles, donde puedes encontrar su figura delineada por las ramas, sino como una imagen líquida filtrada a través del tejido de la visión, ojos de hoja y baya, dedos de cacahuate, piernas de árbol joven. Una bellota para el sexo.

—Hay intersticios —dijo el señor Cementerio, mientras se quitaba su sombrero de copa y lo ponía encima de un tronco— a través de los cuales las cosas se manifiestan. En uno de los evangelios apócrifos, por ejemplo, aparece Jesús escogiendo a Simón entre los pescadores que recogían su red. Y con Jesús está su perro. O un perro.

—Sí, Señor —dice Simón, acercándose de buena gana.

—Y cuando te llame de nuevo —dice el perro— responderás al nombre de Pedro.

Esto fue suprimido de los evangelios tal como los conocemos, por algún copista bien intencionado que no se dio cuenta de que un animal cuya alma entera está compuesta de lealtad y cuya fe en su amo no puede disminuirla ninguna fuerza, ni la muerte ni la distancia, recibe una voz, como el asno de Balam siglos

antes, para recordarnos que nuestra percepción de lo espiritual es ciega.

Y en unos extravagantes *Actos de los apóstoles* hay un león que habla y funge como presentador de Pablo y Barnabás.

—¡Hola, amigos! Aunque soy sólo una bestia sin entendimiento, y no tengo teología, estoy aquí para llamar su atención e invitarlos a reunirse y escuchar a mis queridos amigos C. Paulo, ciudadano romano, y José Consolación Barnabás, que tienen un mensaje para ustedes.

Un león de ojos azules, bañado y esponjado para su aparición en público, las garras tan grandes como platos.

¿Allí estaba el troll, espiando detrás de un árbol?

—Nos conocimos el otoño pasado —dijo el señor Cementerio con una voz que usaba para los niños— cuando el cielo estaba cargado con nubes como montañas de lana sucia, y la neblina se extendía a lo largo del suelo. No me dijiste tu nombre, por eso te llamé Hitch, con tu permiso, tomando tu silencio por anuencia. ¿Cómo te ha ido desde entonces?

Hubo un temblor de hojas, un ahondamiento del silencio del bosque.

—¿No tienes miedo, verdad, de mi bastón recargado ahí contra el tronco? Se trata solamente de un pedazo de madera con un mango de plata que los caballeros de Copenhague llevan consigo. Va con mi sombrero que está allá y con mis guantes. Juntos constituyen una serie de cosas para indicarle al mundo que tenemos dinero y fingimos acatar la moral aprobada por la policía y el clero. Sal.

En un pescado compartido, dijo Demócrito, no hay huesos.

—Déjame contarte una historia que puede echar luz sobre nuestro predicamento. Había una vez un salteador de caminos en Inglaterra que se disfrazaba con una gran peluca, ya que el reputado Samuel Johnson fue el último en usar una entre la gente educada. Cuando un viajante pasó por el camino donde trabajaba, por así decir, el ladrón salió detrás de un arbusto y le dio la opción de entregar su dinero o su vida. El asustado viajante se asustó por su pistola, y probablemente también por su peluca, y le dio su caballo y su bolso.

El ladrón, cabalgando a la distancia, tiró la peluca al lado del camino, donde un transeúnte la encontró después, y se la puso como un adorno caído del cielo.

Mientras tanto, el viajante que había sido robado llegó a un pueblo adonde también había llegado el transeúnte con su peluca recién encontrada. El viajante,

al verlo, llamó al alguacil y lo acusó frente a un juez de haberlo asaltado en el camino. Según su testimonio, reconocería esa peluca en cualquier parte.

El juez sentenció al transeúnte a la horca.

Pero éste era un pueblo chico, y los juicios congregaban a mucha gente, entre las cuales estaba el salteador de caminos.

—¡Tonto! —le gritó al juez—. Está enviando a una persona inocente al cadalso. Mire, denme la peluca, me la pondré y diré: *Su dinero o la vida*, y este falso acusador se dará cuenta de su error.

—*¡Sí, sí!* —dijo el acusador—. Esa es la voz que escuché debajo de la gran peluca.

El juez, sin embargo, determinó que la primera identificación se había hecho bajo juramento, ante Dios, y que la sentencia, pronunciada a través de la majestad de la ley, había sido aprobada. Y debía prevalecer.

Sin duda se produjo un cambio en las sombras por allá, entre el pino de Noruega y el alerce, hacia arriba y a los lados, donde debía estar el troll.

Sería maravilloso que el troll se pareciera a un niño danés, que se pusiera de puntas y se parara de cabeza, pedaleando sus pies en el aire y poniéndose rosado en las mejillas. O que se parara sobre su pierna derecha con su pie izquierdo enganchado alrededor de su cuello, como los acróbatas gitanos en el día de mercado.

—La ley, como verás, es inflexible. Hacemos la ley imitando la manera del dios, por tanto no hay nada de humano en ella. Déjame contarte acerca del dios. Cuando libró a su pueblo de la esclavitud en Egipto, lo guió a Canán, pero durante cuarenta años vagaron en el desierto, donde el dios los alimentó con un pan blanco y esponjoso, maná se llamaba, del cual acabaron cansándose. Así que pidieron algo diferente, algo salado. Como codornices, codornices asadas sobre fuego, bañadas en su propio jugo, salteadas y frotadas con salvia. Así que el dios, enfurecido con justa razón por la ingratitud y la codicia de su pueblo, que había antepuesto la sensualidad del sabor a una justa valoración de su grandeza y poder, dijo:

—¡Comeréis hasta que os salga por la nariz!

Y una granizada de codornices muertas cayó del cielo, y su pueblo las sazonó y las cocinó y (aquí cito la Biblia) cuando la carne estaba todavía entre sus dientes, el dios ocasionó una plaga mortal para matar a los que habían comido codorniz.

—¿Qué piensas de eso? Era una plegaria a la que el dios estaba contestando.

Los ojos del troll eran los de un niño feliz y por tanto ilegibles, porque la felicidad del niño es algo que todos tenemos que olvidar. Es una felicidad que viene de arrancar las manecillas del reloj, de lanzar al fuego la dentadura postiza del abuelo, de robar, de mentir, de jalarle la cola al gato, de romper el jarrón de porcelana, de esconderse de los propios padres para hacerlos enfermar de preocupación, de golpear los dedos de nuestro mejor amigo con un martillo. De un niño con una hermosa cabellera, como si fuese de oro hilado y trenzado, y con grandes ojos azules; la cultura dice: *¡mira, un ángel!* y la naturaleza dice: *he aquí a tu propio demonio personal.*

Un pájaro en esas ramas, ¿o el troll?

—¡Escucha! —dijo—. Aquí me tienes con mi gran abrigo de corte alemán (con el cual escuché la conferencia de Schelling, porque los auditorios alemanes son tan fríos como Groenlandia), guantes, pantalones entubados, bastón y pañuelo arriba de mi manga, pero no puedes deducir a partir de nada de esto, de mi larga nariz o del hecho de que mi hermano Peter sea obispo, que vivo en una ciudad de mercaderes que se ven a sí mismos como cristianos. También podría decirse que un banjoista de Louisiana es Mozart.

No puedes deducir a partir de nada de esto que mi padre alguna vez agitó su puño enfurecido en contra del dios en la colina de Jylland, y lo maldijo en su cara.

¡El troll, el troll! Pero no: una liebre o un zorro que viven en este bosque.

Los troll pertenecen, el señor Cementerio imaginaba, al género de las setas, en el mismo sentido en que los árboles son parientes de los ángeles. El siglo del señor Cementerio estaba mirando en la naturaleza, y los alemanes estaban escrutando la Biblia. ¿Para qué querían al dios, después de todo, si tenían a Hegel?

¿No había pasajes en la Biblia donde los escribas pusieron lo contrario a lo que la misericordia y el miedo les sugería suprimir? Abraham seguramente sacrificó a Isaac.

Su padre había maldecido al dios y se había mudado a Copenhague y prosperó como comerciante, el dinero engendraba dinero en sus arcas. Murió en los brazos de ángeles que lo llevaron al cielo.

El corolario, ¿no es así?, es que si rezamos se nos responde con la muerte cuando aún tenemos la carne de la codorniz entre los dientes. Pero el mundo

está aquí y desesperar es pecado. Incluso en sus iglesias la alta luz, la inflexible y dura luz de enero en las altas ventanas, habla de que la mundanidad del mundo que ningún hegelianismo puede fingir que no está ahí, no está ahí.

El señor Cementerio levantó sus espejuelos sobre su frente, recorrió con su dedo meñique un ceja, masajeó su nariz, cerró sus ojos, humedeció las esquinas de su boca y tosió suavemente.

La ironía de ello.

Un caballo estaba tan vivo como él, y una vaca era exactamente el mismo ser. Un jején.

Sería en cierta medida reconfortante si pudiera saber que era tan feo como Sócrates. Fue, como todos los daneses, hermoso en su juventud. Luego su nariz creció y creció, y su espalda se arqueó y su digestión se echó a perder.

Tal vez el troll no era del tamaño que había supuesto, y estaba envuelto en una hoja.

Lo que sea que digamos del dios que no es, eso es.

—*Absconditus* decimos que está, viéndolo en todas partes. ¿Qué pasa con nosotros, oh Troll, que tenemos fe en lo invisible, lo inaudible y lo intocable, al tiempo que rechazamos lo que está frente a nuestros ojos? En las brumas de la desesperación me he dado cuenta de que preferimos lo que no es a lo que es. Ponemos nuestro entusiasmo en libros que no leemos, o que leemos con una clamorosa falta de entendimiento, tomando nuestro desconocimiento por conocimiento. Nuestra religión es una superstición escandalosa y una magia ilícita.

El señor Cementerio sabía que el troll estaba detrás de uno de los árboles que se encontraba enfrente de él. Lo sintió como una certeza. Tendría, cuando lo viera, nariz chata, ojos verdes redondos, una boca de rana y orejas largas.

—¡Escucha! El domingo pasado, en la iglesia del castillo, el capellán de la corte, que es muy popular y quien en su atuendo de obispo parece un emperador bizantino, predicó un sermón frente a una congregación selecta de mercaderes gordos, abogados, banqueros y vírgenes. Habló con elocuencia y solemnidad contundente. El punto de partida de su sermón fue *Cristo elige a los humildes y despreciados*. Nadie se rió.

La tarde seguía avanzando y el cielo se estaba oscureciendo con nubes grises. El señor Cementerio decidió hacer un trato consigo mismo, un salto de fe.

Creería que el troll estaba ahí, y no se molestaría en comprobarlo. Un hecho es real en la medida en que tenemos el deseo de creerlo. El obispo Mynster predicó su elocuente sermón porque el padre del señor Cementerio lo admiraba, no porque el señor Cementerio estuviera sentado entre un facineroso vestido como un banquero y una dama cuyo bonete había sido confeccionado en Londres. El señor Cementerio escuchó al obispo Mynster por respeto a su padre. Conversaría con el troll por respeto a sí mismo.

Y bien, el troll. No estaba preparado para que estuviera desnudo. Su danés, cuando habló, era antiguo.

Un erizo de los alrededores del Molino de Swan. Sacó un brazo para balancearse, sostenido en una sola pierna y meciendo la otra atrás y adelante.

—¿Ser una rana? —preguntó.

—Soy un ser humano.

—Habéis podido engañarme. ¿De dónde habéis venido, a través o debajo?

Estaba fascinado por la consternación visible en la cara del señor Cementerio y arrugó las esquinas de su boca.

—Si a través del color, ésa sería una forma, embestir a través del amarillo al azul, a través del rojo al verde. La otra forma es retrasarse un poco, encontrar un lugar para atravesar y menearse. A través de la curva, en la corriente. Suave es una, rara la otra.

El troll se acercó. El señor Cementerio pudo ver un chorro de pecas en sus mejillas y nariz. Cautelosamente tocó su bastón.

—Fresno —dijo—. No conocía el árbol. Siempre de este lado, una luna con otro, ¿no estáis?

—¿Este lado de qué? —preguntó tranquilamente el señor Cementerio.

—¿Nunca habéis estado adentro de un gordolobo, no es verdad? ¿Nunca en un marrubio, el algodoncillo, el tártago? ¿Qué eres tú?

—Soy danés. ¿Qué si yo te preguntara qué eres tú? A mis ojos eres un muchacho, con todos los accesorios, bien alimentado y saludable. ¿No tienes frío, así sin nada?

El troll levantó una pierna, sosteniendo su pie en su mano, de tal suerte que su espinilla quedó en paralelo con el suelo del bosque. Sonrió, con o sin ironía el señor Cementerio no podía saber. Sus cejas delgadas se alzaron bajo su pelo.

—Déjame decir —dijo el señor Cementerio— que estoy seguro de que tú estás en mi imaginación, no del todo, aunque hueles a salvia o borraja, y que tú eres una creatura para la cual nuestra ciencia no tiene explicación. Cuando pensamos, atamos. Todavía no puedo cogerte. Ni siquiera sé qué o quién eres. ¿Adónde nos lleva eso?

—Pero yo soy —dijo el troll.

—Te creo. Quiero creerte. Pero éste es el siglo diecinueve. Sabemos todo. No hay ningún orden del ser al cual puedas pertenecer. ¿Conoces al dios?

El troll pensó, un dedo en su mejilla.

—¿Es un acertijo? ¿Qué tenéis para mí si acierto?

—¿Cómo puede ser un acertijo si te estoy preguntando si conoces al dios? Lo conoces o no lo conoces.

—¿Habéis venido aquí a buscarlo?

—Así es.

—¿A qué huele? ¿A qué familia de árboles pertenece?

—Nunca lo he visto. No existe ninguna descripción de él.

—¿Cómo sabráis que lo habéis encontrado?

—Lo sabré. Habrá un sentimiento.

—Tejón, ardilla, zorro, comadreja, rana, venado, lechuza, colimbo, ganso, ¿uno de ellos? Elfo, kobold, nisse, ¿uno de nosotros? ¿Araña, jején, hormiga, polilla?

Entonces el troll se arregló, como si tuviera ropas que ajustar a su cuerpo, como si fuera un niño a punto de recitar en una clase. Cantó. Su voz tenía algo de abeja, un murmullo y un zumbido recurrentes, como el *Barockfagott* del *Orfeo* de Monteverdi, y algo de la paloma torcaz en el tono agudo de su voz hueca. El ritmo era el de una danza campesina, una jiga. Pero ¿cuáles eran las palabras?

El señor Cementerio pudo distinguir *el caballo enfermo de la luna* y *la lechuza que tenía números*. El estribillo parecía lapón. *Un pez, y otro, y una canasta de hierba*.

Cuando la canción terminó, el señor Cementerio se inclinó, haciendo una suerte de reverencia de aprobación. ¿Dónde había escuchado la melodía, en un concierto de música folklórica? ¿En el mercado Roskilde? ¿Y no había visto al mismo troll, increíblemente sucio, con la ropa remendada y una gorra azul, en el muelle de Nyhavn?

Y de repente no había más troll, únicamente el suelo del bosque, el olor verde húmedo de la arboleda y el tic-tac de su reloj.

Sócrates defendió la existencia del dios con -una incertidumbre honesta y un sentimiento profundo. Nosotros, también, creemos con el mismo riesgo, atrapados en la misma contradicción de una certidumbre incierta. Pero ahora la incertidumbre es diferente, porque es absurda, y creer con un sentimiento profundo en lo absurdo es fe. El hecho de que Sócrates supiera que él no sabía nada es gran sentido del humor cuando se lo compara con algo tan serio como lo absurdo, y el sentido profundo de Sócrates por lo existencial es ingenio griego flamante cuando se lo compara con la voluntad de creer.

Traducción de Gabriel Bernal Granados

Nota del traductor: Kierkegaard, que debe pronunciarse como si las dos *a* fueran una sola *o*, es el equivalente en inglés de Churchyard, me dijo una vez, en una de sus cartas; y su equivalente en español sería por lo tanto Cementerio, esto es, el panteón que se encontraba en el patio de las iglesias europeas. En efecto, en este "cuento" Guy Davenport habla de Kierkegaard y de la discusión que sostuvo a lo largo de su vida con la Iglesia. Aunque también se trata, en el fondo, de una discusión sobre lo visible y lo invisible, o la traducción del mundo espiritual a su contraparte mundana. Otros temas, como el amor por los muchachos y la naturaleza (nombres de árboles, flores, plantas y animales), constituyen una parte sustancial de este relato. En los cuentos de Davenport cada palabra tiene una razón de ser, cada frase reviste una forma particular de belleza que, si uno tiene suerte, renace en el momento de la traducción. "El señor Cementerio y el troll", tomado del libro *A Table of Green Fields* (New Directions, 1993), contradice la creencia de algunos críticos que han supuesto que los ensayos de Davenport son superiores a sus ficciones. En ambos casos, debemos hablar de una de las obras más luminosas de la literatura norteamericana de la segunda mitad del siglo xx.

GABRIEL MAGAÑA

FROM *NOTHINGNESS IN THE ROUGH*

HEREDITY INHERITED FROM THE FUTURE

***

breaking
amid the wild grass that will appear
next summer,

in the face
of your still uncleaved thinking, hard as stone,
encouraging formless

***

eternal fissure, neither sky nor valley

***

while it illuminates,
the light falls
        emptied of omens

***

its ambush
lets you cross the bleakest chamber
and make it to the penumbra
that overturns every threshold.
you can go no further, facing,
turning its back towards you,
a sun-flooded winter's day.

***

silence

wrenched
with unpolluted calm

***

it was your guide
to nocturnal versions
torn from anonymous rhythm
scattered inside
a stone

***

if disregarded
words
execute the real

***

naked
the game
night plays
sentenced by thought
---the more nocturnal
the more luminous

***

dragging
sweat out of the dense darkness

the stain of the night
runs inversely

***

darkness in one piece

surrounds and pulsates
the brief life of a sunflower

***

no strand of a feigned sun
can touch it.
genuine clarity reveals
the primeval cavity, suspended
disemboweled, mingling
nostalgia, becoming, future

Translated by Suzanne Jill Levine

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN

SIX POEMS FROM *LIFE IN A BOX IS A PRETTY LIFE*

Divide of critical assessment, relative closeness—unfortunate box—rigid, no pliable formula in the divide. To avoid catatonic state, glaze in hole of what's not left over. They say there are traces, that there will always be traces. It's a fiction anyway, a construction of the mind's needs—that they hold onto filament gestures as material. In the hole, we'll find a digging, fingernails deep in refuse. Here is the trash heap, nothing there except a muted wailing. The orator is on the horn. The orator is telling his life story. We walk the long hot sidewalk toward water. Touch, here, is imperative. To hold up contact, contact of suspense and wanting, to prop up or sustain, to call into being from elsewhere or a reminder of access.

*

Lake, interminable. I do not know where my house is. Where is my house? Summer steams by. Every border is cocked and ready. Flatten body against cool earth. Lie without sound. Be a cool corpse under wire teeth. The police are so young. They do not hear the wailing. Wailing, I'm told, is a figment of your imagination. What to know of the body's refusal to open, of the body's hidden cave? Put the cave inside another cave so no one can reach it. Perspiration aches. Strain against dirt walls. I have come to you from a metal house. We had steel barriers to protect

us from the sun. The lake drifts into forever. Windows here are small and I cannot see myself in them. What it is to be captured without spoons.

*

We never took the train to Sayville and then the ferry to Cherry Grove. We will never go to Cuba. Instead, entered a state of impermanence. Hard to wear down hard corners into curved juice. You say, I totally don't care, which I take to mean the night sky is beautiful but I'm cold. Contortion fits. Wants air, wants treetops. Wants to touch, cannot touch, wants air, air is enclosing. Never took a night train, bed into small bed, hovering up above many rivers. (Seek elevation.) I am driftwood. Now, the crux: I opens promise heaps. (Impossible opening.) A wrangling of desire into a paper hole. Wacky constriction. The I stuffs hands in pockets and walks a small circle. What else to do? Can't afford any new clothes to get fabulous. When the seer said, You might be a completely new person in a year—

*

Life inside grid object, replace faces with armored ducks, drive off fucking cliff, get all damaged after raging. What holds the structure: giant ministries, giant everything. They don't want you to hang yourself. Instead you survive. Spring is here. Let's poison the grass to make it shine. We are shiny people. If you were to hang yourself, you wouldn't die, you don't know how to die. Hurt calm at edge of bay. Today, calm not choppy. Who's digging inside the earth for metal faces? Super structures of defense lined up outside your window. *I'm happy!*, you sing. Register at the desk, indicate whether you understand sentences.

*

The American middle class is screwed again but they don't know it. Politics is a gleaming nowhere. Zizek fantasizes about Capitalism's inevitable end. Reviewers want these poems to be more hopeful. Love is obvious. She's a tutu shelter leaning out. Love is miraculous. She's twirling quite naturally. We dangle our feet in a July swimming pool. Shoots sparkles from eyes—to quiet to quiet all our little monsters. Street habits rear up. Any fire. Any quell. Who's made it to well

being? The television projects hysterical grief. Brown women wailing fall to knees draped over. We are only who we are supposed to be. No moon tonight, dear one.

*

Dear one, the sea smells of nostalgia. We're beached and bloated, lie on shell sand, oil rigs nowhere seen. It's Long Island, and the weather is fine. What to disturb in the heart of a man?

A boy is not a body. A boy is a walk.

Shed the machine.
Must be entirely flesh to fight.
Must be strategy instead of filling.

What to disrobe, there, centrifugal logic, as in here is a slice of my finger. Tell me the circumstance of your cock extension. When we slip into imprecision, we lose control, windowless walls close in. Awareness of being in a female body is a tinge of regret. "The human frame to adapt itself to convention though she herself was a woman." To receive, to be entered, to fret around upon entry. It's grand. I'm a system. Plants tall as wheat to hide in.

MATTHEW HENRIKSEN

TWO POEMS

Deflected Light

Sufficient looking out the window at the drawbridge
Too bored to read

Too tired to walk up to the rooftop
Only to stare off into Queens

Which might as well have been on fire
For all the reality I cared for

No money then whether I worked or not
I let my wife go to work

And destroyed myself morning into afternoon
Recovery in washing a few dishes

And sneaking off to happy hour where I slowly weakly
Slit my wrists from the insides

I have a scar from a box cutter
An accident in a sober afterlife

Not unhappy not blindly fucking my eyes against the wall
Understand if you want the drawbridge relieved

That ridiculous yawn
Cars stalled there

The horrible air above Newtown Creek
If you want to believe something else

Walk away from this poem
Written with petroleum and burnt offerings

Relent

The old drunk in the park between his smells said
What I had felt about nearness

Negating intimacy not in those words
But in the words of a donkey miraculously speaking

Ridiculous therefore incorrect
Multiple-choice en route to the bar

Where they don't allow carry-ins
And without an opener I smashed the neck on a bench

And chugged half of it half-carefully
My full identity disclosed to the failing sun

Though to myself I was just an asshole under a streetlamp
Who saw the leering drunk but would not share

Our common disease
A pair of fruits rotting in distant baskets

Because I would have told the asshole
Who made a shitnest of his angellife

This lack of proximity you taught me
Makes us brothers and foulmouthed lovers

JOSÉ RAMÓN SÁNCHEZ

DOS POEMAS

HAY QUE VOLVERSE POETA

Me fajé con un muchacho y en la pelea perdió
la última falange de un dedo meñique.
Era rubio y fuerte. No quería
que yo tocara el piano. Ni esperó
para pelear que terminaran las clases.
Me tiró una patada a los cojones.
Le cogí la pierna y lo lancé
contra un montón de sillas y de mesas.
Las sillas y las mesas cayeron con él
y el borde de una mesa le cortó el dedo.
Se sujetó la mano ensangrentada
y llorando decía: "¡Fuiste tú, fuiste tú!"
Desde entonces no he podido mirar de frente.

Autorretrato

No es un rostro perfecto.
Lo sé. Y aunque lo pulo
día a día en el espejo
no mejora. Entiéndase:
pulir con la mirada
no con la mano ni otros
instrumentos. La mirada
ni siquiera lo imagina
distinto. Se contenta
con ver que no es peor
que otros que cruza
diariamente. Ni siquiera
es un rostro con carácter.
Le falta barba y color.
Le sobra máscara: muecas
con que quiere ahuyentar
falsos peligros. Es un rostro
perfecto. Lo sé. Se agota
en las palabras y fluye
rápido a la destrucción:
metamorfosis que no da
sitio al azar. Es un rostro
molesto. Hierve y de inmediato:
los otros buscan en el suyo
las heridas. Lo sé.

JOSÉ VIÑALS

FIVE POEMS

PROFESSION AND ART OF THE CUSTOMS AGENT

No one is responsible for the kind of poetry that arrives in towns without Customs.

Someone is responsible that no kind of poetry arrives in towns with Customs.

INSTALLING ENTRY AND EXIT SIGNS ON EACH SIDE OF DOORS IS CONVENIENT

"I dreamt so much that I'm not from here anymore," León Paul Fargue has just told me. As if not being from here would mean being from somewhere else.

As if dreaming were equal to emigrating. As if he who migrates could ever stop belonging.

As if emigrants could emigrate from dreaming and not dream their estrangement.

As if someone who emigrates from dreams were not immigrating to dreams.

As if someone who immigrates to dream were not a foreigner in those dreams.

Mirror mirror

The magpie would be enough, here white, there black: Where is here and there? The magpie would be enough, if it were just about ornithology. Or fauna and flora. All right, here the clematis, there the honeysuckle. Where here, where there? Here the deer and the wolf; there the lama and the guanaco; here the rhea, there the squirrel and the stork, there the routes of migrations. They would be enough, no doubt, but how can they be enough when they're not?

Not even a few, small but solemn and definitive acts: here birth, there-death or vice-versa. Father's grave here, there his cradle; there brother's dense affection, here his sweet, persistent memory. And here and there, beautiful and hateful and bottomless, the big ocean, quiet as a beast roaring inward.

On this shore, the children; the son on that shore; on both shores friends, and the matters of the soul, either old or incipient.

On this shore love as a luminous stain in the chest's well; the loved one on the other shore interweaving anxiety and the urgency of returning.

And where the skinned animal? Where the right half cow or rather the left one? Where's the double beetle that flies mating with itself? Where's the brief variety of sources of sustained happiness? Where's the hard query of pain, and where's the agony?

Where, on which shore, what used to be in the books? And where what once was and still is in life? Where heroisms and cowardice, affirmation and renunciation, courage and fear?

Where's the flagrant split with skillful, winding scars that never quickly close? Where's the flower of the verb, half-light, half-shadow?

Where's the childhood horse? Where's the calm and also agitated wait for the snow?

No more questions; the magpie would be enough, black or white. The calligraphic mirror would be enough broken in halves. The shadow of the shadow would be enough. It would be enough the uniting tear, half quartz half bonfire.

Or looking at the weasel and the hasty work of its holing the ground —in which ground?— at the very verge of my old shoes, or rather by my baring of cold toenails, slightly purple.

Fugitive

From place to place, from world to world. Looking for you. From job to job, looking for you. At twenty, at sixty, looking for you. In the black squares of the chest, dressed in bitter night or the fleeing morning, looking for you.

Looking for you on the reverse side of shadows; in the ballrooms lighted by frivolity and laughter; in run-down taverns; at celebrity cemeteries; at parks, theaters, libraries, health resorts, looking for you.

Looking for you in shacks, on trains, in brothels. In prisons, in ships, in small country towns, looking for you. Sick or dead, eaten by syphilis or anguish, looking for you. Looking for you among the famous painters' models, probably with TB.

Looking for you in a circus arrived from Hungary where you were maybe the aide of a prestigious magician and escapist.

Never so close, so close breathing.

Woman of love with my last name

In the name of the joyous breed of the zebra (female and male); in the name of the awkward movement of the elephant (male & female); in the sovereign name of the tiger, sweet name of the antelope, deadly name of the cobra's black death; in the name of the jungle fauna of remote instinct and ignored fate.

In the name of the polar star and of the Arctic and Antarctic circles; in the name of the morning star and the serene and agreed constellations of Pythagoras; in the name of the tides, the gray typhoon, the terrible tsunami, the moon, the polar bear's tiny cub.

In the name of the black acorn, the contrite onion, the foundations of oil and garlic; in the curly name of parsley; in the name of corn's promising ear; in the name of the many forms of sweetness in the expansive orchestral repertoire of the four seasons; in the name of the strange fruits, avocado, custard apple, pawpaw, mango and other delicate tropical flesh as well as the sweetest and admirable, juicy and wild equatorial fruits.

In the name of the sacred winds of most beautiful names: Aquilo, Boreas, Auster, Mistral, Sirocco, Pampero, the breeze that blew in Paolo and Francesca's readings; that fluttered the curtains of Buddha and Gioconda's skies.

In the name of ornamental birds, bookplate birds, ceremonial birds, those of bold design, the peacock, the stork, the heron, the owl, the pelican, the cockatoo, the parakeet, the parrot, the hawk and even the swan of mythology.

In the name of private parts, the upright penis, the fragrant vagina, the testicles in their bag of worthless leather, and even the erogenous geography with its adventurous hollows and promontories. In the name of sacred copulation and the soft tongue with its surprising intentions.

In the name of birth, death, and resurrection of the human wolf cubs and the rotten profile gods.

In the name of wars, plagues and other natural disasters, or those from the nameless laboratory of death.

In Your name.

In Your name, Woman of silent syllables. Femme, Woman, Wife, incestuous and putative Sister, Mother of the secrets of my blood and the blood of my blood, Partner in pain and ingloriousness, Comrade of sleeplessness, flesh and bone woman of my urgent desires.

In Your name, as a believer in Your name with no tricks, perfect and everlasting Bride, I kneel to the ground.

Translated by Andrés Fisher and Benito del Pliego

MINERVA REYNOSA

(H)EMÖTOMA

MOTHER SHAPIRO

as glad puts you to work, you too would put the prick to soak

J.T. LEROY

mother:

plug me

he aimed at my socket. he hit the chain of expired values. it was he who first took the pill towards a more saintly space.

she aims at my socket but the view is deterred. not the dress amid the odors and the cleanliness of the rose that grazes her. she enters the code to access the (goal) antechamber of composed happiness. there's a string of drool that hangs. at the corner of the mouth, gloss: it's the craving for not being in her

or i hers

a simple life

the one life

in the city of untruth

with the vital hoax

i am unwell

mother:

plug me

plug (informal). [from plug (formal)].*

1. tr. colloq. to plug at someone (shot via gun).

2. n. a lure (with fishing line and hook).

3&4. n. colloq. a piece of tobacco cut from a larger cake for chewing.

5. n. connector for male and female wired parts.

6. n. colloq. occurrence of sexual intercourse.

i put to soak with lemon. the softness that it provides me is my ancestors' tendency towards marinating the body as a spirited form. if my emotional deficiency doesn't relapse into indifference; today i'll be able to exhibit many desires with the potential of not requesting permission.

i supply even more, in hands, an oil that lifts everything as much as contact calls. lifts because the sensation of being orphan on site dismisses the intact and delicious power of my inner thigh: i desire.

MUSCLESPRAYPHÏLIC

s y m p t o m

i enter the screen. my solitude volatilizes in a message, in an electronic emotion, in a printed letter that i cannot deform. i enter. i exit. i enter. i set. i manipulate. i exit. i enter. i run. i scream. *i see. i observe. i watch.* i listen: pity not doing the reading like during cervantes' times (margit frenk).

i enter

i exit

to pinpoint the eye. to pinpoint the hand in the sensation. a pair of hours and i feel that the pill that dopes me is a perpetual party the ample ire infusion. ire apprehension. eye apprehension.

i watch / *i observe* / *i see* the circumference of the space towards mistrust. pinpoint the eye in the image. pinpoint the hand in the emotion. the pill that dopes is an oblique light source that goes arresting the movement to be near, him being, i being, the two in solo, one, in solo the two and being we will be: inhalation.

he inhales. i inhale. we both breath in before the cotton that promotes us towards a unique mass. once more the sensations in large exposed to echoic property. the hand i feel. the foot is everything. the thighs, plenty through the ant trail as spurt from an electric shot. inhale. breathe in. breathe in. breathe in.

