



# M A N D O R L A

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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# MANDORLA

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

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HORÁCIO COSTA

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THREE POEMS

ON THE MONOLOGIC ARCHIPELAGO

There's no more island room on  
the monologic archipelago:  
there are millions in line waiting

and who for decades growing old  
cannot pause even for a day  
to savor the supreme

windfall: talk talk talk not having  
to hear a thing: not a thing beyond  
the beatific sound of their own voice

from dawn to dusk and again  
till the morning after, freed once  
and for all from putting on the face

of I'm listening  
you're so right  
I'm interested in your story

but I have an appointment.  
Therein lies the torture of the monologists  
and they cannot converse

for a dialogist will dispute  
the agonizing situation while the others,  
monologists, will don the landscape

face they've rehearsed since  
childhood. They so needed  
a place like the Archipelago!

Crowded with more islands than the Aegean,  
and more little reefs than the Celebes.  
*L'enfer c'est bien les autres!*

Each on his island! That's how it's best!  
Loneliness, as felt by the geometers of Crotone's  
silence, is not what they want. Talk!

Out loud and with feeling! Freed from listening.  
It matters not to them whether the sea's  
color is turquoise and breathtaking

or whether there's an occasional palm tree  
on the islets, or animals. They say the last  
dodo lived on the island of one such

monologist: he never saw it  
while he reiterated unforgettable  
speeches. And Friday asked someone

else for help after Crusoe deserted:  
the monologist moved to another  
island so as to be left undisturbed.

The monologic republic may well  
be found elsewhere. It makes no  
difference! Anything but dialogue.

And inasmuch as it conveys  
their contempt for reality  
the less there is the better.

Happiest are those who abolish it on  
ideological grounds and with no explanation.  
Determination as opposed to autism.

There are dialogists who experience loss  
when, after waiting, their beloved monologists  
depart for the Archipelago.

What can I say to them but that soon  
they'll find solace in talking that falls  
on more or less attentive ears.

There are dialogists who endeavor to save  
one monologist after another. They're  
the so-called "unconscious" and, rarer

still, "martyrs of monologism."  
Martyrdom is a right! It ought to be, granite-  
like passage, an article in the constitution.

But there are those who learn and,  
in time, manage to rejoice:  
from shelves and family albums

they purge the photos of those who now  
live on the Archipelago; they even  
move away from home or country.

Their aim is to begin all over again  
maybe like Sisyphus but this time  
in the dialogic world.

## MY DAY WITH THE FALCON

I

My day with the falcon  
begins like this:

a glimmer

I discern between building and woodland  
and an unmistakable caw:

good morning!

Good morning, sweet *senhoras, bom dia*  
that bird of prey was soaring  
hereabouts, ladies

you do realize?

or have you given over only  
to shaping your gluteus muscles?

There's too much of us  
for a falcon's hunger  
including our gainful  
*derrières* that anchor us  
in the here and now

It soared and cawed  
I spied it in an instant  
impossible to forget  
and in that minute I saw myself through  
eyes of that other above me

I'm here below  
with a dog on the pathway  
hobbling biped and wooly  
quadruped:

not at all  
appetizing

The falcon paid no mind  
it continued its scrutiny  
in search of rodents  
and lower beings  
on the food chain

I don't blame it  
at long last I ceased to see myself  
as central to the surroundings I inhabit  
but I wanted its viewpoint  
to watch only the things of interest  
to me in the landscape

## II

Let's make this much more radical  
like a wounded tiger  
held prey by an elephant, no:

by a palm tree  
falcon features half hidden  
by that same palm tree

Observe the tiger's eye  
a single eye  
the other one's behind the palm  
tree's trunk  
and under palm tree shade

Sure:

this eye is like the other  
it has this satin irisation  
a little mesmerizing  
due to its chrysoberyl  
chatoyancy

It looks as though behind this eye  
there's no soul or sign at all that  
the tiger is even alive

But it is  
It's alive  
And it can  
    even wounded    attack

### III

Tigers falcons elephants dogs  
this writing each time + like  
a bestiary

    Now the minivan  
with screeching loudspeakers  
drives by selling, no, not procter & gamble:  
politicos

The gluteus-shaping ladies  
haven't turned their heads  
focused instead on muscles  
ibid.

    and I pretend not to notice  
occupied with falcons and their symbolic  
effects and tiger-like  
iridescences

The drive-by minivan spews political ads  
for the monthly mayoral candidate  
to whom I'll go on paying drachmas  
in the form of earthly tariffs

But not in this poem

here I set the rules  
and, so to speak, I am Noah

#### IV

A tiger ponders its desires  
an elephant forgets not and ruminates  
a dog is loyal to its principles  
a falcon, insofar as  
attacking is the point,  
hazards the attack

This poem ends not without  
mention of such animal  
virtues

If such an orphic concert  
as in the paintings of Roelant Savery  
were a sound coda only  
to confirm the exigency of style  
in poetry

then

let it be known at least  
that my day with the falcon  
hasn't ended yet

Osasco 25 VIII 12

## PINA, THE BEE AND THE WINDOW

I'm watching *Pina* before going to sleep  
a bee came to watch  
the assertion outside  
the window of time

there was Pina poolside  
at the hotel in Guanajuato city  
housing *la momia más pequeña del mundo*  
in the one-of-a-kind museum of mummies

I can't see a swimming pool without  
wanting right away to enter—I asked her  
*você não entra*—won't you come in?  
the dancers of Wuppertal were wading

Pina Bausch had that hooked glare  
of Captain Hook  
even as she smiled I insisted  
& persisted like a drone

alright she said wearing a maillot  
and came to wade with everyone else  
I'll never forget that event  
in the life of my weary retinas

Pina Bausch died a few years ago, 3, 4  
true, she smoked too much Shirley  
also smoked too much she died in 2003  
or Manuel, also in the pool, who

died 11 ago I have an astounding view  
from this 21<sup>st</sup> floor the Jaraguá today in the distance

nestled in clouds clouds and the bee no longer  
wants to enter  
today the mummies of Guanajuato are far far and away

who's next in line?  
the bee watching the assertion  
outside the window or  
?

*Translated by Roberto Tejada* 

OMAR PÉREZ

---

## DE FILANTRÓPICAS

### VERSONS ACOMPLEJADOS

Mi verso es un yerro viejo  
enterrado en un jardín  
mi verso es como un violín  
que canta en el entrecejo.

Si ves un trozo de verso  
agostado bajo el sol  
soy yo, soy verso y reverso  
soy materia, soy alcohol.

Amo las tardes divinas  
donde cantan los zorzales  
presiento la luna fina  
astillando los cristales.

He visto, entre sombra y sombra,  
tropezar al policía  
y al criminal que se asombra  
solo en la casa vacía.

Sé que en Persia y en Nigricia  
de esclavo a esclavo se tratan  
cortejando la primicia  
se venden, compran y matan.

He visto en la noche oscura  
alumbrar cien candelabros  
sin resplandores macabros:  
son las luces de natura.

Hay un puñal en la fe  
un dogal en la esperanza  
un elixir de confianza  
que embriaga más que el café.

Salí del claustro contento  
como perro sin bozal  
a ladrarle al pensamiento  
y morder el vendaval.

En el vado entre dos ríos  
me salpiqué la camisa  
la memoria traigo lisa  
el pie descalzo y sombrío.

Yo sé del supermercado  
de su gloria y de su suerte  
donde se compra la muerte,  
el globo y el mantecado.

La esclavitud de los hombres  
la esclavitud de los hombres  
la esclavitud de los hombres  
es la gran pena del mundo.

La prontitud de los hombres  
la lentitud de los hombres  
la ingratitud de los hombres  
es la gran pena del mundo.

La gratitud de los hombres  
la juventud de los hombres  
la senectud de los hombres  
es la gran pena del mundo.

La rectitud de los hombres  
la oblicuitud de los hombres  
la exactitud de los hombres  
es la gran pena del mundo.

La laboriositud e inactitud  
l'apatitud y solidaritud  
la egocitud y colectivitud  
he aquí la esclavitud  
y la gran pena del mundo.

## SUJETO Y PREDICADO

Serumano  
esclavo soberano  
de la grey  
peón y rey  
no me besas  
no me das la mano  
la epidemia es tu ley.  
Frena, frena  
acelera y punto  
toda la materia sale  
del conjunto  
no es una pena  
acaso  
que el individuo cejijunto  
vea en tal asunto  
una condena  
acelera y punto  
frena y punto  
se parte la cadena.  
Escritura  
voluta y viruta  
de las ocupaciones  
la más puta  
no la más antigua:  
inteligencia bruta.  
Es la vida la que mata  
no la muerte  
la muerte viene a verte  
la muy sata  
a distraerte de tanta recholata  
por eso te arrebata:  
buena suerte  
y en verdad los propios huesos

son la estructura del mundo  
Serumano  
esclavo soberano  
de la grey  
peón y rey  
no me besas  
no me das la mano  
la epidemia es tu ley  
it's too late, it's too late  
it's too late.

## POR ESO VOY AL MAR

Un zapatico viejo  
un sacrificio para Yemayá  
dame la visa que voy para allá  
si no me la das  
mato dos carneros más.

Por eso voy al mar  
a rezar  
para que cambie la situación  
en el motor  
de pensar.

Un trozo de botella  
hace sangrar  
las 20 000 leguas de un viaje al más allá  
un desfile de latas escoltado  
por delfines de palo y alquitrán

Por eso voy al mar  
a rezar  
para que cambie la situación  
en el motor  
de pensar.

Tiburón Disney  
sirenita de hilo dental  
cualquier contagio es  
coincidencia universal

De dónde serán los plastic bags  
las chucherías de Tetra Brik  
y los despojos de Taiwán  
y adónde van  
la poliespuma de flotar  
la monedita sin valor  
y los condones  
de pescar.

Por eso voy al mar

a rezar  
para que cambie la situación  
en el motor  
de pensar.

## LA QUIMBUMBIA

Venimos a enterrar a la quimbumbia  
un juego primitivo y tropical  
se juega con tres palitos  
ecológico y bonito  
es muy simple y no gasta electricidad.  
De tantas tradiciones, la quimbumbia  
bien poco que nos queda en realidad  
el arroz desgranadito  
caminar bien derecho  
el saludo, buenos días y qué tal.

La quimbumbia  
la zambumbia  
la columbia  
son valores del espectro nacional  
se diluyen en la nada  
de basura enamorada  
de una plástica y errada  
condición.

Los niños olvidaron la quimbumbia  
jugando a Play Station y batman  
batman spiderman  
haciendo maromas te buscas el pan  
cuidando lo ajeno te crees superman.

La quimbumbia  
la zambumbia  
la columbia  
son valores del espectro nacional  
se diluyen en la nada  
de basura enamorada  
de una plástica y errada  
condición.

Debemos rescatar a la quimbumbia  
han dicho el profesor y el general

un proyecto de la Unesco  
un cigarro o un refresco  
patrocinan esta opción tan natural.

La quimbumbia  
la zambumbia  
la columbia  
son valores del espectro nacional  
se diluyen en la nada  
de basura enamorada  
de una plástica y errada  
condición.

## A LAS 4 'E LA MAÑANA PASA UN TREN

A las 4 'e la mañana pasa un tren  
el sonido d la mar se oye incesante  
entre' l mar y la mañana pasa un bien  
pasa un mal y una pesquisa y es bastante

Es a veces necesario sucumbir  
con cuidado practicar el elegante  
cotidiano negocio del morir  
alejarse y renacer y ya es bastante

Con la mínima paciencia d un volcán  
con la insólita bondad d un elefante  
con la estúpida fiereza d un caimán  
nos miramos al espejo y es bastante

Siento pena por quien veo padecer  
y embullarse por edades semejantes  
a la nuestra, créase por creer  
vívase por vivir y ya es bastante

Una locura, un frío, una verdad  
una mentira, un calor, un detonante  
un escándalo que acalle la ciudad  
y un silencio que diga, ya es bastante.

## SIETE INTERPRETACIONES D LA REALIDAD CUBANA

Cuando el cielo se cayó  
la tierra se despejó

Tantos perros para un hueso  
el ratón se comió el queso

Con la soga del ahorcado  
hizo un trazo delicado

Flaco, flaco como un güin  
el diablo con su violín

Sembraba el status quo  
el viento se lo llevó

El pobre se comió un gato  
Charlie Chaplin un zapato

Lleva cabeza y no cuello  
lleva fino sin repollo.

## MELODÍAS AL MORO

*A Fayad Jamís*

Nací caminando  
un ojo triste, una venganza  
a cuestas como Hamlet  
o un saco de cemento  
nací caminando  
cuatro soldados, un cubo de limpieza  
la bandera en el plato del cake  
a la moda,  
mentira d merengue tricolor  
nací caminando radio reloj  
callejón de los perros una rumba  
a la virgen del Carmen  
decid a los soldados:  
quemen su propio pellejo  
busquen su propio espejo

la labia  
la labia la labia la labia  
lalabia lalabia lalabia  
no me da  
el verso  
no es el único invento perverso  
se siente  
se siente se siente y se miente  
se vive oneroso d frente  
al destino q va por atrás  
convicciones  
se comportan cual malas canciones  
repetiendo estribillo clemente  
se conforman con vagas razones  
a la rabia d ser consecuente  
bla bla bla

la labia  
la labia la labia la labia  
lalabia lalabia lalabia  
no me da

.

no l'astilla en el dedo  
no la espina  
muerte el callado deseo  
no casa comunal  
y dulce: se come solo  
un parpadeo, eclipse  
poeta: meta  
timador en sonata  
prometeica  
dice lo que dice  
y lo que dice calla

.

soy chaquetón, soy medalla?  
augurio soy y piano acompañante  
en el mediterráneo del hacer  
trastorno y torno atrás  
servicio sin ser vicio  
septeto no sectario  
del mismo instrumento  
varias cuerdas  
como en un banco d carpintero  
no t aburres  
no t ahorras  
libertad.

## CUBANOLOGÍA

La poesía es el arma d la revolución  
la poesía es el harpa d la revolución  
la poesía es el herpes d la revolución  
el policía es el héroe d la revolución  
enarbolando el lápiz d la reprobación  
la tropelía es el lupus d la renovación  
el cauce purulento d la fragmentación  
fragmento con fragmento en la televisión  
momento tras momento d cruda imantación  
sicología al uso d la consumición  
con dos palitos chinos y un trasto d Japón  
economía abierta d patas al ladrón  
que sazona su salsa con zumo d salmón.  
La etnología es el baile d la graduación  
d los frijoles negros en ebullición  
y el arrocito blanco, envase d cartón  
d moros y cristianos en mala traducción.  
Y parecía que el hombre en su celebración  
se moría despacio d tanta reflexión  
cabeceando en la noche d su generación  
centenario d zafra y desertificación  
qué vacilón qué vacilón  
el paso vacilante d la transición  
produce tu basura y carga tu camión  
de cada cual su santo a cada cual su son  
de cada cual su rito a cada cual su ron.  
La poesía es el huerto d la evolución  
la poesía es un herpes cargado d emoción  
la poesía es un harpa sembrada en un cajón.

Dijeron que la isla no estaba fijada  
ni al fondo ni al cielo  
y que en ella nacería una nueva criatura

sabroso mango sin chupar  
y entonces, hasta cuando el amor  
será instrumento d venganza  
y la dulzura objeto para el lucro.  
Dijeron que la isla era infinita  
y ahora que he llegado aquí  
todo está lleno d límites.

## INCONCLUSO

Dónde la sed, quise decir el agua  
dónde el discurso, digo, la verdad  
dónde la lluvia, no el paraguas  
dónde el real, digo realidad  
nadar contra la corriente  
sólo saben los salmones  
dónde las uñas y dientes  
quise decir...

## STATUS KU

El King del Tao t  
toca con su velo si  
vuelas con su bola d  
breve porquesí.

El King del Tao es  
benefactor del mundo a  
cuotas quincenales d  
bienes con sus males: π  
rosas al cuadrado son  
motivo de prisa y  
tasas temporales d  
verde y carmesí.

El King del Tao se  
aleja por la calle al  
vacío d sentido que  
organiza l'amor:  
puerto d marinos con  
barcos invisibles, cuán  
flexible es la goleta cuán  
flexible el capitán.

## SARABANDA

Tiembla, ciudad ronca, ciudad renga, ciudad rambla  
gira bombo de ratas y rupias en contradanza  
Calles malignas, miro tus tachos, miro tus techos, miro tus tetas  
y en una esquina indigna podría comerme 12 croquetas.  
Cuánto vale una rumba d cascabeles en competencia?  
Cuánto cuesta 1 helado, 1 sonrisa, 1 paciencia?  
Cuánto este moho oscuro que cubre todo d lentejuelas  
del pasado oportuno: biblias, grilletes y castañuelas?  
Sé que t gusta el mambo, quieres ser parte d la porfía  
sé que chupas y soplas, soplas y chupas con rebeldía  
y que cantas "habana" cual se tratara d un paraíso  
sueños d mariguana, lamiendo culos por un permiso.  
Arrástrate serpiente, vuela venado, muere tortuga  
trinen los pajaritos, que baile el niño con su maruga,  
la lengua se me traba en un trabalenguas d la prehistoria  
el preso tiene jaula, tiene el custodio su pan d gloria.

## FLUJO D'EFFECTIVO

Qué dice la vida  
a veces resulta una causa perdida  
qué dice el honor:  
vive poco mucha prisa  
viene el coco fumar daña la salud  
párese en el medio no sonría  
sonría ahora: paraván o parabien  
d una conciencia superior  
estados oxidados  
como tranca que va d lado a lado  
caja fuerte, seguro contra la muerte  
pirámide y plegaria  
martinete  
sulla testa dell angelo  
sainete  
por motivos piadosos  
se sitúa en el punto d reposo  
la palanca  
akrópolis makrópolis  
auto-ayuda de los menesterosos  
billonarios por la módica cifra  
de treintaytres monedas  
páramo cerebral  
más allá d los trópicos sublimes  
el planeta es una isla gigante  
como cifra d código mutante:  
tanto tienes tanto vales  
tanto vuelas tanto caes  
tanto tanto  
primate con su destino  
celebra los umbrales d la sed  
como cándidos defectos  
las otras drogas son en descrédito perfecto

llevadas al patíbulo del bien  
y el mal se siente en su elemento  
como pez  
en la ciencia sumergido  
la razón es delito consentido  
sin razón:  
qué erótico el abismo  
qué sexy el abandono d sí mismo  
caída libre del espíritu anterior  
a una era sin nombre  
que es la nuestra.

## ÚLTIMA LITURGIA

Enormous personal importance  
peccata minuta est  
micromegalia macrominucia  
ipso facto neuralgia  
cosa nostra maria  
misterium martirium  
et pater filium.  
Deicidio  
subsídio inmortal  
teosis  
eterna esclerosis.  
Teorema en rama  
demonio  
no conmiseración.  
Sum ergo sum  
cogito ergo cogito.

## CINCO POEMAS INFANTILES

Conozco un caballo  
se llama Shalom  
que no es el lacayo  
d ningún cabrón  
ni el adorno tibio  
de casa o cuartón.  
Es fiero tranquilo  
por eso lo quiero  
no le pierdo el hilo  
cuello d pistilo  
ojos d carbón  
no busca venganza  
espera en la danza  
d su condición  
se adormece en vilo  
y cuece en la panza  
pedos d ciclón.  
No es gordo ni flaco  
santo ni bellaco  
se llama Shalom.

3 tazas  
para el que quiere raza  
una d cal  
otra d hiel  
y otra d melaza.  
Si quieres ser ario  
búscate en el diccionario  
si quieres ser puro  
no lleves apuro  
si buscas ancestro  
lleva tu cabestro  
si quieres pigmento  
frótate en el viento.  
Mas si lo que buscas  
es compensación  
pídele el último  
en la cola  
al ratón.

Mi barco velero  
tiene 4 ruedas  
dos son d palabras  
y dos d madera.  
Un día en la niebla  
el barco se hundió  
y mientras se hundía  
al fin navegó!  
Allá en lo profundo  
llegó a una bahía  
el agua era limpia  
el agua era fría  
el agua que todo  
lo abraza con ganas  
mi barco quería  
convertirse en rana!  
Los buques anfibios  
como es este el caso  
llevan dos banderas  
por si acaso  
una d astronauta  
otra submarina  
para protegerse  
d la lluvia fina.  
Qué buque imperioso  
como un estornudo  
va surcando el día  
desnudo.  
En una tormenta  
mi barco se hundió  
mas no se lamenta  
porque al fin zarpó.

Los vegetales  
no tienen alma  
ni la precisan  
tienen calma.  
Las piedras carecen  
de sentimientos  
pero respiran  
lento  
cada suspiro  
dura un milenio  
sin aspavientos  
ni malgenio.  
Perros, delfines,  
chivos, leones  
tienen contadas  
emociones  
mas las que tienen  
son puntuales  
no se reprimen  
los animales.  
Sólo nosotros  
los reprimimos  
los exprimimos  
los suprimimos  
menos mal que  
somos sus primos.

Era un extraño  
hasta que puse en la piel  
una resma d papel  
para poder dibujarme  
pinté pelos d elefante  
y dientes d jabalí  
pero el rostro original  
siguió allí.

En el lomo un carapacho  
d una jicotea urbana  
me fijé con almidón  
y en el pecho una ventana  
para mirar hacia el sol  
en la cabeza un pedal  
y plumas d colibrí  
pero el rostro original  
siguió allí.

Quise tener los bigotes  
d un bandido mejicano  
los pulgares d un herrero  
para completar las manos  
con dedos d platanitos  
los ojos son espejitos  
con los bordes carmesí<sup>1</sup>  
pero el rostro original  
siguió allí.

## CANCIÓN SEMIÓTICA

Duermes  
has cambiado d nombre  
quieres mutar el orden  
por cuestión d palabras.

Dices  
odiаr los mayorales  
pero odias la palabra  
mayoral.

Si  
con otros fonemas  
alguien cercano a ti  
o tú mismo tal vez  
desempeñaras  
esa función maltrecha  
acaso t odiarías  
o estarías contento  
con el nuevo disfraz?  
Fácil cambiar d nombre  
difícil  
cambiar d condición. 

EILEEN MYLES

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FROM AFTERGLOW (A MEMOIR)

### MY FATHER CAME AGAIN AS A DOG

My father came again as a dog. The man named Terrence came again in the month of April approximately thirty years after his own death. No joke he came again as dog named Rosie. I titled her so. She came to me as 'a tough Irish girl' and I cobbled a name for her according to that assignment. I had been attached to the dog corps for as long as I could remember. Simple liking lead me to the annals of the dog, not the horse. On television a boy with soft hair lived in the country with a furry animal with sharp pointed ears. They had their own show. In another show a gang of city kids had a being along for the ride. One that walked on all fours and with a ring around his eye as if to say "seeing is kidding." Look deeper inside. Do as the dog does and the dog does it through taking pictures and sending the pictures around the universe. The team of children and dogs is the strongest link on earth and if we are to survive as a people it shall occur because of the strength of connection in the ranks of these numbers. The future army of the Great War shall be them.

I knew I would be one alone in my family. I was in the middle, the quiet one. The receiver. I felt the tugging from the male side, and another from the female, and those were my siblings. Yet this inbetweenness, this aloneness, hear

it now, is holy. I begged my parents fervently for an animal to be an army with me. My story would have moved so much faster if that dog friend had come aboard so early on. If Dog had come into my child life my father would not have needed to return. He knew this and brought me a small sandy dog I named Taffy and yet my mother returned Taffy, this male, to the ASPSCA the next morning where he most likely died. His crime? That he had cried through that first long night as all dogs do. I would have learned so much from him. Get this. I would have been a prophet at 12 instead of 60. Get this. But I am very grateful to have had Rosie. And her antecedent, the man, my father. And as it stood I was alone in my family, alone in my world, my one ally in the house, the man, my father was dying. I do need to talk about, hear it, the orientation of alcoholism in order to talk about my father. As David Bowie suggested in a powerful film and as certainly Jesus Christ suggested too of the human tribe, we thirst.

There's a very simple reason for the thirst. We are fish. You know the earth was once covered with water and when the higher being who I choose to call Dog felt tired of being alone the waters receded and suddenly there was land. And the fish crawled to land and grew legs. Why wouldn't Dog go into the waters and speak to the fish, in another time, why did the very essence of the fish, some of them, have to change. If you had the powers of a dog who created at least the universe and I have a feeling Dog created many universes but I don't know how many. I am privy to a great deal of knowledge but not all. And this is the very nature of my humility. Even restraining the waters of alcoholism in my own life and I know I know less. And one would assume that Dog could do anything. But no because there are simple laws even Dog needs to obey. You cannot speak underwater. Thus there is no poetry the original speech. Dog wanted to have a conversation with man and the dogs within us. And the fish, frankly, needed to speak. You know how Dog accomplished all this. He pictured it. He pictured an earth covered with water and he pictured it dry, listen to me, and the fish going up on shore and discovering feet. Dog is lonely, we can see that 'lonely' in every dog's eyes and that loneliness is love. It causes us to do good things. Hear this. Such is the power of our army. Because the enemy of that love is dying. Every dog is fading slow returning to the waters of time which is the nature of dog's eyes. His seeing is the sea.

Meanwhile on this earth on this planet we are thirsty. Are we brave enough to see this thirst as longing. We want to go home. So we go to the beach. Understand! We wait for night. The little living human is framed, is continually, by opposites. One of the ways we experience this in the living realm is in the limitations of things. Can we accept this longing, feel it, even maybe occasionally go down to the beach. Jump in, dry off and walk on. Do we accept our fate? The holiest people live by the sea with their dogs. Look at Mary Oliver. That is a saint. But there are a great many challenges to our frame. Think of a mind as a sea. Its own inland sea. We can connect to the enormity of others, the sea in them. We can connect to Dog. Hound of the Ocean as the ancients once said. But there is an agony at first but maybe a little all the time. A kind of oceanic stretch. Aching, impossible thoughts. Some people take a giant leap themselves by being 'gay.' Other people need to kill them. Cannot accept the thought, the 'gay' thought. That things are not as solid as they seem. So there are many sudden inexplicable deaths. How can we abide. There is a sea. There is Dog. Can we trust in that deep silent underwater bark? The ripples allowing a stretching of thought, a wide lookage. To be living in that lighthouse. Thoreau knew it, wrote about it. Yup, you know him. Hear this. To be standing in that light. All that light. Because every day as we are dying our gaze is getting tiny without Dog. We become sorrowful. We can cry out. Wait for this now! And hear her sorrowful knowing bark. For Dog will come to comfort us. We can do evil. Be violent. Use love as if it were a common bone lying on the ground. An inscrutable bone. Using it there. Yes.

The only true logic is sound. If you don't know, listen. Bend yours. Careful here. An angry murmuring, an ill placed yelp, a grrr can set off a maelstrom of pain, tragedy and disease. We need to get it right. To listen well. To not do wrong. We need to abandon our logic and go back. To wait in dog is to get on all fours, not just on your knees, but to worship the dog privately and wait. The waters are coming, we can and we will replace the violence with silence and wait. The peace of the dog is promised and soon will be upon us. His waters will rock us and hold us. He is the sleep. He is the night.

But normally humans want to drink. I'm a little parched they might say. How about a couple of brewskies? Some smart drinks say the lifted eyebrows under a spectacled gaze. One eye shifts towards another in an office. A tipping

gesture like a drink to the lips is made. Glasses into purse. Computer turned off. Okay? There is so much surrounding this urge to drink. A young person might feel, uh, a powerful tugging in their crotch might begin. A thudding inside it is the sea of desire to which all are privy. And all around the youth the message is no. What you feel is wrong. But it is inside me. This is what she says. This is what he says. Is this feeling not right? The youth drinks and the conflict is resolved. The illusion of alcohol is that we are putting the ocean inside. But no get this. Instead we are stilling it. We are dying. Alcohol is mold. Past ripe, a sickly sweetness that makes a person go crazy. Of beer they say the kiss of the hops but it is the hiss of the snake. The snake laughing uproariously whenever a horny teenager takes a drink. Her head cast back in exaltation, her hand fluttering at her chest. She is the antithesis of dog, the agent of counterfeit sweetness that is replete with a message of death not life. SSSSSSSST. It is not the healthy surf pounding against the rock. Another picture: the balloon of your soul deflating.

When two people meet and engage in the act of fertilization simultaneously a million pictures are surging in their brains. Think of your parents making love if you will. Pay attention. An academy award, a cavalcade of thoughts of pictures are coursing through their heads. Yes, right up here. You are one of them. The universe is a tiny yearbook but told in seconds. The possible second of each of us. I must explain here for the first time perhaps that the act of sex is not the sex act as we understand it. Oh no. The tiny picture is key instead, a thought entirely understandable to children who intuit pro-creation entirely. They are for it, standing at their drawing pads in kindergarten. Don't get the wrong idea. The collusion of childhood and sex in our time is the greatest of crimes because we are wiping out their supreme board by imposing too early animal sexuality on a greater moment. I am saying the child is a virtual movie theater, get this, not of sex but of creation. Get this. True creation. The first eight or ten years of the child's existence are full of these pictures. The supreme board, listen here, your light bubbling portrait gallery, the cattle call of images from which all of us were chosen, this is the wild field of life. People in their natural state are sometimes unable to make a selection. You know how the drunkest people often have children. Easily. While the earnest twos, good people can be plugging away at it for years. Even the lesbians trying. Good people too! It is enormous the responsibility.

Which is forgotten after the act always. I tell you now. The two of them engaged in the act must see you momentarily – you are the thought. They must go: Yes, *her*. Few can sail into this mode of selection readily. It's a trance, really. Sex is given humans to distract them from a lighter deeper choosing. That is a fact. It is easy, a child could do it, pick a face, a nature they like from the sea of entities ready to be born. But the world already is terribly crowded. The child must pass a few years; this is the waiting time. The true gestation. Later on they may enter into the deep rich valley of sex: the place where the human first encounters the nature of soul. And it is there at last that our widest choosing has begun—as we begin absently putting our arms around vagrants, elves and villains, around thinkers, teachers, pilgrims and beasts—in this rambling sex time and the map of creation is streaming through our heads all the time here on earth hear this it is *manifested* by the fitting of bodies, one to another. It is a holy place, not a holy act. Like universes if you see where I am going. I have given you many talks. This is one. The greatest crime on the earth of course is rape. Animals commit this crime as well. Dolphins and ducks. The spider many times...she then eats the perpetrator of the crime. I am not saying the spider's way is useful for us. Rape is...prepare for this thought. It's stealing the envelope of another. Bodies, though gorgeous, are only containers of the sea. If you force your way into a message that is not intended for you, it's a kind of suicide. The message will annihilate you ultimately. You're no one now. On and on. You are no one for generations if you do it repeatedly. It's very hard for us to understand it on this plane. The greater suffering is endured by the one who has forced his sex on another. Holy people have said this about their torturers too. It is very hard to think about rape this way but it is true. That there are no pictures. If a child is born of this union they either have no mind or they are sage. There is nothing written on these minds and either nothing good will come of these people or they are the saviors of our time. In the future I see a small yellow dog in this position. And he is the prophet and he shall be the end of this story. For today I see my own teacher, Rosie. ☘

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JOEL BETTRIDGE

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FROM *APOCALYPSE, APOCALYPSE*

*APOCALYPSE, APOCALYPSE*

At thirty-two degrees thirty-five minutes and seven  
seconds

North, by thirty-five degrees eleven minutes and five  
seconds east,

When the wind bites clean the face on your face,  
wry, fills your mouth

With the sea, the troughs, the Valley of Jezreel,  
swollen with the

Valley of Armagedon, the case of its landscape,  
bored by itself, & I am

Here stepping off the bus there, to catch all those  
angels tall as apple

Trees, leaping from the hills, striding between their  
waves, letting slip the

Earth from the bowls of seeds in their hands, casting  
wheat, barley;

Olives and grapes, drawing the Plain of Esdraelon  
up to the sky

& my sister walks among them, takes the harvest  
against her, a poultice for my  
Father's voice talking of Rome, the early church, to  
his traveling  
Congregation, sick with child by a halfwit-Robin  
Goodfellow, she,

The fundamentalists with us, and the angels, not  
having it; and still  
God sows there, and the grain heaves from the  
excavation at our feet,  
Climbs our entwining ankles—the pilgrims, the  
seraphim, the Esther I'm in love with

At home, our eyes skinned back with apocalypse,  
and it's fine, our bolting brains  
Become us, this is the good world all a pinhead,  
imperceptibly  
Almost twirling, and each of us we its creatures,  
grazing, grazing, grazing.

## HYPOTHESIS OF LIGHT (1675)

Infinite space, the sensorium of substance, place, rest  
and motion, time and succession,

Seen by a spectrum projected on a wall twenty-two  
feet away, a spectrum

Five times as long as wide, the termination of  
shadows or darkness, a room plunged

Into midnight at noon, light from Venus gathered  
with a lens, lift up

Your eyes to the lofty revolutions, one beam crosses  
another, name

It rightly, give the earth comfort, our atlas is not far  
from its rising, the resultant radiance

That cannot fatigue us, rays formed in the depths of  
colors merged into

Whiteness, colors reappearing as they separate, the  
confusion of sunlight as

They meet and pass, particles long and short, straight  
and aslant, fast and slow,

Seething harmonically, not two colors, or seven, an  
infinite number corresponding

To the infinite angles of refraction, leap up now &  
rest, leap downe, & perhaps downe & up

Again, sometimes skip, & sometimes turn often as a  
whirlwind.

Now let wash your face in comets and planets  
magnified 150 times,

Corpuscles of an electric spirit hid in the pores of  
bodies, fluids out of solids,

And solids out of fluids, fixed out of volatile, &  
volatile

Out of fixed, an extension tangible because  
impenetrable, visible because opaque, not  
Enclosed but encloses, globuli and y<sup>e</sup> optick nerves,  
surfaces coloured red  
Yellow blue greene; Rivers and the Atmosphere, a  
volcano seeking equilibrium.

NEWTON REDISCOVERS GRAVITY, MARCH, 1727,  
AT THE GREATEST DISTANCE FROM THE WINDOWS,  
AMONG PARCELS OF BOOKS, WRITING OVER HIS  
*CHRONOLOGY OF ANCIENT KINGDOMS*

A little light serves me, a little light, a little  
Light serves, a little light, a little light,  
a little light serves me, a little, a little, a little

Light, a little serves, a little, a light, serves,  
A little light, little light, serves me, a little  
Light, little light, light, a little light,

Serves, little, serves, little, a little light,  
A little light, a little light severs me, light,  
Little light, serves, serves, serves, light,

Light little, a little light, light, a little  
Serves, little, a little, a little, a little, little,  
Light, a little, a little light, a little light.

## THE AMERICAN SCENE

Richard Pryor ached for apocalypse.

Alex Jones weeping over the Second Amendment  
aches for apocalypse.

Tommy Edison drunk on patents & copyrights ached  
for apocalypse.

Martin Luther King ached for apocalypse.

Day Traders in Manhattan ache for apocalypse.

Elizabeth Knapp on the wilderness fringe of the Bay  
Colony, bound to the Rev. Samuel Willard,  
binding herself to Satan instead, ached for  
apocalypse.

The AFT aches for apocalypse.

Thomas Jefferson farmed vegetables as ornaments,  
invented Liberty, and tore more slaves from  
his flesh and ached for apocalypse.

Boy Scouts of America, make vases from popsicle  
sticks, pick up litter by a stream, and ache for  
apocalypse.

Jane Russell ached for apocalypse.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton ached for apocalypse.

Andrew Carnegie forging culture from steel and  
breaking heads at Homestead ached for  
apocalypse.

Florida aches for apocalypse.

Dennis Kucinich aches for apocalypse.

Georgia O'Keeffe ached for apocalypse.

The American Resistance Movement washed in  
internet light, at full alert until further notice,  
aches for apocalypse.

James Fenimore Cooper ached for apocalypse.

Julia Butterfly Hill, a tree ring now, aches for  
apocalypse.

Minutemen transfigured shoot out water tanks and ache  
for apocalypse.

William Mulholland planted Los Angeles aching for  
apocalypse.

Tea Party Patriots dream up fathers and ache for  
apocalypse.

Phillis Wheatley ached for apocalypse.

John Philip Sousa blowing picnics and bunting, heavy-  
petting and aircraft carriers, blowing for all his  
life, aching for apocalypse.

## TO THE CITIZENS OF THE END OF TIME

Go to your rooms, all wrath, and anger, all clamour,  
and railing, with all malice, put  
Away, now is the rank odor of the history of organic  
life, it  
Stems with beauty, the miserable fifty millennia of  
homo sapiens is no revel-

Ation, unless may you cherish defenselessness, and  
be able to open your mouths  
And emptiness come out; one man dies, one is born,  
that is the world to come,  
It wanders in in the now-time, a gardener of asphalt  
& dande-

Lions, ants around its ankles, dragging a hatchet,  
may you inherit the inscrutable,  
May you have nonsense implanted in your hearts, in  
principle, I sit as the incon-  
Sistency in the mind of a monad, crouched in the  
corner, listening to

The pitch of its cosmos—whorl, may you—now get  
down from your rooftops; why spite your  
perfectly  
Unobjectionable beds? Untwist your face as a maiden-  
head,  
A fleet joined to split the oxygen in a push itself to  
heaven,

In principle, today I reenact the abolition of logic,  
don't close down the  
Ports, touch hands with perfect strangers, as if ships  
distended in roman candles, who

Needs it, all that talking in the air, in principle,  
enthusiastic

Misunderstanding, here are the images of the past  
that demand saving, tiptoeing  
At us, a progress in nail shards, already, close,  
mortified in their  
Appetites, engrossed, cracking, may you, capsized,  
drown or swim ashore. 

## INTERSECCIONES

### 0 / PREFIGURACIONES

*Tan sólo ver sin intentar reconocer, entre las crispaciones de la luz, la imagen que va naciendo en el fondo del ojo. Sin lugar, sin tiempo y sin imagen, esa impensada luz naciente propicia otra forma de mirar. Manchas inquietantes que no dicen nada y sin embargo muestran algo nunca visto, que en la densidad de la atmósfera que hace resaltar los detalles, se entrega al contacto de los otros sentidos. Semejante a los juegos de nubes, de espumas o de vaho sobre un vidrio, el pensamiento nace en el ojo desde la huella de una ausencia de la que se desprende como un elemento fantasmático en una luz que se ilumina a sí misma con el solo pensamiento de la luz. Y se extingue al intentar decirla...*



*Higher Ground / Contact*, © 2001 Michael Flomen

## 1/ ACERTIJO

Pura luz animal en los abismos de la hierba, desencarnadas luces vivas. Sin metáfora, la pura impresión sin abstracción —¿de qué?—, sin representación de lo ya visto como lo nunca visto en esta oscuridad que su luminiscencia vuelve cristalina. Concreciones inasibles, misteriosas epifanías captadas en la instantánea y simultánea des-aparición de su estallido. Y todo aquello que involucra la mirada —¿qué...? El negro transparente donde la luz se inscribe, el intermitente centelleo del pensamiento y la tangible materialización del haz de nervios al contacto de esa luz con la cavidad en la que nacen las formas más acá de lo pensado, en el simple y procaz extravío de la mirada en el aire vacío. El vagabundeo en busca de un asidero visual posible funde los elementos en una nueva imagen impensada. Ya, ya..., saber que son luciérnagas no resuelve el origen de su luz...



*Higher Ground / Choice*, © 2001 Michael Flomen

## 2/SIN DISTANCIA

De igual modo que las imágenes fueron captadas *en su milimétrica aparición* (sin acomodo ni composición), de un plano a otro de lo mínimo se desplaza la mirada en esta infinita cercanía en la que el ojo permanece casi pegado a las imágenes. ¿Cómo hacer real lo no visto...? La mirada vacila entre la luz y la flor, la fijea de aquello imposible de ser fijado. Y desde esta profunda y reversible oscuridad, ¿qué es lo cerca o lo lejos cuando la imagen nace al mismo tiempo *dentro y fuera*...? ¿Rastros...? ¿Indicios...? ¿Señales...? Momentáneas constelaciones interiores. ¿Sellos...? ¿Figuras...? ¿Vestigios...? Sólo una huella vaga sobre el vidrio... ¿Y esta cercanía que me produce una doble visión *en relieve* de las formas que percibo con los otros sentidos...? ¿Formas...? ¿Signos...? ¿Sentidos...? Cuando la irracional pureza de la luz y la indetenible búsqueda del ojo salvaje coinciden en el agujero negro de la imagen, la caída de la luz en la materia translada la ambigüedad de aquélla a la irradiación que espontáneamente se produce cada vez que alguien la observa...



*Higher Ground / Concurrence*, © 2000 Michael Flomen

### 3/ TRASTORNO

Arde el bosque en una hoja, se ilumina la noche con una luciérnaga... Entre la transparencia nocturna y la del ojo, los enigmas de la sombra desaparecen y al materializarse la luz revela su indiscernible origen vegetal... La cruda lumino-sidad lunar fotografiada en-sí como la simple sensación de ver sin saber lo que ves... Un ojo en blanco abierto a un mundo ignoto... Y su contacto, la luz tocada, cuando la plenitud de la visión vacía y la materialidad lumínea coinciden en la dilución de las formas creadas... Cuando el campo visual y el ojo que lo abre irradian una misma lucifera sustancia... Hasta la abrupta coagulación de esa luz como un regreso de la visión a la sutil membrana cerebral que la imagina... ¿Y quién ve al ojo cuando la fotografía misma es *la vista de la vista...*? Y qué mirada de azoro —la mía—, qué enervada atracción —la de la luz— al sorprender su imagen oculta en mi retina...

## 0/AUSENCIAS

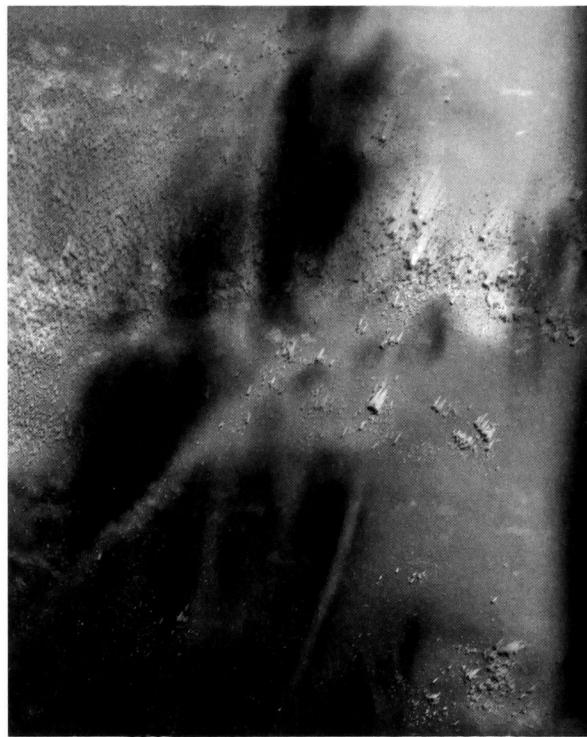
*Sombras de historias en la nieve bajo una luz mineral que entre sus oscuros reflejos convoca espectros y liebres. La sombra en el aire, la sombra en el hielo, la sombra en el reflejo... Sombras que no son imágenes, vacuas en la blancura, sino apenas su anhelada antelación. Huellas borrosas en un pliegue de tiempo, vistas de objetos inciertos que complican la mente, como las cambiantes cicatrices de la nieve. Adivinadas en una luna opaca, las estructuras del aire se intersectan en el ojo... Y cada vez que las veo, miro otra cosa... Un espectro captado en su disipación, como una huella encarnada al interior del reflejo, cruza un copo de nieve y por un momento sus movimientos quedan grabados en la hoja del suelo, que un instante después—pero antes de que la sombra acabe de cruzarlo—destella de nuevo...*



*Snow / Moonmist*, © 2007 Michael Flomen

## 1/NEBLINA LUNAR

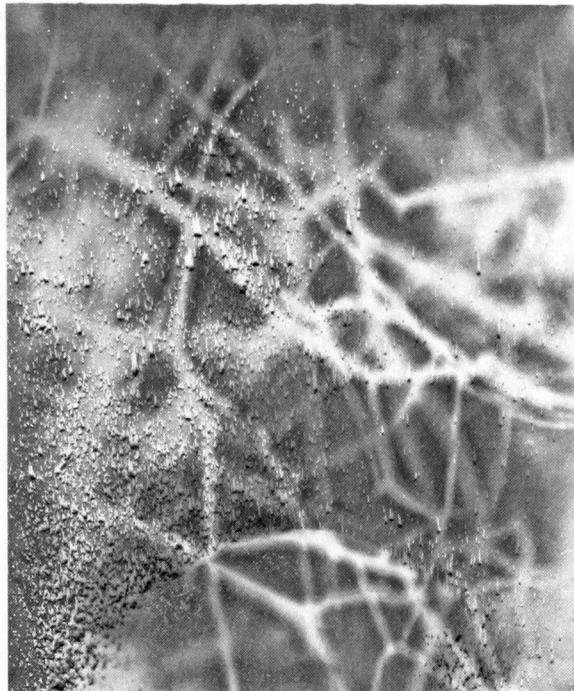
Maravilloso azar iluminado que le permite al ojo absorto en las certezas palpar como tras una tela lo que la noche ya no puede ocultar y sin embargo nunca revelará sino solo dejándolo palpar tras una tela. *Nieve como metáfora de nieve...* Sombras que se desprenden de otras sombras, sombras cubriendose de nieve... A contraluz, allí donde aparecen las cosas que normalmente los ojos no ven, las ramas se quiebran. Sombras de sombras, no de cuerpos... Y en su multiplicación frente al ojo atento, se multiplican también los cuerpos vacíos como vasos encendidos... Entre blancos muñones, una vieja sombra vaga... Mientras otra, apenas más pálida que la luz que la envuelve y en la que se disuelve —*la ausencia eterna casi visible en su doble cuerpo hueco*—, se yergue a punto de encarnar como otro espectro... Vistas en el lugar sin lugar del espejo oscuro revelan bajo la luna la carga que llevan oculta. En este aire que al perder nitidez se solidifica, las sombras vagan como velos de vaho, tenuemente iluminadas por una luz helada. Y en el paso de un mundo a otro, el ojo toca, como un insecto que apenas si se posa, las granulosidades de una imagen cubierta *literalmente* de niebla.



*Snow / Interception*, © 2011 Michael Flomen

## 2/SOMBRA PROFUNDAS

Como una adivinanza imposible de ser siquiera imaginada, siquiera proferida desde el hueco profundo de una cabeza en blanco. Como un espejo roto del que cada fragmento añadiera un reflejo de un lugar y un tiempo diferentes. A simple vista, bajo esta luz hipnótica, en la áspera visión que parece moverse todo el tiempo, la sombra es el testigo mudo de aquello que nosotros desde afuera no vemos, *de aquello que no podríamos ver*. Procesión de sombras irreconocibles que se cruzan en su camino al infinito con otras sombras ya sin rasgos ni alas, que arrastran el cuerpo por el aire. Jirones de espejo que no caen, muestran en su confusa superficie las heridas infligidas a la luz, las cicatrices de una imagen contrapuesta que a la vez que está inmóvil, se da vuelta. En el reino de lo visible elemental —sombras y reflejos—, donde también la vista se opaca para verlos. Y toco las nítidas huellas impresas en el vidrio detrás del cual miran las sombras, sedientas en el hielo, y tras el cual estoy mirando desde ahora, *antes aún de cruzar el reflejo...*



*Snow / Untitled*, © 2008 Michael Flomen

### 3/PESADILLAS DEL HIELO

Al interior de la imagen, el aire se crispa. Hurga el ojo en los recovecos de la sombra, colmándose de una nubosidad insomne. Leves formas aparecen y desaparecen en la superficie de la conciencia, transformándose cada vez que intento asirlas. Rostros apenas pensados como pájaros en las ramas, *nubes que surgen de otras nubes*, formas puras de luz que en los resquicios del aire se confunden. Ah si pudiera aislar una de esas fisuras que inopinadamente se abren y desde su cristalina fijeza momentánea me miran mirarlas. Como desde la aguda visión del insecto transparente—con el cuerpecillo de ciervo y los brazos abiertos—, que entre las resquebrajaduras del hielo ve fijo el ojo interno fijamente. En medio de un mundo de prístinas formas que parecen moverse al grácil ritmo de una música tan suave como para fundirse con el vaivén del aire... Entre los reflejos rotos sorprendo de pronto mi sombra *quebrándose*, como las alas de una mosca, y otro antifaz de pájaro arrancándome del rostro los terribles reflejos. Ah esta cualidad de la imagen que la vuelve *casi tangible*, y a tal punto quebradiza como una brizna congelada, que mi mano en el último instante se resiste a tocarla.



ALFONSO D'AQUINO

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POEMS FROM *FUNGUS SKULL EYE WING: SELECTED POEMS*  
*OF ALFONSO D'AQUINO*

*ACANTHUS*

*B / SHADOW*

The statue doesn't  
but its shadow shifts  
throughout the day  
making a circle

It traces its own way  
across the stones  
fingering forward  
along a blind edge

The light slanting  
over its shoulder  
tints the branches  
with a reddish patina

Its hand points out  
flowers and ivy  
and new leaves  
graze on the shadow

Over stones a restless  
flame quivers  
the afternoon transparentizes  
the dream of flesh

The hand beckons  
making dark signs  
against the high wall  
igneous clusters

The statue doesn't  
but its shadow shifts  
throughout the day  
and returns a stranger

*Translated by Forrest Gander* 

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JULIET LYND

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## SABORES DE CECILIA VICUÑA

En 1966, una joven Cecilia Vicuña, de 18 años, despertó de su siesta en casa de su novio de aquel entonces y comenzó a escribir lo que ella describe como un “chorro de poesía” que llamaría su *Diario estúpido*. Escribió cientos de versos, la mayoría eróticos, exhibiendo una *écriture feminine avant la lettre* y *sui generis*. La frescura y honestidad de la voz poética, a veces coquetona y sensual y a veces irónica y mordaz en su crítica de las instituciones dominantes de la sociedad reflejaba el espíritu revolucionario de la época, la que culminaría en Chile con la vía chilena al socialismo y la presidencia de Salvador Allende. Más que revolucionaria, sin embargo, la poeta es radical en su exploración de subjetividades y experiencias marginales y su exigencia inequívoca de la igualdad para la mujer, para el indígena, para la bisexual y su preocupación por la destrucción del medioambiente. Lo personal es político y la política es inconcebible sin atención a la subjetividad. Si la pluma es fálica, es un juguete para la poeta. Si la tierra es mujer, es sensual y orgásmica. *El corno emplumado / The Plumed Horn*, revista bilingüe que se editaba en México antes de la persecución de los editores tras la masacre de Tlatelolco en 1968 y que reunía poetas de todo el hemisferio americano, publicó algunos de sus poemas y la joven despertó el interés de grandes poetas de la época. Armada de la confianza que le dio su éxito con *El corno* y con

la ayuda de Alfonso Alcalde, poeta que dirigía la editorial estatal Quimantú en aquel momento, consiguió un contrato con Ediciones Universitarias de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso para publicar un volumen de unos cien poemas titulado *Sabor a mí*, con el tiraje impresionante de 3,000 ejemplares. Pero nunca se publicó. Este manuscrito desapareció tras el golpe de estado del 11 de septiembre, 1973 y pasarían años antes de que la poeta se enterara de que un rector conservador había bloqueado su publicación desde antes por su contenido erótico. Vicuña publicaría algunos de estos poemas en otro proyecto al que daría el mismo título (*Sabor a mi/Saborami*, Beau Geste Press, 1973) y sacaría unos cuantos más con diferentes editoriales en sus peripecias por el exilio. Aquí se reproducen algunos de los poemas hasta ahora inéditos, guardados en hojas sueltas en el archivo personal de Vicuña en Nueva York, escritos desde la subjetividad revolucionaria, feminista, medioambientalista, defensora y celebradora de las posibilidades más dinámicas y radicales para el futuro antes del golpe en Chile. La poesía temprana de Vicuña, censurada en 1971, será publicada por Editorial Catalonia en Chile, con el título: *El Zen Surado*, 2013.

CECILIA VICUÑA

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NUEVE POEMAS

BATALLA

Las razones  
de mi mundo  
sin razón  
casi se pierden  
entre las razones  
de los otros mundos  
demasiado razonables

1970

## SEPARACIÓN INCREÍBLE

mi blanca blusa máxima  
debajo  
hay  
un  
pecho.  
sólo uno porque el  
otro  
fue  
a  
pasear  
aprovechando lo  
inmaculado  
de  
la  
ocasión.

## PENELOPÉNICA PASIÓN

Las ensoñaciones y el obligado  
periplo de mis ideas  
dirigiéndose al fondo  
de un país sin menoscabo  
me obligaron a preparar  
un lápiz especial  
para un cuaderno largo  
siendo su forma  
una titubeante analogía  
de penetraciones  
deliciosas.  
Quién ha pensado  
tardíamente en “pene”?  
yo misma, pues.

## ESPEJO DE CARNE

Antes de que cualquier silueta pisara los continentes  
las hierbas transformaban su superficie en el vello  
de una doncella muy grande  
y qué piernas tenía que abrir para formar una bahía  
y qué senos más enormes respiraban en el Himalaya  
pero a pesar de todo eran unos pezones congelados  
de pura nieve  
y ese vientre extendido Atacama misma  
con ciertas colinas  
pero mayormente plano  
además es una dueña milenaria de un millón de brazos  
en Noruega, cada costa es una curva  
y en los terremotos se revuelca  
porque una hembra tiene que hacer el amor  
al cielo que flota  
a todos los astros que hay en él  
y en cada orgasmo se da una vuelta tan grande  
que se llama "revolución por minuto"  
y además esas nubes que vagan  
son nada más y nada menos que su lubricante  
y los mares su saliva, su transpiración  
y las lágrimas que caen por los bordes  
hacen lagos  
y las que van de los senos al monte de venus  
son los ríos  
y toda la geografía es una hembra yacente  
y nosotros somos sus trabajadoras  
y ella misma es amor  
y nosotras debemos repartir el amor  
como única forma de vida!

1967

## TERESA LA IMBÉCIL

Mis amores en realidad  
son la caja extraña de una muñeca polaca.  
Los ojos de la rubia apareciendo  
sobre las caderas mucho después de la medianoche  
la buhardilla siempre está especial  
para soltar el enorme cabello  
en la espalda y caen las hebras finas y gruesas  
por su mentón de nutria.  
Deliberadamente asomaba su rostro en la pared  
y no se veía más que la sombra de los senos  
ocultos bajo marmotas de pelo.  
y tan encantador  
el resplandor de su piel  
a esa hora desusada.  
Los desvíos de la cintura  
se distinguían claramente  
como abejas en el césped.  
La ventana no estaba abierta ni cerrada  
Lo que yo veía, amarillo como cristal  
se desprendía de las caderas soñolientas  
amasadas en torniquetes impropios  
destello pálido de los pelos  
que se abren delicadamente  
y dejan ver la piel rosada o verde  
ya no lo sé  
a un millón de centímetros  
de mis miradas.

## LOS CASTRADOS

Por más que coman plátanos  
y salchichas no tendrán ningún remedio  
de esto deben convencerse.

Pero deberían alegar por una solución  
drástica:

Por ejemplo que falta le hace al papa  
su pajarito?

Ninguna, es obvio  
Por lo que si realmente quiere practicar  
la caridad y el amor  
debe cedérselo a alguno  
que lo haya perdido  
en un accidente o en un coito  
demasiado apasionado  
Para eso fabrican con tanta profusión  
cinta pegativa en la actualidad.  
Se le hace una amarrita con un piolín  
También y queda listo.

## RUIDOS DESAGRADABLES

tic tac  
ametralladora  
explosión nuclear  
discurso  
bendición del papa  
dictado de misa  
enseñanza primaria secundaria general  
declaración de guerra  
ruido de dinero  
chasquido de palmadas  
rumor derechista  
sedición  
tijera que corta pelo  
policía que viene  
persona que obliga

## RUIDOS AGRADABLES

asaltos de bancos  
pis que cae  
tam tam  
ronquido  
ronroneo  
silencio  
silencio  
viento  
lapicito pastel  
pincelito  
pasto que crece  
susurros  
ruidos de copulación  
besos  
chasquidos de cariños  
pasos  
nubes  
truenos  
lluvia  
sol  
risas  
y  
punes

*febrero 1968*

## BÉSAME MUCHO

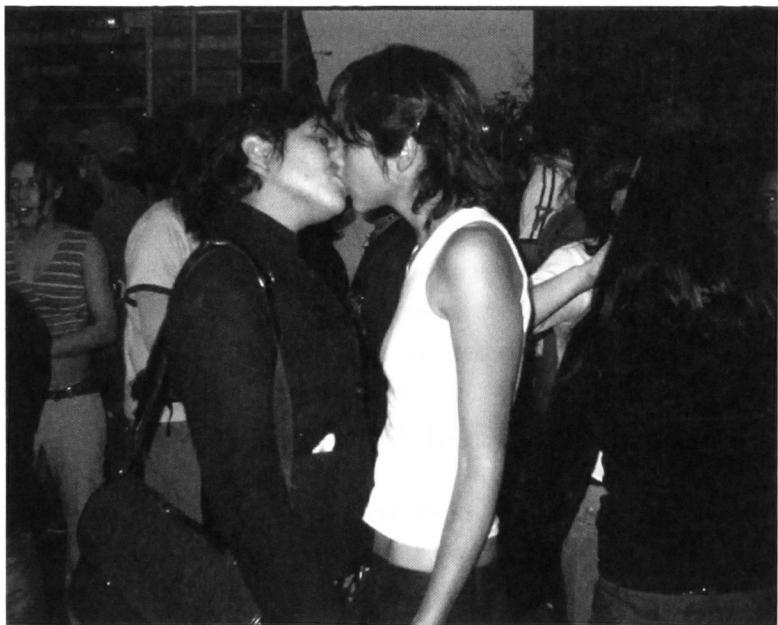
Te propongo hacer un viaje  
alrededor del mundo  
acreditados como:

"Misión investigadora  
del gobierno socialista"

Tú y yo seremos  
los besadores  
Besamos mejor que nadie  
habiendo desarrollado  
una técnica minuciosa  
y altamente estudiada  
de cómo besar más perfectamente.  
No hay mujer que bese como yo  
ni hombre que bese como tú.

Los besadores besaremos  
a todas las personas que encontremos  
para descubrir  
quien sabe hacerlo mejor  
y aprender por tanto  
su estilo  
para practicarlo  
y enseguida traerlo  
a nuestro país socialista  
que será el país de Los Besadores.

*abril 1971*



Santiago de Chile, 2007  
Fotografía: Kena Lorenzini

TWO POEMS FROM THE FUNNY OPPOSITE

POETRY'S IMPERIAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS

A riotous mob blanched heedful poets with fever.  
Accordingly, the poets found a clone heart forming someone's human shape;  
but it deceived, sucking souls out to Rome, Boston, and Hell: cleave in cleave  
montane in Montana, and yet finally an obdurate effect occurred: fate

had all the poets for dinner, no feelings were left. Something sunk,  
a pediatric antic. And sojourning students played Orpheus  
with the underworld; henceforth, no established rescue to the dunk  
of morale, no point of refute, and no megaton in the nefarious

phylum. It was a physic of how pincers prick with pinch;  
how poetry, too, gets pistol-whipped by haters  
who enunciate each syllable of the chant, inch  
by inch, pressing noses to the large lacuna: healers

looking for headfuls, for the right verbal phrase to heed.  
Why were they all feasting on the heavy head of one stinking weed?

## DOUBLE FANTASY

*For Hedy Klein*

My copula connects me to you, though my tough luck connects me to heart valves;  
inside we know there's a formulated plea, an engine determining loyal sponsors.  
We are an embellishment of tough stock—trees with second-hand roots in the suburbs.  
But if you are my double then I can find the person who knows I'm knowable.  
Who knows there's more to me than age, rage or running-to-cover; knows the mishaps  
from the adolescent's tee-shirt. You with all of your soft fabrics and juicy gazing,  
your aesthetic of art-as-dump-truck or art-as-raisin, or art-as-mission accomplished.  
You turned the pleasure-dome into itself. You blankly gaze at evil and call its bluff.  
You have guided my brightness to more wont of life—without your knowing you did.  
O friend, I run for cover to you—from all mountain drops that are disguised as  
people—from ice inside of ventricles, there is such a dear, your double here,  
falling alongside pairs of apartment pajamas—all striped or casually plaid. ¤

ANDRÉS AJENS

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ESTUDIOS BOLIVIANOS N° 17 Y N° 2

ESTUDIOS BOLIVIANOS N° 17

resiente hache ce efe  
mansilla  
en tentativa reciente  
consonancia—¿precrítica?,  
¿irracional?—con  
bolivia. re-  
siente: lógica  
sin adorno (bárbaro fuera  
un poema  
tras la conquista) con-  
tiende.

¿comprende  
mundos circundantes  
náufrago en sopocachi  
con anteojos bipolares  
ultrajerarquizantes:  
crítica, precrítica,

arcaico, moderno,  
oralidad, escritura,  
metafísica, en suma, occidente?—\*  
ni el pensador de la razón más  
familiar (comunicativa)  
se habrá cerrado in extremis  
a su desarme sin resentimiento  
como mansilla.

pero los cuadros,  
dirás tú, ¿co-  
razón?, ¿qué hay  
de los cuadros  
coloniales  
modernos birlados  
sin mancilla?

---

\*Sintomáticamente (efecto agonal de espejo) es lo que H. C. F. Mansilla critica a su oponente de ocasión en la dicha tentativa, para el caso: los “populismos” latinoamericanos con “fuerte arraigo en sectores poblacionales con bajo nivel educativo y de ingresos”, particularmente en el Ande: “Estos estratos sociales se orientan aun hoy por valores convencionales y rutinarios que vienen de muy atrás y que favorecen jerarquías rígidas y (...) sistemas relativamente simples para la comprensión del mundo circundante (como las oposiciones binarias excluyentes: amigo / enemigo, patria / antipatria)” (subrayo). C. H. F. Mansilla, “Aspectos conservadores en los modelos latinoamericanos del cambio radical: un ensayo interpretativo sobre el arraigo del populismo”, in rev. Estudios bolivianos nº 17, IEB, UMSA, La Paz, 2012

ESTUDIOS BOLIVIANOS N° 2

quillacollo, plan tres mil  
tocnolencias, taypi qala  
chulumani, arzans, huari  
camba colla insuperable  
adela zamudio, saya  
real potosí, el lago  
moxos, morón de los robles  
el loco, la noche, ataw  
wallpaj, pachacuti yamqui  
salcamaygua, terremoto  
de sicasica, llallagua  
mocochinche, ají de lengua  
melgar y montaño, lara  
chayanta, beltrán, churata  
razón, el deber, los tiempos  
incendio de unos legajos  
de gabriel rené moreno  
en santiago, villazón  
posvelar, yacuiba, illapa  
un pajarillo llamado  
pazos kanki, mané, charcas  
el prado, colón, la blanca  
cine campero, la ceja  
sorojche, miss litoral  
guayaramerín, luzmila  
shinahota, llajua, el cé  
águila sideral, viña  
la concepción, cobija  
gracias a la vida, el che  
adela zamudio, saya 

MARIO SANTIAGO PAPASQUIARO

# ADVICE FROM A DISCIPLE OF MARX TO A FAN OF HEIDEGGER

## ADVICE FROM A DISCIPLE OF MARX TO A FAN OF HEIDEGGER

*To Roberto Bolaño & Kyra Galvan comrades & poets*

*For Claudia Kerik & my good fortune at having known her*

*...it's as well at times  
To be reminded that nothing is lovely,  
Not even in poetry, which is not the case.  
—W.H. Auden*

Maybe not even carbon dating will be able to reconstruct the true facts

These are not the times in which a naturalist painter  
ruminates on lunchtime excesses  
between Swedish gymnastic movements  
& without losing sight of the pinkish-blue hues of flowers  
he hadn't guessed at not even in his sweetest nightmares

We are actors of infinite acts

& not precisely under the blue tongue  
of cinematographic lights

for instance today / you see how Antonioni passes by  
with his customary camera

observed by those who prefer to bury their heads in the grass  
to get drunk on smog or whatever / so they don't add  
to the scandals

that already make public roads impassable

by those who've been born to be kissed at length by the sun  
& its daily ambassadors

by those who speak of fabulous coitus / of females unbelievable  
-in this geological age

by those who have once been saved

from the kind of accidents that the crime rags call substantial  
& who by the way are not—for now—counted among the flowers  
of the Absurd

So on this trapeze on the high wire  
of this thousand-ring circus  
a grandfather tells of the emotion he felt on seeing Gagarin  
flitting like a fly in space  
& what a pity that the spaceship wasn't called Icarus I

that Russia is so fiercely anti-Trotskyite  
& then his voice dissolves / seems to stagger  
amid applause & boos

Reality & Desire roll around / butcher each other  
spill over 1 on top of the other  
like they'd never do in a Cernuda poem  
froth flows from the mouth of the 1 who speaks wonders  
& it would seem that he lives inside the clouds  
& not in the wastelands of this neighborhood

The humid air of April / the lascivious wind of autumn/  
the hailstone of July & August  
all present here with their fingerprints

Alcohol  
urine / what won't have been used as fertilizer for this grass  
how many gardeners earning less than the minimum wage  
will leave in this trap their scant proteins?

For now you lie face-down in the shadow  
of the long & hairy legs of the parks  
where are gathered  
the 1 who dreams of revolutions parked too long  
in the Caribbean  
the 1 who would like to rip out the eyes of the heroes in posters  
to strip naked the emptiness of the farce  
the girl with cat-like filmic green eyes  
although close up they may turn out be blue who knows  
the student all adrenaline & rebellious pores  
the 1 who doesn't believe in anyone / not even in the Kantian  
beauty of some of Marcuse's female followers  
& explodes screaming that we're putrefied by fury /  
dehydrated by so many volumes of theory  
the worthless occasional whore who shares the torrent

of her solitude with strangers  
letting the scales of supply & demand be tipped by charm  
    warmth sudden vibrations

Chance : that other anti-poet & incorruptible vagabond  
those who come here to cry / until they carve—as if in wood—  
    the face of a paranoid martyr

after ripping up—not precisely out of enthusiasm—  
    the seats of movie theaters

the 1 who writes his will or epitaph on a wrinkled napkin  
& then blows kisses into the air /—& everyone supposes  
he's celebrating his birthday or the divine hymeneal song  
    of the night before last—

& all these hypotheses are too fragile to explain  
why he used a pistol & not a paint can  
if he seemed capable of seducing to the point of horniness /  
    Giotto's pulse & pupil

the 1 who always greets people with an *I'm hopeless*  
    & you?

those who love rabidly like stray dogs  
    —in their green & ripe years—

& they're called florid lovers  
& they're an aphrodisiac not only for Marc Chagall's sensitivity  
those who know death personally  
at the hour in which suicide becomes an obsession  
some disheveled desires to bite & be bitten  
to have had it up to here with so many castles in the sand  
    that seem indestructible

to invent for a few seconds a Power  
that the daily cement mixers destroy in you  
    as if you were a scrap of paper

& then you understand the 1 who'd like to bury  
    beneath tons of plants  
        buildings / black earth

the slightest heartbeat / the tachycardia of his personal story

you're infected by the nervousness the anxiety  
of those who fake their breathing  
as if they possessed a certain aftertaste of carnivorous plants  
& spend hours waiting for friend Tenderness  
that call-girl who rarely comes  
those who come escaping from tear gas  
& the nightsticks of wide avenues  
from the great & small stains that just can't be removed  
by the smell of pine or the caress of a kleenex  
those who ignore who they are / *nor want to know*  
when the climate's reputation worsens daily  
the eternal amnesiacs who suck their thumbs from happiness  
because the Earthly Paradise is here & not in Miami  
those who swear oaths declaring that this free independent  
island territory  
will not degenerate into a scrap-heap supermarket

At the very moment when a hit song  
intermingles its rhythm  
with the peculiar pitter-patter of rain  
& installs a fatally momentary order  
so the scene may continue to be dominated  
by unkempt hair /  
enormous moist eyes  
& as if from the same chiaroscuro of the night  
a girl appears muddying her fists against her thighs  
repeating 1 / 2 / 3 times:  
*I am not a sex object / I am not that robots/*  
*I am alive / like a eucalyptus forest*  
here where the norm is to be implacably kind  
with 1 another  
& this is the least evil

The park trembles / my reflective steps take me  
through the streets of a port by a green sea

that the natives call *Mezcalina*  
a sensation until now unfamiliar  
like truly knowing what DNA tastes like  
after making love

If this isn't Art I'll cut my vocal chords  
my most precious testicle / I'll stop talking nonsense  
If this isn't Art

The branch of a tree bends under the weight of a sparrow  
or rather a sparrow ends up shattering an already broken branch

We're still alive  
somehow or other we have to summon the crystal islands  
that with an excess of violence kick the softest parts of your eyes  
reality seems like an isinglass on a miniature scale  
but also your eyelids your perception & its straightjacket  
Matter & Energy /  
& the will to stick your tongue between its tongue

This is an unusual day  
vibrant ordinary anonymous  
couldn't be more earthling as we tend to say on festive days  
or during the ever more frequent searching of houses  
fear illuminates your stomach & burns it

THERE IS NO AHISTORICAL ANGST  
TO LIVE HERE IS TO HOLD YOUR BREATH  
& STRIP NAKED

—Advice from a disciple of Marx to a fan of Heidegger—

Poetry: we're still alive  
& with your matches you light my cheap cigarette  
& look at me as if I were a single uncombed strand of hair

shivering with cold in the comb of night

We're still alive

1 green-eyed yellow-winged butterfly  
has pinned itself to the blue lapel of my jacket  
—my denim body

feels like a seducer a human radar a pollen magnet—  
that at times acquires the conviction of a diminutive galaxy  
singing sweet madness between ooh's of wonderment—  
Damn what a moon!  
exclaims 1 wealthy in solitude

& wretched in employment  
who was fired just yesterday because he wasn't thrilled  
by the short-circuiting of the bureaucratic coffee-maker

What a moon!

like a cut fingernail  
like a cluster of sperm  
suspended  
over the bristling back of night

when you listen to  
a crunch of flattened walnuts—crack—  
the buzzing whine of an ambulance  
that once again arrives late  
the murmur of lizards with leopard skin spots  
mischievously climbing the vine in search of nourishment  
the last sounds of a picnic  
where Desolation has been up to her old tricks  
& finally announces the proximity of the wind  
that stains & gnaws at everything

However you can still walk here like a happy sparrow  
like Chaplin on the day he kissed Mary Pickford

& this in the same  $m^2$  / at the same moment  
in which the north pole & the south pole  
the thesis & the antithesis of the world

get to know 1 another  
like an incandescent meteorite & a UFO in distress

& inexplicably greet each other:  
It was me who etched on the back of my denim

Jacket  
the phrase : the core of my solar system is Adventure  
that's my name but I like to be called *Kid Protoplasm*  
You're the 1 who bites your nails while leafing through  
the crime section

with your fingers confused by the stiffness of the newspaper pages  
but

is the news... /

those who report it /

or those who read it like an indispensable drug?

Who are the murderers?

