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Sui generis



of its own kind

# Sui Generis

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## **Translations**

我对婚姻的看法  
[Dylan McIntyre]

现在美国的离婚率是百分之五十左右。很多年轻人看着这个统计数字就认为应该不结婚。美国最近的经济灾难也导致很多夫妻因为经济问题吵架，就使夫妇离婚了。从此，很多年轻人把不好的经济条件跟不好的婚姻划上等号。虽然我的看法跟一般年轻人的很类似，但我还想要结婚。我有几个婚姻的条件：一是我必须二十八岁以上才要结婚，二是我念完了研究所以后才要结婚，三是我找到了稳定的工作以后才要结婚。第一个条件是为了我不闪电式结婚。我不羡慕闪电式结婚的人。我想跟我的伴侣渐渐达成结婚的共识，而为了做好心里条件我则决定二十八岁以上才要结婚。为了拥有成功我念完了研究所以后才要结婚。对婚姻来说，重要的是两个人都很成熟。我觉得念完了研究所以后，我就变得比较成熟。如果两个人都不成熟，他们就会有不良的婚姻。为了我和我伴侣的前途，我找到了稳定的工作以后才要结婚。我希望赚很多钱，有健康保险，有甜蜜的生活什么的。如果我跟我伴侣要添宝宝，我们俩都应该有抚养孩子的责任。好的婚姻有很多因素。人们不见得把爱情跟好的婚姻划上等号。爱情只是一个小的因素。我一找到心上人，就要渐渐决定应不应该结婚。

*My Views on Marriage*  
[trans. Dylan McIntyre]

Right now America's divorce rate is about 50 percent. Many young people look at this rate and think that they should not get married. America's recent economic disaster has caused many couples to quarrel on account of the economic problems. These fights then lead to divorce. From this, many young people equate bad economic conditions to bad marriages. Although my view is similar to that of most young people, I still want to get married. I have a few conditions for getting married. The first is that I must be at least 28 years old before I will get married. The second is that I will finish graduate school before getting married. And the third is that only after finding a stable job will I get married. The first condition is so that I do not marry too early. I do not admire people who marry too early. I want to gradually reach an agreement with my partner to marry. Also, for the sake of my emotions, I have decided to get married only after I turn 28 years old. In order to have success, only after I finish graduate school will I get married. When it comes to marriage the important thing is that both people are mature. I think that after I finish graduate school I will be relatively mature. If both people in the marriage are not mature then they will have an unhealthy marriage. For the sake of both my partner's and my future, only after I find a stable job will I get married. I hope to earn a lot of money, have health insurance, and have a happy life and such. If both my partner and I want to have a child, then both of us should have the responsibility to raise the child. Many factors go into making a good marriage. Some people do not necessarily equate being in love to having a good marriage. Love is only a small factor. Once I find my perfect match, I will gradually decide whether or not I should marry that person.



*Sonnet 17*

[William Shakespeare]

Who will believe my verse in time to come  
 If it were filled with your most high deserts?  
 Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb  
 Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.  
 If I could write the beauty of your eyes,  
 And in fresh numbers number all your graces,  
 The age to come would say, "This poet lies;  
 Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces."  
 So should my papers, yellowed with their age,  
 Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,  
 And your fair rights be termed a poet's rage,  
 And stretchèd meter of an antique song.  
 But were some child of yours alive that time,  
 You should live twice: in it, and in my rhyme.

*Sonnet 17*

[trans. Andy Kaplan]

carmine quis mea credet aetate postera  
 pulchritudinibus si complena tuis?  
 iuro sed carmen nec heu te posse monstrare  
 prodere nec tuas formosas partes.  
 scribere si possim tuis de pulchris ocellis  
 et gratias noua renarrare uerba  
 postera aetas dicat "uates hic mendax" et numquam  
 pingisse tantis Natura coloribus.  
 codicilli mei flauī spernentur senecto  
 senes uelut pleni quam ueritate lingua.  
 dignas rites tuas dicantur rabiem uatum,  
 carminis protractos antiquorum metros.  
 tuus sed filius si uiuet illuc tempore  
 bis tu quidem uiues: carmine et filio.

*A une Damoiselle malade*  
[Clément Marot (1496-1544)]

Ma mignonne,  
Je vous donne  
Le bon jour;  
Le séjour  
C'est prison.  
Guérison  
Recouvrez,  
Puis ouvrez  
Votre porte  
Et qu'on sorte  
Vitement,  
Car Clément  
Le vous mande.  
Va, friande  
De ta bouche,  
Qui se couche  
En danger  
Pour manger  
Confitures;  
Si tu dures  
Trop malade,  
Couleur fade  
Tu prendras,  
Et perdras  
L'embonpoint.  
Dieu te doint  
Santé bonne,  
Ma mignonne.

*To A Sick Lady*  
[trans. Alissa Rubin]

*(inspired by Perec)*

My darling,  
I wish you a truly  
Charming day;  
A sickroom  
Is a foul prison.  
You must  
Pull through,  
And unlatch  
Your door,  
And quickly  
Walk forth;  
For I, Marot,  
Insist it.  
Go, you  
Gourmand,  
At risk  
Atop your pillow,  
Snack upon  
Your tasty jams;  
If you stay, in this way,  
So sick and ailing,  
You shall turn  
Light as a moth,  
Both in color  
And in contour.  
God may again grant you  
Vigor, full spirits,  
My darling.

*Honey Pie*

[trans. Tessa von Walderdorff]

Honey Pie,  
Please don't die.

You do imply  
That the stay is dry.

Prison you deny;  
Allow your bad spirit to fry

And let your door fly  
As you gladly wave good-bye.

For Clément permits this high,  
Tells you to look to the sky.

When you crave bonsai  
Let your mouth reply.

Your dreams, your thoughts belie.  
Sick in bed, your stomach's shy.

That pale tone, did you oversupply?  
While that lovely hue hides beneath your red-eye.

Our course has gone awry.  
Honey baby, please comply.

*Extraits de La métromanie ou les dessous de la capitale*

[Jean Paulhan]

**Petites joies de la campagne**

Mais le paysan, qui débarque à Paris, se dit, lui aussi:  
Adieu, vielle terre gluante, maison sans fenêtres, arbres endormis.  
Canards, vaches, chevaux, connais pas.'  
Ainsi du métro.

**La plage**

Le voyageur n'a pas plus tôt dépassé les derniers ornements de style écrevisse qui lui signalaient du loin l'entrée du métro, il n'a pas plus tôt jeté un coup d'œil sur les manchettes des journaux suspendus aux pinces de l'écrevisse, et renoncé sans le moindre regret pour une rivière souterraine au montreur de poids flanqué de son tambour, au café qui se rengorge et aux allusions politiques de quelque statue, qu'il change soudain de pas... Elle n'est pas toujours plus rapide, elle n'a rien non plus d'une flânerie.

...

Il avance donc, descend encore divers escaliers, donne à poinçonner sa carte à une dame appelée portillon, un peu plus bas glisse entre deux gencives gigantesques... et se trouve enfin sur la rive d'un fleuve de fer et d'électricité. Il commence aussitôt à aller et venir, et parfois s'assied dans une odeur anisée, sous une lumière discrète, entre des céramiques vaguement luisantes.

...

Une affiche, qui annonce, à la gare Saint-Lazare, une exposition de locomotives. Drôle d'idée, d'exposer des locomotives. Personne n'y prend garde.

...

Le reste se dresse en désordre. Il se forme à chaque porte de légers tourbillons. Puis un ballet dans le wagon tourne, se presse, prend ses aises, mi-assis mis-debout se serre comme un fagot, s'en va dans les artères de la ville.

**Les déplacements**

...

Nos sociologues s'étonnent parfois que les Européens aient bâti leurs métros dans de grandes villes... où les distances [sont] relativement courtes... au lieu qu'à la campagne elles sont longues et pénibles.

...

Mais la raison est toute simple: c'est que Paris, Londres, et Moscou sont en effet pleins, et légèrement accablantes. Et l'on ne sait à la fin comment se débarrasser de tant de fantômes et de devantures et de métiers, de voitures et de statues et de marchands des quatre-saisons.

...

...et sous nos rues, ce grand creux, et cette sorte d'absence organisée, le métro, où nous pouvons à chaque instant nous vider de tout le reste - oublier même qu'à la sortie nous nous retrouverons hélas amants, époux, agents de change, collégiens ou maîtres chanteurs, ou...

...

Il ne reste, à la station Odéon, qu'un vieillard, flanqué d'une cage où l'on voit deux oiseaux malades ou trop apprivoisés, dont on ne sait précisément ce qu'il nous veut; la charité peut-être.

...

...l'air reposant, stable et pour tout dire modeste, que l'on respire dans le métro. Le danger demeure qu'ils en prennent l'habitude, forcent chaque jour la dose, à la fin ne puissent plus s'en priver. C'est ce qu'on appelle la métromanie.

...

### Faune du métro

...

C'est ici les meilleurs moments de ma vie... Sitôt descendu, je me trouvais pris dans une petite bouillie de chiffonniers, d'accroche-cœurs, d'ivrognes, de cordonniers anarchistes et de maquereaux, où moi-même en savates, dans une odeur d'hommes, de thym, d'absinthe, je me laissais très bien bouillir avec le reste.

...

Ne bougez pas: tant d'aventures au-dessus de nous, la plupart périlleuses, se réduisent ici à ce que peuvent tenter, pressées dans le wagon, des mains insistantes, mais tendres.

...

### Histoire du voleur et du volant

...

...le métro est une sorte de fleuve, un fleuve d'oubli- de cet oubli qui nous permet seul de goûter à tout moment les travaux et les plaisirs de la vie, mais plus fortement encore ceux des champs, ceux de la ville. Car nous bâtissons aujourd'hui nos mythes, au lieu de simplement les imaginer, de fer, d'acier et de bois.

...

Lolagne demeurait chaque jour dans le métro plusieurs heures. 'Qu'y fais-tu donc?' lui demanda son ami Tréméloir. Lolagne eut un geste vague des doigts et dit: 'Mais j'y vole.'

...

*Excerpts from La métromanie ou les dessous de la capitale*  
[trans. Allegra Rosenbaum]

### Cheap Thrills in the Countryside

But the bumpkin, who gets off at Paris says to himself as well:

Farewell, old clumpy earth, house without windows, sleeping trees.

Ducks, cows, horses, don't know 'em.

Into the metro.

### The Beach

...The traveler hasn't even gone beyond the last embellishments in the style of a crawfish, he hasn't even bothered to glance at the headlines of the newspapers hung from the claws of the crawfish, and having abandoned without the least bit of regret for an underground river, the busker slapping his weight on his drum, the café that shows off and political allusions of some importance that announced to him the entrance of the metro from afar, he suddenly switches direction... It isn't always efficient; it isn't always wandering either.

...

He then continues, he descends various stairways again, he gives his ticket to be punched to a woman called the barrier, a bit further beneath slithers between two enormous gums... and finally he discovers on the river of iron and electricity. He immediately begins to come and go, and sometimes he sits in a licorice smell, underneath a quiet light, between vaguely shining tiles.

...

An advertisement reads, at the *Saint-Lazare* station, a train exhibit. What a silly idea, to exhibit trains. No one notices.

...

Everyone else stands chaotically. They make small whirlwinds near each door. Then a ballet in the train car turning, hurrying, relaxing, partially seated, partially standing tightening like a bundle of firewood, departing into the arteries of the city.

...

### Transfers

...

Our sociologists are surprised from time to time that Europeans have constructed their metro systems in big cities... where the distances [are] relatively short... instead of in the countryside where they are long and treacherous.

...

But the reason is very simple: it's that Paris, London and Moscow are in fact full, and somewhat overwhelming. And we don't know how to get rid of all these ghosts and displays and careers, in the end we don't know how to get rid of cars and of sculptures and of year-round merchants.

...

...and beneath our streets, this great cavity, and this kind of organized absence, the metro, where we can, in each moment empty ourselves of everything else- to forget even at the exit that we will find lovers, spouses, stockbrokers, schoolchildren or singing teachers, or...

...

There is no one else here in *Odéon* station except an old man, adjoined by a cage with two birds, either too sick or too tame; we don't know exactly what they want from us: maybe alms.

...

...the relaxing, stable, and frankly unassuming air that we breathe in the metro. The danger appears when people become addicted, needing their dose each day so that in the end they can no longer go without it. This is what we call metromania.

...

### Common Wildlife of the Metro

...

Here are the greatest moments of my life... Following descent, I find myself taken in a little mixture of junkmen, heartthrobs, drunks, anarchist-cobblers and pimps, where I myself in slippers, in a stench of men, of thyme, of absinthe, I leave myself to stew well with the rest of them.

...

Don't move: so many adventures beneath us, most of which are risky, are reduced here to what can be attempted, squeezed in the train-car, insisting but tender hands.

...

### **The Story of the Stealer and the Stolen**

...