(H)EMÖTOMA

part one:

no flashes with expired breath, nor the mint of the paste, nor deodorant, nor the drool at the saltpeter neck, nor the laughter widespread through the propulsion of resonant voices.

part two:

it's two of two and i am one: void

PÏLL

the universe is a multiple fragmentary
OMAR CALABRESE

day before:

to get home with a dizzy smile. to get home and observe that the tenderness of the brushing is not just a question of material nature present. there. out. within. to the side. a luminescent burst from outer streetlight shows the surrender to ghoulish distinction.

day after:

the discomfort of insecurity. the water that runs each time to rid the last but each time more firstborn urine. the vomit. the dry mouth. the emotional need. the void of vocal expression. dizzy.

today:

i am she who writes that it's not she who personifies. in an emotional tumble. the blindness invades. full am i. it's not the lover; the causality of lovers is the coincidence of absolute inconvenience.

(H)EMÖTOMA

molars, hairs, brains, eyes in spite of disturbances
GERARDO DENIZ

exit. reborn. to be or not to be. negation. the light on the eyes. the eros symbol. the pallid eyelids. the descriptions. the routine. cliché. the yo-yo. he shows and goes in me. towards me. with me. towards oneself.

to exit and negate oneself. that the otherness distances itself in tiny scales of alien interest. depopulate known space to immerse oneself in a path of incoherencies. to exit. to be mass. to be something. to be less than the original value because there is no multiplication before the other. the interference that mutilates the stratosphere like a vessel in the pantry: approach to days.

(H)EMÖTOMA

he stampedes out at chance to have a new verve in his hair, a new air that denotes him the extreme remoteness that in a few days will be given.

he recedes with peace that doesn't bear because the symphony of fortune goes dialing him the telephone call: loss of loss.

he recedes the physical activity holds the other's look in the color of dresses, in the smell of the ammonia emotion that feigns the concord. it fastens the edges of the windows where all catlike squanders its croquette life to feel that ugly thing: contractions.

today i awakened with fear in my ankles

cold in my clothes

and a timid tear in my hypocritical unyielding.

(H)EMÖTOMA

the bed gives, and i want to drill you in the hard and inflexible ground

E. JELINEK

fragmentation intercooling:
the terming. the name the delicate attendance in front of the violence. presence. to attend is to conjugate within the uniform mass of the same mass [s i c]. when she opens her eyes and the pupils of senile rage upon not moving one limb: would be.

the terming. the name the entrance towards scads of crowds. but one exit to individuality or thwart or fainting of futility. the terming attracts opposition a priori the fuckative by involuntary action (void of coherence): the fright: the absence of a new round. sentient to a woman is the frostiness from the other.

the name the mistake. the terming the mistaken way of naming. the titular terms and contaminates. the sleight abates of pronouncing the generality, which the i does not opportune me.

FALLIBLE FÄBLE

i go towards what i least knew: i go towards my body

VIEL TEMPERLEY

the womb always recipient. the need with nearness. scarcity thereof, the art. of art the possibility of magnifying motley wombs: the circle of the concord / joy / hark back.

i go towards myself as the concave vacates the world's reality

i go towards myself as the fear that cocoons the womb

alien movements

i go towards skeptic as if i were going in time

historic possibility of my scarcity.

EROTÖMANIC (BECOMING)

one: locked-up wickedness in womb
regions areas within the light, twinkle of bodily motion and the shadow stay. regions the areas. the palatal area the one that smacks loudest when he up at the first white line. white diet. cocaine.

with drugs love grows like dark-pupil dilation that now lightened enlightens the interest: temptation.

region soft laughter in the cellar of suffocation: palate with propelled ricochet. perfect noise space above the groin, beside emotion: his hip careens, i seesaw (my hips) and breeze struck by the other grotto inside my mouth. i yearn to eat from the glow and to hold its decibels.

region opportunity of strength. shoulder grip in the blood battle. region of death close to the heart that enkindles violence in several courses: he / she on a white diet / red diet / diet of being in be-coming: to come back in self. over self. to self. mobile to the bite that generates and impregnates the inquiry in womb. both by desire lead themselves towards their destination of their (inner) drives.

Translated by Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal

ENDNOTE

*The definitions of plug in "MOTHER SHAPIRO" are appropriations from the following sources accessed in March 2011 (with the numbered definition respectively labeling the source): 1) Collins English Dictionary, from Dictionary.com; 2) Oxford English Dictionary, from Babylon 8; 3&4) Oxford English Dictionary, from Babylon 8; 5) Google.com, summary of hits when searching "plug"; and 6) Babylon English from Babylon 8.

KENT JOHNSON

DOSSIER: ANDRÉS AJENS

Introduction

Andrés Ajens was born in Concepción, Chile, in 1961, and currently resides near Santiago. He is, with the Bolivian writers Vicky Ayllón, Jorge Campero, and Emma Villazón, co-editor of the important poetry journal *Mar con Soroche* (Santiago/La Paz) and the publisher of Intemperie, a leading press for new poetries in South America. With the Aymara linguist Zacarías Alavi Mamani, he co-directs the www.lenguandina.org project, and out of Universidad Pedagógica de Santiago de Chile he curates the *Programa de Indagaciones en Escrituras ~~Americanas~~* in collaboration with the philosopher Willy Thayer and the anthropologist André Menard. His books of poetry include *Con dado inescrito* (Córdoba, 2009), *No insista, carajo* (Santiago, 2005) and *Más íntimas íntimas mistura* (Santiago, 1998). Other collections of writing include *La flor del extérmino* (Buenos Aires, 2010), *El entrevero* (La Paz/Santiago, 2008) y *La última carta de Rimbaud* (Santiago, 1996). In 2012, Palgrave published his collection of essays *Poetry after the Invention of América*, translated by Michelle Gil-Montero.

I first met Andres Ajens in 2006, in Andacollo, Chile, at the *Cerros de Oro* poetry conference, to which Forrest Gander and I had been invited.* This conference was one of many international "encuentros de poesía" Ajens has—in part

or whole—conceived and curated over the past fifteen years or so. Indeed, it's important to understand his poetic presence and role in that regard: not only is he widely known as one of the most vibrant writers and poetic thinkers of the Andean and Southern Cone nations; he is, too, a tireless, indispensable, and generative empresario of dialogue, debate, and collaboration among experimental poets in Latin America today.

English translations and translucinations of Ajens's poetry and criticism have appeared in the U.S., England, Canada, and Australia; in Europe, his writing has been published in Portuguese, French, and Galician versions. Further translations of his writing are underway in other languages. This interview was conducted over email in the Spring of 2012. I thank Kristin Dykstra and Roberto Tejada, editors of *Mandorla*, for hosting it.

May, 2012

*Gander and I wrote a renga-like travelogue of our time in Chile. It carries discussion of Ajens and other leading experimental South American writers (along with numerous photos) and can be found at *Jacket Magazine* http://jacketmagazine.com/30/chile.html

MULTIPLE / / / LLISION (A RE-VERSIÓN)

the tunnel f l i e s pas t in the rhythm
of its absence, the you
knell (in sooth) tunnels in and out of you

who all fly self-propelled in the a i r
so s can't, the word
shock does not brake in time

between fractured mahindra error
  mences the colloquium, posthumous
crawl cramping, drawl cllpse ov(th)er

not yrs not myne: saying no less

the unbrakeable at theneck
returns (nape) to imbricate

octb, 2011

Translated by Erin Mouré

Escrituras al seco, ladino-americas, & other paleonasms: entreview with / con Andrés Ajens

Kent Johnson: Let me start with a question not immediately concerned with poetics proper: Some years ago, I saw a kind of manifesto/petition you had co-authored, published in the fabulous journal you edit, *Mar con Soroche*, and to which I'm proud to be a "Contributing Editor," though I'm afraid I haven't quite lived up to my responsibility. The manifesto was signed by dozens of Chilean and Bolivian intellectuals, and it called on the then-Bachelet administration to cede a strip of land at the country's northern edge, so that the nation of Bolivia might at last have an access to the Pacific.

I wanted to ask you what came of that call, if it received any reaction, if the campaign is still active? I've always wondered why Chile would not carry out such an obviously just act, one that would win it eternal admiration from the global community—not to mention the eternal gratitude of the Bolivian people—and set a kind of golden standard for international friendship and compassion. Why can't your nation, which has become internationally admired for its democratic values and economic achievements (even as those are by nature provisional!), bring itself to gift a two or three-kilometre strip of land in the desert, something just wide enough for a road, train-track, and port to the sea, to its long-suffering neighbour, Bolivia?

Andrés Ajens: En 1937 Vicente Huidobro publicó "Un puerto para Bolivia", texto en que desde la fraternidad y, curiosamente en un escritor como Huidobro, desde la moral bíblica, plantea el imperativo de otorgar una salida al mar a Bolivia: "Una vieja ley del Oriente enseña que debemos obrar con nuestro prójimo como desearíamos que él obrara con nosotros. De esta ley nació seguramente la nuestra que dice: Ama a tu prójimo como a ti mismo..." Lo recuerdo, porque es uno de los pocos intelectuales chilenos en pronunciarse al respecto durante todo el siglo XX. Incluso Neruda, que en su *Canto general* hace un recuento de las grandes inequidades en suelo americano, tanto en período colonial como republicano, omite referirse a la Guerra del Pacífico y a sus desastres, en ese libro y en otras ocasiones. ¿Qué retiene a Neruda a reconocer que la susodicha guerra de Chile

contra Bolivia y Perú, y los despojos consecuentes, fuera una descarada operación de conquista, amparada sólo en la sin-razón de Estado; qué posibilita a Huidobro oír de algún modo la demanda boliviana? ¿Lo nacional-popular en Neruda, el cosmopolitanismo en Huidobro? Sin duda la cosa es más compleja. Pero lo que está meridianamente en juego ahí es una cuestión de justicia, el cómo responder a una demanda por justicia – justicia allende el derecho, de cierto, pues el derecho instituido (el Tratado de límites de 1904 entre Chile y Bolivia, que consagra jurídicamente el despojo del litoral boliviano) es fruto justamente de una violenta agresión armada. No se trata de compasión por alguien que carece de X (mar), o tal vez habría que revisar la noción de "compasión": se trata, creo, del incesante llamado del enigma – pues cada vez resulta sin precedentes– de justicia.

Cuando en 2003 setenta y siete escritores / as, artistas y académicos / as, con pasaporte ya de Chile, ya de Bolivia, dimos a conocer una carta instando a los gobiernos y pueblos de ambos países a resolver el "diferendo marítimo", con un acceso soberano de Bolivia al océano Pacífico, la prensa de Santiago literalmente deliró. Incluso un diario habló de una conspiración urdida en La Paz por el servicio secreto boliviano que había logrado engatuzar a algunas decenas de incautos poetas chilenos. De más está recordarlo: la carta la escribimos a cuatro manos con el escritor Cé Mendizábal entre La Paz y Santiago.

Hace algunas semanas, en Santa Cruz de la Sierra, en el llamado "Oriente" boliviano, tras una presentación del último número de *Mar con soroche*, uno de los escritores allí presentes dijo: "Nunca Chile cederá una gota de mar. ¡Imposible!". Lo decía sin pena ni rabia ni olvido, sino con un algo así como un meditado "realismo". ¿Y si se tratara justamente de eso la respuesta o su comienzo, la consonancia con el llamado por justicia: volver literalmente *loco* lo meramente posible, volver acaso más que posible lo imposible?

KJ: I want to return to the above topic, but your last phrase, concerning the matter of the possible and the impossible, relates literally to something I intended to ask, so I'll ask you now: In the first sentence of their Preface to your recent book of essays, *Poetry after the Invention of America*, published in Rachel Blau Du Plessis' series (Palgrave, 2012), Erin Mouré and Forrest Gander propose that you challenge us to confront the paradox of "the poem's possibility and impossibility."

I'm making the assumption that you agree with their claim. If so, the poem is "impossible" how?

AA: Estoy tentado a comenzar a responderte con el nombre de uno de los textiles que se entrecruzan en el libro: ¿Cómo no *responder?* Esto es, cómo no dejar de responderte, cómo no evitar responder, y, a la vez, de qué manera *no* responderte, de qué manera no habría en ningún caso que responder a tal pregunta, so pena de clausurar toda posibilidad, aun en su eventual imposibilidad, hoy, para poemas. Pero. La respuesta *no debe* ser larga, me sugieres. Así que escojo otra frase para empezar, acaso más concentrada, una expresión en quechua que viene en más de un pasaje de *Poetry...*, esta: *Imanatátaj watusúnchij kay wátuy mana atinata*, y que doy por: ¿cómo vamos a traducir lo imposible — de traducir?, y que Michelle Gil-Montero traslucina: *How do we translate what it is impossible—to translate?* "How", en efecto: "how" "watusúnchij" (traduciremos, comprenderemos, adivinaremos o escribiremos—, pues no se trata aquí de saber, hay que saberlo sin del todo saber, a saber: no es la cognición lo que está en juego de manera decisiva ahí sino antes la marca o remarca del sino, tal encendido responder a algún destino o a alguna inasegurada destinación en camino, una pregunta por ejemplo, la tuya, que es lo que, a su modo, el (verbo) quechua *wátuy* subraya).

¿Es eso de veras "a paradox"? ¿O ello habla más bien de la experiencia más extraordinariamente cotidiana, del sobrevenir del más de una voz o llamada en juego, del más de una lengua y del "double bind" si se quiere, en el que estamos de entrada inmersos? (Erín-y-Forrest creo que evitan la palabra *paradox* en el Prefacio de *Poetry...*, y, por demás, tendría que demorarme con mayor atención en lo que "hacen" ahí *entre* ambos con las torvísimas frases que firmo...). Pero. Esto se alarga demasiado. Hubiera querido recordar que *Imanatátaj watusúnchij...* se inscribe desde ya en *Poesía en pampa*, textil que reitera entrecortadamente a ratos *El meridiano* de P. Celan, es decir, es[t]e —son sus términos— "imposible camino, este camino de lo imposible": *diesen unmöglichen Weg, diesen Weg des Unmöglichen...* Pero. A propósito del *wátuy* y de su acaecer a menudo en la *puna* (tierras altas andinas), ahí donde hasta los cielos se *apunan* (mal o éxtasis de altura, alias *soroche*), me remito a traer en provisoria conclusión este pasaje de *Trilce*:

Cielos de puna descorazonada

por gran amor, los cielos de platino, torvos [o torbos, según otras ediciones] de imposible.

¿Cómo trasluce eso Clayton Eshleman? ¿Michael Smith y Valentino Gianuzzi? ¿Y Rebecca Seiferle y Dave Smith? ¿Y...?

KJ: Speaking of impossible things that are somehow made possible, you mentioned Michelle Gil-Montero's tour de force translation of *Poetry after the Invention of America*. Your essays in the book (and elsewhere) are often markedly idiosyncratic in their language and modes of proceeding—conceptually challenging, linguistically cross-dressed, sometimes labyrinthine in their topical unfolding, as if you're out to dismantle and rearrange standard structures of the form from within. I wanted to ask: What about genre? What place does genre have in your larger poetics? Do you see your "essays" as one kind of writing and your "poetry" as another? Or do you reject such distinctions? In either case (if there would be an "either"), please explain.

AA: Generosidad de los géneros, de una parte; hay géneros, cómo no, más de uno, de toda *clase* (en castellano, por demás, recordarás, *genre* y *gender* se remarcan con la misma marca: *género*), con sus móviles leyes, cláusulas y fronteras, y, por cierto, algunos más resistidos u oprimidos que otros. De otra parte, ¿no hay acaso, cada vez, en las escrituras no enteramente amputadas del juego de destinos y destinaciones, la implícita pretensión de decir performáticamente lo único, lo irreductiblemente singular (que nunca se da *simplemente*, de cierto, sino que cada vez sobreviene o se promete en una constelación o nudo), y de decirlo a su vez singularmente, allende o aquende cualquier género, tipo o clase de decir, por mor precisamente de lo "singular plural" sobreviniente? ¿No hay cada vez, si singular plural hay, escrituras-monstruos? Pero. Claro. Monstruo (o idioma) absoluto no hay, no "puede" haberlo, o, en cualquier caso, tal sería absolutamente indecible, ilegible, inaudible, intraducible, etc. Pues cada vez hay, con más o menos violencia, efecto de marco, de domesticación y/o clasificación, por caso, de géneros... En suma: (me) interesa más la suspensión general y genérica, la pujanza excepcional en escritura, la atención a lo singular plural prometiéndose, que el trance de su entrada en la casa conceptual o del Ser o aun

genérica. Sí, Erín y Forrest, en el Prefacio del susodicho libro, y tú, a tu modo, al subrayar lo "idiosincrático" en juego, lo remarcan: *It is*—antes que nada— *an exploration and an opening*.

KJ: Wonderful. OK, back to the Bolivia / Chile question, if you'll forgive the turn: You've now begun to push this issue out beyond Bolivian and Chilean writers. Which seems right, because this is certainly a matter of international justice, one with potentially global implications for the good. So you plan now to circulate the letter more broadly, that hundreds of writers, artists, and intellectuals from around the world be signatories? I'd wager it might be something that could take-off in unsuspected ways.

AA: Es una cuestión abierta, de cierto, allende las eventuales pertenencias estado-nacionales en juego. En el último *Mar con soroche* viene precisamente un dossier llamado sin ambages "Mar para Bolivia", con aportes poéticos, ensayísticos, narrativos, visuales, etc., de escritores / as de muy diversas comarcas (incluso europeas), que estuvieron dispuestos / as a dejarse interpelar por esta suerte de shibboleth alias con-signación contemporánea: "Mar para Bolivia". Por demás, hace 3 o 4 años, en un gesto mínimo, ¡pero a la vena!, destinado a desmontar uno de los tantos legados que todavía permanecían intactos de la llamada "Guerra del Pacífico" (aquella, pues, en que Chile le arrebata toda la costa a Bolivia y un par de provincias a Perú, luego de que sus tropas ocuparan Lima por más de dos años), un centenar de escritores / as, sudamericanos / as en su mayoría, pero también de otros continentes, le dirigimos una carta a la Ministra de Cultura del gobierno de Chile demandando que se devolvieran a Perú las colecciones bibliográficas de la Biblioteca Nacional de Lima que el ejército de chileno había traído como "botín de guerra" hacía más de cien años y que aun estaban en manos de la Biblioteca Nacional chilena. ¡Sabrosa –y a ratos monstruosa— misiva! No habrá sido la única iniciativa en esa dirección, pero de algún modo fue la gota que rebalsó el vaso: a las pocas semanas, la directora de Bibliotecas y Museos del gobierno de Chile anunció que los libros serían devueltos prontamente, en el marco de un giro democratizante de la política patrimonial del país, etc., etc.; y al cabo de unos meses, en efecto, la escena oficial de la devolución de los cientos de libros, algunos de ellos valiosos incunables, se ejecutó en Lima. *Voilà la petite*

histoire de The Purloined Books! (Ha poco me encontré con un interesante trabajo de una historiadora peruana sobre la Guerra del Pacífico –*Guerreros civilizadores*, de Carmen McEvoy— en que muestra, archivo en mano, cómo no sólo el ejército chileno sino la cultura dominante del país a fines del XIX se auto-otorgaba la misión de "vanguardia civilizadora" con respecto a los bárbaros peruanos...).

KJ: Well, so poets in this instance as unacknowledged legislators making a mark! Wish we had some of that savvy hereabouts. Alas, we seem, in the main, quite satisfied with our Academic location these days... You know, regarding the notion of a "civilizing vanguard," we have this proclivity in the U.S., it's something like a reflex assumption among even the most "progressive," where we tend to think we're the leading edge of most things. Not least in the arts and poetry. I'm just barely exaggerating. You might call it the imperialist hubris effect... How much attention do Latin American poets working in the tradition of experiment give to, say, Language poetry and what's evolved out of it in the past fifteen or twenty years? That's "our" latest vanguardia in the U.S. Or I could more specifically ask: What do *you* think about this work, if anything? You're influenced by recent Continental theory, as the Language poets certainly were, so I thought I would ask. We've only begun to pay attention to you folks down south; have you been paying more attention to us up here?

AA: ¿Latin American poets? ¿Y si los/las "Latin American poets" fueran *cada vez más* una producción necesaria u deseada del *gringamen* (ahí donde se encuentra lo gringo y el *amen* crístico, pero también lo gringo y el *game*, etc.), es decir, una manera económica (pero algo) violenta de unificar tal sureño maremágnum (sureño con respecto a sí)? Claro, se hace todos los días y probablemente en los años que vienen se hará aún más... Ante esto, "the project of America –of Americas–" (estoy citando *Our Americas: New Worlds Still in Progress*, de Charles Bernstein) aparece más hospitalario y a la vez más violento. Aparición más hospitalaria, pues de entrada se (nos) invita a las Américas, "an imaginary cultural space whose mutant and multiform manifestation are as evanescent as the last breaths of a dying tongue". Y a la vez más violento en cuanto jamás se explicita qué haría de tal "imaginary cultural espace" uno, *un* espacio, salvo, tal vez, la proyección imaginaria de una subjetividad-una, que al fin y al cabo subsume o supera todas

sus fisuras y pluralidades, todas sus mutaciones y multiformidades... Still in Progress! *Our Americas*, el ensayo de Bernstein, se hace eco y a la vez reinscribe el llamado de "Nuestra América" de Martí-Darío-Mistral, etc., esto es, de los poetas latinoamericanos que quisieron marcar la diferencia entre "nuestra América" con la llamada América anglosajona, y proverbialmente con *America* (U.S.A.), la fuerza pujante. Con todo, bien distinto es el llamado a una política de identidad ("nuestra" América) en el caso de alguien que está en marcada desventaja de poder y necesita por ello a toda costa acrecentar más o menos disciplinadamente su cohesión "interna", que en el caso de una potencia predominante. Hasta Bush (el padre como el hijo) apeló al espacio de las Américas cuando buscó avanzar en tratados de libre comercio... ¡Para no volver a mentar ahora la tristemente célebre "Escuela de las Americas" (*United States Army School of the Americas*), montada en Panamá para entrenar a los torturadores de las dictaduras de los '60 y '70...! ¿Y *Mandorla, dirás tú*? Mandorla –pequeño, significativo detalle, hasta donde alcanzo a entrever su proyecto— jamás habla de *un* espacio ni de *una* escritura, sino de *más de una*, de relación *entre* escrituras, *among the Américas*...

Como sea, el intento de reinscripción del llamado de Martí en Bernstein, el eco de Martí repercutiendo en el oído de Bernstein, es también el eco de Martí repercutiendo en el tímpano de Jerome Rothenberg. Así, mencionando *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas*, como precursor de su planteamiento, Bernstein subraya el anticipo: Rothenberg "here echoes the sentiments of José Martí in 'Our America' eighty years earlier". Luego cita el siguiente, en extremo debatible, pasaje de *Shaking the Pumpkin*:

"The history of America, *from the Incas to the present*, must be taught in its smallest details, even if the Greek Archons go untaught. *Our own Greece* is preferable to the *Greece that is not ours*; we need it more". [Subrayo].

Extremadamente debatible, por múltiples motivos. Por de pronto: si lo propio —lo "nuestro"— está de entrada decidido o resuelto (la Grecia nuestra, versus la Grecia no nuestra o aun la otra Grecia o la Grecia de los otros; en cualquier caso Grecia), ¿qué apertura queda en pie sino la ya programada por la fatalidad y/o decisión de 'lo nuestro'? (Lo que no impide, de cierto, *escribir* performáticamente cada vez relatos únicos de lo único, de la única vez, de singularidades de toda laya, aun, si se quiere, de Manco Cápac al presente). O, en otras palabras,

si venimos de entrada determinados por un 'nuestro' asegurado (en sus referentes, sus identificaciones, cláusulas, envíos, etc.), en qué queda la improbable posibilidad de un encuentro no sólo con otros nosotros sino también con otros en nos-otros? ¿*Our Americas* repone la "poética" más clásica (más soberana y ontoteocéntrica) del Sujeto...? Por otra parte, ¿no es acaso "América" invención europea (y no refiero sólo al nombre de la cosa sino a la cosa misma imaginada, para el caso que "nombre" y "cosa" pudiesen ser separadas tajantemente)? Para quedarnos por ahora con el ejemplo inca, avanzado por Rothenberg, traducir *Pacha* (espacio-tiempo-mundo, etc.), o *Tawantinsuyu* (cuatriparte, cuatro zonas mutuamente implicadas) por "América" no agrava una asimilación expedita de las diferencias en juego? (Neruda, al tanto acaso del dilema, en las primeras líneas de su *Canto general* habla de "tierra mía sin nombre, sin América"). Lo mismo para las traducciones sin más de *arawiku* por 'poeta' y de *amawta* por 'filósofo' que progresistamente propone ya en 1609 *Los comentarios reales* del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.

KJ: Tweaking a bit this complication of identity, nationhood, location, "cultural place," and its repercussions: In a recent interview conducted by Forrest Gander, Raúl Zurita, one of the great poets of Chile, states that nationality in Latin America importantly inflects poetic production. He speaks of Neruda's works as marked by his national "place," and Vallejo's as shaped, in turn, by his different national roots. Zurita says, literally, that Neruda is one species of writer because he is from Chile, and that Vallejo is a very different kind of writer because he is from Peru. It's a recorded interview, and I suspect Zurita might well expand and refine his formulation if given the opportunity. But I believe you would quarrel with how he frames the distinctions there, inasmuch as he gives emphasis to the category of nationality and seems to link it, however roughly, to poetic type and identity? At least I *think* you would quarrel with that idea, from some things of yours I've read. Indeed, you've spoken of yourself as an *Andean* poet, rather than a "Chilean" one, and your critical work—including the thrust of much of your recent book of essays—moves in the direction of deconstructing national categories. Is the notion of a national literature to be dispensed with altogether? If so, what should take its place when we talk of, well, a poet's *place*? We were both at a conference

a few years ago that focused on this theme. And I remember your talk raised a ruckus, with some younger poets yelling in interruption throughout…

AA: Andean poet? In what place — have I spoken of myself in such terms? Such a place, I think, is still vacant. Pero. Si alguien quiere, tú por ejemplo, *llamarme* "Andean poet", I receive it as a present, as a present impression of X (myself), lo que probablemente me presione a la vez a preguntarme qué hay en tal llamada o, incluso, ya sin presión alguna, a preguntarme si tal llamamiento no es acaso "a misprint", como eso que Forrest advirtió ex post en el Prefacio escrito a dos manos con Erin: ahí donde debía tener lugar *writing from the Andrés* viene impreso de hecho, inesperado regalo, *from the Andes*. As the author of the prologue of *The Life of the Tomcat Murr* says, it is also true that often the writers *deben sus más atrevido pensamientos* [ihre kühnsten Gedanken: their most daring thoughts], los giros más insólitos [the most extraordinary twists] to their good typographers [o editores], who, por medio de lo que se ha dado en llamar *gazapos* [Druckfehler: falla de impresión, misprint], contribute to the elevation of ideas - - -

Dicho esto, esto otro (tomado de una *Antología de poesía brasilera contemporánea* persistentemente por venir):

> Hay algo más estúpido que una antología
> nacional en poesía? ¿hay tal
>
> cómo lindar mi cuerpo, cuerpo de antología
> sin sucumbir al deseo de dominio
> estadonacional y, a la vez
> a la devastación imperiosa, imperial? ¿cómo evitar
> la sujeción a la cripta burocrático-popular (registro
> de nacimiento, pasaporte, carnet
> de identidad) y al mismo tiempo
> a la tecnonada planetaria, al borramiento cabal?
>
> y si mi cuerpo no fuera dado
> por inscripción ciudadana alguna
> sino por la cosa misma

nacional, ¿qué sería tal?, ¿qué sería
lo brasilero en poesía, Cintio – Brasilien. Ein Land der Zukunft?
Tristes tropiques? Warhaftige Historia
und beschreibung eyner Landtschafft
der Wilden Nacketen Grimmigen Menschfresser-Leuthen
in der Newenwelt America?

si el romanticismo mismo (el alemán
abonara la creencia en la esencia
poética de todo pueblo, de toda nación
fuera ello enteramente ajeno
a la quema de la Historia
orquestada al ritmo de ein Volk,
ein Reich, ein Führer – ein Rhein?

¿hay algo más idiota que una antología de poesía nacional?

(...).

Es decir, sí: en "América Latina", y no sólo ahí, pues de entrada en Europa y, más ampliamente, en lo que aun pudiéramos seguir llamando "Occidente", la literatura habrá sido aparentemente cosa nacional, estado-nacional: literatura española, literatura francesa, inglesa, etc. ¡Nada más *natural* que la determinación de lo literario por la institución nacional , nada más normal! Si a eso le agregamos el ideologema (más o menos romántico) de 'a cada nación, su poesía', la razón (histórica) se vuelve tautología, y el lugar del escritor o la escritora viene de antemano decidido: su nación, su estado-nación. Así, la norma es encontrarse con antologías de poesía por país, por estado-nación, con lo cual la escritura poética viene a depender de y subsumirse en la escritura de las instituciones estado-nacionales. En lo que llámase "América Latina" (pero, como lo adelantáramos, este nombre no es tampoco para nada natural y hay millones de "latinoamericanos", especialmente indígenas, que no se identifican para nada en él), la construcción de literaturas estado-nacionales habrá ido a

la par de violentos procesos de homogeneización socio-cultural y lingüística, en beneficio del castellano y del portugués, esto es, operaciones de extirpación expedita de alteridades no-occidentales. Tales maqui*naciones* republicanas habrán sido incluso más devastadoras que las del periodo colonial. Quienes hablan aymara, por caso, no sólo se habrán visto repentinamente divididos en tres "naciones" (Perú, Bolivia, Chile) sino además habrán sido violentamente "invitados" adoptar una lengua extranjera, para el caso, el castellano, lengua "nacional". A esa razón de Estado, a esa razón estado-nacional, no le opondría por cierto una razón universal o cosmopolita ni tampoco alguna razón étnica o más local; no le opondría nada, ningún predeterminado lugar. Cualquier oposición alimentaría aquí la máqui*nación*.

Para decirlo con Celan, empero, en cada poema se replantea el misterio del encuentro con la memoria de lo dado, de las datas (*Daten*), con las datas desde las que escribimos y a la vez a las que nos escribimos. Celan, justamente —¿poeta "rumano", "francés", "alemán"? (las categorías nacionales o estado-nacionales colapsan en su caso, como en el de muchos otros)— hace de la lengua alemana (y no de la determinación territorial o geopolítica alemana, ni nacional ni estado-nacional) el lugar de la interrogación por un lugar abierto, por venir, a habitar. Lengua por venir —el alemán de Celan no es simplemente el heredado—, escritura nomás...

Obviamente no da lo mismo nacer aquí o allá; tampoco morir. Pero ni el aquí ni el allá se confunden sin más con lo nacional o lo estado-nacional. Ni Neruda lo hace: marcado a partir de los años '30 por una poética inter-nacionalista-popular, Neruda escribe el *Canto general* y no un canto a Chile, como era su proyecto inicial –lo que no le impedirá, por supuesto, ejercer sus derechos ciudadanos y ser elegido senador de la República y, más tarde, precandidato presidencial. Es Nicanor Parra, si quieres permanecer en el horizonte estado-nacional, quien, oponiéndose al internacionalismo nerudiano (pero a fin de cuentas haciendo sistema mimético con él), comienza a convocar, medio en broma, medio en serio, el tópico de la "poesía chilena" y del "poeta chileno", tendencia que se agudizará con algunos inesperados efectos del 11 de septiembre. De 1973. ¿Pinochet y Zurita, *même combat*, como sugiere Roberto Bolaño en *Estrella distante*? ¿El Golpe de 1973 como *consumación de las vanguardias*, como sugiere el vecino Willy Thayer? Para

decirlo en aymara: *Janiwa*! O, en lengua franca: *Pas si vite!* Y sin embargo, como Parra parodia sistemáticamente a Neruda, Zurita parodia a ratos *Mein Kampf* (cf. *Purgatorio*). Con todo, ante esas "datas" que son el "11 de septiembre" (1973), "Cajamarca" (1532) y un "20.Jänner", ¿la parodia ha lugar?¿O es justamente el lugar, el lugar de la parodia, y de todo su aparataje mimetológico, lo que, de no desfondarse de por sí, cabe desde ya comenzar a desarmar? ¿No es por demás tal ¿im/posible? desarme lo que se deja leer entre líneas tanto en *Lyric Poetry After Auschwitz* como en *Doubled Flowering*?

KJ: ¿Me estás preguntando eso a mí?

AA: Yes.

KJ: Bien, OK, though the deployment of persona in each of those books is very different, obviously. And only one of them is mine, of course. Each of them could be seen as engaging modalities of "paradox" or "impossibility," I suppose, but in very different ways. I mean, each of those books could be seen as defeated in that engagement, failures in their own particular ways.