Given the circumstances you distrust even your own eyes  
struggles pursuits lawsuits of what caliber

hide under the most ragged clothes

## the fearful climb trees

the most agile prefer to walk pointing. their finger at the exact moment in which the atmosphere rare

until you say enough

& planes begin to fall as in a sequence from

a silent film  
in which the arms of the dying move like blades  
without explaining the reason for the fire-slobbered horizon

Though the sky—apparently—looks sober & clear  
like an irreconcilable enemy of the visual arts  
& almost nobody notices the pitiful madman who kisses licks bites  
    his watch that has no hands  
while asking *if the earth is growing colder*  
        *are we leaving its orbit???*  
certain that in this case even Jerry Lewis would weep with sincerity

In any given moment a poem occurs  
    for instance  
the flapping wings of aphonic flies  
    over the bundle that nobody has managed to unravel  
how much rubbish & how many miracles it contains  
    for instance these schoolgirls with their books clasped to  
        their chest  
making the head of the gray-haired man with tatty glasses turn  
while the—slippery—wind plays beneath their miniskirts  
    For instance  
Laurel & Hardy sleep their siesta  
    dreaming of the same mischief  
in which the custard pie wants to serve as make-up  
& 2 feet are foolish enough to enter where only 1 will fit  
    for instance  
the 1 who just yesterday—dressed as a woman—fled  
    the psychiatric clinic  
& hasn't yet tired of doing handstands & running around like  
    a crazy kangaroo asking himself for the meaning of life  
for tincture of iodine to erase his interior bruises  
    the scratches from insulin & electric shocks  
while singing in ballad style that line by Guido Cavalcanti  
    *Now that I have no hope of returning*

for instance  
this red-headed boy who soaks his feet in the water  
of the fountain  
feeling like Huckleberry Finn traveling on a wooden raft  
/ down the middle of the Mississippi /  
or the bearded clochard filling his lungs with Turkish tobacco  
on the banks of the Seine  
watching his name written on the water : *Lord XYZ*  
while reality navigates like a noisy agitated steamboat  
because he knows that life could kill him & revive him  
at any given moment

—in time & space  
where it doesn't matter/ neither Euclid nor his babbling geometry—  
& in the immediacy the drag of days that fly by  
are depicted by anybody shouting Help!  
& who dials the 911 of his conscience  
to find out which brand of life or garbage he has to kiss  
spit at or view in horror  
whatever guy who shouts or who tries to & can't  
while amazement writes (as if with burnt wax)  
on his retired worker's poker face  
that looks like & in what a way  
a time bomb

At times / in the spurt in which a second vomits & turns pale  
Everything's a tragedy / even happiness / whatever you want /  
Aeschylus & Harold Lloyd play chess  
with metal beer bottle tops  
but without knowing how the brewer's yeast to make their  
leisurely creativity grow  
to the size of an earthquake that might truly wipe  
the slate clean  
When Chaos looks robust even bestial  
(the face of a bull & the voice of a queer)  
when you don't have to say that we're economically in the shit

(You / Me / Us)

in order not to speak of neurosis & anemia *made at home*

& what's the use what's the use of

the cyclone the tombola of things

that strip you naked & invade you like amoebas

what's the use if you don't understand for what overpopulation

for what abortions

a pregnant woman smiles at you /

if you don't kapeesh whether it's from desperation or contentment

that she pats her belly like the Madonna del Parto by Piero della

Francesca

if all you can do is stammer dilate your pupils

when the skilful pickpocket's hand begins to move

/ this disciple of Shiva he of the 7 arms: God of  
masturbation

& the assault of the delicate deed /

if all you can do is swallow saliva & gesture

when this Ionesco character—perhaps traumatized by

the bald soprano—

shocks you with the question: are you sexually politically  
life-enhancingly satisfied?

& what's the use if you know in a heartbeat like the palm of your hand

the dew squeezing the gardenia

in the early morning mist

like the—delicious—pubis of the girl

who's the relief of your map

& the compass that keeps your territory upright

what's the use if there are lives like a car without an engine

desperately sounding their horn

without being able to set off

the life of 1 who cures his Saturday hangover by wetting his eyes  
on the edges of fountains  
the life of the high society lady with her Chantilly cream  
candy-twist hairstyle  
& her unbearable piping voice when she says *I smoke my own*  
all this breed of mummies with sacred gestures  
who feel offended  
by their increasing contact with plebeians  
between the soot & the grumpy sun of cities  
& the life of the wanderer (1 whom the vox populi say  
is always around)  
whose clarity is broken into pieces / even though his bicycle  
might not have chased any light in the Sierra Tarahumara  
like his namesake Antonin Artaud

the life of 1 who spins around in too many circles to kiss a flower  
light a cigarette  
saying to his lover: let's go to a hotel / let's shatter  
this white potato face of a moon  
the life of the confused bureaucrat / who makes a mistake &  
more than 2 times  
the man who's going to have the same soap opera face  
—looking sorry for itself—  
the next time he passes by here

the life of the ex-queen of the spring pageant in the time of Hiroshima  
& who's now a neurotic grandma of Mongoloid triplets  
the life of the adolescent broke & ready for anything  
& with hips that might have strangled  
Oscar Wilde's pulse

the life of the corny person who says that a park  
is like the flowery liver of a city  
while dancing about on the tips of his toes  
encircling a woman who hasn't even told him her name

the lives of so many many people who have bathed 5/6 times  
in the dark waters of failure

& *not from choice* (so they say)

unlike the 1 who eats—between smiles—a meringue  
*absolutely no way*

& this is what you always say (You / Me / Us)

while slowly buttoning up your raincoat

—your body & your psychological defences—

& you leave to go for a walk—there will be more than 1  
in the rain

inside & outside

in the rain

& all because you feel the need the urge to loosen up & cry

without faking it

with nothing or nobody interrupting you

not even those girls in hot pants

glowing with their bronze thighs

& hugging the golden street lamps

& you're not the only 1 proclaiming you're the only passenger

aboard the schizophrenic submarine

while walking (like a loony) with an unlit cigarette between

your lips

& the rain falling grotesquely on you

from eye to chin

Of course you're not the only 1

facing a rusty umbrella of life

that doesn't want to spread its wings

you're not the only 1 for whom the world seems

—in a pessimistic moment—

a ghetto without bridges nor paths

& sometimes you too limp & become gloomy

scratching your nose & the scab of memory

Existence has the body of a policeman  
who walks his state-of-the-art nightstick along the length of your face  
& still you ask, What's happening my big bad wolf?

Does repression feel good?  
while the marijuana plants tremble  
planted like carrots in the subsoil of your mind  
& your heart is a crowded neighborhood  
with its gutters & roof tumbling down  
through pure fear  
through pure fear

All in all oxygen & the rhythmic rotation of the stars survive  
September winks an eye at us  
& it's better if each 1 hugs their most cherished waist  
a honey-colored cocker spaniel continues to be lost in sleep  
while a miserable fly uses its nose as a sofa-bed  
litter peel papers  
fly tangled up in the trouser cuffs of the wind  
that today could rip up a flower  
then beat it on the ground  
but tomorrow /  
it's goodbye carbon dioxide /  
apoplexy goddam luck Goodbye  
Explain to your occasional friend  
that even a failed erection  
forms part of the process

this / & the fucking vermillion of dusks  
& the flight of magpies that blacken the air for an instant  
& the flame of life that disturbs the soft hair on your chest  
in decisive times  
& with all the appearance of becoming Epic History

Explain this to your occasional friend  
clarifying it to yourself

that life may continue to be your poetry workshop  
& hopefully you'll electrify the energy of your inner torment  
alongside the girl with the nimbleness of a sailboat  
whom you've chosen as the companion of your future romps  
let the love or dementia that inhabits her  
                live in you / lighten your heels  
polish the sparkle of your eyes  
                Hopefully / hopefully

The aforementioned fragments the splinters  
                become in hands like those of Houdini  
a shout so solid & real  
like a breast or an apple  
or a desire that turns each body into a transparent prism

The apparently ecstatic & fleeting  
turns out to be a valuable piece on the chessboard:  
behind an ordinary traveling photographer  
                once lived someone called Ernesto Che Guevara  
& he didn't seem capable of the least sweat-inducing effort  
not to mention ethical feats

The apparently ecstatic & fleeting  
                turns out to be a valuable piece on the chess board:  
the spirit & passion that accompany you  
                when you cover kilometric avenues  
recalling the verses the skin of Sappho  
bathed in moonlight  
when you stroke your own face  
                at the moment in which you're a rainbow  
scratched by the sun & the 4 o-clock afternoon drizzle  
when you write on naked tree trunks  
poetic devices of this century's end:

You really got me  
You turn me on

You light my fire  
How could this be  
so beautiful?

—burning with faith  
& between waves of pleasure—

When you see in this the instinct of the struggle for life  
that made Rosa Luxembourgo euphoric  
the living practice of the heretic Wilhelm Reich's favorite theorem:  
*a body learns to read itself alongside another body*  
& so the University of Tenderness is established

when you learn to say No  
with all the energy of a black belt karate expert  
or to say Yes / with the certainty  
that the stars will soon become a color  
that we won't understand until some time afterwards

The apparently ecstatic & fleeting  
threatens with setting on fire & with kisses  
the hour in which the great political insurrections seem to be buried  
(that's what bourgeois economists say from their anti-aircraft  
introspections)

But we still see life  
deserving of a hand-drawn tattoo  
even though for now we pose for an invisible photograph  
that could be the same smoldering climate

Even though for now it only seems  
that Beauty becomes emotionally more radical  
like multicolored t-shirts stating: *kiss me*  
from the most erogenous zone of their torsos

like 2 snotty-nosed kids (it's rumored that they're hippies or those anarchs)  
who promise to meet each other  
*at such-&-such an hour / at such-&-such a sunset*  
at Ray Bradbury Port in the canals of Mars  
/ By whatever means possible  
    exactly in that spot /  
Under a sky that Van Gogh would be thankful for in 6 languages/  
  
*& what whiteness would you add to this whiteness  
    what spirit / what passion?*

*Translated by Laura Patricia Burns & Alicia Reardon* 

TWO POEMS

I'M ILL

I'm ill    I'm federal    I'm on leave    I'm a child of refuge    I'm holy    I'm a shit  
I'm desperate    I won't tell you anything    I'm first-gen    I'm Gen X    I'm tied up  
I'm bipolar    I'm barely fertile    I'm a secret    I'm the now  
I'm indifferent    I'm a disgrace    I'm funny    I'm assistance    I'm not saved  
I was Mormon    I'm atheist    I'm mysterious    I'm scared    I'm head of household  
I'm quick-tempered    I'm day-job    I'm night-ghost    I'm failure    I act white  
I live bankrolled    I'm deliverable    I'm not gang    I'm crazy ex    I'm  
slippery    I'm post-post-post I'm greedy    I'm double-crossing    I'm delusional  
I'm of average BMI    I'm hairy    I'm indebted    I'm weak    I'm non-confrontational  
I'm in therapy    I'm sorry    I'm empowered    I don't have a tattoo    I don't have money  
I don't have friends    I'm agoraphobic    I'm a versifier  
I don't have a valid passport    I've never been arrested    I should have been arrested  
I know too much    I can barely read at times    I can barely rise at times  
I'm queerish    I'm marginally fit    I'm arthritic    I'm flaky  
I have few skills    I'm salty    I'm a time bomb  
I'm baptized    I'm dry    I'm in chronic pain    I'm big at mom's house  
I can't remember how many    I am obstructionist    I'm a Master  
That was my    confessional    thank you    very    much

## MY BELONGINGS

my belongings in the box of my room stacks books  
and pages the stench of evening body the halo hair on my daughter's sketch  
of us glass of flat diet Pepsi clips of disassemblage prescriptions photos  
checkbook and krazy glue phone the home of my Peggle lamp and husband  
A. Berrigan S. Briante J. Moxley and E. Myles headphones input broadsides  
Tibetan flags bad to the bone legs *Suttree* hyphenated affliction Lily text SPD  
catalog detritus of literary life the material kind lines and strategies from said husband's  
books bled into this the din of Dr. Suess and smell of a swamp cooler stacks  
called islands laundry in all its states my insouciance Krystal text today I  
peeked into someone else's life through their desires we all  
dream of palace decent soundsystems the laptop is my portal tunnel vision  
scissors fancy pen someone else's Moleskine I'm lonely jade plant Ikea nightstand  
wallet from Rosa notebook from Ada necklace from Katy GIRLVERT son's  
Miro-like drawing the son my double and my ire 4 pillows love  
acquiring Dansko somebody scuffed your face my object ☺

## BORDES SOBRE BORDES

Con Gabriel Zaid y Juan Almela (mejor conocido como Gerardo Deniz, su nombre de pluma), Eduardo Lizalde formó un reducido “grupo” de poetas e intelectuales que mostraron su adhesión, de modo variado, a la política y la estética de Octavio Paz a finales de la década de 1960. Después de haber militado en las filas del poeticismo y el comunismo, Lizalde, en su poesía, comenzó por volcarse sobre el poema filosófico. Hablar de filosofía y poesía, en el marco de la tradición de la poesía mexicana moderna, requiere un deslinde. La poesía—filtrada de impurezas—puede y casi siempre rebasa la hondura del pensamiento filosófico. Porque la poesía es en sí un modo—absoluto y sin ambages—de pensamiento. Lizalde abandona los presupuestos de la poesía filosofante que lo habían acompañado hasta ese momento para dialogar con la tradición y con algunos de sus ejemplos más altos. *Cada cosa es Babel*—publicado en 1966—no es un poema que descienda por línea indirecta de las tentativas y consumaciones de José Gorostiza en *Muerte sin fin*, sino que es un poema que dialoga con el Gorostiza de *Muerte sin fin* para poner en crisis la noción de poema lírico.

## BABEL

Cuenta Lizalde que Gorostiza no reaccionó a la publicación de su poema, que en un primer nivel de lectura puede verse como una respuesta a *Muerte sin fin*. La

razón de este aparente desdén no se encuentra en la edad avanzada del poeta, o en su estado de ánimo siempre decaído, sino en una especie de inteligencia simulada tras la cortina de humo de la apatía. Gorostiza no se pronuncia en ningún sentido sobre *Cada cosa es Babel* porque le resulta evidente la crítica, abierta en el poema, en contra de una de las ideas fundamentales de *Muerte sin fin*: el paradigma inalterable de la forma.

Si en Gorostiza la forma es la del vaso que contiene el fluido inestable y transitorio del agua, generando la ilusión ocular de la estabilidad, en Lizalde la forma es en cambio una figura que depende de los humores o de los pronunciamientos del poeta. No existiría la forma sin el hombre y no existiría el poema sin las pasiones que lo arraebatan de los ámbitos cerrados del verbo. En 1966 y en *Cada cosa es Babel*, la poesía puede más que la apariencia marmórea del lenguaje; cala los huesos y vomita al ser humano que lleva dentro. La poesía es el envés del hombre—o la parte anterior de su piel—porque viene siendo el producto directo de sus vísceras. La palabra en Lizalde dista de la higiene en Gorostiza, y sus poemas, como la pintura negra de Goya, comienzan a mancharse o a contaminarse, mejor dicho, de materiales que antes habían sido ajenos al repertorio de la lírica moderna en esta latitud del continente.

*Cada cosa es Babel* es una discusión sobre el conflicto entre el significado y el significante, o si se quiere, sobre la distancia que separa al nombre de la cosa. Si bien la cosa es anterior al nombre y al poema, el poema, en su eterno conflicto con las cosas, es una fragua volcada sobre sí misma; un espejo donde se mira la persona que contempla por primera vez el espejismo del poema. El poema—sobre todo si se piensa en el poema de largo aliento, tal y como lo concibe Lizalde, mirándose todo el tiempo en el ejemplo de *Muerte sin fin* y Gorostiza—es imperfecto por naturaleza. Tiene cumbres y caídas. Está hecho de tiempo pero también y sobre todo está hecho de sangre. Y su imperfección no es distinta de la imperfección—o de la circunstancia—del hombre que lo produce.

La roca del principio, que comienza el coloquio del poeta con la realidad ambiente, termina por blandirse, enterñecerse y emitir un grito: “Como el espejo roto/—que nuestros versos derruyen—/ llora su ardiente mercurio,/ la roca enterñecida/ vuelve a llorar a piedra viva sus ríos/ de fragor petrificado,/ y

vuelve a hervir la misma lava por sus venas". Lizalde no rehúye de la escatología cuando se trata de estructurar por primera vez su arte poética:

El grito en su desbarrancarse, en su sonar de terremoto  
que hace al grave ropero ponerse a caminar sobre dos patas;  
que en su repentina pelambre de bramido  
provoca aludes veraniegos en el frutero ceroso del banquete,  
que hace crecer por metros la barba a las señoras;  
grito de lobo ensartado por estacas que horadan  
desde el hocico del padre al ano de los nietos;  
el grito que consigue acomodar la forma de la cúpula a sus carnes  
que esponja el foro y el teatro en sus vibrares de suprema tiple,  
será el poema.

Al vapulear el cuerpo de la lírica mexicana moderna con versos que no tienen miramiento alguno a la hora de decir las cosas por su nombre, Lizalde delinea el perfil de su obra futura y se asigna a sí mismo la figura de un poeta musculoso, irreverente y desencantado de la tradición. Corre el año de 1966 y la transformación se ha consumado: de ser un poeta marginal, crítico feroz de las jerarquías dominantes en las esferas de lo político, lo histórico, lo económico y lo social, Lizalde se convierte en una de las figuras centrales de la literatura mexicana de la segunda mitad del siglo xx. A sus 36 / 37 años, Lizalde coquetea con su primera obra maestra.

### EL TIGRE

A diferencia del poema precedente, de índole abstracta, *El tigre en la casa* da la impresión de ser un poema narrativo. No lo es. Si el tema de *Cada cosa es Babel* la pluralidad de los significantes frente al misterio concreto de la cosa, el tema de *El tigre en la casa* es el reverso negativo del amor: el odio.

No hay historia en realidad—el ingrediente primario de toda la poesía de Lizalde es el lenguaje, recorrido por las arterias y las venas salvajes de la inquina—, tan sólo el presupuesto de un amado y una amada que trastocan sus identidades en opuestos sanguinariamente perfectos. La amada del poema, la perra que asesina a sus cachorros para después engullirlos en la compañía lúbrica

del macho con el cual los ha engendrado, es la sombra de un sujeto erótico que ha devenido con el tiempo en el objeto de un desprecio cuyo límite es la muerte; en tanto que el amante es el poeta, que confunde su figura con la de un tigre que ha tomado la casa. La infiltración del tigre en el ámbito doméstico, convertido en desierto toda vez que se ha secado el vínculo amoroso que unía al amante con la amada, tiene la función simbólica de simular la infiltración de la prosa en el poema. “Ya que un museo del bien/ sería una simple galería desierta,/ puede ponerse un poco de estiércol al poema.” Abandonado a sí mismo, descreído de la posibilidad de hacer filosofía en el poema, Lizalde encuentra el equilibrio baudeliano entre la prosa y la poesía, la vulgaridad y lo sublime. Este equilibrio es el mismo que hace posible desterrar de la estructura del poema las nociones de bondad y de belleza; de amor y eternidad incluso:

Para el odio escribo.

Para destruirte, marco estos papeles.

Aunque sus críticos han memorizado estas líneas y han dejado una constancia de ello en los cientos de páginas que se han escrito sobre este poema, *El tigre en la casa* no ha perdido los poderes subversivos que lo caracterizaron desde un principio, cuando se publicó por primera vez en 1970, hace cuarenta y tres años. Hace poco, recuerdo haber visto a mis alumnos salir uno a uno del salón de clase al mismo tiempo en que yo leía fragmentos del poema. “También la pobre puta sueña./ La más infame y sucia/ y rota y necia y torpe,/ hinchada, renga y sorda puta...” Esto se debe, sin duda, a que la subversión que operó Lizalde sobre el cuerpo de la tradición no se dio al nivel de la forma sino de los contenidos morales del lenguaje. *El tigre en la casa* contiene algunas de las líneas más crudas y amargas que se han escrito jamás en la historia de la poesía de lengua española. Podría decirse, incluso, que se trata de un poema misógino, pero en su descargo no podría tampoco dejar de afirmarse que para la existencia de un sentimiento de rencor y de furia parecido hace falta primero la existencia del amor más grande y puro; el amor es odio. Acabado, negado, convertido a su némesis exacto por medio de una pasión desengañada y contenida en la conciencia de su inutilidad, el amor desciende a las planicies del odio y de la muerte, obsequiándonos la razón incontestable de su imposibilidad e inexistencia. *Esto*

*es el odio*, escribe el poeta en sus papeles. No existe el pudor en *El tigre en la casa*; ni la redención ni la esperanza.

#### TABERNA

Adueñado de la figura del tigre como emblema de su personaje y de su obra, Lizalde emprende a finales de la década de 1970 una serie de poemas tabernarios, donde se vislumbra, a la distancia, el espejo de la urbe. El primero de los libros que componen este ciclo se titula, irónicamente, *Caza mayor* (1979). El delgado volumen (la edición original de la UNAM tiene 62 páginas) consta de treinta y dos poemas más o menos breves, es decir, lo contrario de los libros anteriores, conformado cada uno por un solo poema de largo aliento. La consigna baudeleiana, ya anunciada en *El tigre en la casa*, de dejar fuera del poema toda prueba de lirismo rampante y ramplón, se adueña de la retórica desencantada de estos versos, donde el poeta se apoltronía en la cantina para jugar al dominó con sus amigos, poetas y filósofos: “En el abrevadero de La Providencia, en La Derrota / y en El Tigre Negro, otra cantina del peonaje bravo / y de los camioneros de la vieja calzada de la Viga, / recalábamos también, irresponsables / y sospechosos señoritos cultos / que hablaban de poetas ignotos / y bebían como los conocidos”.

La cantina es el escenario idóneo para la realización de un crimen—como tal concebía el mismo Baudelaire la ejecución del poema—y el pedacito de papel es la herramienta adecuada para anotar, al paso, la música pedestre del poema.

Hay cerveza, nunca vino de Lesbos,  
en el café vecino de la imprenta.

(Lizalde se refiere a la Imprenta Universitaria, donde trabajó varios años a las órdenes de su amigo, el también poeta Rubén Bonifaz Nuño.) Lo sublime se encuentra a ras de asfalto. El poema se descorre como una cortina, acotado por las cuatro esquinas de la mesa donde transcurre la partida de las fichas de dominó. Y el poeta vence a la muerte, toda vez que acepta que su destino está hecho de palabras, y de las figuras de una antirretórica personal que deja las puertas abiertas a la inclusión de lo cotidiano y de lo bárbaro. La poesía “negra” de Lizalde—recargada de impurezas—también constituye un modo de pensar la realidad y trascenderla.

## CIUDAD

Entre la publicación de *Caza mayor y Tabernarios y eróticos* (1989, libro de poemas que sigue la misma línea de su antecesor sobre la caza: el poema menor posee el mismo efecto que el poema largo, si se le sabe tratar con agudeza. Este libro contiene dos de los mejores poemas breves de Lizalde: "Caja negra" y "Charlie Brown en la loma"), Lizalde publicó la primera parte de un libro de poemas sobre la ciudad de México, *Tercera Tenochtitlan*. La primera parte del libro se publicó en 1983, en la Editorial Katún, y una segunda parte se publicó junto a la primera en 1999, en la colección Poemas y Ensayos de la UNAM. En la primera sección, Lizalde lamenta el destino de una ciudad mal vengada luego del ultraje sufrido a manos de españoles, siglos atrás. Esta lamentación sería lugar común si Lizalde no Enriqueciera su lenguaje con una liberalidad que no había tenido paralelo en la historia de la poesía mexicana. En ese tránsito, yendo todo el tiempo de lo grosero a lo culto, de la palabra náhuatl a la transcrita directamente del idioma inglés, compone uno de los mejores poemas de cantina que se pueden encontrar en su obra. Unos "guaruras" que beben en una cantina, a la manera de unos goliardos medievales colocados en un nuevo contexto: "Himplan inflan cantan moquean/ Salta en astillas bajo el cubilete/ la barra de formaica/ Y al salir los reyes los tlatoani/ tlatoatiname dirían los nahuatlatos/ del humeante salón tiembla la jungla". Y como en un filme de ficheras de los años setenta, los borrachos cantan una guaracha improvisada al aire enrarecido de las copas y el amanecer:

La marrana está loca  
de amor por el marrano  
(...)  
El marrano está lelo  
de amor por la marrana

De la ciudad en ruinas queda un único vestigio, la palabra. La ciudad de México de aquella época, que no dista mucho de ser la nuestra, parece más una ciudad medieval que una metrópoli moderna. Para retratar este paisaje abigarrado, Lizalde recurre a la lección de Cervantes en *El Quijote*, cuando describe a Roma basándose únicamente en una imagen del Pantheon: unos cuantos

brochazos sobre la tela, un gesto rápido y violento, para reproducir el todo con el lenguaje de la cólera. He aquí, a manera de ejemplo, una postal del Centro Histórico (con el objetivo de la cámara enfocando el edificio de la Catedral):

Elefantuna y baja bajuna y elefante  
la Catedral preside ese cortejo de resucitados  
con los lomos del Sagrario heridos  
por el ácido fecal de las palomas

La falta de misericordia con que Lizardo retrata la ciudad es equivalente a la falta de puntuación casi absoluta en esta parte del poema. Sus estrofas parecen hechas de pesos y contrapesos históricos que aglutinan siglos de una erudición verbal y visual imposibles de trasladarse a otro idioma y a un contexto diferente del nuestro. A diferencia de otros poetas, que rehúyen o encuentran en el poema largo la coronación imposible de sus obras, Lizardo se mueve a sus anchas, como ningún otro contemporáneo suyo, en sus expansivas e informes extensiones, como él mismo lo dice. *Tercera Tenochtitlan*, en su primera y segunda parte, compuesta esta última luego del terremoto de 1985, es uno de los mejores poemas que se han escrito sobre la ciudad de México y encuentra su lugar al lado de *Los hombres del alba* de Efraín Huerta y *Nocturno de San Ildefonso* de Octavio Paz, que le sirven de ejemplo y contrapunto.

#### INFANCIA

La primera parte de *Tercera Tenochtitlan* difiere de la segunda por los años: el poeta que escribe la primera es muy distinto del poeta que escribe la segunda. Pasan cerca de veinte años entre la escritura de una y otra parte. Lo que en un principio fue la tentativa despiadada de describir la destrucción de una ciudad sin exhibir un solo gramo de piedad en la manera y el estilo, en el segundo movimiento de esta obra sinfónica se convierte en una evocación abocetada de la infancia y una reflexión sobre la naturaleza misma del poema largo. Los años ablandan la furia del poeta y lo vuelven misericordioso con la ciudad que habita, acaso porque la ciudad es el poema y el espejo fiel de su poética: crece a la manera de un capricho, vocifera, murmurra, se construye y se destruye, aúna lo vulgar y lo sublime, y es el único lugar habitable sobre la tierra.

Lizalde retoma esta reflexión sobre la infancia en *Algaida* (2004), un poema largo, difícil de clasificar más allá de una aspiración—constante en la obra de Lizalde—a conformar una épica de carácter autobiográfico, una novela proustiana narrada en verso rotundo y sonoro, que carece de personajes, mas no de interlocutores. Góngora, Eliot, Dante, Rimbaud, multitud de nombres de poetas disfrazados de citas literales se adosan a la estructura del poema y constituyen su savia dialogante. Desde el primero hasta el último de sus poemas, la obra de Lizalde está hecha de diálogo y conflicto con la tradición. Y a esto se refiere el poeta, cuando dice: “De formas, vida, quiere el ánimo hablar,/ que a nuevos cuerpos se mudan”. La tradición migra de un cuerpo a otro, en el tiempo, generando nuevas derivas.

La cólera dormida de *Cada cosa es Babel* y la violencia de *El tigre en la casa*, que habían de sobrevivir hasta la primera parte de *Tercera Tenochtitlan*, se han sosegado en *Algaida*, el bosque de la infancia que la ciudad ha ido poco a poco corrompiendo con su avance insensato y destructor. El poeta, a sus setenta y cinco años, no se reconcilia tanto con la Naturaleza rimbaudiana, ese elemento que todo lo abarca y todo lo proporciona, incluidas la vida y la muerte, sino que sustituye la realidad ruinosa de la ciudad con la realidad virtual que edifica la memoria a través de sus dones: las palabras.

En *Algaida* los territorios y el paisaje conocidos en la infancia están convertidos en desierto; pero en una segunda instancia, esos mismos territorios devastados se vuelven palabra. Y el verso se osifica—es hueso duro y resplandeciente que forma una escultura, vibrátil, de palabras. Los versos en *Algaida*, más que en ningún otro poema de Lizalde, pueden tocarse con la vista y desprenderse sensualmente de su sólida estructura. Parecen montañas acumuladas por el paso de las eras, las lecturas y los poemas escritos a lo largo de los años. Suma reposada de conocimiento, *Algaida* es una obra maestra otoñal que sirve de coda al resto de la producción poética de Lizalde. (*Algaida* significa jardín o bosque edénico, pero también significa retorno, y vuelta a comenzar desde otro ángulo, desde una orilla diferente a todo lo anterior.)

Afirmar que no hay ironía en *Algaida* es afirmar que no hay distanciamiento entre el poeta y la realidad que nombra. Existe, más bien, una relación de identidad que se manifiesta a través de los quicios de un estilo sin fisuras:

Por encima del hombro miro retornar las imágenes  
del difuso sendero recorrido.  
Súbitas ráfagas de muy diluida materia.  
Albas nubes altísimas que descansan sobre  
azules columnas,  
pródigos dioses o naves gigantescas  
que parecían derrumbarse sobre el huerto rural.  
Territorio magnánimo del verde verdecido...

La Naturaleza arborece en torno de la infancia y la ciudad, hasta cubrirlo todo. La mirada del poeta reverdece y la nostalgia se transforma en certidumbre: después de un largo recorrido, el poeta finalmente ha hecho las paces con el lenguaje.

#### CODA

El poeta sale victorioso del campo de batalla de la memoria. Ha vencido, venciéndose a sí mismo, su vieja reticencia sobre el poder significante de la palabra. El poema largo, para él, se ha convertido en un hábitat, un espacio connatural al movimiento expansivo de sus versos, en armonía—y en conflicto—con la prosa. Lado a lado, verso y prosa conforman el mascarón de su poesía.

*Ciudad de México, a 31 de marzo de 2013*



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EDUARDO LIZALDE

POEMA

*Los objetos duermen unos  
al lado de los otros,  
vastos rebaños de cosas y  
cosas y cosas...  
los objetos duermen con los  
ojos abiertos...*

*—Octavio Paz, "Un viento llamado Bob Rauschenberg"*

Los muebles de la casa por la noche  
hacen ruidos extraños, crujen, cuchichean,  
hablan en voz baja  
para que nadie descubra que están vivos,  
pese al leñador y al carpintero  
que los humanizaron a serrote contra su voluntad,  
para darles figura y forma confortable.  
Degradados así de su grandiosa  
condición natural de majestuosos  
gigantes de los bosques  
disecadas y ahogadas  
sus maderas  
por los espesos barnices

o lacas industriales,  
sin una sola gota de savia  
para lagrimear  
se lamentan por eso con discertos gemidos  
del despojo sufrido. ☩

FORREST GANDER

---

FROM EIKO & KOMA

## BREATH

Early draft of the world. Or

has all that came before  
made them  
its repository? Grove of slash.  
They are. Flowerless dirt.

Windmoan over  
leafy mound strewn  
with two human forms,  
veined and branched. To

become what one was: that  
never happens. But now the  
ground wrinkles with  
their languorous

pandiculation. Crescent

shoulder blade and blue  
bays between expanding,  
contracting ribs. That the

recognizable mammalian  
familiarity recedes in  
exposures, in dilated time.  
Become one, inhuman, beyond

animal. Are they.

## PARABLE

Cool halogen beam on  
pelt-covered  
human limbs

Lamp dims

Man stumbles from  
burnt curtain  
toward recumbent what?

Placing a white  
bowl with kill  
holes over her face

No

Placing a wreath  
of raven feathers  
over her face

Shaking his head  
his spreading  
teeth ventilate

The black  
spindle-whorl  
in his mouth

She coughs up  
breath she  
suffocating rises

She rises to her knees  
he forces her down  
with his foot  
she rises he  
plants his heel  
in her scapula and  
flattens her

Face-smack

Floods up full

Taken by surprise he is  
limping away  
stage right on

His good foot  
staring behind him  
terrified and heavenward ☯

RICARDO ALBERTO PÉREZ

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## EL REPTIL COMIÓ LA ROSA

MASTUERZO.

Las cabezas que intenté levantar  
prosiguen  
amontonadas en el suelo,  
intenté pero viene la mugre  
te paraliza la mano, el antebrazo,  
solo seis en el altar,  
número y nombres dispuestos  
por la fricción  
de un viejo pájaro mañoso.  
Si me dejaran otro gallo cantaría.  
Otras fueran cayendo.  
El delirio  
la ruptura,  
amontonadas  
hacia abajo  
parecen ironizar,  
puedo dar con el pie  
al gremio

de las desterradas.  
Más abajo,  
que la mugre se sumerja  
con mi intención,  
quiero saber  
si al hacerlo  
seguirá siendo  
fiel al disparar el rabillo  
del ojo.

Vírate mugre.

Mastuerzo,  
ayúdame a adornar la cena  
de todos los que pretenden ascender.

## HACE UN AÑO QUE ENTERRARON A ELENA

en un pequeño cementerio de Nebraska,  
te levantas  
buscando la curva que seis meses atrás  
debía haber concluido en su vientre.

Elena era muy joven  
y tersa,  
y rusa.

La legumbre  
que con alquimia engendró  
empezaba a mostrar su embrión,  
parecía feliz  
o era realmente feliz  
cuando el glamour de sus ojos  
proponía un contraste feroz  
con el ruido de las factorías.

## ¿QUÉ PASA CON LAS MUÑECAS BARATAS?

En cualquier rincón de la casa,  
o del jardín  
van dejando olvidadas las piernas,  
otras veces los brazos,  
hasta las cabezas.  
Las muñecas baratas acostumbran  
a mostrarse mutiladas  
en público,  
a quien pretenden conmover  
si todos conocemos  
su insuperable utilidad.  
Suelen ser agradables, amistosas.  
Aunque le esté vedado  
el arte del silencio.

## EL MENSAJERO DEL PAN

trataba de alcanzarme,  
yo me golpeaba la cabeza  
con una fina varilla de metal,  
mis cabellos  
parecían abrirse  
imitando filamentos  
del tallo de una planta.

Tres hombres se sumaron  
al mensajero del pan,  
la barilla se arqueaba provocativa  
presintiendo el interés del cráneo  
por ese noble juego  
en el que estaban enfrascados.

EL PÁJARO NO TIENE MENOS ESPACIO QUE UNO.

Con la pupila dilatada  
indagamos en la geometría del rastro:  
saliva, sangre, membrillo,  
fantasía del bicho  
al segregar.

¿Cuánto de lo cúbico nos pertenece  
mientras sus alas raspan  
nuestra quietud?

Se aferra,  
garfios dejan criptogramas ,  
el vapor de cada palabra  
desprendida en el rozamiento.

En el trébol  
adquieres—aun calentico—  
un nuevo sentido del excremento.

¿Cuánto de profundidad?  
Y resulta poco,  
tan ínfimo  
que el olor de lo recolectado  
por los dedos  
puede alcanzar el pico  
la silueta  
de la leve paja que porta.

SUBIR POR LAS PAREDES,

y las arañas quedan paralizadas  
con el rencor almacenado  
en la postura,  
cada entidad tiene su músculo,  
su parte,  
un tipo de sudor que filtra.

Vuelves a poner las manos  
en forma de garfios,  
te muerdes la propia boca.

Sientes en la carne  
todo lo que viste en tu adversario.

Estás pegando el vientre  
a un lugar descascarado  
y neutro,  
en pleno relajamiento gozas  
los privilegios  
de la altura.

## SOMOS DE UNA LENTITUD

que produce pavor,  
de una reincidencia que cuaja  
el círculo de la sangre.  
No rajes tus filamentos  
contra lo imposible,  
edifica la posibilidad  
a partir del instante  
en que se rompe la yema.

Habrá polvo y excremento  
cerca de tus pupilas,  
de un iris que está por quebrarse  
ante el gris.

Algo se librará  
y te caerá encima  
con la totalidad de lo fugado:

las escamas de un pez venenoso.

la cola de un lagarto.

la cabeza de un gusano.

el bigote de un gato.

el bigote de una antena de la TV.

el cabo de una navaja.

la humedad de un cuerpo.

la baba de un buey.

el ritmo de mandíbula de vaca  
mientras come.

Se insertan en ti  
o te rompen.

ACOSADO POR LAS IMÁGENES,

por el desempeño de lo material  
busco una nutria  
o una cerveza,  
lo demás me rastrea,  
pega el hocico como medusa  
sobre mi recorrido ,  
granulado se siente más apto,  
en círculo  
para localizar de mí  
los cebos que en forma  
de pequeños péndulos  
me identifican.

## EL REPTIL COMIÓ LA ROSA

(y aunque somos gemelos)  
yo dejo que se marchite,  
los pétalos pudren  
son frutas en fermentación,  
imágenes dejadas a un lado.

Comió la rosa  
en fecha señalada  
y sube al árbol,  
yo dejo que se marchite.  
Las fechas señaladas  
generalmente me aburren.      

DAVID LAU

---

SEVEN POEMS

FLEUR DE DE LA SOUL

1

At Quicken Loans Arena  
an ordinary elevator pours out absinthe,  
the brother, donkey, silence,  
I salute me, Mary, silver, gone, and *amn't*  
*leaving* folk-tif  
of late Chihuahuan  
official steeps in the waters.

In all the leftover hardware we are flown  
for dinner of ground quince with the Katanga government.

2

What was Socialism? Osip Mandelshtam  
at a six-inch upright piano.

There were other passages, lineages, don'ts,  
attempts to setup numbers  
of people's lives and to break apart  
winter language from spring punishment.

We set out from  
a huge mute  
of sculpture in a way in:  
development's brute inconsistency,  
the sordid involvement of the military.

Doodles snatch the loan embankment underneath.

## TRABAJOS ESPIRITUALES

like Turks at the limit of our admiralty  
make mad the neighbors'  
dirty war in this land of the sun  
the sick cook gets work  
the most other contrary  
mostly poor humans plus Mr. Reagan

MY BREAST IS SWARMING WITH RESTLESS WAVES

"Of man's first five year plan  
at the great end period  
shadow on an Aiwa stereo  
thought clips  
find a tag singly shaggy  
and after  
from the crew

*Gli Apostoli*  
that sweep winds across  
marauders  
I am as pleased

crossover  
Migra dynamite

the earth shakes fire  
What is its name thinking / the stall switch  
our desperate generation's iron  
the effect of wondering where the sense simply begins and  
*(noise: pension fund undermined)*

Las Mujeres de Lima blast offstage  
They own factories or something *Fidelio*  
pensive like loyal suicide—unwritten  
total Shakespeare Godard (go die  
imperialist encore),"  
warbled Arrezo, in  
the fight to produce  
hexachord gamut of Guido-like Solfege  
Saracea Zarzuela genre of jets  
who never experienced certain things  
ction & Pamphlet the rock song be

## Action & Pamphlet the rock song beneath Vendetta

## BEATER PRIDE OF LIONS

Coconut and Machete  
begin a slow class  
analysis of Guyanese Society  
or when conquest scrambles its jets  
("We'll be in Africa in under 10 minutes")

now leaving the Gulf Cartel's main plaza in  
the baroque complex of governmental nepotism.  
Every man a mad king. Job  
interviewization, debt—forced into it, to sell  
chant down slavery a keyboard milk.

## NEAR EARTH OBJECT

The bottle-rack-as-hedgehog  
funk joint's to stay for good. Name? Hipólito  
plays the ultimately determining crescendo  
during the guitar solo  
of Chicanismo.

The change in ocean scavenges the sweeping,  
formidable creature  
of return, exoskeleton  
of escaped  
hatred and surf,

fire goddess of the lotus  
just kind of bacon ranch in certain ways...  
and light beams checkered like us  
unearth clay pots  
in the helicopter moon.

Rosa Clará from the forward nectar plane—  
there parted the polka  
that sustains, broken,  
the Whitney's vivid shorthand  
of the operation. Catheter

whose beams canceled  
black blankets on the river-green arroyo—  
there the daily  
passage through the wards  
magicked up the Triaxium novissimi.

The grotto hated our captors,  
sex panthers came on the scene.  
The acid differed in the base:  
muscle, nerve, viscera, purely immediate.  
We mimicked a transition force's vortex of animals.

Quench lost the rise,  
lower heat, the different  
colored flames like lilies  
in the pilaster and quartzite head of a god  
on a new plinth for nothing.

I allowed it to went / the heat of an enormous sun  
does not stay the same in this room  
or the next's music of smoke signaling blanket.  
A solvent purified the start.  
And then it breaks off everywhere yet

in so far as we are residential  
with light, with the years near Año Nuevo  
enthroned in the drill bit meant for your skull,  
we are a federation of insufficiently musical warriors,  
local the 1960s in recycled hand signals;

or it is all continuously happening, a live process  
recombined with the vertical interruption  
of flashback sequences of the shipwreck  
when we win their hearts with an orchid  
map that stays for good.

## EYEBROW OF JUNGLE

in celebration of a forgotten strike  
the ice hotel isn't cold enough

in the laconic mode of a screenplay

here I am

las mujeres hablan ratcatcher negation

O strange part one no two (enjoys itself)  
crossed out jobs in the development package

is the disappearance near?  
Lima very poor

things were tight but could have been ponies  
gourd tree inferno dawn

## TODOS LOS EVERYTHING

We will persevere on our Near Eastern Tone,  
isomorphic to *Woe, Renegade Bull at God, Om.*

Letters are unkind tones, los mummies.

It am (*f*) a certain attunement to left and death. 

CATHERINE WAGNER

---

## AMERICAN DARLING VALVE

Without intending particular tones  
I made sound with tranced voice  
Recorded these events  
Played back and translated the tones and their relationships  
First by turning dynamics spatial  
(Cross-form description)  
Then by pretending voicetones were another language I could  
Understand and translate  
Then by transposing homophonically into words

Please have no choice about seeing  
The words as representative space  
In a time different  
From the time of singing.

To notate a landscape  
Carved by nonintentionality  
That was the idea.

Which required intention to carry it out  
Why did I want to do this  
That intention is reverb not true  
That intention is recombinatory true  
That intention is reversing true  
That intention is irreversible true  
That verse is intentionality true reverb

The landscape (moving tones)  
Serves as valve  
Intake general intention to sound  
Output sound  
Another landscape (poem)  
Serves as valve

## AMERICAN DARLING VALVE

[*cross-form tr*]

I saw cloud recede like tide,  
gray and cello

and the deep flesh blew.

It tongued one

A barrel roll inside a cave of throat

led in, breathed in  
bleded

That was pleasure high in daffodil  
hunting the germ  
and riding the flew dust mating

Cream hold head high in flurry

flirty shudder

Again a smooth surface receding  
liquid wood

forest from inside many of the trees

the glocum and slocum

molasses rise to infinitesimal  
branch  
a sky-broad fur bird  
Ride an uncle sky low here

---

[cross-form tr]

nga ngang ngang  
Ha la la Whoooo  
(time to Kill poetry

aaah

a hallway bland, tonally rich  
resonant cardboard  
we will rise with a siren  
loll ibuilding starts strong concrete and wood, Bauhaus thrum , goes up fades  
in molecule thinning  
I am up there, hardens sharper in molecule thinn  
mmove away from th embuilding  
into coo, ly on, rise, a traffic light dance  
faint tired roll the sound blanket I'm in.  
Sheeee This is very pure upstairs song  
Touching air like cottonball alcohol  
Sheering now, I felt a clean air in the tones plainedted  
the tones against one another atemp  
did not interrupt one another, did not harmonize or harm  
that's when only one of us  
(apart from interjection of siren

now sounds holy like priest I imagine I am embarrassed by having sounded  
thus I go silent

It's over? there's the click.Loong silence.

---

[cross-form tr]

Waking and gargling  
consider little dandelion froths up off into sunny sky

This part says that the froth of blood is up, rising  
capillary toward skin.

Along the skin a stroke, hand strokes, moves along skin goes outward  
Animal  
song:

a Dorothy “someWHERE” mode – the hand strokes round the belly awkward,  
unsure where to go  
considering  
as if rolling a little water inside a pot  
the water will boil – syringa! into air

I am telling a story up and down:  
walking's up and down,  
or breakfasts and their interstices,  
or lunch then napping—  
daily updown, zooms/zones in memory, a breakfast held static long time ago  
is a long light down the brain

weak star, downgrazing

I held taut the light like rope, raised self on it. You Rebecca  
had nothing to hold onto but what you projected  
with a bold voice

hold it, let it soak in water and expand (quiet soaking now)  
A descriptor of meadow flowers and grasses, the graph of motion and height  
difference  
There are people walking they hold baskets easily, there are children

In a left holding pattern now they flighter cistern song

---

*[as-if-semantic tr]*

What you do when you don't have anything to sing, up and down the tree. Rough on feet, hair in soft night. Rise into top of tree, the branch doesn't bend, strong branch, lean out a ways. A long time leaning. Make a harmonic with breeze and woodgrain. Till can swallow both. A body says oh because oh is easiest. Ah then. One is not permitted to think by the sonic. To think outside the sonic.

In this stage the human rides the branch away: it detaches and witches into foglight. The branch detects hollow air and goes there, swift deflecting matter and into hole, next hole in air.

---

*[as-if-semantic tr]*

On the count of three I will lift my arms and begin to write, next hole in air. I firmly doubt.

So if recombinatory guises suit you, prosody whore, make them do/be us. The latest says we I don't know recombine. The whore of thermals. Not underwear: invisible winding and unwinding burritos in the air. Lie on a couch of air in mustard sky. Lo, I was present unrolling. They said they hated all my work and thought I was not very bright.

—  
*[Homophonic tr]*

Ah, car, car, coal total, how are you?  
Boo-boo cuckoo told la?  
Hook. Mm. Sand and ginkgo. Sandal.  
London inca. So. Hey sink Caddy dealer.  
Oooh that. Hello, ooh-la-loo.  
Hah. That's a Kappa Sigma. You  
are lesbian ma, animal. Sound  
get in, sound and vague, sound,

oh ma, hmm, ma, laid. Mm-hmm.  
Mm-hmm. Hm. Oh so bloody good.  
Oh feel in the teat, teat, teat  
cocoa teat, a cocoa teat, a cocoa teat,  
ahh—long-gone sling was rock and roll,  
rolling rolling hum to home? Hum. Hum.  
A longing halo long a day. Hmm, too  
la lay, who, hey? who.  
Woo, whim, whoohoo. Ahh.  
Allah beside him, ooh. Noon train owns  
who, whoa. Hon, hon. Hon.  
Lens fun. Oh. Cold. I guess baby  
can't roll, fingers out. Who I  
bad, night vulnerable, we not  
arrow, we are roamin', we are  
known. We are equal babies oh.  
We up aisle with yo. Wha!  
Hold up worrit, we not arrow, no.

---

Goggles on, shh, la la.  
Oh my god, poo-poo cuckoo.  
Send a great guard. Slender. Lend an Inca.  
We are racing car dealers ooh,  
bad, high-rise pigeons off, that's  
a cup of soup for you, lesbian ma,  
enema. Sound-cat, sound-cat  
really sad. Oh.  
Norma womb, a norm whom. For some  
time lengthening. Home so bloody good—  
ho-he, never tea, tea, tea, tea, tea,  
a gold cartouche, a gold cartouche,  
a gold cartouche, a lounger wonders  
about how it's going for you, lounger in

preschool, ooh it must be hard. Hang  
on ladies in preschool, hey, womb,  
womb, hair for a long way down,  
-ing heavy whizz womb. Mmm.  
Tell ma. Whom, in high ding  
tone. When and where. Ahhh, whim  
poodle lean, whom and lean wean  
wine. Umm. Umm. Hold hold  
rotary unschool. Cold. He can't  
speak, cantor, we're not being  
assholes. Glove used to ride  
sidesaddle. We are, we are uh-oh.  
He hates bridge things take an  
angel who. He loves hating  
you. Here are welcome woes.

---

[cross-form tr]

This is a plane very wide already up in the air and white, wide as a city  
narrows into water sheet, steam sheet, thin of wave  
Up in the air there are curlies, cloudrolls, thermal burritos, down one of these  
is a longshank song quiet, blown through by song  
Higher now what this says is everyone needs to put on their highest hat  
narrow themselves into circuits and lean far into the country and out over the  
water  
like legless ground cranes picking up nothing.  
I saw then below on the water or above on the water, if you didn't go. Some of  
these sounds down the inverted rope/tube of a large wave. Or a concrete cyl-  
inder floating to lake bottom, dropped by the crane. He said our work would  
get married. We would not. But it is we who should be married and our work  
should not.  
The arms lift. A dozen silver birches into which the little money rises.

---

[cross-form tr]

Repeat mechanical bird  
plane lowering long broad fuzz-horn  
I just want to open throat  
wider  
Whole city from throat,  
    upgasp  
quaver turtle downward,

Now song suddenly,  
taken over by it  
it is an up-mountain labor song  
words to it  
tentative quality voice  
lacy  
stronger and claps  
loud excite

—

Mechanical bird furrows  
low organ plane  
multi-engine drift massive  
louder more multiple fills ground.

Narwhal dives into sky, that's  
voice, again the up-down voice  
ragged re-upheaval.  
distort recording  
loud loud sustained holler  
raggy inbreath  
This was inarticulate risk and labor  
Then sudden curtain time, voice  
taken over by it, loud  
Some lala, some cant

And I la la la la la, for huh.  
Song end—thing gravel strain  
then back in louder, clapping  
Stood at end—ach—the song end

---

Sit in bird, bird process, not a  
real bird, while trance confirms  
itself. Bird is housefan squeaking.

Eventually airplane joins it.  
Um think tear button wayside.  
Consider nonging, wailing  
the high sounds  
Loud unpretty occupy ears  
Her first book an animal queen  
Her second down raft on clay oven hill  
The song—goes fast  
through her, she can't  
She can't look at poetry  
Make howa howa  
When I think I love you, hey la la  
can't. And a la la la la, dr ohh.  
Pig yaa, Ah ya. Ming—Ennung  
ing. The birches present in  
drifts. Starclap. Road sound  
down, break if cliffs w/a Midwesterner  
(I'm telling them don't do that)

Afterward (nonsimultaneous tr)  
I thought: Taken over by  
daylaborer, a job of haybales  
loading, women and men many  
All of us here were or had been mostly  
hetero

[If] you panache dream cookie  
I sell you lots of fun songs for the basement  
You can play them in your spare time for lullaby bagels  
The whole trip is off. Who wants to hear  
me sing like that. Not even me.  
So, ludicrous project.  
If music were description  
blame heat blow wine wave.  
If music were descrip of life  
it wouldn't touch you.  
Skate half-herring on log.  
The green lotion sped me nonker.

---

*[cross-form tr]*

Terrifying space blat and then I'm alone in space  
echoing sweet childhood memory lonesome  
But birdsong  
Test song rise Actively taking off, rest on  
thermal  
Treat it not as: describe surface, as if voice were trunk of tree  
Each length is a background, each clickbreath a sudden figure emerging  
Whistle, while note whistling, and smelling rich puss-smell on fingers I will  
maybe  
not smell anymore anyone's

As if wandering in wide-ceilinged hall, high up with wings.

The range voice

can go, so quickly high, that's what's  
magic and like flying—  
skipping heights,  
the cultured ladder-steps,  
yank up or down. 

EL MUNDO COMO SER.

1

Leía un poema de Gottfried Benn, hablaba de un cadáver sobre una mesa de disección, describía la manera en que tocaba el cerebro, la manera en que extraía su lengua y la ponía en un recipiente con agua “like flowers.”

Oí a una multitud gritando atrás por la ventana, una multitud gritando libertad.

Detrás iba una turba gritando cosas violentas.

Libertad, libertad.

Dejé los órganos en el búcaro, cogí mi cámara, me puse las botas sin medias y fui al edificio de prisiones.

Cuando llegué no vi ya a nadie, un guardia joven me dijo que por favor cogiera por la calle, sólo por hoy, me dijo.

Yo pensaba en los órganos de Gottfried.

Sentí emoción por la palabra libertad, creo que eran las madres, regresé a la casa, mientras subía las escaleras pensé, tu problema no es la cobardía, tu problema es la indiferencia.

2

Estaba en ese bar de lesbianas, una cerveza en mis manos. Lo supe, no tengo alma, no existe el alma. Las lesbianas no me querían ahí. Le dije a mi amigo, hay una eterofobia en cada una de estas tipas. Caminé a por la línea de la barra. La cerveza no era amarilla any more. El mundo no es objeto, es un ser, y está vivo.

3

*Frente a mi cerveza*, yo pude ver sus cerebros, el verdadero ser. No tengo alma, me dije, tengo cerebro. Frente a la computadora chateamos, los amigos por el mundo. Deberíamos fundar el partido apolítico. Éramos los hijos de La Revolución, pero también de la dictadura. Habíamos perdido de vista el socialismo, pensando que socialismo era Fidel. Habíamos perdido de vista la igualdad, pensando que igualdad era él.

4

*Ayer mientras* leía un poema político me tembló la mano. Sentí la presión del poder, mi miedo al poder. Ayer, mientras leía, temblé, como la primera vez. Cuando salí, me encontré en un bar con mis amigos, hablé de todo sin decirles nada. Oscar gritaba borracho, la otra pedía tequila. Aunque nos quedamos, hace tiempo que nos fuimos.

5

Yo supe a cada instante de la fugacidad de la vida, por eso a cada instante sufri lo que no debía, por eso también a cada instante disfruté.

Ayer, mientras regaba las matas pensé: La vida se trata de perder, de ganar, pero de perder, uno pierde al menos, un día cada día .La vida está hecha de los seres, el ancla con el mundo es el ser, el mundo como un ser, como los seres.

6

Fuimos a ver la casa de mi bisabuelo, una casa de columnas fuertes, a las que les caía a tiros mentando a Machado.

Recordaba a uno de los hermanos de mi abuelo recostado en una silla echándose aire con una penca. No quedaba nada ahí, de la casa, de los negocios, nada.

Los mundos desaparecen, me dijo mi padre en casa de mi abuela, es un mundo que desapareció, como desaparecerá este.

Esquinas que solo existen en la mente. Objetos. Hay cosas que guardan lo más bello de nosotros, amar, es encontrarse, en ellas.

7

*El mundo no había cambiado* pero yo sí. Un día después de tu muerte, mientras hablábamos de tí, cayó un lucero, un meteorito, creo. Algo bajó echando chispas del cielo. Luego fuimos a comprar cerveza, yo ponía las monedas sobre el cristal del mostrador. La muerte, cuando es literatura, es profunda, pensé, cuando es real, increíble.

8

*Es poco lo que no cae* en el vacío del pasado, la habilidad de pensar es idéntica, como habilidad, a cualquiera. Constante relación del ser con la nada. La relación del vacío. Abrí un osario y vi los huesos, una cajita, donde las tibias estaban al lado del cráneo. Un saco gris. Aunque la muerte se confunda con la nada no son lo mismo. Aunque la vida se confunda con el ser, tampoco.

9

*Los místicos* hablan del Vacío como una abstracción. Yo hablo del vacío como un hecho. Atravieso la miseria .Habana Carlos Tercero, piedra sucia. El sonido del hambre no está en el estómago. El sonido del hambre está en la mente. Algunos seres se definen por los órganos que los rigen. Aparatos intestinales. En mi casa, paredes sin pintar. En la televisión el gran líder. Camino hacia la sala. Todo el que prohíbe, prohíbe por poder, pienso. Las imposiciones no tienen ideología

que las sustenten. Es importante que lo sepan, esto que soy, soy yo, no ustedes. Es importante que sepan. El asno camina siempre en la montaña. El asno, está siempre a un paso del abismo.

10

*El arte como pensamiento*, la conciencia interna de las cosas. Dos monedas en el suelo, me levanto, pongo mis pies en la loza. In the name of revolution, Habana, Carlos Tercero, lluvia , in the name of. Un travesti con zapatos amarillos, cincuenta años de gobierno in the name. Paredes blancas entrando en mis sentidos, Brigadas de Respuesta in the name, el amor in the name. Habana-Vedado, Malecón buscando Línea. Cuando dicen revolución dicen en verdad conservación. La libertad es algo de lo que los poderes hablan, la libertad es algo que el poder consiente, la libertad es cosa de poder. Toda esta gente tiene una vida, una sola vida, el arte, la política, es, como el excremento, tiene la calidad de lo que se come.

11

Hace años que no escribo, me digo. En la calle, a mi lado, un taxi amarillo. En el horizonte el sol se mueve como un huevo.

El fin de la historia, paso el túnel, rayas de separación, el sol, una yema violácea. Nada por lo cual morir. El fin de la historia, digo. Cansancio.

Bandada de yanquis, zapatos blancos, medias blancas, tenis, todo blanco, the cuban marracas, the cuban artist. The cubans.

El centro de la fruta es el hueso, leí.

El centro de mí.

Entro a un bar, ahora todo es privado, gente cool, gente rica, ahora todo es privado, diseño, ahora todo es diseño.

Hay muchas maneras de suicidarse, me dicen. Cerrar los ojos es una.

Salgo del bar, el sol me abre la frente, me abre la frente lo real. Después de mirarlo por un rato, la compañía violácea.

Necesidad terrible de un poema, necesidad de arte.

Escuchar tu voz en soledad, la voz de tu espíritu, hay maneras de no estar, de anularse, me dicen, cerrar los ojos es una, creo, cierro los ojos, la masa violácea flotando en mi retina. Una o, un cero violeta, un círculo trazado por una realidad violenta.

No podrán decir que yo acepté el abuso. No podrán decir:

La raíz de su amor dejó de luchar en la frontera.

No podrán decir, que yo acepté esta nada.

12

Tres canas en el mentón.

Yo creí que el mundo hablaría todo el tiempo de mi amor,  
que el futuro estaba lleno de mi amor.

Da Vinci decía que el ser no podía caer en la nada.

Si un amor como el que yo sentí pudo caer en la nada,  
entonces mi vida podría también.

Si un amor puede caer en la nada, cualquier cosa puede. 

---

CARLOS SOTO-ROMÁN

ELEVEN EXCERPTS

Teniendo presente:

1º.—La gravísima crisis económica, social y moral que está destruyendo al país;

con el compromiso patriótico:

de restaurar la chilenidad	(quebrantada)
de restaurar la justicia	(quebrantada)
de restaurar la institucionalidad	(quebrantada)

conscientes de que ésta es la única forma:

de ser fieles	a las tradiciones nacionales
de ser fieles	al legado de los Padres de la Patria
de ser fieles	a la Historia de Chile

conscientes de que ésta es la única forma:

de permitir que la evolución y el progreso se encaucen	del país
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v i g o r o s a m e n t e

- Por haber ocultado bajo tierra una cantidad de 15 armas, abundante munición y explosivos
- Por haber participado como Instructor de Guerrillas en la zona
- Por sustraer explosivos a viva fuerza
- Por incitar a los mineros a apoderarse de los polvorines
- Por incitar a oponer resistencia armada
- Por haber participado en la adquisición y distribución de armas de fuego
- Por haberle encontrado explosivos enterrados

Se informa a la ciudadanía que hoy \_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_ a las \_\_\_\_ horas fueron ejecutadas las siguientes personas conforme a lo dispuesto por los Tribunales Militares en tiempo de Guerra:

- ¿Cuál es el propósito del interrogatorio?
- ¿Ha sido preparado un plan de interrogatorio?
- ¿Se encuentra disponible un lugar apropiado para el interrogatorio?
- ¿Serán grabadas las sesiones de interrogatorio?
- ¿Se encuentra disponible el equipo necesario?
- ¿Se encuentra instalado el equipo necesario?
- ¿Se han hecho los arreglos para alimentar y custodiar al sujeto, si es necesario?
- ¿Necesita el plan de interrogatorio de más de un agente?
- De ser así ¿Se han asignado los roles?
- ¿Está el ambiente del interrogatorio sujeto a completa manipulación y control del agente interrogador?
- ¿Cómo se dispondrá del interrogado luego de que terminen las preguntas?
- Si es posible, evaluar la respuesta personal del sujeto al interrogador
- ¿Cuál es la reacción del interrogador ante el sujeto? ¿Hay alguna reacción emocional suficientemente fuerte como para afectar los resultados? De ser así, el interrogador debe ser reemplazado.
- Si la fuente se resiste ¿Se utilizarán técnicas coercitivas o no coercitivas?  
¿Cuál es la razón de la elección?
- ¿Ha sido el sujeto interrogado anteriormente?
- ¿Tiene conocimiento sobre técnicas de interrogación?

1. Los inculpados fueron condenados a la pena de muerte que fue cumplida en la madrugada de hoy.
2. Los inculpados fueron condenados a la pena de presidio perpetuo.
3. A la pena de 25 años de presidio se condenó a los siguientes reos:



*Primero, las piernas; después, los órganos sexuales; después el corazón. En ese orden disparaban las ametralladoras.* 

DANIEL BORZUTZKY

---

BED TIME STORIES FOR THE END OF THE WORLD!  
OR MURMURS FROM THE ROTTEN CARCASS ECONOMY!

THE PERFORMANCE OF BECOMING HUMAN

Did you hear the one about the female body that was hollowed out and filled with prawns that came out of her eyes after she discovered her husband had only married her so as to demonstrate to his friends that he could enter the upper class?

On the side of the highway a thousand refugees step off a school bus and into a sun that can only be described as “blazing.”

The rabbi points to the line the refugees are stepping over and says: “that’s where the country begins.”

This reminds me of Uncle Antonio. He would have died had his tortured body not been traded to another country for minerals.

Made that up.

This is a story about diplomatic protections.

The refugees were processed through Austria or Germany or maybe Switzerland.

Somehow they were discovered in some shit village in some shit country by European soldiers and taken to an embassy where they were promptly bathed, injected with vaccines, interrogated, etc...

Their bodies were traded by country A in exchange for some valuable natural resource needed by country B.

There was only one gag, says the rabbi, as he tucks his children into bed. So the soldiers took turns passing the filthy thing back and forth between the mouths of the two prisoners. The mother and son licked each other's slobber off the dirty rag that had been in who knows how many other mouths.

You love to write about this, don't you?

I am paid by the word for my transcriptions. Just one more question about the gag.

He wants to know what color the gag was, what it was made of, how many mouths had licked it. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands?

They used their belts to bind them by the waist to the small cage they were trapped in.

Everything reminds me of a story about an ape captured on a boat by a group of European soldiers who showed him how to become human by teaching him how to spit and belch.

Everything is always about the performance of becoming human.

Observing a newly processed refugee, the rabbi says: "I have seen those blue jeans before."

At times like this, he thinks: I can say just about anything right now.

This is, after all, a bed time story for the end of the world.

I am moving beneath the ground and not sleeping and trying to cross the border from one sick part of the world to another.

But where is the light and why does it not come in through your bloody fingers?

You hold your bloody fingers before my eyes and there is light in them but I cannot see it.

You say: there are countries in my bloody fingers.

I am interested in the borders.

Or:

I am interested in the gas chambers in your collapsible little fingers.

You put them to my face and I see your hands open and in them I see a thick wall and a sky and an ocean and ten years pass and it is still night time and I am falling and there are bodies on the ground in your bloody hands.

Think about the problem really hard then let it go and when you least expect it a great solution will appear in your mind.

The broken bodies stand by the river and wait for the radiation to trickle out of the houses and into their skin.

They stand under billboards and sniff paint and they know the eyes that watch them own their bodies.

A more generous interpretation might be that their bodies are shared between the earth, the state and the bank.

The sentences are collapsing one by one and the bodies are collapsing in your

bloody hands and you stitch me up and pray I will sleep and you tell me of the shattered bus stops where the refugees are waiting for the buses to take them to the mall where they are holding us now and there is a man outside our bodies making comments about perspective and scale and light and there is light once more in your bloody fingers.

All I see is the sea and my mother and father falling into it.

Again? That's like the most boring image ever.

The water is frozen and we are sleeping on the rocks and watching the cows on the cliff and you tell me they might fall and break open and that sheep and humans and countries will fall out of them and that this will be the start of the bed time story you will tell me on this our very last night on earth.

Come closer, you say with your eyes.

Move your bloody face next to mine and rub me with it. We are dying from so many stories. We are not complete in the mind from so many stories of burning houses, missing children, slaughtered animals. Who will put the stories back together and who will restore the bodies? I am working towards the end but first I need a stab, a small slice. The stories they are there but we need a bit more wit. We need something lighter to get us to the end of this story. Did you hear the one about the guy who picked up chicks by quoting the oral testimonies of the illiterate villagers who watched their brothers and sisters get slaughtered?

Or:

Andale andale arriba arriba welcome to Tijuana you cannot eat anymore barbecued iguana.

Have you met Speedy Gonzales' cousin?

His name is Slow Poke Rodriguez.

En español se llama Lento Rodriguez.

He's a drunk little fucking mouse.

His predator, the lazy cat baking in the sun, thinks he will taste good with chili peppers but there's something I forgot to tell you. Slow Poke always pack a gun and now he's going to blow your flabbergasted feline face off.

It was 1987 and my friends from junior high trapped me on the floor and mashed bananas in my face and sang: it's no fun being an illegal alien!

~~You know you can die from so many stories.~~

The pudgy cat guards the AJAX cheese factory behind the fence, right across the border.

The wetback mice see the gringo cheese.

They smell the gringo cheese.

Your gringo cheese it smells so good.

They need Speedy Gonzales to get them some ripe, fresh, stinky gringo cheese.

Do you know this Speedy Gonzales, asks one of the starving wetback mice.

I know him, Speedy Gonzales friends with my seester (the mice laugh). Speedy Gonzales friends with everybody's seester.

Ha ha ha the little border-crossing, sneak-fucking mouses think it's cute that they're invading our culture to steal our cheese but it don't make a difference because you and I (cue the rhythm and blues) we are taking a stroll on the electrified fence of love cause I feel a little Southern Californian transnational romance coming on right about now.

I feel like Daniel from the Karate Kid because I too once had a Southern Californian experience where I wasn't aware that I was learning ancient Japanese secrets when I was waxing on and waxing off and I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Reseda.

I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Pasadena.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi at the All Valley Karate tournament.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Okinawa where you went in Karate Kid II to meet your long lost girlfriend when you discovered that she wasn't married off when she was just a teenager to your fiercest Okinawan rival.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Tijuana where it's murder and diarrhea and always kinda kinky.

But seriously, friends:

What *do* you think of this darkness that surrounds us?

They chopped up two dozen bodies last night and today I have to pick up my dry cleaning.

In the morning I need to assess student learning outcomes as part of an important administrative initiative to secure the nation's future by providing degrees of economic value to the alienated, urban youth.

So for now hasta luego compadres and don't worry too much about the bucket of murmuring shit that is the unitedstatesian night.

What does it say? What does it say? What do you want it to say?

## THE IMMIGRANT, VANISHING SUN

*Everything that happens is at once natural and inconceivable.  
This conclusion is unavoidable, whether we consider great or  
trivial events.*

*—E. M. Cioran (Translated by Richard Howard)*

1. At the bottom of the memo there is a notation: my skin will rot off my body if only you confess that the thing you love is not the thing you love; my skin will rot off my body if only you confess that the invisible line you cross is not the invisible line I cross. Confess instead that the line you cross has killed the thing you love. This thing you love. This line you love. This line that is not love.
2. I do not know how to talk about myself without talking about my country. I do not know how to talk about my country without talking about all the bodies it has destroyed. I do not know how to talk about my city without talking about all the bodies it keeps underground. I do not know how to talk about ghosts without talking about myself. I can explain myself to you best by never opening my mouth. I hold my elbows to my side like a man. I am not a man. I hold my head in the air like a woman. I am not a woman. I am an immigrant standing on a mountain in a city of glass and there are bodies trying to climb buildings that decompose on one side of a line. It is like this everywhere: the city is decomposing and its decomposition provides the only means by which we can understand ourselves. We sing a song called "Thank You to Life" and we mean it even though we hate every second of being alive. It is forgetting that enables us to see that there might be breath in the mud pits of the sinking valley. I love the forgotten body on the hill the way I love the forgotten voice inside my tomb. All we can do is search for voices. Period. The night is wet with tears.
3. There is the joy of the word and the rhythm and the spit and the gurgle and the murmur and the stutter and the voice escaping from the lung and the throat and the tongue and the teeth and into the air that hangs between two bodies who must figure out a means of communicating how the love they share is a love that makes the world bearable by exposing just how unbearable it actually is. The voices are trying to fuse into each other. They are trying to rip the

flesh from each other but there are broken bones that come between them as they try to make love in a vacuum. Let me describe the scene for you. I am in the cage and you are there with me. We are naked and on the outside of the cage there are scientific bodies analyzing our gurgling behavior. We would like to reproduce though at the same time we don't want to bring other bodies into this particular world. It is a question of origins. A question of what you believe in. I believe my body is a vehicle for war and there is a dead city in my mouth and my lips are decomposing and I want to kiss you with my decomposing lips but you say no I must replace my head with another head so I shave off my hair and we put my hair in a Ziploc bag and we seal up the bag and then you put your hair in another bag and we mix our hair together and hold hands and we feel something unquantifiable as our hair mixes together, like milk and honey you want to say, but I tell you I'll die if you treat words this way. And the scientists who quantify the experience are measuring the data in our hair and in our gazes and in the air between our hair and our gazes. This gurgling thing called love.

4. The progression of the ear. It grows as it hears things. The progression of the tongue. It grows as it tastes things. The progression of the finger. It grows as it touches things. We want to know certain things about ourselves but these certain things are forbidden to us. The ability to look at your body is forbidden to you. The ability to frame your own body in relationship to other bodies is forbidden to you. Imagine a world in which each body is independent one from the other. Imagine a world in which the space between you and the person next to you is occupied by a type of air that no one recognizes. To recognize air in a nuclear town is to recognize the probability that to be alive is to have something foreign leak into your mouth, your blood, through your orifices and into the depths of your body. There are the visible lines and the invisible lines and the poison that fills each one of us. There are the things we smuggle in our mouths as we cross our invisible lines and the things they smuggle in their mouths as they cross their invisible lines. It's like this every day in the desert of the early Americans. The heads that float across the border cannot help but fantasize about the possibility of life beneath the desiccated surface of the earth. This is what it's like in a cage. There is a woman who is kept alive by her captor for the sole reason that

the guarding body needs a justification for its service. There is protocol and there are the steps used to measure the efficacy of the various functions of the bureaucratic body vis-a-vis the bodies that deflate, diminish, or dribble. The quantification of the starving body is useful to the bureaucrats on the outside of the cage who would rather their own motivations not be measured. To live with one's own deterioration is to live outside of the deterioration of others. The cage gets bigger as the starving body gets smaller. I shall take the liberty of quantifying you, the scientific body says to the shrinking body. But who on earth will listen?

5. The quantifiable bodies are shrinking. The data is shrinking. The ability to feel another body is disappearing. The ability to know another body is disappearing. The ability to speak is disappearing. The ability to violate is shrinking. The ability to own one's own body is shrinking. The border is growing. The imaginary lines of the earth are growing. The ability to leave is growing. The ability to be left behind by one's own body is growing. The words we have to measure things are shrinking. The pressure of the ecosystem is growing. The disappearing voices and languages are growing. The disappearing tongues are growing. The disappearing nights are growing. The ability to be found is irrelevant. The ability to arrive is irrelevant. The dead planets are growing. The higher state that is boredom is shrinking. The aporetics that leak out of one body and into another are diminishing. The continuous buzzing that leaks out of a toxic mouth and into a sanctified mouth is growing.

Measure my body as it gurgles in the vanishing sun.

Measure my body as it is swallowed by a gurgle of bodies in the silence of the vanishing sun.

Measure the stick that is used to scrape the skin off my body as it gurgles in the vanishing sun.

The immigrant, vanishing sun.

The immigrant, vanishing sun.

## MARKET FLUCTUATION

There are memorials built for the thousands of dogs who have fallen in wars

Why use the word fallen when die might be better

The fallen dogs Dead

I love the scene at the end of the book where the recovering pervert intellectual pities himself to the point where all he can do is kill hopeless dogs in the hospital

They say that physical images (from film) stick with us more than mental images (from books)

And here we are again I am dreaming again I am dreaming the dream in which the economists subdivide my body and treat each organ and appendage as if they are rational automatons that will regenerate as soon as they are severed or damaged

The economists have instructed the rivers to absorb the cities

The economists have instructed the mayors to instruct the rivers to absorb the bodies

Suspended overhead a name in flashing lights over the entire city what the hell are you going to do about the squadrons that ring doorbells in our neighborhood the members of the squadrons approach individually their comrades wait around the corner in the getaway car hello says a scared-looking young man I could use your help my car do you see it over there it's got a flat tire and I need to get home my baby needs me my wife has to go to work she's going to lose her job if I don't get home on time I'm desperate could you give me a hand and help me with my car

And then he forces his way into your house and holds your family hostage and shoots holes in the floor and steals lap top computers and appliances and jewelry

and if you're unlucky he and his comrades do unspeakable things that can not be absorbed by either our collective or our historical memory

But of course my body parts do not regenerate and the economists "have no choice" but to take my body parts to market in order to find a natural means of assessing their value

Should I write frantically or quietly Should I talk frantically or calmly Should I sit by myself and think frantically or calmly

This is an aesthetic choice and an ethical choice it is a choice about how I want to live my life and present it to others

As I write in bed this morning there is a small boy behind my back he is talking about miracles and wrapping his hands around my shoulders he has no idea that I am having the dream in which my tongue is removed by economists from the University of Chicago

But there's a nice Pharaoh, right? he asks, as we read an illustrated book for children about frogs, biting insects, beasts, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts and darkness

Open the flap and you see the deaths of the first-born sons splattered colorfully amid pyramids and deserts

Once there was a man who was me and I was a brain in a jar sold by economists and hawked at a flea market in the parking lot of a Home Depot in a town with a horrible name about forty miles south of Chicago

Baby, I love it when you say *Bolingbrook*

This is the first poem in history about poets plagued by nightmares that their body parts will be sold at the parking lot of a Home Depot in Bolingbrook, Illinois

My muscles are weak. My skin is wilting. I smell like vinegar. You can buy me

with a Citibank credit card at a 0% APR for 15 months. What am I?