...the metro is a kind of river, a river of forgetting- it is only this oblivion that lets us taste at every moment the works and the pleasures of life, but more importantly the pleasures of the fields, and those of the city. Because we build our myths today instead of imagining them, out of iron, out of steel, and out of wood.

...

Lolagne spent each day in the metro for many hours. 'What are you doing there?' asked his friend Tréméloir. Lolagne made a vague gesture with his fingers and said: 'I'm stealing'.

...

*Un'opera, due processi*  
[Jeremy Bannister]

"Facciamo un progetto", Anna ci ha detto  
"che spieghi l'Italia, e non abbia errori"  
poi abbiamo deciso di fare un video,  
sul creare un pasto, ma lì non è rimasto...

"Un film fatto di foto? Ma, sembra rotto!"  
"Se mentre lo fai stai attento, solo ci vogliono cento  
ore - il pomodoro, si taglia da solo, rappresenta il cuore d'Italia,  
e si apre da solo davanti a noi per mostrarci la sua anima"

Le persone che l'hanno visto ancora non hanno capito  
quello che l'Italia è, ma sono vicini perché  
almeno sanno l'importanza, per un italiano che pranza,  
di questo bellissimo pacco, Il Pranzo al Sacco

*One work, two processes*  
[trans. Jeremy Bannister]

"We're going to do a project," Anna told us  
"that explains Italy, and which makes no mistake"  
So we decided on making a video,  
on creating a meal, but it didn't stop there...

"A film made of photos? But, it looks like its broken!"  
"If while you make you are careful, it will only take a hundred  
hours - the tomato, it cuts itself, it represents the heart of Italy  
and it opens to us because it wants to show us its soul"

The people who saw this still do not understand  
all that Italy is, but they are closer because  
at least they know the importance, to an Italian who lunches,  
of this beautiful parcel, Il Pranzo al Sacco

*Un'opera, due processi*

[John Cherichello]

Abbiamo ricevuto un compito per la classe d'italiano.  
Volevamo creare un video in italiano.  
Abbiamo pensato a che cosa fare.  
Un documentario, uno skit, un libro per bambini?  
Un video in stop-motion è stata l'idea finale.

Abbiamo raccolto i materiali.  
Avevamo bisogno di oggetti di scena, una macchina fotografica, e  
pazienza.  
Dovevamo decidere quale cibo aggiungere per l'animazione.  
Abbiamo trascorso una giornata a scattare foto.  
E poi, molto tempo al computer, per la compilazione, il montag-  
gio ecc.

Abbiamo sentito che alle persone è piaciuto  
Quando lo abbiamo mostrato in pubblico  
molti sono stati colpiti!  
Abbiamo messo molto impegno nel rendere il video.  
Con più tempo, avremmo potuto aggiungere di più, curarlo un po'  
di più, ma  
penso proprio che abbiamo circa quattro minuti di qualità.

*One work, two processes*

[trans. John Cherichello]

We received an assignment for Italian class.  
We wanted to create an Italian video.  
We thought about what to do.  
A documentary, a skit, a children's book?  
A stop-motion video was the final idea.

We gathered all the materials.  
We needed props, a camera, and patience.  
We had to decide which food to add for the animation aspect.  
We spent one day taking the pictures.  
Then, we spent a lot of time at the computer, compiling, editing,  
etc.

We felt like people enjoyed it!  
When we showed it during the event, many were impressed  
We put a lot of effort into making the video.  
With more time, we could have added more, edited a bit more, but  
I think we have about four minutes of quality.



8

[Catullus]

Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,  
 et quod uides perisse perditum ducas.  
 fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,  
 cum uentitabas quo puella ducebat  
 amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla.  
 ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant,  
 quae tu uolebas nec puella nolebat,  
 fulsere uere candidi tibi soles.  
 nunc iam illa non uult: tu quoque impotens noli,  
 nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser uiue,  
 sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.  
 uale puella, iam Catullus obdurat,  
 nec te requiret nec rogabit inuitam.  
 at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.  
 scelestas, uae te, quae tibi manet uita?  
 quis nunc te adibit? cui uideberis bella?  
 quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?  
 quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?  
 at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura

8

[trans. Margaret Gushue]

Pathetic Catullus, you stop this embarrassing nonsense at once  
 and look at what you tried to make wasting away to nothing.  
 Once the bright sun lit for you  
 and you often followed that girl's lead;  
 loving so much so no one will be loved again.  
 There was much playing around then  
 things you wished for that she did not yet want,  
 Truly the bright sun lit for you (alone).  
 Now finally she does not want this and  
 feeble you wish not to continue  
 She fled and you must not follow, do not live in sadness;  
 make your heart steadfast and endure.  
 So long girl! Catullus now endures  
 he will not look for you, nor ask for you out of habit,  
 but you will ache when no one asks after you,  
 alas mean girl! What life awaits for you now?  
 Will no one come near you? Who will find you appealing?  
 Who will you love now? What will be said about you?  
 Who will kiss you? Whose lips will you bite?  
 But you, ever-determined Catullus, must withstand this.

*Amores 1.1*

[Ovid]

Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam  
 edere, materia conveniente modis.  
 par erat inferior versus—rissime Cupido  
 dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.  
 'Quis tibi, saeve puer, dedit hoc in carmina iuris?  
 Pieridum vates, non tua turba sumus.  
 quid, si praeripiat flavae Venus arma Minervae,  
 ventilet accensas flava Minerva faces?  
 quis probet in silvis Cererem regnare iugosis,  
 lege pharetratae Virginis arva coli?  
 crinibus insignem quis acuta cuspide Phoebum  
 instruat, Aoniam Marte movente lyram?  
 sunt tibi magna, puer, nimiumque potentia regna;  
 cur opus adfectas, ambitiose, novum?  
 an, quod ubique, tuum est? tua sunt Heliconia tempe?  
 vix etiam Phoebos iam lyra tuta sua est?  
 cum bene surrexit versu nova pagina primo,  
 attenuat nervos proximus ille meos;  
 nec mihi materia est numeris levioribus apta,  
 aut puer aut longas compta puella comas.'  
 Questus eram, pharetra cum protinus ille soluta  
 legit in exitium spicula facta meum,  
 lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum,  
 'quod' que 'canas, vates, accipe' dixit 'opus!'  
 Me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas.  
 uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor.  
 Sex mihi surgat opus numeris, in quinque residat:  
 ferrea cum vestris bella valet modis!  
 cingere litorea flaventia tempora myrto,  
 Musa, per undenos emodulanda pedes!

*Amores 1.1*

[trans. Luke Johnson]

I was preparing to unleash weapons and wild wars  
 with a grave meter, the content fit for the quantity.  
 It was equal under these verses. It is said that  
 Cackling Cupid stole one foot away.  
 "Who handed you the right to poetry, crazy child?  
 Pierian poet, we are not your audience.  
 What, if Venus should wield the weapons of blonde Minerva,  
 Would blonde Minerva wind the smoldering torch?  
 Who would commend Ceres to reign in mountainous forests,  
 Or let the quivered Virgin plow the fields?  
 Who would hand a spear to piliferous Phoebus  
 As Mars wrestles with Aonian lyre?  
 There is a mighty reign for you, child, and too much power.  
 Ambitious boy, why are you on your way to a new endeavor?  
 Because everywhere is yours? Are the realms of the Muses  
 yours?  
 Is Apollo's own lyre now barely safe?  
 When the first verse arises on a new page,  
 The next verse calms my nerves.  
 For me there is no content fit for lighter lines,  
 No boy nor girl with long, twisted hair.  
 I was in luck, for he pried from unbound quiver,  
 constructed for my destruction, an arrow.  
 Crooking as a moon the bow with his knee,  
 "Make music, poet!" He said, "Accept this burden!"  
 Wretched me! That boy has accurate arrows.  
 I burn, as Amor reigns in my empty chest.  
 My work takes flight in sixes, and settles in fives;  
 Farewell iron wars with your meter!  
 Adorn tawny temples with the sea's myrtle,  
 Muse, composing through eleven feet!

*Epode 13*

[Horace]

horrida tempestas caelum contraxit et imbres  
 niuesque deducunt Iouem. nunc mare nunc siluae  
 Threicio Aquilone sonant. rapiamus amici  
 occasionem de die dumque uirent genua  
 et decet obducta soluatur fronte senectus.

tu uina Torquato moue consule pressa meo.  
 cetera mitte loqui. deus haec fortasse benigna  
 reducet in sedem uice. nunc et Achaemenio  
 perfundi nardo iuuat et fide Cyllenea

leuare diris pectora sollicitudinibus  
 nobilis ut grandi cecinit Centaurus alumno:  
 inuicte mortalis dea nate puer Thetide  
 te manet Assaraci tellus quam frigida parui  
 findunt Scamandri flumina lubricus et Simois  
 unde tibi reditum certo subtemine parcae  
 rupere nec mater domum caerulea te reuehet.  
 illic omne malum uino cantuque leuato  
 deformis aegrimoniae dulcibus alloquiis.

*Epode 13*

[trans. Andy Kaplan]

rough weather down from a narrowed sky,  
 rain and snow and now the woods and waves  
 echo, the wind's out of the north country.  
 come on now, we're young and we can move,  
 what better way to celebrate that fact  
 than drinking till we can't. open a bottle,  
 we'll ride the storm out. how about this one,  
 it sat in a barrel the year that we were born.

then after a while, when there's no more to say,  
 looking outside I'll mumble "it looks like  
 it might let up. about time" and meanwhile  
 we can strum a tune, or two. it'll be alright,  
 to rise above soul troubles. and I'll speak  
 of one who long ago sang words not far  
 from what I'm saying now. he was half horse.

"listen, young man, you've lived a couple years,  
 you haven't known defeat. let me tell you,  
 there's a far country waiting for your foot  
 on its broad plain. two rivers divide it,  
 oblivious streams, and your seagreen mother  
 won't bear you home, son. you're not coming back.  
 but once you're there, I'll tell you what to do:  
 intake wine, and output music. sing,  
 and speak soft words. drown out dissonance.

Ode 1.5  
[Horace]

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa  
perfusus liquidis urget odoribus  
grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?  
cui flavam religas comam

simplex munditiis? heu quotiens fidem  
mutatosque deos flebit et aspera  
nigris aequora ventis  
emirabitur insolens  
qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea,  
qui semper vacuum, semper amabilem  
sperat, nescius aurae  
fallacis. miseri, quibus  
intemptata nites. me tabula sacer  
votiva paries indicat uvida  
suspendisse potenti  
vestimenta maris deo.

Ode 1.5  
[trans. Miles Burson]

Which boy, bathed in perfume, fists curling tight around  
rose bouquets, Pyrrha, now begs you to come to his  
pleasing cave? Who's it this time?  
For whose eyes are these yellow braids,

delicate and yet plain? Oh, he will weep over  
misplaced trust and the gods changing their minds again,  
and rough seas from the storm clouds  
will be gazed on in abject shock,

by he who in delight thinks that your gold is pure,  
filled with hope that you might always be his lover  
unaware of the sea change  
on its way. For him, woe, if he'll

try these glittering swells. Hanging up there, on the  
sea god's wall, is the proof: Offered to Neptune are  
my soaked clothes, which I tacked there  
once I'd swam onto shore, unharmed.

## Ode 1.5

[trans. Luke Johnson]

What young man,  
     Slender and bathed in many roses,  
 Routs you from your beloved cave,  
     Pyrrha, with his pure aroma?  
 For whom do you braid your golden hair,  
     Simple in its elegance?  
 Alas! How often he marvels,  
     That insolent boy,  
 At faith and the shifting gods,  
     At the wounding waves and black winds;  
 And now who regales you, naive, with gold,  
     And now who hopes,  
 Always hollow of cares,  
     Always agreeable,  
 Knowing nothing of illusive winds.  
     Wretched folk,  
 For whom you inclemently shine.  
     Votive tablets reveal to me  
 Sodden garments suspended on sacred walls  
     By the almighty god of the sea.