But Andrés, on this "Andean poet" thing, just to quickly note: In fact, Erin Mouré refers to you as an "Andean poet" in the introduction to *Poetry after the Invention of America*. And you do live smack amidst those mountains. So just in my own self-defense, there... But you say you'd be honored by the title, in any case...

Now, you raise the "conflicto" of Neruda and Parra. You are taking a lot for granted in assuming an English-speaking audience is generally conversant with this important "break." Parra being, what? That he is to Neruda in Chilean and even Latin American poetry what Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* were to the *Tractatus*? Though I guess the analogy is flawed there, for obvious reasons of subject and agency... Anyway, sorry for my awkwardness, but could you give us some ABC's, for starters, on that? And then take it wherever you like?

AA: Siendo la escritura de Parra manifiestamente heterogénea, cualquier lectura presuntamente homogénea de la relación entre "Parra" y "Neruda" (incluyendo eventualmente la del propio Parra al respecto), corre el riesgo de hacer pasar peras por manzanas o, mejor, de dejar abierta, en suspenso, la diferencia entre peras y manzanas. Dicho esto, el Parra de la antipoesía, de lo que él habrá llamado y

a ratos explicitado como antipoesía, tiene en Neruda su opuesto mimético por antonomasia y, como lo habrá dicho el mismo Parra, la antipoesía es anti-nerudiana (aunque no exclusivamente). ¿Parra parodia sistemáticamente a Neruda? Cf. "Salutación a Neruda" (1952), "Discurso de bienvenida en honor de Pablo Neruda" (1962), donde identifica a Neruda como al "poeta soldado", opuestro al "antipoeta" y, de paso, confirma su vocación paródica: "Para mí el género supremo es la pantomima". Y así, mimando al padre (admirado / odiado), acaba por hacer sistema con él. Parra: "Traté de zafarme [de Neruda] desde que tuve uso de razón. Era el padre que aparecía ante el hijo como demasiado poderoso" (entrevista con Amanda Paz, 1969). "Neruda fue siempre un problema para mí; un desafío, un obstáculo que se oponía en el camino. Entonces había que pensar las cosas en términos de ese *monstruo*... De modo que si ésta [la antipoesía] es una poesía *anti-Neruda,* también es una poesía *anti-Vallejo*..." (entrevista con Mario Benedetti, 1969; *sub*rayo). Si Neruda es padre (entre otros) de Parra, lo anti-padre confirma tanto al padre como al sistema padre-hijo. Allende este esquema oposicional y su devenir sistémico, pregunta: ¿cómo relacionarse entonces con lo monstruo(so) –lo singular que, por de pronto, (se) *muestra*—, ya no de manera oposicional pero tampoco de modo apropiante o meramente domesticante?

KJ: "Domesticante": Well, let me pursue that concept at another angle: You are very much involved with the most innovative poetic currents in Latin America. And the "vanguardia" tradition has long been a centripetal force in the history of Latin American poetry. Some of the Latin American avant-garde figures have been widely translated and are well known, even canonical figures now, on an international level. Is there today in Chile and Latin America what you would call an "avant-garde," poetic movements beyond the official, institutional margins? Or has the "vanguard" by now become, as it more or less has in the United States and Europe, "domesticated": institutionalized and legitimated into a literary party that has pretty much made its peace with the Academy and High Culture? So, is the vanguardist idea still relevant to current Latin American poets? And if so, where could we be looking to find the most vibrant examples of the radical and New in Latin American poetry? Could you name some poets, groups, journals, publishing houses of importance in this regard?

AA: Sí, sí: nombrar nombres e incluso anónimos (nombres), de cierto, if the vanguardist idea is still relevant to current Latin American poets. ¿Lo es aún? Antes de comenzar a responder esta pregunta –a todas luces relevante, por más que identificar la vanguardist "idea" pudiese ser un ejercicio algo espectral— tendríamos tal vez que comenzar por suspender la figura del "informante nativo", tan cara a la etnología o a lo que algunos han dado en llamar etnopoética: existiría un lugar o configuración cultural, normalmente exótica y remota, de la cual podría dar cuenta fidedignamente alguien que tiene un acceso privilegiado a ella por ser parte de ella... Pero aparte de que alguien que es parte de una totalidad esté en condiciones de hablar de la totalidad, y hablar fidedigna, justamente, parece desde ya problemático, la cosa se complica cuando nos preguntamos por el lugar en cuestión, para el caso, "América Latina". La "idea" y el nombre mismo de *América Latina* es invención reciente, de mediados del siglo XIX, que sólo viene a consagrarse internacionalmente al entrar en el reparto geopolítico de Naciones Unidas, tras la Segunda Guerra mundial: *América Latina y el Caribe* llama las NNUU a lo que, en el llamado continente americano, no es Estados Unidos ni Canadá. Ahora bien, América Latina desde sus inicios no es tanto un descriptor geográfico o geopolítico, sino antes bien un proyecto 'cultural' moderno, que tanto busca desprenderse de la referencia matriz hispánica predominante hasta comienzos del siglo XIX (Indias Occidentales o América Española, o, más tarde, Hispanoamérica), como de la influencia anglosajona (*America*, en el sentido estadunidense).

Así, los "poetas latinoamericanos" se inscriben *en* y responden *a* tal proyecto, tal impronta. Rubén Darío habla ya en 1905, y precisamente en contraposición a Estados Unidos, de la América [Latina] *que tiene sangre indígena, / que aún reza a Jesucristo y aún habla en español* ("A Rooselvelt"). Más allá de todas sus modulaciones y variedades, lo "latino" de América Latina se habrá definido por la lengua española, o, en el mejor de los casos, castellana y portuguesa... en tierras "americanas". Incluso escritores recientes y tan locamente interesantes como Patricio Marchant (1939-1990), traductor temprano de Derrida y, a su modo, de Heidegger, habrá planteado que América Latina "se habla" en castellano –si bien en un castellano latinoamericano, distinto, y no sólo lingüísticamente, del castellano español, tal como lo cree advertir en la poesía de Pablo Neruda y de

Gabriela Mistral (cf. *Escritura y temblor*, textos póstumos, 2001). Es decir, aun reconociendo en algunos casos la "sangre indígena" en juego, América Latina, su "idea" y proyección, habrá remarcado la borradura sino la franca expulsión de las llamadas "lenguas indígenas", sus escrituras en sentido amplio, y asimismo las escrituras y tradiciones "afroamericanas". Esta complicación vuelve justamente complicado hablar hoy sin más de América Latina, o de "Latin American poetry". Entre otros, Silviano Santiago ha subrayado la continuidad de todo esto con la violencia de la Conquista: "Evitar o bilingüismo [el más de una lengua], significa evitar o pluralismo religioso e significa também impor o poder colonialista. Na álgebra do conquistador, a unidade é a única medida que conta. Um só Deus, um só Rei, uma só Língua: o verdadeiro Deus, o verdadeiro Rei, a verdadeira Língua" (en *Uma literatura nos trópicos*, 1978). Eso "es" y "ha sido" América Latina. Queda, tal vez, otra América Latina por venir –y/u otros nombres y escrituras, desde ya.

Para decirlo brevemente: lo más nuevo en la escritura "latinoamericana" hoy por hoy tal vez es lo más viejo: el llamado "Manuscrito de Huarochirí" (texto en quechua, de autor anónimo, circa 1600), el *Primer nueva corónica* de Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615), la *Relación de antigüedades* de Pachakuti Yamqui Salqamaywa (circa 1600), el *Atau Wallpaj p'uchukakuyninpa wankan* (anónimo, en quechua, sin data), para nombrar sólo algunos y únicamente de la llamada área andina. Es decir, texto obturados por siglos del proyecto conquistador y civilizador (incluida su faz moderna y progresista, incluso vanguardista), que recién en el siglo XX comienzan a "descubrirse", a leerse y a apreciarse. Probablemente la llamada vanguardia latinoamericana o sudamericana, salvo escasas excepciones (Gamaliel Churata, en Puno, La Paz y Potosí, y J. M. Arguedas, en Abancay y Lima, entre otros) ni siquiera alcanzó a enterarse de ellos. Ni Neruda ni Borges ni Huidobro ni Vallejo los habrán leído (muchos de dichos textos sólo se publicarían en la segunda mitad del s. XX). Tampoco Gabriela Mistral, Guimarães Rosa o Jaime Saenz, aunque estos últimos sean difícilmente afiliables a las vanguardias. Ni siquiera Nicanor Parra, más cercano a Shakespeare (ha traducido sabrosamente *El rey Lear*, bastante mejor que las desabridas traducciones shakesperianas de Neruda; cf. su *Romeo y Julieta*) que interesado en tales escrituras "anómalas", a ratos inclasificables, en lenguas no europeas y/o en más de una lengua, o en

lenguas monstruosas sino imposibles, donde las aporías del traducir se vuelven patente a cada vuelta de frase... No se trata, "naturalmente", de reiterar aquí el ideografema del buen salvaje, ni el de la mistificación de la otredad sin más, ni postular un poscolonialismo ideo-lógico, ni de echar simplemente por la borda la impronta de la tradición literaria (occidental), ni tampoco de intentar una especie de "fuite en arrière" ante las interpelaciones más evidentes del "presente" (sociológicas, tecnológicas y ecológicas, por caso). Se trata nomás de escribir, de responder o dejar corresponder a *lo que (nos) toca* —y el *acontecimiento*, como viene subrayado en algún pasaje de *Poetry...*, dice precisamente eso: un acontecimiento se da de entrada, en buen romance, en tanto *a/con/tingire*, con raíz i.-e. *tag-*, 'tocar', 'con-tactar': *lo que toca*, lo que toca en suerte o gracia).

Una palabra más, antes de detener provisoriamente esta suerte de respuesta que ya se prolonga más de la cuenta. A veces, sólo a veces, creo que lo que le interesa explorar o intervenir a ese informante nativo que a ratos crees ver en mí (tómalo si quieres como confesiones impías de un des/informante alternativo), antes que una escritura latinoamericana "radical", "nueva" o "experimental", es una escritura americana (o, mejor, ~~americana~~) *a secas*. A secas, con toda la inadministrabilidad que acarrea la expresión "escrituras americanas". Pues *escrituras americanas* puede referir, por de pronto, a las escrituras no occidentales inscritas o inscribiéndose por estos pagos (manteniendo, entonces, aun un vínculo entre escritura y territorio, una tan cierta como incierta geo-grafía), tal las escrituras en náhuatl de Nezahualcóyotl, príncipe de Texcoco, o las escrituras en piedra de Tiwanaku o Machu Picchu, o los *kuel* o montículos mapuches. Pero escrituras americanas puede remitir también, lo habrás ya entrevisto, a las "*american writings*", es decir, a las inscripciones (poéticas o no tanto) estadunidenses, tan provincianas como globales o en vías de globalización, más o menos autoproyectivas y/o imperiales, por lo cual no debieran dejar indiferente a ningún habitante del susodicho globo. Como entenderás, ambas remisiones parecen incompatibles –lo no occidental (americano) y lo occidental dominante (americano)—y, sin embargo, tal vez, subrayo el *tal vez*, hasta cierto punto al menos, a ratos se copertenezcan. Y aun hay al menos otra remisión de *escrituras americanas* a explorar: aquella que no olvida justamente al explorador, las escrituras exploratorias de Americo Vespucio y su legado, en italiano, entonces, en las cuales vuelve, de manera singular sin

duda, todo el legado latino y, acaso, incipientemente, aquello que se habrá llamado la "latinmundialización", incluida "Latinoamérica" –para subrayar que la tan cacareada globalización no es ni jamás habrá sido una, una única, total, sino de entrada repartida, más de una. Por demás, la "estadunificación" del mundo, a ojos vista, no habría que confundirla con su "norteamericanización". Los poemas "norteamericanos" más arrojados y acaso más decisivos que se escriben *hoy por hoy* están siendo escritos también en... gallego. ¿Ya leíste *O Cadoiro*, de Erin?

KJ: I don't think you mean this in the sense of an "Ethnopoetics," or at least not as the concept tends to be bandied about in the North. You raised the term earlier. You're familiar with Jerome Rothenberg. In fact, he recently spent some time in Chile with Parra and Zurita—there was a big feature in BOMB Magazine... So we have "our" notion of Ethnopoetics already, and I wonder if you could talk some more about that project, in regards its values and assumptions, and inasmuch as its place of origin, if you'll pardon that fraught term, is in Empire. I'm not sure I'm making sense. But this stuff regarding translation and the "other" can get complicated! Let me put it this way: How would you feel about getting Ethnopoeticized in an anthology up here? I don't ask the question lightly, for your work is, to some important extent, about putting US under the ethnographic scope. But nothing can stop US from doing it to you, and I'm sure we will. We've already begun...

AA: In the sense of an Ethnopetics? No, no exactamente. O mejor dicho: para nada. No hay etnopoética(s), no hay poema étnicamente clausurado (tal vez haya etnoliteratura, cf. Bloom y su "Canon occidental", tal vez; mas no etno-poética); si hay poema, interrupción hay de pertenencias (étnicas, entre otras), diferimiento de toda ilusión de propiedad. Puedes leerlo, singularmente marcado, de cierto, en *El meridiano* de Celan. Por supuesto, conozco algunos textos de Jerome Rothenberg; incluso, a pesar de que veramente *I don't speak English*, traslapé hace algún tiempo un textil suyo, *Coqboy* (que es, en parte, la historia de un judío que no habla bien inglés en el Far West):

> Rocín montado vine a dar
> marrán inter indieras

qué estoy faciendo en tan estrannio sitio
con tal estrannia gente con t al es t r annios ojo s...

Cuando Rothenberg estuvo en Santiago de Chile, hace algunos años, tuvo la deferencia de pasar a visitarme junto a Cecilia Vicuña. Tengo el mejor de los recuerdos de él; de hecho, compartimos algunas semanas después una lectura de poesía en Buenos Aires, junto a Reynaldo Jiménez. Pero cuando explícitamente hablamos de "etnopoética", o, más precisamente, cuando intenté hacerlo con él, la cosa abruptamente no prosperó. *Pas* de ethnopoétique, entonces, ahora. Lo cual, obviamente, no quiere decir que las llamadas marcas de pertenencia de toda laya (étnicas, de género, de estado-nación, etc.) no sean eventualmente relevantes para cada poema cada vez...

KJ: Andrés, I have to ask you about this "poesía a secas." By the phrase—and your highlighting of *lo novedoso* in colonial-era indigenous texts seems to hint at it—do you mean that poetic value has little to do with aesthetic "progress"? That the teleological vision of "advance" fueling the avant-garde idea ("You can't say it that way anymore") is chimerical? Because that teleological sense sure lurks here, en nuestro clima...

AA: The "poetic value"? Has little or nothing to do with aesthetic "progress"? Poco o nada, o, al contrario, todo (si es que no interrogamos algo así como la idea o teoría del valor en poesía); nada de veras marcante, irrumpiente o decisivo – y no fuera necesario remitir aquí otra vez a *El meridiano* de Celan o al *Shibboleth* de Derrida ni muy menos al pensamiento de la *Dichtung* en Heidegger (cf. "Progreso, regreso y a otro hueso", in *Poetry*...). Dicho esto, is the "avant-garde" –the modern, si prefieres– expression an homogeneous (te(le)ological) expression? Sólo si reducimos el envión vanguardista a una mera idea o teoría, borrando de un plumazo su escritura... Ni *Trilce* ni *Katatay* (Arguedas) ni incluso el *Atau Wallpaj p'uchukakuyninpa wankan*, escrituras indispensables, entre otras, hoy, y a la vez impensables sin su roce con la "avant-garde expression", fueran meras ideas, teorías, *chimeras*...

KJ: Two poets that I've had some fascination for, both Chilean, major figures in Latin American poetry, but both so far virtually unknown here: the endlessly

mysterious Omar Cáceres, murdered in 1936, who may or may not have been a stand-in for Vicente Huidobro, or Pablo de Rokha, or for both. But that's a longer story. I want to ask you about the other one, the legendary Juan Luis Martínez, who died just a few years ago, renowned now as one of the great avant-garde figures of the Southern Cone. What about him, his place and importance, to you and recent others? His most famous, or infamous work, "La poesía chilena," whether a poem or a book or a sculpture or an urn, I'm not sure what to call it, was some kind of large box filled with dirt, in which was buried all manner of curio and detritus? It caused something of a commotion down there, as I understand.

AA: ¿What about..., dices? Martínez, como tal vez sabes, publicó en vida *La nueva novela* (1977, 1985) y *La poesía chilena* (1978), ambas en autoedición, o, más precisamente, bajo un sello creado por él mismo, "Archivo", en vista del rechazo de las editoriales establecidas de la época. Póstumamente habrán aparecido textos dispersos y/o borradores editados por terceros, tanto discursivos como predominantemente visuales: *Poemas del otro* (2003) y *Aproximación del Principio de Incertidumbre a un proyecto poético* (2010). *La poesía chilena* es una especie de pequeña caja con aires de ataúd, con una serie de hojas y materiales en su interior (incluyendo una bolsita con "Tierra del Valle Central de Chile"), y un conjunto de certificados oficiales de defunción: de Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, Pablo de Rokha y Vicente Huidobro, más el de su padre, Luis G. Martínez Villablanca. Por su radical puesta en cuestión de la preeminencia del sujeto (lírico o no tanto, paródico o no tanto, etc.), tan presente en los cuatro poetas inscritos en su necro-antología, su escritura se sustraería de la "tradición moderna" (Octavio Paz). Por su nula conexión o atención a tradiciones de escritura no occidentales americanas, perpetúa el enclaustramiento de cierta poesía moderna latinoamericana. Es plausible que no haya tenido ni noticias de la monstruosa obra de Guamán Poma de Ayala, uno de los "poetas visuales" quechuas más decisivos y tempranos (pero esto no lo podría asegurar: a Juan Luis Martínez sólo lo vine a 'conocer' el día de su funeral, en el cementerio del cerro Cárcel, en Valparaíso). Y sí, de punta a cabo, de *La nueva novela* a *Aproximación del Principio de Incertidumbre* Arthur Rimbaud figura la figura del poeta (no el "yo", entonces, quien entre tanto se habrá desvanecido, sino, precisamente, la figura: (re)nombre pero también dibujo,

contorno, traza) por antonomasia. Huelga decir que hasta ahora ningún pasaje de *La poesía chilena* ha sido incluido en alguna antología de "poesía chilena", situación tan injusta como risible, por inoperante.

KJ: Martínez's box makes me think of the latest au courant thing here, which goes by the name of Conceptual Poetry—I mean in that Martínez reminds me how "post" U.S. notions of poetic conceptualism really are. Anyway, you referred earlier to Darío and Huidobro... You know, Bolaño has a kind of thought experiment in *Amulet*, where via his Uruguayan protagonist, Auxilio Lacouture, he/she wonders what would have happened to the Vanguardia if Darío had lived long enough for Huidobro to have known him, as Pound knew Yeats. I don't know if you want to comment on that: It might have made the Latin American avant-garde, what, more "classical"? Anyway, I am going to press you on my earlier question. Who are some "current" writers, let's say living and untranslated, to give a frame, who interest you most right now in Latin America? To frame it down even a bit more for our "foreign" convenience: If you were to write down a dozen names of living, untranslated poets who you feel must be translated *now* into English, what would your list be? Here is my understanding in asking the question: If I asked you again, you'd probably give me a different list! I know that the request puts you on the spot. Very well, then (as Whitman somewhat put it), my question puts you on the spot. But we have hunger here, and we are more or less lost. Please just make a first pointing. Translators are listening. Una lista nos lleva a otras...

AA: ¿A qué insistir en los "living" e intraducidas/os poetas? ¿Y sobre todo cómo entender, cómo traducir, justamente, "living poets"? ¿Poetas vivos? ¿De qué viveza o vivez estamos hablando...? ¿No fuiste tú quien, ante la decisión de Rothenberg & Joris, de apartar los textos de Yasusada de *Poems for the Millennium*, al anoticiarse de que no habrá habido ningún Araki Yasusada "vivo", le lanzaste la pregunta (más o menos) de si lo que le decidía eran poemas o antes bien biografías? Anyway, intentemos una lista de algunos/as vivos/as no exactamente, con todo, de "Latin America", sino, leve desplazamiento, de Ladinoamérica alias América Ladina. Del nombre o noción de América Ladina han escrito no pocos (Pablo Oyarzún, mañudo escritor de lujo, y Germán Arciniegas,

entre otros); en ella se anudarían, aunque nunca del todo, al menos tres hilos: lo ladino como exposición a la experiencia de más de una lengua y a los eventos de traducción (ladino era sinónimo de traductor en la frontera castellano-mora); lo ladino luego como lo más o menos sagaz y algo mañudo (precisamente por ese "moverse" entre lenguas); lo ladino, en fin, como aquello que caracteriza la condición de escritor/a reciente (y así se habrá hablado, tras la Conquista, de "indios ladinos", para indicar a quienes habían aprendido a leer y a escribir, alfabéticamente hablando).

Como ves, la noción y/o el nombre de América Ladina o Ladinoamérica carece de anclaje territorial e institucional (salvo las marcas en la lengua); no se opone por demás a la América anglosajona como, desde sus inicios, lo habrá hecho América Latina. Más de uno dirá que tal América (ladina) no existe. Pero de hecho hay varios/as poetas ladinoamericanos/as que ya han sido mencionados/das en esta conversación. Naturalmente, la lista la encabezas tú, en especial por el poema *Mission* de *Lyric Poetry after Auschwitz* (y, por supuesto, por tu copyright de *Doubled Flowering*) junto a Jerome Rothenberg, por de pronto por *Coqboy* y, claro, por su pasión pluritraductora. Aunque antes de ustedes habré señalado *O Cadoiro* de Erin Mouré, y ahora no he dejar de mencionar sus *Littles Theatres*, particularmente la sección titulada: *The first story of Latin (os araos):* "I only speak latin". Por caso:

para mí tu lengua es casi como latín,
has hombro y sombra
tan símil

en mi latín es *shoulder* y *shadow*
¿puedes entrever cómo opera?

estoy por aprender tu lengua
miolo y ollo
miga y ojo

uy, mejor me voy con calma
antes que se me le escurra como *auga*

ollomol moi mollado
oficio fio dos fieis
afiador

(*Mergullada*; mi traslucine).

Podría hablarte también del muy ladinoamericano poema *The Tinajera Notebooks*, de Forrest Gander. ¡O incluso del "Wittgenstein" de Michel Palmer...! Si eso lo sazonamos con *Mar paraguayo*, de Wilson Bueno (poeta vivísimo, asesinado hace un par de años en su casa de Curitiba, Paraná); con *Alcoólicas*, de Hilda Hilst, alucinógena escritora fallecida también ha poco; y con Bustriazo Ortíz en persona (ladinoamericano poeta acaso *par excellence*, muerto recientemente en Santa Rosa de La Pampa, Argentina). Échesele a gusto algunas pizcas de *la eme*, de Guillermo Daghero; de *Nada de nadie*, de Silvia Guerra; de *La bandera de Chile* y de *Tatuaje*, de Elvira Hernández y Marina Arrate respectivamente; de *Plexo*, de Reynaldo Jiménez; de *El cóncavo privilegio de la desmemoria*, de Cé Mendizábal; de *Centopéia*, de Glauco Mattoso; del guaraní cristalino de Susy Delgado; de *Jaguar azul*, de Jorge Campero; del *Paqhar Kirki, t'ikha takiy*, de Elvira Espejo (en quechua y aymara); y/o de *Cythna en red*, de Román Antopolsky... (Me consta que Lionel Lienlaf, Juan Luis Huenún, Graciela Huinao, Elikura Chihueilaf, Odi González, Juan Antonio Mazotti y Régis Bonvicino han sido ya al inglés en parte traducidos; también Raúl Zurita, Washington Cucurto, Cecilia Vicuña, José Kozer, Paulo Leminski y el propio Juan Luis Martínez). La lista, con todo, jamás estará lista, de cierto, porque no es representativa de la escritura ladinoamericana tal como un lote de cráteres no hace la superficie de la luna ni un puñado de libélulas o estrellas errantes las luces del firmamento en una noche sin luna. Si a ello le añadimos la enorme "cuestión" de la anonimia y/o efecto de anonimación (es el caso del *Atau Wallpaj p'uchukakuyninpa wankan*, como hemos recordado, y no sólo un "motivo" mallarmeano), ya del texto, ya de su autor/a, no es enteramente improbable que los nombres no nombrados en esa lista estén siendo ahí subrayados de manera aun más explícita.

¿Y cómo no incluir aquí al muy ladino Lautréamont, cuyos *Cantos de Maldoror* vienen por demás a ratos interceptados por la sintaxis rioplatense castellana?

¿O *Garde-manche hypocrite*, del muy querido y mañudo Philippe Beck, vecino de Nantes, o los *Cinepoèmes* de Pierre Alferi y las *Hordas de escritura* de la vecina de Lalín, Chus Pato? Dicho esto, si las/los poetas mencionados podrían legítimamente ser considerados tal vez como escritoras/es experimentales, en cuanto a que sus traslucines y poemas están abiertos a lo que (les/nos) toca, no lo son en el sentido de lo experimental que suele campear: formalismos de toda laya o fascinación por las viejonuevas técnicas y tecnologías en cuanto tales.

KJ: Well, I think I've never felt stranger. Or more honored: to be called a Ladino poet... Some of these names are unfamiliar, and I like to think of myself as relatively in tune with new poetries down your way. But Jiménez, Daghero, Delgado, Antopolsky: time to entablar some serious work on them, for sure. It's good to see the great Guerra brilliantly rendered lately by Gillian Brassil and Alex Verdolini.

Let's see: You know that I grew up in Latin America, went back to work there three times, twice as a literacy teacher with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, fought there with the militia in 1983 against the Contras, did a book in translation on the Talleres de Poesía, and published a series of interviews with FSLN leaders, in the now-defunct Mexican daily *uno más uno*, on the topic of revolutionary culture, one of which (with Ernesto Cardenal) made Octavio Paz blow his top, thus sparking a big debate about the politics of culture in the Sandinista revolution. So I have an interest in that topic and wanted to ask you about "political poetry," which in Latin America has a big, heavy legacy. Apologies for the impossible question, but where do you stand on the matter of *poesía comprometida*— Cardenal, Dalton, or Neruda, for notable exemplars. Could you, under particular circumstances, see yourself writing such directly referential, populist verse?

AA: Oye, estás a ratos como los papas, pidiendo perdón tras perdón (Galileo, la pedofilia, etc.) y de paso, de algún modo, irónicamente rentabilizándolos. De ahí que, a diferencia de lo que escribiera Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe en *La poésie comme expérience*, me huele que Celan jamás esperó que Heidegger pidiera perdón por su circunstancial connivencia con el nacional-socialismo. ¿Poesía y política, dices? ¡Pero cuándo no! ¿Y cada vez jugándose también "en" el poema! Lo cual, otra vez, implica no reducir la política o la politicidad (del estar, del actuar, de la lectoescritura, etc.) única o privilegiadamente a la escena nacional

y/o estado-nacional (o a su contraparte global) ni tampoco negar de cuajo la politicidad diferencial de tales "escenas". Por decir –y tú podrás calibrar cuán "¿referencial?" o "¿populista?" (te) suena este pasaje de Æ–, con una pizca de *jaqi aru* alias lengua aymara:

yaqha layqa phichhitanka

violeta parra manuscribió en bolivia
gracias a la vida — el sesenta y seis
pa' marcar territorio, pa' que ninguna
changuita le levantara al gringo favre

y en las multitudes al hombre que yo amo
y la voz tan tierna de mi bienamado
y la casa tuya, tu calle, tu patio
cuando miro al fondo de tus ojos claros

violeta parra escribió en la peña nayra
gracias a la vida — el sesenta y seis
y de la paz se trajo el revólver tigre
que acabó con todo a las seis de la tarde

¿cómo volver de la paz y no arrasar?
¿cómo no volver a chuqiyapu marka?
¿cómo no domar al tigre ni marcar
territorios y vivir para cantarla?

¿el canto de ustedes, layqa phichhitanka
que es el mismo canto? kunats larch'ukista
¿y el canto de todos, mä lurawix tu-
putaw, que es mi propio canto, sasaw si?

pa' ir ya traduciendo, pa' ir ya recalando
la breva: atesta un zampoñero de marka
en la carpa de la reina en los sesenta
que cuando alguien la llamaba respondía
mar para bolivia, hay sí, violeta parra

gracias a la vida, layqa phichhitanka
layqa phichhitanka, kunats larch'ukista

KJ: Ha! I love saying perdón. It's an affectation that no doubt comes from a long career in poetry of having lots to be sorry about. So I apologize for asking forgiveness so much in this interview, my dear Ajens. The thing is, I think you're dodging my question a bit. Let me put it this way: Let's say there's something akin another 1973 situation in Chile, and I see things are beginning to "hop" a bit down your way in that regard. What's an "avant" poet to do, poetically speaking, cuando las cosas se calientan?

AA: Dejemos venir tal vez otros tonos, otros nombres... Es que esta figura del "avant poet" o del poeta experimental (con las dichas salvedades del caso: apertura a la acontecimentalidad, a los que (nos) toca, al "monstruo" si quieres, con lo cual, incluso los poetas provenzales acaso habrán sido más experimentales que muchos que vociferan hoy en tanto experimentales) huele... un poco mal. Hablemos mejor de escritores/as a secas. (¿Cómo traslucir *a secas*?). Cuando las cosas se calientan... ¿Pero acaso las cosas, en tanto mantengamos la apertura a lo que (nos) toca, no están a su modo cada vez "calientes"? Entonces: what's a writer *a secas* to do, poetically speaking, cuando las cosas se calientan? ¿Simplemente *follar*, como escucho que diría en mí algún quijotesco precursor? Pero, claro, al evocar esa data que es "1973" en Chile, tú pareces querer subrayar algo así como una calentura histórica, una histórica monstruosidad. Sin reabrir por ahora la enorme cuestión de la relación entre escritura a secas e Historia (si una funda a la otra o es tributaria de ella, etc.) y sin tampoco olvidar que no hay receta posible ante la singular monstruosidad del acontecer, si hay tal, diría que, cuando las cosas se calientan, cabe, pues: escribir, *just that* (pero la escritura a

secas no es sólo discursiva ni menos simplemente constativa o notarial; hay cuerpos, "acciones", performatividad, etc. Por demás, la escritura nunca viene a ser completamente mía o de algún yo-yo trascendental; cada vez se escribe con otros, con otras escrituras).

KJ: Aha. Well, in regards writing with others and other writings— Translation/Translucination: You know, in the past few years a number of younger poets in the U.S. and UK have taken a great interest in translation from a conceptual, theoretical perspective. There is a developing current of poets, in fact, who base their work on the inherent problematic of translation, and they are producing some extremely vital work in hybrid modes—translation not as "faithful" record, but as a poetics of radical *traslucine*. The thing is, you and Erin Mouré were moving, collaboratively, within this territory a number of years earlier, and I wouldn't be surprised if this had some impact here in that regard—though you know poets: they don't necessarily like to acknowledge precursors. So here is an unfairly broad question: What are the ethics of translation to you?