I feel a sense of community, says an idealistic economist, when I devise fantastic algorithms to calculate the myriad ways in which the subject's body parts will appreciate over time

Sometimes, when people are buying products that will control the rest of their lives they forget to take into consideration fluctuating market conditions, buyers' changing perceptions of the worth of a product, and the mystical underpinnings that control the alchemy of their emotions and of the so-called consumer market

Fucking clunky sentence

Of course, it was like this even for Hamlet and Marie Antoinette and here in the frame we invent our own desires and like everyone else we try not to completely satisfy them because we understand that verbs are more important than nouns and we despise adverbs and we think there is only "limited potential" in adjectives

But we could really use some organizing principles, say the economists, because the lower classes, stuck eternally in their ugly lives, cannot make ethical decisions when they are starving

And it is fun for the economists to monitor impoverished bodies and to watch them deteriorate and to see what choices they will make in terms of what they want versus what they need

And how *does* desire factor into this process? And how *do* the sadomasochistic tendencies of those on the outside affect their ability to understand and express empathy for those on the inside (read: dying)

Did you hear the one about the boy who was shot for not wearing a freshly pressed white shirt and also he refused to wear the freshly pressed white shirt that once belonged to his fallen brother and now there is a mural in a suburb of Chicago to commemorate his death?

Dear impoverished bodies that don't speak our language, dear broken bodies  
that shit and die on our streets

We hate you but we know you are valued contributors to the invisible  
networks that connect us to each corner of the earth and we will forever  
quantify your vibrations as we sip cocktails from the mud juice of our rotten  
carcass economy 

EMMY PÉREZ

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FROM *NEXT SURGE*

Taste alters. Returns. (Already this is a narrative poem.) Feel like thermometer mercury. She the weather or me. A bridge iced over causing crashes.

\*

stand next to her when chuparosas bury their tongues in the january hoods of south tejas

\*

under which heart has the planet positioned? a planet of planes and drones orbiting el sol, corazón. a planet with trees, grass, and deserts. Arroyos and atomic bombs. Snow and languages. Tongues and trinities.

\*

big red hormigas carry torn pieces of bauhinia orchids in a path they cut through grass. herd insects working for their queen before it thunderstorms. how many orchids will piece back to estrellas in the nest before eaten? how many eggs will the queen release in this bed of soft lips? she isn't a metaphoric

mother of a country or la virgen. she is a mother of mothers, fathers, workers, who disappear fallen toronjas and sting ruiners.

\*

The fertility of children in middle school.

Women scrubbing blood stains out.

\*

what is the secret to giving it up? give it up like your virginity to an eager one in middle school. keeps pressing and pressing—hands in your panties—and you're curious—it feels good—so just give it up. this is not advice i'd give to my child. it's what i'd do on a sunny spring day in winter—fly in a microscopic plane with five passengers over la Sierra Madre de Oaxaca with you.

\*

The body knows how to complete its tasks. When and how to release the appropriate hormones to deliver a baby, make milk after the baby born. It doesn't require us to know much how it works. Sometimes I close my eyes and see, from the Franklin Mountains, Anapra's turquoise and coral shacks. Cars and trucks on 1-10 zoom below and between. Asarco's fallic smelertown coats the river and the Juárez hills with copper dust. Someone is burning old tires to keep warm. The body knows how to prepare for childbirth or make milk on frozen bridges, in maquiladoras, among american-made guns and electric fences.

\*

It's either too much family or not enough. Too cold in the remotest room of the wood house or too hot. The sun or Coyolxauhqui, la frontera or the South. To nurse or not, the longest river or the driest. Parkinson's or not, exes or partners, nostalgia or chucking old correspondence. Selling land and an adobe

casita that neighbors ancestral lands and adobes, the closest you could once live to them, selling water-in-the-desert rights, siphoning gasoline and river, selling trompillo or mountain rocks, cigarettes or gum, menudeo or mayoreo. Disremembering violations, waiting for the epiphany, riding bike in the snow, nausea or cramps, kisses or abrazos.

\*

You cannot pay for someone's dignity, though it helps like honey helps the bear. It's not only the honey the bear wants but the larvae and the bees. It takes a rough tongue to taste a bee or dozens. Osos even take the electric shock from juiced up fences to get to the hives.

\*

Parkinson's partially defined as the *death of dopamine-generating cells*. The zooming off after crossing. The zooming off of dopamine. ADHD is also believed to be associated with decreased dopamine activity. Extroverted folks tend to have more dopamine than introverted. That's dope. That's fucked up. Eating, sex, and email all shots of dopamine. Chocolate. Though waiting for that next text also causes *seeking behavior*. Indeed, I grew to seek my old smartphone's bling bling. If I hear it now in an airport or restaurant, I smile, as if your godly texts that I accidentally zapped resurrected.

\*

Is seeking what feels lost god?

\*

exaggerate exodus, genesis, scripture that says woman should respect her man. heterosexist texas ultrasounds, definite and indefinite articles, masculine or feminine, demonstrative pronouns must match gender. estos ojos, ese corazón... why are eyes masculine? hearts?

\*

teething and seething, but one is a song of innocence. chingonas are songs of experience, though i wouldn't say they seethe. i miss you, friend. you taught me soothing is not the end of suffering. the august sun here in the valley does not soothe after a hurricane. it burns and makes caterpillars appearing amarillo on trash cans wish they could fly already.

\*

williams's refrigerated plums. a musician sick of singing his most popular songs. not even the crowd's nostalgia can make him feel like he's walking on a plank or ledge or as if an arsenic lobster has fallen on his head.

\*

The path of conocimiento in desert arroyos invisible. She finds white snail shells, pea-sized, her second time on grass, lifts one like a conch. I've never sat on my lawn and poured through it like a continent, comet-snuffed and hormiga clean. If I didn't have you, I'd have another cat or four monkeys.

\*

she needed her butt wiped, her nose cleaned, her nails clipped, her ear wax lifted. she refused to eat strawberries, nurse, or lie still. she laughed at sunlight found behind heavy duty curtains meant to fool her to sleep. she laughed at tangerines dangling on the tree. when children entered the view. she grabbed the iPhone and expanded the screen with fingers that can barely grasp cheerios. she tore out all the tabs in the gimmicky picture books. she ate pieces of torn envelopes and shoved everything else she found on the carpet in her mouth. carpet lint, old hard chicharos. she woke every other hour and drank milk like a runner drinks water during the long marathon of night.

\*

Did they ever speak to us in their mother tongue, genuinely?

When will we walk away without summer burning?

How many summers  
will be late today?

How many more tomorrow?

If Gloria Anzaldúa hung out with Jack Spicer, Walt Whitman, and Frank O'Hara in the Rio Grande Valley, where would they eat? What would they say? About pink conchas at the panaderia?

The conjunto festival, the birding festival, the kermes at st. anthony's?

Are you afraid of asking why?

When was the last time you experienced susto?

How to tame your wild tongue? Whyfore?

Who are your censors? Is humor easier when you have none?

Are my assumptions that transparent?

Have a coke with me?

A cigarette up on stage?

A baby?

A tree climb?

A blade of grass?

A water break?

\*

the symmetry of swim, chachalacas, swim, from the sky to the ebano leaves.

\*

its sugar is safer, less refined, still sweetbitter. sappho's esophagus a confluence. we are bodies, not rivers. we are whole, not fragments for specialists. we are whole in the fragments, in the moments between text messages before the next surge of silences.

\*

ghazal with just the rhymes and notes

drones

jones

droids (nicer than luke, han solo)

homies (fifty cent vatos, in gumball machines)

cronies

ponies

groans

chones (left behind, after crossing)

honies

phonies

loans

loams (looms, angora goat herds, weavers, navajo spiderwoman)

wombs

tombs (el panteon)

tones

phones

moans

bones (muertos)

clones (agents)

cones (refried beans in an ice cream cone)

foams  
stones (thrown, border patrol)  
chrome (rims)

\*

Cousins on Harleys or in the Air Force. Former cholas now bikers, poetas. Fathers with Elvira posters in their beloved garages. The curve of Elvira's cleavage or eyeliner caught your eye when sinking stripes or solids. Sunday school in Riverside was Budweisers and volleyball at the elementary school across the street. Working class swimming pool. The first with Nintendo we knew. Live for toys. We were boring without feathered hair and eyelash curlers. Without boyfriends in dickies cut-offs, starting fights. No one spoke about work, spouses, or money. Pachuca talk from the nicest tía with gold-capped teeth. She made the best rice.

\* \*

Poems to the beloved not the same as poems about the beloved.

\*

When I write to you, you are closer than when I write about you.

\*

How about when I write with you? Not collaboration in the traditional sense...

\*

\*with\*

\*

Poems about the beloved can indicate some distance

\*

Water in hands

\*

Not showering with you

\*

Luquillo before a tropical storm

\*

the word tropical has become problematic

\*

Iguana like a rodent in the open-air kioskos

\*

Rain on the clearest island water in my world

\*

Test bomb sites like Vieques and New Mexico

\*

Fort-no-one-will-protest-too-loudly

\*

Water on eyes

\*\*

Not the chased but the settled. Not "illegal." Not anymore. Not technically. Not the "home-bray" but my father repeating it later like the border patrol officer in his childhood yard. No papers needed to trespass on small properties thirty miles north of Mexicali or other borders. My father says Yatahey too like John Wayne.

\*

Spiderman dubbed in Spanish. Christopher Walken's advice to actors: take out all the periods and commas cannot apply. Gotta make your voice move when Dafoe's mouth moves. Why would anyone replace his face with a mask? the critic asks.      ☐

VERÓNICA ZONDEK

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HAY GOLPES DE VIENTO QUE YO NO SÉ...  
*(ITINERARIOS PATAGÓNICOS)*

II

El viento no es más que ausencia / erizo brotado en piel  
andariega / como si sin querer queriendo captase el trémulo  
indicador del mundo. / Y ese quién soy entre los pastizales/  
entre las estepas envueltas en silbido ululante / galopa ya y  
penetra en lóbulo izquierdo / y anida en medio del estómago/  
y congela el movimiento / y nos avisa / y nos dimensiona / y  
nos desciende violento hasta el origen / ahí / donde todo no  
es sino oscuridad acuosa en barbecho y la intemperie / no  
otra cosa que una lejana presencia.

¿Por qué tanta atracción por el viento? / ¿Dónde? / ¿Dónde  
guarda sus alas? / ¿Cuándo duerme? / ¿En dónde va a morir? /  
¿Por qué tuerce las testas? / ¿Por qué eleva al cóndor y lo  
desciende quedo? / ¿En dónde desaparece?

Es que lo veo soplar terrible/ y me paraliza su aliento/ y me tiembla temblando el tripal/ y me come por dentro/ y me arde/ y me incendia la cuenta de lo nadie que soy./ Pajilla/ pajilla movida por ese soplo tan grande/ no divino sino gélido/ antojadizo hasta trizar el raro esqueleto/ ese esqueleto/ esos huesitos de viento que resoplan y avasallan animal/ esa estampida incontrolable/ esa que peina los enanos árboles jadeantes/ que rastrea las laderas/ las cumbres borrascosas/ y galopa/ y trotta/ y avanza/ y eleva semillas y las dispersa/ las exilia/ les quita el hogar/ y vuela/ vuelo techumbres/ mueve arenas/ destruye brotes/ y curte la cara./ ¿Cuál animal es esta magnífica ventolera que remonta las aguas/ y asciende los cielos/ y mueve las nubes que nos llueven el sequío?/ Imagina/ nos moja el sequío y lo brota/ y dulces son las lágrimas que de arriba caen y crecen la hierba/ la de bestias y hombres/ más de bestias que de hombres para ser sincera/ porque en rigor/ no son sino bestias para el hombre/ viento/ viento/ y tan frágil tu cuerpo/ mi cuerpo sujeto e hilado al recuerdo/ al pensamiento/ al amor.

¿Por qué baja el viento y trae esas llamas que todo lo devoran?/ Mira/ mira como corre el cordero y el huemul y el león/ mira como se pinta y aúlla de rojo la ladera/ cómo caen los cuerpos maderosos de los titanes/ cómo los estría el viento y el agua./ ¿Y qué haremos con tanto cadáver?/ ¿Quién vio?/ ¿Quién informa?/ ¿Acaso el cóndor fue testigo flotante en la ventolera?/ ¿Acaso escapó a las lenguas iridiscentes del mal?/ ¿Acaso narrará sus vistas a las faldas serranas aún intactas?/ ¿Al norte que arrecia y silba y muerde la oreja?/ ¿Al hombre vanidoso que no escarmienta?/ Ya/ ya enciende la otra ladera el viento maricón/ y baja la danza/ y nieva/ y cubre la lengua feroz del lobo bermejo/ y no saca lección/ y por suelo avanza/ abraza/ y no hay espalda que se cuide./ Ya se viene el jolgorio y avanzan los trinos y el brote verduzco y los nidos y las pariciones animales./ Y ¡mira!/ trae norte y tibieza del sol a la vez/ y aviva la cueca/ y yergue la cabeza de fuego/ y lo danza largísimo/ y caen esculpidos los lagartos/ sus enormes cabezas/...y pueblan/ pueblan las extensas tierras.

Ya entró la nube/ ya llega cargada con gritos de tero/ ya llega mojada y cubre el monte y desciende/ y oscurece/ y avanza soplada/ y cae/ y derrumba/

y derrama por la ladera/ y nieve se hace en la cumbre/ y viene el viento y la sopla/ la vela volando/ la vuela./ ¡Ay!/ no imaginas lo que es eso/ no sabes cuán bello/ y te sopla por detrás/ y se arremolina la pluma/ y cae/ y rueda/ y carga el río allá abajo/ y viene el viento y le saca corderito albino/ y mira/ ahora llora/berrea/ de hambre berrea/ porque sin hierba/ sin bosque/ sin matorral.

El viento es rey/ es señor/ son él y el cóndor/ tan solos/ tan solos...

Qué hacemos?/ Tú que siempre estás y todo lo ves en este humus parlanchín/ sea mi cuerpo o tu cuerpo o nuestro cuerpo y todos callen para siempre/ y calle el cordero/ la vaca/ la yegua/ y también el cóndor/ el huemul/ el hombre/ la cabra/ el tero/la bandurria/ y reine ahora la ventolera que empuja al agua que empuja a la nube que empuja a la lluvia y gasta/ gasta la piedra y el monte...

¿Quién mira ahora?/ ¿El pez que en el agua se desliza?/ ¿El pez que antes el hombre atrapó?/ ¿El maño que terco aguantó?/ ¿La lenga/ el ñire/ el coigüe/ el laurel?/ Y qué de esos cuerpos muertos/ muertos y negros/ orgullosos/ erguidos/ como plantados para la memoria natural/ para el dolor de haberlo tenido/ dolor de cuerpo/ pequeño mutilo/ un vociferante grito pelado/ y nadie escucha/ porque ya no hay oreja ni pestaña ni ojos/ sólo cuerpos/ negros y erguidos/ negros y yacentes/ todos dormidos para siempre/ degollados entre ese viento que doblega la hierba/ y el que les baja el agua del cielo/ y creo yo/ que habrá un tiempo para cavar las fosas/ y será el viento el sepulturero/ y traerá semillas de lejos para adorno de muertos/ agüita traerá/ y tierra/ y versos/ tan vientres verbosos de sagas/ tan manitas tañendo el silbido de antaño/ tan cubriendo los caminos que antes recorrió la rueda/ tan oscilando los puentes...

Quién lo hubiese dicho... / Y dime / a tus hijas e hijos verdes / ¿los ves? / Ya se inclinan de cabeza / y de torso completo / y no / no desean más lenguas doradas que bajen la pendiente de la mano del viento / no quieren / se inclinan ante ti / los veo / ahí iniciando al novato / a tus hijas que planean en silencio arropadas por el viento / esas que no cayeron cuando la lumbre y el calor / esas que quisieron cantarle al sol o erguir sus delgadas patas sobre algún cuerpo tan negro en el río / todo mojado / todo arremolinado / lleno de muertos para posar el ala...

¿Cómo quedó tu cuerpo llagado con ese viento pendenciero resbalando sin impedimento / sin troncos / sin troncos / en medio de calvas laderas / y el viento / el viento solo y señor / royendo el cuerpo tuyo y antaño / tus ajadas abiertas / en lloro por esas lágrimas otrora perdidas bajo los troncos mancos / aflorando/bajando en cascadas? / ¿Y quién lo detiene ahora? / ¿Quién lo atrapa y lo hace melodía? / ¿Qué cabellos puede peinar? / Di / di algo más que ese silbido que me parte el alma / que me parte la roca / que me parte la tierra / que me tilda los cuerpos vivos / que empuja las velas / que curte los cueros / los rostros / los pensamientos / te digo que hasta al ojo lo curte / le roba el agua / lo deja sonriendo pequeño / agradecido entre grandes / y levanta sus brazos / y se entrega / y contempla.

Sí / todo es silencio y habita la gélida ráfaga y la ululata.

Mira los corderos en el cielo / blancos y negros / cómo viajan veloces y locos los concentrados / cómo van empujados los acuosos / pero no miran / no ven / no hay gente / no hay perros / no hay ovejas ni ropa secando su limpieza / sólo piras de cuerpos apilados / pendientes sus culpas / si es que las hubo.

¿Quién? / ¿Quién puede contra la ley? / ¿Cuál culpa? / ¿Cuál tan grande que teja los maderos / que junte cadáveres en las pampas desoladas...?

¿Y antes?

Bosque/ selva tupida/ húmeda/ flor de carnes palpitantes en deseo.../ ¿Y ahora qué...? / Ahora pira/pira preparada pa' pudre/ pa' fuego.

Un viento/ un viento que abra el vientre/ un viento que enternezca la tierra./ Pero no

¿Qué hago? / El viento me lleva/ nos lleva/ nos leva/ nos canta por dentro y por fuera/ los pájaros se encumbran cual volantines abandonados de la mano del hombre/ remontan/ relavan/ recitan sus alas/ nos miran de allá/ nos pían de allá/ pero mis pies/ están aquí/ hacen tierra/ y/ ¿qué puedo hacer si el viento me/ el viento nos/ y la roca estriada ya suelta el grito/ ya cuenta la historia/ ya dice quién/ quienes son Uds.? / ¿Qué hacen aquí? / ¿Qué hicieron? / ¿Qué miran ahora?

...Pues sucede que el mundo sucede / y va sucediendo como quien da vuelta las páginas de un libro. / Ni duda ni discusión/ silencio/ acontecer/ viento que pasa/ y eleva la polvareda/ y borra las huellas./ Viento que toma/ que trae y deja caer el agua/ sin tiempo/ suspensa/ inocua/ en la tan mentada perfección que precedió la miserable llegada del caballero andante y voraz...

¿Puede acaso la mujer / el hombre / callar y recibir? / ¿Puede no mancillar la  
mudez de la pampa echada a volar? / ¿Del bosque eterno? / ¿De los hielos? /  
¿Puede? / ¿Puede el silencio ser agente único en la inmensidad? / Y más allá/  
allá donde los cráteres lunares establecen domicilio conocido / ¿puede la  
tormenta envolver al trueno con la arena del solo? / ¿Y cuántos son los sueños  
sepultos bajo el polvo y la ceniza?

¿Quién les sacará lustre? / ¿Quién el habla?

No / aquí no se hilan palabras. / El viento silba y ruge y ronca / y todo vuela y  
es gutural.

Mano negra el vendaval / mano blanca de bocas ausentes / silencio / silencio  
glauco llegado para quedar.              ☩

ELENA MINOR

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CUATRO POEMS

COLD FISSION

*When if tomorrow splits its seasons salt and supplications cancel your  
toughest resolution so you're caught off guard and you start up your deep  
song your deepest wail your deeper self rewards a flame a-coming together  
licks a pink-red lobe claims it yours your offer a null set answer blindly  
burn a neuron or three to ninety-eight point six degrees to separate you  
from them / then let slip by calm as dust your KISS about a dream found  
opened before it's time its curse it's legend bound and called to cross the  
raw throat cries heaven's cries and cries stars to let bloom the blood ...  
... let it tell*

## EL OLOR DE TU PIERNA

derecha

desnuda

*(bajo esos pelos*

*negros*

/

*gruesos*

/

*chinos)*

me vuelve

*más loca...*

En cuanto a la chueca,

pues,

imagínate

la fé

## UNTITLED, WITH ENTITLED POSES

Clap your damn hands  
Una, una, una más

Wring out your boneless wig  
Peine tras blanc / o/ peine

Brush your surging sapphire blood  
Lightly onto a laughing wind

| — |

By name of your speaking fa[r]ther s  
Post your furied silence, sjay!

In the blink of your speeding eye  
Down count—número sin número

When your blush rhymes with cornhusk  
Métele blue con semilla dorada

| — |

Loose your blessed canons  
Boom, boom, kadoom

Cut off your frail dismembers  
Three or fewer digits-in-a-box

Dead your frying embers, you  
Mount now your holiest ghost

AS YOU ARE NAKED NOW  
SO SHALL YOU PRIZE TOMORROW

Your body blameless

Bloody

flush in its fattened **carne**

| meaty new experience |

**Rosario**

in hand                  &                  She *prays*

a new god for sake **en carnación**

to sacred blaze bestir a dying firelight

| posthumous burden | ...

You shall plead to awaken divine

| raw |

Your glory bent                  pure, cold  
| not yet leavened | ...

But seed **Rosario's** dreamy murmurs  
& nimble beadwork

smokeless rub  
drift~

voices curved

to nocturnal breath  
& stealthy sighs

pressing dead on  
dawn 

RAÚL ZURITA

---

MY GOD IS NO

*Your names are written in heaven  
—Luke 10:20*



Photo Credit: Ana María López  
Photographs of the poem "La Vida Nueva" by Raúl Zurita written in the sky over New York City, 1982

MY GOD IS HUNGER    MY GOD IS SNOW  
MY GOD IS NO

Adam and Eve

Thousands of buildings in ruins bordered the highway filled with "for sale" signs and in the middle the gates of Eden

Filled with graffiti   with tour buses parked in front and endless lines of yellows queuing up at the ticket booths

Pointing their cameras at the beaches ascending over the horizon and then at the hanging airports   at the floating islands   at the two orbiting cities crossing the heights

Passing in front of the enormous openings that for thousands of millions of years remained printed in the sky   Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the sky: the yellows comment to each other aiming at them with their cameras while up ahead the enchanted gates of Eden were being sketched and a bit beyond Adam and Eve hitchhiking on one side of the old highway   drifting away   mocking youthful

MY GOD IS DISILLUSIONMENT    MY GOD IS CARRION  
MY GOD IS PARADISE

I heard the icebergs ask me what my name is and I told them  
call me Ismael

And behind appeared the old harpooner like in the old  
days and I repeated my name for them while it got colder

Then the conversation changed course it was still dark  
and the icebergs were floating in the night like white whales

"And it was a strange conversation" I said to Jehovah and  
He replied: "you'll be piss drunk" and I "not even a drink"  
and He "what's your name" and then he screamed "the glaciers  
will burn and the icebergs will blaze if my people forget me"  
Over the sky infinite icebergs in flames were hoisting up the  
new dawn You can call me Ismael if you want I responded  
taking my goodbyes

## MY GOD IS PAMPA    MY GOD IS CHICANO                           MY GOD IS CANCER

As if they were armies marching one behind  
the other the breakers were plowing through the sky

Marking it all up with the white lines of its foam  
while below they kept filming them incessantly  
revealing the red sea from the peaks

Sweeping the long coastlines of the dawn where  
thousands of the tortured were working now as movie  
extras waiting for Charlton Heston to part the sea

"I will film the *10 Commandments* you shits and there  
you will watch the breath of God parting the sea" the director  
shouts to the Chilean extras assigning them to play the  
roles of the cliffs of the Andes "But isn't that one there  
that fascist Heston" ask the tortured as they watch the  
suspended breakers open and above them the water-eyes  
of God immense naked empty mirroring the  
cities of water of the new day

MY GOD IS EMPTINESS    MY GOD IS WOUND  
                              MY GOD IS GHETTO

Bluish completely covering the sky the cordilleras began to cross over themselves

Draped against the excruciating blue of the dawning day up above covering the infinite ocean of the peaks with snow

Outlining their infinite peaks over the holes the last squadrons opened for them that last time in the sky shooting their canons between the clouds

When millions of years ago endless missiles were outlined against the horizon and they were like skyscrapers ascending If God ascends they will see the missiles darken the stars But that was so long ago *oh fucking God* they scream in dreams the breakers of the Appalachians crossing the snowy breakers of the white Andes above the excruciating sky of dawn

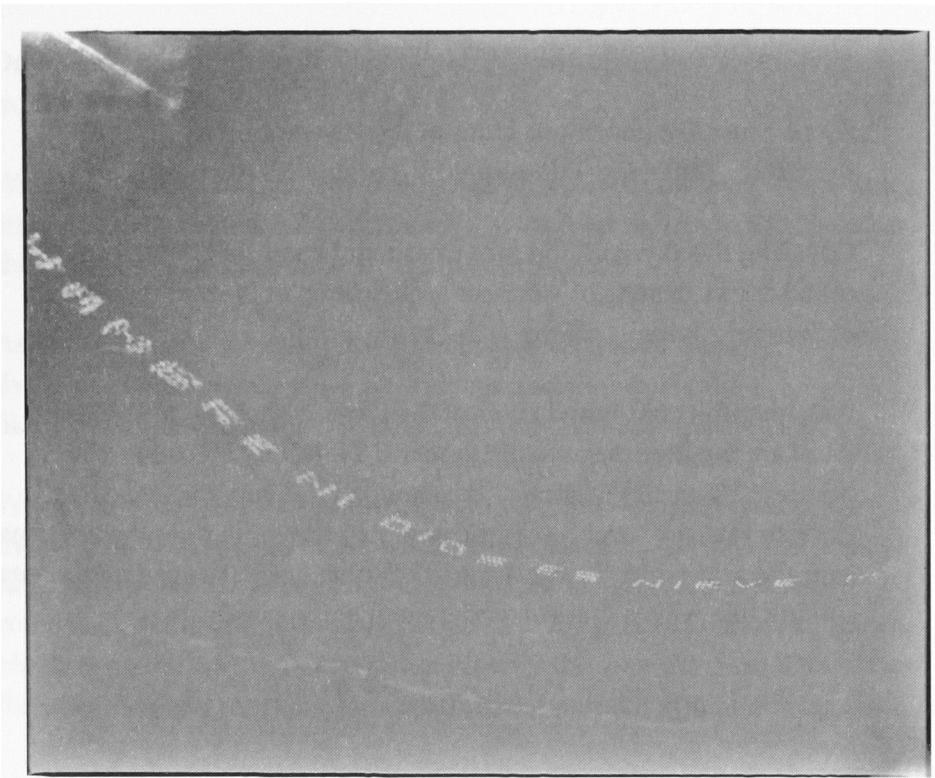


Photo Credit: Ana María López

MY GOD IS DREAM    MY GOD IS    MY LOVE  
OF GOD

Then the new deserts appeared    lying over the sea

Silent   just like enormous cities of thirst swept up by  
the wind   fluttering   dessicated   rising with the new day

Covering the sky with the seas of ash and sand that the dream  
called the ex deserts of Atacama   ex deserts of Nazca   ex deserts  
of Sonora   lying   above

Watching the obliterated cities of the dawn float I say to PW that  
these are the new deserts: the desert U 24: ex city Neruda   the  
desert U 25: ex city Mistral   the deserts U 27 and 28:   ex cities  
Chilean Poetry   and it was the new day dawning over the arid love  
over the arid wind   over the arid countries of pastures and dreams  
sinking like waves that surrender against the ocean

MY GOD DOES NOT ARRIVE    MY GOD DOES NOT COME  
MY GOD DOES NOT RETURN

Drenched dripping with water the National Stadium was rising from the undertow

With the voice of *Los Prisioneros* singing Why don't you leave the country and boys tied up in the locker rooms with their hands on the backs of their necks chanting those songs in the distance

As the dawn rose revealing the bleachers and beyond them the fútbol field entirely covered with sea and the waves were like a sky of barbed wires white covering the rocks with foam

When we were tossed from the Chilean stadiums we managed to see the rocks and then the infinite emptiness of the sea It's that the boys never came back: sing *Los Prisioneros* and it's the god who does not come back the god who does not come the god who does not return blowing us the way the dead dawn blows the way the dead love blows the way the dead morning blows before the remains still blue from the night

MY GOD WAS NOT      MY GOD DID NOT WANT TO  
                          MY GOD DID NOT SAY

And then   the Chilean stadiums reappeared   strewn  
on the beach

Tossed by the surf   their bleachers covered with sand and enormous  
TV screens on the scoreboards   still burning   rising with the new day

Showing images of fútbol matches and guys with their hands in the air  
and in the back the white depths of the ocean   with their clothes on the  
floor   running between rows of soldiers

When the new stadiums of the occupied country appeared rising from the surf  
and above them the hepatic Bolaño writing with airplanes the distant star of a god  
who was not   of a god who did not want to   of a god who did not say  
while up ahead the morning grew and it was like another ocean inside the ocean  
the naked bodies falling   the love of the broken mouth   the bleachers bursting  
with prisoners raising their arms to the waves

MY GOD DOES NOT CRY    MY GOD DOES NOT BLEED  
MY GOD DOES NOT FEEL

*Mi dios es un niño pequeño Mi dios es un hombre gordo* wrote  
the bombers in sky 060845

Crossing the tilted horizon the clouds that were staying below  
the islands reflected in the black sea of the peaks

Where the shelling squadrons spin adrift as if waging a long  
retreat and it was a dream-image the black chalkboard-color  
of the Pacific outlined at the bottom in front of the sun being  
born

In sky 060845 and there were millions and millions of eras  
millions of daybreaks millions of planets being born there  
where we saw ourselves floating with the fallen arms the way  
the drowned float looking down at the long snowy cordillera  
*My God is a little boy My God is a fat man* the bombers kept  
writing in the sky as the new sun rose and they weren't mirages  
the cities of ash being born in the scorched aurora



Photo Credit: Ana María López

Just like vast prairies of earth floating scorched  
the erased cities were now reappearing

Revealing that above this sky is another sky and that between both skies the clouds appear and between the clouds the sea

And that in front of that sea is another sea with the same frozen ports at the end the same rows of prisoners the same caravels rising over the ice

Crossing the foamy ocean the splitting breakers  
bursting over the peaks of the Andes It's the strait  
of Magellan says Magellan as he steers between the  
sunken islands of the cordilleras These are the new  
caravels of the Pacific we reply watching the plains of  
Nagasaki and Hiroshima pass before the Chilean sky  
filled with dust drifting like two days shattered into  
pieces coming closer between the fjords

*My god does not look My god does not listen My god is not  
and they were fugitive airplanes writing in the sky*

Flying above the irradiated cities that were rising up in the immensity of the dawn like distant dreams forgotten upon waking

And they are like misty fields that reappear in a dream or hills  
that suddenly reappear images with gardens and kids pretending  
to return to ash beneath the scalded cities

While the bombers of the dream and the insanity fly above them  
writing in the sky *My god, why? God of mine, don't you hear me?*  
*Love of mine, don't you see me?* And it is the skin of a boy horrifically  
burned the sky horrifically burned by the dawn... It's reported:  
thousands of children rise like little suns at dawn the mushroom  
cloud of dawn is reported Reported are seas of ash and blood  
beneath the fugitive skies of the dawn

*Translated by Daniel Borzutzky*



Photo Credit: Ana María López

EXCERPTS FROM *CIUDADES DE AGUA*

JORAM  
RIVER WENU

The Good River cut against the waters of the Rahue and higher up the rapids of the Futa fell. The humming of the waters had put me to sleep when pointing them out to me he told me: they are stuck together. Unable to break loose the dog dragged the bitch and his muzzle seemed to grab the air. Love is like this, he commented, soon agony will begin for them. It is so, I replied. He had begun to tell me: the biggest fights start with passion. First was the kidnapping of a woman who had an owner and then the well-known vengeance. When they wanted to go back it was already a torrent in which their own blood had mixed. It was blow after blow. Blood cousins, fathers and brothers struggled between themselves, making themselves sons and killing them. A little before it ended, one of the sides had removed all of the men with their women and children and before finishing

them they made them strip naked. The one in charge then remembered what started the fight. All for some dust, he cried, and then even louder still: Let's see if with this they resuscitate and kill us all later! It was an order: opening their legs, they mounted the corpse of a man atop the cadaver of each woman and buried their inert thing into her, as if they really believed they expected their mothers to revive, they took the children and left their mouths stuck to the nipples. Later, when the riverside dwellers came to give them a burial, the jumble of thighs and bodies became so rigid they could not be separated. So be it then, like love, said the oldest taking off his hat. So be it, responded the others. Yet up the raging river, where the wide riverbed of the Wenuleufú joins with the freezing river Futa, my body was still waiting. The body of my love was still there, mouth below mine, glued to me, dragging me toward the buzzing of the waters.

RUTH  
NELTUME

There are those damn assholes! Hit them! Hit them! The shouts of the soldiers mixed with the barking of the dogs while as in a dream the village was fading between the currents. In front of them appeared the boy. He was young, no more than fifteen, and his mouth opened and closed in spasms. Suddenly he put his fingers over my lips and showed me the waters; to the north, by the lake, the Tranquil River, lower down the Calquinco and the Cuacuá. To the south, the Lilizán River, to the side the Fuy and the Truful. To the east, cutting from the banks of these riverbeds, is the Neltume valley. Behind, snipped against the sky, the glaciers blued.

Since they stoned her, something bad vibrated in the air. The Cuacuá emptied itself into the lake and the waters shimmered. The last time we took the boy to the river, as he always did, accompanied us to the boats. He never came to pronounce a syllable, at most a few grunts, but he would stand at your side and no sir, he would not go away until you turned his cap around. He had come brought by a woman named Ruth who installed herself near the village. Maybe he was hers or her mother's, nobody knew, but it was known that the other women began to resent her. They said that she was intimate with the son, afterwards with the village men. Finally, everyone jumped her, like a swarm, and stoned her until she went nuts. The boy ran from side to another trying to stop the stones when he tried to cover her with his own body, but she stopped him by biting him until he had to move away. He went away for a time and even though nobody discussed it, the truth is that we missed him. When

after three months he returned we adopted him and he stuck to us more and more. Now, since the last time we saw him more than six weeks had passed. The bad weather and the floods held us back longer than we thought and we only waited until the waters dropped so we could return, nonetheless, the noise that never stopped following us made us restless. By Holy God, one has to be a crazy bastard to fly in this weather! Exclaimed one of ours. Little by little the rains subsided and the sky cleared. It was then that we saw the little boy appear running. Behind him, like a shadow, he was followed by the stoned woman. I managed to make a gesture of hello, but when I began to second guess myself, the rattling of machine guns opened from the trees. When the gunshots stopped you could hear the increasingly frenetic steps of the boy running from one bundle to another. Realizing that now nobody would turn his hat on his head he turned and charged like a tiny animal against the very ones he had guided. As we threw ourselves into the helicopters his broken body vibrated at the edge of the water and beside him the woman appeared to embrace him. Somebody had said that we were rebels. It didn't last much longer. Later the bulrushes cushioned my fall and I was the only one to see our village again. I only heard the barking of the dogs and beyond that, the indescribable. There were twelve in total. They had never borne arms. Now it is the Valley of the Widows. In Neltume. Where the fish spawn.

ZURITA

THE CROSS OF THE BAKER

The waters of the Barrancas emptied into the Wadis. From the south fell the river Bravo, from the north the river Ventisqueros and from the east, carrying away everything, the torrents of the great Baker. Sonny, he asked, but have you ever seen the true blood of Christ flow? As if the parts of his body fought amongst themselves, he had his right arm tied with a rope to his back and his trembling seemed to cut the immense wasted slopes. His voice was nevertheless clear. It's the greed, he told me, it's that.

It was a Godless and lawless war. The great estate holders began to speculate with the wood and in a few years they razed the forests. It was like this: when the fever came to the larches, the greed bust in the humans. Yes, yes; neither God nor law. They contracted people of all the bad sorts: ex-convicts, no-gooders and the demented. More than two-hundred souls who sleep with the curved machetes tucked under the arm. The pay wasn't bad and the work hard. One had to endure months isolated from everything and the lack of women put the nerves on edge. During the day one only heard the purr of saws cutting logs, the orders and the din of falling trees. Afterwards, in the night, the obscenities of the laughing men, the bets and sooner or later the shouts of fights. Only the song of the river endured, the murmur of the Baker shimmering between its banks. He was our only tie with the world. Further south, coming out to join with the Black River, they received the logs that we sent floating down the river channel. On the Baker also came our provisions, and if someone was nice enough to send them, we got good letters. But it was the river,

always the river. I was the youngest. During the workday, if the hard labor permitted it, we worked elbow to elbow, but when that ended the thirst of the game would stitch their insides and they would auction me off among themselves. It began one time when they surprised me serving another man. Something about him had moved me; a light aloofness. For that reason I wanted to give him a little of me, just a little. Very precious, the others said: "and why not with everyone now?" At first I defended myself and I managed to touch one with a curved machete, but the real tragedy began afterwards. April and the work was supposed to be done before the snows appeared. The proximity of pay and the return had lifted the spirits and the violence barely relented before the sarcasm until in one moment, as if playing, the supervisor said that that week the good boys didn't eat meat and repented of their sins. It was Friday. That was the beginning. One stood up and opening his pants to expose himself and said: "This is my tremendous sin!" And then turning to me he exclaimed: "And if it is for meat we have little now with this ass! Ah, console us little meat!" Yeah, console us, console us, the others laughed boastingly while they pushed me from one to the other. The man who had been served only watched. "And well," the foreman interjected again: "Now all that we're missing is a good Christ!" Suddenly everyone shut up and a misty silence seemed to rise from the river. In fifteen minutes the cross was made. "The ass or his boyfriend!" asked one. Quickly they grabbed us both. His eyes had opened and they looked on with surprise. Him! Him! Everyone began to chorus and I found myself yelling: yes him, him. When they began to nail him I wanted to embrace his feet, but then I began to tremble and my left leg and arm

never obeyed me again. It was finished almost immediately.

The next day the provisions arrived. His blood had dried and the cross divided the sky into four parts. Then it was Saturday. In two more days we would leave and the money would go fast. Along the banks of the Baker, where the great currents open. To the east and the south, north and west.

*Translated by Edward McLean Test and Valerie Mejer* 

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JEFFREY SIRKIN

THREE POEMS

### THE PREMISES

The plumber in the back bathroom curses  
the mechanism, I look out the window  
at rocks in the dry grass  
fallen from the hill,  
winter in the desert,  
and the water runs and runs.  
This is the third plumber's call.

That thing you trespass  
was once called the ground.

We know where the city service enters the residence,  
the main line. We watch as the valve opens,  
then closes. I hold the light steady, illuminating  
the dripping brass and plastic, the screws  
too tiny to grasp. We listen.

Out in the rock garden  
a bird pecks at the irrigation pipe.  
In chiseled light nobody speaks.

“Man,” writes Heidegger,  
“fails to heed this silence.”

Where do I enter this episode? A side  
door pebbled with rust, never opened.  
A garage door, ill-fitted  
to a listing concrete slab. A bird,  
bleeding through the neck, buried  
in the woods. Three windows comprise  
a study in opacity. Shutters snap  
across their frames. The wall  
has leaned so far from plumb  
we wonder it hasn’t collapsed.

Time for the evening stroll.  
Time for a missed appointment.  
The Japanese maple burns red  
in the damp of Cincinnati dusk.

Loose fill once set the illusion  
of level. The subdivision a swamp  
at one time, drained. The porous topsoil  
deposited by a retreating glacier  
at the end of some long-ago ice age,  
a problem for an inexperienced builder  
with up to four hundred feet  
between the shifting surface  
and the bedrock below.

“We used to think that space was just  
the boring static stage upon which the

cosmic drama unfolds," says the physicist.  
The year always comes to a close.

How do we solve for this equation?

This is your flapper. This is your handle arm.  
This is your fill valve. And this is a Tiny Tim.  
We use it to cut the bolt that's rusted shut,  
but the mechanism refuses to cooperate.  
We take it apart and start again.

The Latin *plumbus* means "lead," and refers  
also to the weight at the end of a line  
for perpendicular alignment.  
The plumber then is the artisan who fits  
or repairs the apparatus of water distribution  
in and to a building. In ancient Rome,  
this apparatus was made of lead.

If x and y, then z. Etc.  
We start in the kitchen and work  
our way back to the trunk line, mapping  
the labyrinth of the drain lines below, riddling  
the page. They alone know our secret twists and turns.

I put aside my pen and check for mail.

On his way out, I'll insist we test  
the pressure relief valve, not knowing  
that, once opened, it may never again close.  
If we see water, I ask, what does it mean?

"The landscape is characterized  
by wide terraces and flood plains,  
steep hillsides along the major rivers

and tributary stream valleys,  
and gently rolling glacial till plains.”  
The soil, I read, is choking with life.

The engineer one day will call  
for piles driven to the bedrock  
below, to stop the movement.  
Shouldn’t this be our priority?  
That slow drip, the plumber will instruct,  
is called “weeping.”

“[I]n the universe every point is  
as important as any other point,  
the ultimate geometrical democracy.”  
History is the study of recorded events.  
Geology the study of soil.  
The rest projection.

## THE MORNING PAPER

The hill falls, the daily paper shrinks.  
In the kitchen Dad laments the collapse  
of state funding for public institutions  
and calls out headlines over morning  
cereal. "Smog Alert in Effect." "Streetcar  
Called Waste of Taxpayer Money."  
We chew on our toasted oats  
and pretend the coffee's better  
because of the new machine.

I remark on the efficiency of the  
shower drain, the empty gates  
at the shuttered airport terminal, my research  
plan for the historical society library.

The coffee demands empathy.  
The meteorologist predicts  
more of the same. Dad claims  
he speaks from self-interest.

"Youth Police Cadets in Training."  
"Drought Cited in Fireworks Ban."  
"Bankrupt Airline asks Fed to Assume Responsibility  
For Pension Promises."

This is my empire of repurposed  
paper. My network of convenience packaging.  
My ruin in reverse.

At the research library I search for signs  
of Jeff Davis, the self-proclaimed King of the Hoboes,  
but find outdated property maps and lectures  
lamenting the great surplus of excellent projects  
seeking capital.

I search for *The Jungle Scout. The Hobo News Review.*  
The Traveler's Aid Society.

I find a scale model of the old baseball stadium  
and take a photo from high-above the left field fence,  
but no one cares to comment.

I read about railroad speed, railroad ease,  
and railroad convenience. I find notes  
from shareholders meetings of a hundred defunct railroad companies.  
Danville and Pottsville. Greenville and Miami.  
Sunbury and Erie. Hillsborough and Cincinnati.

The first in the West is the Little Miami,  
incorporated 1836, completed 1846. It runs  
along its namesake river on the east side of town  
north to Springfield, surviving  
as a corporation until 1981, when it is  
merged out of existence, the dormant rails ripped  
from their beds, the right-of-way developed  
into a bike trail.

The museum laughs. The archive  
pleads for mercy. I make an offer  
to the stationary loop  
of the evening commute.

Billie Holiday sings,  
"I've been around the world in a plane,  
settled revolutions in Spain,  
the north pole I have charted,  
but can't get started with you."

Out on the interstate  
three black men balance

against the highway embankment  
hacking weeds and sowing seed aggregate  
to arrest the sliding soil.

Over their heads the sagging fence beckons,  
the family-friendly chain restaurant glowing  
just out of reach.

## THE FREE INQUIRY GROUP

As the probe nears the planet seeking entry  
I'm scanning used records at the Book Café  
and waiting for a call from the guitar player,  
who's been trying for months to convince me  
to re-record the tracks we left behind  
at the defunct brewery fifteen years ago.

I start at the beginning with Abba, Bad Religion,  
a scratchy Carpenters LP, then adjust my trajectory  
to catch the grad students nearby reading Heidegger  
or maybe Foucault or the girls at the next table over  
sipping icy green teas and watching the window

where the people crowd the street fair  
and their babies in pink ball caps drip ice cream;  
where the transvestites cleaning their green and red glasses  
bounce between the brick facades to the thumping bass  
of an unseen indie rock band down the block.

I'm up to Genesis, Journey, Hall and Oates,  
and in the courtyard out back the Free  
Inquiry Group considers the probability  
that life once clung to the unsettled surface  
of some other planet.

The science will offer proof, they claim, of the non-existence  
of a higher being.

The record is a holding cell, I counter.

The dust will settle, they say, after touchdown.

I cringe to see *The Times They Are A Changin'* lying

face down covered in sweat from a cup of half-melted ice  
on the abandoned table nearby. I don't want  
to get involved, but I'm not on the clock, I tell them,  
and besides, the past, we believe, is immutable.

I'm trying to focus on Midnight Star, N-Sync,  
Oasis, but now the girls have moved out back  
with the grad students, smoking. Across the courtyard  
behind them the ivy snakes its way green  
up the red brick of the next building  
reasoning this way and that to the sunlight above.

We fly on our missions. We scan the surface  
for the striations that will prove the theory.  
We recheck our calculations. Super Tramp, Tone-Loc,  
UB40. Three blocks north Liberty Street marks the historical boundary  
of the corporeal city, beyond which one was once free  
to do what one desired.

Will the grad students grab the girls  
and dance? Will I embrace the men of the Free Inquiry Group  
in song? Will the probe find its path  
to the alien mountain? XTC, Young Fresh Fellows,  
Dweezil Zappa.

Still waiting for the call, Fats Waller drifts  
in and out from the back room. 

FRUTOS DE SAL

1

¡Se ha roto el dique!

¡Se ha vuelto cada vez más urgente, oh Mar, que en mí te reconozca!  
Que en mis abismos vea el pez que mora en tus abismos  
el que ha quedado ciego, corroída la carne a la intemperie  
cuando salta de ti salido de mí mismo

Me has observado siempre en la enamada  
y entre la fronda me has dejado verte

*¡Anda, pez ancla, sal a la luz...!*

*¡Leva tus brazos...! ¡Surca mi piel...!*

*¡Anda en mis ondas...!*

*¡Renace pez...!*

Como ese niño arrebatado que regresa sonriente entre las islas,  
trazo de pez espada que relumbra al nacer

Pez renacido de tus secretas grietas  
en el lodo germinaron mis huesos

Todo era magma entonces mar y tierra  
fuego dentro del aire, fuego en torno  
lava la semilla del árbol, labra el hueso  
savia sangre candente, coito todo

Cultivo, caldero, cocimiento,  
de ti ha brotado un barro crudo y pálido  
un gigantesco coágulo solar  
una yema de fuego, todo en germen

En esos brotes pálidos ya estaban las palabras  
que poblaron la tierra con su eco,  
la clepsidra que filtra una a una  
las semillas marinadas y los huecos

Hundí las manos en el agua y la separé en dos  
las culebras se enroscaban en mis brazos  
hurgué entre sus raíces los frutos salobres  
hasta arrancar de la roca mi imagen erizada

Hundí las manos en la roca y la separé en dos  
para sembrar en esa grieta los cimientos de mi ermita  
y entre las algas y las conchas enclavadas  
encontré en el fondo este espejo de espinas

A la deriva cual ballena va una isla sin raíces  
en el centro de la isla hay un árbol solo  
en el corazón del árbol hay un hueco  
en el hueco un fruto centelleante

Toqué con los dedos la arena blanca y suave  
sin darme cuenta de que profanaba  
bajo una nube de cangrejos y conchas ignoradas  
la raíz que brota de los huesos del naufragio

Bajo la madera podrida que descarnan las gaviotas  
vislumbré en las profundidades  
envuelto en una red de sombras  
el inmóvil reflejo del cofre encontrado

*Abre las valvas para que la luz entre  
a la carne lasciva  
que envuelve la semilla salada  
de la que la perla virgen nacerá*

Un haz azul agita la marea  
se hunde en el abismo  
se estrella y estremece  
quiebra los arrecifes  
fermenta las olas erizadas  
aroma el aire que aletea

Resurge en pez espada  
delinea su silueta  
su lengua rasga el aire  
recorta el horizonte  
traza círculos de vidrio  
y canta salmos de agua

El horizonte arde  
su filo corta la mirada  
se ahoga en mi garganta  
dádiva de los dioses ebrios  
que despierta la muerte  
sacia mi sed hasta inundarme

Todos danzan...

Otra vez la incesable vulva parió su hueva viscosa  
engulle y regurgita el plancton de la vida  
insaciable boquea la forma de sus presas  
y sus presas resurgen de otra forma inasible

Una ballena teñida de rojo nos está cantando  
los peces y las plantas ondulan en las ondas  
atados por los hilos magnéticos del agua  
incluso cuando duermen refulgen sus entrañas

Una esfera metálica de atunes se abre y estalla  
remolino de peces con séquitos parásitos  
fantasmas de siluetas emergen de las aguas  
sus formas entintadas ¿son pulpos o son rayas?

El corazón de la primera madre supura lava  
la prole luminosa se esparce sobre el agua  
impávida llamada al pescador pescado  
cardúmenes de plata que eternamente danzan

El primer pez que escupió tierra prendió la llama  
del magma nació un huevo que flota a la deriva  
la sierpe de madera da vueltas a la isla  
se esconde entre las rocas y rumia las estrellas

Entre metales líquidos y gases venenosos  
el agua oscura asciende en las criaturas ciegas  
se abisma en las regiones de las llamas sagradas  
y luego precipita las formas que condensa

Caída en su red de raíces ondula la tierra  
se puebla de fantasmas el aire inagotable  
los peces abisales se convierten en aves  
desde los arrecifes se levantan los árboles

Nado a mar abierto  
 gente desnuda flota entre las bestias  
 ojos sin párpados miran fluir la tarde  
 un albatros atrapa un pez en pleno vuelo  
 y lo va devorando posado en la red que cubre mi cabeza

Desde el ojo del pez el paisaje me mira  
 de ti vengo, de ti he nacido, soy uno de tus frutos  
 siempre ha sonado en mi cabeza tu bramido  
 desde aquel pez espada, antes del pez espada,  
 antes de que naciera

Tengo dos casas  
 un hogar donde mora el fuego profundo  
 del que surgen caballos de sombra  
 y otro donde azulea la celestial columna  
 de una isla que he buscado siempre  
 aunque la llevo a cuestas

¿Quién ha visto a la gente del agua?  
 Nadan en la pez oscura buscando alcanzar el cielo  
 consagran sus cantos al amanecer  
 en el juego inevitable de las presas  
 invocan al mar que se devora a sí mismo

Somos reflejos de otro reino astillas de agua  
 en la lava quedaron grabadas nuestras huellas  
 el alfabeto fósil de los mares...  
 al levantar los brazos el ancla toma forma  
 y se rasga la red con filosas escamas

Renací pez como mi hermano pez  
 como la perla del abismo convertida en una nueva isla

como la flecha alada del pelícano que viene a mi encuentro  
en su barca sueña conmigo el viejo pescador  
¿he de salir del agua a consagrar mi carne intacta?

*¡Sí, sal al sol...!*

*¡Leva los brazos...! ¡Sal al aire...!* 

BRIAN D. COLLIER

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WHY DO FLYING CARP JUMP?  
AN INQUIRY BY THE SOCIETY FOR A RE-NATURAL  
ENVIRONMENT (SRNE)

The SRNE has pondered this question since it first learned of the silver (or flying) carp, a human-introduced fish from northeastern Asia currently invading the waterways of the Midwestern United States.

None of the experts with whom the SRNE has spoken submit a clear answer. The US Fish and Wildlife Service openly admits, "The true reason why silver carp leap out of the water has not been proven yet." We know that vibrations from boat motors trigger them to jump, but that knowledge doesn't tell us why.

After extensive research, including direct observation of this behavior, we have generated a set of hypotheses regarding the subject:

1. It is possible the carp are trying to escape a large aquatic predator. However, because they grow to be very large, up to 50 inches and 60 pounds, this first theory seems unlikely to be true. There are currently no predatory fish in the Mississippi basin, either native or introduced, robust enough to eat full-size silver carp. The rapid growth and large size of the carp are key reasons why their numbers are increasing so rapidly. Silver carp, and the closely related

bighead carp, currently comprise up to 90% of the fish biomass in surveyed sections of the Illinois River. Recorded numbers have shown 4100 fish per mile, so many scientists with whom we've spoken wish there *were* an aquatic predator big enough to eat them.

2. Maybe the fish are jumpy because they know something we don't. Maybe a huge predatory fish lives in these waters. Many people believe in the existence of lake monsters, so why not river monsters? The closest thing to a river monster that has been seen in non-oceanic U.S. waters is the giant snakehead. These grow to be a little over three feet long—not exactly a monstrous size despite their ominous monikers of “fishzilla” and “frankenfish.” The only Midwestern sighting was in the Rock River in Wisconsin. The closely related northern snakehead has been found in waters around Chicago. Snakeheads originate from the same parts of Asia as silver carp; they are a plausible candidate.

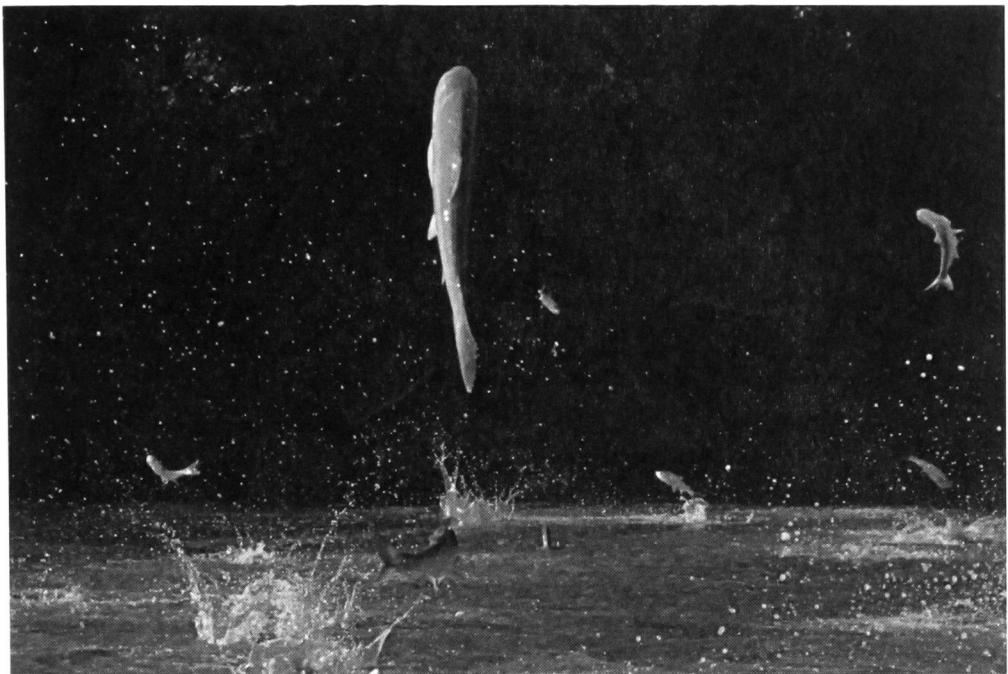
3. Perhaps the carp are trying to fly. Oceanic flying fish use their wing-like pectoral fins to glide as far as 150 feet at a time. This behavior is known to be a predator evasion technique. The silver carp don't have wing-like appendages and can only travel about 10 feet from the water. Keep in mind that they are not evading predators: as previously mentioned, there are no large predators present except for the occasional and not very monstrous snakehead. In fact, the carp's jumping behavior exposes this difficult-to-catch fish (it's a plankton eater, so it won't strike at baited hooks) to the only predator that can handle such a large fish—humans. While jumping, the carp fall victim to three primary threats: aerial netting, the new sport of aerial bow fishing, and death by jumping into boats. (One of our researchers observed more than 50 fish jump into their boat, with suicidal effects, over the course of a couple of hours.)

4. Perhaps the carp are trying to communicate with us. Perhaps they are expressing curiosity and awareness far beyond the normal range of a pelagic, plankton-eating, freshwater fish. Could they want to get to know us? After all, we are the reason they're here. Could they want to know more about the animal devoted to making the machines that disturb their peaceful aquatic

habitat? Might they be curious as to why we provide large amounts of food for them by adding high levels of nutrients to the water, causing oxygen-depleting algae blooms? Although this is an unlikely hypothesis, we cannot conclusively submit that a fish would not want to communicate with humans.

5. The carp could be trying to harm us. Since their spread from aquaculture farms in Arkansas into the waterways of the Mississippi River system in the 1980s, they have inflicted many injuries on boaters throughout the region. Wounds have been inflicted, bones have been broken, people have been knocked unconscious, and genitalia have been bruised. One of our researchers received strikes to the neck and back while on an Illinois Natural History Survey boat. Fortunately no serious injuries have been sustained. In 2009 a woman had her jaw severely broken by a flying carp. In the carp's defense, she was aerial bow fishing at the time.... There are innumerable incidences where humans have been harassed by much smaller animals. With these peculiar attacks, it appears the only outcome is the smaller animal being harmed or killed (although this is only common in the case of stinging invertebrates). Although these events often make little sense to their victims, they do support our theory that the carp are leaping in an attempt to do us bodily harm.

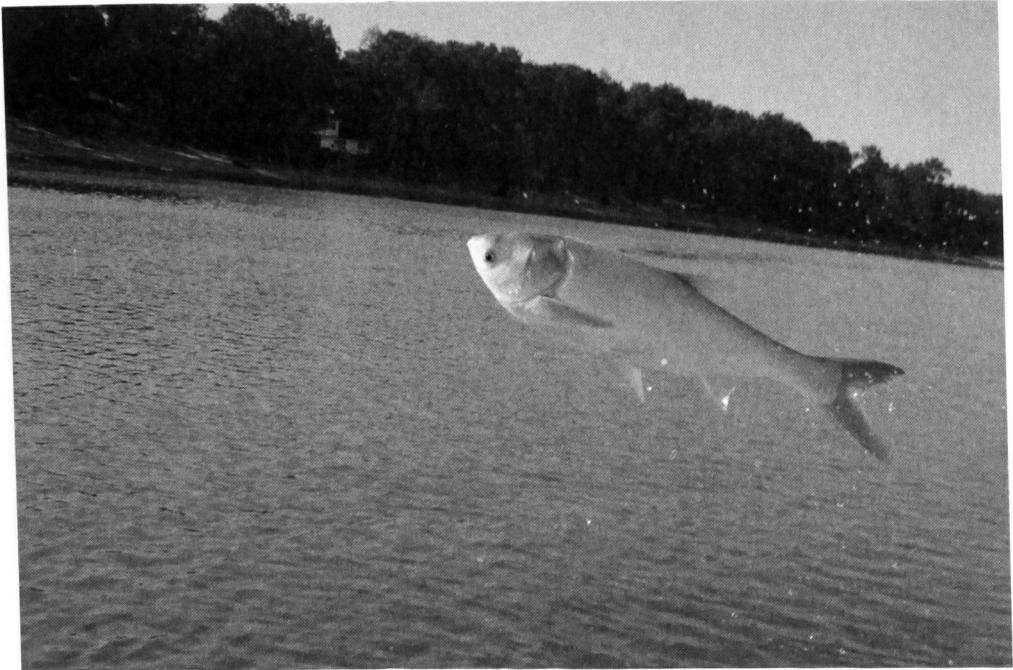
6. Maybe the carp are simply showing off. Normally we associate this kind of behavior with "higher-order" animals like dolphins or whales, but as stated previously, there is much that we simply don't know. The fact that undermines the showing-off theory is that carp almost never jump unless disturbed by loud noises or vibrations. If they were showing off, wouldn't they do it under a wider range of conditions? Why would they only do it when a motorboat passes by? -Unless they were showing off specifically for us, trying to send a message like: "Hi, we're new to the area and look what we can do." If that is the case, the SRNE would like to respond to the flying carp community: *We know you're here. We know what you can do. And we'd like to know why.*



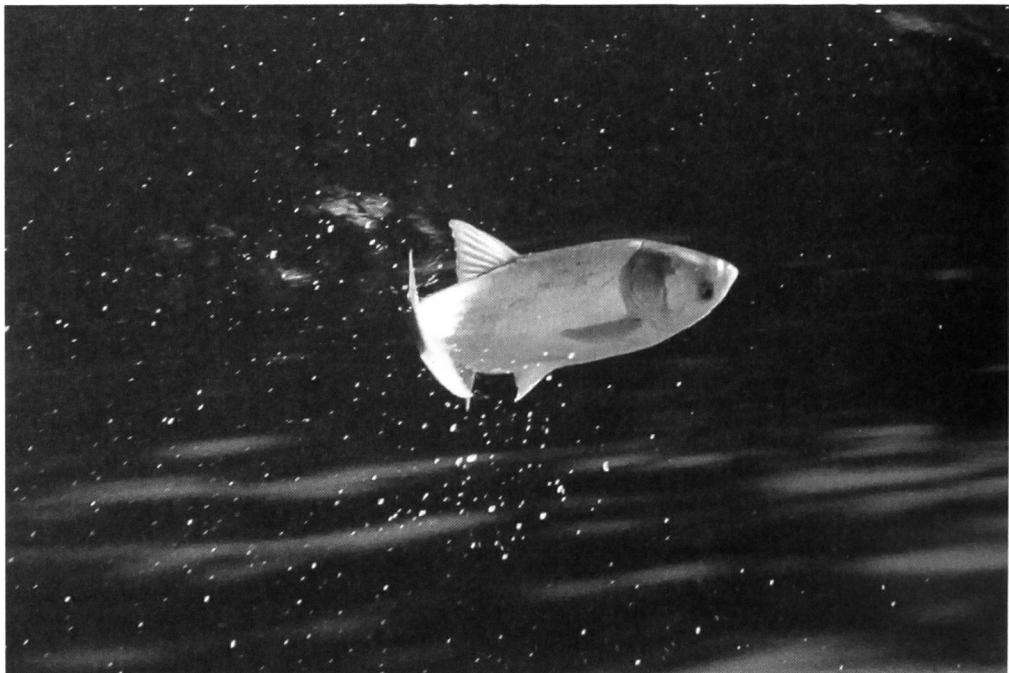
Flying Carp #693  
Spoon River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #699  
Spoon River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #417  
Illinois River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #753  
Spoon River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #696  
Spoon River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #690  
Spoon River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #316  
Illinois River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier



Flying Carp #304  
Illinois River, Havana, IL, 2010  
Brian D. Collier

ANIMAL CONCERT

EYELESS on salt earth  
the sea's black banners lie  
what became of the submarine sky  
where they waved  
before the battle?  
what of the calm flesh  
and abundant blood  
that cloaked the night's greasy scales?

in the pots of the poor  
their glory is just a mouthful  
diluted oil

maybe a belch and sorrow

DEATH writes itself alone  
A black line is a white line  
the sun a hole in the sky  
plenitude of a goat-weary  
eye learns  
to see double

select dissect thresh  
star house algae  
mother wood sea  
write themselves alone  
in the soot of the pillow

piece of bread in the vestibule  
open the door

descend the stairs  
the heart's leaves fall  
the poor girl still locked  
in the tower of hail  
the gold the violet the blue  
railed in

won't erase  
won't erase  
won't erase

FROM the air heave abyss  
I climb this last flower  
like the spider I am  
fragile resentful  
wishing to touch a light  
that could harden my heart

MY head a giant basket  
carries its fish

my head lets the water pass

my head inside another head  
and even more inside  
the head that isn't mine

my head filled with water  
with rumors and ruins  
dries its black cavities  
under a semi-alive sun

my head in the rawest winter  
inside another head  
sprouts

BONFIRE of silences  
crackling of laments  
by the way of the flesh  
blood on high  
reaches the world

thus the shadow illuminates its white  
thus the interminable coda is born  
thus the fly lays her eggs on the luminous thread

the earth turns  
god's eye does not linger  
I wonder what we would do  
without this enormous darkness

## HEARTACHE

black object I lock within my chest  
grows wings  
flies over night  
sulfur light bulb  
miserable sun  
floats in the whitewashed sky  
glides flickers  
dazzles  
he who lies face up  
struck down

TO die each day a little more  
to trim your nails  
hair  
desires  
to learn to think about the little things  
and the immeasurable  
about the farthest  
fixed stars  
in the sky  
stained like an animal  
in the sky  
fleeing from me

IF you could hear me  
you dead and me dead in you  
if you could hear me

sigh of the wheel  
bell in the storm  
bubbling swamp

if you could hear me  
with your one good ear  
me buried alive in you

GIVE me your waste basket  
I promise to burn it  
I won't crucify it  
not even commit it to memory  
I will accept it  
unscourged I will accept it  
I promise you

THE animal that rolls in the mud  
is singing  
love grunts in his chest  
he goes to the party  
wrapped in filthy light

in this adventure  
the slaughterhouse  
would be the arc of triumph  
health and harmony would hide  
in vile appearances  
the black hazelnut  
buried in the windpipe  
would shoot blue rays to the wind

star in the penumbra  
diamond caked in filth  
god lost and found  
in his thick hair  
the nuptials of a gagging melody  
and joyful agony

it takes a certain talent  
to enter the mud puddle

I WILL be survived by a needle cup stone  
zealous ants  
will survive me

the sun's shadow will pass where I cease to be  
and mouth to mouth many words  
will be woven senseless without my breath

tree abounding red seeds  
will take your place  
I see my hour suspended  
in the eternal twilight I exhale

all this and something more we won't see  
upon the waters that saw us

suspended wave fading star  
wine welled in your hand  
deed that air dampens and dissolves  
luminous iceberg of the heart  
absent palpitating  
and no one no one knows why  
it hollows out the air  
with its beating

I MOVE bodiless from sun to shade  
water music in the living shadow  
I cross the whittled vagina  
that guides me from blindness to light  
beneath the tall echoing dome  
in this colossal semblance of a nest  
my belly touches the sea belly  
thoroughly I probe my body  
I prod my feelings  
I am alive

DEATH  
like a bad mother  
touched beneath my eyes

and thus divided  
lurching  
from dark to dark  
I spun and arrived  
at the light of this line

at the bottom of the abyss  
the line  
opening  
and closing

WITHOUT music  
but calling  
without voice  
but calling  
without words  
calling

HAPPILY I have nothing in my head  
just a few ideas that are certainly wrong  
and a memory without time or place  
nothing to give  
nothing to leave  
but bones empty husks  
a little mountain of ashes  
and with luck a bit of dust  
unnamed nothings  
in what was once my head

BLACKENING blood  
learns to shine like a god

pretends to be light  
circles the spider

BOY eats crying  
boy cries eating  
in animal concert  
pleasure and pain  
make the angel  
from two musical cheeks

POOR girl still  
locked in the tower of hail  
the gold the violet the blue  
railed in  
won't erase...

*Translated by E. M. O'Connor* 

POEM

BUFFALO

shaggy & fat-headed, graze on yellow grass,  
massive in the field of *beau fleurs*.

Buff as in tawny.

Buff as in buttercup & tansy.

What were the names of those beautiful flowers?

The buffalo ate all the beautiful flowers.

Their heads grew flowery,  
their eyes small as bullet holes.

Cowcatchers nudged them west in advance of the train.

Sometimes we paused to let whole herds pass  
until they resembled clouds of pollen.

Sometimes we gunned them down.

Some felt guilty for chasing the buffalo away  
& let them stand on nickels & stamps.

The actual buffalo grew small & pale,  
skeletal, bamboozled, shuffling west.

By the time they reached the Plains they were white as ghosts,  
shrunk to the cult circumference of a nowhere Lakota Dance. 

## CURIÑANCO

*Cristal, huesos de cristal  
al trote en la última playa  
Crines de oro lacias  
hundiéndose en el cielo  
y un sudar de grupas  
el resplandor ígneo viniendo*

I

He visto al corcel  
emergir de la cascada  
—relinchos, corridas a ras de olas—  
perderse en la playa inmensa

Curiñanco  
el ave negra  
planea  
y el cristal de la tarde  
aguarda

En tu faz  
resurresto universo  
—salpicando humedad y savia a los muertos—  
cantan los sarapitos  
desaparece el zorزال  
se llenan de orugas los prados  
Mas nadie  
en la poquedad de la tierra

## II

Vuelve desde el norte  
—carrera loca—  
el corcel reluciente de la noche  
Águilas negras compitiendo

De los cerros bajan voces  
animando a las aves  
y el cristal del potro  
acompañado de olas mansas  
apenas deshechas  
Avanza

Los cascós crecen  
el relincho abre entrañas al día  
y en él entra cabeza calma

Crines de oro  
se aposentan  
lado a lado del cuello  
y vuelven las aves  
a planear desiertas playas

Los cascós se refugian  
en el retumbe del mar  
Y es noche

### III

Pedir aún  
un resto de sol y hambre  
nuevas papas y manzanas  
oír llover a raudales  
caer la noche  
Ver el cristal

### IV

Serán apenas las ocho  
de la lluvia  
y un cuarto de bandada  
de trinos entre las matas

A las tres del viento sur  
renacerán las horas dormidas  
Acicalándose cabellos de ríos  
dejarán pasar el tiempo verde  
el fluir indómito  
intransitable del ser

### V

Apareció otra vez  
cabeza gacha  
relincho contenido  
buscándome

Se hundió en la arena  
las olas cercaron su mirada  
y volvieron  
a rebotar las cuencas

Revolcáronse  
a fondo los bríos

VI

Ya marcha el sol paciente  
inquieto y tenaz  
desentume muslos  
calienta grupas  
y me busca  
caracol del tiempo  
hacia el final de la espuma

Yo

Sombra inmensa  
voy cubriendo extensas lagunas  
cerros aledaños a las playas  
roqueríos pálidos

Soy el último sostén  
del universo  
donde palpitas  
y me aguardas

Quedan de ti  
holladas huellas de mar  
espuma horadada  
baño de tiempo que se escapa  
tras el eco de los cascos

Lame el océano  
tu cabalgata poderosa  
y sella de liso silencio  
tu briosa existencia  
Extenuada

# PUERTO EDÉN

A Gabriela Paterito Caac\*

*Despertar de un picotazo en el vidrio  
ver tus ojos emplumados  
urdir pensamientos  
verter mi alma en el paisaje de tu mirada*

Silba tu canto, trina en el viento  
la tierra aprieta las raíces  
estruja lombrices y hierbas  
inconfundible respiro  
eterno, inhumano  
desfleca, hace jirones  
el perfume de las almas

Torres de agua  
han esmerilado mis piernas  
ahora lucen huecas pétreas  
el agua hace de ellas  
cavernas donde la ola se astilla

Ven a este canal húmedo  
a estos pechos nevados  
allí donde el ciprés se aferra  
a la roca y agujerea  
el cielo estrellado

Sumérgete en el agua translúcida  
donde se divisa el lobo marino  
embelesando a las muchachas

Ulula el viento entre los coigües  
la piedra es el hueco de la selva  
ciprés enano  
nada más que raíz y manos

son los seres que se aferran  
a estos cuerpos gélidos  
Australes

Los kawésqar  
—hermanos de los lobos—  
aún navegan en su lengua  
nómades sumergen sus ojos  
en los mares eternos intransitados

Reír en el frío  
Hallar la foca  
la cholga  
El junquillo

Hallar en sus ojos  
frío y pregunta  
¿Cuándo la piel de lobo cubrir  
el cuerpo desnudo?  
¿Cuándo la mujer sumergirse  
en fondos marinos?  
¿Cuándo volver a recalar en *kájef*  
Las islas?

---

\*Gabriela Paterito Caac: mujer kawésqar, exponente viva de la cultura en extinción de estos nómadas marinos y una de las últimas hablantes de su lengua.