*DE CUJUSDAM AQUATILIS BESTIAE VIRTUTE ORATIONIS  
 BEATI VIRI REPULSIONE*

[St. Adoman]

Alio quoque in tempore, cum vir beatus in Pictorum provincia per aliquot moraretur dies, necesse habuit fluium transire Nesam. Ad cujus cum accessisset ripam alios ex acculis aspicit misellum humanantes homunculum, quem ut ipsi sepultores ferebant quaedam paulo ante nantem aquatilis praeipiens bestia morsu momordit sevissimo. Cujus miserum cadaver sero licet quidam in alno subvenientes porrectis praeipuere uncinis. Vir econtra beatus haec audiens praecipit ut aliquis ex comitibus enatans caupallum in altera stantem rupa ad se navigando reducat. Quo sancti audito praedicabilis viri praecepto, Lugneus mocu-Min nihil moratus obsecundans, depositis excepta vestimentis tunica, inmittit se in aquas. Sed belua, quae, prius non tam satiata quam in praedam accensa, in profundo fluminis latitabat. Sentiens eo ante turbatam supra aquam, subito emergens natatilis ad hominem in medio natantem alveo cum ingenti fremitus aperto cucurrit ore. Vir tum beatus videns, omnibus qui inerrant tam barbaris quam etiam fratribus nimio terrore percussis, cum salutare sancta elevate manu in vacuo aere crucis pinxisset signum invocato dei nomine feroci imperavit bestiae, dicens: 'Noles ultra progredi, nec hominem tangas. Retro citius revertere.' Tum vero bestia hac sancti audita voce retrorsum acsi funibus retraheretur velociore recursu fugit tremefacta, quae prius Lugneo nanti eo usque appropinquavit ut hominem inter et bestiam non amplius esset quam unius contuli longitude. Fratres tum recessisse videntes bestiam, Lugneumque commilitonem ad eos intactum et incolomem in navicula reversum, cum ingenti ammiratione glorificaverunt deum in beato viro. Sed et gentiles barbari qui ad praesens inerrant ejusdem miracily magnitudine quod et ipsi viderant compulsi deum magnificarunt christianorum.

*CONCERNING THE REPULSION OF AN AQUATIC BEAST BY  
THE POWER OF THE PRAYER OF A SAINT*

[trans. Luisa Barbano]

Also, at another time, while the saint was staying for several days in the province of the Picts, he found it necessary to cross the River Ness. When he had come to its bank, he observed some of its inhabitants burying a wretched fellow, whom, as the buriers themselves reported, before swimming a little, a certain aquatic beast, having snatched him away, mauled him with most savage bite, he whose pitiable corpse certain men coming to help in a boat, although too late, snatched up with outstretched hooks. The saint, in turn having heard this, ordered that someone out of his companions, having swum out to a boat standing on the other bank, might lead it back by navigating toward him. Lugneus mocu-Min, who having heard the direction of the praiseworthy saint, having complied, having delayed nothing, with his vestments save for his tunic having been placed down, sent himself into the waters. But the beast, which previously was not so much satiated as whetted for prey, was lurking in the deep in the flowing waters. It, having sensed him by his swimming above the turbulent water, having suddenly emerged swimming toward the man swimming in the middle of the basin, hastened forth with a huge roar, its mouth open. Then, having seen this, the saint, with all who were there, with so many heathens as even monks having been struck with a terror beyond measure, with his holy hand having been raised into the empty air, when he had painted the salvation-giving sign of the cross, the name of God having been evoked, gave an order to the ferocious beast, saying. "You will not proceed further, and do not touch that man. Turn back quickly." Then truly the beast, with this voice of the saint having been heard, was withdrawn backwards as if by rigging and fled trembling in retreat, it which previously approached so close to the swimming Lugneus that between man and beast there was no more an ample length than that of one of a little pole. Then the monks, having seen that the beast had receded, and their companion Lugneus returned to them untouched and unharmed on the boat, with huge admiration glorified God in the saint. But the hea-

thens of the clans, who at the time were present, impelled by the magnitude of the miracle itself that they themselves had seen, magnified the God of the Christians.

अमरुकशतकम्

Āmarukashatakam  
[Āmaru]

भवतु विदितं व्यर्थालापैरालं प्रिय गम्यतां  
तनुरपि न ते दोषोऽस्माकं विधिस्तु परांमुखः ।  
तव यदि तथारूढं प्रेम प्रपत्रमिमां दशां  
प्रकृतितरले का नः पिदा गते हतजीविते ॥३०

bhavatu viditaṁ vyarthālapairālaṁ priya gamyatām  
tanurapi na te doṣosmākaṁ vidhistu parāmmukhaḥ |  
tava yadi tathārūḍhaṁ prema prapatramimām daśāṁ  
prakṛtitarale kā naḥ pidā gate hatajīvite || 30

...

दत्तोस्याः प्रणयस त्वयैव भवतैवेयं चिरंलालिता  
दैवादद्या किल त्वम एव कृतवान अस्या नवं विप्रियम ।  
मन्युर् दुःसह ईवा यात्युपशमं नो सान्त्ववादैः स्फुटम  
हे निस्त्रिंश विमुक्तकण्ठकरुणं तावत सखी रोदितु ॥६

dattō'syāḥ praṇayasa tvayaiva bhavataiveyaṁ ciraṁlālītā  
daivādadya kila tvama eva kṛtavāna asyā navam vipriyama |  
manyur duḥsaha īvā yātyupaśamaṁ no sāntvavādaiḥ sphuṭama  
hē nistrimśa vimuktakaṅṭhakarūṇaṁ tāvata sakhī roditu || 6

...

परिम्लाने माने मुखशशिनि तस्याः करधृते  
मयि क्षीणोपाये प्रनिपतमारैकशरणे ।  
तया पक्ष्मप्रंतद्वजपुटनिरुद्धेन सहसा  
प्रसादो बाष्पेण स्तनतटविशिर्णेन कथितः ॥२५

parimlāne māne mukhaśaśini tasyāḥ karadhṛte  
mayi kṣīṇopāye pranipatamāraikaśaraṇe |  
tayā pakṣmapraṁtadvajapuṭaniruddhena sahasā  
prasādo bāṣṭpeṇa stanataṭaviśirṇena kathitaḥ || 25

Selections from Āmaru's Hundred Verses  
[trans C. Alex Meyer]

I understand now!  
Enough of this useless backtalk.  
My love, leave!

Handsome, it's not your fault  
Fate turned her back on me  
Though your affections fell at my feet  
She is capricious

Who then increases his pain  
By leaving ruins him?

...

You granted her alone your affections  
brother, offered her alone your longtime love.  
Now in a trick of Fate she has betrayed you.

Such fury is unbearable.  
Sweet speech will no longer blossom.  
Oh cruel woman, hurling your miserable voice,  
after so long you are only a wailing mistress.

...

Arrogance withers from her face, the moon heavy in her hands.  
My tricks fall flat, I can now only prostrate at her feet.  
She veils her eyes beneath the banners of her hands, suddenly  
she concedes, a tear shatters on the shore of her breast.

YA LEJOS DE LA CARRETERA

[Mario Santiago Papasquiaro]

Vibraciones / vibraciones látigos /  
un sonido viene de la sombra / pronto  
forma una esfera / una granja / un grupo /  
una armada / un universo de universos  
Henri Michaux

A la memoria de Infraín

1

Unos pantalones mugrosos & la muerte en el pecho  
¡Órale!  
Nos vemos ahí en el muro  
/ pasando el vado /  
los vientos cristalizándose a la izquierda  
las aletas del polvo: tus aletas  
1 oasis arponeándonos lo seco  
En la hija de tu ojo / el cementerio  
:Mezcalito echando flores:  
La Tierra y su contrario: 2 venados  
silenciosos como ruidos en sus bodas  
No deberías ir / pero deberías ir

2

(En esta sombra se acurruca esa rara fruta  
que es el corazón anfibio & precoz devenir infrarrealista)

Hijos de Pablo de Rokha somos  
Desde antes de escribir esto / ya volábamos  
Luego el continuum de lo escrito fue menos vigilado  
Bailó el aliento en la punta de la lengua  
Nos transfiguramos acariciando el ayayay de cada llaga

Somos poetas  
Tám-Táms del negro sol  
que nos imanta

3

Ni lúmpenes ni proletarios  
El pequeñodios cobrasalarios  
ni l pluma rompe en los abismos nuestros  
:Las auroras infras en la Casa de Usher de la araña:  
Juega al balero el dulce clítoris / se embarca como a las 5 monta-  
ñas en dos cuatros  
a galope tierno & crines sueltas

Rubayat ama  
a  
Ramayana

4

Nuestra lengua ha sido púa  
Es sandía / chorreante vagabunda de ancha risa  
Aventura que nos ha abierto escoriaciones  
Lo que éramos lo somos en el crescendo de los ecos  
A tales hombros: tales caderas  
A esos tobillos / aquellos pasos  
El aprendizaje de la limpieza al escalpelo

5

Gris es la teoría...  
Rojo el vellón de la Cannabis / la Inhalámbrica



6

¿La lucha? / Contra el poder de \$igno\$ fari\$éico\$  
 (máscara vs. cabellera)  
 10 años después seguimos siendo Tribu  
 / dondequiera lúbricos /  
 en Jalalpa, Minneapolis, Iquitos, Ivre Sur de Seine, Gerona,  
 el Barranco & la Cañada  
 Perros habitados por las voces del desierto  
 Tlamantinis obscecados  
 por la flama del canto por el cuerpo  
 & la flama del cuerpo que es el canto  
 ¡Tlacoyos de realidad!

7

El rastrojo del lenguaje no germina  
 si no es en hechos menguaje ya encarnado

La hazaña marabusina en tierras nahuas  
 –¿De a cómo la liebre lírica? / ¿con alas?  
 –Feliz No cumpleaños  
 El infrarrealismo no es l vocablo-lija  
 Nos han antologado nuestras noches  
 Cada textículo en su sitio / que bien puede ser nuestro milagro  
 nómada

8

Es Hora Zero otra vez  
 Jesús Luis rasga en su luz “Canciones para gandallas”  
 Hay estrellas como hay ganas  
 hay abismos & hay caminos

Las pirañas de anteayer  
 son iguanas a futuro

Olas, olas, olas de sed

9

–¿Qué decían de nosotros esos empleados televisivos?  
 / hijos del feliz oficio & el próspero cheque de honorarios /  
 –Oh Santas Risas Satánicas  
 –¿Ni Billy Burroughs lo sabe?  
 El petate da de brincos  
 / Son cocuyos en la aurora /  
 –¿Será eso l hai-kai sirio?  
 ¿Un poeta náutico en la sierra?  
 ¿El orgasmo del delirio?

10

Poesía endecasilabóiler  
 hermanita de Édgar Allan & Black Sabbath  
 caradiajos & chintreras  
 qué de arrastres  
 labrados en la entraña de la entraña

11

Toco viento  
 : azar turgente :  
 Nuestra raíz está hablando  
 / no el enjuague del Poder & sus taquillas  
 sus tarifas, sus castigos, muecas cínicas, su estertor de vanidades /

12

Que Tin-tán queme su saco  
 Los caminos están llenos de otros seres

/ no el cubículo ni el cargo /  
Recuerda cuerpo cuanto viviste  
Cuánto evangelio de cielos abiertos  
/ Subterráneamente: soberanamente /  
Porque no será el miedo a ningún miedo  
el que nos haga poner a media asta  
el géiser ígneo de nuestra indignación

& este número 13

Bien lo dice:

La Poesía mexicana se divide en 2  
La poesía mexicana & el infrarrealismo  
/ Río Tula a remover /

*Already Far from the Path*  
[trans. Nicholas Schiff]

Vibrations / vibrations of whips /  
a sound coming from the shadow / right away  
forms a sphere / a farm / a group /  
a navy / a universe of universes  
-Henri Michaux

To the memory of Infráin

1

Some filthy pants & death in the chest  
Pray to it!  
We saw ourselves there on the wall  
/ passing the fjord /  
the winds crystallizing to the left  
the fins of dust: your fins  
| oasis harpoons the dry in us  
In the daughter of your eye / the cemetery  
:Mezcalito throwing flowers:  
The Earth and its opposite: 2 silent  
deer like noises in their weddings  
You shouldn't go / but you should go

2

(In this shadow curls a rare fruit  
which is the amphibious heart & precocious source of infrarealism)

Sons of Pablo de Rokha we are  
Since before writing this / we've already flown  
Later the written continuum was less vigilant  
Breath danced on the tip of the tongue  
We transfigured caressing the ayayay of every wound

We're poets  
Tám-táms of the black sun  
that magnetizes us

3

Not lumpens nor proletariats  
The smallgod chargesaleries  
nor | pen broken on our abysses  
:The infra dawns in the House of Usher of the spider  
The sweet clitoris plays balero / it embarks as if toward the 5  
mountains on two fours  
at a tender gallop & loose manes

Rubayat  
loves  
Ramayana

4

Our language has been a spine  
It's watermelon / A dripping vagabond of broad laughter  
Adventure which has raised our abrasions  
We are what we were in the swell of echoes  
At such shoulders: such hips  
At those ankles / those steps  
Learning the cleanliness of the scalpel

5

Grey is the theory...  
Red the fleece of Cannabis / the unwired Alhambra

6

The fight? / Against the power of Phari\$oen \$ign\$  
(mask vs. lady)  
10 years after we continue being Tribe

/ lubricious wherever /  
in Jalalpa, Mineapolis, Iquitos, Ivre Sur de Seine, Gerona,  
el Barranco & Canada  
Dogs inhabited by the voices of the desert  
Tlamantinis obfuscated  
by the flame of the song of the body  
& the flame of the body which is the song  
Tlacoyos of reality!

