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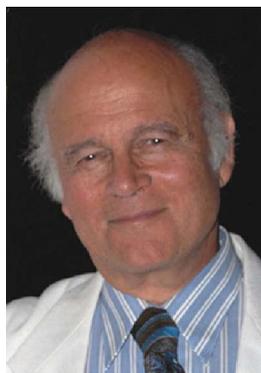
THE VOICE OF THE TRANSLATOR: AN INTERVIEW WITH SALGADO MARANHÃO AND ALEXIS LEVITIN

Rainer Schulte

The interview with the Brazilian poet Salgado Maranhão (SM) and his translator Alexis Levitin (AL), moderated by Rainer Schulte (RS), was conducted in Dallas on November 16, 2012. Since Maranhão is not fluent in English, Levitin translated all the questions addressed to Maranhão and the respective responses from him. In addition, Sarah Valente (SV), of Brazilian origin and fluent in Portuguese, assisted with the translation of specific words and also asked questions.



Salgado Maranhão is the author of nine collections of poems. His book of poems *A Cor da Palavra* (*The Color of the Word*) was named the best book of poetry by the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 2011. *Sol Sangüíneo* (*Blood of the Sun*) is Maranhão's first book to appear in English translation.



Alexis Levitin has translated more than thirty books, mostly from the Portuguese, including Clarice Lispector's *Soulstorm* and Eugenio de Andrade's *Forbidden Words*. He is a distinguished professor at SUNY–Plattsburgh.

RS: May I ask my colleague, Alexis Levitin, to briefly introduce your colleague, a well-known poet from Brazil?

AL: I'm glad to do so. I'm here with Salgado Maranhão touring the United States, giving readings from his new book in English, *Blood of the Sun* (*Sol Sangüíneo*), which was published at the

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end of August by Milkweed Editions. This is the first book of Salgado's poetry to be published in English. In Brazil, he has published eight collections of poetry. Last year he won the award from the Brazilian Academy of Letters for the best book of poetry for the year. That book was his collected poetry under the title *A Cor da Palavra* (*The Color of the Word*).

RS: It is my pleasure to talk with you today because it is very rare that we have both the poet or writer together with his or her translator. And since Alexis—whom I have known for many, many years—has himself published many translations from Brazilian poets, I am very much interested in hearing how a translator works together with his poet. Since Salgado is both a poet and translator, I would like for you [Alexis Levitin] to comment on how you began your collaboration to start the translation of Salgado's newest collection of poems, and then I would like to go into some of the discussions specifically related to the poetry and the difficulties you encountered while translating it and perhaps also saying something in general about where you come from, what your background is, and how his poetry comes to flourish.

AL: This all began five years ago when we met at a conference at Brown University in 2007. We both were invited there by the chairman of the Brazilian and Portuguese Studies department, Luiz Fernando Valente.

SM: The first issue was to see whether Alexis Levitin would have some feeling for my poetry and would—how could one put it—identify with the spirit of the poetry.

My language and syntax are not easy to translate. Among other things, I create neologisms, and I have syntactical structures that aren't really the norm in daily conversation.

Besides that, a source of my poetry is a tradition in the northeast of Brazil that springs from the *repentistas*, who are a kind of modern-day offspring of the troubadours of Provence in medieval and late medieval times. They are traveling, spontaneous poets who go from village to village and create poetry on the spot based on themes provided by the villagers, and I grew up listening to that. That had a significant influence on me. So working with Alexis was very interesting for me. I got to see what his *modus operandi* was, and I think that the result of our collaboration was a translation into English that is quite successful in the new language. What I enjoyed most working with Alexis was his combination of competence and obstinacy. His obstinacy or tenaciousness to find the right word, *le mot juste*.

AL: I don't like the term *le mot juste*, which Flaubert coined, because as a translator I don't believe that there is *le mot juste*, but I do believe that there are many *mots justes*. In any case, to return to Salgado, he is basically saying that he likes my tenacity in seeking *le mot juste*, in the plural. In seeking a good resolution of the problem of representing what he said or what he felt in the new language, in English.

RS: May I just say, I'm fascinated in your poetry, with your concept and your realization of the "word." You are obsessed by that, you talk about the border of the word, you have word combinations that explode with energy. Could you say a little more about what you mean by the boundary of the word?

AL: The famous Brazilian poet Ferreira Gullar said about Salgado's poetry that it is a poetry about the word. He said that Salgado is a poet who works with the word as if it were a totem, as if it had a value in and of itself.