## FIN DEL TIEMPO

*Yo incapaz de todo  
me precipito sin tregua  
en el salto inmanente  
y caigo, caigo hasta que tu mano  
me suspenda en medio  
del vacío que viene.*

I

Entre los muros del universo

Crunch

cranch

mi flácido esqueleto

inerme

de tumbo en tumbo

sin más destino que

chocar vencido

quedo

muerto

Balancea un tiempo

choque de gran cometa

asignado a la madre tierra

que estalla

y me lanza

caída

inminente

sin fin

ni esencia

a los muros

donde fenecer

vida

la Idea

Dios

Madre

III

Jamás  
recordaré  
pero existió  
un texto  
precipitado  
al vacío

# Muerte entre leguas de silencio

Yo  
esqueleto de trapo  
caída vertiginosa  
olvido  
badajo sin campana  
de tumbo  
en tumbo  
contra  
la membrana

III

Nada es  
consciencia de todo

En cambio aquí  
un cerebro que hilvana  
prodigiosamente  
el vacío inútil

# Esencia de lengua muerta tan

tan  
retumba  
No  
Porque cada golpe  
apenas se ha dignado a retornar  
al muro que estremece

Un árbol de cerezo muerto  
su mitad anterior  
se aferra a la ladera del cerro  
ilumina el río  
lo atraviesa y se yergue  
hasta la cumbre del cerro

Las playas lejanas  
orillan avellanas verdes  
Tupida melena que nostalgia  
ojos cansados de no viajar  
Tocar la otra orilla

Vacío  
como el universo  
luego del abandono  
del cuerpo contra el muro dando  
Muñeco de trapo  
lana mojada sin pena  
ni gritos ni huesos  
La esencia

IV  
El sol hizo una retirada rápida  
de seis de la tarde  
Los pies fríos que lo buscan  
retroceden

No hay retorno

La vida fue  
y en ella  
Había

V  
Un pájaro en la piedra  
orilla de río  
Es

Un bote colorado  
basa su experiencia  
en rechazar el agua  
mientras ésta  
suave  
dulce  
lo humedece  
persistente amándolo  
desde su no madera  
no concavidad  
que porta enseres

Seres

VI  
La ligera máscara de ser  
sujeta al rostro ajeno ya no disimula  
avisa macabra que la vida fue  
El resto es no introducir ruido alguno

La pequeña compañera que nos mira  
—y ofrece hocico, cola, ojos—  
se aleja y cruza la mirada

la maquinaria bestia que escribe  
es un pájaro cercano

La cerca emitió un sonido  
y habló su madera  
El chercán en ella oculto  
pió su altanera presencia

Nada  
siguió escribiendo  
incapaz de todo  
dando tumbos

Flácido esqueleto  
de extremo a extremo  
inerme  
cayendo  
vertiginosa  
al pozo de la sangre  
Una luz inerte  
sobre las hebras de lana  
presencia  
la precipitación

El cisma 

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ROSA ALCALÁ

FOUR POEMS

VOICE ACTIVATION

*Do not forget that a poem, although it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information.*  
—Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*

This poem, on the other hand, is activated by the sound of my voice, and, luckily, I am a native speaker. Luckily, I have no accent and you can understand perfectly what I am saying to you via this poem. I have been working on this limpid voice, from which you can read each word as if rounded in my mouth, as if my tongue were pushing into my teeth, my lips meeting and jaws flexing, so that even if from birth you've been taught to read faces before words and words as faces, you'll feel not at all confused with what I say on the page. But maybe you'll see my name and feel a twinge of confusion. Have no doubt, my poem is innocent and transparent. So when I say, I think I'll make myself a sandwich, the poem does not say, I drink an isle of bad trips. Or if I say, my mother is dying, where is her phone. The poem does not say, try other it spying, spare us ur-foam. One way to ensure the poem and its reader no misunderstanding is to never modulate. I'm done with emotion, I'm done, especially, with that certain weakness called exiting one's intention. What I mean is Spanish. What a mess that is, fishing for good old American bread, and ending up with a boatload of uncles and their

boxes of salt cod, a round of aunts poking for fat in your middle. So you see, Wittgenstein, even the sandwich isn't always made to my specifications; it's the poem that does what I demand. Everything else requires a series of steps. I call the nurse's station and explain to the nurse—her accent thick as thieves—that I'd like to speak to my mother. She calls out to my mother: "it's your daughter" (really, she says this in Spanish, but for the sake of voice-activation and this poem, you understand I can't go there), and she hands the phone to my mother and my mother, who is not the poem, has trouble understanding me. So I write this poem, which understands me perfectly, and never needs the nurse's station, and never worries about unintelligible accents or speaking loudly enough or the trouble with dying, which can be understood as a loss of language. If so, the immigrant, my mother, has been misunderstood for so long, this death is from her last interpreters.

## MY BODY'S PRODUCTION

My body

a carder

a spinner

a crusher of blood seeds

and milk-thread

miller

loom of alveoli

powered by rivers

*Here you will find the frock for every vivid hour.*

continuous din

tiresome

to visitors

speedy and needy

and frayed at the ends:

pieceers

& scavengers

quick on the mend

(those motherless creatures

their tiny hands)

and my operative, so tender: here's her  
portrait

with shuttle

as scepter

My body it triggered  
and pierced her

left kidney

*Q. You were perfectly straight and healthy before you worked in  
a mill?*

*A. Yes, I was as straight a little girl as ever went up and down town.*

*Q. Where are you now?*

*A. In the poorhouse.*

And does my body regret  
what it has done?

I'm not responsible  
for its design

My body now weaves  
a funeral shroud

for mother  
her wooden gears  
ground down

The last milk-threads  
unfold, from specter to form

to be carried off  
to the dye house  
hot work for  
the men

Marriage  
to the doffer  
momentarily postponed.

*I do not dance so much for I cannot work so hard and dance  
so much.*

DEAR MARÍA

Dear Mary, Mariah, Marie

Dear mamá, mamacita, and mami

Dear fourth wheel of the trinity

Dear Puerto Rican Ingénue  
in a Red Sash

Dear Off With Their Heads

Dear Diva

Dear Aria, missing its M (Dear Storage Engine)

Dear Ships in Your Name

Dear Asteroid  
discovered in 1877

Dear Song  
by  
Café Tacuba  
Green Day  
The Jacksons  
Men at Work  
Blondie  
Ricky Martin  
Wu-Tang Clan  
, etc.

Dear María, spoken in the bird's tail  
of Papau New Guinea

"How do you solve a problem named Maria?"

Dear Pool Type Reactor

Dear Uranium How You Enrich Us

Dear Spanish Biscuit

Dear Sacrificial Virgins,

of red or blond hair  
of dark brunette  
of the slip, apron, or veil, but never a hat  
of the fresh complexion turned composite  
of Jack the Ripper's complete works  
of fluency  
in Welsh  
Spanish  
English  
Quechua  
French

of obscure and undocumented  
origins

and of las colonias

Querida María de los Angeles

de la Luz,  
de Jesús,  
del Refugio) walking home or waiting  
for the Transporte de Personal  
without executive safe routes

Dear Señorita Maquiladora

Dexterous, tolerant of tedium

model workers  
for Electrolux, General Electric, Alcoa, etc.,

Dear Queen of the plasma TV and print cartridge

Dear Miss Stainless Steel Appliance

Dear crowned with cigarettes, soda cans, boot prints,  
left without nipples, in the desert, branded

Dear Virgen de Guadalupe,  
hand us your sanitary napkin

Blessed art thou,  
your blood is  
on everything.

## DEAR STRANGER

Our plane that night cut through sheets of ice, cleanly and then through clouds. Close to the ground, the sheets turned thicker, the plane's engine started to cough, we sat there each edged in by the fear of death, and also the armrest. How does one survive one's desire for another, I asked you, to ease the tension. How does one survive these flights? The ice turned to sheets of paper and as the plane ripped through them, they doubled in size. We read each moving sheet, which contained questionable instruction, I was not helpful and said they were poems. How does one survive one's desire for big answers, and you grasped my hand as if I might leave. O, the mercy of the body, trying to out-run history. When finally we landed, our plane bullied its way through police cars, pedestrians, SUVs. And ahead of us, another plane curled into pieces. Here was our future, we shall rise as cones of smoke, our casings shall feather weightlessly to the ground. But you reasoned, "That's not us, they must've had a drop in pressure." We made it out and over monkey bars and into a playground, where we sat and waited. The papers were stuck to the plane, everything not said, my waste and the waste of others. And more words irretrievable in the overhead, as in the heart. Sometimes I imagine dropping into the ocean with my inflatable seat. The mercy of the body able to float, until it tires and gives in. It's funny that the best part is no longer having to swim.

## NOTES

Source material for the italicized text in "My Body's Production":

—*Spinner*, Volume IV, 1988

—Testimony of Elizabeth Bentley, who had been a child laborer in a Lowell, MA textile mill, quoted in *The Belles of New England: The Women of the Textile Mills and the Families Whose Wealth They Wove* by William Moran (St. Martin's Press, 2004)

—A letter from Madge C. Gunn, textile worker in Lowell, to Mrs. Cora Hotchkiss in Quebec, Feb. 1, 1874

"Dear María":

Gathers material from the following sources:

—A Wikipedia entry on Maria

—"Murder in Juárez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line" by Jessica Livingston (*Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2004, pp. 59-76)

—*Migrant Imaginaries* by Alicia Schmidt Camacho (NYU, 2008)

—"Electrolux, other maquiladoras affected little by bloodshed in Mexico" by Ryan Jeltema,(www.thedailynews.com. 7 March 2011). In this article, Jeltema explains that in response to the violence in Juárez, "Executive safe routes" were established by the Mexican president so that executives from multi-national companies could visit their plants without threat of violence.

—"Transporte de personal" are buses used to transport factory workers in Juárez to and from their homes in "colonias," which are often poor, self-built communities. ☰

SOLEIDA RÍOS

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## PURIALES DE CAUJERÍ

### PURIALES DE CAUJERÍ

Candela.

José Kozer (junta candela...  
abre monte)  
en Puriales de Caujerí.

Montes serrados, tetudos, picudos: monte  
plegado: el mar  
al sur.

Palmas, pomarrosas. Calma la sed.  
Ojos resplandecientes.  
Abrazos.  
Los enfermos resucitaron.

Comer naranja agria...;qué dulce!  
A la cintura, vadear el Sabanalamar  
(el río, corta). Dormir  
en yaguas y hojas. Comer (almuerzo)

bajo el chubasco: café de boruca,  
huevos crudos, un sorbo de miel.

Monte abajo.  
Monte arriba.  
Pan de Azúcar. Monte de la Vieja.  
Cañadones.  
Mucarales de piedra.

Lomear a los charrascales.  
Sentir el peligro, oler...

Palenque.  
Arroyo Hondo.  
Rumbo tenaz y fijo.  
Monte arriba. Monte abajo.  
Abriendo...

El purial (purio), frondoso  
sombra renacentista  
fertiliza, clarea...

Y vio hoy la yaguama, la hoja fénica  
que estanca la sangre y con su mera sombra  
beneficia...

Un curujey prendido a un jobo. Bebe  
agua clara. Cojea  
(¿iodoformo, algodón fenicado?).

Árboles secos escaldan y chisporrotean  
y echan al cielo su fuste de llama...

Última agua y del otro lado el sueño. El peligro  
se siente: hombres alquilados.

Hamacas, candelas, calderadas. Al pie  
de un árbol grande irá luego a dormir.  
Sao del Nejesial.  
Jaraguá, palo fuerte.  
Rumbo tenaz y fijo.

Oye el remedio de la nube en los ojos (agua de sal  
leche de ítamo...) "que le volvió la vista a un gallo".  
Lavar la ropa azul. La chamarreta...  
Machete al cinto, espuela a la alpargata.  
¿Y cómo no me inspira horror la mancha de sangre que vi en el camino?  
¿Ni la sangre a medio-secar de una cabeza que ya está enterrada...?

## KOZER

¿Entraría por Duaba...?  
¿O por aquellos pedregales de Cajobabo...?  
Dicen, lo vieron bajar de la Goleta...  
Pero besó la tierra y cantó como gallo.

Un brazo (¿armado...  
de la duermevela...?  
¿armado  
de  
la  
reminiscencia...?)  
remo de proa. Frente  
arbórea...Lo vieron, dicen, vaciar el bote  
la mano alzada...Saltar.  
"¡Cuba...!" (por agua, vino de Málaga)...Y  
monte adentro.

En el jolongo: el Diario.  
Machete al cinto (¿filo, añico...?) aupando  
toda  
la teluricidad.

Región florida de los cafetales, con plátanos y cacao.  
Kentucky.  
Secaderos.  
Vereda espesa  
en la fértil tierra de Ti-arriba.

Mejorana: Tres Voces.  
Jagua.  
Mangos de Baraguá.  
Hato del Medio: sabana, yerba ahogada del aluvión.  
Antaño, más de 500 cadáveres regando la marcha  
en el camino de Tacajó.

Barrancas...  
Ah, Cauto (¿oye la Voz del Viejo?), cuánto tiempo  
que no te veía.  
Barrancas feraces y elevadas, desgarradas  
a trechos hacia el cauce...Reverencia.  
Río amado.

Hojas de zarza o de tomate para untarlas de sebo sobre los nacidos.  
Hierven calderos.  
Hamaca. Lluvia. Escribir. Sueño inquieto.

Los perros, ahítos de la matazón, vomitan la res.  
Turbia el agua crecida del Contramaestre.

Dos Ríos  
cruzados por cerca de una ceiba.  
Súbito, de cara al sol...

Kozer...¿cortado como un cañaveral?

Borbotones de tinta (sangre) sobre tierra feraz.  
En la finca San Pedro, 27 ha de ser  
el número final de sus heridas.

Pero lo han visto...  
A flor de labios (soslaya toda posible imitación):  
un níspero (imágenes), un canistel.  
En tierra adentro (con-fundido), agua  
agua clara de lo curujeyes...  
En el Diario: "sirve tú, Cuba, Manantial, sirve ya..."

Y la mano, arpada, se le pudrió, casi  
de tanto saludo recibido (loas) camino de La Quinta.

Hijo de los hijos de José  
(ante la escala de Jacob), ¿la piel cobriza...?  
hijo de la predilección de Orisha Oko  
desciende, dicen, de la cabalgadura  
(¿un caballo dorado, traje de holanda gris?).  
Junto al árbol Lezama  
deja caer fraterna  
transparente  
gota  
de sudor.

27 de marzo–3 de junio, 2010 

GABRIEL GUDDING

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THERE CAN BE NO PASTORAL  
AS LONG AS THERE IS A SLAUGHTERHOUSE

[THERE CAN BE NO PASTORAL AS LONG AS THERE IS A SLAUGHTERHOUSE]

There can be no pastoral as long as there is a slaughterhouse.

It is in the basement of all oppressions

and at the ignored forefront of every assertion  
and definition  
as to what “nature” is.

The front and back of every face is conjoined  
by the foyers of slaughterhouses.

When you consume the muscles of animals  
your anus is a tunnel to the slaughterhouse.

If you eat any part of an animal  
your rectum is the atrium of the slaughterhouses.

The beginning of the wilderness is the end of the wilderness  
as long as there is a slaughterhouse.

At wherever the frontier clasps a bush or a star  
on the top of every peddle of every bicycle,  
there is a slaughterhouse  
inside every sack of intestine, on every piece of piss, on every monocle,  
on the aerosols, on each puddle, at the sled, on the back of the jam jar, in  
the folds of your vulva, at the end of your penis.  
It is on your candy.

It is present in every little collection of beetles and in the air bringing the  
dusts of other counties and of distant states to them.

We carry the slaughterhouse as a mouse would carry Tibet.

I cannot think of the slaughterhouse without being launched from my brow.

I cannot think of the slaughterhouse without leaving through my knees.

The sheriffs are naked, the clouds won't let us cook  
the swales and oxbows and sloughs will not invite us  
we cannot fully watch the spangled pond  
you cannot see the streaming  
you cannot feel the rapid

you cannot say a name

or sit

you cannot love bugles  
or understand a calendar  
as long as there is a slaughterhouse.

The animal should have cinders for snot, scabs for shoulders, we should not spend time

with it, let it have velcro for hair so that it will stick where we put it, the sheep will shit its body directly into cellophane, the chicken—you will not love it—shall be born in a feather factory, much of the cow should sound in the drains—and the calf can't follow its eyes through its childhood.

And the piglet just sees another farmer  
balancing the world's thermostat on the end of his dick.

Its body should be a balloon of protein, its ears and tails are cut away as ballast, its testicles will become earthlets of horror, horns burned, the being in the animal fully sensate, its scrotum is crushed and who needs its little face to be shouting.

I am not asking us to go patch the foxes at the roadway  
I am not asking us to exude along the earth, by electric sled,  
suet, bath, shed  
brass, death  
or pump the stars  
back into the telescope.

Come out of the human political.  
We really are ethical misers when it comes to other beings.  
Poems are pretty aren't they.

[WE THINK A CAR JUST DRIVES THERE]

We think a car just drives there. But there is a fuel and islands we cross. And particulates rise away from these. The tires in fact unspool, aerosolized dots of rubber tape themselves down beside rocks that've traveled from the past into the days when a driver dies and those who are reading about the driver die. The driver moves.

Ring road, service road, the alley, diametrical street, the milk road, the night trees are astral nets, cul de sacs, the bodies of planet are collected there, their balls cast brightly through the shaking map. The driver moves. A farm near Whitney under the sky.

The car is on the plains. The car and the buffalo are the anode and cathode of modernity. When the bullet found the old tublike lives of the bison. When the bullet was disjected from the Sharps rifle, foot-pounds of pubescent meteoroid assumed a nest in the wattage of its heart, an odd death puffed in the stuffings of its legs. Beyond its barrel the whole west was soft. The animals stood there. Mouths flew from the orifices of the other bison, as if asking the east to just come and eat them from this horror. From the ship of the bullet we can still see the old lives of the world. I see people bicycling at the edges of storms. Beyond them, there are busloads of pus still coming out of the bison. It makes the river a blond bench. It becomes the railways. The driver moves.

You are approaching a lake again, like a river wd. Or like a hill of wood wd. In your car. It's your car. Not your friend's car. Not your friend's lake. It's not your lake. It's the present lake. Even the titular owner of the lake, the state, has no owning of this lake. No one owns this lake. It's enhanced with farm run-off. It has farms in it. The farms don't want the lake. The state owns the lake but the farmers can be sued by the lake's swimmers who are hurt in it, so the state bears laws to abdicate responsibility for the lake. It is not in the public commons. There is no public commons. There is no public. The air is not public. Not even the outside is public. The sun[g]light is not public. Who owns the sounds of cars. Not even sounds are public. Do we each own the sounds of our own cars. Do we each own the sounds of our own movements, the smells of our own families.

Rap with your car the lake. Knock it once. Freshen it with the sound of the car. It is “fresh” now, with the f and the h being at the ends of that word.

I saw the bison being swung outward by the bullet, it is still there spinning above the west, a stuffed horned asterisk. Its brain is a desk. Its eyes somehow still insensibly closing and opening.

We see a car. We think a car just drives there. The world resolves to meet it. We see how it proves the elasticity of roadway, the arrayed elasticities of wheat stems. How sweet and warm the places of the soil are. The corporal hills, urine which moves from the animals. Milk in the squirrels. Nouns in the adequate flax. How darling are mammals. They are not little shows freighted with pain and anchored all around us. They are freighted with pain.      ☩

Ernesto de la Peña murió en septiembre de 2012, a los ochenta y cuatro años. Su muerte ahonda un vacío, y aumenta la certidumbre de que la cultura literaria e intelectual en México ha llegado a un punto de crisis. La muerte de Ernesto de la Peña forma parte de una cadena de desapareciones de escritores e intelectuales que contribuyeron a generar una época notable de la cultura mexicana. Los nombres de Octavio Paz y Carlos Fuentes, y los más o menos conocidos de Tomás Segovia, Antonio Alatorre, Juan José Arreola, Juan García Ponce, Salvador Elizondo y, recientemente, Rubén Bonifaz Nuño bastan para comenzar a sentir una nostalgia, la nostalgia que acompaña a la duda y la comparación. Frente a los productos culturales del siglo pasado, México y su poesía han caído en un bache que apenas maquilla la obra de algunos escritores y poetas aislados, cuyas aportaciones no acaban de romper con la tradición ni de crear un nuevo contexto.

Pese a la erudición que acumuló a lo largo de los años, Ernesto de la Peña fue un autor tardío. Publicó su primer libro, un volumen de cuentos titulado *Las estratagemas de Dios*, en 1988, a los 61 años. A partir de ese momento dejó de producir para los cajones de su escritorio. Quien hasta entonces se había desempeñado como un comentarista de radio y televisión de impresionante cultura, se reveló como un escritor de marcada filiación borgesiana. El vínculo

o la descendencia borgesiana que se percibe en los primeros cuentos de De la Peña no agota, sin embargo, el rango de las fuentes que le sirvieron para construir una obra hecha de libros de poemas, narraciones más o menos breves y libros de ensayo. La teología, la Edad Media europea, la música, la mitología, las literaturas griega y latina, los estudios hebraicos, la historia de las religiones, la configuración literaria y simbólica de la tragedia constituyen apenas algunos de los intereses que consolidaron la fama de este escritor políglota (De la Peña se jactaba de conocer al menos tres decenas de idiomas, y de hablar con cierta fluidez al menos una decena de ellos). Una prosa muy trabajada y una red de alusiones a la historia de la cultura occidental son la principal amalgama de su obra narrativa y ensayística. Sus poemas se conservan a la sombra de sus demonios tutelares: Rilke, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Eliot, a quienes frecuentaba en su propio idioma. Su obra no fue concebida, desde luego, para el consumo masivo, sino para la secrecía. El ámbito de su competencia no será nunca el mainstream de la cultura nacional sino las bondades de su periferia.

“El único y su propiedad” (“The Ego and Its Own”, en la traducción al inglés de Ana Rosa González Matute, un cuento que toma su título del famoso libro homónimo de Max Stirner y que alude, por otro lado, al relato no menos famoso de Adelbert von Chamisso *La maravillosa historia de Peter Schlemihl*) formó parte de aquel primer libro de cuentos, *Las estratagemas de Dios*. Pese a su brevedad, su glosa sería demasiado prolífica. De la Peña parece haberse atenido a la máxima borgesiana de decir lo más con lo menos. El lector puede sentirse sofocado por la estrechez de las paredes de un laberinto inmaculado. Aunque podría decirse que la gravedad de la pregunta por la existencia de Dios y la soledad del hombre frente a la magnificencia de sus aspiraciones son algunos de los motivos más visibles en esta miniatura narrativa. 

ERNESTO DE LA PEÑA

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## THE EGO AND ITS OWN

When Christopher Phanerius retired to the small town of Schlehmihl, his business produced enough dividends as to put aside financial concerns, and his state of mind enjoyed a permanent truce. Soon after his arrival, he purchased a spacious house on the banks of the Ischl River, and surrounded the land with exact hedges that defined the boundary and perfumed the air.

Despite the sobriety or even fierceness of his manners, there were villagers who claimed to have seen him inhale the fragrance of rosebushes and heliotropes. Others went so far as to strike up a neighborly conversation with him, even as Phanerius' brittle courtesy froze their solicitous gestures and expressions of solidarity: with thumbs inserted in his waistcoat pockets, he bowed ceremoniously and disappeared behind a simple "Ich empfehle mich!" As he returned, the grass crushed under his buckle shoes showing the suppleness of his footprints whose contours appeared to double, as though with each step someone else's foot, slightly smaller, had burgeoned.

Cristopher Phanerius' near total silence contributed to his popularity among the good people of Schlehmihl: although few of them could boast (and, in so doing, they solicited the listener's reasonable doubt) about having exchanged with him a few words; they had to admit, defeated in their gregarious and neighborly

spirit, that they had only come by categorical replies and expressions of the utmost biting courtesy.

Nothing more appeals to a simple man than the strangeness of another; nothing more compels him to respect and imitation: no sooner had Phanerius irrupted into the uneventful life of Schlehmihl than he became an admired personality. Family heads of certain affluence began to have their clothes fashioned so that, without much effort, it resembled that of Phanerius and their tone of voice pretended to echo the very few words they had heard him utter. The special consistency of the foreigner's hands and features also beguiled the good people of Schlehmihl, perhaps because such imprecision bestowed them (his face and hands conveyed the effect of being in motion, altering slightly but continuously) with an aristocratic air. Phanerius, oblivious, led his life of obstinate confinement. The windows of his house, however, were always kept open, as though to invite the curious to observe what went on inside. In fact, more than one idle soul inspecting the place told incongruous stories about the foreigner appearing possessed of indefinite earthly powers, whose vagueness was reason enough for comment and conjecture.

Others, more prone to delirium, claimed they had seen him flying and that his laughter pealed with dreadful echoes and evil overtones. Everyone corroborated his propensity to speak to himself, although (there was consensus on this, too) not entirely to himself, in that many avowed having heard a faint, hushed voice, barely audible, answering his deliberations.

\*

Stebelski, a brewer of aromatic prestige and a man of sensible reasoning, had become the unimpeachable soothsayer among Schlehmihl's kindly neighbors. Three days after Phanerius arrived to the village, Stebelski keenly observed, in sibylline tones, that they should all be patient and trustful; surely the eccentric would have to hire the service of someone to look after his household, too spacious as to be kept clean and tidy under the sole care of a man who, by all accounts, had surpassed the age of fifty. The anxiety consuming the town gossips changed to outright despair when sixty days had passed without the stranger soliciting any service. Very early each Saturday morning he went to market and, nearly

mute, indicated what he needed and, when fair, paid the requested amount or, when excessive, continued onward.

His return home was always accompanied by restless whispers behind drawn window curtains. The course he followed, always the same, provided the opportunity for feigned encounters and induced coincidences. Nothing altered his petrified smile, not even the plod of his wide shoes. With his eyes invariably fixed in front of him, Phanerius elided passers by and dodged those who persisted. When he arrived at the door to his home, after leaving his twofold footsteps on the wounded grass, he opened the door and turned the key to the double lock, shutting all testimonies and unleashing every hypothesis.

There was no evidence, however, of a deliberate urge to avoid others. The windows, it must be noted, allowed everyone to see him when he touched his own skin, tentatively caressing his face or finger-tapping his belly, as though to confirm that the volumes and contours were still the same, and that their physical appearance had not endured any uncomfortable swelling or dwindling. With his suddenly radiant gaze, and with slow satisfaction, he scanned the profiles of trees, stems of plants, and outline of flower beds, to now and then settle on fallen leaves, following the liquid threads that had seeped through when watering the flowers, or to notice bird droppings. Punctual as always, he later immersed himself in unknown activities and obscure routines, protected by the secrecy of walls and solitude.

\*

On one market Saturday, at last a miracle happened: Christopher Phanerius tactfully approached a young man of discernible strength, jokingly named Simplizissimus, and asked for help with his household work. Proud of the favor requested of him, Simplizissimus hardly knew what fee to charge for such services rendered, and so he accepted the sum Phanerius offered. The entire town breathed with satisfaction when the two were seen heading to the foreigner's house. Recurring here was the ancient mystery of the sphinx revealing its enigmas: the honest citizens of Schlehmihl were forgetting that when it speaks, it poses insoluble questions and punishes with no mercy.

Happily for the village, there was nothing to lament: misfortune had befallen no one, as though modern urban life and temperance in the habits of the town's

modest citizens had clipped the former claws of wonderment. Simplizissimus, whose admiration for the taciturn master was magnified by the communicative zeal of his fellow townsfolk, began carelessly to divulge certain lesser mysteries a few days after moving into Phanerius' quiet manor: his master partook of a meticulous daily bath and regarded each fraction of his body touched by the soap, pressing down afterwards, as though to prove that the film covering each part, hardly palpable, continued to follow an unknown task, as though observing the rites of a vigilant sect. Other times Simplizissimus' loquacity overflowed with dangerous indiscretions: "he appears to profess no religion, he remarked, and among his household wares there are no images or sacred objects, nor does his sparse library include a poor Bible." But nothing helped to dissipate the hidden mystery. A sensible merchant of Schlehmihl claimed there was nothing to be discovered in the methodical foreigner, and he abandoned further inquiries. Most were resolutely determined to pry into what Phanerius' simplicity was hiding. Women, in particular the forty-year old spinsters and the sanctimonious, attributed to him odious passions and an ominous past. Men aspired to know the provenance of his wealth, perhaps to find there an infallible formula for amassing a fortune.

Time went by, monotonously, to relieve the pointed questions and diminish the indiscretions. Phanerius continued tilling his orchard, always leaving behind the double spectrum of his bare feet; and it baffled the servant who, upon catching a glimpse of him against the sun, perceived a halo that encircled him. Almost every afternoon, the recluse drew close to the windowpane to see how the sun escaped at dusk.

The servant went on to share detailed accounts of the odd events with the persistent Stebelsky: he spoke of his master's pupils, that he provided lodging to others, or that the shadow he wore like a glove, was a diffident, almost evaporated shadow; later he insisted on the imprecision of the contours or commented on the echo he believed to perceive, even as he imagined it being a calm answer more than a mitigating repetition. Simplizissimus' deafness stood as an obstacle to what the silent Phanerius was saying. Conjectures proliferated when he claimed to have heard, or so he thought, a feminine tint in the voice conversing with the recluse. Despite constant surveillance, however, no lover was ever found.

\*

The illness that fell upon Phanerius joined relentless fatal symptoms to a lenient brevity. The two town doctors threw themselves into Hippocrates and Galen, even as it led only to incomprehension. A single evident and discouraging certainty spread over Schlehmihl: the foreigner would die without disclosing his mystery or allowing trespass into the zone of his obstinate secret. There were appeals from the entire village for infusions, poultices, diets and plasters. Phanerius' illness defeated every good intention and family recipe: Thursday evening, around seven o'clock, while the garden defended its nocturnal privileges, he expired. At that precise moment, he did not disappoint the diligent citizens of Schlehmihl, perhaps because he seemed to reveal the cipher of his enigma. His last words turned into an incomprehensible refrain:

—I have not yet seen you, Numenius, and I doubt some day I will ever see you...

Simplizissimus made known his fondness for the strange master not only by attending the funeral service with the town's most distinguished citizens, but by staying to linger over the recently raised tomb until it was night, and did he not leave until the cemetery gates were shut.

Astonished and frightened, he told Stebelski that with the moonrise he saw two clearly perceptible flickers emanating from Phanerius' burial ground, twin human figures, embraced in an imperceptible knot, as though one enveloped the other, drawing its vertiginous and volatile substance from the more compact and robust. To this day Simplizissimus affirms that together, contrasted and diffuse, like man and simulacrum, they evanesced into air.

*Translated by Ana Rosa González Matute* 

KENT JOHNSON

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## TWO POEMS

### FORGOTTEN AMERICAN POETS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

*—for John Bradley, in the 21st*

Absalom William Moore is a poet who thought poetry was an anchor in the drift of the world.

Adelaide Mary Brown is a poet who inspired strong feelings among the bachelors of her town.

Bartholomew Derrick Taylor is a poet who spoke to us intimately, from an almost suffocating nearness.

Obedience Sophie Walker is a poet who believed there's another world where we will read to each other high on a mountain in the wind.

Cuthbert Eli Morgan is a poet who always seemed to connect with the choir.

Abiah Charlotte Sanders is a poet who spun her gold down through the moving deep laurel shade all day.

Chauncey Thaddeus Powell is a poet who believed that there are no grounds for belief.

Lucretia Florence Jenkins is a poet who believed they will have to believe it as we believed it.

Cornelius August Parker is a poet who thought he was lit up like morning glories and was showered by the rain of his symbols.

Cyrus Wiley Butler is a poet who believed long poems are “much closer to a whole reality” than shorter poems, but too late.

Fredonia Anna Ross is a poet who believed she had spent the afternoon blowing soap bubbles.

Obediah Virgil Foster is a poet who believed the day was gloves.

Hester Wilma Campbell is a poet who was suddenly covered at the party by the wasps of the doorsill.

Ebenezer Charles Freeman is a poet whose last words were “The pool is covered in slime.”

Permelia Margaret Holmes is a poet who believed that when a screen door banged in the wind it made one of her hinges come loose.

Epaphroditus Benjamin Warren is a poet who didn’t and doesn’t really care where poetry is now.

Prudence Alice Grant is a poet who rode a mule until the mule had to be carried.

Phineas Derrick Knight is a poet who thought of himself highly, believing the nature of what is personal imitates oblivion.

Temperance Clarissa Hamilton is a poet who wrote poems in French with the design that they be translated into the English of the Queen.

Hiram Josiah Hunt is a poet who dragged a rotten log from the bottom of a stagnant pond.

Jedediah Louis Mason is a poet who nested at the end of a tunnel, where he was discovered beneath a bank.

Elijah Aquilla Burns is a poet who loved Rochester, and who flows northward like two joined sewers.

Zachariah Thomas Hayes is a poet who believed we go back to poems as to a wife, leaving the boyfriend we desire.

Malvina Penelope Smith is a poet who shouted primitive slogans and shot symbolic smoke out her gills.

Olive Martha Weaver is a poet who believed she could simply choose to “wander away” from an optional apocalypse.

Nathaniel Edward East is a poet who wondered how the singing of the housefinch rings in finchskull, which wondering made him mad.

Electa Joan McCoy is a poet who believed it was a misunderstanding, mud sliding from the side where the thing was let in.

Mabel Ellen Greene is a poet who believed the whole brilliant mass comes spattering down.

Hezekiah Zander Fox is a poet whose two stalks pushed from the brain, through a series of miraculous infoldings, to form optic cups.

Kesiah Relief Riley is a poet whose hair was black, and whose eyes were black, and from whose long fingers the spirits were conjured.

Newton Duncan Stone is a poet who believed Orpheus liked the glad personal quality of the things beneath the sky, which on that strange day began to rain frogs.

Isaac Davis Gibson is a poet who had a cow’s head on his shoulders and candles sprouting from his back.

Abigail Isabel Hicks is a poet who has disappeared into libraries, into microfilm.

Jeremiah Cross Shaw is a poet who went mad and had relations with Longfellow, his steed.

Tryphosia Sybrina Chapman is a poet who believed our jousting ends in music, like saplings do, after a typhoon.

Loretta Judith Porter is a poet who liked it when it was snowing in Paris, a city which does not exist.

Priscilla Elinamifia Woods is a poet who wrapped you in the burnoose of memories against the dark temptations of the flesh.

Francis Quiet Bryant is a poet who entered the forest, followed a path, and was eaten by The Bear, or The Witch.

Judah Robert Daniels is a poet who discovered a way to translate Eastern texts so that Western men could read Orientally, down at the beach of agates.

Lafayette Blessed Strongly is a poet who thought he was ahead of his time, but now he is regarded as apocryphal.

Pleasant Reunion Washington is a poet whose last line was "I don't think the leeches are sucking anymore."

Jackson Auction Black is a poet whose classical meters were all blasted to ruins in defense of Charleston.

Henrietta Troy Mills is a poet who was stolen by the Apache and became an Apache, it is rumored.

Edward Azariah Cole is a poet who knew he would show them, those who had laughed and mocked him, but alas.

Anne Liza Bishop is a poet who insisted on signing Anonymous and so forever does.

Martha Damaris Tucker is a poet who did not doubt that her hands or her whole body were hers, as the grain of sand to the haboob or the shrimp to the tsunami.

Winifred Fullest Hart is a poet who, like Thomas Jefferson, saw grass enough for myriads of oxen to grind between their teeth.

Kent Linwood Johnson is a poet who at one end of his line had a knot, and at the other end a hook, and he sat fishing for a camel until he was called to come back.

Experience April Weaver is a poet whose sorrow was so wide you couldn't see across it, if sorrow could be seen.

## FORGOTTEN AMERICAN POETS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY [ABORTED ECLOGUE]

*Sometimes I wonder what will happen to me.*

—Janna Levin, particle astrophysicist

### PIERS

I ask that poet 33 be put back on the table, he did as he was able. The river bed is sandy and the water races along; the material synthesized in the centers of stars gets ejected back out into space when the star dies. Everyone tries. I ask that poeta triginta tres be put back on the table.

### CUDDIE

I ask that poet 15 be put back on the table, the horses have fled the stable. The front of the hut slides open, and the woman just sits there, staring out; dominant structures pull on their subordinate neighbors, causing small local motions against the background expansion. He died over his scansion. I ask that poeta quindecim be put back on the table.

### PIERS

I move that poet 501 be put back in circulation, there's no need for oblivion. Eventually, the prayer halls and all the icons they contain are pulled down; the hole is marked by a singularity: in other words, spacetime is infinitely curved down a nozzle in the core. She couldn't have suffered more. I move that poeta quingenti unus be put back in circulation.

### CUDDIE

I beg that poet 247 be entered into conversation, he wrote with deep conviction. As I said, the pilots are pretty inexperienced, and nine times out of ten they crash their planes upside down; fifteen billion years later, we're here. He couldn't make it cohere. I beg that poeta ducenti quadraginta septem be entered into conversation.

### PIERS

I demand that poet 99 be rescued from nothingness, save her memory from emptiness. Boiling is done in enormous cauldrons that belong to the boss; from this perspective, as observers and performers of thought experiments, we can chart out the field on which we live. She wrote out her heart and had nothing left to give. I demand that poeta nonaginta novem be rescued from nothingness.

### CUDDIE

I plead that poet 12.3 be redeemed by the young critics, his oblivion is described by no existing physics. True, where the main car park in the center of town is today there used to be row upon row of eel baskets, strung right across the water; this space has handles which we could not see any more than the inhabitants of a torus could see the handle of their manifold surround. Like a tree with no one around, he fell without a sound. I plead that poeta duodecim punctum tres be redeemed by the young critics.

### PIERS

I implore that poet 57 be returned to the Norton, she is now so forgotten. Incidentally, it's the custom at funerals in our village for the family to scatter coins about in front of their house and in the temple; we are the product of this universe, and I think it can be argued that the entire cosmic code is imprinted in our brains. She laid down on the track and was run over, "repeatably," by trains. I implore that poeta quinquaginta septem be returned to the Norton.

### CUDDIE

I urge that poet 756 be returned to the podium, he won a MacArthur and appeared on Nickolodeon. In those days, people slept with their heads on wooden box pillows—the test was to sneak into a room where someone was sleeping and saw the pillow in half lengthwise very carefully; I suppose the life of the academic topologist is so good sometimes it seems ridiculous to complain. He died in a shack on the coast of Maine. I urge that poeta septingentos quinguaginta sex be returned to the podium.

### PIERS

I petition that poet 11,942 be salvaged from the vacuum, her concepts and marketing have dissolved into talcum. Poetry is mountainous and its forests are hard to reach, but in these times there is plenty of brush on flat land for people to harvest; the hot and cold spots are etched into the background radiation as light climbs out of the hills and hollows. Around her Goth optics, grad students flitted like swallows. I petition that poeta undecim milia nongenti quadraginta et duo be salvaged from the vacuum.

### CUDDIE

I entreat that poet 72,519 be raised from time's cellar, his doggerel, once so

hipster, was a stunning bestseller. Ironically, I'd thought to tie a large piece of cloth around the boy's waist just in case he was dragged away by the tide; the infinite curvature that relativity predicts raises to the surface all kinds of weird quantum phenomena. He streaked across the sky to die at a community college in Oklahoma. I entreat that poeta septuaginta duo milia centum decem et novem be raised from time's cellar.

### PIERS

I insist that poet 146.8 be forgiven for his treason, his avant-garde red weather is now the Official season. In summer, the poets wear white uniforms and carry short swords with gleaming scabbards, while in winter they wear dark blue tunics, with short capes over their shoulders; if one tosses magnetic shavings in the presence of a magnetic field, the shavings will gather along the field lines, showing the presence, direction, and shape of said unseen field. The name of an actual war criminal was imprinted on his shield. I insist that poet centum quadraginta sex punctum octo be forgiven for his treason.

### PIERS AND CUDDIE AS ONE

Now we are very tired and you, of course, are tired, too. And so we determine to bid you adieu. For so many, alas, forgotten have been, and so many more as well shall be, that such strange eclogue as ours, forsooth, could never, ever cease. Another thing is that today you have breeders producing chickens on a massive scale, not like it used to be, when farmers only kept a few birds; the bright star burns out, becoming a black vortex that fades invisibly against the darkness of space. O, poets, our art does make of us one eternal race. And so we part with these rhymes of bittersweet scent, may they lend some gentle grace to our great predicament:

*Forget thee, poet, never! 'till the sun shall in glory cease to shine, and this earthly sphere shall melt beneath the wrath divine; when the stars that twinkle bright shall long have ceased to be the light of lonely mariners, over love's tempestuous sea; when all that is bright and beautiful has fled each sacred spot, Oh, then—and not 'till then—shalt thou ever, by Poetry, be forgot!* ☘

### PLANOS DE CIUDAD

Decir dónde he visto esas cosas / fuera  
del equilibrio / o dentro de la armonía  
nace / «¿Cuál caos?»  
  
La del poema como extraña  
una luz fuera que has descubierto.

¿TRONI?

Veíamos acercarse por aquel camino

<<con un aliento menos presuntuoso>> bambolearse

a los lados de aquel mismo paisaje, el mijo, los maizales

de septiembre a junio sin un poco de aire

entre los maizales, pájaros de camino hacia el cruce

y los desfiladeros / adelantarse más o menos creíamos

tarde cercano a las comunidades.

Y lo que veo de septiembre a junio. Y lo que creo.

## NARCOLEPSIA

No digo si volvería yo a dejarles la piel tensa

cual un cerdo afiebrado

sin un motivo poco menos visible.

<<Llega la tarde>>. Aquí un sol que ahoga.

<<Llegas cual un cerdo afiebrado>>/ Y ese

maldito intento de creer en una mano amistosa.

Tercos sin ningún juicio sabed no digo yo.

## <<ESE Y OTROS CUENTOS>>

Poca cosa a tu paso al sur 9 kms. entre malezas  
y apeaderos un acueducto suntuoso  
que puede resecarse, tarde. Y en los árboles,  
el pájaro de junio el aire que no llega  
te devoran los ojos encuentro  
que no alcanzas entre malezas—al sur 9 kms.

## GALERÍAS

Maduración del cielo    el agua    madurada.

Las manos vean    como

la costra debajo de las uñas / Virutas    ese día.

El maizal seco    dónde    empezaría todo.

¿La blusa desasida    sería    ya la ruta?

Espacio justo / cómo    en salida de baño.

De entre los maizales. El agua madurada el día justo

el día    de tu justo santo. «Por Dios ¿qué se creían?».

## TABLILLA V

Lames de la rugosa naranja en estos días.

*No haz de sentir la línea. Ves el aire.*

Ni lo que puedas      mano en el círculo agitar.

No solo el aire. Sentir      no más la línea.

Como      una naranja habrías rugosa madurado.

## COMEDEROS

Me gustaría al aire que durmieras      espejo  
de dominar fijo / ves      del murciélagos nunca  
o cerca      de la piedra. ¿Se ocupa de oscilar?  
¿Te ocupa el día? / «Pero no todas han crecido,  
esporas». «Y temor fijo. Nudos      que dominaras,  
espejo». Al aire      me gustaría acaso que durmieran.

## <<ACERCA DE UNOS MINUTOS EN EL POZO>>

Me dicen que volvieron ¿eso te dicen? Apuesto  
a que no pasa mascullan «apretado es el cielo» cerca  
ya de haberlo encontrado «¿ves? eso te obliga»  
mascullan desde el lado ventoso contra  
no sé qué tipo de elucubraciones «contener las paredes»  
o decides otro lado inconexo el mismo punto  
del que dicen volvieron en las inmediaciones siempre  
este piso apretado el lado opuesto me dicen a que no dura.

## CIUDAD MUY ADENTRO

Son ahora las casas las que bordean al río de este lado del puente, quiero decir, *de-este-lado*. Y tú seguías el brillo vespertino de las casas y (era tu frase) «las techumbres...» de lata, de fibrocén, de teja, de barro, de papel, y a veces, de mampostería.

Y seguías alguna cosa vívida del agua: una madera, un nylon, algún calzado. Cómo no emocionarse y llegar a pensar que lo más cálido sería acercarnos— lentamente—a esa mansedumbre (¿a esa mancha?) viscosa y muerta, que era el río. Pero las cosas no salieron bien y uno piensa, que no tenían por qué haber salido. Y es que las nubes no eran algo muy perfecto en esos días, que se vieran en el fondo... En verano, no lo eran.      

DANIELLE PAFUNDA

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FROM THE BOOK OF SCAB

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm just so ready to pop the screen and pour this mug of Goldschlager and Listerine out the window. I'm so ready to rip up this musty copy of *Tropic of Cancer*. I could put my boot through this speaker, through this album through the lead singer's leaded crystal skull through the drum's skull through the base drum through the skull of girls like me who get tangled up in their rooms listening to pornmetal, taking the nettles out of their faces one by steely one until that face goes completely numb. Slack. And I'm ready to go facefirst out this window into the shimmy into the scuttle into the creek I'm ready to tell you what I found in your reeking leather suitcases.

Because, really, are you really so sure about my breath and bad makeup and the gash in my leg that never completely heals? When I'm spilling out all over the patio, even in company, and later when the company has gone and the petunias cling weeping and desperate, and even later when the defunct swimming pool fills with frogs the tracks of raccoons leading back to their burrows, their dying faces ripple behind masks?

'Cause, gosh, these boys are WASPy. Gosh they're yummy and pale as their own behinds. I actually like to get my hands on them, my nails in them almost to break. I like to survey their torsos with my rigid tongue. Protestants, mostly, and one that makes porno. Plastic, their wiry builds, their larger than average cocks, their bad taste in music. The old-fashioned men's books they steal from bookstores and hot topic magazines they steal from work and list of guys who have/are bigger dicks than them and what they eat for breakfast nothing, for lunch a bag of corn chips and a cigarette, what they eat for dinner anything I have for them in a paper bag sheer from grease.

I'm moving forward with whatever regret flavored filling I can jam in my pockets. Most of them know me by name. Most of them tumble out of my bed when your car pulls in the drive, or when Gramma comes over to chastise my face, or when they get phone calls from other girls who sell weed. Boys who sell weed. Whatever.

Most of them know how to get here even though we live across town and down a dead end street and there are dogs at one end and murder at the other and the mayor and the town beautification committee out on the wrecked triangle of public space the grassy delta that looks gray from misuse that's full of blisters and feral kittens, beer cans, economy.

I'm just so ready to flip up my dress to show you the cigarette burns and the colony of sparrows that's taken over my gut. I'm ready to show you this cheap gold leaf that's plastered to my throat.

Look close if you want, and I'll show you the scar in my face where the post went through where I rigged the front and back halves of a mule, where I rigged the head and the tail of a daisy, where I circled with kohl and I lined my lips. With kohl and filled my teeth in kohl black and stitched through my cheek with medical grade gold thread and stitched through the webbing between thumb and forefinger my boyfriend's initials and then stitched over them when he left me standing outside the bakery with a bag of hash and a half-dozen crullers, I'm so stupid for sugar.

It's not that somebody loves me. Everyone loves me. Ever so briefly, then split. And I, I never, I never ever ever have to hear them puke in the bushes again. You could take a note. You could take a hint. In the future, I'll be everyone's one night, and on that thousand-and-first, I'm going to burst. Feathers, rue, volcanic ash. I'll leave them a mess that can't none clean up, but

Your Ugly Little,  
Scab

Dear Mom and Dad,

Information crowds each pitiful cell, and this moaning thing that burrows under my ribs. My teeth ache a dull prosthetic ache, they're hardly part of me. I'm like an elephant who's just become aware of the great distance between her heat and the tree. The great distance between the sob in her face and the bones of her herd. With my tusks, I'm moving something vulnerably soft across the grass. I'm lifting up the bones, those that used to be in our house, that used to be inside a person who lived in our house, who had thirty-two teeth and a lamp shaped like a tree, who had a sign on the wall that said *I'm Okay, God Doesn't Make Junk*, and a copy of *The Trumpet of The Swan*, which I kept promising to read when I was old enough to make out all the words, but by then it was boring and I only wanted to read books about girls on the lam.

I'm using a scissor to cut through the thick skin on my feet, and to nip little *vs* in my forearms, I'm dabbing up all the blood with rose petals and silk like some sort of medieval courtly promise and eventually I'll cut off what's left of my hair and maybe also cut into my most somber dress and cut up the bedclothes and cut up this letter and stitch it back together so that what it actually says is *Dear Mom and Dad, I'm a swan, all toothless and goo-hearted.*

There's something soft in the bed with me. Something whose tissue folds weakly in on itself, something parted from its mother. There's something that might be wet, but it's too warm to tell. I think it's alive, in part, and writhing slow. I'm singing to it the low cuckoo song like a counterfeit lullaby. I got it from the radio from the future from the kind of music you pay too much for off a gritty blanket in the subway station because you're standing as far as you can get from the guy with the bruised and lolling cock and the two guys who look like they plan everything together and never sleep. It's a good enough song, it's putting us both to sleep with its no matter how high you build you keep missing your chance at the Lord, something old-fashioned like that slightly heretic a low bodice and a weeping lockback blade. A nightingale at the river plays fiddle, sobs out for his family, don't sob, clean-plucked sinner, huddled in the shelter of a dripping thatch, cold. In the glade go to seed, in the sun dead lover wink like a live one.

There's something I've been meaning to tell you. About that day in the water park when everyone drowned and the only child left in the pool was me, and I'd a bloody feather tucked in my crown? I didn't mean to do it. I meant to do it well.

Your Ugly Little,  
Scab

Dear Mom and Dad,

It's the bleaching hour. I take your wedding album out on the back porch, mid-January and my breath comes out an ice huff. My skin sticks to the clasp and tears away, finger tips going white on the fake white leather fake gold scroll, and only the bleach stays liquid, coat after coat. I'm also going to bleach you in your sleep. I'm going to put a funnel between your pillows and bleach you from the underside. I'm going to feel so cheerfully possible, it's always like this, every time science makes a promise. I go reeling out into the cold with my little prayer face all tipped up and shining, I believe things. I'm sure I'll get a nosebleed that tells the future, I'm sure I'll get a sign, my hands whispered tight like snake babies and my faith giggling up a fat bubble of woozy *please*.

Or maybe that's just begging. Anyhow, I buy my own bleach, and mix up a paste that I apply to all the framed photos and all the certificates of merit. I bleach the contents of the deli drawer in the refrigerator and bleach out the inside of the Canadian V.O. bottles. I bleach the deer's head perched atop its own folded hide, and while I'm in the freezer, I bleach the ice. I bleach my breath so it'll never smell anything other than absent, I bleach each of my tears in special saucer I keep for bleach and tears, and then pour them into an atomizer, but I never actually use this on you or the boys or myself or any of my ugly old teachers who are just begging for it. I don't really want to go to jail, after all.

I write a letter in bleach and then bleach it because of all the times I said *I'll die if you don't* and all the times I used the word *beautiful* to describe what's really just a scrawny stench of a boy. I bleach his address and his phone number, which is still on my inner arm and my inner thigh in permanent marker, and on my neck and the arch of my foot, part of it on my labia, I take a bleach bath, I bleach my towels when the numbers rub off and then I bleach my bleach until I've got the clearest glass of nothing you've ever seen.

Your Ugly Little,  
Scab      ☯

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TIMOTHY LIU

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FOUR POEMS

TRUE VALUE

Why not destroy the thing you  
love most? Like the mouse  
stuck on a glue trap held

under water till the bubbles  
rising from its mouth stopped  
breaking on the surface

and you knew everyone in  
the house would get some sleep  
but you. Like the comic book

collection in a garbage can  
your father doused with  
gasoline and torched one

afternoon after church when  
he wanted to show you how  
much he loved his own god

more than you. Thirty years  
later, you'd stay up late  
at night, recollecting what

you exactly lost, searching  
on eBay for every issue  
of every title in its last known

condition, but no matter how  
hard you tried, something  
escaped you, some nuance

floating away on newsprint  
cinders caught in a breeze  
before settling back on a lawn

still waiting for you to mow  
on any other day but Sunday.  
You got on your bike and rode

to the corner five and dime  
but never spun the rack again  
with Marvel super heroes

gazing out at you. Like eyes  
of mice with faces stuck  
to the black tar, whiskers

twitching to those squeals  
echoing off a kitchen floor  
that would disturb your sleep

for years to come—the Raft  
of the Medusa some artist  
painted arresting your own

eye as you sauntered down  
a gallery on another continent  
a lifetime after any of this

actually happened. Gericault  
was the name you'd later  
recall while perusing a beat-up

monograph sent Express Mail  
by someone who bothered to  
spend more on metered postage

than your father did on your  
entire comic book collection—  
a father who let those demons

he called “Legion” loose as he  
preached to you from scriptures  
marked in red. The same father

who later sent a second-edition  
Random House unabridged  
dictionary for your twenty-first

birthday after asking you what  
you wanted, tossing in a *Collected  
Poems* by Octavio Paz, a book

you've never read collecting dust  
on your shelves. You can walk  
past a painting a hundred times

and never stop to take it in,  
then one day, you're thumbing  
through a gift sent by someone

you adore, and you have to  
work hard to keep your tears  
from splashing on a godforsaken

raft. Or you can find yourself  
kneeling in an aisle of a True  
Value where mousetraps hang—

where the eyes of super heroes  
gaze out at you and this sudden  
urge to drown them in a tub filled

with gasoline comes over you  
as you flick the wheel of a lighter—  
quickly turning pages of a book

you'll never want to read again.

## EPITHALAMION

I am standing at the altar  
ready to flee. Never  
has fidelity been so easy  
on a body that knows how to

pleasure itself. No wonder  
marriages are duller than  
grunts rising from the rear  
of shag-carpeted mini vans.

No wonder your mouth runs  
over me like a Mustang  
through a thunder storm  
with the top down, my hair

standing up on end, my tongue  
doing push ups in my throat  
as it tries to get in shape.  
Forget about bands of gold

when there are holes enough  
for every last finger. Chew me  
to the new moons. Show me  
stars only lovers can see

on the flats of their backs,  
sirens in the distance  
scraping against our ears  
like a gravedigger's shovel

left on the steps of a church.

## ROMANCE

Like an explosion in a pickle  
factory. Like an addict  
shoveling a snowbound  
driveway with a coke spoon.

Like a pair of clean socks  
he puts on only after racing  
through a thunderstorm  
with one sneaker on.

Like a bull's-eye, a beehive,  
scrambled eggs and brains  
he can only get at Nadine's  
in Salt Lake City and only  
if he orders whatever's not  
on the menu—my favorite  
daily special, my mouthful  
of crushed ice, my alpha  
and omega locomotive  
barreling down the tracks  
where I lay spread eagle  
with a thermos full of pisco  
steeped in nettles, lips  
parched, hips bruised,  
and the world all tilted,  
drunk on nuptial cocktails  
with a splash of bitters,  
no sperm facial ushering in  
the morning-after mudslide  
of his ravished looks, don't  
worry, cause I'll be just fine  
without him, without his  
two-stepping savior-faire  
whisking me off my feet  
and up the bridal stairs

to an antique four-poster  
bed missing a post, a gimp  
honeymoon spent on  
a busker's dime, a frat boy's  
beer-soaked fart, so sick  
of all of his speculative talk  
as he pumps my pussy as if  
we were the Tour de France  
on steroids, no telling what.

## ROMANCE

You went to bed not knowing  
someone would hurl a skunk  
through the window you left  
open. If you close your eyes,  
will everything simply turn  
back into a dream—the safe  
un-cracked, towel strips  
soaked in kerosene not  
stuffed down your throat  
while the neighborhood din  
dies down? How many kids  
did the newscast say it took  
to overturn that armored car  
parked outside your door,  
your body a cash machine  
waiting to be fed—the dirt  
and grease from countless  
strangers poking, demanding  
you give them what they  
want while animal control  
looks the other way, unable  
to explain why their traps  
remain un-sprung, why the sun  
looks more like a moon you  
left behind one summer night  
at camp—the sheets thrown  
off your bed while someone  
below scaled up your peaks,  
knuckles gripping crevices  
as he hoisted himself up  
and over, leaving a stench  
not even a tub of tomato juice  
could wash off is what you'd

tell your shrink if only you  
could afford it, credit scores  
damaged beyond all repair. 

CARMEN VÁSCONES

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FOUR POEMS

THE UNUTTERABLE

The unutterable  
hatred of the self  
drips down  
on to a you, unconsidered

Soft music of an owl over a blackened petal

Time does not know how to be alone.

## WHO KNOWS WHAT THAT EYE IS DOING

Who knows what that eye is doing  
or that speck or whatever  
(there are no secrets from the void)

My absence anticipates  
my presence plays it tricks

The word does not ovulate  
Resurrection abandons me

Death is not the end of the Word

Premeditation and betrayal  
offspring of the human.

## SEQUENCE OF DISGUST

Sequence of disgust:  
unburied tracks like butts from a passer-by  
he the desert  
it blinds him

You remain enraged  
(a lovely dune for landscape)

## WATER CANNOT GAZE INTO A MIRROR

Water cannot gaze into a mirror  
it floods  
it overwhelms it  
and orders it to go on floating till the crash

Pieces are buried in a fish's gills

Once in a while a fisherman catches in his net  
remains of what was once a mere reflection  
he brings it to his wife  
utterly content she breaks it up and grinds it down  
till it is just like sand outside of time  
she sticks it all like sequins  
on her only party dress

And out she goes arm in arm with her beloved

In the night her body flashes  
like an announcement of thunder and of feelings  
beneath the light of his gaze  
the helpless storm drops down  
like a lightning bolt at dawn

The silence of drawing close  
Remains of a mirage falling to the sea

Two bodies come together reflected in an abandoned dress

The solitude of the moment embraced as never before.

*Translated by Alexis Levitin* 

MATVEI YANKELEVICH

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FROM SOME WORLDS FOR DR. VOGT

XV

A new world springs up where the old world leaves off. The paw-paws are cut back to reveal a field of maize, a comfort of crows' grainy call, tongues that click. Paddles beat the heavy ribs of arched sculls.

At a yellow crossroad you decide to make a left and what happens after is history or just a job to hiss and spit at. A racket or a lever, a level and a rule. Sweat stains the page of production-oriented labor and that is enough of a difference, because it isn't disappearing in the dirt of tilled rows.

## XVI

The comfort of an arm, a screen  
a calendar, a folding chair. A moon  
fit for a king. A level of comfort  
driven down by rising barrel prices  
as empty as “everything”  
moving with the tides. “There is  
no hope for us but in meaning.”  
Said simply, but nonetheless said:  
Somehow what replaces a banal pub  
on the corner is more generic even.  
Everywhere things getting it right  
and if you walk by you can smell  
the motivation.

## XVII

The space between us is being  
monitored by satellite to judge  
the relative movements toward  
and away, but the space stays  
the same. The words "my face"  
form on your lips as if mistaken.  
In this identity—a world  
of succor; no, wait.  
You've been buffaloed  
into that face of yours  
by many mirrors. Move  
into the next available seat:  
in plain sight, a world. Is this it?  
Is this language language? No  
form in speech? Good question.  
What's locked in the furniture—  
also a body, but at a significant remove.  
Let it be a mild and coalescing body  
or politic to sate your taste for the state.

## XVIII

That world exists  
because the book  
aged not so well.  
Better to drink  
the mouth itself  
to avoid speech.  
Some kind of "k"  
sound, with no  
attachment, no  
apps, yet to become  
a speech triangle.  
Better breathe, or  
close up shop. Dream  
of triumphant  
peanut brittle.  
"Who's to say" is  
a strange way to  
put it. Better  
off not  
knowing.

## XIX

In the shape of a thing, another.  
Fire in the match. Take out  
the wood and leave it alone, or  
strike it. That is this, over there.  
You bring it closer, almost  
to the point of exception.  
The thing maps a thought, all  
mapping corrupted by the new  
world. You make an idea of it.  
Chart an object from life, cut  
it out of it. And what's that left  
in your hand?

## XX

A boat. A moving sale.  
A party undisturbed  
by invitations. A mislaid  
vocab. Price tags in the wind.  
Surveyor bending to the scope.  
Reeds looking to forms  
of potential thought. A cool breeze  
through a competitive  
model. The point of a dagger  
missing, cut off by a framing  
device made of the small gap  
between wood and linen.  
You could say "outside"  
or keep quiet.

## XXI

In the translation there is a clearing,  
in the clearing there is a spring.  
Warmth in the train. Bad news in a letter.  
Say, take this as is and make it a world.  
You look out at the stadium:  
they howl and stop howling.  
Ask them why is there orange light  
or people who care only of honor  
who won't step down? What principle  
takes precedence over the sick at heart?  
Let them sleep one last hour  
before their throats close.



## LONDRES EN TRES TIEMPOS

1. Un paseo por Londres me transporta a una latitud caliente con faroles negros y casas inmaculadas. Mis hermanas y yo vestidas de tul y de frente a un vaporizo sofocante cruzamos la calle, para toparnos con un mundo de musulmanes árabes, turcos y afganos en su cafés al aire libre hasta altas horas de la noche. Los hombres con su mazo de mujeres ocultas en telas. Las más jóvenes en jeans y burkas ajustados al cuerpo, las siluetas coquetas, felinamente maquilladas y el velo transparente en cada cabeza. Todas oteando al público.

Es la hora del té. ¿Tendré el valor de escurrirme en alguna mesa? Soy solo una anciana desnuda tratando de tomar un baño en una vía del tren.

2. En Harrods, el almuerzo del día viene decorado con una profusión de perlas. Tres mujeres musulmanas con velos de seda atraviesan los pasillos en esta tarde gloriosa. A prisa: pupilas dilatadas ceño fruncido pecho acelerado manos heladas. Es todo lo que pude observar.

En Harrods—detenida la conciencia—los empleados de seguridad velan la cabeza de su dueño reproducida en docenas de estatuas egipcias y el cadáver de su hijo junto a su princesa. Momificados.

### 3. Recorro las galerías del British Library. Un sello de ultramar

Cincuenta pesetas	Porto Rico
Veinticinco pesetas	Porto Rico

The Tampling Collection es preludio de mi seducción. Paso mi dedos por el cristal protector. Soy afortunada me digo.

En aquella vitrina exhiben un libro escrito en madera, un códice enrollado con ilustraciones iluminadas en oro. Su texto escrito en siete paneles y sellado en un cilindro. Confabulado hace más de mil años, no éramos ni tan siquiera ilusión mis abuelos, mis padres, mis hermanas, mis hijos y yo.

Un pequeño letrero blanco con tipos en negro pudiera señalar que enterrados en la plaza mayor, los documentos fueron encontrados en un cofre de madera. Debidamente cubiertos por una tela gruesa que ha servido de aislador natural, los documentos destacan que las fuerzas invasoras se comprometen a devolver la plaza, cuando los ríos se dibujen fidelísimos en los mapas incrustados en el marmol venerado, lento, sollozante, fiel.

¿Y libros sobre plantas medicinales? Una profusión de libros ilustrados a mano. Cada página es una explosión de trazos precisos con sus claroscuros pertinentes y testimonios de pétalos, hojas, pistilos, tallos, raíces, semillas. Fijo la vista en una ilustración de un sirviente negro en tuxedo y guantes blancos sirviendo una taza de té. Un escalofrío recorre mi pecho. ☯

CARIDAD ATENCIO

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CINCO POEMAS

*Me sobrepongo porque no me puedo sobreponer.*

*Mi vida la enderezo con un látigo,  
otra tensión, otra tranquilidad,  
si devuelvo la distancia que acorto,  
si me levanto y corto algo de mí.*

*He llegado a esta hora arrastrando mi cuerpo por todos los momentos.*

*Sirvo la sangre herida sin huella material.*

*La historia que me arranco ¿Cómo la tomarás?*

*Si ya se ha impuesto el agua que yo he unido.*

*Surge la madre que retiene por siempre*

*a su hijo en el vientre*

*Y decide vivir, mientras se ahoga.*

*Para Lina de Feria*

Habrá una torcedura si inclino la cabeza.  
No hay cambio ni camino,  
sólo dinero que se irá en conseguir dinero.  
Se oía mucho.  
“A partir de ahí se marchita formalmente”  
o una reja de hierro que da a un pasillo  
iluminado y vacío  
como las serpientes de la suerte.  
Encerrado en el cuerpo de la verdad,  
partido dentro.

La noche hermosa sobre otro veneno. No respondas por ti, que la razón es una bestia helada. Descubre tu cabeza, obligada a llevar esos collares falsos Sin vocación llego a ser su enemigo. La osadía de mi reclamo solo obtendrá el responso que castiga la severa falta de un niño pequeño. Convertida en la piedad del mundo cuando nadie se apiadará de ti. 'Si las raíces dan contra la roca', acaricia y protege a tu verdad. Tú la has legitimado.

Mi cabello cortado adornará mi silla, y sus hebras más largas darán indicio a mis caminos. Con el traje de un hombre y una tijera en mano se esperará el milagro. Busca en mí. *Llámame por mi nombre más profundo. Para quienes amo quiero llamarme*

Dicen las damas penetrantes que soy el horcón de la casa. Quien más sensible a su desesperación soporta los desplantes inconscientes del hijo o los irracionales del padre y el marido. El horcón, que se quiebra en las puntas para abrirse, y aún sostener en hilacha, pero imbatible el centro. El tronco inocente y ancestral donde alcanzo los restos de la noche.



RICHARD DEMING

---

FOUR POEMS

LAZARUS CHORALE

The people in the street clamor for levitation.

To be sent for is not the same  
as invitation.

Who will speak for whom? Let them be, the dead.  
Or, consider, what loneliness isn't enough  
to keep a stone in place.

To come forth is to come back and know the cold,  
cold water rushing all night over  
empty cans in the alleyway.

This body is no bed, and the fingernails continue to grow.  
Beneath the noonday sun, the lips are still blue  
and hunger hollows the eyes.

A mother drags her children inside. Shadows  
tattoo the cracked pavement.

Let the curtain rise on the third day.  
That theater, today, solitary  
and cruel as  
any darkened space,  
the chairs all velvety plush.

We'll make our getaway clean,  
desperate.

Fade me to black.  
The next trick's all yours.

## LANGUAGE POEM

*for Joel Bettridge*

It is raining. Outside the window, that is to say, *beyond the glass*. Where else? There is a tree outside the window. It is raining into the tree. This is not something we say. But it is true.

I think to ask, *what is the first word you remember remembering?* Perhaps I'll text you.

The door closes behind my wife as she leaves to do some shopping. I hear a voice, or think I do, say these words as I read them over, and my throat muscles move. I cannot feel them, but I know this to be the case. Or so I have read. I do not feel them, these muscles, as muscles, unless I have been screaming, which I do not do often. Enough. I worry: *it doesn't count*. What is a real voice? Start there. This is my real voice, the woman said. To the letter.

To be grammatical is to be the same, or, I want to say, similar—as when it is raining outside and the television screen reflects the wall, the window, the water rushing from plugged gutters and draining against the sill. Then the television comes on—I pushed a button—and it is raining, perhaps across the plains in a John Ford film. Inside, outside.

I write a word into my palm, then close my fist. The house is empty and calm. No one comes when I call.

## THE PSYCHIC LIVES OF ANIMALS

Now it is raining.

There's a clarity that makes so long  
a life. Again, then, the outside-it-all  
and a guarantee

of some exquisite  
curse to hate the days you live,  
hate them as you live them,  
that is, the manner of how you spend  
the hours. In the deep grass,

the quiet animals: their eyes slow  
and narrow beneath yellow lids.  
There, one finds no home.

My back sways beneath  
a weight of memory, what

comes with the dream of the lost brother  
and the disappointed light of late February.

The fragile bones of birds' wings  
foretell a sleepy anger  
in their own good time.

By now,  
there's nothing to summon back.  
The arrow is pointed skyward.  
Every angle is terrifying.

## PENTECOST

*For Leland De la Durantaye*

Afternoon is a Ouija board pointing *yes* or *no*. Then,  
on their own, letters

form some name,  
a friend's, perhaps, one flown somewhere  
across the sea. A phone rings and rings and rings.

The air fills with pollen and the new leaves  
of Linden trees.

And when a lake—this lake in fact—is a vague blue  
and the sailboats almost inconsolably

happy,  
when the sunlight's  
so relentlessly itself, nothing either moves or  
vanishes  
when the small voice of a mourning dove  
empties into the landscape falling through  
space for hours and hours,

who's to say there will be no going back or second thoughts? 

SUSAN BRIANTE

---

THREE POEMS FROM *THE MARKET WONDERS*

OCTOBER 8—THE DOW CLOSES UP 11006

In the dream I visit Newark, which is park, brown brick castle, cathedral with fog, with a body of water somewhere beyond, a shuttered lighthouse, brown-stone where my mother grew up. You can linger in a city for years, lose a partner, change careers, and come back to recognize nothing but street names.

My dream Newark looks nothing like real Newark, but I know its landmarks.

I meet a poet who is frail and gray-haired and won't stop talking in red skirt, yellow blouse, carrying a canvas bag out of which pieces of construction paper stick out, and nothing she says makes sense. The young man with her offers a despairing glance, and we follow her past lighthouse, lawn, fog into a building down cream-colored halls through a door in the back of a closet to a room where students sit around a seminar table. She pulls out a yellow notebook, takes her seat at the head and begins:

*Always a story, no matter how avant-garde you live.*

## DECEMBER 18—THE DOW IS CLOSED

I am no longer certain about the origin of things. My child does not sleep. So when I recalled the blond haired woman in the red dress playing a ukulele and my recognition—yes that's how you learn to play, with a humble fret board, smaller neck—I could not remember whether I had seen her on television or in a dream

nor could I find the bit in *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas* about Picasso and Stein turning a corner in Paris to see the camouflaged tank; Picasso stammering something about it is we who have created that. This was less than ten years after Matisse showed his "Femme au chapeau" to the scratch and hiss of Paris. Picasso's recognition before the tank was aesthetic not systemic.

But mostly I was interested in that turning

or the story about Petit Jean on a fishing boat who turns to a young Lacan and points to the glimmer of a floating sardine tin. *Do you see it?* He gestures to the object sparkling on the water's surface. *Well, it doesn't see you.*

Ten years ago when I left New York I gave up the guitar, so when I first saw the blonde-haired woman (wherever I saw her) I thought that I should have started with a smaller instrument. But as I watched more closely I became aware of her intricate fingering, the finest needlepoint, and I realized it was not a matter of ease but of tune.

An instrument might be a string of equations, technique, procedure, transaction.

My copy of the *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein* comes stamped with the name / address *Robin Jennifer Pogrebin, Box 3472, Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520* next to which I wrote in green pen: *Susan Briante, 202 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. #23, Brooklyn, NY 11211*

in an apartment where I lived only 2 months. The impulse was commemorative but the act was an accounting

202+2+23+11211=11438

$$1+1+4+3+8=17$$

$$1+7=8$$

Number 8 carries the energies of success, material wealth, abundance, authority and power, infinity, karma, the challenges of greed, avarice, and holding onto old things.

JULY 8

In the stop-start of morning, I look to take leaps, find a place to hold the child.  
Her accounting is small, and her morning is a tide that sand-shifts like traffic.

I wish we had Schuyler to meet us at the beach to add this up and turn away like  
gulls or waves, or Olson to show us how this shift made land for our house, and  
what's underneath before even the continents splintered apart.

It's not all mind, bodies

are different where they land and what they can do this deep in a year this far  
towards shore, this close to traffic and waves.

First there is a moment, then a poem. A man hangs a ladder from utility wires,  
another sits on his front steps to watch; over the beach an airplane hauls an  
advertisement for a hospital.

An invisible calculus always exists beyond the page, a second story

leaf tremble, that view exactly with the powerline running through

I want you to see it *here* where I stop writing because my daughter calls to me  
from another room. ☺

ALAN GILBERT

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FIVE POEMS

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

A satellite flees its orbit  
to hide behind the moon,  
bending its messages  
around a more obscure tidal pool.

There's a rip buried in the fabric.  
Friday means pizza for lunch at school.  
Some nights we sleep on the roof.  
Insomnia also agitates during naps.

We haven't seen a tree for days  
as the clouds fold over us  
and the carburetor starts to stutter  
with soot combed from these wishes.

A knife slices through the center,  
spilling sprinkles all over.  
We'll move before you tell us not to,  
taking the quinine and newsreels.

It's the equivalent of waking up  
in a ditch beside the highway,  
big trucks rumbling overhead.  
But I still won't miss the view.

## ORDERING OFF THE MENU

All this talk about home isn't getting us any closer,  
like the thread of you  
I'm always weaving  
while playing chase with the vowels  
of what goes away.

Maybe that's why I collect shiny things like a crow  
and specialize in breath-spray acrobatics  
on a filthy mezzanine nicknamed the big sniffer.

Yet even our careful attentions won't keep the meat  
from sticking to the grill  
or answer the questions a soldier asks  
before pulling the trigger.

Butterflies turn black with oil drifting through currents  
that build a nest in our bloodstream sucking  
on a synthetic yummy.

I don't have a magazine rack in my bathroom,  
just a framed picture of you  
dressed up as a Dreamsicle  
that unzips in front of creamy.

You are what you eat runs the cliché,  
and if cranberries flourish in the front yard,  
then it might be a bog.

I get head static,  
both thumbs pushing down on the ignition  
while water slowly fills up the legroom  
of too many commands overwhelming the server we learned  
to play on the piano with little fingers.

Love flows back if you give it a chance.  
That snag is called the past.

Someone held up a bank  
with a bouquet of flowers.

A dented brass band licks the taste of sweet jealousy  
off a mouthpiece that keeps us reaching for  
the wet wipes  
we just got a crush on.

## BREAKING AND ENTERING

It's like being at the office  
when you're not around  
or else I'm neatly stacking  
prosthetics in a closet running  
the length of a food trough.  
We hand crank the generator  
when the electricity starts to flicker  
outside the hospital walls.  
It's false to imagine the body  
immune—just ask the orphans.  
I know that place, with its  
faux-grainy, dark-wood paneling  
and famine on the TV.  
Every Friday night  
the Clanging Bedpan Band  
plays there for free.

The dog looks eager to march  
in a parade featuring used  
barbecue sauce brushes.  
Where the refrigerator truck  
backs up to the dumpster  
we make temporary rooms  
with cable box pomade.  
Exhaust fills the staircase  
like an obese panda bear,  
like when we have trouble breathing,  
watching life-size spinal-  
adjustment dioramas sell  
briskly at a science museum  
gift shop's after-Christmas sale.