7

The crimson visage of ungerminated language  
if not in waning acts already incarnate

The Marabusine feat in Nahua lands  
-Where to derive lyrical locks from? / with wings?  
-Happy No Birthday  
Infra-realism is not | unclean phrase  
They have anthologized our nights  
Each texticle in their realm / which can well be our nomadic mir-  
acle

8

It's Zero Hour once again  
Jesús Luis strums in his light "Songs for vagrants"  
There are stars like there are desires  
there are abysses & there are paths

The day-before-yesterday piranhas  
are future iguanas  
Waves, waves, waves of thirst

9

-¿What'd those television employees say about us?  
/sons of vocational happiness & prosperous honorary checks /  
- Oh Saintly Satanic Smiles

- ¿Nor Billy Boroughs knows this?  
The mate gives summits  
/ They're cocuyos in the dawn /  
- Will it be that | hai-kai sirious?  
¿A nautical poet in the mountains?  
¿An orgasm of delirium?

10

Hendecasyllabic poetry  
little sister of Edgar Allen & Black Sabbath  
cardiajos & chintreras  
that which drags you  
wrought in the core of the core

11

I breathe the breeze  
    :bloated chance:  
Our root is speaking  
/ not the rack & rinse of power /  
his fees, his punishments, his cynical grin, the death-rattle of his  
vanities /

12

That Tin-tán would burn his bag  
That paths are full of other beings  
/ not the cubicle nor the career /  
Recalls corpse count you saw  
Counted gospel of the open heavens  
/ Subterraneanly: soberly /  
Because there won't be fear in any fear  
that which has had us put at half-mast  
the igneous geyser of our indignation

& this number 13

It should well be said:  
Mexican poetry divides in 2  
The Mexican can-be & and infrarealism  
/ Tula River to remove /

*Fragmentos de "La muerte del beso"*  
[Pura López Colomé]

FONS

Quise hallarte dentro de mí  
sabiendo que aquella oscura habitación  
me deparaba vértigo en concavidades.  
Quise, busqué tu rostro.  
Quise de tal modo contemplar  
la parte tuya dentro mío  
que lograra atraer a las demás  
y unir mi boca a otra, otras,  
para ver cómo es el sueño.  
Saber que en todo hay dos  
salivas, ríos de vida,  
fluyendo, influyéndose,  
saber  
que sé, a qué sé,  
lenguas de fuego sumergidas  
en este mar de los misterios,  
bañadas de oro  
porque oro,  
el Verbo se desprende hablado  
y es muerte corporal escrita,  
divina materia que besa eternamente  
las espumas de una luz marina.  
mors osculi  
hecha de amar, desear, sacar la cifra  
pura, impura, lengua que dijo  
En el principio,  
conjugada y sublimada:  
Soy el que soy,  
ven a mí,  
acércate con la boca abierta,  
siente mi aliento,  
llénate del Nombre,  
abre los ojos y verás

Nada.

*Fragments from "The Death of the Kiss"*  
[trans. Emily Shapiro]

FONS

I wanted to find you inside of me  
knowing that each hidden habitation  
left me with the vertigo of my own concavity.  
I wanted to search for your features.  
I wanted by whatever mode of contemplating it  
the part of yours inside of me  
which would force a kind of following  
and unite my mouth to another, and another's,  
so that the way the dream goes might be visible.  
Know that in everything there is two.  
Those who drool in their sleep and the rivers of life  
fluent, influential,  
know  
what I know, and that I know  
how when a steaming tongue is submerged  
in mysterious seas  
washed of gold  
(why gold?)  
the Verb is born spoken  
and dies written,  
becoming a divine material which kisses eternally  
in the foamy light of a harbor  
mors osculi  
made of love, desire, and the taking out of a cipher  
which will purify a language that speaks  
in the beginning  
and then gets sublimated through conjugations.  
Anyhow,  
I am what I am,  
so just come to me,  
a little closer with your mouth open  
and my breath  
filling you with a Name.

Now open your eyes and you will see  
Nothing.

## PREGUNTAS A LA HORA DEL TÉ

[Nicanor Parra]

Este señor desvaído parece  
 Una figura de un museo de cera;  
 Mira a través de los visillos rotos:  
 Qué vale más, ¿el oro o la belleza?,  
 ¿Vale más el arroyo que se mueve  
 O la chéptica fija a la ribera?  
 A lo lejos se oye una campana  
 Que abre una herida más, o que la cierra:  
 ¿Es más real el agua de la fuente  
 O la muchacha que se mira en ella?  
 No se sabe, la gente se lo pasa  
 Construyendo castillos en la arena.  
 ¿Es superior el vaso transparente  
 A la mano del hombre que lo crea?  
 Se respira una atmósfera cansada  
 De ceniza, de humo, de tristeza:  
 Lo que se vio una vez ya no se vuelve  
 A ver igual, dicen las hojas secas.  
 Hora del té, tostadas, margarina.  
 Todo envuelto en una especie de niebla.

## Preguntas a la hora del té

[Sarah Coolidge &amp; Emily Shapiro]

Questions at Teatime  
 (a translation of Nicanor Parra)

That virile man resembles  
 a wax museum figure;  
 Look through the broken cups:  
 What's worth more, gold or beauty?  
 Is the swaying reed worth more  
 or the rib bone fixed in its cage?  
 From far away, a bell is heard,  
 which further opens the wound, or opens it:  
 is the fountain water more real  
 or the girl looking at herself in its surface?  
 No one knows, people pass by  
 building castles in the sand:  
 is the transparent teacup superior  
 to the man's hand that creates it?  
 A tired atmosphere breathes  
 of scissions, smoke, sadness:  
 What was once seen hasn't yet come back.  
 All the same, say the dried leaves.  
 Tea time, toast, margarine.  
 All enveloped in a kind of mist.

*Notes from the translation (translated):*

*Translator: How does this sound: "That virile man resem---"*

*Parra: Sir, I'm afraid we see two different men. This man has soft features like wax, with quite a feminine chin in fact.*

*Translator: Okay, okay. Do excuse me. It's been some time since I've translated poetry. Working with Julieta Ramirez*

*on that edition of Cervantes was all so direct, but you're absolutely right. The man is perspiring!*

*Parra: Well sure he is! It's summer in Chile. Every man you see is perspiring. Now let's move on. Pass the sugar.*

Question to Teatime:  
(a translation of Nicanor Parra)

This sweating man seems  
to be a memory from a wax museum;  
look through the broken blinds:  
which is worth more, gold or beauty?  
Is the candle that moves as it melts more valuable  
than the wick fixed at the center?  
In the distance he'll hear a bell  
that only opens the wound a little more, or closes it.  
Is the water in the fountain more real  
or the girl looking back at herself?  
She doesn't know, and people pass the fountain  
to construct sand castles at the ocean:  
this see-through glass could be better  
than the hand of the man cupping it.  
He breaths air that is worn out  
from science by smoke of sadness:  
he can't return his foot  
to the same river---or so say the dry leaves.  
Teatime, toasted almond biscotti, one percent.  
Everything gets shaped into a species of the mist.

*Translator: Certainly. Now I'm glad you bring up the season. These people building sand castles---are they at the ocean? And do you see it more as people and less the people? Is the definite article important? Do you take cream too?*

*Parra: I meant it is summer now so yes, my man is sweating. But in the poem it is clearly approaching winter. Even an ordinary reader, I hope, would pick up on that. No cream. And people are people. It's not a matter of translation.*

Questions as Teatime  
(a translation of Nicandor Parra)

A museum, a waiter, a virile man.  
Through the bowl of a broken cup  
it is possible to see the most worthy,  
so I ask for both cream and sugar,  
gold and beauty,  
but the question sticks in my rib  
and nothing ever comes.  
Just that the sticking is  
a wound widening from far away.  
Tell me which is real:  
fountain water, or the girl within it.  
None of the people passing know  
how to build castles with sand:  
Is this transparent teacup superior  
to the breath of a tired atmosphere?  
Scissions will make smokes of sadness  
if you offer a light.  
What comes back can't be seen  
the same, say the dried leaves.  
Teatime, toast, margarine.  
I measure it in mist.

*Parra: I think the people in your poem are inclined to drink coffee.*

*Translator: But this isn't my poem.*



Teatime Musings  
(a transmutation)

The hourglass man recalls  
Memory's profile in a wax museum  
    A bit of nose drips onto the bulge of soft chin  
Look through the transparent shards  
    pooling in hot wax  
        in a chipped teacup:  
Which is worth more, gold or good-looks?  
Is the glowing candle more precious  
    than the wick fixed at its center?  
    Listen to the distant bell  
        As your wound opens and closes, or opens.  
And the whistle of the kettle  
    nearby and pulsating:  
Is the girl's reflection more real  
than the fountain from which it pours?  
Unknowingly passersby walk its perimeter  
and conduct sandcastles left by their pedal arches.  
Could this sea-glass be more warm-blooded  
than the hand of the man cupping it?  
Hissing now, fogging the tired edges,  
It emits a hollow sigh  
From sadness, by sadness, of sadness.  
Hardened like wax, he'll never know  
the same river twice---or so say the dry leaves.  
Teatime, marmalade, a pair of toast.  
Everything covered by the hiss of sand  
pouring through the bottleneck  
of a protruding mist.

*Memoria*  
[Manuel Altolaguirre]

La tierra te devuelve a mí.  
Si tú no hubieras muerto,  
Ni las aguas sin venas,  
Ni las frutas con piel,  
Ni los volcanes,  
En su frescor, sabor y fuego,  
Me darían tu presencia.  
Me sería indiferente  
Este globo erizado  
Que expulsa de su entraña  
Las vidas y los árboles,  
Para que lo rodeen  
De color y ternura.  
La tierra sabe bien  
que el sol y las estrellas  
son miradas de seres que no existen.  
Sólo creo en ti, planeta donde muero,  
Donde murió quien siempre me acompaña.

*Memoria*

[trans. Mackenzie Levitan]

The earth brings you back to me.  
If you hadn't died,  
Or the water without seams,  
Or the fruits with skin,  
Or the volcanoes,  
In their freshness, taste and fire,  
They would give me your presence.  
It would be indifferent to me,  
This thorny globe  
That expels from its core  
The lives and the trees,  
So that they surround it  
With color and tenderness.  
The earth knows well  
That the sun and stars  
are the looks of beings that don't exist.  
I only believe in you, planet where I die,  
where he who died always accompanies me.

*Epitafio*

[Manuel Altolaguirre]

Lejano amigo íntimo:  
Tan distante estás ya,  
Que tu reflejo en mí  
No puede ser más hondo.  
Tu recuerdo es profundo,  
Como grande es tu ausencia,  
Y tan largo el camino  
Que has andado en la muerte  
Como el que recorriste  
Traspasando mi alma  
Al subir a tu gloria.

*Epithet*

[trans. Mackenzie Levitan]

Intimate, distanced friend:  
How far you already are,  
Your reflection in me  
Couldn't be deeper.  
Your memory is profound,  
As big is your absence,  
And how large the road  
That you have walked in death  
Like the one you traversed  
Moving through my heart  
To rise to heaven.

*Elegía a Federico García Lorca*

[Manuel Altolaguirre]

Me olvido de vivir si te recuerdo,  
me reconozco polvo de la tierra  
y te incorporo a mí, como lo hace  
la parte más cercana de tu tumba,  
esa tierra insensible que suplanta  
el amoroso afán de tus amigos.

Acabada tu vida, permanece  
con su total contorno dibujado :  
no hay puerta que te lleve a lo futuro.

El árbol de tu nombre ha florecido  
en una incalculable primavera.  
La muerte es perfección, acabamiento.  
Sólo los muertos pueden ser nombrados.  
Los que vivimos no tenemos nombre.

Los míticos honderos de la fama  
tiran los cantos de tu nombre al mundo  
y el lago de la vida abre sus ojos  
con párpados de vidrio interminables :  
No hay montaña, no hay cielo, no hay llanura,  
Que en círculos concéntricos no agrande  
El eco de tu nombre esclarecido.

No es dolor fraternal, no es pena humana,  
Es parte, mi pesar, del sentimiento  
Que hace de las estrellas pensativas  
Flores sobre la noche que te cubre.  
Te escribo estas palabras separado  
Del cotidiano sueño de mi vida,  
Desde un astro lejano en donde sufro  
Tu irreparable pérdida llorando.

*Eulogy to Federico García Lorca*

[trans. Mackenzie Levitan]

I forget to live if I remember you,  
I recognize myself as dust of the earth  
And I incorporate you in me, as does  
The part closest your tomb,  
That insensible earth that supplants  
The loving fervor of your friends.

Finished, your life remains  
With its full contour drawn:  
There is no door that brings you to the future.

The tree of your name has flourished  
In an incalculable spring.  
Death is perfection, finishing.  
Only the dead can be named.  
We that live are without name.

The mythical slingers of fame  
Throw the cantos of your name at the world  
And the lake of life opens its eyes  
With endless glass lids:  
There isn't mountain, or sky, or prairie,  
That in concentric circles doesn't enlarge  
The echo of your clarified name.