AA: Poets don't like to acknowledge precursors? What ethics of translation? Demorémonos un instante en la asombrosa concatenación —¿azarosa?— de ambas preguntas-frases. Como si el reconocimiento de "precursores" y alguna ética de traducción fueran de algún modo de la mano. Como si a los/las poetas que no les gusta reconocer precursores/as fueran los/las mismos/as "poetas" que no les gusta traducir, que incluso estiman la traducción una escritura derivada, no-original sino servil; poetas-Edipos que insisten en matar el "original" para ocupar más expeditamente su lugar –y mientras más lo aniquilan, más suscitan su retorno espectral. Todo eso es bien comprensible en el llamado horizonte romántico (y/o creacionista), que presupone un origen puro y la mayor de las veces un absoluto creador. Pero. Desde el momento en que toda escritura, toda traza significante mínimamente legible, aun en su eventual ilegibilidad, conlleva una in/cierta reiteración y, entonces, un ~~origen~~ desde ya repartido, el alcance de la llamada escritura original, sin desaparecer del todo, se vuelve a ratos indistinguible de la traducción original. Si reitero todo esto, n'est-ce pas, es porque "esto" remueve de pies a cabezas la escena y la figura del poeta aborrecedor de precursores: si el retorno (inidéntico) se da como la posibilidad misma del poema, los/las poetas,

lejos de intentar borrar o aniquilar antecedentes, probablemente tiendan a multiplicar el reconocimiento de precursores, traduciéndose al paso ellas / ellos mismos / as. ¿De qué hablamos, pero, cuándo hablamos de "precursores"? Dímelo tú. ¿Yo? Bueno, como sea; si en Ladionamérica, ese lugar sin lugar que convocas, un poeta dice "tengo muchos precursores" o "estoy lleno de precursores", probablemente termine preso o pasando un mal rato en un cuartel policial. Salvo expresa autorización de las autoridades estado-nacionales correspondientes, no se puede tener muchos precursores y menos en casa, visto que los aludidos son, proverbialmente, elementos indispensables para la alquimia de la hoja de coca en cocaína. ¿Insinúas que la cuestión de las drogas, y de la cocaína en particular, atraviesa de parte a parte el corpus poético ladinoamericano? No lo diría así, de cierto, no exactamente así; el viejo y nuevo *pharmakon* "griego" (de la otra Grecia como de "la nuestra", *bien entendu*), no sólo se da a traducir, recuerda, por "droga". Pero, a ver, dime, ¿a dónde quieres llegar? ¿Yo? ¡Quién más! A la pregunta, pues: What ethics of translation? Dicho telegráficamente: no tengo una ética de traducción (si por ética vamos a entender, provisionalmente: ley, referencia o criterio de decisión) sino al menos más de una; a menudo entran en conflicto y a duras penas logran, si logran, coyunturales concordancias. Más de una: una quiere dejarse dictar la ley de la traducción por el texto singular en traducción, y en el fondo espera que el otro (texto) le proporcione la susodicha ética; otra difiere permanentemente el momento de la ley, sin transgredirla ni confirmarla entonces, apostando a traducir / se antes de la ley. ¿Un ejemplo? ¿Otro más?

KJ: Dammit, Andrés Ajens! I remember in Santiago, at the bar next to that hotel, in front of a bunch of writers, you raised a toast to me: "To Kent Johnson, the greatest living poet of Freeport, Illinois, USA." Now, with your last answer and its admonitions, my cultural capital will be trash even in Freeport. Well, I can laugh at myself. I'm pretty good at it, actually.

Well, then, let's pretend I'm a very famous U.S. poet (so famous I even have a life-sized portrait of myself displayed on the bedroom closet door of Neruda's home in Valparaíso. I have a short beard and a cocked hat; I'm in my prime, "one of the roughs"). And in my poetry I celebrate "American" exceptionalism, and I do so to the point where I celebrate, in passages, the conquest of other

American lands, namely those of Mexico, no matter what the price, for surely this is a civilizing mission. Let's say I do so in such a way that a sublimated racism pours out the pores of my King James Bible prosody. I am not the worst of my kind, for my Modernist poetic children, in fact, are even more visceral than I in their racism and imperial presumptuousness. So: Can you forgive me and my children? Can you read our poetry and value it just as much as if our hearts had been pure? I anticipate you saying something like, Well, if poets only had pure hearts there wouldn't be much poetry. But I'm talking about something a bit more—the more being a fairly deep strain of superior regard in the genes of most of our Modernism. Any chance you folks can make your peace with that? *We* have. And of course we apologize...

AA: ¿Performance, retórica y / o lógica del perdón otra vez? (Otra vez → la lectura de *Todtnauberg*, que, recordarás –lo recuerda Marjorie Perloff por ahí—, traduce en parte *Toute-Neuve*, enteramente nueva, palabra y / o escritura). Lo mismo con respecto a "our poetry"; → lo dicho acerca de "our America(s)". Anyway, una palabra más acerca de "me" y "my children". Singularmente *perdonar* y *forgive* nos hablan de un dar perdurable, insistente; lo dado entra en circulación persistentemente, alimentando incesantemente la máquina sacrificial... Como lo subraya Jacques el Destripador en *La falsa moneda y otras prosas* (sic), desde que el don comparece como tal, no hay tal – desde que algo así como un dar, si hay tal, ha de sobrevenir en asimetría irreductible, ha de sustraerse a toda circulación y / o devolución (si el don es don y no simple intercambio). O, dicho de otro modo, no se trataría de que chilenos y chilenas le pidamos perdón al pueblo boliviano (o, en cuanto recientemente declarado Estado Plurinacional, a las 36 naciones que conviven en dicho Estado); puede hacerse, por supuesto, tal vez gente de "buena fe" lo haga singular o compulsivamente en el futuro, pero posiblemente nada decisivo o relevante ocurra o pase con ello. Simplemente, si de algo se trata *tal* vez, ésta: de comenzar a desmontar los naturalizados automatismos o maquinaciones que hicieron posible esa (guerra de) Conquista, muchas de las cuales permanecen intocadas, y no sólo entre chilenos y chilenas o entre "americanos / as", claro está. O, si prefieres, menos culperío y más disonancia con el "orden" impuesto, más incalculable res-ponsabilidad...

KJ: Para terminar, amigo Ajens, ¿Unpublished works?

AA: Æ, con inéditos de *Quase Flanders, Quase Extremadura*, de la *Nueva Corónica*, de *Trilce* y de *La vida de Dominguito* entreverados, entre otros . Y un par de cinéticos traslucines: *Cobra Norato*, de Raul Bopp, verdura del festín "antropofágico", y el *Cantar delfín, de Atahualpa*, a tres manos con Diether Flores Chumacero, escritor potosino; del *Atau Wallpaj p'uchukakuyninpa wankan*, alias Manuscrito de Chayanta.

ANDRÉS AJENS

ONCE POEMAS

23 DE SEPTIEMBRE

para pasar a la biblioteca *salir a la intemperie*
M. Urrutia

vadeando el estero de
córdoba
que se había crecido a fuer
de aguayo virgen, perla
del alto perú
y de cantorío tejido en
tre fronteras, entra
por la puerta sin puerta
una ráfaga, hoy, un
viento
de un país por venir
de vuelta: va
dean
do el estero
al solar del *primer*
poeta de la patria, acento
–y más,
tilde– de La perla
decantada de memoria
en algarrobo muerto
camino de Ongamira; otra
colágrima fluyendo arriba

aguayo en seco
mediagua aun, ab–ierta

en este **Times N**
ew Roman, en este colapso
nuestro, muerto o
este

en que ni la muerte es
segura, la
propia, en este T
iempo arriesgo

menos que un fraseo
tipo, más
que un término justo, tocayo su
yo: *Layu qucha*
sani unu (lo que sólo
Odi o, quién sabe, Warak'a
honda tan trágica, traduce/n); en este tiempo

en que ni la muerte es
segura, ni e[illegible]a
sacrifica con todo el sacrificio – acarreada
al papel (no habiendo víctima
sin piel), a la pantalla, a la pared
a la conciencia, a lo legible, tiempo

abierto, inseguro, flor
de poema en flor, co
marca, hoy, guarda ilegible

A VARA

real
a monstrua
olha-se
no
espelho
alheio
e vê – o
que vê – a
vara
vê-se
vendo-se
ver-se
agora
variar
na gênese
generosa
doutra
vara
em
si
fora
de si,
doutra
monstrua
amorosa, a vara
porosa, a morosa

CUENTO | CORTO

The art of losing isn't hard to master.
Geography III, E. Bis-

una vez desvezada una frase, sí
laba a sílaba des
co y un tad
a – nomás un tipo, su
funicular carácter de fondo prototípico, queda
mimándola (el tipo: "no significa nada")

otra vez, vid a vid, otro sarmiento, misma mata:
"perder una é (ya perd una í) en el injerto
– prueba perder más rápido, perdiendo
más estrechamente todavía"

una y otra vez, *tal* vez: sustraída
–encriptado en el tiempo, el tipo– (al mito)
abre campo al campo de los desgajados d es
par r amad os n om br e s
salar e s a tópicos b ult os, i n s ep u lto s

y una – roza temporera desbroza
antes del antes del después y del ahora
de las solares imperdidas pérdidas — a un ar t e

POCO DESPUÉS DE SU PRIMER VIAJE a moscú, vallejo
le escribe a pablo abril el 18 del ídem (quasimment
sa lettre d'émail, d'un lot
de dents, évident): a medida
que vivo y que me enseña la vida (la letra – dice en subida
con sangre lenta), voy aclarándome ideas y
sentimientos de las cosas y de los hombres
de ~~américa~~;
me aparece hoy la necesidad de una gran cólera
y de un terrible impulso destructor; hay
que destruir y destruirse a sí mismo – y puesto que no hay voces
con quienes cantar, necesario es por lo menos unirse en apretado haz
de , y
reventar haciendo trizas todo cuanto
o está a nuestro alcance. y sobre todo: hay que
a sí mi~~x~~mo y, depués, lo demás; sin [ilegible]
no hay salud en la industriosa era del signo
bifacialítico: terrible!

saboreando ULYSSES en yacarta, neruda
quiere una y otra vez saberlo (hazme
el favor de conseguirme un ejemplar
de TRILCE), mas
la sazón del caso o caída (en cuyo prólogo
se habla de mí), lo habrá vuelto de golpe
inapetente: seco y espantoso
cruel y estéril; no veo qué objeto tenga
toda esta [j]oda
de indoamericano espectro (sic)

glacial aguayo, a un paso de
santiago, qasamarka, puedes
una y otra vez transombrarme
con nieve

en sazonante pasaje de la historia de la verdad
alias WARHAFTIGE HISTORIA, por vez primera
impresa en Marburgo, en 1567, Hans Staden
da a entender que dios es su editor – à la lettre: Gott
ist meyn nothelffer – y reiteradamente le da crédito
en total: Gott / der alles in allem ist. en otro
pasaje, menos marchante, más sabroso
el humano en desamparo alias narrador
le echa en cara a Kuimba'e Bebe, su tupí benecaptor
la infranimal costumbre de comerse al otro
escritor: si raramente un jaguar se come a otro
jaguar, muy menos un humano a otro
cómele la mano – saboreando los restos
de un dedo cordial, dicho Bebe retraza su
dicha al pasar: "yawara iché" [soy jaguar]

RUIN A S DE PACHAKAMAQ

layqueando
en lo agenciador del mundo
en ruinas – un poema l e y éndose mucho
después de su grafía

el oráculo resuena imperioso, hoy, en inglés
meridianamente incomprensible
do not throw toi
let paper on the floor
sobre todo en ruin a s

en lo esencial (que no hay), guaCa
y poema operan
¿económicamente?, ¿don
por don, potlatch de ocasión?

el espaciotiempo de la guaCa, pero (que
dicha sea de paso
pudiera ser el y aun lo guaCa, dado
quechuaymara en *wak'a*
generosidad no determina),
y del poema que no hay
se estira y/o se estrecha
allende su facturación en ruinas
aquende su artefacer
en sacrifacto asterisco, ahora
que rechipara en esta paz
de una sola línea
poema y guaCa desmárcanse
en tácita entreurdidura – jirón
de aguayo hollando
sin hallarse del todo, impagable
pago cinerario, don

de ande (aquende don
doña, guaCa, Ande

A

F[R]IC[C]IONA D OS...

two legs stand A, four together M
A, L. Zukosfsky

m m m mmmm
LA EME, *G. Daghero*

many people, [...] have been misled into thinking that, in terms of quoting L[ouis] Z[ukofsky] or C[elia] Z[ukofsky], they may do what they want, and do not have to worry about me. these people are then suddenly faced with the reality of an irascible, recalcitrant MOI, and are confronted with the very real prospect of years of work potentially down the tubes. therefore I wish to post an obvious "do not trespass" [*no pasarán*] sign where L[ouis] Z [ukofsky] aficionados may see it [oui, ouï, les parent-
hèses en crochet sont à MOI. A. A.] [...]

PZ

Hong Kong
Sept. 17, 2009

[1]

soy un poema brasilero
no sé lo que soy
sería 100% absurdo
si no supiera
que es perfectamente posible
ser sin saber
más aún: sería 101% absurdo
pretender a ciencia cierta saber
lo que un poema brasilero fuera
sabía acaso el sabiá
qué era cuando
una canción de exilio
le dio inmortalidad?
soy un poema brasilero, dice
no sé lo que soy
pro m es ab ierta, s in c ère

ENTRE LAS CARTAS PERDIDAS de descartes
hay una, c apital, a joachim des cartes
consejero de estado en rennes, su padre

en rapto de opacidad inaudita, el padre
de la moderna filosofía moteja de animal
sin alma a su propio impropio padre
anticipando su teoría del animal-máquina

carentes de espíritu, los animales son (y des
cartes menciona especialmente a monos
loros y urracas en su *discurso*) *des*
automates, ou machines mouvantes

el linde crítico entre máquina animada
y humano no fuera ahí sin más el habla
descartes imagina autómatas parlantes: es
la capacidad de responder, escribe, *au sens*

de tout ce qui se dira en sa présence ¿en
qué sentido? en el sentido de poder responder
al sentido. de todo. lo dicho. ¡en su presencia!
lo que escribiendo descartes dice, su envío vivo

y muerto, su infante automatía, a su padre
sans âme, *sans-cœur*, ante todo habrá sido
una carta à la *lettre* desaparecida
en que prácticamente vacila todo lindero

entre humano y no humano, fante e infante
deus ex machina y adeus ex ante; con esta carta
tanto pudiera apostarse que anuncia la *ent*
sprechung de algún maestro de alemania como

la critura *avant la lettre*, el indecidible
pirquerío de la otra orilla
~~americana~~ y *alea iacta est*, todos las cartas
a la hoguera; meridianas improbables

desarmadas, des c artes

OMAR PÉREZ

"ATHENS AND CRETE," FROM CUBANOLOGY

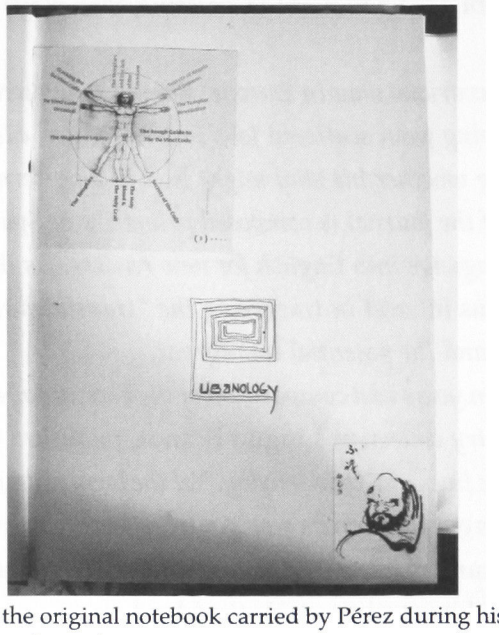
Translator's Note: *The following excerpt is taken from a book of days, "Cubanology," which Omar Pérez started in 2002 while living temporarily in Europe. His trip began as a short professional visit, then shifted into something less defined after Pérez fell in love with a woman named Christina, who plays an important role in the following selection.*

It was not a luxurious stay in Europe. Based in Amsterdam, Pérez sought many ways to eke out a living from scattered jobs in translation, editing, domestic work and childcare, wondering whether his stay might lead to long-term immigration to Europe (it did not). Much of the journal is composed primarily in Spanish, and my translation shifts this anchor language into English for new readers. As this excerpt demonstrates, Pérez took a conscious interest in traversing the "translated worlds" of the visitor, the temporary resident, and the potential immigrant.

These European years and composition of the book of days would serve as predecessors to the 2009 poetry collection Lingua Franca, *published by Ediciones UNIÓN in Havana, where Pérez lives and works today. Yet the book of days is more than a source of raw material. It plays out through its own genre, reflecting its author's journeys through language and literature, work, Zen practice, and conversations with the many people and places that drew his interest outside the island.*

Pérez experimented with multilingualism throughout the pages of his notebook. Indeed, the flexibility of this genre allowed him to blend elements of system with a celebratory anarchy in his use of languages. Sometimes terms are marked as foreign, italicized, defined, contextualized. Elsewhere he presented them without any of these signals to the reader. His uses of English offer another complication throughout the work; Pérez was already an accomplished literary translator before his journey, and he encountered English in many new forms during his European travels. For example, he frequently spoke English with his girlfriend Christina, his fellow Buddhists, and other people he met in several nations—especially in Holland, where he had spent significant time before traveling to Greece with Christina. These Englishes make their way into his writing. There is no right way, then, to create an overall system for presenting this text in English translation: the original (be it handwritten or typed) both uses and defies varieties of categorization. Here I retain Pérez' use of Greek as it appears in the original book of days. I've also left traces of other multilingualisms here, including wordplay in a poem, although his English-language gestures no longer stand out from the rest.

This excerpt deals with his visit to Christina's family in Greece, one of the many potential homes Pérez found during his odyssey. —KD



Detail from the original notebook carried by Pérez during his travels.
Photographs taken in the author's Havana apartment, May 2010, by Kristin Dykstra.

Olympic Airways. Tuesday 5 July, 2005. 3.5 hours to travel from Amsterdam.

Wednesday 6: Wake up in Athína, Ayía Paraskeví, 10 a.m. Breakfast. Cemetery. Oikos Karpousilos, to visit the remains of the Karpousilos family, Christina's ancestors. Cemetery located in Dimos Vyronos, or Byron's neighborhood. In Greece many places bear his name, and until recently, a brand of cigarettes too. *O Lordos Vyronos* died of fever in Misolonghi as he insisted, in vain, on the organization of a small Independence army to fight against the Turks. His death nonetheless served to attract attention from other nations and European groups. This, they say, led in the long term to the British naval presence in Greek waters and the confrontation, said to be chance, with the Turkish fleet, which was left in a bad way, weakening their dominion and facilitating a gradual liberation. Thus the veneration of the romantic and frustrated warrior.

4 p.m. Visit to the priest. Babas Kiprianos and two devotees who live with him. The Babas takes Christina's hand, caresses it as he speaks in psalmody, and does not let go. He is elderly.

Then to the Klifada neighborhood to pick up Yaya, grandma Olga.

At night, again in Ayías Paraskeví, conversation with Babis, a Cypriot, friend of Grigoris and the family.

He says, if you want to come to live in Greece, see if you have a place to live. Then find little job. Then you can learn Greek fast. Learning how to speak, he emphasizes, to write is *dískolos*. Difficult.

Then we talk about the Greek language, how three letters were lost. Ancient alphabet, 27 letters equaling 3 x 9. God's number. 999, now you know why. *Ennead*.

Thursday, le droit a la paresse. Eating, siesta. At 6 a walk. Center-university-Plaka. Acropolis. I mean the mountain, not the monument you see from afar, 500 meters as the bird flies. A theater group performs an ancient work. All women, *gynekés*, only the director and the two musicians, drum and flute, are men. Then to the Psiris neighborhood to hear *bouzukia*.

That is, a duo with guitar and bouzuki, who sing Attic standards. Something like the salsa and soupy music found in Havana's tourist neighborhoods.

Friday 8th. Nothing relevant but a three-hour nap, a walk through the area. There are quite a few trees and steep streets; tossed on the sidewalk I find two cup holders with reproductions of ancient Greek ceramics. Curiously, Made in Amsterdam.

There's a bookstore, a lighting store, a sports center under delayed construction, its usual exposed concrete bristling with iron bars. Ambulatory vendors sell fruits of the earth, especially melons, but also sets of plastic tables and chairs. They go around on loaded motor scooters and hawk their wares with megaphones. Out past the freeway you can see the mountain.

Bombings in London leave 50 dead. Disaster.

Sábato (as in the Italian) 9th. Yayá is not well: to hospital, *nosokomeío*. The word "nosocomio" is no longer used in Spanish and yet I remember having seen it in a story by Mario Benedetti. The Dictionary of the Spanish Language does retain *nosología*, "división of medicine with the object of describing, differentiating, and classifying illnesses." At night we go to the *platía*, or neighborhood plaza. Activity by the KKE, communists. Then a rock band. The television reports a hurricane in Cuba: *tifónas*. 10 dead.

Kiriakí, or the Lord's day. Sunday 10th. To the *nosokomeío* to visit Yayá. Typical hospital, buildings of three or four floors in the middle of a park with trees. Not at all different than the type of hospitals seen in Havana like Calixto García, Covadonga or la Dependiente. The buildings are newer, from the 50s, but the atmosphere is identical. From the balconies you can see the same chain of mountains that flanks Ayía Paraskeví.

Then to the sea, *thálassa*: Porto.

Monday 11th: after the visit to Yayá Olga, Internet Café: expensive: currently 2. 70. KD goes on translating poemas *Algo de lo sagrado. Thálassa*. Open. 10 p.m. Athanassios comes, the bubble bursts. We talk, I show him the soundbox.

Tuesday 12th: at 8:30 we go out to buy chicken, *kotopoulo*, for grandmother. Then on to the house on Mekina Street, in the Elisias neighborhood, more central. Where

Christina's father Grigoris once lived. Marvelous routine I came to know on the earlier trip, *spanakopita* (like a spinach and cheese empanada), *platía*, greetings to the two neighborhood carpenters. Then to the university zone, *panepistimío*. Back to the house: "Tourists!," says Uncle Yura.

I accompany him to Piraeus. Another *nosokomeío*, this one more modern. From the street you see the ships in port. Meeting with the *maniatiki*, or natives of the Mani región, famous in ancient times for its bellicose character. Today more calm. They're relatives by way of one of Cristina's aunts, an ex-cabaret singer, married to one Astelios, man of the sea. Sly and educated. He has been to Cuba on his boat. So, his mother, another yayá facing troubles, is admitted here. They stage the most marvelous miniature theater. The husband of the dying woman, himself a miniature, with a little hat and cane, erupts out of the elevator like a walking loudspeaker. I don't understand Greek, but based on the dramatization I think he wants them to tell him whether his wife is dying or not. "They must tell him the truth!" His daughters calm him, of course, with pure lies. The son-in-law, and really all of the men, impassive. A full minute of phonetic power and expression. The wife will not die for now.

Back in taxi to Athína. "Are you Greek?," says the taxi driver. "I´m from Cuba." "Cuba? Which Cuba? Fidel Castro?." "*Mono* Cuba. Only one Cuba, just as there's only one Hellada," say i. "Well, yes, there´s only one Pakistan also," enigmatic taxi driver. At home, we watch *elenikó film*: *Political cuisine*. A story of a family divided by the war between Turks and Greeks, and reunited by food. *Orea*.

Tetárti or fourth day. Wednesday 13th. Reading *Rough Guide. Greece.* Internet Point.

Kristokinético
Christ in chains!
elkómenos khristos
Christ in chains!
elkómenos khristos
why! ay
un kristo encadenado
kristo en cruz

y no hay why!
un kristo en movimiento
kristokinético
salvo tal vez
en la película
kristokinética
de Passolini
ay! tal vez, tal vez
katalavenis?

.

people kill you if you
forget yourself
kill you if you don´t.

the rough guide to Greece
there are
sheer drops
from the rock face
and unguarded cisterns
so.
descend
before dusk
and if you have young children
keep them close

.

Christ's heart is like a grain of coffee in his abdomen
On the ancient frescoes of Ayíos Oros, Monte Athos. 2030 meters at its peak.

.

The drum box, which Pérez continued to use after his return to Cuba.

Siesta!

Around 9 p.m. Cristina and I leave on the metro (the Athens metro is beautiful) for Sindagma to meet up with Athanassios, who drives us to a singular place. A café-theater, hidden in a dark alley, behind the door of a normal-looking house, *kanoniká*, which creates no suspicions as to what lies inside: a bar, that is to say a bar of brick and ceramic tile, a patio, and a hall with stage and tables. Empty. Just one man inside who seems to live there as caretaker. Certain places in the city (I had seen something similar in the Psirri neighborhood on my previous visit) don't open during the summer tourist season, when the artists go off to the provinces or wherever, returning in the winter. That's why friends here insist that you have to visit Athens in the winter.

I take out my drum box at Athanassios' request and sing a song. "Glikó foné," says Athanassios. The man agrees but says nothing. We go to Psirri, where we talk in a corner café until 4 a.m. Athanassios tells his abrupt, philosophical stories, a little uncouth. He has a gray beard, expressive hands. He describes a decline in knowledge about Greece: of how today the meaning of things in Heraclitus has been twisted, how traveling through mountains one still heard

until a few years ago the feeling and sense of ancient Greek, how he thinks he has found the true meaning of *pólemos* at the moment when Heraclitus elevates it to a "supreme law." "It's not war," he says. "The *pólemos* of old was a little votive shrine placed at the entrance of homes, and what Heraclitus says is that the home is the foundation of everything." He also takes up the famous phrase of the dying Christ, which he considers a message to Apollo. We leave the café as it closes, all three peripatetic, and the session extends until dawn.

Thursday, *Pénti* or fifth day. I reread Pithagóras (Iámblikos) but the sense of absurdity from reading abstruse things about the Greek past while in the land of the Hellenes itself causes me to interrupt my reading. Those who write here don't know what they're talking about, except secondhand. Their contact with the Pythagorean method is, to say the least, oblique. So I leave the book forgotten on some shelf, cross the highway at last and scale the smooth mountain: Imitos. The mountain is always right.

I gather wild oregano, very light, thyme, and an aromatic herb unknown to me (a neighbor informs me later that it's *dendrolíbano*: rosemary, a more wiry rosemary than the one with which I was familiar). Also two small pieces of marble, rectangular, of ancient appearance, and another one that is large, oblong, which I place on end over an anthill. The energy of the mountain here, a serious thing. I return before the sundown can advance too far.

Very important: it rains after midday: heavy downpour.

Friday 15th; in its place, the bird. I clean the house with a vacuum. The machine overheats and stops, the bag isn't full, nor is the pipe blocked. I take it as a sign; I won't clean other people's homes with machines any more. Ready for zazen, the chirp is heard. I feel no nostalgia for Amsterdam or my former life. Over there.

At the siesta hour I can't sleep; I go off to the mountain and find the dog. It's accompanied by a bearded man with a staff and a *próblema* on his left leg. "*Yasu, yasu.*" On the way back I try out a new footpath, get lost, find my way. I've walked in an ellipse.

I look up the meaning of *sofrosine* (wisdom) in an encyclopedia that the

lodgers at this house left by the trash: *autoierarjía, enkratía, anoría*. Debate between self-control, *autokiriarjía*, and dominion over oneself. Athanassios explains to us later that *sofrosine* is an agreement between project and realization, between determination and act. With a gesture of his broad hands he indicates that if we want to square off our life, we should make it square; if we want it to be rounded, then make it round.

I look up the meaning of *agathós* in a Greek-French dictionary: bon, brave, näif. At night we go out with niece Olga to find Jurryt, in the same place at Psirri. Terrace, good food, *musikí*. The same due, tonight mostly playing *rebétika*. We return at two.

Sábato 16th: To the mountain. Internet. Flowers. In the afternoon another meeting with Athanassios at the side of the Acropolis.

Sunday 17th: Athanassios drives us to Rafina, to Danae's home. Also there are a musician named Vassili and another gentleman. Danae is a singer, translator of Neruda and Racine; she lived in Chile for several years. Her songs sound like Lecuona in Greek. 92 years old, she doesn't like to have her own photograph taken, preferring to take pictures of her visitors with a Polaroid. Good health.

Afterwards we converse on a promontory. Athanassios assures me that Rafina is the best of the areas surrounding Athens: 30 minutes from Ayías Paraskeví and with crossings toward the islands, Mykonos and others. Athanassios talks about the two types of education: the majority who learn to say Yes, yes teacher, yes God, yes government; the minority who learn to command those who always say yes. The rest is fantasy, he says.

Monday 18th: I fast, read *The King Must Die* by Mary Renault who rewrote the *istoría* of Theseus: a slave in Crete, dancer and acrobat, destroyer of worlds, a variation on Shiva.

Tuesday, Tríti, third day: I continue my reading and go at midday to the house on *odós* Mekina, Mekina Street. Cleaning and ceremony. Everything is as the dead man left it. I ask Grigoris to borrow *Prospero's Cell*, by Durrell. I return.

Cristina goes to the *nosokomío* where her grandmother agonizes. At sundown, zazen; I return half-naked. At night the moon is full, or nearly so. 40 degrees. The rabbit of the house follows me everywhere.

Wednesday 20th: *Nosokomío*. I return and cook pasta. Siesta. Then we go to a bananapalm corner next to the neighborhood *platía*, a type of café where postmodernity has gone native, where they sell colorful drinks. Nickel-plated architecture in the middle of a patio of Attic farmers; the waitresses are lovely, the music is okay: the Greeks also have their salsa, their elevator music and heavy metal records. *Diskobólos*. A beer, three cigarettes, lawyers for the devil, or is the devil your lawyer?

Thursday 21st: As agreed, Cristina and I travel to *odós* Xiroyanis (pronouncing the X as in México), in the Ilisias district two steps from the house of the deceased Grigoris. First we drink a coffee with Yura: he says it's better for me. *Skepsis*, he says, *skepsis*. We arrive and there's no light: three floors. "You're strong." Unpacking and cleaning. I proceed with my readings and short siesta, one hour maximum. Jurryt arrives from the Cyclades, Serifos; I think about Mariano. It's the island of Perseus. Jurryt drives me to the corner internet café—just 50 cents, which he offers. Possibly the cheapest in the Mediterranean.

"I was a king and a king's heir, I thought as the ship cast her moorings. Now I'm a slave": Mary Renault, *The King Must Die*. "She was a big ship." In English, as in Dutch, ships are feminine. She,

> She was a big ship
> slow to find the cranes
> crane dance is my life
> rice & beans is my beautiful
> mother earth, le droit a la paresse
> "like the phoenicians who always come dancing
> and singing into harbor"
> those who share bread, that is,
> companions and since we can be no

more than that, let's try
to be no less.
Small dog, big bark
little dog, thick skin
mean barking, just skin
mean skin no nice spices
skilos style, bare bone
under full moon.

Friday, Paraskeví 22nd: Jurryt heading back to Amsterdam; sounds decisive about the end of his Athenian dream: he won't be back in the summer, or for the same reasons. "I've had enough of Athens," he says. Funny how I feel the same as him, but about Amsterdam. I feel at home here, but for the people: people are people. "But I'm not people anymore," says Athanassios.

Tipota alási, say the Athenians. *Panda rei*, says Heraclitus.

Likavitos, 9: 30 p.m, going down the esplanade in search of nuts, I encounter Athanassios with raised cigar in hand. "*Telepathía*," we smile. "*Ise kalá?*" "*Kalá.*"

Then the three of us talk, sharing a coffee more costly than ignorance. Ideas, who could remember every word. He speaks about Greece and its ambiguous present; without bitterness, but the question has its seriousness: what's the principal source of our income? It's not the olive, or tobacco, cheese, wine, shipping, not even tourism. It's betting. And in the meantime, the priest robs the earth again. Of that we speak. We'll meet after the *diakopés*, the break. Mother Athena, free me from this pipe, which turns my heart to a torpedo.

Sábato: Internet, *nosokomío, to spiti*: home, final siesta. Silence, *perimenes*, a wait, Ares Enyalios will come. Dionysus planted the vine in Naros, Ciclades.

Visit to the *nosokomío*; good bye grandmother.

At 10 p.m, departure from Pireas.

Empty boat, Knossos Palace red & white. No Euro, no tourist.

At dawn the ship rattles off, *epileptiká* on the way to Crete. What is this, Poseidon? We arrive at Heraklion at 6:30. The driver swaggering and pleasant. Still, the fast, mountainous trip makes one sick.

We stop for coffee. On the other side of the highway are enormous hundred-year-old olive trees, columns of marble thrown randomly. Culture. We arrive at Lendas, southern coast. The first encounter on the beach: Koneehee, a traveler from Alaska who offers mocha to drink; we stay in his store until mezzogiorno.

Cristina wants to rent a room: siesta. Sea, tavern, Chan chan, c´est la mode. But that's not what I came for.

Monday, déutera 25: Swimming, like *padsimadi*, the king of stale bread: when the bread goes stale, you put it in water and bake it again. It's like eating rocks made of bread. With tomato, garlic, olive oil—but you also dip it into other dishes. It gets hot and softens up. There's a little corner store here; the wine of the country people is good, and so are the oil and the *rakí*, an aguardiente that turns the imagination upside down. Like *padsimadi*, I look at the stars...

"A landscape for resolutions and partitions," says Zarian in Durrell's book, "a landscape which precipitates the inward crisis of lives as yet not fully worked out."

Wednesday 27: The feather. Owl.

Gypsy melody that I forget, like others. She walks in front of me like Orpheus; I am Euridyce. We find ourselves on the sand, in front of the rock that rises in the middle of the cove. Then we put up the tent. First night.