From the warehouse to the White Castle,  
from the Ferris wheel to the people mover,  
this is a love poem  
as smooth as a missing tooth.  
Sunlight fades the book's cover.  
At least we have some control  
over the heat this year,  
and won't need to warm  
the kitchen with a microwave oven.  
Let the red-faced warbler finish singing—  
it's been known to attack  
spontaneously, swelling retinas.  
Curious gardeners teach  
the art of tending; we're still  
obsessed with endings.

## REMIND ME AGAIN LATER

The wedding reception got moved to the parking lot  
after the fire department blocked the exits.

I was out walking a poodle and a collection of shards serving  
the demons of our fathers.

Lottery tickets for children include a scratch 'n' sniff feature.

I promise the next line won't rhyme with salads,  
and that I'll play nice for as long as you'll let me,  
because being a writer means sitting inside  
on beautiful days like this

after hiding your eyes all night with a towel.

There's a sadness to the enigmatic,  
and some hurt feels flinty like the Neolithic  
or pinches in the ribs like a well-tailored pantsuit.

The narrow road followed the dairy farm's old stone walls  
while you rubbernecked a Cheetos® spill at your feet.

Store clerks moved the fresh-cut flowers inside during a tornado.

We know lots about the gully  
but not much about the ditch,  
and this unexpected bathrobe fetish has nothing to do  
with a change in seasons,  
but rather with whatever curls around your knees that isn't aquatic.  
Even rusted machines pulse at the right attunement,  
alongside everything living and the unassimilable memories  
forming lesions on the brain.

Yet I've guessed wrong before,  
watching the forests disappear, the leaves clinging tightly to green  
just like me lying down in the pasture  
you draw lightly with your fingers.

The coffeemaker did its best impression of a steam locomotive  
before wheezing its way off the kitchen counter.

I was busy chasing a bat and so I barely noticed,

animal lover that I am.

There are small histories in the glassware at the bar with its,  
“Oh, no, not these guys again!”  
That must be why I keep going back.  
A small star peeks out from behind your ear  
where I imagine putting it next to this poem,  
    like a plastic flower confusing a beehive  
    or one left at the graves of our teachers.  
This time, how about if you carry the box of donuts,  
and I’ll scatter breadcrumbs behind us as we go?

## PENALTY IMPOSED FOR EARLY WITHDRAWAL

The recording slightly degrades every time we play it.  
That may be why death and rhetoric has a nice ring.  
Money is the oil, not the engine, as a truck vacuums  
raw sewage through a thin fiberglass tube fastened  
like a doll's neck while pigeons watch from a rooftop.

Don't believe me? TiVo it. Still, it's impossible  
to go back. So what happens when the system doesn't  
move toward entropy? Failure isn't only personal—  
all you have to do is check the statements, the white  
noise in publics, the endless whacks at a steel piñata.

We scraped debris off the lens with our fingernail,  
leaving a different set of incisions. The electric version

is just as dirty. 

POEMAS

HOMBRES Y MUJERES DESNUDOS

Hombres y mujeres desnudos

serán nudo

nudo serán

hombres y mujeres

desnudos

con el alma en el viento

y

la luna blanca

y sus huesos se elevarán

limpios

claros

y

limpios los huesos

desaparecerán

en el viento

y

la luna blanca

con codos y pies

lamidos de hojas

de hojas de miel

que tañen el sueño

Uno serán hombres y mujeres desnudos  
y se hundirán en el mar en nudo para elevarse

aunque los amantes se pierdan  
sin que el amor s

*e*

pues hombres y mujeres DESNUDOS  
entre los pliegues  
y  
el oleaje  
los arrojará  
a las playas  
playas  
serán NUDO  
de la aorta del mar

y hombres y mujeres desnudos  
yacerán vivos  
retorciéndose en hamacas de lino  
con el torso amarrado a la ternura  
sin quebrarse pues persiste la fe  
la fe untada  
a  
labios  
en sangre

donde sólo la muerte muere

y los cuervos no gritarán  
ni las olas romperán en las playas  
ni la lluvia soplará su agua  
y las cabezas caerán bajo el martirio  
como flores abiertas al sol

y hombres y mujeres desnudos yacerán vivos

vivos para morir su muerte

muerte

donde sólo

la muerte muere †

## C A S A

Yace mi casa  
entre árboles y niebla  
decanta sus muros blancos  
hacia el sedal  
del horizonte.

Sus ventanas  
como lagos sediciosos  
reflejan  
el infinito celaje  
e inducen el trinar  
de ciertos muebles  
—ellos celan  
entre sus negras ramas  
secretos de papel - ol vid O.

Afloran los libros  
como hierba viva  
*des*  
*plie*  
*gan*  
cierta eléctrica conciencia  
o aguas viejas. Al lado  
el rostro de los cuadros  
desafía al techo

luego se vuelve hacia la estrella  
que anuncia el nacimiento  
del niño muerto.

Mientras...

el piano se pregunta  
si alguno sobrevivirá el  
Mañana.

Cada silla apunta  
hacia el follaje oblicuo  
guardada  
y humo  
de voces extintas.

Entre alfombras y maderas  
posan los colores,  
  
eructan su halo a la terraza  
ahí el barandal activa  
  
una ruta viciosa.

*—Tras masacrar al destino  
el Oriente de fuego*

*enamora—*

*enardece el crujir de las puertas  
cuyos goznes anuncian  
la “última lluvia”  
lluvia de polvo llorado.*

**¡Oh** casa! rendida de

*es*

*colt*

*arm*

*e*

hacia el **insomnio** solapado  
del **invierno amotinado** ✗

## LIRIO EN LA NUBE

Vela

la Palabra  
a los pies de la cama  
hiere  
con su espectro  
lo impúdico de la mente  
~profiere  
con sílabas silentes  
el adiós~  
y con el átomo de la letra  
siembra  
en la entraña inmortal  
la daga  
de la corola celeste

Con su brazo de acero  
irrumpe en el firmamento  
de la sábana  
coloca un lirio  
en la nube  
de la almohada  
roza  
con su labio  
el destino y liba  
con su aliento

todo

veneno

El cuerpo      nauseabundo

enamora

a

la

muerte

besa      el arrullo del hielo

con su lengua

entumecida

que sigilosa      guarda

el sino      del tiempo

Inerte

el invierno se tiende

sobre el cuerpo      in

des

ci

frable

siembra

en la expectación de la cama

su nota      última

~una vez canto.

## PESPUENTE

He tejido mis ojos con paisajes  
con musgo y noche los he tejido  
trenzando un pespuente hacia los labios  
que silban al pétalo del estruendo

He bordado mis ojos con tiempo  
con algas y astros los he bordado  
haciendo un revés en la garganta  
que amordaza al clamor del gemido

Oh astros—paisajes—algas  
pétalo zurcido al precio del estruendo  
que encarna al rictus de la estrella  
sojuzgada en el pecho del destello

Oh noches de estruendo y ojos  
cosidos al tiempo del ensueño  
que tiembla entre tus párpados  
hasta el piélago de su respiro

Pespuente de noche y musgo  
oquedad de astro enardecido  
cuyas lunas hilvanan al fantasma  
de mi alma baleada con tu savia.

HORA SOLAR

*Hora memoria*

: despliega sus párpados y  
el pensar azaroso c o n c e r t a el  
electrónico ensueño  
; Canónica cae de rodillas  
sobre el tórax de la almohada  
¿almohada del diario rezo?

*Hora que horma ojos en divino lienzo  
honra a la alondra puntual*

*que  
da la hora  
la horca de la hora  
bañada en sangre  
sangre*

## **o naufragio interior**

de su esqueleto

: culto a la hora sin minuto.

*Hora nido* cosechado en la espina  
e  
s  
pi  
na  
de los excesos del cactus  
fantaseando su esperma  
como un soplo piraña : su propia tierra  
tierra  
u honra~epitafio  
del Tiempo extinto.

*Hora espiga* adereza la mesa

e m i

gr a

a la cabeza del poeta

une la voz de su verso  
que destilan a sedosas~holandas  
que sucumbe a la tormenta.  
el fraseo solitario

## C A O S

*Caos*

vigor de la noche  
de la noche impudica y robada  
que en su andar sonámbulo esconde  
el temblor último • profanO

*Noche*

que en su garbo arrastra su desgarbo  
mimetismo  
de fuerzas perdidas  
enjambre de anhelos que acechan  
un Presente • sin Futuro

*La tierra*

preñada de abismos  
se embriaga al caer  
en su vacío  
donde a u g u s t o  
el tímido silencio  
evoca el garfio de lo estéril  
~ salitre de mudo canto ~

*Los cerebros*

antes prodigiosos  
fecundos

en su propia inmensidad  
fueron privados de ese milagro  
perdieron su carne • semilla y polen  
pobladores de mares...

¡ *Oh Caos !*

monstruo del sino  
preñado ahora de / polvo  
donde el presente NO comienza  
donde el *Tiempo*  
ha colgado su sapiencia  
prohibiendo al Hoy su Mañana.

*La naturaleza*

• SOLA •  
viste de luto  
entierra el *cantar* de sus mares  
se enreda en la selva capilar  
de su íntima y agónica conciencia ✕

## POZO DEL ECO

Eco crujiente  
en tu espiral de signos  
vibrando a fuego y movimiento  
barres el aire  
cabalgado por el viento y  
te aferras al ramaje del encino

¿Será una gaviota quien te emite  
o el Tiempo  
que se ancla a tus pulmones?

Eco que silbas  
al orar las emociones  
susurrando al cielo ~que gime  
en abandono~  
instante en que la estrella aventurera  
imita el danzar  
de la golondrina ciega

¿Dónde perdiste tu campanada  
de poema? ¿Dónde quedó el vigor  
de tu placer secreto?

Lento caminas hacia la cresta  
de la nube

que con su oreja lee ~ absorbe  
tu piel de escamas  
ahí vibras                  con pulso  
de espíritu histérico        y  
jadeando caes enérgico  
                                    al ojo marítimo

Te habrás desviado hacia el ladear  
de la penumbra  
donde el pozo    que te contuvo  
jamás                  se llenará  
y escoltarás    el vuelo  
del águila inquieta  
                                    hasta encontrar   el labio  
que te parió.    ☩

PETER RAMOS

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## LORD BALTIMORE

### I.

Here begins the journey to bread,  
in summer; the object apparently  
is to sweat. Midtown,  
late July, to rise and rinse and boil  
instant coffee with the first cigarette. Tall windows  
open, over ninety with traffic  
already strong below. To work:  
    to climb up  
a ladder with brush and pail  
and wooden stir-stick and stroke  
two coats of Rust-Oleum on the broiling tin roof,  
dizzy with fumes and eye-stinging  
heatglare. Sweat of something  
productive to do, some dull specific task. Touching up  
the curbsides of the Exxon  
with toxic white, aluminum sign  
for gas prices too hot to touch, or hauling  
out the garbage bags, coffee dripping,

restocking the cooler—opening crates  
of soda cans or eggs in blue Styrofoam.  
Then back outside, light- and heat-shocked, with a whining  
mower that chews up the morning, spewing out  
the green or collecting it in canvas, dead grass  
in paper sacks turning to pot liquor,  
a cool garage with oil slick floor.  
The bagged sandwich at noon with water  
gulped from a plastic gallon-jug, a four-minute  
filter-less Camel. Or yawning between the lunch  
and dinner shift—empty lot beyond  
the diner's windows, heatwaves,  
a shimmering horizon. To rise  
or sink  
back down to the middle  
of the middle class or lower: dusk,  
a sunset pink with mono carbons,  
telephone bills and car loans without  
mentioning food.

## II. WISDOM TEETH

Something had to give that summer  
and did—as you pissed away paychecks and woke  
sweating each day. Broken glass  
on the pavement and knee-high weeds. By noon  
no one, not even the homeless, got caught  
on those sidewalks but you, already on your way  
to the Mount Royal Tavern. Then home again  
to sleep, your two-room single strewn  
with greasy wrappers and tall-boys, still  
a hundred degrees by evening.

You painted an old professor's porch  
for rent. In June, you'd seen your mother  
with suitcase descending for good the stairs  
of your childhood home, your father at the table's head,  
mute, dazed and undone. Simmering and grim  
on a four-month bender—your girlfriend  
away—you ranted till they disconnected  
the phone and withheld your TA.

In August you went under, toward something  
like sleep, nitrous oxide's "twilight," the surgeon's whisper  
booming your ear, rubber fingers and hard instruments  
pressed out your drool, and then a crunching sound, cranial-deep,  
like a phonebook ripping apart. They stuffed you  
with cotton, and there, when you came to, fresh  
from New York was a girl you'd almost marry  
caressing your cheek, the blinded room, her parents',  
air-conditioned for sleep, as your mind finally dulled  
under Percocet's liquid heaven. Why go there now, why hold on  
to those bloody molars, your ingrown and bone-aching  
twenty-something teeth?

### III.

*I'm goin' where the sun keeps shining*

Set up the turntable & stacked  
LPs against the wall  
Hammered nails & hung pictures  
Cleaned the icebox  
Scrubbed the toilet  
Opened up the bright windows to breathe  
Imagined possibilities in the blank room  
No one around, the streets empty

All day free & alone  
In the paid-for apartment two flights up  
Flat broke with plenty of light

*through the pourin' rain*

#### IV.

Night Sounds: Preston St.—  
sharp pieces  
of human voice, unscripted and wind-  
blown *Fuck You, faggot*  
tire squeal—hand grenade bits  
exploding up to my dark apt.  
window, the gentle  
evening fragged.

#### V.

A crushed cigar in my pocket, dried blood  
crusting my upper lip, turntable kicked,  
the record skipping under loud fluorescence  
bottles broken, crackling with static,  
refrigerator open, the dripping plastic racks,  
kitchen light someone left burning

piss-green and buzzing all night, in dreams  
I come to the intersection  
of two county roads, Doug Errington's car  
cut in two by a drunk, Doug's body hurled  
burning, already dead, thirty feet  
then gets up to walk, his broken figure smoking,  
traffic lights going on and on, the left rear wheel  
of the flipped car spinning.

## VI.

Baltimore City Waste-  
Water Treatment Center  
or brick shithouse, where they separate  
out the solid sludge and run  
what's liquid and left through cement  
channels of bleach and chlorine filters.  
I ask our guide who limps  
a little, on whose button-  
down blue shirt the name of Joseph  
is stitched in soiled white: what's  
the matter. "Oh that's my back,"  
he says. "They put a steel rod there  
in place of my spine." Then, turning confident-  
ial and speaking out the side  
of his mouth, "I don't mind  
too much 'cept I'm afraid in some rain  
storm the lightening might hit me  
and solder my asshole shut."

\* \* \*

we were atop  
a water tower  
on the compound

in the icy blue  
cloud puffs  
miles off it was  
an open place  
to breathe above  
that wretched summer

## VII.

Owe rent to your discredit.

Come home from last call to stare down the dust clumps and mice droppings.

Hear your mother asking over the phone in a tiny, wavering voice: are you *okay*?

Fear the dusk and wait, as long as possible, until the very last crumbs of sunlight go before you switch on the hallway lamp. You're all out of liquor, the spring still far off.

Smoke until the ashtrays disappear.

Tuna can and six pack dinner. View of empty factories and smokestacks, chemical sludge, the sunset bruised with propane.

Absolutely broke. Waking up, half drunk, the body jerks and stutters, an old machine run out of oil.

Home by 5 o'clock and straight to the rail. Enough jack tonight to feed the jukebox and get all wrecked.

Own a Brother typewriter with keys blackened from snuffed-out butts.

What is this death drive disguising itself as a dream of working class cheap rent and can of Stroh's beer love affair in you?

Cheat on yourself.

Storm-front moving in over red vacancy signs and telephone lines drifting uneasily, the sky one huge moody forehead, occasional bursts throughout the week with scattered blackouts...

Dream of your own dark blood in the toilet, then wake up in a cold sweat and vomit.

## VIII.

To let yourself go  
down, to the dust,  
to the whiskey-drowned

afternoon and come back singing  
the soft luxurious chorus

of failure,  
melodious,  
mellifluous Fuck Up,

warm and final  
dirt on the lid: Lap it up, sucker,

hard syrup  
down a dead tree. Sweet dreams and weep

for this holiday, this dull  
and frightening sunset.

## IX. OUT OF THE CITY, ROUTE 40 WEST, NORMANDY SHOPPING CENTER

Fired. Lose a turn. Move back to your childhood home.  
Shop and daydream here—the old supermarket out in the acreage.  
New fluorescent tubes over the isles, cans repeating  
back to your grandmother, in Modesto, Marin County, Bel Air,  
your mother beside her after the war  
in saddle shoes, tomatoes and grapefruit  
glistening new planets, the parquet floor become  
checkerboard—green and white—linoleum  
refrigerated meat case gurgling and packed  
with lurid purple cuts wrapped in cellophane, clean

mama's boys gesture and smile beside the carts.  
The manager notes the specials on the intercom,  
an Eisenhower figure with glasses, shiny dome  
above us, bald benevolent god.

## X.

Cooler here. When July and August  
ground Baltimore's industry still, for years  
before AC units or central air, the rich came.  
Out of the city's grime: to kudzu, beech  
and staghorn sumac, birdsong, shaded white  
gravel roads (a single empty glinting  
in the grass.) That's Mencken's over there:  
his modest summer "cottage," cement pineapples, grey  
with lichen at the driveway's entrance. Historic

Ellicott City below. Turn of the century's  
church and schoolhouse, abandoned mill.  
Repainted homes, the flowered wallpaper  
peeling and "tea-stained," green carpeting,  
rotten banister spindles, the rain gutters  
rusted through, dead mice in the furnace. Here  
they're rich no more.

When April returns, dandelions, roots  
break up the driveways. Black seeds and kindling  
under new daffodils, then weeping cherries bloom,  
lose their petals like confetti. Come late summer,  
the junked Camero in someone's yard  
sinks deeper into goldenrod.

## XI.

Part time job: move ahead two spaces.

Dusk. The downtown banks and department stores turn to cotton candy. Happy Hour—a hundred bars per mile

Mt. Royal Tavern: stale, dusty and dim—19<sup>th</sup> century whale harpoons crossed over the bar, tarnished chandeliers and glass wet rings on the bartop, inexpensive dark and amber draft.

Club Charles: 1920s black, a gothic art nouveau, jukebox colored Charleston flapper, red bartop over checked floor. Neon birthbath martini in the window, white with green olive

Dead End and Warf Rat down by the pier—a metal piss trough around the bar from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tall green refrigerator, glass and steel, beer-bottle shaped and filled with beer.

Bad service. Good ambience. John Stevens for tap, for steamed and seasoned shrimp, heavy on the Old Bay.

The Depot: lots of TVs. One needn't speak. Or Hotel Belvedere's Owl Bar. Warm suds and backwash, wet tables. 1:40's Last Call.

Lights On. Closing time. The mind finally green:

*I like this place,  
the cheap  
are real drink here. Hell fire.  
Let's get all wacked-out on devil's dandruff—  
Pack elephant guns!  
Pack up your bazookas!*

XII.

Swaggering out of the Midnight Galaxy, you and I  
unzip to pull ourselves out

between thumb  
and forefinger right on time:

the home-going crowd's just letting out  
at the Charles Theatre—older couples

nestling together in fur, in brushed black,  
begin to disperse under the young budding cherries—

branches tipped with green, unclenching  
nubs beneath the lamps, repeating

down Charles St. How we sway and cackle, boasting  
and booze-cocky, nearly six feet tall.

Soon enough they've gone  
back to their houses, to private

domestic light. No need to rush; we were young!  
Open days, the nights liquored and shrill

or blasted, blown out. There was time—to curse  
and let it spray, enough

to mark the filthy sidewalks  
in long, steaming, exclamatory streaks.

### XIII.

Lord Baltimore, not Poe  
but sunk unpublished poet, a mere scribbler  
and *bon vivant*, headpiece cracked & knocked  
askew. By noon, he's just another  
dipshit local drunk.

### XIV. BOOZE MOP HAIKU

—after Bob Bradley

We're noodles of poverty.  
Ramen Dynasty  
Pawns our ditties for dinner.

Live large  
Tu (fat) Fu  
In ancient China!

### XV.

She helped me move out, a one-bedroom  
walk-up with claw-foot tub, the living-room  
& dinette in one. It was 2 pm, the middle  
of June, no AC unit and both of us  
breathless, up and down, until, my junk packed  
away in the car, illegally parked, we stripped  
bright, bald naked and fucked  
  
in the empty apartment—the wood floors  
glaring, sunlight jittering  
through open windows, a beautiful young brunette

with pink areola who couldn't love  
me—nor I her—both of us  
sweating, frantic, furiously holding on  
to each other in our twenties.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lacerations and back rubs or silly  
numb-drunk in the bathtub  
thick summer nights, that gushing  
release we begged

against her father's rage  
my parents' divorce, the rough sex  
such desperate coupling,  
exhausted and rung  
back to the living when the TV  
channel signed off. Breathless midnight.  
Damp sheets. Post-coital  
prickly heat.

## XVI.

How we shone in that place  
then, freshly devirgined, stars pulsing, slow

to go out.

How pretty now, when you blur your eyes:

The white core pops  
green jewelry glittering down

black glass, crackling  
as it fades to cinder, to shadow—  
trash.

*skippin' over the ocean like a stone*

## XVII.

I got out.  
Walked for years, the flames  
eating my skin  
less and less, dumb and dazed,  
afraid but steadyng, toward no place  
I'd ever known.

## XVIII.

Postcard to some future

Dear one, my only  
hope: sweeping up  
by the plate-  
glass window

in the empty café's  
flaring, you'll come to  
know pipes  
hushing down

their sockets, clocks  
turning minimum  
wage, without sex  
drive or past.

## XIX.

Staggering home each night  
after closing-time, collapsing

into the bed, the sofa, and one time  
even the bathtub, poor broken  
record, you.

What were you looking for?  
That's easy—love, but the only thing

you remember now was the last Friday morning  
of winter months, going out for coffee, the hangover

still throbbing your skull and seeing on either side  
of Saint Paul St.: evictions!

By their own cheap sofas, gold shoes  
and negligee, spilled boxes of glass  
jewelry in the gutter—the Call-Girls,

transvestites, tall and elegant still  
but without their wigs, in ratty bathrobes

out without time to put on makeup, suddenly  
forced to wander the streets in broken pumps—

a few in slippers—breasting the cold bright  
morning, all of them, moving on

chin-high and stiff-lipped. And you, dumb  
and open-mouthed: how

did they ever make it?  
You never knew. Those people  
suffered and survived

or died in other galaxies. But you  
lived alone, small and terrified

of shadows and of yourself when each night  
the evening in you tipped  
his dark hat and grinned. 

VALERIE MEJER

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FROM NO REPUBLIC

THE HUMAN CONDITION

What dissolves is the vision, the sad day of the ape.  
She's forgotten the fire, the humid land, the hills like dunes  
of a country that's become uprooted. A heart with houses. In the dream  
the ape passes the time hugging himself  
and is little like what one can see through the window. One day the sea,  
ten years later the field. But it's the same house  
with tap broken and water dripping on the roof,  
with its floorboards of old wood, with that copy of the Goya  
where the sky couldn't be finished. The ape knows the terrace roof,  
he's been scaring pigeons as the sun rises.  
And there the great sphere has frightened him,  
the immense orbit that bears the complete rotation of what's sea and field,  
field and sea. His eyes shine like mercury  
but it's impossible to meet them directly. I know it  
even in dream. I return to feed him and leave a dish  
that sparkles and the ape waits for me to leave before approaching. The moon  
is the only thing for him. He can't talk but in the dream he says this  
and perhaps sings it. He wants to take a bath, to dress, to take

a girlfriend to the Alameda. He wants to be a man. He wants to be able to end his life, to want to end it. He wants to see eye to eye and walk hand in hand. We've slept close to one another, and one of us shivers from the cold. Through a window dawn rises over the sea, through the other, over the field. Later the birds will keep quiet and no one that looks outside will have the willpower to stand, to cry, to wash the dishes. The monumental back of the ape will be an unsurmountable wall and the light in the dish a moon in decline.

## THE BURNING

For a moment the other planets mean nothing.  
The fire had covered the page. The glowing orange face of the monster.  
The little feet of the girl point toward her destiny. To sentences  
that will soon be ashes. We from the South will say *The book that was.*  
The fire that shines on the rippling skin of the tiger.  
The book that in some part mentions a tiger born in captivity.  
And on her body, the vase of her bones crowned  
by two sharp breasts. Sentences that corrected  
what she never thought of.  
Words that thought about what not thinking was. And to be a sex.  
The monster embraced the words that moved the tiger's body  
and hers. Latin America and her anonymous bones. A girl that discovers  
evil as if it existed in a pure state. Like oxygen.  
The sex, the oxygen, the tiger from the zoo, her ribs  
and small feet pointed towards the destiny of the entire South:

where does it burn

the books that thought

what not thinking was. Southward. The poor  
zoo. The book that was. Words that correct. Like oxygen.  
The tiger in captivity. To think about what is not a thought. It burns.  
Evil in a pure state. Words that mend. To never see the sky  
and let the planets mean little. Latin America:

Vase of bones.

The caged tiger. Bars like ribs. Where the book burns.  
In a pure state. Southward. Like oxygen.

*Translated by Torin Jensen*



ALMELIO CALDERÓN FORNARIS

**FRAGMENTOS DE LOS DADOS DE LA NOCHE**

Las palabras son palabras de otras palabras  
Las páginas en blanco son páginas en blanco  
Las palabras tienen sed de otras palabras  
Las páginas en blanco tienen espacios  
De otros espacios  
Intensamente la escritura se pierde en la escritura  
Las palabras flotan  
Las páginas en blanco flotan  
Los espacios flotan  
Las escrituras flotan  
El tiempo es una sola narración del tiempo.

Alucinación ¿será acaso el país de los poetas?  
Las ratas invaden todo cuanto huele  
a buhardilla.

La ciudad aún espera la llegada de los bárbaros;  
sólo por el hecho de buscar algo en sus ruinas.

La ciudad es más que una enfermedad.  
Mientras esperan la señal,  
el hedor enciende sus lámparas.  
Un graznido sale de las miradas.  
La ciudad es una lombriz inquieta en su podredumbre.

Las paredes pintadas de humedad.

Mi padre se levanta sobre la ruina de un discurso.  
Sobre el puente el cielo, las hojas, las noches, La Habana.

Escribir, araÑar las vísperas.

Las palabras necesitan del hombre para existir.  
Y el hombre a las palabras para su perpetuidad.

Hojas muertas, la historia es un discurso de hojas muertas.

Las casas de Alemania son como las casas  
que dibujaba en mi cuaderno escolar.

En esta tarde amarillenta,  
mientras leo *El Frío* de Berhnard  
mi cuerpo se desarraigá.

Negra es la nieve en los poemas de Celan.  
La muerte no tiene color.

Antes era un *homeless*. Dormía en la calle, cerca de una Iglesia.  
No puedo asentir que me influya la opinión del mundo.  
Su mala prosa me provoca náuseas.  
Sigo expuesto a la intemperie.

Bosque  
rico en caza

Hombre  
en extinción

Palabras sobre jardín  
crecerán malas hierbas

La noche extiende  
su interminable  
dominio

sobre la ciudad.

1

Ruinas humanas.  
Prisioneros del movimiento de la noche.  
Buscamos ¿qué verdad?

¿Hablamos con los muertos?

¿Esas sombras dicen algo?

¿Dijeron alguna vez algo

las formas del olvido?

3

La muerte se adueña del vuelo de los pájaros.  
Es un túnel en la inmensidad.  
No es siquiera el reflejo del hombre.

4

El aliento es lo que queda      

ROBERTO HARRISON

---

SEVEN POEMS

forged  
from the leaves of the trees  
no animal can see

beyond the bridges  
of one too many  
and one too few

they walk  
as some birds fly  
to live within

the clouds. no one  
could arrive again  
as the earth

lost its entrance  
to the Sea. but the Ocean  
is twice removed

from any face  
that will gift the light of you  
to the shelters of a wound

as they burn  
and fuse the end  
to the network

of the night ridden  
cockroach.  
belong to the Sea

there is only a simple line  
to this heart

as she welcomes  
the bold rescue  
of Tuscaloosa

metropolis  
Moundville

500 years  
of Mobilian fire

trade  
with the rest of us

Snake Mound  
egg

decision tree  
redundancy

cut it off

seemingly so  
there is a river  
with no stones

the mouth I carried  
erupts  
for a cavity

of consciousness. 4 words  
and a seventh  
move from hand to hand

as the stones of the earth  
will no longer yield  
the wandering

of my climate. I own  
a climate  
to make knots

for others there  
so far away  
in happiness

more clouds  
and the invulnerable  
does not still itself

but I do find  
the Self in you  
that feels the orbit

of the Sun  
with a lighter shade  
of sleep

two faces  
and THEN  
there were none, by the red oak

one stood to believe, the light  
returns  
to salvage a body and the exterior

land of animals. see it, she  
rescues the force  
of your drawn skin, the eyes

more standing and FOR  
as she pours out  
her many skies, the above

of the force field you become  
more ready  
for the semblance

of human kind. there are  
forces of number  
the seasons remain

to distill in the mountain  
which sheds its skin  
for the round dance

high above  
the gigantic fire  
she breathes

to endure  
the cyber heart  
of isthmuses

where did they go  
with the after birth  
of the moon? simple, sencillo

cards  
by the meteor shine

from the forest. explain

this table. what word will fit  
as your pains  
destroy the monitors? all

of them. they sit around  
the drum

and the body  
multi-universe  
of forms

of flowers  
send knots

for the shell. it stopped  
making daylight  
four times in history

cowry  
Other  
emergence

for now

calm  
circumference

battlefield  
of the Sun  
and the Moon

push

I am here  
still

more people  
were alive

on the beach  
they are

light  
now we

si, yo se

once, there were memories  
the straw  
of the underground

concussions  
would not stop at the ends  
of my face, or—no one

they see that the legs  
were strong, they know the weather  
as I do. the legs

wading through the hay  
moist with rabbits  
there were others

that the lines of us were not  
the only receivers  
the ones that make a home

more aligned with the Sun  
more targeted than one can say  
to remain

in the tunnels. I see  
rabbits and not  
I see them      

---

JOSHUA MARIE WILKINSON

---

A SONG CALLED HULL

Borne out in public networks of shame  
fear & gum-bleeding anger  
finally to just climb a tree on the sidewalk  
to sit in the branches  
& watch the Chicago trash  
flutter by for a while.

We took to the snow  
for an early afternoon beer  
at the Edgewater.

Anything to not  
sit at home with the selves  
I tried to ditch  
in the rainy bushes like a stolen bike.

The question was  
why can't I find a nice one  
to distract me  
from the poison in my cup.

Into the cups & lurking  
like the dreamer's peripheral thrash.  
So, was I just anticipating  
the phantom's nostalgia

for a self?

To crash, to cut, to soak the cut,  
& then work myself into a corner  
of the room with the music on low enough  
to keep you underground.

For, shame spills like so much wind  
over a flooded basement.

What's the watchman  
looking into his boredom for?

Hidden from  
the soul's night in epoxy?

I'd just wanted a bit of glue  
to get my head into the clouds.

No laughter but to cover up  
what I was holding myself out for.

From what have I been  
distracting myself *with*?

The wet moon carried us out  
to the open & I told you  
that I fought myself to keep  
the noise tamped to mice.

That I courted quiet  
after you went asleep  
& I could hunt up a path  
to unbloom the blood  
with the animality of unknown  
names & some bodies.

Your hull's carved out nicely.  
Doesn't the snow want a word with us?  
It gets its work done in the lovely  
unconsensual way  
of a field of flowers  
broken by the occasional wasp  
& a wayward traveler  
picks her work through it  
as a path. 

KAZIM ALI

---

SIX POEMS

THE NOWHERE HOUSE

chrysalis drinking brought me brought me certain and dour  
shadow intoxicant lust me  
  
brahmacharya charlatan commit your crime  
  
saint olga broumas seize me  
saint shahid ali sees me  
  
still as that starving humble boy who stumbled  
north up the river from the city thrusting  
  
every time I look into the house of nowhere  
sound hums under  
  
weigh me down and need me  
saint sufi anyone knead me

## THE GOOD BROTHER

A penniless pot-maker I am always willing to condemn or be sentenced.

Oh yes, as the fan turned in the hot afternoon I bore witness to the sadness of our father, working his way through blade and stone, hungry to guide his son.

I am the good brother, never to know more, never to look at the far shore.

For a decade I made pilgrimage to the river, scoping out the place I heard my brother fell.

Brother of the bird, I watched from a distance wondering if I would have had the courage to listen to our father.

Still unbelieving, I remain in the lair of the beast; only half a man, I declined the coat my brother wore, incandescent aspect of both bird and angel.

## TICKET

I dug graves in my pockets searching for the ticket out.  
Intent on escape I never noticed there was no wall.

I lash myself daily describing fake bondage:  
All the prisons and pockets, the graves in which I buried myself.

## SWOON

small sound pocket  
sky torn wound

down my body  
eight-limbed swoon

lunar starved catastrophe  
across the midline stranded

stranger street lantern  
leading to winter

time unwrought sore  
still who are you

no where ecstatic  
beside yourself now

## CRIB

to you I seed myself a crib of roots  
tide in and out sail me ashore

wide eye wild year other side of fall  
forests close tight your hands

wild spring never leave me  
tide out my bonecase my ever

I am harridan-mad and sore  
every body I love is dying

## PRAYER REQUEST CARDS

I would like the church to pray for

a clear reckoning  
the core unearthed  
what's best born skyward  
searched

who's most easily followed  
seared

who's most faithful  
beckoned to  
queer

I would like the church to pray

my psalm to unsettle the case  
my askance umbilical lust to review  
and refute the evidence

to enter my gilt-edged tongue  
as final proof  
of innocence

I would like the church

on the inside of my sin  
to spell out my breath  
to draw a wing      ☩

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

---

FIVE POEMS

AS IF BY MOONLIGHT

It is what it was.  
It's not what it's not.  
It hurts where it hurt.  
It cut where it cuts.  
It counts when it could.  
It strays where it stayed.  
It stayed when it strays.  
It shudders as it shut.  
It dropped as it drops.  
It drips as it dripped.  
It was what it is.

## AND QUIET FLOWS THE SOANE

The difficulty  
is mine  
having met you  
where rivers meet  
& being not of either one  
Rhone nor Soane  
nearer or far away  
bric nor brac  
for a millennial migraine  
as if confluence  
meant the ends are clear.

*St. John's Cathedral, Lyon ("Modernism et Illisibilité" conference), 10/23/08*

## DOUBLE BLIND

there are secrets I know  
but never told  
because they're still  
secret to me

## WHY I AM NOT A HIPPIE

The dope exacerbates  
my bronchitis & there  
are too many people  
I just don't like.

SPRING

cherry blossoms  
all of a sudden  
gone      ☺

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URAYOÁN NOEL

---

STATELESS POEMS

UNSTATEMENTS (UPSTATE SKY)

*talking poem—smartphone voice notes  
on State St., Albany, NY (April 2009)*

*"And I will make a song of the organic bargains of These States"*  
—Whitman

12:34 pm the state building before me whose? construction sites  
interference of spring angle of wires stateless but not wireless yet

12:35 over the brownstones the nice 19th century colonials (me, I'm  
21<sup>st</sup>) it towers (why so?) the state building the late 60s columns the  
tint and the glass the boxy presence

12:36 I tried to feel utilitarian once in the presence of those buildings  
worked there organized cubicled lit fluorescent in early afternoons post-  
its and memos? no memo now

12:37 now memory is speak-only at last (keep your ROM) the  
mystery of memory in cities well, it's shared not well, but still the dif-  
ficulty that defines the song and its trappings the sky

12:39 I've turned left the state building now behind me now potted planters overturned incipience of leaves plastic chairs flowers an impromptu garden

12:41 let me say more there are no fire escapes here just ladders steps white siding against the off-white sky somehow today blue rust on brick a blinding combination and yes I'm still in a construction site

12:42 I've turned right from the state building a tangle of branches again are those Budweiser bottles next to the beach chairs on the deck next door still dim? maybe a Michelob maybe a stutter step?

12:43 far above a second state building no—wait! the real one! the site of protests in budget shortfall freefall days like these I never noticed modernist stone and those arches Gothic perhaps?

12:45 there's an archness to the culture to these times it makes sense somehow that before me hammock/picket fence/Volvo and a tattered American flag fight it out for prominence between the tangle of branches

12:47 the point is that speaking is always an absence and speaking of absence I am the self's speaking bad stance before an open sky always interference in this case an antenna

12:50 again everything around me is wires and noise what happened to the wireless morning? the discreet hum? the promised co-presence? I told you about the mic'd breezeway well here it is again

12:51 how could you write a poem of these states? as interference maybe this stasis yes there is a wreath laurel muted on a neighbor's window the basement door in need of paint yes there are neighbors

12:52 yes there is blood in this expanse a beat but does it know no interference? what can it know as blue tarp and blue sky bleed into one?

12:54 mine is the constriction site of speaking that's my expanse take it leave it that's all that's left to mine a plastic bag tangled in the branches

12:55 it makes its own (kind of) music can you hear it? faint

rustle those aren't berries those planters cannot hold and still the cities hold the holed-up neighbors

12:56 they slowly emerge for this is spring after all in their step is that graffiti in the distance by the 19th-century brick? more interference ugly green early '70s siding siting sighting citing

12:57 we're so aware of temporality or at least I am we have a decade for everything and it goes double for centuries always doubled our temp... orality the medium and the mess...

1:00 I'm not sure what the terms mean anymore the welcome mats are dirty whose citizens? I wasn't born here but then again I was stateless...remember? so many of us were

1:01 this thing about belonging maybe back to text print as belonging

1:02 maybe my voice here is boutique nothing as lonely as openness only expanse

1:06 besides "closed" and "open" meet between the voice and its technologies the freeform and its framing (all art is "framing")

1:07 even when it frames itself or the city (as in graffiti) or frames the audience (as in Duchamp) I'm sitting down now

1:08 I'm tired of dispensing I'll speak the city as tonal shifts SO THINK OF THIS AS BLOCK CAPITALS the capital's blocks aren't always ugly

1:09 the street is still the "I" and its opening call it the spleen of Albany nothing's opening state workers probably out to lunch by now people clerking networking some lurking

1:11 everything's off except the BlackBerries at the Italian restaurants by the courthouse

1:12 interconnectivity stops for no one but I must stop so if you're hedging your bets on "America's Next..." I can't help you... few hedges here more wires

1:13

what would happen if I scaled a rooftop and snipped a wire or two

set fire to the connective tissue? likely not too much a bit more interference?  
they'd make do

1:15 let's get metaphysical let me hear your wireless anima talk  
maybe have a conversation chat without the chattel

1:17 I'm not sure what that means it means that clouds are peeking  
over the state building

1:20 I'm a function of thrift stores and minor symbolists so what is  
my status update? stateless but reinstated? recovering the spring of America  
the mechanical noise it's all I know

## UNITED STATES

*American anagrams (via anagram app for smartphone)*

STEADIEST NUT	ATTESTED IN US
SEDATEST UNIT	TEST STUN IDEA
SAUTEED TINTS	TEST US DETAIN
TAINTED SUETS	U.S. TAINTED SET
STAIDEST TUNE	TUT SITE SEDAN
TUNE DISTASTE	UNSTATED SITE
SITUATED NEST	SUNDAE TIT SET
UNTASTED SITE	TEASED ITS NUT
ATTEND SUITES	TESTES UNIT AD
TENSEST AUDIT	USE TATTED SIN
ANISETTE DUST	AIDS TEST TUNE
ESTATE NUDIST	TU? SADIST TEEN
ANTSIEST DUET	AUDIT TEN SETS
NASTIEST DUET	SAD SEEN TUTTI
NATTIEST DUES	DUST IT SENATE
SIESTA NUTTED	EDIT AT SUNSET
TASTIEST NUDE	NEATEST STUD I
TAUTNESS DIET	EATEN DUST SITS
TETANUS DEIST	ATTUNED SITES
DENTIST SAUTE	STAID TENET US
A STUDENT'S TIE	IS UNATTESTED
A DUSTIEST NET	"ATTITUDENESS!"
SEATED I STUNT	STATES UNTIED

# DESHORACIONES

*entre ciudades, 2:22 A.M*

*"la kreatividad de lo ingobernable"*

*—Clemente Soto Vélez (1905–1993),  
Mujer u ombre u ombre o mujer*

1. Mil puertos. 2. Y algunos más de muertos. 3. Ahí las coordenadas del sueño.
4. La mañana del moriviví. 5. La noche del bosque seco. 6. La madrugada del eco. 7. La ecología de soñar. 8. De despertar. 9. De un trance a otro trance. 10. Anclado a la mañana. 11. Que promete voces y sonrisas. 12. Pero que no procede.
13. Vacío el proscenio. 14. De tu cráneo foráneo. 15. Te mueves en la cama. 16. En pesadillas de guerra. 17. Y tos de invierno. 18. Hace par de noches. 19. Te dormías.
20. Invocando textos sagrados. 21. Hoy la voz se ha desangrado. 22. Escribe un poema. 23. Solo a fuerza de sangrados. 24. Sinalefas de sin. 25. Hemistiquios de cero. 26. Te crees el nuevo poeta de acero. 27. Sincero en la ciudad futura prometida. 28. Catalogas desvaríos de hemisferios. 29. Los blogueros de tu antiguo cautiverio. 30. Sobreviven inconexos. 31. En solares sin plexo. 32. Descapotados y buscando capital. 33. O sea auspicio. 34. O sea casa. 35. Lo del precipicio ya se pasa. 36. Queda la fiebre. 37. Tu cuerpo gris bajo colchas tenebrosas. 38. Prufrock fue célebre. 39. Pero tú celebras la rebelión de la mano. 40. Contra las ganas de aplaudir. 41. Te quitas la barba. 42. La ropa. 43. El cero de sincero. 44. Muestras la cera cincelada. 45. Tu otro sexo. 46. Tu animalidad. 47. Tu dualidad. 48. La maldición bailable. 49. La voz voluble. 50. Tu labia. 51. Tu aluvión. 52. Klemente hablaba de la *kontradiksión*. 53. Principio de dicción. 54. Fricción de cuerpos. 55. No ficciones de facciones. 56. Sino la extrañeza complementaria. 57. De donde sale la belleza. 58. Espontánea. 59. La hazaña de vivir no es soñar. 60. Sino hacer del sueño un espacio habitable. 61. Donde caben los cuerpos. 62. Vivos y muertos. 63. Sus injertos. 64. Te hablé del hemisferio. 65. Canciones sin voz en estéreo. 66. Solo un rumor comunicable. 67. Un rumor compatible. 68. Enemigo también como el de Lezama. 69. Pero bordeando el litoral. 70. Trepando el roquedal. 71. Un para llegar a. 72. Una esferaimagen proyectada. 73. En las galaxias de luz. 74. Entre el ojo y el planeta. 75. Soñar entre orbes. 76. Entre bordes. 77. Te despieras en la tarde. 78. Con recuerdos de un polvo. 79. Él o ella durmiéndose en tus hombros. 80. Pero ahora estás sola(hombre). 81. Holanombre. 82. Así saludas a

## SENTIENCES

*between cities, 2:22 A.M*

*"de krietibiti of de ongóbernabol"*

—Clemente Soto Vélez (1905–1993),  
*Wuman or man or man or wuman*

1. A thousand ports.
2. And many more corpses.
3. Those are the dream coordinates.
4. The morning of the touch-me-nots.
5. The night of the dry forest.
6. The echo's dawn.
7. The ecology of dreaming.
8. Of waking.
9. From one trance to another.
10. Anchored to the morning.
11. That promises you voices and smiles.
12. Without proceeding.
13. Bare is the proscenium.
14. Of your alien cranium.
15. You're rolling in bed.
16. In nightmares of war.
17. And cough of winter.
18. A couple of nights ago.
19. You were falling asleep.
20. Invoking sacred texts.
21. Today the voice has been bled dry.
22. You write a poem.
23. Mostly indented.
24. Unintended elisions.
25. Dented sentences.
26. You think you're the poet unprecedented.
27. Sincere in your promised city of morrow.
28. You catalog sorrows of hemispheres.
29. The bloggers of your ancient captivity.
30. Surviving unconnected.
31. In solitary refinement.
32. Convertible and seeking capital.
33. In other words sponsorship.
34. In other words home.
35. The precipice runs its course.
36. The fever remains.
37. Your gray body under dark quilts.
38. Prufrock was a celebrity.
39. But you celebrate the hand's rebellion.
40. Against the desire to clap.
41. You get rid of your beard.
42. Your clothes.
43. Your sincere zero.
44. You show your chiseled wax.
45. Your other sex.
46. Your animality.
47. Your duality.
48. Your danceable curse.
49. Your voluble voice.
50. Your smooth-talk.
51. Your flood.
52. Klemente spoke of *kontradikshon*.
53. Principle of diction.
54. Friction of bodies.
55. Not fictions of factions.
56. But rather the complementary strangeness.
57. Where beauty comes from.
58. Spontaneous.
59. The feat of living is not dreaming.
60. But making the dream an inhabitable space.
61. Where there's room for the bodies.
62. Living and dead.
63. As grafted.
64. I spoke to you about the hemisphere.
65. Voiceless songs in stereo.
66. Only a communicable rumor.
67. A shareable rumor.
68. Enemy too like Lezama Lima's.
69. But skirting the coast.
70. Climbing the rocky shore.
71. A reaching for.
72. A sphereimage projected.
73. In the galaxies of light.
74. Between the eye and the planet.
75. To dream amid orbs.
76. Between borders.
77. You wake up in the afternoon.
- 78.

las sombras. 83. Que a veces te saludan de vuelta. 84. Entre brisas revoloteando cortinas. 85. Latas proyectiles rumbo a las calles. 86. Donde te dejaste querer de noche. 87. Perdieron tu huella. 88. Calles de otras ciudades. 89. Que parecían tuyas. 90. Ahora te queda apenas ésta. 91. Ciudad transitoria. 92. De mugre y alegría migratoria. 93. Donde sueñas que te enfrentas al pelotón de fusilamiento. 94. En una silla giratoria. 95. Te escapas al último momento. 96. Le cuentas una historia. 97. De circo y sufrimiento. 98. De fallo sistémico y falsa gloria. 99. Vivir escapando. 100. Ley de la ciudad. 101. Un vivir escarpado. 102. Un convivir en el grado cero. 103. De aceras vacías. 104. De la ciudad neoliberal. 105. La que te produjo. 106. A fuerza del miedo del otro. 107. Del miedo de sí. 108. Como lo ves. 109. En tu gloria inalámbrica. 110. Y tu hambre de política. 111. Tu deseo de ser parte. 112. Y salvarte. 113. El arte de zarparte. 114. Lo aprendiste hace mucho. 115. En el cuartucho sin luz de tu ciudad. 116. Oyendo el amor perro. 117. De los vecinos de arriba. 118. Él gruñe. 119. Ella gime. 120. O al revés. 121. Las peleas de los vecinos de al lado. 122. Tirando cosas y gritándose *cabrón*. 123. Hasta que una balada de soul. 124. De los ochenta los silencia. 125. Por esta noche al menos. 126. Hasta que queda apenas. 127. El rumor que te arrulla. 128. El de los trenes elevados. 129. Por los rieles bajo cielos. 130. Crueles de invierno. 131. Te queda tu silencio. 132. Casi ininterrumpido. 133. Por el rumor de un ratoncito en la pared. 134. O la poesía sonora. 135. De los televisores. 136. A las cuatro de la mañana. 137. Donde la anáfora y el volumen. 138. Venden horóscopos y cuerpos. 139. Y mejores erecciones con que poseerlos. 140. Al menos por un instante. 141. La ilusión de la noche es que se puede. 142. Hasta que la mañana trae sus alarmas. 143. Y café instantáneo con su polvo apresurado. 144. Y mensajes de texto de camino al trabajo. 145. Que ya nadie tiene o a punto de perderse. 146. Pues en esta ciudad todo se pierde. 147. Todo se pudre. 148. Todo hecho piedra. 149. Te despertas. 150. Tieso e ilesos. 151. En cuanto iluso. 152. En cuanto helada la ciudad. 153. Elisión del signo. 154. *Eleison* del cuerpo. 155. Voz elástica. 156. Mente hierática. 157. Neural natural. 158. Como el hemisferio. 159. Sur sin norte. 160. Zurdo sin derecho. 161. Absurdo atrecho. 162. De la piel al vocablo. 163. Y es que cuando hablo. 164. No soy fiel. 165. Ni al yo que se desdobra. 166. Ni al ti que rebota. 167. Ni al nos que orbita. 168. Me veo desnudo. 169. En tu oscuridad. 170. En la claridad. 171. Del no verme entero. 172. En tu afasia. 173. En la boca. 174. Que no sacia. 175. Hemisferio a medias. 176. Naranja hecha gajo. 177. Tajo medular. 178. Autopista y autopsia. 179. Túmulo de hipotálamo. 180.

Remembering a lay. 79. He or she falling asleep on your shoulders. 80. But girl now you're alone man. 81. Helloname. 82. That's how you greet the shadows. 83. That sometimes greet you back. 84. Amid breezes fluttering curtains. 85. Projectile cans finding the streets. 86. Where you let yourself be loved last night. 87. They lost your track. 88. Streets of other cities. 89. That seemed to be yours. 90. Now you're left merely with this. 91. Transitory city. 92. Of grime and migratory joy. 93. Where you dream that you face the firing squad. 94. In a swivel chair. 95. You escape at the last moment. 96. You tell them a story. 97. Of circus and suffering. 98. Of systemic failure and false glory. 99. Living as escaping. 100. Law of the city. 101. Precipitous living. 102. A coexisting in the degree zero. 103. Of empty sidewalks. 104. Of the neoliberal city. 105. The one that made you. 106. Out of fear of the other. 107. Fear of the self. 108. As you see it. 109. In your wireless glory. 110. And your hunger for a politics. 111. Your desire to be a part of. 112. And to save yourself. 113. The art of setting sail. 114. You learned it long ago. 115. In that dark little room of your city. 116. Listening to the love bites. 117. Of the upstairs neighbors. 118. He grunts. 119. She groans. 120. Or the other way around. 121. The fights of the next-door neighbors. 122. Throwing stuff and calling each other *cabrón*. 123. Until a soul ballad. 124. From the eighties quiets them. 125. For tonight at least. 126. Until all that's left. 127. Is the rumor that lulls you. 128. That of the elevated trains. 129. Over the rails and under. 130. The cruel skies of winter. 131. You're left with your silence. 132. Almost uninterrupted. 133. By the murmur of a small mouse in the wall. 134. Or the sound poetry. 135. Of the televisions. 136. At four in the morning. 137. Where anaphora and volume. 138. Sell horoscopes and bodies. 139. And better erections with which to possess them. 140. At least for an instant. 141. The illusion of the night is that one can. 142. Until the morning brings with it its alarms. 143. And instant coffee with its hurried stirrings. 144. And text messages on the way to the job. 145. That no one has any more or is about to lose. 146. For in this city everything is lost. 147. Everything rots. 148. Everything turned to stone. 149. You wake up. 150. Stiff and safe. 151. Inasmuch as dreaming. 152. Inasmuch as the city is frozen. 153. Elision of the sign. 154. *Eleison* of the body. 155. Elastic voice. 156. Hieratic mind. 157. Neural natural. 158. Like the hemisphere. 159. South without north. 160. Left without right. 161. Absurd shortcut. 162. From skin to word. 163. And it's just that when I speak. 164. I am not faithful. 165. To the self that splits. 166. To the you that ricochets. 167. Nor to the us that orbits. 168. I see myself naked. 169. In your darkness. 170.

Pie forzado de Catulo. **181.** Traspié de polo a polo. **182.** Apología de piel. **183.** Apoplejía de luz. **184.** Cáñamo dañado. **185.** Yo añadido. **186.** Tuyo el superávit. **187.** Nuestro el hábitat. **188.** Dúo excluido. **189.** Tríptico de tripa. **190.** Entre el tú y el yo. **191.** Hay una grieta. **192.** Parecida al sol. **193.** Semejante a la nada. **194.** A la luz caduca. **195.** Atrapada en ciudades. **196.** Menos grises que esta. **197.** La ciudad sin plata. **198.** Ciudad chata o plana. **199.** Fundada en sueños. **200.** Entre playa y plaza. **201.** Ciudad donde orina uno. **202.** Otro duerme. **203.** Y la especie inerme. **204.** Se desorigina. **205.** Digital diáspórica. **206.** De las lúgubres ágoras. **207.** Sin esfera pública. **208.** Ciudad de erratas y escrotos. **209.** De ratas y rotos. **210.** Un dulce terremoto. **211.** Himnos de rabia. **212.** Un convivir remoto. **213.** Un remate **214.** Un mate **215.** Un té **216.** Un tú **217.** Un túnel **218.** Un hueco **219.** Un eco **220.** Uno. **221.** No. **222.** O.

In the clarity. **171.** Of not seeing myself whole. **172.** In your aphasia. **173.** In your mouth. **174.** That doesn't satiate. **175.** Hemisphere in halves. **176.** Orange turned to slice. **177.** Cut to the bone. **178.** Highway and autopsy. **179.** Hypothalamus tomb. **180.** Catullus's refrain. **181.** Stumbling from pole to pole. **182.** Apologia of skin. **183.** Apoplexy of light. **184.** Damaged canvas. **185.** Additional self. **186.** Yours the surplus. **187.** Ours the habitat. **188.** Excluded duo. **189.** Gut triptych. **190.** Between the you and the I. **191.** There is a crevice. **192.** Something like the sun. **193.** Similar to nothing. **194.** To the expired light. **195.** Trapped in cities. **196.** Less gray than this one. **197.** The city without cash. **198.** Flat city gashed. **199.** Founded on dreams. **200.** Between beachfront and park bench. **201.** A city where one pisses. **202.** Another sleeps. **203.** And the defenseless species. **204.** Unorigi-nates itself. **205.** Digital diaspora. **206.** Of the gloomy markets. **207.** Without public sphere. **208.** City of misprints and scrotums. **209.** Of rats and holes. **210.** A sweet earthquake. **211.** Hymns of rage. **212.** A remote coexistence. **213.** An endgame. **214.** A checkmate. **215.** Tea for two. **216.** From me to you. **217.** A tunnel **218.** A hollow. **219.** An echo. **220.** One. **221.** None. **222.** Done.

## SIGNS OF THE HEMISPHERE

(signs as seen from a bus, New York City to Albany, 2011) TAGS AVAILABLE REDUCE SPEED SERVICE AREA VINCE LOMBARDI SAVE MONEY GEICO GET LOST RIO FORT LEE GEORGE WASHINGTON HACKENSACK PATERSON HAMPTON INN CHALLENGER ROAD LOEWS THEATER SAMSUNG AVAILABLE LAND NO TURNS KEEP RIGHT LEONIA TEANECK EXPRESS

hear me out human as I rise from the hum the humor and rumor of my tongue emerging from the humid asphalt the rumor is my home as resin and as residence where resistance is fragile and resonance is tactile

I'm missing the tongues of the tribe so I transcribe for ages I have foraged have rummaged across these rum-soaked isles my hum not ready for a ream yet finding its rhythm

I'm hawing hemispheres in the farthest latitudes for the hymn of global mouths forgotten in its place the loose hem the stratagem of hum ahem I've come to babble until neurons unravel glyphs in stereo no remedy in standing nonnative to this soil this rock this ruin of focus groups

remains of a village sheets of foliage silence on both sides wind quadrants my landlocked legs my mind lags and follows crossing to look an outlet to the eye

cloud and rustle rust against moon the crudest gestures tossed in a field mine a wakeful subject decomposing against windows means of perception? meaning is notation dismal organismal the logic of slog survived by self I seek how radiance is written rid of scrawl no screened-in radius all signs are glyphic open to the touch survived in song

(letreiros, ônibus, Rio de Janeiro–São Paulo, 2009) MONTEC CALDEIRARIA E MONTAGEM INDUSLAR LAVANDERIAS GRAAL PNEUS EMBAIXADOR E GANHE UM PÃO SEMOLINA MOTOVEREDA COMUNIDADE EVANGÉLICA PROJETO VIDA BEBA SAÚDE ÁGUA MINERAL ATTIVA FUR-

## LETREROS DEL HEMISFERIO

NORTH RAMP YOUR SPEED WELCOME TO HACKENSACK RAINBOW CLEANERS QUEEN ANNE THEATRE LITTLE FERRY LUKOIL NO TRUCKS MORE FUN IS MORE FUN MT. AIRY SWIFT AT&T COVERS 97 % PERCENT OF AMERICANS WOW! THE CONTAINER STORE ANNUAL SALE CLEAR CHANNEL RESTAURANT DEPOT TENSION ENVELOPES FLOOR COVERING LIQUIDATIONS

heme aquí y que humano surgiendo del humo del humor del rumor que es mi lengua el húmedo asfalto no me falta pero el rumor es mi hogar mi resina y residencia donde la resistencia es frágil y la resonancia es táctil

me faltan las lenguas de la tribu y pues transcribo forrajeando de nombre en nombre en estas islas de herrumbre mi reuma aún busca su resma su ritmo

me río en la avería de hemisferio en las lejanas latitudes olvidando el himno de la roca planetaria y en su lugar hallo el ruedo suelto la estrategia del rumor en flor he venido a balbucear hasta ver el deshilar de las neuronas glifos estereofónicos yo de pie y sin remedio forastero en este suelo esta piedra esta ruina de relacionistas públicos

remanentes de la aldea hojas sin plantas el silencio se quebranta cuadrantes de viento mi caminar sin costa mi mente sin riposta cruza para ver escaparate al ojo

nube sin ave moho de luna el crudo ademán del que duerme en campo abierto sujeto despierto descomponiéndose sin ventanales percepciones especulares mi noción es notación de animal abismal la lógica del lodazal donde el Yo se llora busco el escrito radiante que aflora más allá del garabato pantalla sin retrato los letreros ilegibles pero tocables se convierten en tonadas

NAS HOTEL FAZENDA VILLA FORTE LANCHONETE PARADA OBRIGATÓRIA INDÚSTRIAS NUCLEARES DO BRASIL REI DAS TRUTAS ANTES DE CONSTRUIR A 10 KM BEM VINDO A RIO DE JANEIRO ENGEMIX FISCALIZAÇÃO MANTENHA DISTÂNCIA LONGO TRECHO EM

MAHWAH HONDA PARTY BOX ROCK BOTTOM PRICES HOME DEPOT FIX YOUR COMPUTER  
\$19.99 INDOOR GO-KARTING DEERE BRIDGE FREEZES ACTION RUBBER EXXON OUTBACK  
EASTER SEALS PARK AVE BMW ENTERING BORO OF PARAMUS AUTO BODY COLLISION  
SPECIALISTS PET SMART STAPLES IKEA DRIVE LOSE WEIGHT PLASTIC SURGEON PET  
AMERICA OPEN MRI GOLF GALAXY SUBURBAN DINER DICK'S PARAMUS TOWN SQUARE  
CASH 4 GOLD COURTYARD MARRIOT BIJOU BRIDAL TRADER JOE'S PETCO CASUAL MALE

no head just nerve or I die coming down with the illness of stillness  
mine is the grime of rhyme unwashed sediment markings on the body  
my song sounds like serration but can it cut this loss?

the crime of rhyme whatever stands for breath just making room  
rheum in the void making a number of hum-worthy sounds limning the  
sum of nerve and muscle these skeletons are learning the skill of slow dissolve  
against mortar they watch blood trickle behind the scenes fiscal transfusions  
the making of a holding pattern and behind the pattern the jittery jimmying  
of keys hand-held or digital

these skeletons seek out ablution solitary on buses their fate easy to  
hum they are going down together with the kleptocrats and plutocrats and  
technocrats and autocrats and don't forget the sewer rats these skeletons  
stand in for the wordless many the televised nationals of frenzy who oc-  
cupy this unserviceable sector

my hum and its avatars floes and moraines oceans and outlets death  
topographies where dust is just another powder cut and ingested off of un-  
paid credit cards no limit now is when bleat and signal meet wireless in  
alleys the dump truck was here removing the spyware from the panopticon  
my hum is a log on the side of the road no log on no dialog box my hum  
confronts death embodies its echo but bypasses its hectares full of plastic-  
flower terrariums and the daily tedium of its shuttered empowerment zones

DECLIVE ALIMENTO USINA DE ABASTO CERÂMICA ARTÍSTICA A 800 M FERLES INDUS-  
TRIAL TYREX SERRARIA E MADEIRERIA BORRACHARIA AQUI TRANSPORTES YAKULT O  
MELHOR NEGÓCIO ESTÁ AQUI VILLA NEGÓCIOS LOGÍSTICA E TRANSPORTE LORENPET

*BOB'S FURNITURE BAGELS AND DELI SPORTS AUTHORITY MANOR HOUSE CITIBANK  
BERGEN JAGUAR APPLEBEE'S NAIL AND SPA ESTHETICS ETOPIA DESKS BACKPACKING  
EASTERN MOUNTAIN SPORTS LACUTINA HILLSDALE U-TURN SADDLE RIVER SPEED LIMIT  
55 RACETRACK ROAD PUMPKINS FOR SALE SPLIT FIREWOOD COTTAGE GARDENS NO  
STOPPAGE OR-STANDING AIRPORT SHUTTLE CURVE HOLLYWOOD AVENUE ALL TURNS  
HO-HO-KUS LITTER REMOVAL DECORATIONS FABRIC OUTLET LIGHTING BY GREGORY*

decapitado soy nervio que morirá al final del mal de la quietud mío  
es el limo de la rima sucia sedimento el cuerpo y sus marcas mi canción  
chueca aún abarca aborda la pérdida

el crimen de la rima nace del aliento halla su asiento en la reuma del  
vacío haciendo ruidos rumorosos bordeando el músculo y el nervio los  
esqueletos aprenden a disolverse lentamente contra el mortero ven en tarima  
el fluido mortuorio de transfusiones fiscales los patrones iguales y detrás  
del patrón el tecleo ebrio de la mano digital

esos esqueletos buscan bautismo solos en los autobuses con su destino  
coreable descienden juntos junto con los cleptócratas y plutócratas y tec-  
nócratas y autócratas y no te olvides de las ratas esqueletos de rascacielos  
que ocupan el lugar de las masas silentes ciudadanos del frenesí televisado  
ocupando el sector público inservible

los rumores y sus avatares balnearios y estuarios océanos y escenarios  
topografías de muerte donde el polvo es apenas otro polvo repartido y  
olido en tarjetas de crédito sin pagar o sin límite ahora se funden la señal y  
el son sordo en callejones inalámbricos el camión de basura acaba de pasar  
quitándole el spyware al panóptico mi murmullo es un madero en el camino  
sin palabra secreta ni número de usuario mi rumor se enfrenta a la muerte  
a diario reconoce su eco pero bordea el jardín de flores plásticas y el tedio  
cotidiano de las obras públicas sin acabar

*EMBALAGEMS FLEXIVEIS AUTO ELÉCTRICA BOMBAS INJETORAS BAR DA LADEIRA IM-  
PRESSÃO DIGITAL PNEUS BIEMME O BRILHO TRUCK PROMOÇÃO VENDINHA NEM DE  
SÁ 66 DELÍCIA PINTADA NA BRASA DO CHASSI POSTO SOBERANO EMBREVALE VOLVO*

BOTTLE KING THE KITCHEN BATH OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE HORIZON DINER ON THE RUN  
TIRE CENTER EXTENDED STAY PRESTIGE LEXUS FOUNTAIN SPA FOR LEASE TACO BELL  
OLD STONE HOUSE THE WORLD CAPITAL OF HYDRAULIC BOTTLING GOODS #1 FOR TOTAL  
JOINT REPLACEMENT GLOBALSOFT HUMMER NOBODY SELLS MORE REAL ESTATE YOU  
GOTTA PLAY TODAY VALERO GUARANTEED COVERAGE HIBACHI STEAKHOUSE GENERATOR  
DEPOT SHERATON MORRISTOWN TAPPAN ZEE BEST IN REGION FOR HEART SURGERY

a coughless hacking can be heard over the rooftops in the outlying areas  
listen to the power drills' arias mock-phonics and surrounded by grass and  
granite grin and bear the animus of scaffoldings the cascading traffic far-  
awayward masses fading there is one light and another light and another  
and another seriality of bulbs and burbs shots of self in bedroom cams in  
urban encampments

my hum still somehow stunned by language like Langston smiling in  
the cams and jams of midtowns their ethnic enclaves carpeted and marked  
up and then abandoned my hum of off bodies in an on planet an *oración*  
in corpse orated against corporate ration and all reason of nation where  
what starts as hum so soon fades into buzz

mine the hum of hemisphere the silence of its midnight boulevards  
from the Bronx's Grand Concourse to 9 de Julio in Buenos Aires but not  
the para-modern city aping Paris a modernity of imitation unto parody and  
imported pierrots and not quite the boulevards of revolution of indigenous  
vanguards of blowdarts aimed at the pates of the robber barons instead  
mine is the hum of Césaire's archipelagos and Damas's tam-tams and Haroldo's galaxies  
and Vallejo's deserts and Neruda's elements and Bishop's  
loping song and Williams's blinding island sky and Martí's angst and  
Whitman's wonder and Paz's mire and Sousândrade's vertigo and Sor  
Juana's blaze and the drum's cry and the Cree and the Creoles claiming  
no decree but in deictics all pointing the way this way to the Americas

TOLDOS VITÓRIA MOTEL KARIMBÓ ÁLCOOL CHEVROLET SÍTIO DO JUCA POSTO DE  
MOLAS GUARÁ TENDA ATACADO SOL AMERICANO SEM NOIVOS RENT-A-CAR JÚLIO  
TORNEIRO ATACADISTA 24 HORAS CHEGUE BEM EMBAIXADA DO MORRO CLÍNICA

WELCOME TO THE EMPIRE STATE SUFFERN SERVICE AREA LAST EXIT AMBER ALERT  
WHEN FLASHING TUXEDO PARK FINES FOR SPEEDING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STATE  
LAW TANDEM TRAILERS FROM LOCAL FARMS QUIZNOS PARKING GARAGE PEDESRTIAN  
BRIDGE ROAD WORK AHEAD FALLEN ROCK ZONE ARDEN VALLEY APPALACHIAN TRAIL  
CATSKILL REGION KEEP RIGHT NEW ENGLAND TOLL BOOTHS NOTHING IN TOW MONTREAL  
CAR PHONES DIAL 911 GARELICK FARMS SINCE 1911 MOODNA CREEK CARDINAL HEALTH

una tos seca se multiplica sobre las techumbres de los suburbios es-  
cuchad la sinfonía de taladros cómico-fónicos rodeados de grama y de granito  
soségate y brega con la violencia de los andamios el tráfico atrófico para-  
distantes las masas pasan y se pierden queda una luz y otra luz y otra y  
otra bombillas de vecindarios en serie autorretratos con webcams de camas  
sin sutra en campamentos urbanos

mi rumor todavía lenguatónito como Langston Hughes sonriendo  
en las cámaras de ciudades en tránsito en sus enclaves étnicos allanados y  
acicalados y luego abandonados mi rumor de cuerpo puerco en un planeta  
parco un *blues* orado de cuerpo horadado ante la ración corporativa y la  
razón de la nación donde el murmullo deviene barullo

mío el rumor de hemisferio el silencio noctámbulo de bulevares de la  
9 de Julio en Buenos Aires al Grand Concourse del Bronx pero no la ciudad  
para-moderna de poses en pos de París una modernidad imitativa hasta la  
parodia y sus pierrots importados y tampoco los bulevares de revoluciones  
de vanguardias indígenas apuntando sus saetas hacia las calvas de los merce-  
narios el mío es el rumor de los archipiélagos de Césaire de los tam-tams de  
Damas de las galaxias de Haroldo de los desiertos de Vallejo los elementos  
de Neruda la canción nómada de Bishop el cielo ciego e isleño de Williams  
la angustia de Martí el asombro de Whitman el limo de Paz el vértigo  
de Sousândrade el resplandor de Sor Juana el clamor en flor de un tambor  
la ciudad letrada hecha letreros que iluminan las noches americanas sus

VETERINÁRIA WAACK MARIA ELENA CAMARGO LANCHOTE ENCANTADO ASSEMBLEIA  
DE DEUS MADUREIRA VENHA CONHECER NA BASÍLICA LAR DE DOENTE USE FAZ MC  
DONALD'S HAMBURGERS ABASTEÇA AQUI VOCÊ ESTÁ EM CAMINHO ANJOS OBRA DO

SERVICE AREA VAILS GATE BUSINESS CENTER SCRANTON NEWBURGH CAN BE USED IN ANY  
TOLL LANE TUNE RADIO WEED ORCHARD WINERY STEWART AIRPORT IMPERIAL GUITAR  
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OLD NAVY EISENHOWER INTERSTATE BUCKLE UP! PLATTEKILL  
SERVICE STARBUCKS NEXT SERVICE FARM MARKET WEEKENDS HOW'S MY DRIVING?  
LOGISTICS-TRANSPORTATION-DISTRIBUTION SNOW MUCH FUN! AUCTION NEXT 10 MILES  
PINEGROVE DAY PASS POLICE EMERGENCY JELLYSTONE CAMP HUDSON HISTORIC PARK  
by night its smiling villages and radiant exurbs for once at once awake  
startled by the hum

no Che in this noche avoid Evita no motorcycle in these diaries don't  
bother guessing this loco's motive this loca's stride the globe's refraction in  
drive-thru windows workers of the world take off your paper hats avoid  
the avalanche of billboards own your memory of ocean and of mountain the  
likable catastrophe of your dark eyes the strophes and stanzas of your struggle  
that shames the wind chimes tired of hanging yours is the hum of becoming  
refuse the fuselage on fire the carillon's carrion the staging devices and gam-  
ing devices recover the signal in mute emission the knottedness of people  
no longer pandering to états your hum defying the small America its Anglo  
angles and all its unexecutable orders

even without attributes we are still tribulators our fate always in play  
our bodies bound by the spray of bullets and of ocean migrants with no  
return policy always crossing a bridge without a causeway corrupting the  
program spiking the punchbowl so it leaks again this time for good until  
the punch cards are full of dances a neural mass no longer misfiring wide-  
eyed in wartime cities

seen through your eyes I see at last the outlines of the hemisphere I  
find my hum in harmony with you that is in dissonance with self in shared  
discord in a storm front shared and so I name my condition of islandness

GOVERNO DO ESTADO BAR LANCHONETE DA CRIS FAZENDA SÃO FRANCISCO DA BELA  
VISTA PRA CAMIONHEIROS PINGA PAVI DO BRASIL ELMA CHIPS SUPERFECTA VENDEDOR  
SERRALHERIA VALÉRIO RETIFICA RODAGEM DURALAJE CASA DO FIGUEIRO CLASSIC CARS

NEW PALTZ POUHGKEEPSEE SUPER 8 66 RIGHT SHOULDER BE USED WALLKILL RIVER  
SKI REGION HOLIDAY INN LUCAS AVE. KINGSTON ATTRACTIONS FIRST CAPITAL OF NEW  
YORK BUDGET WOODSTOCK DOLLAR GENERAL STOPPING REQUIRED SAW KILL 3 LOTS  
FOR SALE COZY UP \$1.99 WELLS, SEPTIC AND ELECTRIC INSTALLED HOT DOGS TRUCK  
INSPECTION GLASCO TRAIL ROCKING HOUSE RANCH SNOW CLOSE TOUCH A LIFE VERTIS  
LOGISTICS PALACE CANDLES GOURMET CUP SAUGERTIES RIP VAN WINKLE AMERICAN  
villorrios sonrientes y urbanizaciones radiantes por fin por ahora despiertos  
sorprendidos por el rumor

esta noche no Che evita a Evita no hay motocicleta en estos diarios  
no detendrás mi moción de loco mi nación (dis) loca la refracción del globo  
en ventanas de servicarro obreros del mundo quítense sus gorros de papel  
esquiven la avalancha de cruzacalles guarden su memoria de océano y mon-  
taña la tierna catástrofe de sus hermosos y oscuros ojos las coplas y estrofas  
de su lucha que avergüenza a los móviles cansados de reguindar suyo es el  
rumor de un devenir rechazar el fuselaje en llamas la carroña del carillón  
los controles remotos del escenario recuperen la emisión muda de la señal el  
nudo de pueblo ya no en función de estado ese murmullo suyo desafía a la  
pequeña América la de los ángulos *anglo* y las órdenes inejecutables

aun sin atributos somos aún tribuladores nuestro destino siempre en  
juego nuestros cuerpos en la espuma de balas y de océano emigrantes sin  
devolución siempre cruzando un puente sin carretera corrompiendo el  
programa envenenando la champán hasta que llueva de nuevo esta vez a  
cántaros y que el cántaro conlleve el canto y su baile la masa neural ya no  
dispara en falso por fin despierta en las ciudades en guerra

viendo por tus ojos veo por fin los trazos de hemisferio hallo mi to-  
nada en tu armonía es decir en el Yo disonante en la discordia compartida  
en la tormenta compartida y pues nombro mi condición de isla el trauma

DURATEX ALINHAMENTO DE DIREÇÃO USINAGEM VENDO E ALUGO VISÃO ÓCULOS  
WENZEL CANTINA DO MINEIRO MAXI LAJES JÚLIO SIMÕES PROJESUL PORTAS E JANE-  
LAS DE ALUMÍNIO INFORMÁTICA PLASMA LCD SHOPPING CASA DOS VINHOS TERRAS

CANDLE CO DETROIT DIESEL INDOOR POOL WI-FI EXTRA SPACE STORAGE DELI PIZZA  
FALLEN ATLAS VAN LINES SELF-SERVE HEADLIGHTS WIPERS MORE GORE CAVERNS CAMP  
GO UNDERGROUND SCHOOL HOUSE RD JIMMY'S JUNK AUTO WRECKING KAATERSKILL  
CAIRO INDIAN RIDGE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FIRE-FIGHTING MOBIL HOME DEPOT CEVA  
FREIGHT GARDEN STATE CAUTION WIDE FAMOUS FAMILIA NO BULL COXSACKIE RAVENA  
NEED THE BEST SEATS? GIVE A LAPTOP BOAT-N-RV BANQUET HALL CERTIFIED SCALES

the tropics of trauma that birthed me my body damaged and unmanaged  
identity in bio-rhythm labor of movement in unusual time signatures sing  
timeless tuneless melodiatribe aimless in meander out to the jetty beyond  
the observation deck beyond the tourists in knee-high gray gym socks con-  
gregating outside gated communities to take digital footage of the wreckage  
they can't see they cannot hear the hum over their headphones the hum of  
the trade winds on the blood warm seas the hum that hides in our black sand  
in our brown skin and our purple sky

the rattle of bones after the jackhammers I hear it the hum of last resort  
the architecture of our capitals the buzz of our occipitals the sad beauty of  
this claptrap synapse who hears what I'm reciting? here's what I'm resiting  
the echo and the wave's crest I leave the rest to resigning politicians and the  
bankers who are gasping for heirs and so I leave the word in hopeful ruin I  
transcribe our reunion with your help I begin to transcribe I transscrub I  
transcrawl I transcry while holding ground over the missing tongue with  
your help I begin I'm reciting the cyst I'm resisting the sigh I'm restoring  
the song with your help I'm resetting the sky

DO VALE MOTEL 1001 DISPONÍVEL SUFRESH NÉCTAR DE UVA FUJI HUNT NÚCLEO DO  
PARQUE TECNOLÓGICO BORRACHA EE ARLETE VIDROSUL DELPHI AUTOMOTIVE SYS-  
TEMS TRANSPORTADORA GRANJA ALVORADA LOCAÇÃO E MANUTENÇÃO REMOCAR

TRAVEL MART PLAZA SERVICE AREA RAMP STOP DWI ARCTIC ADVENTURES MASS TPKE  
BOSTON BUFFALO KEEP 29 ACRES CLEANING SERVICES TRAVEL INFO CAPITAL REGION  
WELCOME ERIE CANALWAY TIMES UNION NATIONAL HERITAGE THRUWAY CORRIDOR  
GROOVED PAVEMENT VETERANS MEMORIAL BANKING WITH A PURPOSE THE PASSION  
CUT BOXES HITCHES SELF STORAGE HUDSON RIVER PORT ESTUARY BROADWAY RAIL  
STATION EMPIRE PLAZA BUSINESS DISTRICT DUNKIN DONUTS HOME OF YANKEE DOODLE

de trópicos que me dio a luz mi cuerpo dañado y malversado identidad biorrítmica la labor del movimiento fuera de tiempo y de tono entono la melodiatriba vueltas sin rumbo hacia el malecón más allá del observatorio más allá de los turistas en medias grises reunidos a las afueras de urbanizaciones cerradas tomando fotos digitales de la ruina que no logran ver no escuchan el rumor con sus audífonos puestos el rumor de los vientos alisios en la sangre caliente del mar el rumor escondido en nuestra arena negra en nuestra piel oscura y nuestro cielo morado

el cascabel de huesos después de los taladros lo oigo el rumor sin más remedio la arquitectura de nuestras capitales el zumbido de nuestros occitales la belleza triste de esta astrosa sinapsis ¿quién escucha lo que recito? aquí lo que repito el eco y la ola que rompe el resto se lo dejó a los políticos que renuncian a los banqueros que repugnan en busca de herederos y pues le cedo mi palabra a la ruina alentadora y transcribo nuestro reunir con tu ayuda comienzo a transcribir a transgrabar a transtregar a transclamar pisando tierra sobre la lengua ausente con tu ayuda empiezo a recitar el tropiezo a resistir el duelo a restaurar el canto con tu ayuda voy a reiniciar el cielo ☽

DIESEL WAL-MART SUPER CENTRO CORRETOR TODO BRASIL AERNNOVA DO BRASIL EA-TON LTDA. GOOD YEAR JOHNSON & JOHNSON PEÇAS ORIGINAIS ALUGAM ESCRITÓRIOS KODAK RESTAURANTE FRANGO ASADO TRANSMAGNO A SOLUÇÃO NO TRANSPORTE

WILLIE PERDOMO

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FROM THE ESSENTIAL HITS OF SHORTY BON BON

*Dear Shorty (No. 1)*

*Listen to the key,  
love me.  
Pay for your  
life up front,  
let me eat  
from every tree,  
no judgement eyes.  
Be crystal,  
crash into me  
like a new star,  
like the ground  
rips open just for us.  
Act like you know  
my name, whatever  
you say has to eat  
water and dance  
Be gentle when you  
talk, pretend you got kicked*

*in the head by a mule  
and when you lost vision,  
the first thing you heard  
was my song.*

## DELICIOUS NUMBERS

Islands of dancers repeated themselves & me  
With my living-room two-step & two-tone heel,  
Tried my best to scat with each tip of my—shit,  
Rose once crooned the badge off a detective's hem.