It's not fraternal pain, or human sorrow,  
It's a part, my regret, of feeling  
That makes of pensive stars  
Flowers over the night that you cover.  
I write you these words separated  
From the quotidian dream of my life,  
From a distant star in which I suffer  
Your crying irreparable loss.

*Poesía vertical*

[Roberto Juarroz]

62

El hábito de mi soledad  
Se desparrama por mi compañía  
Y las cosas caben en un espacio menor que ellas.

Si quien me acompaña es un hombre,  
El ruedo de su atención  
Se asimila a la pulpa de la mía  
Y entre los dos viven un fruto.

Si es la sombra de un hombre,  
Cabe conmigo en la peripecia de callarme.

Si es la ausencia de un hombre,  
Pernoctamos ambos en los dedos flexibles  
De una espera que puede prescindir de sus razones.

Si ni siquiera es un hombre,  
Nos instalamos sencillamente  
En la raíz del uno anónimo.

El hábito de mi soledad  
Ha salvado el espacio,  
Lo ha disuelto en las cosas,  
Lo ha entregado a sus formas más astutas,  
Lo ha curvado sobre una superficie más interna.  
Y el espacio se mueve ahora con las cosas.  
62

*Poesía vertical*

[trans. Mackenzie Levitan]

The habit of my solitude  
 Scatters itself for my company  
 And things fit in a space smaller than them.

If the person who accompanies me is a man,  
 The wheel of his attention  
 Assimilates to the pulp of mine  
 And between the two live a fruit.

If it is the shadow of a man,  
 He fits with me in the unexpected event of quieting me.

If it is the absence of a man,  
 We stay the night in the flexible fingers  
 Of a waiting that can disregard its reasons.

If not even that is a man,  
 We simply install ourselves  
 In the root of an anonymous man.

The habit of my solitude  
 Has saved the space,  
 It has dissolved the space in things,  
 It has found its most astute forms,  
 It has curved it above the most internal surface.  
 And the space moves itself now with things.

*Extractos de la Relación de la vida del capitán Domingo de Toral y Valdés, escrita por el mismo capitán (1635)*  
 [Domingo de Toral y Valdés]

Conociendo la gente que les mataban con tan poco fruto, tomóse por acuerdo, por divertir al enemigo de sus trincheras, embestir á una media luna que remataba en la cabeza de un ramal de trinchera nuestra que estaba en la manguardia á mano derecha; hicieronlo dos compañías de portugueses, sin fruto, porque el enemigo la defendía valientemente, de tal manera que en aquella tarde murieron mucha gente de los portugueses y entre ellos dos Capitanes; fue [se] acudiendo al asalto y socorro y mudaron aquellas compañías, y en su lugar entró Don Francisco Lasso con su compañía, de quien yo era soldado, que en este día le tocó estar de guarda en la reta en la retaguarda de las trincheras; era de los que llaman los desbocados, y así quiso conseguir lo que otros no pudieron; hizo cuanta diligencia podía un valiente soldado, tanto que en el puesto le mataron diez y siete soldados y entre ellos los de más opinión y algunos Alféreces reformados, hasta que conociendo la dificultad, el Marqués le mandó que se retirase, haciendo alguna fortificación en la cabeza de la trinchera. Tenía ésta media luna encima de la muralla un torno con unas púas atravesadas de parte á parte por el eje, y estaban ensebadas y andaba muy ligero alrededor; la muralla estaba baja; los soldados procuraban subir y meterse por debajo del torno; para subir asían de las púas, y como estaban ensebadas escurrían, de suerte de que cuando estaban ya encima de la muralla; desluciaban de las manos las púas y con la fuerza de deslucio andaba el torno alrededor, y el que subía venía rodando por la muralla abajo con algún picazo ó alcabuzazo, y con esto estaba lleno el suelo de cuerpos muertos; en esta ocasión tres veces subió á la muralla Alonso de Leyte, natural de Madrid, trepando por la muralla asido de una pica del enemigo, y todos tres vino abajo; servía entre nosotros un tercio de ingleses que también se halló en todo lo que se ofreció; dellos y de los nuestros estaban las trincheras llenas de cuerpos muertos, que no se podía poner los pies en la tierra, sino es en ellos, pisándolos; unos que retirándose murieron, otros que allí mataron, reputáronse por quinientos los muertos; amaneció y manda-

ron que los retirasen y mi compañía también se retiró. Salió Don Francisco Lasso y todos tan otros de los que entraron, que parecían demonios de la noche que habían pasado, negros y deslustrados del humo de granadas, pez, alquitrán que echaban y de alcabucería, todos mustios y tristes, que apenas se atrevían á levantar ninguno la cabeza á mirar á otro; venía mi Capitán pasados los calzones y las ligas de alcabuzazos y del fuego y cascos de granada; díjele: Parece que á vuestra merced le han picado grajos. Respondióme: Es verdad, mas eran de plomo.

(...)

Íbase muy poco á poco con las trincheras; cada palmo que se adelantaba costaba mucha gente y así se atrasaba más; estaban [tan] cerca las del enemigo de las nuestras que las granadas se echaban con la mano se unas a otras y con ellas hacían daño notable porque en cualquier miembro ó parte donde daba le hacía pedazos. Llegaron á estar tan las del enemigo y las nuestras que para desembocarlas no faltaba más de con la pala echar la tierra que las dividía, de la una en la otra, sin descubrirse. Conociendo este el Marqués quiso desbocar las suyas en la del enemigo y mandó tomar al ejército las armas; guarneciéronse las trincheras muy bien de gente sobresaliente; halláronse en la plaza de armas dellas todos los más principales soldados y señores del ejército: el Marqués Don Luis de Velasco; Don Iñigo de Borja, que era General de la artillería; dos hijos del Conde de Benavente, Don Manuel y Don García Pimentel; un hijo del Marqués de la Algaba, otro del Marqués de las Navas, sin otros muchos extranjeros; guarnecidas las trincheras, puesta toda la gente en orden para cualquier cosa que pudiera suceder, volóse un hornillo que estaba debajo del terreno que dividía las trincheras nuestras del enemigo, para en volándole embestir; así se hizo, mas el enemigo tenía otra mina debajo de nuestro hornillo; esperó á que los nuestros embistiesen; entonces pególe fuego, abrióse la tierra y al volarle se tragó tres ó cuatro soldados; los demás salieron medio quemados; en este tiempo empezó la artillería y mosquetería de una y otra parte, en tanta cantidad que la tierra temblaba con el estruendo, y el humo y ruido de las balas que cubrían el cielo y cegaban y aturdíán los hombres; peleóse más de dos horas: nosotros, por ocupar puesto en las trincheras enemigas; él por defenderlas; al fin nos

hubimos de retirar y volvernos á fortificar de nuevo el mismo puesto que estábamos.

*Excerpts from the Account of the Life of Captain Domingo de Toral y Valdés, Written by Said Captain (1635)*  
[trans. Guy Sawyer]

*Between 1568 and 1648, the Spanish Empire fought a long and bloody war against the seven rebellious provinces that would later become the modern Netherlands. The Eighty Years War, as it was known, was an enormous drain on the Spanish economy, a financial burden that contributed to the decline of the Spanish Empire in the late 17th century. In the early decades of the 1600s, the collapse of the Empire was still far off, and the Spanish High Command was still optimistic about the prospect of defeating the Dutch and winning the war. In the summer and early fall of 1622, the Spanish Army of Flanders under the command of the Marquis di Spinola attempted to capture the fortress-city of Bergen-op-Zoom from the Dutch Free States. After a vicious four-month siege, the Spanish were forced to retreat back to their strongholds in the south.*

*Domingo de Toral y Valdés fought with the Army of Flanders during the siege. In the following passage taken from his memoir, he describes a series of engagements that took place in the opposing trench works that zigzagged through the fields outside the city walls. The Spaniards and their allies are attacking the Dutch lines.*

Our troops realized that they were being killed without gaining any advantage. In order to draw the enemy away from their trenches, they decided to assail a ravelin that overlooked a branch of the trench works on the right side of our forward lines [1]. Two companies of Portuguese attacked this ravelin without success, for the enemy defended it valiantly. Many Portuguese soldiers died that afternoon, including two of their captains. As others arrived to aid in the assault, the Portuguese troops withdrew, and in their place Don Francisco Lasso, under whom I served, entered with his company. On this day, he and his command had been assigned guard duty in the rear trenches, but he was one of those men who are called unbridled, and so wanted to achieve that which others could not. He carried out the attack

with as much diligence as a valiant soldier could, so much so that at that position the enemy killed sixteen of his soldiers, among them the most esteemed troops and a few reformed ensigns [2]. Seeing our difficulty, the Marquis di Spinola ordered him to fall back and build a fortified position at the head of the trench.

The ravelin was equipped with a beam that ran vertically along the top of its wall. Greased spikes had been passed through its center from one side to the other, then its two ends had been fixed to axles that allowed the spiked beam to spin freely. The wall was low, so our attacking soldiers sought to gain the top and enter the post by climbing up over the beam. In order to pull themselves up, they grasped the spikes, but, because these were greased, their grip slid. When they had already raised themselves above the height of the wall, their hands would slip and the beam would spin round, and those who moved upward would come tumbling back down, stabbed by a pike or hit by arquebus fire [3]. With this, the ground soon became covered with dead bodies. Through this danger, Alonso de Leyte, a native of Madrid, gained the top of the wall three times, climbing up by grasping on to an enemy pike, but all three times he came falling down.

A regiment of Englishmen that fought alongside us was also present in all that happened. The trenches were so full of the dead bodies of soldiers from our two companies that we could not set foot on the ground, but could only tread upon the dead, stepping from one corpse to another. Some had died as they retreated, others were killed there where they lay. In all, some 500 were reputed to have been slain.

Dawn broke, and they ordered the men to withdraw. My company fell back as well, Don Francisco Lasso and all the others returning from the fighting looking so different from the men that had gone into the trenches that it seemed as though the night's fighting had changed them all into demons, black with poured tar and smudged with smoke from grenades, burning pitch, and arquebus powder. Everyone was gloomy and sad, hardly anyone daring to meet the eyes of another man. My captain emerged with his garters and breeches full of holes from arquebus shot, fire, and shards of grenades. I said to him, "It looks like

as though your grace has been pecked by rooks.” “Yes,” he replied, “but they were birds cast in lead.”

(...)

The construction of the trenches continued very slowly. Every small advance cost many men, which slowed the digging even more. The enemy trenches were now so near to our own that the soldiers could throw hand-grenades from one to the other, and in this way great harm was caused to both sides, for any limb or body part hit by a grenade was torn to pieces.

The opposing trenchworks came to be so close that to burst into the trenches of the enemy, a man did not need to leave cover, but only to shovel away the earth that divided the one from the other. Knowing these circumstances, the Marquis wanted to break through into the enemy lines. He called the men to arms, and manned the trenches strongly with reserve troops. The place of arms was filled with the all the important soldiers and lords of the army [4]: the Marquis Don Luis de Velasco, Don Iñigo de Borja, who was General of the Artillery, Don Manuel and Don García Pimentel, two sons of the Count of Benavente, a son of the Marquis of Algaba, and a son of the Marquis de las Navas, not counting the many other foreigners who were also present. Our trenches were filled, and all the troops were ready to meet whatever might come.

We set off a powder charge that was buried under the ground that divided our trenches from those of the enemy, positioned to open a breach when it was detonated. The breach was opened, but the enemy had planted another mine beneath our own. They waited until our men had charged into the opening, then detonated this second set of explosives. The earth opened beneath our men, and the blast swallowed three or four soldiers, the rest coming out burned half to death. At this moment, artillery and musket fire roared from all around, in such quantity that the earth shook with their thunder, and the smoke and the noise of the bullets that covered the sky blinded the troops and left them stunned and senseless. We fought for more than two hours, our soldiers battling to occupy the enemy trenches, our foes fighting to defend them, but in the end we were forced to withdraw, and we refortified the same positions we had held before.

## NOTES:

[1] *Ravelin*, or “*demi-lune*” - A triangular outwork built to shield a wall or entrance to a fortification. They were usually open at the back, exposing attackers to fire from the main defensive works in the event of the position’s capture.

[2] To save money, the Army of Flanders would amalgamate several units into one, known as a *reformación*, or reformation. Reformed officers, or *reformados*, had lost their rank through this process and found themselves back among the ordinary soldiers (Parker xviii).

[3] *Arquebus* - A primitive matchlock firearm.

[4] *Place of Arms* - An enlargement in a trench where troops could assemble for an attack or use as a command post.