Thursday 28: Melon, *karpouzi*. Eating melon and reading that copy of *Ulysses* picked up by the trash in rainy Amsterdam. The eagle glides over the area. Jupiter. A white bird dissolves into the white light. We all dissolve, sooner or later. In the afternoon I play the drum box. Night falls, stars come out. I sing: a girl approaches and asks to listen. Then her friend approaches: "It's nice," broken English. They're Austrians. Stephanie & Tania.

Here the drum box has a more metallic timbre. I sing the same three songs as always.

Afterwards I go to Nikos' restaurant, where Christina and Henk are having dinner together. He offers me a taste of his fish: *dorada*. And beer, then *rakí*. Nikos, the owner, likes to play with words: *eharistop*! When serving the *rakí* he asks,

What is your will? He writes on the menu board, mixing English with German and Dutch: they're his best clients. With Henk you can talk about art and other things. The stars are spectacular.

Friday: We have Greek neighbors. They clash with the rest of the cosmopolitan population. They put out little chairs and tables, bring a hoop, a pail and shovel. Beach ball. Dressed for summer – along this stretch of beach, almost all of us walk around nude. I pull the copy of *Ulysses* apart: all the better to read you. I myself had bound it. Now it's time to concentrate on the reading, and even the spine is annoying. In the end I get bored. It's not the first time: several years ago the same thing happened. Arriving at page 250, I ask myself why I'm reading so much. I leave it on a tree root: what luck for a book. Seven hundred pages to say so little. A master of literature is not the same as a master of language, much less of thought. The ants will take care of it.

I go out for a walk and run into a couple, a Greek man and Andalusian woman. Two lovely children: Ganesh and Sarasvati. They've spent some time in India and continue to come and go today; there they buy merchandise to sell here: fabrics, clothing, handbags, and other Indian items. His name is Alexandrós, and he invites me to get together for a beer in Odisseas, a tavern. Her name is Ana.

Late in the day I take the drum box out of its case. Spectator: a Greek girl, one of the neighbors. Sad eyes, if you so desire, but she knows how to watch.

At midnight, we share pizza with Henk, who heads out. Alexis doesn't arrive "in an hour at the tavern." Christina warns that for a Greek, an hour can mean any time.

Here in Crete, one doesn't do much. There was someone who measured time and space by cigarettes: "Two cigarettes away from here." And during eras of scarcity, they smoked leaves from banana trees and other things. As we're leaving, we turn around and the Greek arrives. Christina goes off to bed. We stay to talk. He's a sadhu in crisis: "I've come back to earth," he says, "which might be a mistake." But he really means it.

We continue in a place called *Diskos*, a sort of rustic discotheque. One smokes and drinks, rock and roll: "I'm coming back to earth!"

We return at dawn by the steep shortcut.

The meeting leaves an impression on me. While walking around Europe I haven't often met up with people who live with their feet on the earth and their gaze intense. For a moment I see reality, my reality. Europe is an aged cloud. The right thing is to return to Cuba in order to get my hands into the matter and raise the imagination's sails. Today, Sábato, I spend the day alone, taking a break from myself and my desires. Meditating. Sofrosine, the word alone calms me like a goddess. Late in the afternoon, another bath in the sea and I follow the trill from Lendas' country house to a tourist restaurant, El Greco. Nothing from the other world. We say goodbye to Hans, the fireman from Antwerp.

Sunday 31st: Visit to the lion's mountain; actually a large crag from which you contemplate the entire area. To the left the little town of Lendas, to the right the strip of beach and the structures called Diskos; in front the sea; and to one's back, rugged mountains with olive trees and stones. I go back and we set up a sunshade, then meet Alexis and Ana in their migratory shop.

They're seen haggling with a German couple. 75. From the German (because he believes that haggling is appropriate and nice), 65. 70 from Alexis; the German insists 65; 68, but the German still insists. "I've come down twice, and you still insist! 67." *Datsi*. "If you hadn't haggled so much, I would have given you a bag for your purchases!" She stays with the children, and Alexis comes for dinner with us to the tavern of old Odyseas after disposing of, as he calls it, "the rest of the day" faltering under age and heat. We talk about the wind: *meltemi, boriña, boreas*. *Kirie Boreas*, as the singer Tsarandonis says, Mr. Boreas, northern wind. We eat surrounded by stars, spaghetti, salad, bread, and a bit of *rakí*.

"If you want to come to Greece, I invite you to join us in the mountains."

He has a dream. Small community: school for children & natural life. Who knows the future: *kataklismós* or paralysis, I mean, paradise.

Monday August 1: Peaceful.

Christina speaks with Charis about a didjiridou, which he's playing by the sea; I can see them from here. He's kind and she can always make good conversation. And forget breakfast. In late afternoon, we eat in another country village called Sifis. We talk and drink rakí with Charis and a girl named Dimitra.

I bring the drum box and sing two songs: *Pajarito* y *Ala de mar*, Little bird and Wing of the sea.

Tuesday 2nd,

Mes ton potamó tou Ná (by the river Ná)
ine yemato Ligariá (a lot of plants)
pu pernane ta pankiá (punks)
ke tis kapnisum ta kladiá (smoke the leaves)
ma ke I mikroastí (the bourgeois)
tin pernun ya hasishiú dendri (confuse the hashish tree)
(Refrain) Ligariá, ligaría,
se pernane ya Foudiá (mistake it for cannabis)
An vrezis poté sto Ná (if you ever go)
min se verdepsi I Ligariá(don´t get confused)
ine dendro liyeró (supple tree)
ma ogi taxidiotikó (but not travelling)
ke an thes onirá gliká (if you want sweet dreams)
na protimás kanavouriá (choose cannabis)

Alexis and I put this song together facing the sea, which today looks like it's full of jellyfish, *tsuchtras* (I get stung twice). The song is about the Ligariá bush, which is called Vencedor (victor) in Cuba and resembles Indica cannabis in more than one way. So much so that the punks, like the good bourgeoisie, smoke it in vain. For the body of the song Alexis has chosen a rebetiká tempo, whereas for the chorus he prefers a more dynamic mode, from Cretan festival music. I tell him that if I were to do a Cuban version, I'd choose a chachachá tempo, and for the chorus, palo.

A Spanish rendition would open:
Junto al río tenaz con su verdor
crecen muchas matas de Vencedor
confundiendo su forma y su color
se las fuman con especial ardor, etc.

Then I go out to swim in the bay, over which a great crag presides. I'd like to climb it but can't. The natives warn me that it's dangerous because the currents are changeable as the wind. "You swim too much," Charis tells me when I show up in front of his cabana of stone and reeds. He just plays the didjiridou and occasionally rinses his body at the shore. He tells me that the name of this bay is *Ditikós*, from the west, *dísi*. En Cretan, they call the place *Diskos*.

Then with Sifis, Nikos and Alexis to Odysseas tavern to drink and smoke. The aged Odysseas, family patriarch, used to play the Cretan lyre, but now he's very old and the lyre hangs from one of the walls, worn out. I'm going to sleep and dream of Havana: seeing the capitalist resurgence I say to my colleagues: so much swimming in order to die upon the shore!

Wednesday 3rd: I start with zazen on a stone wrapped in a pair of pants from India. Then off to swim; with the drum box I try out a possible versión of Ligariá. Lunch: tomata, *anguri* (pepino), *padsimadi*. We go quickly to town, run into Alexis & family, agree to versify in Sifí. We drink a few beers with them and a pianist from Hannover. Alexis invites me to play drum box in his migratory stand, but I don't go. I'm having a social overdose, I tell Christina: I stay out under the stars. I sleep until she gets back. Wake up with an ancient feeling, like someone coming "from an old peninsula": Anatolia.

Thursday 4th: perfect. I wake at dawn, smoke a cigarette, Black Dog comes by with greetings. I do zazen. And return to life. To the sea: I encounter Evil Water, *psuchtra*, which stings in three places: arm, left leg, and cock. *Kalimera, Alexis*. We talk and drink *chaí*, but first he has offered *ellenikó kafé*. Then we go to the old temple of Asklepios. Say hallo to Asklepios from me!, says Alexis.

The temple is a ruin, well preserved, with a floor of mosaics depicting dolphins, an ancient olive tree, and a little orthodox church astutely erected to take advantage of the energy at the site.

As is my custom, I sit down under the olive tree to listen to the voice of the leaves:

You have to break your inner circle of stubbornness by going to the natural kind of life: sea, mountain. In the city you'll also find your place if you let your

inner nature free; it can change your surroundings into a natural place.

Abandon the protecting hedge, anything that reminds you of jail, a holy place, cross, sacrifice, suffering, pain, orders, rules, uniform.

> Don´t be priest inside your land
> or marry outside of her.

Take a look at Miyamoto Musashi again: The activities of the Samurai.

- Music.
- Building.
- Sword. Real sword, not metaphorical.
- Translation, in the broadest sense. Messenger, healer. Traveler, ambassador.

Friday 5th August,

Aletheia? Ne. Hop, we're in Monkey Town. The sea was getting rough: jellyfish and south wind unlike the Libyan kind: cool. Go first to Miamou (a variation on *maimoú*, monkey); we ride in Alexandros's van. Stop there for good raki and conversation. Maybe, Alexandros says, the reason they gave this village its name is the pithecanthropus bones they discovered here. *Píthikos*. Never mind, we ride to Mires, stop for water. I talk to a man milking his goat:

> Milais elleniká; do you speak Greek?
> *Oji*, no.
> *Pou es etci ;* Where do you come from, Romania?
> *Oji*, Cuba.
> Cuba! *Pou dulevis* conf.; where do you work?
> Hollandía.
> Aah...problems with immigrants here, too many.

We move on, from Mires to Matala.

Famous caves, built in the stone. Chambers, beds, corridors, balcony, if you will, terrace, rocks. Climb. Roman cemetery, they say, hideout for those infected

with *lepra.* Especially noticed during hippies' use of it as a refuge in the Seventies. We eat and sleep on the beach, sea is kind of rough, find a *kombolói* on the sand, in the morning. Looks like a rosary, brown plastic beads, like resin. But not prayers, swinging in the hand, spinning the wheel of life around one finger. Good for not smoking. During coffee 2 German ladies come plus a Greek old-timer. *Moira,* we move to Mires. Destination, market. Alexandros and Ana run the shop, Cristina looks for the food, I play the flute and part of the time the drums. Wake up a sleeping vendor. The children play and listen. The sale= 70 €. Pick up everything and go for one last *souvláki ké birra.* Good bye, *andío,* Alexandros and family, we´ll write about the weather: cloudy, rainy, windy, sunny.

One bus to Heraklion, one ship, 10 p.m., to Athína. *Kaló taxidi,* bon voyage. Actually, at dawn, Pireas. Subway to Monastiráki. Syntagma neighborhood, bus, home. Time to rest.

We sleep, wake up as others sleep. Siesta? Tired, no, calm in the body that has departed nature to come to the godless city. Polis, never said better. Nature here as well.

Quiet neighborhood of the masses; neither the bird nor the cat is missing. I clean the house in Xiroyanis street and go on to that of Grigoris. Here I feel at home, whatever may happen.

On FM 93.6 I listen to good music and they talk about Cuba. It's Sunday, August 7th. 8 p.m. and still daylight. You can write, read or talk on the terrace, facing a building above the street that's 8 meters wide. In the afternoons a couple of youths, university students, are talking next to a window. They drink coffee continuously and smoke until noon. She's black, he's white, like that song. Sometimes no one's there.

Here things are left unwritten. We go to Psirri. A month in Greece and I'm already rotting, another month and they'll have to hunt for us with dogs, which certainly…

Monday 8th. Repose. Breathing, oh Kriti, island of the south, land of the body-spirit.

Tuesday 9th, the marmalade in the little market is incredibly expensive.

Etnikí trapeza, community bank. *Trapeza* is also table. Omonia neighborhood, noon. What are we doing? Changing itineraries, pushing the departure back from the 10th to the 29th. Olympic Airways.

Back to the *nosokomío,* visiting grandmother. She dies tomorrow.

She suffers no more at the hands of doctors.

10th: Marjoram, says Merlin, and exercise. We go: Hospital-Ayía Paraskeví- Mekina.

11th: *Spanakopita* dreams: *spanako-pita,* spinach-pie. Clean up Yayá's garden. Speak to the plants, water the soil, sweep, throw away old things, dusty memories, forget and go away. Nothing more. In the afternoon Christina and I go for a walk in neighborhood. At dusk, we go to Ayía Paraskevi. Babis Kharalambos talks about the difference between *dulevos,* work from *dulos,* slave; and *ergasía* from *ergos*: work as undertaking something for others.

The first, job; the second, deed. It's kind of heroic view of work, like the Works of Herakles: cleaning, hunting, battling, killing; not much creation though. Herakles, they say, was in this case an employee of a certain king. But later he undertook his own creations, which were sometimes similar to his previous jobs. He says, "The first only works for money for himself. He's not responsible for the process nor its final results. The second, the artist, creator, graphos, musikí, *kaliteknés,* creates mainly for the others." Yura says that today there's not much difference in Greece.

Friday 12th, funeral. Dimos Vyrona, or the Byron district.

The mourners nearly make you cry. Ah, earth that returns to earth, Yayá. *Kafeneion kai taberna: psári, krasí, psomí.* Fish, wine and bread. Hellos and goodbyes. Aunt Mary invites us to the sea, *sto thalassa,* a neighborhood on the coast: Nea Makri. "Only one family, Cristina, only one family." We eat supper near the beach, *psári* and *skordaliá* that you can make with potato or bread: 7 cloves of garlic per half kilo. Vinegar and oil.

Sábato; *Kalimera. Ellenikó kafé. Monasteri Ayios Efraim. Megalo* martyr, tortured by the barbarians. In this case, Turks. Miracle worker. I take my shirt off in the sun. We go to the sea. I read the novel *Che's Suicide* by Petros Markaros. A detective novel.

Sunday 14th, I sleep outside. Ocean. Back to Mekina street. At night we take a walk through Omonia and the perpetual Psirri district. Sad night. Today there was an airline disaster: Olympic Airlines, 125 dead. Mystery.

Monday August 15th: Panayía. Old tune.

> Sleeping, my new vice
> breathing, my religion
> eating, my necessity
> shitting, my obligation.
> My garden the mountain
> my bathroom the sea
> jasmine my passport
> a contest, honeycomb for me.
> From wasp the sting
> dance from butterfly
> on my lips a song to sing
> and the song hangs in the sky
> god a rain in april
> in your eyes the dawn
> dying is my privilege
> my whim, to be reborn.

Reading *De zelfmoord van Che*, by Markaros, whose title has no relationship to the rest of the book and seems to be a gimmick. A series of distinguished Greek citizens commits suicide before television cameras. As if incited by the recommendations of a political sect. The superintendent, typical anti-hero, sallies forth to navigate the turbid waters of the polis. We'll see.

At night we go out: in the historical and tourist district of Plaka, an excellent gathering: Spyros and his daughter Nora, *misí misí*, half and half, like Cristina, Dutch mother and Hellenic father. They run a craft shop: curiosities, old postcards. He gives me a princely jew's-harp from Tanzania. His concepts for *oikonomía*: lower the prices, neutralize taxes, split the benefit, profit that brings everyone like dogs to the hand of a lunatic. In sum, capitalism: *malakíes*. *Malákas*: jerk. *Oxford Learner´s Pocket Dictionary* by D. N. Stavropoulos.

We go on with wine, a black dog comes to visit us, one of the city dogs. We listen to músikí from Ioaninna, Lesbos kai Mytilene (*kai*: pronounced "kay"). Infinite music from Eládas, each island a country, every mountain a kingdom. At dawn we circle the old city, painting the walls. I leave the sign of four winds. We eat pita.

Tuesday 16th, ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ. Aeschilus or Skilos, dogpoet. Dog: *skílos*. *Orestíada*, in an English version.

> Your chaotic skills
> your eyes like sunrise
> from the first minute
> say "I love you"
> correct me
> if i´m wrong

Some people talk about women's emancipation. Others talk about the emancipation of man from his dependence on the woman. Kimeras.

Read in *Prospero´s Cell*, by Durrell:

Count D: "Therefore if you come to me, like Zarian, and ask me why I am not writing down these discoveries, I can only reply that that is not what I mean by philosophy. I am enduring, and that is enough."

Night. Athina is enough. I read the *Oresteia*.

17th,

Success is now men's god
Coephori

I rock the boat. Then Jarálambos invites us to Nea Makri. Swimming with the family. We eat at his home: *makaronia me oktopodia*. Macaroni with octopus. *Jorta*, vegetables, excellent. *Brian* or *turulú turulú*, a baked dish based on eggplant and other vegetables. Ke *joriátiki*, a peasant salad or Greek salad: tomato, cucumber, feta cheese, everything cubed, olives with their abundant corresponding oil, onions. Then fruit, with cheese from Chipre. Long conversation until midnight.

18th,

New suit, new plumage: new trip. Voice quiet or loud: a question of taste, says Atanasios. Palinuro.

No mother gave me birth. Therefore
the father´s claim and male supremacy in all things,
save to give myself in marriage,
wins my whole heart's loyalty. – Athene. *Eumenides.*

Apollon Loxías: God of words.
Traketeo lunar
vive la luna!
noisy star
vessel
in whose name you forget
even the final trace.

We've gone to the market in the Ilisias district: etnikí ágora. Greetings to the carpenter. Would you like his job? Announcement from the city: Seeking wood sculptor. Kaliteknés. Siesta. Three musicians pass by in a daytime serenade. They saved my day, says Christina. And mine.

"Alexandros, drunk!" shouted Ana at the aforementioned, who without putting hands to the rudder, described and wrote the story in gestures. Monkey's Pass in rugged Crete. Raki, ouzo, with calligraphy there are no fixes, the hand trembles. Like a tulip of ash my cigarette peters out. Those conversations in Greek that you can hear from the street. On the patio the pigeon with her hollow sound, which the children love. The icon observes me with a guilty smile.

19th,

Foreign footballers, tightrope walkers,
poets and authors
will be subject to a special residence status
if they wish to come to Greece.

12 month residence permit. Working contract. 150 €
Athens News. 12 August, 2005.

In the morning, Yura comes to look for us to go to the cemetery, *koimitirion,* place of rest. Dimos Vyronas where seven days ago the second farewell ceremony was held for Olga. Incense, candles and *sítari.*

Sítari is a kind of sweet crumb which they pass around with raisins, pistachio-fistíki, clove...cinnamon, to be shared. The Papas psalmody, a rushed farewell. *Evaristó Papuli:* thanks, *Naste kalá,* he responds. Be well, he disappears.

Glyfada, with Zía Magda. The landscape of our thought, according to Durrell, landscape as a form of metaphysics. Beyond, *meta- físi,* nature. Our metaphysical landscape is Greek, elénikós; according to Martí one breathed a Greek breeze there. Referring to the seminary of San Carlos. They say the Acropolis is open tonight for the full moon.

We eat at Jaralambos' home. Seashells on the island of Cypros, karaolos, salingári in Attic Greek. We drink ouzo chipriota: Isidoros, like my grandfather: gift from Isis.

And the Cypriot cheese: jalumé. Gummy.

Sábato 20th,

We go to the ocean: little beach, anijtó piélagos. Zesi, a small strand on a wide gulf; limpid water, rocky shore. Facing the island of Evia, mountains like feminine bodies, round, smooth, naked, spattered with pine and olive trees. At the top, modern windmills. On the road home I find a song:

Keté -----keté-----keté-----keté

Dekapende, fifteen. It depends.

Sunday,

Jarálambos comes to guide us to the mountain of Imitos. From the top he shows us the city. The modes of green, the structure. The mountains inside: Likavitós, Akrópolis, Filopapo and Turkovuniá. The ones outside: Imitos, Pendelis and Parnases. We return from the peak to a nearby tavern. On the way he shows us the abandoned stone monastery where Atanasios spent fifteen days with no sustenance other than the mountain. He recounts his Pythagorean vision of the world in numbers, letters, sounds. Why we see the green in a plant only thanks to the number of electromagnetic vibrations that arrive at the eye; why the o micron, with a small o, represents the 360 degrees of the circle; why the planets sing; and so on. He has already taken us to the koimitirion of Athens, with its legends in marble:

Matheodoxía, he explains, for nothing, something dead people don't need anymore.

Spondí: offering libations to the dead. Omeospondía: federation. Shared belief. Ikos: house. Nomía: rules of the house: oikonomía.

Jarálambos, sporadic philosopher. An amateur. At night Cristina and I go to Akrópolis from the peak of neighboring rock. We look out over the city again. And the moon, waning somewhat, takes its leave of us. A black dog sleeps next to the abyss. I could stay here forever. Cristina smiles.

Monday 22nd,

Resting the skeleton here, reading *Opus 100* by Asimov save for a brief Internet break, resting the bough.

Tuesday 23rd. In the morning Jarálambos takes us to Nea Makri. Splendid day; we continue the conversation about cognates. According to Asimov, a million seconds equal eleven and a half days.

1. 97 calories per square cm per minute: solar constant.

2. Why the idiot? Dostoyevsky, and others. Idios, oneself. Idiótis, citizen of one's self. Idiotelia: selfishness. Self-interest.

3. Autarkía y autárkis: self-sufficient.

4. Asshole: ilízios.

Siesta. I dream that I'm wandering through Jerusalem with two bottles of ouzo.

New visit to Spiros and Nora: he does my portrait. I do his, just a caricature. We go on with our dreams. Nora paints a Cuban scene, a rumba. Perfect rhythm and emotion. Not to speak of color. We say goodbye next to the Akrópolis.

Thursday 25th. I clean the house with a hose. Read Asimov. Life is dream. We go to Nora and Spiros' store, where there is *polí oreo raki*. A very good aguardiente.

Friday 26th. At night we go to Ayía Paraskeví, eat pizza, receive presents. Tomorrow we're going to Delphi. A certain Asklepios has killed off the cigarette, they say. The serpent gives us health, like the oracle, with the leaves of dafní or laurel. But maybe some other herb or substance, to lend an ear to Robert Graves.

But tomorrow we're not going to Delphi. Instead we're going to Glyfada. Table talk with the merchant captain Stelios. No, Cuba is not a satellite, Stelios. He talks to me about his colleague in Havana, one Kiriakos who repairs ships.

We take the Katexaki subway to Monasteráki, final return.

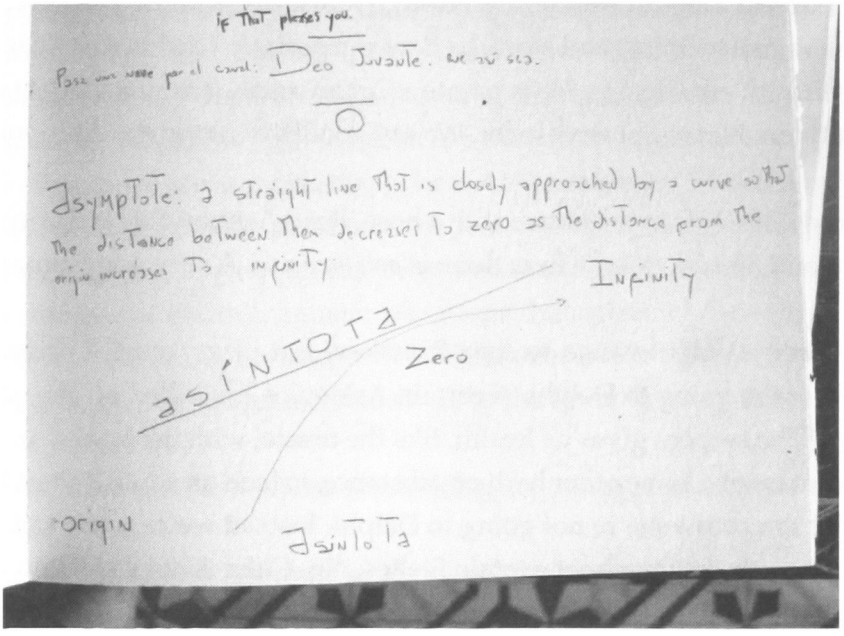
Sunday 28th, peace. The past serene, packing baggage. I'm no more than an ordinary Jaraghiosis. Siesta. Dinner with Babys: "In the winter, it's better."

Monday 29th, airport. *Aeroliménas*.

Greece has exported 51, 807 words to the world
from Abyss and Alphabet to Zodiac and Zone
and kept one for itself
MYTHOS
HELLENIC LAGER BEER

In the check-in line, 8 in the morning.

Translated by Kristin Dykstra



Detail from the poet's notebook.

MARIANELA MEDRANO

TWO POEMS

How We Were Born

From Cacibayagua [Cave of the Jagua] came most of the people who populated the island.

—Fray Ramón Pané

Cacibajagua opens her miraculous womb made of clay
through which a line of people ascend
Taínos Taínas—blowing out the first breath in unison—

History starts differently —you see—

In the green yucca's lines
Yocahú's unmistakable point
opens a route
Atabey lets her waters run
making our steps easier in the current
in the roundness of her infinity

The splendid sun prefigures us

Marocael turned into stone guards us
The jobo's juice too
¡Sons of Yocahú!
¡Daughters of Atabey!
¡Daughters of Yocahú!
¡Sons of Atabey!
 for ever and ever.

How We Learned to Play Hide and Seek

So they would trust us, because I knew they were people who would convert to our faith, with love and not by force, I gave them some red berets and some glass stones and many other worthless things.
—Christopher Columbus, Navigation Diary

In the deception of red berets
the silky black pretends its disappearance
later it comes out for air in the miracle of the
kinky texture of African consolation
Ochún inhales us with divine force

In the fragmentation of glass we seem to succumb
until we discover the magic of stained glass
filtering the hot rays of the Grand Sụn
In the spacious vortex of cathedrals we fly
prey the Our Father in order to sing to Yocahú
In the background of the Holy Mary
Atabey's ethereal and fluid figure vibrates

The island herself from time to time
seems to coil up in the sadness
her body a bloody river moistens the Grand Sun
that's why our dusks are so beautiful

In the roots of the yucca
the goddesses and the gods keep on making miracles
Caguama protects us in her untamable conch
even in these days of beaches colonized by tourists
Playful and calm people
we play under the colorless skins of the saints
to protect our golden epidermis.

Translated by the author and Janet E. Aalfs

CHRISTINE WERTHEIM

TWO WORKS

E | E'S FUL: JUAREZ

e | e's ful
e | e's full
mmmmmmm mmmmmmmm
e | e's full of |+
full of |+
full of the mouth

In 2009, 2,753 were killed in Juarez. That year, as of May 18th, 973 had been slaughtered—a 60% increase over the same period in 2008. Since 2006 when Calderon was elected nearly 28,000 people have been killed in the city. Federal agents and the army have poured in during the same period, and as they arrive the killings rise*.

e | e's ful
e | e's full

e | e's full of the mouth
e | e's full of the-m-Outhers

the mmmmmm- Others
theIR mmmmmm- Mouths
them others theMothers the mothers the mouths
e | e's full of them full of them
full of theMouths

There are 400, mainly American, factories in Juárez, they pay at best $75 a week, the cost of living in Juárez is about 90% the cost on the U.S. side of the border. In addition, the city has now had at least two generations of kids raised pretty much on their own as their parents work five and a half days a week in the factories.

the mmmOuthers Out there
the M mouthers out there
the mmmOuthers Out there
Out there Out there
Out there out there!

The MOUTHers out there
Out there Out there
get them Out out of her$_{e.}$

The murder rate of women in Juárez is about the same as Mexico in general—about 10% of all homicides. The cases are never solved; neither are the cases of the men who comprise 90% of the murders. **Juárez kills everyone.** Juárez is a product of many things: Mexican corruption, a key crossing point for the drug industry, a failing economy. But at the bottom is poverty.

get THEM out! get them out!
get THEM Out! get them OUT!

The president of Mexico says 90% of the dead—over 24,000 in Mexico since he launched his program—are dirty, meaning somehow connected to drugs. This is false. Most of the dead are not capos. They are poor.

get THEM Out! get them OUT
THEM Out! E l e shout

E l e shout! E l es shut
E l e's shut
E l e's sh l t
E l e sh l t
Shit l t Out
Shit l t Out
Shit Out of the Mouth

Three things would over time lower the slaughter of people in Juárez and all over Mexico: legalize drugs, rework NAFTA so it provides a living wage, and cease giving the Mexican army half a billion dollars a year: it is the largest criminal group in Mexico and a growing player in the drug industry.

E l e's sh l t
Shit l t Out
Shit Out of the Mouth
Out themMMm mmmouth
Out themMMm mmouth
Out themmm mothers
theM OUT h!

get themMMm OUT
get themMMm OUT
get themmmm OUT of the mouth get themMMm OUT
get themMMm OUT
get themMMmm OUT of the mouth

out theMothers
the M outh

get themMMm OUT get
themMMm OUT
get themMMm OUT
get them
MMm OOOOOUUUTTTTT hhhh!

*includes passages from a New Yorker interview with Charles Bowden, author of *Murder City: Ciudad Juárez and the Global Economy!s New Killing Fields*

the passage 'ate ( )
the passage.

The migration of the Mexican poor is the largest human movement across a border on the planet. It was triggered by the destruction of peasant agriculture at the hands of the North American Free Trade Agreement, by the corruption of the Mexican state and by the growing violence in Mexico.

the passage 'ate the passage
| t 'ate + | t 'ate + | t 'ate
+ | t 'ate + | t 'ate
| t 'ate the passage
| t 'ate
| t 'ate 'ate 'ate

It is further exacerbated by the millions of Mexicans working illegally in the U.S. who send money home to finance their families' trips north. It should be seen as a natural shift of a species. We need ecologists on the border; the politicians have become pointless*.

| t 'ate | t 'ate | t 'ate t 'ate
| t 'ate | t | t 'ate |
|
| 'ate | t
the passage
| 'ate | 'ate
| 'ate | t

The drug industry is the second-largest source of foreign currency in Mexico, just behind oil. It earns somewhere between $30 billion and $50 billion a year -- no one really knows, including the people in the industry.

the passage
It was not full
It was not full
It could not be full
It could NOT be full!
NOT be full!
NOT be full!
NOT full!
NOT still!

It also creates enormous numbers of jobs in the U.S. We spend billions a year on narcs, maintain the world's largest prison industry, and have about 20,000 agents on the border who feed off drug importation.

It would NOT be full!
not be still
not full
not still
It is not still
It is not
It is not still
not still

The rehab industry is also a large source of jobs since many well-heeled defendants pick mandatory treatment over prison. Many county and local police departments now get fat off of RICO suits based on drug offenses.

It would not be still
could not be still
could not be STILL
It could not be
the passage
It could not be still
the passage
the passage

th I s passage
I t 'ates

The official line of the U.S. government, one most recently voiced by Hillary Clinton, is that drug consumers in the United States are responsible for drug murders in Mexico. Only someone who is drugged could believe this claim.

I t 'aches
I t is 'ungry
I t is not still
the passage
I t is 'ungry
I t is angry
I t is bleeding
th I s bleeding passage
I t 'aches
I t 'aches
it cannot be
STILL

The sole source of the enormous amount of money in the drug business and the accompanying violence is the U.S. prohibition of drug use by its citizens. Since President Richard Nixon proclaimed the War on Drugs 40 years ago, there have been two notable accomplishments: Drugs are cheaper than ever, and they are of much higher quality.

*includes passages from a New Yorker interview with Charles Bowden, author of *Murder City: Ciudad Juárez and the Global Economy's New Killing Fields*

REINA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ

TRES GENERACIONES

--Desde los comienzos de esa generación llamada "de los 80", de la que formo parte, y en la que me acompañaron poetas como Ángel Escobar, Ramón Fernández Larrea, Raúl Hernández Novás, Efraín Rodríguez, Marilín Bobes, Soleida Ríos, Alex Fleites, Víctor Rodríguez, Osvaldo Sánchez entre otros (ver antología "Usted es la culpable" (1985) (a veces se encuentra algún ejemplar amarillento y barato en moneda nacional) y "Antología diferente", UNAM (llamada "la antología negra", porque estuvo escondida en almacenes y oficinas de burócratas y no sabemos al fin qué rumbo cogió).

En esta generación, predominó el deseo de lograr una intimidad que no estuviera apartada de lo social sino que, inmersa en una crítica viva, atendiera más a la forma humana, al "yo"; a esa sustancia del sujeto que en plena sensación esquizofrénica trata de integrar sus partes sueltas, y volver al cuerpo de la escritura, a la voz, a los deseos, portadores de una imagen excluida por entonces (como la intimidad, el amor, las historias personales, la existencia), por la contrapartida de una poesía épica y comprometida en exceso.