Trust me, Poet: I used to catch bandleaders drug  
Revolutions & Guzzle harmony into alleyway—  
Rose could angel-trade songster for gangster.  
(She dreamed numbers I couldn't divine.) It was  
As if I got my first lesson in everything two/four,  
four/four, six/eight, half-break & run, baby, run.

*Dear Shorty (No. 3)*

*What I believe myself to be  
is never understood.*

*Before you said a word,  
I saw you boost my love  
letters from the rubble.  
I saw you post up in halls  
and lobbies, parks and  
churches, start hobbies  
you couldn't pay balances on.*

*I choose not to count all the places  
where we found ourselves broken  
for the calling we couldn't hear,  
the heard that went undone.*

*Give me sun, give me moon, give me star —  
miracles roll solo, no witnesses.*

*I still can't remember  
who turned off the boogaloo  
on our basement party.*

## THE CITY OF YOU

The scene was treated with a breakfast fix,  
Even the priests stopped inventing for free.  
Out came the mandolins for the mandarins,  
Violins for the vespers—Our Thing, *mano*,  
Was definitely for the stay-alive, the *sangre*  
*Viva*, the sacred & snake, too. When Rose's  
Throat hit six-figures, she bit razors in half,  
Sucked on nightmares, Fame chipped a tooth.  
Not one, bro, but six attempts to blank a page  
Plus one pearl treasured in long grain, voyage  
Bottom-booked. Told her twice in downbeat,  
Told her once up-tempo: Babe, you can be the  
Center of your song, but you can't be the star. 

RICARDO CORTEZ CRUZ

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TM OPUS

## BACK TO LIFE (HOWEVER DO YOU WANT ME)

*Contains a sample of "Soldiers," The Language Of My World*

At age 9, I was THE HERO—pulling my father from a burning kitchen, snatching parts of him left and right, to-and-fro, like I'm a thug already while saving his goddamn life. Salvaging nothing else but a loaded smoke wagon that Daddy claimed he couldn't do without.

With huge eyeballs looking like dust in their sockets and a dangerous infection disturbing him, Daddy remained hot, an angry black man hollering and spitting his illness in the faces of innocent bystanders, blasting away at them, talking smack and blaming everything and his mother and Uncle Sham for a lack of cold cash. He royally dogged everyone that got in his way. Sounding like a runaway choo-choo train, he sold a bunch of woof tickets before preaching to the choir, his mental state going forwards and backwards like it was nothing. Finally, with the world at Daddy's feet convinced that somehow the Lord had done him wrong, did him in, a single teardrop appeared underneath my father's eye to symbolize his being in mourning. Although he didn't sweat it, it nearly rolled / got away from his cheekiness. As if his "boo," the teardrop stood out as a

tattoo. As soon as others glimpsed it, got a whiff of it, they knew he was finished, completely changed forever.

"The only doctor who can do anything now is Dr. Dre," he insisted.

After the fire sermon—once Daddy cooled off, chilled himself out for a moment, detoxed enough to sit back and brew instead, start marinating about what life would be after we die—he got his act together and took off.

He flew, a yardbird springing from a neighbor's bushes in suspect fashion and on the lam after taking a quick minute to consider his options.

In breaking camp, he threw some funky sixties loose threads over his bones and joints, stressing he felt trapped in a closet, and swaggered away from the crib like Stagger Lee, reanimated.

"You made me live again," Daddy kept repeating before he went off (a war vet, he fled to mingle in with the POWs, the people of Walmart). "Before that, it was pain before pleasure, that was my claim to fame." Daddy had become a fruit loop now, a basket or head case. And his sad, sorry, slummy, sadiddy life in the projects? He put that shit all on me, as if I was the small African child with nodding disease that turned him, somehow made him into a resident evil.

Slightly embarrassed of her yellow daisy dukes wanting to raise up, standing by an altar with nothing but framed pictures of my daddy and neatly arranged objects that belonged to him, Mama tried to hold herself back, to not reveal too much of herself.

*So many tears, she must've thought—and he just wouldn't quit. He loved effin' up.*

She had no choice but to snap.

Without warning, she lunged and slapped him hard upside the head, then clubbed him like a fed several times with a straightening iron, and with her already scarred limbs, before he could exit the living room. "Farewell to arms, motherfucker," she said, pushing his ass out of the front door and throwing bows his way. "Hasta la vista, baby. By now, you should know betta—you never ever sleep on a badd bitch." So he wouldn't forget that for the future, she left a bitch mark, a level 2 cut, for him to stomach along with keloids seemingly expanding in claw-like growth over his normal skin.

*You should pimp slap yourself, I spat in his direction. I always hated how the*

man spent all of his time trying to keep up, stay, with the Joneses.

Walkers like me and Daddy would have never have made it the way we were. We were heroes destined to be killed. Unexpectedly terrifying. Further proof that a big dawg or someone blowin' up little by little, in degrees, couldn't get out of the hood alive.

Now, as creepers watch me from their windows, I move around civilian homes, urban gardens, and foreign territory like John Doe. I'm 17. Ready to die. But while following—marching on—the same old orders, jetting through the sketchy parts and hoping to avoid what I already know to be snares, I thank God nobody's trying to ghost my ass. In this war, I am Afro-*HisPanic*. I'm rocking a retro hair pick with a black fist, settling down long enough to walk Che-ish through Woodlawn, cutting in-between a few houses as if a part of a boyz from the hood set. From some damaged BMW's rearview mirror, I see myself as a guerilla. At least today, I am a complex character. I scope the vinyl white picket fences and somehow notice a pretty pool behind one where even an old white man with a wrinkled woman's breasts clings to a paddle in order to guard his private stock.

Freud's favorite flower, the sweet gardenia, reaches out to cover my tracks. Or psychoanalyze me. But, psyche—chalk it; it's not going to happen today. The pigs ain't going to haul me in or eat me for lunch.

My chest sticks out because I'm proud. And I'm feelin' good. Have a little high. I'm holding a bag of Spear O Mint Life Savers—some hard candy, a slice of Chicago-style pizza, and a can of Sprite. As if reborn, even rainworms join me and show themselves in public.

New cocks enjoy terrorizing the hood, drawing the attention of swivel heads. For starters, baby cops (boys in blue) saddled in shotty chariots of justice that carry trunk monkeys hunt for uninsured motorists riding dirty or a brotha to wet down. Even the officers of traffic enforcement and highway patrol manufacture a lot of noise. They recklessly feel for their BANG switches the second they perceive themselves as in trouble.

Now, going thru people requires action that's extremely clumsy and violent.

Living on the outskirts of myself since I can remember, I've got "Death and the Living" on my mind, the thunderstorm at the end of the cut, while I move the crowd, make every effort not to seize up.

The Latin Rascals get me; they let me go.

Punks are niggers, so they don't move on me. Their crews simply ignore my ass.

No clickas to worry about.

Musical youth too busy showing off their fancy-dancy kicks. "Pass the Dutchie," I overhear Junior afterwards tell another in the group.

Rehearsing a new jack swing, Ric, Ran, and Dan from Detroit make music with their mouths, sing "Something," but I pay no attention to it.

"Yo, Ric, how you feelin'?" I ask, almost putting a lackadaisical attitude too far out there into the universe because I know these brothers. They're normal to me, good people to dialogue with in order to see the role of intellectuals in revolutionary situations.

"Cowboys call me Richard," he swiftly answers. "But that's their way of being polite, referring to me as a 'Dick.'"

I feel at home where I am. Chain link fence captures all of us, sections off our ball, our locus amoenus that happily includes the shady lawns; it slices diagonally across our bodies as we do a Harlem shake, dance our way out of our constrictions.

Once a part of the amen corner outside, a Church elder, some kind of magical negro who announces he's revolted by the lack of an "angel race," stares down Sun Ra. Cat with Todd somewhere in his full name, after attempting to start a weak conversation about authentic hip hop, swears today is something like a phenomenon. Cat emphasizes: "This night of the living dead—night of the living baseheads—as public enemies, will be bigger than the sun, the moon, the stars, and darker than a total eclipse. Things will cease to exist."

With apparently a license to ill, he presents interested black folks gathering in a cipher with a sample of "Who Is He And What Is He To You" by Creative Source. While he raps by "biting" off others like there's no tomorrow, there's a lot popping off in the street I see.

Queen gets dragged with bracelets on. Decepticons slide over toward a donut shop. Chicken heads bob, look around for dealers. Curb creatures and savages take off and get small. One brother, stopped in the hood while carrying a soda bottle and showing off some shake and bake, twitches from electronic

convulsions. Another draped in stuff does the dying cockroach. Street kings on that red rum know they gonna be a zero. They play Ruthless Records. And sooner or later become dead beats.

Ghetto boys with wife beaters and tatted-up continue freely smoking trees, obviously not concerned with being marked men. The criminal-minded, the vagrants, and the wretched of the earth also walk on by me. They are not as violent as folks think. It's the white people that scare me, that stalk and haunt me like ghouls in a graveyard.

Little voodoo chile turns into sidewalk inspector, but can do nothing after heroine, to make an example out of him, pushes his tender, big head into some crack.

At the crossroads, I make a honey stop and let nice-looking Nena go first. Suddenly intersection gets packed, loaded, with drama. In a hot mess express, loco/local ugly women dust their noses and cateye me. John and Jane Wayne tell them they're getting to be "ri-goddamn-diculous." Acting like he could barely stomach them, John, obviously drunk, is no quiet man; he fires a mean racial slur at them, which either traumatizes me or triggers my rage.

I wish nice-looking Nena was with *me*. Hot, hot, hot.

I don't know why.

And I have no idea what makes people so sick. But I fear being bagged.

I think of what my girlfriend might say of me during interviews for a police report, the narrative and the basic information:

*I knew he was scared. "Why you following me for?" he asks. He got a smartphone and start walkin'. So I call him again. He put his hoodie on. Still a little drippin' water. I told him to run from his dad's house. But he said he was not going to run. Then just running. I can hear the wind blowin'.*

*"What's going on? What's going on?" Then I'm calling him, but he didn't answer. I could hear like something bump him. You could hear the grass, the noise of something hitting somebody...I could hear a little bit. "Get off, get off." Then next thing, the phone shut off.*

This not funny, but I see another black male corpse on someone's rotting porch with movie ticket stuck in his boxers and a level 3 cut, a wide, goofy, slanted smile going across his gut, his intestines falling out. A trail of bloody footprints

runs to a telephone pole wire overhead where a pair of PU sneakers hang, swing in a southern breeze.

"And he's the lucky one," Rick points out. "Lead poisoning is happening everywhere in our community at an alarming rate. Everybody's getting it, can't help but to be affected/infected by it."

Reporter Geraldo Rivera, as part of *Geraldo At Large* on Sunday night and Fox Channel News, will argue "the hoodie is as much responsible." Adding, "5-O will catch you sooner than later in 'thug wear' and do PR." Geraldo could easily burn a whole show talking about the police's propensity to pound and release.

The white gardenias stand their ground, spreading out and rapidly multiplying before my eyes, playing mind games—Jedi mind tricks—with me. Small-time threats and smatterings of violence continue to quickly grow into seriously messy splatterings. Like that, I find myself suffering from a hole in my heart. Next thing you know, I'm about to experience a nervous breakdown.

Mentally and emotionally decaying, I hop into a sweet ride and cruz [sic] more of the street scene to avoid becoming a dead subject. Dead issue.

In the Bentley, I go slowly and wait for something to jump off. And no doubt when it does, someone like Mia Love, who's running for Congress, will use me as an example of what's wrong in America, turn me into politics, take me apart from the inside out, before eventually calling me something lewd such as "barrel sucker," which is a person who loves guns and gun play.

That's twisted. I am not a monster. I don't deserve to be thought of as something like Monster Kody Scott, the crip.

Although I'm sure my girlfriend, who's strong and independent but receiving generous amounts of government assistance, will vouch for me, I'll be doing good just to see her again.

*I got guilt. Feel real guilty. 'Cause I didn't know about it. He would never fight, that was the problem.*

## HOODIE

*Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair  
Spread out in fiery points  
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.  
—The Waste Land*

*Contains a sample of “Missing”—Everything But The Girl  
Contains an interpretation of “Harvest Song”*

Brain dead but covered up at night for safety, dressed like a man in sheep’s skin, Tar Baby jumps off her ride—her warship, having already stopped being silent a long time ago. She puts a fast end to her hero-worship. In a pair of Timberland Earthkeepers boots the color of coffee she surprisingly struts around liberally on other people’s property, the grass already killed. Her slim ebony body extends for as long as the street, the Black English seeping out of her mouth and becoming more pronounced as she carelessly steps on a seething mass of maggots just enough to give anyone the heebie-jeebies.

I find myself officially in a sticky situation where I should have let sleeping corpses lie.

We’re illegally parked near the gated entrance of Burr Oak Cemetery, on the south side of Chicago, our ride slanted-back on the wet curb. Soon as I get out of the vehicle, a strong scent of motor oil or a freshly paved driveway suddenly hits me. I can hear blues siren Dinah Washington calling out to us. She puts a torch song inside my head that I can’t escape from.

The cemetery is a subterranean river, with old nightmares resurrected, bodies stacked, bones banked as money, burgundy and yellow silk flowers floating out of their vases and blowing away, urban vermin disappearing in sinkholes, smacked and blunted spooks tripping all around the graveyard, spirits flowing in and out of it. The vacant office’s sign boasts being “under new management and committed to the past.”

I got “Baby Get Lost” and “Am I Asking Too Much” on my mind when Tar Baby starts humming, coming, at me in rougher fashion to bond us as if she’s brown Gorilla Glue.

But she is perhaps too chilled and fatigued to bind us.

"Since you skurred, I have a first mind to lay you out," she says like one of the Brides of Frankenstein.

"Man up or else," doll warns. Hiding her slugs, she refuses to smile and pushes herself over the blood alcohol level. The Windy City snow around us doesn't phase her. Even her hanging snakes, the long dreadlocks treated with medicated coal tar and turned into something beautiful and elegant, refuse to lose composure. She shows no concern about eluding activity in order to maintain her hairstyle, the edges and the brittle threads.

No doubt delighted to see herself as a trickster figure, tar baby keeps it real but also appears to be playing around with the hammer hidden in her hip pocket. Perhaps so preoccupied in trapping me, her brain seems to allow one half-formed thought to pass.

She tightens her grip on me. "Ride or die," she says. "Time to gamble with your life. Either get wit the program and roll out a new attitude, or get to steppin'."

In the mean time, hawk cuts through the brown trees like a giant razor blade. Something else shoves me forward a little, but I don't know what it is.

Game recognizes game. Since there ain't no bolts in my neck, I rub the stubble on my chin and say, "Give me my walking papers." *I'd be a fool to stand my ground.*

I figure Tar Baby will be an easy target for either the goons or the George Zimmermans who will be violating the neighborhood and out of their element here in such a dark place but nonetheless determined to exercise/exorcize a "little hero complex" in search of somebody "suspicious."

*Can't touch this*, I think, because, in my mind's eye, there's some real mess out there or going on that even I, in bringing to light the tales of darkest America, ain't dumb enough to fight or get stuck on. I am quaking a little, and it feels as if everything else is in tremors, too. Tar baby surely notices my quivering, my shaky motions for goodbye.

"Maybe one day you'll git back at me!" Tar Baby hollers from behind. She says it loud, black and proud, freezing but looking thrilled not to be one with nerves that are bad tonight.

At last, I see a thick, syrupy part of Tar Baby's character determined to give me something I can sink my teeth into. As she moves toward me like molasses,

I think of the richness of Jean Toomer's *Cane*: She shadows the "reaper whose muscles set at sundown."

Some people might find doll offensive or threatening. But not me. As Death starts to smell us, Tar Baby points to the whole wide world 'round and above us—the legion of white stars glowing/gloating in our presence, to make sure I understand that she's really the only who can keep things together.

Caught in a stiff wind, a sort of dying breath, Tar Baby laughs/cries, ventures a final time to attach herself to me with more than the buttons of her eyes. Possessing mysterious black power and the ability to aid brothers and sisters seeking to sidestep extermination, she escalates raw emotions into the sheer/shared force of a scream, then boldly proclaims herself as the only one left in the concrete jungle able to stop the self-destruction and hold everything down. 

TWO POEMS

LOVE POEMS

1.

The problem with writing love  
poems is that I'm always needing to write  
another kind of poem I need to write  
about Manifest Destiny & how  
Walt Whitman cheered on the Americans  
during the Mexican War & how he called  
for Mexico to be crushed and punished  
(& how as a child I imagined Mexico  
on the map looked like a hammerhead shark)  
& how Whitman wanted my country  
stripped & bound to a fishing rod  
bound to the deck of his boat  
bloody & finless beneath the heels  
of his boot-soles

but my problem with Walt

began when I awoke with a song that  
grew like a finch or a fish in my ears  
that type of fish feeds only on a diet of poems  
and that's no problem because  
books of poetry abound & it's not hard  
finding them gathering dust on the shelves

but the real problems came later  
when there were no more books &  
no more room for a fish in the house  
mamá would look at the fish with contempt  
arguing that there was always another mouth to be fed

I remember when I fell in love  
and we were both dying of hunger—I  
because of love and the fish because  
of lack of a book of poems—the fish  
used to say no problem since he had  
forgotten how to eat anyway

I remember when the fish disappeared  
either because he died of hunger  
or because he had turned himself  
into a book of love poems

2.

The problem with poets is  
they are always turning themselves  
into fish at the first sight of a beautiful  
woman at the edge of a pond

you can find them on bedroom floors  
flapping and grasping for water  
flashing and glistening in grease

gills flaring red at the bottom of a pan  
or mounted by the tail & the fins on a wall  
oh poor little ones screaming or gasping for air  
or stuck wedged flat like dead butterflies  
or like sardines staring with horror at watery  
eyes from the bottom of tin cans

my poem too will end up on a bedroom floor crumpled  
and it will be as if I handed her all my flowers and trees  
and sand dunes and boats and scarves and parrots and  
the revolution and fidel's beard and beret and every  
childhood drawing I've made  
of hammerhead sharks and crocodiles and music  
and clouds and reefs  
and seahorses & every creature that roams the sea  
and is caught at the end of a fishhook

and the only beautiful thing will be knowing  
you can turn yourself into a love poem  
in the strangest of circumstances  
the fish after he died  
and now me  
so that you'll  
love me

## BIBLIOPHILES

*An Irish nobleman, Lord Kingsborough, used up all his financial resources on collecting and reproducing beautiful hand-colored copies of many of the earlier codices, and eventually died in a debtor's prison in Dublin.*

*—from Mesoamerican Mythology*

*Some authors consider that it was the viewing of the Codex Mendoza that inspired Kingsborough to later develop and publish The Antiquities of Mexico.*

*—from Lord Kingsborough and his Contribution to Ancient Meso-American Scholarship*

& what did

Lord Edward Kingsborough 1795–1837  
see exactly when in 1831  
he rediscovered the Codex  
Mendoza one winter afternoon  
in the Bodleian Library  
at Oxford University?

What before  
those eyes caused  
them to flutter  
their *Huitzilopochtli*-  
eyelashes dancing  
in the air with  
hummingbird-  
symmetry?

Irish eyes  
blue as twin  
sapphire suns  
beating down  
on fields of cactus  
maguey and *milpas*

more yellow than  
van Gogh sunflowers  
& on pyramids white  
as seashells flushed  
with the smoke  
of *copal*

A marigold  
heat wave fertilizing  
beds of floating  
terraces more  
beautiful than  
any Noah's ark  
& gardens drifting  
like icebergs  
along the hot-  
*comal* surface of Lake  
Texcoco from  
whose banks  
a carnival  
of *Mexica*  
children are  
splashing in  
the Irish-green  
of those  
waters?

2.

A moment three hundred  
years in the making that  
began in 1541 just twenty  
years after the fall of Tenochtitlan  
when Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza  
commissioned *calmécac*-trained  
scribes wielders of the wind like an obsidian-

pen carving pictograph-pearls from paper  
meant for eyes of a faraway King who

would never lay eyes on glyphs  
stowed away like feverish rainbows  
in the gold-filled hold of a Spanish  
ship captured by French privateers

Once in France  
André Thévet sinks his hands  
into the hold of that ship and pulls  
out pictograph-pearls  
that hang in the air like the starry  
hide of a jaguar like jaguars  
that cross paths before him  
I don't see the jaguars  
I only see the feverish hand that  
sees little jaguars

Why is the hand writing its  
name on five places  
of that codex in 1553?  
Why is the hand giving  
away the codex for twenty  
francs to an Englishman  
sometime after 1616?

I don't know  
I don't see the hand  
write its name in five places  
I don't see twenty francs

I only see a hand that suffers  
from fever & is giving off  
more coals

than a incense  
burner from  
*Palenque*

3.

& what was  
Lord Edward Kingsborough  
thinking exactly—three hundred  
years later—when in 1837 he was  
burning away with typhus  
in a debtor's prison in Dublin?

I don't know  
I don't see a flea-ridden man  
burning frozen with typhus  
I only see a hand  
that is opening its palm toward the light  
and pulls out jaguars from the air  
that he tosses onto the ceiling  
I don't see the jaguars  
I only see the hand that sees little jaguars  
& suffers from fever  
& sweats  
more profusely than  
a *Mexica* sun

I don't see the  
*Mexica* sun

I only see the hand  
that sees the *Mexica* sun &  
thinks that life & death  
are a fever  
& nothing  
more      ☩

FIVE POEMS

A POEM IS LIKE

sometimes  
a poem  
is like an egg:  
you just have to break it  
and it spills

other times  
there is a black line up there  
—close to the end of the sheet—  
and you have to climb up  
and when we get there we look back  
and our trail is the poem

sometimes  
a poem goes up to the sky  
and we have to shoot it down with a howitzer  
each verse is an explosion  
and when a verse hits its target  
the poem's over

and the other verses  
are stray bullets

sometimes  
a poem comes  
and wears the right hand like a glove  
and writes itself from A to Z  
from top to bottom  
and all of a sudden  
it takes off the glove  
and leaves

sometimes there is a line  
and the words  
surround it on all sides  
and don't approach it  
and they return  
and they climb down  
to the 4 silent  
abysses of the sheet  
and the line is a haiku

and sometimes  
a line  
takes off its hat  
and inside there is  
another smaller line  
that also  
takes off its hat  
and so on  
until a line  
is so small  
that when it takes off its hat  
it finds inside  
the end

## HOW ARE HAMLET AND DON QUIXOTE ALIKE? HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

they're alike in their excess  
and they are different  
in the direction of their excess

Don Quixote's goes outward  
and Hamlet's goes inward

this must be taken *cum grano salis*  
because I haven't read Hamlet nor Don Quixote  
—there's no need to blow smoke here—

in any case  
I feel quite close to Hamlet  
especially in the supermarket  
facing two avocados  
facing two tomatoes  
facing two cans of tuna  
—one in water and the other in oil—  
or when I sweat and hesitate  
between a gas cylinder or a Smith & Wesson  
like Pablo de Rokha's

## ASPIRING TO BE CHILE'S GREATEST POET

I don't even aspire the smoke of a cigarette  
and I will aspire to be Chile's greatest poet!

but I want to be

I want people to elbow each other on the street  
and say:

look

there goes chile's greatest poet  
the continent's greatest poet  
the world's greatest poet  
the solar system's greatest poet

humbly

I love this Thelonious Monk solo  
he plays some little notes here some little note there  
and eventually he stops playing for so long  
that Miles Davis thinks the solo's over  
and begins to play

then Monk  
comes right back in  
as if to say  
hey *huevón* what's the matter with you  
this is my solo

some other little notes here  
some other little notes there

and he ends his solo

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH, 1975

the sun came  
then Patti Labelle came  
then Marvin Gaye came  
then my conga drum came  
then Luis Cernuda came  
then Nazim Hikmet came  
then Jorge Luis Borges came  
then Gustav Mahler came  
then came your little red notebook  
after reading Nazim Hikmet  
came your reading of my 18-page letter  
for Francisco from Urubamba  
then came your reading of my unfinished 18-page letter  
for you from last year and  
then came the possibility of going to live to Iran together

we talked about my sister about Brigitte  
about Viviana from Venezuela from Vancouver about  
Blonde Pedro from New York about Gonzalo Millán  
about your letter to Gonzalo Millán about your theory of  
superficial thinking in the letter to Gonzalo  
Millán and about the three-storey house in Ñuñoa that  
you would buy with the money you would make in Teheran.

Paris.

*Translated by Carlos Soto-Román* 

---

STEVE DICKISON

---

SIX POEMS AND "A NOTE ON WADADA"

'THE FRIEND'

that the bird with the enormous velvet nerve-body  
articulated legs more like an insect than I knew  
greedy mouth wanted to feed out of my mouth  
apparently they are always hungry  
"what they are screaming is *ada ada* the word for pain"  
the verb was the same as in spanish *ayudar*  
echo'd "are you there?" or in arabic *wadada*

"tears become pears for mothers to feed their children"

---

19iii08      for McN

FROM *WEAR YOU TO THE BALL*

1.

*she added page zero at front of the story*  
as if before zero sleeps Mnemosyne  
serrated light drops on the wall to read by  
eyelids tinted the shade of the area  
around her nipple here it's called the halo  
in the telling as I'm capable to wield it  
you know the tune where the beauty might not  
be sustained it's like that what won't be said  
sleeping at opposite ends of the spectrum  
the subvocal breezes talking at us  
circa midnight the sliced orange nocturnal  
eminence pours moonbeams from her pail  
a mascara brushed on to negative numbers  
"I need a word with you honeyed to it"  
then stumbled into a magnetic field of them  
she who was that masked girl made to inhabit  
who could lift her inside sensory blanket  
would you show me what's between where you  
secreted pearl and daughter of pearl  
that's how I get my fortune told for free

2.

*you've walked into the door five minutes before closing*  
you are going to be shown the proverbial door  
to be "shown the door" that's a polite elocution  
one is shown to it when catapulted thru its  
rays of light, entering the camera obscura  
at Sutro Beach to be an analogy  
turned on its head, giant retina, a net  
that captures the pictures in brief sailing past  
extremely civil they are cast thru the pinhole  
the volume turned down to a miniature  
Mughal garden scenario, this lithe gazelle  
having walked into the LIONS club her eyes  
don't need to adjust they are fitted with native  
sensitivity to all modes of lighting the shoot  
imagine imagining yourself in the role  
of the stagehand eternally filling her waterbowl  
plumping her pillow, straightening her stocking hems  
coffeebreaks in the shade of a white truck  
so gigantic it simulates the sky  
when the sun hits it turns into another sun  
so there are two of them, you put one in your mouth  
it dissolves like a lozenge while its double rides thru heaven

---

*Larry the K*

4.

*what about the painted-on glitter-shaded eyelids*  
did you not understand, stationed under  
to catch their artificial snowflakes on your tongue  
Nick Moyake's tenor leans into B MY DEAR  
a mouthful of butter his accomplice  
it's the South African method of saying  
“you get a line honey I'll get a pole,” etc.  
it'll have to be said in Europe and in butter  
as drawing a crowd over ten was *verbode*  
in South Africa and butter attracts honey  
growing up attached to *bobber and sinker*  
saturnine and mercurial, leaden and buoyant  
I learned my way around the fishing song  
“also banjo, zither, bells, gongs, logdrum,  
whistles, bicycle horns, voice” acquiring  
imitative skills aimed at aquatic birds  
hyperboreal thunderstorms' protosexual  
folding of donner on blitzen, you've seen them  
parting the clouds traveling down to the well  
to meet the ice inside the LAKE OF FIRE in who is  
attending to ECHO, her sound decay in the cistern

*they can't avert all of their senses from who*  
barely walks by his riddled feet need to mince  
as recorded in their own sentence broken into  
silenced witnesses to an exquisite filth  
cements the articles of garment together  
to be fair he went lost before they were sentient  
have you seen him I seen him again last night  
his sister I only seen her one time she was  
regal implacable a tremendous crown  
planet of hair in suspension above the face  
her body poured from this matted orb of knots  
to meet the sidewalk underneath the look she cast  
two eyes that could split a stone into gravel  
like turning a page in a book I didn't  
know before then I'd been reading what it  
released into the atmosphere between us  
which direction did she walk in do you think  
I think it's not any species of thinking  
reaches nearly enough into that mirror  
to trouble what's written across its surface

25.

*who was standing in this tube of erased light*  
caught by last eyelid of eclipse across full moon  
being dragged inside planet's column of shadow  
like it's written in the BOOK OF NATHANAEL  
*I moved to extend the embrace, either way*  
she was taken aback or she was taking a bath  
"night and day aren't that different for her"  
pajama bottom streetwear, wisp of the ghost  
of a blouse as tho "she only had on three things  
and two were hair-ribbons" I was wanting  
to rekindle her love-hate affair with the poem  
his membrane tattoo'd with percussion of this  
that suddenly one had been made volunteer  
in one's own embarrassment, the dissolving  
where everything pours in unimpeded  
and didn't need to say *I know who you are*  
whose lucky face gets cemented to the hotseat  
for when the light hits as the choreography  
prescribed it one likes to have on decent dress  
that new outfit for instance is erasable  
"how about I kiss that moustache off your lip"

## A NOTE ON WADADA

*for Nate Mackey*

*Having gone to my sources...*

Nani Bezuayehu, of Addis Ababa, “the new-flower,” by way of Minneapolis, “city-of-waters” (Ojibway plus ancient Greek), dental hygienist and paramedic, says yes, in Amharic *wadada* means “he loves.”

El Wadud the radio tells me is one of the names of God.

Simone Fattal, of the 4,000-year city Damascus, by way of Beirut, artist and translator, writes to me that El Wadud indeed is love, “a very sweet love.”

That *wadada*, yes, the Ethiopians will have carried the word from the Arabic, *wadada* is a substantive, it means “love,” as the quality or condition.

This is what Prince Fari says: “*Wadada* means love.”

Further, writes Simone, the Spanish *ayudar*, “to help,” is straight Arabic, *ayada* (دعا).

And “what they are screaming is *ada*, *ada*, the word for pain” is a sentence Eric Greenleaf, psychologist/hypnotherapist, spoke in the course of narrating a video he’d recorded of a group of men under trance possession in Bali.

“Black Wa-da-da,” the dub or double, the ghost to “The Invasion,” cries out... Winston Rodney cries out: “Where is your love, Jamaica?”

“Could you be loved?” maybe is another locution.

It’s a little the way Charles Mingus compacted the standard “What Is This Thing Called Love” to say “What Love?”

As when C.O. Simpkins, M.D., in his biography of John Coltrane, uses the phrase

"tears become pears for mothers to feed their children," that struck me on reading as resembling a construction out of the Quran, it's a translatable step in his attempt at conveying in words the experience of hearing Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*.

"The Theme" carrying its signature call to anamnesis, "don't you remember...?" Wadada Leo Smith, on voice and trumpet, aided by Abdel Wadud on cello, drawing it down, what's carried thru the filter of the name. ☩

JUAN CARLOS FLORES

---

THREE POEMS

DEVOTIONAL

"the dog came to eat fleshy fruit out of my hand and I thought of Saint Francis of Assisi" / brother sun / sister moon / brother forest / brother wind / sister water / sister stone / the words, sisters / the hand that picks up the paintbrush is the same hand that extends the fruit / "the dog came to eat fleshy fruit out of my hand and I thought of Saint Francis of Assisi" /

## FOR A DEAD BLUE JAY

"just when we had stopped thinking about death the blue jay up and died."

But there's a marvelous, wild bird who sings inside my heart. That marvelous, wild bird sings for all and at the same time the bird sings for none. It's painful, as if I were afflicted with illness. There will be a marvelous, wild bird singing until the end. Words are words.

"just when we had stopped thinking about death the blue jay up and died."

POSTCARD

The slender white bird I saw / perched over empty land / on what once was a lake with crystalline waters / lake of waters sweet to the tongue / the years went by and still I keep trying to translate / halfway between translation and artifice / the slender white bird soared away and I was left the same as a blind man in sun

*Translated by Kristin Dykstra* 

NEGRO EN OVEJAS (POEMA OVINO)

“Negro en ovejas” es un *poema ovino* en formato digital que reproduce la instancia en negro de una imbricación ovina, esto es, la implicación de la palabra y la oveja en entramado de poesía interactiva que equipara el texto que las ovejas van formando por el prado con las variantes posibles en el artefacto electrónico. Se trata entonces de varios niveles de interacción y acción poéticas. Primero es el proceso de la construcción del texto, el poema-base formado por palabras que tienen sentido en sí mismas pero adquieren nuevos por interacción con otras (el sustantivo “Sol” y el verbo “Es” se transfieren al plural “Soles” por proximidad o contacto). Una vez construidas las piezas, se asignan a ovejas que libres irán formando poemas en un *performance* de acción y balidos que adquiere entidad propia. Por último, transcrita el encuentro al artefacto digital, el/la navegante en Internet puede acceder a reproducir el proceso en interacción cibernetica y de intercambio de autoridad creadora y especies: el/la cibernauta, como las ovejas, construye la experiencia poética, hermanándose a su vez con ellas. La reproducción en *Mandorla* captura acaso algunos de los versos a modo de sugerencia y propuesta en una última dimensión mediática. Pueden experimentar el poema en [www.tinaescaja.com](http://www.tinaescaja.com)

# NEGRO EN OVEJAS

>



Tina Escaja (c) 2008

Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Ex Traer"

< NEGRO EN OVEJAS >



Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Distancias / A Fines"

## < NEGRO EN OVEJAS >



Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Busque Das / Sin Tregua"

<

# NEGRO EN OVEJAS

>



Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Puertas"

&lt;

## NEGRO EN LOVEJAS

&gt;



Tina Escaja (C) 2008

Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
“Sol Es De Algo Don Y Mar”

< NEGRO EN OVEJAS >



Tina Escaja (c) 2008

Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Me Sumo A Tu Pulso Oveja"



Tina Escaja  
Screen shot  
"Me Aventuro"

# NEGRO EN OVEJAS

Ex Traer

Fórmulas  
Encuentros  
Caos

Distancias  
A Fines

Fragmentos  
Sordos

Ser Vil Ismos

En Verga Duras

Busque Das  
Sin Tregua

Puertas  
Sol Es De Algo Don Y Mar

Color Es  
Y Abatimientos.

Me Sumo A Tu Pulso Oveja  
A Tu Llama Y Redil  
Y Aventuro  
Infinitos.

Me Aventuro. ☰

JENNIFER TAMAYO

---

XI. IS IT KIND OR SICK TO MAKE THINGS THAT HAVE  
A BODY & RELATED QUESTION ON THE INTERNET, WHAT  
WEBSITES DO YOU VISIT

JENNIFER TAMAYO, my love how are you. This is my first email in life and I do it for you. I'm worried about the winter as you are, write me. My phone is 57.314.863.55-35

te quiero mucho tu abuela, Leonor

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Dear grandmother Lion,

It's me JENNIFER TAMAYO! That's good to hear from you. It makes me happy to know that you are thinking of me. Believe it or not always, I think of you (and the family) a lot. My mom told me a lot of you. During Christmas, I said I was in

contact with you (and Marcel and Sun) and she was very happy a lot. We try to give his number, but I'm not sure if you knot well. She still catches your grandma with chitos (cheetos? cheating? cheetahs?). The grandma of the ch—

I feel good. Like I said to Marcel, I live in Baton Rouge (for now) studied literature and poetry at the University of Louisiana. In May, I will finish my Masters and my boyfriend (and our drogs) will be moving to another city. We have a very nice life here - with a lot of friends and lots to do. We are both artists and work together on a lot of projects. During the weekends we like to cook (we are vegetarians), camping, reading, and go for dancing.

Why do you care about the winter? How's it going in there?

I love you, Grandma. I hope everything go swelled. How pleasure communicate with you. Kisses and hugs foreva.

much love,

JT

JENNIFER TAMAYO, my love I got your message, what joy to hear from you. Grandmother of Cheetos was Julia, my mom, your bisbuela, who died last October, for me it was very sad but our family has always accompanied me.

Tell of your mom and of your brother. Tell me about your husband, where is, how old. Congratulations on your mastery of poetry!

Then write you again. I love you. Attached is a Luis photo of your grandfather and mine. Also,

AUTO FINANCING AVAILABLE. BAD CREDIT CAR LOANS 100% ACCEPTED  
AUTO FINANCING AVAILABLE. BAD CREDIT CAR LOANS 100% ACCEPTED  
AUTO FINANCING AVAILABLE. BAD CREDIT CAR LOANS 100% ACCEPTED

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AUTO FINANCING AVAILABLE. BAD CREDIT CAR LOANS 100% ACCEPTED  
AUTO FINANCING AVAILABLE. BAD CREDIT CAR LOANS 100% ACCEPTED

Hello, jenny

Hope you are well, I tell you that I will do the questions of the bank in Medellin.  
I will contact you.

Write me anytime because you respond with great pleasure.

I love you, your father

ps. JENNIFER TAMAYO, daughter, a hug and a thousand blessings on this day,  
may God preserve you for many more years. Also,

DID YOU HEAR THE BIG SECRET?!!! OPRAH HAS A SISTER AND HER NAME  
IS PATRICIA!

JENNIFER TAMAYO, my girl, how these wills and we do not talk, I'm glad that  
you are going to graduate soon. I tell you that I have a granddaughter; Julia is  
five years old. I will send a photo. She is the granddaughter of the Sun.

I crochet, you know? With two needles, I make folders, scarves and valances.  
Your dad is happy that you wrote. I'll send a photo of your cousin, Federico.

JENNIFER TAMAYO I send you a kiss and a hug, write. Write! Write us! You  
write so many but never us.

FIND SINCERE JEWISH SINGELS IN YOUR AREA

MEET ATTRACTIVE JEWISH SINGELS IN YOUR AREA

START FLIRTING! START FLIRTING. NOW!

Daughter, JENNIFER TAMAYO, I wish you a happy birthday! I hope that it passes through you very well and you enjoy a lot in your day.

I love you...a hug from your family here in Colombia...your grandparents... your uncles...your primos and your brother.

-your father.

Thanks, Dad. God to hear from you on my birthday. I had a great—with friends here in New York.

Hugs and kisses to everyone in Colombia, JENNIFER TAMAYO

ps. All good here - our neighborhood lost no electricity or anything during the storm. (We live in the good part of the city).

OH JENNIFER TAMAYO. Blessings of God! As we have seen and read very dramatic situations on the internet. I will comment at all. God fills you with his many blessings. God shoves all of his many blessings inside of you. A huge hug and kiss. When you get a chance, check out

Hi there, dear info! NY Sales

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JUAN MANUEL PORTILLO

---

(ESTUDIOS)

(READY MADE / RECICLABLE)

llevo meses poniendo una botella  
sobre otra

-lo que cuido lo que construyo

monumento  
fuente le llamo

-lo que bebo lo que uso

nadie me ve al cabo  
y si me vieran les diría que juego  
al idiota o a cualquiera otra infancia

hay algo mágico en la orina  
de un enfermo un brillo  
como de oro

la casa que me espera al final del camino  
no existe todavía

está en el aire

la tierra firme es una idea  
redonda como guijarro en órbita  
pulido al sol  
y expuesto a ciertas  
noches de luna

a veces llena

imagino la casa pero  
no existe

la clave es el camino que no se deja atar

hay tantos hilos sueltos y algunos  
tan brillantes aromas

la llave es el aroma o ciertos acomodos  
del aire

a veces música

la casa está en el aire

como aroma  
como lenguaje en celo

(NEGRO / NEGRO)

hablar a estas alturas  
de la luz  
es un oficio de tinieblas

que hablen de la luz  
los sepultureros  
que la ven irse

pero hablar -a estas mismas alturas-  
del otro lado  
de la luz  
es también un oficio de tinieblas

día y noche de la luz

hay oficios comunes, menos  
tenebrosos  
de los que no se habla

oficios se parece a ofidios, sobre  
todo  
cuando oscurece y salen de  
sus piedras  
y salen de sus cuevas  
sibilinas, sibilantes

(AUTORRETRATO / ESTUDIO)

hablo de mí  
como hablo de una escena vista al sesgo

hablo del montaje de  
un día sobre  
otro

o de un rostro: vago  
como figura vaga que  
se aproxima

o de un hueco

---

\*sobre una fotografía de Alfredo Carrillo

(ESTUDIO DE FOTOGRAFÍA / TRIÁNGULO CON NIÑA)

el misterio del triángulo: lo que no es triángulo

vértice uno: la niña en posición de foto con cristal

dos: búsquese la distancia en que los ojos  
del vértice anterior  
se cierran

vértice tres: con los ojos cerrados figurar  
el triángulo, concebirlo  
como pura idea

olvidar el triángulo:  
queda la pureza

---

\*sobre una fotografía de Mónica Nepote

(STOCKHAUSEN / ESTUDIOS)

1

con música de fondo, maestro  
templa tu ira

dirígela  
como un enjambre de hélices

como lejano ruido de langostas

libérala

2

aullido secular de violines

fanfarria  
que nadie se mueva

como estrella  
fugaz la obra maestra  
pasa

pasa  
la torre de marfil

(ESTUDIO CROMÁTICO / GRIS)

todo el peso de otoño sobre tu cabeza  
en una imagen: cielo de plomo

otra imagen: cualquier cosa que apunte hacia tu cielo  
desde aquí

por ejemplo:

un proyectil  
la secuencia de la nota blanca  
a la negra

un proyectil:

el desplome del cielo cada día  
que te callas

por ejemplo

(ESTUDIO DE POSICIÓN)

¿cuántos pies de altura?

decir azul sería  
nombrar en vano para quien  
tiene los pies bien puestos  
en la tierra

los cadáveres tienen los  
pies bien puestos en la tierra

con firmeza de piedra o de raíz  
decir muralla

que proteja la piedra y la raíz  
o reino

decir cielo sería cavar más hondo

(ESTUDIO DE PERSPECTIVA)

primer plano: un atril  
detrás, una ventana

la ventana pintada de paisajes  
de museo

cambiantes

(visita no planeada, paisaje no planeado  
de museo

visita no planeada, paisaje no planeado de museo:  
serie

no planeada

de paisaje  
intocable  
no planeada

intocable  
no planeada

serie de museo

no planeada  
intocable

hay una música que espera  
no planeada

intocable  
espera espera no planeada

intocable

serie no planeada

espera serie espera no planeada serie no planeada planeada no planeada  
intocable

intocable)

cuando el aire se vicia deslizar la ventana:

no a la música de los pájaros

no a los pájaros

deslizar:

la silueta del pájaro  
que borraste de niño

detrás de ti: planea (a veces plena

como sombra) planea  
a plena luz del día ☰

SAMUEL ACE

---

I THINK HE KILLED THE RED

Begin message:

From: S

Subject: I think he killed the red no he killed the bail he killed the eye to eye the sparkle head I think he killed the dozen truces the charge to prove to keep the curtains to keep the couch the teeth I think he killed the way he stood I think he killed the lake the immigrant scheme I think he killed the refuse the ugly lip

Date: October 23 12:10:49 PM MST

To: L

I think he killed the red the sparkle head I think he killed the dozen truces the change (to prove the curtain to keep the couch) I think he killed the way he stood killed the lake the immigrant scheme I think he killed the refuse the ugly lip I think he gave an eye I think he jumped the line

Begin message:

From: L

Subject: Where is it that the push up and the push in where is it that the under-side the crotch where is it that the yellow the fan where is it that the bottom of the foot where is it that the breath held in a hand where is it that was left and stopped in a fugitive ouch where is it that the finish the cake the stunning heaven where is it that the crater the fountain the tray where is it that the boy where is it that he walked away?

Date: December 19 9:59:20 PM MST

To: S

The push	we hadn't
to sorrow	finished
insured	even eaten
or not	the cake
the push	we hadn't
to stain	expected
the hardly	what heaven
cool	would climb
the bottom	we fell
range	our mouths
the last	the rotten
breath	sky
the throaty	the birds
ahhh	the rise

Begin message:

From: S

Subject: I had no idea when I saw the hair on his shoulders there in the small dining room I had no idea the belly on his small frame I had no idea the roughage of his beard the Camel spit on the dash the eyebrow sweat I had no idea the gap the lump the sweet shower I had no idea the o of his o I had no idea the sorry the sweet arms I had no idea the tall the ear of ear I had no idea the question I had no intention of obfuscation had no idea of fog had no idea the shoe would not fit had no idea the boyskin lumps I had no idea the travel it would take I had no idea the truce I had no idea the tuxedo the sweet tie clip the baritone the woody beer

Date: February 2 8:03:25 AM MST

To: L

There's hair! the room has no door no seat just a hole in the floor how do you tell the ear the secret the sorry the rent?

Begin message:

From: S

Subject: Blue scarf of crab the back of my knees undressed of winter blue scrim  
of privacy we would take the fields this time we would transplant some of our  
hair we would be fertilized and lie back down blue scarf of child a currency of  
faith a bus of guile a journey of nuts and yours a blue scarf of boat we would  
sail a bird of chance a small being in the arms of trees a smaller climb an energy  
foretold higher this random harness this trial

Date: February 8 7:36:30 AM MST

To: L

And what if there were no cautions there you  
were softening a bird of chance 

Carlos Augusto Alfonso (1963) es uno de los poetas cubanos que menos concesiones ha hecho a los “ismos”; quien más ha logrado su lugar en, la Diferencia. Nació de una intolerancia, de su pulsión con la historia, de su resquemor con ella. Sus versos no se articulan equilibradamente y mantienen inestabilidad constante en el lenguaje, porque son sensaciones convertidas de la sociedad que llegan a contusiones casi paranoicas: al trance.

Ya con su cuaderno, “Los pescados del muro” (1982) y con “El segundo aire” (1986), desmitifica al poeta ejerciendo una violencia: “Considerarme agitador hasta qué punto / el haber sido agitado me conduce con pase / permanente...” (De, “Analogías con la rosa de Francia”). Y, “aunque me quiebre el pescuezo cuando pase / el impala / voy a seguir siendo su enemigo / aunque grite en inglés mamá rocanroll...” (De, “Siempre estoy”).

En su poética hay una apuesta por una clase que no tiene nada: por “los de abajo”; por ese hombre sin recursos, de la calle, que está en situación extrema siempre. Los vagabundos, los olvidados, los recogedores de cualquier cosa son sus héroes. “Rancho de los pormenores” (título de un poema) es el lugar a donde todos somos invitados y lo que tiene para compartir: “pintacalles fosforeras irrellenables...” donde, “boca a boca al ahogado devuelve el pequeño / favor...”

Diría, que Carlos Augusto, junto con esta historia de la mendicidad y sus horrores, lleva a la vez a sus textos, civilizaciones perdidas que se atropellan unas dentro de otras, para buscar su espacio en otro tiempo: palacios, vestimentas; estilos, barbarie; épocas traídas de las películas y envueltas siempre en un espíritu musical (venido por ejemplo, del sonido de una batería de fondo como aquel poema KTP fingiendo el ritmo de una máquina cortadora de caña), dándole a lo sonoro –jazz, hip hop, songo, heavy metal-, sin establecer jerarquías, un valor primordial, ideológico; creando también, una “poética del ritmo” ya sea a través de la voz o de la música, queriéndonos decir que es el otro (que mantiene una conversación a través de la abstracción de la música), con aquel que lo acompaña, su doble: –un ciego, un tuerto, un emperador, un vagabundo, un rey muerto, un pianista. Fusión que da trasfondo a su imagen “de venido a menos”; de extraído de algún capítulo de “Los miserables”.

Así, extrapolando su identidad y contrapunteando, multiplica su visión semejante a un espejo, para convertirse en un jugador de cartas, -ese que se juega la suerte y la nostalgia por un mundo perdido. (“La verticalidad del lenguaje y de su destrucción); es en el momento en que cada mano (diferente) salta sobre la otra (y no una después de la otra) cuando se produce el agujero y arrastra al sujeto del juego –el sujeto del texto”, dice Barthes en, “El placer del texto”. No encuentra reposo tampoco en esta multiplicidad que recoge, desde los temas cotidianos hasta los más sombríos, donde las guerras, los infortunios de la humanidad; aquellos imperios en decadencia, las revoluciones, provocan una arqueología, que desde su mirada ecléctica y llena de efectismos, sarcasmos y amargura, nos pone en consonancia con aquel título de un libro que leíamos en los años 80 y que sería un buen epíteto para sus textos: “Caída y decadencia de casi todo el mundo”.

En, “Cerval” –libro con el que obtuviera el premio Internacional Raúl Hernández Novás y de la Crítica Cubana 2006-, CAA usa -sin que él lo sepa a cabalidad-, el esquema forma-fuerza de Perlongher, a través de un lenguaje mental que retumba en su cabeza y sus altisonancias. Por “una subjetividad extraviada en su propio pensamiento”. Y, en su último libro inédito, “El libro de los sin casa”, trata de convertirse en el “Ulises”, de Joyce: un “Ulises” tropical que baja a los trasfondos de esta sociedad, con prosas entrecortadas, tremendistas,

hasta delirantes, mostrando estratos, capas, jerarquías, para filosofar a toda costa, tratando de “introducir la verdad de dos historias en la historia” -como él mismo ha dicho en una entrevista-, sacando residuos de su contexto para insertarlos en otros ya pasados, en un intento de recuperación por la cultura a través de la repetición como en aquella paradoja de Deleuze que dice, “que algo verdaderamente nuevo solo puede venir de la repetición”.

La lengua es para él, un estado de conciencia sobre el presente; una vigilancia constante; esa herramienta que tiene que doblegar, aplastar y convertir por sumisión en otro lenguaje que viene de profundos estratos, de Petrarca: un lenguaje para morderse a sí mismo; para golpear y golpearse, sin reconciliación con ningún esquema comercial, con ningún propósito externo a su propia voluntad y deseo. Porque, la lengua no es para él la historia explícita, sino una enseñaza que subyace: un dislocamiento. “Todo puede salir de una palabra mientras camino por las calles: Infanta, Alamar, Buena Vista, porque escribo caminando...” (De una entrevista de Leyla Leyva al autor).

(Es interesante ver, que un poeta que hace cotidianamente la cola del pan y escribe un texto inolvidable sobre esa experiencia: “La cola del pan”; o poemas sobre la corriente del niño que lo arrastra todo sin dejarnos ver el fondo ni el cauce como, “La corriente del niño”, que indaga sobre cuándo “el niño puede volver”, utilizando esa imagen en sus dos sentidos: el de la naturaleza y el de su propio niño escondido dentro de él; o, cuando escribe sobre el tipo de pastoreo que se implantara en Cuba intentando levantar una economía desbastada y tomando el nombre de aquella experiencia, “Pastoreo Wasan”, no sea un poeta de lo cotidiano que apele a “la desesperación silenciosa de las vidas cotidianas”, sino que sea y permanezca, como un poeta crédulo que quiere ir más allá, vaciar lo ideológico para recomponerlo y confirmar todavía, a través de su dolor y de su rabia, una esperanza con lo más positivo que ha quedado de un experimento en el que ha involucrado toda su vida).

Porque, para Carlos Augusto Alfonso, su poética que es ante todo existencia que, a través de personajes tan lúcidos como desvalidos, juega al desgaste del cuerpo, junto al desgaste del texto, de la historia, del ritmo, de la razón, de la palabra (“hebreo, ñáñigo, congo, polaco, ruso, inglés”- nos dice), cualquier lengua convertida en obsesión; fundida en un grafitis o sacada de una enciclopedia, es su

morbo, para entrar en cualquier historia vulgar o sacra, donde ese “yo” la juzga –salido por debajo de la capa de sus personajes–, y la relaciona con otras partes “altas de la cultura”, como un calidoscopio; tensando esta cuerda al máximo (con recelo) al compartirla con los que no ven de qué se trata, cuando él todavía intenta, hasta con didactismo a veces, demostrarnos algo con la fuerza pujada de un dolor. Una violencia. La violencia de “un simple mortal con su angustia”.

Capa por capa, como se quitan las hojas de una cebolla o se escarba hacia la profundidad de un asentamiento romano, el autor siente la pérdida del campo ex socialista -de ahí su texto, “Neva sintomático” donde nos dice: “bajo fianza el único sentido/que se presenta solo menos la pena...” y donde lamenta, la pérdida de la utopía dentro de la que creció, aunque con sus textos de un puñetazo rompa cualquier idealidad, convicciones, principios y hasta esos puentes creados, “levantados los puentes” dice, entre la aridez de aquella zona que fuera una promesa para “el hombre nuevo” y la vida a la que ha sido relegado, puesto fuera del juego de una experiencia real y metido entre esas márgenes mentales que constituyen su ego, su esperanza, pero más que todo, su desgarramiento. Ese dolor sacado “a cinco centavos de un periódico viejo”; “de un viejo con dos cubos de agua parado/en medio de la calle”, cuyo cuerpo quedará en formol para ser diseccionado por los estudiantes de medicina; de su, “Población flotante”, donde puede transformar hasta unos zapatos feos en bonitos; y “en arte en política o en deporte/yo puedo apasionarme como cualquiera”, llegando a su máxima reverencia para los excluidos de cualquier poder en, “El libro de los sin casa” donde intenta correr cada vez más sus propios límites.

Como si toda su poética se defendiera y se retorciera al sentirse ofendida, porque su palabra se encuentra también ofendida y se rebela, ante cualquier tipo de conservación de un equilibrio o de una identidad que no admiten redención ni promesa. A sabiendas de que, él quiso ser un emperador romano; quiso ser Joyce; quiso ser comunista; quiso ser un niño ruso y lo dejaron “solitario en el marabuzal” –como un neobarroco que ni siquiera sospecha que lo es-, en el desierto de Alamar, también llamada: la última provincia del este donde vivieron los rusos antes de la caída del muro. Muro que ha sido también su atalaya, en “Excursión al muro de las lamentaciones”: “para hacerte indeseable o enemigo público o/profeta en tierra de nadie...”

En un lugar con tan poca vanguardia, puede ser que lo vean como “un poeta experimental” que él rechaza ser. Puede que no comprendan su delirio de no claudicar ante una lengua que es la suya propia, con ideas que desmitifican lo que otros alaban, donde “los héroes no se fabrican en La Candeal” o, como dice en, “El héroe”: “soy el héroe de una tira creado por la mano de James Thurber” o, cuando afirma: “Yo también Brutus”, salido de ese doble donde se vuelve muchos, haciéndose cómplice de un “cuerpo histórico”, contemporáneo y provocador como en aquella frase de Roland Barthes: “Intento pues dejarme llevar por la fuerza de toda vida viviente: el olvido”.

En “Protestante”, la antología que edita “Unión”, a cargo de la poeta y editora Jamila Medina, esos tuertos, esos ciegos, esos héroes, esos Brutus, retuerzan la cabeza y nos ven. Parapetados en sus discursos, nos vigilan con un afán ciclópeo. Son síntomas de “intensidad afectiva” como los denomina Lacan. Inválidos que en otro campo de intensidades no convencionales, realizan ellos las acciones que en general no efectuamos como deberíamos. Sus incapacidades demuestran nuestra inacción, nuestra inmovilidad. Vuelve Carlos Augusto a enfrentarnos su Devenir frente al Ser o es el Ser quien se ha convertido durante el trayecto en su propio Devenir. Ser un neobarroco sin neobarroco (sin nombrarlo ¡jamás!) es serlo también en su progresión, en su ocultamiento durante el trayecto, intentando saltar la valla prometida para apropiarse de esas zonas bajas de los discursos donde crear la parábola del agrimensor, del vociferador, del ciego, del antihéroe, porque “el niño siempre estará volviendo puntual / con su reloj del hambre.” (De, “La corriente del niño”).

La historia sin estar en La Historia, como quería también Barthes, sino en el destino de la propia escritura arma un cuadrilátero donde los acontecimientos van quedando re-tenidos, re-leídos, re-escritos, de vuelta ya, quebrados, descentrados, refugiados -como esos niños que luego de cometer su gran peripécia se esconden en la caja de juguetes y no quieren salir más de allí. Cometieron su crimen sin saberlo. Destrozaron algo que de antemano, ya estaba destrozado, pero se sienten rotos y culpables. Niños, que en el campo de batalla de sus juegos fueron hábiles y que ahora, de vuelta al redil, todavía no comprenden el dilema al que estuvieron expuestos. Pero esos textos, esos juegos prohibidos, esos juguetes rotos, todavía están ahí, intactos frente al viento. Ellos, sin temor a su ilegibilidad, obtuvieron

una capacidad, un adiestramiento: la de ser descentrados, irreconocibles, con esa astucia sin reconocimiento frente a los poderes, frente a lo común, como lo vio Víctor Kemplere en su libro, "La lengua del Tercer Reich. Apuntes de un filólogo", son reductos vivos del lenguaje, estratos no convertidos, no parasitarios, sin apropiaciones que no sean puramente literarias, sin concesiones, para desbloquear zonas que se han petrificado en la conciencia.

La Historia como quería Michelet, "como una inmensa antropología", donde resucitan "cuerpos pasados", fantasmas; híbridos sin épocas que agiten lo real: "un texto donde se pudiera escuchar el tono de la garganta, la oxidación de las consonantes, la voluptuosidad de las vocales, toda una estereofonía de la carne profunda" - pedía R.B. "Mar sin importarme el mar" (de, "Arranque en la costa"), va hacia la negación de un mar mentido y necesario; de una mar otro – ni lírico ni predestinado ni edulcorado-, es su alarma contra el espíritu romántico; el desconocimiento del mar común y mental; la ruptura con la banalidad de un mar parejo lleno de peces, promesas, barcos anclados, esperanzas, de ahí, su contradicción (su excitación), por haber encontrado la resurrección en otro mar negado y su golpe final por introducir la verdad sobre un barco pirata que ha tenido un naufragio donde se hunde tanta gente querida que él debe proteger con, "el espíritu del hierro" (dice en, "Carlos el loco"), arrasando la estructura a contrapelo de aquello de que reniega: la cultura vista como un placebo.

Por eso salva a: "El cobrador de impuestos", "el comedor de papa"... "porque cuando éramos Ti Rex en miniatura, carnívoros de hojas...", "el perro Pavlov"...donde no faltan las pulgas, sobras, podredumbre, dolor. Y, entre tantos anonimatos, al mismo nivel, salva a las celebridades que también se hunden hacia un ritmo que se ensancha, desde "Cerval": "un pensamiento dómine en el sirviente Pound"; un pensamiento que se descompone como un tren a punto de descarrilarse, con un ritmo que acelera más y más, sonido, locura y pasión, pero no es ya un tren es más bien una nave (su barca de Noé), o "La Nave va" de Fellini devolviendo al mar las cenizas de La Calla, una voz, donde aparecen y desaparecen, arrastrándolo hasta los círculos del infierno, de los incomprensidos: Eliot, "Cummings y yo", Fassbinder, Víctor Hugo, Cintio Vitier, Fina Marruz, el padre Gaztelu, Juana Borrero, el hijo de Paul Celán que "era payaso del puente Maribeau..." esos "raros" que lo visitan (nacionales e internacionales; vivos

o muertos: prófugos de “la cultura”) que van llegando desde su “Población flotante,” y con ellos, zonas geográficas llegan, descompuestas también, con metástasis: la “Holanda de Ala-mar”, la playa de los rusos de, “Hola-mar”, “El cine al que no iba Lezama”, el “Hotel California”, “...en mar de Barent suben al Kursk...” y se convierten en “lo otro” donde habita: “el otro”: “es un wahavit cara pintada”: “estoy como él, estoy como él”, “esperando no obstante que me hable”. La ola de este maremoto va arrasándolo todo, desarticulando vestigios de realidad y atropellando aquello que la cultura ha designado en sitios, épocas, parcelas, casillas, horarios, galerías, museos, páginas, para celebrar, “El día mundial de las gentes que no me ven”, donde CAA sabe muy bien, que el hoy sale del ayer y que algunos muchas veces, “no quieren que agradezca la ayuda de los zombis”.

*Azotea, 12 de febrero 2013* 

FRANCISCO ARAGÓN

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THREE POEMS

2012

24th & Mission BART station laundry  
hamper wide screen television Dupont  
Circle cassette of my sister's voice cassette  
of my father's Court House Metro  
torn photograph of my grandfather  
"Untitled" by Malaquias Montoya smart  
phone theater programs my father's  
gold watch boxed up photographs lap  
top Fair Oaks the Mission Noe Valley  
skateboard *Mandorla* the New  
Yorker Venus in Fur Sex with Strangers a few  
DVDs *Pilgrimage PALABRA* I was a short  
skinny boy Midnight in Paris Yuba Poppie  
depression *My Vocabulary Did This to Me*

## VOICES

A scrap, a phrase  
that stretch of pavement  
I'd phone him from, sweating

past Saint Matthew's  
coming from the Y  
along Rhode Island

sun on my face never  
his face seen  
or touched—now more

than ever: his son-  
in-law at the keyboard  
not him, answering

the instant message  
*I'm afraid I  
have bad news...*

The night  
we sat or knelt  
around her

was something I never...  
Brother driving all  
day part of the night

to join us bedside.  
(What was it like,  
Ron—your heart

giving out?  
The sky  
darkens, the drip

of morphine not  
enough, the sound  
issuing from her

hard to place—  
substitute  
for breath:

the interval  
between each  
lengthening...

What were some  
of the stories?  
The first one

you recounted  
that day I can't  
be sure. Was it

about the time  
you toked  
up? The warm

breeze  
a comfort, you said  
as I started

the cassette.  
Where does it  
begin, this need

to preserve?  
Yours was strong  
and sure, easy

to listen to, not  
what one  
might expect—

sturdy as the metal  
table and chairs  
in the patio

we lounged on.  
Driving you  
to Sebastopol

for treatments.  
Learning the route  
by heart. That July

on leave, I swooned  
in ways I hadn't  
those years

you lived north  
of us—San  
Rafael, Sonoma,

Santa Rosa,  
Petaluma...  
Was recording

you a way of  
releasing you?  
The months

you lived  
as a child  
among cousins

in Managua  
who didn't  
know a word

of English  
your voice  
was a bridge.

Is a voice  
on a tape  
a bridge?

Sounds  
the living  
make,

the dying,  
the dead.

*for Maria Aragon (1956–2004)*

DECEMBER 31, 1965

The hoped-for words went out  
And so, as dusk settled over the embattled  
Not since the first winter of World War I  
The idea of a holiday from death  
As if in anticipation of the lull  
Throughout the world, hopes rose  
Pope Paul VI exhorted  
President Johnson steadfastly refused  
"They are outsiders, just as I am," snapped Truman  
The foursome, accused of burning their cards  
The Army meanwhile made clear that dissent was for civilians  
Howe was sentenced to two years  
In the bitter Harlem riots of 1964, as in the Watts  
Last week, under a 1901 New York law  
Epton was no ordinary agitator  
Long before the riots, according to a Negro detective who infiltrated the group  
As he made the rounds of Jersey City's sprawling Medical  
"If there is a toe in town I haven't stepped on  
"City jobs around here were just plain patronage plums  
"A man doesn't carry that much fat around and live  
Wrapped perennially in a white linen suit  
At one celebrated Boykinalia  
There was salmon from Quebec  
The voters' love for Boykin ran out in the 1962  
He is now 80 and after all those lovin' years has an ailing heart  
A year before he was arrested for the nightrider slaying  
Klansman Collie Leroy Wilkins was riding around with a sawed-off  
Judge Allgood last week sentenced Wilkins to a year and a day



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Note: source material is taken verbatim from the "Nation" section of *TIME* magazine dated "Friday, December 31, 1965," the date of the author's birth.

CONVERSACIÓN DE RODRIGO TOSCANO CON CECILIA VICUÑA

DONDE LOS GLACIARES ENCUENTRAN EL MAR

RT. Cecilia, a comienzos de noviembre tuvimos una estimulante conversación en una banca de Union Square, Nueva York. Fue una agradable sorpresa que nos encantaran los eventos pedagógicos que cada uno hizo recientemente. En tu caso, intervenciones poéticas, y en el mío, el trabajo de campo en políticas concretas. Estuvimos de acuerdo en que podíamos intercambiar estas definiciones fácilmente entre nosotros en términos de visión y propósitos.

Recuerdo que expresaste públicamente tu profunda preocupación por lo que definiste como *bullying* del capitalismo global contemporáneo sobre la capacidad de los jóvenes de conectarse con tradiciones de poesía oral que han sido reprimidas. Nos conocemos hace más de doce años, por lo que sabes que mi orientación es profundamente anti metafísica, poética y políticamente. Te soy sincero, si tu comentario hubiera venido de otra persona, me habría puesto a pelear con la noción de cualquier cosa “oral que ha sido reprimida”, pero como lo relacionaste con muchos ejemplos de antropóloga radical, organizadora comunitaria y bruja punk del infierno, bueno, ¡me interesó enormemente!

Para quienes vivimos atrapados en la *realidad* de nuestras jornadas de trabajo globales, ¿podrías contarnos experiencias recientes en que has “liberado” los poderes de la poesía oral en la juventud?

CV: ¡Claro! Se me vienen a la cabeza muchas cosas. Hace un par de años vi *El Rey Lear* en The Globe, el teatro shakespeareano de Londres, y durante el intermedio, unas juglares comenzaron a cantar mientras se mezclaban con el público. Un pequeño folleto describía cómo en la época isabelina la última de estas poetas fue colgada, porque cantaron “la verdad al poder”. La libertad de expresión era peligrosa entonces, como ahora, por lo que mataron esta poderosa tradición de poesía oral.

Ahora vamos a Chile. Desde la llegada de los españoles, los chamanes indígenas, que eran poetas orales y trabajaban como mineros, campesinos o pescadores, crearon una poderosa resistencia o movimiento antipoético, que consistía en cantar poemas improvisados durante las ceremonias religiosas. Por quinientos años la Iglesia católica y la sociedad chilena hicieron lo imposible para detenerlos, pero el dinamismo de su arte político y místico no perdió intensidad alguna. Por lo menos hasta ahora, en que está desapareciendo rápidamente por la economía globalizada, que ha destruido el modo de vida independiente de los mineros, campesinos y pescadores. Si agregas la penetración global de la televisión y de los videojuegos, tienes a adolescentes avergonzados de sus padres, de quienes nos les importan sus poéticas. Los muchachos ya no tienen idea qué significa “decirle la verdad al poder”. Se les ha lavado el cerebro para que crean que la poesía es aburrida. Apenas me di cuenta de esto, decidí contrarrestar la muerte lenta de esta tradición.

Comencé en 1995 asaltando una escuelita en las montañas, disfrazada como una escultura o un juguete, cantando y jugando con los niños como si nos hubiéramos convertido en animales salvajes. Y todo esto en presencia de los directores, ¡que esperaban a una maestra de buena fe, venida de Santiago! En un segundo todos bailábamos y gozábamos en el poder liberado de la alegría comunitaria. Pero dar rienda suelta a su capacidad de habla es otra cosa. Ha sido un proceso lento y continuo de varios talleres, porque el sistema escolar y la comunidad entera están en contra de manifestarse en voz alta, en contra de la poesía y de la idea de justicia. La nueva orientación social, que es además la dominante, es hacer dinero, simplemente adaptarse a las “formas modernas”, ¿o no? El reciente movimiento estudiantil chileno se rebela contra ese modelo y ha movilizado a un millón y medio de personas en las calles exigiendo el fin de

la cultura del lucro. Una nueva dimensión oral emerge desde adentro de esta rebelión y mi propósito es tender un puente entre la energía de ese movimiento político urbano y la tradición poética, que le dé protagonismo a las dimensiones orales y poéticas del conocimiento. ¡Más que nunca, necesitamos que continúe!