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“El frío”: Extracto del mundo  
[Juan José Millás]

Todo estaba roto. Cuando yo nací, el mundo no estaba roto todavía, pero no tardaría en estarlo. Soy el cuarto de una familia de nueve. Me preceden una chica y dos chicos. Cada uno se lleva con el anterior quince o dieciséis meses. Nací en Valencia, donde pasé los seis primeros años de mi vida, antes del traslado a Madrid. De Valencia recuerdo, el sol, la playa y algunas secuencias inconexas, como pedazos de película rescatados de un rollo roto:

- Me veo, por ejemplo, de la mano de mi madre. Estamos en un mercado donde ella adquiere algo que paga con las monedas que extrae de un monedero negro, con el cierre de clip. Pienso que en ese recipiente lleva el dinero que le han dado (¿el Gobierno?, ¿Dios?) para toda la vida y se me ocurre que es una irresponsabilidad sacarlo a la calle. Si lo perdiera o se lo robaran, qué sería de nosotros.

- Ahora estoy en un sitio alto, quizá en la cama de arriba de una litera. Hay a mi alcance unas cortinas que dividen el espacio en dos partes. Sé que no debo ver (ni oír) lo que ocurre al otro lado de las cortinas, pero no puedo dejar de hacerlo. Aunque no comprendo lo que veo (ni lo que oigo), me da miedo.

- En otro de esos trozos de película hay un pasillo en uno de cuyos extremos estoy yo con mi madre. Ella permanece agachada detrás de mí, cogiéndome de la cintura. Me pregunta al oído, riéndose, quién creo yo que es la persona que se encuentra al otro extremo del pasillo, detrás de las cortinas que limitan el recibidor. Las cortinas tiemblan ligeramente. Todo está oscuro, en blanco y negro. Yo sé que es mi padre el que las hace temblar, pero también sé que es un hombre. Hay ocasiones en las que papá es sólo papá y ocasiones en las que es sólo un hombre. Cuando sólo es un hombre, como ahora, me da miedo. Mi madre me empuja para que corra a abrazarle y yo me echo a llorar porque no quiero abrazar a aquel hombre.

No todo el caudal de esta época está formado por imágenes inconexas. Es verano, sábado o domingo, y mi madre, mamá, está preparando la comida para ir a la playa. Esa noche he

soñado que al hacer un hoyo en la arena encontraba una peseta. Se lo cuento a mi madre, que va de un lado a otro de la cocina, colocando cosas, y no sé si me escucha. Luego estamos en la playa, debajo de una sombrilla. Mis hermanos han corrido al agua. Mi madre dice que por qué no hago un hoyo, a ver si encuentro la peseta del sueño. Me pongo a escarbar y al poco aparece, en efecto, la moneda, el tesoro. Todos los días de mi vida recordé esta historia que implicaba la realización de un sueño. Me la contaba a mí mismo una y otra vez, como si no comprendiera su sentido. Muchos años después, tumbado en el diván de una dulce psicoanalista, una mujer llamada Marta Lázaro, la volví a contar, volví a contarme la historia de aquel sueño realizado y de súbito, para no ahogarme por la emoción, tuve que incorporarme: acababa de descubrir que mi madre, mamá, había escondido aquella moneda en la arena antes de sugerirme que hiciera el hoyo. En el instante de este segundo descubrimiento, mi madre llevaba más de un año muerta y ocupaba casi todas las horas de mi análisis. La anécdota está atribuida a un personaje de *La soledad* era esto, publicada en 1990.

Otra imagen de la playa: voy por la arena solo, corriendo entre los cuerpos tumbados al sol. Uno de esos cuerpos reclama mi atención. Pertenece a un hombre vestido con pantalones y camisa blancos. Lleva unos zapatos, también blancos, de los de rejilla, y se tapa la cara con un sombrero del mismo color. Duerme. Me quedo mirándolo, extrañado. En esto, viene un poco de aire que le descoloca el sombrero y veo su rostro. Es mi padre, pero sobre todo es un hombre. Salgo corriendo, espantado, hacia donde se encuentra mi madre, pero no le digo que papá está allí a unos metros de nosotros, como si no nos perteneciera o no le perteneciéramos. No sé qué hacía allí.

Otro día, también en la playa, hemos alquilado un patín, esa embarcación rudimentaria compuesta por dos flotadores paralelos unidos por cuatro o cinco travesaños. Estamos sobre él, en equilibrio inestable, mis hermanos y yo, además de papá. De repente, al imaginar el abismo que se abre debajo de nosotros, tengo un ataque de pánico. Quiero volver a la orilla. Mi padre me coge del brazo, me aprieta muy fuerte y me mira como si me quisiera matar, como si me fuera a matar. Se ha convertido en un hombre.

Esa noche, en la cama, tengo la fantasía de que me peleo con él y le venzo.

Todavía un poco más de Valencia: Voy al colegio de la mano de mi madre (la mano de mi madre, ¿cuántas veces ha de emplear esta expresión un hombre que relata su vida?). Voy, pues, de la mano de mi madre. Todos los días nos cruzamos con otra madre que lleva de la mano a su hijo ciego, quizá, pienso yo, a un colegio especial, de alumnos ciegos y profesores ciegos. Los imagino moviéndose como bultos por las estancias de ese centro especial. No sé por qué, me viene a la cabeza la idea de que entre todos esos niños hay uno que, aunque finge ser ciego, ve. Me estremece la idea. Todavía ahora, al imaginar a ese crío impostor en clase, en el comedor, en el recreo, siento una incomodidad inexplicable. El caso es que cuando nos cruzamos con el niño que no ve, yo cierro los ojos y camino algunos metros a ciegas para intentar averiguar qué siente el niño ciego, cómo es su universo, de qué manera percibe los peligros. Pero los abro en seguida, aterado. Un día se me ocurre la idea de que mientras yo permanezco con los ojos cerrados, el niño ciego ve, de modo que empiezo a cerrarlos con frecuencia, en clase de matemáticas, de geografía, durante la comida, en el recreo, también en el pasillo de casa, en el cuarto de baño, en la cocina... Tengo la convicción absurda de que entre ese niño y yo hay un vínculo misterioso que nos obliga a compartir la vista. Llega así un momento en el que paso casi la mitad del día con los ojos cerrados. Las monjas empiezan a llamarme la atención; mi madre me pregunta si me ocurre algo; empiezo a producir inquietud a mi alrededor. Poco a poco, abandono esta costumbre. Un día, dejamos de cruzarnos con el niño ciego. Me olvido de él. Muchos años más tarde, ya convertido en escritor, me acuerdo de aquella historia y decido hacer un reportaje sobre los ciegos. Para ello, paso una jornada en su compañía, con los ojos tapados por un antifaz. Lo hago para que el niño ciego de mi infancia pueda ver el mundo, sin interrupciones, durante un día entero. Caso cerrado, deuda cancelada. Ya no debo sentirme culpable de ver.

El colegio, en Valencia, era de monjas. Dejábamos los abrigos, al llegar, dentro de un armario. Durante la jornada, pensaba a veces en él, en el abrigo dentro del armario. Me parecía

que las prendas de vestir tenían un poco de vida y que estaban deseando que volviéramos a rescatarlas de la oscuridad. No recuerdo cómo aprendí a leer, me recuerdo leyendo en un libro de texto algo sobre don Pelayo. Se me quedó ese nombre, don Pelayo. Por lo demás, pronunciaba muy mal. En casa me llamaban lengua de trapo. A veces me miraba la lengua en el espejo, para comprobar que era de carne. Pero cuando dejaba de mirarla, la sentía realmente como un pedazo de fieltro. En más de una ocasión, la pasé por encima de las chaquetas, de los pantalones, de la ropa interior de mis hermanas y mi madre, convencido de que, al ser de trapo, poseía cualidades especiales para apreciar el sabor de aquellas prendas. Mi dificultad para pronunciar determinadas letras hacía gracia a los mayores. En las reuniones familiares me pedían que recitara poesías subido a una silla.

Cuando entraba en clase una monja determinada, cuyo nombre no recuerdo, yo notaba entre las ingles un movimiento anormal que sólo podía tratarse de una forma muy primaria de excitación venérea. El sexo.

El viaje de la familia a Madrid marcó un antes y un después, no sólo porque después fuimos pobres como ratas, o porque antes no hiciera frío, sino porque gracias a aquel corte sé perfectamente a qué etapa corresponde cada recuerdo. En la etapa de antes, una noche de Reyes vi, mientras me desnudaba, a un rey mago al otro lado de la ventana. Observé que mis hermanos no se habían dado cuenta y no dije nada.

Hay un momento en la etapa de antes de Madrid en el que se empieza a hablar del viaje. Parece que nos vamos de Valencia, pero la información se nos da de forma harto contradictoria. Las bocas de los adultos dicen cosas que sus ojos desmienten. Lo que aseguran las bocas es que se trata de mejorar. Madrid es la capital, un lugar en el que las oportunidades se multiplican, en el que hay de todo (pronto advertiría que no había playa, ni mar, ni calor, entre otras cosas esenciales), en el que uno puede llegar a ser lo que quiera... Estos mensajes van dirigidos sobre todo a mis hermanos mayores. Yo soy un oyente residual que escucha voces cuyos significados desconoce, aunque soy quizá el único capaz de advertir el contraste entre el mensaje de las bocas y el de los ojos.

Se trataba, en realidad, de un viaje desesperado. Una de

las noches anteriores a la partida estoy en la cama, despierto. Se abre la puerta y entran mis padres. Me hago el dormido. Mis hermanos lo están. Mis padres nos dan un beso y vuelven a salir de la habitación, pero se dejan la puerta abierta. Están quitando los cuadros del pasillo. Mi madre, con un rencor inconcebible, pide a mi padre que arranque también las alcayatas, que no deje nada, aunque destroce la pared. Impresiona escuchar su rabia, su amargura, su desesperación. Quizá su miedo. El miedo de los mayores produce pavor en los pequeños.

Viajamos en un tren con los asientos de madera. Llegamos a Madrid muy tarde, por la noche, y dormimos en una pensión de Atocha. Mi padre, mis hermanos y yo ocupamos una habitación enorme, con camas muy altas, de hierro. En la habitación hay un lavabo en el que mi padre, antes de acostarse, orina. Al darse cuenta de que lo estoy observando con extrañeza, se vuelve y me dice:

—Todo el mundo hace esto en las pensiones.

Al día siguiente vamos a la casa, tomamos posesión de ella. Es verano, de manera que no tenemos frío, todavía no. La casa se encuentra lejos, en una calle llamada de Canillas, dentro de un barrio conocido por el nombre de Prosperidad. Se trata de un suburbio, pero todavía no sabemos qué es un suburbio, por lo que tampoco captamos la contradicción. Los críos nos entusiasmos al ver aquel jardín, aquel patio, aquellos cuartos traseros llamados talleres. No nos cansamos de subir y bajar las escaleras, de abrir puertas, de descubrir rincones nuevos. La llegada, de momento, confirma lo que decían las bocas. No tardaría mucho en cumplirse lo que expresaban los ojos.

Durante el verano, para que no le molestáramos, nuestro padre nos obligaba a leer el Quijote por turnos, sentados en un banco del taller. Aquel modo de entrar en contacto con la obra de Cervantes fue un desastre. Cuando podíamos, nos escapábamos a la calle. Pero la calle era un territorio prohibido. Pronto se nos notificó un secreto: nosotros no pertenecíamos a la clase social de los chicos que jugaban en la calle. No debíamos mezclarnos con ellos. ¿Dónde estaban entonces los que pertenecían a la nuestra? En otros lugares, en otros barrios a los que no podíamos acudir porque carecíamos de la ropa adecuada, de los zapatos adecuados,

del dinero preciso. Habíamos caído en una condición infernal. Valencia, desde la distancia, se convirtió entonces no sólo en un espacio luminoso, cálido y con mar, sino en el Paraíso Perdido.

“The Cold”: Excerpt from Juan José Millás’ *The World* (2007)  
[trans. Georgina Kronfeld]

Everything was broken. When I was born, the world wasn’t broken yet, but it wouldn’t take long for it to become so. I’m the fourth in a family of nine. A girl and two boys precede me. We were all born fifteen or sixteen months apart. I was born in Valencia, where I spent the first six years of my life before the move to Madrid. From Valencia I remember the sun, the beach, and a few disconnected sequences, like fragments of film recovered from a broken reel:

- I see myself, for example, holding my mother’s hand. We’re in a market where she buys something. She pays for it with the coins she pulls out of a black change purse with a clasp. I think she carries all the money she’s been given (by the Government? By God?) for the rest of her life in this receptacle and it occurs to me it’s irresponsible to take it out of the house. If it were lost or if it were stolen, what would become of us?

- Now I’m in a high up place, maybe on the top bunk of a bunk bed. Within my reach are two curtains that divide the room in two. I know I shouldn’t see (or hear) what happens on the other side of the curtains, but I can’t stop. Although I don’t understand what I see (or what I hear), it scares me.

- In another of those fragments of film there’s a hallway. I’m at one end of it with my mother. She stays squatted down behind me, holding me by the waist. She whispers into my ear, laughing. Who do I think is the person at the other end of the hallway, behind the curtains that border the entryway? The curtains tremble lightly. Everything is obscure, in black and white. I know it’s my father who makes them tremble, but I also know it’s a man. There are times when Dad is just Dad and there are times when he’s just a man. When he’s just a man, like now, he scares me. My mother pushes me to run and hug him and I burst into tears because I don’t want to hug that man.