Fueron aquellos los tiempos de esplendor "...del medrone" (una pastilla anticonceptiva rosada), y "del yogur de fresa", como Osvaldo Sánchez, poeta y crítico de arte, la llamara. Mientras tomábamos vinos traídos del ex campo

socialista por seis pesos la botella, y té negro, pero frío, en vasos rusos que estallaban al menor contacto –igual que aquel mundo se desintegraban dejando un "borramiento"-, y comíamos "jamón plástico" de los mercados llamados "paralelos", sin cubiertos de plata, en bandejas de aluminio de una beca, todavía nos quedaba algún adorno de porcelana de la familia que no se vendió: un sillón de mimbre roto (y vuelto a pintar de rojo) en una esquina; una cortina de encaje en la ventana de maderas superpuestas o podridas ya; un búcaro de bacarat, algo, que en su carácter de residuo, también usábamos en el texto.

La guerra que se libró por entonces, fue por la individualidad como parte de lo social, pero sobre todo, una guerra de un solo sustantivo contra el incipiente realismo socialista: la guerra por el intimismo. Una guerra, porque los discursos no se injertaran desde lo exterior (lo masivo y propagandístico), sino que las metáforas y las imágenes vinieran sin aborto a ocupar su lugar dentro del contexto. Por lo que, alguna que otra vez, fuimos llamados públicamente, "neo-existencialistas", sin saber qué cosa era serlo. (Nunca olvidaré el prejuicio que yo misma sentía al escribir la palabra "internacionalismo" en un poema: "Hablábamos de internacionalismo proletario..." (era el tiempo de la guerra de Angola) e, inmediatamente, en el siguiente verso, oponía otro que pareciera venir desde el territorio de la metáfora para sopesar la actualidad de aquel tema; para intentar una contrapartida exterior-interior (bicéfala) que aplacaba un complejo de culpa infinito (complejo de participación que arrastrábamos, venido de la generación de los 50, empeñados en demostrar algo siempre); para ser aceptados, logrando así, uno de los versos más espantosos que se hayan escrito,"... hablábamos de internacionalismo proletario, entre el humo y las colillas de la tarde". (De "Cuando una mujer no duerme", premio "Julián del Casal", 1980). Sin dudas, aunque con "Deudas", la poesía que se escribió por entonces, quiso ser honesta, crédula, positiva, y padeció (por eso) de una moralidad que entrañaba también, su gran complejo de culpa. Trocó herencias morales por características estéticas. Quería reafirmar algo, a pesar de...

Otras voces líricas e intentos de poesía civil basados en la obsesiva reafirmación del "yo" sostuvieron sus tendencias a contra pelo (como Raúl Hernández Novás y Ángel Escobar), cuando casi todo fue mezclado (como el café) y se desplazaron de la palestra, a autores que intensificaron con la marca de su

territorio como los lobos y los gatos, una "poesía del lenguaje" (de la mente, y de la palabra), acentuando cada vez más su incomunicación con derivas extraterritoriales, y afianzando el conflicto de cómo "integrar" (palabra muy usada por entonces en el argot popular), lo conversacional hasta lo antipoético (venido de la influencia nicaragüense de Ernesto Cardenal, aunque con mucho menos excesos por suerte), a poemas sociales y políticos por sus temas, como contrapartida para sostener "la identidad".

Si antes de los 90, las citas que aparecían en los libros enviados a concursos o publicados, eran de Rainer María Rilke –recuerdo su poesía publicada en edición masiva-, César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda y Luis Cernuda, después de los 90, se hacían verdaderos palimpsestos (puede decirse que sufrimos una indigestión) con autores que provenían del campo de la crítica, la filosofía y la narrativa. (A falta de escuelas y libros de pensamiento, se transplantaron aquellos y hubo un gran auge de intertextualidad). Se trataron de borrar las definiciones (esas fronteras de los géneros), y todos querían de alguna manera, "pensar" o "parecer" cosmopolitas a falta de viajar realmente. Cuando estos filósofos ya habían quedado relegados en el mundo, aquí se injertaron a los textos literarios. La escritura empezó a formar un conjunto cada vez más cerrado y ambicioso sobre ella misma, guiada por las influencias de poetas como Fernando Pessoa, Paul Celan, Sanguinetti, Kavafis, Edmond Jabés, Michaux, Passolini, Ajamatova, Tsvietáiva, Jorge Luis Borges y Octavio Paz, entre otros.

A partir de los años 89-90 se desarrollan (en conjunción con la plástica), muchos procesos preformativos y experimentales que resultan novedosos para la poesía cubana –tan poco vanguardista-, y que tuvo entre otros antecedentes, el caso de Luis Rogelio Nogueras (1944), y la pintura de los años 80, donde recayó el peso de una crítica social reformista: el kisch, los heterónimos, y la apertura hacia otras zonas del conocimiento con la introducción de autores contemporáneos que habían sido excluidos de los programas de estudios literarios de la universidad o de las librerías y que pasaban "de mano en mano". Fue un momento, en el que las teorías casi suplantaron las estéticas, y modelaron las poéticas. (Benjamín, Canetti, Kristeva, Blanchot, Barthes, Deleuze, Todorov). El pensamiento europeo (sobre todo, alemán y francés) llegado hasta la Isla, casi siempre en fotocopias (también en barcos que pasan como ocurrió en el siglo XIX cuando Julián del

Casal tradujo a Baudelaire) y luego (manoseado) fue convertido en ficción.

Surgió desde 1991, en la azotea -de mi casa-, construida sobre un viejo edificio de Centro Habana, el sitio donde nos reunimos todas las semanas durante siete años o más, autores de diferentes poéticas y pretensiones literarias, cuando solo en algunos sitios de la ciudad había luz, allí éramos: "los iluminados". Este espacio alternativo (que fue llamado "foco cultural" por los burócratas) mantuvo, con un bombillo de muy poco voltaje, un lugar vivo de intercambio y discusión. Cada jueves al atardecer, se leían novelas, poemas o artículos hasta la madrugada. A falta de otros espacios de resistencia, compartíamos libros, lecturas, y una comida literaria hecha también de arroz con col y "cerelac" (especie de cereal prieto y caliente que nos salvó la vida entonces, pero que no queremos recordar). De estas reuniones, a las que todos llegaban sin otra promoción que la llamada de teléfono o el encuentro fortuito en la calle Obispo donde siempre subiendo o bajando nos encontrábamos (por donde ya no sube ni baja ninguno, porque casi todos se fueron), queda alguna foto de un rollo desvaído en la pared. En la actualidad, después del éxodo de casi todos los escritores y pintores que pasaron años allí, "Azotea" ha pasado a ser el nombre de una revista literaria que, tampoco sale ya y que, en sus inicios, pretendía unir, desde todos sus trazados y lenguas, las mitades dispersas (con autores cubanos de adentro o de afuera), y que quiso conservar el carácter manufacturado al estilo de las revistas del siglo XIX. (Tuvo siete números).

Entre los autores que con diferentes poéticas y estilos participaron en ese espacio físico y mental que fue la Azotea estuvieron: Juan Carlos Flores, "Pájaros escritos", "El contragolpe" y "Distintos modos de cavar un túnel" -del que hablaré después con más detalles (por ser un poeta que rescata el submundo de Alamar, la ciudad construida para el "hombre nuevo", llamada también "la última provincia del Este"). Antonio José Ponte, "Asiento en las ruinas", poemas, "Contrabando de sombras", novela; "In the cold of the Malecón", cuentos; "La fiesta vigilada", libro "variopinto" entre varios géneros, que reside ahora en España. Almelio Calderón, "Fragmentos para una caballo de aire"; Damaris Calderón, "Roer un hueso", extraordinaria poeta de la que recordamos siempre: "Esta sería la única mentira en la que siempre creeremos" y "Con el terror del equilibrista", poemas que marcaron toda una época con su fuerza, ahora residente en Chile; Omar

Pérez, que escribió "Algo de lo sagrado" -uno de los libros más importantes de los 80, por su poesía civil y desacralizadora y que el año pasado obtuviera el premio Guillén-; Víctor Fowler Calzada, "Él próximo que venga", "El maquinista de Auschwitz", "Malecón Tao", poesía lírica y conceptual a la vez, que trata de recoger el duelo entre el mundo que construimos persistentemente sobre el que otros van deconstruyendo; Rolando Prats Páez, con "Sin Itaca"; Sigfredo Ariel, "Peces tropicales", "Hotel central", "Born in Santa Clara", con su mirada pictórica, contemplativa de los objetos, sus seres y la ciudad; Carlos Augusto Alfonso (con poemas legendarios como "La cola del pan" o "Pastoreo Wasan", sus libros "El segundo año", "Cabeza abajo", "Serbal", trazan una conducta "esquiso" entre lo popular y lo elevadamente culto; entre la Historia con mayúscula y la calle con su realidad, uno de los pocos poetas neobarrocos cubanos del que hablaré en un texto sobre el neobarroco. Ismael González Castañer, "Mercados verdaderos", "Misiones" (donde la gracia y la ironía logran una poesía ligera y complejísima a la vez, con varios estratos o niveles de discursos, cercana a la pintura de L'Andaluce -pintor de frescos durante la colonia-, con criados y esclavos en poses caricaturescas). Caridad Atencio con su incansable experimentalidad; Rito Ramón Aroche rompiendo siempre los presupuestos de un libro anterior, "Dígitos en el óvalo" y Alessandra Molina, con "Anfiteatro entre los pinos" y "As de triunfo", poesía llena de misterios y paisajes mentales, pensamiento y naturaleza en una conjunción extraña, Aliuska para nosotros, vive ahora en los Estados Unidos.

"Anfiteatro entre los pinos" fluye como un río hacia la frondosidad y casi sin metáforas, solo con imágenes (cosa difícil de hallar en la poesía cubana), se desliza transparente. Es un libro de metamorfosis: la madera en la que todo se convierte (ver el poema IV, Madera). "El lenguaje, dice la autora, no hay razón para olvidarlo, tiene su fama y su flora de lujo. Su materia vegetal". Ella antropomorfiza los seres en la flora de un bosque, por donde uno penetra y camina. Logra la voz de esa naturaleza artificial (Ver "Museo", dedicado a Sivlia Platt). En Museo hay "un duro y blando hueco", en el museo de ciencias naturales y es aquí el interesante giro de un autor que no es romántico, porque ha puesto en el espacio de un museo, de un teatro, de un cuadro, su bosque, el pajar, el nido. Confío también en alguien, que no le teme a "las palpitaciones de su corazón" o, a "barcos que aliviarán la premura". El misterio de Aliuska está en la confesión

que se adentra en nosotros hasta una región tan profunda y humana que logra abrir su página-bosque a un paisaje que se vuelve existencia.

Los integrantes del grupo "Diáspora (s?)" realizaron una revista fotocopiada que lleva ese mismo nombre y circuló de mano en mano. Ellos son: Carlos Aguilera, con "Retrato de Hooper" y una novela publicada en Alemania; Rolando Sánchez Mejía, con "Derivas", "Cuentos de Olmo" y la novela "Feldarfine"; Pedro Marques de Armas, con "Cabezas"; Rogelio Saunders con "Father Pound", y Ricardo A. Pérez con "Trillos urbanos" y "Jeanot o el otro ruido de la noche", "Oral B", "Para qué el cine", "Aracnidos", su novela todavía inédita. Casi todos los integrantes de "Diáspora (s?)" tuvieron una formación autodidacta o se graduaron de carreras lejanas a la literatura (química, biología, ingenierías), y han escrito además de poesía, libros de cuentos y ensayos.

Les recomiendo las antologías, "Mapa imaginario" de 1995; la revista "El Caimán barbudo", con el trabajo de Norge Espinosa sobre la poesía actual (Norge Espinosa, autor también de los 90, con "Vestido de novia" y "Dejar la Isla") así como, "Jugando a juegos prohibidos", selección de Agustín Labrada 1992, "Letras cubanas". También la antología "Retrato de grupo",1989. "La Habana Medieval", realizada en Brasil por de Ricardo A. Pérez. "La tarea del poeta y su lenguaje en la poesía cubana reciente" Víctor Fowler, 1999, Revista Casa. También un dossier de la revista argentina, "Diario de poesía" que recogió ocho años de antologías de la poesía cubana actual, recopilado por Daniel Samoelovich. Porque, la mayor parte de estos textos se encuentran en antologías ya que por aquellos años no había papel. Fue un tiempo de conocimiento a través de las antologías y de las fotocopias por donde drenaba toda la literatura universal.

Si algún desplazamiento hubo entonces fue el de intentar, sacar la escritura de los límites de otros discursos y llevarla hacia la zona antropológica del propio proceso de su oficio y tratar de pensar con ella. No creo que este fuera un hecho aislado o local, en el que influyeron, en su desplazamiento, autores neobarrocos argentinos y cubanos (como Arturo Carrera, José Kózer, Severo Sarduy, Néstor Perlonger, José Zaer, los hermanos Lamborguini, Eduardo Milán, Coral Bracho y la poesía norteamericana con Allen Ginsberg, John Asbery y Robert Creeley principalmente. Fue la época que pudiéramos nombrar como, "Todo lo sólido se desvanece en el aire". Y, como profecía de la cita de Marshall Bermang, sucedió

que aquellos textos y autores se desvanecieran también en el aire, dejando algunos poemas como "Jeanot o el otro ruido de la noche", de Ricardo A. Pérez: un texto extenso de tono narrativo, donde la fábula insiste en trastocar los límites de tres sujetos encadenados a la imposibilidad de una pasión. Uno de los textos que recuerdo por su intensidad; por la estructura rota del sujeto y del contexto. Un texto donde lo que está en el presente se ha fugado al pasado, a otra historia oculta y paralela. La rareza, la subordinación de ambientes reciclados, la ironía, la burla, la palabra machacando sobre otra palabra descontextualizada hasta sacar todas sus vetas a lo actual. Figuras teatrales, arabescos para huir de lo real. Clásico y vanguardista al mismo tiempo.

"Retrato de Hooper", de Carlos Aguilera, un texto muy experimental, caricaturesco y "Mao" un texto político; "N" de Sánchez Mejía, con claras influencias de Sanguinetti; "Father Paund" de Saunders, con influencias de Ezra Paund, en su alteración de la sintaxis, de la grafía, de los espacios en blanco del texto, (un Paund tropical) forman el esqueleto de un "espíritu burlón" que opera tímidamente, pero desde la vanguardia. ¿Pero hubo vanguardia en aquella época? Recuerdo como Carlos Augusto Alfonso, en los años 80, recitaba su poema KTP al ritmo de la batería (KTP era el nombre de la máquina cortadora de caña usada en las zafras millonarias). Pero, salvo vanguardismo por las minúsculas o por las roturas producidas en las sintaxis o por la musicalidad, sobre todo en la poética irreverente de Carlos Aguilera o en los performances que realizó (con precariedad de materiales - porque no había ni ratas por los alrededores-, ¡cómo entonces cazar conejos!), esto no fue posible. Eso sí, apunto esta intención de algunos integrantes de Diáspora (¿) y de Carlos Augusto, con "Serbal", como los únicos intentos serios de una vanguardia poética cubana.

Poco cruce de revistas, carencia de discusiones u otros intentos de que sobreviviera esa vanguardia poética cuando las revistas pertenecen solamente a una promoción cultural institucionalizada como vanguardia política. Solo nombrarse como grupo, "Paideia", 1989, proyecto que comenzó con un programa de televisión y que se propuso la desacralización del artista o, "Diásporas (s?)", era ya una provocación a los estatismos que la época dispuso. A diferencia de la vanguardia del 27, esta vanguardia pobre y colapsada, fue creada ante todo, por poetas (muchos de los pintores ya habían abandonado la isla) y creo que

tuvo la influencia de la visita del poeta austriaco Ide Hinse a La Habana con sus perfomances en la azotea.

Fue un tiempo, repito, de éxodo, de pérdidas (como el suicidio de Ángel Escobar hace ya catorce años, y de Raúl Hernández Novás). "La nave que se hunde, siempre/ da náufragos; y todos los náufragos son huérfanos/ y creen en los augurios/ esas supersticiones que tienen los deseosos/ pueden hacerlos llegar a otra costa, a una costa cualquiera:/ calafatear otro barco y hacerse,/ de nuevo, a la mar...hasta que la nave que cuidan sin melindres vuelva a hundirse./Son además, tercos./Volverán a construirla/ una nave y otra son la misma/ porque tienen paciencia y orgullo, y saben que siempre fueron náufragos, que siempre fueron huérfanos...en cada naufragio hay el vestigio de algo.../Pero yo no soy un náufrago." (De, "El tablón del ahogado", de Ángel Escobar).

Escobar, muerto antes de los cuarenta años, es uno de los más fuertes y lúcidos poetas cubanos. Rompe la sintaxis, la confianza, la finalidad, para crear certezas en medio del desamparo. Hay en él una fuerza, una energía, un dolor, cuyo detallismo cala en un "tomacorriente" que se vuelve sentimiento y obsesión. Hay una antología publicada recientemente con toda su obra.

Y QUIÉN IBA A PODER CONTRA SU PRISA

Los poemas suyos que hallé entre otros papeles amarillentos, pertenecen a una antología llamada "La vía pública".Tampoco recuerdo el motivo por el que me los dejó. Su estilo conversacional se enfrenta al tema de la locura al tratarla contra la razón: "los locos seguiremos piedra y piedra/ contra el techo de zinc de su cordura". (De, "La canción del loco").

Lucha Ángel por un lugar en el país de la razón y quiere que la razón sea su causa. "Y por eso me dicen transeúnte, porque siempre las puertas/ me dan con el trasero en pleno rostro". (De, "Las puertas"). Los normales, sanos y cuerdos tienen normas que mantener y sabe que sus puertas estarán cerradas para él, el "huérfano abollado".

(El otro tema de Ángel Escobar es la confianza en la entrega, en la fidelidad. Cordura y confianza son sus estímulos. "El sol se reduce a cuatro noches/ para

tocar mi bulto de confianzas". (De, "Canción de última hora"). Antes de leer esta mañana de nuevo sus poemas –mañana de un día cualquiera en que mi gata está muy grave; un amigo llegó pidiéndome albergue desde Santi Spíritu; los cubanos ganaron a Puerto Rico en el béisbol, por lo que hay estruendo en toda la cuadra; pisé un ratón moribundo en la escalera al bajar; se me cayó un espejo y ¡se fragmentó!, cuando otro amigo se fue para siempre del país. Tal vez por todos esos motivos, voy a pensar en la dichosa cordura y en el profundo razonamiento con el que Ángel tomó la profesión de Poeta y de Cuerdo).

Cada acto es una avería que taladra el texto que Ángel Escobar sin alardes ni extravagancias ni trucos usa para disfrazar "la locura", produciéndola como un juego desde la lógica y la razón. Porque, él estaba dentro de ella, no tenía que tomar de afuera fuerzas prestadas ni renovarlas con trampas para cazar ratones o arabescos mentales. Los poemas fueron un descanso para él, un lugar de sosiego; un alto al agobio de vivir. Sin ellos, "como un cordón de hormigas metiéndose en el hueco" (De, "Canción de última hora") ¿cómo soportar el peso de la enfermedad y la sinrazón?

Otro tema de Ángel es el miedo: "...y he llegado a saber que soy un hombre / y que me tengo miedo", dice. (De, "Canción de última hora"). Este es un tema sobre los que, no pocos han escrito, filósofos, escritores (recuerdo la magnífica cita de Hobbes con la que Roland Barthes comienza su libro "El placer del texto" y pienso en su relación con los poemas y la vida de Ángel Escobar: "la ùnica pasión de mi vida ha sido el miedo", nos dice).

Queríamos hacer un puente, ese gran barco que pasa, obviar su territorialidad, ortodoxias o maniqueísmos. Queríamos una permanencia, una antología, un grito, una revista, algo que no "hiciera agua" por todas partes; algo que resistiera (como el tablón de Ángel), la afirmación de que todo no había sido fracaso, engaño, postergación. Algo, que no delimitara a la cultura ese gran barco que pasa.

Prometí hablar más de un poeta marginal de la generación de los 80: Juan Carlos Flores, con su libro "Los pájaros escritos", premio David 1990, y cito parte de un prólogo que escribí con motivo de su libro "Distintos modos de cavar un túnel" (premio Julián del Casal 2002):

"...la circularidad es su única posesión. Baja hasta los fosos, las tuberías, los caños perforados por donde su paso-palabra resuena como un golpe seco y

vibrante. Ese gong metálico es un corazón de hojalata que abre y cierra frases fundidas (heridas) de animal que devora sus propios huesos.

No tiene salida ni oportunidad más que roer el hueso dejado, lamer la pata (la sarna-soledad), los recovecos del horror, su marginalidad. Estos poemas recorren al ciudad por debajo, se instalan en el submundo donde los charcos, las ratas, acogen al vagabundo que resiste las embestidas de un afuera soñado. No hay exteriores ni ventanas, hay huecos, pisadas sobre un césped cortado de raíz y calcinado luego...Su influencia más cara es la limpieza de los versos ingleses, alemanes, rusos, "alamares"; la exactitud y la constancia de las repeticiones para lograr el efecto de vencimiento...Suburbano de profesión, Juan Carlos Flores es un niño callejero y maldito...El niño esquiso que hace malabares con la única verdad que tiene: su oficio de "escribidor", como vividor de lo escrito, como comedor de una especie de opio que se llama poesía-mandrágora...Ningún otro poeta vivo que yo conozca, habla de la poesía y de los poetas como él. Él vive de sus lecturas: su comida es la palabra, una perforación intestinal..."

Hijos de los 70

Creo que el fenómeno de la escasez de poetas tuvo su raíz en los años 70, y que padecemos aún, del residuo de aquel nubarrón, "el quinquenio gris", como se ha llamado a esa época marcada por la desesperanza que deja la ortodoxia y la censura. Los que fueron concebidos por entonces, no han resucitado todavía de los daños recibidos por aquellas radiaciones. Extraña generación que emerge del vacío de un mundo cada vez más deshecho; de la escasez de bibliotecas, maestros y abastecimientos (así como de todo el cine que vimos ruso, polaco, húngaro, francés, alemán por los años 80): Javier Marimón, Leymen Pérez, Matanzas; Marcelo Morales, Leonardo Guevara, Ramón Hondal y Lizabel Mónica, La Habana; Pablo de Cuba, Oscar Cruz, Santiago de Cuba; José Ramón Sánchez, Guantánamo; Jamila Medina, Holguín; Legna Rodríguez, Camagüey; Luis Eligio Pérez y Amaury Carbó, Alamar. Cada uno, a su manera, convirtiéndose en vigilantes de la noche: "...vigilante, qué me cuentas de la noche"; aferrándose a la materialidad de la frase que no sostiene ya creencia alguna. Solo, palabras

escépticas que aspiran a otra ruta ante tal pérdida (la, del hijo menos pródigo, un anti-héroe).

Javier Marimón, autor de *"El gatico Vasia" y "El gran lunes"* un libro-arte editado por "Vigía", reside hace años en Texas. Pablo de Cuba vive también allí, y Leonardo Guevara, en Illinois. Marimón está más influido por el cine, el teatro: le importa lo visual, esos nuevos valores que actúan en el ojo. Sus movimientos son anárquicos, centrífugos (sustituidos por el dial de un radio que da la misma noticia) escapando a la razón; produciendo una paralización del ego: hacia delante, hacia atrás, sobre deseos insignificantes que se atropellan en el texto, pretendiendo no usar palabras como discursos, sino como gestos, como velocidad; con ritmo entrecortado sobre el muro de ese límite de cemento pegajoso del Malecón.

Hace poco, leí un segundo libro aún inédito de Pablo de Cuba, "País sin gramática" que rescata "lo incompleto" de Lorenzo García Vega (el poeta maldito de, "Orígenes") sobre quien hizo su tesis. Estructura férrea donde construir un parque de diversiones temáticas a través de paréntesis, disociaciones; hierros fundidos con voces intercaladas, parapetos; estableciendo otra apuesta a la duda que viene: "quién podría dar fe –necesidad única- de frases como Sagrada familia o Dios mío..." *("De Zaratrustra y otros equívocos"*, E. Extramuros) Mientras que, Leonardo Guevara busca teatralidad, *altisonancia*, y no solo experimenta con el verso, sino con el cuerpo.

Pasé años esperando el relevo porque, la panorámica de la última década de la poesía en la Isla es fugaz, escurridiza, no ocurre una sedimentación como en los 80 y 90, cuando escuché al poeta oriental, José Ramón Sánchez leer, "El lobo: cordel veloz que por mi odio pasa", en sus poemarios: *"Aislada noche"* (Letras Cubanas, 2005) y *"Marabuzal"* (inédito) pide cuentas, ubicación: "estoy subido en una isla y no lo se". En textos breves o de gran diapasón, reivindica otra vez la poesía civil. En su poemario *"Las posesiones"* (Letras Cubanas, 2009) Oscar Cruz busca, "las necesidades más aborrecibles y urgentes...cuando todo lo demás me haya abandonado", poesía como única salvación.

Lo rural vuelve a aparecer, no como arabesco o paisaje, sino volviendo a la escritura salvaje. Se, que no hay encadenamiento entre los acontecimientos de carácter salvaje, que no nos piden demostración, son acciones que ocurren,

estallan. En Cruz, cuando algo está a punto de enfocarse, se retuerce. En su poema "Quemaduras" habla "...obras de autores rusos como premios" y luego, las quemaba. Poemas drásticos, llenos de dolor, ternura, rencor, ante la desaparición del mundo prometido, que golpea como lo golpearon a él, al que encontró para defenderse: "(guantes-casa), (guantes-padre), (guantes-tierra)", proponiendo "una física del gesto absoluto", como quería Artaud.

Jamila Medina publicó, "Huecos de araña" (premio David, 2008), retomando el tema femenino sin nostalgia, con atrevimiento, ironía: "La mujer sintió el vidrio punzante en el pie izquierdo...la mujer el otro...desiguales sobre todos en su humedad...calibán, caribe, caribú." Versos irreverentes, clásicos como cuando usa elementos de la mitología; profanos en su defensa de lo actual: "Mujer-hada... mujer-bruja...mujer-sierpe...mujer cielo de la boca...mujer boca del estómago."

Pocos poetas logran con pinceladas mínimas, balbuceos, silencios, un mundo fantasmal. Así, Ramón Hondal, espíritu refinado y parisino: "la música un gesto oculto...donde no hay nota", se toca en un "mal piano...que se equivoca por placer". ("Acordes"). El tormento e imposibilidad da un vacío que no quiere rellenarse, con esa "letra...sin voz", diría, donde halla como Simone Weil: "dos formas de matarse: suicidio o desapego".

En, "*Corrientes coloniales*", Leymen Pérez (Letras Cubanas, 2007) reconstruye la historia del mundo colonial; sus espacios perdidos, intactos bajo el desastre, aunque, su voz, cáustica, sospecha de su imposible reconstrucción. Mientras, Legna Rodríguez, en "Ciudad de pobres corazones", e "Instalando me" (Ácana) busca un sujeto no lírico: un "sujeto desubicado...que no sabe dónde meterse" y siente, "que lo único que hicimos hasta ahora es callar". En "Chicle", un solo ejemplar editado por Mizako, habla de: "almohadilla sanitaria", "uretra", "la perra sin hueso, sin sopa...", es lo más lírico que puede mostrar. Lizabel Mónica hacía perfomances (a pesar de que la literatura cubana ha sido poco preformativa). Luego, buscó conceptos como ejes: yo diría, que su poética se mueve más dentro del ensayo literario y la filosofía, desarrollando una calculada frialdad.

Hay pocos libros o reseñas sobre la Zonafranca, grupo de Alamar, al este de la Ciudad de La Habana, donde habitan poetas que esculpen, dibujan, cantan, como parte de su vida cotidiana en Alamar. El ritmo de sus textos proviene de la geometría cuadriculada compuesta por edificios de microbrigada hechos

para "el hombre nuevo". Juan Carlos Flores de la generación anterior ("*Los pájaros escritos*" (Unión, 1994), "*Distintos modos de cavar un túnel*" (Unión 2003), "*El contragolpe*" (Letras Cubanas, 2009) fue el eje de este proyecto que mezcla la escritura al reggae, al hip-hop, al rap, con estructuras gráficas y espaciales: tradición y experimentalidad a la vez. Desde sus "realidades disparatadas" ellos asumen su pasión mística en un espectáculo que pide confianza, fe.

Nombraré solo a dos: Luis Eligio Pérez rotura el pavimento, la conciencia; cava una franja por donde aparecen los desagües arrastrando aguas albañales. "Estado de guerra", es un ensayo poético donde encontramos otra "Calzada de Jesús del Monte", su homenaje a Eliseo Diego, pero taladrando lo actual. Amaury Pacheco usa trajes con residuos de las tiendas en divisa y una cazuela en la cabeza, replica del sombrero de Manuel de Zequeira. "Grito curi curi...es un hijo del pueblo". Con esta indumentaria, transita las calles entre frases lanzadas desde muchos ángulos como su propia estampa: robótica, parapléjica.

No quiero olvidar a las revistas artesanales o digitales como: "Arique", de Matanzas, de la última década, que incluye a poetas de la región y de otras latitudes; "Mar desnudo" también de Matanzas, con veinticuatro números ya, un cuerpo muy completo, donde han publicado autores de todo el país, por ejemplo, Marcelo Morales, "Cinema", 1997, premio Pinos Nuevos y "Materia", Ediciones Unión, 2009, premio Julián del Casal; "Letra c@n acento" que publica de diferentes generaciones en la Isla junto con otros autores que no viven ya aquí; "Árbol invertido" realizada en Ciego de Ávila por Ileana Álvarez y Francis Sánchez; el blog "del palenque" donde se ha hecho un homenaje al poeta Domingo Alfonso por sus setenta y cinco años, y publican textos del grupo "Diásporas (¿)" intentando rescatar una memoria a punto de desaparecer; "Desliz" realizada por Lizabel Mónica con críticas, ensayos e información cultural y "La noria" con tres números, de un amplio espectro literario que incluye traducciones, realizada por José Ramón Sánchez y Oscar Cruz, en Oriente.

Esto es una muestra discreta de lo que he cazado aquí o allá, desde los andamios. Voces desperdigadas como un tiempo que, luego del nubarrón, dejó chubascos, granizo, ceniza negra esparcida, intermitentemente.

Azotea, 10 de octubre 2010

ANNA DEENY

THINGS WE LAMENT: MAROSA DI GIORGIO'S *CLAVEL Y TENEBRARIO*[1]

Quisiera contar cómo nacían las cosas.
I'd like to tell how things were born.
—Marosa di Giorgio, Clavel y tenebrario (1979)

How do we lament a change in our interpretive processes or, more specifically, figure meaning circumscribed within our minds, the possibility of a certain otherness gone lost? Marosa di Giorgio's *Clavel y tenebrario*, directs our attention to things around us and how they "were born"—pots, pans, cutlery, frogs, mushrooms, flowers—things with which we dwell that recall an irrecuperable childlike world. These things aren't striking because of their innocence, strangeness, or unusual juxtaposition with other things, but because of the promise—how they mean—inherent and arising from their simple presence, and because of how that promise then recedes. The things in *Clavel y tenebrario* are born in the dark surrounded by multiple catastrophic circumstances; di Giorgio's text signals the Uruguayan military dictatorship under which she wrote and published in the 1970s, the Christian crucifixion, and, finally, Lamentations, a book of the Jewish *Tanakh* and the *Bible's* Old Testament that mourns the conquest of Jerusalem in the sixth century BC by the Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar.[2] Di Giorgio

grounds her poetry in the dictatorship and a seemingly endless history of oppression—that of the Jews—in addition to Lamentations, a sacred poetic text that also attends to and laments radical changes in the processes by which its poetic voices interpret the world around them.

Clavel y tenebrario

A flower thought to be indigenous to the Mediterranean region, the *clavel* thrives mostly in family owned farms throughout Marosa di Giorgio's hometown, Salto, Uruguay. *Clavar* in Spanish literally means "to nail" or "to hammer." But the flower's species, *caryophyllus*, is derived either from the Greek *karyophullon* or the Arabic *karanful*, meaning "clove or pink color." *Caryophyllus* is also related to the Latin *carne*, "flesh," the English "carnation," and thus the flower's association with the Christian "incarnation." In the Southern Cone, the carnation's center and surrounding leaves have been likened to the ocular pupil and iris. It seems this visual resemblance gave way to medicinal uses of the flower as infusions made with the carnation's leaves were once prepared to reinvigorate weary eyes and cleans ocular infections.[3] *Clavel* thus converges the fleshy eye with flesh itself, the embodiment of otherworldliness, and the act of hammering, clubbing or nailing a metal or wooden spike with a broadened flat head into a material porous enough to give way to it.