SM: I spent a good part of my childhood, in a sense, without a right to words. Having lived for many years without real access to the word, when I finally was able to have the word, to possess the word, I probably felt that it was almost a talisman to me in its importance.

RS: You have one line in there that says: “The trail of my words” in one of the poems, “The trail of my words,” and then you talk about the ravenous sound of the word. If one enlarges this, it is also the juxtaposition that you continuously have in your poetry. I think that goes beyond the sound of your poetry. It is the juxtaposition of incongruous poetic moments, the visualization of the poetic moment through the vitality of your metaphorical language.

SM: I am moved by your observation of the importance of the word to me as if it were almost a Siamese twin. This observation is very appropriate for the visualization of the poetic insight or perception. My life, after all, was a life of real struggle in my childhood, and the word in my poetry is a word struggling, wrestling to find its radiance.

RS: Its radiance?

AL: Its radiance, *o brilho*.

RS: Oh, its, yes, radiance. Yes, I understand, but that also goes back to your words and the way you poetically think, they are very closely related to the sensuous objects that you use in your poetry.

SM: Yes, you’re absolutely right. That’s because for me the word, even though it’s an instrument, is intimately involved with the world of substance from which it came, and in fact, it permeates that world.

RS: That’s extremely important for your poetry. Your poetry is—the word is there, but the word is beyond the word because in each case it is anchored to the visualization of the object that will bring out what you want to do, poetically speaking.

SM: I’m very pleased with your sensitive reaction to and analysis of my poetic technique.

AL: To carry out further in a metaphor what he thinks you’re saying, for him the word is like the skin or the envelope for an experience of the universe of life.

RS: Well, in one line you say: “My home is my skin.” And the other one that is connected with this—and this is where I think the refinement of your poetry comes out—you have another moment where you say that the word entertains the wind. And that, to me, is another poetic transformation that shows that your poetry is, on the one hand, very, very strong and explosive and on the other hand, the reflection of a very refined poetic process and perception. Yes, and you even go one step further because you then talk about the flowers of water, so the word is, on the one hand, ravenous and on the other hand, it is ethereal.

AL: Now, here’s a poem from the first section of the book *Blood of the Sun* that consists of eight poems, an eight-poem sequence. And in one of these poems, Salgado feels he’s presented himself quite autobiographically. About himself. “A birth / Like gathered grain without a

monogram / or *made in . . .* // — To be born was to domesticate the stones." Words give Salgado the opportunity and the possibility of domesticating or perhaps we could say dominating the harshness and hardness of life, in this verse represented by stones.

RS: Yes, but if you look right there, before this, you see: "I recognize myself in the white that welcomes the trail of my words. In the murmur of syllables that work my woven cloth."

AL: Salgado says that he feels that his task is to domesticate or even to make softer stone itself, to soften stone itself. And in each case you use objects that come from your biography, wherever that was, that then become the medium of presenting or creating that kind of contrast. These things that he takes from his childhood and his growing up, stone and heat, they become the vehicle, you say for what?

SM: They become the vehicle to contrast, to juxtapose the softness which at the same time is to soften the hardness. For me poetry was an instrument of salvation. The conflicts, obstacles, difficulties in my life were such that I had to sublimate them by diving into, or immersing myself in, the world of language and of words.

AL: It is the ability to turn it into poetry, to turn it into words, that saved him from the great frustration that he would have felt if he were simply dealing with these unending obstacles.

SM: I protected myself in this wrapping or this cloak of words, but indeed this very cloak itself at times has thorns in it.

RS: You have, on the surface, a poetry that has the energy and the violence of coping with some emotional or intellectual or philosophical issues. Your poetry is guided by two movements at the same time: the one where we feel the internal struggle, and then how you transform the struggle through your words and images and create the poetic atmosphere.

AL: It seems to me that what you really were saying, is that it looks to you as if his poetry grabs hold of defeat and turns it through words into a kind of victory.

RS: Yes. Because when you finish reading these poems, you're not depressed.

AL: [Laughter] He has been told before that it is the hardness of his verses that remains with the listener or the reader and somehow uplifts them.

SM: So, I have a vision and a being that is strongly impacted by beauty—

AL: By the beauty of art and of life.