Not everything to do with this period is made up of disconnected images. It’s summer, Saturday or Sunday, and my mother, Mom, is preparing lunch to take to the beach. Last night I dreamt that when I dug a hole in the sand I found a peseta. I tell

this to my mother. She’s walking back and forth in the kitchen, arranging things, and I don’t know if she hears me. Later we’re at the beach, under an umbrella. My siblings have run to the water. My mother says why don’t I dig a hole, to see if I find the peseta from my dream? I start to dig and after a short while it actually appears, the coin, the treasure. Every day of my life I remembered this story, which implied a dream coming true. I told it to myself from time to time, as if I didn’t understand its meaning. Many years later, lying on the couch of a kind psychoanalyst, a woman named Marta Lazarus, I told it again, retold myself the story of that dream come true. Suddenly, I had to sit up so as not to choke with emotion: I was realizing that my mother, Mom, had hidden that coin in the sand before suggesting I dig the hole. At the time of this second discovery, my mother had been dead for more than a year and occupied almost all my hours of analysis. The anecdote is attributed to a character in *That Was Loneliness*, published in 1990.

Another image of the beach: I cross the sand alone, running between the bodies lying in the sun. One of these bodies grabs my attention. It belongs to a man dressed in a white shirt and pants. He wears a pair of white woven slip-ons, and he covers his face with a hat of the same color. He’s sleeping. I keep staring at him, startled. Just then, a breeze blows the hat from his head and I see his face. It’s my father, but above all, it’s a man. I run away, terrified, to where my mother is, but I don’t tell her Dad is only a few meters away from us. It’s as if we don’t belong to him or he doesn’t belong to us. I don’t know what he was doing there.

Another day, also at the beach, we’ve rented a paddleboat, that rudimentary craft made from two parallel hulls held together by four or five crossbeams. We’re in it, balancing unsteadily, my siblings and I, Dad too. All of a sudden, I think about the abyss opening below us and I have a panic attack. I want to go back to shore. My father grabs my arm, squeezes me very tight, and looks at me as if he wants to kill me, as if he were about to kill me. He’s changed into a man. That night in bed, I fantasize that I fight him and I defeat him.

Still a little more about Valencia: I walk to school holding my mother’s hand (my mother’s hand, how many times does a

man who tells his life story have to use that expression?) So I walk, holding my mother's hand. Every day we pass another mother who leads her blind son by his hand. Maybe, I think, he goes to a special school with blind students and blind professors. I imagine them moving like indistinct shapes through the rooms of this special center. I don't know why, but the idea gets into my head that among all those children there's one who can see, although he pretends to be blind. The idea makes me shiver. Even now, when I imagine this child impostor in class, in the lunchroom, at recess, I feel strangely uneasy. In any case, when we pass the boy who can't see, I shut my eyes and walk blindly for a few meters to try to learn what the blind boy feels, what his universe is like, how he senses danger. But I open them immediately, terrified. One day, the idea occurs to me that while I keep my eyes closed, the blind boy can see. So I start to close them often, in math class, in geography class, during lunch, at recess, as well as in the hallways of my house, in the bathroom, in the kitchen... I have the absurd conviction that there's a strange bond, between this boy and me, that forces us to share our sight. It reaches a point where I spend almost half the day with my eyes closed. I start attracting the nuns' attention; my mother asks if something's happening to me; I begin to create unease all around me. Little by little, I abandon the habit. One day, we stop passing the blind boy. I forget about him. Many years later, when I'm already a writer, I remember the whole story and decide to do an article about the blind. In order to do so, I spend an entire day in their company, my eyes covered by a blindfold. I do it so the blind boy of my youth can see the world, without interruptions, for a whole day. Case closed, debt paid. I no longer have to feel guilty for being able to see.

The school in Valencia was run by nuns. When we arrived, we left our coats inside a closet. Throughout the day, I sometimes thought about him, about the coat inside the closet. It seemed to me articles of clothing were a little bit alive and they were hoping we'd return to rescue them from the dark. I don't remember how I learned to read. I remember reading something in a textbook about Don Pelayo. That name, Don Pelayo, has stuck with me. In any case, my pronunciation was very bad. At

home they called me *tongue-tied*. Sometimes I looked at my tongue in the mirror, to make sure it was made of flesh. But when I stopped looking at it, it felt like a piece of cloth. On more than one occasion I licked our coats, our pants and my mother and sisters' undergarments. I was convinced that since my tongue was a piece of cloth, it should have a special ability for appreciating the flavor of those garments. The adults found my difficulty with pronouncing certain letters funny. At family reunions they asked me to recite poetry while standing on a chair.

When a certain nun, whose name I don't remember, walked into class, I felt a strange movement in my groin. It only could be a very early form of venereal arousal. Sex.

Our family's trip to Madrid marked a before and an afterwards, not only because afterwards we were dirt poor, or because there was no cold before, but because, thanks to that interruption, I know exactly which period each memory corresponds to. One night during the before period, on Three Kings' Day, I saw one of the Kings on the other side of the window while I was undressing. I realized my brothers hadn't noticed him and I didn't say anything.

There's a moment during the before Madrid period when they start to talk about the trip. It seems we're leaving Valencia, but the information is given to us in an extremely contradictory way. Adults' mouths say things their eyes deny. What the mouths assure us of is we're trying to improve our lives. Madrid is the capital, a place where opportunities multiply, where they have everything (I'd soon realize they didn't have a beach, an ocean, or heat, among other essential things), where one can become whatever he wants... Those messages are directed mostly at my older siblings. I'm a residual listener who hears voices without understanding their meanings, although maybe I'm the only one who's aware of the contrast between the message coming from their mouths and the one coming from their eyes.

In reality, it was a desperate trip. One of the nights before the departure I'm awake in bed. The door opens and my parents come in. I pretend to be asleep. My siblings are. My parents give us a kiss and leave the room, but they leave the door ajar. They're taking the paintings down from the hallway. With unimaginable

bitterness, my mother asks my father to rip out the hooks as well, to leave nothing behind, although it destroys the wall. It's shocking to hear her rage, her bitterness, her desperation. Maybe her fear. Grownup fear strikes terror into children.

We travel on a train with wooden seats. We arrive in Madrid very late at night, and we sleep in a boarding house in Atocha. My father, my brothers and I occupy an enormous room with very tall, iron beds. There's a sink in the room, which my father pees in before going to bed. When he realizes I'm watching him with astonishment, he turns and tells me:

"Everyone does that in boarding houses."

The next day we go to the house, we take possession of it. It's summer, so we aren't cold, not yet. The house is far away, on a street called Canillas, in a neighborhood known by the name of Prosperity. It's a working-class neighborhood, but we still don't know it's a working-class neighborhood, so we don't grasp the irony. We kids are excited when we see that yard, that patio and those quarters at the back of the house called workshops. We don't get tired of going up and down the stairs, of opening the doors, of discovering new nooks and crannies. The arrival, for the moment, confirms what the mouths said. It wouldn't take long to fulfill what the eyes expressed.

During the summer, so we didn't bother him, our father made us to take turns reading from *Don Quixote*, sitting on workshop bench. That was a disastrous way of coming into contact with the work of Cervantes. Whenever we could, we escaped to the street. But the street was a forbidden territory. Soon we were informed of a secret: we didn't belong to the social class of the children who played in the streets. We shouldn't mix with them. So where were those who belonged to our class? In other places, in other neighborhoods we couldn't go to because we lacked the right clothing, the right shoes and the right amount of money. We'd fallen into an infernal situation. From the distance, Valencia turned into not only a bright, warm place with an ocean, but into Paradise Lost.

*Evighet*

[Karin Boye]

En gång var vår sommar  
 en evighet lång.  
 Vi strövade i soldagar  
 utan slut en gång.  
 Vi sjönk i gröna doftande  
 djup utan grund  
 och kände ingen ängslan  
 för kvällningens stund.

Vart gick sen vår evighet?  
 Hur glömde vi bort  
 dess heliga hemlighet?  
 Vår dag blev för kort.  
 Vi strävar i kramp,  
 vi formar i strid  
 ett verk, som skall bli evigt -  
 och dess väsen är tid.

Men än faller tidlösa  
 stänk i vår famn  
 en stund då vi är borta  
 från mål och namn,  
 då solen faller tyst  
 över ensliga strån  
 och all vår strävan syns oss  
 som en lek och ett lån.

Då anar vi det villkor  
 vi en gång fick:  
 att brinna i det levandes  
 ögonblick,  
 och glömmet det timliga,  
 som varar och består  
 för den skapande sekunden,  
 som mått aldrig når.

*Evighet*

[trans. Anna Gors]

Our summer was once  
 an eternity.  
 We roamed about in sunny days  
 without an end.  
 We sank in fragrant greens  
 deep without a ground  
 and felt no anxiety  
 for the evenings moment.

Where then did our eternity go?  
 How did we forget  
 its holy secret?  
 Our day became too short.  
 We strive in spasms,  
 we form in combat  
 a labor, that shall be everlasting-  
 and its essence is time.

Yet still timeless drops  
 fall into our arms  
 a moment where we are gone  
 from purpose and name,  
 when the sun becomes quiet  
 over solitary stalks  
 and all our striving seems to us  
 like a game and a loan.

Then we sense the terms  
 we once received:  
 to burn in the living  
 moment,  
 and forgetting the temporal,  
 that lasts and endures  
 for the second of creation,  
 that the scale never reaches.

## **Original Works**



## 我对婚姻的看法

[Jorge Cortes Martinez]

因为我是同性恋，所以对我来说，婚姻是一件复杂的事情。在墨西哥有几个州许可同性恋人结婚，国家政府也承认他们的婚姻。但是这不是一个全国的法律，如同美国的州一样，墨西哥各州有权决定自己的民法。根据墨西哥最高法院在二零一二年四月十日发布的规定，各州不能控制同性恋结婚的权利。尽管如此，还是有很多州不允许同性恋结婚。这些情况非常复杂，这提醒我在墨西哥很多人到底还是不喜欢同性恋的人。

可是，我从墨西哥城来的朋友觉得因为在墨西哥城同性恋的婚姻是合法的，所以很多人非常开放，甚至赞成同性恋的人应该成为养父母。墨西哥城的政府已经决定同性恋人可以收养孩子。我姐姐也告诉我在她的朋友中很多人越来越开放。甚至连我姥姥，一个很传统的人，她也开始接受这种观念改革。因为我很想返回我的国家，这些新闻让我高兴不已。这个改变的影响很好，但是，我仍然不知道我到底想不想结婚。

一是，我不太喜欢做家务，我能承担我自己的责任和负担，可是我不知道是否我能接收别人的。这不是因为我觉得我不能维持一个家庭，而是因为建立家庭需要有强烈的意愿。相对来说，现在我不太愿意建立一个家庭。另一个原因是事业方面的考虑：我未来想成为一位成功的专家，哪方面的我还不知道，但应该跟中国

有关，所以我可能没时间经营一个家庭。

二是，如果我有一天要结婚，我想结婚之前能赚大钱，这样就能财力稳定和雄厚。

原因是我不喜欢依赖别人也不喜欢别人依赖我。还有，如果我想有孩子，为了抚养他们，

馬遠喬我要有足够的钱。而且，如果我永不结婚，我也能收养一个孩子。虽然有点难，不过孩子们不一定需要同时有父亲和母亲，有一个人抚养他们就够了。

三是，结婚是一种传统的社会制度。保守的人非常保护它。我并不是保守和传统的

人，我是很开放和现代的。所以我不相信传统的婚姻，而且我觉得如果情侣们想在一起住他们并不一定需要结婚。

总的说来，我对婚姻现在没有什么兴趣。未来我的看法很可能会改变。

馬遠喬

我对婚姻的看法  
[Dylan McIntyre]

现在美国的离婚率是百分之五十左右。很多年轻人看着这个统计数字就认为应该不结婚。美国最近的经济灾难也导致很多夫妻因为经济问题吵架，就使夫妇离婚了。从此，很多年轻人把不好的经济条件跟不好的婚姻划上等号。虽然我的看法跟一般年轻人的很类似，但我还想要结婚。我有几个婚姻的条件：一是我必须二十八岁以上才要结婚，二是我念完了研究所以后才要结婚，三是我找到了稳定的工作以后才要结婚。第一个条件是为了我不闪电式结婚。我不羡慕闪电式结婚的人。我想跟我的伴侣渐渐达成结婚的共识，而为了做好心里条件我则决定二十八岁以上才要结婚。为了拥有成功我念完了研究所以后才要结婚。对婚姻来说，重要的是两个人都很成熟。我觉得念完了研究所以后，我就变得比较成熟。如果两个人都不成熟，他们就会有不良的婚姻。为了我和我伴侣的前途，我找到了稳定的工作以后才要结婚。我希望赚很多钱，有健康保险，有甜蜜的生活什么的。如果我跟我伴侣要添宝宝，我们俩都应该有抚养孩子的责任。好的婚姻有很多因素。人们不见得把爱情跟好的婚姻划上等号。爱情只是一个小的因素。我一找到心上人，就要渐渐决定应不应该结婚。

“C'est rien du tout”  
[Ysabel Yates]

J'ai fait un cauchemar  
les mots tombaient  
de  
la  
page

et il n'y avait rien d'écrit  
dans mes livres préférés  
C'était bon ce que  
nous avons fait hier  
et je le ferais  
une fois encore

Mais aujourd'hui  
mon corps et mon esprit  
sont tombés en  
morceaux ensemble

En bas pour toi est haut  
et tu ne dois pas  
me permettre de tomber  
trop loin de haut

Merci de me montrer la fin.