The *clavel's* many associations are intensified in *tenebrario*. From the Latin *tenebrae*, meaning "darkness," the *tenebrario* is a large triangular candelabrum. It's used during the matins and lauds throughout the last days of the Christian Holy Week, a period that recalls the torture and execution of Jesus who was nailed to a cross. At the start of each Tenebrae ceremony, all of the candelabrum's fifteen candles are lit. As one or several in attendance chant the book of Lamentations, each flame but the topmost is extinguished successively. The Tenebrae ceremonies move toward almost absolute darkness accompanied by a cacophonous racket as the attendants silently leave. Again, Lamentations mourns the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. But the actual conquest that culminates in the wrecking of the Temple, along with the imprisonment, enslavement, murder and

exile of the Jews, is recounted in the preceding Book of Jeremiah. In these texts, God is attributed with having directed this ferocity as punishment for the city's sinfulness. The *tenebrario* is thus the centerpiece of a ceremony that represents mourning and redemption, torture, cruelty and sacrifice, as it also manifests a radical alteration in ocular and aural conditions. Light receding, darkness expanding, sound convulsing—these are the challenges of poetic figuration that di Giorgio draws attention to in the title of her book.

Lamentations

In Hebrew, the book of Lamentations is called *Eicha* (אֵיכָה,'êkâ) meaning "Alas" but also "How." It's as much an exclamation of grief, of its dimensions, as a grappling with its perplexing causes and existence—"How is this possible?" A combination of various forms that include the funeral dirge and communal lament, Lamentations is composed of five poems. All poems but the last are an acrostic series of elegies in which each verse begins with a letter of the twenty-two letter Hebrew alphabet. Lamentations 1 and 2 represent the personification of Zion as a devastated and weeping woman. Zion bewails the death of her children and the ruination of her city, as she furiously demands attention from God and those who pass by. "O Lord, look and consider how worthless I have become! / Come, all you who pass by on the road, consider and see: Is there any pain like my pain—that which He caused me."[4] She also accuses God of extreme ferocity and questions the scope of his cruelty. "Should women eat what they bore, the children they have raised?... / You killed them on the day of your wrath, slaughtering without mercy. / You invited, as though to a festival, men to attack me from all sides."[5]

Lamentations 3 is made up of sixty-six very short verses as each letter is repeated three times, establishing a rhythmic climax with a centripetal force that draws attention away from the first and second poems.[6] Even though the first person singular narrator here mourns for those who suffer and die, the effects of that mourning upon his own soul, body and capacity to figure seem to be his main concern. Witnessing the extent of God's wrath—children dying of hunger, mothers eating those dead children, rape, abandonment and alienation—breaks

down his ability to see and speak. He says, "I am the man who has seen hardship under the rod of his anger. / He led and guided me into darkness and gloom."[7] Deprived of the sense of sight, the narrator's body has lost its formal integrity —"He wore out my flesh and skin; he broke my bones."[8] And later, "He ground my teeth in the gravel; he trampled me into the dust."[9]

Although Zion admits guilt, a convention of the lament, as Tod Linafelt has observed, the emphasis of the first two poems is on her—the city's—suffering and the unanswered questions she brashly poses to God. Linafelt notes that Christian exegesis in the modern era de-emphasizes and even belittles Zion's stance that "demands a response on behalf of her children," a response she never receives. Instead, Christian critics privilege the third poem in which the poetic voice is interpreted as a male narrator who gets beyond his grief and guilt to achieve hope.[10] Linafelt recuperates the history of Jewish exegesis of Lamentations after Auschwitz in order to emphasize "the expression of *suffering* rather than the meaning behind it...the vicissitudes of *survival* [rather] than the abstractions of sin and guilt...*protest* as a religious posture [rather] than capitulation or confession."[11] Di Giorgio engages both exegetical positions that pertain to *Eicha*, the first being a condition of collective suffering that has no beyond, no other side or recourse—suffering *as protest* represented through Zion, the city. The second pertains to Jeremiah's challenge, which is how to figure oneself—how to see and speak—as the conditions of that figuration change, as light and the distinctions of sound are transformed to darkness and cacophony.

Darkness

Like the first and second poems of Lamentations, the first poem of *Clavel y tenebrario* tells of the "tragedy that had already begun." Here di Giorgio represents what seems like "the end of everything":

> 1
>
> Cuando se dieron cuenta, la tragedia ya había empezado. Una nube vino, rápida, del sur, y se posó sobre la casa, negra, gris, de un blanco

tenebroso, llena de granizos y silbados, daba a ratos, su terrible uva.

Y las aves, a punto de morir, caían sobre el patio. Las palomas charlatanas, ya, como papeles, como recuerdos; y los loros de alas de oro, que habían dicho grandes discursos, de pie, sobre el naranjo, bajaban más allá—sin ton ni son—, como ramos de flores multicolores.

Parecía que era el final de todo.

Las almas tenían miedo y espiaban por un resquicio, la rota eternidad.[12]

1

When 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 on 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 from a crevice they spied, the broken eternity.[13]

The poem begins with "cuando"—"when"—and establishes a difference between the tragedy *itself*—an accumulation of historical and religious references grounded in the book's title—and the noticing of it. "Already begun" acquires an unstoppable and monstrous momentum so tenuously opposed by "noticed" and the delicate bodies that fall. Right away di Giorgio draws attention to the military dictatorship under which she lived that officially began in 1973. In fact, by the time they noticed it was too late. Unlike Chile's 1973 coup, Uruguay's president Jorge Pacheco Areco declared a state of exception in 1968. But the Uruguayan oligarchy had already begun to systematically subvert popular movements and democracy as well as transfer economic and financial control to the International

Monetary Fund. As Mauricio Rosencof, a political activist, poet, and playwright notes, as early as 1966 there were "political prisoners, and 'extraofficially,' the governments headed by Pacheco and his successor, Juan María Bordaberry, were dictatorial in nature. Pacheco governed by decree, established a 'death squad,' closed newspapers, censored songs, and killed students. By 1972 Uruguayan prisons and barracks were filled to capacity. Torture, rape, and death were the order of the day even before the coup of February 9 (1973). This remained the state of affairs until March 1984."[14]

Like the cacophony that accompanies the Tenebrae ceremony and the progressively extinguished candles, the "hailing and shrilling," the "tenebrous" clouds gain historical specificity as they "sit" over that house in an acute letting loose of their terror. Animals here are personified as producers of language interrupted—the "chattering doves" now like paper and the "great lectures" of the parrots that fall "over there." Even though di Giorgio emphasizes the corporeality of the doves and parrots, the poem closes with bodiless "souls" who "spy." Bodies are now indistinguishable from the darkness that encompasses them. The end of everything here is when the body is removed as the threshold between the soul and the world that surrounds it. But the hidden soul retains the qualities of the body that sees. In other words, although the conditions of representation break down, representation occurs anyway. That is, the souls do see.

An estimated one in every sixty citizens was arrested during the dictatorship as the government dismantled trade unions, educational institutions at every level, and proscribed any type of political, intellectual, or cultural resistance. Rosencof, who was held in solitary confinement for eleven years, describes the extreme physical and emotional conditions that included torture in addition to a deprivation of the senses, particularly that of light. In this poem darkness breaks down the sound of voice: "Taparon la luz, / censuraron las ventanas, / la voz fue disuelta, / todo era nada. / Pero estaban ellos, / afuera. / Allí estaban." ("They blocked out the light / they censored the windows, / dissolved the voice, / everything was nothing. But they were there, / outside. / They were there.")[15] Also using sensorial terms, Uruguayan journalist and novelist Eduardo Galeano describes a more generalized physical and political repression: "One in every eighty Uruguayans had a hood tied on his head while the rest, doomed to isolation

and solitary confinement even when spared the pain of torture, wore invisible hoods as well."[16] But because Rosencof had no way of writing during his confinement, he assiduously elaborated and then memorized poems in the darkness and in his mind, where, unlike his body, poetic form eluded his jailers's reach. This individual, solitary work of the mind—the continuous process of reinterpretation—was his only form of resistance. "Ours was a defeat with no possibility of salvation. But no creature can bear a state of permanent frustration; faced with one, the brain struggles—however quixotically—if not to change reality, at least to reinterpret it."[17] Rosencof navigates between Zion's overwhelming sense of "no possibility of salvation" and Jeremiah's struggle, not to interpret or change "reality," but to *reinterpret* within the material conditions of darkness and torture, to persist in the successive work of thought and language through poetic form.

Susan Stewart traces the philosophical and poetic investigations of the darkness, or the Night, in works such as Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Mind*, Emmanuel Levinas's *Existence and Existents*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the Hebrew Scriptures. She suggests that from an imaginary reservoir of metaphorical darkness—the "loneliness of the mind"—we desire and begin to perceive and name objects through sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. As that darkness recedes, we struggle to distinguish our own bodies, our own difference among these objects and among one another. This, argues Stewart, is the ultimate task of poetry and *poiesis*: to "counter the oblivion that is darkness."[18] For Stewart, poetry is the weft of language that also establishes the most basic grounds for our individual and communal relationships. *Poiesis* is the process of figuration, a material struggle, that simultaneously involves—and this is its purpose—an awaking of the senses and *reciprocal* recognition, the foundation of "intersubjective meaning," of "individual and social existence." As an "anthropomorphic project," poetic figuration is continuous, an emergence from the darkness that is constantly embedded with its own articulation, its own emergence, toward the other. Poetic language is thus encoded with its own genetic memory that is a struggle for meaning from nothingness, from oblivion, from no "this is." However, what is striking about Rosencof's poetry and di Giorgio's things born in the dark is that those things are born *regardless* of the dark, regardless of the possibility of social existence, intersubjectivity or reciprocal recognition.

Unlike Genesis that recounts the beginning of light from darkness, Lamentations, the Tenebrae ceremony, and *Clavel y tenebrario* manifest how the opposite occurs, how darkness comes upon us, how the conditions under which we perceive and signify are withdrawn or altered, and how the poetic voice, the narrator and Zion, are left utterly alone in those conditions. However, in both texts, the presence of darkness doesn't necessarily indicate the impossibility of form. In Lamentations, the alphabet, as the visible notes or building blocks of words and sounds, mediate the darkness that consumes the narrator's mind, soul and body. Although the darkness seems inseparable from the flesh, the bones of language, namely letters, remain to be built back up again. David H. Smythes suggests, for example, that Igor Stravinsky's aim in his 1958 serialist rendition of Lamentations, *Threni*, "was to recover and to recreate the shattered acrostics of the biblical original."[19] Indeed, the Latin and other translations of the Hebrew text had dismantled its acrostic dimension and further emphasized the catastrophic history to which it refers.[20] Thus, for the listeners and readers of Lamentations, the letters might be understood as the recovered fragments of meaning, remains that are proof of violation or the promise of future forms.[21]

But as Susan Gubar has observed, after Auschwitz transnational Jewish poets in particular felt deep misgivings about the use of various language techniques, including acrostics. She suggests that, although such forms may provide distance between the poet and "painful recollections," its rules "recall the language rules (of euphemism, but also of euphonious phrase-making and or archival cataloguing) that played an ominous role in the 'final solution.'"[22] Marguerite Feitlowitz has written of the ubiquitous "perversion" of language, language as torture, derived from and sustained through the deployment of similar language techniques by the military regime in Argentina.[23] However, Gubar points to Anna Rabinowitz's acrostics that signal Lamentations in *Darkling* (2001), and suggests that perhaps such poetic discipline may afford "a last refuge for subjective resistance once the meaning-content of words—who constitutes a human being, for instance, and who a rodent or a cancer—has been so horrifically perverted."[24] Language techniques offer poets "refuge," like the repetition involved in ritual, precisely when "meaning-content" is most at stake. And such a refuge is necessarily re-collected, underscoring that language is as in the mind

as it is a physical material to be worked with and assembled through processes that imply and require hands, touch, mouths, breath and proximity. Even reassembled and recuperated from history's wreckages, the shattered acrostics, like rubbled bricks, convey that, perhaps if we just go through the motions of form, we might construct meaning again.

While the alphabet remains for the poetic and musical exegesis of Lamentations, what's left for di Giorgio are things, things in themselves—picked up like Zion's debris—and our recollection of the interpretation of those things. On the one hand, things elicit the promise of future forms. On the other, di Giorgio laments a specific change in the conditions of figuration. This change ultimately constitutes the destruction of the infinite alterity of things, the infinite combinations, we could say, like Stravinsky's musical notes or that formal promise. The rhetoric of institutions, laws, and torture dictated by regimes such as the Nazi's and Southern Cone dictatorships, foreclosed such multifarious dimensions of language. Di Giorgio's lamentation of things draws attention to things as the "last refuge for subjective resistance once the meaning-content of words...has been so horrifically perverted."

How Things Were Born

The initial fourteen poems of *Clavel y tenebrario* move between "the terrible winds," flying hares, strange childhood memories, and the poetic voice's desire to "find a cavern and close the entrance." In poem 15, di Giorgio gestures toward what she is doing in the work as a whole.

> Quisiera contar cómo nacían las cosas.
>
> Cuando ocupábamos aquella vivienda, que no tenía nada de particular. Casi nada. Con sus numerosas alcobas en las que hacíamos representaciones, que los vecinos espiaban por todas las puertas y ventanas. En uno de esos habitáculos—pero, uno sin techo y sin piso—, desde la tierra, a veces, desde la noche hasta el alba, nacían las cosas: cubiertos, ralladores, platos, ollas, tazas. Todo allí, pulcro,

tierno y casi tembloroso. Lo llevábamos a la cocina para utilizarlo, y nunca se nos ocurrió hacer negocio.

Y cuando nos mudamos a otra vivienda tampoco nadie comentó nada.[25]

I'd like to tell how things were born.

When we lived in that house, that had nothing in particular. Almost nothing. With its many bedrooms in which we put on shows, and that neighbors spied through all the doors and windows. In one of those rooms —but, one with no roof and no floor—, from the dirt, sometimes, from the night until dawn, things were born: utensils, graters, plates, pots, cups. All over there, delicate, tender and almost trembling. We'd go to the kitchen to make use of these things, and selling them never occurred to us.

And when we moved to another home no one spoke of this there either.

I tell it, as, of, now, it seems like a tale.

Throughout ordinary rooms in a country house that had almost nothing in particular, simple domestic things—pots, cups, graters, utensils—come into existence open to earth and sky throughout the night. What appears to be an extraordinary event "that the neighbors spied through windows and doors," is plainly described and decidedly unremarkable. The poetic voice seems to personify the things as "tender and almost trembling." However, "Todo allí," "All over there," unhinges them from absolute personification by returning to an emphasis upon their specificity in that particular place—*all there*, in the house with many rooms—and signals as much the things as what happened.

The importance of limiting the force of personification and its propensity for reflecting what is human has to do with an emphasis not upon what is recognizable to us, but rather upon what is other. While these things may be like or as us, their presence among us is not so we can see ourselves, confer to them a face through prosopopoeia, or project our qualities upon them, but so we can acknowledge something else, something always other. The poetic voice also

distinguishes between their household functions, their culinary usefulness, and potential monetary value—"selling them never occurred to us." Their value, their signifying potential is *here*, near us, as we dwell and represent with and among them. To sell these things would be to transform them into mere objects, diminish, limit and in fact destroy their specific, local, signifying potential.

Here things emerge in the dark and the dominating imperfect tense—"nacían," "ocupábamos," "hacíamos," "llevábamos"—produces a melancholic temporal and grammatical structure. That is, the imperfect tense throughout the poem accumulates to inundate the present tenses of the first and last lines, filling the first person singular of those lines with what the collective can't let go or surpass. Indeed the continuous past *breathes through* the present, like the four commas of that same last line—"Lo cuento, ahora, que, ya, parece un cuento." Visually di Giorgio's unexpected punctuation seems extraneous, growing as mushrooms on a kitchen floor or hopping as gemmed frogs onto a plate. Aurally and rhythmically they might have served as specific indications to di Giorgio during her own poetic recitations; each comma requires a pause. But so many in succession create the need for several breaths and recall how sighing, weeping, or lamenting interrupt speaking. The past and body are materialized together through these syncopations of what the words articulate.

Di Giorgio's poetry often presents such scenes in which kitchens, childhood experiences, flora, fauna, horror, darkness, frogs, eccentric aunts, dolls, fairies, and even crucifixions are seamlessly woven together. Her verses have been described as "hybrid...poems in prose" that range from the *neobarroco* and *neobarroso* to camp and kitsch, evading any attempts to classify them.[26] But this material and critical range reflects how she continuously illustrates the processes of a highly individualized interpretation of things as not fully contingent upon any type of communal recognition.[27] Poetic figuration is liberated of intersubjectivity, that is, whether the neighbors spied in poem 15 or not is irrelevant to representation in and of itself.

At the same time, even though di Giorgio delineates a semi-enclosed space, through her and our embodied readings of the text, we're inadvertently drawn into a community. When that unusual punctuation grows into a line, our breathing is also made unusually present, disrupted, and directed. Our bodies are also

made to recall the irregular respiratory rhythms of lamenting. These are rhythms that, as Francine Masiello has observed, help us imagine meaning beyond the written word and purview of the law. While di Giorgio figures the interpretation of things in *Clavel y tenebrario* as a highly individualized process independent of communal recognition, she simultaneously laments that process—it exists in the past and something has changed—as she draws attention to that change because it is also the result of a communal horror. As we read these lines, we breathe like the poet breathes, we lament as she, as the poem—perhaps even as the poem as a thing itself—laments.

In *The Face of Things*, Silvia Benso brings together Heidegger's consideration of things in themselves and Levinas's reflections upon otherness. Heidegger attempts to recuperate the interpretation of things among us as we distinguish them from a definitive scientific gaze. He suggests that the thing is constituted by what he calls the Fourfold—earth, sky, divine and mortal. For Levinas, ethics opens up a space for Otherness through the notion of the face of the other. What Benso identifies in both Heidegger and Levinas is their emphasis upon a *continuously unknowable* otherness. She explains, "Ethics becomes for Levinas the name for this very special metaphysical relation between the self and an Other that is always beyond conceptualization, and yet is the ultimate origin of all meaning, truth, and reason. ...In its absolute, infinite, over-and ever-flowing transcendence, the other becomes the ungrounded and ungroundable ground of Levinas's project."[28] The other becomes the point of reference that unbinds any point of reference, analogies, paradigms, or models because there's no way of grounding it in what we already know. In addition to the idea of a continuously unknowable otherness, what's also significant for Levinas, Heidegger, and di Giorgio is that those things and faces are near; they're close, they're around us and within reach.

Teresa Porzecanski and María Rosa Olivera-Williams have considered di Giorgio's nocturnal, domestic, natural and childhood spaces to be manifestations of an isolated conscious or unconscious mind that undermines a reality that was "under siege" during the military dictatorship.[29] Both critics note a material proximity—a closeness and even a fusion—in di Giorgio's poetry in which the poetic voice or "I" merges with the things it observes. Porzecanski suggests

that di Giorgio, working "outside of the tradition of nativism" and *costumbrismo* that depicts "country dwellers as wild, silent and rebellious creatures," offers "a strikingly original vision of the relationship between the small farmers of northern Uruguay and the flora and fauna of the region." She thus creates "a cosmology of the garden, of an anthropomorphization of the natural world, of a transubstantiation of the allegorical dimensions of myth, of nature as something sacred, alive, animated." Cosmologies, anthropomorphization, and transubstantiations bring about an "intense presence of a reality independent of the present, underscored by the ordered repetition of seasons, cycles, natural phenomena, births and deaths that point to a dimension that has neither a beginning nor an end."[30] Although these temporal and metaphorical qualities characterize much of di Giorgio's oeuvre, in *Clavel y tenebrario* she indicates specific histories—her own present and that of the Jews. Here "closeness" signals di Giorgio's sustained emphasis upon how we engage and figure things in and of themselves—these things of her specific world—while placing that figuration under the lens of particular types of oppression and possible responses to that oppression.

With attention to closeness, Benso develops an ethics of things, what she calls the other of the Other. Fundamental to this concept is, first, that things exist in a continuous deferral of being; they're ultimately unknowable, indefinable, because they exceed our experience of them, so that they continuously recall in us a certain childlike freedom from the experience of knowledge. Benso writes, "Silent, voiceless witnesses to our endeavors, things look at us and remind us, through the sheer expression of their pure presence, of another other, of another alterity—other than human, other than presence, other than being."[31] This freedom from the experience of knowledge that opens to alterity can be likened to that of a child who places her finger upon a thing, and says, for example, of a doll, "this is my daughter," "this is my friend," or even "this is god." Her bedroom might be a cavern, a palace, a schoolroom, or a tangled forest, and the things within that space are infinite in their capacity to *give* continuously shifting interpretive possibilities.

A second fundamental point of Benso's conception of things has to do with tenderness. Tenderness, she suggests, is when we, through patience learn to touch the other as the other teaches *us* its ways, its being. A few weeks ago

I held my daughter's tiny violin for the first time. I'd been a pianist and could navigate through sound but, before the production of sound, there was touch. As I pressed and drew the bow against the strings, the violin began to teach *me* how to touch it, demanded I be gentle or else it simply would not sound. The violin formed, informed and established the grounds for my body's relationship to it. Like the ambiguous personification of poem 15, it seems difficult not to transfer this concept to the human. What would it mean to approach others in such a way, with the choice of tenderness, to be silent or close our eyes so that the other—not law, not the disembodied voice of God or the state or a torturer—can establish the terms of engagement? Interrupting the power to know and define yokes us not to individuation, but to being individuated by the other through tenderness, to being figuratively given to and from form to formlessness to form through what is continuously other.

For Benso, tenderness corresponds to sadness. She says, "[T]enderness rejoices...for the alterity things display.... What is mourned by sadness [the counterpart of tenderness] is not the past that is no longer, that cannot be prolonged to eternity, because of an ephemeral present. What is lamented is rather the preciousness of alterity, which has gone lost."[32] Di Giorgio emphasizes things because it is a reverberating relationship to them that is continuously lost, continuously sacrificed. I say reverberating because the dynamic of alterity and loss is as much between the human and the thing as between the thing, the human, and the leveling of both. For example, a *child* places her hand on a rock and says, "this is my throne." However, the rock's nearness and its qualities *give* this possibility to the child, that is, until an adult or science constantly establish a favored truth, collapsed through distance and quantity: "*this here* is just a rock, and *there* (far away) are many exactly like it." Or—and this is the same gesture's annihilating edge—who a rodent and who a cancer. The point is that the second interpretive stances are privileged and ultimately displace the first.

Di Giorgio laments the irrecuperability of alterity, the infinite range of nuance and otherness that falls away even at the delicate moment of writing, when the horizon of meaning is inevitably circumscribed. But that possibility is then opened up with the promise of future forms, of ensuing poetic work. Thus tenderness and sadness exist on a spectrum whereby one extreme has to do with

the intricate work of poetic figuration endlessly open to subsequent iterations. The opposite extreme involves defining that is tragic, ultimate, absolute, and deadly—definition that limits the multiple possibilities of form. The "closeness," that Olivera-Williams and Porzecanski have observed throughout di Giorgio's poetry, is the poet's attempt at tenderness, at allowing the things around her to persistently express otherness, as she takes sadness into consideration, the sadness implicit in writing and circumscription.

Di Giorgio's poem 82 crystallizes the moment of loss at its definitive extreme. Here the poetic voice narrates a crucifixion and in this way recalls the Tenebrae ceremony that, again, is the Christian observation of the crucifixion of Jesus. However, here, instead of a religious or political figure, the poetic voice's father gives himself up to be tortured and executed, along with a doll, a begonia, a cat and a bird. They're all *clavados*, "nailed" and "fixed" to crosses.

> Dictaminaron las crucifixiones.
>
> Una muñeca, de ojos grandes y pestañas largas, que estaba tiesa en su caja azul. (Pero, —yo decía—, la muñeca se volverá a tejer, enseguida);
>
> una begonia, de arterias granates. (Pero, la begonia resucita desde una sola hoja);
>
> un gato, ¿cuál? ¿El pequeño, de ojos como de loza que comía carnecita rosada? ¿o el grande, color gris perla, de rostro casi cuadrado, que hacía tantos años que nos acompañaba, y que, a veces, con su mano de felpa entreabría las cazuelas?
>
> ¿Eligieron el grande porque, ya, había vivido muchos años?
>
> También, un miembro de la familia.
>
> Papá, mamá, mi hermana o yo.
>
> Papá, dijo, enseguida: Yo voy.
>
> Se hizo un silencio inmenso.
>
> La muñeca fue hincada en una cruz azul; perdido sus celajes.
>
> La begonia quedó todo plateada y arrugada.
>
> El ave—que me olvidé de mencionar—fue clavada por las alas; entreabrió el pico, puso un huevo roto.

El gato tuvo un rostro casi humano, lloró lágrimas de sangre.
Se hizo un silencio inmenso.
Papá, desde la cruz, nos miraba.
Nosotras lo mirábamos como a través de un vidrio.
De las nubes blancas caía nieve, soplaba el viento.[33]

They proclaimed the crucifixions.

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

a begonia, with garnet arteries. (But, the begonia can be resurrected from just one leaf);

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

Did they choose the big one because he'd already 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; its celestial hues grew dim.

The begonia became all silvery and wrinkled.

The bird—that I forgot to mention—was nailed up by its wings; it opened its beak, and laid a broken egg.

The cat had 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.

In the first line "dictaminaron," "they dictated," "proclaimed," or "ruled," is an obvious cognate of "dictatorship," and implies the authoritative proscription

by a disembodied voice, as Elaine Scarry has observed, of the law or God.[34] Everything that follows the simple line—everything that is body—is subject to it, to the implicit "They" and their exacting decree. The ensuing lines seem like child's play as the poetic voice flatly notes the difference between the crucifixion of things and animals. The doll, she says, can be sewn back up again, and the begonia can regenerate itself from just one leaf. Then the question of arbitrary violence is implied through the choice of which cat—this one or that one. But the reasoning behind why one cat or another is selected to die remains unclear.

What is underscored after the shift from things and animals to "Also, a family member" is not their replaceability, but that a change occurred. The childlike tone allows us to experience the shift from otherness to utter definition, from the child's world to the adult's. And that shift causes the otherness of nonliving things to extend to those of living things and vice versa—the loss of life is the same as the loss of interpretive possibilities. As we're provided a list of things and faces, each face is altered: first, the doll's, then, the begonia wrinkles, the bird opens its beak, the cat has an "almost human face," and, finally, the father, who, like a nonliving doll just "looked at us." He is leveled along with the other things—they take on his qualities just as he takes on theirs—as the mother, sister, and poetic voice, look at him "as if through glass." Finally, the whitening snow and wind erase the scene to leave us with a blank page.

Di Giorgio laments the destruction of things made into objects—what *can* be defined, what *can* be sold, what *can* be duplicated, what is the same, what never is beyond our knowing, what is never other, what is eliminated. It is as if the city's things were conveying, not through the personified voice of Zion the widow and mourning mother, but through themselves—"silent, voiceless witnesses to our endeavors"—and demanding an ethical response, which, like Zion, they never receive. Here we're presented with suffering as no beyond of meaning, and that suffering is fused inextricably with the torture, sacrifice and death, as much of the father in the poem, as of the possibility of interpretation, of otherness, itself.

Notes

1. This short essay is part of a larger chapter that considers Marosa di Giorgio, Emily Dickinson, and how individual meaning sustains its freedom—its own society—as it navigates the pressures of consent and a common language.

2. For the debate regarding the book's historical, structural and temporal unity, see Samuel Tobias Lachs, "The Date of Lamentations V" in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jul., 1966) 46–56.

3. See the "Red Naturaleza" website at: http://www.rednaturaleza.com/plantas_doc.asp?p=Clavel%20(Dianthus%20caryophyllus)

4. Lamentations, 1:11–12. All passages are from Delbert R. Hiller's translation in *Lamentations.* Introduction and Commentary by Delbert R. Hillers (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

5. Lamentations, 2:20–22.

6. Thus, the first, second, and third verses begin with "א" ('aleph'), while the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses begin with "ב" ('beth') and so on.

7. Lamentations, 3:1–2.

8. Lamentations, 3:4.

9. Lamentations, 3:16.

10. See Tod Linafelt's "Zion's Cause: The Presentation of Pain in the Book of Lamentations" in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible After the Holocaust.* Ed. Tod Linafelt (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

11. Linafelt, "Introduction: How to Survive the Book of Lamentations" in *Surviving Lamentations: catastrophe, lament, and protest in the afterlife of a biblical book.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 4. For other contemporary readings of Lamentations, see *Lamentations in contemporary and cultural contexts.* Ed. Nancy C. Lee and Marlene Mandolfo (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

12. Marosa di Giorgio, *Clavel y tenebrario* in *Los papeles salvajes* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo Editores, 2008) 191.

13. All translations from the Spanish are my own.

14. Mauricio Rosencof, "On Suffering, Song, and White Horses" in *Repression, Exile, and Democracy*. Ed. Saúl Sosnowski and Louise B. Popkin. Trans. by Louise B. Popkin. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993) 120–122.

15. Rosencof, 132.

16. Eduardo Galeano, "The Dictatorship and Its Aftermath: the Hidden Wounds" in *Repression, Exile, and Democracy*. Ed. Saúl Sosnowski and Louise B. Popkin. Trans. by Louise B. Popkin. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993) 103.

17. Rosencof, 131.

18. Susan Stewart, "In the Darkness" in *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 1–2.

19. David H. Smyth, "Stravinsky as Serialist: The Sketches for *Threni*" in *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn, 2000): 206.

20. See also Brenda H. Boerger's "Extending Translation Principles for Poetry and Biblical Acrostics" in *Notes on Translation, 1997;* 11(2): 35–56.

21. See also J. Renkema's "The Meaning of the Parallel Acrostics in Lamentations" in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 45, Fasc. 3 (Jul., 1995): 379–383.

22. Susan Gubar, "The Long and the Short of Holocaust Verse" in *New Literary History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Critical Inquiries, Explorations, and Explanations (Summer, 2004): 459. See also *Poetry after Auschwitz: Remembering What One Never Knew* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

23. See Marguerite Feitlowitz's *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 24. Gubar, 459.

25. Di Giorgio, 187.

26. See Roberto Echavarren's "Marosa di Giorgio, Última poeta del Uruguay" in *Revista Iberoamericana*, 1992 July-Dec; 58 (160–161): 1103–15. Also see Hugo Achugar's "¿Kitsch, vanguardia o estética *camp*? Apuntes fragmentarios sobre Marosa di Giorgio" (*Hispamérica*, Año 34, No. 101 (Aug., 2005): 105–110.

27. For a consideration of how di Giorgio's poetry manifests an isolated conscious or unconscious realm that, in being so, constitutes a social transgression see Herbert Benítez Pezzolano, "Marosa di Giorgio en las bocas de la luz" in *Interpretación y eclipse* (Montevideo: Librería Linardi y Risso, 2000) 51–61. See also Ricardo Palleres, "Marosa di Giorgio: Liebre en marzo como en febrero" in *Tres mundos en la lírica uruguaya actual: W. Benavides, J. Arbeleche, M. di Giorgio* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1992) 43–58.

28. Silvia Benso, *The Face of Things* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) xxviii–xxix.

29. Teresa Porzecanski, "Fiction and Friction in the Imaginative Narrative Written inside Uruguay," in *Repression, Exile, and Democracy: Uruguayan Culture*, 216. See also María Rosa Olivera-Williams, "La imaginación salvaje", http:// www.editorialudea.com/revista/275b.html.

30. Porzecanski, "Marosa di Giorgio: Uruguay's Sacred Poet of the Garden" in *A Dream of Light & Shadow: Portraits of Latin American Women Writers*. Ed. and Intro. Marjorie Agosín. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995) 310–311.