SM: So, as a result, I really—in spite of all the suffering—cannot accept or see life without its beauty. My words want to get over, get beyond adversity and penetrate or capture the world of magic and of beauty. Because I know that life isn't only a hard struggle.

RS: And that's in the combination and the metaphorical expressions you create that overcome that basic sentiment.

SM: That is, I think, the purpose of my poetry: to transcend the obvious suffering or pain that it at the same time presents.

RS: Let's move a little further now, because I am primarily interested in the poetry itself. But let's move a little further now into the collaboration between you and the translator and maybe become a little specific about the kinds of problems, the kinds of things that you encountered while you were translating, because everybody says that translation is a failure. [Laughter] I mean, to quote William Weaver and others who have said this.

AL: I completely agree. He just said: "Our collaboration really only could work because we have a very similar vision of what poetry is all about." We actually share, to a significant degree, our vision of life; not just our vision of poetry and its function and its beauty.

SM: Also, in the process of doing this work together, we have developed and strengthened a real friendship nurtured by the work.

AL: So, Salgado thinks that the difficulties we encountered were mitigated, were diminished by a kind of a mutual understanding we had that one could even call a sensorial understanding. What he means is that we sense what the other is trying to do, either in the poem or in the translation.

Well, this is very interesting. What Salgado said is that in my searching for the word in translation, quite often the result would be something that was uplifting to him because he had been hoping for or waiting for that particular rhythm, that particular sound. So, even if he doesn't know English, he can hear the music of the language and that is what he's responding to with a certain joyous—what is the word in English? Where you feel things together, a kind of a sympathy. A kind of a sympathy for the result in English. Without knowing lexically or caring that much.

RS: That's a tuning in.

AL: A tuning in.

RS: So, these are the positive sides, and very beautiful. What do you think are the limitations, and maybe even the irritating moments, of working together with the poet or the poet with the translator?

SM: I am, in general, a level-headed guy. My temperament doesn't vary a great deal, I'm not easily perturbed. Alexis Levitin is a man of strong emotions.

RS: And opinions.

SM: But he is very flexible when he encounters a mistake that he's made, and is willing to search for a solution to correct it.

AL: This demonstrates a solid soul searching for the truth; an integral soul, a whole soul searching for the truth.

SM: Even if the truth isn't exactly always—

AL: A favorable truth. In other words, what I discover may not be exactly what I was looking for, but I will be searching for the truth that will satisfy our mutual need to be true to the feelings of the original poem, which after all this is.

Since we both have had a lot of experience with life and we are in that sense quite mature, we don't get, we don't stumble over or cling to a little problem that could slow us down or that could distract us from the main task.

Well, Salgado made a comment I really like here. He said: "One of the interesting problems that we encountered again and again, and had to deal with, was how do you translate the preposition?" I heartily support him in this respect. I think somebody should write a book about the difficulty of translating prepositions. I think they are the most fascinating underrated words in the language and even for an American to read an American poem is an adventure in the realm of prepositions. English seems to be a language that is very economical with its prepositions. Salgado says that in Portuguese he uses prepositions, tries to use them in a flexible way so that his image or his metaphor can have a polysemic effect that suggests more than one thing to one reader. He likes his poem to have a potentiality and to be able to go in different directions.

Aha! Well, this is very interesting. He said that one of our recurring problems is that English, in its logical exigencies, always wants to know what the subject of a verb or an action is; and very often in Portuguese, this subject is hidden, isn't actually named.

RS: Could we, perhaps, ask both of you to come back to the translation itself and point to some of the specific problems you might have encountered, how satisfied you were or not satisfied, and how you tried to solve the problems.

AL: Umberto Eco spoke of the open-endedness of the literary work and how it's never complete. And, with a smile on his face, Salgado is saying: "This is what we found in some of our translating." And I completely agree with that. In the introduction to my selected poems of Eugenio de Andrade, I said that the poem is never finished; it is only abandoned. And that is certainly true of translation.