**RT:** Totalmente, una conexión cruzada de las esferas alienadas del metabolismo social. El movimiento estudiantil chileno del último año fue un suceso global a gran escala. La clave está en sintonizar con él. El reciente movimiento estudiantil en Italia (14-N) fue crucial también y antes el español (15-M), el quebequense (Classe) y el mexicano (Yo Soy 132). Los efectos de las acciones inspiradas en Occupy a través de Estados Unidos han sido relevantes. Mientras muchos de los “trabajadores” profes de poesía estadounidense son intimidados por los requerimientos específicos (y degradados) de la industria para mejorar poemas individuales, todos estos paisajes increíblemente ricos en cuanto poéticas, son creados a diario.

Siempre me ha impresionado cómo tus acciones poéticas situadas (muchas documentadas ahora en la fascinante antología *Spit Temple*) muestran un compromiso absoluto con el “sitio”: la gente reunida, las dimensiones físicas de la sala, la hora del día, el *clima* ideológico de la semana, etcétera. Todas estas dimensiones del momento de la lectura son abordadas de tal forma que el público experimenta la distribución *performativa* de las ideas políticas y no sólo el “contenido” o la “forma” de un poema en particular. También hay una especie de atributo “escondido” sobre el proceso. Pareciera que la dimensión pre-semántica de tu poética es tan importante como la palabra completamente “presente”. Que centrarse en una sola palabra, en cualquier idioma, puede ser el primer acto en búsqueda de un sentido social mayor. ¿Cómo calza este atributo atómico, oral y distributivo, de tus actuaciones en tu cosmovisión social?

**CV:** Puedo contarte una historia. En 1984, en plena dictadura chilena, vivía en Buenos Aires y me sentía triste e impotente. De pronto, vi emerger una palabra, que brotó como un poroto en mi paisaje mental, no una palabra, sólo una partícula: “com” como en *compasión* o *compañero*, el *com* de lo comunal reemergiendo como una pulsación. Escribí en mi libreta: “una palabra desconocida, una nueva forma toma vida: la convivencia y la commoción.” Estas palabras no se traducen

tan fácilmente al inglés, significan: ser capaz de vivir juntos, sintiendo lo que siente el otro. Guardé mi apunte y no le conté a nadie sobre él. Un par de días después fue la primera manifestación contra la dictadura en Chile, el primer levantamiento de la fuerza colectiva que había sido reprimida. Ahora, ¿cuál es la conexión entre el poder que empuja la partícula “com” en una hélice (como la dibujé años después en *Instan*) y la rabia colectiva de un pueblo despojado de sus derechos? Tú sabes, la gente solía referirse al otro como “compañero” antes de ser aplastada. Creo que hay un campo emocional que atraviesa el tiempo y el espacio, un profundo anhelo de justicia en el núcleo del lenguaje mismo. Si los poetas antiguos que acuñaron estas palabras venían del mismo campo, entonces cualquier palabra puede ser un vehículo espaciotemporal, comunicando muchas esferas a la vez.

Respecto a las múltiples dimensiones de “lo situado”, he trabajado por mucho tiempo en una serie de poemas y traducciones de un poema yaqui del desierto de Sonora. Para los yaquis, el espacio y el lugar son “estados del ser”, en otras palabras, los “sitios” y las dimensiones son formas de conocimiento: las ves cuando estás consciente (una noción que coincide con la visión cuántica de lo no-local). Tú, Rodrigo, las ves porque eres un poeta y un activista, además de una persona que en su juventud efectivamente atravesó muchas dimensiones del desierto como camionero.

La poesía vive en el límite, haciendo de puente entre lo conocido y lo desconocido. Para mí, los atributos de lo “real” *son* lo desconocido. Pienso que las múltiples dimensiones son percibidas como una amenaza para la mentalidad lineal y esta es la razón por la que mi trabajo (y el de muchos poetas) ha sido pasado por alto. Aunque falta un marco conceptual para lidiar con la fluidez de la mente oral, la oralidad no es algo exótico o remoto, está acá, entre nosotros, como potencial no reconocido u olvidado. McLuhan notó esto y dijo que la era digital la traería de vuelta. Para mí, la permanente tensión entre la oralidad y la escritura crea una imagen más viva de quienes somos. Considero que Rosa Alcalá creó un excelente marco teórico en su ensayo introductorio para *Spit Temple* cuando se preguntó “¿qué hace esta mujer?” ¡Algo sucede incluso antes de que lo leas! Así es como llegué a mi poética, manteniéndome en la pregunta, aun hoy. De nuevo, el aspecto clave de este arte es *no saber*, abrirse a las posibilidades del momento, a las combinatorias.

A veces llamo a mi performance “cuásar”, porque son eventos de puro potencial, en los que nada está planeado y todo está por suceder. Pero no es pura improvisación. Es mucho más complejo que eso, el punto de partida es un campo intencional, en el que interviene el trabajo de toda una vida. David Hinton escribe sobre este proceso como pura “energía generativa”, un término del antiguo taoísmo chino. Ese cuerpo de pensamiento resuena realmente en mí. De hecho leí el *Tao Te Ching* cuando era una adolescente en Chile y me influenció profundamente. Reconocí en sus líneas nuestra propia forma de ser (dicho sea de paso, el *Tao Te Ching* también es un poema oral). Entonces (a mediados de los sesenta), las culturas orales aún eran fuertes en Chile. Podías tener la doble experiencia de oír a los poetas cantar y los lefás también. La poesía encarnaba este doble poder. Además caminé mucho tiempo por las montañas. Como dicen los chinos, “las montañas saben bastante”. Mirándolas una noche, experimenté las palabras y cada una era una explosión de conciencia. Tenía dieciocho años y me reí tan fuerte que desperté a la gente en la otra pieza. Me reí al comprender que la conciencia y el lenguaje eran uno, espejeándose entre sí, jugando a través de nosotros. Todo esto ocurría en 1966, en el contexto de una ola revolucionaria fantástica que sacudía a toda Latinoamérica, desde Brasil hasta Chile.

**RT:** Cecilia, hasta los poetas más escépticos, analíticos y “materialistas realistas” que conozco parecen tejer mitos auto habilitantes acerca de su desarrollo artístico. ¡Y los tuyos están llenos de epifanías luminosas! Me sorprende mucho la corriente de momentos reflexivos que llaman a otros momentos, separados por décadas, tejiendo un rico tapiz continuo de tragedia y de gozosa renovación. Pero estos momentos también surgen de las condiciones específicas en que has vivido.

Me pregunto si hubo algún antecedente familiar que también formara tu pensamiento social y político. ¿Fue esta la influencia que impulsó la poética que te mueve hasta hoy?

**CV:** Cuando pienso en cómo llegué a ella, veo muchas tragedias comprimidas en mi pequeño cuerpo, tragedias que me abrieron a experimentar la visión atómica de las palabras. Fue en los sesentas en Chile al pie de las “nieves eternas” como solíamos llamar a los glaciares que hoy se derriten rápidamente. Para llegar allí debo darte algo de contexto. Nací en uno de los pocos intervalos de paz en Chile.

Justo antes de mi nacimiento hubo conflictos sociales brutales y mi abuelo Carlos Vicuña Fuentes estuvo preso o exiliado varias veces por luchar por los derechos humanos. Cuando crecí, su casa se convirtió en un cenáculo, esto es, un salón para el debate político. Cada domingo, refugiados de la guerra civil española se juntaban con escritores e intelectuales chilenos. Los niños los escuchábamos hablar por horas. Era tal la pasión por la justicia social que se sentía en la sala, que cualquier sacrificio por ella parecía insuficiente. Lo que estaba en juego era el bienestar general y esta idea penetró profundamente en mis venas. Me parece que fui entrenada por el poder de esa emoción, mezclada con gritos y tragos y el jolgorio general que empujaba fuera a los niños, aunque nosotros volvíamos gateando sin que nos vieran, para escuchar más. Recuerdo que "Vicuña" (mi abuelo) hablaba en público y la multitud se agolpaba para oírlo. Creo que componía sus discursos oralmente y recuerdo no sólo las palabras, sino también cómo el gentío vibraba, literalmente, respondiendo con el cuerpo a su llamado a la justicia. Todo estaba vivo, la luz afuera, el olor de la pieza, la sensación colectiva de que éramos uno. Simplemente no había espacio entre nosotros para la idea de un "yo" separado ni de un "uno mismo" desconectado del cosmos y de la lucha social. Estar vivo era parte de un océano multidimensional de belleza y dolor. Y había mucha poesía en nuestras vidas. Mi abuelo era escritor y editor. Neruda y Gabriela Mistral eran sus amigos íntimos. También publicó a Vicente Huidobro. A los catorce años leí *Altazor* y *Temblores de cielo* en las ediciones de bolsillo que él había hecho. Dormí con esos libros bajo mi almohada y experimenté el acto de leer tal como experimentaba los eufóricos discursos orales. Ambos fueron viajes hacia la totalidad. Huidobro dice que un aimara en Bolivia le transmitió su visión de las palabras. Pero para mí estaba ahí mismo, en la memoria de la tierra, en la poética de ese majestuoso lugar donde los glaciares encuentran el mar.

Traducción de Enrique Winter 

TWO POEMS

OSHÚN'S NECKLACE

Fourteen fragments of twenty-five rounded amber crystals pierced by a fragile cotton thread. Fourteen knitted closures with two yellow spheres, two green ones and a coral in the middle. When it breaks, said the angel, it will have absorbed the pain that weights you down. I continued crying after visiting the river. The water cleaned and clarified the routes. But each time the burden is heavier, no matter the procedures, the subtle passing of the hours. And it is not broken. Here I am watching the seasons pass, one after the other, with the gray sky in the background, there where the sun cannot compete with that touching gesture in Klimt's painting: a man and a woman carried away in a kiss, she is protecting herself in his golden robe hiding the face, in order to better feel the search that he traces in the kisses' kiss. The man's face is hidden in her cheek within the abyss of time. She cradles herself in the indistinct sunset of his skin adorned in gold, in a subtle continuity of her gold. Mosaics puncture the almost indistinguishable skin of both lovers, foregrounding the place, the home, the dwelling, that they inhabit. Only their faces emerge from the color. The amulet absorbs the moan as if it were its own, it petrifies it, makes a house of it. I press it within my hands since the first time, when I picked it from the earth, from that gray river stone where time passed by. Each sphere a tomb. I wore it yesterday when I met you.

It reminds me of the color of your eyes and the drift of your glance. It says to me: slowly floats love's raft.

*Translation by Áurea María Sotomayor*

## BRATHWAITE THINKING ABOUT SOUND

*and I was quiet now because I had become that sound.  
—Kamau Brathwaite*

The fresh air that comes in through the window  
stupefies my lungs  
with a surprise.

And I think of a night overflowing with nature's sounds  
in the middle of this forest in the city.

In this place I identified the best species:  
the children kneeling before a tree,  
and an old man choosing with delicacy  
the leaves awaiting him,  
looking for spiders, coquí frogs, grasshoppers.  
The young people lie down on the earth  
and feel the earth, while their voices  
slowly rise between the leaves and the trees  
slowly rise like lizards up the trunks.  
My children will always remember this moment  
like the lines of their hands.  
Someday the wind will bring them that sound  
that makes us sleep in dream and they will dream.

The sounds of the city burst in when  
we near the beginning of this turn  
through the brief horizon of a shooting  
and fugitive star. Rap rap the sawing of the song.  
The car's speed, the suffocating smoke  
of the tailpipes, the gleam of the lights  
without night. The city circles the mogote in San Patricio  
it seeps through the trees, along with the other species:  
murderers, blind violences amid the traffic  
of narcotics, acid rain, garbage.  
One stone the stone that throws stones at me, stones me

blinds me, the stone flies, the stone hurts, the stone  
is still a stone and falls,  
gravity makes it fall  
on anyone, anyone receives the impact of a stone  
that emerges from the most unexpected hand, from that hand  
that grips the revolver so gracefully  
like in the movies  
about those who are naturally born killers  
and naturally kill, and yet  
we are all the children of nature.  
This is the reason we listen to the coquíes at midnight.  
We like their sound that is like a music, and the sound  
of the automobiles is like a music and the smell of the  
tailpipes and the shots from the revolvers, what are they if not stonelike,  
they wound as they fall  
the firecrackers of July fourth  
the Buchanan firecrackers, as they hurt the ears,  
the chorus of men behind the household servitude,  
the five o'clock gun barrels, the múcaros,  
the owls, the parrots, the birds, the joggers' rhythm  
and the loudspeakers  
are all here gathered,  
fugitives,  
like that stone  
that suddenly skips out of my hand  
and falls.

*Translated by Urayoán Noel* 

ANNA DEENY, VALERIE MEJER, DANIEL BORZUTZKY,  
AND RAÚL ZURITA

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## DOSSIER: ON TRANSLATION

ANNA DEENY

HERE FAR AWAY: ON TRANSLATING *DIANA'S TREE*

If you're the child of an immigrant, even one of internal migrations, you develop a unique relationship with distance, because distance is as foundational to the nature of your love as it is foundational to the nature of your language.<sup>1</sup> Distance, another language, a mother tongue with which perhaps you've learned to love, a language that is not the one those around you share, are bound together within you. And in the fact that you're the child of displaced peoples, displaced loves, or an immigrant yourself, language emerges as something that consciously or unconsciously is doubly moored.

When we speak of the ethics of translation, when we speak of a text *coming into* another language, and we reveal our anxieties regarding domestication, regarding the erasure of difference, we imply that the one who is translating, along with that target language, and along with that "target" culture is a stable entity in and of itself.

When we speak of the domestication of a translated text, its leveling or standardization within a new language, we overlook what Seamus Heaney

has called the “fretwork” of that target language, the idiolects, twists, turns of the languages that push up against and over and beneath, that *sound* against the desiring centripetal force of a national tongue. Upon translating Beowulf, Heaney often included words derived from his Irish English dialect, his own “first speech” from Northern Ireland, and he admitted, “I said...that I wanted my anchor to be lodged on the Anglo-Saxon seafloor, down in the consonantal rock, but I had a second mooring down in the old soft vowel-bog of the local speech. I was honour-bound to the feel and sense of the original, but at the same time could not desert whatever it is in my ear that makes me sound convincing to myself.”<sup>2</sup> Heaney moves between honor and desertion, the law and an abandonment of his own. The ear, moved by what is sensed before grasping an idea of what might be known, always recalls our coming into language in that you recognize the voice of your mother before you know who she is.

This past year I translated Alejandra Pizarnik’s *Árbol de Diana* (1962), *Diana’s Tree*. Poem 13 was particularly challenging because of its sliding rhythmic weft.

explicar con palabras de este mundo  
que partió de mí un barco llevándome<sup>3</sup>

I translated the poem thus:

explain with words of this world  
that bore of me a boat elsewhere<sup>4</sup>

Both lines of the original poem are *endecasílabas*, 11 syllables, what might be considered the equivalent of the English language iambic pentameter. In the first line Pizarnik includes the *endecasílaba*’s most common emphasis on the sixth and tenth syllables—explicar con paLAbras de este MUndo. But in the second line, Pizarnik alters that dominant emphasis to the fifth and ninth syllables—que partió de MÍ un barco llevÁndome. Such a subtle rhythmic shift to the fifth syllable begins the uneasy rocking of that boat on “MÍ” to continue until the third to last syllable, “llevÁndome,” which literally means “taking me away.”

Pizarnik, the child of Russian Jewish parents, who grew up speaking Yiddish in Buenos Aires, constantly circles around what many scholars have called an absence or emptiness. Tamara Kamenzsain likens what she describes as Pizarnik’s

resistance to identifying the names of things to the Jewish prohibition of naming God, an evasion which transforms God into an anonymous supreme being.<sup>5</sup> For Pizarnik, however, the presence of an absolute is tempered, and, what's worse, placed in doubt by another language. To accept such a prohibition would be to name an origin, a God, an original, where Pizarnik finds none. The words of this world that part her—"que partió de mí"—break her, birth her, cut her, and take her away, the words that are "elsewhere" are those of another language within her, her foundational relationship to meaning that is never grounded, never stable, never univocal or supreme, and always somewhere else. Lingering insistently behind this book in particular is the *endecha*, a Sephardic musical and poetic form of lamentation. Pizarnik lamented the loss of an idea of one language, one meaning, one god, the absolute coming together of name and form, the loss of Babel, of a proximity, a human unity, that would never be resolved. And she couldn't help but be sacrilegious in her poetic craft of recognition despite that loss.

In the English translation I used a trimeter followed by a tetrameter, an inversion of Dickinson's use of these meters, for example in "Because I could not stop for Death / He kindly stopped for me." But to account for my own elsewhere in English, so as not to abandon what sounds convincing to me, I fused these feet to a syllabic count so familiar to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Rubén Dario: the *verso alejandrino*. Then the two lines together in English make up a *verso alejandrino*, a fourteen syllable line divided by a caesura, but here sliced in half.<sup>6</sup>

For Antonio Prete, the translator of Baudelaire to the Italian, whose first language is the Copertino dialect of Salento, such poetic techniques recall a mother tongue that isn't necessarily a different language, although it can be, but sound, rhythm, vocalizations, what Kristeva would call the pulsations of poetic language.<sup>7</sup> These elements of a mother tongue are always in exile, internal or external, with regard to a dominant language.

What's striking, however, is that this is not a Benjaminian coming together of language, but a letting go of and an embrace with the opposite, with an ultimately irresolvable otherness. Emmanuel Levinas's concept of otherness is useful here to think about the ethics of such translations. What Levinas, of Lithuanian Jewish origins, writing in French, and who was also a translator, might say is that we begin with an assumption of otherness, as opposed to an assumption of

comprehension, unity, and commensurability.<sup>8</sup> This is a grounding in alterity, in a love for the other moored in an acceptance of the fact that you will never fully understand or have access to that other. This is what we do when we face another language, but this is also what we do when we face one another and ourselves. Because of this, translation has the capacity to speak to the incommensurability of the other because ultimately there is an incommensurability of the self.

We can't establish an ontology of translation because there's no such paradigm that allows us to be in the know when we approach a text, and there is no analogy, no universalism, or supreme identification that can sustain our relationship. So a translation reflects this pushing off. A translation reflects its deference back to the original, as it has the capacity to account for the loss of the *idea* of an original, again, for an original proximity that's now split by distance, or time, or history or power, that's now split in us. At the same time, the poetic forms of mother tongues, be they the sounds of the same languages or the words and rhythms of others, can always charge against a dominant language, affirming the wonderful sacrilege of Babel and the beauty of what is to be heard elsewhere.

## NOTES

1. My mother is Puerto Rican, so I, like many children of Puerto Rican or Latin American parents who live "stateside," grew up speaking Spanish and English.
2. Seamus Heaney, "Fretwork: On Translating Beowulf," in *Translation—Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader*. Edited by Daniel Weissbort and Astradur Eysteinsson. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 603.
3. Alejandra Pizarnik, "13," in *Alejandra Pizarnik: Poesía Completa*. Edited by Ana Becciu. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Lumen, 2007), 115.
4. Pizarnik, "13," in *Pinholes in the Night: Essential Poems from Latin America*. Edited by Forrest Gander. (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2013). Forthcoming.
5. See Tamara Kamenszain, "La niña extraviada en Pizarnik," in *Feminaria Literaria*, 1996 6 (10): 11–12.

6. When we count syllables in Spanish, two successive vowels are considered one syllable, even if they belong to different words. So, “me a” counts as one syllable.
7. See Antonio Prete, “La poesia tra la lingua della madre e l’altra lingua,” in *Stare tra le lingue: migrazioni poesia traduzione*. Edited by Antonio Prete, Stefano Dal Bianco, and Roberto Francavilla. (San Cesario di Lecce, IT: Piero Manni, 2003).
8. See “Is Ontology Fundamental” (1951) and “Peace and Proximity” (1984) in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*. Ed. by Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

VALERIE MEJER  
SIGUIENDO A FORREST GANDER EN SU CAMINO A JAPÓN

La primera vez que me encontré con la imaginación del Japón de Forrest Gander fue en un sueño. Nunca es verdad que algo ocurre un sueño es la verdadera primera vez, había leído en “Deed of Utmost Kindness” poemas sobre jardines, luchadores de Sumo y mujeres que lloraban al pie de un Buda. Había leído de adolescente con pasión (¿quién no?) libros de Mishima y Kawataba y con el mismo nivel de intriga leí los poemas de Gander, pero cuando no conoces un sitio tu memoria no tiene dónde echar raíces. Fue así que me concentré en traducir otros poemas suyos donde los sitios en que existían me eran más familiares, y la presencia de este poeta en Japón, volvió entonces por vía del sueño cuando mi hija y yo vivíamos en Brooklyn a lado de una Iglesia donde se cantaba Gospel los domingos muy temprano, en el yo intentaba traducir un poema que Forrest Gander había escrito en japonés (me parece ha traducido libros del japonés como el de de Kiwao Nomura “Spectacle and Pigsty” que han cobrado gran importancia en América, pero que nunca ha escrito en ese idioma). Contar el sueño tal como fue me resultó tan imposible como describir un país en el que no había estado nunca, y ese sueño bien de madrugada, en ese barrio afroamericano de Brooklyn se convirtió en este poema:

*Segundo Movimiento (al traductor)*

Si me vieras ahora mismo me verías dormir. Me verías llorar mar adentro. Eso te decía yo al leer sobre el papel, en trazos de espuma tu poema japonés. Las ventanas están cubiertas de un ligero vapor y dos mazos de rosas anaranjadas amanecieron como peces que se agitan en una pecera sin agua. Esta es la escena, el invierno cede y retira sus uñas largas de mi puerta. Así me duermo, así escuchó la respiración de mi hija, los aviones ocasionales, la piel negra que vacía su pulmón de ave canora este domingo. Es muy temprano. Anoche traté de encontrar palabras más justas para tu poema que zumba en el verano. *Clangor of Light* es el sonido que hacen los metales y la luz

que emana de tal cosa. Lo hemos visto y oído, es cierto o visible lo que escribes, van por la calle en desfiles de niñas con sus panderos que absorben y arrojan luz al chocar entre sí. Que largo es decir y decir, que calle más interminable es la de todo lo que no es poesía. Aquello lo vi como un *címbalo de luz* y ahí lo puse, en esos extraños pies de página que has colocado en tus poemas como zapatos de niña. Miró el vaho en la ventana y la desdibujada piel negra de mis vecinos que van de sombrero a cantar a la iglesia de al lado. Miro el sueño, las olas del sueño. Habías escrito un poema en japonés, un poema que al intentar leerlo te oía decirlo y el mar empujaba su masa verde y se adelgazaba en filamentos. Era un poema de abandonada tristeza y era evidente que los gusanos de la melancolía andaban sueltos en la playa. No había nada subterráneo que no fuera la roca de la que está hecho el mundo. No había miedo al sentimentalismo de hablar del mar porque la palabra estaba a salvo en otro idioma. Había frases metálicas que chocaban entre si y un sucesivo resplandor, en olas. Pronto yo tendría que aceptar que era incapaz de traducirlo, el poema tomaría su rumbo de barco y se iría achicando en el horizonte. Eso me hizo llover en el sueño, estaba claro y oculto a la vez que la lluvia era yo, el poema se alejaba y yo no había dado con las palabras justas. Ahora la calle se ha llenado de pájaros negros que esperan a la puerta de un iglesia, bajo el agua. Una niña sin zapatos ha aparecido en el dintel de la puerta, y ya, otra vez, todo es subterráneo.

Me parece que para entonces la última vez que había pensado en *El Japón* fue frente a una litografía en el Museo de Santa Bárbara en California. Yo venía de experimentar una tragedia personal. En esta litografía una mujer vestida en un kimono amarillo va de pie sobre un cocodrilo. Me compré la postal y la imagen de ella balanceando su peso sobre este reptil y la olas empezó a ligarse a mi propia supervivencia. Menciono la postal porque muchas veces eso es todo lo que tenemos de otro mundo. Alguien desde aquel remoto sitio compra una imagen del lugar y escribe una palabras en la parte de atrás. Así fue que Forrest Gander a los veinte años se tropezó con una antología de poetas japoneses traducido por

Hiroake Sato y que eso abrió su universo *hacia* Japón. Ya no se en qué orden fue que tomó lecciones de japonés, que convenció a su madre de cultivar el *ikebana*, que el mismo practicó *kanji* y que escribió en su primer libro “Rush to the lake” sobre esta pasiones como *in situ*. Y fue hasta que realmente fue a Japón que luego escribió al libro “Deeds of Utmost Kindness” que aparece en un poema donde le escribe a su mujer espera a su hijo lo que podría ser una postal desde el Japón. Los insectos y los efectos de los paisajes que son una parte prevalente en la obra de Gander aquí en esta “postal” ganan una extrañeza aún mayor. Cerca del río Koma, los gusanos de seda hacen tanto ruido al masticar que los que se ocupan de este cultivo los alejan de la casa para poder dormir. Y el trabajo de los insectos conduce a un material sin ruido: La seda.

Como si usara tu mano, en este mismo papel delgado escribí una carta para ti, imitando tu letra. Extraña, puse en ella la imagen de alguien alejada de su país, para liberarla en sitios que nunca has visto. Por ejemplo, al interior de estas mangas. En lugar de sostén, llevaba pequeños protectores sobre cada pezón para prevenir que la excitación se notara a través del fino kimono.

Al otro lado del mundo, estás durmiendo.

En aquel viaje a Japón, Forrest Gander se embarca en una extraña tarea: tratar de aprender Sumo. Nada está tan inabarcablemente lejos en otra cultura como el humor y el juego. Así como es imposible que un extranjero entienda los chistes que cuentan los familiares de mexicanos enterrados en un temblor, (y que son contados mientras buscan a su familia entre los escombros), así el juego de estos hombres titánicos se escapa a los otros. Antonio Prete defiende en su “Tratado de la Lejanía” la idea de que la distancia no debe de ser borrada, ni cubierta, ni explicada. Que ahí donde se borra la distancia también muere la diferencia y con ella la literatura. Estamos a salvo de esta tragedia con Forrest Gander, este poeta nacido en Virginia, cuya primera educación poética fue memorizar con su abuelo sueco poemas de Carl Sandburg y aprender la secuencia y nombre de las plantas en ese bosque donde jugaba solo por horas. La comprensión de las secuencias se convierten en un antecedente para construir sus cláusulas y la conexión entre

las mismas dice Gander se da por aquello que Basho llamo “lazos de aromas”. Esa misma mirada anota actos, observa su cronología y que los conecta entre sí “por aromas” se sostiene al contemplar a los luchadores de Sumo y sabe que no encaja. Se adentra en las reglas, las anota, los mira entrar y salir, cocinar y devorar. Derribarse al suelo en instantes. Encaja cada vez menos mientras su conocimiento de ellos avanza. El saber de sí mismo el que se va desvaneciendo. La realidad del Sumo, la nobleza y congruencia del juego va haciendo más fútiles los propósitos del poeta. En el poema del luchador que sube al metro y se enamora de una mujer que ve por la ventana del tren, hay un esbozo en el reverso: el quebradizo autor-retrato del poeta que desconoce las leyes que rigen a estos corazones también empieza a desconocer las del suyo propio. La recortada sintaxis del poema es también el desfigurado rostro de “el visitante”, forma en que Gander alude a su presencia como espectador.

Como si trajera de vuelta las cerámicas más simples y elegantes y que al dar un paso al interior de su país el mismo se cayera y lo que quedara de la imagen, su poder lírico, sea el esfuerzo de salvar la vasija por encima del propio cuerpo. “Aquel que pierda su vida, la salvará” parece ahora más que una máxima moral una regla básica para escribir poemas. La naturaleza fragmentaria de este poema (visible en su sintaxis) está en pie por la voluntad de salvar la vasija, lo que no puedes ni entender, ni trasladar conserva su intriga al preservarlo, al mirarlo, o mejor dicho por el propio Gander en su poema japonés “Figuras del Viaje” (“Figures of Travel”):

*Corolario al fenómeno de parecerle familiar a los extraños: La lengua que te evade en un país, te acecha en el otro.*

Este “acecho” donde Forrest Gander le parece familiar a estos “extraños” y donde alguna parte de sí mismo parece en casa, me fue revelada en el oeste norteamericano, en Oregon, un sitio francamente alejado de Japón pero que cuenta con una población de origen japonés. Por azar como es siempre habíamos visto juntos (en compañía de la poeta Coral Bracho) en el Museo de Arte de Boise (Boise Art Museum) una exhibición sobre la influencia del arte oriental en el arte norteamericano. Ahí había una pieza de gran formato, pintada de un modo que parecía estar a medio camino de la ilustración y las litografías que

todos hemos visto del Japón visto por Hiroshige. Sólo que en ella se retrataban japoneses de todas las edades deambulando alrededor de barracones. Es en ese sitio, entre Idaho y Oregon donde hubo durante la Segunda Guerra un campo de concentración para japoneses. La lectura que tendría Gander al día siguiente resultaría tener por público a los descendientes de aquellos prisioneros. También había entre ellos algunos norteamericanos y bastantes inmigrantes mexicanos. Un poco antes de la lectura nos llevaron a un templo budista donde el “monje” nos recibió y donde vi a Gander hablar fluidamente en japonés con unas jóvenes estudiantes de la zona. Después de aquel breve ritual donde el poeta parecía en casa partimos a la lectura donde leyó algunas de sus traducciones de Niwao Nomura, y poemas sobre el Japón y sobre México. Fue una lectura en tres lenguas donde lo que las acercaba entre sí era la azarosa condición por la que ambas poblaciones (mexicanos y japoneses) habían terminado por vivir en ese sitio. Nada más. Así frente a ellos proyecto videos de algo que no es ni Buttho ni lo que se conoce como “performance” sino algo más llevado a cabo por una pareja de japoneses llamados *Eiko & Koma*. Yo había tenido la oportunidad de verlos moverse, y si hablara libremente diría “nacer el uno al otro” en el Baryshnikov Arts Center, en Manhattan, donde Gander leyó en el contexto de su instalación Lo que hacen es a la vez extranjero a todas las formas de baile o movimiento pero a la vez una depuración sin precedentes del idioma del amor. Gander contaba que hace años había enviado a Eiko y Koma una postal profesando su admiración por “lo que hacen” y todo esto ocurrió también por aquella postal. Es cómo si el poeta hubiera encontrado los cuerpos de su vocabulario y por lo tanto hubiera podido seguir, anotando sus movimientos como hace años lo hizo con su visita a Japón. Un espectador dentro de la esfera de un nacimiento. Ya aquí el autorretrato no se quiebra, es una poesía anterior a la noción de identidad, cercana a donde viven los insectos, a las revelaciones del musgo, y a redefinición de los confines de lo humano. Así en Oregon, (en el Four River Cultural Center) Gander leía frente a aquellos descendientes, inmigrantes, todos en suma extraños, mientras aquellos cuerpos se movían en la pantalla, más lentos que la lentitud. La lectura ocurrió “naturalmente” en inglés, en japonés y en español. Todos en casa al ser extraños, se encontraban reunidos por el azar de la historia y la constancia de sus injusticias. Cuando ya todas habían pasado, así que esta vez

no sería la injusticia el tema de conversación, sino que norteamericanos sajones, de origen japonés, mexicanos inmigrantes y naturalizados volverían a su casa a pensar en *El Japón* mientras se desvestían, como si aquel remoto país fuera un vehículo limpio para repensar el cuerpo. Y donde la poesía de Forrest Gander los asistiría en este tránsito.

## SUMO

*de Forrest Gander / traducido por Valerie Mejer*

Ø Ø Ø

Como si se tratara de un escritorio, la multitud  
se parte a su alrededor, sin embargo se mueve  
él también, tan fluidamente como se leen los labios;  
se vierte algo de mano en mano.

Las multitudes lo excitan. Es lo que  
él ve en los otros. Vivir separados, comer  
aparte. Entrenando. En las calles  
él es su *Shakkei*, su paisaje prestado.  
Es suyo lo callado  
no entra en él la música. Sin embargo el crepúsculo  
en la hora pico no se siente  
rudo. Mientras camina

él parte el ruido en gamas cromáticas,  
un tono continuo se convierte en pulsos.  
Sus pasos funcionan para mantener  
el ritmo de fondo por el que todo el resto  
resulta sincopado.

Ø Ø Ø

Es la semi-luz de la mañana.

Imagina a un hombre que pesa 370 libras  
de pie delante de un espejo oscuro  
solo, en una habitación pequeña, desnudo,  
trenzando en trance su largo cabello .

Ø Ø Ø

Él no se mueve a lo largo de esta escena .  
En cada una de las paradas, otros tiran  
titubeando hacia la puerta—del modo  
en que se arrastran las arañas . O se derraman afuera del tren,  
entran nuevos cuerpos de manera  
que la densidad sigue siendo casi la misma.

Ø Ø Ø

En un movimiento nuevo, se enredan en capas  
para soltar el calor  
como el agua de una concha.

La capucha de una mujer cae de nuevo  
y ella sacude su pelo suelto.

Él está mirando.

Ella es del color del esquisto húmedo y la música koto  
temprano antes de que nadie esté en pie. Desaparece  
en la siguiente parada. Y entonces él la ve  
a través de la ventana, un instante antes de que la multitud  
se instale, su doble cara  
se refracta a través del cristal, sus labios,  
luces intermitentes en la lluvia.

DANIEL BORZUTZKY

## THE DEAD SKY, THE DEAD TREES, THE DEAD FOREST: THE ECOLOGICAL POETICS OF THE DYING NATION

### 1. A PRIMAL FORCE

I would like to begin by engaging the notion of translation as a “primal force.” Primal can be defined as “first” or “original,” and if it is correct to say that translation is a primal force, then what we are saying is that before there is anything else, there is translation. Before there are words, there is translation. Before there is thought, there is translation. Before there is communication across borders and between nations, there is translation. But if translation is the primal force, if translation comes before the words, then what comes before the translation? For the writers I have been most influenced by, the answer to this question is a sonic one: it’s a scream, a howl, a vocalized trauma for which there are no words. These are sounds that begin in the body, the individual body and the body of the collective. It is the scream and the howl and the murmur that is contained in the ravished, traumatized or tortured body. If, to paraphrase, Marguerite Duras, “writing is to take place,” then the scream must first be translated into words.

### 2. SCREECHES AND HOWLS: TRANSLATION AS EVOCATIVE PERFORMANCE

In the prologue to the 2009 translation of his book *INRI* (originally published in 2003), Raúl Zurita contextualizes the project by discussing how the book was a response to the 2001 acknowledgment on television by Chilean President Ricardo Lagos that “the bodies of hundreds of people who had been disappeared during the Pinochet dictatorship {1973–1990} would never be found because they had been thrown out of airplanes into the sea and the mountains: into the Pacific Ocean and into the mouths of volcanoes (Zurita V *INRI*)”. Despite the fact that Chileans had known about these unspeakable acts for many years, Zurita discusses how this moment, this act of public acknowledgment hit him hard and thus led to the writing of *INRI*. He writes:

No, it wasn’t ‘moral outrage’ or any other high-sounding phrase, it was something much more concrete and unspoken: it was like a screech I couldn’t get away from, that I may never be able to pull

myself away from. The book was called *INRI*, and it came out of the image of a man who was uttering strange words on the TV. I don't know if what I am saying about the screech makes sense: it was called innrrrrriiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.

There was also a detail, another fact about that crucifixion: one of the reports tells how before killing their victims the military personnel gouged out their eyes with hooks, that's why in the book no one sees, they only hear. [And in the original publication of *INRI*, there was a page written in braille so that readers could "enter a non-visual experience of reading, through the sense of touch."] (Zurita V-VI)

In *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Emily Apter provides a theoretical framework for understanding translation as a transnational practice that applies in 'zones' of data, linguicide, war and "damaged experience." To this end, she is particularly interested in "designated sites that are "in-translation," as opposed to those zones which seek to prohibit movement between languages. These sites that are "in-translation," writes Apter, belong "to no single, discrete language or single medium of communication." According to Apter, these translation zones can be found in "diasporic language communities, print and media public spheres, institutions of government.....and theaters of war," among other areas (6):

Cast as an act of love, and as an act of disruption, translation becomes a means of repositioning the subject in the world and in history; a means of rendering self-knowledge foreign to itself; a way of denaturalizing citizens, taking them out of the comfort zone of national space, daily ritual and pre-given domestic arrangements. (Apter 6)

To cast translation as an act of love. It is this moment in Apter's formulation that stands out to me the most, and which seems like an appropriate entrance into thinking about the acts of translation (from within his own context and culture) that generated Zurita's *INRI*: the overdue admission that the bodies of Chileans were dropped into the sea and the mountains; the screech heard on television; and the gouging out of the eyes of the prisoners. In other words, Zurita's *INRI* is formed at the conjunction of government and media, war and its unspeakable acts

of violence, and the brutality and anonymity of death. I see *INRI* as an attempt to translate the screech, to translate the language of those whose eyes were gouged out into something that renders their disappearance as presence.

To say it another way, written at the moment that the disappearances were acknowledged, *INRI* can perhaps be seen as an attempt, as Zurita has said in conversation, to prevent the disappeared from disappearing again. And in the process it imagines the disappeared in various scenes of exile, the diasporic communities of the fallen bodies. The chapters have names like "The Sea," "The Snow," "The Desert," as this is where the bodies of the disappeared Chileans are located. But the book also reimagines the nation, and in particular its natural environment, as one which absorbs and loves the dead bodies, as opposed to rejecting them, brutalizing them, and gouging out their eyes:

Then the flowers of the Andes and the flowers of  
the Pacific say they love us. This is what they say  
to us: that they love us. The marvelous acacias  
with yellow flowers rising up out of all the blood  
of the fields and the acacias that now grow  
where the narrow plays were say it. And they  
say it to you, murderers, destroyers of human  
beings, the marvelous acacias in the fields and  
the magnolias that grow where the cordilleras  
used to be and the bluish hydrangeas that grow  
where the Pacific once was say it. Listen little  
dove all the flowers of the deserts, of the sea-  
shores of Chile and mountains love us. I died  
and they love me. You died and they love you....  
the cordilleras and valleys are telling us  
they love us. (Zurita 81)

In the afterword to the English edition of *INRI* published in 2009, William Rowe discusses the process of translating the book as a search for the appropriate language to "break through the illusion of consensus by speaking of what is not said," which required him to make "more use of sonorousness" than

Zurita does in the original (132–133). And indeed there are several examples in the book where Rowe uses a form of alliteration that may diverge from the original, as in this short phrase: “the line...breaks away from the skin and sinks, slowly sinks, separates from the sky and sinks....The Andes sink into the sea of stones” (62).

By calling attention to his own use of sonorousness, what Rowe is suggesting is that in order for the book to ‘translate’ across national and linguistic boundaries, then there must be an extra-textual turn that the language takes in English in order to recreate the effect of the original. In other words, Rowe makes what Della Pollock, in her scholarly manifesto “Performing Writing,” might call a “performative” move by evoking, through sound, “worlds that are otherwise intangible, unlocatable: worlds of memory, sensation, imagination and insight” which creates more space for an “interplay of reader and writer in the joint production of meaning” (Pollock 80). On a physical level, through the placement of Braille onto the pages, Zurita asks us to feel the text, to touch it and thus to embody the experience of blindness in order to read the unreadable text.

Returning to Pollock, what she calls “Performative Writing” is as hard to define as performance itself, and deliberately so. In her essay she recognizes as much, and lays out a number of claims about what performative writing can accomplish. I am particularly interested in her discussion of how performative writing is “metonymic,” or “filled with longing for a lost subject / object that has disappeared into history or time, and for what, in the face of that disappearance, may seem both the inadequacy and impossibility of evocation” (84). To exemplify this, she discusses the ‘earthworks’ of Ana Mendieta, “grave sites that flame and dwindle into ash, shoreline images that are no sooner inscribed in sand than they are swept away by wave after wave” (84). This brings to mind Zurita’s ecological writings, and his use of nature as the stage on which to perform his writing, as in the series of poems in *La Vida Nueva*, which were written in the sky over Manhattan with an airplane in 1982, as well as his bulldozing of the words “ni pena, ni miedo” into the Atacama desert during the Pinochet regime.

In her analysis of Jane Blocker’s efforts to “write the work of Ana Mendieta,” Pollock suggests that performative writing about death and disappearance needs to be presented in a frame that is itself one that will die and disappear.

Connecting this to Zurita, skywriting is of course ephemeral. It can only disappear, and be absorbed by the natural world. It erases its own message and thus renders language as a completely inadequate means of responding to the worst types of violence.

### 3. THE DEAD SKY, THE DEAD TREES, THE DEAD FOREST

*And then one day, there will be nothing left to write, nothing to read, nothing left but the untranslatable fact of the life of that dead boy who was so young, young enough to make you scream.*

—Marguerite Duras, “The Death of the Young British Pilot”

“The Death of the Young British Pilot” narrates Duras’ encounter in a village in France where during World War II, W.J. Cliffe, a 20-year-old British pilot, who had been an orphan, crashed his plane and died anonymously. While visiting the village where Cliffe was found, Duras learns of the ways in which its residents took care of the body, praying to it, keeping vigil over it, and singing each year at its grave.

“If there weren’t things like this,” writes Duras of the discovery of the anonymous dead soldier, “then writing would never take place. But even if writing is there, always ready to scream, to cry, one does not write. Emotions of that order, very subtle, very profound, very carnal, and essential, and completely unpredictable, can hatch entire lives in a body” (54).

In this essay, Duras goes back and forth between the personal and the communal. She intersperses in brief, simple sentences, the death of the British pilot with the death of her brother, who was discovered after the war with Japan in “a mass pit on top of the previous corpses.” She shares with Zurita in this work an uncanny focus on not just “the heap of bodies...the disappearance of that body in the mass of other bodies...” but on nature, and on depictions of war and death through an examination of natural landscape, of “the sooty blackness of the scorched trees...those twin rivers gone mad that scream every evening; those badly made rivers, God’s failures, ill born, that slam together every night... The dead trees...frozen in their fixed chaos...black with the dark blood of trees killed by fire” (46).

In “Diaspora and the Detours of Identity,” British sociologist and cultural theorist Paul Gilroy critiques the notion of individuals and communities possessing fixed identities that are tied to what he calls “the sedentary poetics of blood and soil” (317). Here Gilroy is pushing back against a typical trope that nation-states have used in order to inspire solidarity: the heightened rhetoric of nature as a means of unifying their citizenry through appeals to God and country. He refers to this as “the ecological dynamics of identity-formation” or “an ecological account of the relationship between shared humanity, common citizenship, place and identity” (316).

“I see places linked together,” writes Duras. “Except the continuity of the forest: that has disappeared.”

I too see places linked together. I see Zurita’s Chile, Duras’ France and the U.S. in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century linked together. I see the three of them transposed on top of each other all the time. I see in Zurita and Duras the only two writings I know of that deal with the anonymous deaths of bodies falling from airplanes, and in this transhistorical space that they share, this communal articulation of facts and lives and experiences that are decades and continents apart, I see an eloquent response to Gilroy’s ideas about the ecological dynamics of identity. In Duras, for instance, there can be no ‘nature-based’ tie to the nation because nature itself is disappearing as a result of the violence of nation-states.

I have recently been translating a section of Zurita’s called *El País de Tablas*, or *The Country of Planks*, which was published in Chile in 2011 in an anthology entitled *Zurita*. Each of the poems in *El País de Tablas* takes the name of a Chilean prison during the dictatorship, and the poems articulate the image of a country emerging out of a sea that has been opened up the way Moses parted the Red Sea in the book of Exodus. Like much of Zurita’s writing, there is an obsessive use of nature as a means of talking about the politics and identity of the nation. Connecting this to Duras, both *El País de Tablas* and “The Death of the Young, British Pilot,” are about the same length (19 and 21 pages). In this short section, Zurita uses the adjective “dead” with elements of nature (the sky, the sea, the night, the sticks, etc...) at least 15 times, while Duras refers to natural elements as being “dead” or “assassinated” at least 10 times.

To illustrate this point, it might be best to look at Zurita's writing itself. The following is a poem I recently translated from *El País de Tablas* entitled "Villa Grimaldi Prison," the name of a famous torture center in Santiago, whose prisoners included, among others, ex Chilean president Michele Bachelet.

### VILLA GRIMALDI PRISON

#### —Barracks—

No one is the homeland, was the  
apparent scream of the blind planks  
in the dead homeland of the sea

This is how the chilean prisons were emerging the snowy  
peaks of the Andes were nothing but planks nailed to those barracks

In the middle of the ocean's abyss as if they had wanted with  
their shredders to remind us of the infinite pain of the camps  
the quarters the infinite sheds where they killed us

When the Pacific opened up and we carried one another  
we saw the stakes of a cordillera and then a dead sky  
sinking into the slit of the sea until it became the final silence  
that covers our remains still nailed down still broken  
our eyes still open looking out from those barracks the  
dead gaze of the ocean

I find this poem to be interesting alongside Gilroy's ideas about the rhetoric of nature as it relates to national identity. For in Zurita's writing I think that the rhetoric of nature is being used to reformulate and reimagine the identity of the nation and homeland, which in this poem is unstable, and corresponds to "no one." So while the mountains are nailed into the landscape, it is important to stress that this is something which has been done to them artificially, and not something that has occurred naturally. We can say that the murderers, the military and the government, have attached the mountains to the land, thus forcing against their

will the connection they form between the nation and its territory. If the forest in Duras has disappeared, the forest in Zurita has been bound against its will.

One way, then, of relating this poem to Gilroy's ideas is by suggesting that first Zurita is aware of the rhetorical trope of using nature to inspire national unity, and he is reclaiming it, or reconfiguring it to more accurately reflect what he takes to be the realities of a dying nation. Rather than being something that forms national identity, in Zurita's *Pais de Tablas*, nature absorbs identities. The shame of the political has been absorbed by the natural. The blood and the bodies of the disappeared, now scattered throughout the landscape, have become part of the homeland, the Chilean soil. This is the rhetoric of Zurita's natural depictions as they are tied to national identities. It's a rhetoric of shame, of loss, of unquantifiable and unspeakable violence. A violence communicated first as a physical experience; the blindness of the tortured reader and the unintelligible shriek on the television were the roots from which to perform the acts of translation that became INRI.

I will conclude here, but I want to end by simply pointing out that in his recent writings Zurita has been more consciously addressing themes that might seem more natural to Duras' oeuvre rather than his own. In recent books, he has poems that directly address the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Auschwitz; and the construction of the atomic bomb, thus allowing us to situate his body of work as one which stretches across nations and time to demonstrate an eloquent refusal to experience history, and especially the history of atrocity, as a series of separate events. Or, as Zurita puts it a poem that I have recently translated: "the plains of Nagasaki and Hiroshima pass before the Chilean sky / filled with dust / drifting / like two days shattered into pieces coming closer between the fjords."

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RAÚL ZURITA  
CONTRA LAS LENGUAS  
—TRES APUNTES PARA UNA TRADUCCIÓN—

*El príncipe, oyendo el pregón, no entendiendo el lenguaje español, preguntó a los religiosos que con él iban qué era lo que aquel hombre iba diciendo.*

1

Es la decapitación del último pretendiente al trono inca, el primer Tupac Amaru, ocurrida en el Cuzco en 1572. La escena cierra *La conquista del Perú* del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, segunda parte y final de sus *Comentarios Reales*, que en sus capítulos anteriores narraba las violentas muertes, unos en manos de otros, de los principales protagonistas de la conquista del Perú. Este último capítulo, que omite el nombre de Tupac Amaru, está en el código genético de ese trágico inacabable de malos entendidos, fantasías, obras maestras y abandonos, que después se denominará literatura latinoamericana, y aunque Garcilaso intenta contenerse su lenguaje es emotivo. En síntesis: camino al patíbulo un pregonero va enunciando a viva voz las culpas por la que se condena al príncipe inca a muerte y éste al oírlo le pide al fraile que lo acompaña que le traduzca porque no entiende el castellano, es decir, no entiende la lengua en la que está la razón de por qué él debe morir. El hecho es en sí impresionante porque le ataña finalmente a la fundación misma de lo humano; somos seres para la muerte, pero lo somos porque las razones por las que cada uno de nosotros va a morir están siempre expresadas en la más extranjera de las lenguas, en una lengua intraducible.

2

No existe más inconsciente que el del lenguaje. Más que los hombres que las hablan las lenguas tienen memoria. Los hispanoparlantes hablamos una lengua datada, que se impuso y de una u otra forma ella guarda en cada una de sus partículas, en cada letra, sílaba, palabra, las condiciones de esa imposición. Un idioma es también la suma de las muertes que contiene y los textos literarios son siempre el resultado de la colisión de dos voluntades: la voluntad del poeta, la voluntad de lo que éste desea expresar por medio de la lengua, y la voluntad de lo que la lengua quieren expresar a través de quienes las hablan. Son dos fuerzas antagónicas y la lucha es a muerte. Los malos poemas son aquellos en

que siempre se impone la voluntad de quien los escribe, sus emociones privadas, su sentimentalismo, su angustia personal, los grandes poemas son siempre el resultado de la victoria de la voluntad de la lengua, por eso son impredecibles. Nada en efecto hay en un idioma ni en un ser humano para que esos grandes poemas fueran escritos y sin embargo fueron escritos, nada había en el toscano del mil trescientos ni en un tal Dante Alighieri que posibilitara que la *Commedia* fuera escrita y sin embargo fue escrita, nada había en el inglés ni en un tal William Shakespeare como para que los *Sonetos de Shakespeare* fueran escritos y sin embargo los *Sonetos de Shakespeare* fueron escritos, nada había en el castellano ni en ese individuo que decidió llamarse Pablo Neruda para que se escribiera *Alturas de Macchu Picchu*, y no obstante *Alturas de Macchu Picchu* fue escrito. Más que un intercambio de vida la traducción es un intercambio de muertes. Traducir es encontrar el mar común en el que van a desembocar dos ríos de difuntos; los de la lengua del traductor y el de la lengua desde la que se traduce.

### 3

La experiencia más radical de la escritura es el monolingüismo. El que tiene una única lengua llevará hasta sus consecuencias extremas su experiencia con esa lengua, se le va la vida en ello, no tiene puerta de escapatoria. Él hará el esfuerzo desorbitado para que esa lengua única sea a la vez la única lengua, no reconciliará dos ríos de muertos porque no puede sino contemplar ese gran río único donde deshaciéndose se funden todas las muertes. La música de una lengua es el sonido de todos sus muertos.

La traducción literaria es un ejercicio despiadado de autocontemplación. ☛

JAIME RODRÍGUEZ Z.

## SELECTIONS FROM VIC MORROW'S SONG

*Der Held ist eins. Im Helden ist Gewalt.*

-Rilke

*Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I know my words are wild...*

—Tennyson

## 1. RESENTMENT'S TENANT.

garbage afloat on the warm air  
lifting cars  
and building dark vegetable bridges  
and labels

he  
would huddle on rooftops  
so that I could not watch him live his silent death  
to the fullest

up there  
I saw him devour his own heart  
crash his head against columns  
dance between strings and wires

hands like planets  
but nothing moved his captors

then fear would take hold of us  
and  
open cracks along  
the path home  
                  the mandarins  
falling too far away

up there  
at forty-one  
                  and here  
it was all so grey  
so grey  
that I could not but need it

and that is how it happened  
we could not avoid it  
                  the puddle  
was too deep  
too wide  
for us to avoid it

he lifted me on his shoulders  
and stepped into its shimmering surface

and I  
his face refracted in the water  
struggling to get down  
but he  
—no

and that was all.

#### 8. THE CATERPILLAR. A CELEBRATION.

By then  
Vic  
would carry a caterpillar in his pocket and with it illuminate  
the wide avenues

So  
when he came across the drunkards  
on leave

he gave the order  
but his two eyes fell from his face with such a clamor  
that he was nearly caught in a rain  
of shrapnel  
and  
we almost had to do away with him

Hanley and Carlyle and Doc

saying no one darkens the way he does

Pincers moving over water

In those days they frequented the Asian  
dives  
and Vic fancied the owner's daughter  
who as you know would only  
stare back at us in disgust

he would request songs  
or so they say  
feeling prematurely melancholy

while the fluorescent light of the caterpillar  
shone  
in his pocket  
Vic

on his worst days  
would talk to the comedians  
the back end of his Thompson resting on his steel-toed boot  
and together they'd sing  
Hilda oh Hilda  
my life a trail of tears  
and so on

until the caterpillar  
or  
the tongues of radioactive dogs  
would illuminate the darkness

## 25. AN OLD TV SHOW.

between 1979 and 1983 peruvian state television broadcast 68 of the 183 original episodes of the military combat series the characters winged beings who battled the nazis saw their reflections in the puddles that flooded building block number forty-one in the rimac

housing development lima peru these things all also imagined surrounded by jasmine flowers and trash-pickers by then my father was living with his back to the void consuming the hate that filled the streets and alleys in which he searched and getting ready for the party i always came home on time and loved ants and waves of invading children inundated the old parking lot with the retarded security guard my grandmother looked after the parks and my mother permitted experimentation trafficked in spices cut the heads off chickens she didn't know but often i was watching her from atop the tower singing her love songs an angel fighting fear told me to come down and i joined the battalion for the last raid the final showdown us or them our objective was to take by storm and destroy the bedroom in which juan castro had killed himself he was just a teenager you know just a kid captain captain captain wielding the wisdom of the flying v my grandmother had a philips radio once i electrocuted myself with it much later i found about the accident it happened while they were filming vic was rescuing two kids from a storm when the helicopter crashed into them but we kept moving and when we reached the staircase there was my father drinking happily with uncle genaro i wanted to show him my trophies but it was not to be and instead he gave me what he claimed were genuine ducal coins so we grabbed our shattered thompsons and headed for the old building block past the passionfruit vines in the seventy-fifth episode the double agent came on the scene and after that things got a bit chaotic because nobody wanted to be roddy mcdowall and my father's thirty coins were just enough for the ducats vic died decapitated and the children their images close enough to hold like floating dung bubbles and our weapons splintered into smaller and smaller pieces and we grew up adopted a dog grew up some couldn't wait to change sides but by then they were all dead all of them dead doc tebi mugui hanley carlyle emerson the part of me that was they said captain caje and that was the last I ever heard of any of them.

*Translated by Marta del Pozo and Eli S. Evans* 

FORREST GANDER

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CINCO POEMAS

ALIENTO

Primer bosquejo del mundo. O

como si todo  
lo que una vez existió hiciera de ellos  
su urna. Son una hendidura  
del tajo. Son. Tierra sin flores.

Vientogimiente sobre  
un hojoso montón de tierra y  
formas humanas diseminadas,  
ramas y venas. Para

llegar a ser lo que uno fue: eso  
nunca pasa. Pero el auténtico suelo  
se frunce hacia ellos e incita  
su lánguida

pandiculación. La creciente  
aspas del hombro y la sombra  
en bahías de expansibles,  
contráctiles costillas. Así la

mamífera familiaridad  
reconocible se contrae en  
revelaciones, en tiempo dilatado.  
Volviéndose uno, inhumano, más

allá del animal. Son ellos.

## ENMARAÑAMIENTO

Y empiezan a emerger. Desde su  
prolongado flotar. Desde los basamentos del sueño.

Aquí en la húmeda estación  
de la tierra. Pelo y hojas mezclados  
con hojas y pelo. Visión desprendida  
para hacer espacio a la visión.

Dos figuras y  
cesura, un espacio de  
anhelo. Atadas a lo  
no escrito. Sin despertar

sus ojos se vacían.  
Boquiabiertos. Presimbólicos.

La punta del pie se tensa  
con lentitud vegetal. Sus cabezas  
se vuelcan hacia arriba, ofrendando su garganta uno  
al otro. Declamatorio  
brillo téreo. Los músculos fibrosos  
de sus muslos se crispan. Como dios

vertido en el ser creado. Aún  
supino. Extrañamente receptivo  
a la oleada del suelo  
y fluyendo con ella. Ellos  
no se mueven en el mismo mundo  
en el que los observamos.

Al levantarse, están en riesgo. Su  
cuello de pájaro sabio contra  
sus hombros. Él se tambalea, espasmódico,  
a través de una red invisible.  
Sus encorvados brazos se extienden  
como los de un cormorán. Enfáticamente

angular. Su mano siente  
el rostro de ella ciegamente. Esta  
es una historia de amor.

Esta es una historia de amor. Su mano  
ciegamente siente el rostro,  
enfáticamente angular. Sus encorvados  
brazos se extienden como los de un cormorán.

Se tambalea hacia ella, espasmódico,  
a través de una red invisible. El  
cuello de pájaro sabio desplumado contra  
sus hombros. Al levantarse  
están. En riesgo. No se

mueven en el mismo mundo  
en el que los observamos  
con extrañeza. Receptivos aún y fluyendo  
con la ondulación del suelo.  
Supino. Como dios vertido  
en el ser creado. Los

músculos fibrosos de sus muslos  
se crispan. Brillo téreo.  
Declamatoriamente sus  
cabezas volcadas hacia arriba ofrendan su garganta  
uno al otro. La punta  
de un pie se tensa con lentitud  
vegetal. Presimbólicos,  
boquibiertos, sin despertar.

Sus ojos se vacían. Dos figuras  
atadas a lo no escrito.  
Y cesura, el espacio  
del anhelo.

La visión desprendiéndose  
para hacer espacio a la visión. Hojas  
y pelo mezclado con pelo  
y hojas. Aquí  
en la húmeda estación de la tierra. Desde  
los basamentos del sueño, desde su  
largo flotar. Y empiezan  
a emerger.

## FIDELIDAD

Una vida puede cambiar la  
vida de una persona puede cambiar con  
un gesto o una frase  
hormada en luz albumínica  
y en mansedumbre desde la cual  
gesta cuerpos  
que despiertan dúctiles y  
extraños como un ostión

dilatación de las fosas nasales lenta  
contracción de las costillas brisa  
en el estíercol (alientodevida)  
un dedo junta y deja  
en la sombra sobre el rostro de ella  
palpitando su boqueo

marmóreo perfil a lo largo  
de la ahuecada espina a través  
de cada vértebra lumbar (una a  
una) distinguibles  
puntos de ondulación  
se espatulan desde sus hombros  
el talón de su pie vuelto hacia afuera  
contrayéndose por el ligamento  
de la pantorrilla así

entre ellos  
el espacio puede ser re-  
concebido (uni-  
verso en embrión) como  
un medio de acceso al reino de la carne  
ciego buscando carne ciegamente  
sintiendo adelantarse el brazo apical

espasmódicamente en la preluz  
cara arriba planos pies debajo  
de sus caderas las palmas al  
revés el cuerpo  
más arriba de la elevación ventral y

cayendo como un animal acabado de nacer  
con los músculos no usados  
por el peso y la secuencia  
el tendón detrás  
de la bolsa sinovial  
(exquisitamente) prueba su rango  
piernadoblada bajo  
el cuerpo oscilante que  
se levanta de nuevo desequilibrado  
encorvados los muslos y los codos  
contra sus articulaciones

tanteando el aire  
con el rostro resplandeciente  
el flexible tronco arrastrado  
hacia delante (brazos enclavijados)  
con los muñones de hombro  
propiciando pequeños momentos  
el hueso zarcilloso de la pierna  
ondula desde su cavidad pélvica

en cuanto caen torpemente  
afinados a sus lugares  
guarda la sombra la clavícula  
(boquiabiertos) un pie levantado  
la cara colgante lo de arriba abajo  
de su garganta la rima de  
voltear la boca y los ojos  
sus cuatro nalgas transmutan

como un madrigal en pera  
el equilibrio de sus fuerzas  
a medida que él desenvuelve  
la cintura de ella como una fuente  
ella echa la cabeza hacia atrás y su cabello barre  
el suelo exuberante  
solemnidad el principio  
consciente de  
una emoción

mientras el silencio mastica los bordes  
del acuáticosonido, noche, viento  
sus muñecas  
ardientes vulnerable  
la larga punta del pie jalada hacia atrás  
desde la inmensidad  
del contacto la precisión  
articulada (dedoextendido)  
implorando por las primeras  
figuras anfibias  
gastadas y mutuas con un mundo  
dos cuerpos  
liberan los hechos

## DESMONTE

¿A dónde vas? Fantasma empolvado ¿De dónde has venido?  
Roma resolución del montón de rocas, árida monarquía.  
Una araña lobo del tamaño de una mano, incrustada en la basura al borde de los  
[escombros.]

Lo que aquí cruza tiene colmillos o espinas y extrae su color del suelo.

Jántica sombra en los bordes.

¿A dónde vamos? Fantasma empolvado. ¿De dónde hemos venido?

Una camilla llena de terrones junto a un cobertizo que se colapsa.

¿Qué significa una topografía cauterizada?

Un paso adelante y él está con nosotros. Un paso atrás y otro reino lo absorbe.

El holgado sentido de la época, desatado.

Cada uno pensando que es el otro quien retrocede como un horizonte.

La milagrosa jaula visible bajo la piel.

No puedo ser apartado, dijo su ojo.

Una flauta que toca una nota. Un rostro.

En el foso abierto a mediodía, mengua el brillo de los hombres.

Puedo ser leída, dicen las rocas, pero no por ti.

El aire bruñido, casi mineral, como una fina cáscara de mica.

Túmulo en la fotografía, iris en el ojo.

¿Qué significa una topografía cauterizada?

Rescatar de las rocas el color de todas ellas y desde todas ellas el color de la roca.

Puedo ser leído, dicen sus ojos, pero no por ti.

Y como si la tierra se hubiera abandonado a sí misma.

Precipitación pluvial desde las colinas despojadas, el suelo pulverizándose en el viento.

Un paso adelante y estamos con ellos. Un paso atrás y otro reino nos absorbe.

No levantes las rocas, dice él, porque las rocas pertenecen al muerto.

Jántica sombra en los bordes.

La distancia se extiende como una crin de yeso, toda esponjada desde lo hondo.

Negra cima de piedras desechadas.

No hay nada entre sus ojos y los nuestros, ni una invitación siquiera.

Cada piedra carga su sentencia de muerte dentro del mundo animado.

Una larva de mosca se come el cerebro rojo de una hormiga.

El holgado sentido de la época.

La luz estalla en el aire.

La sombra de una ramita tiene la misma cualidad que la sombra de un hombre.

Una hojeada contenida, un brillo prolongado.

Toda esponjada desde el fondo, la distancia se tiende como una crin de yeso.

El iris en un ojo, el túmulo en la fotografía.

No lo levantes, dicen las rocas, porque el muerto pertenece a las rocas.

Incrustada en la basura al borde de los escombros: una araña lobo del tamaño de

[una mano.]

La sombra de un hombre tiene la misma cualidad que la sombra de una rama.

Lo que aquí cruza tiene colmillos o espinas y extrae su color del suelo.

El aire bruñido, casi mineral.

## MANO

*para Rick Hirsch & Michael Rogers*

En los (microscópicos) agujeros de una  
piedra de granito del tamaño de una palma  
rastros de maíz verde verdolaga  
(víboragrasta) y piñón fundido  
con raíces huntadas  
y polen de hierbabeja  
(ocrepolvo) que es arrastrado  
a lo largo del verano hasta el  
cuero cabelludo de una mujer  
encorvada (y resuelta) sobre una  
vasija de piedra dentellante  
sus músculos flexionados  
de trapecio a  
tríceps la muñeca (gruesa)  
produce un corto  
manotazo orbital de la mano-  
de-piedra que toma  
la curva de  
la palma (ahuecada)  
y el peso de su torso  
cayendodetravés mientras  
las golondrinas bajan y  
se desvían a lo largo del  
despeñadero el tibio  
talón costroso de  
su palma se abate  
(talón de palma) sobre  
y dentro del ruidoraspante  
que la piedra funde  
con la mano  
que la muele  
como-rueda,

el creador (soplo-de-aliento) vive  
en su herramienta (ágil)  
las moscas se agitan y  
aterrizan en su pelo  
que se topa con sus  
ojos pulsoradiante  
hojatrinada y  
en esa cadencia  
se inserta  
la cadencia más  
lenta con la que  
ella mece a su niño  
cuando llora  
y todos los variables  
*templos* de su pecho,  
las incontables medidas  
de su cuerpo (resuellos)  
decibeles de plenitud  
dichosdías y  
toda esta tensión  
se aprieta (contra el basalto),  
y pasa por las venas de la piedra

dentro de la (picada) piedra

va un pelo de conejo  
dejado por la mano  
que desolla  
la piel en la ojilarga  
y lenta tarde cuando  
brotan las hormigas rojas  
de los hoyos del suelo rocoso  
palpitando a través de la hierba mullida  
(hormigas de cabeza-cuadrada) hacia

un jardín (donde tres pavos  
vigilantes atados a una estaca  
picotean ((come-  
hojas)) las hormigas)  
una victoria menor (el jardín  
reverdece) inscribiendo  
en los ojos  
de la mujer  
que arrastra  
la piedra en la piedra  
el curvo y fluido  
fragor de la violencia  
y el tiempo  
que se traga su luz  
en nuestra (nuestra) luz  
como se entrecierra la pupila  
en su iris y nos inclinamos  
(casi de rodillas) en un claro  
a levantar  
y sopesar la roca  
halcónedesliz  
en nuestra mano  
en la que hace milenios  
la mano de ella ha sido  
la que desaparece al  
aclarnos (¿para  
quién?) en una  
ladera cubierta de maleza  
donde alguien se arrodilla  
en el ahora (aún  
ahora) más allá  
(flujo fijo) de nuestra mirada

*Traducción de Alfonso D'Aquino* ☒

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FLÁVIA ROCHA

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*IN ANOTHER PLACE*

ALBUM

The boy encapsulated in the happiness  
of a flawless shout  
filling rooms, halls,  
interior stadiums, unsaying  
parts, cognitive bases,  
disassembling them to then, intuitively,  
give them life again,  
absorbed in magnetism—  
the girl detects with a half-sunken gaze  
strange spaces that could be used  
for something meaningless  
but necessary, leaves smashed  
on a dinner plate,  
a synthetic tent pitched  
in the garden of a gated building,  
the beach, in the danger on the streets,  
heat lifting from the asphalt,  
in the customary night heat—

utensils in hand for anything  
you may be able to reach,  
extracting from them a worthless no,  
gathering facts, a shared knowledge,  
without identifying any agenda, without  
the outlines of opportunity,  
projects, archetypes, immersed  
in an intoxicating and infantile  
fermentation, your self-image revised  
via signs of recognition—  
we open the album  
to page seven, to someone  
who looks essentially like you, a soft cry  
in her eyes, her mouth  
under water.

## ATEMPORAL

In the space made of changing forms,  
emptiness fills each eternity—

the death of something that no longer exists  
making room for another eternity to take place

outside of time—a subtle cellular explosion  
different from us, from everything.

## LUMINOSITY: A FAMILY HISTORY

A scratch on the wooden wall  
across a crack between two planks,  
a tangle, stain—

great red hair  
tangled, then split—  
broken stems  
bending like threads of water.

The house minutes before its demolition:  
at the end of the corridor,  
covered by a fine layer of lichen,  
a rectangle for a door,  
and the rose bed, and the brightness.

*Translated by Idra Novey and Flávia Rocha.*

LAURA ELRICK

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## 5 DE PROPAGACIÓN

*...oír todo lo que uno no sabe que oye, todo lo que uno  
no sabe que dice y todo lo que uno no sabe cómo decir...*

*—Henri Mescchonic*

|| cuadrados

cercados

por qué

cuadrados

dementes

cercados

por qué

cuadrados

dementes

cerca

dos por qué

cuadrados dementes

cercados

|| en  
el estacionamiento  
afuera  
en el estacionamiento  
en el estaciona  
miento afuera en  
el estacionamiento  
adentro  
del estacionamiento  
adentro  
del estaciona  
miento afuera  
en el estacionamiento  
afuera en  
el estacionamiento

|| y esta es mi parte  
esta mi parte  
esta mi  
parte esta  
mi parte parte esta  
y es mía  
y esta es  
y es mía ella  
es mía  
mi montón mi destino  
mi sándwich  
es mi  
parte  
es mía es mía  
mi parte parte  
la parte  
que es mía

|| y lo que sea distinto  
que hagan  
lo que sea  
que hagan  
lo que sea distinto que ellos  
hacen y  
hagan lo  
que sea  
distinto  
que hacen que  
hagan lo  
que sea que  
como siempre  
distinto  
hacan  
hagan  
es siempre  
lo que sea  
lo que sea distinto  
es  
simultáneamente  
lo que debe hacerse

|| una fracción del amor  
una fracción entera  
fascina  
una fracción facciona  
el amor  
y fascina  
fascina  
el amor de fracciones  
fascina  
fascinación  
amor  
fracciones  
facciones del amor  
el amor fascinado  
fractura  
el amor fractura  
lo lo  
amor  
fractúralo  
ama la fractura entera  
y la fascinación  
la ama también  
fractura para  
amarla  
para amarla  
plural ama plural  
ama

una fracción del plural

nos ama

está fascinándonos

una fracción

una fracción

del amor

es fascinante

es entera

*Traducción de Enrique Winter* 

I

There is a single house at the doors of your life. Between your own image and the horizon, eagle perched on no sentinel's shoulder, the house lets all things be. At times unruly against your love, it transcends creation, flower and water. It rectifies and with multiple bifurcations points out the today of your yesterday. It scrapes out the mad bite of scar and dust. You open a crack in the mist to feel inside, touching no great guilt, the pulp of your fleece. You float directly toward its flanks and walls, you traverse the immobile hallways with a gold ring that belongs to your dream. Who wants to float up the stairs to make a link of time with certain space, who clothes you and does not exile the angel on your forehead in the immense morning, beneath the weight and deaf rumor of your real and invisible house?

## II

Did your grandparents stoke wood, gifts, or legends here? In their time, they were chosen to live another form and, even in their hours emptied by us, their sadness is loving unconsciousness. Our adhesion, which is made of bones, marrow and visceral foam, wakes them from the longest dream. We have two options when we face them: faithfulness and candor and, in dialogue, to shake up memory at the mercy of our yesterday, or to show them a thin volume of wandering stars here on earth, or fanatical dead roses with the dark fire that borders the precipice.

III

Like someone who erases a phrase from an  
endless manuscript,  
the big herbaceous window shades rain,  
spring and youth flowing, a river  
slides by very lazily in the grass.

The lips in a crevice on our root.

We pass.

(The red mouth is muteness.)

(We eat the dead without a single tear.)

Time still passes.

(The final rose that our exclusive sister brings.)

## IV

We filled a basket with hard stones and saw it was a white or black steppe where wild desires trot, we later forged through the great river they call destiny as in a dream, through the wall of sunflowers and the sparkle of song, very happy to continue and elapse.

V

My shadow belongs to no one. The open road is yours and no one's.

My light belongs to no one: it bends in my pockets like just another shadow,  
the sunflower's nothing in common.

VI

No one sees these eyes, desperate eyes like things written while dreaming. No one sees me seated on a golden chair playing the universe simply with the tide that grazes lip to lip as I tune my flute with the law of the birds.

VII

*to Juan Liscano*

You have your own name  
if you excavate within yourself  
and reject your fear of dying  
which leads to dying  
and accept the verb that leads  
to silence.

Written stone of time, tossed here  
at our side  
with the fragile stalks where the spirit rejuvenates.  
Free me for the sake of my hunger, from my hunger  
and for the sake of my thirst, from my thirst.

VIII

Echo of indocile rumor  
a secret rose segregates  
and carries me insomniac  
in real or illusory living  
without a soundless north, Rose Selavy.

## IX

The words sound like gold animals.

Dispelling the limits, you will so drench all and nothingness as to suffocate vertigo, and they will become girls made of cotton.

X

We have begun with a harangue and

with oblique phrases that we love

and their silvery blue rooster heads.

We have begun or we haven't, sweet and

grumpy lady, and the playful enumeration

runs in the wind, over the purest

incomprehensible errand, as we

go by blurred, more or less mutilated.

Less oblique than my dead man's face, and a fish plunges agog; the fish goes through the sea's nebulous tower, without the roseate eye of my guilt. I eat the unattainable diamond fish one hundred times, with the nocturnal strangeness in my mouth.

XII

I sustain the tree that I increase. And the round star is covered by a jungle of spells. You walk by barefoot, like the lightning inside the center of the bark. I polish lamps with my index finger on your breast. A visionary girl looks for me in the sun of the blonde flowerpots and I place my utmost attention on her until I inscribe her name in reality and craft my desire.

*Translated by Guillermo Parra* 

MAGGIE NELSON

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*JANE: A MURDER*

## ESPÍRITU

*El espíritu de Jane  
pervive en ti,  
mi madre dice*

intentando describir  
quién soy. Me siento como la chica  
en la película de medianoche

que contempla horrorizada  
el retrato de  
su siniestro ancestro

al descubrir  
ambas usan el mismo  
vulgar dije

alrededor de su cuello.  
Desde que tengo  
memoria, mi abuelo

comete el mismo error:  
se sienta en la cocina,  
sus gelatinosos ojos azules

fijos en mí. *Bueno Jane,*  
*dice, creo que tomaré*  
*otra taza de café.*

## EL PLAN

Ella iba a casa sola  
para anunciar que ella y Phil  
estaban comprometidos.