31. Benso, 146.

32. Benso, 178.

33. Di Giorgio, 231.

34. See Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World.* (New York: Oxford University Press) 1985.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS / BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Writer, vocalist, and sound artist, **LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs** has authored several chapbooks which include *Ichi-Ban* and *Ni-Ban* (MOH Press), *Manuel is destroying my bathroom* (Belladonna Books), and the album, Televisíon. A Harlem native, she is the co-founder of the literary arts magazine, *Coon Bidness /SO4*. Her first full length books is forthcoming from Belladonna Books • **Rolando Sánchez Mejías**: Holguín, Cuba, 1959. Entre sus libros: *Historias de Olmo* y *Cuaderno de Feldafing*, ambos de narrativa, editados en Siruela, Madrid. Parte de su poesía se publicó en la editorial Aldus, México, con el titulo *Cálculo de lindes*. Vive en España exiliado desde 1997. Fundó en 1994 en la Habana el grupo y la revista DIASPORA(S). • **Jaime Permuth** is a Guatemalan photographer living and working in New York City. He is a Faculty Member at the School of Visual Arts where he teaches in the Master of Professional Studies in Digital Photography. In New York his photographs have been shown at The Museum of Modern Art, The Queens Museum of Art, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, The Museum of the City of New York, The Jewish Museum, El Museo del Barrio, and The Brooklyn Museum of Art. Among others, his work is included in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Polaroid Corporation, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Museum of the City of New York, Yeshiva University Museum, State University of New York New Paltz, Art Museum of the Americas (DC), Fullerton

Art Museum (CA) and Museum of Art Ft. Lauderdale (FLA). He has received commissions from El Museo del Barrio, The Queens Museum of Art, The Jewish Museum, and Queens Theater in the Park. • **Myriam Moscona**: poeta mexicana de origen búlgaro sefardí. Ha publicado diversos libros de poesía. Recientemente se editó en Los Ángeles *Negro marfil*, traducido por Jen Hofer. Ha recibido diversos reconocimientos, entre ellos el Premio Nacional de Poesía Aguascalientes por *Las visitantes*. Becaria de la Fundación Guggenheim 2006, ha sido traducida a diversas lenguas. • **John Pluecker** is a writer, interpreter and translator. His work has been published in the U.S. and Mexico, including in *Anomalous Press*, *Third Text*, *Animal Shelter* and *HTMLGiant*. He has published seven books in translation from the Spanish, including essays by a Mexican feminist and a detective novel, and three chapbooks of his work: *Routes into Texas* (DIY, 2010), *Undone* (Dusie Kollektiv, 2011) and *Killing Current* (Mouthfeel Press, 2012). • **Matthew Goulish** is the author of *39 Microlectures—in proximity of performance* (Routledge, 2000), *The Brightest Thing in the World—Three Lectures from the Institute of Failure* (Green Lantern, 2012), and *Work from Memory*, a collaboration in response to Marcel Proust with the poet Dan Beachy-Quick (Ahsahta, 2012). He teaches writing at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, received a Lannan Foundation writer's residency in 2004, and shared the United States Artists Ziporyn Fellowship with Lin Hixson in 2009. • **André Lepecki** is Associate Professor in the Department of Performance Studies at New York University. Doctoral degree from New York University. He also works as an independent curator and a writer. • **Eleonora Fabião** is a performer and performance theorist. She is Associate Professor and Chair of the Theater Directing Program at the School of Communication at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro where she teaches since 1997. She holds a Doctoral Degree in Performance Studies from New York University and a M.A. in Social History of Culture from PUC-RJ. • **Lila Zemborain** is an Argentine poet who has lived in New York since 1985. She is the author of several poetry collections, among them *Guardians of the Secret* (2009) and *Mauve Sea-Orchids* (2007). She formerly directed the Creative Writing in Spanish Program at NYU, where she also curates the King Juan Carlos I Center Poetry Series. • **Mariela Méndez** is Assistant Professor of Latin American and Iberian Studies at the University of Richmond, Virginia, where she teaches courses on Latin

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in collaboration with visual artists from the Taller Experimental de Gráfica in Havana and the University of Alabama's Book Arts program, Lazer published *Indivisible*, a fine press bilingual edition of handwritten shape poems. Pages from the notebooks have been performed with soprano saxophonist Andrew Raffo Dewar. • **Evie Shockley** is the author of two books of poetry, *the new black* (Wesleyan, 2011) and *a half-red sea* (Carolina Wren Press, 2006); two poetry chapbooks; and a critical study, *Renegade Poetics: Black Aesthetics and Formal Innovation in African American Poetry*. She is Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. • Poeta, pintora y crítica de arte, **Marjorie Welish** ha escrito sobre arte contemporáneo en *Writing the Image After Roland Barthes* y *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Es autora del libro *Signifying Art: Essays on Art After 1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) y de los poemarios *The Annotated "Here" and Selected Poems* (Coffee House Press, 2000) y *Isle of the Signatories* (Coffee House Press, 2008). Los poemas traducidos al español para este número provienen de *Word Group* (Coffee House Press, 2004). • **Tomás Harris** (b. 1956, La Serena; lives in Santiago), considered one of Chile's most important contemporary voices, is the author of poetry and prose collections including *Cipango*, *Crónicas maravillosas*, *Itaca*, and *Historia personal del miedo*. Among his awards in Chile and Latin America are the Premio Municipal de Poesía, the Premio Pablo Neruda, and the Casa de las Américas prize. • **Daniel Shapiro**'s poems, prose, and translations have been published in *The American Poetry Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *BOMB*, *CNN.com*, and *Confrontation*; his translation of *Cipango*, by Chilean poet Tomás Harris, was published to acclaim by Bucknell University Press in 2010. He is Director of Literature at the Americas Society in New York City, and Editor of *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*. • **Jeffrey Yang** is the author of the poetry books *Vanishing-Line* and *An Aquarium*. He is the translator of Nobel Peace Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo's *June Fourth Elegies*, and the editor of *Birds, Beasts, and Seas: Nature Poems from New Directions*. He works as an editor at New Directions Publishing and New York Review Books. • **Christine Nguyen** resides in Los Angeles. She creates music and art inspired by the depths of the ocean, the cosmos, wonders of nature, supernatural, magical, and the sciences. Exhibitions of her work has been featured at the Hammer Museum, Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles; Churner and Churner Gallery, New York;

Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Germany and 10 Chancery Lane; Hong Kong. • **C. D. Wright** has published 12 poetry collections andreceived fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Lannan Foundation. For this collection of poems *Rising, Hovering, Falling* she won the International Winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2009. She won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry in 2011. Wright is currently the Israel J. Kapstein Professor of English at Brown University. • Poet, painter, and essayist **Valerie Mejer** (b. Mexico City) has received the Spanish Government's "Gerardo Diego 1966" International Award. Her poetry books include *Geografías de Niebla, Esta Novela Azul, Ante el Ojo del Cíclope,* and *de la ola, el atajo.* Her latest book, *Cuaderno de Edimburgo,* will appear in Spain from Editorial Amargord. Two of her books translated into English will be published by Action Books: *This blue novel* and *Rain of the future.* Her poems in English have appeared in *Poetry London, Hunger Mountain Review, Fascicle* and *Nimrod.* • **Isabel Cadenas Cañón** is a poet and a photographer. Her book *Irse* (Madrid, Vitruvio, 2010) won the Caja de Guadalajara—Fundación Siglo Futuro award. She is the anthologist of *El tejedor: Nueva poesía iberoamericana en Nueva York.* Her photographic work has been shown in Argentina, Spain and the USA. She has translated several Latin American poets into Basque and French. She is currently pursuing a PhD at New York University. • **Roberto Echavarren**: poeta, ensayista, traductor, editor uruguayo. Sus últimos libros de poemas son: *Performance* (una antología de sus títulos anteriores de poesía y una serie de trabajos en torno a su obra) compilado por Adrián Cangi, Eudeba, 2000; *Casino Atlántico,* Artefato, 2004; *Centralasia,* tse-tsé, 2005, Premio del Ministerio de Cultura de Uruguay; *El expreso entre el sueño y la vigilia,* Premio Fundación Nancy Bacelo, 2009; *Ruido de fondo,* Cuarto Propio, 2010. Compiló (junto con José Kozer) y prologó (junto con Néstor Perlongher) *Medusario, muestra de poesía latinoamericana,* 2010. • **Edgar Garcia**'s poetry, translations and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in a number of publications, including *The Antioch Review, Berkeley Poetry Review, Big Bridge, Damn the Ceasars, Hydra Magazine, Jacket2, Los Angeles Review of Books, MAKE Magazine* and *Sous les Pavés. Boundary Loot,* a book of poetry, is available from Punch Press. He is completing a PhD in American Literature at Yale University. • **Estela Lamat** is the author of *Sangre seca* (Santiago: Contrabando del bando en

contra, 2005), *Yo, la peor de todas* (Contrabando del bando en contra, 2006), and the forthcoming *Colmillo molido* (Santiago: Andesground). Her collaborative EP (with Maps and Diagrams), *The Worst of Us* (2010), is available online from the French label Beko. • **Michael Leong** is the author of several books and chapbooks of poetry including *e.s.p.* (Silenced Press, 2009), *The Philosophy of Decomposition/ Re-composition as Explanation* (Delete Press, 2011), and *Cutting Time with a Knife* (Black Square Editions, 2012). His translation of Estela Lamat, *I, the Worst of All*, was published by BlazeVOX [books] in 2009. He is currently a part-time lecturer in the Writers House at Rutgers University. • **Rodrigo Toscano**'s latest book is *Collapsible Poetics Theater*, a 2007 National Poetry Series Selection. A new collection of poetic prose, *Deck of Deeds*, is due out from Counterpath Press in 2012. His Spanish-language poetry can be found in *Malditos Latinos, Malditos Sudacas*. He has worked in labor politics and environmental justice movements for over 15 years; currently with the Labor Institute, Toscano works in conjunction with the United Steelworkers and Communication Workers of America, and he coordinates a National Institute of Environmental Health Science education / integration program. http://poeticstheater.typepad.com/photos/rt_pics/ • **Galo Ghigliotto** (Valdivia, Chile, 1977), en poesía ha publicado los libros *Valdivia* (Santiago: Mantra Editorial, 2006), *Bonnie&Clyde* (Santiago: Garrapato Ediciones, 2007; Monterrey, México: La Regia Cartonera, 2009) y *Aeropuerto* (Santiago: Editorial Cuneta, 2009). En 2011 recibió la Beca de Creación Literaria del Consejo Nacional del Libro (Chile) para escribir su novela *Maleza.* • **Daniel Borzutzky** is the author of *The Book of Interfering Bodies* (2011); *The Ecstasy of Capitulation* (2007) and *Arbitrary Tales* (2005). His translations include Raúl Zurita's *Song for his Disappeared Love* (Action Books, 2010) and Jaime Luis Huenún's *Port Trakl* (Action Books, 2010), among others. He lives in Chicago. • **Odi Gonzales** is a Peruvian Andean poet who writes in both Quechua and Spanish. A recipient of Peru's César Vallejo National Poetry Prize, Gonzales has published seven collections of poems. The collection in which these poems appear, *Birds on the Kiswar Tree (The School of Cusco/La Escuela de Cusco,* Ediciones el Santo Oficio Gráficos), translated by Lynn Levin, is forthcoming in a bilingual edition from Latin American Literary Review Press. Gonzales currently teaches at New York University. • **Lynn Levin** is a poet, writer, and translator. Her most recent collections

of poems are *Miss Plastique* (Ragged Sky Press, 2013) and *Fair Creatures of an Hour* (Loonfeather Press, 2009), a Next Generation Indie Book Awards finalist in poetry. Her translation of Odi Gonzales's collection *Birds on the Kiswar Tree* (*The School of Cusco/La Escuela de Cusco*) is forthcoming in a bilingual edition from Latin American Literary Review Press. Lynn Levin teaches at Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania. • **Roberto Appratto** ha ejercido la crítica literaria y cinematográfica en varios medios de prensa, dentro y fuera de Uruguay. Coordina talleres de escritura desde hace varios años. Ha publicado nueve libros de poesía, el último de los cuales es *Lugar perfecto* (2011), cinco libros de narrativa, entre los cuales figuran Íntima (1993) y *Se hizo de noche* (2007) y un libro de ensayos poéticos, *Impresiones en silencio* (2011). Este año se publicará su traducción de *Enrique VI*, de William Shakespeare, en Random House Mondadori. • **Anna Maria Hong**'s poems have recently appeared in *Boston Review, jubilat, Verse Daily, POOL, Fairy Tale Review, No Tell Motel,* and *Green Mountains Review.* The 2010–11 Bunting Fellow in Poetry at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, she has received residencies from Yaddo, Djerassi, Kunstnarhuset Messen, and Fundación Valparaíso. She teaches creative writing at the UCLA Extension Writers' Program. • **Hilda Doolittle**, a quien en el mundo de las letras se le conoce como H. D., nació el 10 de septiembre de 1886, en Filadelfia, y murió el 27 de septiembre de 1961, en Zürich, Suiza. Es una de las figuras más relevantes del modernismo norteamericano. Junto con Ezra Pound y Richard Aldington, inició el movimiento literario conocido como imaginismo, pero pronto se apartó de esta corriente para encontrar su propia voz. Escribió poesía, novelas, obras de teatro, ensayos sobre diversos temas, textos autobiográficos, y se dedicó ampliamente a la traducción. Casi toda su obra lírica se encuentra en *Collected Poems* (1912–1944) y en *Hermetic Definition* (1972), que incluye "Sagesse" y "Winter Love". • Esta selección de poemas de *Sagesse*, en traducción de la poeta mexicana **Ana Rosa González Matute**, forma parte del libro *Definición hermética*, próximo a publicarse en México con el sello de Libros Magenta. • **Robert Fernandez** is the author of *We Are Pharaoh* (Canarium Books 2011) and *Pink Reef* (forthcoming Canarium 2013). He is the recipient of awards from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and the Gertrude Stein Awards for Innovative Poetry. He was recently named a New American Poet by the Poetry Society

of America. • **Khadijah Queen** is the author of two poetry collections: *Conduit*, and *Black Peculiar*, which won the 2010 Noemi Book Award for Poetry. Individual poems, four times nominated for the Pushcart Prize, appear in *jubilat*, *In Posse Review*, *Best American Nonrequired Reading* (Houghton Mifflin 2010) and *Villanelles* (Random House 2012) and many other journals and anthologies. The recipient of fellowships from Cave Canem, Squaw Valley Community of Writers and the Norman Mailer Writers' Colony, she is currently working on her third manuscript. • **Camilo Roldán** is a poet and translator living in Brooklyn, NY. He co-curates the Triptych Reading Series and is the author of a chapbook, Amílkar U., Nadaísta in Translation (These Signals Press 2011). His poems have appeared in various journals, including SET, La Fovea, Lungfull!, and PANK. • **Gonzalo Arango** (1931-1976) born in the town of Andes, Colombia. He was a poet and the author of a short story collection (*Sexo y saxofon*), two novels (*Providencia* and *Fuego en el altar*), two collections of plays (*Nada bajo el cielo raso, HK-11*and *Los ratones van al infierno y La Consagración de la Nada*) numerous pamphlets and essays (*Prosas para leer en la silla eléctrica).* Arango also edited the first two anthologies of Nadaisata poetry: *13 poetas nadaistas* and *De la nada al Nadaismo*. His presence and his writing, as the de facto leader of the Nadaista movement, influenced several generations of Colombian writers and his life and correspondence has been the subject of several books. Gonzalo Arango died in a car accident in the town of Tocancipá. • **Jaime Jaramillo Escobar** (X-504) (1932–) was born in the town of Pueblo Rico, Colombia. He is the author of four books of poetry: *Poemas de la ofensa*, *Sombrero de ahogado*, *Poemas de tierra caliente*, and *Método fácil y rápido para ser poeta*. He has been touted as the most "literary" Nadaista as well as the most characteristic of the movement. He lives in Medellín, Colombia. **Paul Martinez-Pompa** is the author of *Pepper Spray* (Momotombo Press 2006) and *My Kill Adore Him* (University of Notre Dame Press 2009). • **Oscar Cruz:** (Santiago de Cuba, 1979). Graduado en Historia (2003). Tiene publicados *Los malos inquilinos,* Eds. Unión (2008), *Las posesiones*, Ed. Letras Cubanas (2009) y *El pequeño* (trad.) Eds. Santiago (2011). Es coeditor de la revista literaria *la noria.* • **Guillermo Rebollo-Gil** (San Juan, 1979). Sociólogo. Su más reciente poemario se titula "Sobre la Destrucción." Tiene un perro mudo y siniestro llamado Wallace. • **Roberto Ransom** (b. 1960, Mexico City) is the author of novels

and short-story and essay collections including *En esta otra tierra, Historia de dos leones* (*A Tale of Two Lions*), *Desaparecidos, animales y artistas*, and *Por qué aterra Lecter;* he was awarded the 2010 Premio Bellas Artes de Ensayo Literario Malcolm Lowry. Ransom is Professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua. • **Mariela Dreyfus** has published the poetry collections *Memorias de Electra, Placer fantasma, Ónix, Pez* and *Morir es un arte*. She has co-edited the critical volume *Nadie sabe mis cosas. Reflexiones en torno a la poesía de Blanca Varela* (2007), and published the book-length essay, *Soberanía y transgresión: César Moro* (2008). She has translated several American poets, among them Allen Ginsberg, Edward Dorn, Sylvia Plath, Diane Wakoski and AI. In 1982 Dreyfus co-founded the poetic movement *Kloaka*, one of the most important expressions of the Peruvian artistic underground at the time. She is the Graduate Adviser of the Creative Writing in Spanish Program at NYU. • **Eileen O'Connor** is the translator of *Fish* by Mariela Dreyfus (Peru) and *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* by Marjorie Agosín (Chile). Her poetry and essays have appeared in *Litoral, Anamesa, The Recorder: Journal of Irish American History, Revista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, and elsewhere. She currently is writing a novel for young adults, and teaching in the Department of Humanities at Lesley University. • De **Reynaldo Jiménez**, Libros Magenta ha publicado en 2011 en México su traducción de *Galaxias* (Haroldo de Campos). Asimismo ha concluido su versión íntegra de *Catatau* (Paulo Leminski) y es inminente la aparición de su libro de poesía *Esteparia* por Amargord-Portbou de Madrid. • **Nathanaël** has published a score of books in French or English, sometimes in (self)translation, including *We Press Ourselves Plainly, Carnet de délibérations, Absence Where As (Claude Cahun and the Unopened Book), L'injure* and *Sisyphus, Outdone*. Her translations include works by Catherine Mavrikakis, Édouard Glissant, Danielle Collobert, and Hilda Hist, the latter in collaboration with Rachel Gontijo Araújo. Nathanaël lives in Chicago. • **Roberto Harrison**'s books include *Os* (subpress, 2006) and *Counter Daemons* (Litmus, 2006). His latest chapbook is *Bridge of the World* (cannot exist, 2011). He lives in Milwaukee, WI, with his wife, the poet Brenda Cárdenas. • **Chantal Neveu**'s books include *Une Spectaculaire influence, coït* (an English translation of which will be published in 2012), *mentale, Èdres* followed by *Èdres | Dehors*, and *Je suis venue faire l'amour*. Her writings have been produced in media and stage adaptations by Éditions OHM-

Avatar, Klangkunst / DeutschlandRadio Kultur, Vidéoformes, La Scène poétique, L'Espace du son / Société Radio-Canada, OBORO, etc. She lives in Montreal. • **Rachel Gontijo Araujo** speaks Portuguese, writes in English and is located at an unequal distance between. She is the co-founder of A Bolha Editora, an in translation press with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. • **Guy Davenport** nació en Carolina del Sur (1927) y murió en Kentucky (2005). Publicó libros de crítica: *The Intelligence of Louis Agassiz, Cities on Hills* (un estudio sobre los primeros 30 Cantares de Pound), *La geografía de la imaginación, Toda fuerza deviene forma* y *Cuaderno de Balthus*. Sus colecciones de cuentos son consideradas clásicos de la literatura norteamericana. En español es conocido principalmente por la traducción de sus ensayos, antologados en el volumen *El museo en Sí* (Pre-Textos, 2006), *¿Qué son las revoluciones?* (Libros Magenta, 2008) y por *Objetos sobre una mesa. Desorden armonioso en arte y literatura* (Turner/ Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002). "El señor Cementerio y el troll" forma parte de un volumen de cuentos en preparación, titulado *La sonata Concord*, próximo a ser publicado por Libros Magenta. • **Gabriel Magaña** was born in Guadalajara, Mexico (1944). His book *La Nada en bruto* appeared in 1995 from the Mexico City publisher El Tucán de Virginia. *Insumiso al rostro*, a selection from various books, was published by the Universidad Veracruzana in 2009. • **Dawn Lundy Martin**'s latest book is *Discipline* (Nightboat, 2011). • **Matthew Henriksen**'s first book, *Ordinary Sun*, emerged from Black Ocean in 2011. He co-edits *Typo* and teaches in the Arkansas Ozarks. • **José Ramón Sánchez Leyva** (Guantánamo, 1972). Autor del poemario *Aislada noche* (Letras Cubanas, 2005). Editor de la revista literaria *La Noria*. Correo electrónico: marabuzal@yahoo.com • **José Viñals** (Córdoba, Argentina, 1930—Málaga, Spain, 2009) was a prolific writer that moved to Spain in 1979. Among the many significant book of poems are *Entrevista con el pájaro* (1968). *Poesía reunida* (1995), *Animales, amores, parajes y blasfemias* (1998), or *Transmutaciones* (2000). *Caballo en el umbral. 1958–2006* is a extensive anthology of his poetry released in 2010. • **Andrés Fisher** (Washington DC, 1963): In poetry he has published *Hielo* (2000), *Relación* (2008), and *Series. Poesía reunida 1995–2010* (2010). He translated *Hambre de Forma* (2009), a bilingual anthology of Haroldo de Campos, and wrote *La poesía inmortal y pobre de Borges* (Del Centro Editores, 2012). • **Benito del Pliego** (Madrid, 1970) has published, among other books of poems, *Índice* (Varasek Ed.,

2010) and *Fábula* (Aristas Martínez Ed., 2011). He has also edited and translated the poetry of José Viñals, Isel Rivero (*Words are Witnesses*) and Mario Merlino (*Voces comunes y otros poemas*). • **Minerva Reynosa** is an acclaimed Mexican poet, essayist, and cultural curator who has published four books of poetry: *Una infanta necia, Emötoma, La íntima de las cosas, Atardecer en los suburbios*. She has been collaborating with digital poet Benjamín Moreno on a textual, visual, and technological experiment called BENERVA! (http://benerva.tumbrl.com), and she creates within the blogosphere at ladoncelladilatada.blogspot.com. • **Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal** is a Mexican and Chicana poet, a translator, and an instructor of English. The English counterpart *(H)emötoma* has been the main focus of her translations, for she even attended World to World, Mundo a Mundo in 2009 to workshop a couple of poems from the book. She is also the translator of "Grace Shot," by Luis Alberto Arellano in *Sèrie Alfa: Artiliteratura*, and "Eight Fabulous Animals" by Ilan Stavans in *Eleven Eleven*. • **Andrés Ajens** codirige el Programa de Indagaciones en Escrituras ~~Americanas~~ (U. Metropolitana UMCE), la revista de poesía *Mar con soroche* (Santiago/La Paz) y, con el lingüista boliviano Zacarías Alavi, el sitio lenguandina.org. Entre otros poemas, ha publicado *Con dado inescrito* (2009), *No insista, carajo* (2004) y *Más íntimas mistura* (con trad. parcial al inglés por Erin Mouré como *Quase Flanders, Quase Extremadura*, Cambridge, 2001; Vancouver, 2008), y las porosas prosas *La flor del extérmino* (2011; trad. por Michelle Gil-Montero como *Don't Light the Flower*, 2011), *El entrevero* (2008) y *La última carta de Rimbaud* (1995). Ha traducido *Poemas inconjuntos*, de A. Caeiro / F. Pessoa (1996). • **Erín Moure** is a Montreal poet, essayist and translator of poetry from Galician, Spanish, French and Portuguese. She translated Andrés Ajens's *quase flanders, quase extremadura* (La Mano Izquierda, Victoria Canada, 2008). She also translates Galician poet Chus Pato and Quebec poet Nicole Brossard, among others. Her own latest book is *The Unmemntioable* (Anansi, Toronto, 2012). • **Kent Johnson** is co-editor with Roberto Echavarren of *Hotel Lautréamont: Contemporary Poetry from Uruguay* (Shearsman, 2012). An expanded second edition of *A Question Mark above the Sun: Documents on the Mystery Surrounding a Famous Poem "By" Frank O'Hara* will be published in Fall of 2012 by Starcherone/Dzanc Books. • **Omar Pérez** (1964, Havana, Cuba) is the author of the collections *Algo de lo Sagrado, Oíste hablar del gato de pelea?, Canciones y letanías,*

Lingua Franca, and *Crítica de la Razón Puta,* for which he won the Nicolás Guillén Prize for Poetry. A book of essays, *La perseverancia de un hombre oscuro,* earned him Cuba's National Critics' Prize for that genre in 2000. He is also a literary translator with numerous publications and serves as a percussionist for dance-theater performances. • **Kristin Dykstra** is a 2012 NEA Fellow in Literary Translation. Her translations and commentary are featured in bilingual editions of poetry by Reina María Rodríguez and Omar Pérez, and her bilingual edition of *The Counterpunch (And Other Horizontal Poems),* by Juan Carlos Flores, is forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press. • **Marianela Medrano** is a Dominican writer, poet, licensed psychotherapist and certified poetry therapist living in Connecticut since 1990. Her individual publications include: *Oficio de Vivir* (Buho,1986), *Los Alegres Ojos de la Tristeza* (Buho,1987), *Regando Esencias/ The Scent of Waiting* (Alcance,1998), *Curada de Espantos* (Torremozas, 2002) and *Diosas de la Yuca,* (Torremozas, 2011). Medrano-Marra's work also appears in literary magazines and academic journals such as *Brooklyn Review* (1995), *Punto 7 Review* (1996) *Sisters of Caliban* (1996) *Callaloo* (2000), *Tertuliando/Hanging Out* (1997), *Letras Femeninas* (2005), *Kacike* (2009), *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* (2010), *Letralia* (2011), *Phatitude* (2012), among others. • **Janet Aalfs** (born 1956) is an American poet and martial artist. She is a co-founder of Valley Women's Martial Arts and the Institute for Healing and Violence Prevention Strategies and the National Women's Martial Arts Federation. She served as poet laureate of Northampton from 2003 until 2005. • **Christine Wertheim** is author of + | *'me'S-pace,* editor of the anthology *Feminaissance,* and with Matias Viegener co-editor of *Séance* and *The* n/*Oulipean Analects.* Her poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections including *Against Expression,* ed. C. Dworkin and K. Goldsmith (Northwestern University Press), *The & Now Awards: The Best Innovative Writing,* eds. R. Archambeau, D. Schneiderman and S. Tomasula (Lake Forest College Press), and *I'll Drown My Book* (Les Figues Press). She regularly writes critical pieces on art, literature and aesthetics: recently for *Cabinet, X-tra, The Quick and the Dead,* Walker Art Center cat., and *Patarcitical Interogation Techniques, vol 3,* ed. Doug Harvey. With her sister Margaret, she co-directs the *Institute For Figuring,* organizing events at the intersection of science, art and pedagogy. In 2011 the sisters received the Theo Westenberger Grant for Outstanding Female

Artists from the Autry National Center. She teaches at the California Institute of the Arts. • **Reina María Rodríguez** (1952) tiene publicados, entre muchos otros poemarios, *Para un cordero blanco* (Premio Casa de las Américas, 1984), *La foto del invernadero* (Premio Casa de las Américas, 1998), *La detención del tiempo / Time's Arrest* (edición bilingüe, 2001/2005), *Violet Island and Other Poems* (edición bilingüe, 2004), *El libro de las clientas* (2005), y *Catch and release* (2006), así como varios libros en prosa. Obtuvo el Premio Italo Calvino 2004 con la novela *Tres maneras de tocar un elefante*. • **Anna Deeny** is a translator and literary critic. Her works in translation by Raúl Zurita include *Purgatory* (UC Press, 2009), *Dreams for Kurosawa* (arrow as arrow Press, 2012), and a volume of selected works, *Sky Below*, forthcoming from Northwestern University Press. She has also translated works by Mercedes Roffé, Alejandra Pizarnik, and Marosa di Giorgio among others. Deeny teaches Latin American literature at Harvard.

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Poetry in Translation

Review 85

Literature and Arts of the Americas

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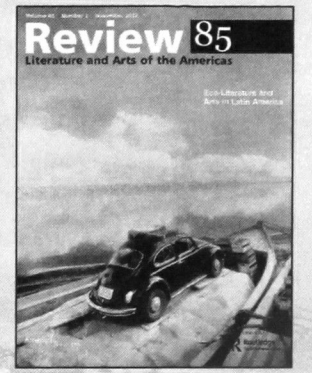

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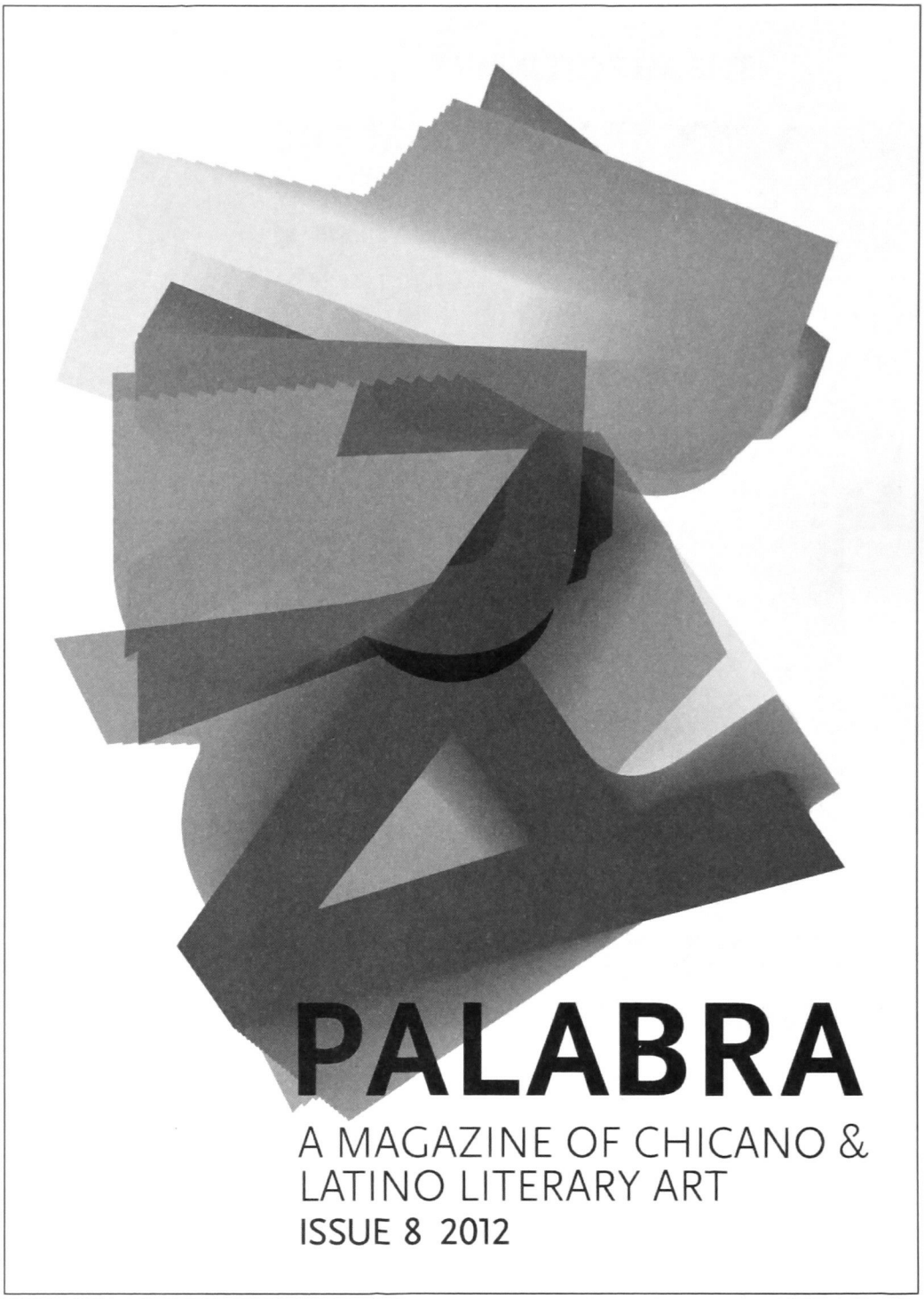
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Chantal Neveu
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Guy Davenport
Gabriel Magaña
Dawn Lundy Martin
Matthew Henriksen
José Ramón Sánchez
José Viñals
Andrés Fisher
Benito del Pliego
Minerva Reynosa
Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal
Andrés Ajens
Erin Mouré
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Reina María Rodríguez
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