I will now read this in English and then I'd like to discuss places where I think the translation is very successful in playing with sounds, and I will discuss one line where it was not successful and which I have changed in my readings since the book came out. *Ecstasy*. "Hibiscuses dance / In the photograph / They dance / Motionless / Absorbed / In their crimson / Calligraphy / Hibiscuses of blood / They dance / They dance in the eyes / Of the city / They dance these climes / They dance these rhymes / They dance in the eye / Of the photograph / They dance lithe lithograph of day / They dance exotic / They dance exact / In ecstasy / Statically / They dance / They dance / They surrender." Now, if you think of surrender as a soft wilting away into submission, then you might like the sound of the end of [the] English translation. But when Salgado reads the words "surrender" or "they give themselves," they sound exactly like a continuation, an echoing of "they dance." Because in Portuguese, "they give themselves" does sound like "they dance." In English, "they surrender" does not sound like "they dance." So, now that we're going around the country reading this poem aloud, I am not happy with the ending I gave to the poem originally and I want it to end this way: "They dance exotic / They dance exact / In ecstasy / Statically / They dance / They dance / They yield to dance." That way I get the word "dance" tying up the poem at the end, a final repetition of the word "dance" and the rhythm. "They yield to dance" ties up the poem.

The positive, powerful rhythm that's been established all along. Now, many translators would have ended the poem "they surrender" and never would've felt that there is anything wrong with that because it's the correct translation. But I feel it isn't the correct translation because sound is so important to Salgado and to me. Now, where do I think in this poem the English really triumphs? "They dance these climes / They dance these rhymes." There I got exactly what he was doing. But then he goes on. *Olho, cromo, fotografia, dia*. I can't get all of that. But this is what I do to compensate. "They dance these climes / They dance these rhymes / They dance in the eye / Of the photograph / They dance lithe lithograph of day / They dance." Now: I, lithe, lithograph. Lithe is the word I put into the poem that is not in the original. By putting it in I make a tie between eye and lithe, assonance; and lithe and lithograph, consonance. And so the word "lithe" is trying to compensate for the loss of the slant rhyme in the original: *olho, cromo, rima, fotografia*. Also, I think, in English what works very well is that luckily, exotic, exact, ecstasy, and statically all are the same words in English as they are in Portuguese. And so all those *ex* and *st* explosive sounds are preserved in the English. And that is, of course, good fortune.

SM: The other poem we're going to talk about is dedicated to my mother, an extraordinary woman with a story very different from that of ordinary people.

Mater

Sometimes I sit under one of those palms, taking in the wind and the monthly payments of the plants.

—Dona Raimunda Salgado

I

Of you there's nothing but
a family album:
photos of childhood
in fields of rice and sesame.

Maybe in my thoughts there linger
fragments of your voice
In the wind
like fingerprints
on a river.

II

On the day the blue
stole your eyes
and silence tore apart
your name,
skylarks started singing in my tracks.
On the day the morning
closed your eyes.

III

Without you
 I am the blossom on the tree,
 bereft. Now
 the sea beats against my rocks
 and the night prowls at my heels.

AL: Salgado says very kindly that there were no grammatical problems for the translator. Well, but there was a great blindness and it was, as he kindly says, a cultural blindness.

SM: My mother lived in a region so distant from everything and so utterly without resources that in fact nothing survived, no documentation of any kind survived from her childhood and her youth, such as a photograph.

AL: So, the very embarrassed translator Alexis Levitin, due to his cultural assumptions—you know, in a world where we all have cameras, we all have photo albums—was unable to see that the Portuguese actually had said: “Of you there’s not even a family album.” And so the poor translator, locked into his own culture, said: “Of you there’s nothing but a family album,” a grievous mistake. And let me be the first to point it out.

SM: [Laughter]

RS: It’s a lovely example of assuming because—

AL: This was a cultural trap, but I have to say that although Salgado had made it into a very interesting story, it was an example of real carelessness. The translator fell asleep for a moment, he dropped the ball; but dropping the ball was encouraged by his cultural assumption.

RS: That’s what I’m saying, yes.

AL: And that is what Salgado pointed out to me to make me feel a little better.

RS: It is very important because we come to the text with our own baggage.

SM: Considering the world we all live in today, where everybody has a cell phone, everybody has an audiovisual recording device, everybody has a video camera, everybody has electricity. In this world, how can one even imagine the medieval world in which I grew up, where there was no electricity and in fact there was nothing from the modern world whatsoever. In fact, that world in which I grew up is so distant from the world in which I live today that very often it feels like a dream to me. The dream is, of course, engraved inside me, but that’s what it feels like: a dream, another world.

RS: I can fully identify with this because I come from a similar disrupted personal background.