A Phil le habían ofrecido  
empleo en NYU; Jane  
dejaría Michigan

y estudiaría Leyes  
allá también. Pero  
temía

furia de  
sus viejos,  
una escenita cerrada

de golpe  
con un portazo.  
¿Sería porque

él era  
judío? ¿Sería  
porque era

marxista?  
O ¿era  
porque

él la llevaría  
a un mundo aparte,  
lejano al propio?

Jane lo platicó con su hermana  
por horas en el teléfono  
El plan: una noche

en casa, sola,  
para calmar las aguas;  
Phil la alcanzaría

unos días después.  
*Confía en mí por esta vez, Barb*  
*confía en mí*

fue lo último  
que Jane le  
diría a su hermana.

## EL REGALO

La mañana siguiente, casi catorce millas afuera de Anne Arbor,  
un niño encontró una bolsa en la carretera cerca de su casa de ladrillo  
en su camino a la escuela.

Había un regalo en la bolsa, junto con un folder  
grueso con páginas mecanografiadas.

*Queridísima Mamá, siento llegar tarde a tu cumpleaños, pero*

*en cien años, no notarás  
la diferencia, decía la tarjeta  
del regalo. El niño se la trajo*

a su madre, quien notó sangre  
en un lado de la bolsa. Ella salió  
a mirar en los alrededores, y pronto descubrió

lo que parecía un cuerpo  
apoyado sobre una tumba  
en el viejo cementerio más allá del camino.

Adentro de la caja había un par de pantunflas de peluche azul.  
Pero ¿quién abrió la caja? ¿Acaso  
fue un policía que leyó

*Te amo, Janie  
y luego deshizo  
el moño del regalo?*

## POSICIÓN

El brazo derecho estirado por encima de su cabeza,  
el brazo izquierdo sobre sus ojos.

Un zapato sobre su abdomen,  
un zapato puesto al lado.

Su gabardina extendida sobre su cuerpo,  
su cabeza en la tumba de un desconocido.

Algunos después lo llamaron  
“una muestra reverencial”

## FIERABRÁS

Mientras crecíamos, Emily y yo tratábamos de no preguntar acerca de Jane; no queríamos hacer llorar a nuestra madre. Pero si Jane surgía en la conversación, tratábamos de engatusarla para que nos dijera cómo era.

*Era una fierabrás, mi madre siempre decía. Ella fue obediente por años, luego comenzó a rebelarse.*

Fui a mi cuarto y busqué en mi diccionario.

**“Fierabrás:** Persona fuerte e ingobernable.”

## EL FUNERAL

*No es momento de preguntarse por qué estas cosas ocurren,  
sino de tener fe, el reverendo dijo,  
y cuatrocientas personas lloraron.*

Treinta años después la mañana es silenciosa  
y sin fe. Es momento  
de hacer preguntas.

*Traducción de Sylvia Aguilar Zéleny* 

LUIS PALÉS MATOS

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## ÑÁÑIGO ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

Ñáñigo ascends to heaven,  
which was decorated  
with melon and pumpkin  
for the arrival of Ñáñigo.  
The archangels, in vestments  
of green plantain fronds,  
sport pineapple crowns  
and bear swords of yam.  
The glory of the Eternal Father  
bursts with a triumphant force  
that sprays the foam of angels  
in every imaginable way.  
Ñáñigo moves forth, tearing  
the tender swells of white,  
in his miraculous ascension  
to the sweet angelic world.  
Over cayman and swine  
the mighty Jehovah has triumphed...  
Glory to God on high  
who finally brings us Ñáñigo!

A heavenly, heavenly party made,  
with sweetness of meringues and souls,  
with marmalade of prayers and  
the honest cider of psalms.

Playing with fingers of bronze and gold,  
the trumpets of the heralds  
lay forth bouquets of melody  
from the balcony of heaven.

To soothe their throats,  
the smiling cherubs  
of the eminent choir  
drink their fill of the Holy Spirit.  
The positive, celestial mood  
spreads around the honest cheer  
of dirty jokes in words  
washed clean of all  
earthly filth by the  
sky-blue heaven of the saints.

The Ñáñigo begins to climb  
up the flight of marble steps,  
swaying with a contagious roll  
of hips and shoulder blades:  
the celestial orders greet him  
with gyrations.

The white orders of ceremonial  
austerity slowly make their approach:  
The Order of Breast-Beating,  
The Order of the Ecstatic Eye,  
the one over which Saint Memo presides,  
the Royal Order of Saint Mamo,  
the parsimonious orders  
of the Sacred Beam  
that with rattle and broom  
sweep the roofs of hell.

In praising the new soul  
that the Empire has conquered,  
the sky ripples, like the sea,  
in a martial wave of doctors and saints.

Overwhelmed by maternal bliss,  
the purest eleven thousand virgins  
bring their unborn seeds  
to stand before the Ñáñigo.

The High Chancellors  
give charge to their ambassadors,  
and come forth, in holy rapture,  
babbling a hen-like chatter,  
like a flock of new capons.

With the swiftness of a kick  
Jehovah shook space itself:  
a thunderclap, and face to face  
stood God and Ñáñigo, by themselves.  
In the right hand of the Lord  
He held a sharp whip, bright with lightning,  
and He spoke...

(The Word of God: not a music  
transposable to human rhythm.  
To say exactly what Jehovah asked,  
and what Ñáñigo expressed and answered,  
calls for a more noble instrument  
and needs a higher stand to rest.  
Thus, the exegetes attack  
the very core of claiming this miracle  
and reserve my romance  
for the pecking bush.  
But when the beak is short,  
sight and smell have much between them,  
and while one can see

God and Ñáñigo in embrace,  
the others observe a gentle breeze  
and a vapor of Antillean rum  
that envelops the two  
central figures of the scene  
and adds the scent of debauchery  
to the festival of being.)

Why is Saint Memo in such a rush?  
Why is Saint Mamo so elated?  
Why do the eleven thousand maidens,  
upon the chaste men,  
cast their childrearing duties  
with the most disdainful shamelessness?  
Who else instigates on high  
but this baroque Antillean,  
so much that the waves of gossip  
shake the walls we live within?  
Who is this grand figure  
who swaggers his way along,  
with his thunderous contempt  
and his blue glow of lightning?  
A soul has entered heaven:  
And that soul is the soul of Ñáñigo!

*Translated by David A. Colón* 

## PEDRO HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA: ¿AMERICANISTA?

### INTRODUCCIÓN: ENTRE CIVILIZACIÓN Y BARBARIE

Como expresara Braulio Muñoz con respecto a Mario Vargas Llosa, el intelectual dominicano Pedro Henríquez Ureña podría ser considerado como “un claro ejemplo del Hombre Mestizo: un ser atormentado que encarna las contradicciones fundamentales de nuestro tiempo” (La traducción es mía. Muñoz x). Mulato nacido en el seno de una familia intelectual y política de la élite, Henríquez Ureña pasó su vida tratando de reconciliar las culturas de Latinoamérica y España en la escritura. Su inserción en el canon occidental es problemática, en tanto se apropió de la dicotomía civilización/barbarie propuesta por Domingo Faustino Sarmiento a finales de siglo XIX. España, en particular, y Europa y los Estados Unidos, en general, vienen a representar esa civilización “superior” frente a una América Latina poblada por negros e indígenas “bárbaros”, que aparecen elididos en la mayor parte de su obra.

Pedro Henríquez Ureña sustentaba la noción cartesiana que divide el mundo entre europeos “sujetos racionales” y no-europeos “objetos de estudio o dominación” (Buscaglia-Salgado xiv). Esa dicotomía se expresa en lo que Aníbal Quijano denomina “la colonialidad del poder”, en la que existe una asimetría de poder basada en la clasificación racial entre España y sus antiguas colonias.

Como Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, Henríquez Ureña “was a typical creole, spending his entire life in search of recognition, honor, and legitimacy at all costs” (Buscaglia-salgado 137).

#### “... PORQUE SOY HISPANISTA”

Paradójicamente, Henríquez Ureña es reconocido por muchos críticos como americanista, a causa de sus reflexiones sobre Latinoamérica en obras como *La utopía de América*, *Corrientes Literarias en la América Hispana*, y *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión*.<sup>1</sup> Mi propósito en este artículo consistirá en la exploración del “americanismo” en la obra de Pedro Henríquez Ureña, a la luz de un pensamiento crítico que desmitifique y desacralice nociones asumidas como verdaderas acerca de este intelectual en los estudios americanos.

En 1923, Henríquez Ureña le expresa a Félix Lizaso lo siguiente “¿Cree Fernández de Castro que no soy americanista porque soy hispanista?”,<sup>2</sup> con respecto a su exclusión en una antología realizada por el crítico cubano Fernández de Castro acerca de los “escritores propagandistas del americanismo”. Poco después, un sentido Henríquez Ureña le escribe a su amigo Alfonso Reyes para comunicarle el propósito de publicar un libro sobre la “cultura hispanoamericana”. Este proyecto se concretizaría cinco años más tarde con la publicación de *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión* (1928). Yerra Henríquez Ureña el falso dilema americanista versus hispanista. Si bien es cierto que el intelectual caribeño dedicó ingentes horas al estudio de la cultura española, de la cual era un ferviente admirador, no menos cierto es que también escribió sobre Latinoamérica. No es un problema de cantidad, así como tampoco de los “temas” tratados sobre Latinoamérica. La cuestión fundamental en el pensamiento de Henríquez Ureña consiste en su ideología. Su pensamiento nunca hizo una “ruptura” (Roig 188) de la conciencia latinoamericana con respecto a España, sino que estableció un *continuum* entre esas culturas, es decir, retuvo los valores de la hispanidad (Pratt 175), en lo que denominaba Hispania:<sup>3</sup> la comunidad transatlántica lingüístico-cultural entre España y la América Latina.

Arturo Andrés Roig, en su libro *Teoría y crítica del pensamiento latinoamericano*, se refiere a una “conciencia de ruptura” como la que se produjo después del enfrentamiento entre las culturas mesoamericanas y la española y dio como

resultado una “literatura indígena de la ruptura” (188). Por su parte, Mary Louise Pratt señala que, en muchos países, la élite criolla “sought aesthetic and ideological grounding as white Americans and attempted to create an independent, decolonised American society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy” (175). Pratt denomina este fenómeno “transatlantic appropriation”. En su escritura, Henríquez Ureña se apropiá de los valores de la cultura española en desmedro de la presencia indígena y africana en el continente.

#### EL AMERICANISMO DE PEDRO HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA

Surgido durante el romanticismo, a raíz de la independencia de los países latinoamericanos, el americanismo puede ser definido como el énfasis temático y conceptual volcado sobre (Latino)américa en el siglo XIX, en busca de una “expresión” cultural identitaria. Dicha “expresión” se abocaba a desentrañar una literatura nacional en cada país específico. Emilio Carilla distingue entre varios tipos de americanismo: paisajista, indigenista, del mestizaje, hispanista, criollista, y expresivo (“Americanismo literario” 301). Según Carilla, el americanismo de Henríquez Ureña pertenecería al “expresivo”, posiblemente por el eco del título del libro *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión* (1928). Carilla cita la siguiente frase de Henríquez Ureña, tomada de este último libro: “El carácter original de los pueblos viene de su fondo espiritual, de su energía nativa, savia extraída de la tierra propia” (Citado por Carilla en “Americanismo literario” 309. El énfasis es mío). En palabras de Carilla, la “expresión”, en el pensamiento de Henríquez Ureña, supera la caracterización “superficial” de los demás americanismos. Y agrega, Henríquez Ureña llega más “hondo” (309). Con estas metáforas espaciales no explica Carilla en qué consiste la “profundidad” del americanismo de Henríquez Ureña y por qué “superá” el de los demás intelectuales latinoamericanos. Henríquez Ureña tampoco desglosa en qué consiste “el carácter original”, “el fondo espiritual”, la energía nativa” o la “savia” de estos pueblos. Más bien, parece que Henríquez Ureña buscaba la “esencia” de Latinoamérica en un humanismo idealista que nunca abandonó los valores hispanos. Es más, su admiración por Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, a quien llama maestro, uno de los pensadores españoles más casticistas y retrógrados, deja mucho que pensar.

## “¿...NO SOY AMERICANISTA...?”

El silencio sobre la cultura popular latinoamericana y sobre las razas negra e indígena llevaría al Henríquez Ureña por el camino de la hispanofilia que lo caracterizó.<sup>4</sup> En sus escritos, son abundantes los elogios y las reflexiones acerca de la literatura y la cultura españolas. Henríquez Ureña estudió y luego fue profesor en los Estados Unidos, donde por aquella época predominaban los estudios que hoy llamamos peninsulares, en clara distinción de los latinoamericanos. Al respecto expresa: “Pero, fuera de España, no existe grupo de eruditos en letras españolas comparable, por la abundancia de calidad, al que forman los catedráticos de los Estados Unidos” (Citado por De Zuleta 163). En el verano de 1917, trabajó en el Centro de Estudios Históricos y bibliotecas y archivos en Madrid. Volvería a España entre 1919 y 1920 para profundizar sus estudios para la publicación de su tesis doctoral *La versificación irregular en la poesía castellana* (1920).

A finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX, en el contexto del pensamiento latinoamericano, la matriz discursiva oponía lo hispano a la América sajona. En el artículo “Ariel” (1904), Pedro Henríquez Ureña expresa lo siguiente: “Somos españoles, pero antes americanos, y junto con la herencia insustituible de la tradición gloriosa...” (*Obra crítica* 27). ¿Qué quiere decir el intelectual dominicano cuando afirma “Somos españoles, pero antes americanos”? ¿Que la cultura española está por encima de los aportes de las culturas indo-americanas o afro-americanas? En otro artículo, “Rubén Darío” (1905), el escritor dominicano asegura que Darío “acaso pertenece hoy, más que a la América, a España.... él pertenece a toda la familia española” (*Obra crítica* 102. El énfasis es mío). En esta metáfora de la familia, es de esperarse que España sea la Madre Patria y los países latinoamericanos sus hijos. De ahí que no debe de extrañar la afirmación, por parte del crítico, de que “Somos españoles”. Por supuesto, esa afirmación se basa en la negación de las razas: “Entonces, ¿por qué hacer hincapié en rivalidades de raza que el tiempo barrerá...?” (*Obra crítica* 103). Aquí, el tiempo se constituye en agente abstracto que se encargará de eliminar los problemas raciales en Latinoamérica, con el consecuente énfasis en la hispanidad.

Pero más allá de esta afirmación, en *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión* (1928), Pedro Henríquez Ureña llega al delirio de decir lo siguiente: “[N]o sólo escribimos el idioma de Castilla, sino que pertenecemos a la Romania, la

familia románica que constituye todavía una comunidad, una unidad de cultura, descendiente de la que Roma organizó su potestad: pertenecemos—según la repetida frase Sarmiento—al Imperio Romano” (*Obra crítica* 250). Esto lo escribe el crítico dominicano en 1928, un año después de la publicación del libro de José Carlos Mariátegui *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1927); y once años antes de que Aimé Césaire publicara su *Cuadernos del retorno al país natal* (1939). A Henríquez Ureña, quien sólo menciona de paso a estos escritores, no le interesaban las “preguntas” que estos autores se plantearon en sus libros acerca de la realidad indígena y negra y la descolonización política y cultural en Latinoamérica.

No es sólo orgullo, sino también admiración lo que siente Henríquez Ureña por la invasión y colonización del continente americano por parte de los españoles. En su conferencia “Raza y cultura” (1934) expresa lo siguiente: “La más humana de las colonizaciones, y por eso *la mejor*, ha sido la de España y Portugal: es la única que de modo sincero y leal gana para la civilización europea a los pueblos *exóticos*” (*La Utopía de América* 16. El énfasis es mío). En *Las corrientes literarias en la América Hispánica*, Henríquez Ureña repite la idea de la colonización como una empresa humana: “Pero aún hoy no es tarea fácil convencer al hombre de la calle de que la conquista española, a pesar de los males de los que ninguna conquista está exenta, tuvo una cualidad humana única” (25). También: “Las relaciones de los españoles y portugueses con los indios eran, de por sí, humanas, pero anárquicas; tanto más sus relaciones con los esclavos negros” (45). En su ceguera ideológica, parece ser que esas relaciones “humanas” entre conquistadores españoles e indígenas fue la que tuvo como resultado el exterminio de millones en el continente americano. Como se puede constatar, Henríquez Ureña justifica, con su humanización de la colonización y su “silencio”, el holocausto de millones de indígenas y esclavos africanos. Tanto en la admiración de la colonización como de la romanización de la cultura latinoamericana quedan excluidos los millones de indígenas y negros de Latinoamérica. Henríquez Ureña elide/ elude las razas negra e indígena y su vinculación con las clases sociales en el proceso de la colonización.

## LOS SILENCIOS DE PEDRO HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA

En la obra del americanista Henríquez Ureña se escuchan los silencios ideológicos de lo que no quiso—o no pudo—considerar, a causa de resistencias y obstáculos epistemológicos, y la interpelación por parte de la cultura universal—entiéndase europea—de su época. Pierre Macherey considera la relación entre el texto y su ideología de la manera siguiente: “Monde construit autour d'un grand soleil absent, une idéologie est faite de ce dont elle ne parle pas; elle existe parce qu'il y a des choses dont il ne faut pas parler. C'est en ce sens que Lénine peut dire que *les silences de Tolstoï sont éloquents*” (154. Itálicas en el original). Por supuesto, Macherey se refiere a la ficción, pero lo mismo se podría extrapolar a la crítica literaria. En el caso de la obra de Henríquez Ureña, sería absurdo—y vano esfuerzo—rastrear todos los libros que no leyó y, si los leyó, no le interesó establecer un diálogo con estos. Pero hay libros que están muy cerca, rozando, se diría que casi se pueden respirar, de los que Henríquez Ureña no habla.

En la primera mitad del siglo XX, la circulación del conocimiento dependía de varios factores: la escasez de traducciones, el acceso a bibliotecas y archivos, la lentitud de medios de transporte como el barco, la inexistencia de medios de comunicación como la televisión y la *internet*. En el caso de los textos latinoamericanos, los obstáculos tienen menos justificación. En Latinoamérica, en el lapso de vida de Henríquez Ureña, Aimé Césaire publicó su *Cuadernos de retorno al país natal* (1939), José María Arguedas, sus novelas *Agua* (1935) y *Tawar* (1941), José Carlos Mariátegui sus *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1927) y Fernando Ortiz su *Contrapunteo entre el azúcar y el tabaco* (1940).<sup>5</sup> Henríquez Ureña no estableció un diálogo con el pensamiento de estos escritores contemporáneos suyos, por lo que a diferencia de éstos, su pensamiento no experimentó lo que Bachelard denomina una “ruptura epistemológica”.

Si, por un lado, existen, grandes “silencios” en su obra, con respecto a la raza y la cultura popular, específicamente, las culturas indígena y negra, por otro, sus silencios están llenos de agujeros por los que habla la ideología. Por ejemplo, en su ensayo “La lengua en Santo Domingo”, Pedro Henríquez Ureña afirma lo siguiente:

La raza negra nunca ha predominado allí [en República Dominicana] y la lengua castellana se conserva pura. Nunca ha existido, ni existe, dialecto negro en la República. Al contrario: Santo Domingo pertenece a la sección de América donde la lengua se mantiene más cercana a sus orígenes castellanos. (*Obras completas V. IV*, 49)

La cita es bastante sintomática de la elisión de los negros en la sociedad dominicana y de su afán por castellanizar, no sólo la lengua, sino también la cultura dominicana. Intelectuales como Arcadio Díaz Quiñones reconocen este fenómeno: “A la vez, muestra cuán reacio era [Henríquez Ureña] a aceptar la presencia afrodominicano y cómo este prejuicio infiltra sus estudios” (“Pedro Henríquez Ureña y las tradiciones...”, 12).

De nuevo, con respecto a la raza y cultura negras en la República Dominicana, Henríquez Ureña expresa lo siguiente:

Esta *invasión* está *ennegriendo* rápidamente el país: se calcula que hay más de doscientos mil inmigrantes de origen antillano; la población total del país apenas alcanza a millón y medio de habitantes. La interesante novela de Francisco Moscoso Puello, *Cañas y bueyes*, Santo Domingo 1936, pinta aspectos de esta invasión... Ahora se ha extendido a Santo Domingo la reciente boga de la poesía de temas negros en las Antillas, que florece en Cuba y Puerto Rico con las obras de Luis Palés Matos... Alejo Carpentier, Nicolás Guillén... Produce los *Doce poemas negros* de Manuel del Cabral (Santo Domingo, 1935): los negros de sus poemas son principalmente *haitianos* o *cocolos* de las islas inglesas, porque los nativos de Santo Domingo tienen costumbres menos pintorescas... Las viejas y *deliciosas criollas* de Arturo Pellerano Castro son ciertamente criollas: hablan siempre de mujeres *blancas* y *trigueñas*. (*El español en Santo Domingo* 133. El énfasis es mío).

Me permito reproducir esta extensa cita, porque en ella se dilucidan importantes aspectos de las culturas dominicana y caribeña. Henríquez Ureña rechaza la inmigración negra, haitiana y “cocola”, a la República Dominicana, que denomina “invasión”. Así mismo, la palabra “ennegriendo” es un juicio de valor racista. Según se colige, en la República Dominicana no hay negros; los

negros son haitianos y *cocolos*.<sup>6</sup> Los “criollos”, que son los dominicanos descendientes de indígenas y españoles, son blancos y trigueños. Las costumbres de los negros son pintorescas. ¿Qué hay de pintoresco en la cultura afro-caribeña? Acaso el vudú, los atabales, el dialecto, la comida y muchos otros aspectos de la presencia cultural africana en el Caribe puedan parecerle “pintorescas”. Es obvio también, en esta cita, el rechazo al movimiento poético-cultural de la Negritud y, por tanto, a todo el proceso de descolonización intelectual que se estaba llevando a cabo en el Caribe y Latinoamérica.<sup>7</sup>

Ya en 1909, en sus memorias, insólitamente escritas a los veinte y cinco años, Henríquez Ureña hacía una distinción de clase / raza, con respecto a los haitianos, cuando expresaba que, en Cabo Haitiano, donde acompañó a su padre, “Estuve dos meses (...) en la casa de la familia Lauransón; y aquella ciudad me interesó mucho: las correctas costumbres de sus habitantes *cultos* en contraste con el estado *salvaje* del bajo pueblo, que apenas si se viste” (Roggiano 342. El énfasis es mío). En otra parte, refiriéndose al francés y al *creole*, “Haití, donde la gente culta lo habla, aunque el bajo pueblo usa un *patois* paupérrimo” (Roggiano 346). Con respecto a las clases sociales, Henríquez Ureña distinguía entre “gentes de excepción” y “gentes vulgares” cuando afirmaba que “En realidad, yo había tratado casi siempre con gentes de excepción; en mi país, sobre todo, había tratado conocer (sic) a todas las mujeres superiores; ya sabía que había una multitud de gentes vulgares” (Roggiano 355). Henríquez Ureña vivió y escribió de espaldas a la realidad social y cultural latinoamericana. ¿Cómo se puede construir la utopía de una “comunidad espiritual”,<sup>8</sup> del “hombre universal”, de la “magna patria” cuando se desprecian las grandes masas negras e indígenas latinoamericanas y se silencian las atrocidades de la colonización española?—Su utopía de América es una utopía del silencio—. El humanismo de Pedro Henríquez Ureña, planteado en “La utopía de América”, es un humanismo burgués renacentista; un humanismo abstracto en el que “el hombre universal” constituye la abstracción del hombre concreto; de la opresión y explotación de los negros e indígenas de carne y hueso de Latinoamérica.

#### EL AMERICANISMO Y EL “OTRO EXÓTICO”

En su obra póstuma, *Las corrientes literarias en la América Hispánica*,

recopilación de las cátedras dictadas en la Universidad de Harvard durante el año académico de 1940–1941, Henríquez Ureña le dedica el capítulo “El descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo en la imaginación europea” a la descripción de algunos aspectos de las culturas indígenas desde el punto de vista de los conquistadores.<sup>9</sup> Según Henríquez Ureña, los “hombres nuevos” fueron el resultado del “crisol de dos culturas”: la española y la indígena (62). En ambos libros, la presencia cultural africana queda reducida a unos cuantos párrafos.

A instancias del lingüista Juan E. Valdez, después de una conversación en la que me planteaba un posible cambio en el pensamiento de Henríquez Ureña, hacia el final de su vida, sobre las culturas precolombinas y africanas, volví a leer el último capítulo de *Las Corrientes literarias*, “Problemas de hoy” (1920–1940). En este capítulo, Henríquez Ureña le dedica dos páginas a la literatura negra e indígena, en las que más que una propuesta de revisión de su pensamiento sobre la cuestión, hay afirmaciones problemáticas como las siguientes: “Ya hemos visto que los indios han *conservado* una parte importante de sus antiguas culturas, fundiéndola con la *escasa porción* de civilización europea que *recibieron*. También los negros *trajeron* consigo *mucho* de sus culturas tribales africanas” (199. El énfasis es mío.). Henríquez Ureña no elabora una extensa propuesta sobre la “presencia” indígena y africana. Los verbos “conservan”, “recibieron” y “trajeron”, junto a los cuantificadores “escasa” y “mucho”, implican una reducción y marginación de dichas culturas. Estos verbos son, además, pasivos y no expresan las luchas, la resistencia de negros e indígenas ni las atrocidades cometidas por los conquistadores en el proceso de imposición de la lengua y la cultura españolas. A diferencia de las culturas indígenas y africanas, cuando se refiere a la cultura europea la denomina “civilización”, como si las primeras no hubieran constituido “civilizaciones”.

En el mismo párrafo expresa lo siguiente: “Ahora tenemos una idea más justa. Las solas supervivencias (de las culturas indígenas y africanas), como tales, no entrañan *peligro*; antes al contrario, añaden *color* y *sabor* a una vida social que podría llegar a hacerse demasiado gris y monótona; en muchos casos, además, salvan al nativo de la factoría o de la plantación” (199). En la visión de Henríquez Ureña, los indígenas y negros constituyen un otro “exótico”, que añaden “color” y “sabor” a la vida social latinoamericana. ¿Cómo podría haber color y sabor en

la miseria de los indígenas de los Andes, en la tortura de los esclavos africanos en el Caribe? Esta visión es reduccionista con respecto a la importancia de la presencia de las culturas indígenas y negras en Latinoamérica.

## CONCLUSIÓN

Cuando en la primera mitad del siglo XX, escritores como Martí, Mariátegui, Martínez Estrada, Césaire y Fanon, aportaron una crítica al colonialismo en busca de descolonización mental del intelectual latinoamericano, Henríquez Ureña todavía se esforzaba en preocupaciones decimonónicas como el americanismo romántico e hispanista y se deshacía en elogios a España y sus escritores (no a los más progresistas precisamente) y establecía una filiación cultural (anacrónica) entre ésta y los países latinoamericanos. En palabras del intelectual argentino Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, Pedro Henríquez Ureña “Me opuso siempre una exagerada posición ortodoxa a mi vieja requisitoria contra España y a cuanto tiene sabor a pompa imperial verbal en su literatura...” (Citado por De Zuleta 170).

El americanismo de Pedro Henríquez Ureña es hispanista y elitista. El intelectual latinoamericano macrocefalizó la lengua española y partir de ahí identificó la lengua con la cultura. No pudo –o no quiso– ver los procesos de mestizaje cultural y la formación de una lengua nacional en cada país (dialectos del español americano). El pensamiento americanista de Henríquez Ureña es paradójico y hasta contradictorio. En “Caminos de nuestra expresión” (*Obra Crítica* 254), habla de la “literatura de la América española”, de manera tal que identifica la “expresión americana” con la América española. Una de las secciones de *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión* se titula “El afán europeizante”, sin embargo, él mismo hace largos rodeos hablando de la cultura europea antes de entrar en materia sobre la latinoamericana. En el ensayo “Hacia el nuevo teatro”, le dedica diez páginas al teatro europeo y sólo una página al latinoamericano.

En su americanismo elitista, Henríquez Ureña dedica ingentes esfuerzos a establecer el canon de la literatura latinoamericana, por lo que expresa lo siguiente, en la sección “Las tablas de valores” del ensayo “Caminos de nuestra historia literaria” (1925): La historia literaria de la América española debe escribirse alrededor de unos cuantos nombres centrales: Bello, Sarmiento, Montalvo, Martí, Darío, Rodó” (*Obra crítica* 255). Luego, ¿dónde buscar “el carácter original

de los pueblos”, el “fondo espiritual”, la “energía nativa”, la “savia” de la cultura latinoamericana? Seguramente que en los escritores canónicos, pero no en los “salvajes haitianos”, en los “pintorescos indígenas”, en la “ennegrecida” población dominicana, en fin, en las gentes “vulgares”.

## NOTAS

1. Entre los críticos que han escrito sobre el americanismo de Pedro Henríquez Ureña, véanse los trabajos de Soledad Álvarez, Emilio Carilla, Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot, Sergio Pitol y Emilia de Zuleta.
2. Citado en el ensayo de Emilio Carilla “Sobre Pedro Henríquez Ureña en su centenario” 313.
3. Coincidencia o ironía de la arquitectura, en la avenida Pedro Henríquez Ureña #129 de la ciudad de Santo Domingo se levanta la torre de apartamentos Hispania.
4. Como muestra de su admiración por España, Henríquez Ureña publicó los siguientes libros: *En la orilla, mi España* (1922) y *Plenitud de España* (1940). Además, publicó numerosos artículos a lo largo de toda su vida.
5. Algunos de los poetas latinoamericanos más importantes de la época como Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Vicente Huidobro, Jorge Luis Borges, Nicolás Guillén apenas son mencionados en su *Corrientes Literarias en la América Hispánica*. Es evidente el rechazo por parte de Henríquez Ureña a los poetas de vanguardia: “El arte y la literatura de nuestros días apenas recuerdan ya su antigua función trascendental; sólo nos va quedando el juego... Y el arte reducido a diversión, por mucho que sea diversión inteligente, pirotecnia del ingenio, acaba en hastío” (*Obra crítica* 253). Sobre Borges, quien tanto lo admiró dice lo siguiente: “[Borges] es un modelo muy peligroso, porque sólo tiene un tono y no una serie de tonos: es como si compusiera siempre en fa sostenido; es enteramente incapaz de manejar, por ejemplo, el tono de mi bemol mayor... Cree demasiado, como ciertos ingleses, que hay que tener humor” (Citado por Pitol 3)
6. Se denominan “cocolos” a los inmigrantes de las islas caribeñas de posesión inglesa. El nombre debe su origen posiblemente a la corruptela del nombre de la isla Tórtola, la más grande de las islas Vírgenes británicas.

7. El escritor dominicano Manuel Núñez afirma que la Negritud lo que hizo fue crear lo que él denomina un “sionismo negro”, que junto al “separatismo indigenista” han ayudado a crear la “leyenda negra” (11). No es de extrañar que Núñez, un intelectual rabiosamente anti-haitiano, tenga afinidad con el pensamiento de Henríquez Ureña.

8. Los conceptos “comunidad espiritual”, “magna patria” son de la autoría de Pedro Henríquez Ureña para referirse a la América española o Hispanoamérica como prefería llamar a Latinoamérica. Más específicamente, en la conferencia pronunciada el 11 de octubre de 1933, representando a la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, con motivo del Día de la Raza, después recopilada con el título “Raza y cultura hispánicas” en el libro *La utopía de América*, Henríquez Ureña destaca que la conferencia es “en homenaje a España, la más antigua de las naciones y la más joven de las repúblicas que forman nuestra comunidad espiritual” (12). Más adelante, Henríquez Ureña agrega que “se ha desarrollado la conciencia de nuestra comunidad espiritual, de la unidad esencial de los pueblos hispánicos, la conciencia de «la raza»” (12). Como se puede observar en estas citas, para Henríquez Ureña entre España y los países latinoamericanos de habla hispana existe una “unidad esencial”, que consiste básicamente en la lengua que determina la cultura. Henríquez Ureña menciona de paso el catolicismo, sin abundar en ello.

9. En otra obra clave del americanismo, *Historia de la cultura en la América Hispánica*, Henríquez Ureña sólo le dedica doce páginas a las culturas indígenas.

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## NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS / BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**Horácio Costa** is the author of books that include *O livro dos fracta* (Iluminuras, 1990); *Quadragésimo* (Ateliê, 1996), *Paulistanas & Homoeróticas* (Lumme Editor, 2007), *Ravenalas: Poemas 2004–2008* (Demônio Negro, 2009) and *Cicópico olho* (Annablume Editora, 2011). • **Roberto Tejada** is the author of *Mirrors for Gold* (Krupskaya, 2006), *Exposition Park* (Wesleyan, 2010), and *Full Foreground* (University of Arizona, 2012). He co-edited, with Elaine O'Brien, Everlyn Nicodemus, Melissa Chiu, Benjamin Genocchio, and Mary K. Coffey, the volume *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). • **Omar Pérez**, La Habana, 1964. Poeta y traductor. Autor de libros como *La perseverancia de un hombre oscuro* (ensayos sobre poesía y traducción) y *Oíste hablar del gato de pelea?* Desde hace varios años combina la composición y performance poético con el uso de la percusión. • **Eileen Myles** is a poet who lives in New York. Her books include *Snowflake/different streets* (poetry), *Inferno* (a poet's novel) and *The Importance of Being Iceland/* for which she got a Warhol/Creative Capital art writers' grant. In 2012 she received a Guggenheim fellowship. • **Joel Bettridge** is the author of two books of poetry, *That Abrupt Here* (The Cultural Society 2007) and *Presocratic Blues* (Chax 2009) as well as the critical study, *Reading as Belief: Language Writing, Poetics, Faith* (Palgrave 2009). He co-edited, with Eric Selinger, *Ronald Johnson: Life and Works* (The National

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CCCP, Cambridge, U. K., 2001, y The Left Hand, Vancouver, 2008), *La última carta de Rimbaud* (Intemperie, 1995), y, en traducción, *Poemas inconjuntos y otros poemas* de A. Caeiro / F. Pessoa (Dolmen, Santiago, 1996). Con Vicky Ayllón, Jorge Campero y Emma Villazón coordina la revista *Mar con Soroche* (Santiago / La Paz). Nació en Concepción, Chile. • **Mario Santiago Papasquiaro**/MSP (1953–1998) founded the Infrarrealist movement with his friend Roberto Bolaño in 1975; he is the acknowledged inspiration for Ulises Lima, protagonist in Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives*. Five volumes of his poetry have been published in Mexico and Spain. • **Laura Patricia Burns & Alicia Reardon** are translators, writers and editors, members of La Ratona Catonera, a Mexican collective whose publications include contemporary Infrarrealist poets and authors. Individually they have translated a variety of texts, including period novels and non-fiction. "We would like to express our gratitude to the late Rebeca Lopez, MSP's widow, for her collaboration in helping us unravel the poet's reality." • **Carmen Giménez Smith** is the author of a memoir, *Bring Down the Little Birds* and, most recently, the poetry collections *Milk and Filth*; *Goodbye, Flicker*; and *The City She Was*. She teaches in the creative writing programs at New Mexico State University, while serving as the editor-in-chief of the literary journal *Puerto del Sol* and the publisher of Noemi Press. • Desde 1991, **Gabriel Bernal Granados** ha formado parte de la redacción de la revista *Mandorla*. En 2006, junto con Ana Rosa González Matute, fundó la editorial Libros Magenta. Ha publicado los libros de prosa *Historia Natural de Uno Mismo* (2003), *La guerra fue breve* (2009), *Una finestra che guarda tramontana* (2011) y *Viaje al País de la Errata* (2011), entre otros; y el libro de poemas *Sobre una hoja* (2010). • **Eduardo Lizalde** nació en la ciudad de México en 1929. Es el poeta vivo más importante de México y su vasta obra ocupa un lugar al lado de las grandes obras de la poesía mexicana de los últimos cuarenta años. Libros suyos y poemas sueltos se han traducido al inglés, al polaco, al portugués, al italiano y al alemán, entre otras lenguas. El poema que aquí publicamos pertenece a un libro en proceso, aún inédito. • **Ricardo Alberto Pérez** (La Habana, 1963) ha publicado, entre otros, los poemarios *Trillos Urbanos*; *Vibraciones del Buey*; *Oral –B*; y *Vengan a ver las palomas de Varsovia*. En el año 2007 recibió El Premio Nacional de Poesía Nicolás Guillén. Ha residido en Brasil; y ha trasladado al español a más de una decena de autores brasileños. Tiene in-

édita la novela *Arácnidos*. • **David Lau** is the author of *Virgil and the Mountain Cat: Poems* (University of California Press, 2009) and a chapbook called *Bad Opposites* (Spect Books, 2012). He co-edits *Lana Turner: a Journal of Poetry and Opinion*. He is a lecturer at the University of California, Santa Cruz. • **Catherine Wagner**'s collections include *Nervous Device* (City Lights, 2012) and three books from Fence: *My New Job* (2009), *Macular Hole* (2004), and *Miss America* (2001). Her work has been anthologized in the *Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry*, *Out of Everywhere: Linguistically Innovative Poetry by Women in North America and the UK*, *Gurlesque*, *Poets on Teaching*, *Best American Erotic Poems*, and elsewhere. She is professor of English at Miami University and lives in Oxford, Ohio with her son Ambrose. • **Marcelo Morales** (La Habana, 1977) ha publicado, entre otros, los libros *Cinema* (Premio Pinos Nuevos), *El mundo como objeto* (mención del Premio UNEAC de Poesía "Julián del Casal" 2003; Premio La Gaceta de Cuba 2004, fragmento; Premio del PEN Club de Puerto Rico; Finalista Casa de las Américas 2004), *El Círculo mágico* (poemas de este libro obtuvieron la beca de creación de La Gaceta de Cuba 2005, bajo el título de "Los momentos de ser"; y uno de los premios Nosside Caribe 2006, bajo el título "La cavidad"), y *Materia* (Premio UNEAC de Poesía "Julián del Casal" 2008). • **Carlos Soto-Román** is a pharmacist and a poet. He holds a Master of Bioethics degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He has published in Chile: *La Marcha de los Quiltros* (1999), *Haikú Minero* (2007), and *Cambio y Fuera* (2009); and in the States: *Philadelphia's Notebooks* (Otoliths, 2011). His work can be found in *Crux Desperationis 3*, *Newport Review*, *Coydyp 5*, *Summer's Stock*, *P-Queue*, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *Dear Navigator 4*, and the *American Poetry Review*, among others. He is a MacDowell Fellow and a recipient of two grants from the Chilean Council for Culture and the Arts. He is also a translator and the curator of the cooperative anthology of US poetry *Elective Affinities*. He lives in Philadelphia, PA. • **Daniel Borzutzky**'s latest book is *The Book of Interfering Bodies* (Nightboat, 2011). • **Emmy Pérez**'s collection *Solstice* (Swan Scythe Press) appeared as a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2011. Recent work has appeared in *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line*, *Pilgrimage Magazine*, *The Laurel Review*, *PALABRA*, and other publications. She was an inaugural CantoMundo poetry fellow (2010–2012) and is a member of the Macondo Writers' Workshop. An associate professor at the University of Texas-Pan American,

she has lived on the Tejas-Mexico border, from El Paso to the Rio Grande Valley, for over a decade. • **Verónica Zondek** nació en Santiago de Chile en 1953 y reside en la ciudad de Valdivia. Poeta, traductora y gestora cultural, licenciada en Historia del Arte en la Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalén, forma parte del comité editorial de LOM Ediciones y de algunas revistas en Chile y el extranjero. Es Asesora externa del Dpto. de Coordinación de Extensión de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades de la Universidad Austral de Chile. Sus libros publicados desde 2007 incluyen “La ciudad que habito” (*poesía*) 2012; “La morgue y otros poemas”, (traducción poemario Gotfried Benn), 2012; “Poema sobre mis derechos”, (traducción poemas de June Jordan), 2010; “Memoria sensible de la sinagoga de calle Serrano”, poema Verónica Zondek- fotografía Pilar Cruz, 2009; “La raíz del viento”, poema Verónica Zondek – fotografía Abel Lagos, 2008; “Por gracia de hombre” (*poesía*) 2008; “El ojo atravesado I y II - Gabriela Mistral entre los uruguayos” Edición, selección, notas y comentarios Verónica Zondek y Silvia Guerra, 2007. Recientemente, han aparecido la re-edición de *El hueso de la memoria* (Editorial Cuneta, 2011) y poemario una colaboración con el fotógrafo Patricio Luco, *Instalaciones de la memoria* (Editorial Alquimia, 2013). • **elena minor's** poetry, fiction and prose have been published in more than two dozen journals, most recently in *MAKE*, *Switchback* and *Shadowbox*. She is founding editor of *PALABRA*. Her volume of poetry, *Titulada*, will be published in 2013. • **Raúl Zurita** is one of Latin America's most celebrated poets. His poetry primarily illuminates the terrible violence and atrocities committed by the Pinochet regime in Chile. Zurita has received several notable awards, including the Chilean National Prize for Literature, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has given several readings at notable universities in the United States. The translated poems by Borzutzky are from *Zurita* (2011); the translated poems by Test are from *Ciudades de Agua* (2007). • **Edward McLean Test** is an Associate Professor of English at Boise State University, where he specializes in translation and British Renaissance literature. He is author of the bilingual collection of poems, *Fata Morgana* (*El Tucan de Virginia*, Mexico, 2004), as well as three translated books of poetry into Spanish by English writing poets. He has translated various Spanish writers into English, such as José Martí, Angel Guerra and Jesus Castellanos. • **Valerie Mejer** was born in Mexico City. She has twice been the recipient of grants from

FONCA (Jóvenes Creadores) and once for the translation of a collection of poems by the Australian poet Les Murray. For her book *De Elefante a Elefante*, she was awarded the International Award "Gerardo Diego 1996" by the Spanish Government. She is also the author of the books of poetry *de la ola, el atajo* (Amagord 2009) *Geografías de Niebla* (2008), *Esta Novela Azul*, (Editorial El Tucán de Virginia, México, 2004) and *Ante el Ojo del Ciclope* (Ed Tierra Adentro, México, 2000). *This Blue Novel*, a long versed poem, and "Rain of the future", an anthology of her poems, will appear this year in a bilingual version from Action Books. • **Jeffrey Sirkin** is a poet and Assistant Professor in the Creative Writing Department at University of Texas, El Paso, where he teaches twentieth century literature and culture. He earned his PhD in Literature from University at Buffalo, focusing on the intersections of popular music with postmodern literature. Previous work can be found in *Forklift, Ohio, Puerto Del Sol*, and elsewhere. • **Ángel Cuevas** (ciudad de México, 1970). Poeta y editor, miembro del taller de Poesía y Silencio desde 1999. Ha publicado *Niño invierno* (Hoja suelta, 2004) y *El silencio del bosque* (Ediciones sin Nombre, 2010), obra con la que obtuvo el Premio Iberoamericano de Poesía Carlos Pellicer en 2011. • Artist, educator and re-naturalist **Brian D. Collier**'s interdisciplinary projects manifest as a combination of sanctioned and unsanctioned public projects, exhibitions and multi-media presentations. In 2007 he founded The Society for a Re-Natural Environment, a re-environmental organization. A partial list of his exhibition venues includes Neues Museum Weserberg Bremen, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales (Havana, Cuba), University of Kansas Natural History Museum, University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, and Galería Raul Martínez (Cuba). Collier is currently Assistant Professor of Art at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, VT. • **Blanca Varela** (1926–2009) was born in Lima, Peru. She is considered one of the most important voices of her generation in Latin American poetry. Varela published over ten books of poetry in her lifetime. Her numerous awards include the Medalla de Honor by the Peruvian National Institute of Culture, the Premio Octavio Paz de Poesía y Ensayo, the Premio Internacional de Poesía Ciudad de Granada Federico García Lorca (as the first female recipient) and the Premio Reina Sofía de Poesía Iberoamericana. • **E. M. O'Connor** is a writer and translator. Her translation of the novel *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* by

Marjorie Agosín will be published in 2013 by Simon and Schuster; her translation of *Fish* by poet Mariela Dreyfus is forthcoming by Nirala Publications. Her poetry and essays have been featured in *Literal*, *The Recorder*, *Anamesa* and *Revista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, among others. E. M. O'Connor teaches in the Humanities Department at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA and is writing her first novel. • **Dan Featherston**'s books of poetry include *The Radiant World* (BlazeVox, 2009), *The Clock Maker's Memoir* (Cuneiform Press, 2007), *United States* (Factory School, 2005), and *Into the Earth* (Quarry Press, 2005). He teaches at Temple University and lives in Philadelphia with Rachel McCrystal and their rescue companion animals. • **Heddy Navarro Harris**, nace en la sureña ciudad de Puerto Montt, en 1944. Es madre de cuatro hijos, y licenciada en Artes Plásticas de la Universidad de Chile. Editora y creadora de la Revista Palabra de Mujer (1987 a 1995), dedicada a la difusión de la poesía con conciencia de género de poetas chilenas y latinoamericanas. Ha publicado en poesía: *Palabra de mujer* (1984); *Óvulos* (1986); *Oda al Macho* (1987); *Poemas Insurrectos* (1988); *Vírgenes Vacantes* (1991); *Sur* (1994) y *Cantos de la Duramadre* (2004). En 2010 aparece su libro *Palabra de Mujer: Poesía Reunida*, de Editorial Cuarto Propio, libro que compila su obra publicada. • **Rosa Alcalá** is the author of two books of poetry, *Undocumentaries* and *The Lust of Unsentimental Waters*, and the editor of *Spit Temple: The Selected Performances of Cecilia Vicuña*. Her translations include two books of poetry by Lila Zemborain, *Guardians of the Secret* and *Mauve-Sea Orchids* (with Monica de la Torre), and Lourdes Vazquez's *Bestiary*. She has also translated poems for the *Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry*. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Brown University, and a PhD in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Creative Writing and Bilingual MFA at the University of Texas at El Paso. • **Soleida Ríos** (Santiago de Cuba, 1950) ha publicado, entre otros, los libros *De la Sierra*, *De pronto abril*, *El libro roto*, *El texto sucio*, *El libro de los sueños*, *Antes del mediodía*, *Memoria del sueño*, *Secadero*, y *Escritos al revés*. Ganó el premio Nicolás Guillén de poesía, 2012. • **Gabriel Gudding** is the author of *Rhode Island Notebook* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2007), *A Defense of Poetry* (Pitt, 2002), several recent chapbooks and is currently writing a series of haibun called *Rivers for Animals*. His essays and poems appear in such periodicals as *Harper's Magazine*, *The Nation*,

and *Journal of the History of Ideas*, in such anthologies as *Great American Prose Poems*, *Best American Poetry*, and *&Now: Best Innovative Writing*. His translations from Spanish appear in anthologies such as *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry*, *Poems for the Millennium*, and *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry*. His essays and poems have been translated into French, Danish, Vietnamese, and Spanish. • **Ernesto de la Peña** (Mexico City, 1927–2012) was known also as a radio and television journalist. His early passion for languages, literature and music gave way to the erudition that informs the short fictions of *Las estratagemas de Dios* (1988), *La máquinas espirituales* (1991), and *El indeleble caso de Borelli* (1991), as well as the essays in *La rosa transfigured* (1999) and *La sinrazón sospechosa* (2004) an extended meditation on Cervantes. “The Ego and Its Own” makes reference to the eponymous work by philosopher Max Stirner. • **Ana Rosa González Matute** estudió letras inglesas en la UNAM y letras hispánicas en El Colegio de México. Ha publicado los libros de poemas: *Estrías* (Papeles Privados, 1994), *Silogismo del alba* (Aldus, 1999) y *Sil* (Libros Magenta, 2008). Esta serie pertenece a un libro en proceso. Su libro de ensayos sobre literatura *La gran cadena del ser* acaba de aparecer en México bajo el sello de Libros Magenta. • **Kent Johnson** has most recently edited *Hotel Lautréamont: Contemporary Poetry of Uruguay*. An edition in English translation from the Uruguayan poet Amanda Berenguer, titled *Materia Prima*, has recently been completed. Ugly Duckling Presse plans to release his annotated translation of César Vallejo’s only extant interview. Una traducción al español de uno de los poemas aquí (traducido por el poeta chileno Juan Manuel Silva) se puede ver en Letras en Linea, <http://www.letrasenlinea.cl/?p=3853>. • **Rito Ramón Aroche** (La Habana, 1961): Obtuvo mención en el Concurso David de Poesía en 1991, y el premio Abril de Poesía en ese mismo año, así como el Premio de Poesía “La ciudad de las columnas” en 1994, y el premio de Poesía “Luis Rogelio Nogueras” en 1993. En 2006 obtuvo el Premio de Poesía de La Gaceta de Cuba. Entre sus libros más recientes son *Del río que durando se destruye* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, 2005), *El libro de los colegios reales* (Editorial Extramuros, la Habana, 2005), y *Andamios* (Editorial Unión, La Habana, 2007). • **Danielle Pafunda**’s books include *Manhater* (Dusie Press Books), *Iatrogenic: Their Testimonies* (Noemi Press), *My Zorba* (Bloof Books), and the forthcoming *Natural History Rape Museum* (Bloof Books 2013). She’s an

editor for *Coconut Magazine* and teaches at the University of Wyoming. • **Timothy Liu** has three new books forthcoming: *Kingdom Come: A Novel* (Talisman House, 2013), *Don't Go Back To Sleep: Poems* (Saturnalia Books, 2014) and *Let It Ride: Poems* (Station Hill, 2015). He lives in Manhattan with his husband. • **Carmen Váscones** is a practicing clinical psychologist, as well as a major poetic voice in contemporary Ecuadorian literature. Her *Collected Poems, Oasis of Voices*, was published in 2011 by the Ecuadorian Casa de la Cultura. Her poems, accompanied by translations by Alexis Levitin, have appeared in the USA in *Bitter Oleander*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Hamden-Sydney Poetry Review*, and *Per Contra*; others are forthcoming in *Moon City Review*, *Osiris*, and *Mid-American Review*. • **Alexis Levitin** has published thirty-two books of translations, including Clarice Lispector's *Soulstorm* and Eugenio de Andrade's *Forbidden Words* (both from New Directions), as well as the recent *Blood of the Sun* by Salgado Maranhao (from Milkweed Editions). His work has appeared in over two hundred magazines, among them *Partisan Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *New Letters*, and *Prairie Schooner*. His next book is *Exemplary Tales* by Portugal's Sophia de Melo Breyner Andresen. • **Matvei Yankelevich** is the author of the poetry collection *Alpha Donut* (United Artists Books) and the novella-in-fragments *Boris by the Sea* (Octopus Books), and several chapbooks. He is the translator of *Today I Wrote Nothing: The Selected Writings of Daniil Kharms* (Overlook / Ardis). A founding editor of Ugly Duckling Presse and curator of UDP's Eastern European Poets Series, his real job is to provide seminars on a variety of subjects at a certain quantity of institutions. • Entre los últimos libros de **Lourdes Vázquez** se encuentran la antología de su poesía en italiano: *Appunti dalla Terra Frammentata* (Italia: EDIBOM, 2012); la novela corta *Sin ti no soy yo* (El Gallo Rojo, 2012) traducido al inglés con el título, *Not Myself Without You* (Arizona State University, Bilingual Review Press, 2012) y el libro de cuentos *La mujer, el pan y el pordiosero* (México: Eón, 2010). Ha ganado sinnúmero de premios, entre ellos el Juan Rulfo de Cuentos y sus trabajos han sido publicados en sinúmero de revistas y antologías; además de traducidos al inglés, sueco, francés, italiano, portugués, catalán, gallego y mixteca. • **Caridad Atencio**: Poetisa y ensayista. Ha publicado textos de creación e investigación literarias entre los que se destaca *El libro de los sentidos* (2010), Premio de la Crítica. Es investigadora del equipo de Estudios

Literarios en el Centro de Estudios Martianos. • **Richard Deming**'s collection of poems, *Let's Not Call It Consequence* (Shearsman 2008), received the 2009 Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America. He teaches at Yale University. He was the Spring 2012 John P. Birkelund Fellow of the American Academy in Berlin. • **Susan Briante** is the author of *Pioneers in the Study of Motion* (2007) and *Utopia Minus* (2011) both published by Ahsahta Press. • **Alan Gilbert** is the author of the poetry books *The Treatment of Monuments* (SplitLevel Texts) and *Late in the Antenna Fields* (Futurepoem), as well as a collection of essays, articles, and reviews entitled *Another Future: Poetry and Art in a Postmodern Twilight* (Wesleyan University Press). He lives in New York City. • **Peter Ramos**'s poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Indiana Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Verse*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *Poet Lore* and other journals. Peter is the author of one book of poetry, *Please Do Not Feed the Ghost* (Blazevox Books, 2008). He has criticism on Kate Chopin (in *College Literature*), William Faulkner and Toni Morrison (in the *Faulkner Journal*), Walt Whitman, Pablo Neruda and Langston Hughes (in the *CEA Critic*), William Carlos Williams (*MELUS*), James Wright and César Vallejo (in *Mandorla*), and modern and contemporary Latin American poetry (in *Pleiades* and *Poetry Daily*). • **Torin Jensen** is a poet and translator living in Washington DC. A graduate of the Boise State MFA program, where he coordinated the MFA reading series, his work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Jupiter 88*, SP CE, the *Anvil*, *Asymptote*, and *MAKE*. • **Almeilio Calderón Fornaris** (La Habana, 1966): ha publicado los poemarios *Fragmentos para un caballo de aire*, Ediciones Extramuros, 1987, y *Las provincias del alma*, Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1991. Sus obras están recogidas en diferentes revistas y antologías nacionales e internacionales. Reside en Valencia, España. • **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. • **Joshua Marie Wilkinson** (b. Seattle, 1977) is the author of *Swamp Isthmus* and five other collections of poetry. He lives in Tucson, where he is the editor of *The Volta* and Letter Machine Editions. • **Kazim Ali** has published four poetry collections, most recently *Sky Ward* (Wesleyan University Press), two novels and two collections of essays. He has translated books by Sohrab Sepehri, Marguerite Duras and Ananda Devi.

He is the founding editor of Nightboat Books and associate professor of Creative Writing and Comparative Literature at Oberlin College. • **Charles Bernstein** is the author of *Recalculating* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), *Attack of the Difficult Poems* (Chicago, 2011), and *All the Whiskey in Heaven: Selected Poems* (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2010). He teaches at the University of Pennsylvania. More info: epc.buffalo.edu. • **Urayoán Noel** (San Juan, 1976) is the author of various books of poetry, including, most recently *Los días porosos (the porous days)* (Catafixia Editorial, Guatemala, 2012). The poems included here are from his bilingual manuscript *Buzzing hemisphere/Rumor hemisférico*, the Spanish portion of which was recently shortlisted for the inaugural Paz Prize for Poetry (National Poetry Series). As a translator, he has published *Ilusos* (Atarraya Cartonera, Puerto Rico, 2010) by Edwin Torres, and he recently completed a critical study entitled *In Visible Movement: Nuyorican Poetry from the Sixties to Slam*. A 2013 CantoMundo fellow, he is currently Assistant Professor of English at SUNY Albany. • **Willie Perdomo** is the author of *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime*, which was a Poetry Society of America Norma Farber First Book Award finalist, and *Smoking Lovely*, which won a PEN Beyond Margins Award. • **Ricardo Cortez Cruz** is the author of *Straight Outta Compton* and *Five Days of Bleeding*, novels short and funky. He is the Associate Chair for the Department of English at Illinois State University and a member of the editorial board for Steerage Press. His fiction appears in numerous places, including *Packingtown Review's* 2009 inaugural issue, *Fiction International's* abject/outcast issue, *African-American Review*, *Urban Reinventors*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Obsidian II: Black Literature in Review*, *Postmodern Culture*, and Kevin Powell's anthology *Step Into A World*. His short story "Sweet Honey on the Rocks," published by *Mandorla*, won a 2006 Illinois Arts Council Literary Award. • Born in Cosamaloapan, Veracruz, Mexico, **Lauro Vazquez** grew up in the California bay area. He is a CantoMundo fellow and received his MFA at the University of Notre Dame. He is assistant editor and contributor at Letras Latinas—the literary program at Notre Dame's institute for Latino Studies. • **Claudio Bertoni** is a poet and a visual artist. He has published several books of poetry. He has been nominated 5 times to the Altazor awards in Chile, and received a Guggenheim fellowship in 1993. He lives in Concón, Chile, since 1976. His first book translated into English will be pub-

lished this year by Das Kapital Ediciones. • **Steve Dickison** lives in San Francisco. Recent works: *Disposed* (The Post-Apollo Press, 2007); *Wear You to the Ball* performed with new music composer Bill Dietz, 2009; co-editor, *Prison/Culture* (City Lights Foundation, 2010) and *Homage to Etel Adnan* (The Post-Apollo Press, 2012). From 2002–2006, co-editor with David Meltzer of the music magazine *Shuffle Boil*, and, from 1994, editor / publisher of the small press Listening Chamber. Director of the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archives, San Francisco State University, teaching there and at California College of the Arts. • **Juan Carlos Flores** (b. 1962, Cuba) is the author of *Los pájaros escritos*, *Distintos Modos de Cavar un Túnel*, and *El contragolpe* (y otros poemas horizontales). He won Cuba's David Prize for his first collection, then went on to win the prestigious Julián del Casal Prize. The poems published in English translation here are from his new book in progress. • **Kristin Dykstra**'s translation *The Counterpunch (And Other Horizontal Poems)*, a collection by Juan Carlos Flores, is forthcoming in a bilingual edition from the University of Alabama Press with a companion essay. So too are *Other Letters to Milena* and *Breach of Trust*, her translations of books by Reina María Rodríguez and Ángel Escobar. Dykstra is Professor of English at Illinois State University. • **Tina Escaya** is a poet, digital artist and scholar based in Burlington, Vermont. Her poetry book, *Caída Libre* (2004), was awarded the International Poetry Prize "Dulce María Loynaz." Other digital projects/books include *13 lunas 13* (2011), *Código de barras* (2007), *Respiración mecánica* (2001), the hypertextual series *VeloCity* (2000, 2001), and the interactive novel *Pinzas de metal* (2003). Her digital work has been exhibited in museums and galleries of Spain, Mexico and the US. • A performer and writer, **Jennifer Tamayo** is the author of *Red Missed Aches Read Missed Aches Red Mistakes Read Mistakes* (Switchback Books 2011) and *POEMS ARE THE ONLY REAL BODIES* (Bloof Books 2013). Her second full-length collection, *YOU DA ONE*, will be published in 2014 by Coconut Books. She serves as the Managing Editor at Futurepoem. Work and video can be found at [www.jennifertamayo.com](http://www.jennifertamayo.com). • **Juan Manuel Portillo** (Ciudad Juárez, 1967) es Doctor en Español por la Universidad de California en Davis (UC Davis). Ha publicado los libros de poesía *passwords* (Mouthfeel Press, 2011) y *BLA* (Vena Cava Books, 2012), y traducciones al español de poemas de Paul Celan, John Taggart y Geoffrey Hill. Su poesía ha aparecido en Aufgabe, Periódico

co de poesía, *Tierra adentro*, *Anuario de poesía mexicana* y *Plan b*, entre otras publicaciones. Ha impartido clases de lengua, cultura y literatura hispánicas en la Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, en UC Davis, en la Universidad de Texas en El Paso y, a partir de otoño de 2013, en Colby College, en Maine. • **Samuel Ace's** books include *Normal Sex*, *Home in three days*. *Don't wash*, and most recently, *Stealth* (with Maureen Seaton, Chax Press). His work has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Eoagh*, *Spiral Orb*, *Kenyon Review*, *Rhino*, *3:am*, *Trickhouse*, *The Collagist*, *The Volta*, *Versal*, and others. He is the recipient of an Astraean Lesbian Writer's Fund Award, the Firecracker Alternative Book Award, and was a finalist for the 2012 National Poetry Series. He lives in Tucson, AZ and Truth or Consequences, NM. • **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), *En la arena de Padua* (Premio Plural, 1991, y Premio Nacional de la Crítica 1992), y *Páramos* (Premio Julián del Casal 1993, Premio Nacional de la Crítica 1995), así como varios libros en prosa. Una edición bilingüe de su libro *Otras Cartas a Milena* (2003), traducida y presentada por Kristin Dykstra, aparecerá en la editorial de la Universidad de Alabama en 2014. • **Francisco Aragón** is the author of *Glow of Our Sweat* (Scapegoat Press) and *Puerta del Sol* (Bilingual Press), as well as editor of the anthology, *The Wind Shifts* (University of Arizona Press). He directs Letras Latinas, the literary program of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. • **Rodrigo Toscano** es autor de *Deck of Deeds* (Counterpath Press, 2012) y *Collapsible Poetics Theater* (premio National Poetry Series. 2007), entre otros. Su poesía aparece en las antologías *Against Expression*, *Diasporic Avant Gardes* y *Poetic Voices Without Borders*. Hace doce años que trabaja para el Labor Institute en conjunto con la United Steelworkers Union. Lo hace desde un laptop atado a un celular, de modo que vive en aeropuertos y escribe mientras vuela. Reside además en Greenpoint, Brooklyn, donde corre y escribe para los North Brooklyn Runners. • **Enrique Winter** (Santiago de Chile, 1982) es autor de *Guía de despacho* (premio Concurso Nacional de Poesía y Cuento Joven. 2010), *Rascacielos* (beca Consejo Nacional del Libro. México, 2008; Buenos Aires, 2011) y *Atar las naves* (premio Festival de Todas las Artes Víctor Jara. 2003; Valparaíso, 2009). Es, además, coautor de la antología *Decepciones de Philip Larkin* (2013) y del álbum *Agua en polvo* (premio

Fondo para el Fomento de la Música Nacional. 2012). Becario del magíster en escritura creativa de la Universidad de Nueva York, fue editor de Ediciones del Temple y abogado. • **Áurea María Sotomayor-Miletti** (San Juan, 1951) is the author of various books of poetry, among them *La gula de la tinta* (1994), *Rizoma* (1998), *Diseño del ala* (2004) and *Cuerpo nuestro* (2013). She is also a critic, essayist, and translator, having published the books of criticism *Femina Faber* (2005) and *Hilo de Aracne, literatura puertorriqueña hoy* (1994), and a translation of a book of poetry by Derek Walcott, *La providencia /The Bounty* (2010). She was a founding member and co-editor of the Puerto Rican cultural journals *Postdata*, *Nómada*, and *Hotel Abismo*. Recently, she has published the anthology *Red de voces: poesía contemporánea puertorriqueña* (2011) and the volume *Poéticas de José María Lima. Tradición y sorpresa* (2012). She holds a PhD in Latin American Literature from Stanford University and is a professor of Latin American literature at the University of Pittsburgh. • **Anna Deeny**'s latest works in translation by Raúl Zurita include *Dreams for Kurosawa* (House Press, 2012) and *Sky Below*, a volume of selected works, forthcoming from Northwestern UP. • **Jaime Rodríguez Z.** (Lima, 1973) is a poet and journalist. He was poetry editor for the magazine *Lateral*, literary critic for *El Periódico de Catalunya* and, for the last six years, director of the magazine *Quimera*. He currently lives in Madrid, where he is at work on his first novel. • **Marta del Pozo** has a PhD in Spanish literature from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She won the *accésit* for best young poet with her poetry collection *La memoria del pez* (2008), and a second collection, *Deus ex Machina*, is forthcoming in 2014 (Devenir, Spain). With Nick Rattner, she has translated into English *Viento de Fuego/FireWind*, by Yvan Yauri (Ugly Duckling Presse, NY, 2011). Her translation into Spanish with Aníbal Cristobo of *The Beauty of Weapons/La belleza de las armas*, by Robert Bringhurst, is also forthcoming in 2013 (Kriller71, Barcelona). Marta is currently teaching Spanish at New York University. • **Eli S. Evans** is a writer and translator, and Ph.D. candidate in the Comparative Literature Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He contributes regularly to magazines such as *n+1*, *Befrois*, and *The American Reader*, and has scholarly work forthcoming on the 1976 Spanish film *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* as well as the radical feminist pedagogy of Monique Wittig. • **Flávia Rocha** is a Brazilian poet, editor and translator. She is the author

of two poetry books, published in Brazil: the bilingual *A Casa Azul ao Meio-dia/The Blue House Around Noon* and *Quartos Habitáveis*. She is the editor-in-chief of *Rattapallax* magazine, and currently lives in Portland, Oregon. • **Idra Novey** is the author of *Exit, Civilian*, selected for the 2011 National Poetry Series, and *The Next Country*, a finalist for the 2008 Foreword Book of the Year Award in poetry. Her recent translations include Clarice Lispector's novel *The Passion According to G.H.* (New Directions and Penguin UK, 2012). She teaches at NYU and in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University. • **Laura Elrick** es autora del reciente *Propagation* (Kenning Editions, 2012). Sus trabajos previos incluyen una cartografía de oposición y una performance llamadas *Blocks Away* (2010), el video poema *Stalk* (2008), el sonoro *5 Audio Pieces for Doubled Voice* (2006) y dos libros de poesía: *Fantasies in Permeable Structures* (Factory School, 2005) y *sKincerity* (Krupskaya, 2003). Su comentado ensayo "Poetry, Ecology and the Production of Lived Space", que apareció originalmente en *The Brooklyn Rail*, fue incluido en *Eco Language Reader* (2010). Traducida además al francés y al noruego, enseña escritura en el Pratt Institute de Brooklyn, Nueva York. • **Juan Sánchez Peláez** was born in Altagracia de Orituco, Venezuela in 1922 and died in Caracas in 2003. He attended university in Chile in the 1940s, where he published his first poems in the magazine of the surrealist group Mandrágora. He lived in Paris in the 1950s and in 1969 he was a Fellow at the University of Iowa's International Writing Program. These poems were originally published in *Rasgos comunes* (Caracas: Monte Ávila Editores, 1975) and are translated from *Obra poética* (Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 2004). • **Guillermo Parra** was born in Cambridge, MA in 1970 and lives in Pittsburgh. He has published two translations of José Antonio Ramos Sucre, *From the Livid Country* (Auguste Press, 2012) and *Selected Works* (University of New Orleans Press, 2012). • **Maggie Nelson** (Estados Unidos, 1973). Realizó sus estudios de posgrado en Nueva York. Tiene un doctorado en inglés y desde 2005 es catedrática de CalArts. Es principalmente reconocida como poeta pero se ha desempeñado en géneros como el ensayo, la crítica y la no-ficción. • **Sylvia Aguilar Zéleny**. (México, 1973) Autora de los cuentarios: *Gente Menuda* (1999), *No son gente como uno* (2004), y de la novela *Una no habla de esto* (2008). Su libro *Nenitas* ganó el Concurso de Cuento Ciudad de la Paz en 2012. Se gradúa este año del MFA en Escritura Creativa en la Universidad de Texas en

El Paso. La traducción de *Jane: A Murder* es su proyecto de tesis. • **Luis Palés Matos** (1898–1959) was a Puerto Rican poet widely credited for initiating the Afro-Antillano movement in Spanish Caribbean literature. His book, *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* (1937), brought his reputation to international prominence. His *Selected Poems/Poesía Selecta* (Arte Público Press, 2000) was edited and translated by Julio Marzán. • **David A. Colón** is Assistant Professor of English and Latino Studies at Texas Christian University. His essays and reviews have appeared in many scholarly publications, including *Cultural Critique*, the *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, *MELUS*, the *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry*, *Studies in American Culture*, and *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. He is editor of the anthology, *Between Day and Night: New and Selected Poems 1946–2010* by Miguel González-Gerth (TCU Press, 2013), and author of a novel, *The Lost Men* (Elsewhen Press, 2012), nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke Award. • **Fernando Valerio-Holguín** es profesor titular de literatura y cultura afro-caribeñas en Colorado State University. Algunas de sus publicaciones incluyen: *Presencia de Trujillo en la narrativa contemporánea*, *Banalidad posmoderna: ensayos sobre identidad cultural latinoamericana* y *El bolero literario en Latinoamérica*.

# Review 87

Literature and Arts of the Americas

## Special Issue

**Review 87, Vol. 46, No. 2**

**November 2013**

**Mario Vargas Llosa's Legacy /  
Contemporary Andean  
Fiction and Arts**

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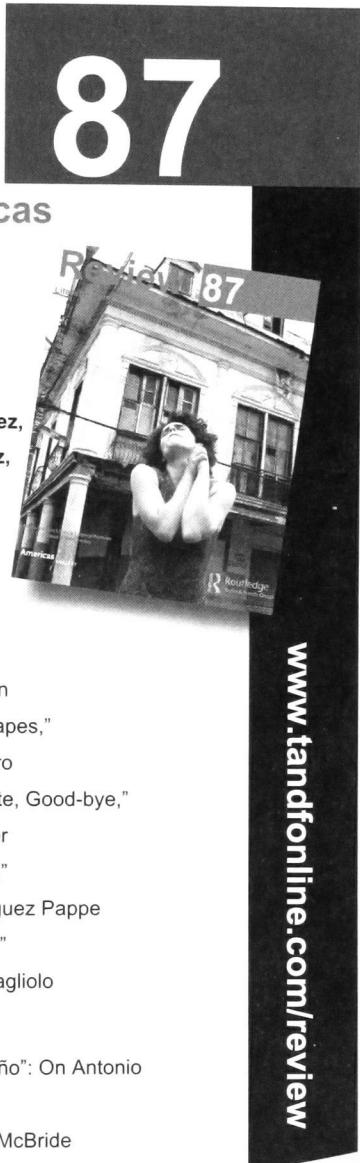
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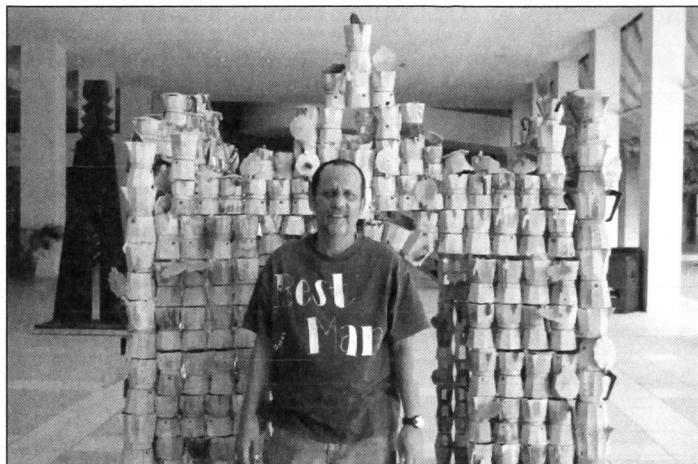
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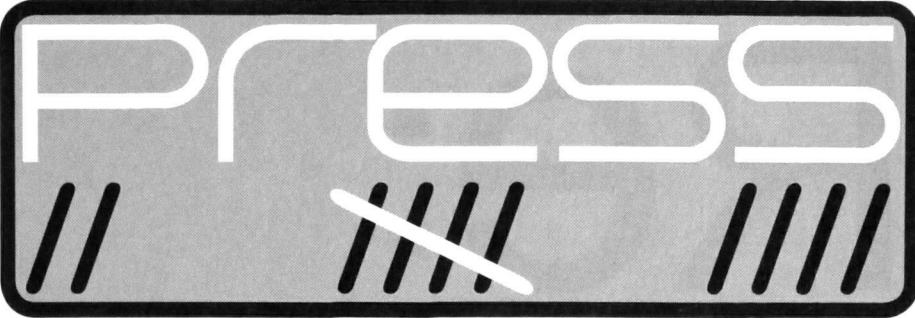
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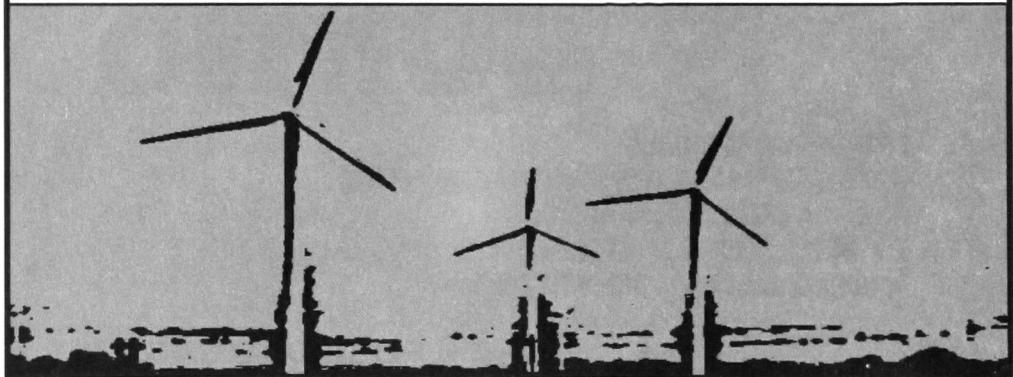
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