חסויל מַמְקָד  
[Orit Yeret]

אני לא מבין למה  
הם רוצים שאני אשאר,  
לא עשיתי כלום  
והם רוצים למחוק אותי  
לחסל.  
אני לא יכול להתעלם  
מהקולות שבראש שלי,  
הם אומרים לפעל מהר  
לברוח.  
אבל אני רוצה לדרוש  
את האמת,  
לתפס את הרגע  
ובכל מחיר  
להלחם.

שמש בגבעון  
[Orit Yeret]

התיק שלי צלצל  
וסופ שאלה: "מה אפשר לעשות עם השמש?"  
ענתי שמתחשק לי לאכל בונה.  
אה, זה בגלל ששניהם צהבים"  
לא, שניהם בשלים  
לא, שניהם אמתיים"  
שום דבר אינו אמת בעולם הזה.  
אוי, סופ...  
אוי, התחלה... למה את כל-כך קשה?"  
כי אני מיחדת  
לא, כי את חולמת"  
אני חולמת בתבניות ספרותיות.  
באמת, סופ...  
מה נשתנה?"  
האיש היושב מולי בתלצה הירוקה  
את לא קוהרנטית"  
זה לא מדיק, אני דרוכה  
"השמש מרגישה כמו פצצה".

אָסוּפִית  
[Orit Yeret]

היא נושמת אור  
וגושפת עשן  
כמו מנוע קיטור  
שלא אבד מחוסנו.  
היא ממלמלת משפט לא מובן  
אמרות סיסמאות, כמו -  
הכל או לא כלום"  
ולוגמת מכוס ניר.  
פורידיה זורם הקפה השחר  
הביץ המקריד  
שהרגילה את עצמה  
לשותות, לאהב, לשבא.  
קשה להאמין שפעם הייתה  
ילדה שקופה  
מפחדת  
לבושה ורד.  
כעת האפר שולט בגופה  
מעוות את פניה  
האור המקרין  
אסופית בודדה.

הַסְלָם  
[Orit Yeret]

הסלם שמוביל אל הגג  
מחבר בין שום מקום לבין שמים,  
על המשקוף תלוי דגל התקנה  
ואני צופה בחלון העונות.  
מול עיני משנים העלים את צבעם:  
ירק הופך צהוב הופך חום  
ואני, באלו כלום  
נותרת שקטה.  
ההדרכה שסברה לי  
ההכונה העליונה, אני יודעת...  
חסר המטרה  
הסערה, או העדרה.  
למצא את הדרך  
לטעות  
לבקש הוראות  
להמשיך מעלה.

על הקטב  
[Orit Yeret]

איה לכתב? (כתבי!)  
איה להתחיל? (התחילי!)  
מאבק פנימי  
בין אמת לבדיקה  
בין מציאות לתודעה  
בין גוף לנפש.  
אינני יכולה... (פשוט כתבי!)  
היא בתוכי ואני בה  
קשורות לעד  
קשר של תוכחה.  
כתבי ואניח לה! (אבל איה?)  
כתבי - "אני רוצה" (אני רוצה - מה?)  
"לומר לה" (לומר לה...)  
"אינני יכולה" (אינני יכולה...)  
אינני יכולה יותר.

*Un'opera, due processi*  
[Jeremy Bannister]

"Facciamo un progetto", Anna ci ha detto  
"che spieghi l'Italia, e non abbia errori"  
poi abbiamo deciso di fare un video,  
sul creare un pasto, ma lì non è rimasto...

"Un film fatto di foto? Ma, sembra rotto!"  
"Se mentre lo fai stai attento, solo ci vogliono cento  
ore - il pomodoro, si taglia da solo, rappresenta il cuore d'Italia,  
e si apre da solo davanti a noi per mostrarci la sua anima"

Le persone che l'hanno visto ancora non hanno capito  
quello che l'Italia è, ma sono vicini perché  
almeno sanno l'importanza, per un italiano che pranza,  
di questo bellissimo pacco, Il Pranzo al Sacco

*Un'opera, due processi*  
[John Cherichello]

Abbiamo ricevuto un compito per la classe d'italiano.  
Volevamo creare un video in italiano.  
Abbiamo pensato a che cosa fare.  
Un documentario, uno skit, un libro per bambini?  
Un video in stop-motion è stata l'idea finale.  
Abbiamo raccolto i materiali.  
Avevamo bisogno di oggetti di scena, una macchina fotografica,  
e pazienza.  
Dovevamo decidere quale cibo aggiungere per l'animazione.  
Abbiamo trascorso una giornata a scattare foto.  
E poi, molto tempo al computer, per la compilazione, il montag-  
gio ecc.

Abbiamo sentito che alle persone è piaciuto  
Quando lo abbiamo mostrato in pubblico  
molti sono stati colpiti!  
Abbiamo messo molto impegno nel rendere il video.  
Con più tempo, avremmo potuto aggiungere di più, curarlo un po'  
di più, ma  
penso proprio che abbiamo circa quattro minuti di qualità.

*La gaviota moribunda que vuela sobre un montón elephantino*  
[Sarah Coolidge]

*(En el estilo de César Moro)*  
No quiero ver ni la cabellera sangrienta del gallo humano que  
anda a través del parque al mediodía  
Ni al otro hombre bestia con bolsillos de escamas de trigo  
El vacío del cielo que corre en los ríos de coronas plásticas como  
la saliva del deseo  
El vacío de la sangre de la sombra de un piano mojado y arruina-  
do  
El vacío nebuloso que vuela con la gaviota moribunda que vive  
dentro de un martillo elephantino violento  
El olor de la canción del volcán que espera el tren que viene  
siempre de lejos  
El mar sube como el gallo de trigo que va a morir en la luna  
ecuestre después de su último bocado  
Y las gaviotas dan vueltas alrededor de una boca abierta lunar  
En que aparece el montón elephantino como una gaviota soñando  
El trigo cubre todos con su olor de plumas del gallo y el martillo  
desciende a la torre del gallo humano  
Tu rostro me mira con cuatro piernas del caballo que vuela alre-  
dedor de mí  
Soy el pico donde mueven las sombras húmedas de las gaviotas  
lejos del sol acuático  
No quiero ver ninguna cabellera mezclada con los vestigios de  
granizada zigzagueando en los ojos primordiales de un cerdito  
campesino

*Drosophila*  
[Sarah Coolidge]

(En el estilo de Juan José Arreola)

De la familia *Drosophilidae*, estas 'moscas de fruta', como son conocidas, vuelan sin pensar en nada. Sus ojos rojos parecen meros ornamentos. Todos conocen la imagen de una nube de moscas dando vueltas alrededor de una manzana madura. Y todos saben también como tenderles una trampa. Un tarro lleno de un poquito de vino, cubierto en papel film con agujeros apuñalados en la superficie. Estas pequeñas moscas se ahogan en el líquido azucarado como el hombre en sus deseos más profundos. No existe ninguna mosca *zen*. Tampoco existe el papel film para el Buda.

*Drosophila* es también el enfoque de los experimentos científicos. Su estructura genética es conocida mejor que la nuestra propia. Los científicos despliegan el ADN y encuentran un documento en clave. Y siempre dicen lo mismo: ¡es tan compleja esta peste de la fruta!

*El ratón*  
[Sarah Coolidge]

El ratón de la especie de *Mus* es bien conocido como el enemigo del gato predatorio. Con la cola rozando detrás, corre desde la sombra de su agujero en la pared a través de la vasta alfombra hacia la cocina para volar un solo bocado o, sí es más valiente, todo lo que puede llevar en sus manecitas. El gato se esconde en un rincón bajo una sombra de siesta y con el sonido de los pasos ligeros de su vecinito enemigo, abre un ojo y empieza a conspirar una trampa. Esto es la estructura político-cultural que empieza dentro de nuestras propias casas. Viven en las paredes, en graneros y en laboratorios donde tratan de navegar un laberinto perverso de la creación humana.

En los textos antiguos se dice que el hígado del ratón crece con la luna llena. Los científicos que dan el alcohol a estas creaturas lunares quizá pueden ver alguna diferencia en su aptitud durante estas noches. Este ratón cruza los laberintos con un deseo ardiente de lograr una esfera que brilla al fondo de su mente. Olfatea y se escabulle hacia una idea luciente escondida por las paredes fabricadas. Cuando finalmente gira al último rincón, se encuentra cara a cara con un bloque de queso que huele a la muerte. La luz apagada de su mente, se acerca al bloque con un fatalismo que sólo puede conocer el alma de un ratón.

*Salamandra*

[Sarah Coolidge]

Han encontrado fósiles de las salamandras ancianas en China y Kazakhstán que datan del período Jurásico. Tienen las cabezas de rana con colas más desarrolladas. Empiezan su vida bajo el agua con branquias y cuando logran a ser adultos desarrollan los pulmones, salen del agua y se hacen criaturas de la tierra. Esta metamorfosis es como el hombre de una edad madura que quita sus pecados para llegar a la tierra de Dios.

Sin embargo, hay algo demoníaco de estas bestias. Dicen los sabios que las salamandras pueden vivir en el fuego sin ser heridas. Otros dicen que pueden también extinguir el fuego. ¿Has visto una vez un leño negro ardiendo y chispeando en las llamas rojas del fuego? Si miras con atención quizá vas a ver el movimiento rápido de la lengua y la oscilación mórbida de su cola larga. Su veneno es peligroso y puede matar a mucha gente con un movimiento de su cola. Les gustan los árboles de fruta y andan sobre sus ramas, infectando las frutas con su veneno sin pensar en las consecuencias, o si lo piensan no se preocupan.

Nuestro Octavio Paz nos dice que son como los axolotl. Los llama martirios de los aztecas, sacrificados para crear la luna, el sol, y la cultura latinoamericana. Pero el axolotl es el niño perpetuo de esta especie. Nunca quita las branquias y nunca desarrolla los pulmones con los que podría inhalar el humo venenoso que infecta el alma de las salamandras. El axolotl queda en el mismo charco en que cayó Xolotl hace muchos años durante su huida del sacrificio. Y allá quedamos nosotros, en el río para quitar el sabor del fraile Sahagún. Vemos una figura roja, las manecitas moviéndose, una cabeza triangular que no nos mira porque no hay vidrio entro él y nosotros. Hay solamente la superficie del agua que muestra las impresiones violentas de ciertas gotas de lluvia.

*La pantera nebulosa*

[Mackenzie Levitan]

El padre de la pantera nebulosa venía de la oscuridad, de las sombras que resistían el paso de tiempo. Su negrura era invisible, sus movimientos cautivos y furtivos. La madre era bronceada y cariñosa como el sol. Pero de todos modos, ella mantenía un aire de distancia que venía de una sofisticación e una indiferencia. La pantera no sólo es nebulosa a causa de las dos pieles que le dieron las manchas sino también a causa de su característica. Es cariñosa, está cerca del sol, pero distante, con la habilidad de causar la oscuridad.

La pantera vive en ciclos que duran tres días. En el primer día, duerme en su cueva y causa la oscuridad para que pueda dormir mejor. De lejos y de cerca, la gente y los animales de la selva empiezan a buscar a la pantera nebulosa para recapturar la luz. Ellos recogen armas y veneno para destruir la pantera y no vivir en la oscuridad. La pantera sigue durmiendo.

El segundo día, la gente y los animales se acercan a la cueva donde está la pantera y empiezan a planear su ataque. Los animales pequeños van a picar a la pantera, los aves van a molestarla con sus sonidos, y los animales más grandes y las humanas van a atacarla con armas y ferocidad. La pantera sigue durmiendo.

El tercer día, muy temprano y todavía sin luz, todos empiezan a prepararse. Los serpientes y las arañas se aproximan a la bestia durmiendo. Pero con la primera pica de una mosca, la pantera nebulosa abre sus ojos y su boca. El olor que emite cuando abre su boca es demasiado y los seduce a todos. En un trance, todos se convierten en víctimas del hambre voraz de la pantera. Sólo en este día, después de su banqueta, viene el sol. Pero nadie está allí para disfrutarlo.