AL: Listen, I would like to talk about the nitty-gritty of translation and give a few examples. I will give now an example of how, once in a while, the translator is given a gift by his own language

that enables him to deepen the text, make it even deeper than the original. So, my example is from the poem called “Poem No. 2” from *Blood of the Sun* [*Sol Sangüíneo*]. It’s about Salgado’s past, his relationship to language and to his ancestors who were slaves brought from Africa. And the end of the poem talks about being black and it talks about the suffering of his ancestors, but it also talks about the arrival of language in a mixing of languages from Africa and Portuguese. So, let me just read that to you in English. “Comes the sun— / in the blackest black / mated to the flesh; / and mills for grinding sugar cane / and men in supplication; / and impositions of the whip / and centuries / of entangling phonemes / to add to the boil. / To me with whom they sailed their way / to the sea of / the Antilles, lacerated.”

What I want to discuss briefly is the word “lacerated.” In Portuguese the poem ends with the two words *Antilhas laceradas*, which must mean the lacerated or torn Antilles. The Antilles was the region in the Caribbean where African slaves were warehoused. They were taken off the slave ships and put into large storehouses and then distributed to buyers in South America. So, for Salgado, the Antilles, *Antilhas laceradas*, is an image to suggest the suffering of the slaves who were transported through the Antilles. However, in English, the word “lacerated” is an adjective without a marker—in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian; in most languages, an adjective agrees in gender and number with the noun it is modifying. In English you only know from its position what an adjective is modifying. I have written a sentence here in English where by keeping Salgado’s image *lacerada* at the end, after a comma, it applies to everything. Listen to the English: “To me with whom they sailed their way / to the sea of / the Antilles, lacerated.” It can be me who is lacerated; it can be they, the slaves, who are lacerated; and it can be the Antilles that are lacerated. And since all three are valid readings, the poem becomes richer. Not only did his ancestors suffer, not only were the Antilles a place of suffering, but he, as he writes the poem, is also suffering. That works in English but could not have been achieved in Portuguese. So, that is a good feeling to the translator. But now I would like to give an example of a small failure, a small loss where the translator could not reproduce the sound of the original.

Salgado has a poem where he talks about the failure of god in us, in human beings. And this is how he describes it. In English, this becomes: “Within us seminal / time / turns pages of *anima*’s memory / like a god fallen ill.” I think the image, a god fallen ill, is very apt. It’s as if god has diminished, has fallen inside us into an illness. However, god fallen ill has no sounds that are echoing. The word “god” is not echoed in the words “fallen ill.” But in the Portuguese, the word *deus* is echoed in the verb *adoeci*. And so there is an example of how—although I think I did a good translation—I was not able to translate the music of repetition that was there in the original. Let me give a couple of other examples of sound: “The physical word in my disemboweled howl. My home is to own myself.” What holds the English together is actually more than what was in the Portuguese because where he had *meu uivo esvantrado*, I have internal assonance: “my disemboweled howl.” And then I back it up with: “my home is to own myself.” And [*ter e termi*] is the repetition of the *ter*; and I am repeating the long vowel sound: “home is to own myself.” So between “disemboweled howl” and “home is to own” I have a lot of strong assonance to hold the music of the imagery together at this particular moment in the poem.

Well, I hope that you could hear how sounds are repeated in that opening stanza of “Poem No. 1” from *Blood of the Sun*. “Palavra, larva, alarde, dispensa, existencia, rapto.” There’s a lot of a sounds holding the music together. I cannot get all of those sounds; however, I tried to get something else, something to compensate for the loss of *al-al* or *al-ar*. This is what I have: “To return to the desolate shelter of the flat lions.” That’s exactly what he wrote, and I think it has a similar cadence. Now: “To return to the borders of the word larvae ravenous are repressed roar.” Return, border, word, larva, ravenous, repressed, roar. It’s the Rs that are holding together.

These liquid Rs are holding together the English-language text, where in the original it was a combination of *l*, *a*, and *r*; and *v*, for that matter. *L*, *a*, *r*, and *v* held the original together, and in English it tends to be simply an abundance of *r* sounds. So, I was unable to find all the *l*, *a*, *r* sounds in English, but I tried to compensate with a weave of other sounds to hold it together. And that's the joy for me of translating, of trying to do that.

SV: I have a question about your use of the word "blood" in so many of these poems. Earlier, Rainer referred to the violence encountered in much of your imagery. And it seems to me that blood is an essential substance throughout these poems, perhaps derived from the suffering of whipped slaves, for example. But could you elaborate a bit on your relationship to and use of the word *sangue* in this series of poems? And especially in that sentence that reads: "The earth is my skin" and the imagery of the African slaves working in the crops and that suffering within that earth being part of the skin.

SM: You're quite right in your reference to the suffering of the slaves that I refer to in my poems, and in fact Maranhão, the state from which I come and from which I took my name, Salgado Maranhão, was one of the last states to abolish slavery and to actually eliminate it on the ground, so to speak. I lived until the age of fifteen surrounded by blood. It was a land without law. Conflicts over land, over possession of land, were resolved without the mediation of a legal system. These battles or struggles for possession of the land were resolved through gunshots, through bullets and knife thrusts. My mother—though completely untrained—in fact sewed up with her needle and thread many men who were trying to resolve their conflicts over various things but that might have included land as well. They tried to resolve their conflicts with their machetes.

The world I grew up in had all this violence in it. You would see people with scars down the middle of their face from a machete. You would see a person lying there who had just been killed. The violence and the spilling of blood that was part of that world was under the direct gaze of rays of the sun. And so, *Blood of the Sun* perhaps is where that title comes from.

AL: When Salgado was ten years old, somebody stole a chicken, and the landowner had the guy's fingernails pulled out as punishment.

SM: I saw that same landowner having ordinary conversations with his hired killers, and I asked myself how is it possible that a human life could have less value than a chicken?

These hired killers were respected by the landowners because they could kill a man at their bidding. But the poor, starving, or impoverished person who stole a chicken was treated with great cruelty.

RS: What I would like to do is perhaps for Salgado to talk a little about how he sees himself in the contemporary context of the Brazilian poetic scene.

SM: I see myself in the context of other people from my generation in a kind of poetic discourse or conversation with them. However, I see my voice as a very particular individual voice, because my background is really individual and different from anybody else's.

I participated in the movement from the 70s until now, a kind of a marginalized poetic movement, or a movement of marginalized poets, that has had a significant influence on poetry in Brazil. But, as critics have said, my voice is profoundly, rootedly personal. Even if a poet is

looked at in the context of his generation, I really believe that the poet has to have his own individual voice.

RS: Alexis, I would like for you to speak about your view of the translator, especially as a translator of poetry.

AL: Well, since we, human beings, have no idea what life means and what we mean, it's very hard for us, if we're not starving, to figure out what to do with our days on this earth. And a great German sociologist defined us about one hundred years ago as *Homo ludens*, which means: the creature who plays games. And what I would like to say about that is I think the games that human beings play can be very serious games. And for me the game of a serious person is to try to redeem their life through doing something positive, through some sort of—without sounding pretentious—some sort of contribution to something or other. Now, one great contribution a human being can make to try to redeem their life is to be good to others, or what Christ called loving your neighbor. I find that very hard to do. However, there may be other things that we can do that could redeem our life. Now, translation is a small niche, it's a small little piece of the huge puzzle of humanity. But in that realm, I am very happily amused, bemused, bewildered, and perplexed, and deeply rewarded when I can figure something out, when I can find a solution, when I can get a text to really sound beautiful in English. It's terribly rewarding to me, and I have the illusion that I have actually accomplished something, some little thing of value. And so, I'm not talking in vast cultural terms, I don't feel as if I'm salvaging an unknown Brazilian by bringing him to an American audience. I feel I'm joining this Brazilian—who by the way is no longer unknown, having won the biggest prize in Brazil last year for poetry—I'm joining him in the real pleasure of immersing oneself in language and playing with that language in a highly serious way to make it as beautiful as possible and as moving as possible. So that somehow one is reaching out to other people and maybe having a chance to enrich their lives a little bit through what I would call the music of language at its greatest, which is poetry. And there's something else I want to say about poetry. To me, poetry is the art that tries to say what cannot be said in words. Well, if it cannot be said in words, then there's a paradox, because what does poetry have? What is it constructed of if not words? Well, I would say it's constructed of vowels, consonants, rhythms, interruptions, pauses, punctuation, caesuras, enjambments, alliterations, assonantal rhymes, internal rhymes, end rhymes. It's inhabited poetry by an infinite variety of musical possibilities that create a meaning or a felt meaning that can actually be explained in words or be put into words, and yet it's there. And that's what really interests me, and it's a great pleasure to struggle in that realm and try to wrest some kind of felt meaning from language. And when one thinks one has achieved it, it gives one a great feeling of satisfaction.

RS: Salgado and Alexis, I thank you for this interview.